

The Divine Comedy



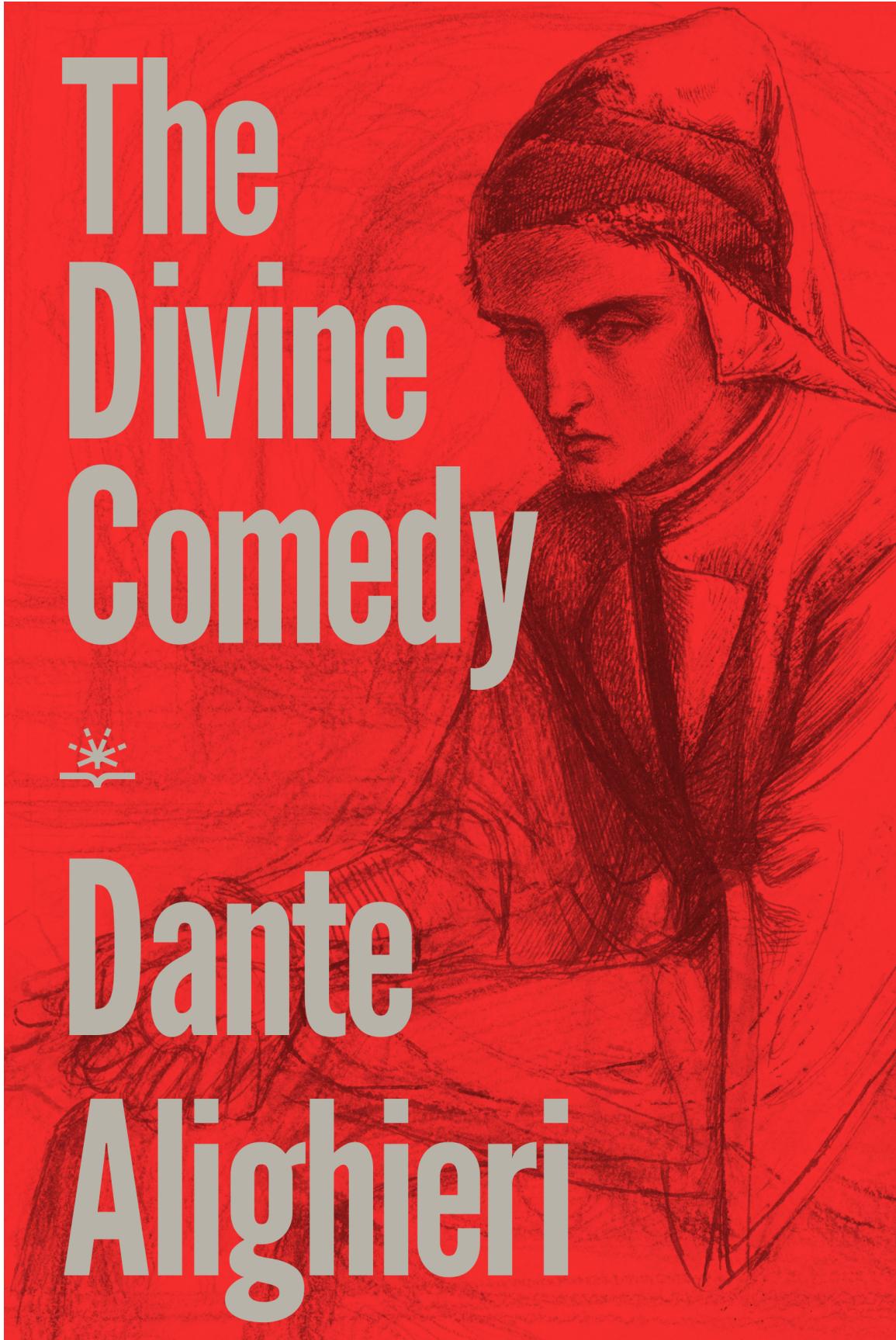
Dante Alighieri



The Divine Comedy



Dante
Alighieri



The divine comedy

Dante Alighieri

Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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Dante Alighieri (c. 1265–1321) was an Italian poet whose masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, is one of the greatest works of world literature. This epic poem takes readers on a symbolic journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, exploring themes of sin, redemption, and divine justice.

The *Divine Comedy* has been in the public domain for centuries, inspiring countless interpretations. Let's celebrate Dante's visionary storytelling and the timeless power of public-domain literature!

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*I follow here the footing of thy feet
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meet*

SPENSER

The Divine Comedy

Inferno¹

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,

What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This medieval miracle of song!

CANTO I

The dark forest—The hill of Difficulty—The panther, the lion, and the wolf—Virgil.

Midway upon the journey of our life²
I found myself within a forest dark,³
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
 What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
 Which in the very thought renews the fear.
So bitter is it, death is little more;
 But of the good to treat, which there I found,
 Speak will I of the other things I saw there.
I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
 So full was I of slumber at the moment
 In which I had abandoned the true way.
But after I had reached a mountain's foot,⁴
 At that point where the valley terminated,⁵
 Which had with consternation pierced my heart,
Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders,
 Vested already with that planet's rays⁶
 Which leadeth others right by every road.
Then was the fear a little quieted
 That in my heart's lake had endured throughout⁷
 The night, which I had passed so piteously.
And even as he, who, with distressful breath,
 Forth issued from the sea upon the shore,
 Turns to the water perilous and gazes;
So did my soul, that still was fleeing onward,

Turn itself back to re-behold the pass
Which never yet a living person left.⁸

After my weary body I had rested,
The way resumed I on the desert slope,
So that the firm foot ever was the lower.⁹

And lo! almost where the ascent began,¹⁰
A panther light and swift exceedingly,¹¹
Which with a spotted skin was covered o'er!

And never moved she from before my face,
Nay, rather did impede so much my way,
That many times I to return had turned.¹²

The time was the beginning of the morning,
And up the sun was mounting with those stars¹³
That with him were, what time the Love Divine

At first in motion set those beauteous things;
So were to me occasion of good hope,
The variegated skin of that wild beast,

The hour of time, and the delicious season;
But not so much, that did not give me fear
A lion's aspect which appeared to me.¹⁴

He seemed as if against me he were coming
With head uplifted, and with ravenous hunger,
So that it seemed the air was afraid of him;¹⁵

And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings¹⁶
Seemed to be laden in her meagreness,
And many folk has caused to live forlorn!

She brought upon me so much heaviness,
With the affright that from her aspect came,
That I the hope relinquished of the height.

And as he is who willingly acquires,
And the time comes that causes him to lose,
Who weeps in all his thoughts and is despondent,

E'en such made me that beast withouten peace,
Which, coming on against me by degrees
Thrust me back thither where the sun is silent.¹⁷

While I was rushing downward to the lowland,

Before mine eyes did one present himself,
Who seemed from long-continued silence hoarse.¹⁸

When I beheld him in the desert vast,
“Have pity on me,” unto him I cried,
“Whiche’er thou art, or shade or real man!”

He answered me: “Not man; man once I was,
And both my parents were of Lombardy,
And Mantuans by country both of them.

Sub Julio was I born, though it was late,¹⁹
And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
During the time of false and lying gods.

A Poet was I, and I sang that just
Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
After that Ilion the superb was burned.

But thou, why goest thou back to such annoyance?
Why climb’st thou not the Mount Delectable,
Which is the source and cause of every joy?”

“Now, art thou that Virgilius and that fountain²⁰
Which spreads abroad so wide a river of speech?”

I made response to him with bashful forehead.

“O, of the other poets honor and light,
Avail me the long study and great love
That have impelled me to explore thy volume!

Thou art my master, and my author thou,
Thou art alone the one from whom I took
The beautiful style that has done honor to me.²¹

Behold the beast, for which I have turned back;
Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,
For she doth make my veins and pulses tremble.”

“Thee it behoves to take another road,”

 Responded he, when he beheld me weeping,
 “If from this savage place thou wouldst escape;

Because this beast, at which thou criest out,
Suffers not any one to pass her way,
But so doth harass him, that she destroys him;

And has a nature so malign and ruthless,
That never doth she glut her greedy will,

And after food is hungrier than before.
Many the animals with whom she weds,
 And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound²²
 Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.
He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,
 But upon wisdom, and on love and virtue;
 'Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;
Of that low Italy shall he be the saviour,²³
 On whose account the maid Camilla died,
 Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;
Through every city shall he hunt her down,
 Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,
 There from whence envy first did let her loose.
Therefore I think and judge it for thy best
 Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,
 And lead thee hence through the eternal place,
Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,
 Shalt see the ancient spirits disconsolate,²⁴
 Who cry out each one for the second death;
And thou shalt see those who contented are
 Within the fire, because they hope to come,
 Whene'er it may be, to the blessed people;
To whom, then, if thou wishest to ascend,
 A soul shall be for that than I more worthy,²⁵
 With her at my departure I will leave thee;
Because that Emperor, who reigns above,
 In that I was rebellious to his law,
 Wills that through me none come into his city.
He governs everywhere, and there he reigns;
 There is his city and his lofty throne;
 O happy he whom thereto he elects!"
And I to him: "Poet, I thee entreat,
 By that same God whom thou didst never know,
 So that I may escape this woe and worse,
Thou wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,
 That I may see the portal of Saint Peter,
 And those thou makest so disconsolate."

Then he moved on, and I behind him followed.

CANTO II

Dante's protest and Virgil's appeal—The intercession of the Three Ladies Benedight.

Day was departing, and the embrowned air²⁶
Released the animals that are on earth
From their fatigues; and I the only one
Made myself ready to sustain the war,
Both of the way and likewise of the woe,
Which memory that errs not shall retrace.
O Muses, O high genius, now assist me!
O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
Here thy nobility shall be manifest!
And I began: “Poet, who guidest me,
Regard my manhood, if it be sufficient,
Ere to the arduous pass thou dost confide me.
Thou sayest, that of Silvius the parent,²⁷
While yet corruptible, unto the world
Immortal went, and was there bodily.
But if the adversary of all evil
Was courteous, thinking of the high effect
That issue would from him, and who, and what,
To men of intellect unmeet it seems not;
For he was of great Rome, and of her empire
In the empyreal heaven as father chosen;
The which and what, wishing to speak the truth,
Were stablished as the holy place, wherein
Sits the successor of the greatest Peter.²⁸
Upon this journey, whence thou givest him vaunt,

Things did he hear, which the occasion were
Both of his victory and the papal mantle.

Thither went afterwards the Chosen Vessel,²⁹
To bring back comfort thence unto that Faith,
Which of salvation's way is the beginning.

But I, why thither come, or who concedes it?

I not Aeneas am, I am not Paul,
Nor I, nor others, think me worthy of it.

Therefore, if I resign myself to come,
I fear the coming may be ill-advised;
Thou 'rt wise, and knowest better than I speak."³⁰

And as he is, who unwillings what he willed,
And by new thoughts doth his intention change,
So that from his design he quite withdraws,
Such I became, upon that dark hillside,
Because, in thinking, I consumed the emprise,
Which was so very prompt in the beginning.³⁰

"If I have well thy language understood,"

Replied that shade of the Magnanimous,
"Thy soul attainted is with cowardice,

Which many times a man encumbers so,
It turns him back from honored enterprise,
As false sight doth a beast, when he is shy.

That thou mayst 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,³¹
And a fair, saintly Lady called to me
In such wise, I besought her to command me.

Her eyes where shining brighter than the Star;³²

And she began to say, gentle and low,³³
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 succor,
From that which I have heard of him in Heaven.

Bestir thee now, and with thy speech ornate,³⁴
And with what needful is for his release,
Assist him so, that I may be consoled.

Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go;³⁵
I come from there, where I would fain return;
Love moved me, which compelleth me to speak.

When I shall be in presence of my Lord,
Full often will I praise thee unto him.'

Then paused she, and thereafter I began:
'O Lady of virtue, thou alone through whom
The human race exceedeth all contained
Within the heaven that has the lesser circles,³⁶

So grateful unto me is thy commandment,
To obey, if 'twere already done, were late;
No farther need'st thou ope to me thy wish.

But the cause tell me why thou dost not shun
The here descending down into this centre,
From the vast place thou burnest to return to.'³⁷

'Since thou wouldest fain so inwardly discern,
Briefly will I relate,' she answered me,
'Why I am not afraid to enter here.

Of those things only should one be afraid
Which have the power of doing others harm;
Of the rest, no; because they are not fearful.

God in his mercy such created me
That misery of yours attains me not,
Nor any flame assails me of this burning.

A gentle Lady is in Heaven, who grieves³⁸
At this impediment, to which I send thee,
So that stern judgment there above is broken.

In her entreaty she besought Lucia,³⁹

And said, "Thy faithful one now stands in need
Of thee, and unto thee I recommend him."

Lucia, foe of all that cruel is,
Hastened away, and came unto the place
Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.⁴⁰

"Beatrice," said she, "the true praise of God,
Why succorest thou not him, who loved thee so,
For thee he issued from the vulgar herd?

Dost thou not hear the pity of his plaint?
Dost thou not see the death that combats him
Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt?"⁴¹
Never were persons in the world so swift
To work their weal and to escape their woe,
As I, after such words as these were uttered,
Came hither downward from my blessed seat,
Confiding in thy dignified discourse,
Which honors thee, and those who've listened to it.'

After she thus had spoken unto me,
Weeping, her shining eyes she turned away;
Whereby she made me swifter in my coming;
And unto thee I came, as she desired;
I have delivered thee from that wild beast,
Which barred the beautiful mountain's short ascent.

What is it, then? Why, why dost thou delay?
Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart?
Daring and hardihood why hast thou not,
Seeing that three such Ladies benedight
Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven,
And so much good my speech doth promise thee?"

Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,⁴²
Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
Uplift themselves all open on their stems;

Such I became with my exhausted strength,
And such good courage to my heart there coursed,
That I began, like an intrepid person:
"O she compassionate, who succored me,
And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon

The words of truth which she addressed to thee!
Thou hast my heart so with desire disposed
To the adventure, with these words of thine,
That to my first intent I have returned.
Now go, for one sole will is in us both,
Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou.”
Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,
I entered on the deep and savage way.

CANTO III

*The gate of Hell—The inefficient or
indifferent—Pope Celestine
V
—The shores of Acheron—Charon—The
earthquake and the swoon.*

“Through me the way is to the city dolent;⁴³
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Justice incited my sublime Creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!”
These words in sombre color I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate;
Whence I: “Their sense is, Master, hard to me!”
And he to me, as one experienced:
“Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned,
All cowardice must needs be here extinct.
We to the place have come, where I have told thee
Thou shalt behold the people dolorous
Who have foregone the good of intellect.”⁴⁴
And after he had laid his hand on mine
With joyful mien, whence I was comforted,
He led me in among the secret things.
There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud⁴⁵

Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.
Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,
Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
 Forever in that air forever black,
 Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes.
And I, who had my head with horror bound,
 Said: "Master, what is this which now I hear?
 What folk is this, which seems by pain so vanquished?"
And he to me: "This miserable mode
 Maintain the melancholy souls of those
 Who lived withouten infamy or praise."⁴⁶
Commingled are they with that caitiff choir
 Of Angels, who have not rebellious been,
 Nor faithful were to God, but were for self.
The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair;
 Nor them the nethermore abyss receives,
 For glory none the damned would have from them."⁴⁷
And I: "O Master, what so grievous is
 To these, that maketh them lament so sore?"
 He answered: "I will tell thee very briefly.
These have no longer any hope of death;
 And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
 They envious are of every other fate.
No fame of them the world permits to be;
 Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
 Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass."
And I, who looked again, beheld a banner,⁴⁸
 Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly,
 That of all pause it seemed to me indignant;
And after it there came so long a train
 Of people, that I ne'er would have believed
 That ever Death so many had undone.
When some among them I had recognized,
 I looked, and I beheld the shade of him⁴⁹

Who made through cowardice the great refusal.
Forthwith I comprehended, and was certain,
That this the sect was of the caitiff wretches
Hateful to God and to his enemies.
These miscreants, who never were alive,
Were naked, and were stung exceedingly
By gadflies and by hornets that were there.
These did their faces irrigate with blood,
Which, with their tears commingled, at their feet
By the disgusting worms was gathered up.
And when to gazing farther I betook me,
People I saw on a great river's bank;
Whence said I: "Master, now vouchsafe to me,
That I may know who these are, and what law
Makes them appear so ready to pass over,
As I discern athwart the dusky light."⁵⁰
And he to me: "These things shall all be known
To thee, as soon as we our footsteps stay
Upon the dismal shore of Acheron."
Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,
Fearing my words might irksome be to him,
From speech refrained I till we reached the river.
And lo! towards us coming in a boat⁵¹
An old man, hoary with the hair of eld,
Crying: "Woe unto you, ye souls depraved!
Hope nevermore to look upon the heavens;
I come to lead you to the other shore,
To the eternal shades in heat and frost."⁵²
And thou, that yonder standest, living soul,
Withdraw thee from these people, who are dead!"⁵³
But when he saw that I did not withdraw,
He said: "By other ways, by other ports
Thou to the shore shalt come, not here, for passage;
A lighter vessel needs must carry thee."⁵⁴
And unto him the Guide: "Vex thee not, Charon;⁵⁵
It is so willed there where is power to do

That which is willed; and farther question not.”
Thereat were quieted the fleecy cheeks
 Of him the ferryman of the livid fen,
 Who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.
But all those souls who weary were and naked
 Their color changed and gnashed their teeth together,
 As soon as they had heard those cruel words.
God they blasphemed and their progenitors,
 The human race, the place, the time, the seed
 Of their engendering and of their birth!
Thereafter all together they drew back,
 Bitterly weeping, to the accursed shore,
 Which waiteth every man who fears not God.
Charon the demon, with the eyes of glede,⁵⁶
 Beckoning to them, collects them all together,
 Beats with his oar whoever lags behind.
As in the autumn-time the leaves fall off,⁵⁷
 First one and then another, till the branch
 Unto the earth surrenders all its spoils;
In similar wise the evil seed of Adam
 Throw themselves from that margin one by one,
 At signals, as a bird unto its lure.
So they depart across the dusky wave,
 And ere upon the other side they land,
 Again on this side a new troop assembles.
“My son,” the courteous Master said to me,
 “All those who perish in the wrath of God
 Here meet together out of every land;
And ready are they to pass o’er the river,
 Because celestial Justice spurs them on,
 So that their fear is turned into desire.
This way there never passes a good soul;
 And hence if Charon doth complain of thee,
 Well mayst thou know now what his speech imports.”
This being finished, all the dusk champaign
 Trembled so violently, that of that terror
 The recollection bathes me still with sweat.

The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind,
And fulminated a vermillion light,
Which overmastered in me every sense,
And as a man whom sleep hath seized I fell.

CANTO IV

*The First Circle—Limbo, or the border land
of the unbaptized—The four poets, Homer,
Horace, Ovid, and Lucan—The noble castle
of philosophy.*

Broke the deep lethargy within my head⁵⁸
A heavy thunder, so that I upstarted,
Like to a person who by force is wakened;
And round about I moved my rested eyes,
Uprisen erect, and steadfastly I gazed,
To recognise the place wherein I was.
True is it, that upon the verge I found me
Of the abysmal valley dolorous,
That gathers thunder of infinite ululations.
Obscure, profound it was, and nebulous,⁵⁹
So that by fixing on its depths my sight
Nothing whatever I discerned therein.
“Let us descend now into the blind world,”
Began the Poet, pallid utterly;
“I will be first, and thou shalt second be.”
And I, who of his color was aware,
Said: “How shall I come, if thou art afraid,
Who ’rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?”
And he to me: “The anguish of the people
Who are below here in my face depicts
That pity which for terror thou hast taken.
Let us go on, for the long way impels us.”
Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter

The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.
There, in so far as I had power to hear,
 Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
 That tremulous made the everlasting air.
And this arose from sorrow without torment,⁶⁰
 Which the crowds had, that many were and great,
 Of infants and of women and of men.⁶¹
To me the Master good: "Thou dost not ask
 What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are?
 Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther,
That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
 'Tis not enough, because they had not baptism
 Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;
And if they were before Christianity,
 In the right manner they adored not God;
 And among such as these am I myself.
For such defects, and not for other guilt,
 Lost are we, and are only so far punished,
 That without hope we live on in desire."
Great grief seized on my heart when this I heard,
 Because some people of much worthiness
 I knew, who in that Limbo were suspended.
"Tell me, my Master, tell me, thou my Lord."
 Began I, with desire of being certain
 Of that Faith which o'ercometh every error,
"Came any one by his own merit hence,
 Or by another's, who was blessed thereafter?"
 And he, who understood my covert speech,
Replied: "I was a novice in this state,
 When I saw hither come a Mighty One,⁶²
 With sign of victory incoronate.
Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,
 And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
 Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient
Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,
 Israel with his father and his children,
 And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,

And others many, and he made them blessed;
And thou must know, that earlier than these
Never were any human spirits saved."

We ceased not to advance because he spake,
But still were passing onward through the forest,
The forest, say I, of thick-crowded ghosts.

Not very far as yet our way had gone
This side the summit, when I saw a fire
That overcame a hemisphere of darkness.

We were a little distant from it still,
But not so far that I in part discerned not
That honorable people held that place.⁶³

"O thou who honorest every art and science,
Who may these be, which such great honor have,
That from the fashion of the rest it parts them?"

And he to me: "The honorable name,
That sounds of them above there in thy life,
Wins grace in Heaven, that so advances them."

In the meantime a voice was heard by me:
"All honor be to the preeminent Poet,
His shade returns again, that was departed."

After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.

To say to me began my gracious Master:
"Him with that falchion in his hand behold,⁶⁴
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.

That one is Homer, Poet sovereign;
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.

Because to each of these with me applies
The name that solitary voice proclaimed,
They do me honor, and in that do well."⁶⁵

Thus I beheld assemble the fair school
Of that lord of the song preeminent,
Who o'er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together had discoursed somewhat,

They turned to me with signs of salutation,
And on beholding this, my Master smiled;
And more of honor still, much more, they did me,⁶⁶
In that they made me one of their own band;
So that the sixth was I, 'mid so much wit.
Thus we went on as far as to the light,
Things saying 'tis becoming to keep silent,
As was the saying of them where I was.
We came unto a noble castle's foot,⁶⁷
Seven times encompassed with lofty walls,
Defended round by a fair rivulet;
This we passed over even as firm ground;
Through portals seven I entered with these Sages;
We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.
People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance;
They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.
Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
Into an opening luminous and lofty,
So that they all of them were visible.
There opposite, upon the green enamel,⁶⁸
Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted.
I saw Electra with companions many,
'Mongst whom I knew both Hector and Aeneas,
Caesar in armor with gerfalcon eyes;
I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
On the other side, and saw the King Latinus,
Who with Lavinia his daughter sat;
I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia,⁶⁹
And saw alone, apart, the Saladin.⁷⁰
When I had lifted up my brows a little,
The Master I beheld of those who know,
Sit with his philosophic family.
All gaze upon him, and all do him honor.

There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
Who nearer him before the others stand;
Democritus, who puts the world on chance,
Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus;
Of qualities I saw the good collector,
Hight Dioscorides; and Orpheus saw I,
Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca,
Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna,⁷¹
Averroes, who the great Comment made.⁷²
I cannot all of them portray in full,
Because so drives me onward the long theme,
That many times the word comes short of fact.
The sixfold company in two divides;
Another way my sapient Guide conducts me
Forth from the quiet to the air that trembles;
And to a place I come where nothing shines.

CANTO V

*The Second Circle—Minos—The wanton—
The infernal hurricane—Francesca da
Rimini.*

Thus I descended out of the first circle⁷³
Down to the second, that less space begirds,⁷⁴
And so much greater dole, that goads to wailing.
There standeth Minos horribly, and snarls;⁷⁵
Examines the transgressions at the entrance;
Judges, and sends according as he girds him.
I say, that when the spirit evil-born
Cometh before him, wholly it confesses;
And this discriminator of transgressions
Seeth what place in Hell is meet for it;
Girds himself with his tail as many times
As grades he wishes it should be thrust down.
Always before him many of them stand;
They go by turns each one unto the judgment;
They speak, and hear, and then are downward hurled.
“O thou, that to this dolorous hostelry
Comest,” said Minos to me, when he saw me,
Leaving the practice of so great an office,
“Look how thou enterest, and in whom thou trustest;
Let not the portal’s amplitude deceive thee.”
And unto him my Guide: “Why criest thou too?⁷⁶
Do not impede his journey fate-ordained;
It is so willed there where is power to do
That which is willed; and ask no further question.”

And now begin the dolesome notes to grow
Audible unto me; now am I come
There where much lamentation strikes upon me.
I came into a place mute of all light,⁷⁷
Which bellows as the sea does in a tempest,
If by opposing winds 'tis combated.
The infernal hurricane that never rests
Hurtles the spirits onward in its rapine;
Whirling them round, and smiting, it molests them.
When they arrive before the precipice,
There are the shrieks, the plaints, and the laments,
There they blaspheme the puissance divine.
I understood that unto such a torment
The carnal malefactors were condemned,
Who reason subjugate to appetite.
And as the wings of starlings bear them on
In the cold season in large band and full,
So doth that blast the spirits maledict;
It hither, thither, downward, upward, drives them;
No hope doth comfort them forevermore,
Not of repose, but even of lesser pain.
And as the cranes go chanting forth their lays,
Making in air a long line of themselves,
So saw I coming, uttering lamentations,
Shadows borne onward by the aforesaid stress.
Whereupon said I: "Master, who are those
People, whom the black air so castigates?"⁷⁸
"The first of those, of whom intelligence
Thou fain wouldst have," then said he unto me,
"The empress was of many languages.
To sensual vices she was so abandoned,
That lustful she made licit in her law,
To remove the blame to which she had been led.
She is Semiramis, of whom we read
That she succeeded Ninus, and was his spouse;
She held the land which now the Sultan rules.
The next is she who killed herself for love,⁷⁹

And broke faith with the ashes of Sichaeus;
Then Cleopatra the voluptuous."

Helen I saw, for whom so many ruthless
Seasons revolved; and saw the great Achilles,⁸⁰
Who at the last hour combated with Love.

Paris I saw, Tristan; and more than a thousand⁸¹
Shades did he name and point out with his finger,
Whom Love had separated from our life.

After that I had listened to my Teacher,
Naming the dames of old and cavaliers,⁸²
Pity prevailed, and I was nigh bewildered.

And I began: "O Poet, willingly
Speak would I to those two, who go together,
And seem upon the wind to be so light."

And he to me: "Thou'l mark, when they shall be
Nearer to us; and then do thou implore them
By love which leadeth them, and they will come."

Soon as the wind in our direction sways them,
My voice uplift I: "O ye weary souls!
Come speak to us, if no one interdicts it."

As turtledoves, called onward by desire,
With open and steady wings to the sweet nest
Fly through the air by their volition borne,
So came they from the band where Dido is,
Approaching us athwart the air malign,
So strong was the affectionate appeal.

"O living creature gracious and benignant,
Who visiting goest through the purple air⁸³
Us, who have stained the world incarnadine,
If were the King of the Universe our friend,
We would pray unto him to give thee peace,
Since thou hast pity on our woe perverse.

Of what it pleases thee to hear and speak,
That will we hear, and we will speak to you,
While silent is the wind, as it is now.

Sitteth the city, wherein I was born,⁸⁴

Upon the seashore where the Po descends
To rest in peace with all his retinue.⁸⁵

Love, that on gentle heart doth swiftly seize,
Seized this man for the person beautiful
That was ta'en from me, and still the mode offends me.

Love, that exempts no one beloved from loving,⁸⁶
Seized me with pleasure of this man so strongly,⁸⁷
That, as thou seest, it doth not yet desert me;

Love has conducted us unto one death;
Caïna waiteth him who quenched our life!"⁸⁸
These words were borne along from them to us.

As soon as I had heard those souls tormented,
I bowed my face, and so long held it down
Until the Poet said to me: "What thinkest?"

When I made answer, I began: "Alas!
How many pleasant thoughts, how much desire,
Conducted these unto the dolorous pass!"

Then unto them I turned me, and I spake,
And I began: "Thine agonies, Francesca,
Sad and compassionate to weeping make me.

But tell me, at the time of those sweet sighs,
By what and in what manner Love conceded,⁸⁹
That you should know your dubious desires?"

And she to me: "There is no greater sorrow⁹⁰
Than to be mindful of the happy time
In misery, and that thy Teacher knows.

But, if to recognise 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 Launcelot, how Love did him enthrall.
Alone we were and without any fear.

Full many a time our eyes together drew
That reading, and drove the color from our faces;
But one point only was it that o'ercame us.

Whenas 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 farther did we read therein.”
And all the while one spirit uttered this,
The other one did weep so, that, for pity,
I swooned away as if I had been dying,
And fell, even as a dead body falls.⁹¹

CANTO VI

*The Third Circle—Cerberus—The
gluttonous—The eternal rain—Ciacco.*

At the return of consciousness, that closed
Before the pity of those two relations,⁹²
Which utterly with sadness had confused me,
New torments I behold, and new tormented
 Around me, whichsoever way I move,
 And whichsoever way I turn, and gaze.
In the third circle am I of the rain⁹³
 Eternal, maledict, and cold, and heavy;
 Its law and quality are never new.
Huge hail, and water sombre-hued, and snow,
 Athwart the tenebrous air pour down amain;
 Noisome the earth is, that receiveth this.
Cerberus, monster cruel and uncouth,
 With his three gullets like a dog is barking
 Over the people that are there submerged.
Red eyes he has, and unctuous beard and black,
 And belly large, and armed with claws his hands;
 He rends the spirits, flays, and quarters them.
Howl the rain maketh them like unto dogs;
 One side they make a shelter for the other;
 Oft turn themselves the wretched reprobates.
When Cerberus perceived us, the great worm!
 His mouths he opened, and displayed his tusks;
 Not a limb had he that was motionless.
And my Conductor, with his spans extended,

Took of the earth, and with his fists well filled,
He threw it into those rapacious gullets.
Such as that dog is, who by barking craves,
And quiet grows soon as his food he gnaws,
For to devour it he but thinks and struggles,
The like became those muzzles filth-begrimed
Of Cerberus the demon, who so thunders
Over the souls that they would fain be deaf.
We passed across the shadows, which subdues
The heavy rainstorm, and we placed our feet
Upon their vanity that person seems.
They all were lying prone upon the earth,
Excepting one, who sat upright as soon
As he beheld us passing on before him.
“O thou that art conducted through this Hell,”
He said to me, “recall me, if thou canst;
Thyself wast made before I was unmade.”
And I to him: “The anguish which thou hast
Perhaps doth draw thee out of my remembrance,
So that it seems not I have ever seen thee.
But tell me who thou art, that in so doleful
A place art put, and in such punishment,
If some are greater, none is so displeasing.”
And he to me: “Thy city, which is full
Of envy so that now the sack runs over,
Held me within it in the life serene.
You citizens were wont to call me Ciacco;⁹⁴
For the pernicious sin of gluttony
I, as thou seest, am battered by this rain.
And I, sad soul, am not the only one,
For all these suffer the like penalty
For the like sin”; and word no more spake he.
I answered him: “Ciacco, thy wretchedness
Weighs on me so that it to weep invites me;
But tell me, if thou knowest, to what shall come
The citizens of the divided city;
If any there be just; and the occasion

Tell me why so much discord has assailed it.”
And he to me: “They, after long contention,

Will come to bloodshed; and the rustic party⁹⁵
Will drive the other out with much offence.

Then afterwards behoves it this one fall

Within three suns, and rise again the other
By force of him who now is on the coast.⁹⁶

High will it hold its forehead a long while,
Keeping the other under heavy burdens,
Howe’er it weeps thereat and is indignant.

The just are two, and are not understood there;⁹⁷

Envy and Arrogance and Avarice
Are the three sparks that have all hearts enkindled.”

Here ended he his tearful utterance;

And I to him: “I wish thee still to teach me,
And make a gift to me of further speech.

Farinata and Tegghiaio, once so worthy,
Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, and Mosca,⁹⁸
And others who on good deeds set their thoughts,
Say where they are, and cause that I may know them;
For great desire constraineth me to learn
If Heaven doth sweeten them, or Hell envenom.”

And he: “They are among the blacker souls;
A different sin downweights them to the bottom;
If thou so far descendest, thou canst see them.

But when thou art again in the sweet world,
I pray thee to the mind of others bring me;
No more I tell thee and no more I answer.”

Then his straightforward eyes he turned askance,
Eyed me a little, and then bowed his head;
He fell therewith prone like the other blind.

And the Guide said to me: “He wakes no more
This side the sound of the angelic trumpet;
When shall approach the hostile Potentate,

Each one shall find again his dismal tomb,
Shall reassume his flesh and his own figure,
Shall hear what through eternity reechoes.”

So we passed onward o'er the filthy mixture
Of shadows and of rain with footsteps slow,
Touching a little on the future life.

Wherefore I said: "Master, these torments here,
Will they increase after the mighty sentence,
Or lesser be, or will they be as burning?"

And he to me: "Return unto thy science,⁹⁹
Which wills, that as the thing more perfect is,
The more it feels of pleasure and of pain."

Albeit that this people maledict
To true perfection never can attain,
Hereafter more than now they look to be."

Round in a circle by that road we went,
Speaking much more, which I do not repeat;
We came unto the point where the descent is;
There we found Plutus the great enemy.¹⁰⁰

CANTO VII

*The Fourth Circle—Plutus—The avaricious
and the prodigal—Fortune and her wheel—
The Fifth Circle—Styx—The irascible and
the sullen.*

“Papē Satàn, Papē Satàn, Aleppë!”¹⁰¹
Thus Plutus with his clucking voice began;
And that benignant Sage, who all things knew,
Said, to encourage me: “Let not thy fear
Harm thee; for any power that he may have
Shall not prevent thy going down this crag.”
Then he turned round unto that bloated lip,
And said: “Be silent, thou accursed wolf;
Consume within thyself with thine own rage.
Not causeless is this journey to the abyss;
Thus is it willed on high, where Michael wrought¹⁰²
Vengeance upon the proud adultery.”
Even as the sails inflated by the wind
Together fall involved when snaps the mast,
So fell the cruel monster to the earth.
Thus we descended into the fourth chasm,
Gaining still farther on the dolesome shore
Which all the woe of the universe insacks.
Justice of God, ah! who heaps up so many
New toils and sufferings as I beheld?
And why doth our transgression waste us so?
As doth the billow there upon Charybdis,
That breaks itself on that which it encounters,

So here the folk must dance their roundelay.¹⁰³
Here saw I people, more than elsewhere, many,
 On one side and the other, with great howls,
 Rolling weights forward by main-force of chest.¹⁰⁴
They clashed together, and then at that point
 Each one turned backward, rolling retrograde,
 Crying, "Why keepest?" and, "Why squanderest thou?"
Thus they returned along the lurid circle
 On either hand unto the opposite point,
 Shouting their shameful metre evermore.
Then each, when he arrived there, wheeled about
 Through his half-circle to another joust;
 And I, who had my heart pierced as it were,
Exclaimed: "My Master, now declare to me
 What people these are, and if all were clerks,
 These shaven crowns upon the left of us."¹⁰⁵
And he to me: "All of them were asquint
 In intellect in the first life, so much
 That there with measure they no spending made.
Clearly enough their voices bark it forth,
 Whene'er they reach the two points of the circle,
 Where sunders them the opposite defect.
Clerks those were who no hairy covering
 Have on the head, and Popes and Cardinals,
 In whom doth Avarice practise its excess."
And I: "My Master, among such as these
 I ought forsooth to recognise some few,
 Who were infected with these maladies."
And he to me: "Vain thought thou entertainest;
 The undiscerning life which made them sordid
 Now makes them unto all discernment dim.
Forever shall they come to these two buttings;
 These from the sepulchre shall rise again
 With the fist closed, and these with tresses shorn.
Ill giving and ill keeping the fair world¹⁰⁶
 Have ta'en from them, and placed them in this scuffle;
 Whate'er it be, no words adorn I for it.

Now canst thou, Son, behold the transient farce
Of goods that are committed unto Fortune,
For which the human race each other buffet;
For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever has been, of these weary souls
Could never make a single one repose.”

“Master,” I said to him, “now tell me also
What is this Fortune which thou speakest of,[107](#)
That has the world’s goods so within its clutches?”

And he to me: “O creatures imbecile,
What ignorance is this which doth beset you?
Now will I have thee learn my judgment of her.
He whose omniscience everything transcends
The heavens created, and gave who should guide them,[108](#)
That every part to every part may shine,
Distributing the light in equal measure;
He in like manner to the mundane splendors
Ordained a general mistress and guide,
That she might change at times the empty treasures
From race to race, from one blood to another,
Beyond resistance of all human wisdom.
Therefore one people triumphs, and another
Languishes, in pursuance of her judgment,
Which hidden is, as in the grass a serpent.
Your knowledge has no counterstand against her;
She makes provision, judges, and pursues
Her governance, as theirs the other gods.
Her permutations have not any truce;
Necessity makes her precipitate,
So often cometh who his turn obtains.
And this is she who is so crucified
Even by those who ought to give her praise,
Giving her blame amiss, and bad repute.
But she is blissful, and she hears it not;
Among the other primal creatures gladsome
She turns her sphere, and blissful she rejoices.
Let us descend now unto greater woe;

Already sinks each star that was ascending¹⁰⁹
When I set out, and loitering is forbidden."

We crossed the circle to the other bank,
Near to a fount that boils, and pours itself
Along a gully that runs out of it.

The water was more sombre far than perse;¹¹⁰
And we, in company with the dusky waves,
Made entrance downward by a path uncouth.

A marsh it makes, which has the name of Styx,
This tristful brooklet, when it has descended
Down to the foot of the malign gray shores.

And I, who stood intent upon beholding,
Saw people mud-besprent in that lagoon,
All of them naked and with angry look.

They smote each other not alone with hands,
But with the head and with the breast and feet,
Tearing each other piecemeal with their teeth.

Said the good Master: "Son, thou now beholdest¹¹¹
The souls of those whom anger overcame;
And likewise I would have thee know for certain
Beneath the water people are who sigh
And make this water bubble at the surface,
As the eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turns.

Fixed in the mire they say, 'We sullen were
In the sweet air, which by the sun is gladdened,
Bearing within ourselves the sluggish reek;
Now we are sullen in this sable mire.'
This hymn do they keep gurgling in their throats,
For with unbroken words they cannot say it."

Thus we went circling round the filthy fen
A great arc 'twixt the dry bank and the swamp,
With eyes turned unto those who gorge the mire;
Unto the foot of a tower we came at last.

CANTO VIII

Phlegyas—Philippe Argenti—The gate of the city of Dis.

I say, continuing, that long before¹¹²
We to the foot of that high tower had come,
Our eyes went upward to the summit of it,
By reason of two flamelets we saw placed there,¹¹³
And from afar another answer them,
So far, that hardly could the eye attain it.
And, to the sea of all discernment turned,
I said: “What sayeth this, and what respondeth
That other fire? and who are they that made it?”
And he to me: “Across the turbid waves
What is expected thou canst now discern,
If reek of the morass conceal it not.”
Cord never shot an arrow from itself
That sped away athwart the air so swift,
As I beheld a very little boat
Come o’er the water tow’rds us at that moment,
Under the guidance of a single pilot,
Who shouted, “Now art thou arrived, fell soul?”
“Phlegyas, Phlegyas, thou criest out in vain¹¹⁴
For this once,” said my Lord; “thou shalt not have us
Longer than in the passing of the slough.”
As he who listens to some great deceit
That has been done to him, and then resents it,
Such became Phlegyas, in his gathered wrath.
My Guide descended down into the boat,

And then he made me enter after him,
And only when I entered seemed it laden.¹¹⁵

Soon as the Guide and I were in the boat,
The antique prow goes on its way, dividing
More of the water than 'tis wont with others.

While we were running through the dead canal,
Uprose in front of me one full of mire,
And said, "Who 'rt thou that comest ere the hour?"

And I to him: "Although I come, I stay not;
But who art thou that hast become so squalid?"
"Thou seest that I am one who weeps," he answered.

And I to him: "With weeping and with wailing,
Thou spirit maledict, do thou remain;
For thee I know, though thou art all defiled."

Then stretched he both his hands unto the boat;
Wherewithal my wary Master thrust him back,
Saying, "Away there with the other dogs!"

Thereafter with his arms he clasped my neck;
He kissed my face, and said: "Dissainful soul,
Blessed be she who bore thee in her bosom.

That was an arrogant person in the world;
Goodness is none, that decks his memory;
So likewise here his shade is furious.

How many are esteemed great kings up there,¹¹⁶
Who here shall be like unto swine in mire,
Leaving behind them horrible dispraises!"¹¹⁷

And I: "My Master, much should I be pleased,
If I could see him soused into this broth,
Before we issue forth out of the lake."

And he to me: "Ere unto thee the shore
Reveal itself, thou shalt be satisfied;
Such a desire 'tis meet thou shouldst enjoy."

A little after that, I saw such havoc
Made of him by the people of the mire,
That still I praise and thank my God for it.

They all were shouting, "At Philippo Argenti!"¹¹⁸
And that exasperate spirit Florentine

Turned round upon himself with his own teeth.

We left him there, and more of him I tell not;

But on mine ears there smote a lamentation,

Whence forward I intent unbar mine eyes.

And the good Master said: "Even now, my son,

The city draweth near whose name is Dis,

With the grave citizens, with the great throng."

And I: "Its mosques already, Master, clearly¹¹⁹

Within there in the valley I discern

Vermilion, as if issuing from the fire

They were." And he to me: "The fire eternal

That kindles them within makes them look red,

As thou beholdest in this nether Hell."

Then we arrived within the moats profound,

That circumvallate that disconsolate city;

The walls appeared to me to be of iron.¹²⁰

Not without making first a circuit wide,

We came unto a place where loud the pilot

Cried out to us, "Debark, here is the entrance."

More than a thousand at the gates I saw

Out of the Heavens rained down, who angrily

Were saying, "Who is this that without death

Goes through the kingdom of the people dead?"

And my sagacious Master made a sign

Of wishing secretly to speak with them.

A little then they quelled their great disdain,

And said: "Come thou alone, and he begone

Who has so boldly entered these dominions.

Let him return alone by his mad road;

Try, if he can; for thou shalt here remain,

Who hast escorted him through such dark regions."

Think, Reader, if I was discomfited

At utterance of the accursed words;

For never to return here I believed.

"O my dear Guide, who more than seven times

Hast rendered me security, and drawn me

From imminent peril that before me stood,

Do not desert me," said I, "thus undone;
And if the going farther be denied us,
Let us retrace our steps together swiftly."

And that Lord, who had led me thitherward,
Said unto me: "Fear not; because our passage
None can take from us, it by Such is given.

But here await me, and thy weary spirit
Comfort and nourish with a better hope;
For in this nether world I will not leave thee."

So onward goes and there abandons me
My Father sweet, and I remain in doubt,
For No and Yes within my head contend.

I could not hear what he proposed to them;
But with them there he did not linger long,
Ere each within in rivalry ran back.

They closed the portals, those our adversaries,
On my Lord's breast, who had remained without
And turned to me with footsteps far between.

His eyes cast down, his forehead shorn had he
Of all its boldness, and he said, with sighs,
"Who has denied to me the dolesome houses?"

And unto me: "Thou, because I am angry,
Fear not, for I will conquer in the trial,
Whatever for defence within be planned.

This arrogance of theirs is nothing new;¹²¹
For once they used it at less secret gate,¹²²
Which finds itself without a fastening still.

O'er it didst thou behold the dead inscription;
And now this side of it descends the steep,
Passing across the circles without escort,
One by whose means the city shall be opened."¹²³

CANTO IX

The furies—The angel—The city of Dis—The Sixth Circle—Heresiarchs.

That hue which cowardice brought out on me,¹²⁴
Beholding my Conductor backward turn,
Sooner repressed within him his new color.
He stopped attentive, like a man who listens,
Because the eye could not conduct him far
Through the black air, and through the heavy fog.
“Still it behoveth us to win the fight,”
Began he; “Else... Such offered us herself...¹²⁵
O how I long that someone here arrive!”¹²⁶
Well I perceived, as soon as the beginning
He covered up with what came afterward,
That they were words quite different from the first;
But none the less his saying gave me fear,
Because I carried out the broken phrase,
Perhaps to a worse meaning than he had.
“Into this bottom of the doleful conch¹²⁷
Doth any e'er descend from the first grade,
Which for its pain has only hope cut off?”
This question put I; and he answered me:
“Seldom it comes to pass that one of us
Maketh the journey upon which I go.
True is it, once before I here below
Was conjured by that pitiless Erictho,
Who summoned back the shades unto their bodies.
Naked of me short while the flesh had been,

Before within that wall she made me enter,
To bring a spirit from the circle of Judas;
That is the lowest region and the darkest,
And farthest from the heaven which circles all.
Well know I the way; therefore be reassured.
This fen, which a prodigious stench exhales,
Encompasses about the city dolent,
Where now we cannot enter without anger.”

And more he said, but not in mind I have it;
Because mine eye had altogether drawn me
Tow’rds the high tower with the red-flaming summit,
Where in a moment saw I swift uprisen
The three infernal Furies stained with blood,
Who had the limbs of women and their mien,
And with the greenest hydras were begirt;
Small serpents and cerastes were their tresses,
Wherewith their horrid temples were entwined.

And he who well the handmaids of the Queen
Of everlasting lamentation knew,
Said unto me: “Behold the fierce Erinnys.
This is Megaera, on the left-hand side;
She who is weeping on the right, Alecto;
Tisiphone is between”; and then was silent.
Each one her breast was rending with her nails;
They beat them with their palms, and cried so loud,
That I for dread pressed close unto the Poet.

“Medusa come, so we to stone will change him!”¹²⁸

All shouted looking down; “in evil hour
Avenged we not on Theseus his assault!”¹²⁹

“Turn thyself round, and keep thine eyes close shut,
For if the Gorgon appear, and thou shouldst see it,
No more returning upward would there be.”

Thus said the Master; and he turned me round
Himself, and trusted not unto my hands
So far as not to blind me with his own.

O ye who have undistempered intellects,
Observe the doctrine that conceals itself¹³⁰

Beneath the veil of the mysterious verses!
And now there came across the turbid waves
 The clangor of a sound with terror fraught,
 Because of which both of the margins trembled;
Not otherwise it was than of a wind
 Impetuous on account of adverse heats,
 That smites the forest, and, without restraint,
The branches rends, beats down, and bears away;
 Right onward, laden with dust, it goes superb,
 And puts to flight the wild beasts and the shepherds.
Mine eyes he loosed, and said: "Direct the nerve
 Of vision now along that ancient foam,
 There yonder where that smoke is most intense."
Even as the frogs before the hostile serpent
 Across the water scatter all abroad,
 Until each one is huddled in the earth,
More than a thousand ruined souls I saw,
 Thus fleeing from before one who on foot
 Was passing o'er the Styx with soles unwet.
From off his face he fanned that unctuous air,
 Waving his left hand oft in front of him,
 And only with that anguish seemed he weary.
Well I perceived one sent from Heaven was he,
 And to the Master turned; and he made sign
 That I should quiet stand, and bow before him.
Ah! how disdainful he appeared to me!
 He reached the gate, and with a little rod
 He opened it, for there was no resistance.
"O banished out of Heaven, people despised!"
 Thus he began upon the horrid threshold;
 "Whence is this arrogance within you couched?
Wherefore recalcitrant against that will,
 From which the end can never be cut off,
 And which has many times increased your pain?
What helpeth it to butt against the fates?
 Your Cerberus, if you remember well,
 For that still bears his chin and gullet peeled."

Then he returned along the miry road,
And spake no word to us, but had the look
Of one whom other care constrains and goads
Than that of him who in his presence is;
And we our feet directed tow'rs the city,
After those holy words all confident.
Within we entered without any contest;
And I, who inclination had to see
What the condition such a fortress holds,
Soon as I was within, cast round mine eye,
And see on every hand an ample plain,
Full of distress and torment terrible.
Even as at Arles, where stagnant grows the Rhone,¹³¹
Even as at Pola near to the Quarnaro,¹³²
That shuts in Italy and bathes its borders,
The sepulchres make all the place uneven;
So likewise did they there on every side,
Saving that there the manner was more bitter;
For flames between the sepulchres were scattered,
By which they so intensely heated were,
That iron more so asks not any art.
All of their coverings uplifted were,
And from them issued forth such dire laments,
Sooth seemed they of the wretched and tormented.
And I: "My Master, what are all those people
Who, having sepulture within those tombs,
Make themselves audible by doleful sighs?"
And he to me: "Here are the Heresiarchs,
With their disciples of all sects, and much
More than thou thinkest laden are the tombs.
Here like together with its like is buried;
And more and less the monuments are heated."
And when he to the right had turned, we passed
Between the torments and high parapets.

CANTO X

Farinata and Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti.

Now onward goes, along a narrow path¹³³

Between the torments and the city wall,
My Master, and I follow at his back.

“O power supreme, that through these impious circles
Turnest me,” I began, “as pleases thee,
Speak to me, and my longings satisfy;
The people who are lying in these tombs,
Might they be seen? already are uplifted
The covers all, and no one keepeth guard.”

And he to me: “They all will be closed up
When from Jehosaphat they shall return
Here with the bodies they have left above.

Their cemetery have upon this side
With Epicurus all his followers,¹³⁴
Who with the body mortal make the soul;
But in the question thou dost put to me,
Within here shalt thou soon be satisfied,
And likewise in the wish thou keepest silent.”

And I: “Good Leader, I but keep concealed
From thee my heart, that I may speak the less,
Nor only now hast thou thereto disposed me.”

“O Tuscan, thou who through the city of fire
Goest alive, thus speaking modestly,
Be pleased to stay thy footsteps in this place.

Thy mode of speaking makes thee manifest
A native of that noble fatherland,

To which perhaps I too molestful was.”
Upon a sudden issued forth this sound
From out one of the tombs; wherefore I pressed,
Fearing, a little nearer to my Leader.
And unto me he said: “Turn thee; what dost thou?
Behold there Farinata who has risen;¹³⁵
From the waist upwards wholly shalt thou see him.”
I had already fixed mine eyes on his,
And he uprose erect with breast and front
E’en as if Hell he had in great despite.
And with courageous hands and prompt my Leader
Thrust me between the sepulchres towards him,
Exclaiming, “Let thy words explicit be.”
As soon as I was at the foot of his tomb,
Somewhat he eyed me, and, as if disdainful,
Then asked of me, “Who were thine ancestors?”
I, who desirous of obeying was,
Concealed it not, but all revealed to him;
Whereat he raised his brows a little upward.
Then said he: “Fiercely adverse have they been¹³⁶
To me, and to my fathers, and my party;
So that two several times I scattered them.”
“If they were banished, they returned on all sides,”
I answered him, “the first time and the second;
But yours have not acquired that art aright.”¹³⁷
Then there uprose upon the sight, uncovered
Down to the chin, a shadow at his side;¹³⁸
I think that he had risen on his knees.
Round me he gazed, as if solicitude
He had to see if someone else were with me;
But after his suspicion was all spent,
Weeping, he said to me: “If through this blind
Prison thou goest by loftiness of genius,
Where is my son? and why is he not with thee?”¹³⁹
And I to him: “I come not of myself;
He who is waiting yonder leads me here,

Whom in disdain perhaps your Guido had.”¹⁴⁰
His language and the mode of punishment
 Already unto me had read his name;
 On that account my answer was so full.
Up starting suddenly, he cried out: “How
 Saidst thou—he had? Is he not still alive?
 Does not the sweet light strike upon his eyes?”
When he became aware of some delay,
 Which I before my answer made, supine
 He fell again, and forth appeared no more.
But the other, magnanimous, at whose desire
 I had remained, did not his aspect change,
 Neither his neck he moved, nor bent his side.¹⁴¹
“And if,” continuing his first discourse,
 “They have that art,” he said, “not learned aright,
 That more tormenteth me, than doth this bed.
But fifty times shall not rekindled be
 The countenance of the Lady who reigns here,¹⁴²
 Ere thou shalt know how heavy is that art;
And as thou wouldest to the sweet world return,
 Say why that people is so pitiless
 Against my race in each one of its laws?”
Whence I to him: “The slaughter and great carnage
 Which have with crimson stained the Arbia, cause¹⁴³
 Such orisons in our temple to be made.”
After his head he with a sigh had shaken,
 “There I was not alone,” he said, “nor surely
 Without a cause had with the others moved.
But there I was alone, where everyone
 Consented to the laying waste of Florence,
 He who defended her with open face.”
“Ah! so hereafter may your seed repose,”¹⁴⁴
 I him entreated, “solve for me that knot,
 Which has entangled my conceptions here.
It seems that you can see, if I hear rightly,
 Beforehand whatsoe’er time brings with it,

And in the present have another mode.”
“We see, like those who have imperfect sight,
The things,” he said, “that distant are from us;
So much still shines on us the Sovereign Ruler.
When they draw near, or are, is wholly vain
Our intellect, and if none brings it to us,
Not anything know we of your human state.
Hence thou canst understand, that wholly dead
Will be our knowledge from the moment when
The portal of the future shall be closed.”
Then I, as if compunctious for my fault,
Said: “Now, then, you will tell that fallen one,
That still his son is with the living joined.
And if just now, in answering, I was dumb,
Tell him I did it because I was thinking
Already of the error you have solved me.”
And now my Master was recalling me,
Wherefore more eagerly I prayed the spirit
That he would tell me who was with him there.
He said: “With more than a thousand here I lie;
Within here is the second Frederick,¹⁴⁵
And the Cardinal, and of the rest I speak not.”¹⁴⁶
Thereon he hid himself; and I towards
The ancient poet turned my steps, reflecting
Upon that saying, which seemed hostile to me.
He moved along; and afterward, thus going,
He said to me, “Why art thou so bewildered?”
And I in his inquiry satisfied him.
“Let memory preserve what thou hast heard
Against thyself,” that Sage commanded me,
“And now attend here”; and he raised his finger.
“When thou shalt be before the radiance sweet
Of her whose beauteous eyes all things behold,
From her thou’lt know the journey of thy life.”
Unto the left hand then he turned his feet;
We left the wall, and went towards the middle,
Along a path that strikes into a valley,

Which even up there unpleasant made its stench.

CANTO XI

Pope Anastasius—General description of the Inferno and its divisions.

Upon the margin of a lofty bank
Which great rocks broken in a circle made,
We came upon a still more cruel throng;
And there, by reason of the horrible
Excess of stench the deep abyss throws out,
We drew ourselves aside behind the cover
Of a great tomb, whereon I saw a writing,
Which said: “Pope Anastasius I hold,¹⁴⁷
Whom out of the right way Photinus drew.”¹⁴⁸
“Slow it behoveth our descent to be,
So that the sense be first a little used
To the sad blast, and then we shall not heed it.”
The Master thus; and unto him I said,
“Some compensation find, that the time pass not
Idly”; and he: “Thou seest I think of that.
My son, upon the inside of these rocks,”
Began he then to say, “are three small circles,
From grade to grade, like those which thou art leaving.
They all are full of spirits maledict;
But that hereafter sight alone suffice thee,
Hear how and wherefore they are in constraint.
Of every malice that wins hate in Heaven,
Injury is the end; and all such end
Either by force or fraud afflicteth others.
But because fraud is man’s peculiar vice,

More it displeases God; and so stand lowest
The fraudulent, and greater dole assails them.
All the first circle of the Violent is;
But since force may be used against three persons,
In three rounds 'tis divided and constructed.
To God, to ourselves, and to our neighbor can we
Use force; I say on them and on their things,
As thou shalt hear with reason manifest.
A death by violence, and painful wounds,
Are to our neighbor given; and in his substance
Ruin, and arson, and injurious levies;
Whence homicides, and he who smites unjustly,
Marauders, and freebooters, the first round
Tormenteth all in companies diverse.
Man may lay violent hands upon himself
And his own goods; and therefore in the second
Round must perforce without avail repent
Whoever of your world deprives himself,
Who games, and dissipates his property,
And weepeth there, where he should jocund be.
Violence can be done the Deity,
In heart denying and blaspheming Him,
And by disdaining Nature and her bounty.
And for this reason doth the smallest round
Seal with its signet Sodom and Cahors,¹⁴⁹
And who, disdaining God, speaks from the heart.
Fraud, wherewithal is every conscience stung,
A man may practise upon him who trusts,
And him who doth no confidence imburse.
This latter mode, it would appear, dissevers
Only the bond of love which Nature makes;
Wherefore within the second circle nestle
Hypocrisy, flattery, and who deals in magic,
Falsification, theft, and simony,
Panders, and barrators, and the like filth.
By the other mode, forgotten is that love
Which Nature makes, and what is after added,

From which there is a special faith engendered.
Hence in the smallest circle, where the point is
 Of the Universe, upon which Dis is seated,
 Whoe'er betrays forever is consumed.”
And I: “My Master, clear enough proceeds
 Thy reasoning, and full well distinguishes
 This cavern and the people who possess it.
But tell me, those within the fat lagoon,¹⁵⁰
 Whom the wind drives, and whom the rain doth beat,¹⁵¹
 And who encounter with such bitter tongues,¹⁵²
Wherefore are they inside of the red city
 Not punished, if God has them in his wrath,
 And if he has not, wherefore in such fashion?”
And unto me he said: “Why wanders so
 Thine intellect from that which it is wont?
 Or, sooth, thy mind where is it elsewhere looking?
Hast thou no recollection of those words
 With which thine Ethics thoroughly discusses¹⁵³
 The dispositions three, that Heaven abides not—
Incontinence, and Malice, and insane
 Bestiality? and how Incontinence
 Less God offendeth, and less blame attracts?
If thou regardest this conclusion well,
 And to thy mind recallest who they are
 That up outside are undergoing penance,
Clearly wilt thou perceive why from these felons
 They separated are, and why less wroth
 Justice divine doth smite them with its hammer.”
“O Sun, that healest all distempered vision,
 Thou dost content me so, when thou resolvest,
 That doubting pleases me no less than knowing!
Once more a little backward turn thee,” said I,
 “There where thou sayest that usury offends
 Goodness divine, and disengage the knot.”
“Philosophy,” he said, “to him who heeds it,
 Noteth, not only in one place alone,
 After what manner Nature takes her course

From Intellect Divine, and from its art;
And if thy Physics carefully thou notest,¹⁵⁴
After not many pages shalt thou find,
That this your art as far as possible
Follows, as the disciple doth the master;
So that your art is, as it were, God's grandchild.
From these two, if thou bringest to thy mind
Genesis at the beginning, it behoves¹⁵⁵
Mankind to gain their life and to advance;
And since the usurer takes another way,¹⁵⁶
Nature herself and in her follower¹⁵⁷
Disdains he, for elsewhere he puts his hope.
But follow, now, as I would fain go on,
For quivering are the Fishes on the horizon,
And the Wain wholly over Caurus lies,¹⁵⁸
And far beyond there we descend the crag.”

CANTO XII

The Minotaur—The Seventh Circle—The violent—Phlegethon—The violent against their neighbors—The centaurs—Tyrants.

The place where to descend the bank we came¹⁵⁹
Was alpine, and from what was there, moreover,¹⁶⁰
Of such a kind that every eye would shun it.
Such as that ruin is which in the flank
Smote, on this side of Trent, the Adige,¹⁶¹
Either by earthquake or by failing stay,
For from the mountain's top, from which it moved,
Unto the plain the cliff is shattered so,
Some path 'twould give to him who was above;
Even such was the descent of that ravine,
And on the border of the broken chasm
The infamy of Crete was stretched along,¹⁶²
Who was conceived in the fictitious cow;
And when he us beheld, he bit himself,
Even as one whom anger racks within.
My Sage towards him shouted: “Peradventure
Thou think’st that here may be the Duke of Athens,
Who in the world above brought death to thee?¹⁶³
Get thee gone, beast, for this one cometh not
Instructed by thy sister, but he comes¹⁶⁴
In order to behold your punishments.”
As is that bull who breaks loose at the moment
In which he has received the mortal blow,
Who cannot walk, but staggers here and there,

The Minotaur beheld I do the like;
And he, the wary, cried: "Run to the passage;
While he wroth, 'tis well thou shouldst descend."

Thus down we took our way o'er that discharge
Of stones, which oftentimes did move themselves
Beneath my feet, from the unwonted burden.

Thoughtful I went; and he said: "Thou art thinking
Perhaps upon this ruin, which is guarded
By that brute anger which just now I quenched.

Now will I have thee know, the other time
I here descended to the nether Hell,
This precipice had not yet fallen down.

But truly, if I well discern, a little
Before His coming who the mighty spoil
Bore off from Dis, in the supernal circle,¹⁶⁵

Upon all sides the deep and loathsome valley
Trembled so, that I thought the Universe
Was thrilled with love, by which there are who think¹⁶⁶

The world oftentimes converted into chaos;
And at that moment this primeval crag
Both here and elsewhere made such overthrow.

But fix thine eyes below; for draweth near
The river of blood, within which boiling is
Whoe'er by violence doth injure others."

O blind cupidity, O wrath insane,
That spurs us onward so in our short life,
And in the eternal then so badly steeps us!

I saw an ample moat bent like a bow,
As one which all the plain encompasses,
Conformable to what my Guide had said.

And between this and the embankment's foot
Centaurs in file were running, armed with arrows,¹⁶⁷
As in the world they used the chase to follow.

Beholding us descend, each one stood still,
And from the squadron three detached themselves,
With bows and arrows in advance selected;

And from afar one cried: "Unto what torment

Come ye, who down the hillside are descending?
Tell us from there; if not, I draw the bow.”

My Master said: “Our answer will we make
To Chiron, near you there; in evil hour,
That will of thine was evermore so hasty.”

Then touched he me, and said: “This one is Nessus,
Who perished for the lovely Dejanira,¹⁶⁸
And for himself, himself did vengeance take.

And he in the midst, who at his breast is gazing,
Is the great Chiron, who brought up Achilles;¹⁶⁹
That other Pholus is, who was so wrathful.

Thousands and thousands go about the moat
Shooting with shafts whatever soul emerges
Out of the blood, more than his crime allots.”

Near we approached unto those monsters fleet;
Chiron an arrow took, and with the notch¹⁷⁰
Backward upon his jaws he put his beard.

After he had uncovered his great mouth,
He said to his companions: “Are you ware
That he behind moveth whate'er he touches?

Thus are not wont to do the feet of dead men.”

And my good Guide, who now was at his breast,
Where the two natures are together joined,

Replied: “Indeed he lives, and thus alone
Me it behoves to show him the dark valley;
Necessity, and not delight, impels us.

Someone withdrew from singing Halleluja,
Who unto me committed this new office;
No thief is he, nor I a thievish spirit.

But by that virtue through which I am moving
My steps along this savage thoroughfare,
Give us someone of thine, to be with us,

And who may show us where to pass the ford,
And who may carry this one on his back;
For 'tis no spirit that can walk the air.”

Upon his right breast Chiron wheeled about,
And said to Nessus: “Turn and do thou guide them,

And warn aside, if other band may meet you.”
We with our faithful escort onward moved,
 Along the brink of the vermillion boiling,
 Wherein the boiled were uttering loud laments.
People I saw within up to the eyebrows,
 And the great Centaur said: “Tyrants are these,
 Who dealt in bloodshed and in pillaging.
Here they lament their pitiless mischiefs; here
 Is Alexander, and fierce Dionysius¹⁷¹
 Who upon Sicily brought dolorous years.
That forehead there which has the hair so black
 Is Azzolin; and the other who is blond,¹⁷²
 Obizzo is of Esti, who, in truth,¹⁷³
Up in the world was by his stepson slain.”
 Then turned I to the Poet; and he said,
 “Now he be first to thee, and second I.”
A little farther on the Centaur stopped
 Above a folk, who far down as the throat
 Seemed from that boiling stream to issue forth.
A shade he showed us on one side alone,
 Saying: “He clef^t asunder in God’s bosom¹⁷⁴
 The heart that still upon the Thames is honored.”
Then people saw I, who from out the river
 Lifted their heads and also all the chest;
 And many among these I recognized.¹⁷⁵
Thus ever more and more grew shallower
 That blood, so that the feet alone it covered;
 And there across the moat our passage was.
“Even as thou here upon this side beholdest
 The boiling stream, that aye diminishes,”
 The Centaur said, “I wish thee to believe
That on this other more and more declines
 Its bed, until it reunites itself
 Where it behoveth tyranny to groan.
Justice divine, upon this side, is goading
 That Attila, who was a scourge on earth,¹⁷⁶

And Pyrrhus, and Sextus; and forever milks¹⁷⁷
The tears which with the boiling it unseals
In Rinier da Corneto and Rinier Pazzo,¹⁷⁸
Who made upon the highways so much war.”
Then back he turned, and passed again the ford.

CANTO XIII

The wood of thorns—The Harpies—The violent against themselves—Suicides—Pier della Vigna—Lano and Jacopo da Sant’ Andrea.

Not yet had Nessus reached the other side,¹⁷⁹
When we had put ourselves within a wood,¹⁸⁰
That was not marked by any path whatever.
Not foliage green, but of a dusky color,
Not branches smooth, but gnarled and intertwined,
Not apple trees were there, but thorns with poison.
Such tangled thickets have not, nor so dense,
Those savage wild beasts, that in hatred hold
'Twixt Cecina and Corneto the tilled places.¹⁸¹
There do the hideous Harpies make their nests,
Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades,¹⁸²
With sad announcement of impending doom;
Broad wings have they, and necks and faces human,
And feet with claws, and their great bellies fledged;
They make laments upon the wondrous trees.
And the good Master: “Ere thou enter farther,
Know that thou art within the second round,”
Thus he began to say, “and shalt be, till
Thou comest out upon the horrible sand;
Therefore look well around, and thou shalt see
Things that will credence give unto my speech.”¹⁸³
I heard on all sides lamentations uttered,
And person none beheld I who might make them,

Whence, utterly bewildered, I stood still.
I think he thought that I perhaps might think
 So many voices issued through those trunks
 From people who concealed themselves from us;
Therefore the Master said: "If thou break off
 Some little spray from any of these trees,
 The thoughts thou hast will wholly be made vain."
Then stretched I forth my hand a little forward,
 And plucked a branchlet off from a great thorn;
 And the trunk cried, "Why dost thou mangle me?"
After it had become embrowned with blood,
 It recommenced its cry: "Why dost thou rend me?
 Hast thou no spirit of pity whatsoever?"
Men once we were, and now are changed to trees;
 Indeed, thy hand should be more pitiful,
 Even if the souls of serpents we had been."
As out of a green brand, that is on fire ¹⁸⁴
 At one of the ends, and from the other drips
 And hisses with the wind that is escaping;
So from that splinter issued forth together
 Both words and blood; whereat I let the tip
 Fall, and stood like a man who is afraid.
"Had he been able sooner to believe,"
 My Sage made answer, "O thou wounded soul,
 What only in my verses he has seen,
Not upon thee had he stretched forth his hand;
 Whereas the thing incredible has caused me
 To put him to an act which grieveth me.
But tell him who thou wast, so that by way
 Of some amends thy fame he may refresh
 Up in the world, to which he can return."
And the trunk said: "So thy sweet words allure me,
 I can not 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 ¹⁸⁵
 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.
The courtesan who never from the dwelling
Of Caesar turned aside her strumpet eyes,
Death universal and the vice of courts,
Inflamed against me all the other minds,
And they, inflamed, did so inflame Augustus,
That my glad honors turned to dismal mournings.
My spirit, in disdainful exultation,
Thinking by dying to escape disdain,
Made me unjust against myself, the just.
I, by the roots unwonted of this wood,
Do swear to you that never broke I faith
Unto my lord, who was so worthy of honor;
And to the world if one of you return,
Let him my memory comfort, which is lying
Still prostrate from the blow that envy dealt it.”
Waited awhile, and then: “Since he is silent,”
The Poet said to me, “lose not the time,
But speak, and question him, if more may please thee.”
Whence I to him: “Do thou again inquire
Concerning what thou thinks’t will satisfy me;
For I can not, such pity is in my heart.”
Therefore he recommenced: “So may the man
Do for thee freely what thy speech implores,
Spirit incarcerated, again be pleased
To tell us in what way the soul is bound
Within these knots; and tell us, if thou canst,
If any from such members e’er is freed.”
Then blew the trunk amain, and afterward
The wind was into such a voice converted:
“With brevity shall be replied to you.
When the exasperated soul abandons
The body whence it rent itself away,
Minos consigns it to the seventh abyss.
It falls into the forest, and no part

Is chosen for it; but where Fortune hurls it,
There like a grain of spelt it germinates.
It springs a sapling, and a forest tree;
The Harpies, feeding then upon its leaves,
Do pain create, and for the pain an outlet.
Like others for our spoils shall we return;
But not that any one may them revest,
For 'tis not just to have what one casts off.
Here we shall drag them, and along the dismal
Forest our bodies shall suspended be,
Each to the thorn of his molested shade."

We were attentive still unto the trunk,
Thinking that more it yet might wish to tell us,
When by a tumult we were overtaken,
In the same way as he is who perceives¹⁸⁶
The boar and chase approaching to his stand,
Who hears the crashing of the beasts and branches;
And two behold! upon our left-hand side,
Naked and scratched, fleeing so furiously,
That of the forest every fan they broke.
He who was in advance: "Now help, Death, help!"
And the other one, who seemed to lag too much,
Was shouting: "Lano, were not so alert"¹⁸⁷
Those legs of thine at joustings of the Toppo!"
And then, perchance because his breath was failing,
He grouped himself together with a bush.
Behind them was the forest full of black
She-mastiffs, ravenous, and swift of foot¹⁸⁸
As greyhounds, who are issuing from the chain.
On him who had crouched down they set their teeth,
And him they lacerated piece by piece,
Thereafter bore away those aching members.
Thereat my Escort took me by the hand,
And led me to the bush, that all in vain
Was weeping from its bloody lacerations.
"O Jacopo," it said, "of Sant' Andrea,"¹⁸⁹
What helped it thee of me to make a screen?

What blame have I in thy nefarious life?"
When near him had the Master stayed his steps,
He said: "Who wast thou, that through wounds so many
Art blowing out with blood thy dolorous speech?"
And he to us: "O souls, that hither come
To look upon the shameful massacre
That has so rent away from me my leaves,
Gather them up beneath the dismal bush;
I of that city was which to the Baptist¹⁹⁰
Changed its first patron, wherefore he for this
Forever with his art will make it sad.
And were it not that on the pass of Arno
Some glimpses of him are remaining still,
Those citizens, who afterwards rebuilt it
Upon the ashes left by Attila,¹⁹¹
In vain had caused their labor to be done.¹⁹²
Of my own house I made myself a gibbet."

CANTO XIV

*The sand waste—The violent against God—
Capaneus—The statue of time, and the four
infernal rivers.*

Because the charity of my native place¹⁹³

Constrained me, gathered I the scattered leaves,
And gave them back to him, who now was hoarse.

Then came we to the confine, where disparted

The second round is from the third, and where
A horrible form of Justice is beheld.

Clearly to manifest these novel things,

I say that we arrived upon a plain,
Which from its bed rejecteth every plant;

The dolorous forest is a garland to it

All round about, as the sad moat to that;
There close upon the edge we stayed our feet.

The soil was of an arid and thick sand,

Not of another fashion made than that
Which by the feet of Cato once was pressed.¹⁹⁴

Vengeance of God, O how much oughtest thou

By each one to be dreaded, who doth read
That which was manifest unto mine eyes!

Of naked souls beheld I many herds,

Who all were weeping very miserably,
And over them seemed set a law diverse.

Supine upon the ground some folk were lying;

And some were sitting all drawn up together,
And others went about continually.

Those who were going round were far the more,
And those were less who lay down to their torment,
But had their tongues more loosed to lamentation.

O'er all the sand-waste, with a gradual fall,
Were raining down dilated flakes of fire,
As of the snow on Alp without a wind.

As Alexander, in those torrid parts¹⁹⁵
Of India, beheld upon his host
Flames fall unbroken till they reached the ground,
Whence he provided with his phalanxes
To trample down the soil, because the vapor
Better extinguished was while it was single;
Thus was descending the eternal heat,
Whereby the sand was set on fire, like tinder
Beneath the steel, for doubling of the dole.

Without repose forever was the dance
Of miserable hands, now there, now here,
Shaking away from off them the fresh gleeds.

"Master," began I, "thou who overcomest
All things except the demons dire, that issued
Against us at the entrance of the gate,¹⁹⁶
Who is that mighty one who seems to heed not
The fire, and lieth lowering and disdainful,
So that the rain seems not to ripen him?"

And he himself, who had become aware
That I was questioning my Guide about him,
Cried: "Such as I was living, am I, dead!

If Jove should weary out his smith, from whom
He seized in anger the sharp thunderbolt,
Wherewith upon the last day I was smitten,

And if he wearied out by turns the others
In Mongibello at the swarthy forge,¹⁹⁷
Vociferating, 'Help, good Vulcan, help!'
Even as he did there at the fight of Phlegra,
And shot his bolts at me with all his might,
He would not have thereby a joyous vengeance."

Then did my Leader speak with such great force,

That I had never heard him speak so loud:¹⁹⁸

“O Capaneus, in that is not extinguished

Thine arrogance, thou punished art the more;

Not any torment, saving thine own rage,

Would be unto thy fury pain complete.”

Then he turned round to me with better lip,

Saying: “One of the Seven Kings was he

Who Thebes besieged, and held, and seems to hold

God in disdain, and little seems to prize him;

But, as I said to him, his own despites

Are for his breast the fittest ornaments.¹⁹⁹

Now follow me, and mind thou do not place

As yet thy feet upon the burning sand,

But always keep them close unto the wood.”

Speaking no word, we came to where there gushes

Forth from the wood a little rivulet,

Whose redness makes my hair still stand on end.

As from the Bulicamē springs the brooklet,²⁰⁰

The sinful women later share among them,²⁰¹

So downward through the sand it went its way.

The bottom of it, and both sloping banks,

Were made of stone, and the margins at the side;

Whence I perceived that there the passage was.

“In all the rest which I have shown to thee

Since we have entered in within the gate

Whose threshold unto no one is denied,

Nothing has been discovered by thine eyes

So notable as is the present river,

Which all the little flames above it quenches.”

These words were of my Leader; whence I prayed him

That he would give me largess of the food,

For which he had given me largess of desire.

“In the mid-sea there sits a wasted land,”

Said he thereafterward, “whose name is Crete,

Under whose king the world of old was chaste.

There is a mountain there, that once was glad

With waters and with leaves, which was called Ida;

Now 'tis deserted, as a thing worn out.
Rhea once chose it for the faithful cradle
 Of her own son; and to conceal him better,
 Whene'er he cried, she there had clamors made.²⁰²
A grand old man stands in the mount erect,²⁰³
 Who holds his shoulders turned tow'rds Damietta,
 And looks at Rome as if it were his mirror.²⁰⁴
His head is fashioned of refined gold,
 And of pure silver are the arms and breast;
 Then he is brass as far down as the fork.
From that point downward all is chosen iron,
 Save that the right foot is of kiln-baked clay,
 And more he stands on that than on the other.
Each part, except the gold, is by a fissure
 Asunder cleft, that dripping is with tears,²⁰⁵
 Which gathered together perforate that cavern.
From rock to rock they fall into this valley;
 Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon they form;
 Then downward go along this narrow sluice
Unto that point where is no more descending.
 They form Cocytus; what that pool may be
 Thou shalt behold, so here 'tis not narrated."
And I to him: "If so the present runnel
 Doth take its rise in this way from our world,
 Why only on this verge appears it to us?"
And he to me: "Thou knowest the place is round,
 And notwithstanding thou hast journeyed far,
 Still to the left descending to the bottom,
Thou hast not yet through all the circle turned.
 Therefore if something new appear to us,
 It should not bring amazement to thy face."
And I again: "Master, where shall be found
 Lethe and Phlegethon, for of one thou 'rt silent,
 And sayest the other of this rain is made?"
"In all thy questions truly thou dost please me,"
 Replied he; "but the boiling of the red
 Water might well solve one of them thou makest.

Thou shalt see Lethe, but outside this moat,²⁰⁶
There where the souls repair to lave themselves,
When sin repented of has been removed.”
Then said he: “It is time now to abandon
The wood; take heed that thou come after me;
A way the margins make that are not burning,
And over them all vapors are extinguished.”

CANTO XV

The violent against nature—Brunetto Latini.

Now bears us onward one of the hard margins,²⁰⁷

And so the brooklet's mist o'ershadows it,

From fire it saves the water and the dikes.

Even as the Flemings, 'twixt Cadsand and Bruges,²⁰⁸

Fearing the flood that tow'rds them hurls itself,²⁰⁹

Their bulwarks build to put the sea to flight;

And as the Paduans along the Brenta,

To guard their villas and their villages,

Or ever Chiarentana feel the heat;²¹⁰

In such similitude had those been made,

Albeit not so lofty nor so thick,

Whoever he might be, the master made them.

Now were we from the forest so remote,

I could not have discovered where it was,

Even if backward I had turned myself,

When we a company of souls encountered,

Who came beside the dike, and everyone

Gazed at us, as at evening we are wont

To eye each other under a new moon,

And so towards us sharpened they their brows

As an old tailor at the needle's eye.

Thus scrutinised by such a family,

By someone I was recognized, who seized

My garment's hem, and cried out, "What a marvel!"

And I, when he stretched forth his arm to me,

On his baked aspect fastened so mine eyes,

That the scorched countenance prevented not
His recognition by my intellect;
And bowing down my face unto his own,²¹¹
I made reply, "Are you here, Ser Brunetto?"²¹²
And he: "May 't not displease thee, O my son,
If a brief space with thee Brunetto Latini
Backward return and let the trail go on."
I said to him: "With all my power I ask it;
And if you wish me to sit down with you,
I will, if he please, for I go with him."
"O son," he said, "whoever of this herd
A moment stops, lies then a hundred years,
Nor fans himself when smiteth him the fire.
Therefore go on; I at thy skirts will come,
And afterward will I rejoin my band,
Which goes lamenting its eternal doom."
I did not dare to go down from the road
Level to walk with him; but my head bowed
I held as one who goeth reverently.
And he began: "What fortune or what fate
Before the last day leadeth thee down here?
And who is this that sheweth thee the way?"
"Up there above us in the life serene,"
I answered him, "I lost me in a valley,
Or ever yet my age had been completed.
But yestermorn I turned my back upon it;
This one appeared to me, returning thither,
And homeward leadeth me along this road."
And he to me: "If thou thy star do follow,
Thou canst not fail thee of a glorious port,
If well I judged in the life beautiful.
And if I had not died so prematurely,
Seeing Heaven thus benignant unto thee,
I would have given thee comfort in the work.
But that ungrateful and malignant people,
Which of old time from Fesole descended,²¹³
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite,

Will make itself, for thy good deeds, thy foe;

And it is right; for among crabbed sorbs

It ill befits the sweet fig to bear fruit.

Old rumor in the world proclaims them blind,²¹⁴

A people avaricious, envious, proud;

Take heed that of their customs thou do cleanse thee.

Thy fortune so much honor doth reserve thee,

One party and the other shall be hungry

For thee; but far from goat shall be the grass.

Their litter let the beasts of Fesole

Make of themselves, nor let them touch the plant,

If any still upon their dunghill rise,

In which may yet revive the consecrated

Seed of those Romans, who remained there when

The nest of such great malice it became."

"If my entreaty wholly were fulfilled,"

Replied I to him, "not yet would you be

In banishment from human nature placed;

For in my mind is fixed, and touches now

My heart the dear and good paternal image

Of you, when in the world from hour to hour

You taught me how a man becomes eternal;

And how much I am grateful, while I live

Behoves that in my language be discerned.

What you narrate of my career I write,

And keep it to be glossed with other text²¹⁵

By a Lady who can do it, if I reach her.

This much will I have manifest to you;

Provided that my conscience do not chide me,

For whatsoever Fortune I am ready.

Such hansel is not new unto mine ears;

Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel around

As it may please her, and the churl his mattock."²¹⁶

My Master thereupon on his right cheek

Did backward turn himself, and looked at me;

Then said: "He listeneth well who noteth it."

Nor speaking less on that account, I go

With Ser Brunetto, and I ask who are
His most known and most eminent companions.
And he to me: "To know of some is well;
Of others it were laudable to be silent,
For short would be the time for so much speech.
Know then, in sum, that all of them were clerks,
And men of letters great and of great fame,
In the world tainted with the selfsame sin.
Priscian goes yonder with that wretched crowd,²¹⁷
And Francis of Accorso; and thou hadst seen there,²¹⁸
If thou hadst had a hankering for such scurf,
That one, who by the Servant of the Servants
From Arno was transferred to Bacchiglione,²¹⁹
Where he has left his sin-excited nerves.
More would I say, but coming and discoursing
Can be no longer; for that I behold
New smoke uprising yonder from the sand.
A people comes with whom I may not be;
Commended unto thee be my Tesoro,²²⁰
In which I still live, and no more I ask."
Then he turned round, and seemed to be of those
Who at Verona run for the Green Mantle²²¹
Across the plain; and seemed to be among them
The one who wins, and not the one who loses.

CANTO XVI

*Guidoguerra, Aldobrandi, and Rusticucci—
Cataract of the river of blood.*

Now was I where was heard the reverberation²²²

Of water falling into the next round,

Like to that humming which the beehives make,

When shadows three together started forth,²²³

Running, from out a company that passed

Beneath the rain of the sharp martyrdom.

Towards us came they, and each one cried out:

“Stop, thou; for by thy garb to us thou seemest

To be someone of our depraved city.”

Ah me! what wounds I saw upon their limbs,

Recent and ancient by the flames burnt in!

It pains me still but to remember it.

Unto their cries my Teacher paused attentive;

He turned his face towards me, and “Now wait,”

He said; “to these we should be courteous.

And if it were not for the fire that darts

The nature of this region, I should say

That haste were more becoming thee than them.”

As soon as we stood still, they recommenced

The old refrain, and when they overtook us,

Formed of themselves a wheel, all three of them.

As champions stripped and oiled are wont to do,

Watching for their advantage and their hold,

Before they come to blows and thrusts between them,

Thus, wheeling round, did every one his visage

Direct to me, so that in opposite wise
His neck and feet continual journey made.

And, "If the misery of this soft place
Bring in disdain ourselves and our entreaties,"

Began one, "and our aspect black and blistered,
Let the renown of us thy mind incline
To tell us who thou art, who thus securely
Thy living feet dost move along through Hell.

He in whose footprints thou dost see me treading,
Naked and skinless though he now may go,
Was of a greater rank than thou dost think;

He was the grandson of the good Gualdrada;²²⁴

His name was Guidoguerra, and in life
Much did he with his wisdom and his sword.

The other, who close by me treads the sand,
Tegghiaio Aldobrandi is, whose fame²²⁵
Above there in the world should welcome be.

And I, who with them on the cross am placed,
Jacopo Rusticucci was; and truly²²⁶
My savage wife, more than aught else, doth harm me."²²⁷

Could I have been protected from the fire,
Below I should have thrown myself among them,
And think the Teacher would have suffered it;

But as I should have burned and baked myself,
My terror overmastered my good will,
Which made me greedy of embracing them.

Then I began: "Sorrow and not disdain
Did your condition fix within me so,
That tardily it wholly is stripped off,

As soon as this my Lord said unto me
Words, on account of which I thought within me
That people such as you are were approaching.

I of your city am; and evermore
Your labors and your honorable names
I with affection have retraced and heard.

I leave the gall, and go for the sweet fruits
Promised to me by the veracious Leader;

But to the centre first I needs must plunge.”

“So may the soul for a long while conduct
Those limbs of thine,” did he make answer then,
“And so may thy renown shine after thee,
Valor and courtesy, say if they dwell
Within our city, as they used to do,
Or if they wholly have gone out of it;

For Guglielmo Borsier, who is in torment²²⁸

With us of late, and goes there with his comrades,
Doth greatly mortify us with his words.”

“The new inhabitants and the sudden gains,
Pride and extravagance have in thee engendered,
Florence, so that thou weep’st thereat already!”

In this wise I exclaimed with face uplifted;
And the three, taking that for my reply,
Looked at each other, as one looks at truth.

“If other times so little it doth cost thee,”

Replied they all, “to satisfy another,
Happy art thou, thus speaking at thy will!

Therefore, if thou escape from these dark places,
And come to rebehold the beauteous stars,
When it shall pleasure thee to say, ‘I was,’
See that thou speak of us unto the people.”

Then they broke up the wheel, and in their flight
It seemed as if their agile legs were wings.

Not an Amen could possibly be said
So rapidly as they had disappeared;
Wherefore the Master deemed best to depart.

I followed him, and little had we gone,
Before the sound of water was so near us,
That speaking we should hardly have been heard.

Even as that stream which holdeth its own course

The first from Monte Veso tow’rds the East,²²⁹
Upon the left-hand slope of Apennine,

Which is above called Acquacheta, ere
It down descendeth into its low bed,
And at Forlì is vacant of that name,

Reverberates there above San Benedetto
From Alps, by falling at a single leap,
Where for a thousand there were room enough; [230](#)
Thus downward from a bank precipitate,
We found resounding that dark-tinted water,
So that it soon the ear would have offended.
I had a cord around about me girt, [231](#)
And therewithal I whilom had designed
To take the panther with the painted skin.
After I this had all from me unloosed,
As my Conductor had commanded me,
I reached it to him, gathered up and coiled,
Whereat he turned himself to the right side, [232](#)
And at a little distance from the verge,
He cast it down into that deep abyss.
“It must needs be some novelty respond,”
I said within myself, “to the new signal
The Master with his eye is following so.”
Ah me! how very cautious men should be
With those who not alone behold the act,
But with their wisdom look into the thoughts!
He said to me: “Soon there will upward come
What I await; and what thy thought is dreaming
Must soon reveal itself unto thy sight.”
Aye to that truth which has the face of falsehood,
A man should close his lips as far as may be,
Because without his fault it causes shame;
But here I cannot; and, Reader, by the notes
Of this my Comedy to thee I swear,
So may they not be void of lasting favor,
Athwart that dense and darksome atmosphere
I saw a figure swimming upward come, [233](#)
Marvellous unto every steadfast heart, [234](#)
Even as he returns who goeth down
Sometimes to clear an anchor, which has grappled
Reef, or aught else that in the sea is hidden,

Who upward stretches, and draws in his feet.

CANTO XVII

*Geryon—The violent against art—Usurers—
Descent into the abyss of Malebolge.*

“Behold the monster with the pointed tail,²³⁵
Who cleaves the hills, and breaketh walls and weapons,
Behold him who infecteth all the world.”

Thus unto me my Guide began to say,
And beckoned him that he should come to shore,
Near to the confine of the trodden marble;
And that uncleanly image of deceit
Came up and thrust ashore its head and bust,
But on the border did not drag its tail.

The face was as the face of a just man,²³⁶
Its semblance outwardly was so benign,
And of a serpent all the trunk beside.
Two paws it had, hairy unto the armpits;
The back, and breast, and both the sides it had
Depicted o'er with nooses and with shields.

With colors more, groundwork or broidery
Never in cloth did Tartars make nor Turks,²³⁷
Nor were such tissues by Arachne laid.²³⁸
As sometimes wherries lie upon the shore,
That part are in the water, part on land;
And as among the guzzling Germans there,
The beaver plants himself to wage his war;
So that vile monster lay upon the border,
Which is of stone, and shutteth in the sand
His tail was wholly quivering in the void,

Contorting upwards the envenomed fork,
That in the guise of scorpion armed its point.
The Guide said: "Now perforce must turn aside
Our way a little, even to that beast
Malevolent, that yonder coucheth him."
We therefore on the right-hand side descended,
And made ten steps upon the outer verge,
Completely to avoid the sand and flame;
And after we are come to him, I see
A little farther off upon the sand
A people sitting near the hollow place.
Then said to me the Master: "So that full
Experience of this round thou bear away,
Now go and see what their condition is.
There let thy conversation be concise;
Till thou returnest I will speak with him,
That he concede to us his stalwart shoulders."
Thus farther still upon the outermost
Head of that seventh circle all alone
I went, where sat the melancholy folk.
Out of their eyes was gushing forth their woe;
This way, that way, they helped them with their hands
Now from the flames and now from the hot soil.
Not otherwise in summer do the dogs,
Now with the foot, now with the muzzle, when
By fleas, or flies, or gadflies, they are bitten.
When I had turned mine eyes upon the faces
Of some, on whom the dolorous fire is falling,
Not one of them I knew; but I perceived
That from the neck of each there hung a pouch,
Which certain color had, and certain blazon;
And thereupon it seems their eyes are feeding.²³⁹
And as I gazing round me come among them,
Upon a yellow pouch I azure saw²⁴⁰
That had the face and posture of a lion.
Proceeding then the current of my sight,
Another of them saw I, red as blood,

Display a goose more white than butter is.²⁴¹
And one, who with an azure sow and gravid²⁴²
Emblazoned had his little pouch of white,
Said unto me: "What dost thou in this moat?
Now get thee gone; and since thou 'rt still alive,
Know that a neighbor of mine, Vitaliano,²⁴³
Will have his seat here on my left-hand side.
A Paduan am I with these Florentines;
Full many a time they thunder in mine ears,
Exclaiming, 'Come the sovereign cavalier,
He who shall bring the satchel with three goats''',²⁴⁴
Then twisted he his mouth, and forth he thrust²⁴⁵
His tongue, like to an ox that licks its nose.
And fearing lest my longer stay might vex
Him who had warned me not to tarry long,
Backward I turned me from those weary souls.²⁴⁶
I found my Guide, who had already mounted
Upon the back of that wild animal,
And said to me: "Now be both strong and bold.
Now we descend by stairways such as these;
Mount thou in front, for I will be midway,
So that the tail may have no power to harm thee."
Such as he is who has so near theague
Of quartan that his nails are blue already,
And trembles all, but looking at the shade;
Even such became I at those proffered words;
But shame in me his menaces produced,
Which maketh servant strong before good master.
I seated me upon those monstrous shoulders;
I wished to say, and yet the voice came not
As I believed, "Take heed that thou embrace me."
But he, who other times had rescued me
In other peril, soon as I had mounted,
Within his arms encircled and sustained me,
And said: "Now, Geryon, bestir thyself;
The circles large, and the descent be little;

Think of the novel burden which thou hast.”
Even as the little vessel shoves from shore,
 Backward, still backward, so he thence withdrew;
 And when he wholly felt himself afloat,
There where his breast had been he turned his tail,
 And that extended like an eel he moved,
 And with his paws drew to himself the air.
A greater fear I do not think there was
 What time abandoned Phaeton the reins,²⁴⁷
 Whereby the heavens, as still appears, were scorched,²⁴⁸
Nor when the wretched Icarus his flanks²⁴⁹
 Felt stripped of feathers by the melting wax,
 His father crying, “An ill way thou takest!”
Than was my own, when I perceived myself
 On all sides in the air, and saw extinguished
 The sight of everything but of the monster.
Onward he goeth, swimming slowly, slowly;
 Wheels and descends, but I perceive it only
 By wind upon my face and from below.
I heard already on the right the whirlpool
 Making a horrible crashing under us;
 Whence I thrust out my head with eyes cast downward.
Then was I still more fearful of the abyss;
 Because I fires beheld, and heard laments,
 Whereat I, trembling, all the closer cling.
I saw then, for before I had not seen it,
 The turning and descending, by great horrors
 That were approaching upon divers sides.
As falcon who has long been on the wing,
 Who, without seeing either lure or bird,
 Maketh the falconer say, “Ah me, thou stoapest,”
Descendeth weary, whence he started swiftly,
 Thorough a hundred circles, and alights
 Far from his master, sullen and disdainful;
Even thus did Geryon place us on the bottom,
 Close to the bases of the rough-hewn rock,
 And being disencumbered of our persons,

He sped away as arrow from the string.[250](#)

CANTO XVIII

The Eighth Circle: Malebolge—The fraudulent—The First Bolgia: seducers and panders—Venedico Caccianimico—Jason—The Second Bolgia: flatterers—Allessio Intermielli—Thaïs.

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge,²⁵¹
Wholly of stone and of an iron color,²⁵²
As is the circle that around it turns.
Right in the middle of the field malign
There yawns a well exceeding wide and deep,
Of which its place the structure will recount.
Round, then, is that enclosure which remains
Between the well and foot of the high, hard bank,
And has distinct in valleys ten its bottom.
As where for the protection of the walls
Many and many moats surround the castles,
The part in which they are a figure forms,
Just such an image those presented there;
And as about such strongholds from their gates
Unto the outer bank are little bridges,
So from the precipice's base did crags
Project, which intersected dikes and moats,
Unto the well that truncates and collects them.
Within this place, down shaken from the back
Of Geryon, we found us; and the Poet
Held to the left, and I moved on behind.
Upon my right hand I beheld new anguish,

New torments, and new wielders of the lash,
Wherewith the foremost Bolgia was replete.
Down at the bottom were the sinners naked;
This side the middle came they facing us,
Beyond it, with us, but with greater steps;
Even as the Romans, for the mighty host,
The year of Jubilee, upon the bridge,²⁵³
Have chosen a mode to pass the people over;
For all upon one side towards the Castle²⁵⁴
Their faces have, and go unto Saint Peter's;
On the other side they go towards the Mountain.
This side and that, along the livid stone
Beheld I horned demons with great scourges,
Who cruelly were beating them behind.
Ah me! how they did make them lift their legs
At the first blows! and sooth not any one
The second waited for, nor for the third.
While I was going on, mine eyes by one
Encountered were; and straight I said: "Already
With sight of this one I am not unfed."
Therefore I stayed my feet to make him out,
And with me the sweet Guide came to a stand,
And to my going somewhat back assented;
And he, the scourged one, thought to hide himself,
Lowering his face, but little it availed him;
For said I: "Thou that castest down thine eyes,
If false are not the features which thou bearest,
Thou art Venedico Caccianimico,"²⁵⁵
But what doth bring thee to such pungent sauces?"²⁵⁶
And he to me: "Unwillingly I tell it;
But forces me thine utterance distinct,
Which makes me recollect the ancient world.
I was the one who the fair Ghisola
Induced to grant the wishes of the Marquis,
Howe'er the shameless story may be told.
Not the sole Bolognese am I who weeps here;
Nay, rather is this place so full of them,

That not so many tongues today are taught
'Twixt Reno and Savena to say *sipa*; [257](#)
And if thereof thou wishest pledge or proof,
Bring to thy mind our avaricious heart."

While speaking in this manner, with his scourge
A demon smote him, and said: "Get thee gone
Pander, there are no women here for coin."

I joined myself again unto mine Escort;
Thereafterward with footsteps few we came
To where a crag projected from the bank.
This very easily did we ascend,
And turning to the right along its ridge,
From those eternal circles we departed. [258](#)

When we were there, where it is hollowed out
Beneath, to give a passage to the scourged,
The Guide said: "Wait, and see that on thee strike
The vision of those others evil-born,
Of whom thou hast not yet beheld the faces,
Because together with us they have gone."

From the old bridge we looked upon the train
Which tow'rd us came upon the other border,
And which the scourges in like manner smite.

And the good Master, without my inquiring,
Said to me: "See that tall one who is coming,
And for his pain seems not to shed a tear;
Still what a royal aspect he retains!

That Jason is, who by his heart and cunning [259](#)
The Colchians of the Ram made destitute.
He by the isle of Lemnos passed along
After the daring women pitiless
Had unto death devoted all their males.
There with his tokens and with ornate words
Did he deceive Hypsipyle, the maiden [260](#)
Who first, herself, had all the rest deceived.
There did he leave her pregnant and forlorn;
Such sin unto such punishment condemns him,
And also for Medea is vengeance done.

With him go those who in such wise deceive;
And this sufficient be of the first valley
To know, and those that in its jaws it holds.”

We were already where the narrow path
Crosses athwart the second dike, and forms
Of that a buttress for another arch.

Thence we heard people, who are making moan
In the next Bolgia, snorting with their muzzles,
And with their palms beating upon themselves.

The margins were encrusted with a mould
By exhalation from below, that sticks there,
And with the eyes and nostrils wages war.

The bottom is so deep, no place suffices
To give us sight of it, without ascending
The arch’s back, where most the crag impends.

Thither we came, and thence down in the moat
I saw a people smothered in a filth
That out of human privies seemed to flow;
And whilst below there with mine eye I search,
I saw one with his head so foul with ordure,
It was not clear if he were clerk or layman.

He screamed to me: “Wherefore art thou so eager
To look at me more than the other foul ones?”
And I to him: “Because, if I remember,
I have already seen thee with dry hair,

And thou ’rt Alessio Interminei of Lucca;²⁶¹
Therefore I eye thee more than all the others.”

And he thereon, belaboring his pumpkin:
“The flatteries have submerged me here below,
Wherewith my tongue was never surfeited.”
Then said to me the Guide: “See that thou thrust
Thy visage somewhat farther in advance,
That with thine eyes thou well the face attain
Of that uncleanly and dishevelled drab,
Who there doth scratch herself with filthy nails,
And crouches now, and now on foot is standing.
Thaïs the harlot is it, who replied²⁶²

Unto her paramour, when he said, ‘Have I
Great gratitude from thee?’—‘Nay, marvellous’;
And herewith let our sight be satisfied.”²⁶³

CANTO XIX

*The Third Bolgia: the simoniacs—Pope
Nicholas
III*

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O Simon Magus, O forlorn disciples,²⁶⁴
Ye who the things of God, which ought to be
The brides of holiness, rapaciously
For silver and for gold do prostitute,
Now it behoves for you the trumpet sound,²⁶⁵
Because in this third Bolgia ye abide.
We had already on the following tomb
Ascended to that portion of the crag
Which o'er the middle of the moat hangs plumb.
Wisdom supreme, O how great art thou shovest
In heaven, in earth, and in the evil world,
And with what justice doth thy power distribute!
I saw upon the sides and on the bottom
The livid stone with perforations filled,
All of one size, and everyone was round.
To me less ample seemed they not, nor greater
Than those that in my beautiful Saint John
Are fashioned for the place of the baptizers,
And one of which, not many years ago,²⁶⁶
I broke for someone, who was drowning in it,²⁶⁷
Be this a seal all men to undeceive.
Out of the mouth of each one there protruded
The feet of a transgressor, and the legs

Up to the calf, the rest within remained.
In all of them the soles were both on fire;
Wherefore the joints so violently quivered,
They would have snapped asunder withes and bands.
Even as the flame of unctuous things is wont
To move upon the outer surface only,
So likewise was it there from heel to point.
“Master, who is that one who writhes himself,
More than his other comrades quivering,”
I said, “and whom a redder flame is sucking?”²⁶⁸
And he to me: “If thou wilt have me bear thee
Down there along that bank which lowest lies,
From him thou ’lt know his errors and himself.”
And I: “What pleases thee, to me is pleasing;
Thou art my Lord, and knowest that I depart not
From thy desire, and knowest what is not spoken.”
Straightway upon the fourth dike we arrived;
We turned, and on the left-hand side descended
Down to the bottom full of holes and narrow.
And the good Master yet from off his haunch
Deposed me not, till to the hole he brought me
Of him who so lamented with his shanks.
“Whoe’er thou art, that standest upside down,
O doleful soul, implanted like a stake,”
To say began I, “if thou canst, speak out.”
I stood even as the friar who is confessing
The false assassin, who, when he is fixed,²⁶⁹
Recalls him, so that death may be delayed.
And he cried out: “Dost thou stand there already,
Dost thou stand there already, Boniface?²⁷⁰
By many years the record lied to me.
Art thou so early satiate with that wealth,
For which thou didst not fear to take by fraud
The beautiful Lady, and then work her woe?”
Such I became, as people are who stand,
Not comprehending what is answered them,
As if bemocked, and know not how to answer.

Then said Virgilius: "Say to him straightway,
I am not he, I am not he thou thinkest."
And I replied as was imposed on me.

Whereat the spirit writhed with both his feet,
Then, sighing, with a voice of lamentation
Said to me: "Then what wantest thou of me?

If who I am thou carest so much to know,
That thou on that account hast crossed the bank,
Know that I vested was with the great mantle;

And truly was I son of the She-bear,²⁷¹
So eager to advance the cubs, that wealth
Above, and here myself, I pocketed.

Beneath my head the others are dragged down
Who have preceded me in simony,
Flattened along the fissure of the rock.

Below there I shall likewise fall, whenever
That one shall come who I believed thou wast,
What time the sudden question I proposed.

But longer I my feet already toast,
And here have been in this way upside down,
Than he will planted stay with reddened feet;

For after him shall come of fouler deed
From tow'rds the west a Pastor without law,²⁷²
Such as befits to cover him and me.

New Jason will he be, of whom we read²⁷³
In Maccabees; and as his king was pliant,
So he who governs France shall be to this one."²⁷⁴

I do not know if I were here too bold,
That him I answered only in this metre:
"I pray thee tell me now how great a treasure

Our Lord demanded of Saint Peter first,
Before he put the keys into his keeping?
Truly he nothing asked but 'Follow me.'

Nor Peter nor the rest asked of Matthias²⁷⁵
Silver or gold, when he by lot was chosen
Unto the place the guilty soul had lost.

Therefore stay here, for thou art justly punished,
And keep safe guard o'er the ill-gotten money,
Which caused thee to be valiant against Charles.²⁷⁶

And were it not that still forbids it me
The reverence for the keys superlative
Thou hadst in keeping in the gladsome life,
I would make use of words more grievous still;
Because your avarice afflicts the world,
Trampling the good and lifting the depraved.

The Evangelist you Pastors had in mind,
When she who sitteth upon many waters²⁷⁷
To fornicate with kings by him was seen;

The same who with the seven heads was born,
And power and strength from the ten horns received,²⁷⁸
So long as virtue to her spouse was pleasing.

Ye have made yourselves a god of gold and silver;
And from the idolater how differ ye,
Save that he one, and ye a hundred worship?

Ah, Constantine! of how much ill was mother,
Not thy conversion, but that marriage-dower
Which the first wealthy Father took from thee!"²⁷⁹

And while I sang to him such notes as these,
Either that anger or that conscience stung him,
He struggled violently with both his feet.

I think in sooth that it my Leader pleased,
With such contented lip he listened ever
Unto the sound of the true words expressed.

Therefore with both his arms he took me up,
And when he had me all upon his breast,
Remounted by the way where he descended.

Nor did he tire to have me clasped to him;
But bore me to the summit of the arch
Which from the fourth dike to the fifth is passage.

There tenderly he laid his burden down,
Tenderly on the crag uneven and steep,
That would have been hard passage for the goats:

Thence was unveiled to me another valley.

CANTO XX

*The Fourth Bolgia: soothsayers—
Amphiaraüs, Tiresias, Aruns, Manto,
Eryphylus, Michael Scott, Guido Bonatti, and
Asdente.*

Of a new pain behoves me to make verses [280](#)
And give material to the twentieth canto
Of the first song, which is of the submerged.
I was already thoroughly disposed
To peer down into the uncovered depth,
Which bathed itself with tears of agony;
And people saw I through the circular valley,
Silent and weeping, coming at the pace
Which in this world the Litanies assume. [281](#)
As lower down my sight descended on them,
Wondrously each one seemed to be distorted
From chin to the beginning of the chest;
For tow'rds the reins the countenance was turned, [282](#)
And backward it behoved them to advance,
As to look forward had been taken from them.
Perchance indeed by violence of palsy
Someone has been thus wholly turned awry;
But I ne'er saw it, nor believe it can be.
As God may let thee, Reader, gather fruit
From this thy reading, think now for thyself
How I could ever keep my face unmoistened,
When our own image near me I beheld,
Distorted so, the weeping of the eyes

Along the fissure bathed the hinder parts.
Truly I wept, leaning upon a peak
Of the hard crag, so that my Escort said
To me: "Art thou, too, of the other fools?
Here pity lives when it is wholly dead;
Who is a greater reprobate than he
Who feels compassion at the doom divine?
Lift up, lift up thy head, and see for whom
Opened the earth before the Thebans' eyes;
Wherefore they all cried: 'Whither rushest thou,
Amphiaraus? Why dost leave the war?'²⁸³
And downward ceased he not to fall amain
As far as Minos, who lays hold on all.
See, he has made a bosom of his shoulders!
Because he wished to see too far before him
Behind he looks, and backward goes his way:
Behold Tiresias, who his semblance changed,²⁸⁴
When from a male a female he became,
His members being all of them transformed;
And afterwards was forced to strike once more
The two entangled serpents with his rod,
Ere he could have again his manly plumes.²⁸⁵
That Aruns is, who backs the other's belly,²⁸⁶
Who in the hills of Luni, there where grubs
The Carrarese who houses underneath,
Among the marbles white a cavern had
For his abode; whence to behold the stars
And sea, the view was not cut off from him.
And she there, who is covering up her breasts,
Which thou beholdest not, with loosened tresses,
And on that side has all the hairy skin,
Was Manto, who made quest through many lands,²⁸⁷
Afterwards tarried there where I was born;
Whereof I would thou list to me a little.
After her father had from life departed,
And the city of Bacchus had become enslaved,

She a long season wandered through the world.
Above in beauteous Italy lies a lake
 At the Alp's foot that shuts in Germany
 Over Tyrol, and has the name Benaco.[288](#)
By a thousand springs, I think, and more, is bathed,
 'Twixt Garda and Val Camonica, Pennino,[289](#)
 With water that grows stagnant in that lake.
Midway a place is where the Trentine Pastor,
 And he of Brescia, and the Veronese
 Might give his blessing, if he passed that way.[290](#)
Sitteth Peschiera, fortress fair and strong,[291](#)
 To front the Brescians and the Bergamasks,
 Where round about the bank descendeth lowest.
There of necessity must fall whatever
 In bosom of Benaco cannot stay,
 And grows a river down through verdant pastures.
Soon as the water doth begin to run,
 No more Benaco is it called, but Mincio,[292](#)
 Far as Governo, where it falls in Po.
Not far it runs before it finds a plain
 In which it spreads itself, and makes it marshy,
 And oft 'tis wont in summer to be sickly.
Passing that way the virgin pitiless[293](#)
 Land in the middle of the fen descried,
 Untilled and naked of inhabitants;
There to escape all human intercourse,
 She with her servants stayed, her arts to practise,
 And lived, and left her empty body there.
The men, thereafter, who were scattered round,
 Collected in that place, which was made strong
 By the lagoon it had on every side;
They built their city over those dead bones,
 And, after her who first the place selected,
 Mantua named it, without other omen.[294](#)
Its people once within more crowded were,
 Ere the stupidity of Casalodi[295](#)

From Pinamonte had received deceit.
Therefore I caution thee, if e'er thou hearest
 Originate my city otherwise,
 No falsehood may the verity defraud.”
And I: “My Master, thy discourses are
 To me so certain, and so take my faith,
 That unto me the rest would be spent coals.
But tell me of the people who are passing,
 If any one noteworthy thou beholdest,
 For only unto that my mind reverts.”
Then said he to me: “He who from the cheek
 Thrusts out his beard upon his swarthy shoulders
 Was, at the time when Greece was void of males,
So that there scarce remained one in the cradle,
 An augur, and with Calchas gave the moment,²⁹⁶
 In Aulis, when to sever the first cable.
Eryphylus his name was, and so sings²⁹⁷
 My lofty Tragedy in some part or other;
 That knowest thou well, who knowest the whole of it.
The next, who is so slender in the flanks,
 Was Michael Scott, who of a verity²⁹⁸
 Of magical illusions knew the game.
Behold Guido Bonatti, behold Asdente,²⁹⁹
 Who now unto his leather and his thread
 Would fain have stuck, but he too late repents.
Behold the wretched ones, who left the needle,
 The spool and rock, and made them fortune-tellers;
 They wrought their magic spells with herb and image.
But come now, for already holds the confines
 Of both the hemispheres, and under Seville
 Touches the ocean-wave, Cain and the thorns,³⁰⁰
And yesternight the moon was round already;
 Thou shouldst remember well it did not harm thee
 From time to time within the forest deep.”
Thus spake he to me, and we walked the while.

CANTO XXI

The Fifth Bolgia: peculators—The elder of Santa Zita—Malebranche.

From bridge to bridge thus, speaking other things³⁰¹

Of which my Comedy cares not to sing,³⁰²

We came along, and held the summit, when

We halted to behold another fissure

Of Malebolge and other vain laments;

And I beheld it marvellously dark.

As in the Arsenal of the Venetians³⁰³

Boils in the winter the tenacious pitch

To smear their unsound vessels o'er again,

For sail they cannot; and instead thereof

One makes his vessel new, and one recaulks

The ribs of that which many a voyage has made;

One hammers at the prow, one at the stern,

This one makes oars, and that one cordage twists,

Another mends the mainsail and the mizzen;

Thus, not by fire, but by the art divine,

Was boiling down below there a dense pitch

Which upon every side the bank belimed.

I saw it, but I did not see within it

Aught but the bubbles that the boiling raised,

And all swell up and resubside compressed.

The while below there fixedly I gazed,

My Leader, crying out: “Beware, beware!”

Drew me unto himself from where I stood.

Then I turned round, as one who is impatient

To see what it behoves him to escape,
And whom a sudden terror doth unman,
Who, while he looks, delays not his departure;
And I beheld behind us a black devil,
Running along upon the crag, approach.
Ah, how ferocious was he in his aspect!
And how he seemed to me in action ruthless,
With open wings and light upon his feet!
His shoulders, which sharp-pointed were and high,
A sinner did encumber with both haunches,
And he held clutched the sinews of the feet.
From off our bridge, he said: "O Malebranche,³⁰⁴
Behold one of the elders of Saint Zita;³⁰⁵
Plunge him beneath, for I return for others
Unto that town, which is well furnished with them.
All there are barrators, except Bonturo;³⁰⁶
No into Yes for money there is changed."
He hurled him down, and over the hard crag
Turned round, and never was a mastiff loosened
In so much hurry to pursue a thief.
The other sank, and rose again face downward;³⁰⁷
But the demons, under cover of the bridge,
Cried: "Here the Santo Volto has no place!"³⁰⁸
Here swims one otherwise than in the Serchio;³⁰⁹
Therefore, if for our gaffs thou wishest not,
Do not uplift thyself above the pitch."
They seized him then with more than a hundred rakes;
They said: "It here behoves thee to dance covered,
That, if thou canst, thou secretly mayest pilfer."
Not otherwise the cooks their scullions make
Immerse into the middle of the cauldron
The meat with hooks, so that it may not float.
Said the good Master to me: "That it be not
Apparent thou art here, crouch thyself down
Behind a jag, that thou mayest have some screen;
And for no outrage that is done to me

Be thou afraid, because these things I know,
For once before was I in such a scuffle.”³¹⁰

Then he passed on beyond the bridge’s head,
And as upon the sixth bank he arrived,
Need was for him to have a steadfast front.

With the same fury, and the same uproar,
As dogs leap out upon a mendicant,
Who on a sudden begs, where’er he stops,

They issued from beneath the little bridge,
And turned against him all their grappling-irons;
But he cried out: “Be none of you malignant!

Before those hooks of yours lay hold of me,
Let one of you step forward, who may hear me,
And then take counsel as to grappling me.”

They all cried out: “Let Malacoda go”;
Wherewithal one started, and the rest stood still,
And he came to him, saying: “What avails it?”

“Thinkest thou, Malacoda, to behold me
Advanced into this place,” my Master said,
“Safe hitherto from all your skill of fence,

Without the will divine, and fate auspicious?
Let me go on, for it in Heaven is willed
That I another show this savage road.”

Then was his arrogance so humbled in him,
That he let fall his grapnel at his feet,
And to the others said: “Now strike him not.”

And unto me my Guide: “O thou, who sittest
Among the splinters of the bridge crouched down,
Securely now return to me again.”

Wherefore I started and came swiftly to him;
And all the devils forward thrust themselves,
So that I feared they would not keep their compact.

And thus beheld I once afraid the soldiers
Who issued under safeguard from Caprona,³¹¹
Seeing themselves among so many foes.

Close did I press myself with all my person
Beside my Leader, and turned not mine eyes

From off their countenance, which was not good.
They lowered their rakes, and “Wilt thou have me hit him,”
 They said to one another, “on the rump?”
 And answered: “Yes; see that thou nick him with it.”
But the same demon who was holding parley
 With my Conductor turned him very quickly,
 And said: “Be quiet, be quiet, Scarmiglione”;
Then said to us: “You can no farther go
 Forward upon this crag, because is lying
 All shattered, at the bottom, the sixth arch.
And if it still doth please you to go onward,
 Pursue your way along upon this rock; [312](#)
 Near is another crag that yields a path. [313](#)
Yesterday, five hours later than this hour, [314](#)
 One thousand and two hundred sixty-six
 Years were complete, that here the way was broken. [315](#)
I send in that direction some of mine
 To see if any one doth air himself,
 Go ye with them; for they will not be vicious.
Step forward, Alichino and Calcabrina,”
 Began he to cry out, “and thou, Cagnazzo;
 And Barbariccia, do thou guide the ten.
Come forward, Libicocco and Draghignazzo,
 And tusked Ciriatto and Graffiacane,
 And Farfarello and mad Rubicante;
Search ye all round about the boiling pitch;
 Let these be safe as far as the next crag, [316](#)
 That all unbroken passes o’er the dens.”
“O me! what is it, Master, that I see?
 Pray let us go,” I said, “without an escort,
 If thou knowest how, since for myself I ask none.
If thou art as observant as thy wont is,
 Dost thou not see that they do gnash their teeth,
 And with their brows are threatening woe to us?”
And he to me: “I will not have thee fear;
 Let them gnash on, according to their fancy,

Because they do it for those boiling wretches.”
Along the left-hand dike they wheeled about;
But first had each one thrust his tongue between³¹⁷
His teeth towards their leader for a signal;
And he had made a trumpet of his rump.

CANTO XXII

Ciampolo, Friar Gomita, and Michael Zanche.

I have erewhile seen horsemen moving camp,³¹⁸
Begin the storming, and their muster make,
And sometimes starting off for their escape;
Vaunt-couriers have I seen upon your land,
O Aretines, and foragers go forth,³¹⁹
Tournaments stricken, and the joustings run,
Sometimes with trumpets and sometimes with bells,³²⁰
With kettle-drums, and signals of the castles,
And with our own, and with outlandish things,
But never yet with bagpipe so uncouth
Did I see horsemen move, nor infantry,
Nor ship by any sign of land or star.
We went upon our way with the ten demons;
Ah, savage company! but in the church
With saints, and in the tavern with the gluttons!³²¹
Ever upon the pitch was my intent,
To see the whole condition of that Bolgia,
And of the people who therein were burned.
Even as the dolphins, when they make a sign
To mariners by arching of the back,
That they should counsel take to save their vessel,
Thus sometimes, to alleviate his pain,
One of the sinners would display his back,
And in less time conceal it than it lightens.
As on the brink of water in a ditch

The frogs stand only with their muzzles out,
So that they hide their feet and other bulk,

So upon every side the sinners stood;
But ever as Barbariccia near them came,
Thus underneath the boiling they withdrew.

I saw, and still my heart doth shudder at it,
One waiting thus, even as it comes to pass
One frog remains, and down another dives;
And Graffiacan, who most confronted him,
Grappled him by his tresses smeared with pitch,

And drew him up, so that he seemed an otter.

I knew, before, the names of all of them,
So had I noted them when they were chosen,
And when they called each other, listened how.

“O Rubicante, see that thou do lay
Thy claws upon him, so that thou mayst flay him,”
Cried all together the accursed ones.

And I: “My Master, see to it, if thou canst,
That thou mayst know who is the luckless wight,
Thus come into his adversaries’ hands.”

Near to the side of him my Leader drew,
Asked of him whence he was; and he replied:
“I in the kingdom of Navarre was born;³²²

My mother placed me servant to a lord,
For she had borne me to a ribald knave,
Destroyer of himself and of his things.

Then I domestic was of good King Thibault;³²³
I set me there to practise barratry,
For which I pay the reckoning in this heat.”

And Ciriatto, from whose mouth projected,
On either side, a tusk, as in a boar,
Caused him to feel how one of them could rip.

Among malicious cats the mouse had come;
But Barbariccia clasped him in his arms,
And said: “Stand ye aside, while I enfork him.”
And to my Master he turned round his head;
“Ask him again,” he said, “if more thou wish

To know from him, before someone destroy him.”
The Guide: “Now tell then of the other culprits;
Knowest thou any one who is a Latian,³²⁴
Under the pitch?” And he: “I separated
Lately from one who was a neighbor to it;
Would that I still were covered up with him,
For I should fear not either claw nor hook!”
And Libicocco: “We have borne too much”;
And with his grapnel seized him by the arm,
So that, by rending, he tore off a tendon.
Eke Draghignazzo wished to pounce upon him
Down at the legs; whence their Decurion
Turned round and round about with evil look.
When they again somewhat were pacified,
Of him, who still was looking at his wound,
Demanded my Conductor without stay:
“Who was that one, from whom a luckless parting
Thou sayest thou hast made, to come ashore?”
And he replied: “It was the Friar Gomita,
He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,³²⁵
Who had the enemies of his Lord in hand,
And dealt so with them each exults thereat;
Money he took, and let them smoothly off,
As he says; and in other offices
A barrator was he, not mean but sovereign.
Foregathers with him one Don Michael Zanche³²⁶
Of Logodoro; and of Sardinia
To gossip never do their tongues feel tired.
O me! see that one, how he grinds his teeth;
Still farther would I speak, but am afraid
Lest he to scratch my itch be making ready.”
And the grand Provost, turned to Farfarello,
Who rolled his eyes about as if to strike,
Said: “Stand aside there, thou malicious bird.”
“If you desire either to see or hear,”
The terror-stricken recommenced thereon,
“Tuscans or Lombards, I will make them come.

But let the Malebranche cease a little,
So that these may not their revenges fear,
And I, down sitting in this very place,
For one that I am will make seven come,
When I shall whistle, as our custom is
To do whenever one of us comes out."

Cagnazzo at these words his muzzle lifted,
Shaking his head, and said: "Just hear the trick
Which he has thought of, down to throw himself!"

Whence he, who snares in great abundance had,
Responded: "I by far too cunning am,
When I procure for mine a greater sadness."

Alichin held not in, but running counter
Unto the rest, said to him: "If thou dive,
I will not follow thee upon the gallop,
But I will beat my wings above the pitch;
The height be left, and be the bank a shield,
To see if thou alone dost countervail us."

O thou who readest, thou shalt hear new sport!
Each to the other side his eyes averted;
He first, who most reluctant was to do it.

The Navarrese selected well his time;
Planted his feet on land, and in a moment
Leaped, and released himself from their design.

Whereat each one was suddenly stung with shame,
But he most who was cause of the defeat;
Therefore he moved, and cried: "Thou art o'ertakern."

But little it availed, for wings could not
Outstrip the fear; the other one went under,
And, flying, upward he his breast directed.

Not otherwise the duck upon a sudden
Dives under, when the falcon is approaching,
And upward he returneth cross and weary.

Infuriate at the mockery, Calcabrina
Flying behind him followed close, desirous
The other should escape, to have a quarrel.

And when the barrator had disappeared,

He turned his talons upon his companion,
And grappled with him right above the moat.
But sooth the other was a doughty sparhawk
To clapperclaw him well; and both of them
Fell in the middle of the boiling pond.
A sudden intercessor was the heat;
But ne'ertheless of rising there was naught,
To such degree they had their wings belimed.
Lamenting with the others, Barbariccia
Made four of them fly to the other side
With all their gaffs, and very speedily
This side and that they to their posts descended;
They stretched their hooks towards the pitch-ensnared,
Who were already baked within the crust,
And in this manner busied did we leave them.

CANTO XXIII

The Sixth Bolgia: hypocrites—Catalano and Loderingo—Caiaphas.

Silent, alone, and without company³²⁷

We went, the one in front, the other after,
As go the Minor Friars along their way.

Upon the fable of Aesop was directed³²⁸

My thought, by reason of the present quarrel,
Where he has spoken of the frog and mouse;

For *mo* and *issa* are not more alike³²⁹

Than this one is to that, if well we couple
End and beginning with a steadfast mind.

And even as one thought from another springs,
So afterward from that was born another,
Which the first fear within me double made.

Thus did I ponder: “These on our account
Are laughed to scorn, with injury and scoff
So great, that much I think it must annoy them.

If anger be engrafted on ill-will,
They will come after us more merciless
Than dog upon the leveret which he seizes,”

I felt my hair stand all on end already
With terror, and stood backwardly intent,
When said I: “Master, if thou hidest not
Thyself and me forthwith, of Malebranche
I am in dread; we have them now behind us;
I so imagine them, I already feel them.”

And he: “If I were made of leaded glass,

Thine outward image I should not attract
Sooner to me than I imprint the inner.
Just now thy thoughts came in among my own,
With similar attitude and similar face,
So that of both one counsel sole I made.
If peradventure the right bank so slope
That we to the next Bolgia can descend,
We shall escape from the imagined chase."

Not yet he finished rendering such opinion,
When I beheld them come with outstretched wings,
Not far remote, with will to seize upon us.

My Leader on a sudden seized me up,³³⁰
Even as a mother who by noise is wakened,
And close beside her sees the enkindled flames,
Who takes her son, and flies, and does not stop,
Having more care of him than of herself,
So that she clothes her only with a shift;
And downward from the top of the hard bank
Supine he gave him to the pendent rock,
That one side of the other Bolgia walls.

Ne'er ran so swiftly water through a sluice
To turn the wheel of any land-built mill,
When nearest to the paddles it approaches,

As did my Master down along that border,
Bearing me with him on his breast away,
As his own son, and not as a companion.

Hardly the bed of the ravine below
His feet had reached, ere they had reached the hill
Right over us; but he was not afraid;

For the high Providence, which had ordained
To place them ministers of the fifth moat,
The power of thence departing took from all.

A painted people there below we found,
Who went about with footsteps very slow,
Weeping and in their semblance tired and vanquished.

They had on mantles with the hoods low down
Before their eyes, and fashioned of the cut

That in Cologne they for the monks are made.³³¹
Without, they gilded are so that it dazzles;
 But inwardly all leaden and so heavy
 That Frederick used to put them on of straw.³³²
O everlastingly fatiguing mantle!³³³
 Again we turned us, still to the left hand
 Along with them, intent on their sad plaint;
But owing to the weight, that weary folk
 Came on so tardily, that we were new
 In company at each motion of the haunch.
Whence I unto my Leader: “See thou find
 Someone who may by deed or name be known,
 And thus in going move thine eye about.”
And one, who understood the Tuscan speech,
 Cried to us from behind: “Stay ye your feet,
 Ye, who so run athwart the dusky air!
Perhaps thou’lt have from me what thou demandest.”
 Whereat the Leader turned him, and said: “Wait,
 And then according to his pace proceed.”
I stopped, and two beheld I show great haste
 Of spirit, in their faces, to be with me;
 But the burden and the narrow way delayed them.
When they came up, long with an eye askance
 They scanned me without uttering a word.
 Then to each other turned, and said together:
“He by the action of his throat seems living;
 And if they dead are, by what privilege
 Go they uncovered by the heavy stole?”
Then said to me: “Tuscan, who to the college³³⁴
 Of miserable hypocrites art come,
 Do not disdain to tell us who thou art.”
And I to them: “Born was I, and grew up
 In the great town on the fair river of Arno,³³⁵
 And with the body am I’ve always had.
But who are ye, in whom there trickles down
 Along your cheeks such grief as I behold?

And what pain is upon you, that so sparkles?"
And one replied to me: "These orange cloaks
Are made of lead so heavy, that the weights
Cause in this way their balances to creak.
Frati Gaudenti were we, and Bolognese;³³⁶
I Catalano, and he Loderingo
Named, and together taken by thy city,
As the wont is to take one man alone,
For maintenance of its peace; and we were such
That still it is apparent round Gardingo."³³⁷
"O Friars," began I, "your iniquitous..."
But said no more; for to mine eyes there rushed
One crucified with three stakes on the ground.
When me he saw, he writhed himself all over,
Blowing into his beard with suspirations;³³⁸
And the Friar Catalan, who noticed this,
Said to me: "This transfixed one, whom thou seest,³³⁹
Counselled the Pharisees that it was meet
To put one man to torture for the people.
Crosswise and naked is he on the path,
As thou perceivest; and he needs must feel,
Whoever passes, first how much he weighs;
And in like mode his father-in-law is punished³⁴⁰
Within this moat, and the others of the council,
Which for the Jews was a malignant seed."
And thereupon I saw Virgilius marvel
O'er him who was extended on the cross
So vilely in eternal banishment.
Then he directed to the Friar this voice:
"Be not displeased, if granted thee, to tell us
If to the right hand any pass slope down
By which we two may issue forth from here,
Without constraining some of the black angels
To come and extricate us from this deep."
Then he made answer: "Nearer than thou hopest
There is a rock, that forth from the great circle³⁴¹

Proceeds, and crosses all the cruel valleys,
Save that at this 'tis broken, and does not bridge it;
 You will be able to mount up the ruin,
 That sidelong slopes and at the bottom rises."

The Leader stood awhile with head bowed down;
 Then said: "The business badly he recounted
 Who grapples with his hook the sinners yonder."

And the Friar: "Many of the Devil's vices³⁴²
 Once heard I at Bologna, and among them,
 That he's a liar and the father of lies."

Thereat my Leader with great strides went on,
 Somewhat disturbed with anger in his looks;
 Whence from the heavy-laden I departed
 After the prints of his beloved feet.

CANTO XXIV

The Seventh Bolgia: thieves—Vanni Fucci.

In that part of the youthful year wherein [343](#)
The Sun his locks beneath Aquarius tempers, [344](#)
And now the nights draw near to half the day,
What time the hoar-frost copies on the ground
The outward semblance of her sister white,
But little lasts the temper of her pen,
The husbandman, whose forage faileth him,
Rises, and looks, and seeth the champaign
All gleaming white, whereat he beats his flank,
Returns in doors, and up and down laments,
Like a poor wretch, who knows not what to do;
Then he returns, and hope revives again,
Seeing the world has changed its countenance
In little time, and takes his shepherd's crook,
And forth the little lambs to pasture drives.
Thus did the Master fill me with alarm,
When I beheld his forehead so disturbed,
And to the ailment came as soon the plaster.
For as we came unto the ruined bridge,
The Leader turned to me with that sweet look
Which at the mountain's foot I first beheld. [345](#)
His arms he opened, after some advisement
Within himself elected, looking first
Well at the ruin, and laid hold of me.
And even as he who acts and meditates,
For aye it seems that he provides beforehand,

So upward lifting me towards the summit
Of a huge rock, he scanned another crag,
Saying: "To that one grapple afterwards,
But try first if 'tis such that it will hold thee."
This was no way for one clothed with a cloak;
For hardly we, he light, and I pushed upward,
Were able to ascend from jag to jag.
And had it not been, that upon that precinct
Shorter was the ascent than on the other,
He I know not, but I had been dead beat.
But because Malebolge tow'rds the mouth
Of the profoundest well is all inclining,
The structure of each valley doth import
That one bank rises and the other sinks.
Still we arrived at length upon the point
Wherfrom the last stone breaks itself asunder.
The breath was from my lungs so milked away,³⁴⁶
When I was up, that I could go no farther,
Nay, I sat down upon my first arrival.
"Now it behoves thee thus to put off sloth,"
My Master said; "for sitting upon down,
Or under quilt, one cometh not to fame,
Withouten which whoso his life consumes
Such vestige leaveth of himself on earth,
As smoke in air or in the water foam.
And therefore raise thee up, o'ercome the anguish
With spirit that o'ercometh every battle,
If with its heavy body it sink not.
A longer stairway it behoves thee mount;³⁴⁷
'Tis not enough from these to have departed;
Let it avail thee, if thou understand me."
Then I uprose, showing myself provided
Better with breath than I did feel myself,
And said: "Go on, for I am strong and bold."
Upward we took our way along the crag,
Which jagged was, and narrow, and difficult,
And more precipitous far than that before.

Speaking I went, not to appear exhausted;
 Wherat a voice from the next moat came forth,
 Not well adapted to articulate words.

I know not what it said, though o'er the back
 I now was of the arch that passes there;
 But he seemed moved to anger who was speaking.

I was bent downward, but my living eyes
 Could not attain the bottom, for the dark;
 Wherefore I: "Master, see that thou arrive
At the next round, and let us descend the wall;³⁴⁸
 For as from hence I hear and understand not,
 So I look down and nothing I distinguish."

"Other response," he said, "I make thee not,
 Except the doing; for the modest asking
 Ought to be followed by the deed in silence."

We from the bridge descended at its head,
 Where it connects itself with the eighth bank,
 And then was manifest to me the Bolgia;

And I beheld therein a terrible throng
 Of serpents, and of such a monstrous kind,
 That the remembrance still congeals my blood.

Let Lybia boast no longer with her sand;
 For if Chelydri, Jaculi, and Phareae³⁴⁹
 She breeds, with Cenchri and with Amphisbaena,

Neither so many plagues nor so malignant
 E'er showed she with all Ethiopia,
 Nor with whatever on the Red Sea is!

Among this cruel and most dismal throng
 People were running naked and affrighted,
 Without the hope of hole or heliotrope.³⁵⁰

They had their hands with serpents bound behind them;
 These riveted upon their reins the tail
 And head, and were in front of them entwined.

And lo! at one who was upon our side
 There darted forth a serpent, which transfixed him
 There where the neck is knotted to the shoulders.

Nor *O* so quickly e'er, nor *I* was written,

As he took fire, and burned; and ashes wholly
Behoved it that in falling he became.
And when he on the ground was thus destroyed,
The ashes drew together, and of themselves
Into himself they instantly returned.
Even thus by the great sages 'tis confessed
 The phoenix dies, and then is born again,[351](#)
 When it approaches its five-hundredth year;
On herb or grain it feeds not in its life,
 But only on tears of incense and amomum,
 And nard and myrrh are its last winding-sheet.
And as he is who falls, and knows not how,
 By force of demons who to earth down drag him,
 Or other oppilation that binds man,[352](#)
When he arises and around him looks,
 Wholly bewildered by the mighty anguish
 Which he has suffered, and in looking sighs;
Such was that sinner after he had risen.
 Justice of God! O how severe it is,
 That blows like these in vengeance poureth down!
The Guide thereafter asked him who he was;
 Whence he replied: "I rained from Tuscany
 A short time since into this cruel gorge.
A bestial life, and not a human, pleased me,
 Even as the mule I was; I'm Vanni Fucci,[353](#)
 Beast, and Pistoia was my worthy den."
And I unto the Guide: "Tell him to stir not,
 And ask what crime has thrust him here below,
 For once a man of blood and wrath I saw him."
And the sinner, who had heard, dissembled not,
 But unto me directed mind and face,
 And with a melancholy shame was painted.
Then said: "It pains me more that thou hast caught me
 Amid this misery where thou seest me,
 Than when I from the other life was taken.
What thou demandest I cannot deny;
 So low am I put down because I robbed

The sacristy of the fair ornaments,
And falsely once 'twas laid upon another;
But that thou mayst not such a sight enjoy,
If thou shalt e'er be out of the dark places,
Thine ears to my announcement ope and hear:
Pistoia first of Neri groweth meagre; ³⁵⁴
Then Florence doth renew her men and manners;
Mars draws a vapor up from Val di Magra, ³⁵⁵
Which is with turbid clouds enveloped round,
And with impetuous and bitter tempest
Over Campo Picen shall be the battle;
When it shall suddenly rend the mist asunder,
So that each Bianco shall thereby be smitten.
And this I've said that it may give thee pain."

CANTO XXV

*Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso degli Abati,
Puccio Sciancato, Cianfa de' Donati, and
Guercio Cavalcanti.*

At the conclusion of his words, the thief³⁵⁶
Lifted his hands aloft with both the figs,³⁵⁷
Crying: "Take that, God, for at thee I aim them."
From that time forth the serpents were my friends;
For one entwined itself about his neck
As if it said: "I will not thou speak more";
And round his arms another, and rebound him,
Clinching itself together so in front,
That with them he could not a motion make.
Pistoia, ah, Pistoia! why resolve not³⁵⁸
To burn thyself to ashes and so perish,
Since in ill-doing thou thy seed excellest?
Through all the sombre circles of this Hell,
Spirit I saw not against God so proud,
Not he who fell at Thebes down from the walls!³⁵⁹
He fled away, and spake no further word;
And I beheld a Centaur full of rage
Come crying out: "Where is, where is the scoffer?"
I do not think Maremma has so many³⁶⁰
Serpents as he had all along his back,
As far as where our countenance begins.
Upon the shoulders, just behind the nape,
With wings wide open was a dragon lying,
And he sets fire to all that he encounters.

My Master said: "That one is Cacus, who³⁶¹

Beneath the rock upon Mount Aventine
Created oftentimes a lake of blood.

He goes not on the same road with his brothers,³⁶²

By reason of the fraudulent theft he made
Of the great herd, which he had near to him;
Whereat his tortuous actions ceased beneath
The mace of Hercules, who peradventure
Gave him a hundred, and he felt not ten."

While he was speaking thus, he had passed by,

And spirits three had underneath us come,³⁶³
Of which nor I aware was, nor my Leader,
Until what time they shouted: "Who are you?"

On which account our story made a halt,³⁶⁴
And then we were intent on them alone.

I did not know them; but it came to pass,
As it is wont to happen by some chance,
That one to name the other was compelled,

Exclaiming: "Where can Cianfa have remained?"³⁶⁵
Whence I, so that the Leader might attend,
Upward from chin to nose my finger laid.

If thou art, Reader, slow now to believe
What I shall say, it will no marvel be,
For I who saw it hardly can admit it.

As I was holding raised on them my brows,
Behold! a serpent with six feet darts forth
In front of one, and fastens wholly on him.

With middle feet it bound him round the paunch,
And with the forward ones his arms it seized;
Then thrust its teeth through one cheek and the other;

The hindermost it stretched upon his thighs,
And put its tail through in between the two,
And up behind along the reins outspread it.

Ivy was never fastened by its barbs
Unto a tree so, as this horrible reptile
Upon the other's limbs entwined its own.

Then they stuck close, as if of heated wax
They had been made, and intermixed their color;
Nor one nor other seemed now what he was;
E'en as proceedeth on before the flame
Upward along the paper a brown color,³⁶⁶
Which is not black as yet, and the white dies.
The other two looked on, and each of them
Cried out: "O me, Agnello, how thou changest!
Behold, thou now art neither two nor one."
Already the two heads had one become,
When there appeared to us two figures mingled
Into one face, wherein the two were lost.
Of the four lists were fashioned the two arms,³⁶⁷
The thighs and legs, the belly and the chest
Members became that never yet were seen.
Every original aspect there was cancelled,³⁶⁸
Two and yet none did the perverted image
Appear, and such departed with slow pace.
Even as a lizard, under the great scourge
Of days canicular, exchanging hedge,
Lightning appeareth if the road it cross;
Thus did appear, coming towards the bellies
Of the two others, a small fiery serpent,³⁶⁹
Livid and black as is a peppercorn.
And in that part whereat is first received
Our aliment, it one of them transfix'd;
Then downward fell in front of him extended.
The one transfix'd looked at it, but said naught;
Nay, rather with feet motionless he yawned,
Just as if sleep or fever had assailed him.
He at the serpent gazed, and it at him;
One through the wound, the other through the mouth
Smoked violently, and the smoke commingled.
Henceforth be silent Lucan, where he mentions
Wretched Sabellus and Nassidius,³⁷⁰
And wait to hear what now shall be shot forth.

Be silent Ovid, of Cadmus and Arethusa;³⁷¹

For if him to a snake, her to fountain,
Converts he fabling, that I grudge him not;
Because two natures never front to front
Has he transmuted, so that both the forms
To interchange their matter ready were.

Together they responded in such wise,
That to a fork the serpent cleft his tail,
And eke the wounded drew his feet together.

The legs together with the thighs themselves
Adhered so, that in little time the juncture
No sign whatever made that was apparent.

He with the cloven tail assumed the figure
The other one was losing, and his skin
Became elastic, and the other's hard.

I saw the arms draw inward at the armpits,
And both feet of the reptile, that were short,
Lengthen as much as those contracted were.

Thereafter the hind feet, together twisted,
Became the member that a man conceals,
And of his own the wretch had two created.

While both of them the exhalation veils
With a new color, and engenders hair
On one of them and depilates the other,

The one uprose and down the other fell,
Though turning not away their impious lamps,
Underneath which each one his muzzle changed.

He who was standing drew it tow'rds the temples,
And from excess of matter, which came thither,
Issued the ears from out the hollow cheeks;

What did not backward run and was retained
Of that excess made to the face a nose,
And the lips thickened far as was befitting.

He who lay prostrate thrusts his muzzle forward,
And backward draws the ears into his head,
In the same manner as the snail its horns;
And so the tongue, which was entire and apt

For speech before, is cleft, and the bi-forked
In the other closes up, and the smoke ceases.
The soul, which to a reptile had been changed,
Along the valley hissing takes to flight,
And after him the other speaking sputters.
Then did he turn upon him his new shoulders,
And said to the other: "I'll have Buoso run,
Crawling as I have done, along this road."
In this way I beheld the seventh ballast
Shift and reshift, and here be my excuse
The novelty, if aught my pen transgress.[372](#)
And notwithstanding that mine eyes might be
Somewhat bewildered, and my mind dismayed,
They could not flee away so secretly
But that I plainly saw Puccio Sciancato;
And he it was who sole of three companions,
Which came in the beginning, was not changed;
The other was he whom thou, Gaville, weepest.[373](#)

CANTO XXVI

The Eighth Bolgia: evil counsellors—Ulysses and Diomed.

Rejoice, O Florence, since thou art so great,³⁷⁴

That over sea and land thou beatest thy wings,
And throughout Hell thy name is spread abroad!

Among the thieves five citizens of thine³⁷⁵

Like these I found, whence shame comes unto me,
And thou thereby to no great honor risest.

But if when morn is near our dreams are true,³⁷⁶

Feel shalt thou in a little time from now
What Prato, if none other, craves for thee.³⁷⁷

And if it now were, it were not too soon;³⁷⁸

Would that it were, seeing it needs must be,
For 'twill aggrieve me more the more I age.

We went our way, and up along the stairs

The bourns had made us to descend before,
Remounted my Conductor and drew me.

And following the solitary path

Among the rocks and ridges of the crag,
The foot without the hand sped not at all.

Then sorrowed I, and sorrow now again,

When I direct my mind to what I saw,
And more my genius curb than I am wont,

That it may run not unless virtue guide it;

So that if some good star, or better thing,³⁷⁹

Have given me good, I may myself not grudge it.³⁸⁰

As many as the hind (who on the hill

Rests at the time when he who lights the world
His countenance keeps least concealed from us,
While as the fly gives place unto the gnat)
Seeth the glow-worms down along the valley,
Perchance there where he ploughs and makes his vintage;
With flames as manifold resplendent all
Was the eighth Bolgia, as I grew aware
As soon as I was where the depth appeared.
And such as he who with the bears avenged him ³⁸¹
Beheld Elijah's chariot at departing, ³⁸²
What time the steeds to heaven erect uprose,
For with his eye he could not follow it
So as to see aught else than flame alone,
Even as a little cloud ascending upward,
Thus each along the gorge of the intrenchment
Was moving; for not one reveals the theft,
And every flame a sinner steals away.
I stood upon the bridge uprisen to see,
So that, if I had seized not on a rock,
Down had I fallen without being pushed.
And the Leader, who beheld me so attent,
Exclaimed: "Within the fires the spirits are;
Each swathes himself with that wherewith he burns."
"My Master," I replied, "by hearing thee
I am more sure; but I surmised already
It might be so, and already wished to ask thee
Who is within that fire, which comes so cleft
At top, it seems uprising from the pyre
Where was Eteocles with his brother placed." ³⁸³
He answered me: "Within there are tormented
Ulysses and Diomed, and thus together ³⁸⁴
They unto vengeance run as unto wrath.
And there within their flame do they lament
The ambush of the horse, which made the door ³⁸⁵
Whence issued forth the Romans' gentle seed;
Therein is wept the craft, for which being dead

Deidamia still deplores Achilles,³⁸⁶
And pain for the Palladium there is borne.”³⁸⁷

“If they within those sparks possess the power
To speak,” I said, “thee, Master, much I pray,
And re-pray, that the prayer be worth a thousand,
That thou make no denial of awaiting
Until the horned flame shall hither come;
Thou seest that with desire I lean towards it.”

And he to me: “Worthy is thy entreaty
Of much applause, and therefore I accept it;
But take heed that thy tongue restrain itself.
Leave me to speak, because I have conceived
That which thou wishest; for they might disdain
Perchance, since they were Greeks, discourse of thine.”³⁸⁸

When now the flame had come unto that point,
Where to my Leader it seemed time and place,
After this fashion did I hear him speak:
“O ye, who are twofold within one fire,
If I deserved of you, while I was living,
If I deserved of you or much or little
When in the world I wrote the lofty verses,
Do not move on, but one of you declare
Whither, being lost, he went away to die.”

Then of the antique flame the greater horn,
Murmuring, began to wave itself about
Even as a flame doth which the wind fatigues.

Thereafterward, the summit to and fro
Moving as if it were the tongue that spake,
It uttered forth a voice, and said: “When I
From Circe had departed, who concealed me
More than a year there near unto Gaëta,
Or ever yet Aeneas named it so,
Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
For my old father, nor the due affection
Which joyous should have made Penelope,
Could overcome within me the desire
I had to be experienced of the world,

And of the vice and virtue of mankind;
But I put forth on the high open sea
 With one sole ship, and that small company
 By which I never had deserted been.
Both of the shores I saw as far as Spain,
 Far as Morocco, and the isle of Sardes,
 And the others which that sea bathes round about.
I and my company were old and slow
 When at that narrow passage we arrived
 Where Hercules his landmarks set as signals,³⁸⁹
That man no farther onward should adventure.
 On the right hand behind me left I Seville,
 And on the other already had left Ceuta.
‘O brothers, who amid a hundred thousand
 Perils,’ I said, ‘have come unto the West,
 To this so inconsiderable vigil
Which is remaining of your senses still,
 Be ye unwilling to deny the knowledge,
 Following the sun, of the unpeopled world.
Consider ye the seed from which ye sprang;
 Ye were not made to live like unto brutes,
 But for pursuit of virtue and of knowledge.’
So eager did I render my companions,
 With this brief exhortation, for the voyage,
 That then I hardly could have held them back.
And having turned our stern unto the morning,
 We of the oars made wings for our mad flight,³⁹⁰
 Evermore gaining on the larboard side.
Already all the stars of the other pole³⁹¹
 The night beheld, and ours so very low
 It did not rise above the ocean floor.
Five times rekindled and as many quenched
 Had been the splendor underneath the moon,
 Since we had entered into the deep pass,
When there appeared to us a mountain, dim
 From distance, and it seemed to me so high
 As I had never any one beheld.

Joyful were we, and soon it turned to weeping;
For out of the new land a whirlwind rose,
And smote upon the fore part of the ship.
Three times it made it whirl with all the waters,
At the fourth time it made the stern uplift,
And the prow downward go, as pleased Another,
Until the sea above us closed again.”^{[392](#)}

CANTO XXVII

Guido da Montefeltro.

Already was the flame erect and quiet,³⁹³
To speak no more, and now departed from us
With the permission of the gentle Poet;
When yet another, which behind it came,
Caused us to turn our eyes upon its top
By a confused sound that issued from it.
As the Sicilian bull (that bellowed first³⁹⁴
With the lament of him, and that was right,
Who with his file had modulated it)
Bellowed so with the voice of the afflicted,
That, notwithstanding it was made of brass,
Still it appeared with agony transfixed;
Thus, by not having any way or issue
At first from out the fire, to its own language
Converted were the melancholy words.
But afterwards, when they had gathered way
Up through the point, giving it that vibration
The tongue had given them in their passage out,
We heard it said: "O thou, at whom I aim
My voice, and who but now wast speaking Lombard,
Saying, 'Now go thy way, no more I urge thee,'³⁹⁵
Because I come perchance a little late,
To stay and speak with me let it not irk thee;
Thou seest it irks not me, and I am burning.
If thou but lately into this blind world
Hast fallen down from that sweet Latian land,

Wherfrom I bring the whole of my transgression,
Say, have the Romagnuoli peace or war,³⁹⁶

For I was from the mountains there between³⁹⁷
Urbino and the yoke whence Tiber bursts."

I still was downward bent and listening,
When my Conductor touched me on the side,
Saying: "Speak thou: this one a Latian is."

And I, who had beforehand my reply
In readiness, forthwith began to speak:
"O soul, that down below there art concealed,
Romagna thine is not and never has been
Without war in the bosom of its tyrants;
But open war I none have left there now.

Ravenna stands as it long years has stood;³⁹⁸
The Eagle of Polenta there is brooding,³⁹⁹
So that she covers Cervia with her vans.

The city which once made the long resistance,⁴⁰⁰
And of the French a sanguinary heap,
Beneath the Green Paws finds itself again;⁴⁰¹
Verrucchio's ancient Mastiff and the new,⁴⁰²
Who made such bad disposal of Montagna,
Where they are wont make wimbles of their teeth.

The cities of Lamone and Santerno⁴⁰³
Governs the Lioncel of the white lair,
Who changes sides 'twixt summer-time and winter;
And that of which the Savio bathes the flank,⁴⁰⁴
Even as it lies between the plain and mountain,
Lives between tyranny and a free state.

Now I entreat thee tell us who thou art;
Be not more stubborn than the rest have been,
So may thy name hold front there in the world."

After the fire a little more had roared
In its own fashion, the sharp point it moved
This way and that, and then gave forth such breath:
"If I believed that my reply were made
To one who to the world would e'er return,

This flame without more flickering would stand still;
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,⁴⁰⁵
Believing thus begirt to make amends;
And truly my belief had been fulfilled
But for the High Priest, whom may ill betide,⁴⁰⁶
Who put me back into my former sins;
And how and wherefore I will have thee hear.
While I was still the form of bone and pulp
My mother gave to me, the deeds I did
Were not those of a lion, but a fox.
The machinations and the covert ways
I knew them all, and practised so their craft,
That to the ends of earth the sound went forth.
When now unto that portion of mine age
I saw myself arrived, when each one ought
To lower the sails, and coil away the ropes,⁴⁰⁷
That which before had pleased me then displeased me;
And penitent and confessing I surrendered,
Ah woe is me! and it would have bestead me;
The Leader of the modern Pharisees
Having a war near unto Lateran,⁴⁰⁸
And not with Saracens nor with the Jews,
For each one of his enemies was Christian,
And none of them had been to conquer Acre,
Nor merchandising in the Sultan's land,
Nor the high office, nor the sacred orders,
In him regarded, nor in me that cord
Which used to make those girt with it more meagre;
But even as Constantine sought out Sylvester⁴⁰⁹
To cure his leprosy, within Soracte,
So this one sought me out as an adept⁴¹⁰
To cure him of the fever of his pride.
Counsel he asked of me, and I was silent,

Because his words appeared inebriate.
And then he said: ‘Be not thy heart afraid;
Henceforth I thee absolve; and thou instruct me
How to raze Palestrina to the ground.⁴¹¹
Heaven have I power to lock and to unlock,
As thou dost know; therefore the keys are two,
The which my predecessor held not dear.’⁴¹²
Then urged me on his weighty arguments
There, where my silence was the worst advice;
And said I: ‘Father, since thou washest me
Of that sin into which I now must fall,
The promise long with the fulfilment short
Will make thee triumph in thy lofty seat.’
Francis came afterward, when I was dead,
For me; but one of the black Cherubim
Said to him: ‘Take him not; do me no wrong;
He must come down among my servitors,
Because he gave the fraudulent advice
From which time forth I have been at his hair;
For who repents not cannot be absolved,⁴¹³
Nor can one both repent and will at once,
Because of the contradiction which consents not.’
O miserable me! how I did shudder
When he seized on me, saying: ‘Peradventure
Thou didst not think that I was a logician!’
He bore me unto Minos, who entwined
Eight times his tail about his stubborn back,
And after he had bitten it in great rage,
Said: ‘Of the thievish fire a culprit this’;
Wherefore, here where thou seest, am I lost,
And vested thus in going I bemoan me.”
When it had thus completed its recital,
The flame departed uttering lamentations,
Writhing and flapping its sharp-pointed horn.
Onward we passed, both I and my Conductor,
Up o’er the crag above another arch,
Which the moat covers, where is paid the fee

By those who, sowing discord, win their burden.

CANTO XXVIII

The Ninth Bolgia: schismatics—Mahomet and Ali—Pier da Medicina, Curio, Mosca, and Bertrand de Born.

Who ever could, e'en with untrammelled words,⁴¹⁴
Tell of the blood and of the wounds in full
Which now I saw, by many times narrating?
Each tongue would for a certainty fall short
By reason of our speech and memory,
That have small room to comprehend so much.
If were again assembled all the people
Which formerly upon the fateful land
Of Puglia were lamenting for their blood⁴¹⁵
Shed by the Romans and the lingering war⁴¹⁶
That of the rings made such illustrious spoils,⁴¹⁷
As Livy has recorded, who errs not,
With those who felt the agony of blows
By making counterstand to Robert Guiscard,⁴¹⁸
And all the rest, whose bones are gathered still
At Ceperano, where a renegade⁴¹⁹
Was each Apulian, and at Tagliacozzo,⁴²⁰
Where without arms the old Alardo conquered,
And one his limb transpierced, and one lopped off,
Should show, it would be nothing to compare
With the disgusting mode of the ninth Bolgia.
A cask by losing centre-piece or cant
Was never shattered so, as I saw one
Rent from the chin to where one breaketh wind.

Between his legs were hanging down his entrails;
His heart was visible, and the dismal sack
That maketh excrement of what is eaten.

While I was all absorbed in seeing him,
He looked at me, and opened with his hands
His bosom, saying: “See now how I rend me;
How mutilated, see, is Mahomet;⁴²¹
In front of me doth Ali weeping go,
Cleft in the face from forelock unto chin;
And all the others whom thou here beholdest,
Disseminators of scandal and of schism
While living were, and therefore are cleft thus.

A devil is behind here, who doth cleave us
Thus cruelly, unto the falchion’s edge
Putting again each one of all this ream,
When we have gone around the doleful road;
By reason that our wounds are closed again
Ere any one in front of him repass.

But who art thou, that musest on the crag,
Perchance to postpone going to the pain
That is adjudged upon thine accusations?”

“Nor death hath reached him yet, nor guilt doth bring him,”
My Master made reply, “to be tormented;
But to procure him full experience,

Me, who am dead, behoves it to conduct him
Down here through Hell, from circle unto circle;
And this is true as that I speak to thee.”

More than a hundred were there when they heard him,
Who in the moat stood still to look at me,
Through wonderment oblivious of their torture.

“Now say to Fra Dolcino, then, to arm him,⁴²²
Thou, who perhaps wilt shortly see the sun,
If soon he wish not here to follow me,
So with provisions, that no stress of snow
May give the victory to the Novarese,⁴²³
Which otherwise to gain would not be easy.”

After one foot to go away he lifted,

This word did Mahomet say unto me,
Then to depart upon the ground he stretched it.
Another one, who had his throat pierced through,
And nose cut off close underneath the brows,
And had no longer but a single ear,
Staying to look in wonder with the others,
Before the others did his gullet open,
Which outwardly was red in every part,
And said: "O thou, whom guilt doth not condemn,
And whom I once saw up in Latian land,
Unless too great similitude deceive me,
Call to remembrance Pier da Medicina,⁴²⁴
If e'er thou see again the lovely plain⁴²⁵
That from Vercelli slopes to Marcabò,
And make it known to the best two of Fano,⁴²⁶
To Messer Guido and Angioletto likewise,
That if foreseeing here be not in vain,
Cast over from their vessel shall they be,
And drowned near unto the Cattolica,
By the betrayal of a tyrant fell.
Between the isles of Cyprus and Majorca
Neptune ne'er yet beheld so great a crime,
Neither of pirates nor Argolic people.
That traitor, who sees only with one eye,⁴²⁷
And holds the land, which someone here with me⁴²⁸
Would fain be fasting from the vision of,
Will make them come unto a parley with him;
Then will do so, that to Focara's wind⁴²⁹
They will not stand in need of vow or prayer."
And I to him: "Show to me and declare,
If thou wouldst have me bear up news of thee,
Who is this person of the bitter vision."
Then did he lay his hand upon the jaw
Of one of his companions, and his mouth
Oped, crying: "This is he, and he speaks not.
This one, being banished, every doubt submerged

In Caesar by affirming the forearmed
Always with detriment allowed delay.”

O how bewildered unto me appeared,
With tongue asunder in his windpipe slit,
Curio, who in speaking was so bold!⁴³⁰

And one, who both his hands dissevered had,
The stumps uplifting through the murky air,
So that the blood made horrible his face,

Cried out: “Thou shalt remember Mosca also,⁴³¹
Who said, alas! ‘A thing done has an end!’
Which was an ill seed for the Tuscan people”;

“And death unto thy race,” thereto I added;
Whence he, accumulating woe on woe,
Departed, like a person sad and crazed.

But I remained to look upon the crowd;
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,
Without some further proof, even to recount,

If it were not that conscience reassures me,
That good companion which emboldens man
Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure.

I truly saw, and still I seem to see it,
A trunk without a head walk in like manner
As walked the others of the mournful herd.

And by the hair it held the head dissevered,
Hung from the hand in fashion of a lantern,
And that upon us gazed and said: “O me!”

It of itself made to itself a lamp,
And they were two in one, and one in two;
How that can be, He knows who so ordains it.

When it was come close to the bridge’s foot,
It lifted high its arm with all the head,
To bring more closely unto us its words,

Which were: “Behold now the sore penalty,
Thou, who dost breathing go the dead beholding;
Behold if any be as great as this.

And so that thou may carry news of me,
Know that Bertram de Born am I, the same⁴³²

Who gave to the Young King the evil comfort.⁴³³
I made the father and the son rebellious;
Achitophel not more with Absalom⁴³⁴
And David did with his accursed goadings.
Because I parted persons so united,
Parted do I now bear my brain, alas!
From its beginning, which is in this trunk.
Thus is observed in me the counterpoise.”

CANTO XXIX

The Tenth Bolgia: alchemists—Griffolino d' Arezzo and Capocchio.

The many people and the divers wounds⁴³⁵

These eyes of mine had so inebriated,

That they were wishful to stand still and weep;

But said Virgilius: “What dost thou still gaze at?

Why is thy sight still riveted down there

Among the mournful, mutilated shades?

Thou hast not done so at the other Bolge;

Consider, if to count them thou believest,

That two-and-twenty miles the valley winds,

And now the moon is underneath our feet;

Henceforth the time allotted us is brief,

And more is to be seen than what thou seest.”

“If thou hadst,” I made answer thereupon,

“Attended to the cause for which I looked,

Perhaps a longer stay thou wouldest have pardoned.”

Meanwhile my Guide departed, and behind him

I went, already making my reply,

And superadding: “In that cavern where

I held mine eyes with such attention fixed,

I think a spirit of my blood laments

The sin which down below there costs so much.”

Then said the Master: “Be no longer broken

Thy thought from this time forward upon him;

Attend elsewhere, and there let him remain;

For him I saw below the little bridge,

Pointing at thee, and threatening with his finger
Fiercely, and heard him called Geri del Bello.⁴³⁶

So wholly at that time wast thou impeded
By him who formerly held Altaforte,⁴³⁷
Thou didst not look that way; so he departed."

"O my Conductor, his own violent death,
Which is not yet avenged for him," I said,
"By any who is sharer in the shame,
Made him disdainful; whence he went away,
As I imagine, without speaking to me,⁴³⁸
And thereby made me pity him the more."⁴³⁹

Thus did we speak as far as the first place
Upon the crag, which the next valley shows
Down to the bottom, if there were more light.

When we were now right over the last cloister
Of Malebolge, so that its lay-brothers
Could manifest themselves unto our sight,
Divers lamentings pierced me through and through,
Which with compassion had their arrows barbed,
Whereat mine ears I covered with my hands.

What pain would be, if from the hospitals⁴⁴⁰
Of Valdichiana, 'twixt July and September,
And of Maremma and Sardinia
All the diseases in one moat were gathered,
Such was it here, and such a stench came from it
As from putrescent limbs is wont to issue.

We had descended on the furthest bank
From the long crag, upon the left hand still,
And then more vivid was my power of sight
Down tow'rds the bottom, where the mistress
Of the high Lord, Justice infallible,
Punishes forgers, which she here records.⁴⁴¹

I do not think a sadder sight to see
Was in Aegina the whole people sick,⁴⁴²
(When was the air so full of pestilence,
The animals, down to the little worm,

All fell, and afterwards the ancient people,
According as the poets have affirmed,
Were from the seed of ants restored again,) Than was it to behold through that dark valley
The spirits languishing in divers heaps.

This on the belly, that upon the back
One of the other lay, and others crawling
Shifted themselves along the dismal road.
We step by step went onward without speech,
Gazing upon and listening to the sick
Who had not strength enough to lift their bodies.

I saw two sitting leaned against each other,
As leans in heating platter against platter,
From head to foot bespotted o'er with scabs;
And never saw I plied a currycomb
By stable-boy for whom his master waits,
Or him who keeps awake unwillingly,
As everyone was plying fast the bite
Of nails upon himself, for the great rage
Of itching which no other succor had.

And the nails downward with them dragged the scab,
In fashion as a knife the scales of bream,
Or any other fish that has them largest.

“O thou, that with thy fingers dost dismail thee,”
Began my Leader unto one of them,
“And makest of them pincers now and then,

Tell me if any Latian is with those⁴⁴³
Who are herein; so may thy nails suffice thee
To all eternity unto this work.”

“Latians are we, whom thou so wasted seest,
Both of us here,” one weeping made reply;
“But who art thou, that questionest about us?”

And said the Guide: “One am I who descends
Down with this living man from cliff to cliff,
And I intend to show Hell unto him.”

Then broken was their mutual support,
And trembling each one turned himself to me,

With others who had heard him by rebound.
Wholly to me did the good Master gather,
Saying: "Say unto them whate'er thou wishest."
And I began, since he would have it so:
"So may your memory not steal away
In the first world from out the minds of men,
But so may it survive 'neath many suns,
Say to me who ye are, and of what people;
Let not your foul and loathsome punishment
Make you afraid to show yourselves to me."
"I of Arezzo was," one made reply,⁴⁴⁴
"And Albert of Siena had me burned;
But what I died for does not bring me here.
'Tis true I said to him, speaking in jest,
That I could rise by flight into the air,
And he who had conceit, but little wit,
Would have me show to him the art; and only
Because no Daedalus I made him, made me⁴⁴⁵
Be burned by one who held him as his son.
But unto the last Bolgia of the ten,
For alchemy, which in the world I practised,
Minos, who cannot err, has me condemned."
And to the Poet said I: "Now was ever
So vain a people as the Sienese?"⁴⁴⁶
Not for a certainty the French by far."
Whereat the other leper, who had heard me,
Replied unto my speech: "Taking out Stricca,⁴⁴⁷
Who knew the art of moderate expenses,
And Niccolò, who the luxurious use
Of cloves discovered earliest of all
Within that garden where such seed takes root;
And taking out the band, among whom squandered
Caccia d' Ascian his vineyards and vast woods,
And where his wit the Abbagliato proffered!
But, that thou know who thus doth second thee
Against the Sienese, make sharp thine eye
Tow'rds me, so that my face well answer thee,

And thou shalt see I am Capocchio's shade,⁴⁴⁸
Who metals falsified by alchemy;
Thou must remember, if I well descry thee,
How I a skilful ape of nature was."

CANTO XXX

*Other falsifiers or forgers—Gianni Schicchi,
Myrrha, Adam of Brescia, Potiphar's wife,
and Sinon of Troy.*

'Twas at the time when Juno was enraged,⁴⁴⁹
For Semele, against the Theban blood,
As she already more than once had shown,
So reft of reason Athamas became,⁴⁵⁰
That, seeing his own wife with children twain
Walking encumbered upon either hand,
He cried: "Spread out the nets, that I may take
The lioness and her whelps upon the passage";
And then extended his unpitying claws,
Seizing the first, who had the name Learchus,
And whirled him round, and dashed him on a rock;
And she, with the other burthen, drowned herself;—
And at the time when fortune downward hurled
The Trojan's arrogance, that all things dared,
So that the king was with his kingdom crushed,
Hecuba sad, disconsolate, and captive,⁴⁵¹
When lifeless she beheld Polyxena,
And of her Polydorus on the shore
Of ocean was the dolorous one aware,
Out of her senses like a dog she barked,
So much the anguish had her mind distorted;
But not of Thebes the furies nor the Trojan
Were ever seen in any one so cruel
In goading beasts, and much more human members,

As I beheld two shadows pale and naked,
Who, biting, in the manner ran along
That a boar does, when from the sty turned loose.
One to Capocchio came, and by the nape
Seized with its teeth his neck, so that in dragging
It made his belly grate the solid bottom.
And the Aretine, who trembling had remained,⁴⁵²
Said to me: "That mad sprite is Gianni Schicchi,
And raving goes thus harrying other people."
"O," said I to him, "so may not the other
Set teeth on thee, let it not weary thee
To tell us who it is, ere it dart hence."
And he to me: "That is the ancient ghost
Of the nefarious Myrrha, who became
Beyond all rightful love her father's lover.
She came to sin with him after this manner,
By counterfeiting of another's form;
As he who goeth yonder undertook⁴⁵³
That he might gain the lady of the herd,
To counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati,
Making a will and giving it due form."
And after the two maniacs had passed
On whom I held mine eye, I turned it back
To look upon the other evil-born.
I saw one made in fashion of a lute,
If he had only had the groin cut off
Just at the point at which a man is forked.
The heavy dropsy, that so disproportions
The limbs with humors, which it ill concocts,
That the face corresponds not to the belly,
Compelled him so to hold his lips apart
As does the hectic, who because of thirst
One tow'rds the chin, the other upward turns.
"O ye, who without any torment are,
And why I know not, in the world of woe,"
He said to us, "behold, and be attentive
Unto the misery of Master Adam;"⁴⁵⁴

I had while living much of what I wished,
And now, alas! a drop of water crave.

The rivulets, that from the verdant hills⁴⁵⁵
Of Cassentin descend down into Arno,⁴⁵⁶
Making their channels to be cold and moist,
Ever before me stand, and not in vain;
For far more doth their image dry me up
Than the disease which strips my face of flesh.

The rigid justice that chastises me
Draweth occasion from the place in which
I sinned, to put the more my sighs in flight.

There is Romena, where I counterfeited⁴⁵⁷
The currency imprinted with the Baptist,
For which I left my body burned above.
But if I here could see the tristful soul
Of Guido, or Alessandro, or their brother,
For Branda's fount I would not give the sight.

One is within already, if the raving
Shades that are going round about speak truth;
But what avails it me, whose limbs are tied?

If I were only still so light, that in
A hundred years I could advance one inch,
I had already started on the way,
Seeking him out among this squalid folk,
Although the circuit be eleven miles.⁴⁵⁸
And be not less than half a mile across.

For them am I in such a family;
They did induce me into coining florins,
Which had three carats of impurity."

And I to him: "Who are the two poor wretches
That smoke like unto a wet hand in winter,
Lying there close upon thy right-hand confines?"
"I found them here," replied he, "when I rained
Into this chasm, and since they have not turned,
Nor do I think they will for evermore.

One the false woman is who accused Joseph,⁴⁵⁹

The other the false Sinon, Greek of Troy;⁴⁶⁰
From acute fever they send forth such reek.”

And one of them, who felt himself annoyed
At being, peradventure, named so darkly,
Smote with the fist upon his hardened paunch.

It gave a sound, as if it were a drum;⁴⁶¹
And Master Adam smote him in the face,
With arm that did not seem to be less hard,
Saying to him: “Although be taken from me
All motion, for my limbs that heavy are,
I have an arm unfettered for such need.”

Whereat he answer made: “When thou didst go
Unto the fire, thou hadst it not so ready;
But hadst it so and more when thou wast coining.”

The dropsical: “Thou sayest true in that;
But thou wast not so true a witness there,
Where thou wast questioned of the truth at Troy.”

“If I spake false, thou falsifiedst the coin,”
Said Sinon; “and for one fault I am here,
And thou for more than any other demon.”

“Remember, perjurer, about the horse,”
He made reply who had the swollen belly,
“And rueful be it thee the whole world knows it.”

“Rueful to thee the thirst be wherewith cracks
Thy tongue,” the Greek said, “and the putrid water
That hedges so thy paunch before thine eyes.”

Then the false-coiner: “So is gaping wide
Thy mouth for speaking evil, as ’tis wont;
Because if I have thirst, and humour stuff me,

Thou hast the burning and the head that aches,
And to lick up the mirror of Narcissus⁴⁶²
Thou wouldst not want words many to invite thee.”

In listening to them was I wholly fixed,
When said the Master to me: “Now just look,
For little wants it that I quarrel with thee.”

When him I heard in anger speak to me,
I turned me round towards him with such shame

That still it eddies through my memory.
And as he is who dreams of his own harm,
Who dreaming wishes it may be a dream,
So that he craves what is, as if it were not;
Such I became, not having power to speak,
For to excuse myself I wished, and still
Excused myself, and did not think I did it.
“Less shame doth wash away a greater fault,”
The Master said, “than this of thine has been;
Therefore thyself disburden of all sadness,
And make account that I am aye beside thee,
If e'er it come to pass that fortune bring thee
Where there are people in a like dispute;
For a base wish it is to wish to hear it.”

CANTO XXXI

The giants, Nimrod, Ephialtes, and Antaeus.

One and the self-same tongue first wounded me,⁴⁶³

So that it tinged the one cheek and the other,
And then held out to me the medicine;

Thus do I hear that once Achilles' spear,⁴⁶⁴

His and his father's, used to be the cause
First of a sad and then a gracious boon.

We turned our backs upon the wretched valley,

Upon the bank that girds it round about,
Going across it without any speech.

There it was less than night, and less than day,

So that my sight went little in advance;
But I could hear the blare of a loud horn,

So loud it would have made each thunder faint,

Which, counter to it following its way,
Mine eyes directed wholly to one place.

After the dolorous discomfiture⁴⁶⁵

When Charlemagne the holy emprise lost,
So terribly Orlando sounded not.⁴⁶⁶

Short while my head turned thitherward I held

When many lofty towers I seemed to see,
Whereat I: "Master, say, what town is this?"

And he to me: "Because thou peerest forth

Athwart the darkness at too great a distance,
It happens that thou errest in thy fancy.

Well shalt thou see, if thou arrivest there,

How much the sense deceives itself by distance;

Therefore a little faster spur thee on.”
Then tenderly he took me by the hand,
And said: “Before we farther have advanced,
That the reality may seem to thee
Less strange, know that these are not towers, but giants,
And they are in the well, around the bank,
From navel downward, one and all of them.”
As, when the fog is vanishing away,
Little by little doth the sight refigure
Whate’er the mist that crowds the air conceals,
So, piercing through the dense and darksome air,
More and more near approaching tow’rd the verge,
My error fled, and fear came over me;
Because as on its circular parapets
Montereggione crowns itself with towers,⁴⁶⁷
E’en thus the margin which surrounds the well
With one half of their bodies turreted
The horrible giants, whom Jove menaces
E’en now from out the heavens when he thunders.
And I of one already saw the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and great part of the belly,
And down along his sides both of the arms.
Certainly Nature, when she left the making
Of animals like these, did well indeed,
By taking such executors from Mars;
And if of elephants and whales she doth not
Repent her, whosoever looketh subtly
More just and more discreet will hold her for it;
For where the argument of intellect
Is added unto evil will and power,
No rampart can the people make against it.
His face appeared to me as long and large
As is at Rome the pine-cone of Saint Peter’s,⁴⁶⁸
And in proportion were the other bones;
So that the margin, which an apron was
Down from the middle, showed so much of him
Above it, that to reach up to his hair

Three Frieslanders in vain had vaunted them;
For I beheld thirty great palms of him
Down from the place where man his mantle buckles.

“Raphel mai amech izabi almi,”⁴⁶⁹
Began to clamor the ferocious mouth,
To which were not befitting sweeter psalms.
And unto him my Guide: “Soul idiotic,
Keep to thy horn, and vent thyself with that,
When wrath or other passion touches thee.
Search round thy neck, and thou wilt find the belt
Which keeps it fastened, O bewildered soul,
And see it, where it bars thy mighty breast.”

Then said to me: “He doth himself accuse;
This one is Nimrod, by whose evil thought⁴⁷⁰
One language in the world is not still used.
Here let us leave him and not speak in vain;
For even such to him is every language
As his to others, which to none is known.”

Therefore a longer journey did we make,
Turned to the left, and a crossbow-shot off
We found another far more fierce and large.
In binding him, who might the master be
I cannot say; but he had pinioned close
Behind the right arm, and in front the other,
With chains, that held him so begirt about
From the neck down, that on the part uncovered
It wound itself as far as the fifth gyre.
“This proud one wished to make experiment
Of his own power against the Supreme Jove,”
My Leader said, “whence he has such a guerdon.
Ephialtes is his name; he showed great prowess,⁴⁷¹
What time the giants terrified the Gods;
The arms he wielded never more he moves.”

And I to him: “If possible, I should wish
That of the measureless Briareus⁴⁷²
These eyes of mine might have experience.”

Whence he replied: "Thou shalt behold Antaeus⁴⁷³

Close by here, who can speak and is unbound,

Who at the bottom of all crime shall place us.

Much farther yon is he whom thou wouldest see,

And he is bound, and fashioned like to this one,

Save that he seems in aspect more ferocious."

There never was an earthquake of such might

That it could shake a tower so violently,

As Ephialtes suddenly shook himself.

Then was I more afraid of death than ever,

For nothing more was needful than the fear,

If I had not beheld the manacles.

Then we proceeded farther in advance,

And to Antaeus came, who, full five ells

Without the head, forth issued from the cavern.

"O thou, who in the valley fortunate,⁴⁷⁴

Which Scipio the heir of glory made,

When Hannibal turned back with all his hosts,

Once brought'st a thousand lions for thy prey,

And who, hadst thou been at the mighty war

Among thy brothers, some it seems still think

The sons of Earth the victory would have gained;

Place us below, nor be disdainful of it,

There where the cold doth lock Cocytus up.

Make us not go to Tityus nor Typhoeus;⁴⁷⁵

This one can give of that which here is longed for;

Therefore stoop down, and do not curl thy lip.

Still in the world can he restore thy fame;

Because he lives, and still expects long life,

If to itself Grace call him not untimely."

So said the Master; and in haste the other

His hands extended and took up my Guide—

Hands whose great pressure Hercules once felt.⁴⁷⁶

Virgilius, when he felt himself embraced,

Said unto me: "Draw nigh, that I may take thee";

Then of himself and me one bundle made.

As seems the Carisenda, to behold⁴⁷⁷
Beneath the leaning side, when goes a cloud
Above it so that opposite it hangs;
Such did Antaeus seem to me, who stood
Watching to see him stoop, and then it was
I could have wished to go some other way.
But lightly in the abyss, which swallows up
Judas with Lucifer, he put us down;
Nor thus bowed downward made he there delay,
But, as a mast does in a ship, uprose.

CANTO XXXII

*The Ninth Circle: the frozen lake of
Cocytus—First division, Caïna: traitors to
their kindred—Camicion de' Pazzi—Second
division, Antenora: traitors to their country—
Bocca degli Abati and Buoso da Duera.*

If I had rhymes both rough and stridulous,⁴⁷⁸
As were appropriate to the dismal hole
Down upon which thrust all the other rocks,⁴⁷⁹
I would press out the juice of my conception
More fully; but because I have them not,
Not without fear I bring myself to speak;
For 'tis no enterprise to take in jest,
To sketch the bottom of all the universe,
Nor for a tongue that cries Mamma and Babbo.⁴⁸⁰
But may those Ladies help this verse of mine,
Who helped Amphion in enclosing Thebes,⁴⁸¹
That from the fact the word be not diverse.
O rabble ill-begotten above all,
Who're in the place to speak of which is hard,
'Twere better ye had here been sheep or goats!⁴⁸²
When we were down within the darksome well,
Beneath the giant's feet, but lower far,
And I was scanning still the lofty wall,
I heard it said to me: "Look how thou steppest!
Take heed thou do not trample with thy feet
The heads of the tired, miserable brothers!"
Whereat I turned me round, and saw before me

And underfoot a lake, that from the frost
The semblance had of glass, and not of water.
So thick a veil ne'er made upon its current
In winter-time Danube in Austria,
Nor there beneath the frigid sky the Don,
As there was here; so that if Tamberlich⁴⁸³
Had fallen upon it, or Pietrapana,
E'en at the edge 'twould not have given a creak.
And as to croak the frog doth place himself
With muzzle out of water—when is dreaming
Of gleaning oftentimes the peasant-girl—
Livid, as far down as where shame appears,
Were the disconsolate shades within the ice,
Setting their teeth unto the note of storks.
Each one his countenance held downward bent;
From mouth the cold, from eyes the doleful heart
Among them witness of itself procures.
When round about me somewhat I had looked,
I downward turned me, and saw two so close,
The hair upon their heads together mingled.
“Ye who so strain your breasts together, tell me,”
I said, “who are you”; and they bent their necks,
And when to me their faces they had lifted,
Their eyes, which first were only moist within,
Gushed o'er the eyelids, and the frost congealed
The tears between, and locked them up again.
Clamp never bound together wood with wood
So strongly; whereat they, like two he-goats,
Butted together, so much wrath o'ercame them.
And one, who had by reason of the cold
Lost both his ears, still with his visage downward,
Said: “Why dost thou so mirror thyself in us?
If thou desire to know who these two are,⁴⁸⁴
The valley whence Bisenzio descends
Belonged to them and to their father Albert.
They from one body came, and all Caïna⁴⁸⁵
Thou shalt search through, and shalt not find a shade

More worthy to be fixed in gelatine;
Not he in whom were broken breast and shadow
 At one and the same blow by Arthur's hand;⁴⁸⁶
Focaccia not; not he who me encumbers⁴⁸⁷
So with his head I see no farther forward,
 And bore the name of Sassol Mascheroni;⁴⁸⁸
Well knowest thou who he was, if thou art Tuscan.
And that thou put me not to further speech,
 Know that I Camicion de' Pazzi was,⁴⁸⁹
 And wait Carlino to exonerate me.”
Then I beheld a thousand faces, made
 Purple with cold; whence o'er me comes a shudder,
 And evermore will come, at frozen ponds.
And while we were advancing tow'rds the middle,
 Where everything of weight unites together,
 And I was shivering in the eternal shade,
Whether 'twere will, or destiny, or chance,
 I know not; but in walking 'mong the heads
 I struck my foot hard in the face of one.
Weeping he growled: “Why dost thou trample me?
 Unless thou comest to increase the vengeance
 Of Montaperti, why dost thou molest me?”⁴⁹⁰
And I: “My Master, now wait here for me,
 That I through him may issue from a doubt;
 Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish.”
The Leader stopped; and to that one I said
 Who was blaspheming vehemently still:
 “Who art thou, that thus reprehendest others?”
“Now who art thou, that goest through Antenora⁴⁹¹
 Smiting,” replied he, “other people's cheeks,
 So that, if thou wert living, 'twere too much?”
“Living I am, and dear to thee it may be,”
 Was my response, “if thou demandest fame,
 That 'mid the other notes thy name I place.”
And he to me: “For the reverse I long;
 Take thyself hence, and give me no more trouble;

For ill thou knowest to flatter in this hollow.”
Then by the scalp behind I seized upon him,
And said: “It must needs be thou name thyself,
Or not a hair remain upon thee here.”
Whence he to me: “Though thou strip off my hair,
I will not tell thee who I am, nor show thee,
If on my head a thousand times thou fall.”
I had his hair in hand already twisted,
And more than one shock of it had pulled out,
He barking, with his eyes held firmly down,
When cried another: “What doth ail thee, Bocca?⁴⁹²
Is’t not enough to clatter with thy jaws,
But thou must bark? what devil touches thee?”
“Now,” said I, “I care not to have thee speak,
Accursed traitor; for unto thy shame
I will report of thee veracious news.”
“Begone,” replied he, “and tell what thou wilt,
But be not silent, if thou issue hence,
Of him who had just now his tongue so prompt;
He weepeth here the silver of the French;
‘I saw,’ thus canst thou phrase it, ‘him of Duera⁴⁹³
There where the sinners stand out in the cold.’⁴⁹⁴
If thou shouldst questioned be who else was there,
Thou hast beside thee him of Beccaria,⁴⁹⁵
Of whom the gorget Florence slit asunder;
Gianni del Soldanier, I think, may be⁴⁹⁶
Yonder with Ganellon, and Tebaldello⁴⁹⁷
Who oped Faenza when the people slept.”
Already we had gone away from him,
When I beheld two frozen in one hole,
So that one head a hood was to the other;
And even as bread through hunger is devoured,
The uppermost on the other set his teeth,
There where the brain is to the nape united.
Not in another fashion Tydeus gnawed⁴⁹⁸
The temples of Menalippus in disdain,

Than that one did the skull and the other things.
“O thou, who showest by such bestial sign
Thy hatred against him whom thou art eating,
Tell me the wherefore,” said I, “with this compact,
That if thou rightfully of him complain,
In knowing who ye are, and his transgression,
I in the world above repay thee for it,
If that wherewith I speak be not dried up.”

CANTO XXXIII

*Count Ugolino and the Archbishop
Ruggieri—Third division of the Ninth Circle,
Ptolomaea: traitors to their friends—Friar
Alberigo, Branco d’Oria.*

His mouth uplifted from his grim repast,⁴⁹⁹
That sinner, wiping it upon the hair
Of the same head that he behind had wasted.
Then he began: “Thou wilt that I renew
The desperate grief, which wrings my heart already
To think of only, ere I speak of it;
But if my words be seed that may bear fruit
Of infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw,
Speaking and weeping shalt thou see together.
I know not who thou art, nor by what mode
Thou hast come down here; but a Florentine
Thou seemest to me truly, when I hear thee.
Thou hast to know I was Count Ugolino,⁵⁰⁰
And this one was Ruggieri the Archbishop;
Now I will tell thee why I am such a neighbor.
That, by effect of his malicious thoughts,
Trusting in him I was made prisoner,
And after put to death, I need not say;
But ne’ertheless what thou canst not have heard,
That is to say, how cruel was my death,
Hear shalt thou, and shalt know if he has wronged me.
A narrow perforation in the mew,⁵⁰¹
Which bears because of me the title of Famine,

And in which others still must be locked up,
Had shown me through its opening many moons
 Already, when I dreamed the evil dream
 Which of the future rent for me the veil.
This one appeared to me as lord and master,
 Hunting the wolf and whelps upon the mountain
 For which the Pisans cannot Lucca see.⁵⁰²
With sleuth-hounds gaunt, and eager, and well trained,⁵⁰³
 Gualandi with Sismondi and Lanfranchi
 He had sent out before him to the front.
After brief course seemed unto me forespent
 The father and the sons, and with sharp tushes
 It seemed to me I saw their flanks ripped open.
When I before the morrow was awake,
 Moaning amid their sleep I heard my sons
 Who with me were, and asking after bread.
Cruel indeed art thou, if yet thou grieve not,
 Thinking of what my heart foreboded me,
 And weep'st thou not, what art thou wont to weep at?
They were awake now, and the hour drew nigh
 At which our food used to be brought to us,
 And through his dream was each one apprehensive;
And I heard locking up the under door⁵⁰⁴
 Of the horrible tower; whereat without a word
 I gazed into the faces of my sons.
I wept not, I within so turned to stone;
 They wept; and darling little Anselm mine
 Said: 'Thou dost gaze so, father, what doth ail thee?'
Still not a tear I shed, nor answer made
 All of that day, nor yet the night thereafter,
 Until another sun rose on the world.
As now a little glimmer made its way
 Into the dolorous prison, and I saw
 Upon four faces my own very aspect,
Both of my hands in agony I bit;
 And, thinking that I did it from desire
 Of eating, on a sudden they uprose,

And said they: ‘Father, much less pain ’twill give us
If thou do eat of us; thyself didst clothe us
With this poor flesh, and do thou strip it off.’

I calmed me then, not to make them more sad.
That day we all were silent, and the next.
Ah! obdurate earth, wherefore didst thou not open?

When we had come unto the fourth day, Gaddo
Threw himself down outstretched before my feet,
Saying, ‘My father, why dost thou not help me?’

And there he died; and, as thou seest me,
I saw the three fall one by one, between
The fifth day and the sixth; whence I betook me,
Already blind, to groping over each,
And three days called them after they were dead;
Then hunger did what sorrow could not do.”

When he had said this, with his eyes distorted,
The wretched skull resumed he with his teeth,
Which, as a dog’s, upon the bone were strong.

Ah! Pisa, thou opprobrium of the people
Of the fair land there where the *Si* doth sound, [505](#)
Since slow to punish thee thy neighbors are,

Let the Capraia and Gorgona move, [506](#)
And make a hedge across the mouth of Arno,
That every person in thee it may drown!

For if Count Ugolino had the fame
Of having in thy castles thee betrayed, [507](#)
Thou shouldst not on such cross have put his sons. [508](#)

Guiltless of any crime, thou modern Thebes!
Their youth made Uguccione and Brigata,
And the other two my song doth name above!

We passed still farther onward, where the ice
Another people ruggedly enswathes,
Not downward turned, but all of them reversed.

Weeping itself there does not let them weep,
And grief that finds a barrier in the eyes
Turns itself inward to increase the anguish;

Because the earliest tears a cluster form,

And, in the manner of a crystal visor,
Fill all the cup beneath the eyebrow full.

And notwithstanding that, as in a callus,
Because of cold all sensibility
Its station had abandoned in my face,
Still it appeared to me I felt some wind;
Whence I: "My Master, who sets this in motion?
Is not below here every vapor quenched?"

Whence he to me: "Full soon shalt thou be where
Thine eye shall answer make to thee of this,
Seeing the cause which raineth down the blast."

And one of the wretches of the frozen crust
Cried out to us: "O souls so merciless
That the last post is given unto you,
Lift from mine eyes the rigid veils, that I
May vent the sorrow which impregnates my heart
A little, e'er the weeping recongeal."

Whence I to him: "If thou wouldst have me help thee,
Say who thou wast; and if I free thee not,
May I go to the bottom of the ice."

Then he replied: "I am Friar Alberigo;⁵⁰⁹
He am I of the fruit of the bad garden,
Who here a date am getting for my fig."⁵¹⁰

"O," said I to him, "now art thou, too, dead?"
And he to me: "How may my body fare
Up in the world, no knowledge I possess.

Such an advantage has this Ptolomaea,⁵¹¹
That oftentimes the soul descendeth here
Sooner than Atropos in motion sets it.⁵¹²

And, that thou mayest more willingly remove
From off my countenance these glassy tears,
Know that as soon as any soul betrays
As I have done, his body by a demon
Is taken from him, who thereafter rules it,
Until his time has wholly been revolved.

Itself down rushes into such a cistern;
And still perchance above appears the body

Of yonder shade, that winters here behind me.
This thou shouldst know, if thou hast just come down;
 It is Ser Branca d' Oria, and many years⁵¹³
 Have passed away since he was thus locked up."
"I think," said I to him, "thou dost deceive me;
 For Branca d' Oria is not dead as yet,
 And eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and puts on clothes."
"In moat above," said he, "of Malebranche,
 There where is boiling the tenacious pitch,
 As yet had Michel Zanche not arrived,
When this one left a devil in his stead
 In his own body and one near of kin,
 Who made together with him the betrayal.
But hitherward stretch out thy hand forthwith,
 Open mine eyes";—and open them I did not,
 And to be rude to him was courtesy.
Ah, Genoese! ye men at variance⁵¹⁴
 With every virtue, full of every vice!
 Wherefore are ye not scattered from the world?
For with the vilest spirit of Romagna⁵¹⁵
 I found of you one such, who for his deeds
 In soul already in Cocytus bathes,
And still above in body seems alive!

CANTO XXXIV

*Fourth division of the Ninth Circle, the
Judecca: traitors to their lords and
benefactors—Lucifer, Judas Iscariot, Brutus
and Cassius.*

“*Vexilla Regis prodeunt Inferni*⁵¹⁶

Towards us; therefore look in front of thee,”

My Master said, “if thou discernest him.”

As, when there breathes a heavy fog, or when

Our hemisphere is darkening into night,

Appears far off a mill the wind is turning,

Methought that such a building then I saw;

And, for the wind, I drew myself behind

My Guide, because there was no other shelter.

Now was I, and with fear in verse I put it,

There where the shades were wholly covered up,

And glimmered through like unto straws in glass.

Some prone are lying, others stand erect,

This with the head, and that one with the soles;

Another, bow-like, face to feet inverts.

When in advance so far we had proceeded,

That it my Master pleased to show to me

The creature who once had the beauteous semblance,⁵¹⁷

He from before me moved and made me stop,

Saying: “Behold Dis, and behold the place

Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself.”

How frozen I became and powerless then,

Ask it not, Reader, for I write it not,

Because all language would be insufficient.
I did not die, and I alive remained not;
 Think for thyself now, hast thou aught of wit,
 What I became, being of both deprived.
The Emperor of the kingdom dolorous⁵¹⁸
 From his mid-breast forth issued from the ice;
 And better with a giant I compare
Than do the giants with those arms of his;
 Consider now how great must be that whole,
 Which unto such a part conforms itself.
Were he as fair once, as he now is foul,
 And lifted up his brow against his Maker,
 Well may proceed from him all tribulation.
O, what a marvel it appeared to me,
 When I beheld three faces on his head!⁵¹⁹
 The one in front, and that vermillion was;
Two were the others, that were joined with this
 Above the middle part of either shoulder,
 And they were joined together at the crest;
And the right-hand one seemed 'twixt white and yellow;
 The left was such to look upon as those
 Who come from where the Nile falls valley-ward.⁵²⁰
Underneath each came forth two mighty wings,
 Such as befitting were so great a bird;
 Sails of the sea I never saw so large.⁵²¹
No feathers had they, but as of a bat
 Their fashion was; and he was waving them,
 So that three winds proceeded forth therefrom.
Thereby Cocytus wholly was congealed.
 With six eyes did he weep, and down three chins
 Trickled the tear-drops and the bloody drivel.
At every mouth he with his teeth was crunching⁵²²
 A sinner, in the manner of a brake,
 So that he three of them tormented thus.
To him in front the biting was as naught
 Unto the clawing, for sometimes the spine

Utterly stripped of all the skin remained.
“That soul up there which has the greatest pain,”
 The Master said, “is Judas Iscariot;⁵²³
 With head inside, he plies his legs without.
Of the two others, who head downward are,
 The one who hangs from the black jowl is Brutus;
 See how he writhes himself, and speaks no word.
And the other, who so stalwart seems, is Cassius.
 But night is reascending, and ’tis time⁵²⁴
 That we depart, for we have seen the whole.”
As seemed him good, I clasped him round the neck,
 And he the vantage seized of time and place,
 And when the wings were opened wide apart,
He laid fast hold upon the shaggy sides;
 From fell to fell descended downward then
 Between the thick hair and the frozen crust.
When we were come to where the thigh revolves
 Exactly on the thickness of the haunch,⁵²⁵
 The Guide, with labor and with hard-drawn breath,
Turned round his head where he had had his legs,
 And grappled to the hair, as one who mounts,
 So that to Hell I thought we were returning.
“Keep fast thy hold, for by such stairs as these,”
 The Master said, panting as one fatigued,
 “Must we perforce depart from so much evil.”
Then through the opening of a rock he issued,
 And down upon the margin seated me;
 Then tow’rds me he outstretched his wary step.
I lifted up mine eyes and thought to see
 Lucifer in the same way I had left him;
 And I beheld him upward hold his legs.
And if I then became disquieted,
 Let stolid people think who do not see
 What the point is beyond which I had passed.
“Rise up,” the Master said, “upon thy feet;
 The way is long, and difficult the road,⁵²⁶
 And now the sun to middle-tierce returns.”

It was not any palace corridor
There where we were, but dungeon natural,
With floor uneven and unease of light.

“Ere from the abyss I tear myself away,
My Master,” said I when I had arisen,
“To draw me from an error speak a little;
Where is the ice? and how is this one fixed
Thus upside down? and how in such short time
From eve to morn has the sun made his transit?”

And he to me: “Thou still imaginest
Thou art beyond the centre, where I grasped
The hair of the fell worm, who mines the world.
That side thou wast, so long as I descended;
When round I turned me, thou didst pass the point
To which things heavy draw from every side,
And now beneath the hemisphere art come
Opposite that which overhangs the vast
Dry-land, and 'neath whose cope was put to death⁵²⁷
The Man who without sin was born and lived.

Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere
Which makes the other face of the Judecca.
Here it is morn when it is evening there;
And he who with his hair a stairway made us
Still fixed remaineth as he was before.
Upon this side he fell down out of heaven;
And all the land, that whilom here emerged,
For fear of him made of the sea a veil,
And came to our hemisphere; and peradventure
To flee from him, what on this side appears⁵²⁸
Left the place vacant here, and back recoiled.”

A place there is below, from Beelzebub
As far receding as the tomb extends,
Which not by sight is known, but by the sound
Of a small rivulet, that there descendeth⁵²⁹
Through chasm within the stone, which it has gnawed
With course that winds about and slightly falls.
The Guide and I into that hidden road

Now entered, to return to the bright world;
And without care of having any rest
We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear; [530](#)
Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars.

Purgatorio

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream

And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

CANTO I

The shores of Purgatory—Cato of Utica.

To run o'er better waters hoists its sail⁵³¹
The little vessel of my genius now,
That leaves behind itself a sea so cruel;
And of that second kingdom will I sing
Wherein the human spirit doth purge itself,
And to ascend to heaven becometh worthy.
But let dead Poesy here rise again,
O holy Muses, since that I am yours,
And here Calliope somewhat ascend,⁵³²
My song accompanying with that sound,
Of which the miserable magpies felt⁵³³
The blow so great, that they despaired of pardon.
Sweet color of the oriental sapphire,
That was upgathered in the cloudless aspect
Of the pure air, as far as the first circle,⁵³⁴
Unto mine eyes did recommence delight
Soon as I issued forth from the dead air,
Which had with sadness filled mine eyes and breast.
The beauteous planet, that to love incites,⁵³⁵
Was making all the orient to laugh,⁵³⁶
Veiling the Fishes that were in her escort.
To the right hand I turned, and fixed my mind
Upon the other pole, and saw four stars⁵³⁷
Ne'er seen before save by the primal people.⁵³⁸
Rejoicing in their flamelets seemed the heaven.

O thou septentrional and widowed site,
Because thou art deprived of seeing these!
When from regarding them I had withdrawn,
Turning a little to the other pole,
There where the Wain had disappeared already,⁵³⁹
I saw beside me an old man alone,⁵⁴⁰
Worthy of so much reverence in his look,
That more owes not to father any son.
A long beard and with white hair intermingled
He wore, in semblance like unto the tresses,
Of which a double list fell on his breast.
The rays of the four consecrated stars
Did so adorn his countenance with light,
That him I saw as were the sun before him.
“Who are you? ye who, counter the blind river,⁵⁴¹
Have fled away from the eternal prison?”
Moving those venerable plumes, he said:⁵⁴²
“Who guided you? or who has been your lamp
In issuing forth out of the night profound,
That ever black makes the infernal valley?
The laws of the abyss, are they thus broken?
Or is there changed in heaven some counsel new,
That being damned ye come unto my crags?”
Then did my Leader lay his grasp upon me,
And with his words, and with his hands and signs,
Reverent he made in me my knees and brow;
Then answered him: “I came not of myself,⁵⁴³
A Lady from Heaven descended, at whose prayers
I aided this one with my company.
But since it is thy will more be unfolded
Of our condition, how it truly is,
Mine cannot be that this should be denied thee.
This one has never his last evening seen,
But by his folly was so near to it
That very little time was there to turn.
As I have said, I unto him was sent

To rescue him, and other way was none
Than this to which I have myself betaken.
I've shown him all the people of perdition,
And now those spirits I intend to show
Who purge themselves beneath thy guardianship.
How I have brought him would be long to tell thee.
Virtue descendeth from on high that aids me
To lead him to behold thee and to hear thee.
Now may it please thee to vouchsafe his coming;
He seeketh Liberty, which is so dear,
As knoweth he who life for her refuses.
Thou know'st it; since, for her, to thee not bitter
Was death in Utica, where thou didst leave
The vesture, that will shine so, the great day.
By us the eternal edicts are not broken;
Since this one lives, and Minos binds not me;⁵⁴⁴
But of that circle I, where are the chaste⁵⁴⁵
Eyes of thy Marcia, who in looks still prays thee,
O holy breast, to hold her as thine own;
For her love, then, incline thyself to us.
Permit us through thy sevenfold realm to go;
I will take back this grace from thee to her,
If to be mentioned there below thou deignest.”
“Marcia so pleasing was unto mine eyes
While I was on the other side,” then said he,
“That every grace she wished of me I granted;
Now that she dwells beyond the evil river,
She can no longer move me, by that law
Which, when I issued forth from there, was made.
But if a Lady of Heaven do move and rule thee,
As thou dost say, no flattery is needful;
Let it suffice thee that for her thou ask me.
Go, then, and see thou gird this one about
With a smooth rush, and that thou wash his face,⁵⁴⁶
So that thou cleanse away all stain therefrom,
For 'twere not fitting that the eye o'ercast
By any mist should go before the first

Angel, who is of those of Paradise.
This little island round about its base
 Below there, yonder, where the billow beats it,
 Doth rushes bear upon its washy ooze;
No other plant that putteth forth the leaf,
 Or that doth indurate, can there have life,
 Because it yieldeth not unto the shocks.
Thereafter be not this way your return;
 The sun, which now is rising, will direct you
 To take the mount by easier ascent.”
With this he vanished; and I raised me up
 Without a word, and wholly drew myself
 Unto my Guide, and turned mine eyes to him.
And he began: “Son, follow thou my steps;
 Let us turn back, for on this side declines
 The plain unto its lower boundaries.”
The dawn was vanquishing the matin hour⁵⁴⁷
 Which fled before it, so that from afar
 I recognized the trembling of the sea.
Along the solitary plain we went
 As one who unto the lost road returns,
 And till he finds it seems to go in vain.
As soon as we were come to where the dew
 Fights with the sun, and, being in a part
 Where shadow falls, little evaporates,⁵⁴⁸
Both of his hands upon the grass outspread
 In gentle manner did my Master place;
 Whence I, who of his action was aware,
Extended unto him my tearful cheeks;
 There did he make in me uncovered wholly
 That hue which Hell had covered up in me.
Then came we down upon the desert shore
 Which never yet saw navigate its waters
 Any that afterward had known return.
There he begirt me as the other pleased;
 O marvellous! for even as he culled
 The humble plant, such it sprang up again⁵⁴⁹

Suddenly there where he uprooted it.

CANTO II

The Celestial Pilot—Casella.

Already had the sun the horizon reached [550](#)
Whose circle of meridian covers o'er
Jerusalem with its most lofty point,
And night that opposite to him revolves
Was issuing forth from Ganges with the Scales
That fall from out her hand when she exceedeth;
So that the white and the vermillion cheeks [551](#)
Of beautiful Aurora, where I was,
By too great age were changing into orange.
We still were on the border of the sea,
Like people who are thinking of their road,
Who go in heart, and with the body stay;
And lo! as when, upon the approach of morning,
Through the gross vapors Mars grows fiery red
Down in the West upon the ocean floor,
Appeared to me—may I again behold it!—
A light along the sea so swiftly coming,
Its motion by no flight of wing is equalled;
From which when I a little had withdrawn
Mine eyes, that I might question my Conductor,
Again I saw it brighter grown and larger.
Then on each side of it appeared to me
I knew not what of white, and underneath it
Little by little there came forth another.
My Master yet had uttered not a word
While the first whiteness into wings unfolded;

But when he clearly recognized the pilot,
He cried: "Make haste, make haste to bow the knee!
Behold the Angel of God! fold thou thy hands!
Henceforward shalt thou see such officers!
See how he scorneth human arguments,⁵⁵²
So that nor oar he wants, nor other sail
Than his own wings, between so distant shores.
See how he holds them pointed up to heaven,
Fanning the air with the eternal pinions,
That do not moult themselves like mortal hair!"
Then as still nearer and more near us came
The Bird Divine, more radiant he appeared,
So that near by the eye could not endure him,
But down I cast it; and he came to shore
With a small vessel, very swift and light,
So that the water swallowed naught thereof.
Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot;
Beatitude seemed written in his face,⁵⁵³
And more than a hundred spirits sat within.
"In exitu Israel de Ægypto!"
They chanted all together in one voice,
With whatso in that psalm is after written.
Then made he sign of holy rood upon them,
Wherat all cast themselves upon the shore,
And he departed swiftly as he came.
The throng which still remained there unfamiliar
Seemed with the place, all round about them gazing,
As one who in new matters makes essay.
On every side was darting forth the day
The sun, who had with his resplendent shafts
From the mid-heaven chased forth the Capricorn,⁵⁵⁴
When the new people lifted up their faces
Towards us, saying to us: "If ye know,
Show us the way to go unto the mountain."
And answer made Virgilius: "Ye believe
Perchance that we have knowledge of this place,
But we are strangers even as yourselves.

Just now we came, a little while before you,
Another way, which was so rough and steep,
That mounting will henceforth seem sport to us.”

The souls who had, from seeing me draw breath,
Become aware that I was still alive,
Pallid in their astonishment became;
And as to messenger who bears the olive
The people throng to listen to the news,
And no one shows himself afraid of crowding,
So at the sight of me stood motionless
Those fortunate spirits, all of them, as if
Oblivious to go and make them fair.

One from among them saw I coming forward,
As to embrace me, with such great affection,
That it incited me to do the like.

O empty shadows, save in aspect only!
Three times behind it did I clasp my hands,⁵⁵⁵
As oft returned with them to my own breast!

I think with wonder I depicted me;
Whereat the shadow smiled and backward drew;
And I, pursuing it, pressed farther forward.

Gently it said that I should stay my steps;
Then knew I who it was, and I entreated
That it would stop awhile to speak with me.

It made reply to me: “Even as I loved thee
In mortal body, so I love thee free;
Therefore I stop; but wherefore goest thou?”

“My own Casella! to return once more⁵⁵⁶
There where I am, I make this journey,” said I;
“But how from thee has so much time be taken?”

And he to me: “No outrage has been done me,
If he who takes both when and whom he pleases
Has many times denied to me this passage,
For of a righteous will his own is made.

He, sooth to say, for three months past has taken⁵⁵⁷
Whoever wished to enter with all peace;

Whence I, who now had turned unto that shore⁵⁵⁸

Where salt the waters of the Tiber grow,
Benignantly by him have been received.⁵⁵⁹
Unto that outlet now his wing is pointed,
Because for evermore assemble there
Those who tow'rds Acheron do not descend."
And I: "If some new law take not from thee
Memory or practice of the song of love,
Which used to quiet in me all my longings,
Thee may it please to comfort therewithal
Somewhat this soul of mine, that with its body
Hitherward coming is so much distressed."
"Love, that within my mind discourses with me,"
Forthwith began he so melodiously,
The melody within me still is sounding.
My Master, and myself, and all that people
Which with him were, appeared as satisfied
As if naught else might touch the mind of any.
We all of us were moveless and attentive
Unto his notes; and lo! the grave old man,
Exclaiming: "What is this, ye laggard spirits?
What negligence, what standing still is this?
Run to the mountain to strip off the slough,
That lets not God be manifest to you."
Even as when, collecting grain or tares,
The doves, together at their pasture met,
Quiet, nor showing their accustomed pride,
If aught appear of which they are afraid,
Upon a sudden leave their food alone,
Because they are assailed by greater care;
So that fresh company did I behold
The song relinquish, and go tow'rds the hill,
As one who goes, and knows not whitherward;
Nor was our own departure less in haste.

CANTO III

*The foot of the mountain—Those who have
died in contumacy of Holy Church—
Manfredi.*

Inasmuch as the instantaneous flight
Had scattered them asunder o'er the plain,
Turned to the mountain whither reason spurs us,
I pressed me close unto my faithful comrade,
And how without him had I kept my course?
Who would have led me up along the mountain?
He seemed to me within himself remorseful;
O noble conscience, and without a stain,
How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!
After his feet had laid aside the haste
Which mars the dignity of every act,
My mind, that hitherto had been restrained,
Let loose its faculties as if delighted,
And I my sight directed to the hill
That highest tow'rds the heaven uplifts itself.⁵⁶⁰
The sun, that in our rear was flaming red,
Was broken in front of me into the figure
Which had in me the stoppage of its rays;
Unto one side I turned me, with the fear
Of being left alone, when I beheld
Only in front of me the ground obscured.
“Why dost thou still mistrust?” my Comforter
Began to say to me turned wholly round;
“Dost thou not think me with thee, and that I guide thee?

'Tis evening there already where is buried
 The body within which I cast a shadow;
 'Tis from Brundusium ta'en, and Naples has it.⁵⁶¹
Now if in front of me no shadow fall,
 Marvel not at it more than at the heavens,
 Because one ray impedeth not another
To suffer torments, both of cold and heat,
 Bodies like this that Power provides, which wills
 That how it works be not unveiled to us.
Insane is he who hopeth that our reason
 Can traverse the illimitable way,
 Which the one Substance in three Persons follows!
Mortals, remain contented at the *Quia*:⁵⁶²
 For if ye had been able to see all,
 No need there were for Mary to give birth;
And ye have seen desiring without fruit,
 Those whose desire would have been quieted,
 Which evermore is given them for a grief.
I speak of Aristotle and of Plato,
 And many others";—and here bowed his head,
 And more he said not, and remained disturbed.
We came meanwhile unto the mountain's foot;
 There so precipitate we found the rock,
 That nimble legs would there have been in vain.
'Twixt Lerici and Turbia, the most desert,⁵⁶³
 The most secluded pathway is a stair
 Easy and open, if compared with that.
"Who knoweth now upon which hand the hill
 Slopes down," my Master said, his footsteps staying,
 "So that who goeth without wings may mount?"
And while he held his eyes upon the ground
 Examining the nature of the path,
 And I was looking up around the rock,
On the left hand appeared to me a throng
 Of souls, that moved their feet in our direction,
 And did not seem to move, they came so slowly.
"Lift up thine eyes," I to the Master said;

“Behold, on this side, who will give us counsel,
If thou of thine own self can have it not.”

Then he looked at me, and with frank expression
Replied: “Let us go there, for they come slowly,
And thou be steadfast in thy hope, sweet son.”

Still was that people as far off from us,⁵⁶⁴

After a thousand steps of ours I say,
As a good thrower with his hand would reach,

When they all crowded unto the hard masses
Of the high bank, and motionless stood and close,
As he stands still to look who goes in doubt.

“O happy dead! O spirits elect already!”

Virgilius made beginning, “by that peace
Which I believe is waiting for you all,
Tell us upon what side the mountain slopes,
So that the going up be possible,
For to lose time irks him most who most knows.”

As sheep come issuing forth from out the fold
By ones and twos and threes, and the others stand
Timidly, holding down their eyes and nostrils,

And what the foremost does the others do,⁵⁶⁵
Huddling themselves against her, if she stop,
Simple and quiet and the wherefore know not;

So moving to approach us thereupon
I saw the leader of that fortunate flock,
Modest in face and dignified in gait.

As soon as those in the advance saw broken
The light upon the ground at my right side,
So that from me the shadow reached the rock,
They stopped, and backward drew themselves somewhat;
And all the others, who came after them,
Not knowing why nor wherefore, did the same.

“Without your asking, I confess to you
This is a human body which you see,
Whereby the sunshine on the ground is cleft.
Marvel ye not thereat, but be persuaded
That not without a power which comes from Heaven

Doth he endeavor to surmount this wall.”
The Master thus; and said those worthy people:
“Return ye then, and enter in before us,”
Making a signal with the back o’ the hand
And one of them began: “Whoe’er thou art,
Thus going turn thine eyes, consider well
If e’er thou saw me in the other world.”
I turned me tow’rds him, and looked at him closely;
Blond was he, beautiful, and of noble aspect,
But one of his eyebrows had a blow divided.
When with humility I had disclaimed
E’er having seen him, “Now behold!” he said,
And showed me high upon his breast a wound.
Then said he with a smile: “I am Manfredi,⁵⁶⁶
The grandson of the Empress Costanza;⁵⁶⁷
Therefore, when thou returnest, I beseech thee
Go to my daughter beautiful, the mother⁵⁶⁸
Of Sicily’s honor and of Aragon’s,
And the truth tell her, if aught else be told.
After I had my body lacerated
By these two mortal stabs, I gave myself
Weeping to Him, who willingly doth pardon.
Horrible my iniquities had been;
But Infinite Goodness hath such ample arms,
That it receives whatever turns to it.
Had but Cosenza’s pastor, who in chase⁵⁶⁹
Of me was sent by Clement at that time,
In God read understandingly this page,
The bones of my dead body still would be
At the bridge-head, near unto Benevento,
Under the safeguard of the heavy cairn.
Now the rain bathes and moveth them the wind,
Beyond the realm, almost beside the Verde,⁵⁷⁰
Where he transported them with tapers quenched.⁵⁷¹
By malison of theirs is not so lost
Eternal Love, that it cannot return,

So long as hope has anything of green.
True is it, who in contumacy dies
 Of Holy Church, though penitent at last,
 Must wait upon the outside this bank
Thirty times told the time that he has been
 In his presumption, unless such decree
 Shorter by means of righteous prayers become.
See now if thou hast power to make me happy,
 By making known unto my good Costanza
 How thou hast seen me, and this ban beside,
For those on earth can much advance us here.”

CANTO IV

Farther ascent of the mountain—The Negligent, who postponed repentance till the last hour—Belacqua.

Whenever by delight or else by pain,
That seizes any faculty of ours,
Wholly to that the soul collects itself,
It seemeth that no other power it heeds;
And this against that error is which thinks
One soul above another kindles in us.⁵⁷²
And hence, whenever aught is heard or seen
Which keeps the soul intently bent upon it,
Time passes on, and we perceive it not,
Because one faculty is that which listens,
And other that which the soul keeps entire;
This is as if in bonds, and that is free.
Of this I had experience positive
In hearing and in gazing at that spirit;
For fifty full degrees uprisen was⁵⁷³
The sun, and I had not perceived it, when
We came to where those souls with one accord
Cried out unto us: “Here is what you ask.”
A greater opening oftentimes hedges up
With but a little forkful of his thorns
The villager, what time the grape imbrowns,
Than was the passage-way through which ascended
Only my Leader and myself behind him,
After that company departed from us.

One climbs Sanleo and descends in Noli,⁵⁷⁴
And mounts the summit of Bismantova,
With feet alone; but here one needs must fly;
With the swift pinions and the plumes I say
Of great desire, conducted after him
Who gave me hope, and made a light for me.
We mounted upward through the rifted rock,
And on each side the border pressed upon us,
And feet and hands the ground beneath required.
When we were come upon the upper rim
Of the high bank, out on the open slope,
“My Master,” said I, “what way shall we take?”⁵⁷⁵
And he to me: “No step of thine descend;
Still up the mount behind me win thy way,
Till some sage escort shall appear to us.”
The summit was so high it vanquished sight,
And the hillside precipitous far more
Than line from middle quadrant to the centre.⁵⁷⁶
Spent with fatigue was I, when I began:
“O my sweet Father! turn thee and behold
How I remain alone, unless thou stay!”
“O son,” he said, “up yonder drag thyself,”
Pointing me to a terrace somewhat higher,
Which on that side encircles all the hill.
These words of his so spurred me on, that I
Strained every nerve, behind him scrambling up,
Until the circle was beneath my feet.
Thereon ourselves we seated both of us
Turned to the East, from which we had ascended,
For all men are delighted to look back.
To the low shores mine eyes I first directed,
Then to the sun uplifted them, and wondered
That on the left hand we were smitten by it.
The Poet well perceived that I was wholly
Bewildered at the chariot of the light,
Where ’twixt us and the Aquilon it entered.
Whereon he said to me: “If Castor and Pollux⁵⁷⁷

Were in the company of yonder mirror,
That up and down conducteth with its light,
Thou wouldst behold the zodiac's jagged wheel⁵⁷⁸

Revolving still more near unto the Bears,
Unless it swerved aside from its old track.

How that may be wouldst thou have power to think,
Collected in thyself, imagine Zion
Together with this mount on earth to stand,
So that they both one sole horizon have,

And hemispheres diverse; whereby the road⁵⁷⁹
Which Phaeton, alas! knew not to drive,
Thou'l see how of necessity must pass⁵⁸⁰

This on one side, when that upon the other,
If thine intelligence right clearly heed."

"Truly, my Master," said I, "never yet
Saw I so clearly as I now discern,
There where my wit appeared incompetent,
That the mid-circle of supernal motion,
Which in some art is the Equator called,
And aye remains between the Sun and Winter,
For reason which thou sayest, departeth hence

Tow'rds the Septentrion, what time the Hebrews⁵⁸¹
Beheld it tow'rds the region of the heat.

But, if it pleaseth thee, I fain would learn
How far we have to go; for the hill rises
Higher than eyes of mine have power to rise."

And he to me: "This mount is such, that ever
At the beginning down below 'tis tiresome,
And aye the more one climbs, the less it hurts.

Therefore, when it shall seem so pleasant to thee,
That going up shall be to thee as easy
As going down the current in a boat,
Then at this pathway's ending thou wilt be;
There to repose thy panting breath expect;
No more I answer; and this I know for true."

And as he finished uttering these words,
A voice close by us sounded: "Peradventure

Thou wilt have need of sitting down ere that.”
At sound thereof each one of us turned round,
And saw upon the left hand a great rock,
Which neither I nor he before had noticed.
Thither we drew; and there were persons there
Who in the shadow stood behind the rock,
As one through indolence is wont to stand.
And one of them, who seemed to me fatigued,
Was sitting down, and both his knees embraced,
Holding his face low down between them bowed.
“O my sweet Lord,” I said, “do turn thine eye⁵⁸²
On him who shows himself more negligent
Than even if Sloth herself his sister were.”
Then he turned round to us, and he gave heed,
Just lifting up his eyes above his thigh,
And said: “Now go thou up, for thou art valiant.”
Then knew I who he was; and the distress,
That still a little did my breathing quicken,
My going to him hindered not; and after
I came to him he hardly raised his head,
Saying: “Hast thou seen clearly how the sun
O’er thy left shoulder drives his chariot?”
His sluggish attitude and his curt words
A little unto laughter moved my lips;
Then I began: “Belacqua, I grieve not⁵⁸³
For thee henceforth; but tell me, wherefore seated
In this place art thou? Waitest thou an escort?
Or has thy usual habit seized upon thee?”
And he: “O brother, what’s the use of climbing?
Since to my torment would not let me go
The Angel of God, who sitteth at the gate.
First heaven must needs so long revolve me round
Outside thereof, as in my life it did,
Since the good sighs I to the end postponed,
Unless, e’er that, some prayer may bring me aid⁵⁸⁴
Which rises from a heart that lives in grace;
What profit others that in heaven are heard not?”

Meanwhile the Poet was before me mounting,
And saying: "Come now; see the sun has touched
Meridian, and from the shore the night
Covers already with her foot Morocco."

CANTO V

*Those who died by violence, but repentant—
Buonconte di Montefeltro—La Pia.*

I had already from those shades departed,[585](#)
And followed in the footsteps of my Guide,
When from behind, pointing his finger at me,
One shouted: “See, it seems as if shone not
The sunshine on the left of him below,
And like one living seems he to conduct him!”
Mine eyes I turned at utterance of these words,
And saw them watching with astonishment
But me, but me, and the light which was broken!
“Why doth thy mind so occupy itself?”
The Master said, “that thou thy pace dost slacken?
What matters it to thee what here is whispered?
Come after me, and let the people talk;
Stand like a steadfast tower, that never wags
Its top for all the blowing of the winds;
For evermore the man in whom is springing
Thought upon thought, removes from him the mark,
Because the force of one the other weakens.”
What could I say in answer but “I come”?
I said it somewhat with that color tinged
Which makes a man of pardon sometimes worthy.
Meanwhile along the mountain-side across
Came people in advance of us a little,
Singing the Miserere verse by verse.
When they became aware I gave no place

For passage of the sunshine through my body,
They changed their song into a long, hoarse "Oh!"
And two of them, in form of messengers,
Ran forth to meet us, and demanded of us,
"Of your condition make us cognizant."
And said my Master: "Ye can go your way
And carry back again to those who sent you,
That this one's body is of very flesh.
If they stood still because they saw his shadow,
As I suppose, enough is answered them;
Him let them honor, it may profit them."
Vapors enkindled saw I ne'er so swiftly
At early nightfall cleave the air serene,⁵⁸⁶
Nor, at the set of sun, the clouds of August,
But upward they returned in briefer time,
And, on arriving, with the others wheeled
Tow'rds us, like troops that run without a rein.
"This folk that presses unto us is great,
And cometh to implore thee," said the Poet;
"So still go onward, and in going listen."
"O soul that goest to beatitude
With the same members wherewith thou wast born,"
Shouting they came, "a little stay thy steps,
Look, if thou e'er hast any of us seen,
So that o'er yonder thou bear news of him;
Ah, why dost thou go on? Ah, why not stay?
Long since we all were slain by violence,
And sinners even to the latest hour;
Then did a light from heaven admonish us,
So that, both penitent and pardoning, forth
From life we issued reconciled to God,
Who with desire to see Him stirs our hearts."
And I: "Although I gaze into your faces,
No one I recognize; but if may please you
Aught I have power to do, ye well-born spirits,
Speak ye, and I will do it, by that peace
Which, following the feet of such a Guide,

From world to world makes itself sought by me.”
And one began: “Each one has confidence
 In thy good offices without an oath,
 Unless the I cannot cut off the I will;⁵⁸⁷
Whence I, who speak alone before the others,⁵⁸⁸
 Pray thee, if ever thou dost see the land
 That ’twixt Romagna lies and that of Charles,
Thou be so courteous to me of thy prayers
 In Fano, that they pray for me devoutly,
 That I may purge away my grave offences.
From thence was I; but the deep wounds, through which
 Issued the blood wherein I had my seat,⁵⁸⁹
 Were dealt me in bosom of the Antenori,⁵⁹⁰
There where I thought to be the most secure;
 ’Twas he of Este had it done, who held me
 In hatred far beyond what justice willed.
But if towards the Mira I had fled,⁵⁹¹
 When I was overtaken at Oriaco,
 I still should be o’er yonder where men breathe.
I ran to the lagoon, and reeds and mire
 Did so entangle me I fell, and saw there
 A lake made from my veins upon the ground.”
Then said another: “Ah, be that desire
 Fulfilled that draws thee to the lofty mountain,
 As thou with pious pity aidest mine.
I was of Montefeltro, and am Buonconte;⁵⁹²
 Giovanna, nor none other cares for me;⁵⁹³
 Hence among these I go with downcast front.”
And I to him: “What violence or what chance
 Led thee astray so far from Campaldino,⁵⁹⁴
 That never has thy sepulture been known?”
“Oh,” he replied, “at Casentino’s foot
 A river crosses named Archiano, born
 Above the Hermitage in Apennine.⁵⁹⁵
There where the name thereof becometh void⁵⁹⁶
 Did I arrive, pierced through and through the throat,

Fleeing on foot, and bloodying the plain;
There my sight lost I, and my utterance
 Ceased in the name of Mary, and thereat
 I fell, and tenantless my flesh remained.
Truth will I speak, repeat it to the living;
 God's Angel took me up, and he of hell⁵⁹⁷
 Shouted: 'O thou from heaven, why dost thou rob me?
Thou bearest away the eternal part of him,
 For one poor little tear, that takes him from me;
 But with the rest I'll deal in other fashion!'
Well knowest thou how in the air is gathered⁵⁹⁸
 That humid vapor which to water turns,
 Soon as it rises where the cold doth grasp it.
He joined that evil will, which aye seeks evil,⁵⁹⁹
 To intellect, and moved the mist and wind
 By means of power, which his own nature gave;
Thereafter, when the day was spent, the valley
 From Pratomagno to the great yoke covered⁶⁰⁰
 With fog, and made the heaven above intent,
So that the pregnant air to water changed;⁶⁰¹
 Down fell the rain, and to the gullies came
 Whate'er of it earth tolerated not;
And as it mingled with the mighty torrents,
 Towards the royal river with such speed
 It headlong rushed, that nothing held it back.
My frozen body near unto its outlet
 The robust Archian found, and into Arno
 Thrust it, and loosened from my breast the cross⁶⁰²
I made of me, when agony o'ercame me;
 It rolled me on the banks and on the bottom,
 Then with its booty covered and begirt me."
"Ah, when thou hast returned unto the world,
 And rested thee from thy long journeying,"
 After the second followed the third spirit,
"Do thou remember me who am the Pia;
 Siena made me, unmade me Maremma,⁶⁰³

He knoweth it, who had encircled first,
Espousing me, my finger with his gem."

CANTO VI

Sordello.

Whene'er is broken up the game of Zara,⁶⁰⁴
He who has lost remains behind despondent,
The throws repeating, and in sadness learns;
The people with the other all depart;
One goes in front, and one behind doth pluck him,
And at his side one brings himself to mind;
He pauses not, and this and that one hears;
They crowd no more to whom his hand he stretches,
And from the throng he thus defends himself.
Even such was I in that dense multitude,
Turning to them this way and that my face,
And, promising, I freed myself therefrom.
There was the Aretine, who from the arms⁶⁰⁵
Untamed of Ghin di Tacco had his death,⁶⁰⁶
And he who fleeing from pursuit was drowned.⁶⁰⁷
There was imploring with his hands outstretched
Frederick Novello, and that one of Pisa⁶⁰⁸
Who made the good Marzucco seem so strong.
I saw Count Orso; and the soul divided⁶⁰⁹
By hatred and by envy from its body,
As it declared, and not for crime committed,
Pierre de la Brosse I say; and here provide⁶¹⁰
While still on earth the Lady of Brabant,
So that for this she be of no worse flock!
As soon as I was free from all those shades
Who only prayed that someone else may pray,

So as to hasten their becoming holy,
Began I: "It appears that thou deniest,
O light of mine, expressly in some text,
That orison can bend decree of Heaven;⁶¹¹
And ne'ertheless these people pray for this.
Might then their expectation bootless be?
Or is to me thy saying not quite clear?"
And he to me: "My writing is explicit,
And not fallacious is the hope of these,
If with sane intellect 'tis well regarded;
For top of judgment doth not vail itself,⁶¹²
Because the fire of love fulfils at once
What he must satisfy who here installs him.
And there, where I affirmed that proposition,
Defect was not amended by a prayer,
Because the prayer from God was separate.
Verily, in so deep a questioning
Do not decide, unless she tell it thee,
Who light 'twixt truth and intellect shall be.
I know not if thou understand; I speak
Of Beatrice; her shalt thou see above,
Smiling and happy, on this mountain's top."
And I: "Good Leader, let us make more haste,
For I no longer tire me as before;
And see, e'en now the hill a shadow casts."⁶¹³
"We will go forward with this day," he answered,
"As far as now is possible for us;
But otherwise the fact is than thou thinkest.
Ere thou art up there, thou shalt see return
Him, who now hides himself behind the hill,
So that thou dost not interrupt his rays.
But yonder there behold! a soul that stationed
All, all alone is looking hitherward;
It will point out to us the quickest way."
We came up unto it; O Lombard soul,
How lofty and disdainful thou didst bear thee,
And grand and slow in moving of thine eyes!

Nothing whatever did it say to us,
 But let us go our way, eying us only
 After the manner of a couchant lion;
Still near to it Virgilius drew, entreating
 That it would point us out the best ascent;
 And it replied not unto his demand,
But of our native land and of our life
 It questioned us; and the sweet Guide began:
 “Mantua,”—and the shade, all in itself recluse,
Rose tow’rds him from the place where first it was,
 Saying: “O Mantuan, I am Sordello⁶¹⁴
 Of thine own land!” and one embraced the other.
Ah! servile Italy, grief’s hostelry!⁶¹⁵
 A ship without a pilot in great tempest!
 No Lady thou of Provinces, but brothel!
That noble soul was so impatient, only
 At the sweet sound of his own native land,
 To make its citizen glad welcome there;
And now within thee are not without war
 Thy living ones, and one doth gnaw the other
 Of those whom one wall and one fosse shut in!
Search, wretched one, all round about the shores
 Thy seaboard, and then look within thy bosom,
 If any part of thee enjoyeth peace!
What boots it, that for thee Justinian
 The bridle mend, if empty be the saddle?⁶¹⁶
 Withouten this the shame would be the less.
Ah! people, thou that oughtest to be devout,
 And to let Caesar sit upon the saddle,⁶¹⁷
 If well thou hearest what God teacheth thee,
Behold how fell this wild beast has become,
 Being no longer by the spur corrected,
 Since thou hast laid thy hand upon the bridle.
O German Albert! who abandonest⁶¹⁸
 Her that has grown recalcitrant and savage,
 And oughtest to bestride her saddle-bow,

May a just judgment from the stars down fall
Upon thy blood, and be it new and open,
That thy successor may have fear thereof;
Because thy father and thyself have suffered,
By greed of those transalpine lands distrained,
The garden of the empire to be waste.

Come and behold Montecchi and Cappelletti,⁶¹⁹
Monaldi and Fillipeschi, careless man!⁶²⁰
Those sad already, and these doubt-depressed!
Come, cruel one! come and behold the oppression
Of thy nobility, and cure their wounds,
And thou shalt see how safe is Santafiore!⁶²¹

Come and behold thy Rome, that is lamenting,⁶²²
Widowed, alone, and day and night exclaims,
“My Caesar, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Come and behold how loving are the people;
And if for us no pity moveth thee,
Come and be made ashamed of thy renown!

And if it lawful be, O Jove Supreme!⁶²³
Who upon earth for us wast crucified,
Are thy just eyes averted otherwhere?

Or preparation is’t, that, in the abyss
Of thine own counsel, for some good thou makest
From our perception utterly cut off?

For all the towns of Italy are full
Of tyrants, and becometh a Marcellus⁶²⁴
Each peasant churl who plays the partisan!

My Florence! well mayst thou contented be⁶²⁵
With this digression, which concerns thee not,
Thanks to thy people who such forethought take!

Many at heart have justice, but shoot slowly,
That unadvised they come not to the bow,
But on their very lips thy people have it!

Many refuse to bear the common burden;
But thy solicitous people answereth
Without being asked, and crieth: “I submit.”

Now be thou joyful, for thou hast good reason;
Thou affluent, thou in peace, thou full of wisdom!
If I speak true, the event conceals it not.
Athens and Lacedaemon, they who made
The ancient laws, and were so civilized,
Made towards living well a little sign
Compared with thee, who makest such fine-spun
Provisions, that to middle of November
Reaches not what thou in October spinnest.
How oft, within the time of thy remembrance,
Laws, money, offices, and usages
Hast thou remodelled, and renewed thy members?⁶²⁶
And if thou mind thee well, and see the light,
Thou shalt behold thyself like a sick woman,
Who cannot find repose upon her down,
But by her tossing wardeth off her pain.

CANTO VII

The Valley of the Princes.

After the gracious and glad salutations
Had three and four times been reiterated,
Sordello backward drew and said, "Who are you?"
"Or ever to this mountain were directed
The souls deserving to ascend to God,
My bones were buried by Octavian.⁶²⁷
I am Virgilius; and for no crime else
Did I lose heaven, than for not having faith";
In this wise then my Leader made reply.
As one who suddenly before him sees
Something whereat he marvels, who believes
And yet does not, saying, "It is! it is not!"
So he appeared; and then bowed down his brow,
And with humility returned towards him,
And, where inferiors embrace, embraced him.
"O glory of the Latians, thou," he said,
"Through whom our language showed what it could do,
O pride eternal of the place I came from,
What merit or what grace to me reveals thee?
If I to hear thy words be worthy, tell me
If thou dost come from Hell, and from what cloister."
"Through all the circles of the doleful realm,"
Responded he, "have I come hitherward;
Heaven's power impelled me, and with that I come.
I by not doing, not by doing, lost
The sight of that high sun which thou desirest,

And which too late by me was recognized.
A place there is below not sad with torments,⁶²⁸
 But darkness only, where the lamentations
 Have not the sound of wailing, but are sighs.
There dwell I with the little innocents
 Snatched by the teeth of Death, or ever they
 Were from our human sinfulness exempt.
There dwell I among those who the three saintly⁶²⁹
 Virtues did not put on, and without vice
 The others knew and followed all of them.⁶³⁰
But if thou know and can, some indication
 Give us by which we may the sooner come
 Where Purgatory has its right beginning."
He answered: "No fixed place has been assigned us;
 'Tis lawful for me to go up and round;
 So far as I can go, as guide I join thee.
But see already how the day declines,
 And to go up by night we are not able;⁶³¹
 Therefore 'tis well to think of some fair sojourn.
Souls are there on the right hand here withdrawn;
 If thou permit me I will lead thee to them,
 And thou shalt know them not without delight."
"How is this?" was the answer; "should one wish
 To mount by night would he prevented be
 By others? or mayhap would not have power?"
And on the ground the good Sordello drew
 His finger, saying, "See, this line alone
 Thou couldst not pass after the sun is gone;
Not that aught else would hindrance give, however,
 To going up, save the nocturnal darkness;
 This with the want of power the will perplexes.
We might indeed therewith return below,
 And, wandering, walk the hill-side round about,
 While the horizon holds the day imprisoned."
Thereon my Lord, as if in wonder, said:
 "Do thou conduct us thither, where thou sayest
 That we can take delight in tarrying."

Little had we withdrawn us from that place,
When I perceived the mount was hollowed out
In fashion as the valleys here are hollowed.
“Thitherward,” said that shade, “will we repair,
Where of itself the hill-side makes a lap,
And there for the new day will we await.”

’Twixt hill and plain there was a winding path⁶³²
Which led us to the margin of that dell,
Where dies the border more than half away.

Gold and fine silver, and scarlet and pearl-white,⁶³³
The Indian wood resplendent and serene,
Fresh emerald the moment it is broken,
By herbage and by flowers within that hollow
Planted, each one in color would be vanquished,
As by its greater vanquished is the less.

Nor in that place had nature painted only,
But of the sweetness of a thousand odors
Made there a mingled fragrance and unknown.

“*Salve Regina*,” on the green and flowers⁶³⁴
There seated, singing, spirits I beheld,
Which were not visible outside the valley.

“Before the scanty sun now seeks his nest,”
Began the Mantuan who had led us thither,
“Among them do not wish me to conduct you.

Better from off this ledge the acts and faces
Of all of them will you discriminate,
Than in the plain below received among them.

He who sits highest, and the semblance bears
Of having what he should have done neglected,
And to the others’ song moves not his lips,

Rudolph the Emperor was, who had the power⁶³⁵
To heal the wounds that Italy have slain,
So that through others slowly she revives.

The other, who in look doth comfort him,
Governed the region where the water springs,
The Moldau bears the Elbe, and Elbe the sea.

His name was Ottocar; and in swaddling-clothes⁶³⁶

Far better he than bearded Winceslaus⁶³⁷

His son, who feeds in luxury and ease.

And the small-nosed, who close in council seems⁶³⁸

With him that has an aspect so benign,⁶³⁹

Died fleeing and disflowering the lily;

Look there, how he is beating at his breast!

Behold the other one, who for his cheek

Sighing has made of his own palm a bed;

Father and father-in-law of France's Pest⁶⁴⁰

Are they, and know his vicious life and lewd,

And hence proceeds the grief that so doth pierce them.

He who appears so stalwart, and chimes in,⁶⁴¹

Singing, with that one of the manly nose,⁶⁴²

The cord of every valor wore begirt;

And if as King had after him remained

The stripling who in rear of him is sitting,⁶⁴³

Well had the valor passed from vase to vase,

Which cannot of the other heirs be said.

Frederick and Jacomo possess the realms,

But none the better heritage possesses.

Not oftentimes upriseth through the branches⁶⁴⁴

The probity of man; and this He wills

Who gives it, so that we may ask of Him.

Eke to the large-nosed reach my words, no less⁶⁴⁵

Than to the other, Pier, who with him sings;

Whence Provence and Apulia grieve already⁶⁴⁶

The plant is as inferior to its seed,

As more than Beatrice and Margaret⁶⁴⁷

Costanza boasteth of her husband still.⁶⁴⁸

Behold the monarch of the simple life,

Harry of England, sitting there alone;⁶⁴⁹

He in his branches has a better issue.

He who the lowest on the ground among them

Sits looking upward, is the Marquis William,⁶⁵⁰

For whose sake Alessandria and her war⁶⁵¹
Make Monferrat and Canavese weep.”

CANTO VIII

*The Guardian Angels and the serpent—Nino
di Gallura—Currado Malaspina.*

'Twas now the hour that turneth back desire⁶⁵²
In those who sail the sea, and melts the heart,
The day they've said to their sweet friends farewell,
And the new pilgrim penetrates with love,⁶⁵³
If he doth hear from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day,⁶⁵⁴
When I began to make of no avail
My hearing, and to watch one of the souls
Uprisen, that begged attention with its hand.
It joined and lifted upward both its palms,
Fixing its eyes upon the orient,
As if it said to God, "Naught else I care for."
"Te lucis ante" so devoutly issued⁶⁵⁵
Forth from its mouth, and with such dulcet notes,
It made me issue forth from my own mind.
And then the others, sweetly and devoutly,
Accompanied it through all the hymn entire,
Having their eyes on the supernal wheels.
Here, Reader, fix thine eyes well on the truth,
For now indeed so subtle is the veil,
Surely to penetrate within is easy.
I saw that army of the gentle-born
Thereafterward in silence upward gaze,
As if in expectation, pale and humble;
And from on high come forth and down descend,

I saw two Angels with two flaming swords,⁶⁵⁶

Truncated and deprived of their points.⁶⁵⁷

Green as the little leaflets just now born⁶⁵⁸

Their garments were, which, by their verdant pinions
Beaten and blown abroad, they trailed behind.

One just above us came to take his station,

And one descended to the opposite bank,
So that the people were contained between them.

Clearly in them discerned I the blond head;

But in their faces was the eye bewildered,
As faculty confounded by excess.

“From Mary’s bosom both of them have come,”

Sordello said, “as guardians of the valley
Against the serpent, that will come anon.”

Whereupon I, who knew not by what road,
Turned round about, and closely drew myself,
Utterly frozen, to the faithful shoulders.

And once again Sordello: “Now descend we
’Mid the grand shades, and we will speak to them;
Right pleasant will it be for them to see you.”

Only three steps I think that I descended,
And was below, and saw one who was looking
Only at me, as if he fain would know me.

Already now the air was growing dark,
But not so that between his eyes and mine⁶⁵⁹
It did not show what it before locked up.

Tow’rds me he moved, and I tow’rds him did move;
Noble Judge Nino! how it me delighted,⁶⁶⁰
When I beheld thee not among the damned!

No greeting fair was left unsaid between us;
Then asked he: “How long is it since thou camest
O’er the far waters to the mountain’s foot?”

“Oh!” said I to him, “through the dismal places
I came this morn; and am in the first life,
Albeit the other, going thus, I gain.”

And on the instant my reply was heard,

He and Sordello both shrank back from me,
Like people who are suddenly bewildered.
One to Virgilius, and the other turned
To one who sat there, crying, “Up, Currado!
Come and behold what God in grace has willed!”
Then, turned to me: “By that especial grace
Thou owest unto Him, who so conceals
His own first wherefore, that it has no ford,
When thou shalt be beyond the waters wide,
Tell my Giovanna that she pray for me,⁶⁶¹
Where answer to the innocent is made.
I do not think her mother loves me more,
Since she has laid aside her wimple white,
Which she, unhappy, needs must wish again.⁶⁶²
Through her full easily is comprehended
How long in woman lasts the fire of love,
If eye or touch do not relight it often.
So fair a hatchment will not make for her⁶⁶³
The Viper marshalling the Milanese⁶⁶⁴
A-field, as would have made Gallura’s Cock.”⁶⁶⁵
In this wise spake he, with the stamp impressed
Upon his aspect of that righteous zeal
Which measurably burneth in the heart.
My greedy eyes still wandered up to heaven,
Still to that point where slowest are the stars,
Even as a wheel the nearest to its axle.
And my Conductor: “Son, what dost thou gaze at
Up there?” And I to him: “At those three torches⁶⁶⁶
With which this hither pole is all on fire.”
And he to me: “The four resplendent stars
Thou sawest this morning are down yonder low,
And these have mounted up to where those were.”
As he was speaking, to himself Sordello
Drew him, and said, “Lo there our Adversary!”
And pointed with his finger to look thither.
Upon the side on which the little valley

No barrier hath, a serpent was; perchance
The same which gave to Eve the bitter food.

'Twixt grass and flowers came on the evil streak,⁶⁶⁷

Turning at times its head about, and licking
Its back like to a beast that smoothes itself.

I did not see, and therefore cannot say
How the celestial falcons 'gan to move,
But well I saw that they were both in motion.

Hearing the air cleft by their verdant wings,
The serpent fled, and round the Angels wheeled,
Up to their stations flying back alike.

The shade that to the Judge had near approached
When he had called, throughout that whole assault
Had not a moment loosed its gaze on me.

"So may the light that leadeth thee on high
Find in thine own free-will as much of wax
As needful is up to the highest azure,"⁶⁶⁸

Began it, "if some true intelligence
Of Valdimagra or its neighborhood⁶⁶⁹
Thou knowest, tell it me, who once was great there.

Currado Malaspina was I called;⁶⁷⁰
I'm not the elder, but from him descended;
To mine I bore the love which here refineth."
"O," said I unto him, "through your domains
I never passed, but where is there a dwelling
Throughout all Europe, where they are not known?"

That fame, which doeth honor to your house,
Proclaims its Signors and proclaims its land,
So that he knows of them who ne'er was there.

And, as I hope for heaven, I swear to you
Your honored family in naught abates
The glory of the purse and of the sword.

It is so privileged by use and nature,
That though a guilty head misguide the world,⁶⁷¹
Sole it goes right, and scorns the evil way."

And he: "Now go; for the sun shall not lie

Seven times upon the pillow which the Ram⁶⁷²
With all his four feet covers and bestrides,
Before that such a courteous opinion
Shall in the middle of thy head be nailed⁶⁷³
With greater nails than of another's speech,
Unless the course of justice standeth still."⁶⁷⁴

CANTO IX

Dante's dream of the eagle—The gate of Purgatory.

The concubine of old Tithonus now⁶⁷⁵
Gleamed white upon the eastern balcony,⁶⁷⁶
Forth from the arms of her sweet paramour;
With gems her forehead all relucent was,
Set in the shape of that cold animal⁶⁷⁷
Which with its tail doth smite amain the nations,
And of the steps, with which she mounts, the Night
Had taken two in that place where we were,⁶⁷⁸
And now the third was bending down its wings;
When I, who something had of Adam in me,⁶⁷⁹
Vanquished by sleep, upon the grass reclined,
There were all five of us already sat.⁶⁸⁰
Just at the hour when her sad lay begins
The little swallow, near unto the morning,⁶⁸¹
Perchance in memory of her former woes,
And when the mind of man, a wanderer
More from the flesh, and less by thought imprisoned,
Almost prophetic in its visions is,⁶⁸²
In dreams it seemed to me I saw suspended
An eagle in the sky, with plumes of gold,
With wings wide open, and intent to stoop,
And this, it seemed to me, was where had been⁶⁸³
By Ganymede his kith and kin abandoned,
When to the high consistory he was rapt.

I thought within myself, perchance he strikes
From habit only here, and from elsewhere
Disdains to bear up any in his feet.

Then wheeling somewhat more, it seemed to me,
Terrible as the lightning he descended,
And snatched me upward even to the fire.⁶⁸⁴

Therein it seemed that he and I were burning,
And the imagined fire did scorch me so,
That of necessity my sleep was broken.

Not otherwise Achilles started up,
Around him turning his awakened eyes,
And knowing not the place in which he was,
What time from Chiron stealthily his mother⁶⁸⁵
Carried him sleeping in her arms to Scyros,
Wherfrom the Greeks withdrew him afterwards,
Than I upstarted, when from off my face
Sleep fled away; and pallid I became,
As doth the man who freezes with affright.

Only my Comforter was at my side,
And now the sun was more than two hours high,
And turned towards the sea-shore was my face.

“Be not intimidated,” said my Lord,
“Be reassured, for all is well with us;
Do not restrain, but put forth all thy strength.

Thou hast at length arrived at Purgatory;
See there the cliff that closes it around;
See there the entrance, where it seems disjoined.

Whilom at dawn, which doth precede the day,
When inwardly thy spirit was asleep⁶⁸⁶
Upon the flowers that deck the land below,
There came a Lady and said: ‘I am Lucia;⁶⁸⁷
Let me take this one up, who is asleep;
So will I make his journey easier for him.’
Sordello and the other noble shapes⁶⁸⁸
Remained; she took thee, and, as day grew bright,
Upward she came, and I upon her footsteps.

She laid thee here; and first her beauteous eyes
That open entrance pointed out to me;
Then she and sleep together went away.”⁶⁸⁹

In guise of one whose doubts are reassured,
And who to confidence his fear doth change,
After the truth has been discovered to him,
So did I change; and when without disquiet
My Leader saw me, up along the cliff
He moved, and I behind him, tow’rd the height.

Reader, thou seest well how I exalt
My theme, and therefore if with greater art
I fortify it, marvel not thereat.

Nearer approached we, and were in such place,
That there, where first appeared to me a rift
Like to a crevice that disparts a wall,
I saw a portal, and three stairs beneath,
Diverse in color, to go up to it,
And a gate-keeper, who yet spake no word.

And as I opened more and more mine eyes,
I saw him seated on the highest stair,
Such in the face that I endured it not.

And in his hand he had a naked sword,
Which so reflected back the sunbeams tow’rds us,
That oft in vain I lifted up mine eyes.

“Tell it from where you are, what is’t you wish?”
Began he to exclaim; “where is the escort?
Take heed your coming hither harm you not!”

“A Lady of Heaven, with these things conversant,”
My Master answered him, “but even now
Said to us, ‘Thither go; there is the portal.’”

“And may she speed your footsteps in all good,”
Again began the courteous janitor;
“Come forward then unto these stairs of ours.”

Thither did we approach; and the first stair⁶⁹⁰
Was marble white, so polished and so smooth,
I mirrored myself therein as I appear.

The second, tinct of deeper hue than perse,⁶⁹¹

Was of a calcined and uneven stone,
Cracked all asunder lengthwise and across.
The third, that uppermost rests massively,
Porphyry seemed to me, as flaming red
As blood that from a vein is spirting forth.
Both of his feet was holding upon this
 The Angel of God, upon the threshold seated,
 Which seemed to me a stone of diamond.⁶⁹²
Along the three stairs upward with good will
 Did my Conductor draw me, saying: "Ask
 Humbly that he the fastening may undo."
Devoutly at the holy feet I cast me,
 For mercy's sake besought that he would open,
 But first upon my breast three times I smote.
Seven P's upon my forehead he described⁶⁹³
 With the sword's point, and, "Take heed that thou wash
 These wounds, when thou shalt be within," he said.
Ashes, or earth that dry is excavated,
 Of the same color were with his attire,
 And from beneath it he drew forth two keys.
One was of gold, and the other was of silver;⁶⁹⁴
 First with the white, and after with the yellow,
 Plied he the door, so that I was content.
"Whenever faileth either of these keys
 So that it turn not rightly in the lock,"
 He said to us, "this entrance doth not open.
More precious one is, but the other needs
 More art and intellect ere it unlock,
 For it is that which doth the knot unloose.
From Peter I have them; and he bade me err
 Rather in opening than in keeping shut,
 If people but fall down before my feet."
Then pushed the portals of the sacred door,
 Exclaiming: "Enter; but I give you warning
 That forth returns whoever looks behind."⁶⁹⁵
And when upon their hinges were turned round
 The swivels of that consecrated gate,

Which are of metal, massive and sonorous,
Roared not so loud, nor so discordant seemed⁶⁹⁶
 Tarpeia, when was ta'en from it the good
 Metellus, wherefore meagre it remained.⁶⁹⁷
At the first thunder-peal I turned attentive,
 And “*Te Deum laudamus*” seemed to hear⁶⁹⁸
 In voices mingled with sweet melody.
Exactly such an image rendered me
 That which I heard, as we are wont to catch,
 When people singing with the organ stand;⁶⁹⁹
For now we hear, and now hear not, the words.

CANTO X

*The First Circle—The Proud—The sculptures
on the wall.*

When we had crossed the threshold of the door⁷⁰⁰

Which the perverted love of souls disuses,

Because it makes the crooked way seem straight,

Re-echoing I heard it closed again;

And if I had turned back mine eyes upon it,

What for my failing had been fit excuse?

We mounted upward through a rifted rock,

Which undulated to this side and that,

Even as a wave receding and advancing.

“Here it behoves us use a little art,”

Began my Leader, “to adapt ourselves

Now here, now there, to the receding side.”

And this our footsteps so infrequent made,

That sooner had the moon’s decreasing disk⁷⁰¹

Regained its bed to sink again to rest,

Than we were forth from out that needle’s eye;

But when we free and in the open were,

There where the mountain backward piles itself,

I wearied out, and both of us uncertain

About our way, we stopped upon a plain

More desolate than roads across the deserts.

From where its margin borders on the void,

To foot of the high bank that ever rises,

A human body three times told would measure;

And far as eye of mine could wing its flight,

Now on the left, and on the right flank now,
The same this cornice did appear to me.
Thereon our feet had not been moved as yet,
When I perceived the embankment round about,
Which all right of ascent had interdicted,⁷⁰²
To be of marble white, and so adorned
With sculptures, that not only Polycletus,⁷⁰³
But Nature's self, had there been put to shame.⁷⁰⁴
The Angel, who came down to earth with tidings
Of peace, that had been wept for many a year,
And opened Heaven from its long interdict,
In front of us appeared so truthfully
There sculptured in a gracious attitude,
He did not seem an image that is silent.
One would have sworn that he was saying, "Ave",⁷⁰⁵
For she was there in effigy portrayed
Who turned the key to ope the exalted love,
And in her mien this language had impressed,
"Ecce ancilla Dei," as distinctly⁷⁰⁶
As any figure stamps itself in wax.
"Keep not thy mind upon one place alone,"
The gentle Master said, who had me standing
Upon that side where people have their hearts;
Whereat I moved mine eyes, and I beheld
In rear of Mary, and upon that side
Where he was standing who conducted me,
Another story on the rock imposed;
Wherefore I passed Virgilius and drew near,
So that before mine eyes it might be set.
There sculptured in the self-same marble were
The cart and oxen, drawing the holy ark,
Wherefore one dreads an office not appointed.⁷⁰⁷
People appeared in front, and all of them
In seven choirs divided, of two senses
Made one say, "No," the other, "Yes, they sing."
Likewise unto the smoke of the frankincense,

Which there was imaged forth, the eyes and nose
Were in the yes and no discordant made.

Preceded there the vessel benedight,
Dancing with girded loins, the humble Psalmist,⁷⁰⁸
And more and less than King was he in this.

Opposite, represented at the window
Of a great palace, Michal looked upon him,⁷⁰⁹
Even as a woman scornful and afflicted.

I moved my feet from where I had been standing,
To examine near at hand another story,
Which after Michal glimmered white upon me.

There the high glory of the Roman Prince⁷¹⁰
Was chronicled, whose great beneficence

Moved Gregory to his great victory;⁷¹¹
'Tis of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking;
And a poor widow at his bridle stood,
In attitude of weeping and of grief.

Around about him seemed it thronged and full
Of cavaliers, and the eagles in the gold
Above them visibly in the wind were moving.

The wretched woman in the midst of these
Seemed to be saying: "Give me vengeance, Lord,
For my dead son, for whom my heart is breaking."

And he to answer her: "Now wait until
I shall return." And she: "My Lord," like one
In whom grief is impatient, "shouldst thou not
Return?" And he: "Who shall be where I am
Will give it thee." And she: "Good deed of others
What boots it thee, if thou neglect thine own?"

Whence he: "Now comfort thee, for it behoves me
That I discharge my duty ere I move;
Justice so wills, and pity doth retain me."

He who on no new thing has ever looked
Was the creator of this visible language,
Novel to us, for here it is not found.

While I delighted me in contemplating
The images of such humility,

And dear to look on for their Maker's sake,
"Behold, upon this side, but rare they make
Their steps," the Poet murmured, "many people;
These will direct us to the lofty stairs."
Mine eyes, that in beholding were intent
To see new things, of which they curious are,
In turning round towards him were not slow.
But still I wish not, Reader, thou shouldst swerve
From thy good purposes, because thou hearest
How God ordaineth that the debt be paid;
Attend not to the fashion of the torment,
Think of what follows; think that at the worst
It cannot reach beyond the mighty sentence.
"Master," began I, "that which I behold
Moving towards us seems to me not persons,
And what I know not, so in sight I waver."
And he to me: "The grievous quality
Of this their torment bows them so to earth,
That my own eyes at first contended with it;
But look there fixedly, and disentangle
By sight what cometh underneath those stones;
Already canst thou see how each is stricken."
O ye proud Christians! wretched, weary ones!
Who, in the vision of the mind infirm,
Confidence have in your backsliding steps,
Do ye not comprehend that we are worms,⁷¹²
Born to bring forth the angelic butterfly
That flieth unto judgment without screen?
Why floats aloft your spirit high in air?⁷¹³
Like are ye unto insects undeveloped,
Even as the worm in whom formation fails!
As to sustain a ceiling or a roof,
In place of corbel, oftentimes a figure
Is seen to join its knees unto its breast,
Which makes of the unreal real anguish
Arise in him who sees it; fashioned thus
Beheld I those, when I had ta'en good heed.

True is it, they were more or less bent down,
According as they more or less were laden;
And he who had most patience in his looks
Weeping did seem to say, "I can no more!"

CANTO XI

*Omberto di Santafiore—Oderisi d'
Agobbio—Provenzan Salvani.*

“Our Father, thou who dwellest in the heavens,
Not circumscribed, but from the greater love
Thou bearest to the first effects on high,⁷¹⁴
Praised be thy name and thine omnipotence
By every creature, as befitting is
To render thanks to thy sweet effluence.⁷¹⁵
Come unto us the peace of thy dominion,
For unto it we cannot of ourselves,
If it come not, with all our intellect.
Even as thine own Angels of their will
Make sacrifice to thee, Hosanna singing,
So may all men make sacrifice of theirs.
Give unto us this day our daily manna,
Withouten which in this rough wilderness
Backward goes he who toils most to advance.
And even as we the trespass we have suffered
Pardon in one another, pardon thou
Benignly, and regard not our desert.
Our virtue, which is easily o’ercome,
Put not to proof with the old Adversary,
But thou from him who spurs it so, deliver.
This last petition verily, dear Lord,
Not for ourselves is made, who need it not,
But for their sake who have remained behind us.”
Thus for themselves and us good furtherance

Those shades imploring, went beneath a weight
Like unto that of which we sometimes dream,
Unequally in anguish round and round
And weary all, upon that foremost cornice,
Purging away the smoke-stains of the world.
If there good words are always said for us,
What may not here be said and done for them,
By those who have a good root to their will?
Well may we help them wash away the marks
That hence they carried, so that clean and light
They may ascend unto the starry wheels!
“Ah! so may pity and justice you disburden
Soon, that ye may have power to move the wing,
That shall uplift you after your desire,
Show us on which hand tow’rd the stairs the way
Is shortest, and if more than one the passes,
Point us out that which least abruptly falls;
For he who cometh with me, through the burden
Of Adam’s flesh wherewith he is invested,
Against his will is chary of his climbing.”⁷¹⁶
The words of theirs which they returned to those
That he whom I was following had spoken,
It was not manifest from whom they came,
But it was said: “To the right hand come with us
Along the bank, and ye shall find a pass
Possible for living person to ascend.
And were I not impeded by the stone,
Which this proud neck of mine doth subjugate,
Whence I am forced to hold my visage down,
Him, who still lives and does not name himself,
Would I regard, to see if I may know him
And make him piteous unto this burden.
A Latian was I, and born of a great Tuscan;⁷¹⁷
Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi was my father;
I know not if his name were ever with you.
The ancient blood and deeds of gallantry
Of my progenitors so arrogant made me

That, thinking not upon the common mother,
All men I held in scorn to such extent
 I died therefor, as know the Sienese,
 And every child in Campagnatico.
I am Omberto; and not to me alone
 Has pride done harm, but all my kith and kin
 Has with it dragged into adversity.
And here must I this burden bear for it
 Till God be satisfied, since I did not
 Among the living, here among the dead.”
Listening I downward bent my countenance;
 And one of them, not this one who was speaking,
 Twisted himself beneath the weight that cramps him,
And looked at me, and knew me, and called out,
 Keeping his eyes laboriously fixed
 On me, who all bowed down was going with them.
“O,” asked I him, “art thou not Oderisi,⁷¹⁸
 Agobbio’s honor, and honor of that art
 Which is in Paris called illuminating?”⁷¹⁹
“Brother,” said he, “more laughing are the leaves
 Touched by the brush of Franco Bolognese;⁷²⁰
 All his the honor now, and mine in part.
In sooth I had not been so courteous
 While I was living, for the great desire
 Of excellence, on which my heart was bent.
Here of such pride is paid the forfeiture;
 And yet I should not be here, were it not
 That, having power to sin, I turned to God.
O thou vain glory of the human powers,
 How little green upon thy summit lingers,
 If’t be not followed by an age of grossness!
In painting Cimabue thought that he⁷²¹
 Should hold the field, now Giotto has the cry,⁷²²
 So that the other’s fame is growing dim.
So has one Guido from the other taken⁷²³
 The glory of our tongue, and he perchance

Is born, who from the nest shall chase them both.⁷²⁴
Naught is this mundane rumor but a breath
 Of wind, that comes now this way and now that,
 And changes name, because it changes side.
What fame shalt thou have more, if old peel off⁷²⁵
 From thee thy flesh, than if thou hadst been dead
 Before thou left the *pappo* and the *dindi*,⁷²⁶
Ere pass a thousand years? which is a shorter
 Space to the eterne, than twinkling of an eye
 Unto the circle that in heaven wheels slowest.⁷²⁷
With him, who takes so little of the road⁷²⁸
 In front of me, all Tuscany resounded;
 And now he scarce is lisped of in Siena,
Where he was lord, what time was overthrown⁷²⁹
 The Florentine delirium, that superb
 Was at that day as now 'tis prostitute.
Your reputation is the color of grass
 Which comes and goes, and that discolors it
 By which it issues green from out the earth."
And I: "Thy true speech fills my heart with good⁷³⁰
 Humility, and great tumor thou assuagest;
 But who is he, of whom just now thou spakest?"
"That," he replied, "is Provenzan Salvani,⁷³¹
 And he is here because he had presumed
 To bring Siena all into his hands.
He has gone thus, and goeth without rest
 E'er since he died; such money renders back
 In payment he who is on earth too daring."
And I: "If every spirit who awaits
 The verge of life before that he repent,
 Remains below there and ascends not hither,
(Unless good orison shall him bestead,)
 Until as much time as he lived be passed,
 How was the coming granted him in largess?"
"When he in greatest splendor lived," said he,
 "Freely upon the Campo of Siena,

All shame being laid aside, he placed himself;
And there to draw his friend from the duress
Which in the prison-house of Charles he suffered,
He brought himself to tremble in each vein.[732](#)
I say no more, and know that I speak darkly;
Yet little time shall pass before thy neighbors
Will so demean themselves that thou canst gloss it.[733](#)
This action has released him from those confines.”

CANTO XII

The sculptures on the pavement—Ascent to the Second Circle.

Abreast, like oxen going in a yoke,⁷³⁴
I with that heavy-laden soul went on,
As long as the sweet pedagogue permitted;⁷³⁵
But when he said, “Leave him, and onward pass,
For here ’tis good that with the sail and oars,
As much as may be, each push on his barque”;
Upright, as walking wills it, I redressed
My person, notwithstanding that my thoughts
Remained within me downcast and abashed.
I had moved on, and followed willingly
The footsteps of my Master, and we both
Already show'd how light of foot we were,
When unto me he said: “Cast down thine eyes;
’Twere well for thee, to alleviate the way,
To look upon the bed beneath thy feet.”
As, that some memory may exist of them,
Above the buried dead their tombs in earth⁷³⁶
Bear sculptured on them what they were before;
Whence often there we weep for them afresh,
From pricking of remembrance, which alone
To the compassionate doth set its spur;
So saw I there, but of a better semblance
In point of artifice, with figures covered
Whate'er as pathway from the mount projects.
I saw that one who was created noble⁷³⁷

More than all other creatures, down from heaven
Flaming with lightnings fall upon one side.[738](#)

I saw Briareus smitten by the dart[739](#)

Celestial, lying on the other side,
Heavy upon the earth by mortal frost.

I saw Thymbraeus, Pallas saw, and Mars,[740](#)

Still clad in armour round about their father,
Gaze at the scattered members of the giants.

I saw, at foot of his great labor, Nimrod,[741](#)

As if bewildered, looking at the people
Who had been proud with him in Sennaar.[742](#)

O Niobe! with what afflicted eyes[743](#)

Thee I beheld upon the pathway traced,
Between thy seven and seven children slain![744](#)

O Saul! how fallen upon thy proper sword[745](#)

Didst thou appear there lifeless in Gilboa,
That felt thereafter neither rain nor dew![746](#)

O mad Arachne! so I thee beheld[747](#)

E'en then half spider, sad upon the shreds
Of fabric wrought in evil hour for thee!

O Rehoboam! no more seems to threaten[748](#)

Thine image there; but full of consternation
A chariot bears it off, when none pursues!

Displayed moreo'er the adamantine pavement

How unto his own mother made Alcmaeon[749](#)

Costly appear the luckless ornament;

Displayed how his own sons did throw themselves

Upon Sennacherib within the temple,[750](#)

And how, he being dead, they left him there;

Displayed the ruin and the cruel carnage

That Tomyris wrought, when she to Cyrus said,[751](#)

"Blood didst thou thirst for, and with blood I glut thee!"

Displayed how routed fled the Assyrians

After that Holofernes had been slain,[752](#)

And likewise the remainder of that slaughter.

I saw there Troy in ashes and in caverns; [753](#)

O Ilion! thee, how abject and debased,
Displayed the image that is there discerned!

Who e'er of pencil master was or stile,
That could portray the shades and traits which there
Would cause each subtile genius to admire?

Dead seemed the dead, the living seemed alive; [754](#)

Better than I saw not who saw the truth,
All that I trod upon while bowed I went.

Now wax ye proud, and on with looks uplifted,
Ye sons of Eve, and bow not down your faces
So that ye may behold your evil ways!

More of the mount by us was now encompassed,
And far more spent the circuit of the sun,
Than had the mind preoccupied imagined,

When he, who ever watchful in advance
Was going on, began: "Lift up thy head,
'Tis no more time to go thus meditating.

Lo there an Angel who is making haste
To come towards us; lo, returning is
From service of the day the sixth handmaiden. [755](#)

With reverence thine acts and looks adorn,
So that he may delight to speed us upward;
Think that this day will never dawn again."

I was familiar with his admonition
Ever to lose no time; so on this theme
He could not unto me speak covertly.

Towards us came the being beautiful
Vested in white, and in his countenance
Such as appears the tremulous morning star.

His arms he opened, and opened then his wings;
"Come," said he, "near at hand here are the steps,
And easy from henceforth is the ascent."

At this announcement few are they who come!
O human creatures, born to soar aloft,
Why fall ye thus before a little wind?

He led us on to where the rock was cleft;

There smote upon my forehead with his wings,
Then a safe passage promised unto me.
As on the right hand, to ascend the mount
Where seated is the church that lordeth it
O'er the well-guided, above Rubaconte,⁷⁵⁶
The bold abruptness of the ascent is broken
By stairways that were made there in the age
When still were safe the ledger and the stave,⁷⁵⁷
E'en thus attempered is the bank which falls
Sheer downward from the second circle there;
But on this side and that the high rock grazes.
As we were turning thitherward our persons,
“*Beati pauperes spiritu,*” voices⁷⁵⁸
Sang in such wise that speech could tell it not.
Ah me! how different are these entrances
From the Infernal! for with anthems here
One enters, and below with wild laments.
We now were mounting up the sacred stairs,
And it appeared to me by far more easy
Than on the plain it had appeared before.
Whence I: “My Master, say, what heavy thing
Has been uplifted from me, so that hardly
Aught of fatigue is felt by me in walking?”
He answered: “When the P's which have remained
Still on thy face almost obliterate
Shall wholly, as the first is, be erased,
Thy feet will be so vanquished by good will,
That not alone they shall not feel fatigue,
But urging up will be to them delight.”
Then did I even as they do who are going
With something on the head to them unknown,
Unless the signs of others make them doubt,
Wherefore the hand to ascertain is helpful,
And seeks and finds, and doth fulfill the office
Which cannot be accomplished by the sight;
And with the fingers of the right hand spread
I found but six the letters, that had carved

Upon my temples he who bore the keys;
Upon beholding which my Leader smiled.

CANTO XIII

The Second Circle—The Envious—Sapia of Siena.

We were upon the summit of the stairs,⁷⁵⁹
Where for the second time is cut away
The mountain, which ascending shriveth all.
There in like manner doth a cornice bind
The hill all round about, as does the first,
Save that its arc more suddenly is curved.
Shade is there none, nor sculpture that appears;
So seems the bank, and so the road seems smooth,
With but the livid color of the stone.⁷⁶⁰
“If to inquire we wait for people here,”
The Poet said, “I fear that peradventure
Too much delay will our election have.”
Then steadfast on the sun his eyes he fixed,
Made his right side the centre of his motion,⁷⁶¹
And turned the left part of himself about.
“O thou sweet light! with trust in whom I enter⁷⁶²
Upon this novel journey, do thou lead us,”
Said he, “as one within here should be led.
Thou warmest the world, thou shiniest over it;
If other reason prompt not otherwise,
Thy rays should evermore our leaders be!”
As much as here is counted for a mile,
So much already there had we advanced
In little time, by dint of ready will;
And tow’rds us there were heard to fly, albeit

They were not visible, spirits uttering
Unto Love's table courteous invitations,
The first voice that passed onward in its flight,
“*Vinum non habent*,” said in accents loud,⁷⁶³
And went reiterating it behind us.
And ere it wholly grew inaudible
Because of distance, passed another, crying,
“I am Orestes!” and it also stayed not.⁷⁶⁴
“O,” said I, “Father, these, what voices are they?”
And even as I asked, behold the third,
Saying: “Love those from whom ye have had evil!”⁷⁶⁵
And the good Master said: “This circle scourges
The sin of envy, and on that account
Are drawn from love the lashes of the scourge.⁷⁶⁶
The bridle of another sound shall be;
I think that thou wilt hear it, as I judge,
Before thou comest to the Pass of Pardon.⁷⁶⁷
But fix thine eyes athwart the air right steadfast,
And people thou wilt see before us sitting,
And each one close against the cliff is seated.”
Then wider than at first mine eyes I opened;
I looked before me, and saw shades with mantles
Not from the color of the stone diverse.
And when we were a little farther onward,
I heard a cry of, “Mary, pray for us!”
A cry of, “Michael, Peter, and all Saints!”⁷⁶⁸
I do not think there walketh still on earth
A man so hard, that he would not be pierced
With pity at what afterward I saw.
For when I had approached so near to them
That manifest to me their acts became,
Drained was I at the eyes by heavy grief.
Covered with sackcloth vile they seemed to me,
And one sustained the other with his shoulder,
And all of them were by the bank sustained.
Thus do the blind, in want of livelihood,

Stand at the doors of churches asking alms,
And one upon another leans his head,
So that in others pity soon may rise,
Not only at the accent of their words,
But at their aspect, which no less implores.
And as unto the blind the sun comes not,
So to the shades, of whom just now I spake,
Heaven's light will not be bounteous of itself;
For all their lids an iron wire transpierces,
And sews them up, as to a sparrowhawk wild
Is done, because it will not quiet stay.
To me it seemed, in passing, to do outrage,
Seeing the others without being seen;
Wherefore I turned me to my counsel sage.
Well knew he what the mute one wished to say,
And therefore waited not for my demand,
But said: "Speak, and be brief, and to the point."
I had Virgilius upon that side
Of the embankment from which one may fall,
Since by no border 'tis engarlanded;
Upon the other side of me I had
The shades devout, who through the horrible seam
Pressed out the tears so that they bathed their cheeks.
To them I turned me, and, "O people, certain,"
Began I, "of beholding the high light,
Which your desire has solely in its care,
So may grace speedily dissolve the scum
Upon your consciences, that limpidly
Through them descend the river of the mind,
Tell me, for dear 'twill be to me and gracious,
If any soul among you here is Latian,⁷⁶⁹
And 'twill perchance be good for him I learn it."
"O brother mine, each one is citizen
Of one true city; but thy meaning is,
Who may have lived in Italy a pilgrim."
By way of answer this I seemed to hear
A little farther on than where I stood,

Wheret I made myself still nearer heard.
Among the rest I saw a shade that waited
 In aspect, and should anyone ask how,
 Its chin it lifted upward like a blind man.
“Spirit,” I said, “who stopest to ascend,
 If thou art he who did reply to me,
 Make thyself known to me by place or name.”
“Sienese was I,” it replied, “and with
 The others here recleanse my guilty life,
 Weeping to Him to lend himself to us.
Sapient I was not, although I Sapia⁷⁷⁰
 Was called, and I was at another’s harm⁷⁷¹
 More happy far than at my own good fortune.
And that thou mayst not think that I deceive thee,
 Hear if I was as foolish as I tell thee.
 The arc already of my years descending,⁷⁷²
My fellow-citizens near unto Colle
 Were joined in battle with their adversaries,
 And I was praying God for what he willed.
Routed were they, and turned into the bitter
 Passes of flight; and I, the chase beholding,
 A joy received unequalled by all others;
So that I lifted upward my bold face
 Crying to God, ‘Henceforth I fear thee not,’⁷⁷³
 As did the blackbird at the little sunshine.
Peace I desired with God at the extreme
 Of my existence, and as yet would not
 My debt have been by penitence discharged,
Had it not been that in remembrance held me
 Pier Pettignano in his holy prayers,⁷⁷⁴
 Who out of charity was grieved for me.
But who art thou, that into our conditions
 Questioning goest, and hast thine eyes unbound
 As I believe, and breathing dost discourse?”
“Mine eyes,” I said, “will yet be here ta’en from me,
 But for short space; for small is the offence

Committed by their being turned with envy.
Far greater is the fear, wherein suspended
 My soul is, of the torment underneath,
 For even now the load down there weighs on me.”⁷⁷⁵
And she to me: “Who led thee, then, among us
 Up here, if to return below thou thinkest?”
 And I: “He who is with me, and speaks not;
And living am I; therefore ask of me,
 Spirit elect, if thou wouldst have me move
 O’er yonder yet my mortal feet for thee.”⁷⁷⁶
“O, this is such a novel thing to hear,”
 She answered, “that great sign it is God loves thee;
 Therefore with prayer of thine sometimes assist me.
And I implore, by what thou most desirest,
 If e’er thou treadest the soil of Tuscany,
 Well with my kindred reinstate my fame.
Them wilt thou see among that people vain⁷⁷⁷
 Who hope in Talamone, and will lose there⁷⁷⁸
 More hope than in discovering the Diana;⁷⁷⁹
But there still more the admirals will lose.”⁷⁸⁰

CANTO XIV

Guido del Duca and Renier da Calboli.

“Who is this one that goes about our mountain,⁷⁸¹

Or ever Death has given him power of flight,
And opes his eyes and shuts them at his will?”

“I know not who, but know he’s not alone;
Ask him thyself, for thou art nearer to him,
And gently, so that he may speak, accost him.”

Thus did two spirits, leaning tow’rds each other,⁷⁸²
Discourse about me there on the right hand;
Then held supine their faces to address me.

And said the one: “O soul, that, fastened still
Within the body, tow’rds the heaven art going,
For charity console us, and declare

Whence comest and who art thou; for thou mak’st us
As much to marvel at this grace of thine
As must a thing that never yet has been.”

And I: “Through midst of Tuscany there wanders
A streamlet that is born in Falterona,⁷⁸³
And not a hundred miles of course suffice it;
From thereupon do I this body bring.
To tell you who I am were speech in vain,
Because my name as yet makes no great noise.”

“If well thy meaning I can penetrate
With intellect of mine,” then answered me
He who first spake, “thou speakest of the Arno.”
And said the other to him: “Why concealed
This one the appellation of that river,

Even as a man doth of things horrible?"
And thus the shade that questioned was of this
 Himself acquitted: "I know not; but truly
 'Tis fit the name of such a valley perish;
For from its fountain-head (where is so pregnant
 The Alpine mountain whence is cleft Peloro⁷⁸⁴
 That in few places it that mark surpasses)
To where it yields itself in restoration
 Of what the heaven doth of the sea dry up,
 Whence have the rivers that which goes with them,
Virtue is like an enemy avoided
 By all, as is a serpent, through misfortune
 Of place, or through bad habit that impels them;
On which account have so transformed their nature⁷⁸⁵
 The dwellers in that miserable valley,
 It seems that Circe had them in her pasture.
'Mid ugly swine, of acorns worthier⁷⁸⁶
 Than other food for human use created,
 It first directeth its impoverished way.
Curs findeth it thereafter, coming downward,⁷⁸⁷
 More snarling than their puissance demands,
 And turns from them disdainfully its muzzle.
It goes on falling, and the more it grows,
 The more it finds the dogs becoming wolves,⁷⁸⁸
 This maledict and misadventurous ditch.
Descended then through many a hollow gulf,
 It finds the foxes so replete with fraud,⁷⁸⁹
 They fear no cunning that may master them.
Nor will I cease because another hears me;
 And well 'twill be for him, if still he mind him
 Of what a truthful spirit to me unravels.⁷⁹⁰
Thy grandson I behold, who doth become⁷⁹¹
 A hunter of those wolves upon the bank
 Of the wild stream, and terrifies them all.
He sells their flesh, it being yet alive;
 Thereafter slaughters them like ancient beeves;

Many of life, himself of praise, deprives.
Blood-stained he issues from the dismal forest;⁷⁹²
 He leaves it such, a thousand years from now
 In its primeval state 'tis not re-wooded."
As at the announcement of impending ills
 The face of him who listens is disturbed,
 From whate'er side the peril seize upon him;
So I beheld that other soul, which stood
 Turned round to listen, grow disturbed and sad,
 When it had gathered to itself the word.
The speech of one and aspect of the other
 Had me desirous made to know their names,
 And question mixed with prayers I made thereof,
Whereat the spirit which first spake to me
 Began again: "Thou wishest I should bring me
 To do for thee what thou'l not do for me;
But since God willeth that in thee shine forth
 Such grace of his, I'll not be chary with thee;
 Know, then, that I Guido del Duca am.⁷⁹³
My blood was so with envy set on fire,
 That if I had beheld a man make merry,
 Thou wouldst have seen me sprinkled o'er with pallor.
From my own sowing such the straw I reap!
 O human race! why dost thou set thy heart
 Where interdict of partnership must be?⁷⁹⁴
This is Renier; this is the boast and honor⁷⁹⁵
 Of the house of Calboli, where no one since
 Has made himself the heir of his desert.
And not alone his blood is made devoid,
 'Twixt Po and mount, and sea-shore and the Reno,⁷⁹⁶
 Of good required for truth and for diversion;⁷⁹⁷
For all within these boundaries is full
 Of venomous roots, so that too tardily
 By cultivation now would they diminish.
Where is good Lizio, and Arrigo Manardi,⁷⁹⁸
 Pier Traversaro, and Guido di Carpigna,⁷⁹⁹

O Romagnuoli into bastards turned?
When in Bologna will a Fabbro rise? [800](#)
 When in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco, [801](#)
 The noble scion of ignoble seed?
Be not astonished, Tuscan, if I weep,
 When I remember, with Guido da Prata, [802](#)
 Ugolin d' Azzo, who was living with us,
 Frederick Tignoso and his company, [803](#)
 The house of Traversara, and th' Anastagi, [804](#)
 And one race and the other is extinct;
The dames and cavaliers, the toils and ease [805](#)
 That filled our souls with love and courtesy,
 There where the hearts have so malicious grown!
O Brettinoro! why dost thou not flee, [806](#)
 Seeing that all thy family is gone,
 And many people, not to be corrupted?
Bagnacaval does well in not begetting [807](#)
 And ill does Castrocaro, and Conio worse,
 In taking trouble to beget such Counts.
Will do well the Pagani, when their Devil [808](#)
 Shall have departed; but not therefore pure
 Will testimony of them e'er remain.
O Ugolin de' Fantoli, secure [809](#)
 Thy name is, since no longer is awaited
 One who, degenerating, can obscure it!
But go now, Tuscan, for it now delights me
 To weep far better than it does to speak,
 So much has our discourse my mind distressed."
We were aware that those beloved souls
 Heard us depart; therefore, by keeping silent,
 They made us of our pathway confident.
When we became alone by going onward,
 Thunder, when it doth cleave the air, appeared
 A voice, that counter to us came, exclaiming: [810](#)
 "Shall slay me whosoever findeth me!" [811](#)
 And fled as the reverberation dies

If suddenly the cloud asunder bursts.
As soon as hearing had a truce from this,
Behold another, with so great a crash,
That it resembled thunderings following fast:
“I am Aglaurus, who became a stone!”⁸¹²
And then, to press myself close to the Poet,
I backward, and not forward, took a step.
Already on all sides the air was quiet;
And said he to me: “That was the hard curb
That ought to hold a man within his bounds;
But you take in the bait so that the hook
Of the old Adversary draws you to him,
And hence availeth little curb or call.⁸¹³
The heavens are calling you, and wheel around you,⁸¹⁴
Displaying to you their eternal beauties,
And still your eye is looking on the ground;⁸¹⁵
Whence He, who all discerns, chastises you.”

CANTO XV

The Third Circle—The Irascible.

As much as 'twixt the close of the third hour⁸¹⁶
And dawn of day appeareth of that sphere
Which aye in fashion of a child is playing,
So much it now appeared, towards the night,
Was of his course remaining to the sun;
There it was evening, and 'twas midnight here;
And the rays smote the middle of our faces,
Because by us the mount was so encircled,
That straight towards the west we now were going;
When I perceived my forehead overpowered
Beneath the splendor far more than at first,
And stupor were to me the things unknown;
Whereat towards the summit of my brow
I raised my hands, and made myself the visor
Which the excessive glare diminishes.
As when from off the water, or a mirror,
The sunbeam leaps unto the opposite side,
Ascending upward in the selfsame measure
That it descends, and deviates as far
From falling of a stone in line direct,⁸¹⁷
(As demonstrate experiment and art,)
So it appeared to me that by a light
Refracted there before me I was smitten;
On which account my sight was swift to flee.
“What is that, Father sweet, from which I cannot
So fully screen my sight that it avail me,”

Said I, "and seems towards us to be moving?"
"Marvel thou not, if dazzle thee as yet
 The family of heaven," he answered me;
 "An angel 'tis, who comes to invite us upward.
Soon will it be, that to behold these things
 Shall not be grievous, but delightful to thee
 As much as nature fashioned thee to feel."
When we had reached the Angel benedight,
 With joyful voice he said: "Here enter in
 To stairway far less steep than are the others."
We mounting were, already thence departed,
 And "*Beati misericordes*" was ⁸¹⁸
 Behind us sung, "Rejoice, thou that o'ercomest!" ⁸¹⁹
My Master and myself, we two alone
 Were going upward, and I thought, in going,
 Some profit to acquire from words of his;
And I to him directed me, thus asking:
 "What did the spirit of Romagna mean,
 Mentioning interdict and partnership?"
Whence he to me: "Of his own greatest failing
 He knows the harm; and therefore wonder not
 If he reprove us, that we less may rue it.
Because are thither pointed your desires
 Where by companionship each share is lessened,
 Envy doth ply the bellows to your sighs.
But if the love of the supernal sphere
 Should upwardly direct your aspiration,
 There would not be that fear within your breast;
For there, as much the more as one says *Our*, ⁸²⁰
 So much the more of good each one possesses,
 And more of charity in that cloister burns."
"I am more hungering to be satisfied,"
 I said, "than if I had before been silent,
 And more of doubt within my mind I gather.
How can it be, that boon distributed
 The more possessors can more wealthy make
 Therein, than if by few it be possessed?"

And he to me: "Because thou fixest still
Thy mind entirely upon earthly things,
Thou pluckest darkness from the very light.
That goodness infinite and ineffable⁸²¹
Which is above there, runneth unto love,
As to a lucid body comes the sunbeam.
So much it gives itself as it finds ardor,⁸²²
So that as far as charity extends,
O'er it increases the eternal valor.
And the more people thitherward aspire,
More are there to love well, and more they love there,
And, as a mirror, one reflects the other.
And if my reasoning appease thee not,
Thou shalt see Beatrice; and she will fully
Take from thee this and every other longing.
Endeavour, then, that soon may be extinct,
As are the two already, the five wounds
That close themselves again by being painful."
Even as I wished to say, "Thou dost appease me,"
I saw that I had reached another circle,
So that my eager eyes made me keep silence.
There it appeared to me that in a vision
Ecstatic on a sudden I was rapt,
And in a temple many persons saw;
And at the door a woman, with the sweet
Behavior of a mother, saying: "Son,⁸²³
Why in this manner hast thou dealt with us?
Lo, sorrowing, thy father and myself
Were seeking for thee";—and as here she ceased,
That which appeared at first had disappeared.
Then I beheld another with those waters
Adown her cheeks which grief distils whenever
From great disdain of others it is born,
And saying: "If of that city thou art lord,⁸²⁴
For whose name was such strife among the gods,
And whence doth every science scintillate,
Avenge thyself on those audacious arms

That clasped our daughter, O Pisistratus";⁸²⁵
And the lord seemed to me benign and mild
To answer her with aspect temperate:
"What shall we do to those who wish us ill,
If he who loves us be by us condemned?"
Then saw I people hot in fire of wrath,⁸²⁶
With stones a young man slaying, clamorously
Still crying to each other, "Kill him! kill him!"
And him I saw bow down, because of death
That weighed already on him, to the earth,
But of his eyes made ever gates to heaven,
Imploring the high Lord, in so great strife,
That he would pardon those his persecutors,
With such an aspect as unlocks compassion.
Soon as my soul had outwardly returned
To things external to it which are true,
Did I my not false errors recognize.⁸²⁷
My Leader, who could see me bear myself
Like to a man that rouses him from sleep,
Exclaimed: "What ails thee, that thou canst not stand?
But hast been coming more than half a league
Veiling thine eyes, and with thy legs entangled,
In guise of one whom wine or sleep subdues?"
"O my sweet Father, if thou listen to me,
I'll tell thee," said I, "what appeared to me,
When thus from me my legs were ta'en away."
And he: "If thou shouldst have a hundred masks
Upon thy face, from me would not be shut
Thy cogitations, howsoever small.
What thou hast seen was that thou mayst not fail
To ope thy heart unto the waters of peace,
Which from the eternal fountain are diffused.
I did not ask, 'What ails thee?' as he does
Who only looketh with the eyes that see not
When of the soul bereft the body lies,
But asked it to give vigor to thy feet;
Thus must we needs urge on the sluggards, slow

To use their wakefulness when it returns.”
We passed along, athwart the twilight peering
Forward as far as ever eye could stretch
Against the sunbeams serotine and lucent;
And lo! by slow degrees a smoke approached
In our direction, sombre as the night,
Nor was there place to hide one’s self therefrom.
This of our eyes and the pure air bereft us.

CANTO XVI

Marco Lombardo.

Darkness of hell, and of a night deprived⁸²⁸
Of every planet under a poor sky,⁸²⁹
As much as may be tenebrous with cloud,
Ne'er made unto my sight so thick a veil,
As did that smoke which there enveloped us,
Nor to the feeling of so rough a texture;
For not an eye it suffered to stay open;
Whereat mine escort, faithful and sagacious,
Drew near to me and offered me his shoulder.
E'en as a blind man goes behind his guide,
Lest he should wander, or should strike against
Aught that may harm or peradventure kill him,
So went I through the bitter and foul air,
Listening unto my Leader, who said only,
“Look that from me thou be not separated.”
Voices I heard, and everyone appeared
To supplicate for peace and misericord
The Lamb of God who takes away our sins.
Still “*Agnus Dei*” their exordium was;⁸³⁰
One word there was in all, and metre one,
So that all harmony appeared among them.
“Master,” I said, “are spirits those I hear?”
And he to me: “Thou apprehendest truly,
And they the knot of anger go unloosing.”
“Now who art thou, that cleavest through our smoke,
And art discoursing of us even as though

Thou didst by calends still divide the time?"⁸³¹
After this manner by a voice was spoken;
Whereon my Master said: "Do thou reply,
And ask if on this side the way go upward."
And I: "O creature that dost cleanse thyself
To return beautiful to Him who made thee,
Thou shalt hear marvels if thou follow me."
"Thee will I follow far as is allowed me,"
He answered; "and if smoke prevent our seeing,
Hearing shall keep us joined instead thereof."
Thereon began I: "With that swathing band
Which death unwindeth am I going upward,
And hither came I through the infernal anguish.
And if God in his grace has me infolded,
So that he wills that I behold his court
By method wholly out of modern usage,
Conceal not from me who ere death thou wast,
But tell it me, and tell me if I go
Right for the pass, and be thy words our escort."
"Lombard was I, and I was Marco called;⁸³²
The world I knew, and loved that excellence,
At which has each one now unbent his bow.
For mounting upward, thou art going right."
Thus he made answer, and subjoined: "I pray thee
To pray for me when thou shalt be above."
And I to him: "My faith I pledge to thee
To do what thou dost ask me; but am bursting
Inly with doubt, unless I rid me of it.
First it was simple, and is now made double
By thy opinion, which makes certain to me,
Here and elsewhere, that which I couple with it.⁸³³
The world forsooth is utterly deserted
By every virtue, as thou tellest me,
And with iniquity is big and covered;
But I beseech thee point me out the cause,
That I may see it, and to others show it;
For one in the heavens, and here below one puts it."

A sigh profound, that grief forced into Ai!⁸³⁴

He first sent forth, and then began he: "Brother,
The world is blind, and sooth thou comest from it!"

Ye who are living every cause refer⁸³⁵
Still upward to the heavens, as if all things
They of necessity moved with themselves.⁸³⁶

If this were so, in you would be destroyed⁸³⁷
Free will, nor any justice would there be
In having joy for good, or grief for evil.

The heavens your movements do initiate,
I say not all; but granting that I say it,
Light has been given you for good and evil,
And free volition; which, if some fatigue
In the first battles with the heavens it suffers,
Afterwards conquers all, if well 'tis nurtured.⁸³⁸

To greater force and to a better nature,⁸³⁹
Though free, ye subject are, and that creates
The mind in you the heavens have not in charge.

Hence, if the present world doth go astray,
In you the cause is, be it sought in you;
And I therein will now be thy true spy.⁸⁴⁰
Forth from the hand of Him, who fondles it
Before it is, like to a little girl
Weeping and laughing in her childish sport,
Issues the simple soul, that nothing knows,
Save that, proceeding from a joyous Maker,
Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.

Of trivial good at first it tastes the savor;
Is cheated by it, and runs after it,⁸⁴¹
If guide or rein turn not aside its love.

Hence it behoved laws for a rein to place,
Behoved a king to have, who at the least
Of the true city should discern the tower.⁸⁴²
The laws exist, but who sets hand to them?
No one; because the shepherd who precedes
Can ruminate, but cleaveth not the hoof;⁸⁴³

Wherefore the people that perceives its guide
 Strike only at the good for which it hankers,⁸⁴⁴
 Feeds upon that, and farther seeketh not.
Clearly canst thou perceive that evil guidance
 The cause is that has made the world depraved,
 And not that nature is corrupt in you.
Rome, that reformed the world, accustomed was
 Two suns to have, which one road and the other,⁸⁴⁵
 Of God and of the world, made manifest.
One has the other quenched, and to the crosier
 The sword is joined, and ill beseemeth it
 That by main force one with the other go,
Because, being joined, one feareth not the other;
 If thou believe not, think upon the grain,
 For by its seed each herb is recognized.
In the land laved by Po and Adige,⁸⁴⁶
 Valor and courtesy used to be found,
 Before that Frederick had his controversy,⁸⁴⁷
Now in security can pass that way
 Whoever will abstain, through sense of shame,
 From speaking with the good, or drawing near them.
True, three old men are left, in whom upbraids
 The ancient age the new, and late they deem it
 That God restore them to the better life:
Currado da Palazzo, and good Gherardo,⁸⁴⁸
 And Guido da Castel, who better named is,
 In fashion of the French, the simple Lombard:
Say thou henceforward that the Church of Rome,
 Confounding in itself two governments,
 Falls in the mire, and soils itself and burden.”
“O Marco mine,” I said, “thou reasonest well;
 And now discern I why the sons of Levi
 Have been excluded from the heritage.⁸⁴⁹
But what Gherardo is it, who, as sample
 Of a lost race, thou sayest has remained
 In reprobation of the barbarous age?”

“Either thy speech deceives me, or it tempts me,”
He answered me; “for speaking Tuscan to me,
It seems of good Gherardo naught thou knowest.

By other surname do I know him not,
Unless I take it from his daughter Gaia.[850](#)
May God be with you, for I come no farther.
Behold the dawn, that through the smoke rays out,
Already whitening; and I must depart—
Yonder the Angel is—e'er he appear.”
Thus did he speak, and would no farther hear me.

CANTO XVII

Dante's dream of anger—The Fourth Circle—The Slothful.

Remember, Reader, if e'er in the Alps⁸⁵¹
A mist o'ertook thee, through which thou couldst see⁸⁵²
Not otherwise than through its membrane mole,
How, when the vapors humid and condensed
Begin to dissipate themselves, the sphere
Of the sun feebly enters in among them,
And thy imagination will be swift
In coming to perceive how I re-saw
The sun at first, that was already setting.
Thus, to the faithful footsteps of my Master
Mating mine own, I issued from that cloud
To rays already dead on the low shores.
O thou, Imagination, that dost steal us
So from without sometimes, that man perceives not,
Although around may sound a thousand trumpets,
Who moveth thee, if sense impel thee not?
Moves thee a light, which in the heaven takes form,
By self, or by a will that downward guides it.
Of her impiety, who changed her form⁸⁵³
Into the bird that most delights in singing,
In my imagining appeared the trace;
And hereupon my mind was so withdrawn
Within itself, that from without there came
Nothing that then might be received by it.
Then rained within my lofty fantasy⁸⁵⁴

One crucified, disdainful and ferocious
In countenance, and even thus was dying.
Around him were the great Ahasuerus,
Esther his wife, and the just Mordecai,
Who was in word and action so entire.
And even as this image burst asunder
Of its own self, in fashion of a bubble
In which the water it was made of fails,
There rose up in my vision a young maiden⁸⁵⁵
Bitterly weeping, and she said: "O queen,
Why hast thou wished in anger to be naught?
Thou'st slain thyself, Lavinia not to lose;
Now hast thou lost me; I am she who mourns,
Mother, at thine ere at another's ruin."
As sleep is broken, when upon a sudden
New light strikes in upon the eyelids closed,
And broken quivers e'er it dieth wholly,
So this imagining of mine fell down
As soon as the effulgence smote my face,
Greater by far than what is in our wont.
I turned me round to see where I might be,
When said a voice, "Here is the passage up";
Which from all other purposes removed me,
And made my wish so full of eagerness
To look and see who was it that was speaking,
It never rests till meeting face to face;
But as before the sun, which quells the sight,
And in its own excess its figure veils,⁸⁵⁶
Even so my power was insufficient here.
"This is a spirit divine, who in the way
Of going up directs us without asking,
And who with his own light himself conceals.
He does with us as man doth with himself;
For he who sees the need, and waits the asking,
Malignly leans already tow'rds denial.
Accord we now our feet to such inviting,
Let us make haste to mount ere it grow dark;

For then we could not till the day return.”
Thus my Conductor said; and I and he
 Together turned our footsteps to a stairway;
 And I, as soon as the first step I reached,
Near me perceived a motion as of wings,
 And fanning in the face, and saying, “*Beati*⁸⁵⁷
 Pacifici, who are without ill anger.”
Already over us were so uplifted
 The latest sunbeams, which the night pursues,
 That upon many sides the stars appeared.
“O manhood mine, why dost thou vanish so?”
 I said within myself; for I perceived
 The vigor of my legs was put in truce.
We at the point were where no more ascends
 The stairway upward, and were motionless,
 Even as a ship, which at the shore arrives;
And I gave heed a little, if I might hear
 Aught whatsoever in the circle new;
 Then to my Master turned me round and said:
“Say, my sweet Father, what delinquency
 Is purged here in the circle where we are?
 Although our feet may pause, pause not thy speech.”
And he to me: “The love of good, remiss⁸⁵⁸
 In what it should have done, is here restored;
 Here plied again the ill-belated oar;
But still more openly to understand,
 Turn unto me thy mind, and thou shalt gather
 Some profitable fruit from our delay.
Neither Creator nor a creature ever,
 Son,” he began, “was destitute of love
 Natural or spiritual; and thou knowest it.
The natural was ever without error;
 But err the other may by evil object,
 Or by too much, or by too little vigor.
While in the first it well directed is,⁸⁵⁹
 And in the second moderates itself,
 It cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure;

But when to ill it turns, and, with more care
Or lesser than it ought, runs after good,
'Gainst the Creator works his own creation.

Hence thou mayst comprehend that love must be
The seed within yourselves of every virtue,
And every act that merits punishment.

Now inasmuch as never from the welfare
Of its own subject can love turn its sight,
From their own hatred all things are secure;
And since we cannot think of any being
Standing alone, nor from the First divided,
Of hating Him is all desire cut off.

Hence if, discriminating, I judge well,
The evil that one loves is of one's neighbor,
And this is born in three modes in your clay.

There are, who, by abasement of their neighbor,
Hope to excel, and therefore only long

That from his greatness he may be cast down;

There are, who power, grace, honor, and renown
Fear they may lose because another rises,
Thence are so sad that the reverse they love;
And there are those whom injury seems to chafe,
So that it makes them greedy for revenge,
And such must needs shape out another's harm.

This threefold love is wept for down below,⁸⁶⁰

Now of the other will I have thee hear,
That runneth after good with measure faulty.

Each one confusedly a good conceives
Wherein the mind may rest, and longeth for it;
Therefore to overtake it each one strives.

If languid love to look on this attract you,
Or in attaining unto it, this cornice,
After just penitence, torments you for it.

There's other good that does not make man happy;
'Tis not felicity, 'tis not the good
Essence, of every good the fruit and root.

The love that yields itself too much to this⁸⁶¹

Above us is lamented in three circles;
But how tripartite it may be described,
I say not, that thou seek it for thyself."

CANTO XVIII

Virgil's discourse of love—The abbot of San Zeno.

An end had put unto his reasoning [862](#)
The lofty Teacher, and attent was looking
Into my face, if I appeared content;
And I, whom a new thirst still goaded on,
Without was mute, and said within: “Perchance
The too much questioning I make annoys him.”
But that true Father, who had comprehended
The timid wish, that opened not itself,
By speaking gave me hardihood to speak.
Whence I: “My sight is, Master, vivified
So in thy light, that clearly I discern
Whate’er thy speech importeth or describes.
Therefore I thee entreat, sweet Father dear,
To teach me love, to which thou dost refer
Every good action and its contrary.”
“Direct,” he said, “towards me the keen eyes
Of intellect, and clear will be to thee
The error of the blind, who would be leaders.
The soul, which is created apt to love,
Is mobile unto everything that pleases,
Soon as by pleasure she is waked to action.
Your apprehension from some real thing [863](#)
An image draws, and in yourselves displays it
So that it makes the soul turn unto it.
And if, when turned, towards it she incline,

Love is that inclination; it is nature,
Which is by pleasure bound in you anew.⁸⁶⁴

Then even as the fire doth upward move
By its own form, which to ascend is born,
Where longest in its matter it endures,⁸⁶⁵

So comes the captive soul into desire,
Which is a motion spiritual, and ne'er rests
Until she doth enjoy the thing beloved.

Now may apparent be to thee how hidden
The truth is from those people, who aver
All love is in itself a laudable thing;
Because its matter may perchance appear
Aye to be good; but yet not each impression
Is good, albeit good may be the wax."

"Thy words, and my sequacious intellect,"
I answered him, "have love revealed to me;
But that has made me more impregned with doubt;
For if love from without be offered us,
And with another foot the soul go not,⁸⁶⁶
If right or wrong she go, 'tis not her merit."

And he to me: "What reason seeth here,
Myself can tell thee; beyond that await
For Beatrice, since 'tis a work of faith.

Every substantial form, that segregate⁸⁶⁷
From matter is, and with it is united,
Specific power has in itself collected,
Which without act is not perceptible,
Nor shows itself except by its effect,
As life does in a plant by the green leaves.

But still, whence cometh the intelligence
Of the first notions, man is ignorant,
And the affection for the first allurements,
Which are in you as instinct in the bee
To make its honey; and this first desire
Merit of praise or blame containeth not.

Now, that to this all others may be gathered,⁸⁶⁸

Innate within you is the power that counsels,
And it should keep the threshold of assent.
This is the principle, from which is taken
 Occasion of desert in you, according
 As good and guilty loves it takes and winnows.⁸⁶⁹
Those who, in reasoning, to the bottom went,
 Were of this innate liberty aware,
 Therefore bequeathed they Ethics to the world.
Supposing, then, that from necessity
 Springs every love that is within you kindled,
 Within yourselves the power is to restrain it.
The noble virtue Beatrice understands⁸⁷⁰
 By the free will; and therefore see that thou
 Bear it in mind, if she should speak of it.”
The moon, belated almost unto midnight,⁸⁷¹
 Now made the stars appear to us more rare,
 Formed like a bucket, that is all ablaze,
And counter to the heavens ran through those paths
 Which the sun sets aflame, when he of Rome⁸⁷²
 Sees it 'twixt Sardes and Corsicans go down;
And that patrician shade, for whom is named
 Pietola more than any Mantuan town,⁸⁷³
 Had laid aside the burden of my lading,⁸⁷⁴
Whence I, who reason manifest and plain
 In answer to my questions had received,
 Stood like a man in drowsy reverie.
But taken from me was this drowsiness
 Suddenly by a people, that behind
 Our backs already had come round to us.
And as, of old, Ismenus and Asopus⁸⁷⁵
 Beside them saw at night the rush and throng,
 If but the Thebans were in need of Bacchus,
So they along that circle curve their step,⁸⁷⁶
 From what I saw of those approaching us,
 Who by good-will and righteous love are ridden.
Full soon they were upon us, because running

Moved onward all that mighty multitude,
And two in the advance cried out, lamenting,
“Mary in haste unto the mountain ran,⁸⁷⁷
And Caesar, that he might subdue Ilerda,⁸⁷⁸
Thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain.”
“Quick! quick! so that the time may not be lost
By little love!” forthwith the others cried,
“For ardor in well-doing freshens grace!”
“O folk, in whom an eager fervor now
Supplies perhaps delay and negligence,
Put by you in well-doing, through lukewarmness,
This one who lives, and truly I lie not,
Would fain go up, if but the sun relight us;
So tell us where the passage nearest is.”
These were the words of him who was my Guide;
And someone of those spirits said: “Come on
Behind us, and the opening shalt thou find;
So full of longing are we to move onward,
That stay we cannot; therefore pardon us,
If thou for churlishness our justice take.
I was San Zeno’s Abbot at Verona,⁸⁷⁹
Under the empire of good Barbarossa,⁸⁸⁰
Of whom still sorrowing Milan holds discourse;
And he has one foot in the grave already,⁸⁸¹
Who shall ere long lament that monastery,
And sorry be of having there had power,
Because his son, in his whole body sick,
And worse in mind, and who was evil-born,
He put into the place of its true pastor.”
If more he said, or silent was, I know not,
He had already passed so far beyond us;
But this I heard, and to retain it pleased me.
And he who was in every need my succor
Said: “Turn thee hitherward; see two of them
Come fastening upon slothfulness their teeth.”⁸⁸²
In rear of all they shouted: “Sooner were

The people dead to whom the sea was opened,
Than their inheritors the Jordan saw;⁸⁸³
And those who the fatigue did not endure
Unto the issue, with Anchises' son,⁸⁸⁴
Themselves to life withouten glory offered.”
Then when from us so separated were
Those shades, that they no longer could be seen,
Within me a new thought did entrance find,
Whence others many and diverse were born;
And so I lapsed from one into another,
That in a reverie mine eyes I closed,
And meditation into dream transmuted.⁸⁸⁵

CANTO XIX

Dante's dream of the Siren—The Fifth Circle—The Avaricious and Prodigal—Pope Adrian

V

.

It was the hour when the diurnal heat⁸⁸⁶

No more can warm the coldness of the moon,

Vanquished by earth, or peradventure Saturn,⁸⁸⁷

When geomancers their Fortuna Major⁸⁸⁸

See in the orient before the dawn

Rise by a path that long remains not dim,⁸⁸⁹

There came to me in dreams a stammering woman,⁸⁹⁰

Squint in her eyes, and in her feet distorted,

With hands dissevered and of sallow hue.

I looked at her; and as the sun restores

The frigid members which the night benumbs,

Even thus my gaze did render voluble

Her tongue, and made her all erect thereafter

In little while, and the lost countenance

As love desires it so in her did color.

When in this wise she had her speech unloosed,

She 'gan to sing so, that with difficulty

Could I have turned my thoughts away from her.

"I am," she sang, "I am the Siren sweet

Who mariners amid the main unman,

So full am I of pleasantness to hear.

I drew Ulysses from his wandering way

Unto my song, and he who dwells with me
Seldom departs so wholly I content him.”

Her mouth was not yet closed again, before
Appeared a Lady saintly and alert
Close at my side to put her to confusion.

“Virgilius, O Virgilius! who is this?”

Sternly she said; and he was drawing near
With eyes still fixed upon that modest one.

She seized the other and in front laid open,
Rending her garments, and her belly showed me;
This waked me with the stench that issued from it.

I turned mine eyes, and good Virgilius said:
“At least thrice have I called thee; rise and come;
Find we the opening by which thou mayst enter.”

I rose; and full already of high day
Were all the circles of the Sacred Mountain,
And with the new sun at our back we went.

Following behind him, I my forehead bore
Like unto one who has it laden with thought,
Who makes himself the half arch of a bridge,

When I heard say, “Come, here the passage is,”
Spoken in a manner gentle and benign,
Such as we hear not in this mortal region.

With open wings, which of a swan appeared,
Upward he turned us who thus spake to us,
Between the two walls of the solid granite.

He moved his pinions afterwards and fanned us,
Affirming those *qui lugent* to be blessed,
For they shall have their souls with comfort filled.⁸⁹¹

“What aileth thee, that aye to earth thou gazest?”

To me my Guide began to say, we both
Somewhat beyond the Angel having mounted.

And I: “With such misgiving makes me go
A vision new, which bends me to itself,
So that I cannot from the thought withdraw me.”

“Didst thou behold,” he said, “that old enchantress,
Who sole above us henceforth is lamented?⁸⁹²

Didst thou behold how man is freed from her?
Suffice it thee, and smite earth with thy heels,⁸⁹³
 Thine eyes lift upward to the lure, that whirls
 The Eternal King with revolutions vast.”
Even as the hawk, that first his feet surveys,
 Then turns him to the call and stretches forward,
 Through the desire of food that draws him thither,
Such I became, and such, as far as cleaves
 The rock to give a way to him who mounts,
 Went on to where the circling doth begin.
On the fifth circle when I had come forth,
 People I saw upon it who were weeping,
 Stretched prone upon the ground, all downward turned.
“*Adhæsit pavimento anima mea,*”⁸⁹⁴
 I heard them say with sighings so profound,
 That hardly could the words be understood.
“O ye elect of God, whose sufferings
 Justice and Hope both render less severe,
 Direct ye us towards the high ascents.”
“If ye are come secure from this prostration,
 And wish to find the way most speedily,
 Let your right hands be evermore outside.”
Thus did the Poet ask, and thus was answered
 By them somewhat in front of us; whence I
 In what was spoken divined the rest concealed,
And unto my Lord’s eyes mine eyes I turned;
 Whence he assented with a cheerful sign
 To what the sight of my desire implored.
When of myself I could dispose at will,
 Above that creature did I draw myself,
 Whose words before had caused me to take note,
Saying: “O Spirit, in whom weeping ripens
 That without which to God we cannot turn,
 Suspend awhile for me thy greater care.
Who wast thou, and why are your backs turned upwards,
 Tell me, and if thou wouldest that I procure thee
 Anything there whence living I departed.”

And he to me: "Wherefore our backs the heaven
Turns to itself, know shalt thou; but beforehand
*Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.*⁸⁹⁵

Between Siestri and Chiaveri descends
A river beautiful, and of its name
The title of my blood its summit makes.

A month and little more essayed I how
Weighs the great cloak on him from mire who keeps it;
For all the other burdens seem a feather.

Tardy, ah woe is me! was my conversion;
But when the Roman Shepherd I was made,
Then I discovered life to be a lie.

I saw that there the heart was not at rest,
Nor farther in that life could one ascend;
Whereby the love of this was kindled in me.

Until that time a wretched soul and parted
From God was I, and wholly avaricious;
Now, as thou seest, I here am punished for it.

What avarice does is here made manifest
In the purgation of these souls converted,
And no more bitter pain the Mountain has.

Even as our eye did not uplift itself
Aloft, being fastened upon earthly things,
So justice here has merged it in the earth.

As avarice had extinguished our affection
For every good, whereby was action lost,
So justice here doth hold us in restraint,

Bound and imprisoned by the feet and hands;
And so long as it pleases the just Lord
Shall we remain immovable and prostrate."

I on my knees had fallen, and wished to speak;
But even as I began, and he was 'ware,
Only by listening, of my reverence,
"What cause," he said, "has downward bent thee thus?"

And I to him: "For your own dignity,
Standing, my conscience stung me with remorse."

"Straighten thy legs, and upward raise thee, brother,"

He answered: "Err not, fellow-servant am I [896](#)
With thee and with the others to one power.
If e'er that holy, evangelic sound,
Which sayeth *neque nubent*, thou hast heard, [897](#)
Well canst thou see why in this wise I speak.
Now go; no longer will I have thee linger,
Because thy stay doth incommod my weeping,
With which I ripen that which thou hast said. [898](#)
On earth I have a grandchild named Alagia, [899](#)
Good in herself, unless indeed our house
Malevolent may make her by example,
And she alone remains to me on earth."

CANTO XX

Hugh Capet—The earthquake.

Ill strives the will against a better will;⁹⁰⁰
Therefore, to pleasure him, against my pleasure⁹⁰¹
I drew the sponge not saturate from the water.
Onward I moved, and onward moved my Leader,
Through vacant places, skirting still the rock,
As on a wall close to the battlements;
For they that through their eyes pour drop by drop
The malady which all the world pervades,
On the other side too near the verge approach.
Accursed mayst thou be, thou old she-wolf,
That more than all the other beasts hast prey,
Because of hunger infinitely hollow!
O heaven, in whose gyrations some appear⁹⁰²
To think conditions here below are changed,
When will he come through whom she shall depart?⁹⁰³
Onward we went with footsteps slow and scarce,
And I attentive to the shades I heard
Piteously weeping and bemoaning them;
And I by peradventure heard “Sweet Mary!”
Uttered in front of us amid the weeping
Even as a woman does who is in child-birth;
And in continuance: “How poor thou wast
Is manifested by that hostelry⁹⁰⁴
Where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down.”
Thereafterward I heard: “O good Fabricius,⁹⁰⁵
Virtue with poverty didst thou prefer

To the possession of great wealth with vice.”
So pleasurable were these words to me
That I drew farther onward to have knowledge
Touching that spirit whence they seemed to come.
He furthermore was speaking of the largess⁹⁰⁶
Which Nicholas unto the maidens gave,⁹⁰⁷
In order to conduct their youth to honor.
“O soul that dost so excellently speak,
Tell me who wast thou,” said I, “and why only
Thou dost renew these praises well deserved?
Not without recompense shall be thy word,
If I return to finish the short journey
Of that life which is flying to its end.”
And he: “I’ll tell thee, not for any comfort
I may expect from earth, but that so much
Grace shines in thee or ever thou art dead.
I was the root of that malignant plant⁹⁰⁸
Which overshadows all the Christian world,
So that good fruit is seldom gathered from it;
But if Douay and Ghent, and Lille and Bruges
Had power, soon vengeance would be taken on it;
And this I pray of Him who judges all.
Hugh Capet was I called upon the earth;
From me were born the Louises and Philips,⁹⁰⁹
By whom in later days has France been governed.
I was the son of a Parisian butcher,⁹¹⁰
What time the ancient kings had perished all,⁹¹¹
Excepting one, contrite in cloth of gray.
I found me grasping in my hands the rein
Of the realm’s government, and so great power
Of new acquest, and so with friends abounding,
That to the widowed diadem promoted
The head of mine own offspring was, from whom⁹¹²
The consecrated bones of these began.
So long as the great dowry of Provence⁹¹³
Out of my blood took not the sense of shame,

'Twas little worth, but still it did no harm.
Then it began with falsehood and with force
 Its rapine; and thereafter, for amends,⁹¹⁴
 Took Ponthieu, Normandy, and Gascony.
Charles came to Italy, and for amends⁹¹⁵
 A victim made of Conradin, and then⁹¹⁶
 Thrust Thomas back to heaven, for amends.⁹¹⁷
A time I see, not very distant now,
 Which draweth forth another Charles from France,⁹¹⁸
 The better to make known both him and his.
Unarmed he goes, and only with the lance
 That Judas jousted with; and that he thrusts⁹¹⁹
 So that he makes the paunch of Florence burst.⁹²⁰
He thence not land, but sin and infamy,⁹²¹
 Shall gain, so much more grievous to himself
 As the more light such damage he accounts.
The other, now gone forth, ta'en in his ship,⁹²²
 See I his daughter sell, and chaffer for her
 As corsairs do with other female slaves.
What more, O Avarice, canst thou do to us,⁹²³
 Since thou my blood so to thyself hast drawn,
 It careth not for its own proper flesh?
That less may seem the future ill and past,
 I see the flower-de-luce Alagna enter,⁹²⁴
 And Christ in his own Vicar captive made.⁹²⁵
I see him yet another time derided;
 I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
 And between living thieves I see him slain.
I see the modern Pilate so relentless,⁹²⁶
 This does not sate him, but without decretal
 He to the temple bears his sordid sails!
When, O my Lord! shall I be joyful made
 By looking on the vengeance which, concealed,
 Makes sweet thine anger in thy secrecy?
What I was saying of that only bride⁹²⁷

Of the Holy Ghost, and which occasioned thee
To turn towards me for some commentary,
So long has been ordained to all our prayers
As the day lasts; but when the night comes on,
Contrary sound we take instead thereof.

At that time we repeat Pygmalion,⁹²⁸
Of whom a traitor, thief, and parricide
Made his insatiable desire of gold;
And the misery of avaricious Midas,⁹²⁹
That followed his inordinate demand,
At which forevermore one needs but laugh.

The foolish Achan each one then records,⁹³⁰
And how he stole the spoils; so that the wrath
Of Joshua still appears to sting him here.

Then we accuse Sapphira with her husband,⁹³¹
We laud the hoof-beats Heliodorus had,⁹³²
And the whole mount in infamy encircles
Polymnestor who murdered Polydorus.⁹³³

Here finally is cried: ‘O Crassus, tell us,⁹³⁴
For thou dost know, what is the taste of gold?’
Sometimes we speak, one loud, another low,
According to desire of speech, that spurs us
To greater now and now to lesser pace.

But in the good that here by day is talked of,
Erewhile alone I was not; yet near by⁹³⁵
No other person lifted up his voice.”

From him already we departed were,
And made endeavor to o’ercome the road
As much as was permitted to our power,

When I perceived, like something that is falling,
The mountain tremble, whence a chill seized on me,⁹³⁶
As seizes him who to his death is going.

Certes so violently shook not Delos,⁹³⁷
Before Latona made her nest therein
To give birth to the two eyes of the heaven.

Then upon all sides there began a cry,

Such that the Master drew himself towards me,
Saying, "Fear not, while I am guiding thee."

"*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," all [938](#)

Were saying, from what near I comprehended,
Where it was possible to hear the cry.

We paused immovable and in suspense,
Even as the shepherds who first heard that song, [939](#)

Until the trembling ceased, and it was finished.

Then we resumed again our holy path,
Watching the shades that lay upon the ground,

Already turned to their accustomed plaint.

No ignorance ever with so great a strife
Had rendered me importunate to know,

If erreth not in this my memory,

As meditating then I seemed to have;
Nor out of haste to question did I dare,

Nor of myself I there could aught perceive;

So I went onward timorous and thoughtful.

CANTO XXI

The poet Statius.

The natural thirst, that ne'er is satisfied⁹⁴⁰
Excepting with the water for whose grace
The woman of Samaria besought,⁹⁴¹
Put me in travail, and haste goaded me
Along the encumbered path behind my Leader,
And I was pitying that righteous vengeance;
And lo! in the same manner as Luke writeth⁹⁴²
That Christ appeared to two upon the way
From the sepulchral cave already risen,
A shade appeared to us, and came behind us,
Down gazing on the prostrate multitude,
Nor were we ware of it, until it spake,
Saying, "My brothers, may God give you peace!"
We turned us suddenly, and Virgilius rendered
To him the countersign thereto conforming.⁹⁴³
Thereon began he: "In the blessed council,
Thee may the court veracious place in peace,
That me doth banish in eternal exile!"
"How," said he, and the while we went with speed,
"If ye are shades whom God deigns not on high,
Who up his stairs so far has guided you?"
And said my Teacher: "If thou note the marks⁹⁴⁴
Which this one bears, and which the Angel traces,
Well shalt thou see he with the good must reign.
But because she who spinneth day and night⁹⁴⁵
For him had not yet drawn the distaff off,

Which Clotho lays for each one and compacts,
His soul, which is thy sister and my own,

In coming upwards could not come alone,
By reason that it sees not in our fashion.

Whence I was drawn from out the ample throat
Of Hell to be his guide, and I shall guide him
As far on as my school has power to lead.⁹⁴⁶

But tell us, if thou knowest, why such a shudder
Erewhile the mountain gave, and why together
All seemed to cry, as far as its moist feet?"

In asking he so hit the very eye
Of my desire, that merely with the hope
My thirst became the less unsatisfied.

"Naught is there," he began, "that without order⁹⁴⁷
May the religion of the mountain feel,
Nor aught that may be foreign to its custom.

Free is it here from every permutation;
What from itself heaven in itself receiveth⁹⁴⁸
Can be of this the cause, and naught beside;
Because that neither rain, nor hail, nor snow,
Nor dew, nor hoar-frost any higher falls
Than the short, little stairway of three steps.⁹⁴⁹

Dense clouds do not appear, nor rarefied,
Nor coruscation, nor the daughter of Thaumas,⁹⁵⁰
That often upon earth her region shifts;

No arid vapor any farther rises
Than to the top of the three steps I spake of,
Whereon the Vicar of Peter has his feet.

Lower down perchance it trembles less or more,
But, for the wind that in the earth is hidden
I know not how, up here it never trembled.

It trembles here, whenever any soul
Feels itself pure, so that it soars, or moves
To mount aloft, and such a cry attends it.

Of purity the will alone gives proof,
Which, being wholly free to change its convent,

Takes by surprise the soul, and helps it fly.
First it wills well; but the desire permits not,
 Which divine justice with the self-same will⁹⁵¹
 There was to sin, upon the torment sets.
And I, who have been lying in this pain
 Five hundred years and more, but just now felt
 A free volition for a better seat.
Therefore thou heardst the earthquake, and the pious
 Spirits along the mountain rendering praise
 Unto the Lord, that soon he speed them upwards.”
So said he to him; and since we enjoy
 As much in drinking as the thirst is great,
 I could not say how much it did me good.
And the wise Leader: “Now I see the net
 That snares you here, and how ye are set free,
 Why the earth quakes, and wherefore ye rejoice.
Now who thou wast be pleased that I may know;
 And why so many centuries thou hast here
 Been lying, let me gather from thy words.”
“In days when the good Titus, with the aid⁹⁵²
 Of the supremest King, avenged the wounds
 Whence issued forth the blood by Judas sold,
Under the name that most endures and honors,
 Was I on earth,” that spirit made reply,
 “Greatly renowned, but not with faith as yet.
My vocal spirit was so sweet, that Rome
 Me, a Thoulousian, drew unto herself,⁹⁵³
 Where I deserved to deck my brows with myrtle.
Statius the people name me still on earth;
 I sang of Thebes, and then of great Achilles;
 But on the way fell with my second burden.
The seeds unto my ardor were the sparks
 Of that celestial flame which heated me,
 Whereby more than a thousand have been fired;
Of the Aeneid speak I, which to me
 A mother was, and was my nurse in song;
 Without this weighed I not a drachma’s weight.

And to have lived upon the earth what time
 Virgilius lived, I would accept one sun⁹⁵⁴
 More than I must ere issuing from my ban.”
These words towards me made Virgilius turn
 With looks that in their silence said, “Be silent!”
 But yet the power that wills cannot do all things;
For tears and laughter are such pursuivants
 Unto the passion from which each springs forth,
 In the most truthful least the will they follow.
I only smiled, as one who gives the wink;
 Whereat the shade was silent, and it gazed
 Into mine eyes, where most expression dwells;
And, “As thou well mayst consummate a labor
 So great,” it said, “why did thy face just now
 Display to me the lightning of a smile?”⁹⁵⁵
Now am I caught on this side and on that;
 One keeps me silent, one to speak conjures me,
 Wherefore I sigh, and I am understood.
“Speak,” said my Master, “and be not afraid
 Of speaking, but speak out, and say to him
 What he demands with such solicitude.”
Whence I: “Thou peradventure marvelllest,
 O antique spirit, at the smile I gave;
 But I will have more wonder seize upon thee.
This one, who guides on high these eyes of mine,
 Is that Virgilius, from whom thou didst learn
 To sing aloud of men and of the Gods.
If other cause thou to my smile imputedst,
 Abandon it as false, and trust it was
 Those words which thou hast spoken concerning him.”
Already he was stooping to embrace
 My Teacher’s feet; but he said to him: “Brother,⁹⁵⁶
 Do not; for shade thou art, and shade beholdest.”
And he uprising: “Now canst thou the sum
 Of love which warms me to thee comprehend,
 When this our vanity I disremember,
Treating a shadow as substantial thing.”

CANTO XXII

The Sixth Circle—The Gluttonous—The Mystic Tree.

Already was the Angel left behind us,⁹⁵⁷
The Angel who to the sixth round had turned us,
Having erased one mark from off my face;
And those who have in justice their desire
Had said to us, “*Beati*,” in their voices,⁹⁵⁸
With “*sitio*,” and without more ended it.
And I, more light than through the other passes,
Went onward so, that without any labor
I followed upward the swift-footed spirits;
When thus Virgilius began: “The love
Kindled by virtue aye another kindles,
Provided outwardly its flame appear.
Hence from the hour that Juvenal descended⁹⁵⁹
Among us into the infernal Limbo,
Who made apparent to me thy affection,
My kindness towards thee was as great
As ever bound one to an unseen person,
So that these stairs will now seem short to me.
But tell me, and forgive me as a friend,
If too great confidence let loose the rein,
And as a friend now hold discourse with me;
How was it possible within thy breast
For avarice to find place, ’mid so much wisdom
As thou wast filled with by thy diligence?”
These words excited Statius at first

Somewhat to laughter; afterward he answered:
“Each word of thine is love’s dear sign to me.

Verily oftentimes do things appear
Which give fallacious matter to our doubts,
Instead of the true causes which are hidden!

Thy question shows me thy belief to be
That I was niggard in the other life,
It may be from the circle where I was;

Therefore know thou, that avarice was removed
Too far from me; and this extravagance
Thousands of lunar periods have punished.

And were it not that I my thoughts uplifted,
When I the passage heard where thou exclaimest,
As if indignant, unto human nature,

‘To what impellest thou not, O cursed hunger⁹⁶⁰
Of gold, the appetite of mortal men?’

Revolving I should feel the dismal joustings.⁹⁶¹

Then I perceived the hands could spread too wide
Their wings in spending, and repented me
As well of that as of my other sins;

How many with shorn hair shall rise again⁹⁶²
Because of ignorance, which from this sin
Cuts off repentance living and in death!

And know that the transgression which rebuts
By direct opposition any sin
Together with it here its verdure dries.

Therefore if I have been among that folk
Which mourns its avarice, to purify me,
For its opposite has this befallen me.”

“Now when thou sangest the relentless weapons
Of the twofold affliction of Jocasta,”⁹⁶³

The singer of the Songs Bucolic said,

“From that which Clio there with thee preludes,⁹⁶⁴
It does not seem that yet had made thee faithful
That faith without which no good works suffice.

If this be so, what candles or what sun

Scattered thy darkness so that thou didst trim
Thy sails behind the Fisherman thereafter?"⁹⁶⁵

And he to him: "Thou first directedst me
Towards Parnassus, in its grots to drink,
And first concerning God didst me enlighten.

Thou didst as he who walketh in the night,
Who bears his light behind, which helps him not,
But maketh wise the persons after him,

When thou didst say: 'The age renews itself,⁹⁶⁶
Justice returns, and man's primeval time,
And a new progeny descends from heaven.'

Through thee I Poet was, through thee a Christian;
But that thou better see what I design,
To color it will I extend my hand.

Already was the world in every part
Pregnant with the true creed, disseminated
By messengers of the eternal kingdom;

And thy assertion, spoken of above,
With the new preachers was in unison;
Whence I to visit them the custom took.

Then they became so holy in my sight,
That, when Domitian persecuted them,
Not without tears of mine were their laments;

And all the while that I on earth remained,
Them I befriended, and their upright customs
Made me disparage all the other sects.

And ere I led the Greeks unto the rivers
Of Thebes, in poetry, I was baptized,
But out of fear was covertly a Christian,

For a long time professing paganism;
And this lukewarmness caused me the fourth circle⁹⁶⁷
To circuit round more than four centuries.

Thou, therefore, who hast raised the covering
That hid from me whatever good I speak of,
While in ascending we have time to spare,

Tell me, in what place is our friend Terentius,⁹⁶⁸

Caecilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou knowest;⁹⁶⁹
Tell me if they are damned, and in what alley.”
“These, Persius and myself, and others many,”⁹⁷⁰
Replied my Leader, “with that Grecian are⁹⁷¹
Whom more than all the rest the Muses suckled,
In the first circle of the prison blind;
Ofttimes we of the mountain hold discourse
Which has our nurses ever with itself.
Euripides is with us, Antiphon,⁹⁷²
Simonides, Agatho, and many other⁹⁷³
Greeks who of old their brows with laurel decked.
There some of thine own people may be seen,
Antigone, Deiphile and Argia,⁹⁷⁴
And there Ismene mournful as of old.
There she is seen who pointed out Langia;⁹⁷⁵
There is Tiresias’ daughter, and there Thetis,⁹⁷⁶
And there Deidamia with her sisters.”⁹⁷⁷
Silent already were the poets both,
Attent once more in looking round about,
From the ascent and from the walls released;
And four handmaidens of the day already⁹⁷⁸
Were left behind, and at the pole the fifth
Was pointing upward still its burning horn,
What time my Guide: “I think that tow’rds the edge
Our dexter shoulders it behoves us turn,
Circling the mount as we are wont to do.”
Thus in that region custom was our ensign;
And we resumed our way with less suspicion
For the assenting of that worthy soul
They in advance went on, and I alone
Behind them, and I listened to their speech,
Which gave me lessons in the art of song.
But soon their sweet discourses interrupted
A tree which midway in the road we found,⁹⁷⁹
With apples sweet and grateful to the smell.
And even as a fir-tree tapers upward

From bough to bough, so downwardly did that;
I think in order that no one might climb it.
On that side where our pathway was enclosed
Fell from the lofty rock a limpid water,
And spread itself abroad upon the leaves.
The Poets twain unto the tree drew near,
And from among the foliage a voice
Cried: "Of this food ye shall have scarcity."
Then said: "More thoughtful Mary was of making ⁹⁸⁰
The marriage feast complete and honorable,
Than of her mouth which now for you responds;
And for their drink the ancient Roman women
With water were content; and Daniel ⁹⁸¹
Disparaged food, and understanding won.
The primal age was beautiful as gold; ⁹⁸²
Acorns it made with hunger savory,
And nectar every rivulet with thirst.
Honey and locusts were the aliments
That fed the Baptist in the wilderness;
Whence he is glorious, and so magnified
As by the Evangel is revealed to you."

CANTO XXIII

Forese.

The while among the verdant leaves mine eyes⁹⁸³
I riveted, as he is wont to do
Who wastes his life pursuing little birds,⁹⁸⁴
My more than Father said unto me: "Son,
Come now; because the time that is ordained us
More usefully should be apportioned out."
I turned my face and no less soon my steps
Unto the Sages, who were speaking so
They made the going of no cost to me;
And lo! were heard a song and a lament,
"Labia mea, Domine," in fashion⁹⁸⁵
Such that delight and dolence it brought forth.
"O my sweet Father, what is this I hear?"
Began I; and he answered: "Shades that go
Perhaps the knot unloosing of their debt."
In the same way that thoughtful pilgrims do,
Who, unknown people on the road o'ertaking,
Turn themselves round to them, and do not stop,
Even thus, behind us with a swifter motion
Coming and passing onward, gazed upon us
A crowd of spirits silent and devout.
Each in his eyes was dark and cavernous,
Pallid in face, and so emaciate
That from the bones the skin did shape itself.
I do not think that so to merest rind
Could Erisichthon have been withered up⁹⁸⁶

By famine, when most fear he had of it.
Thinking within myself I said: "Behold,
 This is the folk who lost Jerusalem,
 When Mary made a prey of her own son."⁹⁸⁷
Their sockets were like rings without the gems;⁹⁸⁸
 Whoever in the face of men reads *omo*⁹⁸⁹
 Might well in these have recognized the *m*.
Who would believe the odor of an apple,
 Begetting longing, could consume them so,
 And that of water, without knowing how?
I still was wondering what so famished them,
 For the occasion not yet manifest
 Of their emaciation and sad squalor;
And lo! from out the hollow of his head
 His eyes a shade turned on me, and looked keenly;
 Then cried aloud: "What grace to me is this?"
Never should I have known him by his look;
 But in his voice was evident to me
 That which his aspect had suppressed within it.
This spark within me wholly re-ekindled
 My recognition of his altered face,
 And I recalled the features of Forese.⁹⁹⁰
"Ah, do not look at this dry leprosy,"
 Entreated he, "which doth my skin disolor,
 Nor at default of flesh that I may have;
But tell me truth of thee, and who are those
 Two souls, that yonder make for thee an escort;
 Do not delay in speaking unto me."
"That face of thine, which dead I once bewept,
 Gives me for weeping now no lesser grief,"
 I answered him, "beholding it so changed!
But tell me, for God's sake, what thus denudes you?
 Make me not speak while I am marvelling,
 For ill speaks he who's full of other longings."
And he to me: "From the eternal council
 Falls power into the water and the tree
 Behind us left, whereby I grow so thin.

All of this people who lamenting sing,
For following beyond measure appetite
In hunger and thirst are here re-sanctified.

Desire to eat and drink enkindles in us
The scent that issues from the apple-tree,
And from the spray that sprinkles o'er the verdure;
And not a single time alone, this ground
Encircling, is renewed our pain—
I say our pain, and ought to say our solace—
For the same wish doth lead us to the tree
Which led the Christ rejoicing to say *Eli*,⁹⁹¹
When with his veins he liberated us.”⁹⁹²

And I to him: “Forese, from that day
When for a better life thou changedst worlds,
Up to this time five years have not rolled round.

If sooner were the power exhausted in thee
Of sinning more, than thee the hour surprised
Of that good sorrow which to God reweds us,
How hast thou come up hitherward already?

I thought to find thee down there underneath,⁹⁹³
Where time for time doth restitution make.”

And he to me: “Thus speedily has led me
To drink of the sweet wormwood of these torments,
My Nella with her overflowing tears;⁹⁹⁴
She with her prayers devout and with her sighs
Has drawn me from the coast where one awaits,
And from the other circles set me free.

So much more dear and pleasing is to God
My little widow, whom so much I loved,
As in good works she is the more alone;

For the Barbagia of Sardinia⁹⁹⁵
By far more modest in its women is
Than the Barbagia I have left her in.

O brother sweet, what wilt thou have me say?
A future time is in my sight already,
To which this hour will not be very old,

When from the pulpit shall be interdicted
 To the unblushing womankind of Florence
 To go about displaying breast and paps.⁹⁹⁶

What savages were e'er, what Saracens,
 Who stood in need, to make them covered go,
 Of spiritual or other discipline?

But if the shameless women were assured
 Of what swift Heaven prepares for them, already
 Wide open would they have their mouths to howl;

For if my foresight here deceive me not,
 They shall be sad ere he has bearded cheeks
 Who now is hushed to sleep with lullaby.

O brother, now no longer hide thee from me;
 See that not only I, but all these people
 Are gazing there, where thou dost veil the sun."

Whence I to him: "If thou bring back to mind
 What thou with me hast been and I with thee,
 The present memory will be grievous still.

Out of that life he turned me back who goes
 In front of me, two days agone when round
 The sister of him yonder showed herself,"

And to the sun I pointed. "Through the deep
 Night of the truly dead has this one led me,
 With this true flesh, that follows after him.

Thence his encouragements have led me up,
 Ascending and still circling round the mount
 That you doth straighten, whom the world made crooked.

He says that he will bear me company,
 Till I shall be where Beatrice will be;
 There it behoves me to remain without him.

This is Virgilius, who thus says to me,"
 And him I pointed at; "the other is
 That shade for whom just now shook every slope⁹⁹⁷

Your realm, that from itself discharges him."

CANTO XXIV

*Buonagiunta da Lucca—Pope Martin
IV
, and others.*

Nor speech the going, nor the going that⁹⁹⁸
Slackened; but talking we went bravely on,
Even as a vessel urged by a good wind.
And shadows, that appeared things doubly dead,
From out the sepulchres of their eyes betrayed
Wonder at me, aware that I was living.
And I, continuing my colloquy,⁹⁹⁹
Said: “Peradventure he goes up more slowly
Than he would do, for other people’s sake.
But tell me, if thou knowest, where is Piccarda;¹⁰⁰⁰
Tell me if anyone of note I see
Among this folk that gazes at me so.”
“My sister, who, ’twixt beautiful and good,
I know not which was more, triumphs rejoicing
Already in her crown on high Olympus.”
So said he first, and then: “’Tis not forbidden
To name each other here, so milked away
Is our resemblance by our dieting.
This,” pointing with his finger, “is Buonagiunta,¹⁰⁰¹
Buonagiunta, of Lucca; and that face
Beyond him there, more peaked than the others,
Has held the holy Church within his arms;¹⁰⁰²
From Tours was he, and purges by his fasting
Bolsena’s eels and the Vernaccia wine.”¹⁰⁰³

He named me many others one by one;
And all contented seemed at being named,
So that for this I saw not one dark look.

I saw for hunger bite the empty air¹⁰⁰⁴
Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Boniface,¹⁰⁰⁵
Who with his crook had pastured many people.

I saw Messer Marchese, who had leisure¹⁰⁰⁶
Once at Forli for drinking with less dryness,
And he was one who ne'er felt satisfied.

But as he does who scans, and then doth prize
One more than others, did I him of Lucca,
Who seemed to take most cognizance of me.

He murmured, and I know not what Gentucca¹⁰⁰⁷
From that place heard I, where he felt the wound¹⁰⁰⁸
Of justice, that doth macerate them so.

“O soul,” I said, “that seemest so desirous
To speak with me, do so that I may hear thee,
And with thy speech appease thyself and me.”

“A maid is born, and wears not yet the veil,”
Began he, “who to thee shall pleasant make
My city, howsoever men may blame it.

Thou shalt go on thy way with this prevision;
If by my murmuring thou hast been deceived,
True things hereafter will declare it to thee.

But say if him I here behold, who forth
Evoked the new-invented rhymes, beginning,¹⁰⁰⁹
*Ladies, that have intelligence of love?”*¹⁰¹⁰

And I to him: “One am I, who, whenever
Love doth inspire me, note, and in that measure
Which he within me dictates, singing go.”

“O brother, now I see,” he said, “the knot
Which me, the Notary, and Guittone held¹⁰¹¹
Short of the sweet new style that now I hear.

I do perceive full clearly how your pens
Go closely following after him who dictates,
Which with our own forsooth came not to pass;

And he who sets himself to go beyond,
No difference sees from one style to another";
And as if satisfied, he held his peace.

Even as the birds, that winter tow'rd the Nile,
Sometimes into a phalanx form themselves,
Then fly in greater haste, and go in file;

In such wise all the people who were there,
Turning their faces, hurried on their steps,
Both by their leanness and their wishes light.

And as a man, who weary is with trotting,
Lets his companions onward go, and walks,
Until he vents the panting of his chest;

So did Forese let the holy flock
Pass by, and came with me behind it, saying,
"When will it be that I again shall see thee?"

"How long," I answered, "I may live, I know not;
Yet my return will not so speedy be,
But I shall sooner in desire arrive;

Because the place where I was set to live
From day to day of good is more depleted,
And unto dismal ruin seems ordained."

"Now go," he said, "for him most guilty of it¹⁰¹²
At a beast's tail behold I dragged along
Towards the valley where is no repentance.

Faster at every step the beast is going,
Increasing evermore until it smites him,
And leaves the body vilely mutilated.

Not long those wheels shall turn," and he uplifted
His eyes to heaven, "ere shall be clear to thee
That which my speech no farther can declare.

Now stay behind; because the time so precious
Is in this kingdom, that I lose too much
By coming onward thus abreast with thee."

As sometimes issues forth upon a gallop
A cavalier from out a troop that ride,
And seeks the honor of the first encounter,

So he with greater strides departed from us;

And on the road remained I with those two,
Who were such mighty marshals of the world.[1013](#)

And when before us he had gone so far
Mine eyes became to him such pursuivants
As was my understanding to his words,
Appeared to me with laden and living boughs
Another apple-tree, and not far distant,
From having but just then turned thitherward.[1014](#)

People I saw beneath it lift their hands,
And cry I know not what towards the leaves,
Like little children eager and deluded,
Who pray, and he they pray to doth not answer,
But, to make very keen their appetite,
Holds their desire aloft, and hides it not.

Then they departed as if undeceived;
And now we came unto the mighty tree
Which prayers and tears so manifold refuses.

“Pass farther onward without drawing near;
The tree of which Eve ate is higher up,[1015](#)
And out of that one has this tree been raised.”

Thus said I know not who among the branches;
Whereat Virgilius, Statius, and myself
Went crowding forward on the side that rises.

“Be mindful,” said he, “of the accursed ones[1016](#)
Formed of the cloud-rack, who inebriate
Combated Theseus with their double breasts;
And of the Jews who showed them soft in drinking,
Whence Gideon would not have them for companions[1017](#)
When he tow’rds Midian the hills descended.”

Thus, closely pressed to one of the two borders,
On passed we, hearing sins of gluttony,
Followed forsooth by miserable gains;

Then set at large upon the lonely road,
A thousand steps and more we onward went,
In contemplation, each without a word.

“What go ye thinking thus, ye three alone?”

Said suddenly a voice, whereat I started
As terrified and timid beasts are wont.
I raised my head to see who this might be,
And never in a furnace was there seen
Metals or glass so lucent and so red
As one I saw who said: "If it may please you¹⁰¹⁸
To mount aloft, here it behoves you turn;
This way goes he who goeth after peace."
His aspect had bereft me of my sight,
So that I turned me back unto my Teachers,
Like one who goeth as his hearing guides him.
And as, the harbinger of early dawn,
The air of May doth move and breathe out fragrance,
Impregnate all with herbage and with flowers,
So did I feel a breeze strike in the midst
My front, and felt the moving of the plumes
That breathed around an odor of ambrosia;
And heard it said: "Blessed are they whom grace
So much illumines, that the love of taste
Excites not in their breasts too great desire,
Hungering at all times so far as is just."

CANTO XXV

Discourse of Statius on generation—The Seventh Circle—The Wanton.

Now was it the ascent no hindrance brooked,¹⁰¹⁹
Because the sun had his meridian circle
To Taurus left, and night to Scorpio.¹⁰²⁰
Wherefore as doth a man who tarries not,
But goes his way, whate'er to him appear,
If of necessity the sting transfix him,
In this wise did we enter through the gap,
Taking the stairway, one before the other,
Which by its narrowness divides the climbers.
And as the little stork that lifts its wing
With a desire to fly, and does not venture
To leave the nest, and lets it downward droop,
Even such was I, with the desire of asking
Kindled and quenched, unto the motion coming
He makes who doth address himself to speak.¹⁰²¹
Not for our pace, though rapid it might be,
My father sweet forbore, but said: “Let fly
The bow of speech thou to the barb hast drawn.”
With confidence I opened then my mouth,
And I began: “How can one meagre grow
There where the need of nutriment applies not?”
“If thou wouldst call to mind how Meleager¹⁰²²
Was wasted by the wasting of a brand,
This would not,” said he, “be to thee so sour;
And wouldst thou think how at each tremulous motion

Trembles within a mirror your own image;
That which seems hard would mellow seem to thee.
But that thou mayst content thee in thy wish
Lo Statius here; and him I call and pray
He now will be the healer of thy wounds.”
“If I unfold to him the eternal vengeance,”
 Responded Statius, “where thou present art,
 Be my excuse that I can naught deny thee.”
Then he began: “Son, if these words of mine
 Thy mind doth contemplate and doth receive,
 They’ll be thy light unto the How thou sayest.
The perfect blood, which never is drunk up¹⁰²³
 Into the thirsty veins, and which remaineth
 Like food that from the table thou removest,
Takes in the heart for all the human members
 Virtue informative, as being that
 Which to be changed to them goes through the veins.
Again digest, descends it where ’tis better
 Silent to be than say; and then drops thence
 Upon another’s blood in natural vase.
There one together with the other mingles,
 One to be passive meant, the other active
 By reason of the perfect place it springs from;¹⁰²⁴
And being conjoined, begins to operate,
 Coagulating first, then vivifying
 What for its matter it had made consistent.
The active virtue, being made a soul¹⁰²⁵
 As of a plant, (in so far different,
 This on the way is, that arrived already,)
Then works so much, that now it moves and feels¹⁰²⁶
 Like a sea-fungus, and then undertakes
 To organize the powers whose seed it is.
Now, Son, dilates and now distends itself
 The virtue from the generator’s heart,
 Where nature is intent on all the members.
But how from animal it man becomes
 Thou dost not see as yet; this is a point

Which made a wiser man than thou once err
So far, that in his doctrine separate
 He made the soul from possible intellect,[1027](#)
 For he no organ saw by this assumed.
Open thy breast unto the truth that's coming,
 And know that, just as soon as in the foetus
 The articulation of the brain is perfect,
The primal Motor turns to it well pleased[1028](#)
 At so great art of nature, and inspires
 A spirit new with virtue all replete,
Which what it finds there active doth attract
 Into its substance, and becomes one soul,
 Which lives, and feels, and on itself revolves.[1029](#)
And that thou less may wonder at my word,
 Behold the sun's heat, which becometh wine,
 Joined to the juice that from the vine distils.
Whenever Lachesis has no more thread,[1030](#)
 It separates from the flesh, and virtually
 Bears with itself the human and divine;[1031](#)
The other faculties are voiceless all;
 The memory, the intelligence, and the will
 In action far more vigorous than before.
Without a pause it falleth of itself
 In marvellous way on one shore or the other;[1032](#)
 There of its roads it first is cognizant.
Soon as the place there circumscribeth it,
 The virtue informative rays round about,
 As, and as much as, in the living members.
And even as the air, when full of rain,
 By alien rays that are therein reflected,
 With divers colors shows itself adorned,
So there the neighboring air doth shape itself
 Into that form which doth impress upon it
 Virtually the soul that has stood still.
And then in manner of the little flame,
 Which followeth the fire where'er it shifts,

After the spirit followeth its new form.
Since afterwards it takes from this its semblance,
It is called shade; and thence it organizes
Thereafter every sense, even to the sight.
Thence is it that we speak, and thence we laugh,¹⁰³³
Thence is it that we form the tears and sighs,
That on the mountain thou mayhap hast heard.
According as impress us our desires
And other affections, so the shade is shaped,
And this is cause of what thou wonderest at.”
And now unto the last of all the circles
Had we arrived, and to the right hand turned,
And were attentive to another care.
There the embankment shoots forth flames of fire,
And upward doth the cornice breathe a blast
That drives them back, and from itself sequesters.
Hence we must needs go on the open side,
And one by one; and I did fear the fire
On this side, and on that the falling down.
My Leader said: “Along this place one ought
To keep upon the eyes a tightened rein,
Seeing that one so easily might err.”
“*Summae Deus clementiæ*,” in the bosom¹⁰³⁴
Of the great burning chanted then I heard,
Which made me no less eager to turn round;
And spirits saw I walking through the flame;
Wherefore I looked, to my own steps and theirs
Apportioning my sight from time to time.
After the close which to that hymn is made,
Aloud they shouted, “*Virum non cognosco*”;¹⁰³⁵
Then recommenced the hymn with voices low.
This also ended, cried they: “To the wood
Diana ran, and drove forth Helice¹⁰³⁶
Therefrom, who had of Venus felt the poison.”
Then to their song returned they; then the wives
They shouted, and the husbands who were chaste,
As virtue and the marriage vow imposes.

And I believe that them this mode suffices,
For all the time the fire is burning them;
With such care is it needful, and such food,
That the last wound of all should be closed up.

CANTO XXVI

Guido Guinicelli and Arnaldo Daniello.

While on the brink thus one before the other¹⁰³⁷

We went upon our way, oft the good Master

Said: "Take thou heed! suffice it that I warn thee."

On the right shoulder smote me now the sun,

That, raying out, already the whole west¹⁰³⁸

Changed from its azure aspect into white.

And with my shadow did I make the flame

Appear more red; and even to such a sign

Shades saw I many, as they went, give heed.

This was the cause that gave them a beginning

To speak of me; and to themselves began they

To say: "That seems not a factitious body!"¹⁰³⁹

Then towards me, as far as they could come,

Came certain of them, always with regard

Not to step forth where they would not be burned.

"O thou who goest, not from being slower

But reverent perhaps, behind the others,

Answer me, who in thirst and fire am burning.

Nor to me only is thine answer needful;

For all of these have greater thirst for it

Than for cold water Ethiop or Indian.

Tell us how is it that thou makest thyself

A wall unto the sun, as if thou hadst not

Entered as yet into the net of death."

Thus one of them addressed me, and I straight

Should have revealed myself, were I not bent

On other novelty that then appeared.
For through the middle of the burning road
 There came a people face to face with these,
 Which held me in suspense with gazing at them.
There see I hastening upon either side
 Each of the shades, and kissing one another
 Without a pause, content with brief salute.
Thus in the middle of their brown battalions
 Muzzle to muzzle one ant meets another
 Perchance to spy their journey or their fortune.
No sooner is the friendly greeting ended,
 Or ever the first footstep passes onward,
 Each one endeavors to outcry the other;
The new-come people: "Sodom and Gomorrah!"
 The rest: "Into the cow Pasiphae enters,[1040](#)
 So that the bull unto her lust may run!"
Then as the cranes, that to Riphæan mountains[1041](#)
 Might fly in part, and part towards the sands,
 These of the frost, those of the sun avoidant,
One folk is going, and the other coming,
 And weeping they return to their first songs,
 And to the cry that most befitteth them;
And close to me approached, even as before,
 The very same who had entreated me,
 Attent to listen in their countenance.
I, who their inclination twice had seen,
 Began: "O souls secure in the possession,
 Whene'er it may be, of a state of peace,
Neither unripe nor ripened have remained
 My members upon earth, but here are with me
 With their own blood and their articulations.
I go up here to be no longer blind;
 A Lady is above, who wins this grace,[1042](#)
 Whereby the mortal through your world I bring.
But as your greatest longing satisfied
 May soon become, so that the Heaven may house you[1043](#)
 Which full of love is, and most amply spreads,

Tell me, that I again in books may write it,
Who are you, and what is that multitude
Which goes upon its way behind your backs?"

Not otherwise with wonder is bewildered
The mountaineer, and staring round is dumb,
When rough and rustic to the town he goes,

Than every shade became in its appearance;
But when they of their stupor were disburdened,
Which in high hearts is quickly quieted,
"Blessed be thou, who of our border-lands,"

He recommenced who first had questioned us,
"Experience freightest for a better life.

The folk that comes not with us have offended
In that for which once Caesar, triumphing,
Heard himself called in contumely, 'Queen.'[1044](#)

Therefore they separate, exclaiming, 'Sodom!'
Themselves reproving, even as thou hast heard,
And add unto their burning by their shame.

Our own transgression was hermaphrodite;
But because we observed not human law,
Following like unto beasts our appetite,

In our opprobrium by us is read,
When we part company, the name of her
Who bestialized herself in bestial wood.[1045](#)

Now knowest thou our acts, and what our crime was;
Wouldst thou perchance by name know who we are,
There is not time to tell, nor could I do it.

Thy wish to know me shall in sooth be granted;
I'm Guido Guinicelli, and now purge me,[1046](#)
Having repented ere the hour extreme."

The same that in the sadness of Lycurgus[1047](#)
Two sons became, their mother re-beholding,
Such I became, but rise not to such height,
The moment I heard name himself the father
Of me and of my betters, who had ever
Practised the sweet and gracious rhymes of love;
And without speech and hearing thoughtfully

For a long time I went, beholding him,
Nor for the fire did I approach him nearer.
When I was fed with looking, utterly
Myself I offered ready for his service,
With affirmation that compels belief.
And he to me: "Thou leavest footprints such
In me, from what I hear, and so distinct,
Lethe cannot efface them, nor make dim.
But if thy words just now the truth have sworn,
Tell me what is the cause why thou displayest
In word and look that dear thou holdest me?"
And I to him: "Those dulcet lays of yours
Which, long as shall endure our modern fashion,
Shall make forever dear their very ink!"
"O brother," said he, "he whom I point out,"
And here he pointed at a spirit in front,
"Was of the mother tongue a better smith.
Verses of love and proses of romance,[1048](#)
He mastered all; and let the idiots talk,
Who think the Lemosin surpasses him.[1049](#)
To clamor more than truth they turn their faces,
And in this way establish their opinion,
Ere art or reason has by them been heard.
Thus many ancients with Guittone did,[1050](#)
From cry to cry still giving him applause,
Until the truth has conquered with most persons.
Now, if thou hast such ample privilege
'Tis granted thee to go unto the cloister
Wherein is Christ the abbot of the college,
To him repeat for me a Paternoster,
So far as needful to us of this world,
Where power of sinning is no longer ours."
Then, to give place perchance to one behind,
Whom he had near, he vanished in the fire
As fish in water going to the bottom.
I moved a little tow'rd him pointed out,
And said that to his name my own desire[1051](#)

An honorable place was making ready.
He of his own free will began to say:
Tan m'abellis vostre cortes deman,
Que jeu nom' pueſc ni vueill a vos cobrire;
*Jeu sui Arnaut, que plor e vai chantan;*¹⁰⁵²
Conſiros vei la passada folor,
E vei jauzen lo jorn qu' esper denan.
Ara vus prec per aquella valor,
Que vus condus al som de la scalina,
*Sovenga vus a temprar ma dolor.*¹⁰⁵³

Then hid him in the fire that purifies them.

CANTO XXVII

Dante's sleep upon the stairway, and his dream of Leah—Arrival at the Terrestrial Paradise.

As when he vibrates forth his earliest rays,¹⁰⁵⁴
In regions where his Maker shed his blood,¹⁰⁵⁵
(The Ebro falling under lofty Libra,
And waters in the Ganges burnt with noon,) So stood the Sun; hence was the day departing,
When the glad Angel of God appeared to us.
Outside the flame he stood upon the verge,
And chanted forth, “*Beati mundo corde,*”¹⁰⁵⁶
In voice by far more living than our own.
Then: “No one farther goes, souls sanctified,
If first the fire bite not; within it enter,
And be not deaf unto the song beyond.”
When we were close beside him thus he said;
Wherefore e'en such became I, when I heard him,
As he is who is put into the grave.
Upon my clasped hands I straightened me,¹⁰⁵⁷
Scanning the fire, and vividly recalling
The human bodies I had once seen burned.
Towards me turned themselves my good Conductors,
And unto me Virgilius said: “My son,
Here may indeed be torment, but not death.
Remember thee, remember! and if I
On Geryon have safely guided thee,¹⁰⁵⁸
What shall I do now I am nearer God?

Believe for certain, shouldst thou stand a full
Millennium in the bosom of this flame,
It could not make thee bald a single hair.
And if perchance thou think that I deceive thee,
Draw near to it, and put it to the proof
With thine own hands upon thy garment's hem.
Now lay aside, now lay aside all fear,
Turn hitherward, and onward come securely”;
And I still motionless, and ’gainst my conscience![1059](#)
Seeing me stand still motionless and stubborn,
Somewhat disturbed he said: “Now look thou, Son,
’Twixt Beatrice and thee there is this wall.”
As at the name of Thisbe oped his lids[1060](#)
The dying Pyramus, and gazed upon her,
What time the mulberry became vermillion,
Even thus, my obduracy being softened,
I turned to my wise Guide, hearing the name
That in my memory evermore is welling.
Whereat he wagged his head, and said: “How now?
Shall we stay on this side?” then smiled as one
Does at a child who’s vanquished by an apple.
Then into the fire in front of me he entered,
Beseeching Statius to come after me,
Who a long way before divided us.[1061](#)
When I was in it, into molten glass
I would have cast me to refresh myself,
So without measure was the burning there!
And my sweet Father, to encourage me,
Discoursing still of Beatrice went on,
Saying: “Her eyes I seem to see already!”
A voice, that on the other side was singing,
Directed us, and we, attent alone
On that, came forth where the ascent began.
“*Venite, benedicti Patris mei,*”[1062](#)
Sounded within a splendor, which was there
Such it o’ercame me, and I could not look.
“The sun departs,” it added, “and night cometh;

Tarry ye not, but onward urge your steps,
So long as yet the west becomes not dark."

Straight forward through the rock the path ascended
In such a way that I cut off the rays
Before me of the sun, that now was low.
And of few stairs we yet had made assay,
Ere by the vanished shadow the sun's setting
Behind us we perceived, I and my Sages.

And ere in all its parts immeasurable [1063](#)

The horizon of one aspect had become,
And Night her boundless dispensation held,
Each of us of a stair had made his bed;
Because the nature of the mount took from us
The power of climbing, more than the delight.

Even as in ruminating passive grow
The goats, who have been swift and venturesome
Upon the mountain-tops ere they were fed,
Hushed in the shadow, while the sun is hot,
Watched by the herdsman, who upon his staff
Is leaning, and in leaning tendeth them;
And as the shepherd, lodging out of doors,
Passes the night beside his quiet flock,
Watching that no wild beast may scatter it,
Such at that hour were we, all three of us,
I like the goat, and like the herdsmen they,
Begirt on this side and on that by rocks.

Little could there be seen of things without;
But through that little I beheld the stars
More luminous and larger than their wont. [1064](#)

Thus ruminating, and beholding these,
Sleep seized upon me—sleep, that oftentimes
Before a deed is done has tidings of it. [1065](#)

It was the hour, I think, when from the East
First on the mountain Citherea beamed, [1066](#)
Who with the fire of love seems always burning;
Youthful and beautiful in dreams methought
I saw a lady walking in a meadow,

Gathering flowers; and singing she was saying:

“Know whosoever may my name demand [1067](#)

That I am Leah, and go moving round

My beauteous hands to make myself a garland.

To please me at the mirror, here I deck me,

But never does my sister Rachel leave

Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day long.

To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she,

As I am to adorn me with my hands;

Her, seeing, and me, doing satisfies.”

And now before the antelucan splendors

That unto pilgrims the more grateful rise,

As, home-returning, less remote they lodge,

The darkness fled away on every side, [1068](#)

And slumber with it; whereupon I rose,

Seeing already the great Masters risen.

“That apple sweet, which through so many branches [1069](#)

The care of mortals goeth in pursuit of,

Today shall put in peace thy hungerings.”

Speaking to me, Virgilius of such words

As these made use; and never were there guerdons

That could in pleasantness compare with these.

Such longing upon longing came upon me

To be above, that at each step thereafter

For flight I felt in me the pinions growing.

When underneath us was the stairway all

Run o'er, and we were on the highest step,

Virgilius fastened upon me his eyes,

And said: “The temporal fire and the eternal,

Son, thou hast seen, and to a place art come

Where of myself no farther I discern.

By intellect and art I here have brought thee;

Take thine own pleasure for thy guide henceforth;

Beyond the steep ways and the narrow art thou.

Behold the sun, that shines upon thy forehead;

Behold the grass, the flowerets, and the shrubs

Which of itself alone this land produces.

Until rejoicing come the beauteous eyes
Which weeping caused me to come unto thee,
Thou canst sit down, and thou canst walk among them.
Expect no more or word or sign from me;
Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,
And error were it not to do its bidding;
Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre!"

CANTO XXVIII

*The Terrestrial Paradise—The River Lethe—
Matilda.*

Eager already to search in and round [1070](#)
The heavenly forest, dense and living-green, [1071](#)
Which tempered to the eyes the new-born day,
Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Taking the level country slowly, slowly
Over the soil that everywhere breathes fragrance.
A softly-breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, upon the forehead smote me
No heavier blow than of a gentle wind,
Whereat the branches, lightly tremulous,
Did all of them bow downward toward that side
Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain;
Yet not from their upright direction swayed,
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should leave the practice of each art of theirs;
But with full ravishment the hours of prime,
Singing, received they in the midst of leaves,
That ever bore a burden to their rhymes,
Such as from branch to branch goes gathering on
Through the pine forest on the shore of Chiassi, [1072](#)
When Eolus unlooses the Sirocco.
Already my slow steps had carried me
Into the ancient wood so far, that I
Could not perceive where I had entered it.
And lo! my further course a stream cut off, [1073](#)

Which tow'rd the left hand with its little waves
Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.
All waters that on earth most limpid are
Would seem to have within themselves some mixture
Compared with that which nothing doth conceal,
Although it moves on with a brown, brown current
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.
With feet I stayed, and with mine eyes I passed
Beyond the rivulet, to look upon
The great variety of the fresh may.
And there appeared to me (even as appears
Suddenly something that doth turn aside
Through very wonder every other thought)
A lady all alone, who went along [1074](#)
Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
With which her pathway was all painted over.
“Ah, beauteous lady, who in rays of love
Dost warm thyself, if I may trust to looks,
Which the heart’s witnesses are wont to be,
May the desire come unto thee to draw
Near to this river’s bank,” I said to her,
“So much that I might hear what thou art singing.
Thou makest me remember where and what
Proserpina that moment was when lost [1075](#)
Her mother her, and she herself the Spring.”
As turns herself, with feet together pressed
And to the ground, a lady who is dancing,
And hardly puts one foot before the other,
On the vermillion and the yellow flowerets
She turned towards me, not in other wise
Than maiden who her modest eyes casts down;
And my entreaties made to be content,
So near approaching, that the dulcet sound
Came unto me together with its meaning.
As soon as she was where the grasses are
Bathed by the waters of the beauteous river,

To lift her eyes she granted me the boon.
I do not think there shone so great a light
Under the lids of Venus, when transfixed¹⁰⁷⁶
By her own son, beyond his usual custom!
Erect upon the other bank she smiled,
Bearing full many colors in her hands,
Which that high land produces without seed.
Apart three paces did the river make us;
But Hellespont, where Xerxes passed across,
(A curb still to all human arrogance,) ¹⁰⁷⁷
More hatred from Leander did not suffer
For rolling between Sestos and Abydos,
Than that from me, because it oped not then.
“Ye are new-comers; and because I smile,”
Began she, “peradventure, in this place
Elect to human nature for its nest,
Some apprehension keeps you marvelling;
But the psalm *Delectasti* giveth light¹⁰⁷⁸
Which has the power to uncloud your intellect.
And thou who foremost art, and didst entreat me,
Speak, if thou wouldest hear more; for I came ready
To all thy questionings, as far as needful.”
“The water,” said I, “and the forest’s sound,
Are combating within me my new faith
In something which I heard opposed to this.” ¹⁰⁷⁹
Whence she: “I will relate how from its cause
Proceedeth that which maketh thee to wonder,
And purge away the cloud that smites upon thee.
The Good Supreme, sole in itself delighting,
Created man good, and this goodly place
Gave him as hansel of eternal peace.
By his default short while he sojourned here;¹⁰⁸⁰
By his default to weeping and to toil
He changed his innocent laughter and sweet play.
That the disturbance which below is made
By exhalations of the land and water,

(Which far as may be follow after heat,) Might not upon mankind wage any war,
This mount ascended tow'rd the heaven so high,
And is exempt, from there where it is locked.[1081](#)

Now since the universal atmosphere Turns in a circuit with the primal motion
Unless the circle is broken on some side,
Upon this height, that all is disengaged
In living ether, doth this motion strike
And make the forest sound, for it is dense;
And so much power the stricken plant possesses
That with its virtue it impregnates the air,
And this, revolving, scatters it around;
And yonder earth, according as 'tis worthy
In self or in its clime, conceives and bears
Of divers qualities the divers trees;
It should not seem a marvel then on earth,
This being heard, whenever any plant
Without seed manifest there taketh root.

And thou must know, this holy table-land
In which thou art is full of every seed,
And fruit has in it never gathered there.

The water which thou seest springs not from vein
Restored by vapor that the cold condenses,
Like to a stream that gains or loses breath;
But issues from a fountain safe and certain,
Which by the will of God as much regains
As it discharges, open on two sides.

Upon this side with virtue it descends,
Which takes away all memory of sin;
On that, of every good deed done restores it.

Here Lethe, as upon the other side
Eunoë, it is called; and worketh not
If first on either side it be not tasted.

This every other savor doth transcend;
And notwithstanding slaked so far may be
Thy thirst, that I reveal to thee no more,

I'll give thee a corollary still in grace,
Nor think my speech will be to thee less dear
If it spread out beyond my promise to thee.
Those who in ancient times have feigned in song
The Age of Gold and its felicity,
Dreamed of this place perhaps upon Parnassus.
Here was the human race in innocence;
Here evermore was Spring, and every fruit;
This is the nectar of which each one speaks."
Then backward did I turn me wholly round
Unto my Poets, and saw that with a smile [1082](#)
They had been listening to these closing words;
Then to the beautiful lady turned mine eyes.

CANTO XXIX

The triumph of the Church.

Singing like unto an enamoured lady¹⁰⁸³

She, with the ending of her words, continued:

“*Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata.*”¹⁰⁸⁴

And even as Nymphs, that wandered all alone

Among the sylvan shadows, sedulous

One to avoid and one to see the sun,

She then against the stream moved onward, going

Along the bank, and I abreast of her,

Her little steps with little steps attending.

Between her steps and mine were not a hundred,¹⁰⁸⁵

When equally the margins gave a turn,

In such a way, that to the East I faced.

Nor even thus our way continued far

Before the lady wholly turned herself

Unto me, saying, “Brother, look and listen!”

And lo! a sudden lustre ran across

On every side athwart the spacious forest,

Such that it made me doubt if it were lightning.

But since the lightning ceases as it comes,

And that continuing brightened more and more,

Within my thought I said, “What thing is this?”

And a delicious melody there ran

Along the luminous air, whence holy zeal

Made me rebuke the hardihood of Eve;

For there where earth and heaven obedient were,

The woman only, and but just created,

Could not endure to stay 'neath any veil;
Underneath which had she devoutly stayed,
I sooner should have tasted those delights
Ineffable, and for a longer time.
While 'mid such manifold first-fruits I walked
Of the eternal pleasure all enrapt,
And still solicitous of more delights,
In front of us like an enkindled fire
Became the air beneath the verdant boughs,
And the sweet sound as singing now was heard.
O Virgins sacrosanct! if ever hunger,
Vigils, or cold for you I have endured,
The occasion spurs me their reward to claim!
Now Helicon must needs pour forth for me,
And with her choir Urania must assist me, [1086](#)
To put in verse things difficult to think.
A little farther on, seven trees of gold
In semblance the long space still intervening
Between ourselves and them did counterfeit;
But when I had approached so near to them
The common object, which the sense deceives, [1087](#)
Lost not by distance any of its marks,
The faculty that lends discourse to reason [1088](#)
Did apprehend that they were candlesticks, [1089](#)
And in the voices of the song "Hosanna!"
Above them flamed the harness beautiful,
Far brighter than the moon in the serene
Of midnight, at the middle of her month.
I turned me round, with admiration filled,
To good Virgilius, and he answered me
With visage no less full of wonderment.
Then back I turned my face to those high things,
Which moved themselves towards us so sedately,
They had been distanced by new-wedded brides.
The lady chid me: "Why dost thou burn only
So with affection for the living lights,
And dost not look at what comes after them?"

Then saw I people, as behind their leaders,
Coming behind them, garmented in white,
And such a whiteness never was on earth.

The water on my left flank was resplendent,
And back to me reflected my left side,
E'en as a mirror, if I looked therein.

When I upon my margin had such post
That nothing but the stream divided us,
Better to see I gave my steps repose;

And I beheld the flamelets onward go,
Leaving behind themselves the air depicted,
And they of trailing pennons had the semblance,

So that it overhead remained distinct
With sevenfold lists, all of them of the colors
Whence the sun's bow is made, and Delia's girdle.[1090](#)

These standards to the rearward longer were
Than was my sight; and, as it seemed to me,
Ten paces were the outermost apart.

Under so fair a heaven as I describe
The four and twenty Elders, two by two,[1091](#)
Came on incoronate with flower-de-luce.

They all of them were singing: "Blessed thou[1092](#)
Among the daughters of Adam art, and blessed
For evermore shall be thy loveliness."

After the flowers and other tender grasses
In front of me upon the other margin
Were disencumbered of that race elect,

Even as in heaven star followeth after star,
There came close after them four animals,[1093](#)
Incoronate each one with verdant leaf.

Plumed with six wings was every one of them,
The plumage full of eyes; the eyes of Argus
If they were living would be such as these.

Reader! to trace their forms no more I waste
My rhymes; for other spendings press me so,
That I in this cannot be prodigal.

But read Ezekiel, who depicteth them [1094](#)
As he beheld them from the region cold
Coming with cloud, with whirlwind, and with fire;
And such as thou shalt find them in his pages,
Such were they here; saving that in their plumage
John is with me, and differeth from him. [1095](#)

The interval between these four contained
A chariot triumphal on two wheels, [1096](#)
Which by a Griffin's neck came drawn along, [1097](#)
And upward he extended both his wings
Between the middle list and three and three, [1098](#)
So that he injured none by cleaving it.
So high they rose that they were lost to sight;
His limbs were gold, so far as he was bird,
And white the others with vermillion mingled.

Not only Rome with no such splendid car
E'er gladdened Africanus, or Augustus,
But poor to it that of the Sun would be— [1099](#)
That of the Sun, which swerving was burnt up
At the importunate orison of Earth,
When Jove was so mysteriously just. [1100](#)

Three maidens at the right wheel in a circle [1101](#)
Came onward dancing; one so very red
That in the fire she hardly had been noted.
The second was as if her flesh and bones
Had all been fashioned out of emerald;
The third appeared as snow but newly fallen.
And now they seemed conducted by the white,
Now by the red, and from the song of her
The others took their step, or slow or swift.

Upon the left hand four made holiday [1102](#)
Vested in purple, following the measure
Of one of them with three eyes in her head.

In rear of all the group here treated of [1103](#)
Two old men I beheld, unlike in habit,
But like in gait, each dignified and grave.

One showed himself as one of the disciples¹¹⁰⁴
 Of that supreme Hippocrates, whom nature
 Made for the animals she holds most dear;
Contrary care the other manifested,
 With sword so shining and so sharp, it caused¹¹⁰⁵
 Terror to me on this side of the river.
Thereafter four I saw of humble aspect,¹¹⁰⁶
 And behind all an aged man alone¹¹⁰⁷
 Walking in sleep with countenance acute.
And like the foremost company these seven
 Were habited; yet of the flower-de-luce
 No garland round about the head they wore,
But of the rose, and other flowers vermillion;
 At little distance would the sight have sworn
 That all were in a flame above their brows.
And when the car was opposite to me
 Thunder was heard; and all that folk august
 Seemed to have further progress interdicted,
There with the vanward ensigns standing still.¹¹⁰⁸

CANTO XXX

Beatrice.

When the Septentrion of the highest heaven¹¹⁰⁹
(Which never either setting knew or rising,
Nor veil of other cloud than that of sin,
And which made everyone therein aware
Of his own duty, as the lower makes
Whoever turns the helm to come to port)
Motionless halted, the veracious people,
That came at first between it and the Griffin,
Turned themselves to the car, as to their peace.
And one of them, as if by Heaven commissioned,
Singing, “*Veni, sponsa, de Libano*”¹¹¹⁰
Shouted three times, and all the others after.
Even as the Blessed at the final summons
Shall rise up quickened each one from his cavern,
Uplifting light the reinvested flesh,
So upon that celestial chariot
A hundred rose *ad vocem tanti senis*,¹¹¹¹
Ministers and messengers of life eternal.
They all were saying, “*Benedictus qui venis*,”¹¹¹²
And, scattering flowers above and round about,
“*Manibus o date lilia plenis.*”¹¹¹³
Ere now have I beheld, as day began,
The eastern hemisphere all tinged with rose,
And the other heaven with fair serene adorned;
And the sun’s face, uprising, overshadowed¹¹¹⁴
So that by tempering influence of vapors

For a long interval the eye sustained it;
Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers
 Which from those hands angelical ascended,
 And downward fell again inside and out,
Over her snow-white veil with olive cinct
 Appeared a lady under a green mantle,¹¹¹⁵
 Vested in color of the living flame.
And my own spirit, that already now
 So long a time had been, that in her presence¹¹¹⁶
 Trembling with awe it had not stood abashed,¹¹¹⁷
Without more knowledge having by mine eyes,
 Through occult virtue that from her proceeded
 Of ancient love the mighty influence felt.
As soon as on my vision smote the power
 Sublime, that had already pierced me through
 Ere from my boyhood I had yet come forth,
To the left hand I turned with that reliance
 With which the little child runs to his mother,
 When he has fear, or when he is afflicted,
To say unto Virgilius: “Not a drachm
 Of blood remains in me, that does not tremble;
 I know the traces of the ancient flame.”¹¹¹⁸
But us Virgilius of himself deprived
 Had left, Virgilius, sweetest of all fathers,
 Virgilius, to whom I for safety gave me:
Nor whatsoever lost the ancient mother¹¹¹⁹
 Availed my cheeks now purified from dew,
 That weeping they should not again be darkened.
“Dante, because Virgilius has departed
 Do not weep yet, do not weep yet awhile;
 For by another sword thou need’st must weep.”
E’en as an admiral, who on poop and prow
 Comes to behold the people that are working
 In other ships, and cheers them to well-doing,
Upon the left hand border of the car,
 When at the sound I turned of my own name,

Which of necessity is here recorded,
I saw the Lady, who erewhile appeared
 Veiled underneath the angelic festival,
 Direct her eyes to me across the river.
Although the veil, that from her head descended,
 Encircled with the foliage of Minerva,
 Did not permit her to appear distinctly,
In attitude still royally majestic
 Continued she, like unto one who speaks,
 And keeps his warmest utterance in reserve:
“Look at me well; in sooth I’m Beatrice!
 How didst thou deign to come unto the Mountain?
 Didst thou not know that man is happy here?”
Mine eyes fell downward into the clear fountain,
 But, seeing myself therein, I sought the grass,
 So great a shame did weigh my forehead down.
As to the son the mother seems superb,
 So she appeared to me; for somewhat bitter
 Tasteth the savor of severe compassion.
Silent became she, and the Angels sang
 Suddenly, “*In te, Domine, speravi*”: [1120](#)
 But beyond *pedes meos* did not pass.
Even as the snow among the living rafters [1121](#)
 Upon the back of Italy congeals,
 Blown on and drifted by Sclavonian winds, [1122](#)
And then, dissolving, trickles through itself
 Whene’er the land that loses shadow breathes,
 So that it seems a fire that melts a taper;
E’en thus was I without a tear or sigh,
 Before the song of those who sing forever
 After the music of the eternal spheres.
But when I heard in their sweet melodies
 Compassion for me, more than had they said,
 “O wherefore, lady, dost thou thus upbraid him?”
The ice, that was about my heart congealed,
 To air and water changed, and in my anguish
 Through mouth and eyes came gushing from my breast.

She, on the right-hand border of the car
Still firmly standing, to those holy beings
Thus her discourse directed afterwards:
“Ye keep your watch in the eternal day,
So that nor night nor sleep can steal from you
One step the ages make upon their path;
Therefore my answer is with greater care,
That he may hear me who is weeping yonder,
So that the sin and dole be of one measure.
Not only by the work of those great wheels,
That destine every seed unto some end,
According as the stars are in conjunction,
But by the largess of celestial graces,
Which have such lofty vapors for their rain¹¹²³
That near to them our sight approaches not,
Such had this man become in his new life
Potentially, that every righteous habit
Would have made admirable proof in him;
But so much more malignant and more savage
Becomes the land untilled and with bad seed,
The more good earthly vigor it possesses.
Some time did I sustain him with my look;
Revealing unto him my youthful eyes,
I led him with me turned in the right way.
As soon as ever of my second age
I was upon the threshold and changed life,¹¹²⁴
Himself from me he took and gave to others.
When from the flesh to spirit I ascended,
And beauty and virtue were in me increased,
I was to him less dear and less delightful;
And into ways untrue he turned his steps,
Pursuing the false images of good,
That never any promises fulfil;
Nor prayer for inspiration me availed,
By means of which in dreams and otherwise
I called him back, so little did he heed them.
So low he fell, that all appliances¹¹²⁵

For his salvation were already short,
Save showing him the people of perdition.
For this I visited the gates of death,
And unto him, who so far up has led him,
My intercessions were with weeping borne.
God's lofty fiat would be violated,
If Lethe should be passed, and if such viands
Should tasted be, withouten any scot
Of penitence, that gushes forth in tears."

CANTO XXXI

*Reproaches of Beatrice and confession of
Dante—The passage of Lethe.*

“O thou who art beyond the sacred river,”¹¹²⁶
Turning to me the point of her discourse,¹¹²⁷
That edgewise even had seemed to me so keen,
She recommenced, continuing without pause,
“Say, say if this be true; to such a charge,
Thy own confession needs must be conjoined.”
My faculties were in so great confusion,
That the voice moved, but sooner was extinct
Than by its organs it was set at large.
Awhile she waited; then she said: “What thinkest?
Answer me; for the mournful memories
In thee not yet are by the waters injured.”
Confusion and dismay together mingled
Forced such a Yes! from out my mouth, that sight
Was needful to the understanding of it.
Even as a cross-bow breaks, when ’tis discharged
Too tensely drawn the bowstring and the bow,
And with less force the arrow hits the mark,
So I gave way beneath that heavy burden,
Outpouring in a torrent tears and sighs,
And the voice flagged upon its passage forth.
Whence she to me: “In those desires of mine
Which led thee to the loving of that good,
Beyond which there is nothing to aspire to,
What trenches lying traverse or what chains¹¹²⁸

Didst thou discover, that of passing onward
Thou shouldst have thus despoiled thee of the hope?
And what allurements or what vantages
Upon the forehead of the others showed,
That thou shouldst turn thy footsteps unto them?"[1129](#)
After the heaving of a bitter sigh,
Hardly had I the voice to make response,
And with fatigue my lips did fashion it.
Weeping I said: "The things that present were
With their false pleasure turned aside my steps,
Soon as your countenance concealed itself."
And she: "Shouldst thou be silent, or deny
What thou confesest, not less manifest
Would be thy fault, by such a Judge 'tis known.
But when from one's own cheeks comes bursting forth
The accusal of the sin, in our tribunal
Against the edge the wheel doth turn itself.[1130](#)
But still, that thou mayst feel a greater shame
For thy transgression, and another time
Hearing the Sirens thou mayst be more strong,
Cast down the seed of weeping and attend;[1131](#)
So shalt thou hear, how in an opposite way
My buried flesh should have directed thee.
Never to thee presented art or nature
Pleasure so great as the fair limbs wherein
I was enclosed, which scattered are in earth.
And if the highest pleasure thus did fail thee
By reason of my death, what mortal thing
Should then have drawn thee into its desire?
Thou oughtest verily at the first shaft
Of things fallacious to have risen up
To follow me, who was no longer such.
Thou oughtest not to have stooped thy pinions downward
To wait for further blows, or little girl,[1132](#)
Or other vanity of such brief use.
The callow birdlet waits for two or three,
But to the eyes of those already fledged,

In vain the net is spread or shaft is shot.”¹¹³³
Even as children silent in their shame
Stand listening with their eyes upon the ground,
And conscious of their fault, and penitent;
So was I standing; and she said: “If thou
In hearing sufferest pain, lift up thy beard
And thou shalt feel a greater pain in seeing.”
With less resistance is a robust holm
Uprooted, either by a native wind
Or else by that from regions of Iarbas,¹¹³⁴
Than I upraised at her command my chin;
And when she by the beard the face demanded,
Well I perceived the venom of her meaning.
And as my countenance was lifted up,
Mine eye perceived those creatures beautiful¹¹³⁵
Had rested from the strewing of the flowers;
And, still but little reassured, mine eyes
Saw Beatrice turned round towards the monster,
That is one person only in two natures.
Beneath her veil, beyond the margent green,
She seemed to me far more her ancient self
To excel, than others here, when she was here.
So pricked me then the thorn of penitence,
That of all other things the one which turned me
Most to its love became the most my foe.
Such self-conviction stung me at the heart
O’erpowered I fell, and what I then became
She knoweth who had furnished me the cause.
Then, when the heart restored my outward sense,
The lady I had found alone, above me¹¹³⁶
I saw, and she was saying, “Hold me, hold me.”
Up to my throat she in the stream had drawn me,
And, dragging me behind her, she was moving¹¹³⁷
Upon the water lightly as a shuttle.
When I was near unto the blessed shore,
“Asperges me,” I heard so sweetly sung,¹¹³⁸

Remember it I cannot, much less write it.
The beautiful lady opened wide her arms,
Embraced my head, and plunged me underneath,
Where I was forced to swallow of the water.
Then forth she drew me, and all dripping brought
Into the dance of the four beautiful,¹¹³⁹
And each one with her arm did cover me.
“We here are Nymphs, and in the Heaven are stars;¹¹⁴⁰
Ere Beatrice descended to the world,
We as her handmaids were appointed her.
We’ll lead thee to her eyes; but for the pleasant
Light that within them is, shall sharpen thine
The three beyond, who more profoundly look.”¹¹⁴¹
Thus singing they began; and afterwards
Unto the Griffin’s breast they led me with them,
Where Beatrice was standing, turned towards us.¹¹⁴²
“See that thou dost not spare thine eyes,” they said;
“Before the emeralds have we stationed thee,¹¹⁴³
Whence Love aforetime drew for thee his weapons.”
A thousand longings, hotter than the flame,
Fastened mine eyes upon those eyes reluctant,
That still upon the Griffin steadfast stayed.
As in a glass the sun, not otherwise
Within them was the twofold monster shining,¹¹⁴⁴
Now with the one, now with the other nature.¹¹⁴⁵
Think, Reader, if within myself I marvelled,
When I beheld the thing itself stand still,
And in its image it transformed itself.
While with amazement filled and jubilant,
My soul was tasting of the food, that while
It satisfies us makes us hunger for it,
Themselves revealing of the highest rank
In bearing, did the other three advance,
Singing to their angelic saraband.¹¹⁴⁶
“Turn, Beatrice, O turn thy holy eyes,”
Such was their song, “unto thy faithful one,

Who has to see thee ta'en so many steps.
In grace do us the grace that thou unveil
 Thy face to him, so that he may discern
 The second beauty which thou dost conceal.”
O splendor of the living light eternal!
 Who underneath the shadow of Parnassus
 Has grown so pale, or drunk so at its cistern,
 He would not seem to have his mind encumbered
 Striving to paint thee as thou didst appear,
 Where the harmonious heaven o'ershadowed thee,
 When in the open air thou didst unveil?

CANTO XXXII

The Tree of Knowledge.

So steadfast and attentive were mine eyes [1147](#)
In satisfying their decennial thirst, [1148](#)
That all my other senses were extinct,
And upon this side and on that they had
Walls of indifference, so the holy smile
Drew them unto itself with the old net;
When forcibly my sight was turned away
Towards my left hand by those goddesses,
Because I heard from them a “Too intently!”
And that condition of the sight which is [1149](#)
In eyes but lately smitten by the sun
Bereft me of my vision some short while;
But to the less when sight reshaped itself,
I say the less in reference to the greater
Splendor from which perforce I had withdrawn,
I saw upon its right wing wheeled about
The glorious host returning with the sun
And with the sevenfold flames upon their faces.
As underneath its shields, to save itself,
A squadron turns, and with its banner wheels,
Before the whole thereof can change its front,
That soldiery of the celestial kingdom
Which marched in the advance had wholly passed us
Before the chariot had turned its pole.
Then to the wheels the maidens turned themselves,
And the Griffin moved his burden benedight,

But so that not a feather of him fluttered.
The lady fair who drew me through the ford
Followed with Statius and myself the wheel
Which made its orbit with the lesser arc.
So passing through the lofty forest, vacant
By fault of her who in the serpent trusted,
Angelic music made our steps keep time.
Perchance as great a space had in three flights
An arrow loosened from the string o'erpassed,¹¹⁵⁰
As we had moved when Beatrice descended.
I heard them murmur altogether, "Adam!"
Then circled they about a tree despoiled¹¹⁵¹
Of blooms and other leafage on each bough.
Its tresses, which so much the more dilate
As higher they ascend, had been by Indians¹¹⁵²
Among their forests marvelled at for height.
"Blessed art thou, O Griffin, who dost not¹¹⁵³
Pluck with thy beak these branches sweet to taste,
Since appetite by this was turned to evil."
After this fashion round the tree robust
The others shouted; and the twofold creature:
"Thus is preserved the seed of all the just."
And turning to the pole which he had dragged,
He drew it close beneath the widowed bough,
And what was of it unto it left bound.¹¹⁵⁴
In the same manner as our trees (when downward
Falls the great light, with that together mingled
Which after the celestial Lasca shines)¹¹⁵⁵
Begin to swell, and then renew themselves,
Each one with its own color, ere the Sun
Harness his steeds beneath another star:¹¹⁵⁶
Less than of rose and more than violet
A hue disclosing, was renewed the tree
That had erewhile its boughs so desolate.
I never heard, nor here below is sung,
The hymn which afterward that people sang,

Nor did I bear the melody throughout.
Had I the power to paint how fell asleep
 Those eyes compassionless, of Syrinx hearing,¹¹⁵⁷
 Those eyes to which more watching cost so dear,
Even as a painter who from model paints
 I would portray how I was lulled asleep;
 He may, who well can picture drowsihood.
Therefore I pass to what time I awoke,
 And say a splendor rent from me the veil
 Of slumber, and a calling: "Rise, what dost thou?"
As to behold the apple-tree in blossom¹¹⁵⁸
 Which makes the Angels greedy for its fruit,
 And keeps perpetual bridals in the Heaven,
Peter and John and James conducted were,
 And, overcome, recovered at the word¹¹⁵⁹
 By which still greater slumbers have been broken,
And saw their school diminished by the loss
 Not only of Elias, but of Moses,
 And the apparel of their Master changed;
So I revived, and saw that piteous one¹¹⁶⁰
 Above me standing, who had been conductress
 Aforetime of my steps beside the river,
And all in doubt I said, "Where's Beatrice?"
 And she: "Behold her seated underneath
 The leafage new, upon the root of it.
Behold the company that circles her;
 The rest behind the Griffin are ascending
 With more melodious song, and more profound."
And if her speech were more diffuse I know not,
 Because already in my sight was she
 Who from the hearing of aught else had shut me.
Alone she sat upon the very earth,
 Left there as guardian of the chariot
 Which I had seen the biform monster fasten.
Encircling her, a cloister made themselves
 The seven Nymphs, with those lights in their hands¹¹⁶¹

Which are secure from Aquilon and Auster.
“Short while shalt thou be here a forester,
And thou shalt be with me for evermore
A citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman.
Therefore, for that world’s good which liveth ill,
Fix on the car thine eyes, and what thou seest,
Having returned to earth, take heed thou write.”

Thus Beatrice; and I, who at the feet
Of her commandments all devoted was,
My mind and eyes directed where she willed.
Never descended with so swift a motion
Fire from a heavy cloud, when it is raining
From out the region which is most remote,
As I beheld the bird of Jove descend¹¹⁶²
Down through the tree, rending away the bark,
As well as blossoms and the foliage new,
And he with all his might the chariot smote,¹¹⁶³
Wherewithal it reeled, like vessel in a tempest
Tossed by the waves, now starboard and now larboard.
Thereafter saw I leap into the body
Of the triumphal vehicle a Fox,¹¹⁶⁴
That seemed unfed with any wholesome food.
But for his hideous sins upbraiding him,
My Lady put him to as swift a flight
As such a fleshless skeleton could bear.
Then by the way that it before had come,
Into the chariot’s chest I saw the Eagle
Descend, and leave it feathered with his plumes.¹¹⁶⁵
And such as issues from a heart that mourns,
A voice from Heaven there issued, and it said:
“My little bark, how badly art thou freighted!”
Methought, then, that the earth did yawn between
Both wheels, and I saw rise from it a Dragon,¹¹⁶⁶
Who through the chariot upward fixed his tail,
And as a wasp that draweth back its sting,
Drawing unto himself his tail malign,

Drew out the floor, and went his way rejoicing.
That which remained behind, even as with grass
 A fertile region, with the feathers, offered
 Perhaps with pure intention and benign,
Reclothed itself, and with them were reclothed
 The pole and both the wheels so speedily,
 A sigh doth longer keep the lips apart.
Transfigured thus the holy edifice
 Thrust forward heads upon the parts of it,
 Three on the pole and one at either corner.[1167](#)
The first were horned like oxen; but the four
 Had but a single horn upon the forehead;
 A monster such had never yet been seen!
Firm as a rock upon a mountain high,
 Seated upon it, there appeared to me
 A shameless whore, with eyes swift glancing round.[1168](#)
And, as if not to have her taken from him,
 Upright beside her I beheld a giant;[1169](#)
 And ever and anon they kissed each other.
But because she her wanton, roving eye
 Turned upon me, her angry paramour
 Did scourge her from her head unto her feet.[1170](#)
Then full of jealousy, and fierce with wrath,
 He loosed the monster, and across the forest
 Dragged it so far, he made of that alone[1171](#)
A shield unto the whore and the strange beast.

CANTO XXXIII

The River Eunoë.

“*Deus venerunt gentes,*” alternating [1172](#)

Now three, now four, melodious psalmody
The maidens in the midst of tears began;
And Beatrice, compassionate and sighing,
Listened to them with such a countenance,
That scarce more changed was Mary at the cross.

But when the other virgins place had given [1173](#)
For her to speak, uprisen to her feet
With color as of fire, she made response:

“*Modicum, et non videbitis me;* [1174](#)

Et iterum, my sisters predilect,
Modicum, et vos videbitis me.”

Then all the seven in front of her she placed;
And after her, by beckoning only, moved
Me and the lady and the sage who stayed. [1175](#)
So she moved onward; and I do not think
That her tenth step was placed upon the ground,
When with her eyes upon mine eyes she smote,
And with a tranquil aspect, “Come more quickly,”
To me she said, “that, if I speak with thee,
To listen to me thou mayst be well placed.”

As soon as I was with her as I should be,
She said to me: “Why, brother, dost thou not
Venture to question now, in coming with me?”
As unto those who are too reverential,
Speaking in presence of superiors,

Who drag no living utterance to their teeth,¹¹⁷⁶
It me befell, that without perfect sound
 Began I: "My necessity, Madonna,
 You know, and that which thereunto is good."
And she to me: "Of fear and bashfulness
 Henceforward I will have thee strip thyself,
 So that thou speak no more as one who dreams.
Know that the vessel which the serpent broke¹¹⁷⁷
 Was, and is not; but let him who is guilty
 Think that God's vengeance does not fear a sop.¹¹⁷⁸
Without an heir shall not forever be¹¹⁷⁹
 The Eagle that left his plumes upon the car,
 Whence it became a monster, then a prey;
For verily I see, and hence narrate it,
 The stars already near to bring the time,
 From every hindrance safe, and every bar,
Within which a Five-hundred, Ten, and Five,¹¹⁸⁰
 One sent from God, shall slay the thievish woman
 And that same giant who is sinning with her.
And peradventure my dark utterance,
 Like Themis and the Sphinx, may less persuade thee,¹¹⁸¹
 Since, in their mode, it clouds the intellect;
But soon the facts shall be the Naiades¹¹⁸²
 Who shall this difficult enigma solve,
 Without destruction of the flocks and harvests.
Note thou; and even as by me are uttered
 These words, so teach them unto those who live
 That life which is a running unto death;¹¹⁸³
And bear in mind, whene'er thou writest them,
 Not to conceal what thou hast seen the plant,
 That twice already has been pillaged here.¹¹⁸⁴
Whoever pillages or shatters it,
 With blasphemy of deed offendeth God,
 Who made it holy for his use alone.
For biting that, in pain and in desire¹¹⁸⁵
 Five thousand years and more the first-born soul

Craved Him, who punished in himself the bite.
Thy genius slumbers, if it deem it not
 For special reason so pre-eminent
 In height, and so inverted in its summit.¹¹⁸⁶
And if thy vain imaginings had not been
 Water of Elsa round about thy mind,¹¹⁸⁷
 And Pyramus to the mulberry, their pleasure,¹¹⁸⁸
Thou by so many circumstances only
 The justice of the interdict of God
 Morally in the tree wouldst recognize.
But since I see thee in thine intellect
 Converted into stone and stained with sin,
 So that the light of my discourse doth daze thee,
I will too, if not written, at least painted,
 Thou bear it back within thee, for the reason
 That cinct with palm the pilgrim's staff is borne.”¹¹⁸⁹
And I: “As by a signet is the wax
 Which does not change the figure stamped upon it,
 My brain is now imprinted by yourself.
But wherefore so beyond my power of sight
 Soars your desirable discourse, that aye
 The more I strive, so much the more I lose it?”
“That thou mayst recognize,” she said, “the school¹¹⁹⁰
 Which thou hast followed, and mayst see how far
 Its doctrine follows after my discourse,
And mayst behold your path from the divine
 Distant as far as separated is
 From earth the heaven that highest hastens on.”
Whence her I answered: “I do not remember
 That ever I estranged myself from you,
 Nor have I conscience of it that reproves me.”
“And if thou art not able to remember,”
 Smiling she answered, “recollect thee now
 That thou this very day hast drunk of Lethe;
And if from smoke a fire may be inferred,
 Such an oblivion clearly demonstrates

Some error in thy will elsewhere intent.
Truly from this time forward shall my words
 Be naked, so far as it is befitting
 To lay them open unto thy rude gaze.”
And more coruscant and with slower steps
 The sun was holding the meridian circle,¹¹⁹¹
 Which, with the point of view, shifts here and there,
When halted (as he cometh to a halt,
 Who goes before a squadron as its escort,
 If something new he find upon his way)
The maidens seven at a dark shadow’s edge,
 Such as, beneath green leaves and branches black,
 The Alp upon its frigid border wears.
In front of them the Tigris and Euphrates¹¹⁹²
 Methought I saw forth issue from one fountain,
 And slowly part, like friends, from one another.
“O light, O glory of the human race!
 What stream is this which here unfolds itself
 From out one source, and from itself withdraws?”
For such a prayer, ’twas said unto me, “Pray
 Matilda that she tell thee”; and here answered,
 As one does who doth free himself from blame,
The beautiful lady: “This and other things
 Were told to him by me; and sure I am
 The water of Lethe has not hid them from him.”
And Beatrice: “Perhaps a greater care,
 Which oftentimes our memory takes away,
 Has made the vision of his mind obscure.
But Eunoë behold, that yonder rises;¹¹⁹³
 Lead him to it, and, as thou art accustomed,
 Revive again the half-dead virtue in him.”¹¹⁹⁴
Like gentle soul, that maketh no excuse,
 But makes its own will of another’s will
 As soon as by a sign it is disclosed,
Even so, when she had taken hold of me,
 The beautiful lady moved, and unto Statius
 Said, in her womanly manner, “Come with him.”

If, Reader, I possessed a longer space
For writing it, I yet would sing in part
Of the sweet draught that ne'er would satiate me;
But inasmuch as full are all the leaves
Made ready for this second canticle,
The curb of art no farther lets me go.
From the most holy water I returned
Regenerate, in the manner of new trees
That are renewed with a new foliage,
Pure and disposed to mount unto the stars.[1195](#)

Paradiso

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the housetops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy fame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,

In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

CANTO I

The ascent to the First Heaven.

The glory of Him who moveth everything¹¹⁹⁶

Doth penetrate the universe, and shine¹¹⁹⁷

In one part more and in another less.

Within that heaven which most his light receives¹¹⁹⁸

Was I, and things beheld which to repeat¹¹⁹⁹

Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;

Because in drawing near to its desire¹²⁰⁰

Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,

That after it the memory cannot go.

Truly whatever of the holy realm

I had the power to treasure in my mind

Shall now become the subject of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last emprise¹²⁰¹

Make of me such a vessel of thy power

As giving the beloved laurel asks!

One summit of Parnassus hitherto

Has been enough for me, but now with both

I needs must enter the arena left.

Enter into my bosom, thou, and breathe¹²⁰²

As at the time when Marsyas thou didst draw¹²⁰³

Out of the scabbard of those limbs of his.

O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me

So that the shadow of the blessed realm

Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,

Thou'l see me come unto thy darling tree,

And crown myself thereafter with those leaves
Of which the theme and thou shall make me worthy.
So seldom, Father, do we gather them
For triumph or of Caesar or of Poet,
(The fault and shame of human inclinations,)
That the Peneian foliage should bring forth
Joy to the joyous Delphic deity,
When anyone it makes to thirst for it.
A little spark is followed by great flame;
Perchance with better voices after me
Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond![1204](#)
To mortal men by passages diverse
Uprises the world's lamp; but by that one
Which circles four uniteth with three crosses,[1205](#)
With better course and with a better star
Conjoined it issues, and the mundane wax[1206](#)
Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.
Almost that passage had made morning there
And evening here, and there was wholly white[1207](#)
That hemisphere, and black the other part,
When Beatrice towards the left-hand side
I saw turned round, and gazing at the sun;
Never did eagle fasten so upon it!
And even as a second ray is wont
To issue from the first and reascend,
Like to a pilgrim who would fain return,
Thus of her action, through the eyes infused
In my imagination, mine I made,
And sunward fixed mine eyes beyond our wont.
There much is lawful which is here unlawful
Unto our powers, by virtue of the place
Made for the human species as its own.
Not long I bore it, nor so little while
But I beheld it sparkle round about
Like iron that comes molten from the fire;[1208](#)
And suddenly it seemed that day to day[1209](#)

Was added, as if He who has the power
Had with another sun the heaven adorned.
With eyes upon the everlasting wheels
Stood Beatrice all intent, and I, on her
Fixing my vision from above removed,
Such at her aspect inwardly became
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb that made him¹²¹⁰
Peer of the other gods beneath the sea.
To represent transhumanize in words
Impossible were; the example, then, suffice
Him for whom Grace the experience reserves.
If I was merely what of me thou newly¹²¹¹
Createdst, Love who governest the heaven,
Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!
When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal¹²¹²
Desiring thee, made me attentive to it
By harmony thou dost modulate and measure,¹²¹³
Then seemed to me so much of heaven enkindled
By the sun's flame, that neither rain nor river
E'er made a lake so widely spread abroad.
The newness of the sound and the great light
Kindled in me a longing for their cause,
Never before with such acuteness felt;
Whence she, who saw me as I saw myself,
To quiet in me my perturbed mind,
Opened her mouth, ere I did mine to ask,
And she began: "Thou makest thyself so dull
With false imagining, that thou seest not
What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it off.
Thou art not upon earth, as thou believest;
But lightning, fleeing its appropriate site,¹²¹⁴
Ne'er ran as thou, who thitherward returnest."
If of my former doubt I was divested
By these brief little words more smiled than spoken,
I in a new one was the more ensnared;
And said: "Already did I rest content

From great amazement; but am now amazed
In what way I transcend these bodies light.”

Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh,
Her eyes directed tow’rds me with that look
A mother casts on a delirious child;
And she began: “All things whate’er they be
Have order among themselves, and this is form,
That makes the universe resemble God.

Here do the higher creatures see the footprints
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end
Whereto is made the law already mentioned.

In the order that I speak of are inclined¹²¹⁵
All natures, by their destinies diverse,
More or less near unto their origin;
Hence they move onward unto ports diverse
O’er the great sea of being; and each one
With instinct given it which bears it on.

This bears away the fire towards the moon;
This is in mortal hearts the motive power;
This binds together and unites the earth.

Nor only the created things that are
Without intelligence this bow shoots forth,
But those that have both intellect and love.

The Providence that regulates all this¹²¹⁶
Makes with its light the heaven forever quiet,¹²¹⁷
Wherein that turns which has the greatest haste.

And thither now, as to a site decreed,
Bears us away the virtue of that cord
Which aims its arrows at a joyous mark.

True is it, that as oftentimes the form
Accords not with the intention of the art,
Because in answering is matter deaf,

So likewise from this course doth deviate
Sometimes the creature, who the power possesses,
Though thus impelled, to swerve some other way,

(In the same wise as one may see the fire
Fall from a cloud,) if the first impetus

Earthward is wrested by some false delight.
Thou shouldst not wonder more, if well I judge,
 At thine ascent, than at a rivulet
 From some high mount descending to the lowland.
Marvel it would be in thee, if deprived
 Of hindrance, thou wert seated down below,
 As if on earth the living fire were quiet.”^{[1218](#)}
Thereat she heavenward turned again her face.

CANTO II

The First Heaven, or that of the moon, in which are seen the spirits of those who, having taken monastic vows, were forced to violate them.

O Ye, who in some pretty little boat,¹²¹⁹
Eager to listen, have been following
Behind my ship, that singing sails along,
Turn back to look again upon your shores;
Do not put out to sea, lest peradventure,
In losing me, you might yourselves be lost.
The sea I sail has never yet been passed;
Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo,¹²²⁰
And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.
Ye other few who have the neck uplifted
Betimes to th' bread of Angels upon which¹²²¹
One liveth here and grows not sated by it,
Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea
Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you
Upon the water that grows smooth again.
Those glorious ones who unto Colchos passed¹²²²
Were not so wonder-struck as you shall be,
When Jason they beheld a ploughman made!
The con-created and perpetual thirst¹²²³
For the realm deiform did bear us on,
As swift almost as ye the heavens behold.
Upward gazed Beatrice, and I at her;
And in such space perchance as strikes a bolt¹²²⁴

And flies, and from the notch unlocks itself,
Arrived I saw me where a wondrous thing
Drew to itself my sight; and therefore she
From whom no care of mine could be concealed,
Towards me turning, blithe as beautiful,
Said unto me: "Fix gratefully thy mind
On God, who unto the first star has brought us."
It seemed to me a cloud encompassed us,
Luminous, dense, consolidate and bright
As adamant on which the sun is striking.
Into itself did the eternal pearl
Receive us, even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken.
If I was body, (and we here conceive not
How one dimension tolerates another,
Which needs must be if body enter body,)
More the desire should be enkindled in us
That essence to behold, wherein is seen
How God and our own nature were united.
There will be seen what we receive by faith,
Not demonstrated, but self-evident
In guise of the first truth that man believes.
I made reply: "Madonna, as devoutly
As most I can do I give thanks to Him
Who has removed me from the mortal world.
But tell me what the dusky spots may be
Upon this body, which below on earth
Make people tell that fabulous tale of Cain?"¹²²⁵
Somewhat she smiled; and then, "If the opinion
Of mortals be erroneous," she said,
"Where'er the key of sense doth not unlock,
Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee
Now, forasmuch as, following the senses,
Thou seest that the reason has short wings.
But tell me what thou think'st of it thyself."
And I: "What seems to us up here diverse,¹²²⁶
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense."

And she: "Right truly shalt thou see immersed
In error thy belief, if well thou hearest
The argument that I shall make against it.

Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you [1227](#)
Which in their quality and quantity
May noted be of aspects different.

If this were caused by rare and dense alone,
One only virtue would there be in all
Or more or less diffused, or equally.

Virtues diverse must be perforce the fruits
Of formal principles; and these, save one,
Of course would by thy reasoning be destroyed.

Besides, if rarity were of this dimness [1228](#)
The cause thou askest, either through and through
This planet thus attenuate were of matter,

Or else, as in a body is apportioned
The fat and lean, so in like manner this
Would in its volume interchange the leaves.

Were it the former, in the sun's eclipse
It would be manifest by the shining through
Of light, as through aught tenuous interfused.

This is not so; hence we must scan the other,
And if it chance the other I demolish,
Then falsified will thy opinion be.

But if this rarity go not through and through,
There needs must be a limit, beyond which
Its contrary prevents the further passing,

And thence the foreign radiance is reflected,
Even as a color cometh back from glass,
The which behind itself concealeth lead. [1229](#)

Now thou wilt say the sunbeam shows itself
More dimly there than in the other parts,
By being there reflected farther back.

From this reply experiment will free thee
If e'er thou try it, which is wont to be
The fountain to the rivers of your arts.

Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove

Alike from thee, the other more remote
Between the former two shall meet thine eyes.
Turned towards these, cause that behind thy back
Be placed a light, illumining the three mirrors
And coming back to thee by all reflected.
Though in its quantity be not so ample
The image most remote, there shalt thou see
How it perforce is equally resplendent.
Now, as beneath the touches of warm rays
Naked the subject of the snow remains [1230](#)
Both of its former color and its cold,
Thee thus remaining in thy intellect,
Will I inform with such a living light,
That it shall tremble in its aspect to thee. [1231](#)
Within the heaven of the divine repose [1232](#)
Revolves a body, in whose virtue lies
The being of whatever it contains.
The following heaven, that has so many eyes, [1233](#)
Divides this being by essences diverse,
Distinguished from it, and by it contained.
The other spheres, by various differences,
All the distinctions which they have within them
Dispose unto their ends and their effects.
Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
As thou perceivest now, from grade to grade;
Since from above they take, and act beneath.
Observe me well, how through this place I come
Unto the truth thou wishest, that hereafter
Thou mayst alone know how to keep the ford.
The power and motion of the holy spheres,
As from the artisan the hammer's craft,
Forth from the blessed motors must proceed.
The heaven, which lights so manifold make fair,
From the Intelligence profound, which turns it, [1234](#)
The image takes, and makes of it a seal.
And even as the soul within your dust

Through members different and accommodated
To faculties diverse expands itself,
So likewise this Intelligence diffuses
Its virtue multiplied among the stars,
Itself revolving on its unity.
Virtue diverse doth a diverse alloyage
Make with the precious body that it quickens,
In which, as life in you, it is combined.
From the glad nature whence it is derived,
The mingled virtue through the body shines,
Even as gladness through the living pupil.
From this proceeds whate'er from light to light
Appeareth different, not from dense and rare:
This is the formal principle that produces, [1235](#)
According to its goodness, dark and bright.”

CANTO III

Piccarda and Constance.

That Sun, which erst with love my bosom warmed,¹²³⁶
 Of beauteous truth had unto me discovered,
 By proving and reproving, the sweet aspect.
And, that I might confess myself convinced
 And confident, so far as was befitting,
 I lifted more erect my head to speak.
But there appeared a vision, which withdrew me
 So close to it, in order to be seen,
 That my confession I remembered not.
Such as through polished and transparent glass,
 Or waters crystalline and undisturbed,
 But not so deep as that their bed be lost,
Come back again the outlines of our faces
 So feeble, that a pearl on forehead white
 Comes not less speedily unto our eyes;
Such saw I many faces prompt to speak,
 So that I ran in error opposite
 To that which kindled love 'twixt man and fountain.¹²³⁷
As soon as I became aware of them,
 Esteeming them as mirrored semblances,
 To see of whom they were, mine eyes I turned,
And nothing saw, and once more turned them forward
 Direct into the light of my sweet Guide,
 Who smiling kindled in her holy eyes.
“Marvel thou not,” she said to me, “because
 I smile at this thy puerile conceit,

Since on the truth it trusts not yet its foot,
But turns thee, as 'tis wont, on emptiness.
True substances are these which thou beholdest,
Here relegate for breaking of some vow.
Therefore speak with them, listen and believe;
For the true light, which giveth peace to them,
Permits them not to turn from it their feet.”
And I unto the shade that seemed most wishful
To speak directed me, and I began,
As one whom too great eagerness bewilders:
“O well-created spirit, who in the rays
Of life eternal dost the sweetness taste
Which being untasted ne'er is comprehended,
Grateful 'twill be to me, if thou content me
Both with thy name and with your destiny.”¹²³⁸
Whereat she promptly and with laughing eyes:
“Our charity doth never shut the doors
Against a just desire, except as one¹²³⁹
Who wills that all her court be like herself.
I was a virgin sister in the world;
And if thy mind doth contemplate me well,
The being more fair will not conceal me from thee,
But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda,
Who, stationed here among these other blessed,
Myself am blessed in the slowest sphere.
All our affections, that alone inflamed
Are in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost,
Rejoice at being of his order formed;
And this allotment, which appears so low,
Therefore is given us, because our vows
Have been neglected and in some part void.”
Whence I to her: “In your miraculous aspects
There shines I know not what of the divine,
Which doth transform you from our first conceptions.
Therefore I was not swift in my remembrance;
But what thou tellest me now aids me so,
That the refiguring is easier to me.

But tell me, ye who in this place are happy,
Are you desirous of a higher place,
To see more or to make yourselves more friends?"

First with those other shades she smiled a little;
Thereafter answered me so full of gladness,
She seemed to burn in the first fire of love:

"Brother, our will is quieted by virtue [1240](#)
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.

If to be more exalted we aspired,
Discordant would our aspirations be
Unto the will of Him who here secludes us;

Which thou shalt see finds no place in these circles,
If being in charity is needful here,
And if thou lookest well into its nature;

Nay, 'tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will divine,
Whereby our very wishes are made one;

So that, as we are station above station
Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing,
As to the King, who makes his will our will.

And his will is our peace; this is the sea
To which is moving onward whatsoever
It doth create, and all that nature makes."

Then it was clear to me how everywhere
In heaven is Paradise, although the grace
Of good supreme there rain not in one measure.

But as it comes to pass, if one food sates,
And for another still remains the longing,
We ask for this, and that decline with thanks,

E'en thus did I; with gesture and with word,
To learn from her what was the web wherein
She did not ply the shuttle to the end.

"A perfect life and merit high in-heaven
A lady o'er us," said she, "by whose rule
Down in your world they vest and veil themselves,
That until death they may both watch and sleep

Beside that Spouse who every vow accepts
Which charity conformeth to his pleasure.
To follow her, in girlhood from the world
I fled, and in her habit shut myself,
And pledged me to the pathway of her sect.
Then men accustomed unto evil more
Than unto good, from the sweet cloister tore me;
God knows what afterward my life became.
This other splendor, which to thee reveals
Itself on my right side, and is enkindled
With all the illumination of our sphere,
What of myself I say applies to her;
A nun was she, and likewise from her head
Was ta'en the shadow of the sacred wimple.
But when she too was to the world returned
Against her wishes and against good usage,
Of the heart's veil she never was divested.
Of great Costanza this is the effulgence,¹²⁴¹
Who from the second wind of Suabia
Brought forth the third and latest puissance.”
Thus unto me she spake, and then began
“Ave Maria” singing, and in singing
Vanished, as through deep water something heavy.
My sight, that followed her as long a time
As it was possible, when it had lost her
Turned round unto the mark of more desire,
And wholly unto Beatrice reverted;
But she such lightnings flashed into mine eyes,
That at the first my sight endured it not;
And this in questioning more backward made me.

CANTO IV

Questionings of the soul and of broken vows.

Between two viands, equally removed¹²⁴²

And tempting, a free man would die of hunger¹²⁴³

Ere either he could bring unto his teeth.

So would a lamb between the ravenings

Of two fierce wolves stand fearing both alike;

And so would stand a dog between two does.¹²⁴⁴

Hence, if I held my peace, myself I blame not,

Impelled in equal measure by my doubts,

Since it must be so, nor do I commend.¹²⁴⁵

I held my peace; but my desire was painted

Upon my face, and questioning with that

More fervent far than by articulate speech.

Beatrice did as Daniel had done¹²⁴⁶

Relieving Nebuchadnezzar from the wrath

Which rendered him unjustly merciless,

And said: "Well see I how attracteth thee

One and the other wish, so that thy care

Binds itself so that forth it does not breathe.

Thou arguest, if good will be permanent,

The violence of others, for what reason

Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?

Again for doubting furnish thee occasion

Souls seeming to return unto the stars,

According to the sentiment of Plato.¹²⁴⁷

These are the questions which upon thy wish

Are thrusting equally; and therefore first¹²⁴⁸

Will I treat that which hath the most of gall.
He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God,[1249](#)
Moses, and Samuel, and whichever John
Thou mayst select, I say, and even Mary,
Have not in any other heaven their seats,
Than have those spirits that just appeared to thee,
Nor of existence more or fewer years;
But all make beautiful the primal circle,
And have sweet life in different degrees,
By feeling more or less the eternal breath.
They showed themselves here, not because allotted
This sphere has been to them, but to give sign
Of the celestial which is least exalted.
To speak thus is adapted to your mind,
Since only through the sense it apprehendeth
What then it worthy makes of intellect.[1250](#)
On this account the Scripture condescends
Unto your faculties, and feet and hands
To God attributes, and means something else;
And Holy Church under an aspect human
Gabriel and Michael represent to you,
And him who made Tobias whole again.[1251](#)
That which Timaeus argues of the soul[1252](#)
Doth not resemble that which here is seen,
Because it seems that as he speaks he thinks.[1253](#)
He says the soul unto its star returns,
Believing it to have been severed thence
Whenever nature gave it as a form.[1254](#)
Perhaps his doctrine is of other guise
Than the words sound, and possibly may be
With meaning that is not to be derided.
If he doth mean that to these wheels return
The honor of their influence and the blame,
Perhaps his bow doth hit upon some truth.
This principle ill understood once warped
The whole world nearly, till it went astray

Invoking Jove and Mercury and Mars.[1255](#)

The other doubt which doth disquiet thee[1256](#)

Less venom has, for its malevolence
Could never lead thee otherwhere from me.

That as unjust our justice should appear

In eyes of mortals, is an argument
Of faith, and not of sin heretical.

But still, that your perception may be able

To thoroughly penetrate this verity,
As thou desirest, I will satisfy thee.

If it be violence when he who suffers

Cooperates not with him who uses force,
These souls were not on that account excused;

For will is never quenched unless it will,

But operates as nature doth in fire
If violence a thousand times distort it.

Hence, if it yieldeth more or less, it seconds

The force; and these have done so, having power
Of turning back unto the holy place.

If their will had been perfect, like to that

Which Lawrence fast upon his gridiron held,[1257](#)
And Mutius made severe to his own hand,[1258](#)

It would have urged them back along the road

Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were free;
But such a solid will is all too rare.

And by these words, if thou hast gathered them

As thou shouldst do, the argument is refuted
That would have still annoyed thee many times.

But now another passage runs across

Before thine eyes, and such that by thyself
Thou couldst not thread it ere thou wouldest be weary.

I have for certain put into thy mind

That soul beatified could never lie,
For it is near the primal Truth,

And then thou from Piccarda might'st have heard

Costanza kept affection for the veil,
So that she seemeth here to contradict me.

Many times, brother, has it come to pass,
That, to escape from peril, with reluctance
That has been done it was not right to do,
E'en as Alcmaeon (who, being by his father [1259](#)
Thereto entreated, his own mother slew)
Not to lose pity pitiless became.

At this point I desire thee to remember
That force with will commingles, and they cause
That the offences cannot be excused.

Will absolute consenteth not to evil;
But in so far consenteth as it fears,
If it refrain, to fall into more harm.

Hence when Piccarda uses this expression,
She meaneth the will absolute, and I
The other, so that both of us speak truth."

Such was the flowing of the holy river
That issued from the fount whence springs all truth;
This put to rest my wishes one and all.

"O love of the first lover, O divine," [1260](#)
Said I forthwith, "whose speech inundates me
And warms me so, it more and more revives me,
My own affection is not so profound
As to suffice in rendering grace for grace;
Let Him, who sees and can, thereto respond.

Well I perceive that never sated is
Our intellect unless the Truth illume it,
Beyond which nothing true expands itself.

It rests therein, as wild beast in his lair,
When it attains it; and it can attain it;
If not, then each desire would frustrate be.

Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot,
Doubt at the foot of truth; and this is nature, [1261](#)
Which to the top from height to height impels us.

This doth invite me, this assurance give me
With reverence, Lady, to inquire of you
Another truth, which is obscure to me.

I wish to know if man can satisfy you

For broken vows with other good deeds, so
That in your balance they will not be light."

Beatrice gazed upon me with her eyes [1262](#)
Full of the sparks of love, and so divine,
That, overcome my power, I turned my back
And almost lost myself with eyes downcast.

CANTO V

Compensations. Ascent to the Second Heaven, or that of Mercury, where are seen the spirits of those who for the love of fame achieved great deeds.

“If in the heat of love I flame upon thee¹²⁶³
Beyond the measure that on earth is seen,
So that the valor of thine eyes I vanquish,
Marvel thou not thereat; for this proceeds
From perfect sight, which as it apprehends
To the good apprehended moves its feet.
Well I perceive how is already shining
Into thine intellect the eternal light,
That only seen enkindles always love;
And if some other thing your love seduce,¹²⁶⁴
'Tis nothing but a vestige of the same,
Ill understood, which there is shining through.
Thou fain wouldest know if with another service
For broken vow can such return be made
As to secure the soul from further claim.”
This Canto thus did Beatrice begin;
And, as a man who breaks not off his speech,
Continued thus her holy argument:
“The greatest gift that in his largess God
Creating made, and unto his own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize
Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence

Both all and only were and are endowed.¹²⁶⁵
Now wilt thou see, if thence thou reasonest,
 The high worth of a vow, if it he made
 So that when thou consentest God consents:
For, closing between God and man the compact,
 A sacrifice is of this treasure made,
 Such as I say, and made by its own act.
What can be rendered then as compensation?
 Think'st thou to make good use of what thou'st offered,
 With gains ill gotten thou wouldest do good deed.¹²⁶⁶
Now art thou certain of the greater point;
 But because Holy Church in this dispenses,
 Which seems against the truth which I have shown thee,
Behoves thee still to sit awhile at table,
 Because the solid food which thou hast taken
 Requireth further aid for thy digestion.
Open thy mind to that which I reveal,
 And fix it there within; for 'tis not knowledge,
 The having heard without retaining it.
In the essence of this sacrifice two things
 Convene together; and the one is that
 Of which 'tis made, the other is the agreement.
This last for evermore is cancelled not
 Unless complied with, and concerning this
 With such precision has above been spoken.
Therefore it was enjoined upon the Hebrews
 To offer still, though sometimes what was offered
 Might be commuted, as thou ought'st to know.
The other, which is known to thee as matter,¹²⁶⁷
 May well indeed be such that one errs not
 If it for other matter be exchanged.
But let none shift the burden on his shoulder
 At his arbitrament, without the turning
 Both of the white and of the yellow key;¹²⁶⁸
And every permutation deem as foolish,
 If in the substitute the thing relinquished,

As the four is in six, be not contained.[1269](#)
Therefore whatever thing has so great weight
 In value that it drags down every balance,
 Cannot be satisfied with other spending.
Let mortals never take a vow in jest;
 Be faithful and not blind in doing that,
 As Jephthah was in his first offering,[1270](#)
Whom more beseemed to say, ‘I have done wrong,
 Than to do worse by keeping; and as foolish
 Thou the great leader of the Greeks wilt find,[1271](#)
Whence wept Iphigenia her fair face,[1272](#)
 And made for her both wise and simple weep,
 Who heard such kind of worship spoken of.’
Christians, be ye more serious in your movements;
 Be ye not like a feather at each wind,
 And think not every water washes you.
Ye have the Old and the New Testament,
 And the Pastor of the Church who guideth you
 Let this suffice you unto your salvation.
If evil appetite cry aught else to you,
 Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep,[1273](#)
 So that the Jew among you may not mock you.
Be ye not as the lamb that doth abandon[1274](#)
 Its mother’s milk, and frolicsome and simple
 Combats at its own pleasure with itself.”
Thus Beatrice to me even as I write it;
 Then all desireful turned herself again
 To that part where the world is most alive.[1275](#)
Her silence and her change of countenance
 Silence imposed upon my eager mind,
 That had already in advance new questions;
And as an arrow that upon the mark
 Strikes ere the bowstring quiet hath become,
 So did we speed into the second realm.
My Lady there so joyful I beheld,
 As into the brightness of that heaven she entered,[1276](#)

More luminous thereat the planet grew;
And if the star itself was changed and smiled,[1277](#)
 What became I, who by my nature am
 Exceeding mutable in every guise!
As, in a fishpond which is pure and tranquil,
 The fishes draw to that which from without
 Comes in such fashion that their food they deem it;
So I beheld more than a thousand splendors
 Drawing towards us, and in each was heard:
 “Lo, this is she who shall increase our love.”
And as each one was coming unto us,
 Full of beatitude the shade was seen,
 By the effulgence clear that issued from it.[1278](#)
Think, Reader, if what here is just beginning
 No farther should proceed, how thou wouldest have
 An agonizing need of knowing more;
And of thyself thou’lt see how I from these
 Was in desire of hearing their conditions,
 As they unto mine eyes were manifest.
“O thou wellborn, unto whom Grace concedes
 To see the thrones of the eternal triumph,
 Or ever yet the warfare be abandoned
With light that through the whole of heaven is spread
 Kindled are we, and hence if thou desirest
 To know of us, at thine own pleasure sate thee.”
Thus by someone among those holy spirits[1279](#)
 Was spoken, and by Beatrice: “Speak, speak
 Securely, and believe them even as Gods.”
“Well I perceive how thou dost nest thyself
 In thine own light, and drawest it from thine eyes,
 Because they coruscate when thou dost smile,
But know not who thou art, nor why thou hast,
 Spirit august, thy station in the sphere
 That veils itself to men in alien rays.”[1280](#)
This said I in direction of the light
 Which first had spoken to me; whence it became
 By far more lucent than it was before.

Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself¹²⁸¹
By too much light, when heat has worn away
The tempering influence of the vapors dense,
By greater rapture thus concealed itself
In its own radiance the figure saintly,
And thus close, close enfolded answered me
In fashion as the following Canto sings.

CANTO VI

Justinian—The Roman eagle—Romeo.

“After that Constantine the eagle turned¹²⁸²
Against the course of heaven, which it had followed
Behind the ancient who Lavinia took,
Two hundred years and more the bird of God¹²⁸³
In the extreme of Europe held itself,¹²⁸⁴
Near to the mountains whence it issued first;
And under shadow of the sacred plumes
It governed there the world from hand to hand,
And, changing thus, upon mine own alighted.
Caesar I was, and am Justinian,¹²⁸⁵
Who, by the will of primal Love I feel,
Took from the laws the useless and redundant;¹²⁸⁶
And ere unto the work I was attent,
One nature to exist in Christ, not more,¹²⁸⁷
Believed, and with such faith was I contented.
But blessed Agapetus, he who was¹²⁸⁸
The supreme pastor, to the faith sincere
Pointed me out the way by words of his.
Him I believed, and what was his assertion
I now see clearly, even as thou seest
Each contradiction to be false and true.
As soon as with the Church I moved my feet,
God in his grace it pleased with this high task
To inspire me, and I gave me wholly to it,
And to my Belisarius I commended¹²⁸⁹

The arms, to which was heaven's right hand so joined
It was a signal that I should repose.

Now here to the first question terminates

My answer; but the character thereof
Constrains me to continue with a sequel,
In order that thou see with how great reason
Men move against the standard sacrosanct,
Both who appropriate and who oppose it.

Behold how great a power has made it worthy
Of reverence, beginning from the hour
When Pallas died to give it sovereignty.¹²⁹⁰

Thou knowest it made in Alba its abode¹²⁹¹
Three hundred years and upward, till at last
The three to three fought for it yet again.¹²⁹²

Thou knowest what it achieved from Sabine wrong¹²⁹³
Down to Lucretia's sorrow, in seven kings
O'ercoming round about the neighboring nations;
Thou knowest what it achieved, borne by the Romans
Illustrious against Brennus, against Pyrrhus,¹²⁹⁴
Against the other princes and confederates.

Torquatus thence and Quintius, who from locks¹²⁹⁵
Unkempt was named, Decii and Fabii,¹²⁹⁶
Received the fame I willingly embalm;
It struck to earth the pride of the Arabians,
Who, following Hannibal, had passed across
The Alpine ridges, Po, from which thou glidest;
Beneath it triumphed while they yet were young
Pompey and Scipio, and to the hill¹²⁹⁷
Beneath which thou wast born it bitter seemed;

Then, near unto the time when heaven had willed¹²⁹⁸
To bring the whole world to its mood serene,
Did Caesar by the will of Rome assume it.

What it achieved from Var unto the Rhine,
Isere beheld and Saone, beheld the Seine,
And every valley whence the Rhone is filled;
What it achieved when it had left Ravenna,

And leaped the Rubicon, was such a flight
That neither tongue nor pen could follow it.
Round towards Spain it wheeled its legions; then
 Towards Durazzo, and Pharsalia smote¹²⁹⁹
 That to the calid Nile was felt the pain.¹³⁰⁰
Antandros and the Simois, whence it started,¹³⁰¹
 It saw again, and there where Hector lies,
 And ill for Ptolemy then roused itself.¹³⁰²
From thence it came like lightning upon Juba;¹³⁰³
 Then wheeled itself again into your West,¹³⁰⁴
 Where the Pompeian clarion it heard.
From what it wrought with the next standard-bearer¹³⁰⁵
 Brutus and Cassius howl in Hell together,
 And Modena and Perugia dolent were;¹³⁰⁶
Still doth the mournful Cleopatra weep
 Because thereof, who, fleeing from before it,
 Took from the adder sudden and black death.
With him it ran even to the Red Sea shore;
 With him it placed the world in so great peace,
 That unto Janus was his temple closed.¹³⁰⁷
But what the standard that has made me speak
 Achieved before, and after should achieve
 Throughout the mortal realm that lies beneath it,
Becometh in appearance mean and dim,
 If in the hand of the third Caesar seen¹³⁰⁸
 With eye unclouded and affection pure,
Because the living Justice that inspires me
 Granted it, in the hand of him I speak of,
 The glory of doing vengeance for its wrath.¹³⁰⁹
Now here attend to what I answer thee;
 Later it ran with Titus to do vengeance¹³¹⁰
 Upon the vengeance of the ancient sin.
And when the tooth of Lombardy had bitten¹³¹¹
 The Holy Church, then underneath its wings
 Did Charlemagne victorious succor her.
Now hast thou power to judge of such as those

Whom I accused above, and of their crimes,¹³¹²
Which are the cause of all your miseries.

To the public standard one the yellow lilies¹³¹³
Opposes, the other claims it for a party,
So that 'tis hard to see which sins the most.

Let, let the Ghibellines ply their handicraft
Beneath some other standard; for this ever
Ill follows he who it and justice parts.

And let not this new Charles e'er strike it down,¹³¹⁴
He and his Guelfs, but let him fear the talons
That from a nobler lion stripped the fell.

Already oftentimes the sons have wept
The father's crime; and let him not believe
That God will change His scutcheon for the lilies.¹³¹⁵

This little planet doth adorn itself¹³¹⁶
With the good spirits that have active been,
That fame and honor might come after them;¹³¹⁷

And whensoever the desires mount thither,
Thus deviating, must perforce the rays
Of the true love less vividly mount upward.

But in commensuration of our wages
With our desert is portion of our joy,
Because we see them neither less nor greater.

Herein doth living Justice sweeten so¹³¹⁸
Affection in us, that for evermore
It cannot warp to any iniquity.

Voices diverse make up sweet melodies;
So in this life of ours the seats diverse
Render sweet harmony among these spheres;

And in the compass of this present pearl
Shineth the sheen of Romeo, of whom¹³¹⁹
The grand and beauteous work was ill rewarded.

But the Provençals who against him wrought,
They have not laughed, and therefore ill goes he
Who makes his hurt of the good deeds of others.

Four daughters, and each one of them a queen,

Had Raymond Berenger, and this for him
Did Romeo, a poor man and a pilgrim;
And then malicious words incited him
To summon to a reckoning this just man,
Who rendered to him seven and five for ten.
Then he departed poor and stricken in years,
And if the world could know the heart he had,
In begging bit by bit his livelihood,
Though much it laud him, it would laud him more.”[1320](#)

CANTO VII

Beatrice's discourse of the incarnation, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body.

“*Osanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth,*¹³²¹

Superillustrans claritate tua

Felices ignes horum malahoth!”

In this wise, to his melody returning,

This substance, upon which a double light¹³²²

Doubles itself, was seen by me to sing,

And to their dance this and the others moved,¹³²³

And in the manner of swift-hurrying sparks

Veiled themselves from me with a sudden distance.

Doubting was I, and saying, “Tell her, tell her,”¹³²⁴

Within me, “tell her,” saying, “tell my Lady,”

Who slakes my thirst with her sweet effluences;

And yet that reverence which doth lord it over

The whole of me only by B and ICE,¹³²⁵

Bowed me again like unto one who drowses.

Short while did Beatrice endure me thus;

And she began, lighting me with a smile¹³²⁶

Such as would make one happy in the fire:

“According to infallible advisement,

After what manner a just vengeance justly¹³²⁷

Could be avenged has put thee upon thinking,

But I will speedily thy mind unloose;

And do thou listen, for these words of mine

Of a great doctrine will a present make thee.

By not enduring on the power that wills
Curb for his good, that man who ne'er was born,
Damning himself damned all his progeny;[1328](#)

Whereby the human species down below
Lay sick for many centuries in great error,
Till to descend it pleased the Word of God
To where the nature, which from its own Maker
Estranged itself, he joined to him in person
By the sole act of his eternal love.

Now unto what is said direct thy sight;
This nature when united to its Maker,
Such as created, was sincere and good;[1329](#)
But by itself alone was banished forth
From Paradise, because it turned aside
Out of the way of truth and of its life.

Therefore the penalty the cross held out,
If measured by the nature thus assumed,
None ever yet with so great justice stung,
And none was ever of so great injustice,
Considering who the Person was that suffered,
Within whom such a nature was contracted.

From one act therefore issued things diverse;
To God and to the Jews one death was pleasing;
Earth trembled at it and the Heaven was opened.

It should no longer now seem difficult
To thee, when it is said that a just vengeance
By a just court was afterward avenged.

But now do I behold thy mind entangled
From thought to thought within a knot, from which
With great desire it waits to free itself.

Thou sayest, 'Well discern I what I hear;
But it is hidden from me why God willed
For our redemption only this one mode.'

Buried remaineth, brother, this decree
Unto the eyes of everyone whose nature
Is in the flame of love not yet adult.

Verily, inasmuch as at this mark

One gazes long and little is discerned,
Wherefore this mode was worthiest will I say.
Goodness Divine, which from itself doth spurn
All envy, burning in itself so sparkles [1330](#)
That the eternal beauties it unfolds.

Whate'er from this immediately distils [1331](#)
Has afterwards no end, for ne'er removed
Is its impression when it sets its seal.

Whate'er from this immediately rains down
Is wholly free, because it is not subject
Unto the influences of novel things.

The more conformed thereto, the more it pleases;
For the blest ardor that irradiates all things
In that most like itself is most vivacious.

With all of these things has advantaged been [1332](#)
The human creature; and if one be wanting,
From his nobility he needs must fall.

'Tis sin alone which doth disfranchise him,
And render him unlike the Good Supreme,
So that he little with its light is blanched,

And to his dignity no more returns,
Unless he fill up where transgression empties
With righteous pains for criminal delights.

Your nature when it sinned so utterly
In its own seed, out of these dignities
Even as out of Paradise was driven,
Nor could itself recover, if thou notest
With nicest subtlety, by anyway,
Except by passing one of these two fords:

Either that God through clemency alone
Had pardon granted, or that man himself
Had satisfaction for his folly made.

Fix now thine eye deep into the abyss
Of the eternal counsel, to my speech
As far as may be fastened steadfastly!

Man in his limitations had not power
To satisfy, not having power to sink

In his humility obeying then,
Far as he disobeying thought to rise;
And for this reason man has been from power
Of satisfying by himself excluded.
Therefore it God behoved in his own ways
Man to restore unto his perfect life,
I say in one, or else in both of them.
But since the action of the doer is
So much more grateful, as it more presents
The goodness of the heart from which it issues,
Goodness Divine, that doth imprint the world,
Has been contented to proceed by each
And all its ways to lift you up again;
Nor 'twixt the first day and the final night
Such high and such magnificent proceeding
By one or by the other was or shall be;
For God more bounteous was himself to give
To make man able to uplift himself,
Than if he only of himself had pardoned;
And all the other modes were insufficient
For justice, were it not the Son of God
Himself had humbled to become incarnate.
Now, to fill fully each desire of thine,
Return I to elucidate one place,
In order that thou there mayst see as I do.
Thou sayst: 'I see the air, I see the fire,
The water, and the earth, and all their mixtures
Come to corruption, and short while endure;
And these things notwithstanding were created';
Therefore if that which I have said were true,
They should have been secure against corruption.
The Angels, brother, and the land sincere¹³³
In which thou art, created may be called
Just as they are in their entire existence;
But all the elements which thou hast named,
And all those things which out of them are made,
By a created virtue are informed.

Created was the matter which they have;
Created was the informing influence
Within these stars that round about them go.
The soul of every brute and of the plants
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights;
But your own life immediately inspires [1334](#)
Supreme Beneficence, and enamours it
So with herself, it evermore desires her.
And thou from this mayst argue furthermore
Your resurrection, if thou think again
How human flesh was fashioned at that time
When the first parents both of them were made.”

CANTO VIII

*Ascent to the Third Heaven, or that of Venus,
where are seen the spirits of lovers—Charles
Martel.*

The world used in its peril to believe¹³³⁵
That the fair Cypria delirious love¹³³⁶
Rayed out, in the third epicycle turning;¹³³⁷
Wherefore not only unto her paid honor
Of sacrifices and of votive cry
The ancient nations in the ancient error,
But both Dione honored they and Cupid,¹³³⁸
That as her mother, this one as her son,
And said that he had sat in Dido's lap;¹³³⁹
And they from her, whence I beginning take,¹³⁴⁰
Took the denomination of the star
That woos the sun, now following, now in front.¹³⁴¹
I was not ware of our ascending to it;
But of our being in it gave full faith
My Lady whom I saw more beauteous grow.
And as within a flame a spark is seen,
And as within a voice a voice discerned,
When one is steadfast, and one comes and goes,
Within that light beheld I other lamps
Move in a circle, speeding more and less,
Methinks in measure of their inward vision.¹³⁴²
From a cold cloud descended never winds,
Or visible or not, so rapidly¹³⁴³

They would not laggard and impeded seem
To anyone who had those lights divine

Seen come towards us, leaving the gyration
Begun at first in the high Seraphim.[1344](#)

And behind those that most in front appeared
Sounded “Osanna!” so that never since
To hear again was I without desire.

Then unto us more nearly one approached,
And it alone began: “We all are ready
Unto thy pleasure, that thou joy in us.

We turn around with the celestial Princes,[1345](#)
One gyre and one gyration and one thirst,
To whom thou in the world of old didst say,

‘*Ye who, intelligent, the third heaven are moving*’,[1346](#)
And are so full of love, to pleasure thee
A little quiet will not be less sweet.”

After these eyes of mine themselves had offered[1347](#)
Unto my Lady reverently, and she
Content and certain of herself had made them,
Back to the light they turned, which so great promise
Made of itself, and “Say, who art thou?” was
My voice, imprinted with a great affection.

O how and how much I beheld it grow[1348](#)
With the new joy that superadded was
Unto its joys, as soon as I had spoken!

Thus changed, it said to me: “The world possessed me[1349](#)
Short time below; and, if it had been more,
Much evil will be which would not have been.

My gladness keepeth me concealed from thee,
Which rayeth round about me, and doth hide me
Like as a creature swathed in its own silk.

Much didst thou love me, and thou hadst good reason;
For had I been below, I should have shown thee
Somewhat beyond the foliage of my love.

That left-hand margin, which doth bathe itself[1350](#)
In Rhone, when it is mingled with the Sorgue,

Me for its lord awaited in due time,
And that horn of Ausonia, which is townd¹³⁵¹
 With Bari, with Gaeta and Catona,
 Whence Tronto and Verde in the sea disgorge.
Already flashed upon my brow the crown
 Of that dominion which the Danube waters¹³⁵²
 After the German borders it abandons;
And beautiful Trinacria, that is murky¹³⁵³
 'Twixt Pachino and Peloro, (on the gulf¹³⁵⁴
 Which greatest scath from Eurus doth receive,)
Not through Typhoeus, but through nascent sulphur,¹³⁵⁵
 Would have awaited her own monarchs still,
 Through me from Charles descended and from Rudolph,¹³⁵⁶
If evil lordship, that exasperates ever
 The subject populations, had not moved
 Palermo to the outcry of 'Death! death!'¹³⁵⁷
And if my brother could but this foresee,¹³⁵⁸
 The greedy poverty of Catalonia
 Straight would he flee, that it might not molest him;
For verily 'tis needful to provide,
 Through him or other, so that on his bark¹³⁵⁹
 Already freighted no more freight be placed.
His nature, which from liberal covetous¹³⁶⁰
 Descended, such a soldiery would need
 As should not care for hoarding in a chest."¹³⁶¹
"Because I do believe the lofty joy
 Thy speech infuses into me, my Lord,
 Where every good thing doth begin and end¹³⁶²
Thou seest as I see it, the more grateful
 Is it to me; and this too hold I dear,
 That gazing upon God thou dost discern it.
Glad hast thou made me; so make clear to me,
 Since speaking thou hast stirred me up to doubt,
 How from sweet seed can bitter issue forth."
This I to him; and he to me: "If I
 Can show to thee a truth, to what thou askest

Thy face thou'lt hold as thou dost hold thy back.

The Good which all the realm thou art ascending [1363](#)

Turns and contents, maketh its providence

To be a power within these bodies vast;

And not alone the natures are foreseen

Within the mind that in itself is perfect,

But they together with their preservation.

For whatsoever thing this bow shoots forth

Falls foreordained unto an end foreseen,

Even as a shaft directed to its mark.

If that were not, the heaven which thou dost walk

Would in such manner its effects produce,

That they no longer would be arts, but ruins.

This cannot be, if the Intelligences

That keep these stars in motion are not maimed,

And maimed the First that has not made them perfect.

Wilt thou this truth have clearer made to thee?"

And I: "Not so; for 'tis impossible

That nature tire, I see, in what is needful."

Whence he again: "Now say, would it be worse

For men on earth were they not citizens?" [1364](#)

"Yes," I replied; "and here I ask no reason."

"And can they be so, if below they live not

Diversely unto offices diverse?

No, if your master writeth well for you." [1365](#)

So came he with deductions to this point;

Then he concluded: "Therefore it behoves

The roots of your effects to be diverse.

Hence one is Solon born, another Xerxes, [1366](#)

Another Melchisedec, and another he

Who, flying through the air, his son did lose.

Revolving Nature, which a signet is

To mortal wax, doth practise well her art,

But not one inn distinguish from another; [1367](#)

Thence happens it that Esau differeth [1368](#)

In seed from Jacob; and Quirinus comes [1369](#)

From sire so vile that he is given to Mars.
A generated nature its own way
Would always make like its progenitors,
If Providence divine were not triumphant.
Now that which was behind thee is before thee;
But that thou know that I with thee am pleased,
With a corollary will I mantle thee.
Evermore nature, if it fortune find
Discordant to it, like each other seed
Out of its region, maketh evil thrift; [1370](#)
And if the world below would fix its mind
On the foundation which is laid by nature,
Pursuing that, 'twould have the people good.
But you unto religion wrench aside [1371](#)
Him who was born to gird him with the sword,
And make a king of him who is for sermons;
Therefore your footsteps wander from the road."

CANTO IX

Cunizza, Folco of Marseilles, and Rahab.

Beautiful Clemence, after that thy Charles¹³⁷²
Had me enlightened, he narrated to me
The treacheries his seed should undergo;¹³⁷³
But said: “Be still and let the years roll round”;
So I can only say, that lamentation
Legitimate shall follow on your wrongs.
And of that holy light the life already
Had to the Sun which fills it turned again,
As to that good which for each thing sufficeth.
Ah, souls deceived, and creatures impious,
Who from such good do turn away your hearts,
Directing upon vanity your foreheads!
And now, behold, another of those splendors
Approached me, and its will to pleasure me
It signified by brightening outwardly.
The eyes of Beatrice, that fastened were
Upon me, as before, of dear assent
To my desire assurance gave to me.
“Ah, bring swift compensation to my wish,
Thou blessed spirit,” I said, “and give me proof
That what I think in thee I can reflect!”
Whereat the light, that still was new to me,¹³⁷⁴
Out of its depths, whence it before was singing,
As one delighted to do good, continued:
“Within that region of the land depraved¹³⁷⁵
Of Italy, that lies between Rialto

And fountainheads of Brenta and of Piava,
Rises a hill, and mounts not very high,¹³⁷⁶
Wherfrom descended formerly a torch
That made upon that region great assault.
Out of one root were born both I and it;
Cunizza was I called, and here I shine¹³⁷⁷
Because the splendor of this star o'ercame me.¹³⁷⁸
But gladly to myself the cause I pardon¹³⁷⁹
Of my allotment, and it does not grieve me;
Which would perhaps seem strong unto your vulgar.
Of this so luculent and precious jewel,¹³⁸⁰
Which of our heaven is nearest unto me,
Great fame remained; and ere it die away
This hundredth year shall yet quintupled be.
See if man ought to make him excellent,
So that another life the first may leave!
And thus thinks not the present multitude
Shut in by Adige and Tagliamento,¹³⁸¹
Nor yet for being scourged is penitent.
But soon 'twill be that Padua in the marsh¹³⁸²
Will change the water that Vicenza bathes,
Because the folk are stubborn against duty;
And where the Sile and Cagnano join¹³⁸³
One lordeth it, and goes with lofty head,¹³⁸⁴
For catching whom e'en now the net is making.
Feltro moreover of her impious pastor
Shall weep the crime, which shall so monstrous be¹³⁸⁵
That for the like none ever entered Malta.¹³⁸⁶
Ample exceedingly would be the vat
That of the Ferrarese could hold the blood,
And weary who should weigh it ounce by ounce,
Of which this courteous priest shall make a gift¹³⁸⁷
To show himself a partisan; and such gifts
Will to the living of the land conform.¹³⁸⁸
Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,¹³⁸⁹

From which shines out on us God Judicant,
So that this utterance seems good to us.”

Here it was silent, and it had the semblance
Of being turned elsewhither, by the wheel
On which it entered as it was before.

The other joy, already known to me,
Became a thing transcendent in my sight,
As a fine ruby smitten by the sun.¹³⁹⁰

Through joy effulgence is acquired above,¹³⁹¹
As here a smile; but down below, the shade
Outwardly darkens, as the mind is sad.

“God seeth all things, and in Him, blest spirit,¹³⁹²
Thy sight is,” said I, “so that never will
Of his can possibly from thee be hidden;

Thy voice, then, that forever makes the heavens¹³⁹³
Glad, with the singing of those holy fires¹³⁹⁴
Which of their six wings make themselves a cowl,
Wherefore does it not satisfy my longings?
Indeed, I would not wait thy questioning
If I in thee were as thou art in me.”¹³⁹⁵

“The greatest of the valleys where the water¹³⁹⁶
Expands itself,” forthwith its words began,
“That sea excepted which the earth engarlands,
Between discordant shores against the sun¹³⁹⁷
Extends so far, that it meridian makes
Where it was wont before to make the horizon.

I was a dweller on that valley’s shore
'Twixt Ebro and Magra that with journey short¹³⁹⁸
Doth from the Tuscan part the Genoese.

With the same sunset and same sunrise nearly
Sit Buggia and the city whence I was,¹³⁹⁹
That with its blood once made the harbour hot.¹⁴⁰⁰
Folco that people called me unto whom¹⁴⁰¹
My name was known; and now with me this heaven
Imprints itself, as I did once with it;

For more the daughter of Belus never burned,¹⁴⁰²

Offending both Sichaeus and Creusa,
Than I, so long as it became my locks,
Nor yet that Rodophean, who deluded¹⁴⁰³
Was by Demophoon, nor yet Alcides,¹⁴⁰⁴
When Iole he in his heart had locked.
Yet here is no repenting, but we smile,¹⁴⁰⁵
Not at the fault, which comes not back to mind,
But at the power which ordered and foresaw.
Here we behold the art that doth adorn¹⁴⁰⁶
With such affection, and the good discover
Whereby the world above turns that below.
But that thou wholly satisfied mayst bear
Thy wishes hence which in this sphere are born,
Still farther to proceed behoveth me.
Thou fain wouldest know who is within this light
That here beside me thus is scintillating,
Even as a sunbeam in the limpid water.
Then know thou, that within there is at rest
Rahab, and being to our order joined,¹⁴⁰⁷
With her in its supremest grade 'tis sealed.
Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone¹⁴⁰⁸
Cast by your world, before all other souls
First of Christ's triumph was she taken up.¹⁴⁰⁹
Full meet it was to leave her in some heaven,
Even as a palm of the high victory
Which he acquired with one palm and the other,¹⁴¹⁰
Because she favored the first glorious deed¹⁴¹¹
Of Joshua upon the Holy Land,¹⁴¹²
That little stirs the memory of the Pope.
Thy city, which an offshoot is of him¹⁴¹³
Who first upon his Maker turned his back,
And whose ambition is so sorely wept,
Brings forth and scatters the accursed flower¹⁴¹⁴
Which both the sheep and lambs hath led astray
Since it has turned the shepherd to a wolf.
For this the Evangel and the mighty Doctors¹⁴¹⁵

Are derelict, and only the Decretals
So studied that it shows upon their margins.
On this are Pope and Cardinals intent;
Their meditations reach not Nazareth,
There where his pinions Gabriel unfolded; [1416](#)
But Vatican and the other parts elect
Of Rome, which have a cemetery been
Unto the soldiery that followed Peter
Shall soon be free from this adultery.”

CANTO X

*The Fourth Heaven, or that of the Sun, where
are seen the spirits of theologians and fathers
of the Church—St. Thomas Aquinas.*

Looking into his Son with all the Love¹⁴¹⁷
Which each of them eternally breathes forth,¹⁴¹⁸
The Primal and unutterable Power
Whate'er before the mind or eye revolves
With so much order made, there can be none
Who this beholds without enjoying Him.
Lift up then, Reader, to the lofty wheels
With me thy vision straight unto that part
Where the one motion on the other strikes,¹⁴¹⁹
And there begin to contemplate with joy
That Master's art, who in himself so loves it
That never doth his eye depart therefrom.
Behold how from that point goes branching off
The oblique circle, which conveys the planets,¹⁴²⁰
To satisfy the world that calls upon them;
And if their pathway were not thus inflected,¹⁴²¹
Much virtue in the heavens would be in vain,
And almost every power below here dead.
If from the straight line distant more or less
Were the departure, much would wanting be
Above and underneath of mundane order.
Remain now, Reader, still upon thy bench,
In thought pursuing that which is foretasted,
If thou wouldest jocund be instead of weary.

I've set before thee; henceforth feed thyself,
For to itself diverteth all my care
That theme whereof I have been made the scribe.
The greatest of the ministers of nature,¹⁴²²
Who with the power of heaven the world imprints
And measures with his light the time for us,
With that part which above is called to mind¹⁴²³
Conjoined, along the spirals was revolving,¹⁴²⁴
Where each time earlier he presents himself;
And I was with him; but of the ascending
I was not conscious, saving as a man
Of a first thought is conscious ere it come;
And Beatrice, she who is seen to pass
From good to better, and so suddenly
That not by time her action is expressed,
How lucent in herself must she have been!
And what was in the sun, wherein I entered,
Apparent not by color but by light,
I, though I call on genius, art, and practice,
Cannot so tell that it could be imagined;
Believe one can, and let him long to see it.
And if our fantasies too lowly are
For altitude so great, it is no marvel,
Since o'er the sun was never eye could go.¹⁴²⁵
Such in this place was the fourth family
Of the high Father, who forever sates it,
Showing how he breathes forth and how begets.¹⁴²⁶
And Beatrice began: "Give thanks, give thanks
Unto the Sun of Angels, who to this
Sensible one has raised thee by his grace!"
Never was heart of mortal so disposed
To worship, nor to give itself to God
With all its gratitude was it so ready,
As at those words did I myself become;
And all my love was so absorbed in Him,
That in oblivion Beatrice was eclipsed.

Nor this displeased her; but she smiled at it
 So that the splendor of her laughing eyes
 My single mind on many things divided.
Lights many saw I, vivid and triumphant,
 Make us a centre and themselves a circle,
 More sweet in voice than luminous in aspect.
Thus girt about the daughter of Latona¹⁴²⁷
 We sometimes see, when pregnant is the air,
 So that it holds the thread which makes her zone.
Within the court of Heaven, whence I return,
 Are many jewels found, so fair and precious
 They cannot be transported from the realm;
And of them was the singing of those lights.
 Who takes not wings that he may fly up thither,
 The tidings thence may from the dumb await!
As soon as singing thus those burning suns
 Had round about us whirled themselves three times,
 Like unto stars neighboring the steadfast poles,
Ladies they seemed, not from the dance released,
 But who stop short, in silence listening
 Till they have gathered the new melody.
And within one I heard beginning: "When¹⁴²⁸
 The radiance of grace, by which is kindled
 True love, and which thereafter grows by loving,
Within thee multiplied is so resplendent
 That it conducts thee upward by that stair,
 Where without reascending none descends,¹⁴²⁹
Who should deny the wine out of his vial
 Unto thy thirst, in liberty were not¹⁴³⁰
 Except as water which descends not seaward.
Fain wouldest thou know with what plants is enflowered
 This garland that encircles with delight
 The Lady fair who makes thee strong for heaven.
Of the lambs was I of the holy flock
 Which Dominic conducteth by a road
 Where well one fattens if he strayeth not.
He who is nearest to me on the right

My brother and master was; and he Albertus¹⁴³¹
Is of Cologne, I Thomas of Aquinum.¹⁴³²
If thou of all the others wouldest be certain,
Follow behind my speaking with thy sight
Upward along the blessed garland turning.
That next effulgence issues from the smile
Of Gratian, who assisted both the courts¹⁴³³
In such wise that it pleased in Paradise.
The other which near by adorns our choir
That Peter was who, e'en as the poor widow,¹⁴³⁴
Offered his treasure unto Holy Church.
The fifth light, that among us is the fairest,¹⁴³⁵
Breathes forth from such a love, that all the world
Below is greedy to learn tidings of it.¹⁴³⁶
Within it is the lofty mind, where knowledge
So deep was put, that, if the true be true,
To see so much there never rose a second.
Thou seest next the lustre of that taper,¹⁴³⁷
Which in the flesh below looked most within
The angelic nature and its ministry.
Within that other little light is smiling
The advocate of the Christian centuries,¹⁴³⁸
Out of whose rhetoric Augustine was furnished.
Now if thou trainest thy mind's eye along
From light to light pursuant of my praise,
With thirst already of the eighth thou waitest.
By seeing every good therein exults
The sainted soul, which the fallacious world¹⁴³⁹
Makes manifest to him who listeneth well;
The body whence 'twas hunted forth is lying
Down in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom¹⁴⁴⁰
And banishment it came unto this peace.
See farther onward flame the burning breath
Of Isidore, of Beda, and of Richard¹⁴⁴¹
Who was in contemplation more than man.
This, whence to me returneth thy regard,

The light is of a spirit unto whom
In his grave meditations death seemed slow.[1442](#)
It is the light eternal of Sigier,[1443](#)
Who, reading lectures in the Street of Straw,[1444](#)
Did syllogize invidious verities."[1445](#)

Then, as a horologe that calleth us
What time the Bride of God is rising up
With matins to her Spouse that he may love her,
Wherein one part the other draws and urges,
Ting! ting! resounding with so sweet a note,
That swells with love the spirit well disposed,
Thus I beheld the glorious wheel move round,
And render voice to voice, in modulation
And sweetness that can not be comprehended,[1446](#)
Excepting there where joy is made eternal.

CANTO XI

*St. Thomas Aquinas recounts the life of
St. Francis.*

O Thou insensate care of mortal men,¹⁴⁴⁷
How inconclusive are the syllogisms
That make thee beat thy wings in downward flight!
One after laws and one to aphorisms¹⁴⁴⁸
Was going, and one following the priesthood,
And one to reign by force or sophistry,
And one in theft, and one in state affairs,
One in the pleasures of the flesh involved
Wearied himself, one gave himself to ease;
When I, from all these things emancipate,
With Beatrice above there in the Heavens
With such exceeding glory was received!
When each one had returned unto that point
Within the circle where it was before,
It stood as in a candlestick a candle;
And from within the effulgence which at first¹⁴⁴⁹
Had spoken unto me, I heard begin
Smiling while it more luminous became:
“Even as I am kindled in its ray,
So, looking into the Eternal Light,¹⁴⁵⁰
The occasion of thy thoughts I apprehend.
Thou doubttest, and wouldst have me to resift
In language so extended and so open
My speech, that to thy sense it may be plain,
Where just before I said, ‘where well one fattens,’¹⁴⁵¹

And where I said, ‘there never rose a second’;¹⁴⁵²
And here ’tis needful we distinguish well.
The Providence, which governeth the world
With counsel, wherein all created vision
Is vanquished ere it reach unto the bottom,
(So that towards her own Beloved might go
The bride of Him who, uttering a loud cry,¹⁴⁵³
Espoused her with his consecrated blood,
Self-confident and unto Him more faithful,)¹⁴⁵⁴
Two Princes did ordain in her behoof,¹⁴⁵⁵
Which on this side and that might be her guide.
The one was all seraphical in ardor;¹⁴⁵⁶
The other by his wisdom upon earth
A splendor was of light cherubical.
One will I speak of, for of both is spoken¹⁴⁵⁷
In praising one, whichever may be taken,
Because unto one end their labors were.
Between Tupino and the stream that falls¹⁴⁵⁸
Down from the hill elect of blessed Ubald,
A fertile slope of lofty mountain hangs,
From which Perugia feels the cold and heat
Through Porta Sole, and behind it weep
Gualdo and Nocera their grievous yoke.
From out that slope, there where it breaketh most
Its steepness, rose upon the world a sun¹⁴⁵⁹
As this one does sometimes from out the Ganges;¹⁴⁶⁰
Therefore let him who speaketh of that place,
Say not Ascesi, for he would say little,¹⁴⁶¹
But Orient, if he properly would speak.
He was not yet far distant from his rising
Before he had begun to make the earth
Some comfort from his mighty virtue feel.
For he in youth his father’s wrath incurred
For certain Dame, to whom, as unto death,¹⁴⁶²
The gate of pleasure no one doth unlock;
And was before his spiritual court¹⁴⁶³

Et coram patre unto her united;
Then day by day more fervently he loved her.
She, reft of her first husband, scorned, obscure,
One thousand and one hundred years and more,¹⁴⁶⁴
Waited without a suitor till he came.

Naught it availed to hear, that with Amyclas¹⁴⁶⁵
Found her unmoved at sounding of his voice
He who struck terror into all the world;
Naught it availed being constant and undaunted,
So that, when Mary still remained below,
She mounted up with Christ upon the cross.

But that too darkly I may not proceed,
Francis and Poverty for these two lovers¹⁴⁶⁶
Take thou henceforward in my speech diffuse.
Their concord and their joyous semblances,
The love, the wonder, and the sweet regard,
They made to be the cause of holy thoughts;

So much so that the venerable Bernard¹⁴⁶⁷
First bared his feet, and after so great peace
Ran, and, in running, thought himself too slow.
O wealth unknown! O veritable good!
Giles bares his feet, and bares his feet Sylvester¹⁴⁶⁸
Behind the bridegroom, so doth please the bride!

Then goes his way that father and that master,
He and his Lady and that family
Which now was girding on the humble cord;
Nor cowardice of heart weighed down his brow
At being son of Peter Bernardone,¹⁴⁶⁹
Nor for appearing marvellously scorned;
But regally his hard determination
To Innocent he opened, and from him
Received the primal seal upon his Order¹⁴⁷⁰

After the people mendicant increased
Behind this man, whose admirable life
Better in glory of the heavens were sung,¹⁴⁷¹
Incoronated with a second crown

Was through Honorius by the Eternal Spirit¹⁴⁷²
The holy purpose of this Archimandrite.¹⁴⁷³
And when he had, through thirst of martyrdom,
In the proud presence of the Sultan preached¹⁴⁷⁴
Christ and the others who came after him,
And, finding for conversion too unripe
The folk, and not to tarry there in vain,¹⁴⁷⁵
Returned to fruit of the Italic grass,
On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno¹⁴⁷⁶
From Christ did he receive the final seal,
Which during two whole years his members bore.
When He, who chose him unto so much good,
Was pleased to draw him up to the reward
That he had merited by being lowly,
Unto his friars, as to the rightful heirs,
His most dear Lady did he recommend,
And bade that they should love her faithfully;
And from her bosom the illustrious soul
Wished to depart, returning to its realm,
And for its body wished no other bier.¹⁴⁷⁷
Think now what man was he, who was a fit¹⁴⁷⁸
Companion over the high seas to keep
The bark of Peter to its proper bearings.
And this man was our Patriarch; hence whoever
Doth follow him as he commands can see
That he is laden with good merchandise.
But for new pasturage his flock has grown
So greedy, that it is impossible
They be not scattered over fields diverse;
And in proportion as his sheep remote
And vagabond go farther off from him,
More void of milk return they to the fold.
Verily some there are that fear a hurt,
And keep close to the shepherd; but so few,
That little cloth doth furnish forth their hoods.
Now if my utterance be not indistinct,

If thine own hearing hath attentive been,
If thou recall to mind what I have said,
In part contented shall thy wishes be;
For thou shalt see the plant that's chipped away,^{[1479](#)}
And the rebuke that lieth in the words,^{[1480](#)}
‘Where well one fattens, if he strayeth not.’”

CANTO XII

*St. Buonaventura recounts the life of
St. Dominic.*

Soon as the blessed flame had taken up ¹⁴⁸¹
The final word to give it utterance,
Began the holy millstone to revolve, ¹⁴⁸²
And in its gyre had not turned wholly round,
Before another in a ring enclosed it,
And motion joined to motion, song to song;
Song that as greatly doth transcend our Muses,
Our Sirens, in those dulcet clarions,
As primal splendor that which is reflected.
And as are spanned athwart a tender cloud
Two rainbows parallel and like in color, ¹⁴⁸³
When Juno to her handmaid gives command, ¹⁴⁸⁴
(The one without born of the one within,
Like to the speaking of that vagrant one ¹⁴⁸⁵
Whom love consumed as doth the sun the vapors,)
And make the people here, through covenant ¹⁴⁸⁶
God set with Noah, presageful of the world
That shall no more be covered with a flood,
In such wise of those sempiternal roses
The garlands twain encompassed us about,
And thus the outer to the inner answered.
After the dance, and other grand rejoicings,
Both of the singing, and the flaming forth
Effulgence with effulgence blithe and tender,
Together, at once, with one accord had stopped,

(Even as the eyes, that, as volition moves them,
Must needs together shut and lift themselves,) Out of the heart of one of the new lights
There came a voice, that needle to the star
Made me appear in turning thitherward.
And it began: "The love that makes me fair¹⁴⁸⁷
Draws me to speak about the other leader,¹⁴⁸⁸
By whom so well is spoken here of mine.
'Tis right, where one is, to bring in the other,¹⁴⁸⁹
That, as they were united in their warfare,
Together likewise may their glory shine.
The soldiery of Christ, which it had cost
So dear to arm again, behind the standard¹⁴⁹⁰
Moved slow and doubtful and in numbers few,
When the Emperor who reigneth evermore
Provided for the host that was in peril,
Through grace alone and not that it was worthy;
And, as was said, he to his Bride brought succor¹⁴⁹¹
With champions twain, at whose deed, at whose word
The straggling people were together drawn.
Within that region where the sweet west wind¹⁴⁹²
Rises to open the new leaves, wherewith
Europe is seen to clothe herself afresh,
Not far off from the beating of the waves,
Behind which in his long career the sun
Sometimes conceals himself from every man,
Is situate the fortunate Calahorra,¹⁴⁹³
Under protection of the mighty shield¹⁴⁹⁴
In which the Lion subject is and sovereign.
Therein was born the amorous paramour¹⁴⁹⁵
Of Christian Faith, the athlete consecrate,
Kind to his own and cruel to his foes;
And when it was created was his mind¹⁴⁹⁶
Replete with such a living energy,
That in his mother her it made prophetic.¹⁴⁹⁷
As soon as the espousals were complete

Between him and the Faith at holy font,
Where they with mutual safety dowered each other,
The woman, who for him had given assent,¹⁴⁹⁸
Saw in a dream the admirable fruit
That issue would from him and from his heirs;
And that he might be construed as he was,
A spirit from this place went forth to name him
With His possessive whose he wholly was.¹⁴⁹⁹
Dominic was he called; and him I speak of¹⁵⁰⁰
Even as of the husbandman whom Christ
Elected to his garden to assist him.
Envoy and servant sooth he seemed of Christ,
For the first love made manifest in him
Was the first counsel that was given by Christ.¹⁵⁰¹
Silent and wakeful many a time was he
Discovered by his nurse upon the ground,
As if he would have said, ‘For this I came.’
O thou his father, Felix verily!¹⁵⁰²
O thou his mother, verily Joanna,
If this, interpreted, means as is said!
Not for the world which people toil for now
In following Ostiense and Taddeo,¹⁵⁰³
But through his longing after the true manna,
He in short time became so great a teacher,
That he began to go about the vineyard,
Which fadeth soon, if faithless be the dresser;
And of the See, (that once was more benignant)¹⁵⁰⁴
Unto the righteous poor, not through itself,
But him who sits there and degenerates,)¹⁵⁰⁵
Not to dispense or two or three for six,¹⁵⁰⁶
Not any fortune of first vacancy,
Non decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei,
He asked for, but against the errant world
Permission to do battle for the seed,
Of which these four and twenty plants surround thee.
Then with the doctrine and the will together,

With office apostolical he moved,
Like torrent which some lofty vein out-presses;
And in among the shoots heretical
His impetus with greater fury smote,
Wherever the resistance was the greatest.
Of him were made thereafter divers runnels,
Whereby the garden catholic is watered,
So that more living its plantations stand.

If such the one wheel of the Biga was,¹⁵⁰⁷
In which the Holy Church itself defended
And in the field its civic battle won,
Truly full manifest should be to thee
The excellence of the other, unto whom
Thomas so courteous was before my coming.

But still the orbit, which the highest part¹⁵⁰⁸
Of its circumference made, is derelict,
So that the mould is where was once the crust.¹⁵⁰⁹

His family, that had straight forward moved
With feet upon his footprints, are turned round
So that they set the point upon the heel.¹⁵¹⁰

And soon aware they will be of the harvest
Of this bad husbandry, when shall the tares
Complain the granary is taken from them.¹⁵¹¹

Yet say I, he who searcheth leaf by leaf¹⁵¹²
Our volume through, would still some page discover
Where he could read, 'I am as I am wont.'

'Twill not be from Casal nor Acquasparta,¹⁵¹³
From whence come such unto the written word
That one avoids it, and the other narrows.

Bonaventura of Bagnoregio's life¹⁵¹⁴
Am I, who always in great offices
Postponed considerations sinister.

Here are Illuminato and Agostino,¹⁵¹⁵
Who of the first barefooted beggars were
That with the cord the friends of God became.

Hugh of Saint Victor is among them here,¹⁵¹⁶

And Peter Mangiador, and Peter of Spain,¹⁵¹⁷
Who down below in volumes twelve is shining;
Nathan the seer, and metropolitan¹⁵¹⁸
Chrysostom, and Anselmus, and Donatus¹⁵¹⁹
Who deigned to lay his hand to the first art;
Here is Rabanus, and beside me here¹⁵²⁰
Shines the Calabrian Abbot Joachim,¹⁵²¹
He with the spirit of prophecy endowed.
To celebrate so great a paladin
Have moved me the impassioned courtesy
And the discreet discourses of Friar Thomas,
And with me they have moved this company.”

CANTO XIII

Of the wisdom of Solomon.

Let him imagine, who would well conceive [1522](#)

 What now I saw, and let him while I speak

 Retain the image as a steadfast rock,

The fifteen stars, that in their divers regions

 The sky enliven with a light so great

 That it transcends all clusters of the air;

Let him the Wain imagine unto which [1523](#)

 Our vault of heaven sufficeth night and day,

 So that in turning of its pole it fails not;

Let him the mouth imagine of the horn [1524](#)

 That in the point beginneth of the axis

 Round about which the primal wheel revolves—

To have fashioned of themselves two signs in heaven,

 Like unto that which Minos' daughter made, [1525](#)

 The moment when she felt the frost of death;

And one to have its rays within the other,

 And both to whirl themselves in such a manner

 That one should forward go, the other backward;

And he will have some shadowing forth of that

 True constellation and the double dance

 That circled round the point at which I was;

Because it is as much beyond our wont,

 As swifter than the motion of the Chiana [1526](#)

 Moveth the heaven that all the rest outspeeds. [1527](#)

There sang they neither Bacchus, nor Apollo,

 But in the divine nature Persons three,

And in one person the divine and human.
The singing and the dance fulfilled their measure,
 And unto us those holy lights gave need,
 Growing in happiness from care to care.
Then broke the silence of those saints concordant
 The light in which the admirable life [1528](#)
 Of God's own mendicant was told to me,
And said: "Now that one straw is trodden out [1529](#)
 Now that its seed is garnered up already,
 Sweet love invites me to thresh out the other.
Into that bosom, thou believest, whence [1530](#)
 Was drawn the rib to form the beauteous cheek
 Whose taste to all the world is costing dear,
And into that which, by the lance transfixed, [1531](#)
 Before and since, such satisfaction made
 That it weighs down the balance of all sin,
Whate'er of light it has to human nature
 Been lawful to possess was all infused
 By the same power that both of them created;
And hence at what I said above dost wonder,
 When I narrated that no second had
 The good which in the fifth light is enclosed. [1532](#)
Now ope thine eyes to what I answer thee,
 And thou shalt see thy creed and my discourse
 Fit in the truth as centre in a circle.
That which can die, and that which dieth not, [1533](#)
 Are nothing but the splendor of the idea
 Which by his love our Lord brings into being;
Because that living Light, which from its fount [1534](#)
 Effulgent flows, so that it disunites not
 From Him nor from the Love in them intrined,
Through its own goodness reunites its rays [1535](#)
 In nine subsistences, as in a mirror,
 Itself eternally remaining One.
Thence it descends to the last potencies, [1536](#)
 Downward from act to act becoming such

That only brief contingencies it makes;
And these contingencies I hold to be [1537](#)
 Things generated, which the heaven produces
 By its own motion, with seed and without.
Neither their wax, nor that which tempers it, [1538](#)
 Remains immutable, and hence beneath
 The ideal signet more and less shines through;
Therefore it happens, that the selfsame tree
 After its kind bears worse and better fruit,
 And ye are born with characters diverse.
If in perfection tempered were the wax, [1539](#)
 And were the heaven in its supremest virtue,
 The brilliance of the seal would all appear;
But nature gives it evermore deficient,
 In the like manner working as the artist,
 Who has the skill of art and hand that trembles.
If then the fervent Love, the Vision clear, [1540](#)
 Of primal Virtue do dispose and seal,
 Perfection absolute is there acquired.
Thus was of old the earth created worthy
 Of all and every animal perfection;
 And thus the Virgin was impregnate made;
So that thine own opinion I commend,
 That human nature never yet has been,
 Nor will be, what it was in those two persons.
Now if no farther forth I should proceed,
 ‘Then in what way was he without a peer?’ [1541](#)
 Would be the first beginning of thy words.
But, that may well appear what now appears not,
 Think who he was, and what occasion moved him
 To make request, when it was told him, ‘Ask.’ [1542](#)
I’ve not so spoken that thou canst not see
 Clearly he was a king who asked for wisdom,
 That he might be sufficiently a king;
'Twas not to know the number in which are
 The motors here above, or if *necessē* [1543](#)

With a contingent e'er *necesse* make,[1544](#)
Non si est dare primum motum esse,[1545](#)

Or if in semicircle can be made
Triangle so that it have no right angle.[1546](#)

Whence, if thou notest this and what I said,[1547](#)

A regal prudence is that peerless seeing[1548](#)
In which the shaft of my intention strikes.

And if on 'rose' thou turnest thy clear eyes,
Thou'l see that it has reference alone
To kings who're many, and the good are rare.

With this distinction take thou what I said,
And thus it can consist with thy belief
Of the first father and of our Delight.

And lead shall this be always to thy feet,
To make thee, like a weary man, move slowly
Both to the Yes and No thou seest not;

For very low among the fools is he
Who affirms without distinction, or denies,
As well in one as in the other case;

Because it happens that full often bends
Current opinion in the false direction,
And then the feelings bind the intellect.

Far more than uselessly he leaves the shore,
(Since he returneth not the same he went,)
Who fishes for the truth, and has no skill;

And in the world proofs manifest thereof

Parmenides, Melissus, Brissus are,[1549](#)
And many who went on and knew not whither;

Thus did Sabellius, Arius, and those fools[1550](#)

Who have been even as swords unto the Scriptures[1551](#)
In rendering distorted their straight faces.

Nor yet shall people be too confident
In judging, even as he is who doth count
The corn in field or ever it be ripe.

For I have seen all winter long the thorn
First show itself intractable and fierce,

And after bear the rose upon its top;
And I have seen a ship direct and swift
Run o'er the sea throughout its course entire,
To perish at the harbour's mouth at last.
Let not Dame Bertha nor Ser Martin think, [1552](#)
Seeing one steal, another offering make,
To see them in the arbitrament divine; [1553](#)
For one may rise, and fall the other may."

CANTO XIV

The Fifth Heaven, or that of Mars, where are seen the spirits of martyrs, and of crusaders who died fighting for the true faith—The Celestial Cross.

From centre unto rim, from rim to centre,[1554](#)
In a round vase the water moves itself,[1555](#)
As from without 'tis struck or from within.
Into my mind upon a sudden dropped
 What I am saying, at the moment when
 Silent became the glorious life of Thomas,[1556](#)
Because of the resemblance that was born
 Of his discourse and that of Beatrice,
 Whom, after him, it pleased thus to begin:
“This man has need (and does not tell you so,
 Nor with the voice, nor even in his thought)
 Of going to the root of one truth more.
Declare unto him if the light wherewith
 Blossoms your substance shall remain with you
 Eternally the same that it is now;
And if it do remain, say in what manner,
 After ye are again made visible,
 It can be that it injure not your sight.”
As by a greater gladness urged and drawn
 They who are dancing in a ring sometimes
 Uplift their voices and their motions quicken;
So, at that orison devout and prompt,
 The holy circles a new joy displayed

In their revolving and their wondrous song.
Whoso lamenteth him that here we die
That we may live above, has never there
Seen the refreshment of the eternal rain.

The One and Two and Three who ever liveth,[1557](#)
And reigneth ever in Three and Two and One,
Not circumscribed and all things circumscribing,
Three several times was chanted by each one
Among those spirits, with such melody
That for all merit it were just reward;
And, in the lustre most divine of all
The lesser ring, I heard a modest voice,[1558](#)
Such as perhaps the Angel's was to Mary,
Answer: "As long as the festivity
Of Paradise shall be, so long our love
Shall radiate round about us such a vesture.
Its brightness is proportioned to the ardor,
The ardor to the vision; and the vision
Equals what grace it has above its worth.
When, glorious and sanctified, our flesh
Is reassumed, then shall our persons be
More pleasing by their being all complete;
For will increase whate'er bestows on us
Of light gratuitous the Good Supreme,
Light which enables us to look on Him;
Therefore the vision must perforce increase,
Increase the ardor which from that is kindled,
Increase the radiance which from this proceeds.
But even as a coal that sends forth flame,
And by its vivid whiteness overpowers it
So that its own appearance it maintains,
Thus the effulgence that surrounds us now
Shall be o'erpowered in aspect by the flesh,
Which still today the earth doth cover up;
Nor can so great a splendor weary us,
For strong will be the organs of the body
To everything which hath the power to please us."

So sudden and alert appeared to me
Both one and the other choir to say Amen,
That well they showed desire for their dead bodies;
Nor sole for them perhaps, but for the mothers,
The fathers, and the rest who had been dear
Or ever they became eternal flames.
And lo! all round about of equal brightness
Arose a lustre over what was there,
Like an horizon that is clearing up.
And as at rise of early eve begin
Along the welkin new appearances,
So that the sight seems real and unreal,
It seemed to me that new subsistences [1559](#)
Began there to be seen, and make a circle
Outside the other two circumferences.
O very sparkling of the Holy Spirit,
How sudden and incandescent it became
Unto mine eyes, that vanquished bore it not!
But Beatrice so beautiful and smiling
Appeared to me, that with the other sights
That followed not my memory I must leave her.
Then to uplift themselves mine eyes resumed
The power, and I beheld myself translated
To higher salvation with my Lady only.
Well was I ware that I was more uplifted
By the enkindled smiling of the star, [1560](#)
That seemed to me more ruddy than its wont. [1561](#)
With all my heart, and in that dialect [1562](#)
Which is the same in all, such holocaust
To God I made as the new grace beseemed;
And not yet from my bosom was exhausted
The ardor of sacrifice, before I knew
This offering was accepted and auspicious;
For with so great a lustre and so red
Splendors appeared to me in twofold rays,
I said: "O Helios who dost so adorn them!" [1563](#)

Even as distinct with less and greater lights
Glimmers between the two poles of the world
The Galaxy that maketh wise men doubt,¹⁵⁶⁴
Thus constellated in the depths of Mars,
Those rays described the venerable sign¹⁵⁶⁵
That quadrants joining in a circle make.
Here doth my memory overcome my genius;
For on that cross as levin gleamed forth Christ,¹⁵⁶⁶
So that I cannot find ensample worthy;
But he who takes his cross and follows Christ
Again will pardon me what I omit,
Seeing in that aurora lighten Christ.
From horn to horn, and 'twixt the top and base,¹⁵⁶⁷
Lights were in motion, brightly scintillating
As they together met and passed each other;
Thus level and aslant and swift and slow¹⁵⁶⁸
We here behold, renewing still the sight,
The particles of bodies long and short,
Across the sunbeam move, wherewith is listed
Sometimes the shade, which for their own defence
People with cunning and with art contrive.
And as a lute and harp, accordant strung
With many strings, a dulcet tinkling make
To him by whom the notes are not distinguished,
So from the lights that there to me appeared
Upgathered through the cross a melody,
Which rapt me, not distinguishing the hymn.
Well was I ware it was of lofty laud,
Because there came to me, "Arise and conquer!"¹⁵⁶⁹
As unto him who hears and comprehends not.
So much enamoured I became therewith,
That until then there was not anything
That e'er had fettered me with such sweet bonds.
Perhaps my word appears somewhat too bold,
Postponing the delight of those fair eyes,
Into which gazing my desire has rest;

But who bethinks him that the living seals¹⁵⁷⁰
Of every beauty grow in power ascending,
And that I there had not turned round to those,¹⁵⁷¹
Can me excuse, if I myself accuse
To excuse myself, and see that I speak truly:
For here the holy joy is not disclosed,
Because ascending it becomes more pure.¹⁵⁷²

CANTO XV

Cacciaguida—Florence in the olden time.

A will benign, in which reveals itself¹⁵⁷³

Ever the love that righteously inspires,

As in the iniquitous, cupidity,

Silence imposed upon that dulcet lyre,

And quieted the consecrated chords,

That Heaven's right hand doth tighten and relax.

How unto just entreaties shall be deaf

Those substances, which, to give me desire

Of praying them, with one accord grew silent?

'Tis well that without end he should lament,

Who for the love of thing that doth not last

Eternally despoils him of that love!

As through the pure and tranquil evening air

There shoots from time to time a sudden fire,

Moving the eyes that steadfast were before,

And seems to be a star that changeth place,

Except that in the part where it is kindled

Nothing is missed, and this endureth little;

So from the horn that to the right extends

Unto that cross's foot there ran a star

Out of the constellation shining there;

Nor was the gem dissevered from its ribbon,¹⁵⁷⁴

But down the radiant fillet ran along,

So that fire seemed it behind alabaster.¹⁵⁷⁵

Thus piteous did Anchises' shade reach forward,¹⁵⁷⁶

If any faith our greatest Muse deserve,

When in Elysium he his son perceived.

“*O sanguis meus, O superinfusa* [1577](#)

*Gratia Dei, sicut tibi, cui
Bis unquam Coeli janua reclusa?*”

Thus that effulgence; whence I gave it heed;

Then round unto my Lady turned my sight,

And on this side and that was stupefied;

For in her eyes was burning such a smile

That with mine own methought I touched the bottom

Both of my grace and of my Paradise!

Then, pleasant to the hearing and the sight,

The spirit joined to its beginning things

I understood not, so profound it spake;

Nor did it hide itself from me by choice,

But by necessity; for its conception

Above the mark of mortals set itself.

And when the bow of burning sympathy

Was so far slackened, that its speech descended

Towards the mark of our intelligence,

The first thing that was understood by me

Was “Benedight be Thou, O Trine and One,

Who hast unto my seed so courteous been!”

And it continued: “Hunger long and grateful, [1578](#)

Drawn from the reading of the mighty volume [1579](#)

Wherein is never changed the white nor dark,

Thou hast appeased, my son, within this light

In which I speak to thee, by grace of her

Who to this lofty flight with plumage clothed thee.

Thou thinkest that to me thy thought doth pass

From Him who is the first, as from the unit, [1580](#)

If that be known, ray out the five and six;

And therefore who I am thou askest not,

And why I seem more joyous unto thee

Than any other of this gladsome crowd.

Thou think’st the truth; because the small and great [1581](#)

Of this existence look into the mirror

Wherein, before thou think'st, thy thought thou shovest.
But that the sacred love, in which I watch
 With sight perpetual, and which makes me thirst
 With sweet desire, may better be fulfilled,
Now let thy voice secure and frank and glad
 Proclaim the wishes, the desire proclaim,
 To which my answer is decreed already.”
To Beatrice I turned me, and she heard
 Before I spake, and smiled to me a sign,
 That made the wings of my desire increase;
Then in this wise began I: “Love and knowledge,
 When on you dawned the first Equality,[1582](#)
 Of the same weight for each of you became;
For in the Sun, which lighted you and burned
 With heat and radiance, they so equal are,
 That all similitudes are insufficient.
But among mortals will and argument,[1583](#)
 For reason that to you is manifest,
 Diversely feathered in their pinions are.
Whence I, who mortal am, feel in myself
 This inequality; so give not thanks,
 Save in my heart, for this paternal welcome.
Truly do I entreat thee, living topaz![1584](#)
 Set in this precious jewel as a gem,
 That thou wilt satisfy me with thy name.”
“O leaf of mine, in whom I pleasure took
 E'en while awaiting, I was thine own root!”[1585](#)
 Such a beginning he in answer made me.
Then said to me: “That one from whom is named[1586](#)
 Thy race, and who a hundred years and more
 Has circled round the mount on the first cornice,
A son of mine and thy great-grandsire was;
 Well it behoves thee that the long fatigue
 Thou shouldst for him make shorter with thy works.
Florence, within the ancient boundary[1587](#)
 From which she taketh still her tierce and nones,[1588](#)

Abode in quiet, temperate and chaste.[1589](#)
No golden chain she had, nor coronal,[1590](#)
 Nor ladies shod with sandal shoon, nor girdle
 That caught the eye more than the person did.[1591](#)
Not yet the daughter at her birth struck fear
 Into the father, for the time and dower
 Did not o'errun this side or that the measure.
No houses had she void of families,
 Not yet had thither come Sardanapalus
 To show what in a chamber can be done;[1592](#)
Not yet surpassed had Montemalo been[1593](#)
 By your Uccellatojo, which surpassed[1594](#)
 Shall in its downfall be as in its rise.
Bellincion Berti saw I go begirt[1595](#)
 With leather and with bone, and from the mirror
 His dame depart without a painted face;
And him of Nerli saw, and him of Vecchio,[1596](#)
 Contented with their simple suits of buff
 And with the spindle and the flax their dames.
O fortunate women! and each one was certain
 Of her own burial-place, and none as yet
 For sake of France was in her bed deserted.[1597](#)
One o'er the cradle kept her studious watch,
 And in her lullaby the language used
 That first delights the fathers and the mothers;
Another, drawing tresses from her distaff,
 Told o'er among her family the tales
 Of Trojans and of Fesole and Rome.
As great a marvel then would have been held
 A Lapo Salterello, a Cianghella,[1598](#)
 As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.[1599](#)
To such a quiet, such a beautiful
 Life of the citizen, to such a safe
 Community, and to so sweet an inn,
Did Mary give me, with loud cries invoked,[1600](#)
 And in your ancient Baptistry at once[1601](#)

Christian and Cacciaguida I became.¹⁶⁰²
Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo;
From Val di Pado came to me my wife,¹⁶⁰³
And from that place thy surname was derived.
I followed afterward the Emperor Conrad,¹⁶⁰⁴
And he begirt me of his chivalry,¹⁶⁰⁵
So much I pleased him with my noble deeds.
I followed in his train against that law's
Iniquity, whose people doth usurp¹⁶⁰⁶
Your just possession, through your Pastor's fault.
There by that execrable race was I
Released from bonds of the fallacious world,
The love of which defileth many souls,
And came from martyrdom unto this peace."

CANTO XVI

Cacciaguida's discourse of the great Florentines.

O thou our poor nobility of blood,¹⁶⁰⁷
If thou dost make the people glory in thee
Down here where our affection languishes,
A marvellous thing it ne'er will be to me;
For there where appetite is not perverted,
I say in Heaven, of thee I made a boast!
Truly thou art a cloak that quickly shortens,
So that unless we piece thee day by day
Time goeth round about thee with his shears!
With *You*, which Rome was first to tolerate,¹⁶⁰⁸
(Wherein her family less perseveres,)
Yet once again my words beginning made;
Whence Beatrice, who stood somewhat apart,
Smiling, appeared like unto her who coughed¹⁶⁰⁹
At the first failing writ of Guenever.
And I began: "You are my ancestor,
You give to me all hardihood to speak,
You lift me so that I am more than I.
So many rivulets with gladness fill
My mind, that of itself it makes a joy¹⁶¹⁰
Because it can endure this and not burst.
Then tell me, my beloved root ancestral,
Who were your ancestors, and what the years
That in your boyhood chronicled themselves?
Tell me about the sheepfold of Saint John,¹⁶¹¹

How large it was, and who the people were
Within it worthy of the highest seats.”

As at the blowing of the winds a coal
Quickens to flame, so I beheld that light
Become resplendent at my blandishments.

And as unto mine eyes it grew more fair,
With voice more sweet and tender, but not in
This modern dialect, it said to me:¹⁶¹²

“From uttering of the Ave, till the birth¹⁶¹³
In which my mother, who is now a saint,
Of me was lightened who had been her burden,
Unto its Lion had this fire returned
Five hundred fifty times and thirty more,
To reinflame itself beneath his paw.

My ancestors and I our birthplace had
Where first is found the last ward of the city¹⁶¹⁴
By him who runneth in your annual game.¹⁶¹⁵

Suffice it of my elders to hear this;
But who they were, and whence they thither came,
Silence is more considerate than speech.

All those who at that time were there between
Mars and the Baptist, fit for bearing arms,¹⁶¹⁶
Were a fifth part of those who now are living;

But the community, that now is mixed
With Campi and Certaldo and Figghine,¹⁶¹⁷
Pure in the lowest artisan was seen.

O how much better ’twere to have as neighbors
The folk of whom I speak, and at Galluzzo¹⁶¹⁸
And at Trespiano have your boundary,

Than have them in the town, and bear the stench
Of Aguglione’s churl, and him of Signa¹⁶¹⁹
Who has sharp eyes for trickery already.

Had not the folk, which most of all the world¹⁶²⁰
Degenerates, been a step-dame unto Caesar,
But as a mother to her son benignant,
Some who turn Florentines, and trade and discount,

Would have gone back again to Simifonte¹⁶²¹
There where their grandsires went about as beggars.
At Montemurlo still would be the Counts,¹⁶²²
The Cerchi in the parish of Acone,¹⁶²³
Perhaps in Valdigrieve the Buondelmonti.¹⁶²⁴
Ever the intermingling of the people
Has been the source of malady in cities,
As in the body food it surfeits on;
And a blind bull more headlong plunges down¹⁶²⁵
Than a blind lamb; and very often cuts
Better and more a single sword than five.¹⁶²⁶
If Luni thou regard, and Urbisaglia,¹⁶²⁷
How they have passed away, and how are passing
Chiusi and Sinigaglia after them,¹⁶²⁸
To hear how races waste themselves away,¹⁶²⁹
Will seem to thee no novel thing nor hard,
Seeing that even cities have an end.¹⁶³⁰
All things of yours have their mortality,¹⁶³¹
Even as yourselves; but it is hidden in some
That a long while endure, and lives are short;¹⁶³²
And as the turning of the lunar heaven
Covers and bares the shores without a pause,
In the like manner fortune does with Florence.
Therefore should not appear a marvellous thing
What I shall say of the great Florentines¹⁶³³
Of whom the fame is hidden in the Past.
I saw the Ughi, saw the Catellini,
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi,
Even in their fall illustrious citizens;
And saw, as mighty as they ancient were,
With him of La Sannella him of Arca,
And Soldanier, Ardinghi, and Bostichi.¹⁶³⁴
Near to the gate that is at present laden
With a new felony of so much weight¹⁶³⁵
That soon it shall be jetsam from the bark,

The Ravignani were, from whom descended
The County Guido, and whoe'er the name¹⁶³⁶
Of the great Bellincione since hath taken.¹⁶³⁷

He of La Pressa knew the art of ruling
Already, and already Galigajo
Had hilt and pommel gilded in his house.¹⁶³⁸

Mighty already was the Column Vair,¹⁶³⁹
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifant, and Barucci,
And Galli, and they who for the bushel blush.¹⁶⁴⁰

The stock from which were the Calfucci born
Was great already, and already chosen
To curule chairs the Sizii and Arrigucci.

O how beheld I those who are undone¹⁶⁴¹
By their own pride! and how the Balls of Gold¹⁶⁴²
Florence enflowered in all their mighty deeds!

So likewise did the ancestors of those¹⁶⁴³
Who evermore, when vacant is your church,
Fatten by staying in consistory.

The insolent race, that like a dragon follows¹⁶⁴⁴
Whoever flees, and unto him that shows
His teeth or purse is gentle as a lamb,
Already rising was, but from low people;
So that it pleased not Ubertin Donato¹⁶⁴⁵
That his wife's father should make him their kin.

Already had Caponsacco to the Market¹⁶⁴⁶
From Fesole descended, and already
Giuda and Infangato were good burghers.

I'll tell a thing incredible, but true;¹⁶⁴⁷
One entered the small circuit by a gate
Which from the Della Pera took its name!

Each one that bears the beautiful escutcheon¹⁶⁴⁸
Of the great baron whose renown and name
The festival of Thomas keepeth fresh,
Knighthood and privilege from him received;¹⁶⁴⁹
Though with the populace unites himself

Today the man who binds it with a border.
Already were Gualterotti and Importuni;
And still more quiet would the Borgo be¹⁶⁵⁰
If with new neighbors it remained unfed.
The house from which is born your lamentation,¹⁶⁵¹
Through just disdain that death among you brought
And put an end unto your joyous life,
Was honored in itself and its companions.
O Buondelmonte, how in evil hour¹⁶⁵²
Thou fled'st the bridal at another's promptings!
Many would be rejoicing who are sad,¹⁶⁵³
If God had thee surrendered to the Ema
The first time that thou camest to the city.
But it behoved the mutilated stone¹⁶⁵⁴
Which guards the bridge, that Florence should provide
A victim in her latest hour of peace.
With all these families, and others with them,
Florence beheld I in so great repose,
That no occasion had she whence to weep;
With all these families beheld so just
And glorious her people, that the lily
Never upon the spear was placed reversed,¹⁶⁵⁵
Nor by division was vermillion made.”¹⁶⁵⁶

CANTO XVII

Cacciaguida's prophecy of Dante's banishment.

As came to Clymene, to be made certain [1657](#)
Of that which he had heard against himself, [1658](#)
He who makes fathers chary still to children, [1659](#)
Even such was I, and such was I perceived
By Beatrice and by the holy light
That first on my account had changed its place.
Therefore my Lady said to me: "Send forth
The flame of thy desire, so that it issue
Imprinted well with the internal stamp;
Not that our knowledge may be greater made
By speech of thine, but to accustom thee
To tell thy thirst, that we may give thee drink."
"O my beloved tree, (that so dost lift thee,
That even as minds terrestrial perceive
No triangle containeth two obtuse,
So thou beholdest the contingent things [1660](#)
Ere in themselves they are, fixing thine eyes
Upon the point in which all times are present,) [1661](#)
While I was with Virgilius conjoined
Upon the mountain that the souls doth heal, [1662](#)
And when descending into the dead world, [1663](#)
Were spoken to me of my future life
Some grievous words; although I feel myself
In sooth foursquare against the blows of chance. [1664](#)

On this account my wish would be content
To hear what fortune is approaching me,
Because foreseen an arrow comes more slowly."

Thus did I say unto that selfsame light¹⁶⁶⁵
That unto me had spoken before; and even
As Beatrice willed was my own will confessed.
Not in vague phrase, in which the foolish folk¹⁶⁶⁶
Ensnared themselves of old, ere yet was slain
The Lamb of God who taketh sins away,
But with clear words and unambiguous
Language responded that paternal love,¹⁶⁶⁷
Hid and revealed by its own proper smile:
"Contingency, that outside of the volume¹⁶⁶⁸
Of your materiality extends not,
Is all depicted in the eternal aspect.

Necessity however thence it takes not,¹⁶⁶⁹
Except as from the eye, in which 'tis mirrored,
A ship that with the current down descends.
From thence, e'en as there cometh to the ear
Sweet harmony from an organ, comes in sight
To me the time that is preparing for thee.

As forth from Athens went Hippolytus,¹⁶⁷⁰
By reason of his step-dame false and cruel,
So thou from Florence must perforce depart.

Already this is willed, and this is sought for;
And soon it shall be done by him who thinks it,¹⁶⁷¹
Where every day the Christ is bought and sold.

The blame shall follow the offended party¹⁶⁷²
In outcry as is usual; but the vengeance¹⁶⁷³
Shall witness to the truth that doth dispense it.

Thou shalt abandon everything beloved
Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
Which first the bow of banishment shoots forth.

Thou shalt have proof how savoureth of salt¹⁶⁷⁴
The bread of others, and how hard a road
The going down and up another's stairs.

And that which most shall weigh upon thy shoulders
 Will be the bad and foolish company [1675](#)
 With which into this valley thou shalt fall;
For all ingrate, all mad and impious
 Will they become against thee; but soon after
 They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet. [1676](#)
Of their bestiality their own proceedings
 Shall furnish proof; so 'twill be well for thee
 A party to have made thee by thyself.
Thine earliest refuge and thine earliest inn
 Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy, [1677](#)
 Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird,
Who such benign regard shall have for thee
 That 'twixt you twain, in doing and in asking,
 That shall be first which is with others last.
With him shalt thou see one who at his birth [1678](#)
 Has by this star of strength been so impressed,
 That notable shall his achievements be.
Not yet the people are aware of him
 Through his young age, since only nine years yet
 Around about him have these wheels revolved.
But ere the Gascon cheat the noble Henry, [1679](#)
 Some sparkles of his virtue shall appear
 In caring not for silver nor for toil.
So recognized shall his magnificence
 Become hereafter, that his enemies
 Will not have power to keep mute tongues about it.
On him rely, and on his benefits;
 By him shall many people be transformed,
 Changing condition rich and mendicant;
And written in thy mind thou hence shalt bear
 Of him, but shalt not say it"—and things said he
 Incredible to those who shall be present.
Then added: "Son, these are the commentaries [1680](#)
 On what was said to thee; behold the snares
 That are concealed behind few revolutions;

Yet would I not thy neighbors thou shouldst envy,
Because thy life into the future reaches
Beyond the punishment of their perfidies."

When by its silence showed that sainted soul
That it had finished putting in the woof
Into that web which I had given it warped,
Began I, even as he who yearneth after,
Being in doubt, some counsel from a person
Who seeth, and uprightly wills, and loves:
"Well see I, father mine, how spurreth on
The time towards me such a blow to deal me
As heaviest is to him who most gives way.

Therefore with foresight it is well I arm me,
That, if the dearest place be taken from me,
I may not lose the others by my songs.

Down through the world of infinite bitterness,
And o'er the mountain, from whose beauteous summit
The eyes of my own Lady lifted me,
And afterward through heaven from light to light,
I have learned that which, if I tell again,
Will be a savor of strong herbs to many.

And if I am a timid friend to truth,
I fear lest I may lose my life with those
Who will hereafter call this time the olden."

The light in which was smiling my own treasure
Which there I had discovered, flashed at first
As in the sunshine doth a golden mirror;

Then made reply: "A conscience overcast
Or with its own or with another's shame,
Will taste forsooth the tartness of thy word;

But ne'ertheless, all falsehood laid aside,
Make manifest thy vision utterly,¹⁶⁸¹
And let them scratch wherever is the itch;¹⁶⁸²
For if thine utterance shall offensive be
At the first taste, a vital nutrient
'Twill leave thereafter, when it is digested.
This cry of thine shall do as doth the wind,

Which smiteth most the most exalted summits,
And that is no slight argument of honor.
Therefore are shown to thee within these wheels,
Upon the mount and in the dolorous valley,
Only the souls that unto fame are known;
Because the spirit of the hearer rests not,
Nor doth confirm its faith by an example
Which has the root of it unknown and hidden,
Or other reason that is not apparent.”

CANTO XVIII

*The Sixth Heaven, or that of Jupiter, where
are seen the spirits of righteous kings and
rulers—The celestial eagle.*

Now was alone rejoicing in its word¹⁶⁸³
That soul beatified, and I was tasting¹⁶⁸⁴
My own, the bitter tempering with the sweet,
And the Lady who to God was leading me
Said: “Change thy thought; consider that I am
Near unto Him who every wrong disburdens.”
Unto the loving accents of my comfort
I turned me round, and then what love I saw
Within those holy eyes I here relinquish,¹⁶⁸⁵
Not only that my language I distrust,
But that my mind cannot return so far¹⁶⁸⁶
Above itself, unless another guide it.
Thus much upon that point can I repeat,
That, her again beholding, my affection
From every other longing was released.
While the eternal pleasure, which direct
Rayed upon Beatrice, from her fair face
Contented me with its reflected aspect,
Conquering me with the radiance of a smile,
She said to me, “Turn thee about and listen;
Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise.”
Even as sometimes here do we behold
The affection in the look, if it be such
That all the soul is wrapt away by it,

So, by the flaming of the effulgence holy
To which I turned, I recognized therein
The wish of speaking to me somewhat farther.
And it began: "In this fifth resting-place
Upon the tree that liveth by its summit,¹⁶⁸⁷
And aye bears fruit, and never loses leaf,
Are blessed spirits that below, ere yet
They came to Heaven, were of such great renown
That every Muse therewith would affluent be.
Therefore look thou upon the cross's horns;
He whom I now shall name will there enact
What doth within a cloud its own swift fire."
I saw athwart the Cross a splendor drawn
By naming Joshua, (even as he did it,)¹⁶⁸⁸
Nor noted I the word before the deed;
And at the name of the great Maccabee¹⁶⁸⁹
I saw another move itself revolving,
And gladness was the whip unto that top.¹⁶⁹⁰
Likewise for Charlemagne and for Orlando,¹⁶⁹¹
Two of them my regard attentive followed
As followeth the eye its falcon flying.
William thereafterward, and Renouard,¹⁶⁹²
And the Duke Godfrey, did attract my sight¹⁶⁹³
Along upon that Cross, and Robert Guiscard.¹⁶⁹⁴
Then, moved and mingled with the other lights,
The soul that had addressed me showed how great
An artist 'twas among the heavenly singers.
To my right side I turned myself around,
My duty to behold in Beatrice
Either by words or gesture signified;
And so translucent I beheld her eyes,
So full of pleasure, that her countenance
Surpassed its other and its latest wont.
And as, by feeling greater delectation,
A man in doing good from day to day
Becomes aware his virtue is increasing,

So I became aware that my gyration
With heaven together had increased its arc,
That miracle beholding more adorned.[1695](#)

And such as is the change, in little lapse
Of time, in a pale woman, when her face
Is from the load of bashfulness unladen,
Such was it in mine eyes, when I had turned,[1696](#)
Caused by the whiteness of the temperate star,
The sixth, which to itself had gathered me.

Within that Jovial torch did I behold
The sparkling of the love which was therein
Delineate our language to mine eyes.

And even as birds uprisen from the shore,
As in congratulation o'er their food,
Make squadrons of themselves, now round, now long,[1697](#)

So from within those lights the holy creatures
Sang flying to and fro, and in their figures
Made of themselves now D, now I, now L.[1698](#)

First singing they to their own music moved;
Then one becoming of these characters,
A little while they rested and were silent.

O divine Pegasea, thou who genius[1699](#)
Dost glorious make, and render it long-lived,
And this through thee the cities and the kingdoms,
Illume me with thyself, that I may bring
Their figures out as I have them conceived!
Apparent be thy power in these brief verses!

Theymselves then they displayed in five times seven
Vowels and consonants; and I observed
The parts as they seemed spoken unto me.

Diligite justitiam, these were
First verb and noun of all that was depicted;
Qui judicatis terram were the last.[1700](#)

Thereafter in the M of the fifth word
Remained they so arranged, that Jupiter
Seemed to be silver there with gold inlaid.

And other lights I saw descend where was
The summit of the M, and pause there singing
The good, I think, that draws them to itself.
Then, as in striking upon burning logs¹⁷⁰¹
Upward there fly innumerable sparks,
Whence fools are wont to look for auguries,
More than a thousand lights seemed thence to rise,¹⁷⁰²
And to ascend, some more, and others less,
Even as the Sun that lights them had allotted;
And, each one being quiet in its place,
The head and neck beheld I of an eagle¹⁷⁰³
Delineated by that inlaid fire.
He who there paints has none to be his guide;
But Himself guides; and is from Him remembered
That virtue which is form unto the nest.¹⁷⁰⁴
The other beatitude, that contented seemed¹⁷⁰⁵
At first to bloom a lily on the M,
By a slight motion followed out the imprint.
O gentle star! what and how many gems
Did demonstrate to me, that all our justice
Effect is of that heaven which thou ingemnest!
Wherefore I pray the Mind, in which begin
Thy motion and thy virtue, to regard
Whence comes the smoke that vitiates thy rays;
So that a second time it now be wroth
With buying and with selling in the temple
Whose walls were built with signs and martyrdoms!¹⁷⁰⁶
O soldiery of heaven, whom I contemplate,
Implore for those who are upon the earth
All gone astray after the bad example!¹⁷⁰⁷
Once 'twas the custom to make war with swords;
But now 'tis made by taking here and there¹⁷⁰⁸
The bread the pitying Father shuts from none.
Yet thou, who writest but to cancel, think¹⁷⁰⁹
That Peter and that Paul, who for this vineyard
Which thou art spoiling died, are still alive!

Well canst thou say: “So steadfast my desire
Is unto him who willed to live alone,
And for a dance was led to martyrdom,[1710](#)
That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul.”

CANTO XIX

The eagle discourses of salvation by faith.

Appeared before me with its wings outspread [1711](#)
The beautiful image that in sweet fruition
Made jubilant the interwoven souls;
Appeared a little ruby each, wherein
Ray of the sun was burning so enkindled
That each into mine eyes refracted it.
And what it now behoves me to retrace
Nor voice has e'er reported, nor ink written,
Nor was by fantasy e'er comprehended;
For speak I saw, and likewise heard, the beak,
And utter with its voice both *I* and *My*,
When in conception it was *We* and *Our*. [1712](#)
And it began: “Being just and merciful
Am I exalted here unto that glory
Which cannot be exceeded by desire;
And upon earth I left my memory
Such, that the evil-minded people there
Commend it, but continue not the story.”
So doth a single heat from many embers
Make itself felt, even as from many loves
Issued a single sound from out that image.
Whence I thereafter: “O perpetual flowers
Of the eternal joy, that only one
Make me perceive your odors manifold,
Exhaling, break within me the great fast
Which a long season has in hunger held me,

Not finding for it any food on earth.
Well do I know, that if in heaven its mirror [1713](#)
 Justice Divine another realm doth make,
 Yours apprehends it not through any veil.
You know how I attentively address me
 To listen; and you know what is the doubt [1714](#)
 That is in me so very old a fast."
Even as a falcon, issuing from his hood,
 Doth move his head, and with his wings applaud him,
 Showing desire, and making himself fine,
Saw I become that standard, which of lauds [1715](#)
 Was interwoven of the grace divine,
 With such songs as he knows who there rejoices.
Then it began: "He who a compass turned [1716](#)
 On the world's outer verge, and who within it
 Devised so much occult and manifest,
Could not the impress of his power so make
 On all the universe, as that his Word [1717](#)
 Should not remain in infinite excess.
And this makes certain that the first proud being,
 Who was the paragon of every creature,
 By not awaiting light fell immature. [1718](#)
And hence appears it, that each minor nature [1719](#)
 Is scant receptacle unto that good
 Which has no end, and by itself is measured.
In consequence our vision, which perforce
 Must be some ray of that intelligence
 With which all things whatever are replete, [1720](#)
Cannot in its own nature be so potent, [1721](#)
 That it shall not its origin discern
 Far beyond that which is apparent to it.
Therefore into the justice sempiternal
 The power of vision that your world receives,
 As eye into the ocean, penetrates;
Which, though it see the bottom near the shore,
 Upon the deep perceives it not, and yet

'Tis there, but it is hidden by the depth.
There is no light but comes from the serene
 That never is o'ercast, nay, it is darkness¹⁷²²
 Or shadow of the flesh, or else its poison.
Amply to thee is opened now the cavern
 Which has concealed from thee the living justice
 Of which thou mad'st such frequent questioning.
For saidst thou: 'Born a man is on the shore
 Of Indus, and is none who there can speak
 Of Christ, nor who can read, nor who can write;
And all his inclinations and his actions
 Are good, so far as human reason sees,
 Without a sin in life or in discourse:
He dieth unbaptised and without faith;
 Where is this justice that condemneth him?
 Where is his fault, if he do not believe?'
Now who art thou, that on the bench wouldest sit
 In judgment at a thousand miles away,
 With the short vision of a single span?
Truly to him who with me subtilizes,
 If so the Scripture were not over you,
 For doubting there were marvellous occasion.
O animals terrene, O stolid minds,
 The primal will, that in itself is good,
 Ne'er from itself, the Good Supreme, has moved.
So much is just as is accordant with it;
 No good created draws it to itself,
 But it, by raying forth, occasions that."
Even as above her nest goes circling round
 The stork when she has fed her little ones,
 And he who has been fed looks up at her,
So lifted I my brows, and even such
 Became the blessed image, which its wings
 Was moving, by so many counsels urged.
Circling around it sang, and said: "As are
 My notes to thee, who dost not comprehend them,
 Such is the eternal judgment to you mortals."

Those lucent splendors of the Holy Spirit
Grew quiet then, but still within the standard
That made the Romans reverend to the world.

It recommenced: "Unto this kingdom never
Ascended one who had not faith in Christ,[1723](#)
Before or since he to the tree was nailed.

But look thou, many crying are, 'Christ, Christ!'[1724](#)
Who at the judgment shall be far less near
To him than some shall be who knew not Christ.[1725](#)

Such Christians shall the Ethiop condemn,[1726](#)
When the two companies shall be divided,[1727](#)
The one forever rich, the other poor.

What to your kings may not the Persians say,
When they that volume opened shall behold[1728](#)
In which are written down all their dispraises?

There shall be seen, among the deeds of Albert,[1729](#)
That which ere long shall set the pen in motion,
For which the realm of Prague shall be deserted.

There shall be seen the woe that on the Seine
He brings by falsifying of the coin,
Who by the blow of a wild boar shall die.[1730](#)

There shall be seen the pride that causes thirst,
Which makes the Scot and Englishman so mad[1731](#)
That they within their boundaries cannot rest;

Be seen the luxury and effeminate life
Of him of Spain, and the Bohemian,[1732](#)
Who valor never knew and never wished;

Be seen the Cripple of Jerusalem,[1733](#)
His goodness represented by an I,
While the reverse an M shall represent;

Be seen the avarice and poltroonery
Of him who guards the Island of the Fire,[1734](#)
Wherein Anchises finished his long life;[1735](#)

And to declare how pitiful he is
Shall be his record in contracted letters[1736](#)

Which shall make note of much in little space.
And shall appear to each one the foul deeds
 Of uncle and of brother who a nation¹⁷³⁷
 So famous have dishonored, and two crowns.
And he of Portugal and he of Norway¹⁷³⁸
 Shall there be known, and he of Rascia too,¹⁷³⁹
 Who saw in evil hour the coin of Venice.¹⁷⁴⁰
O happy Hungary, if she let herself¹⁷⁴¹
 Be wronged no farther! and Navarre the happy,
 If with the hills that gird her she be armed!¹⁷⁴²
And each one may believe that now, as hansel¹⁷⁴³
 Thereof, do Nicosia and Famagosta¹⁷⁴⁴
 Lament and rage because of their own beast,
Who from the others' flank departeth not.”¹⁷⁴⁵

CANTO XX

The eagle praises the righteous kings of old.

When he who all the world illuminates¹⁷⁴⁶
Out of our hemisphere so far descends
That on all sides the daylight is consumed,¹⁷⁴⁷
The heaven, that erst by him alone was kindled,
Doth suddenly reveal itself again¹⁷⁴⁸
By many lights, wherein is one resplendent.
And came into my mind this act of heaven,
When the ensign of the world and of its leaders
Had silent in the blessed beak become;
Because those living luminaries all,
By far more luminous, did songs begin
Lapsing and falling from my memory.
O gentle Love, that with a smile dost cloak thee,
How ardent in those sparks didst thou appear,
That had the breath alone of holy thoughts!
After the precious and pellucid crystals,
With which begemmed the sixth light I beheld,
Silence imposed on the angelic bells,
I seemed to hear the murmuring of a river
That clear descendeth down from rock to rock,
Showing the affluence of its mountain-top.
And as the sound upon the cithern's neck
Taketh its form, and as upon the vent
Of rustic pipe the wind that enters it,
Even thus, relieved from the delay of waiting,
That murmuring of the eagle mounted up

Along its neck, as if it had been hollow.
There it became a voice, and issued thence
 From out its beak, in such a form of words
 As the heart waited for wherein I wrote them.
“The part in me which sees and bears the sun
 In mortal eagles,” it began to me,
 “Now fixedly must needs be looked upon;
For of the fires of which I make my figure,
 Those whence the eye doth sparkle in my head
 Of all their orders the supremest are.
He who is shining in the midst as pupil [1749](#)
 Was once the singer of the Holy Spirit,
 Who bore the ark from city unto city;
Now knoweth he the merit of his song,
 In so far as effect of his own counsel, [1750](#)
 By the reward which is commensurate.
Of five, that make a circle for my brow,
 He that approacheth nearest to my beak [1751](#)
 Did the poor widow for her son console;
Now knoweth he how dearly it doth cost
 Not following Christ, by the experience
 Of this sweet life and of its opposite.
He who comes next in the circumference [1752](#)
 Of which I speak, upon its highest arc,
 Did death postpone by penitence sincere; [1753](#)
Now knoweth he that the eternal judgment
 Suffers no change, albeit worthy prayer
 Maketh below tomorrow of today.
The next who follows, with the laws and me, [1754](#)
 Under the good intent that bore bad fruit [1755](#)
 Became a Greek by ceding to the pastor;
Now knoweth he how all the ill deduced
 From his good action is not harmful to him,
 Although the world thereby may be destroyed.
And he, whom in the downward arc thou seest,
 Guglielmo was, whom the same land deplores [1756](#)

That weepeth Charles and Frederick yet alive;
Now knoweth he how heaven enamoured is
With a just king; and in the outward show
Of his effulgence he reveals it still.

Who would believe, down in the errant world,
That e'er the Trojan Ripheus in this round¹⁷⁵⁷
Could be the fifth one of the holy lights?
Now knoweth he enough of what the world
Has not the power to see of grace divine,
Although his sight may not discern the bottom.”
Like as a lark that in the air expatiates,¹⁷⁵⁸
First singing and then silent with content
Of the last sweetness that doth satisfy her,
Such seemed to me the image of the imprint
Of the eternal pleasure, by whose will
Doth everything become the thing it is.

And notwithstanding to my doubt I was
As glass is to the color that invests it,
To wait the time in silence it endured not,
But forth from out my mouth, “What things are these?”
Extorted with the force of its own weight;
Wherat I saw great joy of coruscation.

Thereafterward with eye still more enkindled
The blessed standard made to me reply,
To keep me not in wonderment suspended:

“I see that thou believest in these things
Because I say them, but thou seest not how;
So that, although believed in, they are hidden.

Thou doest as he doth who a thing by name
Well apprehendeth, but its quiddity¹⁷⁵⁹
Cannot perceive, unless another show it.

Regnum cælorum suffereth violence¹⁷⁶⁰
From fervent love, and from that living hope
That overcometh the Divine volition;
Not in the guise that man o'ercometh man,
But conquers it because it will be conquered,
And conquered conquers by benignity.

The first life of the eyebrow and the fifth¹⁷⁶¹

Cause thee astonishment, because with them

Thou seest the region of the angels painted.

They passed not from their bodies, as thou thinkest,

Gentiles, but Christians in the steadfast faith

Of feet that were to suffer and had suffered.¹⁷⁶²

For one from Hell, where no one e'er turns back¹⁷⁶³

Unto good will, returned unto his bones,

And that of living hope was the reward—

Of living hope, that placed its efficacy

In prayers to God made to resuscitate him,

So that 'twere possible to move his will.¹⁷⁶⁴

The glorious soul concerning which I speak,¹⁷⁶⁵

Returning to the flesh, where brief its stay,

Believed in Him who had the power to aid it;

And, in believing, kindled to such fire

Of genuine love, that at the second death

Worthy it was to come unto this joy.

The other one, through grace, that from so deep¹⁷⁶⁶

A fountain wells that never hath the eye

Of any creature reached its primal wave,

Set all his love below on righteousness;

Wherefore from grace to grace did God unclose

His eye to our redemption yet to be,

Whence he believed therein, and suffered not

From that day forth the stench of paganism,

And he reproved therefor the folk perverse.

Those Maidens three, whom at the right-hand wheel¹⁷⁶⁷

Thou didst behold, were unto him for baptism

More than a thousand years before baptizing.

O thou predestination, how remote¹⁷⁶⁸

Thy root is from the aspect of all those

Who the First Cause do not behold entire!

And you, O mortals! hold yourselves restrained

In judging; for ourselves, who look on God,

We do not know as yet all the elect;

And sweet to us is such a deprivation,
Because our good in this good is made perfect,
That whatsoe'er God wills, we also will."

After this manner by that shape divine,
To make clear in me my shortsightedness,
Was given to me a pleasant medicine;
And as good singer a good lutanist
Accompanies with vibrations of the chords,
Whereby more pleasantness the song acquires,
So, while it spake, do I remember me
That I beheld both of those blessed lights,
Even as the winking of the eyes concords,
Moving unto the words their little flames.

CANTO XXI

*The Seventh Heaven, or that of Saturn, where
are seen the spirits of the contemplative—The
Celestial Stairway—St. Peter Damiano—His
invectives against the luxury of the Prelates.*

Already on my Lady's face mine eyes¹⁷⁶⁹

Again were fastened, and with these my mind,

And from all other purpose was withdrawn;

And she smiled not; but “If I were to smile,”

She unto me began, “thou wouldest become

Like Semele, when she was turned to ashes.¹⁷⁷⁰

Because my beauty, that along the stairs

Of the eternal palace more enkindles,

As thou hast seen, the farther we ascend,

If it were tempered not, is so resplendent

That all thy mortal power in its effulgence

Would seem a leaflet that the thunder crushes.

We are uplifted to the seventh splendor,¹⁷⁷¹

That underneath the burning Lion's breast

Now radiates downward mingled with his power.

Fix in direction of thine eyes the mind,

And make of them a mirror for the figure

That in this mirror shall appear to thee.”

He who could know what was the pasturage

My sight had in that blessed countenance,

When I transferred me to another care,

Would recognize how grateful was to me

Obedience unto my celestial escort,

By counterpoising one side with the other.
Within the crystal which, around the world
 Revolving, bears the name of its dear leader,
 Under whom every wickedness lay dead,[1772](#)
Coloured like gold, on which the sunshine gleams,
 A stairway I beheld to such a height[1773](#)
 Uplifted, that mine eye pursued it not.
Likewise beheld I down the steps descending
 So many splendors, that I thought each light
 That in the heaven appears was there diffused.
And as accordant with their natural custom
 The rooks together at the break of day[1774](#)
 Bestir themselves to warm their feathers cold;
Then some of them fly off without return,
 Others come back to where they started from,
 And others, wheeling round, still keep at home;
Such fashion it appeared to me was there
 Within the sparkling that together came,
 As soon as on a certain step it struck,
And that which nearest unto us remained[1775](#)
 Became so clear, that in my thought I said,
 “Well I perceive the love thou shovest me;
But she, from whom I wait the how and when[1776](#)
 Of speech and silence, standeth still; whence I
 Against desire do well if I ask not.”
She thereupon, who saw my silentness
 In the sight of Him who seeth everything,
 Said unto me, “Let loose thy warm desire.”
And I began: “No merit of my own
 Renders me worthy of response from thee;
 But for her sake who granteth me the asking,
Thou blessed life that dost remain concealed
 In thy beatitude, make known to me
 The cause which draweth thee so near my side;
And tell me why is silent in this wheel
 The dulcet symphony of Paradise,

That through the rest below sounds so devoutly.”
“Thou hast thy hearing mortal as thy sight,”
It answer made to me; “they sing not here,
For the same cause that Beatrice has not smiled.[1777](#)

Thus far adown the holy stairway’s steps
Have I descended but to give thee welcome
With words, and with the light that mantles me;
Nor did more love cause me to be more ready,
For love as much and more up there is burning,
As doth the flaming manifest to thee.

But the high charity, that makes us servants
Prompt to the counsel which controls the world,
Allotteth here, even as thou dost observe.”

“I see full well,” said I, “O sacred lamp!
How love unfettered in this court sufficeth
To follow the eternal Providence;

But this is what seems hard for me to see,
Wherefore predestinate wast thou alone
Unto this office from among thy consorts.”

No sooner had I come to the last word,
Than of its middle made the light a centre,
Whirling itself about like a swift millstone.[1778](#)

When answer made the love that was therein:
“On me directed is a light divine,
Piercing through this in which I am embosomed,
Of which the virtue with my sight conjoined
Lifts me above myself so far, I see
The supreme essence from which this is drawn.

Hence comes the joyfulness with which I flame,
For to my sight, as far as it is clear,
The clearness of the flame I equal make.[1779](#)

But that soul in the heaven which is most pure,
That seraph which his eye on God most fixes,
Could this demand of thine not satisfy;

Because so deeply sinks in the abyss
Of the eternal statute what thou askest,
From all created sight it is cut off.

And to the mortal world, when thou returnest,
This carry back, that it may not presume
Longer tow'rd such a goal to move its feet.
The mind, that shineth here, on earth doth smoke;
From this observe how can it do below
That which it cannot though the heaven assume it?"
Such limit did its words prescribe to me,
The question I relinquished, and restricted
Myself to ask it humbly who it was.
"Between two shores of Italy rise cliffs,¹⁷⁸⁰
And not far distant from thy native place,
So high, the thunders far below them sound,
And form a ridge that Catria is called,
'Neath which is consecrate a hermitage¹⁷⁸¹
Wont to be dedicate to worship only."
Thus unto me the third speech recommenced,¹⁷⁸²
And then, continuing, it said: "Therein
Unto God's service I became so steadfast,
That feeding only on the juice of olives
Lightly I passed away the heats and frosts,
Contented in my thoughts contemplative.
That cloister used to render to these heavens
Abundantly, and now is empty grown,
So that perforce it soon must be revealed.
I in that place was Peter Damiano;¹⁷⁸³
And Peter the Sinner was I in the house¹⁷⁸⁴
Of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.
Little of mortal life remained to me,
When I was called and dragged forth to the hat¹⁷⁸⁵
Which shifteth evermore from bad to worse.
Came Cephas, and the mighty Vessel came¹⁷⁸⁶
Of the Holy Spirit, meagre and barefooted,
Taking the food of any hostelry.¹⁷⁸⁷
Now someone to support them on each side¹⁷⁸⁸
The modern shepherds need, and some to lead them,
So heavy are they, and to hold their trains.

They cover up their palfreys with their cloaks,
So that two beasts go underneath one skin;
O Patience, that dost tolerate so much!"

At this voice saw I many little flames
From step to step descending and revolving,
And every revolution made them fairer.

Round about this one came they and stood still,
And a cry uttered of so loud a sound,
It here could find no parallel, nor I
Distinguished it, the thunder so o'ercame me.[1789](#)

CANTO XXII

St. Benedict—His lamentation over the corruption of the monks—The Eighth Heaven, or that of the Fixed Stars.

Oppressed with stupor, I unto my guide¹⁷⁹⁰
Turned like a little child who always runs
For refuge there where he confideth most;
And she, even as a mother who straightway
Gives comfort to her pale and breathless boy
With voice whose wont it is to reassure him,
Said to me: “Knowest thou not thou art in heaven,
And knowest thou not that heaven is holy all
And what is done here cometh from good zeal?
After what wise the singing would have changed thee
And I by smiling, thou canst now imagine,
Since that the cry has startled thee so much,
In which if thou hadst understood its prayers
Already would be known to thee the vengeance
Which thou shalt look upon before thou diest.
The sword above here smiteth not in haste
Nor tardily, howe'er it seem to him
Who fearing or desiring waits for it.
But turn thee round towards the others now,
For very illustrious spirits shalt thou see,
If thou thy sight directest as I say.”
As it seemed good to her mine eyes I turned,
And saw a hundred spherules that together
With mutual rays each other more embellished.

I stood as one who in himself represses
The point of his desire, and ventures not
To question, he so feareth the too much.
And now the largest and most luculent
Among those pearls came forward, that it might
Make my desire concerning it content.
Within it then I heard: “If thou couldst see [1791](#)
Even as myself the charity that burns
Among us, thy conceits would be expressed;
But, that by waiting thou mayst not come late
To the high end, I will make answer even
Unto the thought of which thou art so chary.
That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands [1792](#)
Was frequented of old upon its summit
By a deluded folk and ill-disposed;
And I am he who first up thither bore [1793](#)
The name of Him who brought upon the earth
The truth that so much sublimateth us.
And such abundant grace upon me shone
That all the neighboring towns I drew away
From the impious worship that seduced the world.
These other fires, each one of them, were men
Contemplative, enkindled by that heat
Which maketh holy flowers and fruits spring up.
Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus, [1794](#)
Here are my brethren, who within the cloisters
Their footsteps stayed and kept a steadfast heart.”
And I to him: “The affection which thou shovest
Speaking with me, and the good countenance
Which I behold and note in all your ardors,
In me have so my confidence dilated
As the sun doth the rose, when it becomes
As far unfolded as it hath the power.
Therefore I pray, and thou assure me, father,
If I may so much grace receive, that I
May thee behold with countenance unveiled.”
He thereupon: “Brother, thy high desire

In the remotest sphere shall be fulfilled,
Where are fulfilled all others and my own.
There perfect is, and ripened, and complete,
Every desire; within that one alone [1795](#)
Is every part where it has always been;
For it is not in space, nor turns on poles,
And unto it our stairway reaches up,
Whence thus from out thy sight it steals away.

Up to that height the Patriarch Jacob saw it [1796](#)
Extending its supernal part, what time
So thronged with angels it appeared to him.
But to ascend it now no one uplifts
His feet from off the earth, and now my Rule
Below remaineth for mere waste of paper. [1797](#)

The walls that used of old to be an Abbey
Are changed to dens of robbers, and the cowls [1798](#)
Are sacks filled full of miserable flour.

But heavy usury is not taken up [1799](#)
So much against God's pleasure as that fruit
Which maketh so insane the heart of monks;
For whatsoever hath the Church in keeping
Is for the folk that ask it in God's name,
Not for one's kindred or for something worse.

The flesh of mortals is so very soft,
That good beginnings down below suffice not
From springing of the oak to bearing acorns.

Peter began with neither gold nor silver,
And I with orison and abstinence,
And Francis with humility his convent.

And if thou lookest at each one's beginning,
And then regardest whither he has run,
Thou shalt behold the white changed into brown.

In verity the Jordan backward turned, [1800](#)
And the sea's fleeing, when God willed were more
A wonder to behold, than succor here."

Thus unto me he said; and then withdrew

To his own band, and the band closed together;
Then like a whirlwind all was upward rapt.
The gentle Lady urged me on behind them
Up o'er that stairway by a single sign,
So did her virtue overcome my nature;
Nor here below, where one goes up and down
By natural law, was motion e'er so swift
That it could be compared unto my wing.

Reader, as I may unto that devout
Triumph return, on whose account I often [1801](#)
For my transgressions weep and beat my breast—
Thou hadst not thrust thy finger in the fire
And drawn it out again, before I saw
The sign that follows Taurus, and was in it. [1802](#)

O glorious stars, O light impregnated [1803](#)
With mighty virtue, from which I acknowledge
All of my genius, whatsoe'er it be,
With you was born, and hid himself with you, [1804](#)
He who is father of all mortal life,
When first I tasted of the Tuscan air;
And then when grace was freely given to me
To enter the high wheel which turns you round, [1805](#)
Your region was allotted unto me.

To you devoutly at this hour my soul
Is sighing, that it virtue may acquire
For the stern pass that draws it to itself.

“Thou art so near unto the last salvation,”
Thus Beatrice began, “thou oughtest now
To have thine eyes unclouded and acute;
And therefore, ere thou enter farther in,
Look down once more, and see how vast a world
Thou hast already put beneath thy feet;
So that thy heart, as jocund as it may,
Present itself to the triumphant throng
That comes rejoicing through this rounded ether.”

I with my sight returned through one and all

The sevenfold spheres, and I beheld this globe
Such that I smiled at its ignoble semblance; [1806](#)

And that opinion I approve as best
Which doth account it least; and he who thinks
Of something else may truly be called just.

I saw the daughter of Latona shining [1807](#)
Without that shadow, which to me was cause
That once I had believed her rare and dense. [1808](#)

The aspect of thy son, Hyperion, [1809](#)
Here I sustained, and saw how move themselves
Around and near him Maia and Dione. [1810](#)

Thence there appeared the temperateness of Jove [1811](#)
'Twixt son and father, and to me was clear
The change that of their whereabout they make;
And all the seven made manifest to me
How great they are, and eke how swift they are, [1812](#)
And how they are in distant habitations.

The threshing-floor that maketh us so proud, [1813](#)
To me revolving with the eternal Twins,
Was all apparent made from hill to harbour!
Then to the beauteous eyes mine eyes I turned.

CANTO XXIII

The triumph of Christ.

Even as a bird, 'mid the beloved leaves,¹⁸¹⁴
Quiet upon the nest of her sweet brood
Throughout the night, that hideth all things from us,¹⁸¹⁵
Who, that she may behold their longed-for looks
And find the food wherewith to nourish them,
In which, to her, grave labors grateful are,
Anticipates the time on open spray
And with an ardent longing waits the sun,
Gazing intent as soon as breaks the dawn:
Even thus my Lady standing was, erect
And vigilant, turned round towards the zone
Underneath which the sun displays less haste,¹⁸¹⁶
So that beholding her distraught and wistful,
Such I became as he is who desiring
For something yearns, and hoping is appeased.
But brief the space from one When to the other;
Of my awaiting, say I, and the seeing
The welkin grow resplendent more and more.
And Beatrice exclaimed: "Behold the hosts
Of Christ's triumphal march, and all the fruit¹⁸¹⁷
Harvested by the rolling of these spheres!"¹⁸¹⁸
It seemed to me her face was all aflame;
And eyes she had so full of ecstasy
That I must needs pass on without describing.
As when in nights serene of the full moon
Smiles Trivia among the nymphs eternal¹⁸¹⁹

Who paint the firmament through all its gulfs,
Saw I, above the myriads of lamps,
A Sun that one and all of them enkindled,¹⁸²⁰
E'en as our own doth the supernal sights,¹⁸²¹
And through the living light transparent shone
The lucent substance so intensely clear
Into my sight, that I sustained it not.
O Beatrice, thou gentle guide and dear!
To me she said: "What overmasters thee
A virtue is from which naught shields itself.
There are the wisdom and the omnipotence
That oped the thoroughfares 'twixt heaven and earth,
For which there erst had been so long a yearning."
As fire from out a cloud unlocks itself,
Dilating so it finds not room therein,
And down, against its nature, falls to earth,
So did my mind, among those aliments
Becoming larger, issue from itself,
And that which it became cannot remember.
"Open thine eyes, and look at what I am:¹⁸²²
Thou hast beheld such things, that strong enough
Hast thou become to tolerate my smile."
I was as one who still retains the feeling
Of a forgotten vision, and endeavors
In vain to bring it back into his mind,
When I this invitation heard, deserving
Of so much gratitude, it never fades
Out of the book that chronicles the past.
If at this moment sounded all the tongues
That Polyhymnia and her sisters made¹⁸²³
Most lubrical with their delicious milk,
To aid me, to a thousandth of the truth
It would not reach, singing the holy smile
And how the holy aspect it illumed.
And therefore, representing Paradise,
The sacred poem must perforce leap over,
Even as a man who finds his way cut off;

But whoso thinketh of the ponderous theme,
And of the mortal shoulder laden with it,
Should blame it not, if under this it tremble.

It is no passage for a little boat
This which goes cleaving the audacious prow,
Nor for a pilot who would spare himself.

“Why doth my face so much enamour thee,¹⁸²⁴
That to the garden fair thou turnest not,
Which under the rays of Christ is blossoming?

There is the Rose in which the Word Divine¹⁸²⁵
Became incarnate; there the lilies are¹⁸²⁶
By whose perfume the good way was discovered.”

Thus Beatrice; and I, who to her counsels
Was wholly ready, once again betook me
Unto the battle of the feeble brows.¹⁸²⁷

As in the sunshine, that unsullied streams
Through fractured cloud, ere now a meadow of flowers
Mine eyes with shadow covered o'er have seen,
So troops of splendors manifold I saw
Illumined from above with burning rays,
Beholding not the source of the effulgence.

O power benignant that dost so imprint them!¹⁸²⁸
Thou didst exalt thyself to give more scope
There to mine eyes, that were not strong enough.

The name of that fair flower I e'er invoke¹⁸²⁹
Morning and evening utterly enthralled
My soul to gaze upon the greater fire.¹⁸³⁰

And when in both mine eyes depicted were
The glory and greatness of the living star¹⁸³¹
Which there excelleth, as it here excelled,

Athwart the heavens a little torch descended¹⁸³²
Formed in a circle like a coronal,
And cinctured it, and whirled itself about it.

Whatever melody most sweetly soundeth
On earth, and to itself most draws the soul,
Would seem a cloud that, rent asunder, thunders,

Compared unto the sounding of that lyre
Wherewith was crowned the sapphire beautiful,¹⁸³³
Which gives the clearest heaven its sapphire hue.

"I am Angelic Love, that circle round
The joy sublime which breathes from out the womb
That was the hostelry of our Desire;¹⁸³⁴
And I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, while
Thou followest thy Son, and mak'st diviner
The sphere supreme, because thou enterest there."

Thus did the circulated melody
Seal itself up; and all the other lights
Were making to resound the name of Mary.

The regal mantle of the volumes all¹⁸³⁵
Of that world, which most fervid is and living
With breath of God and with his works and ways,
Extended over us its inner border,¹⁸³⁶
So very distant, that the semblance of it
There where I was not yet appeared to me.

Therefore mine eyes did not possess the power
Of following the incoronated flame,
Which mounted upward near to its own seed.¹⁸³⁷

And as a little child, that towards its mother
Stretches its arms, when it the milk has taken,
Through impulse kindled into outward flame,
Each of those gleams of whiteness upward reached
So with its summit, that the deep affection
They had for Mary was revealed to me.

Thereafter they remained there in my sight,
Regina coeli singing with such sweetness,¹⁸³⁸
That ne'er from me has the delight departed.

O, what exuberance is garnered up
Within those richest coffers, which had been
Good husbandmen for sowing here below!

There they enjoy and live upon the treasure
Which was acquired while weeping in the exile
Of Babylon, wherein the gold was left.¹⁸³⁹

There triumpheth, beneath the exalted Son
Of God and Mary, in his victory,
Both with the ancient council and the new,
He who doth keep the keys of such a glory.[1840](#)

CANTO XXIV

St. Peter examines Dante upon Faith.

“O company elect to the great supper¹⁸⁴¹
Of the Lamb benedight, who feedeth you
So that forever full is your desire,
If by the grace of God this man foretaste
Something of that which falleth from your table,
Or ever death prescribe to him the time,
Direct your mind to his immense desire,
And him somewhat bedew; ye drinking are
Forever at the fount whence comes his thought.”
Thus Beatrice; and those souls beatified
Transformed themselves to spheres on steadfast poles,
Flaming intensely in the guise of comets.
And as the wheels in works of horologes
Revolve so that the first to the beholder
Motionless seems, and the last one to fly,
So in like manner did those carols, dancing¹⁸⁴²
In different measure, of their affluence¹⁸⁴³
Give me the gauge, as they were swift or slow.
From that one which I noted of most beauty¹⁸⁴⁴
Beheld I issue forth a fire so happy¹⁸⁴⁵
That none it left there of a greater brightness;
And around Beatrice three several times¹⁸⁴⁶
It whirled itself with so divine a song,
My fantasy repeats it not to me;
Therefore the pen skips, and I write it not,
Since our imagination for such folds,

Much more our speech, is of a tint too glaring.¹⁸⁴⁷
“O holy sister mine, who us implorest¹⁸⁴⁸
With such devotion, by thine ardent love
Thou dost unbind me from that beautiful sphere!”
Thereafter, having stopped, the blessed fire
Unto my Lady did direct its breath,
Which spake in fashion as I here have said.
And she: “O light eterne of the great man
To whom our Lord delivered up the keys
He carried down of this miraculous joy,
This one examine on points light and grave,
As good beseemeth thee, about the Faith
By means of which thou on the sea didst walk.
If he love well, and hope well, and believe,
From thee ’tis hid not; for thou hast thy sight¹⁸⁴⁹
There where depicted everything is seen.
But since this kingdom has made citizens
By means of the true Faith, to glorify it
’Tis well he have the chance to speak thereof.”
As baccalaureate arms himself, and speaks not
Until the master doth propose the question,
To argue it, and not to terminate it,
So did I arm myself with every reason,
While she was speaking, that I might be ready
For such a questioner and such profession.
“Say, thou good Christian; manifest thyself,
What is the Faith?” Whereat I raised my brow
Unto that light wherefrom was this breathed forth.
Then turned I round to Beatrice, and she
Prompt signals made to me that I should pour
The water forth from my internal fountain.
“May grace, that suffers me to make confession,”
Began I, “to the great centurion,¹⁸⁵⁰
Cause my conceptions all to be explicit!”
And I continued: “As the truthful pen,
Father, of thy dear brother wrote of it,¹⁸⁵¹

Who put with thee Rome into the good way,
Faith is the substance of the things we hope for,^{[1852](#)}
And evidence of those that are not seen;
And this appears to me its quiddity.”^{[1853](#)}
Then heard I: “Very rightly thou perceivest,
If well thou understandest why he placed it
With substances and then with evidences.”
And I thereafterward: “The things profound,
That here vouchsafe to me their apparition,
Unto all eyes below are so concealed,
That they exist there only in belief,
Upon the which is founded the high hope,
And hence it takes the nature of a substance.
And it behoveth us from this belief
To reason without having other sight,
And hence it has the nature of evidence.”^{[1854](#)}
Then heard I: “If whatever is acquired
Below by doctrine were thus understood,
No sophist’s subtlety would there find place.”
Thus was breathed forth from that enkindled love;
Then added: “Very well has been gone over
Already of this coin the alloy and weight;
But tell me if thou hast it in thy purse?”
And I: “Yes, both so shining and so round
That in its stamp there is no peradventure.”^{[1855](#)}
Thereafter issued from the light profound
That there resplendent was: “This precious jewel,
Upon the which is every virtue founded,
Whence hadst thou it?” And I: “The large outpouring
Of Holy Spirit, which has been diffused
Upon the ancient parchments and the new,^{[1856](#)}
A syllogism is, which proved it to me
With such acuteness, that, compared therewith,
All demonstration seems to me obtuse.”
And then I heard: “The ancient and the new
Postulates, that to thee are so conclusive,

Why dost thou take them for the word divine?"

And I: "The proofs, which show the truth to me,
Are the works subsequent, whereunto Nature
Ne'er heated iron yet, nor anvil beat."

'Twas answered me: "Say, who assureth thee
That those works ever were? the thing itself
That must be proved, nought else to thee affirms it."

"Were the world to Christianity converted,"

I said, "withouten miracles, this one
Is such, the rest are not its hundredth part;
Because that poor and fasting thou didst enter
Into the field to sow there the good plant,
Which was a vine and has become a thorn!"

This being finished, the high, holy Court
Resounded through the spheres, "One God we praise!"
In melody that there above is chanted.

And then that Baron, who from branch to branch,¹⁸⁵⁷

Examining, had thus conducted me,
Till the extremest leaves we were approaching,

Again began: "The Grace that dallying¹⁸⁵⁸
Plays with thine intellect thy mouth has opened,
Up to this point, as it should opened be,
So that I do approve what forth emerged;
But now thou must express what thou believest,
And whence to thy belief it was presented."

"O holy father, spirit who beholdest
What thou believedst so that thou o'ercamest,
Towards the sepulchre, more youthful feet,"¹⁸⁵⁹

Began I, "thou dost wish me in this place
The form to manifest of my prompt belief,
And likewise thou the cause thereof demandest.

And I respond: In one God I believe,
Sole and eterne, who moveth all the heavens
With love and with desire, himself unmoved;

And of such faith not only have I proofs
Physical and metaphysical, but gives them
Likewise the truth that from this place rains down

Through Moses, through the Prophets and the Psalms,
Through the Evangel, and through you, who wrote [1861](#)
After the fiery Spirit sanctified you;
In Persons three eterne believe, and these
One essence I believe, so one and trine
They bear conjunction both with *sunt* and *est.* [1862](#)
With the profound condition and divine
Which now I touch upon, doth stamp my mind
Ofttimes the doctrine evangelical.
This the beginning is, this is the spark
Which afterwards dilates to vivid flame,
And, like a star in heaven, is sparkling in me.”
Even as a lord who hears what pleaseth him
His servant straight embraces, gratulating
For the good news as soon as he is silent;
So, giving me its benediction, singing,
Three times encircled me, when I was silent, [1863](#)
The apostolic light, at whose command
I spoken had, in speaking I so pleased him.

CANTO XXV

St. James examines Dante upon Hope.

If e'er it happen that the Poem Sacred,¹⁸⁶⁴
To which both heaven and earth have set their hand,
So that it many a year hath made me lean,
O'ercome the cruelty that bars me out
From the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slumbered,¹⁸⁶⁵
An enemy to the wolves that war upon it,
With other voice forthwith, with other fleece¹⁸⁶⁶
Poet will I return, and at my font¹⁸⁶⁷
Baptismal will I take the laurel crown;
Because into the Faith that maketh known
All souls to God there entered I, and then
Peter for her sake thus my brow encircled.¹⁸⁶⁸
Thereafterward towards us moved a light
Out of that band whence issued the first-fruits¹⁸⁶⁹
Which of his vicars Christ behind him left,
And then my Lady, full of ecstasy,
Said unto me: "Look, look! behold the Baron¹⁸⁷⁰
For whom below Galicia is frequented."
In the same way as, when a dove alights
Near his companion, both of them pour forth,
Circling about and murmuring, their affection,
So one beheld I by the other grand
Prince glorified to be with welcome greeted,
Lauding the food that there above is eaten.
But when their gratulations were complete,

Silently *coram me* each one stood still, [1871](#)

So incandescent it o'ercame my sight.

Smiling thereafterwards, said Beatrice:

"Illustrious life, by whom the benefactions [1872](#)

Of our Basilica have been described,

Make Hope resound within this altitude;

Thou knowest as oft thou dost personify it [1873](#)

As Jesus to the three gave greater clearness."—

"Lift up thy head, and make thyself assured; [1874](#)

For what comes hither from the mortal world

Must needs be ripened in our radiance." [1875](#)

This comfort came to me from the second fire;

Wherefore mine eyes I lifted to the hills, [1876](#)

Which bent them down before with too great weight.

"Since, through his grace, our Emperor wills that thou

Shouldst find thee face to face, before thy death,

In the most secret chamber, with his Counts, [1877](#)

So that, the truth beholden of this court,

Hope, which below there rightfully enamours,

Thereby thou strengthen in thyself and others,

Say what it is, and how is flowering with it

Thy mind, and say from whence it came to thee."

Thus did the second light again continue.

And the Compassionate, who piloted [1878](#)

The plumage of my wings in such high flight,

Did in reply anticipate me thus:

"No child whatever the Church Militant

Of greater hope possesses, as is written

In that Sun which irradiates all our band; [1879](#)

Therefore it is conceded him from Egypt

To come into Jerusalem to see,

Or ever yet his warfare be completed.

The two remaining points, that not for knowledge [1880](#)

Have been demanded, but that he report

How much this virtue unto thee is pleasing,

To him I leave; for hard he will not find them,

Nor of self-praise; and let him answer them;¹⁸⁸¹
And may the grace of God in this assist him!"

As a disciple, who his teacher follows,

Ready and willing, where he is expert,
That his proficiency may be displayed,

"Hope," said I, "is the certain expectation¹⁸⁸²

Of future glory, which is the effect
Of grace divine and merit precedent.

From many stars this light comes unto me;

But he instilled it first into my heart
Who was chief singer unto the chief captain.¹⁸⁸³

*Sperent in te, in the high Theody*¹⁸⁸⁴

He sayeth, 'those who know thy name'; and who
Knoweth it not, if he my faith possess?

Thou didst instil me, then, with his instilling

In the Epistle, so that I am full,
And upon others rain again your rain."¹⁸⁸⁵

While I was speaking, in the living bosom

Of that combustion quivered an effulgence,
Sudden and frequent, in the guise of lightning;

Then breathed: "The love wherewith I am inflamed

Towards the virtue still which followed me

Unto the palm and issue of the field,¹⁸⁸⁶

Wills that I breathe to thee that thou delight

In her; and grateful to me is thy telling
Whatever things Hope promises to thee."

And I: "The ancient Scriptures and the new

The mark establish, and this shows it me,¹⁸⁸⁷

Of all the souls whom God hath made his friends.¹⁸⁸⁸

Isaiah saith, that each one garmented¹⁸⁸⁹

In his own land shall be with twofold garments,
And his own land is this delightful life.

Thy brother, too, far more explicitly,

There where he treateth of the robes of white,¹⁸⁹⁰
This revelation manifests to us."

And first, and near the ending of these words,

“*Sperent in te*” from over us was heard,
To which responsive answered all the carols.
Thereafterward a light among them brightened,¹⁸⁹¹
So that, if Cancer one such crystal had,¹⁸⁹²
Winter would have a month of one sole day.
And as uprises, goes, and enters the dance
A winsome maiden, only to do honor
To the new bride, and not from any failing,¹⁸⁹³
Even thus did I behold the brightened splendor
Approach the two, who in a wheel revolved¹⁸⁹⁴
As was beseeming to their ardent love.
Into the song and music there it entered;
And fixed on them my Lady kept her look,
Even as a bride silent and motionless.
“This is the one who lay upon the breast
Of him our Pelican; and this is he¹⁸⁹⁵
To the great office from the cross elected.”¹⁸⁹⁶
My Lady thus; but therefore none the more
Did move her sight from its attentive gaze
Before or afterward these words of hers.
Even as a man who gazes, and endeavors
To see the eclipsing of the sun a little,
And who, by seeing, sightless doth become,
So I became before that latest fire,¹⁸⁹⁷
While it was said, “Why dost thou daze thyself
To see a thing which here hath no existence?
Earth in the earth my body is, and shall be
With all the others there, until our number
With the eternal proposition tallies.¹⁸⁹⁸
With the two garments in the blessed cloister¹⁸⁹⁹
Are the two lights alone that have ascended:¹⁹⁰⁰
And this shalt thou take back into your world.”
And at this utterance the flaming circle
Grew quiet, with the dulcet intermingling
Of sound that by the trinal breath was made,¹⁹⁰¹
As to escape from danger or fatigue

The oars that erst were in the water beaten
Are all suspended at a whistle's sound.
Ah, how much in my mind was I disturbed,
When I turned round to look on Beatrice,
That her I could not see, although I was [1902](#)
Close at her side and in the Happy World!

CANTO XXVI

St. John examines Dante upon Charity.

While I was doubting for my vision quenched,¹⁹⁰³
Out of the flame resplendent that had quenched it
Issued a breathing, that attentive made me,
Saying: "While thou recoverest the sense
Of seeing which in me thou hast consumed,
'Tis well that speaking thou shouldst compensate it.
Begin then, and declare to what thy soul
Is aimed, and count it for a certainty,
Sight is in thee bewildered and not dead;
Because the Lady, who through this divine
Region conducteth thee, has in her look
The power the hand of Ananias had."¹⁹⁰⁴
I said: "As pleaseth her, or soon or late
Let the cure come to eyes that portals were
When she with fire I ever burn with entered.
The Good, that gives contentment to this Court,
The Alpha and Omega is of all¹⁹⁰⁵
The writing that love reads me low or loud."
The selfsame voice, that taken had from me
The terror of the sudden dazzlement,
To speak still farther put it in my thought;
And said: "In verity with finer sieve
Behoveth thee to sift; thee it behoveth
To say who aimed thy bow at such a target."
And I: "By philosophic arguments,
And by authority that hence descends,

Such love must needs imprint itself in me;
For Good, so far as good, when comprehended
Doth straight enkindle love, and so much greater
As more of goodness in itself it holds;
Then to that Essence (whose is such advantage
That every good which out of it is found
Is nothing but a ray of its own light)
More than elsewhither must the mind be moved
Of everyone, in loving, who discerns
The truth in which this evidence is founded.
Such truth he to my intellect reveals
Who demonstrates to me the primal love¹⁹⁰⁶
Of all the sempiternal substances¹⁹⁰⁷
The voice reveals it of the truthful Author,
Who says to Moses, speaking of Himself,
'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.'¹⁹⁰⁸
Thou too revealest it to me, beginning
The loud Evangel, that proclaims the secret¹⁹⁰⁹
Of heaven to earth above all other edict."
And I heard say: "By human intellect¹⁹¹⁰
And by authority concordant with it,
Of all thy loves reserve for God the highest.
But say again if other cords thou feelest,
Draw thee towards Him, that thou mayst proclaim
With how many teeth this love is biting thee."
The holy purpose of the Eagle of Christ¹⁹¹¹
Not latent was, nay, rather I perceived
Whither he fain would my profession lead.
Therefore I recommenced: "All of those bites
Which have the power to turn the heart to God
Unto my charity have been concurrent.
The being of the world, and my own being,
The death which He endured that I may live,
And that which all the faithful hope, as I do,
With the forementioned vivid consciousness
Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse,

And of the right have placed me on the shore.
The leaves, wherewith embowered is all the garden¹⁹¹²
 Of the Eternal Gardener, do I love
 As much as he has granted them of good.”
As soon as I had ceased, a song most sweet
 Throughout the heaven resounded, and my Lady
 Said with the others, “Holy, holy, holy!”¹⁹¹³
And as at some keen light one wakes from sleep
 By reason of the visual spirit that runs
 Unto the splendor passed from coat to coat,
And he who wakes abhorreth what he sees,
 So all unconscious is his sudden waking,
 Until the judgment cometh to his aid,
So from before mine eyes did Beatrice
 Chase every mote with radiance of her own,
 That cast its light a thousand miles and more.
Whence better after than before I saw,
 And in a kind of wonderment I asked
 About a fourth light that I saw with us.
And said my Lady: “There within those rays
 Gazes upon its Maker the first soul¹⁹¹⁴
 That ever the first virtue did create.”
Even as the bough that downward bends its top
 At transit of the wind, and then is lifted
 By its own virtue, which inclines it upward,
Likewise did I, the while that she was speaking,
 Being amazed, and then I was made bold
 By a desire to speak wherewith I burned.
And I began: “O apple, that mature¹⁹¹⁵
 Alone hast been produced, O ancient father,
 To whom each wife is daughter and daughter-in-law,
Devoutly as I can I supplicate thee
 That thou wouldst speak to me; thou seest my wish;
 And I, to hear thee quickly, speak it not.”
Sometimes an animal, when covered, struggles
 So that his impulse needs must be apparent,
 By reason of the wrappage following it;

And in like manner the primeval soul
 Made clear to me athwart its covering
 How jubilant it was to give me pleasure.

Then breathed: "Without thy uttering it to me,
 Thine inclination better I discern
 Than thou whatever thing is surest to thee;
For I behold it in the truthful mirror,
 That of Himself all things parhelion makes,¹⁹¹⁶
 And none makes Him parhelion of itself.

Thou fain wouldest hear how long ago God placed me
 Within the lofty garden, where this Lady
 Unto so long a stairway thee disposed.

And how long to mine eyes it was a pleasure,
 And of the great disdain the proper cause,
 And the language that I used and that I made.

Now, son of mine, the tasting of the tree
 Not in itself was cause of so great exile,
 But solely the o'erstepping of the bounds.

There, whence thy Lady moved Virgilius,¹⁹¹⁷
 Four thousand and three hundred and two circuits
 Made by the sun, this Council I desired;

And him I saw return to all the lights
 Of his highway nine hundred times and thirty,
 Whilst I upon the earth was tarrying.

The language that I spake was quite extinct¹⁹¹⁸
 Before that in the work interminable
 The people under Nimrod were employed;

For nevermore result of reasoning
 (Because of human pleasure that doth change,
 Obedient to the heavens) was durable.¹⁹¹⁹

A natural action is it that man speaks;
 But whether thus or thus, doth nature leave
 To your own art, as seemeth best to you.

Ere I descended to the infernal anguish,
 El was on earth the name of the Chief Good,¹⁹²⁰
 From whom comes all the joy that wraps me round

Eli he then was called, and that is proper.¹⁹²¹
Because the use of men is like a leaf¹⁹²²
On bough, which goeth and another cometh.
Upon the mount that highest o'er the wave¹⁹²³
Rises was I, in life or pure or sinful,
From the first hour to that which is the second,
As the sun changes quadrant, to the sixth.”¹⁹²⁴

CANTO XXVII

*St. Peter's reproof of bad popes—The Ascent
to the Ninth Heaven, or the Primum Mobile.*

“Glory be to the Father, to the Son,¹⁹²⁵
And Holy Ghost!” all Paradise began,
So that the melody inebriate made me.
What I beheld seemed unto me a smile
Of the universe; for my inebriation
Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.
O joy! O gladness inexpressible!
O perfect life of love and peacefulness!
O riches without hankering secure!¹⁹²⁶
Before mine eyes were standing the four torches¹⁹²⁷
Enkindled, and the one that first had come
Began to make itself more luminous;
And even such in semblance it became
As Jupiter would become, if he and Mars¹⁹²⁸
Were birds, and they should interchange their feathers.
That Providence, which here distributeth
Season and service, in the blessed choir
Had silence upon every side imposed.
When I heard say: “If I my color change,
Marvel not at it; for while I am speaking
Thou shalt behold all these their color change.
He who usurps upon the earth my place,¹⁹²⁹
My place, my place, which vacant has become
Before the presence of the Son of God,
Has of my cemetery made a sewer¹⁹³⁰

Of blood and stench, whereby the Perverse One,
Who fell from here, below there is appeased!"
With the same color which, through sun adverse,
Painteth the clouds at evening or at morn,
Beheld I then the whole of heaven suffused.
And as a modest woman, who abides
Sure of herself, and at another's failing,
From listening only, timorous becomes,
Even thus did Beatrice change countenance;
And I believe in heaven was such eclipse,
When suffered the supreme Omnipotence;¹⁹³¹
Thereafterward proceeded forth his words
With voice so much transmuted from itself,
The very countenance was not more changed.
"The spouse of Christ has never nurtured been
On blood of mine, of Linus and of Cletus,¹⁹³²
To be made use of in acquest of gold;
But in acquest of this delightful life
Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus,¹⁹³³
After much lamentation, shed their blood.
Our purpose was not, that on the right hand
Of our successors should in part be seated¹⁹³⁴
The Christian folk, in part upon the other;
Nor that the keys which were to me confided
Should e'er become the escutcheon on a banner,¹⁹³⁵
That should wage war on those who are baptized;¹⁹³⁶
Nor I be made the figure of a seal
To privileges venal and mendacious,¹⁹³⁷
Wherat I often redden and flash with fire.
In garb of shepherds the rapacious wolves¹⁹³⁸
Are seen from here above o'er all the pastures!
O wrath of God, why dost thou slumber still?¹⁹³⁹
To drink our blood the Caorsines and Gascons¹⁹⁴⁰
Are making ready. O thou good beginning,
Unto how vile an end must thou needs fall!
But the high Providence, that with Scipio¹⁹⁴¹

At Rome the glory of the world defended,
Will speedily bring aid, as I conceive;
And thou, my son, who by thy mortal weight
Shalt down return again, open thy mouth;
What I conceal not, do not thou conceal.”
As with its frozen vapors downward falls
In flakes our atmosphere, what time the horn¹⁹⁴²
Of the celestial Goat doth touch the sun,¹⁹⁴³
Upward in such array saw I the ether
Become, and flaked with the triumphant vapors,
Which there together with us had remained.¹⁹⁴⁴
My sight was following up their semblances,
And followed till the medium, by excess,¹⁹⁴⁵
The passing farther onward took from it;
Whereat the Lady, who beheld me freed
From gazing upward, said to me: “Cast down
Thy sight, and see how far thou art turned round.”
Since the first time that I had downward looked,¹⁹⁴⁶
I saw that I had moved through the whole arc
Which the first climate makes from midst to end;¹⁹⁴⁷
So that I saw the mad track of Ulysses¹⁹⁴⁸
Past Gades, and this side, well nigh the shore¹⁹⁴⁹
Whereon became Europa a sweet burden.¹⁹⁵⁰
And of this threshing-floor the site to me¹⁹⁵¹
Were more unveiled, but the sun was proceeding
Under my feet, a sign and more removed.¹⁹⁵²
My mind enamoured, which is dallying¹⁹⁵³
At all times with my Lady, to bring back
To her mine eyes was more than ever ardent.
And if or Art or Nature has made bait¹⁹⁵⁴
To catch the eyes and so possess the mind,
In human flesh or in its portraiture,
All joined together would appear as nought
To the divine delight which shone upon me
When to her smiling face I turned me round.
The virtue that her look endowed me with

From the fair nest of Leda tore me forth,¹⁹⁵⁵
And up into the swiftest heaven impelled me.
Its parts exceeding full of life and lofty
Are all so uniform, I cannot say
Which Beatrice selected for my place.

But she, who was aware of my desire,¹⁹⁵⁶
Began, the while she smiled so joyously
That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice:
“The nature of that motion, which keeps quiet
The centre and all the rest about it moves,
From hence begins as from its starting point.

And in this heaven there is no other Where¹⁹⁵⁷
Than in the Mind Divine, wherein is kindled
The love that turns it, and the power it rains.
Within a circle light and love embrace it,
Even as this doth the others, and that precinct¹⁹⁵⁸
He who encircles it alone controls.

Its motion is not by another meted,
But all the others measured are by this,
As ten is by the half and by the fifth.¹⁹⁵⁹

And in what manner time in such a pot
May have its roots, and in the rest its leaves,
Now unto thee can manifest be made.

O Covetousness, that mortals dost engulf
Beneath thee so, that no one hath the power
Of drawing back his eyes from out thy waves!

Full fairly blossoms in mankind the will;
But the uninterrupted rain converts
Into abortive wildlings the true plums.

Fidelity and innocence are found¹⁹⁶⁰
Only in children; afterwards they both
Take flight or e'er the cheeks with down are covered.

One, while he prattles still, observes the fasts,
Who, when his tongue is loosed, forthwith devours
Whatever food under whatever moon;

Another, while he prattles, loves and listens

Unto his mother, who when speech is perfect
Forthwith desires to see her in her grave.
Even thus is swarthy made the skin so white
In its first aspect of the daughter fair¹⁹⁶¹
Of him who brings the morn, and leaves the night.
Thou, that it may not be a marvel to thee,
Think that on earth there is no one who governs;¹⁹⁶²
Whence goes astray the human family.
Ere January be unwintered wholly
By the centesimal on earth neglected,¹⁹⁶³
Shall these supernal circles roar so loud
The tempest that has been so long awaited¹⁹⁶⁴
Shall whirl the poops about where are the prows;
So that the fleet shall run its course direct,
And the true fruit shall follow on the flower.”

CANTO XXVIII

God and the Celestial Hierarchies.

After the truth against the present life [1965](#)
 Of miserable mortals was unfolded
 By her who doth imparadise my mind, [1966](#)
As in a looking-glass a taper's flame
 He sees who from behind is lighted by it,
 Before he has it in his sight or thought,
And turns him round to see if so the glass
 Tell him the truth, and sees that it accords
 Therewith as doth a music with its metre,
In similar wise my memory recollecteth
 That I did, looking into those fair eyes,
 Of which Love made the springes to ensnare me.
And as I turned me round, and mine were touched
 By that which is apparent in that volume, [1967](#)
 Whenever on its gyre we gaze intent,
A point beheld I, that was raying out [1968](#)
 Light so acute, the sight which it enkindles
 Must close perforce before such great acuteness.
And whatsoever star seems smallest here
 Would seem to be a moon, if placed beside it.
 As one star with another star is placed.
Perhaps at such a distance as appears
 A halo cincturing the light that paints it,
 When densest is the vapor that sustains it,
Thus distant round the point a circle of fire
 So swiftly whirled, that it would have surpassed

Whatever motion soonest girds the world;
And this was by another circumcinct,
That by a third, the third then by a fourth,
By a fifth the fourth, and then by a sixth the fifth;
The seventh followed thereupon in width
So ample now, that Juno's messenger¹⁹⁶⁹
Entire would be too narrow to contain it.
Even so the eighth and ninth; and everyone¹⁹⁷⁰
More slowly moved, according as it was
In number distant farther from the first.
And that one had its flame most crystalline
From which less distant was the stainless spark,
I think because more with its truth imbued.
My Lady, who in my anxiety
Beheld me much perplexed, said: "From that point
Dependent is the heaven and nature all.
Behold that circle most conjoined to it,
And know thou, that its motion is so swift
Through burning love whereby it is spurred on."
And I to her: "If the world were arranged
In the order which I see in yonder wheels,
What's set before me would have satisfied me;
But in the world of sense we can perceive
That evermore the circles are diviner
As they are from the centre more remote
Wherefore if my desire is to be ended
In this miraculous and angelic temple,
That has for confines only love and light,
To hear behoves me still how the example¹⁹⁷¹
And the exemplar go not in one fashion,
Since for myself in vain I contemplate it."
"If thine own fingers unto such a knot
Be insufficient, it is no great wonder,
So hard hath it become for want of trying."¹⁹⁷²
My Lady thus; then said she: "Do thou take
What I shall tell thee, if thou wouldest be sated,
And exercise on that thy subtlety.

The circles corporal are wide and narrow [1973](#)

According to the more or less of virtue
Which is distributed through all their parts.
The greater goodness works the greater weal,
The greater weal the greater body holds,
If perfect equally are all its parts.

Therefore this one which sweeps along with it [1974](#)

The universe sublime, doth correspond
Unto the circle which most loves and knows.

On which account, if thou unto the virtue
Apply thy measure, not to the appearance
Of substances that unto thee seem round,
Thou wilt behold a marvellous agreement,
Of more to greater, and of less to smaller, [1975](#)
In every heaven, with its Intelligence."

Even as remaineth splendid and serene
The hemisphere of air, when Boreas [1976](#)

Is blowing from that cheek where he is mildest,
Because is purified and resolved the rack
That erst disturbed it, till the welkin laughs
With all the beauties of its pageantry;
Thus did I likewise, after that my Lady
Had me provided with her clear response,

And like a star in heaven the truth was seen.

And soon as to a stop her words had come,
Not otherwise does iron scintillate

When molten, than those circles scintillated. [1977](#)

Their coruscation all the sparks repeated,
And they so many were, their number makes
More millions than the doubling of the chess. [1978](#)

I heard them sing hosanna choir by choir
To the fixed point which holds them at the *Ubi*, [1979](#)
And ever will, where they have ever been.

And she, who saw the dubious meditations
Within my mind, "The primal circles," said,
"Have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim. [1980](#)

Thus rapidly they follow their own bonds,¹⁹⁸¹

To be as like the point as most they can,
And can as far as they are high in vision.

Those other Loves, that round about them go,

Thrones of the countenance divine are called,¹⁹⁸²
Because they terminate the primal Triad.

And thou shouldst know that they all have delight

As much as their own vision penetrates
The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest.

From this it may be seen how blessedness

Is founded in the faculty which sees,¹⁹⁸³
And not in that which loves, and follows next;

And of this seeing merit is the measure,

Which is brought forth by grace, and by good will;¹⁹⁸⁴
Thus on from grade to grade doth it proceed.

The second Triad, which is germinating

In such wise in this sempiternal spring,¹⁹⁸⁵
That no nocturnal Aries despoils,
Perpetually hosanna warbles forth
With threefold melody, that sounds in three
Orders of joy, with which it is intrined.

The three Divine are in this hierarchy,

First the Dominions, and the Virtues next;¹⁹⁸⁶
And the third order is that of the Powers.

Then in the dances twain penultimate

The Principalities and Archangels wheel;
The last is wholly of angelic sports.

These orders upward all of them are gazing,

And downward so prevail, that unto God
They all attracted are and all attract.

And Dionysius with so great desire¹⁹⁸⁷

To contemplate these Orders set himself,
He named them and distinguished them as I do.

But Gregory afterwards dissented from him;¹⁹⁸⁸

Wherefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes
Within this heaven, he at himself did smile.

And if so much of secret truth a mortal
Proffered on earth, I would not have thee marvel,
For he who saw it here revealed it to him,¹⁹⁸⁹
With much more of the truth about these circles."

CANTO XXIX

Beatrice's discourse of the creation of the Angels, and of the fall of Lucifer—Her reproof of the ignorance and avarice of preachers, and the sale of indulgences.

At what time both the children of Latona,¹⁹⁹⁰
Surmounted by the Ram and by the Scales,¹⁹⁹¹
Together make a zone of the horizon,¹⁹⁹²
As long as from the time the zenith holds them
In equipoise, till from that girdle both
Changing their hemisphere disturb the balance,
So long, her face depicted with a smile,
Did Beatrice keep silence while she gazed
Fixedly at the point which had o'ercome me.¹⁹⁹³
Then she began: "I say, and I ask not
What thou dost wish to hear, for I have seen it¹⁹⁹⁴
Where centres every When and every *Ubi*.¹⁹⁹⁵
Not to acquire some good unto himself,
Which is impossible, but that his splendor¹⁹⁹⁶
In its resplendency may say, '*Subsistō*,'
In his eternity outside of time,¹⁹⁹⁷
Outside all other limits, as it pleased him,
Into new Loves the Eternal Love unfolded.¹⁹⁹⁸
Nor as if torpid did he lie before;
For neither after nor before proceeded
The going forth of God upon these waters.¹⁹⁹⁹
Matter and Form unmixed and conjoined²⁰⁰⁰

Came into being that had no defect,²⁰⁰¹
E'en as three arrows from a three-stringed bow.
And as in glass, in amber, or in crystal
A sunbeam flashes so, that from its coming
To its full being is no interval,
So from its Lord did the triform effect
Ray forth into its being all together,
Without discrimination of beginning.
Order was con-created and constructed
In substances, and summit of the world
Were those wherein the pure act was produced.²⁰⁰²
Pure potentiality held the lowest part;²⁰⁰³
Midway bound potentiality with act²⁰⁰⁴
Such bond that it shall never be unbound.²⁰⁰⁵
Jerome has written unto you of angels²⁰⁰⁶
Created a long lapse of centuries
Or ever yet the other world was made;
But written is this truth in many places²⁰⁰⁷
By writers of the Holy Ghost, and thou²⁰⁰⁸
Shalt see it, if thou lookest well thereat.
And even reason seeth it somewhat,
For it would not concede that for so long
Could be the motors without their perfection.²⁰⁰⁹
Now dost thou know both where and when these Loves
Created were, and how; so that extinct
In thy desire already are three fires.
Nor could one reach, in counting, unto twenty
So swiftly, as a portion of these angels
Disturbed the subject of your elements.²⁰¹⁰
The rest remained, and they began this art
Which thou discernest, with so great delight
That never from their circling do they cease.
The occasion of the fall was the accursed
Presumption of that One, whom thou hast seen²⁰¹¹
By all the burden of the world constrained.
Those whom thou here beholdest modest were

To recognise themselves as of that goodness
Which made them apt for so much understanding;
On which account their vision was exalted
By the enlightening grace and their own merit,
So that they have a full and steadfast will.
I would not have thee doubt, but certain be,
'Tis meritorious to receive this grace, [2012](#)
According as the affection opens to it.
Now round about in this consistory
Much mayst thou contemplate, if these my words
Be gathered up, without all further aid.
But since upon the earth, throughout your schools,
They teach that such is the angelic nature
That it doth hear, and recollect, and will,
More will I say, that thou mayst see unmixed
The truth that is confounded there below,
Equivocating in suchlike prelections.
These substances, since in God's countenance
They jocund were, turned not away their sight
From that wherfrom not anything is hidden;
Hence they have not their vision intercepted
By object new, and hence they do not need
To recollect, through interrupted thought.
So that below, not sleeping, people dream,
Believing they speak truth, and not believing;
And in the last is greater sin and shame.
Below you do not journey by one path
Philosophising; so transporteth you
Love of appearance and the thought thereof.
And even this above here is endured
With less disdain, than when is set aside
The Holy Writ, or when it is distorted.
They think not there how much of blood it costs
To sow it in the world, and how he pleases
Who in humility keeps close to it.
Each striveth for appearance, and doth make
His own inventions; and these treated are [2013](#)

By preachers, and the Evangel holds its peace.
One sayeth that the moon did backward turn,
 In the Passion of Christ, and interpose herself
 So that the sunlight reached not down below;
And lies; for of its own accord the light
 Hid itself; whence to Spaniards and to Indians,
 As to the Jews, did such eclipse respond.

Florence has not so many Lapi and Bindi²⁰¹⁴
 As fables such as these, that every year
 Are shouted from the pulpit back and forth,
In such wise that the lambs, who do not know,
 Come back from pasture fed upon the wind,²⁰¹⁵
 And not to see the harm doth not excuse them.
Christ did not to his first disciples say,
 ‘Go forth, and to the world preach idle tales,’
 But unto them a true foundation gave;
And this so loudly sounded from their lips,
 That, in the warfare to enkindle Faith,
 They made of the Evangel shields and lances.

Now men go forth with jests and drolleries²⁰¹⁶
 To preach, and if but well the people laugh,
 The hood puffs out, and nothing more is asked.
But in the cowl there nestles such a bird,²⁰¹⁷
 That, if the common people were to see it,
 They would perceive what pardons they confide in,
For which so great on earth has grown the folly,
 That, without proof of any testimony,
 To each indulgence they would flock together.
By this Saint Anthony his pig doth fatten,²⁰¹⁸
 And many others, who are worse than pigs,
 Paying in money without mark of coinage.²⁰¹⁹
But since we have digressed abundantly,
 Turn back thine eyes forthwith to the right path,
 So that the way be shortened with the time.
This nature doth so multiply itself²⁰²⁰
 In numbers, that there never yet was speech

Nor mortal fancy that can go so far.
And if thou notest that which is revealed
By Daniel, thou wilt see that in his thousands²⁰²¹
Number determinate is kept concealed.
The primal light, that all irradiates it,²⁰²²
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendors wherewith it is mated.²⁰²³
Hence, inasmuch as on the act conceptive
The affection followeth, of love the sweetness²⁰²⁴
Therein diversely fervid is or tepid.
The height behold now and the amplitude
Of the eternal power, since it hath made
Itself so many mirrors, where 'tis broken,
One in itself remaining as before.”

CANTO XXX

The Tenth Heaven, or Empyrean—The River of Light—The Two Courts of Heaven—The White Rose of Paradise.

Perchance six thousand miles remote from us²⁰²⁵
Is glowing the sixth hour, and now this world²⁰²⁶
Inclines its shadow almost to a level,
When the mid-heaven begins to make itself
So deep to us, that here and there a star
Ceases to shine so far down as this depth,
And as advances bright exceedingly
The handmaid of the sun, the heaven is closed
Light after light to the most beautiful;
Not otherwise the Triumph, which forever²⁰²⁷
Plays round about the point that vanquished me,
Seeming enclosed by what itself encloses,
Little by little from my vision faded;
Whereto turn mine eyes on Beatrice
My seeing nothing and my love constrained me.
If what has hitherto been said of her
Were all concluded in a single praise,
Scant would it be to serve the present turn.
Not only does the beauty I beheld
Transcend ourselves, but truly I believe
Its Maker only may enjoy it all.
Vanquished do I confess me by this passage
More than by problem of his theme was ever
O'ercome the comic or the tragic poet;

For as the sun the sight that trembles most,
Even so the memory of that sweet smile
My mind depriveth of its very self.
From the first day that I beheld her face
In this life, to the moment of this look,
The sequence of my song has ne'er been severed;
But now perforce this sequence must desist
From following her beauty with my verse,
As every artist at his uttermost.
Such as I leave her to a greater fame
Than any of my trumpet, which is bringing
Its arduous matter to a final close,
With voice and gesture of a perfect leader
She recommenced: "We from the greatest body²⁰²⁸
Have issued to the heaven that is pure light;
Light intellectual replete with love,
Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness.²⁰²⁹
Here shalt thou see the one host and the other²⁰³⁰
Of Paradise, and one in the same aspects
Which at the final judgment thou shalt see."²⁰³¹
Even as a sudden lightning that disperses
The visual spirits, so that it deprives
The eye of impress from the strongest objects,
Thus round about me flashed a living light,
And left me swathed around with such a veil
Of its effulgence, that I nothing saw.
"Ever the Love which quieteth this heaven
Welcomes into itself with such salute,
To make the candle ready for its flame."
No sooner had within me these brief words
An entrance found, than I perceived myself
To be uplifted over my own power,
And I with vision new rekindled me,
Such that no light whatever is so pure
But that mine eyes were fortified against it.

And light I saw in fashion of a river²⁰³²
Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt two banks
Depicted with an admirable Spring.
Out of this river issued living sparks,²⁰³³
And on all sides sank down into the flowers,
Like unto rubies that are set in gold;²⁰³⁴
And then, as if inebriate with the odors,
They plunged again into the wondrous torrent,
And as one entered issued forth another.
“The high desire, that now inflames and moves thee
To have intelligence of what thou seest,
Pleaseth me all the more, the more it swells.
But of this water it behoves thee drink
Before so great a thirst in thee be slaked.”
Thus said to me the sunshine of mine eyes;
And added: “The river and the topazes²⁰³⁵
Going in and out, and the laughing of the herbage,
Are of their truth foreshadowing prefaces;
Not that these things are difficult in themselves,
But the deficiency is on thy side,
For yet thou hast not vision so exalted.”
There is no babe that leaps so suddenly
With face towards the milk, if he awake
Much later than his usual custom is,
As I did, that I might make better mirrors
Still of mine eyes, down stooping to the wave
Which flows that we therein be better made.
And even as the penthouse of mine eyelids
Drank of it, it forthwith appeared to me
Out of its length to be transformed to round.²⁰³⁶
Then as a folk who have been under masks
Seem other than before, if they divest
The semblance not their own they disappeared in,
Thus into greater pomp were changed for me
The flowerets and the sparks, so that I saw
Both of the Courts of Heaven made manifest.

O splendor of God! by means of which I saw
The lofty triumph of the realm veracious,
Give me the power to say how it I saw!²⁰³⁷

There is a light above, which visible²⁰³⁸
Makes the Creator unto every creature,
Who only in beholding Him has peace,
And it expands itself in circular form
To such extent, that its circumference
Would be too large a girdle for the sun.

The semblance of it is all made of rays
Reflected from the top of Primal Motion,
Which takes therefrom vitality and power.

And as a hill in water at its base
Mirrors itself, as if to see its beauty
When affluent most in verdure and in flowers,
So, ranged aloft all round about the light,
Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand
All who above there have from us returned.
And if the lowest row collect within it
So great a light, how vast the amplitude
Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves!

My vision in the vastness and the height
Lost not itself, but comprehended all
The quantity and quality of that gladness.

There near and far nor add nor take away;
For there where God immediately doth govern,
The natural law in naught is relevant.

Into the yellow of the Rose Eternal²⁰³⁹
That spreads, and multiplies, and breathes an odor
Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun,
As one who silent is and fain would speak,
Me Beatrice drew on, and said: "Behold

Of the white stoles how vast the convent is!²⁰⁴⁰

Behold how vast the circuit of our city!
Behold our seats so filled to overflowing,
That here henceforward are few people wanting!
On that great throne wheron thine eyes are fixed

For the crown's sake already placed upon it,
Before thou suppest at this wedding feast
Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus²⁰⁴¹
On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come²⁰⁴²
To redress Italy ere she be ready.
Blind covetousness, that casts its spell upon you,
Has made you like unto the little child,
Who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse.
And in the sacred forum then shall be²⁰⁴³
A Prefect such, that openly or covert²⁰⁴⁴
On the same road he will not walk with him.
But long of God he will not be endured
In holy office; he shall be thrust down
Where Simon Magus is for his deserts,²⁰⁴⁵
And make him of Alagna lower go!"²⁰⁴⁶

CANTO XXXI

The glory of Paradise—St. Bernard.

In fashion then as of a snow-white rose²⁰⁴⁷

 Displayed itself to me the saintly host,

 Whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride,

But the other host, that flying sees and sings

 The glory of Him who doth enamour it,

 And the goodness that created it so noble,

Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers²⁰⁴⁸

 One moment, and the next returns again

 To where its labor is to sweetness turned,

Sank into the great flower, that is adorned

 With leaves so many, and thence reascended

 To where its love abideth evermore.

Their faces had they all of living flame,

 And wings of gold, and all the rest so white

 No snow unto that limit doth attain.

From bench to bench, into the flower descending,

 They carried something of the peace and ardor

 Which by the fanning of their flanks they won.

Nor did the interposing 'twixt the flower

 And what was o'er it of such plenitude

 Of flying shapes impede the sight and splendor;

Because the light divine so penetrates

 The universe, according to its merit,

 That naught can be an obstacle against it.

This realm secure and full of gladsomeness,

 Crowded with ancient people and with modern,

Unto one mark had all its look and love.
O Trinal Light, that in a single star
 Sparkling upon their sight so satisfies them,
 Look down upon our tempest here below!
If the barbarians, coming from some region
 That every day by Helice is covered,²⁰⁴⁹
 Revolving with her son whom she delights in,
Beholding Rome and all her noble works,²⁰⁵⁰
 Were wonder-struck, what time the Lateran²⁰⁵¹
 Above all mortal things was eminent—
I who to the divine had from the human,
 From time unto eternity, had come,
 From Florence to a people just and sane,
With what amazement must I have been filled!
 Truly between this and the joy, it was
 My pleasure not to hear, and to be mute.
And as a pilgrim who delighteth him
 In gazing round the temple of his vow,
 And hopes some day to retell how it was,
So through the living light my way pursuing
 Directed I mine eyes o'er all the ranks,
 Now up, now down, and now all round about.
Faces I saw of charity persuasive,
 Embellished by His light and their own smile,
 And attitudes adorned with every grace.
The general form of Paradise already
 My glance had comprehended as a whole,
 In no part hitherto remaining fixed,
And round I turned me with rekindled wish
 My Lady to interrogate of things
 Concerning which my mind was in suspense.
One thing I meant, another answered me;
 I thought I should see Beatrice, and saw
 An Old Man habited like the glorious people.
O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks
 With joy benign, in attitude of pity
 As to a tender father is becoming.

And "She, where is she?" instantly I said;
Whence he: "To put an end to thy desire,
Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.
And if thou lookest up to the third round
Of the first rank, again shalt thou behold her
Upon the throne her merits have assigned her."
Without reply I lifted up mine eyes,
And saw her, as she made herself a crown
Reflecting from herself the eternal rays.
Not from that region which the highest thunders²⁰⁵²
Is any mortal eye so far removed,
In whatsoever sea it deepest sinks,
As there from Beatrice my sight; but this
Was nothing unto me; because her image
Descended not to me by medium blurred.
"O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong,
And who for my salvation didst endure
In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,
Of whatsoever things I have beheld,
As coming from thy power and from thy goodness
I recognise the virtue and the grace.
Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom,
By all those ways, by all the expedients,
Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.
Preserve towards me thy magnificence,
So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed,
Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."
Thus I implored; and she, so far away,
Smiled, as it seemed, and looked once more at me;
Then unto the eternal fountain turned.
And said the Old Man holy: "That thou mayst
Accomplish perfectly thy journeying,
Whereunto prayer and holy love have sent me,
Fly with thine eyes all round about this garden;
For seeing it will discipline thy sight
Farther to mount along the ray divine.
And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn

Wholly with love, will grant us every grace,
Because that I her faithful Bernard am.”[2053](#)

As he who peradventure from Croatia
Cometh to gaze at our Veronica,[2054](#)
Who through its ancient fame is never sated,
But says in thought, the while it is displayed,
“My Lord, Christ Jesus, God of very God,
Now was your semblance made like unto this?”

Even such was I while gazing at the living
Charity of the man, who in this world
By contemplation tasted of that peace.

“Thou son of grace, this jocund life,” began he,
“Will not be known to thee by keeping ever
Thine eyes below here on the lowest place;
But mark the circles to the most remote,
Until thou shalt behold enthroned the Queen[2055](#)
To whom this realm is subject and devoted.”

I lifted up mine eyes, and as at morn
The oriental part of the horizon
Surpasses that wherein the sun goes down,
Thus, as if going with mine eyes from vale
To mount, I saw a part in the remoteness
Surpass in splendor all the other front.

And even as there where we await the pole
That Phaeton drove badly, blazes more[2056](#)
The light, and is on either side diminished,
So likewise that pacific oriflamme
Gleamed brightest in the centre, and each side
In equal measure did the flame abate.

And at that centre, with their wings expanded,
More than a thousand jubilant Angels saw I,
Each differing in effulgence and in kind.

I saw there at their sports and at their songs
A beauty smiling, which the gladness was
Within the eyes of all the other saints;

And if I had in speaking as much wealth
As in imagining, I should not dare

To attempt the smallest part of its delight.
Bernard, as soon as he beheld mine eyes
 Fixed and intent upon its fervid fervor,
 His own with such affection turned to her
 That it made mine more ardent to behold.

CANTO XXXII

St. Bernard points out the saints in the White Rose.

Absorbed in his delight, that contemplator [2057](#)
Assumed the willing office of a teacher,
And gave beginning to these holy words:
“The wound that Mary closed up and anointed,
She at her feet who is so beautiful, [2058](#)
She is the one who opened it and pierced it.
Within that order which the third seats make
Is seated Rachel, lower than the other, [2059](#)
With Beatrice, in manner as thou seest.
Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and her who was
Ancestress of the Singer, who for dole [2060](#)
Of the misdeed said, ‘*Miserere mei,*’ [2061](#)
Canst thou behold from seat to seat descending
Down in gradation, as with each one’s name
I through the Rose go down from leaf to leaf.
And downward from the seventh row, even as
Above the same, succeed the Hebrew women,
Dividing all the tresses of the flower;
Because, according to the view which Faith
In Christ had taken, these are the partition
By which the sacred stairways are divided.
Upon this side, where perfect is the flower
With each one of its petals, seated are
Those who believed in Christ who was to come. [2062](#)
Upon the other side, where intersected

With vacant spaces are the semicircles,
Are those who looked to Christ already come.²⁰⁶³

And as, upon this side, the glorious seat
Of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats
Below it, such a great division make,
So opposite doth that of the great John,²⁰⁶⁴
Who, ever holy, desert and martyrdom
Endured, and afterwards two years in Hell.

And under him thus to divide were chosen
Francis, and Benedict, and Augustine,
And down to us the rest from round to round.

Behold now the high providence divine;
For one and other aspect of the Faith
In equal measure shall this garden fill.

And know that downward from that rank which cleaves²⁰⁶⁵
Midway the sequence of the two divisions,
Not by their proper merit are they seated;
But by another's under fixed conditions;²⁰⁶⁶
For these are spirits one and all assoiled
Before they any true election had.

Well canst thou recognise it in their faces,
And also in their voices puerile,
If thou regard them well and hearken to them.

Now doubtest thou, and doubting thou art silent;
But I will loosen for thee the strong bond
In which thy subtle fancies hold thee fast.

Within the amplitude of this domain
No casual point can possibly find place,
No more than sadness can, or thirst, or hunger;

For by eternal law has been established
Whatever thou beholdest, so that closely
The ring is fitted to the finger here.

And therefore are these people, festinate²⁰⁶⁷
Unto true life, not *sine causa* here
More and less excellent among themselves.

The King, by means of whom this realm reposes

In so great love and in so great delight
That no will ventureth to ask for more,
In his own joyous aspect every mind
Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace
Diversely; and let here the effect suffice.

And this is clearly and expressly noted
For you in Holy Scripture, in those twins [2068](#)
Who in their mother had their anger roused.

According to the color of the hair, [2069](#)
Therefore, with such a grace the light supreme
Consenteth that they worthily be crowned.
Without, then, any merit of their deeds,
Stationed are they in different gradations,
Differing only in their first acuteness. [2070](#)

'Tis true that in the early centuries, [2071](#)
With innocence, to work out their salvation
Sufficient was the faith of parents only.

After the earlier ages were completed, [2072](#)
Behoved it that the males by circumcision
Unto their innocent wings should virtue add;
But after that the time of grace had come
Without the baptism absolute of Christ,
Such innocence below there was retained.

Look now into the face that unto Christ [2073](#)
Hath most resemblance; for its brightness only
Is able to prepare thee to see Christ."

On her did I behold so great a gladness
Rain down, borne onward in the holy minds
Created through that altitude to fly,

That whatsoever I had seen before
Did not suspend me in such admiration,
Nor show me such similitude of God.

And the same Love that first descended there, [2074](#)
"Ave Maria, gratia plena," singing,
In front of her his wings expanded wide.

Unto the canticle divine responded

From every part the court beatified,
So that each sight became serener for it.²⁰⁷⁵

“O holy father, who for me endurest
To be below here, leaving the sweet place
In which thou sittest by eternal lot,
Who is the Angel that with so much joy
Into the eyes is looking of our Queen,
Enamoured so that he seems made of fire?”

Thus I again recourse had to the teaching
Of that one who delighted him in Mary²⁰⁷⁶
As doth the star of morning in the sun.²⁰⁷⁷

And he to me: “Such gallantry and grace
As there can be in Angel and in soul,
All is in him; and thus we fain would have it;
Because he is the one who bore the palm
Down unto Mary, when the Son of God
To take our burden on himself decreed.

But now come onward with thine eyes, as I
Speaking shall go, and note the great patricians
Of this most just and merciful of empires.

Those two that sit above there most enrapture
As being very near unto Augusta,²⁰⁷⁸
Are as it were the two roots of this Rose.

He who upon the left is near her placed²⁰⁷⁹
The father is, by whose audacious taste
The human species so much bitter tastes.

Upon the right thou seest that ancient father²⁰⁸⁰
Of Holy Church, into whose keeping Christ
The keys committed of this lovely flower.

And he who all the evil days beheld,²⁰⁸¹
Before his death, of her the beauteous bride
Who with the spear and with the nails was won,
Beside him sits, and by the other rests
That leader under whom on manna lived²⁰⁸²
The people ingrate, fickle, and stiff-necked.²⁰⁸³

Opposite Peter seest thou Anna seated,²⁰⁸⁴

So well content to look upon her daughter,
Her eyes she moves not while she sings Hosanna.
And opposite the eldest household father
Lucia sits, she who thy Lady moved [2085](#)
When to rush downward thou didst bend thy brows.
But since the moments of thy vision fly,
Here will we make full stop, as a good tailor
Who makes the gown according to his cloth,
And unto the first Love will turn our eyes,
That looking upon Him thou penetrate
As far as possible through his effulgence.
Truly, lest peradventure thou recede,
Moving thy wings believing to advance, [2086](#)
By prayer behoves it that grace be obtained;
Grace from that one who has the power to aid thee;
And thou shalt follow me with thy affection
That from my words thy heart turn not aside.”
And he began this holy orison.

CANTO XXXIII

Prayer to the Virgin—The Threefold Circle of the Trinity—Mystery of the divine and human nature.

“Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,²⁰⁸⁷
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make himself its creature.
Within thy womb rekindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.
Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountainhead of hope.
Lady, thou art so great, and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.
Not only thy benignity gives succor
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Forerunneth of its own accord the asking.
In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate’er of goodness is in any creature.
Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as here has seen
One after one the spiritual lives,

Supplicate thee through grace for so much power

That with his eyes he may uplift himself

Higher towards the uttermost salvation.

And I, who never burned for my own seeing

More than I do for his, all of my prayers

Proffer to thee, and pray they come not short,

That thou wouldest scatter from him every cloud

Of his mortality so with thy prayers,

That the Chief Pleasure be to him displayed.

Still farther do I pray thee, Queen, who canst

Whate'er thou wilt, that sound thou mayst preserve

After so great a vision his affections. [2088](#)

Let thy protection conquer human movements;

See Beatrice and all the blessed ones

My prayers to second clasp their hands to thee!"

The eyes beloved and revered of God,

Fastened upon the speaker, showed to us

How grateful unto her are prayers devout;

Then unto the Eternal Light they turned,

On which it is not credible could be

By any creature bent an eye so clear.

And I, who to the end of all desires

Was now approaching, even as I ought

The ardor of desire within me ended. [2089](#)

Bernard was beckoning unto me, and smiling,

That I should upward look; but I already

Was of my own accord such as he wished;

Because my sight, becoming purified,

Was entering more and more into the ray

Of the High Light which of itself is true.

From that time forward what I saw was greater

Than our discourse, that to such vision yields,

And yields the memory unto such excess.

Even as he is who seeth in a dream,

And after dreaming the imprinted passion

Remains, and to his mind the rest returns not,

Even such am I, for almost utterly

Ceases my vision, and distilleth yet
Within my heart the sweetness born of it;
Even thus the snow is in the sun unsealed,
Even thus upon the wind in the light leaves
Were the soothsayings of the Sibyl lost.[2090](#)

O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,
And make my tongue of so great puissance,
That but a single sparkle of thy glory
It may bequeath unto the future people;
For by returning to my memory somewhat,
And by a little sounding in these verses,
More of thy victory shall be conceived!

I think the keenness of the living ray
Which I endured would have bewildered me,
If but mine eyes had been averted from it;[2091](#)
And I remember that I was more bold
On this account to bear, so that I joined
My aspect with the Glory Infinite.

O grace abundant, by which I presumed
To fix my sight upon the Light Eternal,
So that the seeing I consumed therein!

I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up with love together in one volume,[2092](#)
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;
Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is one simple light.[2093](#)

The universal fashion of this knot
Methinks I saw, since more abundantly
In saying this I feel that I rejoice.

One moment is more lethargy to me,[2094](#)
Than five and twenty centuries to the emprise
That startled Neptune with the shade of Argo!
My mind in this wise wholly in suspense,

Steadfast, immovable, attentive gazed,
And evermore with gazing grew enkindled.
In presence of that light one such becomes,
That to withdraw therefrom for other prospect
It is impossible he e'er consent;
Because the good, which object is of will,²⁰⁹⁵
Is gathered all in this, and out of it
That is defective which is perfect there.
Shorter henceforward will my language fall
Of what I yet remember, than an infant's
Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast.
Not because more than one unmingled semblance
Was in the living light on which I looked,
For it is always what it was before;
But through the sight, that fortified itself
In me by looking, one appearance only
To me was ever changing as I changed.²⁰⁹⁶
Within the deep and luminous subsistence²⁰⁹⁷
Of the High Light appeared to me three circles,²⁰⁹⁸
Of threefold color and of one dimension,
And by the second seemed the first reflected
As Iris is by Iris, and the third
Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed.
O how all speech is feeble and falls short
Of my conceit, and this to what I saw
Is such, 'tis not enough to call it little!
O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!
That circulation, which being thus conceived
Appeared in thee as a reflected light,²⁰⁹⁹
When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,
Within itself, of its own very color
Seemed to me painted with our effigy,²¹⁰⁰
Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.
As the geometrician, who endeavors

To square the circle, and discovers not,
By taking thought, the principle he wants,
Even such was I at that new apparition;
I wished to see how the image to the circle
Conformed itself, and how it there finds place;
But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote
A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.[2101](#)
Here vigor failed the lofty fantasy:
But now was turning my desire and will,
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,[2102](#)
The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.[2103](#)

Endnotes

1. The *Vita Nuova* of Dante closes with these words:—

“After this sonnet there appeared to me a wonderful vision, in which I beheld things that made me propose to say no more of this blessed one, until I shall be able to treat of her more worthily. And to attain thereunto, truly I strive with all my power, as she knoweth. So that if it shall be the pleasure of Him, through whom all things live, that my life continue somewhat longer, I hope to say of her what never yet was said of any woman. And then may it please Him, who is the Sire of courtesy, that my soul may depart to look upon the glory of its Lady, that is to say, of the blessed Beatrice, who in glory gazes into the face of Him, *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus.*”

In these lines we have the earliest glimpse of the *Divine Comedy*, as it rose in the author’s mind.

Whoever has read the *Vita Nuova* will remember the stress which Dante lays upon the mystic numbers Nine and Three; his first meeting with Beatrice at the beginning of her ninth year, and the end of his; his nine days’ illness, and the thought of her death which came to him on the ninth day; her death on the ninth day of the ninth month, “computing by the Syrian method,” and in that year of our Lord “when the perfect number ten was nine times completed in that century” which was the thirteenth. Moreover, he says the number nine was friendly to her, because the nine heavens were in conjunction at her

birth; and that she was herself the number nine, “that is, a miracle whose root is the wonderful Trinity.”

Following out this idea, we find the *Divine Comedy* written in terza rima, or threefold rhyme, divided into three parts, and each part again subdivided in its structure into three. The whole number of cantos is one hundred, the perfect number ten multiplied into itself; but if we count the first canto of the Inferno as a Prelude, which it really is, each part will consist of thirty-three cantos, making ninety-nine in all; and so the favorite mystic numbers reappear.

The three divisions of the Inferno are minutely described and explained by Dante in Canto XI. They are separated from each other by great spaces in the infernal abyss. The sins punished in them are—I Incontinence. II Malice. III Bestiality.

I INCONTINENCE: 1. The Wanton. 2. The Gluttonous. 3. The Avaricious and Prodigal. 4. The Irascible and the Sullen.

II MALICE: 1. The Violent against their neighbor, in person or property. 2. The Violent against themselves, in person or property. 3. The Violent against God, or against Nature, the daughter of God, or against Art, the daughter of Nature.

III BESTIALITY: first subdivision: 1. Seducers. 2. Flatterers. 3. Simoniacs. 4. Soothsayers. 5. Barrators. 6. Hypocrites. 7. Thieves. 8. Evil counsellors. 9. Schismatics. 10. Falsifiers.

Second subdivision: 1. Traitors to their kindred. 2. Traitors to their country. 3. Traitors to their friends. 4. Traitors to their lords and benefactors.

The *Divine Comedy* is not strictly an allegorical poem in the sense in which the *Faerie Queene* is; and yet it is full of allegorical symbols and figurative meanings. In a letter to Can Grande della Scala, Dante writes:—

“It is to be remarked, that the sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary one may say manifold. For one sense is that which is derived from the letter, and another is that which is derived from the things signified by the letter. The first is called literal, the second allegorical or moral... The subject, then, of the whole work, taken literally, is the condition of souls after death, simply

considered. For on this and around this the whole action of the work turns. But if the work be taken allegorically, the subject is man, how by actions of merit or demerit, through freedom of the will, he justly deserves reward or punishment."

It may not be amiss here to refer to what are sometimes called the sources of the *Divine Comedy*. Foremost among them must be placed the Eleventh Book of the *Odyssey*, and the Sixth of the *Aeneid*; and to the latter Dante seems to point significantly in choosing Virgil for his Guide, his Master, his Author, from whom he took "the beautiful style that did him honor."

Next to these may be mentioned Cicero's *Vision of Scipio*, of which Chaucer says:—

"Chapiters seven it had, of Heven, and Hell,
And Earthe, and soules that therein do dwell."

Then follow the popular legends which were current in Dante's age; an age when the end of all things was thought to be near at hand, and the wonders of the invisible world had laid fast hold on the imaginations of men. Prominent among these is the "Vision of Frate Alberico," who calls himself "the humblest servant of the servants of the Lord"; and who

"Saw in dreame at point-devyse
Heaven, Earthe, Hell, and Paradysse."

This vision was written in Latin in the latter half of the twelfth century, and contains a description of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, with its Seven Heavens. It is for the most part a tedious tale, and bears evident marks of having been written by a friar of some monastery, when the afternoon sun was shining into his sleepy eyes. He seems, however, to have looked upon his own work with a not unfavorable opinion; for he concludes the Epistle Introductory with the words of St. John:—

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if

any man shall take away from these things, God shall take away his part from the good things written in this book.”

It is not impossible that Dante may have taken a few hints also from the *Tesoretto* of his teacher, Ser Brunetto Latini, See [note 212](#).

See upon this subject, Cancellieri, *Osservazioni Sopra l'Originalità di Dante*;—Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory, an Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages*;—Ozanam, *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au Treizième Siècle*;—Labitte, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, published as an Introduction to the translation of Brizeux;—and Delepierre, *Le Livre des Visions, ou l'Enfer et le Ciel décrits par ceux qui les ont vus.* [✉](#)

2. The action of the poem begins on Good Friday of the year 1300, at which time Dante, who was born in 1265, had reached the middle of the Scriptural threescore years and ten. It ends on the first Sunday after Easter, making in all ten days. [✉](#)
3. The dark forest of human life, with its passions, vices, and perplexities of all kinds; politically the state of Florence with its factions Guelf and Ghibelline. Dante, *Convito*, IV 25, says:—

“Thus the adolescent, who enters into the erroneous forest of this life, would not know how to keep the right way if he were not guided by his elders.”

Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, II 75:—

“*Pensando a capo chino
Perdei il gran cammino,
E tenni alia traversa
D'una selva diversa.*”

Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, IV ii 45:—

“Seeking adventures in the salvage wood.”



4. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, which is a kind of *Divine Comedy* in prose, says:—

“I beheld then that they all went on till they came to the foot of the hill Difficulty.... But the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of the going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty.... They went then till they came to the Delectable Mountains, which mountains belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken before.”



5. Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*:—

“But now in this valley of Humiliation poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way before he spied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name is Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back or stand his ground.... Now at the end of this valley was another, called the valley of the Shadow of Death; and Christian must needs go through it, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it.”



6. The sun, with all its symbolical meanings. This is the morning of Good Friday.

In the Ptolemaic system the sun was one of the planets. [↙](#)

7. The deep mountain tarn of his heart, dark with its own depth, and the shadows hanging over it. [↙](#)

8. Jeremiah 2:6:—

“That led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the

shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.”

In his note upon this passage Mr. Wright quotes Spenser’s lines, *Faerie Queene*, I v 31:—

“there creature never passed
That back returned without heavenly grace.”

↲

9. Climbing the hillside slowly, so that he rests longest on the foot that is lowest. ↲

10. Jeremiah 5:6:—

“Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces.”

↲

11. Worldly Pleasure; and politically Florence, with its factions of Bianchi and Neri. ↲

12. *Più volte volto.* Dante delights in a play upon words as much as Shakespeare. ↲

13. The stars of Aries. Some philosophers and fathers think the world was created in Spring. ↲

14. Ambition; and politically the royal house of France. ↲

15. Some editions read *temesse*, others *tremesse*. ↲

16. Avarice; and politically the Court of Rome, or temporal power of the Popes. ↲

17. Dante as a Ghibelline and Imperialist is in opposition to the Guelfs, Pope Boniface VIII, and the King of France, Philip the Fair, and is banished from Florence, out of the sunshine, and into “the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty.”

Cato speaks of the “silent moon” in *De Re Rustica*, XXIX, *Evehito luna silenti*; and XL, *Vites inseri luna silenti*. Also Pliny, XVI 39, has *Silens luna*; and Milton, in *Samson Agonistes* “Silent as the moon.” ↪

18. The long neglect of classic studies in Italy before Dante’s time. ↪

19. Born under Julius Caesar, but too late to grow up to manhood during his Imperial reign. He flourished later under Augustus. ↪

20. In this passage Dante but expresses the universal veneration felt for Virgil during the Middle Ages, and especially in Italy. Petrarch’s copy of Virgil is still preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan; and at the beginning of it he has recorded in a Latin note the time of his first meeting with Laura, and the date of her death, which, he says:—

“I write in this book, rather than elsewhere, because it comes often under my eye.”

In the popular imagination Virgil became a mythical personage and a mighty magician. See the story of *Virgilius* in Thom’s *Early Prose Romances*, 11. Dante selects him for his guide, as symbolizing human science or Philosophy. “I say and affirm,” he remarks, *Convito*, V 16, “that the lady with whom I became enamored after my first love was the most beautiful and modest daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy.” ↪

21. Dante seems to have been already conscious of the fame which his *Vita Nuova* and *Canzoni* had given him. ↪

22. The greyhound is Can Grande della Scala, Lord of Verona, Imperial Vicar, Ghibelline, and friend of Dante. Verona is between Feltro in the Marca Trivigiana, and Montefeltro in Romagna. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, I 7, speaks of him as “one of the most notable and magnificent lords that had been known in Italy, since the Emperor

Frederick the Second.” To him Dante dedicated the *Paradiso*. Some commentators think the *Veltro* is not Can Grande, but Ugguccione della Faggiola. See Troya, *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*. ↪

23. The plains of Italy, in contradistinction to the mountains; the *humilemque Italiam* of Virgil, *Aeneid*, III 522:—

“And now the stars being chased away, blushing Aurora appeared, when far off we espy the hills obscure, and lowly Italy.”



24. I give preference to the reading, *Di quegli antichi spiriti dolenti*. ↪

25. Beatrice. ↪

26. The evening of Good Friday. Dante, *Convito*, III 2, says:—

“Man is called by philosophers the divine animal.”

Chaucer’s *Assemble of Foules*:—

“The daie gan failen, and the darke night
That reveth bestes from hir businesse
Berafte me my boke for lacke of light.”

Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 240, speaking of Dante’s use of the word “bruno,” says:—

“In describing a simple twilight—not a Hades twilight, but an ordinarily fair evening—(*Inferno* II 1), he says, the ‘brown’ air took the animals away from their fatigues;—the waves under Charon’s boat are ‘brown’ (*Inferno* III 117); and Lethe, which is perfectly clear and yet dark, as with oblivion, is ‘bruna-bruna,’ ‘brown’ *exceeding* brown.’ Now, clearly in all these cases no *warmth* is meant to be mingled in the color. Dante had never seen one of our

bog-streams, with its porter-colored foam; and there can be no doubt that, in calling Lethe brown, he means that it was dark slate-gray, inclining to black; as, for instance, our clear Cumberland lakes, which, looked straight down upon where they are deep, seem to be lakes of ink. I am sure this is the color he means; because no clear stream or lake on the Continent ever looks brown, but blue or green; and Dante, by merely taking away the pleasant color, would get at once to this idea of grave clear gray. So, when he was talking of twilight, his eye for color was far too good to let him call it *brown* in our sense. Twilight is not brown, but purple, golden, or dark gray; and this last was what Dante meant. Farther, I find that this negation of color is always the means by which Dante subdues his tones. Thus the fatal inscription on the Hades gate is written in ‘obscure color,’ and the air which torments the passionate spirits is ‘aer nero,’ *black* air (*Inferno* V 51), called presently afterwards (line 81) malignant air, just as the gray cliffs are called malignant cliffs.”



27. Aeneas, founder of the Roman Empire. Virgil, *Aeneid*, B. VI. [←](#)
28. “That is,” says Boccaccio, *Comento*, “St. Peter the Apostle, called the greater on account of his papal dignity, and to distinguish him from many other holy men of the same name.” [←](#)
29. St. Paul. Acts, 9:15:—

“He is a chosen vessel unto me.”

Also, 2 Corinthians 12:3, 4:—

“And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth; how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

↖

30. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, IV 1:—

“The flighty purpose never is o’ertook,
Unless the deed go with it.”

↖

31. Suspended in Limbo; neither in pain nor in glory. ↖

32. Brighter than the star; than “that star which is brightest,” comments Boccaccio. Others say the Sun, and refer to Dante’s *Canzone*, beginning:—

“The star of beauty which doth measure time,
The lady seems, who has enamored me,
Placed in the heaven of Love.”

↖

33. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, V 3:—

“Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman.”

↖

34. This passage will recall Minerva transmitting the message of Juno to Achilles, *Iliad*, II:—

“Go thou forthwith to the army of the Achaeans, and hesitate not; but restrain each man with thy persuasive words, nor suffer them, to drag to the sea their double-oared ships.”

↖

35. Beatrice Portinari, Dante's first love, the inspiration of his song and in his mind the symbol of the Divine. He says of her in the *Vita Nuova*:—

“This most gentle lady, of whom there has been discourse in what precedes, reached such favor among the people, that when she passed along the way persons ran to see her, which gave me wonderful delight. And when she was near any one, such modesty took possession of his heart, that he did not dare to raise his eyes or to return her salutation; and to this, should any one doubt it, many, as having experienced it, could bear witness for me. She, crowned and clothed with humility, took her way, displaying no pride in that which she saw and heard. Many, when she had passed, said, ‘This is not a woman, rather is she one of the most beautiful angels of heaven.’ Others said, ‘She is a miracle. Blessed be the Lord who can perform such a marvel.’ I say, that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all beauties, that those who looked on her felt within themselves a pure and sweet delight, such as they could not tell in words.”

—C. E. Norton, The New Life, 51, 52



36. The heaven of the moon, which contains or encircles the earth. [←](#)

37. The ampler circles of Paradise. [←](#)

38. Divine Mercy. [←](#)

39. St. Lucia, emblem of enlightening Grace. [←](#)

40. Rachel, emblem of Divine Contemplation. See [*Paradiso XXXII 9.*](#) [←](#)

41. *Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt;* “That is,” says Boccaccio, *Comento*, “the sea cannot boast of being more impetuous or more dangerous than that.” [←](#)

42. This simile has been imitated by Chaucer, Spenser, and many more.
Jeremy Taylor says:—

“So have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death, and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer.”

Rossetti, *Spirito Antipapale del Secolo di Dante*, translated by Miss Ward, II 216, makes this political application of the lines:—

“*The Florentines*, called *Sons of Flora*, are compared to *flowers*; and Dante calls the two parties who divided the city *white and black flowers*, and himself *white-flower*—the name by which he was called by many. Now he makes use of a very abstruse comparison, to express how he became, from a Guelph or *Black*, a Ghibelline or *White*. He describes himself as a flower, first bent and closed by the night frosts, and then *blanched* or *whitened* by the sun (the symbol of reason), which opens its leaves; and what produces the effect of the sun on him is a speech of Virgil’s, persuading him to follow his guidance.”



43. This canto begins with a repetition of sounds like the tolling of a funeral bell: *dolente ... dolore!*

Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 215, speaking of the Inferno, says:—

“Milton’s effort, in all that he tells us of his Inferno, is to make it indefinite; Dante’s, to make it *definite*. Both, indeed, describe it as entered through gates; but, within the gate, all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having

indeed its four rivers—the last vestige of the medieval tradition—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by ‘many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.’ But Dante’s Inferno is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction, trenched in a thoroughly good style of engineering from depth to depth, and divided, in the ‘*accurate middle*’ (*dritto mezzo*) of its deepest abyss, into a concentric series of ten moats and embankments, like those about a castle, with bridges from each embankment to the next; precisely in the manner of those bridges over Hiddekel and Euphrates, which Mr. Macaulay thinks so innocently designed, apparently not aware that he is also laughing at Dante. These larger fosses are of rock, and the bridges also; but as he goes further into detail, Dante tells us of various minor fosses and embankments, in which he anxiously points out to us not only the formality, but the neatness and perfectness, of the stonework. For instance, in describing the river Phlegethon, he tells us that it was ‘paved with stone at the bottom, and at the sides, and *over the edges of the sides*,’ just as the water is at the baths of Bulicame; and for fear we should think this embankment at all larger than it really was, Dante adds, carefully, that it was made just like the embankments of Ghent or Bruges against the sea, or those in Lombardy which bank the Brenta, only ‘not so high, nor so wide,’ as any of these. And besides the trenches, we have two well-built castles; one like Ecbatana, with seven circuits of wall (and surrounded by a fair stream), wherein the great poets and sages of antiquity live; and another, a great fortified city with walls of iron, red-hot, and a deep fosse round it, and full of ‘grave citizens,—the city of Dis.

‘Now, whether this be in what we moderns call ‘good taste,’ or not, I do not mean just now to inquire—Dante having nothing to do with taste, but with the facts of what he had seen; only, so far as the imaginative faculty of the

two poets is concerned, note that Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence, so far as it is significative in the matter. For it does not follow, because Milton did not map out his Inferno as Dante did, that he *could* not have done so if he had chosen; only it was the easier and less imaginative process to leave it vague than to define it. Imagination is always the seeing and asserting faculty; that which obscures or conceals may be judgment, or feeling, but not invention. The invention, whether good or bad, is in the accurate engineering, not in the fog and uncertainty."



44. Aristotle says: "The good of the intellect is the highest beatitude"; and Dante in the *Convito*: "The True is the good of the intellect." In other words, the knowledge of God is intellectual good.

"It is a most just punishment," says St. Augustine, "that man should lose that freedom which man could not use, yet had power to keep, if he would, and that he who had knowledge to do what was right, and did not do it, should be deprived of the knowledge of what was right; and that he who would not do righteously, when he had the power, should lose the power to do it when he had the will."

45. The description given of the Mouth of Hell by Frate Alberico, *Vision*, 9, is in the grotesque spirit of the Medieval Mysteries:—

"After all these things, I was led to the Tartarean Regions, and to the mouth of the Infernal Pit, which seemed like unto a well; regions full of horrid darkness, of fetid exhalations, of shrieks and loud howlings. Near this Hell there was a Worm of immeasurable size, bound with a huge chain, one end of which seemed to be fastened in Hell. Before the mouth of this Hell there stood a great multitude of souls, which he absorbed at once, as if they were flies; so that, drawing in his breath, he swallowed them all together; then, breathing, exhaled them all on fire, like sparks."



46. The reader will here be reminded of Bunyan's town of Fair-speech:—

“*Christian*. Pray who are your kindred there, if a man may be so bold.

“*By-ends*. Almost the whole town; and in particular my Lord Turnabout, my Lord Timeserver, my Lord Fair-speech, from whose ancestors that town first took its name; also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr., Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything—and the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother's own brother by father's side....

“There Christian stepped a little aside to his fellow Hopeful, saying, ‘It runs in my mind that this is one By-ends of Fair-speech; and if it be he, we have as very a knave in our company as dwelleth in all these parts.’”



47. Many commentators and translators interpret *alcuna* in its usual signification of *some*: “For some glory the damned would have from them.” This would be a reason why these pusillanimous ghosts should not be sent into the profounder abyss, but no reason why they should not be received there. This is strengthened by what comes afterwards, I 63. These souls were “hateful to God, and to his enemies.” They were not good enough for Heaven, nor bad enough for Hell.

“So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.”

—*Revelation 3:16*.

Macchiavelli represents this scorn of inefficient mediocrity in an epigram on Peter Soderini:—

“The night that Peter Soderini died
He at the mouth of Hell himself presented.
‘What, you come into Hell? poor ghost demented,
Go to the Babies' Limbo!' Pluto cried.”

The same idea is intensified in the old ballad of “Carle of Kelly-Burn Brees,” Cromeek, p. 37:—

“She’s nae fit for heaven, an’ she’ll ruin a’ hell.”

✉

48. This restless flag is an emblem of the shifting and unstable minds of its followers. ✉
49. Generally supposed to be Pope Celestine V whose great refusal, or abdication, of the papal office is thus described by Boccaccio in his *Comento*:—

“Being a simple man and of a holy life, living as a hermit in the mountains of Morrone in Abruzzo, above Selmona, he was elected Pope in Perugia after the death of Pope Niccola d’ Ascoli; and his name being Peter, he was called Celestine. Considering his simplicity. Cardinal Messer Benedetto Gatano, a very cunning man, of great courage and desirous of being Pope, managing astutely, began to show him that he held this high office much to the prejudice of his own soul, inasmuch as he did not feel himself competent for it;—others pretend that he contrived with some private servants of his to have voices heard in the chamber of the aforesaid Pope, which, as if they were voices of angels sent from heaven, said, ‘Resign, Celestine! Resign, Celestine!’—moved by which, and being an idiotic man, he took counsel with Messer Benedetto aforesaid, as to the best method of resigning.”

Celestine having relinquished the papal office, this “Messer Benedetto aforesaid” was elected Pope, under the title of Boniface VIII. His greatest misfortune was that he had Dante for an adversary.

Gower gives this legend of Pope Celestine in his *Confessio Amantis*, Book II, as an example of “the vice of supplantacion.” He says:—

“This clerk, when he hath herd the form.

How he the pope shuld enform,
Toke of the cardinal his leve
And goth him home, till it was eve.
And prively the trompe he hadde
Til that the pope was abedde.
And at midnight when he knewe
The pope slepte, than he blewe
Within his trompe through the wall
And tolde in what maner he shall
His papacie leve, and take
His first estate.”

Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 194, speaks thus upon the subject:—

“The abdication of Celestine V was an event unprecedented in the annals of the Church, and jarred harshly against some of the first principles of the Papal authority. It was a confession of common humanity, of weakness below the ordinary standard of men in him whom the Conclave, with more than usual certitude, as guided by the special interposition of the Holy Ghost, had raised to the spiritual throne of the world. The Conclave had been, as it seemed, either under an illusion as to this declared manifestation of the Holy Spirit, or had been permitted to deceive itself. Nor was there less incongruity in a Pope, whose office invested him in something at least approaching to infallibility, acknowledging before the world his utter incapacity, his undeniable fallibility. That idea, formed out of many conflicting conceptions, yet forcibly harmonized by long, traditional reverence, of unerring wisdom, oracular truth, authority which it was sinful to question or limit, was strangely disturbed and confused, not as before by too overweening ambition, or even awful yet still unacknowledged crime, but by avowed weakness, bordering on imbecility. His profound

piety hardly reconciled the confusion. A saint after all made but a bad Pope.

“It was viewed, in his own time, in a different light by different minds. The monkish writers held it up as the most noble example of monastic, of Christian perfection. Admirable as was his election, his abdication was even more to be admired. It was an example of humility stupendous to all, imitable by few. The divine approval was said to be shown by a miracle which followed directly on his resignation; but the scorn of man has been expressed by the undying verse of Dante, who condemned him who was guilty of the baseness of the ‘great refusal’ to that circle of hell where are those disdained alike by mercy and justice, on whom the poet will not descend to look. This sentence, so accordant with the stirring and passionate soul of the great Florentine, has been feebly counteracted, if counteracted, by the praise of Petrarch in his declamation on the beauty of a solitary life, for which the lyrist professed a somewhat hollow and poetic admiration. Assuredly there was no magnanimity contemptuous of the Papal greatness in the abdication of Celestine; it was the weariness, the conscious inefficiency, the regret of a man suddenly wrenched away from all his habits, pursuits, and avocations, and unnaturally compelled or tempted to assume an uncongenial dignity. It was the cry of passionate feebleness to be released from an insupportable burden. Compassion is the highest emotion of sympathy which it would have desired or could deserve.”



50. Spenser’s “misty dampe of misconceyving night.”

51. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, Davidson’s translation:—

“A grim ferryman guards these floods and rivers, Charon, of frightful slovenliness; on whose chin a load of gray hair

neglected lies; his eyes are flame: his vestments hang from his shoulders by a knot, with filth overgrown. Himself thrusts on the barge with a pole, and tends the sails, and wafts over the bodies in his iron-colored boat, now in years: but the god is of fresh and green old age. Hither the whole tribe in swarms come pouring to the banks, matrons and men, the souls of magnanimous heroes who had gone through life, boys and unmarried maids, and young men who had been stretched on the funeral pile before the eyes of their parents; as numerous as withered leaves fall in the woods with the first cold of autumn, or as numerous as birds flock to the land from deep ocean, when the chilling year drives them beyond sea, and sends them to sunny climes. They stood praying to cross the flood the first, and were stretching forth their hands with fond desire to gain the further bank: but the sullen boatman admits sometimes these, sometimes those; while others to a great distance removed, he debars from the banks.”

And Shakespeare, *Richard III*, I 4:—

“I passed, methought, the melancholy flood
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.”



52. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, III 1:—

“This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling.”

[←](#)

53. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI:—

“This is the region of Ghosts, of Sleep and drowsy Night; to waft over the bodies of the living in my Stygian boat is not permitted.”

[←](#)

54. The souls that were to be saved assembled at the mouth of the Tiber, where they were received by the celestial pilot, or ferryman, who transported them to the shores of Purgatory, as described in *Purgatorio* II. [←](#)

55. Many critics, and foremost among them Padre Pompeo Venturi, blame Dante for mingling together things Pagan and Christian. But they should remember how through all the Middle Ages human thought was wrestling with the old traditions; how many Pagan observances passed into Christianity in those early days; what reverence Dante had for Virgil and the classics; and how many Christian nations still preserve some traces of Paganism in the names of the stars, the months, and the days. Padre Pompeo should not have forgotten that he, though a Christian, bore a Pagan name, which perhaps is as evident a *brutto miscuglio* in a learned Jesuit, as any which he has pointed out in Dante.

Upon him and other commentators of the Divine Poem, a very amusing chapter might be written. While the great Comedy is going on upon the scene above, with all its pomp and music, these critics in the pit keep up such a perpetual wrangling among themselves, as seriously to disturb the performance. Biagioli is the most violent of all, particularly against Venturi, whom he calls an “infamous dirty dog,” *sozzo can vituperato*, an epithet hardly permissible in the most heated literary controversy. Whereupon in return Zani de’ Ferranti calls Biagioli “an inurbane grammarian,” and a “most ungrateful ingrate,”— *quel grammatico inurbano ... ingrato ingratissimo*.

Any one who is desirous of tracing out the presence of Paganism in Christianity will find the subject amply discussed by Middleton in his *Letter from Rome*. [←](#)

56. Dryden's *Aeneid*, B. VI:—

“His eyes like hollow furnaces on fire.”



57. Homer, *Iliad*, VI:—

“As is the race of leaves, such is that of men; some leaves the wind scatters upon the ground, and others the budding wood produces, for they come again in the season of Spring. So is the race of men, one springs up and the other dies.”

See also [note 51](#).

Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 160, says:—

“When Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron ‘as dead leaves flutter from a bough,’ he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves: he makes no confusion of one with the other.”

Shelley in his Ode to the West Wind inverts this image, and compares the dead leaves to ghosts:—

“O wild West Wind! thou breath of Autumn’s being!
Thou from whose presence the leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts, from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes.”



58. Dante is borne across the river Acheron in his sleep, he does not tell us how, and awakes on the brink of “the dolorous valley of the abyss.” He

now enters the First Circle of the Inferno; the Limbo of the Unbaptized, the border land, as the name denotes.

Frate Alberico in § 2 of his *Vision* says, that the divine punishments are tempered to extreme youth and old age:—

“Man is first a little child, then grows and reaches adolescence, and attains to youthful vigor; and, little by little growing weaker, declines into old age; and at every step of life the sum of his sins increases. So likewise the little children are punished least, and more and more the adolescents and the youths; until, their sins decreasing with the long-continued torments, punishment also begins to decrease, as it by a kind of old age (*veluti quadam senectute*).”



59. Frate Alberico, in § 9:—

“The darkness was so dense and impenetrable that it was impossible to see anything there.”



60. Mental, not physical pain; what the French theologians call *la peine du dam*, the privation of the sight of God.

61. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI:—

“Forthwith are heard voices, loud wailings, and weeping ghosts of infants, in the first opening of the gate; whom, bereaved of sweet life out of the course of nature, and snatched from the breast, a black day cut off, and buried in an untimely grave.”



62. The descent of Christ into Limbo. Neither here nor elsewhere in the Inferno does Dante mention the name of Christ. ↵
63. The reader will not fail to observe how Dante makes the word *honor*, in its various forms, ring and reverberate through these lines—*orrevol, onori, orranza, onrata, onorata!* ↵
64. Dante puts the sword into the hand of Homer as a symbol of his warlike epic, which is a Song of the Sword. ↵
65. Upon this line Boccaccio, *Comento*, says:—

“A proper thing it is to honor every man, but especially those who are of one and the same profession, as these were with Virgil.”

- ↵
66. Another assertion of Dante’s consciousness of his own power as a poet. ↵
 67. This is the Noble Castle of human wit and learning, encircled with its seven scholastic walls, the *Trivium*, Logic, Grammar, Rhetoric, and the *Quadrivium*, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry, Music.
The fair rivulet is Eloquence, which Dante does not seem to consider a very profound matter, as he and Virgil pass over it as if it were dry ground. ↵
 68. Of this word “enamel” Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 227, remarks:—

“The first instance I know of its right use, though very probably it had been so employed before, is in Dante. The righteous spirits of the pre-Christian ages are seen by him, though in the Inferno, yet in a place open, luminous and high, walking upon the ‘green enamel.’”

“I am very sure that Dante did not use this phrase as we use it. He knew well what enamel was; and his readers, in

order to understand him thoroughly, must remember what it is—a vitreous paste, dissolved in water, mixed with metallic oxides, to give it the opacity and the color required, spread in a moist state on metal, and afterwards hardened by fire, so as never to change. And Dante means, in using this metaphor of the grass of the Inferno, to mark that it is laid as a tempering and cooling substance over the dark, metallic, gloomy ground; but yet so hardened by the fire, that it is not any more fresh or living grass, but a smooth, silent, lifeless bed of eternal green. And we know how *hard* Dante's idea of it was; because afterwards, in what is perhaps the most awful passage of the whole Inferno, when the three furies rise at the top of the burning tower, and, catching sight of Dante, and not being able to get at him, shriek wildly for the Gorgon to come up, too, that they may turn him into stone, the word *stone* is not hard enough for them. Stone might crumble away after it was made, or something with life might grow upon it; no, it shall not be stone; they will make enamel of him; nothing can grow out of that; it is dead forever."

And yet just before, line 111, Dante speaks of this meadow as a "meadow of fresh verdure."

Compare Brunetto's *Tesoretto*, XIII.

*"Or va mastro Brunetto
Per lo cammino stretto,
Cercando di vedere,
E toccare, e sapere
Ciò, che gli è destinato.
E non fui guarì andato,
Ch' i' fui nella diserta,
Dov' i' non trovai certa
Nè strada, nè sentiero.
Deh che paese fero
Trovai in quelle parti!
Che s' io sapessi d' arti*

*Quivi mi bisognava,
Chè quanto più mirava,
Più mi parea selvaggio.
Quivi non ha viaggio,
Quivi non ha persona,
Quivi non ha magione,
Non bestia, non uccello,
Non fiume, non ruscello,
Non formica, nè mosca,
Nè cosa, ch' i' conosca.
E io pensando forte,
Dottai ben della morte.
E non è maraviglia;
Chè ben trecento miglia
Girava d' ogni lato
Quel paese snagiato.
Ma sì m' assicurai
Quando mi ricordai
Del sicuro segnale,
Che contra tutto male
Mi dà securamento:
E io presi ardimento,
Quasi per avventura
Per una valle scura,
Tanto, ch' al terzo giorno
I' mi trovai d' intorno
Un grande pian giocondo,
Lo più gaio del mondo,
E lo più diletoso.
Ma ricontar non oso
Ciò, ch' io trovai, e vidi,
Se Dio mi guardi, e guidi.
Io non sarei creduto
Di ciò, ch' i' ho veduto;
Ch' i' vidi Imperadori,
E Re, e gran signori,
E mastri di scienze,*

*Che dittavan sentenze;
E vidi tante cose,
Che già 'n rime, nè 'n prose
Non le poria ritrare.”*



69. In the *Convito*, IV 28, Dante makes Marcia, Cato's wife, a symbol of the noble soul:—

“Per la quale Marzia s'intende la nobile anima.”



70. The Saladin of the Crusades. See Gibbon, Chap. LIX. Dante also makes mention of him, as worthy of affectionate remembrance, in the *Convito*, IV 2. Mr. Cary quotes the following passage from Knolles's *History of the Turks*, page 57:—

“About this time (1193) died the great Sultan Saladin, the greatest terror of the Christians, who, mindful of man's fragility and the vanity of worldly honors, commanded at the time of his death no solemnity to be used at his burial, but only his shirt, in manner of an ensign, made fast unto the point of a lance, to be carried before his dead body as an ensign, a plain priest going before, and crying aloud unto the people in this sort, ‘Saladin, Conqueror of the East, of all the greatness and riches he had in his life, carrieth not with him anything more than his shirt.’ A sight worthy so great a king, as wanted nothing to his eternal commendation more than the true knowledge of his salvation in Christ Jesus. He reigned about sixteen years with great honor.”

The following story of Saladin is from the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Roscoe's *Italian Novelists*, I 18:—

“On another occasion the great Saladin, in the career of victory, proclaimed a truce between the Christian armies and his own. During this interval he visited the camp and the cities belonging to his enemies, with the design, should he approve of the customs and manners of the people, of embracing the Christian faith. He observed their tables spread with the finest damask coverings ready prepared for the feast, and he praised their magnificence. On entering the tents of the king of France during a festival, he was much pleased with the order and ceremony with which everything was conducted, and the courteous manner in which he feasted his nobles; but when he approached the residence of the poorer class, and perceived them devouring their miserable pittance upon the ground, he blamed the want of gratitude which permitted so many faithful followers of their chief to fare so much worse than the rest of their Christian brethren.

“Afterwards, several of the Christian leaders returned with the Sultan to observe the manners of the Saracens. They appeared much shocked on seeing all ranks of people take their meals sitting upon the ground. The Sultan led them into a grand pavilion where he feasted his court, surrounded with the most beautiful tapestries, and rich foot-cloths, on which were wrought large embroidered figures of the cross. The Christian chiefs trampled them under their feet with the utmost indifference, and even rubbed their boots, and spat upon them.

“On perceiving this, the Sultan turned towards them in the greatest anger, exclaiming: ‘And do you who pretend to preach the cross treat it thus ignominiously? Gentlemen, I am shocked at your conduct. Am I to suppose from this that the worship of your Deity consists only in words, not in actions? Neither your manners nor your conduct please me.’ And on this he dismissed them, breaking off the truce and commencing hostilities more warmly than before.”

[←](#)

71. Avicenna, an Arabian physician of Ispahan in the eleventh century.
Born 980, died 1036. [←](#)
72. Averrhoës, an Arabian scholar of the twelfth century, who translated the works of Aristotle, and wrote a commentary upon them. He was born in Cordova in 1149, and died in Morocco, about 1200. He was the head of the Western School of philosophy, as Avicenna was of the Eastern. [←](#)
73. In the Second Circle are found the souls of carnal sinners, whose punishment is

“To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world.”

[←](#)

74. The circles grow smaller and smaller as they descend. [←](#)
75. Minos, the king of Crete, so renowned for justice as to be called the Favorite of the Gods, and after death made Supreme Judge in the Infernal Regions. Dante furnishes him with a tail, thus converting him, after the medieval fashion, into a Christian demon. [←](#)
76. Thou, too, as well as Charon, to whom Virgil has already made the same reply. Canto VI 22. [←](#)
77. In Canto I 60, the sun is silent; here the light is dumb. [←](#)
78. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, VIII, gives a similar list “of gentil folke that whilom were lovers,” seen by him as he lay in a swoond and listened to the music

“Of bombarde and of clarionne
With cornemuse and shalmele.”

←

79. Queen Dido. ←

80. Achilles, being in love with Polyxena, a daughter of Priam, went unarmed to the temple of Apollo, where he was put to death by Paris. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, IV, says:—

“For I have herde tell also
Achilles left his armes so,
Both of himself and of his men,
At Troie for Polixenen
Upon her love when he felle,
That for no chaunce that befelle
Among the Grekes or up or down
He wolde nought ayen the town
Ben armed for the love of her.”

“I know not how,” says Bacon in his “Essay on Love,” “but martial men are given to love; I think it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasure.” ←

81. Paris of Troy, of whom Spenser says, *Faerie Queene*, III, ix 34:—

“Most famous Worthy of the world, by whome
That warre was kindled which did Troy inflame
And stately towres of Ilion whilome
Brought unto balefull ruine, was by name
Sir Paris, far renown’d through noble fame.”

Tristan is the Sir Tristram of the Romances of Chivalry. See his adventures in the *Mort d’Arthure*. Also Thomas of Ercildoune’s *Sir Tristram, a Metrical Romance*. His amours with Yseult or Ysonde bring him to this circle of the Inferno. ←

82. Shakespeare, “Sonnet CVI”:—

“When in the chronicle of wasted time

I see descriptions of the fairest wights
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights.”

See also the “wives and daughters of chieftains” that appear to Ulysses, in the *Odyssey*, Book XI.

Also Milton, *Paradise Regained*, II 357:—

“And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Palleas, or Pellenore.”



83. In the original, *l'aer perso*, the perse air. Dante, *Convito*, IV 20, defines perse as “a color mixed of purple and black, but the black predominates.” Chaucer’s “Doctour of Phisike” in the *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue 441, wore this color:—

“In sanguin and in perse he clad was alle,
Lined with taffata and with sendalle.”

The Glossary defines it, “skie colored, of a bluish gray.” The word is again used, VII 103, and *Purgatorio* IX 97.

84. The city of Ravenna. “One reaches Ravenna,” says Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 311, “by journeying along the borders of a pine forest, which is seven leagues in length, and which seemed to me an immense funereal wood, serving as an avenue to the common tomb of those two great powers, Dante and the Roman Empire in the West. There is hardly room for any other memories than theirs. But other poetic names are attached to the Pine Woods of Ravenna. Not long ago Lord Byron evoked there the fantastic tales borrowed by Dryden from Boccaccio, and now he is himself a figure of the past, wandering in this melancholy place. I thought, in traversing it, that the singer of

despair had ridden along this melancholy shore, trodden before him by the graver and slower footstep of the poet of the Inferno.” ↵

85. Quoting this line, Ampère remarks, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 312:—

“We have only to cast our eyes upon the map to recognize the topographical exactitude of this last expression. In fact, in all the upper part of its course, the Po receives a multitude of affluents, which converge towards its bed. They are the Tessino, the Adda, the Olio, the Mincio, the Trebbia, the Bormida, the Taro;—names which recur so often in the history of the wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.”

↵

86. Here the word *love* is repeated, as the word *honor* was in Canto IV 72. The verse murmurs with it, like the “moan of doves in immemorial elms.”

St. Augustine says in his *Confessions*, III 1:—

“I loved not yet, yet I loved to love... I sought what I might love, in love with loving.”

↵

87. I think it is Coleridge who says:—

“The desire of man is for the woman, but the desire of woman is for the desire of man.”

↵

88. Caïna is in the lowest circle of the Inferno, where fratricides are punished. ↵

89. Francesca, daughter of Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna, and wife of Gianciotto Malatesta, son of the Lord of Rimini. The lover, Paul

Malatesta, was the brother of the husband, who, discovering their amour, put them both to death with his own hand.

Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Lect. III, says:—

“Dante’s painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night; taken on the wider scale, it is every way noble, and the outcome of a great soul.

Francesca and her Lover, what qualities in that! A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too: *della bella persona, che mi fu tolta*; and how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that he will never part from her! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai*. And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno*, whirl them away again, to wail forever!—

Strange to think: Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca’s father; Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet’s knee, as a bright, innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigor of law: it is so Nature is made; it is so Dante discerned that she was made.”

Later commentators assert that Dante’s friend Guido was not the father of Francesca, but her nephew.

Boccaccio’s account, translated from his Commentary by Leigh Hunt, *Stories from the Italian Poets*, Appendix II, is as follows:—

“You must know that this lady. Madonna Francesca, was daughter of Messer Guido the Elder, lord of Ravenna and of Cervia, and that a long and grievous war having been waged between him and the lords Malatesta of Rimini, a treaty of peace by certain mediators was at length concluded between them; the which, to the end that it might be the more firmly established, it pleased both parties to desire to fortify by relationship; and the matter of this relationship was so discoursed, that the said Messer Guido agreed to give his young and fair daughter in marriage to Gianciotto, the son of Messer Malatesta. Now,

this being made known to certain of the friends of Messer Guido, one of them said to him: ‘Take care what you do; for if you contrive not matters discreetly, such relationship will beget scandal. You know what manner of person your daughter is, and of how lofty a spirit; and if she see Gianciotto before the bond is tied, neither you nor any one else will have power to persuade her to marry him; therefore, if it so please you, it seems to me that it would be good to conduct the matter thus: namely, that Gianciotto should not come hither himself to marry her, but that a brother of his should come and espouse her in his name.’

“Gianciotto was a man of great spirit, and hoped, after his father’s death, to become lord of Rimini; in the contemplation of which event, albeit he was rude in appearance and a cripple, Messer Guido desired him for a son-in-law above any one of his brothers. Discerning, therefore, the reasonableness of what his friend counselled, he secretly disposed matters according to his device; and a day being appointed. Polo, a brother of Gianciotto, came to Ravenna with full authority to espouse Madonna Francesca. Polo was a handsome man, very pleasant, and of a courteous breeding; and passing with other gentlemen over the courtyard of the palace of Messer Guido, a damsel who knew him pointed him out to Madonna Francesca through an opening in the casement, saying, ‘That is he that is to be your husband;’ and so indeed the poor lady believed, and incontinently placed in him her whole affection; and the ceremony of the marriage having been thus brought about, and the lady conveyed to Rimini, she became not aware of the deceit till the morning ensuing the marriage, when she beheld Gianciotto rise from her side; the which discovery moved her to such disdain, that she became not a whit the less rooted in her love for Polo. Nevertheless, that it grew to be unlawful I never heard, except in what is written by this author (Dante), and possibly it might so have become;

albeit I take what he says to have been an invention framed on the possibility, rather than anything which he knew of his own knowledge. Be this as it may. Polo and Madonna Francesca living in the same house, and Gianciotto being gone into a certain neighboring district as governor, they fell into great companionship with one another, suspecting nothing; but a servant of Gianciotto's, noting it, went to his master and told him how matters looked; with the which Gianciotto being fiercely moved, secretly returned to Rimini; and seeing Polo enter the room of Madonna Francesca the while he himself was arriving, went straight to the door, and finding it locked inside, called to his lady to come out; for, Madonna Francesca and Polo having descried him. Polo thought to escape suddenly through an opening in the wall, by means of which there was a descent into another room; and therefore, thinking to conceal his fault either wholly or in part, he threw himself into the opening, telling the lady to go and open the door. But his hope did not turn out as he expected; for the hem of a mantle which he had on caught upon a nail, and the lady opening the door meantime, in the belief that all would be well by reason of Polo's not being there, Gianciotto caught sight of Polo as he was detained by the hem of the mantle, and straightway ran with his dagger in his hand to kill him; whereupon the lady, to prevent it, ran between them; but Gianciotto having lifted the dagger, and put the whole force of his arm into the blow, there came to pass what he had not desired—namely, that he struck the dagger into the bosom of the lady before it could reach Polo; by which accident, being as one who had loved the lady better than himself, he withdrew the dagger and again struck at Polo, and slew him; and so leaving them both dead, he hastily went his way and betook him to his wonted affairs; and the next morning the two lovers, with many tears, were buried together in the same grave."

⬅

90. This thought is from Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Lib. II Prosa 4:—

“In omni adversitate fortunæ, infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem et non esse.”

In the *Convito*, II 16, Dante speaks of Boethius and Tully as having directed him “to the love, that is to the study, of this most gentle lady Philosophy.” From this Venturi and Biagioli infer that, by the Teacher, Boethius is meant, not Virgil.

This interpretation, however, can hardly be accepted, as not in one place only, but throughout the Inferno and the Purgatorio, Dante proclaims Virgil as his Teacher, *il mio Dottore*. Lombardi thinks that Virgil had experience of this “greatest sorrow,” finding himself also in “the infernal prison;” and that it is to this, in contrast with his happy life on earth, that Francesca alludes, and not to anything in his writings.

The Romance of Launcelot of the Lake. See Delvan, *Bibliothèque Bleue*:—

“Chap. 39. Comment Launcelot et la Reine Genièvre devisèrent de choses et d’autres, et surtout de choses amoureuses. ...”

“La Reine, voyant qu'il n'osait plus rien faire ni dire, le prit par le menton et le bâisa assez longuement en présence de Gallehault.”

The Romance was to these two lovers, what Galeotto (Gallehault or Sir Galahad) had been to Launcelot and Queen Guenever.

Leigh Hunt speaks of the episode of Francesca as standing in the Inferno “like a lily in the mouth of Tartarus.” ⏪

91. Chaucer, “Knightes Tale”:—

“The colde death, with mouth gaping upright.”

↙

92. The sufferings of these two, and the pity it excited in him. As in Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV 1:—

“But yet the pity of it, Iago!—O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!”

↙

93. In this third circle are punished the Gluttons. Instead of the feasts of former days, the light, the warmth, the comfort, the luxury, and “the frolic wine” of dinner tables, they have the murk and the mire, and the “rain eternal, maledict, and cold, and heavy”; and are barked at and bitten by the dog in the yard.

Of Gluttony, Chaucer says in “The Persones Tale,” p. 239:—

“He that is usant to this sinne of glotonie, he ne may no sinne withstand, he must be in servage of all vices, for it is the devils horde, ther he hideth him and resteth. This sinne hath many spices. The first is dronkennesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes reson: and therefore whan a man is dronke, he hath lost his reson: and this is dedly sinne. But sothly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinkes, and peraventure nc knoweth not the strength of the drinke, or hath feblenesse in his hed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodenly caught with drinke, it is no dedly sinne, but venial. The second spice of glotonie is, that the spirit of a man wexeth all trouble for dronkennesse, and bereveth a man the discretion of his wit. The thridde spice of glotonie is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath not rightful maner of eting. The fourthe is, whan thurgh the gret abundance of his mete, the humours in his body ben distempered. The fifthe is, foryefulnesse by to moche drinking, for which sometime a man forgeteth by the morwe, what he did over eve.”

↙

94. It is a question whether *Ciacco*, Hog, is the real name of this person, or a nickname. Boccaccio gives him no other. He speaks of him, *Comento*, VI, as a noted diner-out in Florence, “who frequented the gentry and the rich, and particularly those who ate and drank sumptuously and delicately; and when he was invited by them to dine, he went; and likewise when he was not invited by them, he invited himself; and for this vice he was well known to all Florentines; though apart from this he was a well-bred man according to his condition, eloquent, affable, and of good feeling; on account of which he was welcomed by every gentleman.”

The following story from the *Decameron*, Gior. IX, Nov. VIII, translation of 1684, presents a lively picture of social life in Florence in Dante’s time, and is interesting for the glimpse it gives, not only of Ciacco, but of Filippo Argenti, who is spoken of hereafter. Canto VIII 61. The Corso Donati here mentioned is the Leader of the Neri. His violent death is predicted, *Purgatorio* XXIV 82:—

“There dwelt sometime in Florence one that was generally called by the name of Ciacco, a man being the greatest Gourmand and grossest Feeder as ever was seen in any Countrey, all his means and procurements meerly unable to maintain expenses for filling his belly. But otherwise he was of sufficient and commendable carriage, fairly demeaned, and well discoursing on any Argument: yet not as a curious and spruce Courtier, but rather a frequenter of rich mens Tables, where choice of good cheer is seldom wanting, and such should have his Company, albeit not invited, he had the Courage to bid himself welcome.

“At the same time, and in our City of Florence also, there was another man named Biondello, very low of stature, yet comely formed, quick witted, more neat and brisk than a Butterflie, always wearing a wrought silk Cap on his head, and not a hair standing out of order, but the tuft flourishing above the forehead, and he such another trencher flie for the Table, as our forenamed Ciacco was. It so fell out on a morning in the Lent time, that he went into the Fish-market, where he bought two goodly

Lampreys for Messer Viero de Cerchi, and was espyed by Ciacco, who, coming to Biondello, said, ‘What is the meaning of this cost, and for whom is it?’ Whereto Biondello thus answered, ‘Yesternight three other Lampreys, far fairer than these, and a whole Sturgeon, were sent unto Messer Corso Donati, and being not sufficient to feed divers Gentlemen, whom he hath invited this day to dine with him, he caused me to buy these two beside: Dost not thou intend to make one of them?’ ‘Yes, I warrant thee,’ replied Ciacco, ‘thou knowest I can invite myself thither, without any other bidding.’

“So parting, about the hour of dinner time Ciacco went to the house of Messer Corso, whom he found sitting and talking with certain of his Neighbours, but dinner was not as yet ready, neither were they come thither to dinner. Messer Corso demanded of Ciacco, what news with him, and whether he went? ‘Why Sir,’ said Ciacco, ‘I come to dine with you, and your good Company.’ Whereto Messer Corso answered. That he was welcome: and his other friends being gone, dinner was served in, none else thereat present but Messer Corso and Ciacco: all the diet being a poor dish of Peas, a little piece of Tunny, and a few small fishes fryed, without any other dishes to follow after. Ciacco seeing no better fare, but being disappointed of his expectation, as longing to feed on the Lampreys and Sturgeon, and so to have made a full dinner indeed, was of a quick apprehension, and apparently perceived that Biondello had meerly gull’d him in a knavery, which did not a little vex him, and made him vow to be revenged on Biondello, as he could compass occasion afterward.

“Before many days were past, it was his fortune to meet with Biondello, who having told his jest to divers of his friends, and much good merryment made thereat: he saluted Ciacco in a kind manner, saying, ‘How didst thou like the fat Lampreys and Sturgeon which thou fed’st on at the house of Messer Corso?’ ‘Well, Sir,’ answered Ciacco, ‘perhaps before Eight days pass over my head, thou shalt

meet with as pleasing a dinner as I did.' So, parting away from Biondello, he met with a Porter, such as are usually sent on Errands; and hyring him to do a message for him, gave him a glass Bottle, and bringing him near to the Hall-house of Cavicciuli, showed him there a Knight, called Signior Philippo Argenti, a man of huge stature, very choleric, and sooner moved to Anger than any other man. 'To him thou must go with this Bottle in thy hand, and say thus to him. Sir, Biondello sent me to you, and courteously entreateth you, that you would erubinate this glass Bottle with your best Claret Wine; because he would make merry with a few friends of his. But beware he lay no hand on thee, because he may be easily induced to misuse thee, and so my business be disappointed.' 'Well, Sir,' said the Porter, 'shall I say anything else unto him?' 'No,' quoth Ciacco, 'only go and deliver this message, and when thou art returned, I'll pay thee for thy pains.' The Porter being gone to the house, delivered his message to the Knight, who, being a man of no great civil breeding, but very furious, presently conceived that Biondello, whom he knew well enough, sent this message in meer mockage of him, and, starting up with fierce looks, said, 'What erubination of Claret should I send him? and what have I to do with him or his drunken friends? Let him and thee go hang your selves together.' So he stepped to catch hold on the Porter, but he being nimble and escaping from him, returned to Ciacco and told him the answer of Philippe. Ciacco, not a little contented, payed the Porter, tarried in no place till he met Biondello, to whom he said, 'When wast thou at the Hall of Cavicciuli?' 'Not a long while,' answered Biondello; 'but why dost thou demand such a question?' 'Because,' quoth Ciacco, 'Signior Philippe hath sought about for thee, yet know not I what he would have with thee.' 'Is it so,' replied Biondello, 'then I will walk thither presently, to understand his pleasure.'

“When Biondello was thus parted from him, Ciacco followed not far off behind him, to behold the issue of this angry business; and Signior Philippo, because he could not catch the Porter, continued much distempered, fretting and fuming, because he could not comprehend the meaning of the Porter’s message, but only surmised that Biondello, by the procurement of somebody else, had done this in scorn of him. While he remained thus deeply discontented, he espyed Biondello coming towards him, and meeting him by the way, he stepped close to him and gave him a cruel blow on the Face, causing his Nose to fall out a bleeding. ‘Alas, Sir,’ said Biondello, ‘wherefore do you strike me?’ Signior Philippo, catching him by the hair of the head, trampled his Night Cap in the dirt, and his Cloak also, when, laying many violent blows on him, he said, ‘Villainous Traitor as thou art, I’ll teach thee what it is to erubinate with Claret, either thy self or any of thy cupping Companions. Am I a Child to be jested withal?’

“Nor was he more furious in words than in stroaks also, beating him about the Face, hardly leaving any hair on his head, and dragging him along in the mire, spoiling all his Garments, and he not able, from the first blow given, to speak a word in defence of himself. In the end Signior Philippo having extreamly beaten him, and many people gathering about them, to succour a man so much misused, the matter was at large related, and manner of the message sending. For which they all did greatly reprehend Biondello, considering he knew what kind of man Philippo was, not any way to be jested withal. Biondello in tears maintained that he never sent any such message for Wine, or intended it in the least degree; so, when the tempest was more mildly calmed, and Biondello, thus cruelly beaten and durtied, had gotten home to his own house, he could then remember that (questionless) this was occasioned by Ciacco.

“After some few days were passed over, and the hurts in his face indifferently cured, Biondello beginning to

walk abroad again, chanced to meet with Ciacco, who, laughing heartily at him, said, ‘Tell me, Biondello, how dost thou like the erubinating Claret of Signior Philippo?’ ‘As well,’ quoth Biondello, ‘as thou didst the Sturgeon and Lampreys at Messer Corso Donaties.’ ‘Why then,’ said Ciacco, ‘let these tokens continue familiar between thee and me, when thou wouldest bestow such another dinner on me, then will I erubinate thy Nose with a Bottle of the same Claret.’ But Biondello perceived to his cost that he had met with the worser bargain, and Ciacco got cheer without any blows; and therefore desired a peaceful! attonement, each of them always after abstaining from flouting one another.”

Ginguené, *Histoire littéraire de l'Italie*, II 53, takes Dante severely to task for wasting his pity upon poor Ciacco, but probably the poet had pleasant memories of him at Florentine banquets in the olden time. Nor is it remarkable that he should be mentioned only by his nickname. Mr. Forsyth calls Italy “the land of nicknames.” He says in continuation, *Italy*, p. 145:—

“Italians have suppressed the surnames of their principal artists under various designations. Many are known only by the names of their birthplace, as Correggio, Bassano, etc. Some by those of their masters, as Il Salviati, Sansovino, etc. Some by their father’s trade, as Andrea del Sarto, Tintoretto, etc. Some by their bodily defects, as Guercino, Cagnacci, etc. Some by the subjects in which they excelled, as M. Angelo delle Battaglie, Agostino delle Perspettive. A few (I can recollect only four) are known, each as the *prince* of his respective school, by their Christian names alone: Michelangelo, Raphael, Guido, Titian.”



95. The Bianchi are called the *Parte selvaggia*, because its leaders, the Cerchi, came from the forest lands of Val di Sieve. The other party, the

Neri, were led by the Donati.

The following account of these factions is from Giovanni Fiorentino, a writer of the fourteenth century; *Il Pecorone*, Gior. XIII Nov. I, in Roscoe's *Italian Novelists*, I 327:—

"In the city of Pistoia, at the time of its greatest splendor, there flourished a noble family, called the Cancellieri, derived from Messer Cancelliere, who had enriched himself with his commercial transactions. He had numerous sons by two wives, and they were all entitled by their wealth to assume the title of Cavalieri, valiant and worthy men, and in all their actions magnanimous and courteous. And so fast did the various branches of this family spread, that in a short time they numbered a hundred men at arms, and being superior to every other, both in wealth and power, would have still increased, but that a cruel division arose between them, from some rivalry in the affections of a lovely and enchanting girl, and from angry words they proceeded to more angry blows. Separating into two parties, those descended from the first wife took the title of Cancellieri Bianchi, and the others, who were the offspring of the second marriage, were called Cancellieri Neri.

"Having at last come to action, the Neri were defeated, and wishing to adjust the affair as well as they yet could, they sent their relation, who had offended the opposite party, to entreat forgiveness on the part of the Neri, expecting that such submissive conduct would meet with the compassion it deserved. On arriving in the presence of the Bianchi, who conceived themselves the offended party, the young man, on bended knees, appealed to their feelings for forgiveness, observing, that he had placed himself in their power, that so they might inflict what punishment they judged proper; when several of the younger members of the offended party, seizing on him, dragged him into an adjoining stable, and ordered that his right hand should be severed from his body. In the utmost

terror the youth, with tears in his eyes, besought them to have mercy, and to take a greater and nobler revenge, by pardoning one whom they had it in their power thus deeply to injure. But heedless of his prayers, they bound his hand by force upon the manger, and struck it off; a deed which excited the utmost tumult throughout Pistoia, and such indignation and reproaches from the injured party of the Neri, as to implicate the whole city in a division of interests between them and the Bianchi, which led to many desperate encounters.

“The citizens, fearful lest the faction might cause insurrections throughout the whole territory, in conjunction with the Guelfs, applied to the Florentines in order to reconcile them; on which the Florentines took possession of the place, and sent the partisans on both sides to the confines of Florence, whence it happened that the Neri sought refuge in the house of the Frescobaldi, and the Bianchi in that of the Cerchi nel Garbo, owing to the relationship which existed between them. The seeds of the same dissension being thus sown in Florence, the whole city became divided, the Cerchi espousing the interests of the Bianchi, and the Donati those of the Neri.

“So rapidly did this pestiferous spirit gain ground in Florence, as frequently to excite the greatest tumult; and from a peaceable and flourishing state, it speedily became a scene of rapine and devastation. In this stage Pope Boniface VIII was made acquainted with the state of this ravaged and unhappy city, and sent the Cardinal Acqua Sparta on a mission to reform and pacify the enraged parties. But with his utmost efforts he was unable to make any impression, and accordingly, after declaring the place excommunicated, departed. Florence being thus exposed to the greatest perils, and in a continued state of insurrection, Messer Corso Donati, with the Spini, the Pazzi, the Tosinghi, the Cavicciuli, and the populace attached to the Neri faction, applied, with the consent of their leaders, to Pope Boniface. They entreated that he

would employ his interest with the court of France to send a force to allay these feuds, and to quell the party of the Bianchi. As soon as this was reported in the city, Messer Donati was banished, and his property forfeited, and the other heads of the sect were proportionally fined and sent into exile. Messer Donati, arriving at Rome, so far prevailed with his Holiness, that he sent an embassy to Charles de Valois, brother to the king of France, declaring his wish that he should be made Emperor, and King of the Romans; under which persuasion Charles passed into Italy, reinstating Messer Donati and the Neri in the city of Florence. From this there only resulted worse evils, inasmuch as all the Bianchi, being the least powerful, were universally oppressed and robbed, and Charles, becoming the enemy of Pope Boniface, conspired his death, because the Pope had not fulfilled his promise of presenting him with an imperial crown. From which events it may be seen that this vile faction was the cause of discord in the cities of Florence and Pistoia, and of the other states of Tuscany; and no less to the same source was to be attributed the death of Pope Boniface VIII."

[◀](#)

96. Charles de Valois, called Senzaterra, or Lackland, brother of Philip the Fair, king of France. [◀](#)
97. The names of these two remain unknown. Probably one of them was Dante's friend Guido Cavalcanti. [◀](#)
98. Of this Arrigo nothing whatever seems to be known, hardly even his name; for some commentators call him Arrigo dei Fisanti, and others Arrigo dei Fifanti. Of these other men of mark "who set their hearts on doing good," Farinata is among the Heretics, Canto X; Tegghiaio and Rusticucci among the Sodomites, Canto XVI; and Mosca among the Schismatics, Canto XXVIII. [◀](#)

99. The philosophy of Aristotle. The same doctrine is taught by St. Augustine:—

“Cum fiet resurrectio carnis, et bonorum gaudia et tormenta mahrum major a crunt.”



100. Plutus, the God of Riches, of which Lord Bacon says in his *Essays*:—

“I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better, ‘impedimenta’; for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue; it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindcreth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory; of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit.... The personal fruition in any man cannot reach to feel great riches: there is a custody of them; or a power of dole and donative of them; or a fame of them; but no solid use to the owner.”



101. In this Canto is described the punishment of the Avaricious and the Prodigal, with Plutus as their jailer. His outcry of alarm is differently interpreted by different commentators, and by none very satisfactorily. The curious student, groping among them for a meaning, is like Gower’s young king, of whom he says, in his *Confessio Amantis*:—

“Of deepe ymaginations
And straunge interpretations,
Problemes and demaundes eke
His wisedom was to finde and seke,
Whereof he wolde in sondry wise
Opposen hem, that weren wise;
But none of hem it mighte here
Upon his word to give answere.”

But nearly all agree, I believe, in construing the strange words into a cry of alarm or warning to Lucifer, that his realm is invaded by some unusual apparition.

Of all the interpretations given, the most amusing is that of Benvenuto Cellini, in his description of the Court of Justice in Paris, Roscoe's *Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini*, Chap. XXII:—

“I stooped down several times to observe what passed: the words which I heard the judge utter, upon seeing two gentlemen who wanted to hear the trial, and whom the porter was endeavoring to keep out, were these: ‘Be quiet, be quiet, Satan, get hence, and leave off disturbing us.’

The terms were, *Paix, paix, Satan, allez, paix*. As I had by this time thoroughly learnt the French language, upon hearing these words, I recollect what Dante said, when he with his master, Virgil, entered the gates of hell; for Dante and Giotto the painter were together in France, and visited Paris with particular attention, where the court of justice may be considered as hell. Hence it is that Dante, who was likewise perfect master of the French, made use of that expression; and I have often been surprised, that it was never understood in that sense; so that I cannot help thinking, that the commentators on this author have often made him say things which he never so much as dreamed of.”

Dante himself hardly seems to have understood the meaning of the words, though he suggests that Virgil did. ↪

102. The overthrow of the Rebel Angels. St. Augustine says:—

“*Idolatria et quælibet noxia superstitione fornicatio est.*”

↪

103. Must dance the *Ridda*, a round dance of the olden time. It was a Roundelay, or singing and dancing together. Boccaccio's *Monna*

Belcolore “knew better than any one how to play the tambourine and lead the Ridda.” [←](#)

104. As the word *honor* resounds in Canto IV, and the word *love* in Canto V, so here the words *rolling* and *turning* are the burden of the song, as if to suggest the motion of Fortune’s wheel, so beautifully described a little later. [←](#)

105. Clerks, clerics, or clergy. Boccaccio, *Comento*, remarks upon this passage:—

“Some maintain, that the clergywear the tonsure in remembrance and reverence of St. Peter, on whom, they say, it was made by certain evil-minded men as a mark of madness; because not comprehending and not wishing to comprehend his holy doctrine, and seeing him fervently preaching before princes and people, who held that doctrine in detestation, they thought he acted as one out of his senses. Others maintain that the tonsure is worn as a mark of dignity, as a sign that those who wear it are more worthy than those who do not; and they call it *corona*, because, all the rest of the head being shaven, a single circle of hair should be left, which in form of a crown surrounds the whole head.”

[←](#)

106. In like manner Chaucer, “Persones Tale,” pp. 227, 337, reproves ill-keeping and ill-giving:—

“Avarice, after the description of Seint Augustine, is a likerousnesse in herte to have erthly thinges. Som other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthly thinges, and nothing to yeve to hem that han nede. And understand wel, that avarice standeth not only in land ne catel, but som time in science and in glorie, and in every maner outrageous thing is avarice....

“But for as moche as som folk ben unmesurable, men oughten for to avoid and eschue fool-largesse, the whiche men clepen waste. Certes, he that is fool-large, he yeveth not his catel, but he leseth his catel, Sothly, what thing that he yeveth for vaine-glory, as to minstrals, and to folk that here his renome in the world, he hath do sinne thereof, and non almesse: certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yefte of his good nothing but sinne. He is like to an hors that seketh rather to drink drovy or troubled water, than for to drink water of the clere well. And for as moche as they yeven thcr as they shuld nat yeven, to hem apperteineth thilkc malison, that Crist shal yeve at the day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.”



107. The Wheel of Fortune was one of the favorite subjects of art and song in the Middle Ages. On a large square of white marble set in the pavement of the nave of the Cathedral at Siena, is the representation of a revolving wheel. Three boys are climbing and clinging at the sides and below; above is a dignified figure with a stern countenance, holding the sceptre and ball. At the four corners are inscriptions from Seneca, Euripides, Aristotle, and Epictetus. The same symbol may be seen also in the wheel-of-fortune windows of many churches; as, for example, that of San Zcno at Verona. See Knight, *Ecclesiastical Architecture*, II plates V, VI.

In the following poem Guido Cavalcanti treats this subject in Very much the same way that Dante does; and it is curious to observe how at particular times certain ideas seem to float in the air, and to become the property of every one who chooses to make use of them. From the similarity between this poem and the lines of Dante, one might infer that the two friends had discussed the matter in conversation, and afterwards that each had written out their common thought.

Cavalcanti’s “Song of Fortune,” as translated by Rossetti, *Early Italian Poets*, p. 366, runs as follows:—

“Lo! I am she who makes the wheel to turn;

Lo! I am she who gives and takes away;
Blamed idly, day by day,
In all mine acts by you, ye humankind.
For whoso smites his visage and doth mourn,
What time he renders back my gifts to me.
Learns then that I decree
No state which mine own arrows may not find.
Who clomb must fall:—this bear ye well in mind,
Nor say, because he fell, I did him wrong.
Yet mine is a vain song:
For truly ye may find out wisdom when
King Arthur's resting-place is found of men.

“Ye make great marvel and astonishment
What time ye see the sluggard lifted up
And the just man to drop.
And ye complain on God and on my sway.
O humankind, ye sin in your complaint:
For He, that Lord who made the world to live.
Lets me not take or give
By mine own act, but as he wills I may.
Yet is the mind of man so castaway,
That it discerns not the supreme behest.
Alas! ye wretchedest,
And chide ye at God also? Shall not He
Judge between good and evil righteously?

“Ah! had ye knowledge how God evermore.
With agonies of soul and grievous heats,
As on an anvil beats
On them that in this earth hold high estate—
Ye would choose little rather than much store,
And solitude than spacious palaces;
Such is the sore disease
Of anguish that on all their days doth wait.
Behold if they be not unfortunate,
When oft the father dares not trust the son!

O wealth, with thee is won
A worm to gnaw forever on his soul
Whose abject life is laid in thy control!

“If also ye take note what piteous death
They ofttimes make, whose hoards were manifold,
Who cities had and gold
And multitudes of men beneath their hand;
Then he among you that most angereth
Shall bless me saying, ‘Lo! I worship thee
That I was not as he
Whose death is thus accurst throughout the land.’
But now your living souls are held in band
Of avarice, shutting you from the true light
Which shows how sad and slight
Are this world’s treasured riches and array
That still change hands a hundred times a day.

“For me—could envy enter in my sphere,
Which of all human taint is clean and quit—
I well might harbor it
When I behold the peasant at his toil.
Guiding his team, untroubled, free from fear,
He leaves his perfect furrow as he goes,
And gives his field repose
From thorns and tares and weeds that vex the soil:
Thereto he labors, and without turmoil
Entrusts his work to God, content if so
Such guerdon from it grow
That in that year his family shall live:
Nor care nor thought to other things will give.

“But now ye may no more have speech of me,
For this mine office craves continual use:
Ye therefore deeply muse
Upon those things which ye have heard the while:
Yea, and even yet remember heedfully

How this my wheel a motion hath so fieet.
That in an eyelid's beat
Him whom it raised it maketh low and vile.
None was, nor is, nor shall be of such guile,
Who could, or can, or shall, I say, at length
Prevail against my strength.
But still those men that are my questioners
In bitter torment own their hearts perverse.

“Song, that wast made to carry high intent
Dissembled in the garb of humbleness—
With fair and open face
To Master Thomas let thy course be bent.
Say that a great thing scarcely may be pent
In little room: yet always pray that he
Commend us, thee and me,
To them that are more apt in lofty speech:
For truly one must learn ere he can teach.”



108. This old Rabbinical tradition of the “Regents of the Planets” has been painted by Raphael, in the Capella Chigiana of the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome. See Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 45. She says:—

“As a perfect example of grand and poetical feeling I may cite the angels as ‘Regents of the Planets’ in the Capella Chigiana. The Cupola represents in a circle the creation of the solar system, according to the theological (or rather astrological) notions which then prevailed—a hundred years before ‘the starry Galileo and his woes.’ In the centre is the Creator; around, in eight compartments, we have, first, the angel of the celestial sphere, who seems to be listening to the divine mandate, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven’; then follow, in their order, the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The name of each planet is expressed by its mythological

representative; the Sun by Apollo, the Moon by Diana; and over each presides a grand, colossal winged spirit, seated or reclining on a portion of the zodiac as on a throne.”

The old tradition may be found in Stehelin, *Rabbinical Literature*, I 157. See [*Purgatorio, XVI 69.*](#) ↪

109. Past midnight. ↪

110. *Perse*, purple-black. See [note 83.](#) ↪

111. “Is not this a cursed vice?” says Chaucer in “The Persones Tale,” p. 202, speaking of wrath:—

“Yes, certes. Alas! it benimmeth fro man his witte and his reson, and all his debonaire lif spirituel, that shulde keepe his soule. Certes it benimmeth also Goddes due lordship (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighbours; it reveth him the quiet of his herte, and subverteth his soule.”

And farther on he continues:—

“After the sinne of wrath, now wolle I speke of the sinne of accidie, or slouth; for envie blindeth the herte of a man, and ire trouhleth a man, and accidie maketh him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envie and ire maken bitternesse in herte, which bitternesse is mother of accidie, and benimmeth him the love of alle goodnesse; than is accidie the anguish of a trouble herte.”

And Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, I 3. i 3, speaking of that kind of melancholy which proceeds from “humors adust,” says:—

“For example, if it proceeds from flegm (which is seldom, and not so frequent as the rest) it stirs up dull symptomcs, and a kind of stupidity, or impassionate hurt; they are

sleepy, saith Savanarola, dull, slow, cold, blockish, ass-like, *asininam melancholiam* Melancthon calls it, they are much given to weeping, and delight in waters, ponds, pools, rivers, fishing, fowling, etc. They are pale of color, slothful, apt to sleep, heavy, much troubled with the headache, continual meditation and muttering to themselves, they dream of waters, that they are in danger of drowning, and fear such things."

See also [*Purgatorio XVII 85.*](#) ↵

112. Boccaccio and some other commentators think the words "I say, continuing," are a confirmation of the theory that the first seven cantos of the Inferno were written before Dante's banishment from Florence. Others maintain that the words suggest only the continuation of the subject of the last canto in this. ↵
113. These two signal fires announce the arrival of two persons to be ferried over the wash, and the other in the distance is on the watchtower of the City of Dis, answering these. ↵
114. Phlegyas was the father of Ixion and Coronis. He was king of the Lapithae, and burned the temple of Apollo at Delphi to avenge the wrong done by the god to Coronis. His punishment in the infernal regions was to stand beneath a huge impending rock, always about to fall upon him. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, says of him:—

"Phlegyas, most wretched, is a monitor to all and with loud voice proclaims through the shades, 'Being warned, learn righteousness, and not to contemn the gods.'"

↵

115. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI:—

"The boat of sewn hide groaned under the weight, and, being leaky, took in much water from the lake."

↖

116. Mr. Wright here quotes Spenser, “Ruins of Time”:—

“How many great ones may remembered be,
Who in their days most famously did flourish,
Of whom no word we have, nor sign now see,
But as things wiped out with a sponge do perish.”

↖

117. Chaucer’s “sclandre of his diffame.” ↲

118. Of Philippo Argenti little is known, and nothing to his credit. Dante seems to have an especial personal hatred of him, as if in memory of some disagreeable passage between them in the streets of Florence. Boccaccio says of him in his *Comento*:—

“This Philippo Argenti, as Coppo di Borghese Domenichi de’ Cavicciuli was wont to say, was a very rich gentleman, so rich that he had the horse he used to ride shod with silver, and from this he had his surname; he was in person large, swarthy, muscular, of marvellous strength, and at the slightest provocation the most irascible of men; nor are any more known of his qualities than these two, each in itself very blameworthy,”

He was of the Adimari family, and of the Neri faction; while Dante was of the Bianchi party, and in banishment. Perhaps this fact may explain the bitterness of his invective.

This is the same Philippo Argenti who figures in Boccaccio’s tale. See [note 94](#), The *Ottimo Comento* says of him:—

“He was a man of great pomp, and great ostentation, and much expenditure, and little virtue and worth; and therefore the author says, ‘Goodness is none that decks his memory.’”

And this is all that is known of the “*Fiorentino spirito bizzaro*,” forgotten by history, and immortalized in song. “What a barbarous strength and confusion of ideas,” exclaims Leigh Hunt, *Italian Poets*, p. 60, “is there in this whole passage about him! Arrogance punished by arrogance, a Christian mother blessed for the unchristian disdainfulness of her son, revenge boasted of and enjoyed, passion arguing in a circle.” ↪

119. The word “mosques” paints at once to the imagination the City of Unbelief. ↪

120. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, Davidson’s Translation:—

“Aeneas on a sudden looks back, and under a rock on the left sees vast prisons enclosed with a triple wall, which Tartarean Phlegethon’s rapid flood environs with torrents of flame, and whirls roaring rocks along. Fronting is a huge gate, with columns of solid adamant, that no strength of men, nor the gods themselves, can with steel demolish. An iron tower rises aloft; and there wakeful Tisiphone, with her bloody robe tucked up around her, sits to watch the vestibule both night and day.”

↪

121. This arrogance of theirs; *tracotanza, oltracotanza*; Brantome’s *outrecuidance*; and Spenser’s *surquedrie*. ↪

122. The gate of the Inferno. ↪

123. The coming of the Angel, whose approach is described in the next canto, beginning at line 64. ↪

124. The flush of anger passes from Virgil’s cheek on seeing the pallor of Dante’s, and he tries to encourage him with assurances of success; but betrays his own apprehensions in the broken phrase, “If not,” which he immediately covers with words of cheer. ↪

125. Such, or so great a one, is Beatrice, the “fair and saintly Lady” of Virgil’s cheek on seeing the pallor of Canto II 53. [←](#)
126. The Angel who will open the gates of the City of Dis. [←](#)
127. Dante seems to think that he has already reached the bottom of the infernal conch, with its many convolutions. [←](#)
128. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I:—
- “Cast nought thin eye upon Meduse
That thou be turned into stone.”
- Hawthorne has beautifully told the story of “The Gorgon’s Head,” as well as many more of the classic fables, in his *Wonder-Book*. [←](#)
129. The attempt which Theseus and Pirithous made to rescue Proserpine from the infernal regions. [←](#)
130. The hidden doctrine seems to be, that Negation or Unbelief is the Gorgon’s head which changes the heart to stone; after which there is “no more returning upward.” The Furies display it from the walls of the City of Heretics. [←](#)
131. At Aries lie buried, according to old tradition, the Peers of Charlemagne and their ten thousand men at arms. Archbishop Turpin, in his famous *History of Charles the Great*, XXX, Rodd’s Translation, I, says:—
- “After this the King and his army proceeded by the way of Gascony and Thoulouse, and came to Aries, where we found the army of Burgundy, which had left us in the hostile valley, bringing their dead by the way of Morbihan and Thoulouse, to bury them in the plain of Aries. Here we performed the rites of Estolfo, Count of Champagne; of Solomon; Sampson, Duke of Burgundy; Arnold of Berlanda; Alberic of Burgundy; Gumard, Esturinite, Hato,

Juonius, Berard, Berengaire, and Naaman, Duke of Bourbon, and of ten thousand of their soldiers.”

Boccacio comments upon these tombs as follows:—

“At Arles, somewhat out of the city, are many tombs of stone, made of old for sepulchres, and some are large, and some are small, and some are better sculptured, and some not so well, peradventure according to the means of those who had them made; and upon some of them appear inscriptions after the ancient custom, I suppose in indication of those who are buried within. The inhabitants of the country repeat a tradition of them, affirming that in that place there was once a great battle between William of Orange, or some other Christian prince, with his forces on one side, and infidel barbarians from Africa [on the other]; and that many Christians were slain in it; and that on the following night, by divine miracle, those tombs were brought there for the burial of the Christians, and so on the following morning all the dead Christians were buried in them.”



132. Pola is a city in Istria. “Near Pola,” says Benvenuto da Imola, “are seen many tombs, about seven hundred, and of various forms.”

Quarnaro is a gulf of the northern extremity of the Adriatic.

133. In this Canto is described the punishment of Heretics.

Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, XIII:—

“*Or va mastro Brunetto
Per lo cammino stretto.*”



134. Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial*, Chap. IV, says:—

“They may sit in the orchestra and noblest seats of heaven who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory. Meanwhile Epicurus lies deep in Dante’s hell, wherein we meet with tombs enclosing souls, which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous heathen, who lived better than he spake, or, erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above philosophers of more specious maxims, lie so deep as he is placed, at least so low as not to rise against Christians, who, believing or knowing that truth, have lastingly denied it in their practice and conversation—were a query too sad to insist on.”

Also Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part II Sec. 2. Mem. 6. Subs. 1, thus vindicates the memory of Epicurus:—

“A quiet mind is that *voluptas*, or *summum bonum* of Epicurus; *non dolere, curis vacare, animo tranquillo esse*, not to grieve, but to want cares, and have a quiet soul, is the only pleasure of the world, as Seneca truly recites his opinion, not that of eating and drinking, which injurious Aristotle maliciously puts upon him, and for which he is still mistaken, *mala audit et vapulat*, slandered without a cause, and lashed by all posterity.”



135. Farinata degli Uberti was the most valiant and renowned leader of the Ghibellines in Florence. Boccaccio, *Comento*, says:—

“He was of the opinion of Epicurus, that the soul dies with the body, and consequently maintained that human happiness consisted in temporal pleasures; but he did not follow these in the way that Epicurus did, that is by making long fasts to have afterwards pleasure in eating dry bread; but was fond of good and delicate viands, and ate them without waiting to be hungry; and for this sin he is damned as a Heretic in this place.”

Farinata led the Ghibellines at the famous battle of Monte Aperto in 1260, where the Guelfs were routed, and driven out of Florence. He died in 1264. [←](#)

136. The ancestors of Dante, and Dante himself, were Guelfs. He did not become a Ghibelline till after his banishment. Boccaccio in his Life of Dante makes the following remarks upon his party spirit. I take the passage as given in Mrs. Bunbury's translation of Balbo's *Life and Times of Dante*, II 227:—

“He was,” says Boccaccio, “a most excellent man, and most resolute in adversity. It was only on one subject that he showed himself, I do not know whether I ought to call it impatient, or spirited—it was regarding anything relating to Party; since in his exile he was more violent in this respect than suited his circumstances, and more than he was willing that others should believe. And in order that it may be seen for what party he was thus violent and pertinacious, it appears to me I must go further back in my story. I believe that it was the just anger of God that permitted, it is a long time ago, almost all Tuscany and Lombardy to be divided into two parties; I do not know how they acquired those names, but one party was called Guelf and the other party Ghibelline. And these two names were so revered, and had such an effect on the folly of many minds, that, for the sake of defending the side any one had chosen for his own against the opposite party, it was not considered hard to lose property, and even life, if it were necessary. And under these names the Italian cities many times suffered serious grievances and changes; and among the rest our city, which was sometimes at the head of one party, and sometimes of the other, according to the citizens in power; so much so that Dante's ancestors, being Guelfs, were twice expelled by the Ghibellines from their home, and he likewise under the title of Guelf held the reins of the Florentine Republic, from which he was expelled, as we have shown, not by the Ghibellines, but by

the Guelfs; and seeing that he could not return, he so much altered his mind that there never was a fiercer Ghibelline, or a bitterer enemy to the Guelfs, than he was. And that which I feel most ashamed at for the sake of his memory is, that it was a well-known thing in Romagna, that if any boy or girl, talking to him on party matters, condemned the Ghibelline side, he would become frantic, so that if they did not be silent he would have been induced to throw stones at them; and with this violence of party feeling he lived until his death. I am certainly ashamed to tarnish with any fault the fame of such a man; but the order of my subject in some degree demands it, because if I were silent in those things in which he was to blame, I should not be believed in those things I have already related in his praise. Therefore I excuse myself to himself, who perhaps looks down from heaven with a disdainful eye on me writing.”



137. The following account of the Guelfs and Ghibellines is from the *Pecorone* of Giovanni Fiorentino, a writer of the fourteenth century. It forms the first Novella of the Eighth Day, and will be found in Roscoe's *Italian Novelists*, I 322:—

“There formerly resided in Germany two wealthy and wellborn individuals, whose names were Guelfo and Ghibellino, very near neighbors, and greatly attached to each other. But returning together one day from the chase, there unfortunately arose some difference of opinion as to the merits of one of their hounds, which was maintained on both sides so very warmly, that, from being almost inseparable friends and companions, they became each other's deadliest enemies. This unlucky division between them still increasing, they on either side collected parties of their followers, in order more effectually to annoy each other. Soon extending its malignant influence among the

neighboring lords and barons of Germany, who divided, according to their motives, either with the Guelf or the Ghibelline, it not only produced many serious affrays, but several persons fell victims to its rage. Ghibellino, finding himself hard pressed by his enemy, and unable longer to keep the field against him, resolved to apply for assistance to Frederick the First, the reigning Emperor. Upon this, Guelfo, perceiving that his adversary sought the alliance of this monarch, applied on his side to Pope Honorius II, who being at variance with the former, and hearing how the affair stood, immediately joined the cause of the Guelfs, the Emperor having already embraced that of the Ghibellines. It is thus that the apostolic see became connected with the former, and the empire with the latter faction; and it was thus that a vile hound became the origin of a deadly hatred between the two noble families. Now it happened that in the year of our dear Lord and Redeemer 1215, the same pestiferous spirit spread itself into parts of Italy, in the following manner. Messer Guido Orlando being at that time chief magistrate of Florence, there likewise resided in that city a noble and valiant cavalier of the family of Buondelmonti, one of the most distinguished houses in the state. Our young Buondelmonce having already plighted his troth to a lady of the Amidei family, the lovers were considered as betrothed, with all the solemnity usually observed on such occasions. But this unfortunate young man, chancing one day to pass by the house of the Donati, was stopped and accosted by a lady of the name of Lapaccia, who moved to him from her door as he went along, saying: 'I am surprised that a gentleman of your appearance, Signor, should think of taking for his wife a woman scarcely worthy of handing him his boots. There is a child of my own, whom, to speak sincerely, I have long intended for you, and whom I wish you would just venture to see.' And on this she called out for her daughter, whose name was Ciulla, one of the prettiest and most enchanting girls in all

Florence. Introducing her to Messer Buondelmonte, she whispered, ‘This is she whom I had reserved for you’; and the young Florentine, suddenly becoming enamored of her, thus replied to her mother, ‘I am quite ready. Madonna, to meet your wishes’; and before stirring from the spot he placed a ring upon her finger, and, wedding her, received her there as his wife.

“The Amidei, hearing that young Buondelmonte had thus espoused another, immediately met together, and took counsel with other friends and relations, how they might best avenge themselves for such an insult offered to their house. There were present among the rest Lambertuccio Amidei, Schiatta Ruberti, and Mosca Lamberti, one of whom proposed to give him a box on the ear, another to strike him in the face; yet they were none of them able to agree about it among themselves. On observing this, Mosca hastily rose, in a great passion, saying, ‘*Cosa fatta capo ha*,’ wishing it to be understood that a dead man will never strike again. It was therefore decided that he should be put to death, a sentence which they proceeded to execute in the following manner.

“M. Buondelmonte returning one Easter morning from a visit to the Casa Bardi, beyond the Arno, mounted upon a snow-white steed, and dressed in a mantle of the same color, had just reached the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, or old bridge, where formerly stood a statue of Mars, whom the Florentines in their Pagan state were accustomed to worship, when the whole party issued out upon him, and, dragging him in the scuffle from his horse, in spite of the gallant resistance he made, despatched him with a thousand wounds. The tidings of this affair seemed to throw all Florence into confusion; the chief personages and noblest families in the place everywhere meeting, and dividing themselves into parties in consequence; the one party embracing the cause of the Buondelmonti, who placed themselves at the head of the Guelfs; and the other

taking part with the Amidei, who supported the Ghibellines.

“In the same fatal manner, nearly all the seignories and cities of Italy were involved in the original quarrel between these two German families: the Guelfs still supporting the interest of the Holy Church, and the Ghibellines those of the Emperor. And thus I have made you acquainted with the origin of the Germanic faction, between two noble houses, for the sake of a vile cur, and have shown how it afterwards disturbed the peace of Italy for the sake of a beautiful woman.”

For an account of the Bianchi and Neri factions see [note 354](#). [←](#)

138. Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, father of Dante's friend, Guido Cavalcanti. He was of the Guelf party; so that here are Guelf and Ghibelline buried in the same tomb. [←](#)
139. This question recalls the scene in the *Odyssey*, where the shade of Agamemnon appears to Ulysses and asks for Orestes. Book XI in Chapman's translation, line 603:—

“Doth my son yet survive
In Orchomen or Pylos? Or doth live
In Sparta with his uncle? Yet I see
Divine Orestes is not here with me.”

[←](#)

140. Guido Cavalcanti, whom Benvenuto da Imola calls “the other eye of Florence,”—*alter oculus Florentiae tempore Dantis*. It is to this Guido that Dante addresses the sonnet, which is like the breath of Spring, beginning:—

“Guido, I wish that Lapo, thou, and I
Could be by spells conveyed, as it were now,
Upon a barque, with all the winds that blow,
Across all seas at our good will to hie.”

He was a poet of decided mark, as may be seen by his “Song of Fortune,” quoted in [note 107](#), and the Sonnet to Dante, [note 1125](#). But he seems not to have shared Dante’s admiration for Virgil, and to have been more given to the study of philosophy than of poetry. Like Lucentio in “The Taming of the Shrew” he is

“So devote to Aristotle’s ethics
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured.”

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, VI 9, praises him for his learning and other good qualities; “for over and beside his being one of the best Logitians, as those times not yielded a better,” so runs the old translation, “he was also a most absolute Natural Philosopher, a very friendly Gentleman, singularly well spoken, and whatsoever else was commendable in any man was no way wanting in him.” In the same Novella he tells this anecdote of him:—

“It chanced upon a day that Signior Guido, departing from the Church of Saint Michael d’ Horta, and passing along by the Adamari, so far as to Saint John’s Church, which evermore was his customary walk: many goodly Marble Tombs were then about the said Church, as now adays are at Saint Reparata, and divers more beside. He entring among the Columns of Porphyry, and the other Sepulchers being there, because the door of the Church was shut: Signior Betto and his Company came riding from Saint Reparata, and espying Signior Guido among the Graves and Tombs, said, ‘Come, let us go make some jests to anger him.’ So putting the Spurs to their Horses they rode apace towards him; and being upon him before hee perceived them, one of them said, ‘Guido, thou refusest to be one of our society, and seekest for that which never was: when thou hast found it, tell us, what wilt thou do with it?’

“Guido seing himself round engirt with them, suddenly thus replyed: ‘Gentlemen, you may use me in your own House as you please.’ And setting his hand upon one of

the Tombs (which was somewhat great) he took his rising, and leapt quite over it on the further side, as being of an agile and sprightly body, and being thus freed from them, he went away to his own lodging.

“They stood all like men amazed, strangely looking one upon another, and began afterward to murmur among themselves: That Guido was a man without any understanding, and the answer which he had made unto them was to no purpose, neither savoured of any discretion, but merely came from an empty Brain, because they had no more to do in the place where now they were, than any of the other Citizens, and Signior Guido (himself) as little as any of them; whereto Signior Betto thus replyed: ‘Alas, Gentlemen, it is you your selves that are void of understanding: for, if you had but observed the answer which he made unto us: he did honestly, and (in very few words) not only notably express his own wisdom, but also deservedly reprehend us. Because, if we observe things as we ought to do. Graves and Tombs are the Houses of the dead, ordained and prepared to be the latest dwellings. He told us moreover that although we have here (in this life) our habitations and abidings, yet these (or the like) must at last be our Houses. To let us know, and all other foolish, indiscreet, and unlearned men, that we are worse than dead men, in comparison of him, and other men equal to him in skill and learning. And therefore, while we are here among the Graves and Monuments, it may be well said, that we are not far from our own Houses, or how soon we shall be possessors of them, in regard of the frailty attending on us.’”

Napier, *Florentine History*, I 368, speaks of Guido as “a bold, melancholy man, who loved solitude and literature; but generous, brave, and courteous, a poet and philosopher, and one that seems to have had the respect and admiration of his age.” He then adds this singular picture of the times:—

“Corso Donati, by whom he was feared and hated, would have had him murdered while on a pilgrimage to Saint James of Galicia; on his return this became known and gained him many supporters amongst the Cerchi and other youth of Florence; he took no regular measures of vengeance, but, accidentally meeting Corso in the street, rode violently towards him, casting his javelin at the same time; it missed by the tripping of his horse and he escaped with a slight wound from one of Donati’s attendants.”

Sacchetti, Nov. 68, tells a pleasant story of Guido’s having his cloak nailed to the bench by a roguish boy, while he was playing chess in one of the streets of Florence, which is also a curious picture of Italian life. [←](#)

141. Farinata pays no attention to this outburst of paternal tenderness on the part of his Guelfic kinsman, but waits, in stern indifference, till it is ended, and then calmly resumes his discourse. [←](#)
142. The moon, called in the heavens Diana, on earth Luna, and in the infernal regions Proserpina. [←](#)
143. In the great battle of Monte Aperto. The river Arbia is a few miles south of Siena. The traveller crosses it on his way to Rome, In this battle the banished Ghibellines of Florence, joining the Sienese, gained a victory over the Guelfs, and retook the city of Florence. Before the battle Buonaguida, Syndic of Siena, presented the keys of the city to the Virgin Mary in the Cathedral, and made a gift to her of the city and the neighboring country. After the battle the standard of the vanquished Florentines, together with their battle-bell, the Martinella, was tied to the tail of a jackass and dragged in the dirt. See Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 254. [←](#)
144. After the battle of Monte Aperto a diet of the Ghibellines was held at Empoli, in which the deputies from Siena and Pisa, prompted no doubt by provincial hatred, urged the demolition of Florence. Farinata vehemently opposed the project in a speech, thus given in Napier, *Florentine History*, I 257:—

“‘It would have been better,’ he exclaimed, ‘to have died on the Arbia, than survive only to hear such a proposition as that which they were then discussing. There is no happiness in victory itself, *that* must ever be sought for amongst the companions who helped us to gain the day, and the injury we receive from an enemy inflicts a far more trifling wound than the wrong that comes from the hand of a friend. If I now complain, it is not that I fear the destruction of my native city, for as long as I have life to wield a sword Florence shall never be destroyed; but I cannot suppress my indignation at the discourses I have just been listening to: we are here assembled to discuss the wisest means of maintaining our influence in Florence, not to debate on its destruction, and my country would indeed be unfortunate, and I and my companions miserable, mean-spirited creatures, if it were true that the fate of our city depended on the fiat of the present assembly. I did hope that all former hatred would have been banished from such a meeting, and that our mutual destruction would not have been treacherously aimed at from under the false colors of general safety; I did hope that all here were convinced that counsel dictated by jealousy could never be advantageous to the general good! But to what does your hatred attach itself? To the ground on which the city stands? To its houses and insensible walls? To the fugitives who have abandoned it? Or to ourselves that now possess it? Who is he that thus advises? Who is the bold bad man that dare thus give voice to the malice he hath engendered in his soul? Is it meet then that all *your* cities should exist unharmed, and ours alone be devoted to destruction? That *you* should return in triumph to your hearths, and we with whom you have conquered should have nothing in exchange but exile and the ruin of our country? Is there one of you who can believe that I could even hear such things with patience? Are you indeed ignorant that if I have carried arms, if I have persecuted my foes, I still have never ceased to love my country, and

that I never will allow what even our enemies have respected to be violated by your hands, so that posterity may call *them* the saviours, *us* the destroyers of our country? Here then I declare, that, although I stand alone amongst the Florentines, I will never permit my native city to be destroyed, and if it be necessary for her sake to die a thousand deaths, I am ready to meet them all in her defence.'

"Farinata then rose, and with angry gestures quitted the assembly; but left such an impression on the mind of his audience that the project was instantly dropped, and the only question for the moment was how to regain a chief of such talent and influence,"



145. Frederick II, son of the Emperor Henry VI, surnamed the Severe, and grandson of Barbarossa. He reigned from 1220 to 1250, not only as Emperor of Germany, but also as King of Naples and Sicily, where for the most part he held his court, one of the most brilliant of the Middle Ages. Villani, *Cronica*, V 1, thus sketches his character:—

"This Frederick reigned thirty years as Emperor, and was a man of great mark and great worth, learned in letters and of natural ability, universal in all things; he knew the Latin language, the Italian, the German, French, Greek, and Arabic; was copiously endowed with all virtues, liberal and courteous in giving, valiant and skilled in arms, and was much feared. And he was dissolute and voluptuous in many ways, and had many concubines and mamelukes, after the Saracenic fashion; he was addicted to all sensual delights, and led an Epicurean life, taking no account of any other; and this was one principal reason why he was an enemy to the clergy and the Holy Church."

Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, B. X, Chap, III, says of him:—

“Frederick’s predilection for his native kingdom, for the bright cities reflected in the blue Mediterranean, over the dark barbaric towns of Germany, of itself characterizes the man. The summer skies, the more polished manners, the more elegant luxuries, the knowledge, the arts, the poetry, the gayety, the beauty, the romance of the South, were throughout his life more congenial to his mind, than the heavier and more chilly climate, the feudal barbarism, the ruder pomp, the coarser habits of his German liegemen.... And no doubt that delicious climate and lovely land, so highly appreciated by the gay sovereign, was not without influence on the state, and even the manners of his court, to which other circumstances contributed to give a peculiar and romantic character. It resembled probably (though its full splendor was of a later period) Grenada in its glory, more than any other in Europe, though more rich and picturesque from the variety of races, of manners, usages, even dresses, which prevailed within it.”

Gibbon also, *Decline and Fall*, Chap. LIX, gives this graphic picture:—

“Frederick the Second, the grandson of Barbarossa, was successively the pupil, the enemy, and the victim of the Church. At the age of twenty-one years, and in obedience to his guardian Innocent the Third, he assumed the cross; the same promise was repeated at his royal and imperial coronations; and his marriage with the heiress of Jerusalem forever bound him to defend the kingdom of his son Conrad. But as Frederick advanced in age and authority, he repented of the rash engagements of his youth: his liberal sense and knowledge taught him to despise the phantoms of superstition and the crowns of Asia: he no longer entertained the same reverence for the successors of Innocent; and his ambition was occupied by the restoration of the Italian monarchy, from Sicily to the Alps. But the success of this project would have reduced

the Popes to their primitive simplicity; and, after the delays and excuses of twelve years, they urged the Emperor, with entreaties and threats, to fix the time and place of his departure for Palestine. In the harbors of Sicily and Apulia he prepared a fleet of one hundred galleys, and of one hundred vessels, that were framed to transport and land two thousand five hundred knights, with horses and attendants; his vassals of Naples and Germany formed a powerful army; and the number of English crusaders was magnified to sixty thousand by the report of fame. But the inevitable, or affected, slowness of these mighty preparations consumed the strength and provisions of the more indigent pilgrims; the multitude was thinned by sickness and desertion, and the sultry summer of Calabria anticipated the mischiefs of a Syrian campaign. At length the Emperor hoisted sail at Brundusium with a fleet and army of forty thousand men; but he kept the sea no more than three days; and his hasty retreat, which was ascribed by his friends to a grievous indisposition, was accused by his enemies as a voluntary and obstinate disobedience. For suspending his vow was Frederick excommunicated by Gregory the Ninth; for presuming, the next year, to accomplish his vow, he was again excommunicated by the same Pope. While he served under the banner of the cross, a crusade was preached against him in Italy; and after his return he was compelled to ask pardon for the injuries which he had suffered. The clergy and military orders of Palestine were previously instructed to renounce his communion and dispute his commands; and in his own kingdom the Emperor was forced to consent that the orders of the camp should be issued in the name of God and of the Christian republic. Frederick entered Jerusalem in triumph; and with his own hands (for no priest would perform the office) he took the crown from the altar of the holy sepulchre."

Matthew Paris, AD 1239, gives a long letter of Pope Gregory IX in which he calls the Emperor some very hard names; “a beast, full of the words of blasphemy,” “a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” “a son of lies,” “a staff of the impious,” and “hammer of the earth”; and finally accuses him of being the author of a work *De Tribus Impostoribus*, which, if it ever existed, is no longer to be found:—

“There is one thing,” he says in conclusion, “at which, although we ought to mourn for a lost man, you ought to rejoice greatly, and for which you ought to return thanks to God, namely, that this man, who delights in being called a forerunner of Antichrist, by God’s will, no longer endures to be veiled in darkness; not expecting that his trial and disgrace are near, he with his own hands undermines the wall of his abominations, and, by the said letters of his, brings his works of darkness to the light, boldly setting forth in them, that he could not be excommunicated by us, although the Vicar of Christ; thus affirming that the Church had not the power of binding and loosing, which was given by our Lord to St. Peter and his successors.... But as it may not be easily believed by some people that he has ensnared himself by the words of his own mouth, proofs are ready, to the triumph of the faith; for this king of pestilence openly asserts that the whole world was deceived by three, namely Christ Jesus, Moses, and Muhammad; that, two of them having died in glory, the said Jesus was suspended on the cross; and he, moreover, presumes plainly to affirm (or rather to lie), that all are foolish who believe that God, who created nature, and could do all things, was born of the Virgin.”



146. This is Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, who is accused of saying, “If there be any soul, I have lost mine for the Ghibellines.” Dante takes him at his word.

147. Some critics and commentators accuse Dante of confounding Pope Anastasius with the Emperor of that name. It is however highly probable that Dante knew best whom he meant. Both were accused of heresy, though the heresy of the Pope seems to have been of a mild type. A few years previous to his time, namely, in the year 484, Pope Felix III and Acacius, Bishop of Constantinople, mutually excommunicated each other. When Anastasius II became Pope in 496, “he dared,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, I 349, “to doubt the damnation of a bishop excommunicated by the See of Rome: ‘Felix and Acacius are now both before a higher tribunal; leave them to that unerring judgment.’ He would have the name of Acacius passed over in silence, quietly dropped, rather than publicly expunged from the diptychs. This degenerate successor of St. Peter is not admitted to the rank of a saint. The Pontifical book (its authority on this point is indignantly repudiated) accuses Anastasius of having communicated with a deacon of Thessalonica, who had kept up communion with Acacius; and of having entertained secret designs of restoring the name of Acacius in the services of the Church.” ↩
148. Photinus is the deacon of Thessalonica alluded to in the preceding note. His heresy was, that the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Father, and that the Father was greater than the Son. The writers who endeavor to rescue the Pope at the expense of the Emperor say that Photinus died before the days of Pope Anastasius. ↩
149. Cahors is the cathedral town of the Department of the Lot, in the South of France, and the birthplace of the poet Clément Marot and of the romance-writer Calprenède. In the Middle Ages it seems to have been a nest of usurers. Matthew Paris, in his *Historia Major*, under date of 1235, has a chapter entitled, “Of the Usury of the Caursines,” which in the translation of Rev. J. A. Giles runs as follows:—

“In these days prevailed the horrible nuisance of the Caursines to such a degree that there was hardly any one in all England, especially among the bishops, who was not caught in their net. Even the king himself was held indebted to them in an uncalculable sum of money. For

they circumvented the needy in their necessities, cloaking their usury under the show of trade, and pretending not to know that whatever is added to the principal is usury, under whatever name it may be called. For it is manifest that their loans lie not in the path of charity, inasmuch as they do not hold out a helping hand to the poor to relieve them, but to deceive them; not to aid others in their starvation, but to gratify their own covetousness; seeing that the motive stamps our every deed.”



150. *Those within the fat lagoon*, the Irascible, Canto VII, VIII. [←](#)

151. *Whom the wind drives*, the Wanton, Canto V, and *whom the rain doth beat*, the Gluttonous, Canto VI. [←](#)

152. *And who encounter with such bitter tongues*, the Prodigal and Avaricious, Canto VII. [←](#)

153. The *Ethics* of Aristotle, VII i:—

“After these things, making another beginning, it must be observed by us that there are three species of things which are to be avoided in manners, viz. Malice, Incontinence, and Bestiality.”



154. The *Physics* of Aristotle, Book II. [←](#)

155. Genesis 1:28:—

“And God said unto them. Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”



156. Gabrielle Rossetti, in the “Comento Analitico” of his edition of the *Divina Commedia*, quotes here the lines of Florian:—

“*Nous ne recevons l’existence
Qu’afin de travailler pour nous, ou pour autrui:
De ce devoir sacre quiconque se dispense
Est puni par la Providence,
Par le besoin, ou par l’ennui.*”

↖

157. The constellation Pisces precedes Aries, in which the sun now is. This indicates the time to be a little before sunrise. It is Saturday morning.

↖

158. The Wain is the constellation Charles’s Wain, or Bootes; and Caurus is the Northwest, indicated by the Latin name of the northwest wind. ↲

159. With this Canto begins the Seventh Circle of the Inferno, in which the Violent are punished. In the first *Girone* or round are the Violent against their neighbors, plunged more or less deeply in the river of boiling blood. ↲

160. Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 242, has the following remarks upon Dante’s idea of rocks and mountains:—

“At the top of the abyss of the seventh circle, appointed for the ‘violent,’ or souls who had done evil by force, we are told, first, that the edge of it was composed of ‘great broken stones in a circle’; then, that the place was ‘Alpine’; and, becoming hereupon attentive, in order to hear what an Alpine place is like, we find that it was ‘like the place beyond Trent, where the rock, either by earthquake, or failure of support, has broken down to the plain, so that it gives any one at the top some means of getting down to the bottom.’ This is not a very elevated or enthusiastic description of an Alpine scene; and it is far from mended by the following verses, in which we are

told that Dante ‘began to go down by this great *unloading* of stones,’ and that they moved often under his feet by reason of the new weight. The fact is that Dante, by many expressions throughout the poem, shows himself to have been a notably bad climber; and being fond of sitting in the sun, looking at his fair Baptistry, or walking in a dignified manner on flat pavement in a long robe, it puts him seriously out of his way when he has to take to his hands and knees, or look to his feet; so that the first strong impression made upon him by any Alpine scene whatever is, clearly, that it is bad walking. When he is in a fright and hurry, and has a very steep place to go down, Virgil has to carry him altogether.”



161. Speaking of the region to which Dante here alludes, Eustace, *Classical Tour*, I 71, says:—

“The descent becomes more rapid between Roveredo and Ala; the river, which glided gently through the valley of Trent, assumes the roughness of a torrent; the defiles become narrower; and the mountains break into rocks and precipices, which occasionally approach the road, sometimes rise perpendicular from it, and now and then hang over it in terrible majesty.”

In a note he adds:—

“Amid these wilds the traveller cannot fail to notice a vast tract called the Slavini di Marco, covered with fragments of rock torn from the sides of the neighboring mountains by an earthquake, or perhaps by their own unsupported weight, and hurled down into the plains below. They spread over the whole valley, and in some places contract the road to a very narrow space. A few firs and cypresses scattered in the intervals, or sometimes rising out of the crevices of the rocks, cast a partial and melancholy shade

amid the surrounding nakedness and desolation. This scene of ruin seems to have made a deep impression upon the wild imagination of Dante, as he has introduced it into the twelfth canto of the Inferno, in order to give the reader an adequate idea of one of his infernal ramparts.”



162. The Minotaur, half bull, half man. See the infamous story in all the classical dictionaries. [←](#)
163. The Duke of Athens is Theseus. Chaucer gives him the same title in “The Knightes Tale”:—

“Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus.
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
That greter was ther non under the sonne.
Ful many a rich contree had he wonne.
What with his wisdom and his chevalrie,
He conquerd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was ycleped Scythia;
And wedded the freshe quene Ipolita,
And brought hire home with him to his contree
With mochel glorie and great solemnitee,
And eke hire yonge suster Emelie.
And thus with victorie and with melodic
Let I this worthy duk to Athenes ride,
And all his host, in armes him beside.”

Shakespeare also, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, calls him the Duke of Athens. [←](#)

164. Ariadne, who gave Theseus the silken thread to guide him back through the Cretan labyrinth after slaying the Minotaur. Hawthorne has beautifully told the old story in his *Tanglewood Tales*:—

“Ah, the bullheaded villain!” he says. “And O my good little people, you will perhaps see, one of these days, as I do now, that every human being who suffers anything evil to get into his nature, or to remain there, is a kind of Minotaur, an enemy of his fellow-creatures, and separated from all good companionship, as this poor monster was.”



165. Christ’s descent into Limbo, and the earthquake at the Crucifixion. [←](#)

166. This is the doctrine of Empedocles and other old philosophers. See Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Book V Chap. VI. The following passages are from Mr. Morrison’s translation:—

“Empedocles proceeded from the Eleatic principle of the oneness of all truth. In its unity it resembles a ball; he calls it the sphere, wherein the ancients recognized the God of Empedocles....

“Into the unity of the sphere all elementary things are combined by love, without difference or distinction: within it they lead a happy life, replete with holiness, and remote from discord:

They know no god of war nor the spirit of battles.

Nor Zeus, the sovereign, nor Cronos, nor yet Poseidon,
But Cypris the queen...

“The actual separation of the elements one from another is produced by discord; for originally they were bound together in the sphere, and therein continued perfectly unmovable. Now in this Empedocles posits different periods and different conditions of the world; for, according to the above position, originally all is united in love, and then subsequently the elements and living essences are separated....

“His assertion of certain mundane periods was taken by the ancients literally; for they tell us that, according to his theory. All was originally one by love, but afterwards many and at enmity with itself through discord.”



167. The Centaurs are set to guard this Circle, as symbolizing violence, with some form of which the classic poets usually associate them. [←](#)

168. Chaucer, “The Monkes Tale”:

“A leman had this noble champion,
That highte Deianire, as fresh as May;
And as thise clerkes maken mention,
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay:
Alas! this sherte, alas and wala wa!
Envenimed was sotilly withalle.
That or that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flesh all from his bones falle.”

Chiron was a son of Saturn; Pholus, of Silenus; and Nessus, of Ixion and the Cloud. [←](#)

169. Homer, *Iliad*, XI 832:

“Whom Chiron instructed, the most just of the Centaurs.”

Hawthorne gives a humorous turn to the fable of Chiron, in the *Tanglewood Tales*, p. 273:

“I have sometimes suspected that Master Chiron was not really very different from other people, but that, being a kindhearted and merry old fellow, he was in the habit of making believe that he was a horse, and scrambling about the schoolroom on all fours, and letting the little boys ride upon his back. And so, when his scholars had grown up, and grown old, and were trotting their grandchildren on

their knees, they told them about the sports of their school days; and these young folks took the idea that their grandfathers had been taught their letters by a Centaur, half man and half horse....

“Be that as it may, it has always been told for a fact, (and always will be told, as long as the world lasts,) that Chiron, with the head of a schoolmaster, had the body and legs of a horse. Just imagine the grave old gentleman clattering and stamping into the schoolroom on his four hoofs, perhaps treading on some little fellow’s toes, flourishing his switch tail instead of a rod, and, now and then, trotting out of doors to eat a mouthful of grass!”



170. Mr. Ruskin refers to this line in confirmation of his theory that “all great art represents something that it sees or believes in; nothing unseen or uncredited.” The passage is as follows. *Modern Painters*, III 83:—

“And just because it is always something that it sees or believes in, there is the peculiar character above noted, almost unmistakable, in all high and true ideals, of having been as it were studied from the life, and involving pieces of sudden familiarity, and close *specific* painting which never would have been admitted or even thought of, had not the painter drawn either from the bodily life or from the life of faith. For instance, Dante’s Centaur, Chiron, dividing his beard with his arrow before he can speak, is a thing that no mortal would ever have thought of, if he had not actually seen the Centaur do it. They might have composed handsome bodies of men and horses in all possible ways, through a whole life of pseudo-idealism, and yet never dreamed of any such thing. But the real living Centaur actually trotted across Dante’s brain, and he saw him do it.”



171. Alexander of Thessaly and Dionysius of Syracuse. [←](#)

172. Azzolino, or Ezzolino di Romano, tyrant of Padua, nicknamed the Son of the Devil. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, III 33, describes him as

“Fierce Ezelin, that most inhuman lord,
Who shall be deemed by men a child of hell.”

His Story may be found in Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, Chap. XIX. He so outraged the religious sense of the people by his cruelties, that a crusade was preached against him, and he died a prisoner in 1259, tearing the bandages from his wounds, and fierce and defiant to the last:—

“Ezzolino was small of stature,” says Sismondi, “but the whole aspect of his person, all his movements, indicated the soldier. His language was bitter, his countenance proud; and by a single look, he made the boldest tremble. His soul, so greedy of all crimes, felt no attraction for sensual pleasures. Never had Ezzolino loved women; and this perhaps is the reason why in his punishments he was as pitiless against them as against men. He was in his sixty-sixth year when he died; and his reign of blood had lasted thirty-four years.”

Many glimpses of him are given in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, as if his memory long haunted the minds of men. Here are two of them, from Novella 83:—

“Once upon a time Messer Azzolino da Romano made proclamation, through his own territories and elsewhere, that he wished to do a great charity, and therefore that all the beggars, both men and women, should assemble in his meadow, on a certain day, and to each he would give a new gown, and abundance of food. The news spread among the servants on all hands. When the day of assembling came, his seneschals went among them with the gowns and the food, and made them strip naked one

by one, and then clothed them with new clothes, and fed them. They asked for their old rags, but it was all in vain; for he put them into a heap and set fire to them.

Afterwards he found there so much gold and silver melted, that it more than paid the expense, and then he dismissed them with his blessing....

“To tell you how much he was feared, would be a long story, and many people know it. But I will recall how he, being one day with the Emperor on horseback, with all their people, they laid a wager as to which of them had the most beautiful sword. The Emperor drew from its sheath his own, which was wonderfully garnished with gold and precious stones. Then said Messer Azzolino: ‘It is very beautiful; but mine, without any great ornament, is far more beautiful’;—and he drew it forth. Then six hundred knights, who were with him, all drew theirs. When the Emperor beheld this cloud of swords, he said: ‘Yours is the most beautiful.’”



173. Obizzo da Esti, Marquis of Ferrara. He was murdered by Azzo, “whom he thought to be his son,” says Boccaccio, “though he was not.” The *Ottimo Comento* remarks:—

“Many call themselves sons, and are stepsons.”



174. Guido di Monforte, who murdered Prince Henry of England “in the bosom of God,” that is, in the church, at Viterbo. The event is thus narrated by Napier, *Florentine History*, I 283:—

“Another instance of this revengeful spirit occurred in the year 1271 at Viterbo, where the cardinals had assembled to elect a successor to Clement the Fourth, about whom they had been long disputing: Charles of Anjou and Philip of France, with Edward and Henry, sons of Richard, Duke

of Cornwall, had repaired there, the two first to hasten the election, which they finally accomplished by the elevation of Gregory the Tenth. During these proceedings Prince Henry, while taking the sacrament in the church of San Silvestro at Viterbo, was stabbed to the heart by his own cousin, Guy de Montfort, in revenge for the Earl of Leicester's death, although Henry was then endeavoring to procure his pardon. This sacrilegious act threw Viterbo into confusion, but Montfort had many supporters, one of whom asked him what he had done. '*I have taken my revenge,*' said he. '*But your father's body was trailed!*' At this reproach, De Montfort instantly reentered the church, walked straight to the altar, and, seizing Henry's body by the hair, dragged it through the aisle, and left it, still bleeding, in the open street: he then retired unmolested to the castle of his father-in-law. Count Rosso of the Maremma, and there remained in security!"

"The body of the Prince," says Barlow, *Study of Dante*, p. 125, "was brought to England, and interred at Hayles, in Gloucestershire, in the Abbey which his father had there built for monks of the Cistercian order; but his heart was put into a golden vase, and placed on the tomb of Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey; most probably, as stated by some writers, in the hands of a statue." ↵

175. Violence in all its forms was common enough in Florence in the age of Dante. ↵

176. Attila, the Scourge of God. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chap. 39, describes him thus:—

"Attila, the son of Mundzuk, deduced his noble, perhaps his regal, descent from the ancient Huns, who had formerly contended with the monarchs of China. His features, according to the observation of a Gothic historian, bore the stamp of his national origin; and the portrait of Attila exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuk; a large head, a swarthy complexion,

small, deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short, square body, of nervous strength, though of a disproportioned form. The haughty step and demeanor of the King of the Huns expressed the consciousness of his superiority above the rest of mankind; and he had a custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired.”



177. Which Pyrrhus and which Sextus, the commentators cannot determine; but incline to Pyrrhus of Epirus, and Sextus Pompey, the corsair of the Mediterranean. [←](#)
178. Nothing more is known of these highwaymen than that the first infested the Roman seashore, and that the second was of a noble family of Florence. [←](#)
179. In this Canto is described the punishment of those who had laid violent hands on themselves or their property. [←](#)
180. “Knights Tale,” 1977:—

“First on the wall was peinted a forest,
In which therwonneth neyther man ne best,
With knotty knarry barrein trees old
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to behold;
In which there ran a romble and a swough
As though a storme shuld bresten every bough.”



181. The Cecina is a small river running into the Mediterranean not many miles south of Leghorn; Corneto, a village in the Papal States, north of Civita Vecchia. The country is wild and thinly peopled, and studded with thickets, the haunts of the deer and the wild boar. This region is the fatal Maremma, thus described by Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 156:—

“Farther south is the Maremma, a region which, though now worse than a desert, is supposed to have been anciently both fertile and healthy. The Maremma certainly formed part of that Etruria which was called from its harvests the *annonaria*. Old Roman cisterns may still be traced, and the ruins of Populonium are still visible in the worst part of this tract: yet both nature and man seem to have conspired against it.

“Sylla threw this maritime part of Tuscany into enormous *latifundia* for his disbanded soldiers. Similar distributions continued to lessen its population during the Empire. In the younger Pliny’s time the climate was pestilential. The Lombards gave it a new aspect of misery. Wherever they found culture they built castles, and to each castle they allotted a ‘bandita’ or military fief. Hence baronial wars which have left so many picturesque ruins on the hills, and such desolation round them. Whenever a baron was conquered, his vassals escaped to the cities, and the vacant fief was annexed to the victorious. Thus stripped of men, the lands returned into a state of nature: some were flooded by the rivers, others grew into horrible forests, which enclose and concentrate the pestilence of the lakes and marshes.

“In some parts the water is brackish, and lies lower than the sea: in others it oozes full of tartar from beds of travertine. At the bottom or on the sides of hills are a multitude of hot springs, which form pools, called *Lagoni*. A few of these are said to produce borax: some, which are called *fumache*, exhale sulphur; others, called *bulicami*, boil with a mephitic gas. The very air above is only a pool of vapors, which sometimes undulate, but seldom flow off. It draws corruption from a rank, unshorn, rotting vegetation, from reptiles and fish both living and dead.

“All nature conspires to drive man away from this fatal region; but man will ever return to his bane, if it be well baited. The Casentine peasants still migrate hither in the winter to feed their cattle: and here they sow corn, make

charcoal, saw wood, cut hoops, and peel cork. When summer returns they decamp, but often too late; for many leave their corpses on the road, or bring home the Maremmian disease.”



182. *Aeneid*, III, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“The shores of the Strophades first receive me rescued from the waves. The Strophades, so called by a Greek name, are islands situated in the great Ionian Sea; which direful Celaeno and the other Harpies inhabit, from what time Phineus’ palace was closed against them, and they were frightened from his table, which they formerly haunted. No monster more fell than they, no plague and scourge of the gods more cruel, ever issued from the Stygian waves. They are fowls with virgin faces, most loathsome is their bodily discharge, hands hooked, and looks ever pale with famine. Hither conveyed, as soon as we entered the port, lo! we observe joyous herds of cattle roving up and down the plains, and flocks of goats along the meadows without a keeper. We rush upon them with our swords, and invoke the gods and Jove himself to share the booty. Then along the winding shore we raise the couches, and feast on the rich repast. But suddenly, with direful swoop, the Harpies are upon us from the mountains, shake their wings with loud din, prey upon our banquet, and defile everything with their touch: at the same time, together with a rank smell, hideous screams arise.”



183. His words in the *Aeneid*, III, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“Near at hand there chanced to be a rising ground, on whose top were young cornel-trees, and a myrtle rough with thick, spear-like branches. I came up to it, and

attempting to tear from the earth the verdant wood, that I might cover the altars with the leafy boughs, I observe a dreadful prodigy, and wondrous to relate. For from that tree which first is torn from the soil, its rooted fibres being burst asunder, drops of black blood distil, and stain the ground with gore: cold terror shakes my limbs, and my chill blood is congealed with fear. I again essay to tear off a limber bough from another, and thoroughly explore the latent cause: and from the rind of that other the purple blood descends. Raising in my mind many an anxious thought, I with reverence besought the rural nymphs, and father Mars, who presides over the Thracian territories, kindly to prosper the vision and avert evil from the omen. But when I at tempted the boughs a third time with a more vigorous effort, and on my knees struggled against the opposing mould, (shall I speak, or shall I forbear?) a piteous groan is heard from the bottom of the rising ground, and a voice sent forth reaches my ears: ‘Aeneas, why dost thou tear an unhappy wretch? Spare me, now that I am in my grave; forbear to pollute with guilt thy pious hands: Troy brought me forth no stranger to you; nor is it from the trunk this blood distils.’”



184. Chaucer, “Knights Tale,” 2339:—

“And as it queinte, it made a whisteling
As don these brondes wet in hir brenning,
And at the brondes ende outran anon
As it were blody dropes many on.”

See also Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I ii 30.

185. Pietro della Vigna, Chancellor of the Emperor Frederick II. Napier’s account of him is as follows, *Florentine History*, I 197:—

“The fate of his friend and minister, Piero delle Vigne of Capua, if truly told, would nevertheless impress us with an unfavorable idea of his mercy and magnanimity: Piero was sent with Taddeo di Sessa as Frederick’s advocate and representative to the Council of Lyons, which was assembled by his friend Innocent the Fourth, nominally to reform the Church, but really to impart more force and solemnity to a fresh sentence of excommunication and deposition. There Taddeo spoke with force and boldness for his master; but Piero was silent; and hence he was accused of being, like several others, bribed by the Pope, not only to desert the Emperor, but to attempt his life; and whether he were really culpable, or the victim of court intrigue, is still doubtful. Frederick, on apparently good evidence, condemned him to have his eyes burned out, and the sentence was executed at San Miniato al Tedesco: being afterwards sent on horseback to Pisa, where he was hated, as an object for popular derision, he died, as is conjectured, from the effects of a fall while thus cruelly exposed, and not by his own hand, as Dante believed and sung,”

Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, V 499, gives the story thus:—

“Peter de Vineâ had been raised by the wise choice of Frederick to the highest rank and influence. All the acts of Frederick were attributed to his Chancellor. De Vineâ, like his master, was a poet; he was one of the counsellors in his great scheme of legislation. Some rumors spread abroad that at the Council of Lyons, though Frederick had forbidden all his representatives from holding private intercourse with the Pope, De Vineâ had many secret conferences with Innocent, and was accused of betraying his master’s interests. Yet there was no seeming diminution in the trust placed in De Vineâ. Still, to the end the Emperor’s letters concerning the disaster at Parma are

by the same hand. Over the cause of his disgrace and death, even in his own day, there was deep doubt and obscurity. The popular rumor ran that Frederick was ill; the physician of De Vineâ prescribed for him; the Emperor having received some warning, addressed De Vineâ: ‘My friend, in thee I have full trust; art thou sure that this is medicine, not poison?’ De Vineâ replied: ‘How often has my physician ministered healthful medicines!—why are you now afraid?’ Frederick took the cup, sternly commanded the physician to drink half of it. The physician threw himself at the King’s feet, and, as he fell, overthrew the liquor. But what was left was administered to some criminals, who died in agony. The Emperor wrung his hands and wept bitterly: ‘Whom can I now trust, betrayed by my own familiar friend? Never can I know security, never can I know joy more.’ By one account Peter de Vineâ was led ignominiously on an ass through Pisa, and thrown into prison, where he dashed his brains out against the wall. Dante’s immortal verse has saved the fame of De Vineâ: according to the poet he was the victim of wicked and calumnious jealousy.”

See also Giuseppe de Blasiis, *Vita et Opere di Pietro della Vigna*. [←](#)

186. *Iliad*, XII 146: “Like two wild boars, which catch the coming tumult of men and dogs in the mountains, and, advancing obliquely to the attack, break down the wood about them, cutting it off at the roots.”

Chaucer, *Legende of Goode Women*:—

“Envie ys lavendere of the court alway;
For she ne parteth neither nyght ne day
Out of the house of Cesar, thus saith Daunte.”

[←](#)

187. “Lano,” says Boccaccio, *Comento*, “was a young gentleman of Siena, who had a large patrimony, and associating himself with a club of other young Sienese, called the Spendthrift Club, they also being all

rich, together with them, not spending but squandering, in a short time he consumed all that he had and became very poor.” Joining some Florentine troops sent out against the Aretines, he was in a skirmish at the parish of Toppo, which Dante calls a joust; “and notwithstanding he might have saved himself,” continues Boccaccio, “remembering his wretched condition, and it seeming to him a grievous thing to bear poverty, as he had been very rich, he rushed into the thick of the enemy and was slain, as perhaps he desired to be.” [←](#)

188. Some commentators interpret these dogs as poverty and despair, still pursuing their victims. The *Ottimo Comento* calls them “poor men who, to follow pleasure and the kitchens of other people, abandoned their homes and families, and are therefore transformed into hunting dogs, and pursue and devour their masters.” [←](#)
189. Jacopo da St. Andrea was a Paduan of like character and life as Lano. “Among his other squanderings,” says the *Ottimo Comento*, “it is said that, wishing to see a grand and beautiful fire, he had one of his own villas burned.” [←](#)
190. Florence was first under the protection of the god Mars; afterwards under that of St. John the Baptist. But in Dante’s time the statue of Mars was still standing on a column at the head of the Ponte Vecchio. It was overthrown by an inundation of the Arno in 1333. See [note 213](#).
[←](#)
191. Florence was destroyed by Totila in 450, and never by Attila. In Dante’s time the two seem to have been pretty generally confounded. The *Ottimo Comento* remarks upon this point:—

“Some say that Totila was one person and Attila another; and some say that he was one and the same man.”

- [←](#)
192. Dante does not mention the name of this suicide; Boccaccio thinks, for one of two reasons:—

“either out of regard to his surviving relatives, who peradventure are honorable men, and therefore he did not wish to stain them with the infamy of so dishonest a death, or else (as in those times, as if by a malediction sent by God upon our city, many hanged themselves) that each one might apply it to either he pleased of these many.”



193. In this third round of the seventh circle are punished the Violent against God,

“In heart denying and blaspheming him,
And by disdaining Nature and her bounty.”



194. When he retreated across the Libyan desert with the remnant of Pompey’s army after the battle of Pharsalia. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, Book IX:—

“Foremost, behold, I lead you to the toil,
My feet shall foremost print the dusty soil.”



195. Boccaccio confesses that he does not know where Dante found this tradition of Alexander. Benvenuto da Imola says it is in a letter which Alexander wrote to Aristotle. He quotes the passage as follows:—

“In India ignited vapors fell from heaven like snow. I commanded my soldiers to trample them under foot.”

Dante perhaps took the incident from the old metrical *Romance of Alexander*, which in some form or other was current in his time. In the English version of it, published by the Roxburghe Club, we find the rain of fire, and a fall of snow; but it is the snow, and not the fire, that

the soldiers trample down. So likewise in the French version. The English runs as follows, line 4164:—

“Than fandis he furth as I finde five and twenti days,
Come to a velanus vale thare was a vile cheele,
Quare flaggis of the fell snawe fell fra the heven,
That was a brade, sais the buke, as battes ere of wolle.
Than bett he many brigt fire and lest it bin nold,
And made his folk with thaire feete as florcs it to trede.

:

Than fell ther fra the firmament as it ware fell sparkes,
Ropand doune o rede fire, than any rayne thikir.”

↖

196. Canto VIII 83. ↲

197. Mount Etna, under which, with his Cyclops, Vulcan forged the thunderbolts of Jove. ↲

198. Capaneus was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes. Euripides, *Phoenissae*, line 1188, thus describes his death:—

“While o’er the battlements sprung Capaneus,
Jove struck him with his thunder, and the earth
Resounded with the crack; meanwhile mankind
Stood all aghast; from off the ladder’s height
His limbs were far asunder hurled, his hair
Flew to’ards Olympus, to the ground his blood,
His hands and feet whirled like Ixion’s wheel,
And to the earth his flaming body fell.”

Also Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I:—

“As he the cite wolde assaile,
God toke him selfe the bataile
Ayen his pride, and fro the sky

A firy thonder sudeinly
He sende and him to pouder smote.”



199. Like Hawthorne’s scarlet letter, at once an ornament and a punishment.



200. The Bulicame or Hot Springs of Viterbo. Villani, *Cronica*, Book I Ch. 51, gives the following brief account of these springs, and of the origin of the name of Viterbo:—

“The city of Viterbo was built by the Romans, and in old times was called Vigezia, and the citizens Vigentians. And the Romans sent the sick there on account of the baths which flow from the Bulicame, and therefore it was called *Vita Erbo*, that is, life of the sick, or city of life.”



201. “The building thus appropriated,” says Mr. Barlow, *Contributions to the Study of the Divine Comedy*, p. 129:—

“would appear to have been the large ruined edifice known as the Bagno di Ser Paolo Benigno, situated between the Bulicame and Viterbo. About half a mile beyond the Porta di Faule, which leads to Toscanella, we come to a way called Riello, after which we arrive at the said ruined edifice, which received the water from the Bulicame by conduits, and has popularly been regarded as the Bagno delle Meretrici alluded to by Dante; there is no other building here found, which can dispute with it the claim to this distinction.”



202. The shouts and cymbals of the Corybantes, drowning the cries of the infant Jove, lest Saturn should find him and devour him.

203. The statue of Time, turning its back upon the East and looking towards Rome, Compare Daniel 2:31. [←](#)

204. The Ages of Gold, Silver, Brass, and Iron. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.
See also Don Quixote's discourse to the goatherds, inspired by the acorns they gave him. Book II Chap. 3; and Tasso's Ode to the Golden Age, in the *Aminta*. [←](#)

205. The Tears of Time, forming the infernal rivers that flow into Cocytus.
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II 577:—

“Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.”

[←](#)

206. See Purgatorio XXVIII. [←](#)

207. In this Canto is described the punishment of the Violent against Nature;—

“And for this reason does the smallest round Seal with its signet Sodom and Cahors.”

[←](#)

208. Guizzante is not Ghent, but Cadsand, an island opposite L'Ecluse, where the great canal of Bruges enters the sea. A canal thus flowing into the sea, the dikes on either margin uniting with the sea-dikes, gives a perfect image of this part of the Inferno.

Lodovico Guicciardini in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (1581), p. 416, speaking of Cadsand, says:—

“This is the very place of which our great poet Dante makes mention in the fifteenth chapter of the Inferno, calling it incorrectly, perhaps by error of the press, Guizzante; where still at the present day great repairs are continually made upon the dikes, because here, and in the environs towards Bruges, the flood, or I should rather say the tide, on account of the situation and lowness of the land, has very great power, particularly during a northwest wind.”



209. These lines recall Goldsmith’s description in the *Traveller*:—

“Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire’s artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow;
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar.
Scoops out an empire and usurps the shore.”



210. That part of the Alps in which the Brenta rises. [✉](#)

211. The reading *la mia* seems preferable to *la mano*, and is justified by line 45. [✉](#)

212. Brunetto Latini, Dante’s friend and teacher. Villani thus speaks of him, *Cronica*, VIII 10:—

“In this year 1294 died in Florence a worthy citizen,
whose name was Ser Brunetto Latini, who was a great

philosopher and perfect master of rhetoric, both in speaking and in writing. He commented the Rhetoric of Tully, and made the good and useful book called the *Tesoro*, and the *Tesoretto*, and the *Keys of the Tesoro*, and many other books of philosophy, and of vices and of virtues, and he was Secretary of our Commune, He was a worldly man, but we have made mention of him because he was the first master in refining the Florentines, and in teaching them how to speak correctly, and how to guide and govern our Republic on political principles."

Boccaccio, *Comento*, speaks of him thus:—

"This Ser Brunetto Latini was a Florentine, and a very able man in some of the liberal arts, and in philosophy; but his principal calling was that of Notary; and he held himself and his calling in such great esteem, that, having made a mistake in a contract drawn up by him, and having been in consequence accused of fraud, he preferred to be condemned for it rather than to confess that he had made a mistake; and afterwards he quitted Florence in disdain, and leaving in memory of himself a book composed by him, called the *Tesoretto*, he went to Paris and lived there a long time, and composed a book there which is in French, and in which he treats of many matters regarding the liberal arts, and moral and natural philosophy, and metaphysics, which he called the *Tesoro*; and finally, I believe, he died in Paris."

He also wrote a short poem, called the "*Favoletto*," and perhaps the "*Pataffio*," a satirical poem in the Florentine dialect, "a jargon," says Nardini, "which cannot be understood even with a commentary." But his fame rests upon the *Tesoretto* and the *Tesoro*, and more than all upon the fact that he was Dante's teacher, and was put by him into a very disreputable place in the Inferno. He died in Florence, not in Paris, as Boccaccio supposes, and was buried in Santa Maria Novella, where his tomb still exists. It is strange that Boccaccio should not have

known this, as it was in this church that the “seven young gentlewomen” of his *Decameron* met “on a Tuesday morning,” and resolved to go together into the country, where they “might hear the birds sing, and see the verdure of the hills and plains, and the fields full of grain undulating like the sea.”

The poem of the *Tesoretto*, written in a jingling metre, which reminds one of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, is itself a Vision, with the customary allegorical personages of the Virtues and Vices. Ser Brunetto, returning from an embassy to King Alphonso of Spain, meets on the plain of Roncesvalles a student of Bologna, riding on a bay mule, who informs him that the Guelfs have been banished from Florence. Whereupon Ser Brunetto, plunged in meditation and sorrow, loses the high road and wanders in a wondrous forest. Here he discovers the august and gigantic figure of Nature, who relates to him the creation of the world, and gives him a banner to protect him on his pilgrimage through the forest, in which he meets with no adventures, but with the Virtues and Vices, Philosophy, Fortune, Ovid, and the God of Love, and sundry other characters, which are sung at large through eight or ten chapters. He then emerges from the forest, and confesses himself to the monks of Montpellier; after which he goes back into the forest again, and suddenly finds himself on the summit of Olympus; and the poem abruptly leaves him discoursing about the elements with Ptolemy,

“*Mastro di storlomia
E di filosofia.*”

It has been supposed by some commentators that Dante was indebted to the *Tesoretto* for the first idea of the *Commedia*. “If any one is pleased to imagine this,” says the Abbate Zannoni in the Preface to his edition of the *Tesoretto*, (Florence, 1824,) “he must confess that a slight and almost invisible spark served to kindle a vast conflagration.”

The *Tesoro*, which is written in French, is a much more ponderous and pretentious volume. Hitherto it has been known only in manuscript, or in the Italian translation of Giamboni, but at length appears as one of the volumes of the *Collection de Documents Inédits sur l’Histoire de France*, under the title of *Li Livres dou Tresor*, edited

by P. Chabaille, Paris, 1863; a stately quarto of some seven hundred pages, which it would assuage the fiery torment of Ser Brunetto to look upon, and justify him in saying

“Commended unto thee be my Tesoro,
In which I still live, and no more I ask.”

The work is quaint and curious, but mainly interesting as being written by Dante’s schoolmaster, and showing what he knew and what he taught his pupil. I cannot better describe it than in the author’s own words. Book I ch. I:—

“The smallest part of this Treasure is like unto ready money, to be expended daily in things needful; that is, it treats of the beginning of time, of the antiquity of old histories, of the creation of the world, and in fine of the nature of all things....

“The second part, which treats of the vices and virtues, is of precious stones, which give unto man delight and virtue; that is to say, what things a man should do, and what he should not, and shows the reason why....

“The third part of the Treasure is of fine gold; that is to say, it teaches a man to speak according to the rules of rhetoric, and how a ruler ought to govern those beneath him....

“And I say not that this book is extracted from my own poor sense and my own naked knowledge, but, on the contrary, it is like a honeycomb gathered from diverse flowers; for this book is wholly compiled from the wonderful sayings of the authors who before our time have treated of philosophy, each one according to his knowledge....

“And if any one should ask why this book is written in Romance, according to the language of the French, since we are Italian, I should say it is for two reasons; one, because we are in France, and the other, because this

speech is more delectable, and more common to all people.”



213. “Afterwards,” says Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, Book I Pt. I ch. 37, “the Romans besieged Fiesole, till at last they conquered it and brought it into subjection. Then they built upon the plain, which is at the foot of the high rocks on which that city stood, another city, that is now called Florence. And know that the spot of ground where Florence stands was formerly called the House of Mars, that is to say the House of War; for Mars, who is one of the seven planets, is called the God of War, and as such was worshipped of old. Therefore it is no wonder that the Florentines are always in war and in discord, for that planet reigns over them. Of this Master Brunez Latins ought to know the truth, for he was born there, and was in exile on account of war with the Florentines, when he composed this book.”

See also Villani, I 38, who assigns a different reason for the Florentine dissensions:—

“And observe, that if the Florentines are always in war and dissension among themselves it is not to be wondered at, they being descended from two nations so contrary and hostile and different in customs, as were the noble and virtuous Romans and the rude and warlike Fiesolans.”

Again, IV 7, he attributes the Florentine dissensions to both the abovementioned causes.

214. Villani, IV 31, tells the story of certain columns of porphyry given by the Pisans to the Florentines for guarding their city while the Pisan army had gone to the conquest of Majorca. The columns were cracked by fire, but being covered with crimson cloth, the Florentines did not perceive it. Boccaccio repeats the story with variations, but does not think it a sufficient reason for calling the Florentines blind, and confesses that he does not know what reason there can be for so calling them.

215. The “other text” is the prediction of his banishment. Canto X 81, and the Lady is Beatrice. [←](#)

216. Boileau, *Épitre*, V:—

“*Qu'à son gré désormais la fortune me joue,
On me verra dormir au branle de sa roué.*”

And Tennyson’s Song of “Fortune and her Wheel”:—

“Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro’ sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

“Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

“Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

“Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.”

[←](#)

217. Priscian, the grammarian of Constantinople in the sixth century. [←](#)

218. Francesco d’Accorso, a distinguished jurist and Professor at Bologna in the thirteenth century, celebrated for his Commentary upon the Code Justinian. [←](#)

219. Andrea de’ Mozzi, Bishop of Florence, transferred by the Pope, the “Servant of Servants,” to Vicenza; the two cities being here designated by the rivers on which they are respectively situated. [←](#)

220. See [note 212](#). [←](#)

221. The *Corsa del Pallio*, or foot races, at Verona; in which a green mantle, or *Pallio*, was the prize. Buttura says that these footraces are still continued (1823), and that he has seen them more than once; but certainly not in the nude state in which Boccaccio describes them, and which renders Dante's comparison more complete and striking. [←](#)

222. In this Canto the subject of the preceding is continued. [←](#)

223. Guidoguerra, Tegghiajo Aldobrandi, and Jacopo Rusticucci. [←](#)

224. The good Gualdrada was a daughter of Bellincion Berti, the simple citizen of Florence in the olden time, who used to walk the streets "begirt with bone and leather," as mentioned in the *Paradiso*, XV 112. Villani, I 37, reports a story of her with all the brevity of a chronicler. Boccaccio tells the same story, as if he were writing a page of the Decameron. In his version it runs as follows:—

"The Emperor Otho IV, being by chance in Florence and having gone to the festival of St. John, to make it more gay with his presence, it happened that to the church with the other city dames, as our custom is, came the wife of Messer Berto, and brought with her a daughter of hers called Gualdrada, who was still unmarried. And as they sat there with the others, the maiden being beautiful in face and figure, nearly all present turned round to look at her, and among the rest the Emperor. And having much commended her beauty and manners, he asked Messer Berto, who was near him, who she was. To which Messer Berto smiling answered: 'She is the daughter of one who, I dare say, would let you kiss her if you wished.' These words the young lady heard, being near the speaker; and somewhat troubled by the opinion her father seemed to have of her, that, if he wished it, she would suffer herself to be kissed by any one in this free way, rising, and looking a moment at her father, and blushing with shame, said: 'Father, do not make such courteous promises at the

expense of my modesty, for certainly, unless by violence, no one shall ever kiss me, except him whom you shall give me as my husband.' The Emperor, on hearing this, much commended the words and the young lady.... And calling forward a noble youth named Guido Beisangue, who was afterwards called Guido the Elder, who as yet had no wife, he insisted upon his marrying her; and gave him as her dowry a large territory in Cassentino and the Alps, and made him Count thereof."

Ampère says in his *Voyage Dantesque*, page 242:—

"Near the battlefield of Campaldino stands the little town of Poppi, whose castle was built in 1230 by the father of the Arnolfo who built some years later the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence. In this castle is still shown the bedroom of the beautiful and modest Gualdrada."

Francesco Sansovino, an Italian novelist of the sixteenth century, has made Gualdrada the heroine of one of his tales, but has strangely perverted the old tradition. His story may be found in Roscoe's *Italian Novelists*, III p. 107. [←](#)

225. Tegghiajo Aldobrandi was a distinguished citizen of Florence, and opposed what Malespini calls "the ill counsel of the people," that war should be declared against the Sienese, which war resulted in the battle of Monte Aperto and the defeat of the Florentines. [←](#)
226. Jacopo Rusticucci was a rich Florentine gentleman, whose chief misfortune seems to have been an ill-assorted marriage. Whereupon the amiable Boccaccio in his usual Decameron style remarks:—

"Men ought not then to be overhasty in getting married; on the contrary, they should come to it with much precaution."

And then he indulges in five octavo pages against matrimony and woman in general. [←](#)

227. See Macchiavelli's story of "Belfagor," wherein Minos and Rhadamanthus, and the rest of the infernal judges, are greatly surprised to hear an infinite number of condemned souls "lament nothing so bitterly as their folly in having taken wives, attributing to them the whole of their misfortune." [←](#)
228. Boccaccio, in his *Comento*, speaks of Guglielmo Borsiere as "a courteous gentleman of good breeding and excellent manners"; and in the *Decameron*, Gior. I Nov. 8, tells of a sharp rebuke administered by him to Messer Ermino de' Grimaldi, a miser of Genoa:—

"It came to pass, that, whilst by spending nothing he went on accumulating wealth, there came to Genoa a well-bred and witty gentleman called Gulielmo Borsiere, one nothing like the courtiers of the present day; who, to the great reproach of the debauched dispositions of such as would now be reputed fine gentlemen, should more properly style themselves asses, brought up amidst the filthiness and sink of mankind, rather than in courts....

"This Gulielmo, whom I before mentioned, was much visited and respected by the better sort of people at Genoa; when having made some stay here, and hearing much talk of Ermino's sordidness, he became desirous of seeing him. Now Ermino had been informed of Gulielmo's worthy character, and having, however covetous he was, some small sparks of gentility, he received him in a courteous manner, and, entering into discourse together, he took him, and some Genoese who came along with him, to see a fine house which he had lately built: and when he had showed every part of it, he said: 'Pray, sir, can you, who have heard and seen so much, tell me of something that was never yet seen, to have painted in my hall?' To whom Gulielmo, hearing him speak so simply, replied: 'Sir, I can tell you of nothing which has never yet been seen, that I know of; unless it be sneezing, or some thing of that sort; but if you please, I can tell you of a thing which, I believe, you never saw.' Said Ermmo (little expecting such an

answer as he received), ‘I beg you would let me know what that is.’ Guglielmo immediately replied, ‘Paint Liberality.’ When Ermino heard this, such a sudden shame seized him, as quite changed his temper from what it had hitherto been; and he said: ‘Sir, I will have her painted in such a manner that neither you, nor any one else, shall be able to say, hereafter, that I am unacquainted with her.’ And from that time such effect had Guglielmo’s words upon him, he became the most liberal and courteous gentleman, and was the most respected, both by strangers and his own citizens, of any in Genoa.”



229. Monte Veso is among the Alps, between Piedmont and Savoy, where the Po takes its rise. From this point eastward to the Adriatic, all the rivers on the left or northern slope of the Apennines are tributaries to the Po, until we come to the Montone, which above Forli is called Acquacheta. This is the first which flows directly into the Adriatic, and not into the Po. At least it was so in Dante’s time. Now, by some change in its course, the Lamone, farther north, has opened itself a new outlet, and is the first to make its own way to the Adriatic. See Barlow, *Contributions to the Study of the Divine Comedy*, p. 131. This comparison shows the delight which Dante took in the study of physical geography. To reach the waterfall of Acquacheta he traverses in thought the entire valley of the Po, stretching across the whole of Northern Italy. [←](#)
230. Boccaccio’s interpretation of this line, which has been adopted by most of the commentators since his time, is as follows:—

“I was for a long time in doubt concerning the author’s meaning in this line; but being by chance at this monastery of San Benedetto, in company with the abbot, he told me that there had once been a discussion among the Counts who owned the mountain, about building a village near the waterfall, as a convenient place for a settlement, and bringing into it their vassals scattered on

neighboring farms; but the leader of the project dying, it was not carried into effect; and that is what the author says, *Ove dovea per mille*, that is, for many, *esser ricetto*, that is, home and habitation.”

Doubtless grammatically the words will bear this meaning. But evidently the idea in the author’s mind, and which he wished to impress upon the reader’s, was that of a waterfall plunging at a single leap down a high precipice. To this idea, the suggestion of buildings and inhabitants is wholly foreign, and adds neither force nor clearness. Whereas, to say that the river plunged at one bound over a precipice high enough for a thousand cascades, presents at once a vivid picture to the imagination, and I have interpreted the line accordingly, making the contrast between *una scesa* and *mille*. It should not be forgotten that, while some editions read *dovea*, others read *dovria*, and even *potria*. [←](#)

231. This cord has puzzled the commentators exceedingly. Boccaccio, Volpi, and Venturi do not explain it. The anonymous author of the *Ottimo*, Benvenuto da Imola, Buti, Landino, Vellutello, and Daniello, all think it means fraud, which Dante had used in the pursuit of pleasure—“the panther with the paintedskin.” Lombardi is of opinion that, “by girding himself with the Franciscan cord, he had endeavored to restrain his sensual appetites, indicated by the panther; and still wearing the cord as a Tertiary of the Order, he makes it serve here to deceive Geryon, and bring him up.” Biagioli understands by it “the humility with which a man should approach Science, because it is she that humbles the proud.” Fraticelli thinks it means vigilance; Tommaseo, “the good faith with which he hoped to win the Florentines, and now wishes to deal with their fraud, so that it may not harm him”; and Gabrielli Rossetti says, “Dante flattered himself, acting as a sincere Ghibelline, that he should meet with good faith from his Guelf countrymen, and met instead with horrible fraud.”

Dante elsewhere speaks of the cord in a good sense. In *Purgatorio*, VII 114, Peter of Aragon is “girt with the cord of every virtue,” In *Inferno*, XXVII 92, it is mortification, “the cord that used to make

those girt with it more meagre"; and in *Paradiso*, XI 87, it is humility, "that family which had already girt the humble cord."

It will be remembered that St. Francis, the founder of the Cordeliers (the wearers of the cord), used to call his body *asino*, or ass, and to subdue it with the *capestro*, or halter. Thus the cord is made to symbolize the subjugation of the animal nature. This renders Lombardi's interpretation the most intelligible and satisfactory, though Virgil seems to have thrown the cord into the abyss simply because he had nothing else to throw, and not with the design of deceiving. ↵

232. As a man does naturally in the act of throwing. ↵

233. That Geryon, seeing the cord, ascends, expecting to find some *moine défroqué*, and carry him down, as Lombardi suggests, is hardly admissible; for that was not his office. The spirits were hurled down to their appointed places, as soon as Minos doomed them. *Inferno*, V 15.

↵

234. Even to a steadfast heart. ↵

235. In this Canto is described the punishment of Usurers, as sinners against Nature and Art. See *Inferno* XI 109:—

"And since the usurer takes another way,
Nature herself and in her follower
Disdains he, for elsewhere he puts his hope."

The monster Geryon, here used as the symbol of Fraud, was born of Chrysaor and Callirhoe, and is generally represented by the poets as having three bodies and three heads. He was in ancient times King of Hesperia or Spain, living on Erytheia, the Red Island of sunset, and was slain by Hercules, who drove away his beautiful oxen. The nimble fancy of Hawthorne thus depicts him in his *Wonder-Book*, p. 148:—

"But was it really and truly an old man? Certainly at first sight it looked very like one; but on closer inspection, it rather seemed to be some kind of a creature that lived in the sea. For on his legs and arms there were scales, such

as fishes have; he was web-footed and web-fingered, after the fashion of a duck; and his long beard, being of a greenish tinge, had more the appearance of a tuft of seaweed than of an ordinary beard. Have you never seen a stick of timber, that has been long tossed about by the waves, and has got all overgrown with barnacles, and at last, drifting ashore, seems to have been thrown up from the very deepest bottom of the sea? Well, the old man would have put you in mind of just such a wave-tost spar.”

The three bodies and three heads, which old poetic fable has given to the monster Geryon, are interpreted by modern prose as meaning the three Balearic Islands, Majorca, Minorca, and Ivica, over which he reigned. [✉](#)

236. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, XIV 87, Rose’s Tr., thus depicts Fraud:—

“With pleasing mien, grave walk, and decent vest,
Fraud rolled her eyeballs humbly in her head;
And such benign and modest speech possest,
She might a Gabriel seem who *Ave* said.
Foul was she and deformed in all the rest;
But with a mantle, long and widely spread,
Concealed her hideous parts; and evermore
Beneath the stole a poisoned dagger wore.”

The Gabriel saying *Ave* is from Dante, *Purgatory*, X 40:—

“One would have sworn that he was saying *Ave*.”

[✉](#)

237. Tartars nor Turks, “who are most perfect masters therein,” says Boccaccio, “as we can clearly see in Tartarian cloths, which truly are so skilfully woven, that no painter with his brush could equal, much less surpass them. The Tartars are...” And with this unfinished sentence close the Lectures upon Dante, begun by Giovanni Boccaccio on Sunday, August 9, 1373, in the church of San Stefano, in Florence.

That there were some critics among his audience is apparent from this sonnet, which he addressed “to one who had censured his public Exposition of Dante.” See D. G. Rosetti, *Early Italian Poets*, p. 447:—

“If Dante mourns, there wheresoe’er he be,
That such high fancies of a soul so proud
Should be laid open to the vulgar crowd,
(As, touching my Discourse, I ’m told by thee,)
This were my grievous pain; and certainly
My proper blame should not be disavowed;
Though hereof somewhat, I declare aloud,
Were due to others, not alone to me.
False hopes, true poverty, and therewithal
The blinded judgment of a host of friends,
And their entreaties, made that I did thus.
But of all this there is no gain at all
Unto the thankless souls with whose base ends
Nothing agrees that’s great or generous.”

↖

238. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI:—

“One at the loom so excellently skilled
That to the Goddess she refused to yield.”

↖

239. Their love of gold still haunting them in the other world. ↲

240. The arms of the Gianfigliacci of Florence. ↲

241. The arms of the Ubbriachi of Florence. ↲

242. The Scrovigni of Padua. ↲

243. Vitaliano del Dente of Padua. ↲

244. Giovanni Bujamonte, who seems to have had the ill-repute of being the greatest usurer of his day, called here in irony the “sovereign cavalier.” [←](#)
245. As the ass-driver did in the streets of Florence, when Dante beat him for singing his verses amiss. See Sacchetti, Nov. CXV [←](#)
246. Dante makes as short work with these usurers, as if he had been a curious traveller walking through the Ghetto of Rome, or the Judengasse of Frankfort. [←](#)
247. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, Addison’s Tr.:—

“Half dead with sudden fear he dropt the reins;
The horses felt ’em loose upon their manes,
And, flying out through all the plains above,
Ran uncontrolled where’er their fury drove;
Rushed on the stars, and through a pathless way
Of unknown regions hurried on the day.
And now above, and now below they flew,
And near the earth the burning chariot drew.

:

At once from life and from the chariot driv’n,
Th’ ambitious boy fell thunder-struck from heav’n.
The horses started with a sudden bound,
And flung the reins and chariot to the ground:
The studded harness from their necks they broke,
Here fell a wheel, and here a silver spoke,
Here were the beam and axle torn away;
And, scatter’d o’er the earth, the shining fragments lay.
The breathless Phaeton, with flaming hair.
Shot from the chariot, like a falling star.
That in a summer’s ev’ning from the top
Of heav’n drops down, or seems at least to drop;
Till on the Po his blasted corpse was hurled,
Far from his country, in the Western World.”

↖

248. The Milky Way. In Spanish *El camino de Santiago*; in the Northern Mythology the pathway of the ghosts going to Valhalla. ↲

249. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, Croxall's Tr.:—

“The soft'ning wax, that felt a nearer sun,
Dissolv'd apace, and soon began to run.
The youth in vain his melting pinions shakes,
His feathers gone, no longer air he takes.
O father, father, as he strove to cry,
Down to the sea he tumbled from on high.
And found his fate; yet still subsists by fame,
Among those waters that retain his name.
The father, now no more a father, cries.
Ho, Icarus! where are you? as he flies:
Where shall I seek my boy? he cries again.
And saw his feathers scattered on the main.”

↖

250. Lucan, *Pharsalia* I:—

“To him the Balearic sling is slow.
And the shaft loiters from the Parthian bow.”

↖

251. Here begins the third division of the Inferno, embracing the Eighth and Ninth Circles, in which the Fraudulent are punished.

“But because fraud is man's peculiar vice
More it displeases God; and so stand lowest
The fraudulent, and greater dole assails them.”

The Eighth Circle is called Malebolge, or Evil-budgets, and consists of ten concentric ditches, or *Bolge* of stone, with dikes between, and

rough bridges running across them to the centre like the spokes of a wheel.

In the First Bolgia are punished Seducers, and in the Second, Flatterers. ↲

252. Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III p. 237, says:—

“Our slates and granites are often of very lovely colors; but the Apennine limestone is so gray and toneless, that I know not any mountain district so utterly melancholy as those which are composed of this rock, when unwooded. Now, as far as I can discover from the internal evidence in his poem, nearly all Dante’s mountain wanderings had been upon this ground. He had journeyed once or twice among the Alps, indeed, but seems to have been impressed chiefly by the road from Garda to Trent, and that along the Cornice, both of which are either upon those limestones, or a dark serpentine, which shows hardly any color till it is polished. It is not ascertainable that he had ever seen rock scenery of the finely colored kind, aided by the Alpine mosses: I do not know the fall at Forli (*Inferno*, XVI 99), but every other scene to which he alludes is among these Apennine limestones; and when he wishes to give the idea of enormous mountain size, he names Tabernicch and Pietra-pana—the one clearly chosen only for the sake of the last syllable of its name, in order to make a sound as of crackling ice, with the two sequent rhymes of the stanza—and the other is an Apennine near Lucca.

“His idea, therefore, of rock color, founded on these experiences, is that of a dull or ashen gray, more or less stained by the brown of iron ochre, precisely as the Apennine limestones nearly always are; the gray being peculiarly cold and disagreeable. As we go down the very hill which stretches out from Pietra-pana towards Lucca, the stones laid by the roadside to mend it are of this ashen gray, with efflorescences of manganese and iron in the

fissures. The whole of Malebolge is made of this rock,
‘All wrought in stone of iron-colored grain.’”



253. The year of Jubilee 1300. Mr. Norton, in his *Notes of Travel and Study in Italy*, p. 255, thus describes it:—

“The beginning of the new century brought many pilgrims to the Papal city, and the Pope, seeing to what account the treasury of indulgences possessed by the Church might now be turned, hit upon the plan of promising plenary indulgence to all who, during the year, should visit with fit dispositions the holy places of Rome. He accordingly, in the most solemn manner, proclaimed a year of Jubilee, to date from the Christmas of 1299, and appointed a similar celebration for each hundredth year thereafter. The report of the marvellous promise spread rapidly through Europe; and as the year advanced, pilgrims poured into Italy from remote as well as from neighboring lands. The roads leading to Rome were dusty with bands of travellers pressing forward to gain the unwonted indulgence. The Crusades had made travel familiar to men, and a journey to Rome seemed easy to those who had dreamed of the Farther East, of Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Giovanni Villani, who was among the pilgrims from Florence, declares that there were never less than two hundred thousand strangers at Rome during the year; and Guglielmo Ventura, the chronicler of Asti, reports the total number of pilgrims at not less than two millions. The picture which he draws of Rome during the Jubilee is a curious one. *Mirandum est quod passim ibant viri et mulieres, qui anno illo Romæ fuerunt quo ego ibi fui et per dies XV steti. De pane, vino, carnibus, piscibus, et avena, bonum mercatum ibi erat; fœnum carissimum ibi fuit; hospitia carissima; taliter quod lectus meus et equi mei super fœno et avena constabat mihi tornesium unum*

grossum. Exiens de Roma in Vigilia Nativitatis Christi, vidi turbam magnam, quam dinumerare nemo pot erat; et fama erat inter Romanos, quod ibi fuerant plusquam vigenti centum millia virorum et mulierum. Pluries ego vidi ibi tam viros quam mulieres conculcatos sub pedibus aliorum; et etiam egomet in eodem periculo plures vices evasi. Papa innumerabilem pecuntam ab eisdem recepit, quia die ac nocte duo clerici stabant ad altare Sancti Pauli tenentes in corum manibus rastellos, rastellantes pecuniam infinitam. ’ To accommodate the throng of pilgrims, and to protect them as far as possible from the danger which Ventura feelingly describes, a barrier was erected along the middle of the bridge under the castle of Sant’ Angelo, so that those going to St. Peter’s and those coming from the church, passing on opposite sides, might not interfere with each other. It seems not unlikely that Dante himself was one of the crowd who thus crossed the old bridge, over whose arches, during this year, a flood of men was flowing almost as constantly as the river’s flood ran through below.”



254. The castle is the Castle of St. Angelo, and the mountain Monte Gianicolo. See Barlow, *Study of Dante*, p. 126. Others say Monte Giordano. [←](#)

255. “This Caccianimico,” says Benvenuto da Imola, “was a Bolognese; a liberal, noble, pleasant, and very powerful man.”

Nevertheless he was so utterly corrupt as to sell his sister, the fair Ghisola, to the Marquis of Este. [←](#)

256. In the original the word is *salse*.

“In Bologna,” says Benvenuto da Imola, “the name of *Salse* is given to a certain valley outside the city, and near

to Santa Maria in Monte, into which the mortal remains of desperadoes, usurers, and other infamous persons are wont to be thrown. Hence I have sometimes heard boys in Bologna say to each other, by way of insult, ‘Your father was thrown into the *Salse*.’”



257. The two rivers between which Bologna is situated. In the Bolognese dialect *sipa* is used for *si*.
258. They cease going round the circles as heretofore, and now go straight forward to the centre of the abyss.
259. For the story of Jason, Medea, and the Golden Fleece, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. Also Chaucer, *Legende of Goode Women*:—

“Thou roote of fals loveres, duke Jason!
Thou slye devourer and confusyon
Of gentil wommen, gentil creatures!”



260. When the women of Lemnos put to death all the male inhabitants of the island, Hypsipyle concealed her father Thoas, and spared his life. Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautics*, II, Fawkes’s Tr.:—

“Hypsipyle alone, illustrious maid,
Spared her sire Thoas, who the sceptre swayed.”



261. “Allessio Interminelli,” says Benvenuto da Imola, “a soldier, a nobleman, and of gentle manners, was of Lucca, and from him descended that tyrant Castruccio who filled all Tuscany with fear, and was lord of Pisa, Lucca, and Pistoja, of whom Dante makes no mention, because he became illustrious after the author’s death. Alessio took

such delight in flattery, that he could not open his mouth without flattering. He besmeared everybody, even the lowest menials.”

The *Ottimo* says, that in the dialect of Lucca the head “was facetiously called a pumpkin.” [←](#)

262. Thaïs, the famous courtesan of Athens. Terence, *The Eunuch*, Act III
Sc. 1:—

THRASO Did Thaïs really return me many thanks?

GNATHO Exceeding thanks.

THRASO Was she delighted, say you?

GNATHO Not so much, indeed, at the present itself, as because it was given by you; really, in right earnest, she does exult at that.

[←](#)

263. “The filthiness of some passages,” exclaims Landor, *Pentameron*, p. 15, “would disgrace the drunkenest horse-dealer; and the names of such criminals are recorded by the poet, as would be forgotten by the hangman in six months.” [←](#)

264. The Third Bolgia is devoted to the Simoniacs, so called from Simon Magus, the Sorcerer mentioned in Acts 8:9, 18. See [note 2050](#).

Brunetto Latini touches lightly upon them in the *Tesoretto*, XXI 259, on the account of their high ecclesiastical dignity. His pupil is less reverential in the particular.

“*Altri per simonia
Si getta in mala via,
E Dio e’ Santi offende
E vende le prebende,
E Sante Sagramente,*

*E mette 'nfra la gente
Assempri di mal fare.
Ma questo lascio stare,
Chè tocca a ta' persone,
Che non è mia ragione
Di dirne lungamente."*

Chaucer, "Persones Tale," speaks thus of Simony:—

"Certes simonie is cleped of Simon Magus, that wold have bought for temporel catel the yefte that God had yeven by the holy gost to Seint Peter, and to the Apostles: and therfore understand ye, that both he that selleth and he that byeth thinges spirituel ben called Simoniackes, be it by catel, be it by procuring, or by fleshly praier of his frendes, fleshly frendes, or spirituel frendes, fleshly in two maners, as by kinrede or other frendes: soothly, if they pray for him that is not worthy and able, it is simonie, if he take the benefice: and if he be worthy and able, ther is non."



265. Gower, *Confessio Amantis* I:—

"A trompe with a sterne breth,
Which was cleped the trompe of deth.

:

He shall this dredfull trompe blowe
To-fore his gate and make it knowe,
How that the jugement is yive
Of deth, which shall nought be foryive."



266. Lami, in his *Deliciae Eruditorum*, makes a strange blunder in reference to this passage. He says:—

“Not long ago the baptismal font, which stood in the middle of Saint John’s at Florence, was removed; and in the pavement may still be seen the octagonal shape of its ample outline. Dante says, that, when a boy, he fell into it and was near drowning; or rather he fell into one of the circular basins of water, which surrounded the principal font.”

Upon this Arrivabeni, *Comento Storico*, p. 588, where I find this extract, remarks:—

“Not Dante, but Lami, staring at the moon, fell into the hole.”



267. Dante’s enemies had accused him of committing this act through impiety. He takes this occasion to vindicate himself. ↲
268. Probably an allusion to the red stockings worn by the Popes. ↲
269. Burying alive with the head downward and the feet in the air was the inhuman punishment of hired assassins, “according to justice and the municipal law in Florence,” says the *Ottimo*. It was called *Propagginare*, to plant in the manner of vine-stocks.
Dante stood bowed down like the confessor called back by the criminal in order to delay the moment of his death. ↲
270. Benedetto Gaetani, Pope Boniface VIII Gower, *Confessio Amantis* II, calls him

“Thou Boneface, thou proude clerke,
Misleder of the papacie.”

This is the Boniface who frightened Celestine from the papacy, and persecuted him to death after his resignation. “The lovely Lady” is the Church. The fraud was his collusion with Charles II of Naples. “He went to King Charles by night, secretly, and with few attendants,” says

Villani, VIII ch. 6, “and said to him: ‘King, thy Pope Celestine had the will and the power to serve thee in thy Sicilian wars, but did not know how: but if thou wilt contrive with thy friends the cardinals to have me elected Pope, I shall know how, and shall have the will and the power’; promising upon his faith and oath to aid him with all the power of the Church.” Farther on he continues: “He was very magnanimous and lordly, and demanded great honor, and knew well how to maintain and advance the cause of the Church, and on account of his knowledge and power was much dreaded and feared. He was avaricious exceedingly in order to aggrandize the Church and his relations, not being over-scrupulous about gains, for he said that all things were lawful which were of the Church.”

He was chosen Pope in 1294. “The inauguration of Boniface,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book IX, ch. 7, “was the most magnificent which Rome had ever beheld. In his procession to St. Peter’s and back to the Lateran palace, where he was entertained, he rode not a humble ass, but a noble white horse, richly caparisoned: he had a crown on his head; the King of Naples held the bridle on one side, his son, the King of Hungary, on the other. The nobility of Rome, the Orsinis, the Colonnas, the Savellis, the Stefaneschi, the Annibaldi, who had not only welcomed him to Rome, but conferred on him the Senatorial dignity, followed in a body: the procession could hardly force its way through the masses of the kneeling people. In the midst, a furious hurricane burst over the city, and extinguished every lamp and torch in the church. A darker omen followed: a riot broke out among the populace, in which forty lives were lost. The day after, the Pope dined in public in the Lateran; the two Kings waited behind his chair.”

Dante indulges towards him a fierce Ghibelline hatred, and assigns him his place of torment before he is dead. In Canto XXVII 85, he calls him “the Prince of the new Pharisees”; and, after many other bitter allusions in various parts of the poem, puts into the mouth of St. Peter, *Paradiso* XXVII 22, the terrible invective that makes the whole heavens red with anger.

“He who usurps upon the earth my place,
My place, my place, which vacant has become
Now in the presence of the Son of God,

Has of my cemetery made a sewer
Of blood and fetor, whereat the Perverse,
Who fell from here, below there is appeased."

He died in 1303. See [note 925.](#) ↵

271. Nicholas III, of the Orsini (the Bears) of Rome, chosen Pope in 1277. "He was the first Pope, or one of the first," says Villani, VII ch. 54, "in whose court simony was openly practised." On account of his many accomplishments he was surnamed *Il Compiuto*. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XI ch. 4, says of him:—

"At length the election fell on John Gaetano, of the noble Roman house, the Orsini, a man of remarkable beauty of person and demeanor. His name, 'the Accomplished,' implied that in him met all the graces of the handsomest clerks in the world, but he was a man likewise of irreproachable morals, of vast ambition, and of great ability."

He died in 1280. ↵

272. The French Pope Clement V, elected in 1305, by the influence of Philip the Fair of France, with sundry humiliating conditions. He transferred the Papal See from Rome to Avignon, where it remained for seventy-one years in what Italian writers call its "Babylonian captivity." He died in 1314, on his way to Bordeaux. "He had hardly crossed the Rhone," says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XII ch. 5, "when he was seized with mortal sickness at Roquemaure. The Papal treasure was seized by his followers, especially his nephew; his remains were treated with such utter neglect, that the torches set fire to the catafalque under which he lay, not in state. His body, covered only with a single sheet, all that his rapacious retinue had left to shroud their forgotten master, was half burned... before alarm was raised. His ashes were borne back to Carpentras and solemnly interred." ↵

273. Jason, to whom Antiochus Epiphanes granted a “license to set him up a place for exercise, and for the training up of youth in the fashions of the heathen.”

2 Maccabees 4:13:—

“Now such was the height of Greek fashions, and increase of the heathenish manners, through the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly wretch and not high priest, that the priests had no courage to serve any more at the altar, but, despising the temple, and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the place of exercise, after the game of Discus called them forth.”

↩

274. Philip the Fair of France. See [note 272](#). “He was one of the handsomest men in the world,” says Villani, IX 66, “and one of the largest in person, and well proportioned in every limb—a wise and good man for a layman.” ↩

275. Matthew, chosen as an Apostle in the place of Judas. ↩

276. According to Villani, VII 54, Pope Nicholas III wished to marry his niece to a nephew of Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily. To this alliance the King would not consent, saying: “Although he wears the red stockings, his lineage is not worthy to mingle with ours, and his power is not hereditary.” This made the Pope indignant, and, together with the bribes of John of Procida, led him to encourage the rebellion in Sicily, which broke out a year after the Pope’s death in the “Sicilian Vespers,” 1282. ↩

277. The Church of Rome under Nicholas, Boniface, and Clement.
Revelation 17:1–3:—

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me. Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great

whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

The seven heads are interpreted to mean the Seven Virtues, and the ten horns the Ten Commandments. [←](#)

278. Revelation 17:12, 13:—

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,... and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

[←](#)

279. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Prologus:—

“The patrimonie and the richesse
Which to Silvester in pure almesse
The firste Constantinus lefte.”

Upon this supposed donation of immense domains by Constantine to the Pope, called the “Patrimony of St. Peter,” Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book I ch. 2, remarks:—

“Silvester has become a kind of hero of religious fable. But it was not so much the genuine mythical spirit which unconsciously transmutes history into legend; it was rather deliberate invention, with a specific aim and design, which, in direct defiance of history, accelerated the baptism of Constantine, and sanctified a porphyry vessel as appropriated to, or connected with, that holy use: and at a later period produced the monstrous fable of the Donation.

“But that with which Constantine actually did invest the Church, the right of holding landed property, and receiving it by bequest, was far more valuable to the Christian hierarchy, and not least to the Bishop of Rome, than a premature and prodigal endowment.”



280. In the Fourth Bolgia are punished the Soothsayers:—

“Because they wished to see too far before them,
Backward they look, and backward make their way.”



281. Processions chanting prayers and supplications.

282. Ignaro in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, I viii 31:—

“But very uncouth sight was to behold
How he did fashion his untoward pace;
For as he forward moved his footing old,
So backward still was turned his wrinkled face.”



283. Amphiaraus was one of the seven kings against Thebes. Foreseeing his own fate, he concealed himself, to avoid going to the war; but his wife Eriphyle, bribed by a diamond necklace (as famous in ancient story as the Cardinal de Rohan’s in modern), revealed his hiding-place, and he went to his doom with the others.

Aeschylus, *The Seven Against Thebes*:—

“I will tell of the sixth, a man most prudent and in valor
the best, the seer, the mighty Amphiaraus.... And through
his mouth he gives utterance to this speech... ‘I, for my
part, in very truth shall flatten this soil, seer as I am, buried
beneath a hostile earth.’”

Statius, *Thebaid*, VIII 47, Lewis's Tr.:—

“Bought of my treacherous wife for cursed gold,
And in the list of Argive chiefs enrolled,
Resigned to fate I sought the Theban plain;
Whence flock the shades that scarce thy realm contain;
When, how my soul yet dreads! an earthquake came,
Big with destruction, and my trembling frame,
Rapt from the midst of gaping thousands, hurled
To night eternal in thy nether world.”



284. The Theban soothsayer. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, Addison's Tr.:—

“It happen'd once, within a shady wood,
Two twisted snakes he in conjunction view'd,
When with his staff their slimy folds he broke,
And lost his manhood at the fatal stroke.
But, after seven revolving years, he view'd
The self-same serpents in the self-same wood:
'And if,' says he, 'such virtue in you lie,
That he who dares your slimy folds untie
Must change his kind, a second stroke I'll try.'
Again he struck the snakes, and stood again
New-sex'd, and straight recovered into man.

:

When Juno fired,
More than so trivial an affair required,
Deprived him, in her fury, of his sight,
And left him groping round in sudden night.
But Jove (for so it is in heav'n decreed
That no one god repeal another's deed)
Irradiates all his soul with inward light,
And with the prophet's art relieves the want of sight.”



285. His beard. The word “plumes” is used by old English writers in this sense. Ford, *Lady's Trial*:—

“Now the down
Of softness is exchanged for plumes of age.”

See also *Purgatorio* I 42. [←](#)

286. An Etrurian soothsayer. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, I, Rowe's Tr.:—

“Of these the chief, for learning famed and age,
Aruns by name, a venerable sage,
At Luna lived.”

Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III p. 246, says:—

“But in no part of the poem do we find allusion to mountains in any other than a stern light; nor the slightest evidence that Dante cared to look at them. From that hill of San Miniato, whose steps he knew so well, the eye commands, at the farther extremity of the Val d' Arno, the whole purple range of the mountains of Carrara, peaked and mighty, seen always against the sunset light in silent outline, the chief forms that rule the scene as twilight fades away. By this vision Dante seems to have been wholly unmoved, and, but for Lucan's mention of Aruns at Luna, would seemingly not have spoken of the Carrara hills in the whole course of his poem: when he does allude to them, he speaks of their white marble, and their command of stars and sea, but has evidently no regard for the hills themselves. There is not a single phrase or syllable throughout the poem which indicates such a regard. Ugolino, in his dream, seemed to himself to be in the mountains, ‘by cause of which the Pisan cannot see Lucca’; and it is impossible to look up from Pisa to that hoary slope without remembering the awe that there is in the passage; nevertheless it was as a hunting-ground only that he remembered these hills. Adam of Brescia,

tormented with eternal thirst, remembers the hills of Romena, but only for the sake of their sweet waters.”



287. Manto, daughter of Tiresias, who fled from Thebes, the “City of Bacchus,” when it became subject to the tyranny of Cleon. ↲

288. Lake Benacus is now called the Lago di Garda. It is pleasantly alluded to by Claudian in his “Old Man of Verona,” who has seen “the grove grow old coeval with himself.”

“Verona seems
To him remoter than the swarthy Ind;
He deems the Lake Benacus as the shore
Of the Red Sea.”



289. The Pennine Alps, or *Alpes Pœnæ*, watered by the brooklets flowing into the Sarca, which is the principal tributary of Benaco. ↲

290. The place where the three dioceses of Trent, Brescia, and Verona meet.



291. At the outlet of the lake. ↲

292. *Aeneid*, X:—

“Mincius crowned with sea-green reeds.”

Milton, “Lycidas”:—

“Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds.”



293. Manto. Benvenuto da Imola says:—

“Virgin should here be rendered Virago.”



294. *Aeneid*, X:—

“Ocnus, . . . son of the prophetic Manto, and of the Tuscan river, who gave walls and the name of his mother to thee, O Mantua!”



295. Pinamonte dei Buonacossi, a bold, ambitious man, persuaded Alberto, Count of Casalodi and Lord of Mantua, to banish to their estates the chief nobles of the city, and then, stirring up a popular tumult, fell upon the rest, laying waste their houses, and sending them into exile or to prison, and thus greatly depopulating the city. [←](#)

296. *Iliad*, I 69:—

“And Calchas, the son of Thestor, arose, the best of augurs, a man who knew the present, the future, and the past, and who had guided the ships of the Achans to Ilium, by that power of prophecy which Phoebus Apollo gave him.”



297. *Aeneid*, II 114:—

“In suspense we send Eurypylus to consult the oracle of Apollo, and he brings back from the shrine these mournful words: ‘O Greeks, ye appeased the winds with blood and a virgin slain, when first ye came to the Trojan shores; your return is to be sought by blood, and atonement made by a Grecian life.’”

Dante calls Virgil's poem a Tragedy, to mark its sustained and lofty style, in contrast with that of his own Comedy, of which he has already spoken once. Canto XVI 138, and speaks again. Canto XXI 2; as if he wished the reader to bear in mind that he is wearing the sock, and not the buskin. ↪

298. "Michael Scott, the Magician," says Benvenuto da Imola, "practised divination at the court of Frederick II, and dedicated to him a book on natural history, which I have seen, and in which among other things he treats of Astrology, then deemed infallible.... It is said, moreover, that he foresaw his own death, but could not escape it. He had prognosticated that he should be killed by the falling of a small stone upon his head, and always wore an iron skullcap under his hood, to prevent this disaster. But entering a church on the festival of Corpus Domini, he lowered his hood in sign of veneration, not of Christ, in whom he did not believe, but to deceive the common people, and a small stone fell from aloft on his bare head."

The reader will recall the midnight scene of the monk of St. Mary's and William of Deloraine in Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Canto II:—

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
A wizard of such dreaded fame
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone;
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done."

And the opening of the tomb to recover the Magic Book:—

"Before their eyes the wizard lay,

As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapped him round.
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound.
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 His left hand held his book of might;
A silver cross was in his right;
 The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look.
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:—
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.”



299. Guido Bonatti, a tiler and astrologer of Fori, who accompanied Guido di Montefeltro when he marched out of Forli to attack the French “under the great oak.” Villani, VII, 81, in a passage in which he and him get a little entangled, says:—

“It is said that the Count of Montefeltro was guided by divination and the advice of Guido Bonatti (a tiler who had become an astrologer), or some other strategy, and he gave the orders; and in this enterprise he gave him the gonfalon and said, ‘So long as a rag of it remains, wherever thou bearest it, thou shalt be victorious’; but I rather think his victories were owing to his own wits and his mastery in war.”

Benvenuto da Imola reports the following anecdote of the same personages.

“As the Count was standing one day in the large and beautiful square of Forli, there came a rustic mountaineer and gave him a basket of pears. And when the Count said, ‘Stay and sup with me,’ the rustic answered, ‘My Lord, I wish to go home before it rains; for infallibly there will be

much rain today.' The Count, wondering at him, sent for Guido Bonatti, as a great astrologer, and said to him, 'Dost thou hear what this man says?' Guido answered, 'He does not know what he is saying; but wait a little.' Guido went to his study, and, having taken his astrolabe, observed the aspect of the heavens. And on returning he said that it was impossible it should rain that day. But the rustic obstinately affirming what he had said, Guido asked him, 'How dost thou know?' The rustic answered, 'Because today my ass, in coming out of the stable, shook his head and pricked up his ears, and whenever he does this, it is a certain sign that the weather will soon change.' Then Guido replied, 'Supposing this to be so, how dost thou know there will be much rain?' 'Because,' said he, 'my ass, with his ears pricked up, turned his head aside, and wheeled about more than usual.' Then, with the Count's leave, the rustic departed in haste, much fearing the rain, though the weather was very clear. And an hour afterwards, lo, it began to thunder, and there was a great down-pouring of waters, like a deluge. Then Guido began to cry out, with great indignation and derision, 'Who has deluded me? Who has put me to shame?' And for a long time this was a great source of merriment among the people."

Asdente, a cobbler of Parma. "I think he must have had acuteness of mind, although illiterate; some having the gift of prophecy by the inspiration of Heaven." Dante mentions him in the *Convito*, IV 16, where he says that, if nobility consisted in being known and talked about, "Asdente the shoemaker of Parma would be more noble than any of his fellow-citizens." ↪

300. The moon setting in the sea west of Seville. In the Italian popular tradition to which Dante again alludes. *Paradiso* II 51, the Man in the Moon is Cain with his Thorns. This belief seems to have been current too in England, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III 1:—

“Or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine.”

And again, V, 1:—

“The man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i’ the moon? ... All that I have to say is to tell you, that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.”

The time here indicated is an hour after sunrise on Saturday morning. ↵

301. The Fifth Bolgia, and the punishment of Barrators, or “Judges who take bribes for giving judgment.” ↵
302. Having spoken in the preceding Canto of Virgil’s “lofty Tragedy,” Dante here speaks of his own Comedy, as if to prepare the reader for the scenes which are to follow, and for which he apologizes in Canto XXII 14, by repeating the proverb,

“In the church
With saints, and in the tavern with carousers.”

↵

303. Of the Arsenal of Venice Mr. Hillard thus speaks in his *Six Months in Italy*, I 63:—

“No reader of Dante will fail to pay a visit to the Arsenal, from which, in order to illustrate the terrors of his ‘Inferno,’ the great poet drew one of these striking and picturesque images, characteristic alike of the boldness and the power of his genius, which never hesitated to look for its materials among the homely details and familiar incidents of life. In his hands, the boiling of pitch and the calking of seams ascend to the dignity of poetry. Besides,

it is the most impressive and characteristic spot in Venice. The Ducal Palace and the Church of St. Mark's are symbols of pride and power, but the strength of Venice resided here. Her whole history, for six hundred years, was here epitomized, and as she rose and sunk, the hum of labor here swelled and subsided. Here was the indexhand which marked the culmination and decline of her greatness. Built upon several small islands, which are united by a wall of two miles in circuit, its extent and completeness, decayed as it is, show what the naval power of Venice once was, as the disused armor of a giant enables us to measure his stature and strength. Near the entrance are four marble lions, brought by Morosini from the Peloponnesus in 1685, two of which are striking works of art. Of these two, one is by far the oldest thing in Venice, being not much younger than the battle of Marathon; and thus, from the height of twenty-three centuries, entitled to look down upon St. Mark's as the growth of yesterday. The other two are nondescript animals, of the class commonly called heraldic, and can be styled lions only by courtesy. In the armory are some very interesting objects, and none more so than the great standard of the Turkish admiral, made of crimson silk, taken at the battle of Lepanto, and which Cervantes may have grasped with his unwounded hand. A few fragments of some of the very galleys that were engaged in that memorable fight are also preserved here."



304. Malebranche, Evil-claws, a general name for the devils. [←](#)

305. Santa Zita, the Patron Saint of Lucca, where the magistrates were called Elders, or Aldermen. In Florence they bore the name of Priors.



306. A Barrator, in Dante's use of the word, is to the State what a Simoniac is to the Church; one who sells justice, office, or employment.

Benvenuto says that Dante includes Bontura with the rest, "because he is speaking ironically, as who should say, 'Bontura is the greatest barrator of all.' For Bontura was an arch-barrator, who sagaciously led and managed the whole commune, and gave offices to whom he wished. He likewise excluded whom he wished." [←](#)

307. Bent down in the attitude of one in prayer; therefore the demons mock him with the allusion to the *Santo Volto*. [←](#)

308. The *Santo Volto*, or Holy Face, is a crucifix still preserved in the Cathedral of Lucca, and held in great veneration by the people. The tradition is that it is the work of Nicodemus, who sculptured it from memory.

See also Sacchetti, Nov. 73, in which a preacher mocks at the *Santo Volto* in the church of Santa Croce at Florence. [←](#)

309. The Serchio flows near Lucca. Shelley, in a poem called "The Boat, on the Serchio," describes it as a "torrent fierce,"

"Which fervid from its mountain source,
Shallow, smooth, and strong, doth come;
Swift as fire, tempestuously
It sweeps into the affrighted sea.
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss, and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright."

[←](#)

310. Canto IX 22:—

"True is it once before I here below
Was conjured by that pitiless Erictho,
Who summoned back the shades unto their bodies."

[←](#)

311. A fortified town on the Arno, in the Pisan territory. It was besieged by the troops of Florence and Lucca in 1289, and capitulated. As the garrison marched out under safeguard, they were terrified by the shouts of the crowd, crying: “Hang them! hang them!” In this crowd was Dante, “a youth of twenty-five,” says Benvenuto da Imola. [←](#)

312. Along the circular dike that separates one Bolgia from another. [←](#)

313. This is a falsehood, as all the bridges over the next Bolgia are broken. See Canto XXIII 140. [←](#)

314. At the close of the preceding Canto the time is indicated as being an hour after sunrise. Five hours later would be noon, or the scriptural sixth hour, the hour of the Crucifixion. Dante understands St. Luke to say that Christ died at this hour. *Convito*, IV 23:—

“Luke says that it was about the sixth hour when he died; that is, the culmination of the day.”

Add to the “one thousand and two hundred sixtysix years,” the thirty-four of Christ’s life on earth, and it gives the year 1300, the date of the Infernal Pilgrimage. [←](#)

315. Broken by the earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion, as the rock leading to the Circle of the Violent, Canto XII 45:—

“And at that moment this primeval rock
Both here and elsewhere made such overthrow.”

As in the next Bolgia Hypocrites are punished, Dante couples them with the Violent, by making the shock of the earthquake more felt near them than elsewhere. [←](#)

316. The next crag or bridge, traversing the dikes and ditches. [←](#)

317. See [Canto XVII 75.](#) [←](#)

318. The subject of the preceding Canto is continued in this. [←](#)
319. Aretino, *Vita di Dante*, says, that Dante in his youth was present at the “great and memorable battle, which befell at Campaldino, fighting valiantly on horseback in the front rank.” It was there he saw the vaunt-couriers of the Aretines, who began the battle with such a vigorous charge, that they routed the Florentine cavalry, and drove them back upon the infantry. [←](#)
320. Napier, *Florentine History*, I 214–217, gives this description of the Carroccio and the Martinella of the Florentines:—

“In order to give more dignity to the national army and form a rallying point for the troops, there had been established a great car, called the Carroccio, drawn by two beautiful oxen, which, carrying the Florentine standard, generally accompanied them into the field. This car was painted vermilion, the bullocks were covered with scarlet cloth, and the driver, a man or some consequence, was dressed in crimson, was exempt from taxation, and served without pay; these oxen were maintained at the public charge in a public hospital, and the white and red banner of the city was spread above the car between two lofty spars. Those taken at the battle of Monteaperto are still exhibited in Siena Cathedral as trophies of that fatal day.

“Macchiavelli erroneously places the adoption of the Carroccio by the Florentines at this epoch, but it was long before in use, and probably was copied from the Milanese, as soon as Florence became strong and independent enough to equip a national army. Eribert, Archbishop of Milan, seems to have been its author, for in the war between Conrad I and that city, besides other arrangements for military organization, he is said to have finished by the invention of the Carroccio: it was a pious and not impolitic imitation of the ark as it was carried before the Israelites. This vehicle is described, and also represented in ancient paintings, as a four-wheeled oblong

car, drawn by two, four, or six bullocks: the car was always red, and the bullocks, even to their hoofs, covered as above described, but with red or white according to the faction; the ensign staff was red, lofty, and tapering, and surmounted by a cross or golden ball: on this, between two white fringed veils, hung the national standard, and halfway down the mast, a crucifix. A platform ran out in front of the car, spacious enough for a few chosen men to defend it, while behind, on a corresponding space, the musicians with their military instruments gave spirit to the combat: mass was said on the *Carroccio* ere it quitted the city, the surgeons were stationed near it, and not unfrequently a chaplain also attended it to the field. The loss of the *Carroccio* was a great disgrace, and betokened utter discomfiture; it was given to the most distinguished knight, who had a public salary and wore conspicuous armor and a golden belt: the best troops were stationed round it, and there was frequently the hottest of the fight....

“Besides the *Carroccio*, the Florentine army was accompanied by a great bell, called *Martinella*, or *Campana degli Asini*, which, for thirty days before hostilities began, tolled continually day and night from the arch of *Porta Santa Maria*, as a public declaration of war, and, as the ancient chronicle hath it, ‘for greatness of mind, that the enemy might have full time to prepare himself.’ At the same time also, the *Carroccio* was drawn from its place in the offices of *San Giovanni* by the most distinguished knights and noble vassals of the republic, and conducted in state to the *Mercato Nuovo*, where it was placed upon the circular stone still existing, and remained there until the army took the field. Then also the *Martinella* was removed from its station to a wooden tower placed on another car, and with the *Carroccio* served to guide the troops by night and day. ‘And with these two pomps, of the *Carroccio* and *Campana*,’ says

Malespini, ‘the pride of the old citizens, our ancestors, was ruled.’”



321. Equivalent to the proverb, “Do in Rome as the Romans do.”
322. Giampolo, or Ciampolo, say all the commentators; but nothing more is known of him than his name, and what he tells us here of his history.
323. It is not very clear which King Thibault is here meant, but it is probably King Thibault IV, the crusader and poet, born 1201, died 1253. His poems have been published by Lévêque de la Ravallière, under the title of “*Les Poésies du Roi de Navarre*”; and in one of his songs (Chanson 53) he makes a clerk address him as the *Bons Rois Thiebaut*. Dante cites him two or three times in his *Volgari Eloquio*, and may have taken this expression from his song, as he does afterwards. Canto XXVIII 135, *lo Re joves*, the *Re Giovarje*, or Young King, from the songs of Bertrand de Born.
324. A Latian, that is to say, an Italian.
325. This Frate Gomita was a Sardinian in the employ of Nino de' Visconti, judge in the jurisdiction of Gallura, the “gentle Judge Nino” of *Purgatorio* VIII 53. The frauds and peculations of the Friar brought him finally to the gallows. Gallura is the northeastern jurisdiction of the island.
326. Don Michael Zanche was Seneschal of King Enzo of Sardinia, a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II. Dante gives him the title of *Don*, still used in Sardinia for *Signore*. After the death of Enzo in prison at Bologna, in 1271, Don Michael won by fraud and flattery his widow Adelasia, and became himself Lord of Logodoro, the northwestern jurisdiction, adjoining that of Gallura.
The gossip between the Friar and the Seneschal, which is here described by Ciampolo, recalls the *Vision* of the Sardinian poet Araolla, a dialogue between himself and Gavino Sambigucci, written

in the soft dialect of Logodoro, a mixture of Italian, Spanish, and Latin, and beginning:—

“*Dulche, amara memoria de giornadas
Fuggitivas cun doppia pena mia,
Qui quanto pius l'istringo sunt passadas.*”

See Valery, *Voyages en Corse et en Sardaigne*, II 410. ↵

327. In this Sixth Bolgia the Hypocrites are punished.

“A painted people there below we found,
Who went about with footsteps very slow,
Weeping and in their looks subdued and weary.”

Chaucer, “Knightes Tale,” 2780:—

“In his colde grave
Alone, withouten any compagnie.”

And Gower, *Confessio Amantis*:—

“To muse in his philosophie
Sole withouten compaignie.”

↵

328. The *Fables of Aesop*, by Sir Roger L'Estrange, IV:—

“There fell out a bloody quarrel once betwixt the Frogs and the Mice, about the sovereignty of the Fenns; and whilst two of their champions were disputing it at swords point, down comes a kite powdering upon them in the interim, and gobbles up both together, to part the fray.”

↵

329. Both words signifying “now”; *mo*, from the Latin *modo*; and *issa*, from the Latin *ipsa*; meaning *ipsa hora*. “The Tuscans say *mo*,” remarks

Benvenuto, “the Lombards *issa*.” [←](#)

330. “When he is in a fright and hurry, and has a very steep place to go down, Virgil has to carry him altogether,” says Mr. Ruskin. See [note 160.](#) [←](#)
331. Benvenuto speaks of the cloaks of the German monks as “ill-fitting and shapeless.” [←](#)
332. The leaden cloaks which Frederick put upon malefactors were straw in comparison. The Emperor Frederick II is said to have punished traitors by wrapping them in lead, and throwing them into a heated cauldron. I can find no historic authority for this. It rests only on tradition; and on the same authority the same punishment is said to have been inflicted in Scotland, and is thus described in the ballad of “Lord Soulis,” Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, IV 256:—

“On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
 On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
 Till the burnished brass did glimmer and shine.

“They roll’d him up in a sheet of lead,
 A sheet of lead for a funeral pall,
And plunged him into the cauldron red,
 And melted him—lead, and bones, and all.”

We get also a glimpse of this punishment in Ducange, Glos. Capa Plumbea, where he cites the case in which one man tells another:—

“If our Holy Father the Pope knew the life you are leading, he would have you put to death in a cloak of lead.”

[←](#)

333. *Comedy of Errors*, IV 2:—

“A devil in an everlasting garment hath him.”



334. Bologna was renowned for its University; and the speaker, who was a Bolognese, is still mindful of his college. [←](#)
335. Florence, the *bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma*, as Dante calls it, *Convito*, I 3. [←](#)
336. An order of knighthood, established by Pope Urban IV in 1261, under the title of “Knights of Santa Maria.” The name *Frati Gaudenti*, or “Jovial Friars,” was a nickname, because they lived in their own homes and were not bound by strict monastic rules. Napier, *Florentine History* I 269, says:—

“A short time before this a new order of religious knighthood under the name of *Frati Gaudenti* began in Italy: it was not bound by vows of celibacy, or any very severe regulations, but took the usual oaths to defend widows and orphans and make peace between man and man: the founder was a Bolognese gentleman, called Loderingo di Liandolo, who enjoyed a good reputation, and along with a brother of the same order, named Catalano di Malavolti, one a Guelph and the other a Ghibelline, was now invited to Florence by Count Guido to execute conjointly the office of Podestà. It was intended by thus dividing the supreme authority between two magistrates of different politics, that one should correct the other, and justice be equally administered; more especially as, in conjunction with the people, they were allowed to elect a deliberative council of thirty-six citizens, belonging to the principal trades without distinction of party.”

Farther on he says that these two *Frati Gaudenti* “forfeited all public confidence by their peculation and hypocrisy.” And Villani, VII 13: “Although they were of different parties, under cover of a false

hypocrisy, they were of accord in seeking rather their own private gains than the common good.” ↵

337. A street in Florence, laid waste by the Guelfs. ↵

338. *Hamlet*, I 2:—

“Nor windy suspiration of forced breath.”

↵

339. Caiaphas, the High-Priest, who thought “expediency” the best thing.

↵

340. Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas. ↵

341. The great outer circle surrounding this division of the Inferno. ↵

342. He may have heard in the lectures of the University an exposition of John 8:44:—

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

↵

343. The Seventh Bolgia, in which Thieves are punished. ↵

344. The sun enters Aquarius during the last half of January, when the Equinox is near, and the hoarfrost in the morning looks like snow on the fields, but soon evaporates. If Dante had been a monk of Monte Casino, illuminating a manuscript, he could not have made a more clerkly and scholastic flourish with his pen than this, nor have painted a more beautiful picture than that which follows. The medieval poets are full of lovely descriptions of Spring, which seems to blossom and

sing through all their verses; but none is more beautiful or suggestive than this, though serving only as an illustration. [←](#)

345. In Canto I. [←](#)

346. See what Mr. Ruskin says of Dante as “a notably bad climber,” [note 160.](#) [←](#)

347. The ascent of the Mount of Purgatory. [←](#)

348. The next circular dike, dividing the fosses. [←](#)

349. This list of serpents is from Lucan, *Pharsalia* IX 711, Rowe’s Tr.:—

“Slimy Chelyders the parched earth distain
And trace a reeking furrow on the plain.
The spotted Cenchrus, rich in various dyes,
Shoots in a line, and forth directly flies.

:

The Swimmer there the crystal stream pollutes,
And swift thro’ air the flying Javelin shoots.

:

The Amphisbaena doubly armed appears
At either end a threatening head she rears;
Raised on his active tail Pareas stands,
And as he passes, furrows up the sands.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X 521:—

“Dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarming now
With complicated monsters head and tail,
Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena dire,
Cerastes horned, hydrus, and elops drear, And dipsas.”

Of the Phareas, Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, Gloss of Genesis 3:1, says:—

“And this he (Lucifer) did by means of the serpent; for then it was erect like man; being afterwards made prostrate by the curse; and it is said the *Phareas* walks erect even to this day.”

Of the amphisbaena, Brunetto Latini, *Tresor* I v 140, says:—

“The Amphimenie is a kind of serpent which has two heads; one in its right place, and the other in the tail; and with each she can bite; and she runs swiftly, and her eyes shine like candles.”

◀

350. Without a hiding-place, or the heliotrope, a precious stone of great virtue against poisons, and supposed to render the wearer invisible. Upon this latter vulgar error is founded Boccaccio’s comical story of Calandrino and his friends Bruno and Buffulmacco, *Decameron*, Gior. VIII, Nov. 3. ▵

351. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor* I v 164, says of the Phoenix:—

“He goeth to a good tree, savory and of good odor, and maketh a pile thereof, to which he setteth fire, and entereth straightway into it toward the rising of the sun.”

And Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1697:—

“So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,

Revives, re flourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame survives
A secular bird ages of lives.”

✉

352. Any obstruction, “such as the epilepsy,” says Benvenuto. “Gouts and dropsies, catarrhs and oppilations,” says Jeremy Taylor. ✉
353. Vanni Fucci, who calls himself a mule, was a bastard son of Fuccio de' Lazzari. All the commentators paint him in the darkest colors. Dante had known him as “a man of blood and wrath,” and seems to wonder he is here, and not in the circle of the Violent, or of the Irascible. But his great crime was the robbery of a sacristy. Benvenuto da Imola relates the story in detail. He speaks of him as a man of depraved life, many of whose misdeeds went unpunished, because he was of noble family. Being banished from Pistoia for his crimes, he returned to the city one night of the Carnival, and was in company with eighteen other revellers, among whom was Vanni della Nona, a notary; when, not content with their insipid diversions, he stole away with two companions to the church of San Giacomo, and, finding its custodians absent, or asleep with feasting and drinking, he entered the sacristy and robbed it of all its precious jewels. These he secreted in the house of the notary, which was close at hand, thinking that on account of his honest repute no suspicion would fall upon him. A certain Rampino was arrested for the theft, and put to the torture; when Vanni Fucci, having escaped to Monte Carelli, beyond the Florentine jurisdiction, sent a messenger to Rampino's father, confessing all the circumstances of the crime. Hereupon the notary was seized “on the first Monday in Lent, as he was going to a sermon in the church of the Minorite Friars,” and was hanged for the theft, and Rampino set at liberty.
- No one has a good word to say for Vanni Fucci, except the Canonico Crescimbeni, who, in the “*Comentarj*” to the *Istoria della Volg. Poesia*, II ii, p. 99, counts him among the Italian Poets, and speaks of him as a man of great courage and gallantry, and a leader of the Neri party of Pistoia, in 1300. He smooths over Dante's invectives by

remarking that Dante “makes not too honorable mention of him in the Comedy”; and quotes a sonnet of his, which is pathetic from its utter despair and self-reproach:—

“For I have lost the good I might have had
Through little wit, and not of mine own will.”

It is like the wail of a lost soul, and the same in tone as the words which Dante here puts into his mouth. Dante may have heard him utter similar selfaccusations while living, and seen on his face the blush of shame, which covers it here. [←](#)

354. The Neri were banished from Pistoia in 1301; the Bianchi, from Florence in 1302. [←](#)

355. This vapor or lightning flash from Val di Magra is the Marquis Malaspini, and the “turbid clouds” are the banished Neri of Pistoia, whom he is to gather about him to defeat the Bianchi at Campo Piceno, the old battlefield of Catiline. As Dante was of the Bianchi party, this prophecy of impending disaster and overthrow could only give him pain. See [note 95.](#) [←](#)

356. The subject of the preceding Canto is continued in this. [←](#)

357. This vulgar gesture of contempt consists in thrusting the thumb between the first and middle fingers. It is the same that the ass-driver made at Dante in the street; Sacchetti, Nov. CXV:—

“When he was a little way off, he turned round to Dante, and, thrusting out his tongue and making a fig at him with his hand, said, ‘Take that.’”

Villani, VI 5, says:—

“On the Rock of Carmignano there was a tower seventy yards high, and upon it two marble arms, the hands of which were making the figs at Florence.”

Others say these hands were on a finger-post by the roadside.

In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, I 3, Pistol says:—

“Convey, the wise it call; Steal! foх; a fico for the phrase!”

And Martino, in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Widow*, V I:—

“The fig of everlasting obloquy
Go with him.”

[←](#)

358. Pistoia is supposed to have been founded by the soldiers of Catiline.

Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I i 37, says:—

“They found Catiline at the foot of the mountains and he had his army and his people in that place where is now the city of Pestoire. There was Catiline conquered in battle, and he and his were slain; also a great part of the Romans were killed. And on account of the pestilence of that great slaughter the city was called Pestoire.”

The Italian proverb says, *Pistoia la ferrigna*, iron Pistoia, or Pistoia the pitiless. [←](#)

359. Capaneus, Canto XIV 44. [←](#)

360. See [note 181](#). [←](#)

361. Cacus was the classic Giant Despair, who had his cave in Mount Aventine, and stole a part of the herd of Geryon, which Hercules had brought to Italy. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“See yon huge cavern, yawning wide around,
Where still the shattered mountain spreads the ground:
That spacious hold grim Cacus once possessed,
Tremendous fiend! half human, half a beast:

Deep, deep as hell, the dismal dungeon lay,
Dark and impervious to the beams of day.
With copious slaughter smoked the purple floor,
Pale heads hung horrid on the lofty door,
Dreadful to view! and dropped with crimson gore.”

↖

362. Dante makes a Centaur of Cacus, and separates him from the others because he was fraudulent as well as violent. Virgil calls him only a monster, a half-man, *Semihominis Caci facies*. ↲
363. Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso degli Abati, and Puccio Sciancato. ↲
364. The story of Cacus, which Virgil was telling. ↲
365. Cianfa Donati, a Florentine nobleman. He appears immediately, as a serpent with six feet, and fastens upon Agnello Brunelleschi. ↲
366. Some commentators contend that in this line *papiro* does not mean paper, but a lamp-wick made of papyrus. This destroys the beauty and aptness of the image, and rather degrades

“The leaf of the reed,
Which has grown through the clefts in the ruins of ages.”

↖

367. These four lists, or hands, are the fore feet of the serpent and the arms of Agnello. ↲
368. Shakespeare, in the “Additional Poems to Chester’s Love’s Martyrs,” Knight’s Shakespeare, VII 193, speaks of “Two distincts, division none”; and continues:—

“Property was thus appalled
That the self was not the same,
Single nature’s double name

Neither two nor one was called.

“Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together;
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded.”

✉

369. This black serpent is Guercio Cavalcanti, who changes form with
Buoso degli Abati. ✉

370. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, IX, Rowe’s Tr.:—

“But soon a fate more sad with new surprise
From the first object turns their wondering eyes.
Wretched Sabellus by a Sephs was stung:
Fixed on his leg with deadly teeth it hung.
Sudden the soldier shook it from the wound,
Transfixed and nailed it to the barren ground.
Of all the dire, destructive serpent race,
None have so much of death, though none are less.
For straight around the part the skin withdrew,
The flesh and shrinking sinews backward flew.
And left the naked bones exposed to view.
The spreading poisons all the parts confound,
And the whole body sinks within the wound.

:

Small relics of the mouldering mass were left,
At once of substance as of form bereft;
Dissolved, the whole in liquid poison ran,
And to a nauseous puddle shrunk the man.

:

So snows dissolved by southern breezes run,
So melts the wax before the noonday sun.
Nor ends the wonder here; though flames are known

To waste the flesh, yet still they spare the bone:
Here none were left, no least remains were seen,
No marks to show that once the man had been.

:

A fate of different kind Nasidius found—
A burning Prcster gave the deadly wound,
And straight a sudden flame began to spread,
And paint his visage with a glowing red.
With swift expansion swells the bloated skin—
Naught but an undistinguished mass is seen,
While the fair human form lies lost within;
The puffy poison spreads and heaves around,
Till all the man is in the monster drowned.
No more the steely plate his breast can stay,
But yields, and gives the bursting poison way.
Not waters so, when fire the rage supplies,
Bubbling on heaps, in boiling cauldrons rise;
Nor swells the stretching canvas half so fast,
When the sails gather all the driving blast,
Strain the tough yards, and bow the lofty mast.
The various parts no longer now are known,
One headless, formless heap remains alone.”



371. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, Eusden's Tr.:—

“‘Come, my Harmonia, come, thy face recline
Down to my face: still touch what still is mine.
O let these hands, while hands, be gently pressed,
While yet the serpent has not all possessed.’
More he had spoke, but strove to speak in vain—
The forked tongue refused to tell his pain,
And learned in hissing only to complain.
“Then shrieked Harmonia, ‘Stay, my Cadmus, stay!
Glide not in such a monstrous shape away!’

Destruction, like impetuous waves, rolls on.
Where are thy feet, thy legs, thy shoulders, gone?
Changed is thy visage, changed is all thy frame—
Cadmus is only Cadmus now in name.
Ye Gods! my Cadmus to himself restore.
Or me like him transform—I ask no more.”

And V, Maynwaring’s Tr.:—

“The God so near, a chilly sweat possessed
My fainting limbs, at every pore expressed;
My strength distilled in drops, my hair in dew,
My form was changed, and all my substance new:
Each motion was a stream, and my whole frame
Turned to a fount, which still preserves my name.”

See also Shelley’s “Arethusa”:—

“Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains—
From cloud and from crag
With many a jag
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams;
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep.
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.”



372. Some editions read *la penna*, the pen, instead of *la lingua*, the tongue.

↖

373. Gaville was a village in the Valdarno, where Guercio Cavalcanti was murdered. The family took vengeance upon the inhabitants in the old Italian style, thus causing Gaville to lament the murder. ↲

374. The Eighth Bolgia, in which Fraudulent Counsellors are punished. ↲

375. Of these five Florentine nobles, Cianfa Donati, Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso degli Abati, Puccio Sciancato, and Guercio Cavalcanti, nothing is known but what Dante tells us. Perhaps that is enough. ↲

376. See *Purgatorio* IX 13:—

“Just at the hour when her sad lay begins
The little swallow, near unto the morning,
Perchance in memory of her former woes.
And when the mind of man, a wanderer
More from the flesh, and less by thought imprisoned,
Almost prophetic in its visions is.”

↖

377. The disasters soon to befall Florence, and in which even the neighboring town of Prato would rejoice, to mention no others. These disasters were the fall of the wooden bridge of Carraia, with a crowd upon it, witnessing a Miracle Play on the Arno; the strife of the Bianchi and Neri; and the great fire of 1304. See Villani, VIII 70, 71. Napier, *Florentine History*, I 394, gives this account:—

“Battles first began between the Cerchi and Giugni at their houses in the Via del Garbo; they fought day and night, and with the aid of the Cavalcanti and Antellesi the former subdued all that quarter: a thousand rural adherents strengthened their bands, and that day might have seen the Neri’s destruction if an unforeseen disaster had not turned the scale. A certain dissolute priest, called Neri Abati,

prior of San Piero Scheraggio, false to his family and in concert with the Black chiefs, consented to set fire to the dwellings of his own kinsmen in Orto-san-Michele; the flames, assisted by faction, spread rapidly over the richest and most crowded part of Florence: shops, warehouses, towers, private dwellings and palaces, from the old to the new marketplace, from *Vacchereccia* to *Porta Santa Maria* and the *Ponte Vecchio*, all was one broad sheet of fire: more than nineteen hundred houses were consumed; plunder and devastation revelled unchecked amongst the flames, whole races were reduced in one moment to beggary, and vast magazines of the richest merchandise were destroyed. The Cavalcanti, one of the most opulent families in Florence, beheld their whole property consumed, and lost all courage; they made no attempt to save it, and, after almost gaining possession of the city, were finally overcome by the opposite faction.”



378. *Macbeth*, 1.7:—

“If it were done when ’tis done, then ’twere well
It were done quickly.”



379. See *Paradiso* XII 112:—

“O glorious stars! O light impregnated
With mighty virtue, from which I acknowledge
All of my genius, whatsoe’er it be.”



380. I may not balk or deprive myself of this good. [✉](#)

381. The Prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 2:23:—

“And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him. Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.”



382. 2 Kings 2:11:—

“And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”



383. These two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polynices, were so hostile to each other, that, when after death their bodies were burned on the same funeral pile, the flames swayed apart, and the ashes separated. Statius, *Thebaid*, XII 430, Lewis's Tr.:—

“Again behold the brothers! When the fire
Pervades their limbs in many a curling spire,
The vast hill trembles, and the intruder's corse
Is driven from the pile with sudden force.
The flames, dividing at the point, ascend,
And at each other adverse rays extend.
Thus when the ruler of the infernal state,
Pale-visaged Dis, commits to stern debate
The sister-fiends, their brands, held forth to fight,
Now clash, then part, and shed a transient light.”



384. The most cunning of the Greeks at the siege of Troy, now united in their punishment, as before in warlike wrath. [←](#)
385. As Troy was overcome by the fraud of the wooden horse, it was in a poetic sense the gateway by which Aeneas went forth to establish the Roman empire in Italy. [←](#)
386. Deidamia was a daughter of Lycomedes of Scyros, at whose court Ulysses found Achilles, disguised in woman's attire, and enticed him away to the siege of Troy, telling him that, according to the oracle, the city could not be taken without him, but not telling him that, according to the same oracle, he would lose his life there. [←](#)
387. Ulysses and Diomed together stole the Palladium, or statue of Pallas, at Troy, the safeguard and protection of the city. [←](#)
388. The Greeks scorned all other nations as “outside barbarians.” Even Virgil, a Latian, has to plead with Ulysses the merit of having praised him in the Aeneid. [←](#)
389. The Pillars of Hercules at the straits of Gibraltar; Abyla on the African shore, and Gibraltar on the Spanish; in which the popular mind has lost its faith, except as symbolized in the columns on the Spanish dollar, with the legend, *Plus ultra*.

Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto* IX 119:—

“*Appresso questo mare,
Vidi diritto stare
Gran colonne, le quali
Vi mise per segnali
Ercules il potente,
Per mostrare alia gente
Che loco sia finata
La terra e terminata.*”

[←](#)

390. *Odyssey*, XI 155:—

“Well-fitted oars, which are also wings to ships.”



391. Humboldt, *Personal Narrative*, II 19, Miss Williams's Tr., has this passage:—

“From the time we entered the torrid zone, we were never wearied with admiring, every night, the beauty of the Southern sky, which, as we advanced toward the south, opened new constellations to our view. We feel an indescribable sensation, when, on approaching the equator, and particularly on passing from one hemisphere to the other, we see those stars, which we have contemplated from our infancy, progressively sink, and finally disappear. Nothing atvakens in the traveller a livelier remembrance of the immense distance by which he is separated from his country, than the aspect of an unknown firmament. The grouping of the stars of the first magnitude, some scattered nebula, rivalling in splendor the milky way, and tracks of space remarkable for their extreme blackness, give a particular physiognomy to the Southern sky. This sight fills with admiration even those who, uninstructed in the branches of accurate science, feel the same emotion of delight in the contemplation of the heavenly vault, as in the view of a beautiful landscape, or a majestic site. A traveller has no need of being a botanist, to recognize the torrid zone on the mere aspect of its vegetation; and without having acquired any notions of astronomy, without any acquaintance with the celestial charts of Flamstead and De la Caille, he feels he is not in Europe, when he sees the immense constellation of the Ship, or the phosphorescent clouds of Magellan, arise on the horizon.”



392. Compare Tennyson's *Ulysses*:—

“There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with
me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and, sitting well in order, smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts.
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”



393. The subject of the preceding Canto is continued in this. [←](#)

394. The story of the Brazen Bull of Perillus is thus told in the *Gesta Romanorum*, Tale 48, Swan's Tr.:—

“Dionysius records, that when Perillus desired to become an artificer of Phalaris, a cruel and tyrannical king who

depopulated the kingdom, and was guilty of many dreadful excesses, he presented to him, already too well skilled in cruelty, a brazen bull, which he had just constructed. In one of its sides there was a secret door, by which those who were sentenced should enter and be burnt to death. The idea was, that the sounds produced by the agony of the sufferer confined within should resemble the roaring of a bull; and thus, while nothing human struck the ear, the mind should be unimpressed by a feeling of mercy. The king highly applauded the invention, and said, ‘Friend, the value of thy industry is yet untried: more cruel even than the people account me, thou thyself shalt be the first victim.’”

Also in Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, VII:—

“He had of counsell many one,
Among the whiche there was one,
By name which Berillus hight.
And he bethought him how he might
Unto the tirant do liking.
And of his own ymagining
Let forge and make a bulle of bras,
And on the side cast there was
A dore, where a man may inne,
Whan he his peine shall beginne
Through fire, which that men put under.
And all this did he for a wonder,
That whan a man for peine cride,
The bull of bras, which gapeth wide,
It shulde seme, as though it were
A bellewing in a mannes ere
And nought the crieng of a man.
But he, which alle sleightes can.
The devil, that lith in helle fast,
Him that it cast hath overcast,
That for a trespass, which he dede,

He was put in the same stede.
And was himself the first of alle,
Which was into that peine falle
That he for other men ordeigneth.”

✉

395. Virgil being a Lombard, Dante suggests that, in giving Ulysses and Diomed license to depart, he had used the Lombard dialect, saying, “*Issa t’ en va.*” See [note 329](#). ✉
396. The inhabitants of the province of Romagna, of which Ravenna is the capital. ✉
397. It is the spirit of Guido da Montefeltro that speaks. The city of Montefeltro lies between Urbino and that part of the Apennines in which the Tiber rises. Count Guido was a famous warrior, and one of the great Ghibelline leaders. He tells his own story sufficiently in detail in what follows. ✉
398. Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, III 105, gives this description of Ravenna, with an allusion to Boccaccio’s Tale, versified by Dryden under the title of “Theodore and Honoria”:—
- “Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
 Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna’s immemorial wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow’d o’er,
To where the last Caesarean fortress stood,
 Ever-green forest! which Boccaccio’s lore
And Dryden’s lay made haunted ground to me,
 How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!
- “The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed’s and mine,
 And vesper-bell’s that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti’s line,

His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng,
Which learned from this example not to fly
From a true lover, shadowed my mind's eye.”

Dryden’s “Theodore and Honoria” begins with these words:—

“Of all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief, and most renowned, Ravenna stands,
Adorned in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.”

It was at Ravenna that Dante passed the last years of his life, and there he died and was buried. [←](#)

399. The arms of Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna, Dante’s friend, and father (or nephew) of Francesca da Rimini, were an eagle half white in a field of azure, and half red in a field of gold. Cervia is a small town some twelve miles from Ravenna. [←](#)
400. The city of Forlì, where Guido da Montefeltro defeated and slaughtered the French in 1282. See [note 299](#). [←](#)
401. A Green Lion was the coat of arms of the Ordelaffi, then Lords of Forli. [←](#)
402. Malatesta, father and son, tyrants of Rimini, who murdered Montagna, a Ghibelline leader. Verrucchio was their castle, near the city. Of this family were the husband and lover of Francesca. Dante calls them mastiffs, because of their fierceness, making “wimbles of their teeth” in tearing and devouring. [←](#)
403. The cities of Faenza on the Lamone, and Imola on the Santerno. They were ruled by Mainardo, surnamed “the Devil,” whose coat of arms was a lion azure in a white field. [←](#)
404. The city of Cesena. [←](#)
405. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 479:—

“Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.”

↲

406. Boniface VIII, who in line 85 is called “the Prince of the new Pharisees.” ↲

407. Dante, *Convito*, IV 28, quoting Cicero, says:—

“Natural death is as it were a haven and rest to us after long navigation. And the noble soul is like a good mariner; for he, when he draws near the port, lowers his sails, and enters it softly with feeble steerage.”

↲

408. This Papal war, which was waged against Christians, and not against pagan Saracens, nor unbelieving Jews, nor against the renegades who had helped them at the siege of Acre, or given them aid and comfort by traffic, is thus described by Mr. Norton, *Travel and Study in Italy*, p. 263:—

“This ‘war near the Lateran’ was a war with the great family of Colonna. Two of the house were Cardinals. They had been deceived in the election, and were rebellious under the rule of Boniface. The Cardinals of the great Ghibelline house took no pains to conceal their ill-will toward the Guelf Pope. Boniface, indeed, accused them of plotting with his enemies for his overthrow. The Colonnas, finding Rome unsafe, had withdrawn to their strong town of Palestrina, whence they could issue forth at will for plunder, and where they could give shelter to those who shared in their hostility toward the Pope. On the other hand, Boniface, not trusting himself in Rome, withdrew to the secure height of Orvieto, and thence, on the 14th of December, 1297, issued a terrible bull for a crusade against them, granting plenary indulgence to all, (such

was the Christian temper of the times, and so literally were the violent seizing upon the kingdom of Heaven,) granting plenary indulgence to all who would take up arms against these rebellious sons of the Church and march against their chief stronghold, their '*alto seggio*' of Palestrina. They and their adherents had already been excommunicated and put under the ban of the Church; they had been stripped of all dignities and privileges; their property had been confiscated; and they were now by this bull placed in the position of enemies, not of the Pope alone, but of the Church Universal. Troops gathered against them from all quarters of Papal Italy. Their lands were ravaged, and they themselves shut up within their stronghold; but for a long time they held out in their ancient high-walled mountaintown. It was to gain Palestrina that Boniface 'had war near the Lateran.' The great church and palace of the Lateran, standing on the summit of the Ccelian Hill, close to the city wall, overlooks the Campagna, which, in broken levels of brown and green and purple fields, reaches to the base of the encircling mountains. Twenty miles away, crowning the top and clinging to the side of one of the last heights of the Sabine range, are the gray walls and roofs of Palestrina. It was a far more conspicuous place at the close of the thirteenth century than it is now; for the great columns of the famous temple of Fortune still rose above the town, and the ancient citadel kept watch over it from its high rock. At length, in September, 1298, the Colonnas, reduced to the hardest extremities, became ready for peace. Boniface promised largely. The two Cardinals presented themselves before him at Rieti, in coarse brown dresses, and with ropes around their necks, in token of their repentance and submission. The Pope gave them not only pardon and absolution, but hope of being restored to their titles and possessions. This was the '*lunga promessa con l'attender corto*'; for, while the Colonnas were retained near him, and these deceptive hopes held out to

them, Boniface sent the Bishop of Orvieto to take possession of Palestrina, and to destroy it utterly, leaving only the church to stand as a monument above its ruins. The work was done thoroughly;—a plough was drawn across the site of the unhappy town, and salt scattered in the furrow, that the land might thenceforth be desolate. The inhabitants were removed from the mountain to the plain, and there forced to build new homes for themselves, which, in their turn, two years afterwards, were thrown down and burned by order of the implacable Pope. This last piece of malignity was accomplished in 1300, the year of the Jubilee, the year in which Dante was in Rome, and in which he saw Guy of Montefeltro, the counsellor of Boniface in deceit, burning in Hell.”



409. The story of Sylvester and Constantine is one of the legends of the *Legenda Aurea*. The part of it relating to the Emperor's baptism is thus condensed by Mrs. Jameson in her *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II 313:—

“Sylvester was born at Rome of virtuous parents; and at a time when Constantine was still in the darkness of idolatry and persecuted the Christians, Sylvester, who had been elected Bishop of Rome, fled from the persecution, and dwelt for some time in a cavern, near the summit of Monte Calvo. While he lay there concealed, the Emperor was attacked by a horrible leprosy: and having called to him the priests of his false gods, they advised that he should bathe himself in a bath of children's blood, and three thousand children were collected for this purpose. And as he proceeded in his chariot to the place where the bath was to be prepared, the mothers of these children threw themselves in his way with dishevelled hair, weeping, and crying aloud for mercy. Then Constantine was moved to tears, and he ordered his chariot to stop, and

he said to his nobles and to his attendants who were around him, ‘Far better is it that I should die, than cause the death of these innocents!’ And then he commanded that the children should be restored to their mothers with great gifts, in recompense of what they had suffered; so they went away full of joy and gratitude, and the Emperor returned to his palace.

“On that same night, as he lay asleep, St. Peter and St. Paul appeared at his bedside: and they stretched their hands over him and said, ‘Because thou hast feared to spill the innocent blood, Jesus Christ has sent us to bring thee good counsel. Send to Sylvester, who lies hidden among the mountains, and he shall show thee the pool in which, having washed three times, thou shalt be clean from thy leprosy; and henceforth thou shalt adore the God of the Christians, and thou shalt cease to persecute and to oppress them.’ Then Constantine, awaking from this vision, sent his soldiers in search of Sylvester. And when they took him, he supposed that it was to lead him to death; nevertheless he went cheerfully: and when he appeared before the Emperor, Constantine arose and saluted him, and said, ‘I would know of thee who are those two gods who appeared to me in the visions of the night?’ And Sylvester replied, ‘They were not gods, but the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Then Constantine desired that he would show him the effigies of these two apostles; and Sylvester sent for two pictures of St. Peter and St. Paul, which were in the possession of certain pious Christians. Constantine, having beheld them, saw that they were the same who had appeared to him in his dream. Then Sylvester baptized him, and he came out of the font cured of his malady.”

Gower also, *Confessio Amantis*, II, tells the story at length:—

“And in the while it was begunne
A light, as though it were a sunne,

Fro heven Into the place come
Where that he toke his christendome,
And ever amonge the holy tales
Lich as they weren fisches scales
They fallen from him now and eftre,
Till that there was nothing belefte
Of all this grete maladie.”



410. Montefeltro was in the Franciscan monastery at Assisi. [✉](#)

411. See [note 408](#). Dante calls the town Penestrino from its Latin name Praeneste. [✉](#)

412. Pope Celestine V, who made “the great refusal,” or abdication of the papacy. See [note 49](#). [✉](#)

413. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II:—

“For shrifte stant of no value
To him, that woll him noughe vertue,
To leve of vice the folie,
For worde is wind, but the maistrie
Is, that a man himself defende
Of thing whiche is noughe to commende,
Wherof ben fewe now a day.”



414. The Ninth Bolgia, in which are punished the Schismatics, and

“where is paid the fee
By those who sowing discord win their burden”;

a burden difficult to describe even with untrammelled words, or in plain prose, free from the fetters of rhyme. [✉](#)

415. Apulia, or La Puglia, is in the southeastern part of Italy, “between the spur and the heel of the boot.” ←

416. The people slain in the conquest of Apulia by the Romans. Of the battle of Maleventum, Livy, X 15, says:—

“Here likewise there was more of flight than of bloodshed. Two thousand of the Apulians were slain, and Decius, despising such an enemy, led his legions into Samnium.”

←

417. Hannibal’s famous battle at Cannae, in the second Punic war. According to Livy, XXII 49:—

“The number of the slain is computed at forty thousand foot, and two thousand seven hundred horse.”

He continues, XXII 51, Baker’s Tr.:—

“On the day following, as soon as light appeared, his troops applied themselves to the collecting of the spoils, and viewing the carnage made, which was such as shocked even enemies; so many thousand Romans, horsemen and footmen, lay promiscuously on the field, as chance had thrown them together, either in the battle, or flight. Some, whom their wounds, being pinched by the morning cold, had roused from their posture, were put to death by the enemy, as they were rising up, all covered with blood, from the midst of the heaps of carcasses. Some they found lying alive, with their thighs and hams cut, who, stripping their necks and throats, desired them to spill what remained of their blood. Some were found, with their heads buried in the earth, in holes which it appeared they had made for themselves, and covering their faces with earth thrown over them, had thus been suffocated. The attention of all was particularly attracted by a living Numidian with his nose and ears mangled, stretched under

a dead Roman, who lay over him, and who, when his hands had been rendered unable to hold a weapon, his rage being exasperated to madness, had expired in the act of tearing his antagonist with his teeth."

When Mago, son of Hamilcar, carried the news of the victory to Carthage, "in conformation of his joyful intelligence," says the same historian, XXIII 12, "he ordered the gold rings taken from the Romans to be poured down in the porch of the senate-house, and of these there was so great a heap that, according to some writers, on being measured, they filled three pecks and a half; but the more general account, and likewise the more probable is, that they amounted to no more than one peck. He also explained to them, in order to show the greater extent of the slaughter, that none but those of equestrian rank, and of these only the principal, wore this ornament." [←](#)

418. Robert Guiscard, the renowned Norman conqueror of southern Italy. Dante places him in the Fifth Heaven of Paradise, in the planet Mars. For an account of his character and achievements see Gibbon, Ch. LVI.

Matthew Paris, Giles's Tr., I 171, AD. 1239, gives the following account of the manner in which he captured the monastery of Monte Cassino:—

"In the same year, the monks of Monte Cassino (where St. Benedict had planted a monastery), to the number of thirteen, came to the Pope in old and torn garments, with dishevelled hair and unshorn beards, and with tears in their eyes; and on being introduced to the presence of his Holiness, they fell at his feet, and laid a complaint that the Emperor had ejected them from their house at Monte Cassino. This mountain was impregnable, and indeed inaccessible to any one unless at the will of the monks and others who dwelt on it; however R. Guiscard, by a device, pretending that he was dead and being carried thither on a bier, thus took possession of the monks' castle. When the Pope heard this, he concealed his grief, and asked the reason; to which the monks replied, 'Because, in

obedience to you, we excommunicated the Emperor.' The Pope then said, 'Your obedience shall save you'; on which the monks went away without receiving anything more from the Pope."



419. The battle of Ceperano, near Monte Cassino, was fought in 1265, between Charles of Anjou and Manfred, king of Apulia and Sicily. The Apulians, seeing the battle going against them, deserted their king and passed over to the enemy. [←](#)
420. The battle of Tagliacozzo in Abruzzo was fought in 1268, between Charles of Anjou and Curradino or Conradin, nephew of Manfred. Charles gained the victory by the strategy of Count Alardo di Valleri, who,

"weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous."

This valiant but wary crusader persuaded the king to keep a third of his forces in reserve; and when the soldiers of Curradino, thinking they had won the day, were scattered over the field in pursuit of plunder, Charles fell upon them, and routed them.

Alardo is mentioned in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. LVII, as "celebrated for his wonderful prowess even among the chief nobles, and no less esteemed for his singular virtues than for his courage." [←](#)

421. Gibbon, ch. L, says:—

"At the conclusion of the Life of Muhammad, it may perhaps be expected that I should balance his faults and virtues, that I should decide whether the title of enthusiast or impostor more properly belongs to that extraordinary man. Had I been intimately conversant with the son of Abdallah, the task would still be difficult, and the success uncertain; at the distance of twelve centuries, I darkly contemplate his shade through a cloud of religious

incense; and could I truly delineate the portrait of an hour, the fleeting resemblance would not equally apply to the solitary of Mount Hera, to the preacher of Mecca, and to the conqueror of Arabia. . . . From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery; the daemon of Socrates affords a memorable instance how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud.”

Of Ali, the son-in-law and faithful follower of Muhammad, he goes on to say:—

“He united the qualifications of a poet, a soldier, and a saint; his wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings; and every antagonist, in the combats of the tongue or of the sword, was subdued by his eloquence and valor. From the first hour of his mission to the last rites of his funeral, the apostle was never forsaken by a generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent, and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses.”



422. Fra Dolcino was one of the early social and religious reformers in the North of Italy. His sect bore the name of “Apostles,” and its chief, if not only, heresy was a desire to bring back the Church to the simplicity of the apostolic times. In 1305 he withdrew with his followers to the mountains overlooking the Val Sesia in Piedmont, where he was pursued and besieged by the Church party, and, after various fortunes of victory and defeat, being reduced by “stress of snow” and famine, was taken prisoner, together with his companion, the beautiful Margaret of Trent. Both were burned at Vercelli on the 1st of June, 1307. This “last act of the tragedy” is thus described by Mr. Mariotti, *Historical Memoir of Fra Dolcino and His Times*, p. 290:—

“Margaret of Trent enjoyed the precedence due to her sex. She was first led out into a spot near Vercelli, bearing the name of ‘Arena Servi,’ or more properly ‘Arena Cervi,’ in the sands, that is, of the torrent Cervo, which has its confluent with the Sesia at about one mile above the city. A high stake had been erected in a conspicuous part of the place. To this she was fastened, and a pile of wood was reared at her feet. The eyes of the inhabitants of town and country were upon her. On her also were the eyes of Dolcino. She was burnt alive with slow fire.

“Next came the turn of Dolcino: he was seated high on a car drawn by oxen, and thus paraded from street to street all over Vercelli. His tormentors were all around him. Beside the car, iron pots were carried, filled with burning charcoal; deep in the charcoal were iron pincers, glowing at white heat. These pincers were continually applied to the various parts of Dolcino’s naked body, all along his progress, till all his flesh was torn piecemeal from his limbs: when every bone was bare and the whole town was perambulated, they drove the still living carcass back to the same arena, and threw it on the burning mass in which Margaret had been consumed.”

Farther on he adds:—

“Divested of all fables which ignorance, prejudice, or open calumny involved it in, Dolcino’s scheme amounted to nothing more than a reformation, not of religion, but of the Church; his aim was merely the destruction of the temporal power of the clergy, and he died for his country no less than for his God. The wealth, arrogance, and corruption of the Papal See appeared to him, as it appeared to Dante, as it appeared to a thousand other patriots before and after him, an eternal hindrance to the union, peace, and welfare of Italy, as it was a perpetual check upon the progress of the human race, and a source of infinite scandal to the piety of earnest believers....

“To this clear mission of Italian protestantism Dolcino was true throughout. If we bring the light of even the clumsiest criticism to bear on his creed, even such as it has been summed up by the ignorance or malignity of men who never utter his name without an imprecation, we have reason to be astonished at the little we find in it that may be construed into a wilful deviation from the strictest orthodoxy. Luther and Calvin would equally have repudiated him. He was neither a Presbyterian nor an Episcopalian, but an uncompromising, stanch Papist. His was, most eminently, the heresy of those whom we have designated as ‘literal Christians.’ He would have the Gospel strictly—perhaps blindly—adhered to. Neither was that, in the abstract, an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Romanism of those times—witness St. Francis and his early flock—provided he had limited himself to make Gospel-law binding upon himself and his followers only. But Dolcino must needs enforce it upon the whole Christian community, enforce it especially on those who set up as teachers of the Gospel, on those who laid claim to Apostolical succession. That was the error that damned him.”

Of Margaret he still farther says, referring to some old manuscript as authority:—

“She was known by the emphatic appellation of Margaret the Beautiful. It is added, that she was an orphan, heiress of noble parents, and had been placed for her education in a monastery of St. Catherine in Trent; that there Dolcino—who had also been a monk, or at least a novice, in a convent of the Order of the Humiliati, in the same town, and had been expelled in consequence either of his heretic tenets, or of immoral conduct—succeeded nevertheless in becoming domesticated in the nunnery of St. Catherine, as a steward or agent to the nuns, and there

accomplished the fascination and abduction of the wealthy heiress.”

◀

423. Val Sesia, among whose mountains Fra Dolcino was taken prisoner, is in the diocese of Novara. ▵

424. A Bolognese, who stirred up dissensions among the citizens. ▵

425. The plain of Lombardy sloping down two hundred miles and more, from Vercelli in Piedmont to Marcabo, a village near Ravenna. ▵

426. Guido del Cassero and Angiolello da Cagnano, two honorable citizens of Fano, going to Rimini by invitation of Malatestino, were by his order thrown into the sea and drowned, as here prophesied or narrated, near the village of Cattolica on the Adriatic. ▵

427. Malatestino had lost one eye. ▵

428. Rimini. ▵

429. Focara is a headland near Cattolica, famous for dangerous winds, to be preserved from which mariners offered up vows and prayers. These men will not need to do it; they will not reach that cape. ▵

430. Curio, the banished Tribune, who, fleeing to Cjesar’s camp on the Rubicon, urged him to advance upon Rome. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, I, Rowe’s Tr.:—

“To Caesar’s camp the busy
Curio fled; Curio, a speaker turbulent and bold,
Of venal eloquence, that served for gold,
And principles that might be bought and sold.

:

To Caesar thus, while thousand cares infest,
Revolving round the warrior’s anxious breast,

His speech the ready orator addressed.

:

‘Haste, then, thy towering eagles on their way;
When fair occasion calls, ’tis fatal to delay.’”

↖

431. Mosca degl’ Uberti, or dei Lamberti, who, by advising the murder of Buondelmonte, gave rise to the parties of Guelf and Ghibelline, which so long divided Florence. See [note 137.](#) ↲

432. Bertrand de Born, the turbulent Troubadour of the last half of the twelfth century, was alike skilful with his pen and his sword, and passed his life in alternately singing and fighting, and in stirring up dissension and strife among his neighbors. He is the author of that spirited war-song, well known to all readers of Troubadour verse, beginning

“The beautiful spring delights me well,
When flowers and leaves are growing;
And it pleases my heart to hear the swell
Of the birds’ sweet chorus flowing
In the echoing wood;
And I love to see, all scattered around,
Pavilions and tents on the martial ground;
And my spirit finds it good,
To see, on the level plains beyond
Gay knights and steeds caparison’d”;—

and ending with a challenge to Richard Coeur de Lion, telling his minstrel Papiol to go

“And tell the Lord of ‘Yes and No’
That peace already too long has been.”

“Bertrand de Born,” says the old Provençal biography, published by Raynouard, *Choix de Poésies Originales des Troubadours*, V 76, “was

a chatelain of the bishopric of Perigueux, Viscount of Hautefort, a castle with nearly a thousand retainers. He had a brother, and would have dispossessed him of his inheritance, had it not been for the king of England. He was always at war with all his neighbors, with the Count of Perigueux, and with the Viscount of Limoges, and with his brother Constantine, and with Richard, when he was Count of Poitou. He was a good cavalier, and a good warrior, and a good lover, and a good troubadour; and well informed and well spoken; and knew well how to bear good and evil fortune. Whenever he wished, he was master of King Henry of England and of his son; but always desired that father and son should be at war with each other, and one brother with the other. And he always wished that the king of France and the king of England should be at variance; and if there were either peace or truce, straightway he sought and endeavored by his satires to undo the peace, and to show how each was dishonored by it. And he had great advantages and great misfortunes by thus exciting feuds between them. He wrote many satires, but only two songs. The king of Aragon called the songs of Giraud de Borneil the wives of Bertrand de Born's satires. And he who sang for him bore the name of Papiol. And he was handsome and courteous; and called the Count of Britany, Rassa; and the king of England, Yes and No; and his son, the young king, Marinier. And he set his whole heart on fomenting war; and embroiled the father and son of England, until the young king was killed by an arrow in a castle of Bertrand de Born.

“And Bertrand used to boast that he had more wits than he needed. And when the king took him prisoner, he asked him, ‘Have you all your wits, for you will need them now?’ And he answered, ‘I lost them all when the young king died.’ Then the king wept, and pardoned him, and gave him robes, and lands, and honors. And he lived long and became a Cistercian monk.”

Fauriel, *Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*, Adler’s Tr., p. 483, quoting part of this passage, adds:—

“In this notice the old biographer indicates the dominant trait of Bertrand’s character very distinctly; it was an unbridled passion for war. He loved it not only as the occasion for exhibiting proofs of valor, for acquiring

power, and for winning glory, but also, and even more on account of its hazards, on account of the exaltation of courage and of life which it produced, nay, even for the sake of the tumult, the disorders, and the evils which are accustomed to follow in its train. Bertrand de Born is the ideal of the undisciplined and adventuresome warrior of the Middle Age, rather than that of the chevalier in the proper sense of the term.”

See also Millot, *Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*, I 210, and *Histoire Littéraire de la France par les Bénédictins de St. Maur*, continuation, XVII 425.

Bertrand de Born, if not the best of the Troubadours, is the most prominent and striking character among them. His life is a drama full of romantic interest; beginning with the old castle in Gascony, “the dames, the cavaliers, the arms, the loves, the courtesy, the bold emprise”; and ending in a Cistercian convent, among friars and fastings and penitence and prayers. ↪

433. A vast majority of manuscripts and printed editions read in this line, *Re Giovanni*, King John, instead of *Re Giovane*, the Young King. Even Boccaccio’s copy, which he wrote out with his own hand for Petrarca, has *Re Giovanni*. Out of seventy-nine Codici examined by Barlow, he says, *Study of the Divina Commedia*, p. 153, “Only five were found with the correct reading—*re giovane*.... The reading *re giovane* is not found in any of the early editions, nor is it noticed by any of the early commentators.” See also Ginguené, *Histoire littéraire de l’Italie*, II 586, where the subject is elaborately discussed, and the note of Biagioli, who takes the opposite side of the question.

Henry II of England had four sons, all of whom were more or less rebellious against him. They were, Henry, surnamed Curt-Mantle, and called by the Troubadours and novelists of his time “The Young King,” because he was crowned during his father’s life; Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Count of Guienne and Poitou; Geoffroy, Duke of Brittany; and John Lackland. Henry was the only one of these who bore the title of king at the time in question. Bertrand de Born was on terms of intimacy with him, and speaks of him in his poems as *lo Reys joves*,

sometimes lauding, and sometimes reproving him. One of the best of these poems is his *Complainte*, on the death of Henry, which took place in 1183, from disease, say some accounts, from the bolt of a crossbow say others. He complains that he has lost “the best king that was ever born of mother”; and goes on to say, “King of the courteous, and emperor of the valiant, you would have been Seigneur if you had lived longer; for you bore the name of the Young King, and were the chief and peer of youth. Ay! hauberk and sword, and beautiful buckler, helmet and gonfalon, and purpoint and sark, and joy and love, there is none to maintain them!” See Raynouard, *Choix de Poésies*, IV 49.

In the *Bible Guiot de Provins*, Barbazan, *Fabliaux et Contes*, II 518, he is spoken of as

“*Il jones Rois,
Li proux, li saiges, li cortoisi.*”

In the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, XVIII, XIX, XXXV, he is called *Il Re Giovane*; and in Roger de Wendover’s *Flowers of History*, AD 1179–1183, “Henry the Young King.”

It was to him that Bertrand de Born “gave the evil counsels,” embroiling him with his father and his brothers. Therefore, when the commentators challenge us as Pistol does Shallow, “Under which king, Bezonian? speak or die!” I think we must answer as Shallow does, “Under King Harry.” ↪

434. See 2 Samuel 17:1, 2:—

“Moreover, Ahithophel said unto Absalom, let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night. And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only.”

Dryden, in his poem of *Absalom and Achitopbel*, gives this portrait of the latter:—

“Of these the false Achitophel was first;

A name to all succeeding ages curst;
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pygmy body to decay,
And o'er inform'd the tenement of clay.”

Then he puts into the mouth of Achitophel the following description of Absalom:—

“Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire;
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas, and shows the promised land;
Whose dawning day, in every distant age,
Has exercised the sacred prophet's rage;
The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream.”



435. The Tenth and last “cloister of Malebolge,” where

“Justice infallible
Punishes forgers,”

and falsifiers of all kinds. This Canto is devoted to the alchemists. [←](#)

436. Geri del Bello was a disreputable member of the Alighieri family, and was murdered by one of the Sacchetti. His death was afterwards avenged by his brother, who in turn slew one of the Sacchetti at the door of his house. [←](#)

437. Bertrand de Born. [←](#)

438. Like the ghost of Ajax in the *Odyssey*, XI:—

“He answered me not at all, but went to Erebus amongst
the other souls of the dead.”

✉

439. Dante seems to share the feeling of the Italian *vendetta*, which required retaliation from some member of the injured family.

“Among the Italians of this age,” says Napier, *Florentine History*, I Ch. VII, “and for centuries after, private offence was never forgotten until revenged, and generally involved a succession of mutual injuries; vengeance was not only considered lawful and just, but a positive duty, dishonorable to omit; and, as may be learned from ancient private journals, it was sometimes allowed to sleep for five-and-thirty years, and then suddenly struck a victim who perhaps had not yet seen the light when the original injury was inflicted.” ✉

440. The Val di Chiana, near Arezzo, was in Dante’s time marshy and pestilential. Now, by the effect of drainage, it is one of the most beautiful and fruitful of the Tuscan valleys. The Maremma was and is notoriously unhealthy; see [note 181](#), and Sardinia would seem to have shared its ill repute. ✉

441. Forgers or falsifiers in a general sense. The “false semblaunt” of Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II:—

“Of fals semblaunt if I shall telle,
Above all other it is the welle
Out of the which deceipte floweth.”

They are registered here on earth to be punished hereafter. ✉

442. The plague of Aegina is described by Ovid, *Metamorph.* VII, Stonestreet’s Tr.:—

“Their black dry tongues are swelled, and scarce can
move,

And short thick sighs from panting lungs are drove.
They gape for air, with flatt'ring hopes t' abate
Their raging flames, but that augments their heat.
No bed, no cov'ring can the wretches bear,
But on the ground, exposed to open air,
They lie, and hope to find a pleasing coolness there.
The suff'ring earth, with that oppression curst,
Returns the heat which they imparted first

:

“Here one, with fainting steps, does slowly creep
O'er heaps of dead, and straight augments the heap;
Another, while his strength and tongue prevailed,
Bewails his friend, and falls himself bewailed;
This with imploring looks surveys the skies,
The last dear office of his closing eyes,
But finds the Heav'ns implacable, and dies.”

The birth of the Myrmidons, “who still retain the thrift of ants, though now transformed to men,” is thus given in the same book:—

“As many ants the num'rous branches bear,
The same their labor, and their frugal care;
The branches too alike commotion found,
And shook th' industrious creatures on the ground,
Who by degrees (what 's scarce to be believed)
A nobler form and larger bulk received,
And on the earth walked an unusual pace,
With manly strides, and an erected face;
Their num'rous legs, and former color lost,
The insects could a human figure boast.”

✉

443. Latian, or Italian; any one of the Latin race. ✉

444. The speaker is a certain Griffolino, an alchemist of Arezzo, who practised upon the credulity of Albert, a natural son of the Bishop of

Siena. For this he was burned; but was “condemned to the last Bolgia of the ten for alchemy.” ↵

445. The inventor of the Cretan labyrinth. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII:—

“Great Daedalus of Athens was the man
Who made the draught, and formed the wondrous plan.”

Not being able to find his way out of the labyrinth, he made wings for himself and his son Icarus, and escaped by flight. ↵

446. Speaking of the people of Siena, Forsyth, *Italy*, 532, says:—

“Vain, flighty, fanciful, they want the judgment and penetration of their Florentine neighbors; who, nationally severe, call a nail without a head *chiodo Sanese*. The accomplished Signora Rinieri told me, that her father, while Governor of Siena, was once stopped in his carriage by a crowd at Florence, where the mob, recognizing him, called out: ‘*Lasciate passare il Governatore de’ matti.*’ A native of Siena is presently known at Florence; for his very walk, being formed to a hilly town, detects him on the plain.”

↵

447. The persons here mentioned gain a kind of immortality from Dante’s verse. The Stricca, or Baldastricca, was a lawyer of Siena; and Niccolò dei Salimbeni, or Bonsignori, introduced the fashion of stuffing pheasants with cloves, or, as Benvenuto says, of roasting them at a fire of cloves. Though Dante mentions them apart, they seem, like the two others named afterwards, to have been members of the *Brigita Spendereccia*, or Prodigal Club, of Siena, whose extravagances are recorded by Benvenuto da Imola. This club consisted of “twelve very rich young gentlemen, who took it into their heads to do things that would make a great part of the world wonder.” Accordingly each contributed eighteen thousand golden florins to a common fund, amounting in all to two hundred and sixteen thousand florins. They

built a palace, in which each member had a splendid chamber, and they gave sumptuous dinners and suppers; ending their banquets sometimes by throwing all the dishes, table-ornaments, and knives of gold and silver out of the window. “This silly institution,” continues Benvenuto, “lasted only ten months, the treasury being exhausted, and the wretched members became the fable and laughingstock of all the world.”

In honor of this club, Folgore da San Geminiano, a clever poet of the day (1260), wrote a series of twelve convivial sonnets, one for each month of the year, with Dedication and Conclusion. A translation of these sonnets may be found in D. G. Rossetti’s *Early Italian Poets*. The Dedication runs as follows:—

“Unto the blithe and lordly Fellowship,
(I know not where, but wheresoe’er, I know,
Lordly and blithe,) be greeting; and thereto,
Dogs, hawks, and a full purse wherein to dip;
Quails struck i’ the flight; nags mettled to the whip;
Hart-hounds, hare-hounds, and blood-hounds even so;
And o’er that realm, a crown for Niccolò,
Whose praise in Siena springs from lip to lip.
Tingoccio, Atuin di Togno, and Ancaian,
Bartolo, and Mugaro, and Faenot,
Who well might pass for children of King Ban,
Courteous and valiant more than Lancelot—
To each, God speed! How worthy every man
To hold high tournament in Camelot.”



448. “This Capocchio,” says the *Ottimo*, “was a very subtle alchemist; and because he was burned for practising alchemy in Siena, he exhibits his hatred to the Sienese, and gives us to understand that the author knew him.”

449. In this Canto the same Bolgia is continued, with different kinds of Falsifiers.

450. Athamas, king of Thebes and husband of Ino, daughter of Cadmus. His madness is thus described by Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV, Eusden's Tr.:—

“Now Athamas cries out, his reason fled,
‘Here, fellow-hunters, let the toils be spread.
I saw a lioness, in quest of food,
With her two young, run roaring in this wood.’
Again the fancied savages were seen,
As thro’ his palace still he chased his queen;
Then tore Learchus from her breast: the child
Stretched little arms, and on its father smiled—
A father now no more—who now begun
Around his head to whirl his giddy son,
And, quite insensible to nature’s call,
The helpless infant flung against the wall.
The same mad poison in the mother wrought;
Young Melicerta in her arms she caught,
And with disordered tresses, howling, flies,
‘O Bacchus, Evôe, Bacchus!’ loud she cries.
The name of Bacchus Juno laughed to hear,
And said, ‘Thy foster-god has cost thee dear.’
A rock there stood, whose side the beating waves
Had long consumed, and hollowed into caves.
The head shot forwards in a bending steep,
And cast a dreadful covert o’er the deep.
The wretched Ino, on destruction bent,
Climbed up the cliff—such strength her fury lent:
Thence with her guiltless boy, who wept in vain,
At one bold spring she plunged into the main.”



451. Hecuba, wife of Priam of Troy, and mother of Polyxena and Polydorus. Ovid, XIII, Stanyan's Tr.:—

“When on the banks her son in ghastly hue
Transfixed with Thracian arrows strikes her view,

The matrons shrieked; her big swoln grief surpassed
The power of utterance; she stood aghast;
She had nor speech, nor tears to give relief:
Excess of woe suppressed the rising grief.
Lifeless as stone, on earth she fix'd her eyes;
And then look'd up to Heav'n with wild surprise,
Now she contemplates o'er with sad delight
Her son's pale visage; then her aking sight
Dwells on his wounds: she varies thus by turns,
Till with collected rage at length she burns,
Wild as the mother-lion, when among
The haunts of prey she seeks her ravished young:
Swift flies the ravisher; she marks his trace,
And by the print directs her anxious chase.
So Hecuba with mingled grief and rage
Pursues the king, regardless of her age.

:

Fastens her forky fingers in his eyes;
Tears out the rooted balls; her rage pursues,
And in the hollow orbs her hand imbrues.

“The Thracians, fired at this inhuman scene,
With darts and stones assail the frantic queen.
She snarls and growls, nor in an human tone;
Then bites impatient at the bounding stone;
Extends her jaws, as she her voice would raise
To keen invectives in her wonted phrase;
But barks, and thence the yelping brute betrays.”

↵

452. Griffolino d'Arezzo, mentioned in Canto XXIX 109. ↵

453. The same “mad sprite,” Gianni Schicchi, mentioned in line 32. “Buoso Donati of Florence,” says Benvenuto, “although a nobleman and of an illustrious house, was nevertheless like other noblemen of his time,

and by means of thefts had greatly increased his patrimony. When the hour of death drew near, the sting of conscience caused him to make a will in which he gave fat legacies to many people; whereupon his son Simon, (the *Ottimo* says his nephew,) thinking himself enormously aggrieved, suborned Vanni Schicchi dei Cavalcanti, who got into Buoso's bed, and made a will in opposition to the other. Gianni much resembled Buoso." In this will Gianni Schicchi did not forget himself, while making Simon heir; for, according to the *Ottimo*, he put this clause into it: "To Gianni Schicchi I bequeath my mare." This was the "lady of the herd," and Benvenuto adds, "none more beautiful was to be found in Tuscany; and it was valued at a thousand florins." ↵

454. Messer Adamo, a false-coiner of Brescia, who at the instigation of the Counts Guido, Alessandro, and Aghinolfo of Romena, counterfeited the golden florin of Florence, which bore on one side a lily, and on the other the figure of John the Baptist. ↵

455. Tasso, *Gerusalemme*, XIII 60, Fairfax's Tr.:—

"He that the gliding rivers erst had seen
Adown their verdant channels gently rolled,
Or filling streams, which to the valleys green,
Distilled from tops of Alpine mountains cold,
Those he desired in vain, new torments been
Augmented thus with wish of comforts old;
Those waters cool he drank in vain conceit,
Which more increased his thirst, increased his heat."

↵

456. The upper valley of the Arno is in the province of Cassentino. Quoting these three lines. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 246, says:—

"In these untranslatable verses, there is a feeling of humid freshness, which almost makes one shudder. I owe it to truth to say, that the Cassentine was a great deal less fresh and less verdant in reality than in the poetry of Dante, and that in the midst of the aridity which surrounded me, this

poetry, by its very perfection, made one feel something of the punishment of Master Adam.”



457. Forsyth, *Italy*, 116, says:—

“The castle of Romena, mentioned in these verses, now stands in ruins on a precipice about a mile from our inn, and not far off is a spring which the peasants call Fonte Branda. Might I presume to differ from his commentators, Dante, in my opinion, does not mean the great fountain of Siena, but rather this obscure spring; which, though less known to the world, was an object more familiar to the poet himself, who took refuge here from proscription, and an image more natural to the coiner who was burnt on the spot.”

Ampère is of the same opinion, *Voyage Dantesque*, 246:—

“The Fonte Branda, mentioned by Master Adam, is assuredly the fountain thus named, which still flows not far from the tower of Romena, between the place of the crime and that of its punishment.”

On the other hand, Mr. Barlow, *Contributions*, remarks:—

“This little fount was known only to so few, that Dante, who wrote for the Italian people generally, can scarcely be thought to have meant this, when the famous Fonte Branda at Siena was, at least by name, familiar to them all, and formed an image more in character with the insatiable thirst of Master Adam.”

Poetically the question is of slight importance; for, as Fluellen says:—

“There is a river in Macedon, and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth, . . . and there is salmons in both.”



458. This line and line 11 of Canto XXIX are cited by Gabrielle Rossetti in confirmation of his theory of the “Principal Allegory of the Inferno,” that the city of Dis is Rome. He says, *Spirito Antipapale*, I 62, Miss Ward’s Tr.:—

“This well is surrounded by a high wall, and the wall by a vast trench; the circuit of the trench is twenty-two miles, and that of the wall eleven miles. Now the outward trench of the walls of Rome (whether real or imaginary we say not) was reckoned by Dante’s contemporaries to be exactly twenty-two miles; and the walls of the city were then, and still are, eleven miles round. Hence it is clear, that the *wicked time* which looks into Rome, as into a mirror, sees there the corrupt place which is the final goal to its waters or people, that is, the figurative Rome, ‘dread seat of Dis.’”

The trench here spoken of is the last trench of Malebolge. Dante mentions no wall about the well; only giants standing round it like towers.

459. Potiphar’s wife.

460. Virgil’s “perjured Sinon,” the Greek who persuaded the Trojans to accept the wooden horse, telling them it was meant to protect the city, in lieu of the statue of Pallas, stolen by Diomed and Ulysses.

Chaucer, “Nonnes Preestes Tale”:—

“O false dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broughtest Troye at utterly to sorwe.”



461. The disease of *tympanites* is so called “because the abdomen is distended with wind, and sounds like a drum when struck.” ↵

462. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III:—

“A fountain in a darksome wood,
Nor stained with falling leaves nor rising mud.”

↵

463. This Canto describes the Plain of the Giants, between Malebolge and the mouth of the Infernal Pit. ↵

464. *Iliad*, XVI:—

“A Pelion ash, which Chiron gave to his (Achilles’) father, cut from the top of Mount Pelion, to be the death of heroes.”

Chaucer, “Squieres Tale”:—

“And of Achilles for his queinte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and drere.”

And Shakespeare, in *King Henry the Sixth*, V i:—

“Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles’ spear,
Is able with the change to kill and cure.”

↵

465. The battle of Roncesvalles,

“When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabia.”

↵

466. Archbishop Turpin, *Chronicle*, XXIII, Rodd's Tr., thus describes the blowing of Orlando's horn:—

“He now blew a loud blast with his horn, to summon any Christian concealed in the adjacent woods to his assistance, or to recall his friends beyond the pass. This horn was endued with such power, that all other horns were split by its sound; and it is said that Orlando at that time blew it with such vehemence, that he burst the veins and nerves of his neck. The sound reached the king’s ears, who lay encamped in the valley still called by his name, about eight miles from Ronceval, towards Gascony, being carried so far by supernatural power. Charles would have flown to his succor, but was prevented by Ganalon, who, conscious of Orlando’s sufferings, insinuated it was usual with him to sound his horn on light occasions. ‘He is, perhaps,’ said he, ‘pursuing some wild beast, and the sound echoes through the woods; it will be fruitless, therefore, to seek him.’ O wicked traitor, deceitful as Judas! What dost thou merit?”

Walter Scott in *Marmion*, VI 33, makes allusion to Orlando’s horn:—

“O for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!”

Orlando’s horn is one of the favorite fictions of old romance, and is surpassed in power only by that of Alexander, which took sixty men to blow it and could be heard at a distance of sixty miles! ↪

467. Monteriggione is a picturesque old castle on an eminence near Siena. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 251, remarks:—

“This fortress, as the commentators say, was furnished with towers all round about, and had none in the centre. In its present state it is still very faithfully described by the verse,

‘*Montereggion di torri si corona.*’”



468. This pine-cone of bronze, which is now in the gardens of the Vatican, was found in the mausoleum of Hadrian, and is supposed to have crowned its summit. “I have looked daily,” says Mrs. Kemble, *Year of Consolation*, 152, “over the lonely, sunny gardens, open like the palace halls to me, where the wide-sweeping orange-walks end in some distant view of the sad and noble Campagna, where silver fountains call to each other through the silent, overarching cloisters of dark and fragrant green, and where the huge bronze pine, by which Dante measured his great giant, yet stands in the midst of graceful vases and bass-reliefs wrought in former ages, and the more graceful blossoms blown within the very hour.”

And Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 277, remarks:—

“Here Dante takes as a point of comparison an object of determinate size; the *pigna* is eleven feet high, the giant then must be seventy; it performs, in the description, the office of those figures which are placed near monuments to render it easier for the eye to measure their height.”

Mr. Norton, *Travel and Study in Italy*, 253, thus speaks of the same object:—

“This pine-cone, of bronze, was set originally upon the summit of the Mausoleum of Hadrian. After this imperial sepulchre had undergone many evil fates, and as its ornaments were stripped one by one from it, the cone was in the sixth century taken down, and carried off to adorn a fountain, which had been constructed for the use of dusty and thirsty pilgrims, in a pillared enclosure, called the

Paradiso, in front of the old basilica of St. Peter. Here it remained for centuries; and when the old church gave way to the new, it was put where it now stands, useless and out of place, in the trim and formal gardens of the Papal palace.”

And adds in a note:—

“At the present day it serves the bronze-workers of Rome as a model for an inkstand, such as is seen in the shopwindows every winter, and is sold to travellers, few of whom know the history and the poetry belonging to its original.”

↵

469. “The gaping monotony of this jargon,” says Leigh Hunt, “full of the vowel *a*, is admirably suited to the mouth of the vast half-stupid speaker. It is like a babble of the gigantic infancy of the world.” ↵

470. Nimrod, the “mighty hunter before the Lord,” who built the tower of Babel, which, according to the Italian popular tradition, was so high that whoever mounted to the top of it could hear the angels sing.

Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, 51, gives this extract from the “Sibylline Oracles”:—

“But wlicn the judgments of the Almighty God
Were ripe for execution; when the Tower
Rose to the skies upon Assyria’s plain,
And all mankind one language only knew;
A dread commission from on high was given
To the fell whirlwinds, which with dire alarms
Beat on the Tower, and to its lowest base
Shook it convulsed. And now all intercourse,
By some occult and overruling power,
Ceased among men: by utterance they strove
Perplexed and anxious to disclose their mind;
But their lip failed them, and in lieu of words

Produced a painful babbling sound: the place
Was thence called Babel; by th' apostate crew
Named from the event. Then severed far away
They sped uncertain into realms unknown;
Thus kingdoms rose, and the glad world was filled.”



471. *Odyssey*, XI, Buckley's Tr.:—

“Godlike Otus and far-famed Ephialtes; whom the faithful earth nourished, the tallest and far the most beautiful, at least after illustrious Orion. For at nine years old they were also nine cubits in width, and in height they were nine fathoms. Who even threatened the immortals that they would set up a strife of impetuous war in Olympus. They attempted to place Ossa upon Olympus, and upon Ossa leafy Pelion, that heaven might be accessible. And they would have accomplished it, if they had reached the measure of youth; but the son of Jove, whom fair-haired Latona bore, destroyed them both, before the down flowered under their temples and thickened upon their cheeks with a flowering beard.”



472. The giant with a hundred hands. *Aeneid*, X:—

“Aegaeon, who, they say, had a hundred arms and a hundred hands, and flashed fire from fifty mouths and breasts; when against the thunderbolts of Jove he on so many equal bucklers clashed; unsheathed so many swords.”

He is supposed to have been a famous pirate, and the fable of the hundred hands arose from the hundred sailors that manned his ship.

473. The giant Antaeus is here unbound, because he had not been at “the mighty war” against the gods. ↵
474. The valley of the Bagrada, one of whose branches flows by Zama, the scene of Scipio’s great victory over Hannibal, by which he gained his greatest renown and his title of Africanus.
- Among the neighboring hills, according to Lucan, *Pharsalia*, IV, the giant Antaeus had his cave. Speaking of Curio’s voyage, he says:—
- “To Afric’s coast he cuts the foamy way,
Where low the once victorious Carthage lay.
There landing, to the well-known camp he hies,
Where from afar the distant seas he spies;
Where Bagrada’s dull waves the sands divide,
And slowly downward roll their sluggish tide.
From thence he seeks the heights renowned by fame,
And hallowed by the great Cornelian name:
The rocks and hills which long, traditions say,
Were held by huge Antaeus’ horrid sway.

:

But greater deeds this rising mountain grace,
And Scipio’s name ennobles much the place,
While, fixing here his famous camp, he calls
Fierce Hannibal from Rome’s devoted walls.
As yet the mouldering works remain in view,
Where dreadful once the Latian eagles flew.”

- ↵
475. *Aeneid*, VI:—
- “Here too you might have seen Tityus, the fosterchild of all-bearing earth, whose body is extended over nine whole acres; and a huge vulture, with her hooked beak, pecking at his immortal liver.”

Also *Odyssey*, XI, in similar words.

Typhoeus was a giant with a hundred heads, like a dragon's, who made war upon the gods as soon as he was born. He was the father of Geryon and Cerberus. [✉](#)

476. The battle between Hercules and Antaeus is described by Lucan, *Pharsalia*, IV:—

“Bright in Olympic oil Alcides shone,
Antaeus with his mother’s dust is strown,
And seeks her friendly force to aid his own.”



477. One of the leaning towers of Bologna, which Eustace, *Classical Tour*, I 167, thinks are “remarkable only for their unmeaning elevation and dangerous deviation from the perpendicular.” [✉](#)

478. In this Canto begins the Ninth and last Circle of the Inferno, where Traitors are punished.

“Hence in the smallest circle, at the point
Of all the Universe, where Dis is seated,
Whoe’er betrays forever is consumed.”



479. The word *thrust* is here used in its architectural sense, as the thrust of a bridge against its abutments, and the like. [✉](#)

480. Still using the babble of childhood. [✉](#)

481. The Muses; the poetic tradition being that Amphion built the walls of Thebes by the sound of his lyre; and the prosaic interpretation, that he did it by his persuasive eloquence. [✉](#)

482. Matthew 26:24:—

“Woeunto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed!
it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”



483. Tambernich is a mountain of Sclavonia, and Pietrapana another near Lucca. [←](#)

484. These two “miserable brothers” are Alessandro and Napoleone, sons of Alberto degli Alberti, lord of Falterona in the valley of the Bisenzio. After their father’s death they quarreled, and one treacherously slew the other. [←](#)

485. Caina is the first of the four divisions of this Circle, and takes its name from the first fratricide. [←](#)

486. Sir Mordred, son of King Arthur. See *Le Mort d’Arthure*, III ch. 167:—

“And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield with a foine of his speare throughout the body more than a fadom.”

Nothing is said here of the sun’s shining through the wound, so as to break the shadow on the ground, but that incident is mentioned in the Italian version of the Romance of Launcelot of the Lake, *L’illustre e famosa istoria di Lancillotto del Lago*, III ch. 162:—

“Behind the opening made by the lance there passed through the wound a ray of the sun so manifestly, that Girflet saw it.”



487. Focaccia was one of the Cancellieri Bianchi, of Pistoia, and was engaged in the affair of cutting off the hand of his half-brother. See [note 95](#). He is said also to have killed his uncle. [←](#)

488. Sassol Mascheroni, according to Benvenuto, was one of the Toschi family of Florence. He murdered his nephew in order to get possession of his property; for which crime he was carried through the streets of Florence nailed up in a cask, and then beheaded. [←](#)
489. Camicion de' Pazzi of Valdarno, who murdered his kinsman Ubcrtino. But his crime will seem small and excusable when compared with that of another kinsman, Carlino de' Pazzi, who treacherously surrendered the castle of Piano in Valdarno, wherein many Florentine exiles were taken and put to death. [←](#)
490. The speaker is Bocca degli Abati, whose treason caused the defeat of the Guelfs at the famous battle of Montaperti in 1260. See [note 143](#).
“Messer Bocca degli Abati, the traitor,” says Malispini, *Storia*, ch. 171, “with his sword in hand, smote and cut off the hand of Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi of Florence, who bore the standard of the cavalry of the Commune of Florence. And the knights and the people, seeing the standard down, and the treachery, were put to rout.” [←](#)
491. The second division of the Circle, called Antenora, from Antenor, the Trojan prince, who betrayed his country by keeping up a secret correspondence with the Greeks. Virgil, *Aeneid*, I 242, makes him founder of Padua. [←](#)
492. See [note 490](#). [←](#)
493. Buoso da Duera of Cremona, being bribed, suffered the French cavalry under Guido da Monforte to pass through Lombardy on their way to Apulia, without opposing them as he had been commanded. [←](#)
494. There is a double meaning in the Italian expression *sta fresco*, which is well rendered by the vulgarism, *left out in the cold*, so familiar in American politics. [←](#)
495. Beccaria of Pavia, Abbot of Vallombrosa, and Papal Legate at Florence, where he was beheaded in 1258 for plotting against the Guelfs. [←](#)

496. Gianni de' Soldanieri, of Florence, a Ghibelline, who betrayed his party. Villani, VII 14, says:—

“Messer Gianni de' Soldanieri put himself at the head of the populace from motives of ambition, regardless of consequences which were injurious to the Ghibelline party, and to his own detriment, which seems always to have been the case in Florence with those who became popular leaders.”



497. The traitor Ganellon, or Ganalon, who betrayed the Christian cause at Roncesvalles, persuading Charlemagne not to go to the assistance of Orlando. See [note 466](#).

Tebaldello de' Manfredi treacherously opened the gates of Faenza to the French in the night. ↲

498. Tydeus, son of the king of Calydon, slew Menalippus at the siege of Thebes and was himself mortally wounded. Statius, *Thebaid*, VIII, thus describes what followed:—

“O'ercome with joy and anger, Tydeus tries
To raise himself, and meets with eager eyes
The deathful object, pleased as he surveyed
His own condition in his foe's portrayed.
The severed head impatient he demands,
And grasps with fervor in his trembling hands,
While he remarks the restless balls of sight
That sought and shunned alternately the light.
Contented now, his wrath began to cease,
And the fierce warrior had expired in peace;
But the fell fiend a thought of vengeance bred,
Unworthy of himself and of the dead.
Meanwhile, her sire unmoved, Tritonia came,
To crown her hero with immortal fame;
But when she saw his jaws besprinkled o'er
With spattered brains, and tinged with living gore,

Whilst his imploring friends attempt in vain
To calm his fury, and his rage restrain,
Again, recoiling from the loathsome view,
The sculptur'd target o'er her face she threw."

✉

499. In this Canto the subject of the preceding is continued. ✉

500. Count Ugolino della Gherardesca was Podestà of Pisa. "Raised to the highest offices of the republic for ten years," says Napier, *Florentine History*, I 318, "he would soon have become absolute, had not his own nephew, Nino Visconte, Judge of Gallura, contested this supremacy and forced himself into conjoint and equal authority; this could not continue, and a sort of compromise was for the moment effected, by which Visconte retired to the absolute government of Sardinia. But Ugolino, still dissatisfied, sent his son to disturb the island; a deadly feud was the consequence, Guelph against Guelph, while the latent spirit of Ghibellinism, which filled the breasts of the citizens and was encouraged by priest and friar, felt its advantage; the Archbishop Ruggiero Rubaldino was its real head, but he worked with hidden caution as the apparent friend of either chieftain. In 1287, after some sharp contests, both of them abdicated, for the sake, as it was alleged, of public tranquillity; but, soon perceiving their error, again united, and, scouring the streets with all their followers, forcibly reestablished their authority. Ruggieri seemed to assent quietly to this new outrage, even looked without emotion on the bloody corpse of his favorite nephew, who had been stabbed by Ugolino; and so deep was his dissimulation, that he not only refused to believe the murdered body to be his kinsman's, but zealously assisted the Count to establish himself alone in the government, and accomplish Visconte's ruin. The design was successful; Nino was overcome and driven from the town, and in 1288 Ugolino entered Pisa in triumph from his villa, where he had retired to await the catastrophe. The Archbishop had neglected nothing, and Ugolino found himself associated with this prelate in the public government; events now began to thicken; the Count could not brook a competitor, much less a Ghibelline priest: in the month of July

both parties flew to arms, and the Archbishop was victorious. After a feeble attempt to rally in the public palace. Count Ugolino, his two sons, Uguccione and Gaddo, and two young grandsons, Anselmuccio and Brigata, surrendered at discretion, and were immediately imprisoned in a tower, afterwards called the *Torre della fame*, and there perished by starvation. Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, whose tragic story after five hundred years still sounds in awful numbers from the lyre of Dante, was stained with the ambition and darker vices of the age; like other potent chiefs, he sought to enslave his country, and checked at nothing in his impetuous career; he was accused of many crimes; of poisoning his own nephew, of failing in war, making a disgraceful peace, of flying shamefully, perhaps traitorously, at Meloria, and of obstructing all negotiations with Genoa for the return of his imprisoned countrymen. Like most others of his rank in those frenzied times he belonged more to faction than his country, and made the former subservient to his own ambition; but all these accusations, even if well founded, would not draw him from the general standard; they would only prove that he shared the ambition, the cruelty, the ferocity, the recklessness of human life and suffering, and the relentless pursuit of power in common with other chieftains of his age and country. Ugolino was overcome, and suffered a cruel death; his family was dispersed, and his memory has perhaps been blackened with a darker coloring to excuse the severity of his punishment; but his sons, who naturally followed their parent's fortune, were scarcely implicated in his crimes, although they shared his fate; and his grandsons, though not children, were still less guilty, though one of these was not unstained with blood. The Archbishop had public and private wrongs to revenge, and had he fallen, his sacred character alone would probably have procured for him a milder destiny."

Villani, VII 128, gives this account of the imprisonment:—

"The Pisans, who had imprisoned Count Ugolino and his two sons and two grandsons, children of Count Guelfo, as we have before mentioned, in a tower on the Piazza degli Anziani, ordered the door of the tower to be locked, and the keys to be thrown into the Arno, and forbade any food should be given to the prisoners, who in a few days died

of hunger. And the five dead bodies, being taken together out of the tower, were ignominiously buried; and from that day forth the tower was called the Tower of Famine, and shall be forever more. For this cruelty the Pisans were much blamed through all the world where it was known; not so much for the Count's sake, as on account of his crimes and treasons he perhaps deserved such a death, but for the sake of his children and grandchildren, who were young and innocent boys; and this sin, committed by the Pisans, did not remain unpunished."

Chaucer's version of the story in the "Monkes Tale" is as follows:—

"Of the erl Hugelin of Pise the langour
Ther may no tonge tellen for pitee.
But litel out of Pise stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prison yput was he,
And with him ben his litel children three,
The eldest scarsely five yere was of age:
Alas! fortune, it was gret crueltee
Swiche briddes for to put in swiche a cage.

Dampned was he to die in that prison,
For Roger, which that bishop of Pise,
Had on him made a false suggestion,
Thurgh which the pcplc gan upon him rise,
And put him in prison, in swiche a wise,
As ye han herd; and mete and drinke he had
So smale, that wel unnethe it may suffise,
And therewithal it was ful poure and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be brought,
The gailer shette the dores of the toure;
He hered it wel, but he spake right nought.
And in his herte anon ther fell a thought,
That they for hunger wolden do him dien;
Alas! quod he, alas that I was wrought!

Therwith the teres fallen fro his eyen.

His yonge sone, that three yere was of age,
Unto him said, fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan will the gailer bringen our potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry, that I may not slepe.
Now wolde God that I might slepen ever,
Than shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther n'is no thing, sauf bred, that me were lever.

Thus day by day this childe began to crie,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,
And saide, farewelj fader, I mote die;
And kist his fader, and dide the same day.
And whan the woful fader did it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to bite,
And saide, alas! fortune, and wala wa!
Thy false whele my wo all may I wite.

His children wenden, that for hunger it was
That he his armes gnowe, and not for wo,
And sayden: fader, do not so, alas!
But rather ete the flesh upon us two.
Our flesh thou yaf us, take our flesh us fro,
And ete ynough: right thus they to him seide,
And after that, within a day or two,
They laide hem in his lappe adoun, and deide.

Himself dispeired eke for hunger starf.
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pise:
From high estat fortune away him carf.
Of this tragedie it ought ynough suffice;
Who so wol here it in a longer wise,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
That highte Dante, for he can it devise
Fro point to point, not o word wol he faille.”

Buti, *Commento* says:—

“After eight days they were removed from prison and carried wrapped in matting to the church of the Minor Friars at San Francesco, and buried in the monument, which is on the side of the steps leading into the church near the gate of the cloister, with irons on their legs, which irons I myself saw taken out of the monument.”



501. “The remains of this tower,” says Napier, *Florentine History*, I 319, note, “still exist in the Piazza de’ Cavalieri, on the right of the archway as the spectator looks toward the clock.” According to Buti it was called the Mew, “because the eagles of the Commune were kept there to moult.”

Shelley thus sings of it. *Poems*, III 91:—

“Amid the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
Of an extinguished people, so that pity
Weeps o’er the shipwrecks of oblivion’s wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave
For bread, and gold, and blood: pain, linked to guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt;
There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers
Of solitary wealth! The tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air
Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof,
And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare,
As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
Amid a company of ladies fair
Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,

The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorbed till they to marble grew.”



502. Monte San Giuliano, between Pisa and Lucca.
Shelley, *Poems*, III 166:—

“It was that hill whose intervening brow
Screens Lucca from the Pisan’s envious eye,
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,
With streams and fields and marshes bare,
Divides from the far Apennine, which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.”



503. The hounds are the Pisan mob; the hunters, the Pisan noblemen here mentioned; the wolf and whelps, Ugolino and his sons. [←](#)

504. It is a question whether in this line *chiavar* is to be rendered *nailed up* or *locked*. Villani and Benvenuto say the tower was locked, and the keys thrown into the Arno; and I believe most of the commentators interpret the line in this way. But the locking of a prison door, which must have been a daily occurrence, could hardly have caused the dismay here portrayed, unless it can be shown that the lower door of the tower was usually left unlocked.

“The thirty lines from *Ed io senti’* are unequalled,” says Landor, *Pentameron*, 40, “by any other continuous thirty in the whole dominions of poetry.” [←](#)

505. Italy; it being an old custom to call countries by the affirmative particle of the language. [←](#)

506. Capraia and Gorgona are two islands opposite the mouth of the Arno.
Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 217, remarks:—

“This imagination may appear grotesque and forced if one looks at the map, for the isle of Gorgona is at some distance from the mouth of the Arno, and I had always thought so, until the day when, having ascended the tower of Pisa, I was struck with the aspect which the Gorgona presented from that point. It seemed to shut up the Arno. I then understood how Dante might naturally have had this idea, which had seemed strange to me, and his imagination was justified in my eyes. He had not seen the Gorgona from the Leaning Tower, which did not exist in his time, but from some one of the numerous towers which protected the ramparts of Pisa. This fact alone would be sufficient to show what an excellent interpretation of a poet travelling is.”



507. Napier, *Florentine History*, I 313:—

“He without hesitation surrendered Santa Maria a Monte, Fuccechio, Santa Croce, and Monte Calvole to Florence; exiled the most zealous Ghibellines from Pisa, and reduced it to a purely Guelphic republic; he was accused of treachery, and certainly his own objects were admirably forwarded by the continued captivity of so many of his countrymen, by the banishment of the adverse faction, and by the friendship and support of Florence.”



508. Thebes was renowned for its misfortunes and grim tragedies, from the days of the sowing of the dragon’s teeth by Cadmus, down to the destruction of the city by Alexander, who commanded it to be utterly demolished, excepting only the house in which the poet Pindar was born. Moreover, the tradition runs that Pisa was founded by Pelops, son of King Tantalus of Thebes, although it derived its name from “the Olympic Pisa on the banks of the Alpheus.”

509. Friar Alberigo, of the family of the Manfredi, Lords of Faenza, was one of the *Frati Gaudenti*, or Jovial Friars, mentioned in Canto XXIII 103. The account which the *Ottimo* gives of his treason is as follows:—

“Having made peace with certain hostile fellow-citizens, he betrayed them in this wise. One evening he invited them to supper, and had armed retainers in the chambers round the supper-room. It was in summertime, and he gave orders to his servants that, when after the meats he should order the fruit, the chambers should be opened, and the armed men should come forth and should murder all the guests. And so it was done. And he did the like the year before at Castello delle Mura at Pistoia. These are the fruits of the Garden of Treason, of which he speaks.”

Benvenuto says that his guests were his brother Manfred and his (Manfred's) son. Other commentators say they were certain members of the Order of *Frati Gaudenti*. In 1300, the date of the poem, Alberigo was still living. [←](#)

510. A Rowland for an Oliver. [←](#)

511. This division of Cocytus, the Lake of Lamentation, is called Ptolomaea from Ptolomeus, 1 Maccabees 16:11, where “the captain of Jericho inviteth Simon and two of his sons into his castle, and there treacherously murdereth them”; for “when Simon and his sons had drunk largely, Ptolomee and his men rose up, and took their weapons, and came upon Simon into the banqueting-place, and slew him, and his two sons, and certain of his servants.”

Or perhaps from Ptolemy, who murdered Pompey after the battle of Pharsalia. [←](#)

512. Of the three Fates, Clotho held the distaff, Lachesis spun the thread, and Atropos cut it.

Odyssey, XI:—

“After him I perceived the might of Hercules, an image; for he himself amongst the immortal gods is delighted with banquets, and has the fair-legged Hebe, daughter of mighty Jove, and golden-sandalled Juno,”



513. Ser Branco d’Oria was a Genoese, and a member of the celebrated Doria family of that city. Nevertheless he murdered at table his father-in-law, Michel Zanche, who is mentioned Canto XXII 88. [←](#)
514. This vituperation of the Genoese reminds one of the bitter Tuscan proverb against them: “Sea without fish; mountains without trees; men without faith; and women without shame.” [←](#)
515. Friar Alberigo. [←](#)
516. The fourth and last division of the Ninth Circle, the Judecca—

“the smallest circle, at the point
Of all the Universe, where Dis is seated.”

The first line, “The banners of the king of Hell come forth,” is a parody of the first line of a Latin hymn of the sixth century, sung in the churches during Passion week, and written by Fortunatus, an Italian by birth, but who died Bishop of Poitiers in 600, The first stanza of this hymn is—

“*Vexilla regis prodeunt,
Fulget crucis mysterium,
Quo came carnis conditor,
Suspensus est patibulo.*”

See Königsfeld, *Lateinische Hymnen und Gesänge aus dem Mittelalter*, 64. [←](#)

517. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 708:—

“His countenance as the morning star, that guides
The starry flock.”



518. Compare Milton’s descriptions of Satan, *Paradise Lost*, I 192, 589, II 636, IV 985:—

“Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareus, or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake.”

“He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change

Perplexes monarchs: darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Archangel.”

“As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood
Through the wide Aethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying fiend.”

“On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat horror plumed; nor wanted in his grasp
What seemed both spear and shield.”



519. The *Ottimo* and Benvenuto both interpret the three faces as symbolizing Ignorance, Hatred, and Impotence. Others interpret them as signifying the three quarters of the then known world, Europe, Asia, and Africa. ↲

520. Aethiopia; the region about the Cataracts of the Nile. ↲

521. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II 527:—

“At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground.”



522. Landor in his *Pentameron*, 527, makes Petrarca say:—

“This is atrocious, not terrific nor grand. Alighieri is grand by his lights, not by his shadows; by his human affections, not by his infernal. As the minutest sands are the labors of some profound sea, or the spoils of some vast mountain, in like manner his horrid wastes and wearying minutenesses are the chafings of a turbulent spirit, grasping the loftiest things, and penetrating the deepest, and moving and moaning on the earth in loneliness and sadness.”



523. Gabriele Rossetti, *Spirito Antipapale*, I 75, Miss Ward’s Tr., says:—

“The three spirits, who hang from the mouths of his Satan, are Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. The poet’s reason for selecting those names has never yet been satisfactorily accounted for; but we have no hesitation in pronouncing it to have been this—he considered the Pope not only a betrayer and seller of Christ—‘Where gainful merchandise is made of Christ throughout the livelong day,’ (Parad. 17,) and for that reason put Judas into his centre mouth; but a traitor and rebel to Caesar, and therefore placed Brutus and Cassius in the other two mouths; for the Pope, who was originally no more than Caesar’s vicar, became his enemy, and usurped the capital of his empire, and the supreme authority. His treason to Christ was not discovered by the world in general; hence the face of Judas is hidden—‘He that hath his head within, and plies the feet without’ (Inf. 34); his treason to Caesar was open and manifest, therefore Brutus and Cassius show their faces.”

He adds in a note:—

“The situation of Judas is the same as that of the Popes who were guilty of simony.”

[«](#)

524. The evening of Holy Saturday. [«](#)

525. *Iliad*, V 305:—

“With this he struck the hip of Aeneas, where the thigh turns on the hip.”

[«](#)

526. The canonical day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into four equal parts, called in Italian *Terza*, *Sesta*, *Nona*, and *Vespro*, and varying in length with the change of season. “These hours,” says Dante, *Convito*, III 6, “are short or long... according as day and night increase or diminish.” *Terza* was the first division after sunrise; and at the equinox would be from six till nine. Consequently *mezza terza*, or middle tierce, would be half past seven. [«](#)

527. Jerusalem. [«](#)

528. The Mountain of Purgatory, rising out of the sea at a point directly opposite Jerusalem, upon the other side of the globe. It is an island in the South Pacific Ocean. [«](#)

529. This brooklet is Lethe, whose source is on the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory, flowing down to mingle with Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon, and form Cocytus. See [Canto XIV 136](#). [«](#)

530. It will be observed that each of the three divisions of the *Divine Comedy* ends with the word “Stars,” suggesting and symbolizing endless aspiration. At the end of the Inferno Dante “re-beholds the stars”; at the end of the Purgatorio he is “ready to ascend to the stars”; at the end of the Paradiso he feels the power of “that Love which moves the sun and other stars.” He is now looking upon the morning stars of Easter Sunday. [«](#)

531. The Mountain of Purgatory is a vast conical mountain, rising steep and high from the waters of the Southern Ocean, at a point antipodal to Mount Zion in Jerusalem. In Canto III 14, Dante speaks of it as

“The hill
That highest tow’rds the heaven uplifts itself”;

and in *Paradiso*, XXVI 139, as

“The mount that rises highest o’er the wave.”

Around it run seven terraces, on which are punished severally the Seven Deadly Sins. Rough stairways, cut in the rock, lead up from terrace to terrace, and on the summit is the garden of the Terrestrial Paradise.

The Seven Sins punished in the Seven Circles are—1. Pride; 2. Envy; 3. Anger; 4. Sloth; 5. Avarice and Prodigality; 6. Gluttony; 7. Lust.

The threefold division of the Purgatorio, marked only by more elaborate preludes, or by a natural pause in the action of the poem, is—1. From Canto I to Canto IX; 2. From Canto IX to Canto XXVIII; 3. From Canto XXVIII to the end. The first of these divisions describes the region lying outside the gate of Purgatory; the second, the Seven Circles of the mountain; and the third, the Terrestrial Paradise on its summit.

“Traces of belief in a Purgatory,” says Mr. Alger, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 410, “early appear among the Christians. Many of the gravest Fathers of the first five centuries naturally conceived and taught—as is indeed intrinsically reasonable—that after death some souls will be punished for their sins until they are cleansed, and then will be released from pain. The Manichaeans imagined that all souls, before returning to their native heaven, must be borne first to the moon, where with good waters they would be washed pure from outward filth, and then to the sun, where they would be purged by good fires from every inward stain. After these lunar and solar lustrations, they were fit for the eternal world of light. But the conception of Purgatory as it was held by the early Christians, whether orthodox Fathers or heretical sects, was merely the just and necessary

result of applying to the subject of future punishment the two ethical ideas that punishment should partake of degrees proportioned to guilt, and that it should be restorative....

“Pope Gregory the Great, in the sixth century—either borrowing some of the more objectionable features of the Purgatory-doctrine previously held by the heathen, or else devising the same things himself from a perception of the striking adaptedness of such notions to secure an enviable power to the Church—constructed, established, and gave working efficiency to the dogmatic scheme of Purgatory ever since firmly defended by the Papal adherents as an integral part of the Roman Catholic system. The doctrine as matured and promulgated by Gregory, giving to the representatives of the Church an almost unlimited power over Purgatory, rapidly grew into favor with the clergy, and sank with general conviction into the hopes and fears of the laity,” ↵

532. The Muse “of the beautiful voice,” who presided over eloquence and heroic verse. ↵

533. The nine daughters of Pierus, king of Macedonia, called the Pierides. They challenged the Muses to a trial of skill in singing, and being vanquished were changed by Apollo into magpies. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* V, Maynwaring’s Tr.:—

“Beneath their nails
Feathers they feel, and on their faces scales;
Their horny beaks at once each other scare,
Their arms are plumed, and on their backs they bear
Pied wings, and flutter in the fleeting air.
Chatt’ring, the scandal of the woods, they fly,
And there continue still their clam’rous cry:
The same their eloquence, as maids or birds,
Now only noise, and nothing then but words.”

↵

534. The highest heaven. ↵

535. The planet Venus. [←](#)

536. Chaucer, “Knightes Tale”:—

“The besy larke, the messenger of day,
Saleweth in hire song the morwe gray,
And firy Phebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the sight.”

[←](#)

537. The stars of the Southern Cross. Figuratively the four cardinal virtues. Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. See Canto XXXI 106:—

“We here are Nymphs, and in the Heaven are stars.”

The next line may be interpreted in the same figurative sense.

Humboldt, *Personal Narrative*, II 21, Miss Williams's Tr., thus describes his first glimpse of the Southern Cross:—

“The pleasure we felt on discovering the Southern Cross was warmly shared by such of the crew as had lived in the colonies. In the solitude of the seas, we hail a star as a friend from whom we have long been separated. Among the Portuguese and the Spaniards peculiar motives seem to increase this feeling; a religious sentiment attaches them to a constellation, the form of which recalls the sign of the faith planted by their ancestors in the deserts of the New World.

“The two great stars which mark the summit and the foot of the Cross having nearly the same right ascension, it follows hence, that the constellation is almost perpendicular at the moment when it passes the meridian. This circumstance is known to every nation that lives beyond the tropics, or in the Southern hemisphere. It has been observed at what hour of the night, in different seasons, the Cross o' the South is erect or inclined. It is a timepiece that advances very regularly near four minutes a

day, and no other group of stars exhibits, to the naked eye, an observation of time so easily made. How often have we heard our guides exclaim in the savannahs of Venezuela, or in the desert extending from Lima to Truxillo, ‘Midnight is past, the Cross begins to bend!’ How often those words reminded us of that affecting scene, where Paul and Virginia, seated near the source of the river of Lataniers, conversed together for the last time, and where the old man, at the sight of the Southern Cross, warns them that it is time to separate.”



538. By the “primal people” Dante does not mean our first parents, but “the early races which inhabited Europe and Asia,” says Mr. Barlow, *Study of Dante*, and quotes in confirmation of his view the following passage from Humboldt’s *Cosmos*, II:—

“In consequence of the precession of the equinoxes, the starry heavens are continually changing their aspect from every portion of the earth’s surface. The early races of mankind beheld in the far north the glorious constellations of the southern hemisphere rise before them, which, after remaining long invisible, will again appear in those latitudes after a lapse of thousands of years... The Southern Cross began to become invisible in $52^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude 2900 years before our era, since, according to Galle, this constellation might previously have reached an altitude of more than 10° . When it disappeared from the horizon of the countries of the Baltic, the great Pyramid of Cheops had already been erected more than 500 years.”



539. *Iliad*, XVIII:—

“The Pleiades, and the Hyades, and the strength of Orion, and the Bear, which likewise they call by the appellation

of the Wain, which there turns round and watches Orion; and it alone is deprived of the baths of Oceanus.”



540. Cato of Utica. “Pythagoras escapes, in the fabulous hell of Dante,” says Sir Thomas Brown, *Urn Burial*, IV, “among that swarm of philosophers, wherein, whilst we meet with Plato and Socrates, Cato is found in no lower place than Purgatory.”

In the description of the shield of Aeneas, *Aeneid*, VIII, Cato is represented as presiding over the good in the Tartarean realms: “And the good apart, Cato dispensing laws to them.” This line of Virgil may have suggested to Dante the idea of making Cato the warden of Purgatory.

In the *Convito*, IV 28, he expresses the greatest reverence for him. Marcia returning to him in her widowhood, he says, “symbolizes the noble soul returning to God in old age.” And continues: “What man on earth was more worthy to symbolize God, than Cato? Surely none”;— ending the chapter with these words: “In his name it is beautiful to close what I have had to say of the signs of nobility, because in him this nobility displays them all through all ages.”

Here, on the shores of Purgatory, his countenance is adorned with the light of the four stars which are the four virtues. Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance, and it is foretold of him, that his garments will shine brightly on the last day. And here he is the symbol of Liberty, since, for her sake, to him “not bitter was death in Utica”; and the meaning of Purgatory is spiritual Liberty, or freedom from sin through purification, “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Therefore in thus selecting the “Divine Cato” for the guardian of this realm, Dante shows himself to have greater freedom than the critics, who accuse him of “a perverse theology in saving the soul of an idolater and suicide.”

541. The “blind river” is Lethe, which by sound and not by sight had guided them through the winding cavern from the centre of the earth to the surface. *Inferno* XXXIV 130.

542. His beard. Ford, *Lady's Trial*:—

“Now the down
Of softness is exchanged for plumes of age.”

Dante uses the same expression. *Inferno* XX 45, and Petrarca, who became gray at an early period, says:—

“In such a tenebrous and narrow cage
Were we shut up, and the accustomed plumes
I changed betimes, and my first countenance.”



543. Upon this speech of Virgil to Cato, Mr. Barlow, *Study of Dante*, remarks:—

“The eighth book of the Tesoro of Brunetto Latini is headed, *Qui comincia la Rettorica che c' insegna a ben parlare, e di governare città e popoli*. In this art Dante was duly instructed by his loving master, and became the most able orator of his era in Italy. Giov. Villani speaks of him as *retorico perfetto tanto in dittare e versificare come in aringhiera parlare*. But without this record and without acquaintance with the poet's political history, knowing nothing of his influence in debates and councils, nor of his credit at foreign courts, we might, from the occasional speeches in the *Divina Commedia*, be fully assured of the truth of what Villani has said, and that Dante's words and manner were always skilfully adapted to the purpose he had in view, and to the persons whom he addressed.

“Virgil's speech to the venerable Cato is a perfect specimen of persuasive eloquence. The sense of personal dignity is here combined with extreme courtesy and respect, and the most flattering appeals to the old man's wellknown sentiments, his love of liberty, his love of rectitude, and his devoted attachment to Marcia, are interwoven with irresistible art; but though the resentment

of Cato at the approach of the strangers is thus appeased, and he is persuaded to regard them with as much favor as the severity of his character permits, yet he will not have them think that his consent to their proceeding has been obtained by adulation, but simply by the assertion of power vouchsafed to them from on high—

*Ma se donna del Ciel ti muove e regge,
Come tu di', non c'è mestier lusinga:
Bastiti ben, che per lei mi richegge.*

In this also the consistency of Cato's character is maintained; he is sensible of the flattery, but disowns its influence.”



544. See *Inferno*, V 4.

545. See *Inferno*, IV 128. Also *Convito*, IV 28:—

“This the great poet Lucan shadows forth in the second book of his *Pharsalia*, when he says that Marcia returned to Cato, and besought him and entreated him to take her back in his old age. And by this Marcia is understood the noble soul.”

Lucan, *Pharsalia*, II, Rowe's Tr.:—

“When lo! the sounding doors are heard to turn,
Chaste Martia comes from dead Hortensius' urn.

⋮

Forth from the monument the mournful dame
With beaten breasts and locks dishevelled came;
Then with a pale, dejected, rueful look,
Thus pleasing to her former lord she spoke.

:

‘At length a barren wedlock let me prove,
Give me the name without the joys of love;
No more to be abandoned let me come,
That Cato’s wife may live upon my tomb.’”



546. A symbol of humility. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 232, says:—

“There is a still deeper significance in the passage quoted, a little while ago, from Homer, describing Ulysses casting himself down on the *rushes* and the corn-giving land at the river shore—the rushes and corn being to him only good for rest and sustenance—when we compare it with that in which Dante tells us he was ordered to descend to the shore of the lake as he entered Purgatory, to gather a *rush*, and gird himself with it, it being to him the emblem not only of rest, but of humility under chastisement, the rush (or reed) being the only plant which can grow there;—‘no plant which bears leaves, or hardens its bark, can live on that shore, because it does not yield to the chastisement of its waves.’ It cannot but strike the reader singularly how deep and harmonious a significance runs through all these words of Dante—how every syllable of them, the more we penetrate it, becomes a seed of farther thought! For follow up this image of the girding with the reed, under trial, and see to whose feet it will lead us. As the grass of the earth, thought of as the herb yielding seed, leads us to the place where our Lord commanded the multitude to sit down by companies upon the green grass; so the grass of the waters, thought of as sustaining itself among the waters of affliction, leads us to the place where a stem of it was put into our Lord’s hand for his sceptre; and in the crown of thorns, and the rod of reed, was foreshown the everlasting truth of the Christian ages—that all glory was to be begun in suffering, and all power in humility.”

◀

547. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 248:—

“There is only one more point to be noticed in the Dantesque landscape; namely, the feeling entertained by the poet towards the sky. And the love of mountains is so closely connected with the love of clouds, the sublimity of both depending much on their association, that, having found Dante regardless of the Carrara mountains as seen from San Miniato, we may well expect to find him equally regardless of the clouds in which the sun sank behind them. Accordingly, we find that his only pleasure in the sky depends on its ‘white clearness,’—that turning into *bianco aspetto di celestro*, which is so peculiarly characteristic of fine days in Italy. His pieces of pure pale light are always exquisite. In the dawn on the purgatorial mountain, first, in its pale white, he sees the *tremolar della marina*—trembling of the sea; then it becomes vermillion; and at last, near sunrise, orange. These are precisely the changes of a calm and perfect dawn. The scenery of Paradise begins with ‘day added to day,’ the light of the sun so flooding the heavens, that ‘never rain nor river made lake so wide’; and throughout the Paradise all the beauty depends on spheres of light, or stars, never on clouds. But the pit of the Inferno is at first sight obscure, deep, and so *cloudy* that at its bottom nothing could be seen. When Dante and Virgil reach the marsh in which the souls of those who have been angry and sad in their lives are forever plunged, they find it covered with thick fog; and the condemned souls say to them,

‘We once were sad,
In the stueet air, *made gladsome by the sun.*
Now in these murky settlings are we sad.’

Even the angel crossing the marsh to help them is annoyed by this bitter marsh smoke, *fummo acerbo*, and

continually sweeps it with his hand from before his face.”



548. Some commentators interpret *Ove adozza*, by “where the wind blows.” But the blowing of the wind would produce an effect exactly opposite to that here described. [←](#)

549. *Aeneid*, VI:—

“When the first is torn off, a second of gold succeeds; and a twig shoots forth leaves of the same metal.”



550. It was sunset at Jerusalem, night on the Ganges, and morning at the Mountain of Purgatory.

The sun being in Aries, the night would “come forth with the scales,” or the sign of Libra, which is opposite Aries. These scales fall from the hand of night, or are not above the horizon by night, when the night exceeds, or is longer than the day. [←](#)

551. Boccaccio, *Decamerone*, Prologue to the Third Day, imitates this passage:—

“The Aurora, as the sun drew nigh, was already beginning to change from vermillion to orange.”



552. Argument used in the sense of means, or appliances, as in *Inferno* XXXI 55. [←](#)

553. Cervantes says in *Don Quixote*, Pt. I ch. 12, that the student Crisostomo “had a face like a benediction.” [←](#)

554. Sackville, in his “Induction” to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, says:—

“Whiles Scorpio dreading Sagittarius’ dart
Whose bow prest bent in fight the string had slipped,
Down slid into the ocean flood apart.”



555. *Odyssey*, XI, Buckley’s Tr.:—

“But I, meditating in my mind, wished to lay hold of the soul of my departed mother. Thrice indeed I essayed it, and my mind urged me to lay hold of it, but thrice it flew from my hands, like unto a shadow, or even to a dream.”

And *Aeneid*, VI, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“There thrice he attempted to throw his arms around his neck; thrice the phantom, grasped in vain, escaped his hold, like the fleet gales, or resembling most a fugitive dream.”



556. Casella was a Florentine musician and friend of Dante, who here speaks to him with so much tenderness and affection as to make us regret that nothing more is known of him. Milton alludes to him in his Sonnet to Mr. H. Lawes:—

“Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo’d to sing
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.”



557. The first three months of the year of Jubilee, 1300. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 285, thus describes it:—

“All Europe was in a frenzy of religious zeal. Throughout the year the roads in the remotest parts of Germany,

Hungary, Britain, were crowded with pilgrims of all ages, of both sexes. A Savoyard above one hundred years old determined to see the tombs of the Apostles before he died. There were at times two hundred thousand strangers at Rome. During the year (no doubt the calculations were loose and vague) the city was visited by millions of pilgrims. At one time, so vast was the press both within and without the walls, that openings were broken for ingress and egress. Many people were trampled down, and perished by suffocation.... Lodgings were exorbitantly dear, forage scarce; but the ordinary food of man, bread, meat, wine, and fish, was sold in great plenty and at moderate prices. The oblations were beyond calculation. It is reported by an eyewitness that two priests stood with rakes in their hands sweeping the uncounted gold and silver from the altars. Nor was this tribute, like offerings or subsidies for Crusades, to be devoted to special uses, the accoutrements, provisions, freight of armies. It was entirely at the free and irresponsible disposal of the Pope. Christendom of its own accord was heaping at the Pope's feet this extraordinary custom; and receiving back the gift of pardon and everlasting life."

See also [note 253.](#) ↵

558. The seashore of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, where the souls of those who were saved assembled, and were received by the Celestial Pilot, who transported them to the island of Purgatory. Minutius Felix, a Roman lawyer of the third century, makes it the scene of his *Octavius*, and draws this pleasant picture of the sands and the sea. Reeves's Tr., p. 37:—

"It was vacation-time, and that gave me aloose from my business at the bar; for it was the season after the summer's heat, when autumn promised fair, and put on the face of temperate. We set out, therefore, in the morning early, and as we were walking upon the seashore, and a

kindly breeze fanned and refreshed our limbs, and the yielding sand softly submitted to our feet and made it delicious travelling, Cascilius on a sudden espied the statue of Serapis, and, according to the vulgar mode of superstition, raised his hand to his mouth, and paid his adoration in kisses. Upon which Octavius, addressing himself to me, said: ‘It is not well done, my brother Marcus, thus to leave your inseparable companion in the depth of Vulgar darkness, and to suffer him, in so clear a day, to stumble upon stones; stones, indeed, of figure, and anointed with oil, and crowned; but stones, however, still they are;—for you cannot but be sensible that your permitting so foul an error in your friend redounds no less to your disgrace than his.’ This discourse of his held us through half the city; and now we began to find ourselves upon the free and open shore. There the gently washing waves had spread the extremest sands into the order of an artificial walk; and as the sea always expresses some roughness in his looks, even when the winds are still, although he did not roll in foam and angry surges to the shore, yet were we much delighted, as we walked upon the edges of the water, to see the crisping, frizzly waves glide in snaky folds, one while playing against our feet, and then again retiring and lost in the devouring ocean. Softly, then, and calmly as the sea about us, we travelled on, and kept upon the brim of the gently declining shore, beguiling the way with our stories.”



559. This is the first line of the second canzone of the *Convito*. [←](#)

560. So in *Paradiso*, XXVI 139:—

“The mount that rises highest o’er the sea.”



561. The tomb of Virgil is on the promontory of Pausilippo, overlooking the Bay of Naples. The inscription upon it is:—

*Mantua me genuit: Calabri rapuere: tenet nunc
Parthenope: cecini pascua, rura, duces.*

“The epitaph,” says Eustace, *Classical Tour*, I 499, “which, though not genuine, is yet ancient, was inscribed by order of the Duke of Pescolangiano, then proprietor of the place, on a marble slab placed in the side of the rock opposite the entrance of the tomb, where it still remains.”

Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 378, says:—

“*Virgil’s tomb* is so called, I believe, on the single authority of Donatus. Donatus places it at the right distance from Naples, but on the wrong side of the city; and even there he omits the grotto of Posilipo, which not being so deep in his time as the two last excavations have left it, must have opened precisely at his tomb. Donatus, too, gives, for Virgil’s own composition, an epitaph on the cliff now rejected as a forgery. And who is this Donatus?—an obscure grammarian, or rather his counterfeit. The structure itself resembles a ruined pigeon-house, where the numerous *columbaria* would indicate a family-sepulchre: but who should repose in the tomb of Virgil, but Virgil alone? Visitors of every nation, kings and princes, have scratched their names on the stucco of this apocryphal ruin, but the poet’s awful name seems to have deterred them from versifying here.”



562. Be satisfied with knowing that a thing is, without asking why it is. These were distinguished in scholastic language as the *Demonstratio quia*, and the *Demonstratio propter quid*.

563. Places on the mountainous seaside road from Genoa to Pisa, known as the Riviera di Levante. Of this, Mr. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 243,

says:—

“The similes by which he illustrates the steepness of that ascent are all taken from the Riviera of Genoa, now traversed by a good carriage road under the name of the Cornice; but as this road did not exist in Dante’s time, and the steep precipices and promontories were then probably traversed by footpaths, which, as they necessarily passed in many places over crumbling and slippery limestone, were doubtless not a little dangerous, and as in the manner they commanded the bays of sea below, and lay exposed to the full blaze of the southeastern sun, they corresponded precisely to the situation of the path by which he ascends above the purgatorial sea, the image could not possibly have been taken from a better source for the fully conveying his idea to the reader: nor, by the way, is there reason to discredit, in *this* place, his powers of climbing; for, with his usual accuracy, he has taken the angle of the path for us, saying it was considerable more than forty-five. Now a continuous mountain slope of forty-five degrees is already quite unsafe either for ascent or descent, except by zigzag paths; and a greater slope than this could not be climbed, straightforward, but by help of crevices or jags in the rock, and great physical exertion besides.”

Mr. Norton, *Travel and Study*, p. 1, thus describes the Riviera:—

“The Var forms the geographical boundary between France and Italy; but it is not till Nice is left behind, and the first height of the Riviera is surmounted, that the real Italy begins. Here the hills close round at the north, and suddenly, as the road turns at the top of a long ascent, the Mediterranean appears far below, washing the feet of the mountains that form the coast, and stretching away to the Southern horizon. The line of the shore is of extraordinary beauty. Here an abrupt cliff rises from the sea; here bold

and broken masses of rock jut out into it; here the hills, their gray sides terraced for vineyards, slope gently down to the water's edge; here they stretch into little promontories covered with orange and olive-trees.

"One of the first of these promontories is that of Capo Sant' Ospizio. A close grove of olives half conceals the old castle on its extreme point. With the afternoon sun full upon it, the trees palely glimmering as their leaves move in the light air, the sea so blue and smooth as to be like a darker sky, and not even a ripple upon the beach, it seems as if this were the very home of summer and of repose. It is remote and secluded from the stir and noise of the world. No road is seen leading to it, and one looks down upon the solitary castle and wonders what stories of enchantment and romance belong to a ruin that appears as if made for their dwelling-place. It is a scene out of that Italy which is the home of the imagination, and which becomes the Italy of memory.

"As the road winds down to the sea, it passes under a high isolated peak, on which stands Esa, built as a city of refuge against pirates and Moors. A little farther on,

'Its Roman strength Turbia showed
In ruins by the mountain road,'—

not only recalling the ancient times, when it was the boundary city of Italy and Gaul, and when Augustus erected his triumphal arch within it, but associated also with Dante and the steep of Purgatory. Beneath lies Monaco, glowing 'like a gem' on its oval rock, the sea sparkling around it, and the long western rays of the sinking sun lingering on its little palace, clinging to its church belfry and its gray wall, as if loath to leave them."

In the Casa Magni, on the seashore near Lerici, Shelley once lived. He was returning thither from Leghorn, when he perished in a sudden storm at sea. [←](#)

564. After they had gone a mile, they were still a stone's throw distant. [←](#)

565. See *Convito*, I 10. [←](#)

566. Manfredi, king of Apulia and Sicily, was a natural son of the Emperor Frederick the Second. He was slain at the battle of Benevento, in 1265; one of the great and decisive battles of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the Guelph or Papal forces being commanded by Charles of Anjou, and the Ghibellines or Imperialists by Manfredi.

Malispini, *Storia*, ch. 187, thus describes his death and burial:—

“Manfredi, being left with few followers, behaved like a valiant gentleman who preferred to die in battle rather than to escape with shame. And putting on his helmet, which had on it a silver eagle for a crest, this eagle fell on the saddlebow before him; and seeing this he was greatly disturbed, and said in Latin to the barons who were near him, ‘*Hoc est signum Dei*; for this crest I fastened on with my own hands in such a way that it could not fall.’ But he was not discouraged, and took heart, and went into battle like any other baron, without the royal insignia, in order not to be recognized. But short while it lasted, for his forces were already in flight; and they were routed and Manfredi slain in the middle of the enemy; and they were driven into the town by the soldiers of King Charles, for it was now night, and they lost the city of Benevento. And many of Manfredi’s barons were made prisoners, among whom were the Count Giordano, Messer Piero Asino degli Uberti, and many others, whom King Charles sent captive into Provence, and there had them put to death in prison; and he imprisoned many other Germans in different parts of the kingdom. And a few days afterwards the wife of Manfredi and his children and his sister, who were in Nocera de’ Sardini in Apulia, were taken prisoners by Charles; these died in prison. And for more than three days they made search after Manfredi; for he could not be found, nor was it known if he were dead, or a prisoner, or

had escaped; because he had not worn his royal robes in the battle. And afterwards he was recognized by one of his own camp-followers, from certain marks upon his person, in the middle of the battlefield; and he threw him across an ass, and came shouting, ‘Who will buy Manfredi?’ for which a baron of the king beat him with a cane. And the body of Manfredi being brought to King Charles, he assembled all the barons who were prisoners, and asked each one if that was Manfredi; and timidly they answered yes. Count Giordano smote himself in the face with his hands, weeping and crying, ‘O my lord!’ whereupon he was much commended by the French, and certain Bretons besought that he might have honorable burial. Answered the king and said, ‘I would do it willingly, if he were not excommunicated’; and on that account he would not have him laid in consecrated ground, but he was buried at the foot of the bridge of Benevento, and each one of the army threw a stone upon his grave, so that a great pile was made. But afterwards, it is said, by command of the Pope, the Bishop of Cosenza took him from that grave, and sent him out of the kingdom, because it was Church land. And he was buried by the river Verde, at the confines of the kingdom and the Campagna. This battle was on a Friday, the last day of February, in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-five.”

Villani, who in his account of the battle copies Malispini almost literally, gives in another chapter, VI 46, the following portrait of Manfredi; but it must be remembered that Villani was a Guelph, and Manfredi a Ghibelline:—

“King Manfredi had for his mother a beautiful lady of the family of the Marquises of Lancia in Lombardy, with whom the Emperor had an intrigue, and was beautiful in person, and like his father and more than his father was given to dissipation of all kinds. He was a musician and singer, delighted in the company of buffoons and courtiers

and beautiful concubines, and was always clad in green; he was generous and courteous, and of good demeanor, so that he was much beloved and gracious; but his life was wholly epicurean, hardly caring for God or the saints, but for the delights of the body. He was an enemy of holy Church, and of priests and monks, confiscating churches as his father had done; and a wealthy gentleman was he, both from the treasure which he inherited from the Emperor, and from King Conrad, his brother, and from his own kingdom, which was ample and fruitful, and which, so long as he lived, notwithstanding all the wars he had with the Church, he kept in good condition, so that it rose greatly in wealth and power, both by sea and by land.”

This battle of Benevento is the same as that mentioned *Inferno* XXVIII 16:—

“At Ceperano, where a renegade
Was each Apulian.”

←

567. Constance, wife of the Emperor Henry the Sixth. ←

568. His daughter Constance, who was married to Peter of Aragon, and was the mother of Frederic of Sicily and of James of Aragon. ←

569. The Bishop of Cosenza and Pope Clement the Fourth. ←

570. The name of the river Verde reminds one of the old Spanish ballad, particularly when one recalls the fact that Manfredi had in his army a band of Saracens:—

“Rio Verde, Rio Verde,
Many a corpse is bathed in thee,
Both of Moors and eke of Christians,
Slain with swords most cruelly.”

✉

571. Those who died “in contumely of holy Church,” or under excommunication, were buried with extinguished and inverted torches.

✉

572. Plato’s doctrine of three souls: the Vegetative in the liver; the Sensative in the heart; and the Intellectual in the brain. See *Convito*, IV 7. ✉

573. See *Convito*, II 14, quoted [note 1566](#). ✉

574. Sanleo, a fortress on a mountain in the duchy of Urbino; Noli, a town in the Genoese territory, by the seaside; Bismantova, a mountain in the duchy of Modena. ✉

575. Like Christian going up the hill Difficulty in Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress*:—

“I looked then after Christian to see him go up the hill, where I perceived he fell from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees, because of the steepness of the place,”

✉

576. More than forty-five degrees. ✉

577. If the sun were in Gemini, or if we were in the month of May, you would see the sun still farther to the north. ✉

578. *Rubecchio* is generally rendered red or ruddy. But Jacopo dalla Lana says: “*Rubecchio* in the Tuscan tongue signifies an indented mill-wheel.” This interpretation certainly renders the image more distinct. The several signs of the Zodiac are so many cogs in the great wheel; and the wheel is an image which Dante more than once applies to the celestial bodies. ✉

579. The Ecliptic. See [note 247](#). ✉

580. This, the Mountain of Purgatory; and that, Mount Zion. [←](#)

581. The Seven Stars of Ursa Major, the North Star. [←](#)

582. Compare Thomson's description of the "pleasing land of drowsy-head," in the *Castle of Indolence*:—

"And there a season between June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrowned,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared even for play."

[←](#)

583. "He loved also in life," says Arrivabene, *Commento Storico*, 584, "a certain Belacqua, an excellent maker of musical instruments."

Benvenuto da Imola says of him: "He was a Florentine who made guitars and other musical instruments. He carved and ornamented the necks and heads of the guitars with great care, and sometimes also played. Hence Dante, who delighted in music, knew him intimately." This seems to be all that is known of Belacqua. [←](#)

584. *Measure for Measure*, II 2:—

"True prayers
That shall be up at heaven, and enter there
Ere sunrise; prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal."

[←](#)

585. There is an air of reality about this passage, like some personal reminiscence of street gossip, which gives perhaps a little credibility to the otherwise incredible anecdotes of Dante told by Sacchetti and others;—such as those of the ass-driver whom he beat, and the blacksmith whose tools he threw into the street for singing his verses

amiss, and the woman who pointed him out to her companions as the man who had been in Hell and brought back tidings of it. ↵

586. Some editions read in this line *mezza notte*, midnight, instead of *prima notte*, early nightfall.

Of meteors Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I pt. 3, ch. 107, writes:—

“Likewise it often comes to pass that a dry vapor, when it has mounted so high that it takes fire from the heat which is above, falls, when thus kindled, towards the earth, until it is spent and extinguished, whence some people think it is a dragon or a star which falls.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV 556, describing the flight of Uriel, says:—

“Swift as a shooting star
In Autumn thwarts the night, when vapors fired
Impress the air, and show the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware
Impetuous winds.”

↵

587. Shakespeare’s “war ’twixt will and will not,” and “letting I dare not wait upon I would.” ↵

588. This is Jacopo del Cassero of Fano, in the region between Romagna and the kingdom of Naples, then ruled by Charles de Valois (Charles Lackland). He was waylaid and murdered at Oriago, between Venice and Padua, by Azzone the Third of Este. ↵

589. Leviticus 17:2:—

“The life of the flesh is in the blood.”

↵

590. Among the Paduans, who are called Antenori, because their city was founded by Antenor of Troy. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I ch. 39, says:—

“Then Antenor and Priam departed thence, with a great company of people, and went to the Marca Trevisana, not far from Venice, and there they built another city which is called Padua, where lies the body of Antenor, and his sepulchre is still there.”



591. La Mira is on the Brenta, or one of its canals, in the fen-lands between Padua and Venice. [←](#)

592. Buonconte was a son of Guido di Montefeltro, and lost his life in the battle of Campaldino in the Val d'Arno. His body was never found; Dante imagines its fate.

Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 252, remarks:—

“Observe, Buonconte, as he dies, crosses his arms over his breast, pressing them together, partly in his pain, partly in prayer. His body thus lies by the river shore, as on a sepulchral monument, the arms folded into a cross. The rage of the river, under the influence of the evil demon, *unlooses this cross*, dashing the body supinely away, and rolling it over and over by bank and bottom. Nothing can be truer to the action of a stream in fury than these lines. And how desolate is it all! The lonely flight—the grisly wound, ‘pierced in the throat,’—the death, without help or pity—only the name of Mary on the lips—and the cross folded over the heart. Then the rage of the demon and the river—the noteless grave—and, at last, even she who had been most trusted forgetting him—

‘Giovanna nor none else have care for me.’

“There is, I feel assured, nothing else like it in all the range of poetry; a faint and harsh echo of it, only, exists in

one Scottish ballad, ‘The Twa Corbies.’”



593. The wife of Buonconte. [←](#)

594. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 241, thus speaks of the battle of Campaldino:—

“In this plain of Campaldino, now so pleasant and covered with vineyards, took place, on the 11th of June, 1289, a rude combat between the Guelphs of Florence and the *fuorusciti* Ghibellines, aided by the Aretines. Dante fought in the front rank of the Florentine cavalry; for it must needs be that this man, whose life was so complete, should have been a soldier, before being a theologian, diplomatist, and poet. He was then twenty-four years of age. He himself described this battle in a letter, of which only a few lines remain. ‘At the battle of Campaldino,’ he says, ‘the Ghibelline party was routed and almost wholly slain. I was there, a novice in arms; I had great fear, and at last great joy, on account of the divers chances of the fight.’ One must not see in this phrase the confession of cowardice, which could have no place in a soul tempered like that of Alighieri. The only fear he had was lest the battle should be lost. In fact, the Florentines at first seemed beaten; their infantry fell back before the Aretine cavalry; but this first advantage of the enemy was its destruction, by dividing its forces. These were the vicissitudes of the battle to which Dante alludes, and which at first excited his fears, and then caused his joy.”



595. The Convent of Camaldoli, thus described by Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 117:—

“We now crossed the beautiful vale of Prato Vecchio, rode round the modest arcades of the town, and arrived at the

lower convent of Camaldoli, just at shutting of the gates. The sun was set and every object sinking into repose, except the stream which roared among the rocks, and the convent-bells which were then ringing the *Angelus*.

“This monastery is secluded from the approach of woman in a deep, narrow, woody dell. Its circuit of dead walls, built on the conventional plan, gives it an aspect of confinement and defence; yet this is considered as a privileged retreat, where the rule of the order relaxes its rigor, and no monks can reside but the sick or the superannuated, the dignitary or the steward, the apothecary or the bead-turner. Here we passed the night, and next morning rode up by the steep traverses to the Santo Eremo, where Saint Romualdo lived and established

*de'tacenti cenobiti il coro,
L'arcane penitenze, ed i digiuni
Al Camaldoli suo.*

“The Eremo is a city of hermits, walled round, and divided into streets of low, detached cells. Each cell consists of two or three naked rooms, built exactly on the plan of the Saint’s own tenement, which remains just as Romualdo left it eight hundred years ago; now too sacred and too damp for a mortal tenant.

“The unfeeling Saint has here established a rule which anticipates the pains of Purgatory. No stranger can behold without emotion a number of noble, interesting young men bound to stand erect chanting at choir for eight hours a day; their faces pale, their heads shaven, their beards shaggy, their backs raw, their legs swollen, and their feet bare. With this horrible institute the climate conspires in severity, and selects from society the best constitutions. The sickly novice is cut off in one or two winters, the rest are subject to dropsy, and few arrive at old age.”

596. Where the Archiano loses its name by flowing into the Arno. [←](#)

597. Epistle of Jude, 9:—

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said. The Lord rebuke thee.”

And Jeremy Taylor, speaking of the pardon of sin, says:—

“And while it is disputed between Christ and Christ’s enemy who shall be Lord, the pardon fluctuates like the wave, striving to climb the rock, and is washed off like its own retinue, and it gets possession by time and uncertainty, by difficulty and the degrees of a hard progression.”

[←](#)

598. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I ch. 107:—

“Then arise vapors like unto smoke, and mount aloft in air, where little by little they gather and grow, until they become dark and dense, so that they take away the sight of the sun; and these are the clouds; but they never are so dark as to take away the light of day; for the sun shines through them, as if it were a candle in a lantern, which shines outwardly, though it cannot itself be seen. And when the cloud has waxed great, so that it can no longer support the abundance of water, which is there as vapor, it must needs fall to earth, and that is the rain.”

[←](#)

599. In Ephesians 2:2, the evil spirit is called “the prince of the power of the air.”

Compare also *Inferno* XXIII 16,

“If anger upon evil will be grafted.”

and *Inferno* XXXI 55,

“For where the argument of intellect
Is added unto evil will and power,
No rampart can the people make against it.”



600. This Pratomagno is the same as the Prato Vecchio mentioned in [note 595](#). The “great yoke” is the ridge of the Apennines.

Dr. Barlow, *Study of Dante*, p. 199, has this note on the passage:—

“When rain falls from the upper region of the air, we observe at a considerable altitude a thin light veil, or a hazy turbidness; as this increases, the lower clouds become diffused in it, and form a uniform sheet. Such is the *stratus* cloud described by Dante (V 115) as covering the valley from Pratomagno to the ridge on the opposite side above Camaldoli. This cloud is a widely extended horizontal sheet of vapor, increasing from below, and lying on or near the earth’s surface. It is properly the cloud of night, and first appears about sunset, usually in autumn; it comprehends creeping mists and fogs which ascend from the bottom of valleys, and from the surface of lakes and rivers, in consequence of air colder than that of the surface descending and mingling with it, and from the air over the adjacent land cooling down more rapidly than that over the water, from which increased evaporation is taking place.”



601. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV 500:—

“As Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregnates the clouds

That bring May-flowers.”



602. His arms crossed upon his breast.

603. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 255:—

“Who was this unhappy and perhaps guilty woman? The commentators say that she was of the family of Tolomei, illustrious at Siena. Among the different versions of her story there is one truly terrible. The outraged husband led his wife to an isolated castle in the Maremma of Siena, and there shut himself up with his victim, waiting his vengeance from the poisoned atmosphere of this solitude. Breathing with her the air which was killing her, he saw her slowly perish. This funeral tête-à-tête found him always impassive, until, according to the expression of Dante, the Maremma had unmade what he had once loved. This melancholy story might well have no other foundation than the enigma of Dante’s lines, and the terror with which this enigma may have struck the imaginations of his contemporaries.

“However this may be, one cannot prevent an involuntary shudder, when, showing you a pretty little brick palace [at Siena], they say, ‘That is the house of the Pia.’”

Benvenuto da Imola gives a different version of the story, and says that by command of the husband she was thrown from the window of her palace into the street, and died of the fall.

Bandello, the Italian Novelist, Pt. I Nov. 12, says that the narrative is true, and gives minutely the story of the lovers, with such embellishments as his imagination suggested.

Ugo Foscolo, *Edinb. Review*, XXIX 458, speaks thus:—

“Shakespeare unfolds the character of his persons, and presents them under all the variety of forms which they

can naturally assume. He surrounds them with all the splendor of his imagination, and bestows on them that full and minute reality which his creative genius could alone confer. Of all tragic poets, he most amply develops character. On the other hand, Dante, if compared not only to Virgil, the most sober of poets, but even to Tacitus, will be found never to employ more than a stroke or two of his pencil, which he aims at imprinting almost insensibly on the hearts of his readers. Virgil has related the story of Eurydice in two hundred verses; Dante, in sixty verses, has finished his masterpiece—the tale of Francesca da Rimini. The history of Desdemona has a parallel in the following passage of Dante. Nello della Pietra had espoused a lady of noble family at Sienna, named Madonna Pia. Her beauty was the admiration of Tuscany, and excited in the heart of her husband a jealousy, which, exasperated by false reports and groundless suspicions, at length drove him to the desperate resolution of Othello. It is difficult to decide whether the lady was quite innocent; but so Dante represents her. Her husband brought her into the Maremma, which, then as now, was a district destructive to health. He never told his unfortunate wife the reason of her banishment to so dangerous a country. He did not deign to utter complaint or accusation. He lived with her alone, in cold silence, without answering her questions, or listening to her remonstrances. He patiently waited till the pestilential air should destroy the health of this young lady. In a few months she died. Some chroniclers, indeed, tell us, that Nello used the dagger to hasten her death. It is certain that he survived her, plunged in sadness and perpetual silence. Dante had, in this incident, all the materials of an ample and very poetical narrative. But he bestows on it only four verses.”

For a description of the Maremma, see [note 181](#).

Also Rogers, *Italy*, near the end:—

“Where the path
Is lost in rank luxuriance, and to breathe
Is to inhale distemper, if not death;
Where the wild-boar retreats, when hunters chafe,
And, when the day-star flames, the buffalo-herd
Afflicted plunge into the stagnant pool,
Nothing discerned amid the water-leaves,
Save here and there the likeness of a head,
Savage, uncouth; where none in human shape
Come, save the herdsman, levelling his length
Of lance with many a cry, or Tartar-like
Urging his steed along the distant hill,
As from a danger.”



604. Zara was a game of chance, played with three dice. ↲

605. Messer Benincasa of Arezzo, who, while Vicario del Podestà, or Judge, in Siena, sentenced to death a brother and a nephew of Ghino di Tacco for highway robbery. He was afterwards an Auditor of the Ruota in Rome, where, says Benvenuto:—

“one day as he sat in the tribunal, in the midst of a thousand people, Ghino di Tacco appeared like Scaevola, terrible and nothing daunted; and having seized Benincasa, he plunged his dagger into his heart, leaped from the balcony, and disappeared in the midst of the crowd stupefied with terror,”



606. This terrible Ghino di Tacco was a nobleman of Asinalunga in the territory of Siena; one of those splendid fellows, who, from some real or imaginary wrong done them, take to the mountains and highways to avenge themselves on society. He is the true type of the traditional stage bandit, the magnanimous melodramatic hero, who utters such noble sentiments and commits such atrocious deeds.

Benvenuto is evidently dazzled and fascinated by him, and has to throw two Romans into the scale to do him justice. His account is as follows:—

“Reader, I would have thee know that Ghino was not, as some write, so infamous as to be a great assassin and highway robber. For this Ghino di Tacco was a wonderful man, tall, muscular, black-haired, and strong; as agile as Scsvola, as prudent and liberal as Papirius Cursor. He was of the nobles of La Fratta, in the county of Siena; who, being forcibly banished by the Counts of Santa Fiore, held the noble castle of Radicofani against the Pope. With his marauders he made many and great prizes, so that no one could go safely to Rome or elsewhere through those regions. Yet hardly any one fell into his hands, who did not go away contented, and love and praise him.... If a merchant were taken prisoner, Ghino asked him kindly how much he was able to give him; and if he said five hundred pieces of gold, he kept three hundred for himself, and gave back two hundred, saying, ‘I wish you to go on with your business and to thrive.’ If it were a rich and fat priest, he kept his handsome mule, and gave him a wretched horse. And if it were a poor scholar, going to study, he gave him some money, and exhorted him to good conduct and proficiency in learning.”

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, X 2, relates the following adventure of Ghino di Tacco and the Abbot of Cligni:—

“Ghino di Tacco was a man famous for his bold and insolent robberies, who being banished from Siena, and at utter enmity with the Counts di Santa Fiore, caused the town of Radicofani to rebel against the Church, and lived there whilst his gang robbed all who passed that way. Now when Boniface the Eighth was Pope, there came to court the Abbot of Cligni, reputed to be one of the richest prelates in the world, and having debauched his stomach

with high living, he was advised by his physicians to go to the baths of Siena, as a certain cure. And, having leave from the Pope, he set out with a goodly train of coaches, carriages, horses, and servants, paying no respect to the rumors concerning this robber. Ghino was apprised of his coming, and took his measures accordingly; when, without the loss of a man, he enclosed the Abbot and his whole retinue in a narrow defile, where it was impossible for them to escape. This being done, he sent one of his principal fellows to the Abbot with his service, requesting the favor of him to alight and visit him at his castle. Upon which the Abbot replied, with a great deal of passion, that he had nothing to do with Ghino, but that his resolution was to go on, and he would see who dared to stop him. ‘My Lord,’ quoth the man, with a great deal of humility, ‘you are now in a place where all excommunications are kicked out of doors; then please to oblige my master in this thing; it will be your best way.’ Whilst they were talking together, the place was surrounded with highwaymen, and the Abbot, seeing himself a prisoner, went with a great deal of ill will with the fellow to the castle, followed by his whole retinue, where he dismounted, and was lodged, by Ghino’s appointment, in a poor, dark little room, whilst every other person was well accommodated according to his respective station, and the carriages and all the horses taken exact care of. This being done, Ghino went to the Abbot, and said, ‘My Lord, Ghino, whose guest you are, requests the favor of you to let him know whither you are going, and upon what account?’ The Abbot was wise enough to lay all his haughtiness aside for the present, and satisfied him with regard to both. Ghino went away at hearing this, and, resolving to cure him without a bath, he ordered a great fire to be kept constantly in his room, coming to him no more till next morning, when he brought him two slices of toasted bread, in a fine napkin, and a large glass of his own rich white wine, saying to him, ‘My Lord, when

Ghino was young, he studied physic, and he declares that the very best medicine for a pain in the stomach is what he has now provided for you, of which these things are to be the beginning. Then take them, and have a good heart.'

The Abbot, whose hunger was much greater than was his will to joke, ate the bread, though with a great deal of indignation, and drank the glass of wine; after which he began to talk a little arrogantly, asking many questions, and demanding more particularly to see this Ghino. But Ghino passed over part of what he said as vain, and the rest he answered very courteously, declaring that Ghino meant to make him a visit very soon, and then left him. He saw him no more till next morning, when he brought him as much bread and wine as before, and in the same manner. And thus he continued during many days, till he found the Abbot had eaten some dried beans, which he had left purposely in the chamber, when he inquired of him, as from Ghino, how he found his stomach? The Abbot replied, 'I should be well enough were I out of this man's clutches. There is nothing I want now so much as to eat, for his medicines have had such an effect upon me, that I am fit to die with hunger.' Ghino, then, having furnished a room with the Abbot's own goods, and provided an elegant entertainment, to which many people of the town were invited, as well as the Abbot's own domestics, went the next morning to him, and said, 'My Lord, now you find yourself recovered, it is time for you to quit this infirmary.' So he took him by the hand, and led him into the chamber, leaving him there with his own people; and as he went out to give orders about the feast, the Abbot was giving an account how he had led his life in that place, whilst they declared that they had been used by Ghino with all possible respect. When the time came, they sat down and were nobly entertained, but still without Ghino's making himself known. But after the Abbot had continued some days in that manner, Ghino had all the goods and furniture brought into a large room, and the

horses were likewise led into the courtyard which was under it, when he inquired how his Lordship now found himself, or whether he was yet able to ride. The Abbot made answer that he was strong enough, and his stomach perfectly well, and that he only wanted to quit this man. Ghino then brought him into the room where all his goods were, showing him also to the window, that he might take a view of his horses, when he said, ‘My Lord, you must understand it was no evil disposition, but his being driven a poor exile from his own house, and persecuted with many enemies, that forced Ghino di Tacco, whom I am, to be a robber upon the highways, and an enemy to the court of Rome. You seem, however, to be a person of honor; as, therefore, I have cured you of your pain in your stomach, I do not mean to treat you as I would do another person that should fall into my hands, that is, to take what I please, but I would have you consider my necessity, and then give me what you will yourself. Here is all that belongs to you; the horses you may see out of the window: take either part or the whole, just as you are disposed, and go or stay, as is most agreeable to you.’ The Abbot was surprised to hear a highwayman talk in so courteous a manner, which did not a little please him; so, turning all his former passion and resentment into kindness and goodwill, he ran with a heart full of friendship to embrace him: ‘I protest solemnly, that to procure the friendship of such an one as I take you to be, I would undergo more than what you have already made me suffer. Cursed be that evil fortune which has thrown you into this way of life!’ So, taking only a few of his most necessary things, and also of his horses, and leaving all the rest, he came back to Rome. The Pope had heard of the Abbot’s being a prisoner, and though he was much concerned at it, yet, upon seeing him, he inquired what benefit he had received from the baths? The Abbot replied, with a smile, ‘Holy Father, I found a physician much nearer, who has cured me excellently well’; and he told him the manner of it, which made the Pope laugh

heartily, when, going on with his story, and moved with a truly generous spirit, he requested of his Holiness one favor. The Pope, imagining he would ask something else, freely consented to grant it. Then said the Abbot, ‘Holy Father, what I mean to require is, that you would bestow a free pardon on Ghino di Tacco, my doctor, because, of all people of worth that I ever met with, he certainly is most to be esteemed, and the damage he does is more the fault of fortune than himself. Change but his condition, and give him something to live upon, according to his rank and station, and I dare say you will have the same opinion of him that I have.’ The Pope, being of a noble spirit, and a great encourager of merit, promised to do so, it he was such a person as he reported, and, in the meantime, gave letters of safe-conduct for his coming thither. Upon that assurance, Ghino came to court, when the Pope was soon convinced of his worth, and reconciled to him, giving him the priory of an hospital, and creating him a knight. And there he continued as a friend and loyal servant to the Holy Church, and to the Abbot of Cligni, as long as he lived.”



607. Clone de' Tarlati of Pietramala, who, according to the *Ottimo*, after the fight at Bibbiena, being pursued by the enemy, endeavored to ford the Arno, and was drowned. Others interpret the line differently, making him the pursuing party. But as he was an Aretine, and the Aretines were routed in this battle, the other rendering is doubtless the true one.



608. Federigo Novello, son of Ser Guide Novello of Casentino, slain by one of the Bostoli. “A good youth,” says Benvenuto, “and therefore Dante makes mention of him.”

The Pisan who gave occasion to Marzucco to show his fortitude was Marzucco’s own son, Farinata degli Scoringiani. He was slain by Beccio da Caproni, or, as Benvenuto asserts, declaring that Boccaccio

told him so, by Count Ugolino. His father, Marzucco, who had become a Franciscan friar, showed no resentment at the murder, but went with the other friars to his son's funeral, and in humility kissed the hand of the murderer, extorting from him the exclamation, "Thy patience overcomes my obduracy." This was an example of Christian forgiveness which even that vindictive age applauded. [←](#)

609. Count Orso was a son of Napoleone d'Acerbaja, and was slain by his brother-in-law (or uncle) Alberto. [←](#)

610. Pierre de la Brosse was the secretary of Philip le Bel of France, and suffered at his hands a fate similar to that which befell Pier della Vigna at the court of Frederick the Second. See [note 185](#). Being accused by Marie de Brabant, the wife of Philip, of having written love-letters to her, he was condemned to death by the king in 1276. Benvenuto thinks that during his residence in Paris Dante learned the truth of the innocence of Pierre de la Brosse. [←](#)

611. In *Aeneid*, VI:—

"Cease to hope that the decrees of the gods are to be changed by prayers."

[←](#)

612. The *apex juris*, or top of judgment; the supreme decree of God.
Measure for Measure, II 2:—

"How would you be,
If He who is the top of judgment should
But judge you as you are?"

[←](#)

613. Virgil's Bucolics, *Eclogue I*:—

"And now the high tops of the villages smoke afar, and larger shadows fall from the lofty mountains."

◀

614. This has generally been supposed to be Sordello the Troubadour. But is it he? Is it Sordello the Troubadour, or Sordello the Podestà of Verona? or are they one and the same person? After much research, it is not easy to decide the question, and to

“Single out
Sordello, compassed murkily about
With ravage of six long sad hundred years.”

Yet as far as it is possible to learn it from various conflicting authorities,

“Who will may hear Sordello’s story told.”

Dante, in his treatise *De Volgari Eloquio*, I 15, speaks of Sordello of Mantua as “a man so choice in his language, that not only in his poems, but in whatever way he spoke, he abandoned the dialect of his province.” But here there is no question of the Provençal in which Sordello the Troubadour wrote, but only of Italian dialects in comparison with the universal and cultivated Italian, which Dante says “belongs to all the Italian cities, and seems to belong exclusively to none.” In the same treatise, II 13, he mentions a certain Gotto of Mantua as the author of many good songs; and this Gotto is supposed to be Sordello, as Sordello was born at Goïto in the province of Mantua. But would Dante in the same treatise allude to the same person under different names? Is not this rather the Sordel de Goi, mentioned by Raynouard, *Choix de Poésies Originales des Troubadours*, V 445?

In the old Provençal manuscript quoted by Raynouard, *Choix de Poésies Originales des Troubadours*, V 444, Sordello’s biography is thus given:—

“Sordello was a Mantuan of Sirier, son of a poor knight, whose name was Sir El Cort. And he delighted in learning songs and in making them, and rivalled the good men of the court as far as possible, and wrote love-songs and

satires. And he came to the court of the Count of Saint Boniface, and the Count honored him greatly, and by way of pastime (*a forma de solatz*) he fell in love with the wife of the Count, and she with him. And it happened that the Count quarrelled with her brothers, and became estranged from her. And her brothers, Sir Icellis and Sir Albrics, persuaded Sir Sordello to run away with her; and he came to live with them in great content. And afterwards he went into Provence, and received great honor from all good men, and from the Count and Countess, who gave him a good castle and a gentlewoman for his wife."

Citing this passage, Millot, *Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*, II 80, goes on to say:—

"This is all that our manuscripts tell us of Sordello. According to Agnelli and Platina, historians of Mantua, he was of the house of the Visconti of that city; valiant in deeds of arms, famous in jousts and tournaments, he won the love of Beatrice, daughter of Ezzelin da Romano, Lord of the Marca Trevigiana, and married her; he governed Mantua as Podestà and Captain-General; and though son-in-law of the tyrant Ezzelin, he always opposed him, being a great lover of justice.

"We find these facts cited by Crescimbeni, who says that Sordello was the lord of Goito; but as they are not applicable to our poet, we presume they refer to a warrior of the same name, and perhaps of a different family.

"Among the pieces of Sordello, thirty-four in number, there are some fifteen songs of gallantry, though Nostrodamus says that all his pieces turn only upon philosophic subjects."

Nostrodamus's account, as given by Crescimbeni, *L'Istoria Della Volgar Poesia*, II 105, is as follows:—

"Sordello was a Mantuan poet, who surpassed in Provençal song Calvo, Folchetto of Marseilles, Lanfranco

Cicala, Percival Doria, and all the other Genoese and Tuscan poets, who took far greater delight in our Provençal tongue, on account of its sweetness, than in their own maternal language. This poet was very studious, and exceeding eager to know all things, and as much as any one of his nation excellent in learning as well as in understanding and in prudence. He wrote several beautiful songs, not indeed of love, for not one of that kind is found among his works, but on philosophic subjects. Raymond Belinghieri, the last Count of Provence of that name, in the last days of his life, (the poet being then but fifteen years of age,) on account of the excellence of his poetry and the rare invention shown in his productions, took him into his service, as Pietro di Castelnuovo, himself a Provençal poet, informs us. He also wrote various satires in the same language, and among others one in which he reproves all the Christian princes; and it is composed in the form of a funeral song on the death of Blancasso."

In the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, XIX 452, Eméric-David, after discussing the subject at length, says:—

“Who then is this Sordello, haughty and superb, like a lion in repose—this Sordello, who, in embracing Virgil, gives rise to this sudden explosion of the patriotic sentiments of Dante? Is it a singer of love and gallantry? Impossible. This Sordello is the old Podestà of Mantua, as decided a Ghibelline as Dante himself; and Dante utters before him sentiments which he well knows the zealous Ghibelline will share. And what still more confirms our judgment is, that Sordello embraces the knees of Virgil, exclaiming, ‘O glory of the Latians,’ etc. In this admiration, in this love of the Latin tongue, we still see the Podestà, the writer of Latin; we do not see the Troubadour.”

Benvenuto calls Sordello a “noble and prudent knight,” and “a man of singular virtue in the world, though of impenitent life,” and tells a story he has heard of him and

Cunizza, but does not vouch for it. “Ezzelino,” he says, “had a sister greatly addicted to the pleasures of love, concerning whom much is said in the ninth Canto of Paradiso. She, being enamored of Sordello, had cautiously contrived that he should visit her at night by a back door near the kitchen of her palace at Verona. And as there was in the street a dirty slough in which the swine wallowed, and puddles of filthy water, so that the place would seem in no way suspicious, he caused himself to be carried by her servant to the door where Cunizza stood ready to receive him. Ezzelino having heard of this, one evening, disguised as a servant, carried Sordello, and brought him back. Which done, he discovered himself to Sordello, and said, ‘Enough; abstain in future from doing so foul a deed in so foul a place.’ Sordello, terrified, humbly besought pardon; promising never more to return to his sister. But the accursed Cunizza again enticed him into his former error. Wherefore, fearing Ezzelino, the most formidable man of his time, he left the city. But Ezzelino, as some say, afterwards had him put to death.”

He says, moreover, that Dante places Sordello alone and separate from the others, like Saladin in *Inferno* IV 129, on account of his superiority, or because he wrote a book entitled “The Treasure of Treasures”; and that Sordello was a Mantuan of the village of Goito—“beautiful of person, valiant of spirit, gentle of manner.”

Finally, Quadrio, *Storia d'ogni Poesia*, II 130, easily cuts the knot which no one can untie; but unfortunately he does not give his authorities. He writes:—

“Sordello, native of Goito, (Sordel de Goi,) a village in the Mantuan territory, was born in 1184, and was the son of a poor knight named Elcort.” He then repeats the story of Count Saint Boniface, and of Sordello’s reception by Count Raymond in Provence, and adds: “Having afterwards returned to Italy, he governed Mantua with the title of Regent and Captain-General; and was opposed to

the tyrant Ezzelino, being a great lover of justice, as Agnelli writes. Finally he died, very old and full of honor, about 1280. He wrote not only in Provençal, but also in our own common Italian tongue; and he was one of those poets who avoided the dialect of his own province, and used the good, choice language, as Dante affirms in his book of *Volgar Eloquenza*."

If the reader is not already sufficiently confused, he can easily become so by turning to Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.*, IV 360, where he will find the matter thoroughly discussed, in sixteen solid pages, by the patient librarian of Modena, who finally gives up in despair and calls on the Royal Academy for help;

"But that were overbold;—
Who would has heard Sordello's story told."



615. Before Dante's time Fra Guittone had said, in his famous *Letter to the Florentines*:—

"O queen of cities, court of justice, school of wisdom, mirror of life, and mould of manners, whose sons were kings, reigning in every land, or were above all others, who art no longer queen but servant, oppressed and subject to tribute! no longer court of justice, but cave of robbers, and school of all folly and madness, mirror of death and mould of felony, whose great strength is stripped and broken, whose beautiful face is covered with foulness and shame; whose sons are no longer kings but vile and wretched servants, held, wherever they go, in opprobrium and derision by others."

See also Petrarca, *Canzone XVI*, Lady Dacre's Tr., beginning:—

"O my own Italy! though words are vain
The mortal wounds to close,

Unnumbered, that thy beauteous bosom stain,
Yet may it soothe my pain
To sigh for the Tiber's woes,
And Arno's wrongs, as on Po's saddened shore
Sorrowing I wander and my numbers pour.”

And Filicaja’s sonnet:—

“Italy! Italy! thou who ’rt doomed to wear
The fatal gift of beauty, and possess
The dower funest of infinite wretchedness,
Written upon thy forehead by despair;
Ah! would that thou wert stronger, or less fair,
That they might fear thee more, or love thee less,
Who in the splendor of thy loveliness
Seem wasting, yet to mortal combat dare!
Then from the Alps I should not see descending
Such torrents of armed men, nor Gallic horde
Drinking the wave of Po, distained with gore,
Nor should I see thee girded with a sword
Not thine, and with the stranger’s arm contending,
Victor or vanquished, slave forevermore.”



616. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XLIV, says:—

“The vain titles of the victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust; but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument. Under his reign, and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the CODE, the PANDECTS, and the INSTITUTES; the public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations. Wise or fortunate is the prince who connects his own

reputation with the honor and interest of a perpetual order of men.”



617. Luke 12:17:—

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

And in the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, 563:—

“*Reddite Caesari, quod God,*
That *Caesari* bifalleth,
Et quae sunt Dei Deo,
Or ellis ye don ille.”



618. Albert, son of the Emperor Rudolph, was the second of the house of Hapsburg who bore the title of King of the Romans. He was elected in 1298, but never went to Italy to be crowned. He came to an untimely and violent death, by the hand of his nephew John, in 1308. This is the judgment of Heaven to which Dante alludes.

His successor was Henry of Luxembourg, Dante’s “divine and triumphant Henry,” who, in 1311, was crowned at Milan with the Iron Crown of Lombardy, *Il Sacro Chiodo*, as it is sometimes called, from the plate of iron with which the crown is lined, being, according to tradition, made from a nail of the Cross. In 1312, he was again crowned with the Golden Crown at Rome, and died in the following year. “But the end of his career drew on,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 520. “He had now advanced, at the head of an army which his enemies dared not meet in the field, towards Siena. He rode still, seemingly in full vigor and activity. But the fatal air of Rome had smitten his strength. A carbuncle had formed under his knee; injudicious remedies inflamed his vitiated blood. He died at Buonconvento, in the midst of his awestruck army, on the festival of St. Bartholomew. Rumors of foul practice, of course, spread abroad; a

Dominican monk was said to have administered poison in the Sacrament, which he received with profound devotion. His body was carried in sad state, and splendidly interred at Pisa.

“So closed that empire, in which, if the more factious and vulgar Ghibellines beheld their restoration to their native city, their triumph, their revenge, their sole administration of public affairs, the nobler Ghibellinism of Dante foresaw the establishment of a great universal monarchy necessary to the peace and civilization of mankind. The ideal sovereign of Dante’s famous treatise on Monarchy was Henry of Luxembourg. Neither Dante nor his time can be understood but through this treatise. The attempt of the Pope to raise himself to a great pontifical monarchy had manifestly ignominiously failed: the Ghibelline is neither amazed nor distressed at this event. It is now the turn of the Imperialist to unfold his noble vision. ‘An universal monarchy is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the world’; and this is part of his singular reasoning: ‘Peace,’ (says the weary exile, the man worn out in cruel strife, the wanderer from city to city, each of those cities more fiercely torn by faction than the last,) ‘universal Peace is the first blessing of mankind. The angels sang, not riches or pleasures, but peace on earth: peace the Lord bequeathed to his disciples. For peace One must rule. Mankind is most like God when at unity, for God is One; therefore under a monarchy. Where there is parity there must be strife; where strife, judgment; the judge must be a third party intervening with supreme authority.’ Without monarchy can be no justice, nor even liberty; for Dante’s monarch is no arbitrary despot, but a constitutional sovereign; he is the Roman law impersonated in the Emperor; a monarch who should leave all the nations, all the free Italian cities, in possession of, their rights and old municipal institutions.” ↵

619. The two noble families of Verona, the Montagues and Capulets, whose quarrels have been made familiar to the English-speaking world by *Romeo and Juliet*:—

“Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,

And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate."

✉

620. Families of Orvieto. ✉

621. Santafiore is in the neighborhood of Siena, and much infested with banditti. ✉

622. The state of Rome in Dante's time is thus described by Mr. Norton, *Travel and Study*, pp. 246–248:—

“On the slope of the Quirinal Hill, in the quiet enclosure of the convent of St. Catharine of Siena, stands a square, brick tower, seven stories high. It is a conspicuous object in any general view of Rome; for there are few other towers so tall, and there is not a single spire or steeple in the city. It is the Torre delle Milizie. It was begun by Pope Gregory the Ninth, and finished near the end of the thirteenth century by his vigorous and warlike successor, Boniface the Eighth. Many such towers were built for the purposes of private warfare, in those times when the streets of Rome were the fightingplaces of its noble families; but this is, perhaps, the only one that now remains undiminished in height and unaltered in appearance. It was a new building when Dante visited Rome; and it is one of the very few edifices that still preserve the aspect they then presented. The older ruins have been greatly changed in appearance, and most of the structures of the Middle Ages have disappeared, in the vicissitudes of the last few centuries. The Forum was then filled with a confused mass of ruins and miserable dwellings, with no street running through their intricacies. The Capitol was surrounded with uneven battlemented walls, and bore the character and look of an irregular

citadel. St. Peter's was a low basilica; the Colosseum had suffered little from the attacks of Popes or princes, neither the Venetian nor the Farnese palace having as yet been built with stones from its walls; and centuries were still to pass before Michel Angelo, Bernini, and Borromini were to stamp its present character upon the face of the modern city. The siege and burning of Rome by Robert Guiscard, in 1084, may be taken as the dividing-line between the city of the Emperors and the city of the Popes, between ancient and modern Rome.... Rome was in a state of too deep depression, its people were too turbulent and unsettled, to have either the spirit or the opportunity for great works. There was no established and recognized authority, no regular course of justice. There was not even any strong force, rarely any overwhelming violence, which for a time at least could subdue opposition, and organize a steady, and consequently a beneficent tyranny. The city was continually distracted by petty personal quarrels, and by bitter family feuds. Its obscure annals are full of bloody civil victories and defeats—victories which brought no gain to those who won them, defeats which taught no lesson to those who lost them. The breath of liberty never inspired with life the dead clay of Rome; and though for a time it might seem to kindle some vital heat, the glow soon grew cold, and speedily disappeared. The records of Florence, Siena, Bologna, and Perugia are as full of fighting and bloodshed as those of Rome; but their fights were not mere brawh, nor were their triumphs always barren. Even the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which were like the coming of the spring after a long winter, making the earth to blossom, and gladdening the hearts of men—the centuries which elsewhere in Italy, and over the rest of Europe, gave birth to the noblest medieval Art, when every great city was adorning itself with the beautiful works of the new architecture, sculpture, and painting—even these centuries left scarcely any token of their passage over Rome. The sun, breaking through the

clouds that had long hidden it, shone everywhere but here. While Florence was building her Cathedral and her Campanile, and Orvieto her matchless Duomo—while Pisa was showing her piety and her wealth in her Cathedral, her Camposanto, her Baptistry, and her Tower—while Siena was beginning a church greater and more magnificent in design than her shifting fortune would permit her to complete—Rome was building neither cathedral nor campanile, but was selling the marbles of her ancient temples and tombs to the builders of other cities, or quarrying them for her own mean uses.”



623. This recalls Pope's *Universal Prayer*:—

“Father of all! in every age,
In every clime, adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!”



624. Not the great Roman general who took Syracuse, after Archimedes had defended it so long with his engines and burning-glasses, but a descendant of his, who in the civil wars took part with Pompey and was banished by Caesar. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. IV 257:—

“And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Caesar with a senate at his heels.”



625. Of the state of Florence, Napier writes, *Florentine History*, I 122:—

“It was not the simple movement of one great body against another; not the force of a government in opposition to the people; not the struggle of privilege and

democracy, of poverty and riches, or starvation and repletion; but one universal burst of unmitigated anarchy. In the streets, lanes, and squares, in the courts of palaces and humbler dwellings, were heard the clang of arms, the screams of victims, and the gush of blood: the bow of the bridegroom launched its arrows into the very chambers of his young bride's parents and relations, and the bleeding son, the murdered brother, or the dying husband were the evening visitors of Florentine maids and matrons, and aged citizens. Every art was practised to seduce and deceive, and none felt secure even of their nearest and dearest relatives. In the morning a son left his paternal roof with undiminished love, and returned at evening a corpse, or the most bitter enemy! Terror and death were triumphant; there was no relaxation, no peace by day or night: the crash of the stone, the twang of the bow, the whizzing shaft, the jar of the trembling mangonel from tower and turret, were the dismal music of Florence, not only for hours and days, but months and years. Doors, windows, the jutting galleries and roofs, were all defended, and yet all unsafe: no spot was sacred, no tenement secure: in the dead of night, the most secret chambers, the very hangings, even the nuptial bed itself, were often known to conceal an enemy.

“Florence in those days was studded with lofty towers; most of the noble families possessed one or more, at least two hundred feet in height, and many of them far above that altitude. These were their pride, their family, citadels; and jealously guarded; glittering with arms and men, and instruments of war. Every connecting balcony was alive with soldiers; the battle raged above and below, within and without; stones rained in showers, arrows flew thick and fast on every side; the *seragli*, or barricades, were attacked and defended by chosen bands armed with lances and boar-spears; foes were in ambush at every corner, watching the bold or heedless enemy; confusion was everywhere triumphant, a demon seemed to possess the

community, and the public mind, reeling with hatred, was steady only in the pursuit of blood. Yet so accustomed did they at last become to this fiendish life, that one day they fought, the next caroused together in drunken gambols, foe with foe, boasting of their mutual prowess; nor was it until after nearly five years of reciprocal destruction, that, from mere lassitude, they finally ceased thus to mangle each other, and, as it were for relaxation, turned their fury on the neighboring states.”



626. Upon this subject Napier, *Florentine History*, II 626, remarks:—

“A characteristic, and, if discreetly handled, a wise regulation of the Florentines, notwithstanding Dante’s sarcasms, was the periodical revision of their statutes and ordinances, a weeding out, as it were, of the obsolete and contradictory, and a substitution of those which were better adapted to existing circumstances and the forward movement of man. There are certain fundamental laws necessarily permanent and admitted by all communities, as there are certain moral and theological truths acknowledged by all religions; but these broad frames or outlines are commonly filled up with a thick network of subordinate regulations, that cover them like cobwebs, and often impede the march of improvement. The Florentines were early aware of this, and therefore revised their laws and institutions more or less frequently and sometimes factiously, according to the turbulent or tranquil condition of the times; but in 1394, after forty years’ omission, an officer was nominated for that purpose, but whether permanently or not is doubtful.”



627. See [note 561](#).

628. Limbo, *Inferno* IV 25, the “foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.”

“There, in so far as I had power to hear,
Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
Which tremulous made the everlasting air.
And this was caused by sorrow without torment
Which the crowds had, that many were and great,
Of infants and of women and of men.”



629. The three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. [←](#)

630. The four Cardinal Virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. [←](#)

631. John 12:35:—

“Then Jesus said unto them. Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”



632. In the Middle Ages the longing for rest and escape from danger, which found its expression in cloisters, is expressed in poetry by descriptions of flowery, secluded meadows, suggesting the classic meadows of asphodel. Dante has given one already in the *Inferno*, and gives another here.

Compare with these the following from *The Miracles of Our Lady*, by Gonzalo de Berceo, a monk of Calahorra, who lived in the thirteenth century, and is the oldest of the Castilian poets whose name has come down to us:—

“I, Gonzalo de Berceo, in the gentle summer-tide,
Wending upon a pilgrimage, came to a meadow’s side;
All green was it and beautiful, with flowers far and wide,

A pleasant spot, I ween, wherein the traveller might abide.
Flowers with the sweetest odors filled all the sunny air,
And not alone refreshed the sense, but stole the mind from
care;
On every side a fountain gushed, whose waters pure and
fair
Ice-cold beneath the summer sun, but warm in winter
were.
There on the thick and shadowy trees, amid the foliage
green,
Were the fig and the pomegranate, the pear and apple
seen,
And other fruits of various kinds, the tufted leaves
between;
None were unpleasant to the taste and none decayed, I
ween.
The verdure of the meadow green, the odor of the
flowers,
The grateful shadows of the trees, tempered with fragrant
showers,
Refreshed me in the burning heat of the sultry noontide
hours;
O, one might live upon the balm and fragrance of those
bowers.
Ne'er had I found on earth a spot that had such power
to please,
Such shadows from the summer sun, such odors on the
breeze;
I threw my mantle on the ground, that I might rest at ease,
And stretched upon the greensward lay in the shadow of
the trees.
There, soft reclining in the shade, all cares beside me
flung,
I heard the soft and mellow notes that through the
woodland rung.
Ear never listened to a strain, from instrument or tongue,
So mellow and harmonious as the songs above me sung.”

See also Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, XIX; the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*; Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, VIII, etc. [←](#)

633. Of this description Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 228, remarks:—

“Now, almost in the opening of the Purgatory, as there at the entrance of the Inferno, we find a company of great ones resting in a grassy place. But the idea of the grass now is very different. The word now used is not ‘enamel,’ but ‘herb,’ and instead of being merely green, it is covered with flowers of many colors. With the usual mediseval accuracy, Dante insists on telling us precisely what these colors were, and how bright; which he does by naming the actual pigments used in illumination—‘Gold, and fine silver, and cochineal, and white lead, and Indian wood, serene and lucid, and fresh emerald, just broken, would have been excelled, as less is by greater, by the flowers and grass of the place.’ It is evident that the ‘emerald’ here means the emerald green of the illuminators; for a fresh emerald is no brighter than one which is not fresh, and Dante was not one to throw away his words thus. Observe, then, we have here the idea of the growth, life, and variegation of the ‘green herb,’ as opposed to the smalto of the Inferno; but the colors of the variegation are illustrated and defined by the reference to actual pigments; and, observe, because the other colors are rather bright, the blue ground (Indian wood, indigo?) is sober; lucid, but serene; and presently two angels enter, who are dressed in the green drapery, but of a paler green than the grass, which Dante marks, by telling us that it was ‘the green of leaves just budded.’

“In all this, I wish the reader to observe two things: first, the general carefulness of the poet in defining color, distinguishing it precisely as a painter would (opposed to the Greek carelessness about it); and, secondly, his regarding the grass for its greenness and variegation, rather than, as a Greek would have done, for its depth and

freshness. This greenness or brightness, and variegation, are taken up by later and modern poets, as the things intended to be chiefly expressed by the word ‘enamelled’; and, gradually, the term is taken to indicate any kind of bright and interchangeable coloring; there being always this much of propriety about it, when used of greensward, that such sward is indeed, like enamel, a coat of bright color on a comparatively dark ground; and is thus a sort of natural jewelry and painter’s work, different from loose and large vegetation. The word is often awkwardly and falsely used, by the later poets, of all kinds of growth and color; as by Milton of the flowers of Paradise showing themselves over its wall; but it retains, nevertheless, through all its jaded inanity, some halfunconscious vestige of the old sense, even to the present day.”



634. The old church hymn attributed to Arminius or Hermann, Count of Vehringen, in the eleventh century, beginning:—

“*Salve Regina, mater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo et spas nostra, salve.*”



635. Rudolph of Hapsburg, first Emperor of the house of Austria, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1273. “It is related,” says Voltaire, *Annales de l’Empire*, I 303, “that, as the imperial sword, which they pretended was that of Charlemagne, could not be found, several lords made this defect in the formalities a pretext for not taking the oath pf allegiance. He seized a crucifix; *This is my sceptre*, he said, and all paid homage to him. This single act of firmness made him respectable, and the rest of his conduct showed him to be worthy of the Empire.”

He would not go to Rome to be crowned, and took so little interest in Italian affairs, that Italy became almost independent of the Empire, which seems greatly to disturb the mind of Dante. He died in 1291.

636. Ottocar the Second, king of Bohemia, who is said to have refused the imperial crown. He likewise refused to pay homage to Rudolph, whom he used to call his maître d'hôtel, declaring he had paid his wages and owed him nothing. Whereupon Rudolph attacked and subdued him. According to Voltaire, *Annales de l'Empire*, I 306, “he consented to pay homage to the Emperor as his liege-lord, in the island of Kamberg in the middle of the Danube, under a tent whose curtains should be closed to spare him public mortification. Ottocar presented himself covered with gold and jewels; Rudolph, by way of superior pomp, received him in his simplest dress; and in the middle of the ceremony the curtains of the tent fell, and revealed to the eyes of the people and of the armies, that lined the Danube, the proud Ottocar on his knees, with his hands clasped in the hands of his conqueror, whom he had often called his maître d'hôtel, and whose Grand-Seneschal he now became. This story is accredited, and it is of little importance whether it be true or not.”

But the wife was not quiet under this humiliation, and excited him to revolt against Rudolph. He was again overcome, and killed in battle in 1278. [←](#)

637. This Wenceslaus, says the *Ottimo*, was “most beautiful among all men; but was not a man of arms; he was a meek and humble ecclesiastic, and did not live long.” Why Dante accuses him of living in luxury and ease does not appear. [←](#)

638. Philip the Third of France, surnamed the Bold (1270–1285). Having invaded Catalonia, in a war with Peter the Third of Aragon, both by land and sea, he was driven back, and died at Perpignan during the retreat. [←](#)

639. He with the benign aspect, who rests his cheek upon his hand, is Henry of Navarre, surnamed the Fat, and brother of “Good King Thibault,” *Inferno* XXII 52. An old French chronicle quoted by Philalcthes says, that, “though it is a general opinion that fat men are of a gentle and benign nature, nevertheless this one was very harsh.” [←](#)

640. Philip the Fourth of France, surnamed the Fair, son of Philip the Third, and son-in-law of Henry of Navarre (1285–1314). ↵
641. Peter the Third of Aragon (1276–1285), the enemy of Charles of Anjou and competitor with him for the kingdom of Sicily. He is counted among the Troubadours, and when Philip the Bold invaded his kingdom, Peter launched a song against him, complaining that the “flower-de-luce kept him sorrowing in his house,” and calling on the Gascons for aid. ↵
642. Charles of Anjou, king of Sicily and Naples (1265). Villani, VII 1, thus describes him:—

“This Charles was wise and prudent, and valiant in arms, and rough, and much feared and redoubted by all the kings of the world; magnanimous and of a high spirit; steadfast in carrying on every great enterprise, firm in every adversity, and true to every promise, speaking little and doing much. He laughed but little; was chaste as a monk, catholic, harsh in judgment, and of a fierce countenance; large and muscular in person, with an olive complexion and a large nose, and looked the king more than any other lord. He sat up late at night, and slept little, and was in the habit of saying that a great deal of time was lost in sleeping. He was generous to his knights, but eager to acquire land, lordship, and money wherever he could, to furnish means for his enterprises and wars. In courtiers, minstrels, and players he never took delight.”

Yet this is the monarch whose tyranny in Sicily brought about the bloody revenge of the Sicilian Vespers; which in turn so roused the wrath of Charles, that he swore that, “if he could live a thousand years, he would go on razing the cities, burning the lands, torturing the rebellious slaves. He would leave Sicily a blasted, barren, uninhabited rock, as a warning to the present age, an example to the future.” ↵

643. Philip the Third of Aragon left four sons, Alfonso, James, Frederick, and Peter. Whether the stripling here spoken of is Alonzo or Peter does

not appear. ↵

644. Chaucer, “Wif of Bathes Tale”:—

“Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken of this sentence:
Lo, in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.
Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
Wol that we claime of him our gentillesse:
For of our elders may we nothing claime
But temporel thing, that man may hurt and maime.”

↵

645. It must be remembered that these two who are singing together in this Valley of Princes were deadly foes on earth; and one had challenged the other to determine their quarrel by single combat.

“The wager of battle between the kings,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 168, “which maintained its solemn dignity up almost to the appointed time, ended in a pitiful comedy, in which Charles of Anjou had the ignominy of practising base and disloyal designs against his adversary; Peter, that of eluding the contest by craft, justifiable only as his mistrust of his adversary was well or ill grounded, but much too cunning for a frank and generous knight. He had embarked with his knights for the South of France; he was cast back by tempests on the shores of Spain. He set off with some of his armed companions, crossed the Pyrenees undiscovered, appeared before the gates of Bordeaux, and summoned the English Seneschal. To him he proclaimed himself to be the king of Aragon, demanded to see the lists, rode down them in slow state, obtained an attestation that he had made his appearance within the covenanted time, and affixed his solemn protest against the palpable premeditated treachery of his rival, which made it unsafe for him to remain longer at Bordeaux. Charles, on his part, was furious that Peter had thus broken through the spider’s web of his policy. He was in Bordeaux when Peter appeared under the walls, and had challenged him in vain. Charles presented himself in full armor on the appointed day, summoned Peter to appear,

proclaimed him a recreant and a dastardly craven, unworthy of the name of knight.”

Charles of Anjou, Peter the Third of Aragon, and Philip the Third of France, all died in the same year, 1285. [←](#)

646. These kingdoms being badly governed by his son and successor, Charles the Second, called the Lame. [←](#)
647. Daughters of Raymond Berenger the Fifth, Count of Provence; the first married to St. Louis of France, and the second to his brother, Charles of Anjou. [←](#)
648. Constance, daughter of Manfredi of Apulia, and wife of Peter the Third of Aragon. [←](#)
649. Henry the Third (1216–1272), of whom Hume says:—

“This prince was noted for his piety and devotion, and his regular attendance on public worship; and a saying of his on that head is much celebrated by ancient writers. He was engaged in a dispute with Louis the Ninth of France, concerning the preference between sermons and masses; he maintained the superiority of the latter, and affirmed that he would rather have one hour’s conversation with a friend, than hear twenty of the most elaborate discourses pronounced in his praise.”

Dickens, *Child’s History of England*, Ch. XV, says of him:—

“He was as much of a king in death as he had ever been in life. He was the mere pale shadow of a king at all times.”

His “better issue” was Edward the First, called, on account of his amendment and establishment of the laws, the English Justinian, and less respectfully Longshanks, on account of the length of his legs. “His legs had need to be strong,” says the authority just quoted, “however long, and this they were; for they had to support him through many difficulties on the fiery sands of Syria, where his small force of

soldiers fainted, died, deserted, and seemed to melt away. But his prowess made light of it, and he said, ‘I will go on, if I go on with no other follower than my groom.’” [←](#)

650. The Marquis of Monferrato, a Ghibelline, was taken prisoner by the people of Alessandria in Piedmont, in 1290, and, being shut up in a wooden cage, was exhibited to the public like a wild beast. This he endured for eighteen months, till death released him. A bloody war was the consequence between Alessandria and the Marquis’s provinces of Monferrato and Canavese. [←](#)
651. The city of Alessandria is in Piedmont, between the Tanaro and the Bormida, and not far from their junction. It was built by the Lombard League, to protect the country against the Emperor Frederick, and named in honor of Pope Alexander the Third, a protector of the Guelphs. It is said to have been built in a single year, and was called in derision, by the Ghibellines, Allessandria della Paglia (of the Straw); either from the straw used in the bricks, or more probably from the supposed insecurity of a city built in so short a space of time. [←](#)

652. Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, III 302:—

“It was the hour when every traveller
And every watchman at the gate of towns
Begins to long for sleep, and drowsiness
Is falling even on the mother’s eyes
Whose child is dead.”

Also Byron, *Don Juan*, III 108:—

“Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day’s decay.
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!”

↖

653. The word “pilgrim” is here used by Dante in a general sense, meaning any traveller. ↲

654. Gray, “Elegy”:—

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.”

↖

655. An evening hymn of the Church, sung at Complines, or the latest service of the day:—

“*Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum creator, poscimus
Ut pro tua dementia
Sis presul ad custodiam.*”

“*Procul recedant somnia
Et noxium phantasmata,
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.*”

“*Presta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito
Regnans per omne saeculum.*”

This hymn would seem to have no great applicability to disembodied spirits; and perhaps may have the same reference as the last petition in the Lord’s Prayer, Canto XI 19:—

“Our virtue, which is easily o’ercome,
Put not to proof with the old Adversary,
But thou from him who spurs it so, deliver.
This last petition verily, dear Lord,
Not for ourselves is made, who need it not,

But for their sake who have remained behind us."

Dante seems to think his meaning very easy to penetrate. The commentators have found it uncommonly difficult. [←](#)

656. Genesis 3:24:—

"And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

[←](#)

657. Justice tempered with mercy, say the commentators. [←](#)

658. Green, the color of hope, which is the distinguishing virtue of Purgatory. On the symbolism of colors, Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, Introd., says:—

"In very early Art we find colors used in a symbolical or mystic sense, and, until the ancient principles and traditions were wholly worn out of memory or set aside by the later painters, certain colors were appropriated to certain subjects and personages, and could not arbitrarily be applied or misapplied. In the old specimens of stained glass we find these significations scrupulously attended to. Thus:—

"WHITE, represented by the diamond or silver, was the emblem of light, religious purity, innocence, virginity, faith, joy, and life. Our Saviour wears white after his resurrection. In the judge it indicated integrity; in the rich man, humility; in the woman, chastity. It was the color consecrated to the Virgin, who, however, never wears white except in pictures of the Assumption.

"RED, the ruby, signified fire, divine love, the Holy Spirit, heat, or the creative power, and royalty. White and red roses expressed love and innocence, or love and wisdom, as in the garland with which the angel crowns

St. Cecilia. In a bad sense, red signified blood, war, hatred, and punishment. Red and black combined were the colors of purgatory and the Devil.

“BLUE, or the sapphire, expressed heaven, the firmament, truth, constancy, fidelity. Christ and the Virgin wear the red tunic and the blue mantle, as signifying heavenly love and heavenly truth.²¹⁰⁴ The same colors were given to St. John the Evangelist, with this difference—that he wore the blue tunic and the red mantle; in later pictures the colors are sometimes red and green.

“YELLOW, or gold, was the symbol of the sun; of the goodness of God; initiation, or marriage; faith, or fruitfulness. St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, wears yellow. In pictures of the Apostles, St. Peter wears a yellow mantle over a blue tunic. In a bad sense, yellow signifies inconstancy, jealousy, deceit; in this sense it is given to the traitor Judas, who is generally habited in dirty yellow.

“GREEN, the emerald, is the color of spring; of hope, particularly hope in immortality; and of victory, as the color of the palm and the laurel.

“VIOLET, the amethyst, signified love and truth; or, passion and suffering. Hence it is the color often worn by the martyrs. In some instances our Saviour, after his resurrection, is habited in a violet, instead of a blue mantle. The Virgin also wears violet after the crucifixion. Mary Magdalene, who as patron saint wears the red robe, as penitent wears violet and blue, the colors of sorrow and of constancy. In the devotional representation of her by Timoteo della Vite, she wears red and green, the colors of love and hope.

“GRAY, the color of ashes, signified mourning, humility, and innocence accused; hence adopted as the dress of the Franciscans (the Gray Friars); but it has since been changed for a dark rusty brown.

“BLACK expressed the earth, darkness, mourning, wickedness, negation, death; and was appropriate to the Prince of Darkness. In some old illuminated MSS., Jesus, in the Temptation, wears a black robe. White and black together signified purity of life, and mourning or humiliation; hence adopted by the Dominicans and the Carmelites.”



659. It was not so dark that on a near approach he could not distinguish objects indistinctly visible at a greater distance. ↲
660. Nino de' Visconti of Pisa, nephew of Count Ugolino, and Judge of Gallura in Sardinia. Dante had known him at the siege of Caprona, in 1290, where he saw the frightened garrison march out under safeguard. *Inferno* XXI 95. It was this “gentle Judge,” who hanged Friar Gomita for peculation, *Inferno* XXII 82. ↲
661. His daughter, still young and innocent. ↲
662. His widow married Galeazzo de' Visconti of Milan, “and much discomfort did this woman suffer with her husband,” says the *Ottimo*, “so that many a time she wished herself a widow.” ↲
663. *Hamlet*, IV 5:—

“His obscure funeral,
No trophy, sword, or hatchment o'er his grave.”
664. The Visconti of Milan had for their coat of arms a viper; and being on the banner, it led the Milanese to battle. ↲
665. The arms of Gallura. “According to Fara, a writer of the sixteenth century,” says Valery, *Voyage en Corse et en Sardaigne*, II 37, “the elegant but somewhat chimerical historian of Sardinia, Gallura is a

Gallic colony; its arms are a cock; and one might find some analogy between the natural vivacity of its inhabitants and that of the French.” Nino thinks it would look better on a tombstone than a viper. ↵

666. These three stars are the Alpha of Euridanus, of the Ship, and of the Golden Fish; allegorically, if any allegory be wanted, the three Theological Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity. The four morning stars, the Cardinal Virtues of active life, are already set; these announce the evening and the life contemplative. ↵
667. Compare this with Milton’s description of the serpent, *Paradise Lost*, IX 434, 496:—

“Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
Among thick-woven arborets, and flowers
Imbordered on each bank.

:

Not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since; but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold, a surging maze! his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape
And lovely; never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus, or the god
In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
Ammonian Jove or Capitoline was seen—
He with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but feared
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.

As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail;
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve.
... Oft he bowed
His turret crest, and sleek enamelled neck,
Fawning; and licked the ground whereon she trod.”



668. In the original *al sommo smalto*, to the highest enamel; referring either to the Terrestrial Paradise, enamelled with flowers, or to the highest heaven enamelled with stars. The azure-stone, *pierre d'azur*, or lapis lazuli, is perhaps a fair equivalent for the *smalto*, particularly if the reference be to the sky. [✉](#)
669. The valley in Lunigiana, through which runs the Magra, dividing the Genoese and Tuscan territories. *Paradiso IX* 89:—

“The Magra, that with journey short
Doth from the Tuscan part the Genoese.”



670. Currado or Conrad Malaspina, father of Marcello Malaspina, who six years later sheltered Dante in his exile, as foreshadowed in line 136, It was from the convent of the Corvo, overlooking the Gulf of Spezia, in Lunigiana, that Frate Ilario wrote the letter describing Dante's appearance in the cloister. [✉](#)
671. Pope Boniface the Eighth. [✉](#)
672. Before the sun shall be seven times in Aries, or before seven years are passed. [✉](#)
673. Ecclesiastes 12:11:—

“The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.”



674. With this canto ends the first day in Purgatory, as indicated by the description of evening at the beginning, and the rising of the stars in line 89. With it closes also the first subdivision of this part of the poem, indicated, as the reader will not fail to notice, by the elaborate introduction of the next canto.
675. “Dante begins this canto,” says Benvenuto da Imola, “by saying a thing that was never said or imagined by any other poet, which is, that the aurora of the moon is the concubine of Tithonus. Some maintain that he means the aurora of the sun; but this cannot be, if we closely examine the text.” This point is elaborately discussed by the commentators. I agree with those who interpret the passage as referring to a lunar aurora. It is still evening; and the hour is indicated a few lines lower down.

To Tithonus was given the gift of immortality, but not of perpetual youth. As Tennyson makes him say:—

“The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
The ever silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.”



676. *Don Quixote*, I 2:—

“Scarcely had ruddy Phoebus spread the golden tresses of his beauteous hair over the face of the wide and spacious earth, and scarcely had the painted little birds, with the sweet and mellifluous harmony of their serrated tongues, saluted the approach of rosy Aurora, when, quitting the soft couch of her jealous husband, she disclosed herself to mortals through the gates and balconies of the Manchegan horizon.”



677. As the sun was in Aries, and it was now the fourth day after the full moon, the Scorpion would be rising in the dawn which precedes the moon. [←](#)

678. This indicates the time to be two hours and a half after sunset, or half past eight o'clock. Two hours of the ascending night are passed, and the third is half over.

This circumstantial way of measuring the flight of time is Homeric.
Iliad, X 250:—

“Let us be going, then, for the night declines fast, and the morning is near. And the stars have already far advanced, and the greater portion of the night, by two parts, has gone by, but the third portion still remains.”



679. Namely, his body. [←](#)

680. Virgil, Sordello, Dante, Nino, and Conrad. And here Dante falls upon the grass and sleeps till dawn. There is a long pause of rest and sleep between this line and the next, which makes the whole passage doubly beautiful. The narrative recommences like the twitter of early birds just beginning to stir in the woods. [←](#)

681. For the tragic story of Tereus, changed to a lapwing, Philomela to a nightingale, and Procne to a swallow, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI:—

“Now, with drawn sabre and impetuous speed,
In close pursuit he drives Pandion’s breed;
Whose nimble feet spring with so swift a force
Across the fields, they seem to wing their course.
And now, on real wings themselves they raise,
And steer their airy flight by different ways;
One to the woodland’s shady covert hies,
Around the smoky roof the other flies;
Whose feathers yet the marks of murder stain,
Where stamped upon her breast the crimson spots remain.
Tereus, through grief and haste to be revenged,
Shares the like fate, and to a bird is changed;
Fixed on his head the crested plumes appear,
Long is his beak, and sharpened like a spear;
Thus armed, his looks his inward mind display,
And, to a lapwing turned, he fans his way.”

See also *Confessio Amantis*, V:—

“And of her suster Progne I finde
How she was torned out of kinde
Into a swalwe swift of wing,
Which eke in winter lith swouning
There as she may no thing be sene,
And whan the world is woxe grene
And comen is the somer tide,
Then fleeth she forth and ginneth to chide
And chitereth out in her langage
What falshede is in mariage,
And telleth in a maner speche
Of Tereus the spouse breche.”

⟵

682. Pope, *Temple of Fame*, 7:—

“What time the morn mysterious visions brings,
While purer slumbers spread their golden wings.”

↲

683. Mount Ida. ↲

684. To the region of fire. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, Ch. CXIII, says:—

“After the environment of the air is seated the fourth element; this is an orb of fire, which extends to the moon and surrounds this atmosphere in which we are. And know that above the fire is in the first place the moon, and the other stars, which are all of the nature of fire.”

↲

685. To prevent Achilles from going to the siege of Troy, his mother Thetis took him from Chiron, the Centaur, and concealed him in female attire in the court of Lycomedes, king of Scyros. ↲

686. As Richter says:—

“The hour when sleep is nigh unto the soul.”

↲

687. Lucia, the Enlightening Grace of heaven. *Inferno* II 97. ↲

688. Nino and Conrad. ↲

689. Ovid uses a like expression:—

“Sleep and the god together went away.”

↲

690. The first stair is Confession; the second, Contrition; and the third, Penance. ↲

691. Purple and black. See note 83. ↲

692. The gate of Paradise is thus described by Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 501:—

“Far distant he descries,
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of heaven, a structure high;
At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
The work as of a kingly palace gate,
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Imbellished; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone, inimitable on earth
By model or by shading pencil drawn.
The stairs where such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
To Padan-Aram in the field of Luz,
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, ‘This is the gate of heaven.’
Each stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to heaven sometimes
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from earth sailing arrived,
Wafted by angels; or flew o’er the lake,
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.”

↲

693. The Seven Sins, which are punished in the seven circles of Purgatory; Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, Lust. ↲

694. The golden key is the authority of the confessor; the silver, his knowledge. ↲

695. Luke 9:62:—

“No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

And 17:32:—

“Remember Lot’s wife.”

Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Lib. III Met. 12:—

“*Heu! noctis prope terminos
Orpheus Eurydicen suam
Vidit, perdidit, occidit.
Vos haec fabula respicit,
Quicumque in superum diem
Mentem ducere quaeritis,
Nam qui Tartareum in specus
Victus lumina flexerit,
Quicquid prascipuum trahit,
Perdit, dum videt inferos.*”



696. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II 879:—

“On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.”



697. When Caesar robbed the Roman treasury on the Tarpeian hill, the tribune Metellus strove to defend it; but Caesar, drawing his sword, said to him, “It is easier to do this than to say it.”

Lucan, *Pharsalia*, III:—

“The tribune with unwilling steps withdrew,
While impious hands the rude assault renew:
The brazen gates with thundering strokes resound,
And the Tarpeian mountain rings around.
At length the sacred storehouse, open laid,

The hoarded wealth of ages past displayed;
There might be seen the sums proud Carthage sent,
Her long impending ruin to prevent.
There heaped the Macedonian treasures shone,
What great Flaminus and Aemilius won
From vanquished Philip and his hapless son.
There lay, what flying Pyrrhus lost, the gold
Scorned by the patriot's honesty of old:
Whate'er our parsimonious sires could save,
What tributary gifts rich Syria gave;
The hundred Cretan cities' ample spoil;
What Cato gathered from the Cyprian isle.
Riches of captive kings by Pompey borne,
In happier days, his triumph to adorn,
From utmost India and the rising morn;
Wealth infinite, in one rapacious day,
Became the needy soldiers' lawless prey:
And wretched Rome, by robbery laid low,
Was poorer than the bankrupt Caesar now.”



698. The hymn of St. Ambrose, universally known in the churches as the *Te Deum*.

699. Thomson, “Hymn”:—

“In swarming cities vast
Assembled men to the deep organ join
The long-resounding voice, oft breaking clear
At solemn pauses through the swelling bass,
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardor rise to heaven.”



700. In this canto is described the First Circle of Purgatory, where the sin of Pride is punished.

701. It being now Easter Monday, and the fourth day after the full moon, the hour here indicated would be four hours after sunrise. And as the sun was more than two hours high when Dante found himself at the gate of Purgatory (Canto IX 44), he was an hour and a half in this needle's eye. ↵
702. Which was so steep as to allow of no ascent; *dritto di salita* being used in the sense of right of way. ↵
703. Polycletus, the celebrated Grecian sculptor, among whose works one, representing the bodyguard of the king of Persia, acquired such fame for excellence as to be called “the Rule.” ↵
704. With this description of the sculptures on the wall of Purgatory compare that of the shield which Vulcan made for Achilles, *Iliad*, XVIII 484, Buckley's Tr.:—

“On it he wrought the earth, and the heaven, and the sea, the unwearyed sun, and the full moon. On it also he represented all the constellations with which the heaven is crowned, the Pleiades, the Hyades, and the strength of Orion, and the Bear, which they also call by the appellation of the Wain, which there revolves, and watches Orion; but it alone is free from the baths of the ocean.

“In it likewise he wrought two fair cities of articulate speaking men. In the one, indeed, there were marriages and feasts; and they were conducting the brides from their chambers through the city with brilliant torches, and many a bridal song was raised. The youthful dancers were wheeling round, and among them pipes and lyres uttered a sound; and the women standing, each at her portals, admired. And people were crowded together in an assembly, and there a contest had arisen; for two men contended for the ransom-money of a slain man: the one affirmed that he had paid all, appealing to the people; but the other denied, averring that he had received naught: and

both wished to find an end of the dispute before a judge. The people were applauding both, supporters of either party, and the heralds were keeping back the people; but the elders sat upon polished stones, in a sacred circle, and the pleaders held in their hands the staves of the clear-voiced heralds; with these then they arose, and alternately pleaded their cause. Moreover, in the midst lay two talents of gold, to give to him who should best establish his claim among them. But round the other city sat two armies of people glittering in arms; and one of two plans was agreeable to them, either to waste it, or to divide all things into two parts—the wealth, whatever the pleasant city contained within it. They, however, had not yet complied, but were secretly arming themselves for an ambuscade. Meanwhile, their beloved wives and young children kept watch, standing above, and among them the men whom old age possessed. But they (the younger men) advanced; but Mars was their leader, and Pallas Minerva, both golden, and clad in golden dresses, beautiful and large, along with their armor, radiant all round, and indeed like gods; but the people were of humbler size. But when they now had reached a place where it appeared fit to lay an ambuscade, by a river, where there was a watering-place for all sorts of cattle, there then they settled, clad in shining steel. There, apart from the people, sat two spies, watching when they might perceive the sheep and crooked-horned oxen. These, however, soon advanced, and two shepherds accompanied them, amusing themselves with their pipes, for they had not yet perceived the stratagem. Then they, discerning them, ran in upon them, and immediately slaughtered on all sides the herds of oxen, and the beautiful flocks of snow-white sheep; and slew the shepherds besides. But they, when they heard the great tumult among the oxen, previously sitting in front of the assembly, mounting their nimble-footed steeds, pursued; and soon came up with them. Then, having marshalled themselves, they fought a battle on the banks

of the river, and wounded one another with their brazen spears. Among them mingled Discord and Tumult, and destructive Fate, holding one alive recently wounded, another unwounded, but a third, slain, she drew by the feet through the battle; and had the garment around her shoulders crimsoned with the gore of men. But they turned about, like living mortals, and fought, and drew away the slaughtered bodies of each other.

“On it he also placed a soft fallow field, rich glebe, wide, thrice-ploughed; and in it many ploughmen drove hither and thither, turning round their teams. But when, returning, they reached the end of the field, then a man, advancing, gave into their hands a cup of very sweet wine; but they turned themselves in series, eager to reach the other end of the deep fallow. But it was all black behind, similar to ploughed land, which indeed was a marvel beyond all others.

“On it likewise he placed a field of deep corn, where reapers were cutting, having sharp sickles in their hands. Some handfuls fell one after the other upon the ground along the furrow, and the binders of sheaves tied others with bands. Three binders followed the reapers, while behind them boys gathering the handfuls, and bearing them in their arms, continually supplied them; and among them the master stood by the swath in silence, holding a sceptre, delighted in heart. But apart, beneath an oak, servants were preparing a banquet, and, sacrificing a huge ox, they ministered; while women sprinkled much white barley on the meat, as a supper for the reapers.

“On it likewise he placed a vineyard, heavily laden with grapes, beautiful, golden; but the clusters throughout were black; and it was supported throughout by silver poles. Round ic he drew an azure trench, and about it a hedge of tin; but there was only one path to it, by which the gatherers went when they collected the vintage. Young virgins and youths, of tender minds, bore the luscious fruit in woven baskets, in the midst of whom a boy played

sweetly on a shrill harp; and with tender voice sang gracefully to the chord; while they, beating the ground in unison with dancing and shouts, followed, skipping with their feet.

“In it he also wrought a herd of oxen with horns erect. But the kine were made of gold and of tin, and rushed out with a lowing from the stall to the pasture, beside a murmuring stream, along the breeze-waving reeds. Four golden herdsmen accompanied the oxen, and nine dogs, swift of foot, followed. But two terrible lions detained the bull, roaring among the foremost oxen, and he was dragged away, loudly bellowing, and the dogs and youths followed for a rescue. They indeed, having torn off the skin of the great ox, lapped up his entrails and black blood; and the shepherds vainly pressed upon them, urging on their fleet dogs. These however refused to bite the lions, but, standing very near, barked, and shunned them.

“On it illustrious Vulcan also formed a pasture in a beautiful grove full of white sheep, and folds, and covered huts and cottages.

“Illustrious Vulcan likewise adorned it with a dance, like unto that which, in wide Gnossus, Dsdalus contrived for fair-haired Ariadne. There danced youths and alluring virgins, holding each other’s hands at the wrist. These wore fine linen robes, but those were dressed in well-woven tunics, shining as with oil; these also had beautiful garlands, and those wore golden swords, hanging from silver belts. Sometimes, with skilful feet, they nimbly bounded round; as when a potter, sitting, shall make trial of a wheel fitted to his hands, whether it will run: and at other times again they ran back to their places through one another. But a great crowd surrounded the pleasing dance, amusing themselves; and among them two tumblers, beginning their songs, spun round through the midst.

“But in it he also formed the vast strength of the river Oceanus, near the last border of the well-formed shield.”

See also Virgil's description of the Shield of Aeneas, *Aeneid*, VIII, and of the representations on the walls of the Temple of Juno at Carthage, *Aeneid*, I. Also the description of the Temple of Mars, in Statius, *Thebaid*, VII, and that of the tomb of the Persian queen in the Alexandreis of Philip Gaultier, noticed in Mr. Sumner's article, *Atlantic Monthly*, XVI 754. And finally "the noble kerving and the portreitures" of the Temples of Venus, Mars, and Diana, in Chaucer's "Knightes Tale":—

"Why shulde I not as vvel eke tell you all
The portreiture that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the Rede?

:

"First on the wall was peinted a forest,
In which ther wonncth neyther man ne best;
With knotty, knarry, barrein trees old,
Of stubbes sharpe, and hldous to behold;
In which ther ran a romble and a swough,
As though a storme shuld bresten every bough.
And, dounward from an hill, under a bent,
Ther stood the temple of Mars Armipotcnt,
Wrought all of burned stele; of which th' entrée
Was longe and streite, and gastly for to see;
And therout came a rage and swiche a vise,
That it made all the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the dore shone;
For window, on the wall, ne was ther none,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dore was all of athamant eterne;
Yclenched, overthwart and endelong,
With yren tough. And, for to make it strong,
Every piler the temple to sustene
Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and shcne.

"Ther saw I, first, the derke imagining

Of felonie, and alle the compassing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede;
The pikepurse; and eke the pale drede;
The smiler, with the knif under the cloke;
The shepen brenning, with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordring in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde;
Conteke, with blody knif and sharp menace:
All full of chirking was that sory place.
The sleer of himself, yet, saw I there,
His herte-blood hath bathed all his here,
The naile ydriven in the shode anyght,
The colde deth, with mouth gaping upright.”



705. Luke 1:28:—

“And the angel came in unto her and said. Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.”



706. Luke 1:38:—

“And Mary said. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”



707. 2 Samuel 6:6, 7:—

“And when they came to Nachon’s threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”



708. 2 Samuel 6:14:—

“And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.”



709. 2 Samuel 6:16:—

“And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, Saul’s daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.”



710. This story of Trajan is told in nearly the same words, though in prose, in the *Fiore di Filosofi*, a work attributed to Brunetto Latini. See Nannucci, *Manuale della Letteratura del Prima Secolo*, in. 291. It may be found also in the *Legenda Aurea*, in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. 67, and in the *Life of St. Gregory*, by Paulus Diaconus.

As told by Ser Brunetto the story runs thus:—

“Trajan was a very just Emperor, and one day, having mounted his horse to go into battle with his cavalry, a woman came and seized him by the foot, and, weeping bitterly, asked him and besought him to do justice upon those who had without cause put to death her son, who was an upright young man. And he answered and said, ‘I will give thee satisfaction when I return.’ And she said, ‘And if thou dost not return?’ And he answered, ‘If I do not return, my successor will give thee satisfaction.’ And she said, ‘How do I know that? and suppose he do it, what is it to thee if another do good? Thou art my debtor, and according to thy deeds shalt thou be judged; it is a fraud for a man not to pay what he owes; the justice of another will not liberate thee, and it will be well for thy successor if he shall liberate himself.’ Moved by these words the

Emperor alighted, and did justice, and consoled the widow, and then mounted his horse, and went to battle, and routed his enemies. A long time afterwards St. Gregory, hearing of this justice, saw his statue, and had him disinterred, and found that he was all turned to dust, except his bones and his tongue, which was like that of a living man. And by this St. Gregory knew his justice, for this tongue had always spoken it; so that then he wept very piteously through compassion, praying God that he would take this soul out of Hell, knowing that he had been a Pagan. Then God, because of these prayers, drew that soul from pain, and put it into glory. And thereupon the angel spoke to St. Gregory, and told him never to make such a prayer again, and God laid upon him as a penance either to be two days in Purgatory, or to be always ill with fever and side-ache. St. Gregory as the lesser punishment chose the fever and side-ache (*male di fianco*)."



711. Gregory's "great victory" was saving the soul of Trajan by prayer. [←](#)

712. Jeremy Taylor says:—

"As the silkworm eateth itself out of a seed to become a little worm; and there feeding on the leaves of mulberries, it grows till its coat be off, and then works itself into a house of silk; then, casting its pearly seeds for the young to breed, it leaveth its silk for man, and dieth all white and winged in the shape of a flying creature: so is the progress of souls."



713. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I:—

"The proude vice of veingloire
Remembreth nought of purgatoire."

And Shakespeare, *King Henry the Eighth*, III 2:—

“I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory.”

↲

714. The angels, the first creation or effects of the divine power. ↲

715. Wisdom of Solomon 7:25:—

“For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty.”

In the Vulgate: *Vapor est enim virtutis Dei.* ↲

716. See [note 160](#). ↲

717. Or Italian. The speaker is Omberto Aldobrandeschi, Count of Santaliore, in the Maremma of Siena. “The Counts of Santaiores were, and are, and almost always will be at war with the Sienese,” says the *Ottimo*. In one of these wars Omberto was slain, at the village of Campagnatico. “The author means,” continues the same commentator, “that he who cannot carry his head high should bow it down like a bulrush.” ↲

718. Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*, Mrs. Foster’s Tr., I 103, says:—

“At this time there lived in Rome—to omit nothing relative to art that may be worthy of commemoration—a certain Oderigi of Agobbio, an excellent miniature-painter of those times, with whom Giotto lived on terms of close friendship; and who was therefore invited by the Pope to illuminate many books for the library of the palace: but these books have in great part perished in the lapse of time. In my book of ancient drawings I have some few remains from the hand of this artist, who was certainly a

clever man, although much surpassed by Franco of Bologna, who executed many admirable works in the same manner, for the same Pontiff, (and which were also destined for the library of the palace,) at the same time with those of Oderigi. From the hand of Franco also, I have designs, both in painting and illuminating, which may be seen in my book above cited; among others are an eagle, perfectly well done, and a lion tearing up a tree, which is most beautiful.”



719. The art of illuminating manuscripts, which was called in Paris *alluminare*, was in Italy called *miniare*. Hence Oderigi is called by Vasari a *miniatore*, or miniature-painter. [←](#)
720. Franco Bolognese was a pupil of Oderigi, who perhaps alludes to this fact in claiming a part of the honor paid to the younger artist. [←](#)
721. Of Cimabue, Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*, Mrs. Foster’s Tr., I 35, says:—

“The overwhelming flood of evils by which unhappy Italy had been submerged and devastated had not only destroyed whatever could properly be called buildings, but, a still more deplorable consequence, had totally exterminated the artists themselves, when, by the will of God, in the year 1240, Giovanni Cimabue, of the noble family of that name, was born, in the city of Florence, to give the first light to the art of painting. This youth, as he grew up, being considered by his father and others to give proof of an acute judgment and a clear understanding, was sent to Santa Maria Novella to study letters under a relation, who was then master in grammar to the novices of that convent. But Cimabue, instead of devoting himself to letters, consumed the whole day in drawing men, horses, houses, and other various fancies, on his books and different papers—an occupation to which he felt himself impelled by nature; and this natural inclination was favored by fortune, for the governors of the city had invited certain Greek painters to Florence, for the purpose of restoring the art

of painting, which had not merely degenerated, but was altogether lost. These artists, among other works, began to paint the Chapel of the Gondi, situate next the principal chapel, in Santa Maria Novella, the roof and walls of which are now almost entirely destroyed by time—and Cimabue, often escaping from the school, and having already made a commencement in the art he was so fond of, would stand watching those masters at their work, the day through. Judging from these circumstances, his father, as well as the artists themselves, concluded him to be well endowed for painting, and thought that much might be hoped from his future efforts, if he were devoted to that art. Giovanni was accordingly, to his no small satisfaction, placed with those masters. From this time he labored incessantly, and was so far aided by his natural powers that he soon greatly surpassed his teachers both in design and coloring. For these masters, caring little for the progress of art, had executed their works as we now see them, not in the excellent manner of the ancient Greeks, but in the rude modern style of their own day. Wherefore, though Cimabue imitated his Greek instructors, he very much improved the art, relieving it greatly from their uncouth manner, and doing honor to his country by the name he acquired, and by the works which he performed. Of this we have evidence in Florence from the pictures which he painted there; as, for example, the front of the altar of Santa Cecilia, and a picture of the Virgin, in Santa Croce, which was, and is still, attached to one of the pilasters on the right of the choir.” [←](#)

722. Shakespeare, *Troil. and Cres.*, III 3:—

“The present eye praises the present object:
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye
Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee;
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou wouldest not entomb thyself alive,
And case thy reputation in thy tent.”

Cimabue died in 1300. His epitaph is:

*“Credidit ut Cimabos picturae castra tenere,
Sic tenuit vivens, nunc tenet astra poli.”*

Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*, I 93:—

“The gratitude which the masters in painting owe to Nature—who is ever the truest model of him who, possessing the power to select the brightest parts from her best and loveliest features, employs himself unweariedly in the reproduction of these beauties—this gratitude, I say, is due, in my judgment, to the Florentine painter Giotto, seeing that he alone—although born amidst incapable artists, and at a time when all good methods in art had long been entombed beneath the ruins of war—yet, by the favor of Heaven, he, I say, alone succeeded in resuscitating Art, and restoring her to a path that may be called the true one. And it was in truth a great marvel, that from so rude and inapt an age Giotto should have had strength to elicit so much, that the art of design, of which the men of those days had little, if any knowledge, was by his means effectually recalled into life. The birth of this great man took place in the hamlet of Vespignano, fourteen miles from the city of Florence, in the year 1276. His father’s name was Bondone, a simple husbandman, who reared the child, to whom he had given the name of Giotto, with such decency as his condition permitted. The boy was early remarked for extreme vivacity in all his childish proceedings, and for extraordinary promptitude of intelligence; so that he became endeared, not only to his father, but to all who knew him in the village and around it. When he was about ten years old, Bondone gave him a few sheep to watch, and with these he wandered about the vicinity—now here and now there. But, induced by Nature herself to the arts of design, he was perpetually drawing on the stones, the earth, or the sand, some natural object that came before him, or some fantasy that presented itself to his thoughts. It chanced one day that the affairs of

Cimabue took him from Florence to Vespignano, when he perceived the young Giotto, who, while his sheep fed around him, was occupied in drawing one of them from the life, with a stone slightly pointed, upon a smooth, clean piece of rock—and that without any teaching whatever but such as Nature herself had imparted. Halting in astonishment, Cimabue inquired of the boy if he would accompany him to his home, and the child replied, he would go willingly, if his father were content to permit it. Cimabue therefore requesting the consent of Bondone, the latter granted it readily, and suffered the artist to conduct his son to Florence, where, in a short time, instructed by Cimabue and aided by Nature, the boy not only equalled his master in his own manner, but became so good an imitator of Nature that he totally banished the rude Greek manner, restoring art to the better path adhered to in modern times, and introducing the custom of accurately drawing living persons from nature, which had not been used for more than two hundred years. Or, if some had attempted it, as said above, it was not by any means with the success of Giotto. Among the portraits by this artist, and which still remain, is one of his contemporary and intimate friend, Dante Alighieri, who was no less famous as a poet than Giotto as a painter, and whom Messer Giovanni Boccaccio has lauded so highly in the introduction to his story of Messer Forese da Rabatta, and of Giotto the painter himself. This portrait is in the chapel of the palace of the Podestà in Florence; and in the same chapel are the portraits of Ser Brunetto Latini, master of Dante, and of Messer Corso Donati, an illustrious citizen of that day.”

Pope Benedict the Ninth, hearing of Giotto’s fame, sent one of his courtiers to Tuscany, to propose to him certain paintings for the Church of St. Peter.

"The messenger," continues Vasari, "when on his way to visit Giotto, and to inquire what other good masters there were in Florence, spoke first with many artists in Siena—then, having received designs from them, he proceeded to Florence, and repaired one morning to the workshop where Giotto was occupied with his labors. He declared the purpose of the Pope, and the manner in which that Pontiff desired to avail himself of his assistance; and, finally, requested to have a drawing, that he might send it to his Holiness, Giotto, who was very courteous, took a sheet of paper and a pencil dipped in a red color, then, resting his elbow on his side, to form a sort of compass, with one turn of the hand he drew a circle, so perfect and exact that it was a marvel to behold. This done, he turned smiling to the courtier, saying, 'Here is your drawing.'

'Am I to have nothing more than this?' inquired the latter, conceiving himself to be jested with. 'That is enough and to spare,' returned Giotto; 'send it with the rest, and you will see if it will be recognized.' The messenger, unable to obtain anything more, went away very ill satisfied, and fearing that he had been fooled. Nevertheless, having despatched the other drawings to the Pope, with the names of those who had done them, he sent that of Giotto also, relating the mode in which he had made his circle, without moving his arm and without compasses; from which the Pope, and such of the courtiers as were well versed in the subject, perceived how far Giotto surpassed all the other painters of his time. This incident, becoming known, gave rise to the proverb, still used in relation to people of dull wits—*Tu sei piu tondo che l'O di Giotto*; the significance of which consists in the double meaning of the word 'tondo,' which is used in the Tuscan for slowness of intellect and heaviness of comprehension, as well as for an exact circle. The proverb has besides an interest from the circumstance which gave it birth....

"It is said that Giotto, when he was still a boy, and studying with Cimabue, once painted a fly on the nose of

a figure on which Cimabue himself was employed, and this so naturally, that, when the master returned to continue his work, he believed it to be real, and lifted his hand more than once to drive it away before he should go on with the painting.”

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, VI 5, tells this tale of Giotto:—

“As it often happens that fortune hides under the meanest trades in life the greatest virtues, which has been proved by Pampinea; so are the greatest geniuses found frequently lodged by Nature in the most deformed and misshapen bodies, which was verified in two of our own citizens, as I am now going to relate. For the one, who was called Forese da Rabatta, being a little deformed mortal, with a flat Dutch face, worse than any of the family of the Baronci, yet was he esteemed by most men a repository of the civil law. And the other, whose name was Giotto, had such a prodigious fancy, that there was nothing in Nature, the parent of all things, but he could imitate it with his pencil so well, and draw it so like, as to deceive our very senses, imagining that to be the very thing itself which was only his painting: therefore, having brought that art again to light, which had lain buried for many ages under the errors of such as aimed more to captivate the eyes of the ignorant, than to please the understandings of those who were really judges, he may be deservedly called one of the lights and glories of our city, and the rather as being master of his art, notwithstanding his modesty would never suffer himself to be so esteemed; which honor, though rejected by him, displayed itself in him with the greater lustre, as it was so eagerly usurped by others less knowing than himself, and by many also who had all their knowledge from him. But though his excellence in his profession was so wonderful, yet as to his person and aspect he had no way the advantage of Signor Forese. To come then to my story. These two worthies had each his

country-seat at Mugello, and Forese being gone thither in the vacation time, and riding upon an unsightly steed, chanced to meet there with Giotto, who was no better equipped than himself, when they returned together to Florence. Travelling slowly along, as they were able to go no faster, they were overtaken by a great shower of rain, and forced to take shelter in a poor man's house, who was well known to them both; and, as there was no appearance of the weather's clearing up, and each being desirous of getting home that night, they borrowed two old, rusty cloaks, and two rusty hats, and they proceeded on their journey. After they had gotten a good part of their way, thoroughly wet, and covered with dirt and mire, which their two shuffling steeds had thrown upon them, and which by no means improved their looks, it began to clear up at last, and they, who had hitherto said but little to each other, now turned to discourse together; whilst Forese, riding along and listening to Giotto, who was excellent at telling a story, began at last to view him attentively from head to foot, and, seeing him in that wretched, dirty pickle, without having any regard to himself he fell a laughing, and said, ‘Do you suppose, Giotto, if a stranger were to meet with you now, who had never seen you before, that he would imagine you to be the best painter in the world, as you really are?’ Giotto readily replied, ‘Yes, sir, I believe he might think so, if, looking at you at the same time, he would ever conclude that you had learned your A. BC’ At this Forese was sensible of his mistake, finding himself well paid in his own coin.”

Another story of Giotto may be found in Sacchetti, Nov. 75. [←](#)

723. Probably Dante's friend, Guido Cavalcanti, [note 140](#); and Guido Guinicelli, [note 1046](#), whom he calls

“The father
Of me and of my betters, who had ever

Practised the sweet and gracious rhymes of love.”



724. Some commentators suppose that Dante here refers to himself. He more probably is speaking only in general terms, without particular reference to any one. [←](#)

725. Ben Jonson, “Ode on the Death of Sir H. Morison”:—

“It Is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear;
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light.”



726. The babble of childhood; *pappo* for *pane*, bread, and *dindi* for *danari*, money.

Halliwell, *Dic. of Arch. and Prov. Words*:—

“DINDERS, small coins of the Lower Empire, found at Wroxeter.”



727. The revolution of the fixed stars, according to the Ptolemaic theory, which was also Dante’s, was thirty-six thousand years. [←](#)

728. “Who goes so slowly,” interprets the *Ottimo*. [←](#)

729. At the battle of Monte Aperto. See [note 143](#). [←](#)

730. Henry Vaughan, *Sacred Poems*:—

“O holy hope and high humility,
High as the heavens above;
These are your walks, and you have showed them me
To kindle my cold love!”

And Milton, *Sams. Agon.*, 185:—

“Apt words have power to swage
The tumors of a troubled mind.”

✉

731. A haughty and ambitious nobleman of Siena, who led the Sienese troops at the battle of Monte Aperto. Afterwards, when the Sienese were routed by the Florentines at the battle of Colle in the Val d' Elsa, ([note 772](#).) he was taken prisoner “and his head was cut off,” says Villani, VII 31, “and carried through all the camp fixed upon a lance. And well was fulfilled the prophecy and revelation which the Devil had made to him, by means of necromancy, but which he did not understand; for the Devil, being constrained to tell how he would succeed in that battle, mendaciously answered, and said: ‘Thou shalt go forth and fight, thou shalt conquer not die in the battle, and thy head shall be the highest in the camp.’ And he, believing from these words that he should be victorious, and believing he should be lord over all, did not put a stop after ‘not’ (*vincerai no, morrai*, thou shalt conquer not, thou shalt die). And therefore it is great folly to put faith in the Devil’s advice. This Messer Provenzano was a great man in Siena after his victory at Monte Aperto, and led the whole city, and all the Ghibelline party of Tuscany made him their chief, and he was very presumptuous in his will.”

The humility which saved him was his seating himself at a little table in the public square of Siena, called the Campo, and begging money of all passers to pay the ransom of a friend who had been taken prisoner by Charles of Anjou, as here narrated by Dante. ✉

732. Spenser, *Faery Queene*, VI c. 7, st. 22:—

“He, therewith much abashed and affrayd,

Began to tremble every limbe and vaine.”



733. A prophecy of Dante’s banishment and poverty and humiliation. [←](#)

734. In the first part of this canto the same subject is continued, with examples of pride humbled, sculptured on the pavement, upon which the Proud are doomed to gaze as they go with their heads bent down beneath their heavy burdens,

“So that they may behold their evil ways.”

Iliad, XIII 700:—

“And Ajax, the swift son of Oileus, never at all stood apart from the Telamonian Ajax; but as in a fallow field two dark bullocks, possessed of equal spirit, drag the compacted plough, and much sweat breaks out about the roots of their horns, and the well-polished yoke alone divides them, stepping along the furrow, and the plough cuts up the bottom of the soil, so they, joined together, stood very near to each other.”



735. In Italy a pedagogue is not only a teacher, but literally a leader of children, and goes from house to house collecting his little flock, which he brings home again after school.

Galatians 3:24:—

“The law was our schoolmaster (Paidagogos) to bring us unto Christ.”



736. Tombs under the pavement in the aisles of churches, in contradistinction to those built aloft against the walls. [←](#)

737. The reader will not fail to mark the artistic structure of the passage from this to the sixty-third line. First there are four stanzas beginning, “I saw”; then four beginning, “O”; then four beginning, “Displayed”; and then a stanza which resumes and unites them all. [←](#)

738. Luke 10:18:—

“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I 44:—

“Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.”

[←](#)

739. *Iliad*, I 403:—

“Him of the hundred hands, whom the gods call Briareus,
and all men Aegaeon.”

[note 472.](#)

He was struck by the thunderbolt of Jove, or by a shaft of Apollo, at the battle of Flegra. “Ugly medley of sacred and profane, of revealed truth and fiction!” exclaims Venturi. [←](#)

740. Thymbraeus, a surname of Apollo, from his temple in Thymbra. [←](#)

741. Nimrod, who “began to be a mighty one in the earth,” and his “tower whose top may reach unto heaven.”

Genesis 11:8:—

“So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

See also [note 470](#). [←](#)

742. Lombardi proposes in this line to read "together" instead of "proud"; which Biagioli thinks is "changing a beautiful diamond for a bit of lead; and stupid is he who accepts the change." [←](#)

743. Among the Greek epigrams is one on Niobe, which runs as follows:—

"This sepulchre within it has no corse;
This corse without here has no sepulchre,
But to itself is sepulchre and corse."

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, Croxall's Tr.:—

"Widowed and childless, lamentable state!
A doleful sight, among the dead she sate;
Hardened with woes, a statue of despair,
To every breath of wind unmoved her hair;
Her cheek still reddening, but its color dead,
Faded her eyes, and set within her head.
No more her pliant tongue its motion keeps,
But stands congealed within her frozen lips.
Stagnate and dull, within her purple veins,
Its current stopped, the lifeless blood remains.
Her feet their usual offices refuse,
Her arms and neck their graceful gestures lose:
Action and life from every part are gone,
And even her entrails turn to solid stone;
Yet still she weeps, and whirled by stormy winds,
Borne through the air, her native country finds;
There fixed, she stands upon a bleak hill,
There yet her marble cheeks eternal tears distil."

«

744. Homer, *Iliad*, XXIV 604, makes them but twelve:—

“Twelve children perished in her halls, six daughters and six blooming sons; these Apollo slew from his silver bow, enraged with Niobe; and those Diana, delighting in arrows, because she had deemed herself equal to the beautifulcheeked Latona. She said that Latona had borne only two, but she herself had borne many; nevertheless those, though but two, exterminated all these.”

But Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, says:—

“Seven are my daughters of a form divine,
With seven fair sons, an indefective line.”

«

745. 1 Samuel 31:4, 5:—

“Then said Saul unto his armor-bearer. Draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid; therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.”

«

746. 2 Samuel 1:21:—

“Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you.”

«

747. Arachne, daughter of Idmon the dyer of Colophon. Ovid,
Metamorphoses, VI:—

“One at the loom so excellently skilled,
That to the goddess she refused to yield.
Low was her birth, and small her native town,
She from her art alone obtained renown.

:

Nor would the work, when finished, please so much,
As, while she wrought, to view each graceful touch;
Whether the shapeless wool in balls she wound,
Or with quick motion turned the spindle round,
Or with her pencil drew the neat design,
Pallas her mistress shone in every line.
This the proud maid with scornful air denies,
And even the goddess at her work defies;
Disowns her lieavcnly mistress every hour,
Nor asks her aid, nor deprecates her power.
Let us, she cries, but to a trial come,
And if she conquers, let her fix my doom.”

It was rather an unfair trial of skill, at the end of which Minerva, getting angry, struck Arachne on the forehead with her shuttle of boxwood.

“The unhappy maid, impatient of the wrong,
Down from a beam her injured person hung;
When Pallas, pitying her wretched state,
At once prevented and pronounced her fate:
‘Live; but depend, vile wretch!’ the goddess cried,
‘Doomed in suspense forever to be tied;
That all your race, to utmost date of time,
May feel the vengeance and detest the crime.’
Then, going off, she sprinkled her with juice
Which leaves of baneful aconite produce.
Touched with the poisonous drug, her flowing hair

Fell to the ground and left her temples bare;
Her usual features vanished from their place,
Her body lessened all, but most her face.
Her slender fingers, hanging on each side
With many joints, the use of legs supplied;
A spider's bag the rest, from which she gives
A thread, and still by constant weaving lives.”



748. In the revolt of the Ten Tribes. 1 Kings 12:18:—

“Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died; therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.”



749. Amphiaraus, the soothsayer, foreseeing his own death if he went to the Theban war, concealed himself, to avoid going. His wife Eriphyle, bribed by a “golden necklace set with diamonds,” betrayed to her brother Adrastus his hiding-place, and Amphiaraus, departing, charged his son Alcmeon to kill Eriphyle as soon as he heard of his death.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX:—

“The son shall bathe his hands in parent’s blood,
And in one act be both unjust and good.”

Statius, *Theb.*, II 355, Lewis’s Tr.:—

“Fair Eriphyle the rich gift beheld,
And her sick breast with secret envy swelled.
Not the late omens and the well-known tale
To cure her vain ambition aught avail.
O had the wretch by self-experience known
The future woes, and sorrows not her own!
But fate decrees her wretched spouse must bleed,

And the son's frenzy clear the mother's deed."



750. Isaiah 37:38:—

"And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia, and Esarhaddon, his son, reigned in his stead."



751. Herodotus, Book I Ch. 214, Rawlinson's Tr.:—

"Tomyris, when she found that Cyrus paid no heed to her advice, collected all the forces of her kingdom, and gave him battle. Of all the combats in which the barbarians have engaged among themselves, I reckon this to have been the fiercest.... The greater part of the army of the Persians was destroyed, and Cyrus himself fell, after reigning nine and twenty years. Search was made among the slain, by order of the queen, for the body of Cyrus, and when it was found, she took a skin, and, filling it full of human blood, she dipped the head of Cyrus in the gore, saying, as she thus insulted the corse, 'I live and have conquered thee in fight, and yet by thee am I ruined; for thou tookest my son with guile; but thus I make good my threat, and give thee thy fill of blood.' Of the many different accounts which are given of the death of Cyrus, this which I have followed appears to me most worthy of credit."



752. After Judith had slain Holofernes. Judith 15:1:—

“And when they that were in the tents heard, they were astonished at the thing that was done. And fear and trembling fell upon them, so that there was no man that durst abide in the sight of his neighbor, but, rushing out all together, they fled into every way of the plain and of the hill country.... Now when the children of Israel heard it, they all fell upon them with one consent, and slew them unto Chobai.”



753. This tercet unites the “I saw,” “O,” and “Displayed,” of the preceding passage, and binds the whole as with a selvage.

754. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 19:—

“There was probably never a period in which the influence of art over the minds of men seemed to depend less on its merely *imitative* power, than the close of the thirteenth century. No painting or sculpture at that time reached more than a rude resemblance of reality. Its despised perspective, imperfect chiaroscuro, and unrestrained flights of fantastic imagination, separated the artist’s work from nature by an interval which there was no attempt to disguise, and little to diminish. And yet, at this very period, the greatest poet of that, or perhaps of any other age, and the attached friend of its greatest painter, who must over and over again have held full and free conversation with him respecting the objects of his art, speaks in the following terms of painting, supposed to be carried to its highest perfection:—

*Qual di pennel fu maestro, e di stile
Che ritraesse l’ombre, e i tratti, ch’ivi
Mirar farieno uno ingegno sottile.
Morti li morti, e i vivi parean vivi:
Non vide me’ di me, chi vide il vero,
Quant’io calcai, fin che chinato givi.* ’

Dante has here clearly no other idea of the highest art than that it should bring back, as in a mirror or vision, the aspect of things passed or absent. The scenes of which he speaks are, on the pavement, forever represented by angelic power, so that the souls which traverse this circle of the rock may see them, as if the years of the world had been rolled back, and they again stood beside the actors in the moment of action. Nor do I think that Dante's authority is absolutely necessary to compel us to admit that such art as this *might* indeed be the highest possible. Whatever delight we may have been in the habit of taking in pictures, if it were but truly offered to us to remove at our will the canvas from the frame, and in lieu of it to behold, fixed forever, the image of some of those mighty scenes which it has been our way to make mere themes for the artist's fancy—if, for instance, we could again behold the Magdalene receiving her pardon at Christ's feet, or the disciples sitting with him at the table of Emmaus—and this not feebly nor fancifully, but as if some silver mirror, that had leaned against the wall of the chamber, had been miraculously commanded to retain forever the colors that had flashed upon it for an instant—would we not part with our picture, Titian's or Veronese's though it might be?"

⬅

755. The sixth hour of the day, or noon of the second day. ⏪

756. Florence is here called ironically "the well guided" or well governed. Rubaonte is the name of the most easterly of the bridges over the Arno, and takes its name from Messer Rubaonte, who was Podestà of Florence in 1236, when this bridge was built. Above it on the hill stands the church of San Miniato. This is the hill which Michel Angelo fortified in the siege of Florence. In early times it was climbed by stairways. ⏪

757. In the good old days, before any one had falsified the ledger of the public accounts, or the standard of measure. In Dante's time a certain Messer Niccola tore out a leaf from the public records, to conceal some villany of his; and a certain Messer Durante, a customhouse officer, diminished the salt-measure by one stave. This is again alluded to, *Paradiso XVI* 105. [←](#)

758. Matthew 5:3:—

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

It must be observed that all the Latin lines in Dante should be chanted with an equal stress on each syllable, in order to make them rhythmical. [←](#)

759. The Second Circle, or Cornice, where is punished the sin of Envy; of which St. Augustine says:—

“Envy is the hatred of another's felicity; in respect of superiors, because they are not equal to them; in respect of inferiors, lest they should be equal to them; in respect of equals, because they are equal to them. Through envy proceeded the fall of the world, and the death of Christ.”

[←](#)

760. The livid color of Envy. [←](#)

761. The military precision with which Virgil faces to the right is Homeric. Biagioli says that Dante expresses it “after his own fashion, that is, entirely new and different from mundane custom.” [←](#)

762. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, V Met. 2:—

“Him the Sun, then, rightly call—
God who sees and lightens all.”

[←](#)

763. John 2:3:—

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him. They have no wine.”

Examples are first given of the virtue opposite the vice here punished. These are but “airy tongues that syllable men’s names”; and it must not be supposed that the persons alluded to are actually passing in the air. [←](#)

764. The name of Orestes is here shouted on account of the proverbial friendship between him and Pylades. When Orestes was condemned to death, Pylades tried to take his place, exclaiming, “I am Orestes.” [←](#)

765. Matthew 5:44:—

“But I say unto you. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”

[←](#)

766. See [Canto XIV 147.](#) [←](#)

767. The next stairway leading from the second to the third circle. [←](#)

768. The Litany of All Saints. [←](#)

769. Latian for Italian. [←](#)

770. A Sienese lady living in banishment at Colle, where from a tower she witnessed the battle between her townsmen and the Florentines.

“Sapia hated the Sienese,” says Benvenuto, “and placed herself at a window not far from the field of battle, waiting the issue with anxiety, and desiring the rout and

ruin of her own people. Her desires being verified by the entire discomfiture of the Sienese, and the death of their captain," (Provenzan Salvani, see [note 731](#),) "exultant and almost beside herself, she lifted her bold face to heaven, and cried, 'Now, O God, do with me what thou wilt, do me all the harm thou canst; now my prayers are answered, and I die content.'"



771. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II:—

"Whan I have sene another blithe
Of love and hadde a goodly chere,
Ethna, which brenneth yere by yere,
Was thanne nougnt so hote as I
Of thilk e sore which prively
Mine hertes thought withinne brenneth."



772. *Convito*, IV 23:—

"Every effect, in so far as it is effect, receiveth the likeness of its cause, as far as it can retain it. Therefore, inasmuch as our life, as has been said, and likewise that of every living creature here below, is caused by the heavens, and the heavens reveal themselves to all these effects, not in complete circle, but in part thereof, so must its movement needs be above; and as an arch retains all lives nearly, (and, I say, retains those of men as well as of other living creatures,) ascending and curving, they must be in the similitude of an arch. Returning then to our life, of which it is now question, I say that it proceeds in the image of this arch, ascending and descending."



773. The warm days near the end of January are still called in Lombardy *I giorni della merla*, the days of the blackbird; from an old legend, that once in the sunny weather a blackbird sang, “I fear thee no more, O Lord, for the winter is over.” [←](#)

774. Peter Pettignano, or Pettinajo, was a holy hermit, who saw visions and wrought miracles at Siena. Forsyth, *Italy*, 149, describing the festival of the Assumption in that city in 1802, says:—

“The Pope had reserved for this great festival the Beatification of Peter, a Sienese comb-maker, whom the Church had neglected to canonize till now. Poor Peter was honored with all the solemnity of music, high-mass, an officiating cardinal, a florid panegyric, pictured angels bearing his tools to heaven, and combing their own hair as they soared; but he received five hundred years ago a greater honor than all, a verse of praise from Dante.”

[←](#)

775. Dante’s besetting sin was not envy, but pride. [←](#)

776. On the other side of the world. [←](#)

777. The vanity of the Sienese is also spoken of *Inferno* XXIX 123. [←](#)

778. Talamone is a seaport in the Maremma, “many times abandoned by its inhabitants,” says the *Ottimo*, “on account of the malaria. The town is utterly in ruins; but as the harbor is deep, and would be of great utility if the place were inhabited, the Sienese have spent much money in repairing it many times, and bringing in inhabitants; it is of little use, for the malaria prevents the increase of population.”

Talamone is the ancient Telamon, where Marius landed on his return from Africa. [←](#)

779. The Diana is a subterranean river, which the Sienese were in search of for many years to supply the city with water. “They never have been able to find it,” says the *Ottimo*, “and yet they still hope.” In Dante’s

time it was evidently looked upon as an idle dream. To the credit of the Sienese be it said, they persevered, and finally succeeded in obtaining the water so patiently sought for. The *Pozzo Diana*, or Diana's Well, is still to be seen at the Convent of the Carmen. ↵

780. The admirals who go to Talamone to superintend the works will lose there more than their hope, namely, their lives. ↵

781. The subject of the preceding canto is here continued. Compare the introductory lines with those of Canto V. ↵

782. These two spirits prove to be Guido del Duca and Rinieri da Calboli.
↵

783. A mountain in the Apennines, northeast of Florence, from which the Arno takes its rise. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 246, thus describes this region of the Val d' Arno:—

“Farther on is another tower, the tower of *Porciano*, which is said to have been inhabited by Dante. From there I had still to climb the summits of the Falterona. I started towards midnight in order to arrive before sunrise. I said to myself. How many times the poet, whose footprints I am following, has wandered in these mountains! It was by these little alpine paths that he came and went, on his way to friends in Romagna or friends in Urbino, his heart agitated with a hope that was never to be fulfilled. I figured to myself Dante walking with a guide under the light of the stars, receiving all the impressions produced by wild and weather-beaten regions, steep roads, deep valleys, and the accidents of a long and difficult route, impressions which he would transfer to his poem. It is enough to have read this poem to be certain that its author has travelled much, has wandered much. Dante really walks with Virgil. He fatigues himself with climbing, he stops to take breath, he uses his hands when feet are insufficient. He gets lost, and asks the way. He observes the height of the sun and stars. In a word, one finds the

habits and souvenirs of the traveller in every verse, or rather at every step of his poetic pilgrimage.

“Dante has certainly climbed the top of the Falterona. It is upon this summit, from which all the Valley of the Arno is embraced, that one should read the singular imprecation which the poet has uttered against this whole valley. He follows the course of the river, and as he advances marks every place he comes to with fierce invective. The farther he goes, the more his hate redoubles in violence and bitterness. It is a piece of topographical satire, of which I know no other example.”



784. The Apennines, whose long chain ends in Calabria, opposite Cape Peloro in Sicily. *Aeneid*, III 410, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“But when, after setting out, the wind shall waft you to the Sicilian coast, and the straits of narrow Pelorus shall open wider to the eye, veer to the land on the left, and to the sea on the left, by a long circuit; fly the right both sea and shore. These lands, they say, once with violence and vast desolation convulsed, (such revolutions a long course of time is able to produce,) slipped asunder; when in continuity both lands were one, the sea rushed impetuously between, and by its waves tore the Italian side from that of Sicily; and with a narrow frith runs between the fields and cities separated by the shores. Scylla guards the right side, implacable Charybdis the left, and thrice with the deepest eddies of its gulf swallows up the vast billows, headlong in, and again spouts them out by turns high into the air, and lashes the stars with the waves.”

And Lucan, *Pharsalia*, II:—

“And still we see on fair Sicilians sands
Where part of Apennine Pelorus stands.”

And Shelley, "Ode to Liberty":—

"O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus."



785. When Dante wrote this invective against the inhabitants of the Val d' Arno, he probably had in mind the following passage of Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, IV Pros. 3, Ridpath's Tr.:—

"Hence it again follows, that everything which strays from what is good ceases to be; the wicked therefore must cease to be what they were; but that they were formerly men, their human shape, which still remains, testifies. By degenerating into wickedness, then, they must cease to be men. But as virtue alone can exalt a man above what is human, so it is on the contrary evident, that vice, as it divests him of his nature, must sink him below humanity; you ought therefore by no means to consider him as a man whom vice has rendered vicious. Tell me. What difference is there betwixt a wolf who lives by rapine, and a robber whom the desire of another's wealth stimulates to commit all manner of violence? Is there anything that bears a stronger resemblance to a wrathful dog who barks at passengers, than a man whose dangerous tongue attacks all the world? What is liker to a fox than a cheat, who spreads his snares in secret to undermine and ruin you? to a lion, than a furious man who is always ready to devour you? to a deer, than a coward who is afraid of his own shadow? to an ass, than a mortal who is slow, dull, and indolent? to the birds of the air, than a man volatile and inconstant? and what, in fine, is a debauchee who is immersed in the lowest sensual gratifications, but a hog who wallows in the mire? Upon the whole, it is an unquestionable truth that a man who forsakes virtue ceases to be a man; and, as it is impossible that he can

ascend in the scale of beings, he must of necessity degenerate and sink into a beast."



786. The people of Casentino. Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 126:—

"On returning down to the Casentine, we could trace along the Arno the mischief which followed a late attempt to clear some Apennines of their woods. Most of the soil, which was then loosened from the roots and washed down by the torrents, lodged in this plain; and left immense beds of sand and large rolling stones on the very spot where Dante describes

*'Li ruscelletti che de' verdi colli
Del Casentin discendor giuso in Arno,
Facendo i lor canali e freddi e molli.'*

"I was surprised to find so large a town as Bibbiena in a country devoid of manufactures, remote from public roads, and even deserted by its landholders; for the Niccolini and Vecchietti, who possess most of this district, prefer the obscurer pleasures of Florence to their palaces and preeminence here. The only commodity which the Casentines trade in is pork. Signore Baglione, a gentleman at whose house I slept here, ascribed the superior flavor of their hams, which are esteemed the best in Italy and require no cooking, to the dryness of the air, the absence of stagnant water, and the quantity of chestnuts given to their hogs. Bibbiena has been long renowned for its chestnuts, which the peasants dry in a kiln, grind into a sweet flour, and then convert into bread, cakes, and *polenta*."



787. The people of Arezzo. Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 128:—

“The Casentines were no favorites with Dante, who confounds the men with their hogs. Yet, following the *divine poet* down the Arno, we came to a race still more forbidding. The Aretine peasants seem to inherit the coarse, surly visages of their ancestors, whom he styles *Bottoli*. Meeting one girl, who appeared more cheerful than her neighbors, we asked her how far it was from Arezzo, and received for answer, ‘*Quanto c’è.*’”

“The valley widened as we advanced, and when Arezzo appeared, the river left us abruptly, wheeling off from its environs at a sharp angle, which Dante converts into a snout, and points disdainfully against the currish race....

“On entering the Val di Chiana, we passed through a peasantry more civil and industrious than their Aretine neighbors. One poor girl, unlike the last whom we accosted, was driving a laden ass, bearing a billet of wood on her head, spinning with the *rocca*, and singing as she went on. Others were returning with their sickles from the fields which they had reaped in the Maremma, to their own harvest on the hills. That contrast which struck me in the manners of two cantons so near as Cortona to Arezzo, can only be a vestige of their ancient rivalry while separate republics. Men naturally dislike the very virtues of their enemies, and affect qualities as remote from theirs as they can well defend.”

◀

788. The Florentines. ▲

789. The Pisans. ▲

790. At the close of these vituperations, perhaps to soften the sarcasm by making it more general, Benvenuto appends this note:—

“What Dante says of the inhabitants of the Val d’ Arno might be said of the greater part of the Italians, nay, of the world. Dante, being once asked why he had put more

Christians than Gentiles into Hell, replied, ‘Because I have known the Christians better.’”



791. Messer Fulcieri da Calboli of Forli, nephew of Rinieri. He was Podestà of Florence in 1302, and, being bribed by the Neri, had many of the Bianchi put to death. [←](#)
792. Florence, the habitation of these wolves, left so stripped by Fulcieri, on his retiring from office, that it will be long in recovering its former prosperity. [←](#)
793. Guido del Duca of Brettinoro, near Forli, in Romagna; nothing remains but the name. He and his companion Rinieri were “gentlemen of worth, if they had not been burned up with envy.” [←](#)
794. On worldly goods, where selfishness excludes others; in contrast with the spiritual, which increase by being shared. See [Canto XV 45.](#) [←](#)
795. Rinieri da Calboli. “He was very famous,” says the *Ottimo*, and history says no more. In the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. 44, Roscoe’s Tr., he figures thus:—

“A certain knight was one day entreating a lady whom he loved to smile upon his wishes, and among other delicate arguments which he pressed upon her was that of his own superior wealth, elegance, and accomplishments, especially when compared with the merits of her own liege-lord, ‘whose extreme ugliness, madam,’ he continued, ‘I think I need not insist upon.’ Her husband, who overheard this compliment from the place of his concealment, immediately replied, ‘Pray, sir, mend your own manners, and do not vilify other people.’ The name of the plain gentleman was Lizio di Valbona, and Messer Rinieri da Calvoli that of the other.”



796. In Romagna, which is bounded by the Po, the Apennines, the Adriatic, and the river Reno, that passes near Bologna. [←](#)

797. For study and pleasure. [←](#)

798. Of Lizio and Manardi the *Ottimo* says:—

“Messer Lizio di Valbona, a courteous gentleman, in order to give a dinner at Forli, sold half his silken bedquilt for sixty florins. Arrigo Manardi was of Brettinoro; he was a gentleman full of courtesy and honor, was fond of entertaining guests, made presents of robes and horses, loved honorable men, and all his life was devoted to largess and good living.”

The marriage of Riccardo Manardi with Lizio’s daughter Caterina is the subject of one of the tales of the *Decameron*, V 4. Pietro Dante says, that, when Lizio was told of the death of his dissipated son, he replied, “It is no news to me, he never was alive.” [←](#)

799. Of Pier Traversaro the *Ottimo* says: “He was of Ravenna, a man of most gentle blood”; and of Guido di Carpigna: “He was of Montefeltro.... Most of the time he lived at Brettinoro, and surpassed all others in generosity, loved for the sake of loving, and lived handsomely.” [←](#)

800. “This Messer Fabbro,” says the *Ottimo*, “was born of low parents, and lived so generously that the author (Dante) says there never was his like in Bologna.” [←](#)

801. The *Ottimo* again:—

“This Messer Bernardino, son of Fosco, a farmer, and of humble occupation, became so excellent by his good works, that he was an honor to Faenza; and he was named with praise, and the old grandees were not ashamed to visit him, to see his magnificence, and to hear his pleasant jests.”

✉

802. Guido da Prata, from the village of that name, between Faenza and Forli, and Ugolin d' Azzo of Faenza, according to the same authority, though “of humble birth, rose to such great honor, that, leaving their native places, they associated with the noblemen before mentioned.”

✉

803. Frederick Tignoso was a gentleman of Rimini, living in Brettinoro. “A man of great mark,” says Buti, “with his band of friends.” According to Benvenuto, “he had beautiful blond hair, and was called *tignoso* (the scurvy fellow) by way of antiphrase.” The *Ottimo* speaks of him as follows: “He avoided the city as much as possible, as a place hostile to gentlemen, but when he was in it, he kept open house.”

✉

804. Ancient and honorable families of Ravenna. There is a story of them in the *Decameron*, Gior. V Nov. 8, which is too long to quote. Upon this tale is founded Dryden’s poem of “Theodore and Honoria.”

✉

805. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, I 1:—

“The dames, the cavaliers, the arms, the loves,
The courtesies, the daring deeds I sing.”

✉

806. Brettinoro, now Bertinoro, is a small town in Romagna, between Forli and Cesena, in which lived many of the families that have just been mentioned. The hills about it are still celebrated for their wines, as its inhabitants were in old times for their hospitality. The following anecdote is told of them by the *Ottimo*, and also in nearly the same words in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. 88:—

“Among other laudable customs of the nobles of Brettinoro was that of hospitality, and their not permitting any man in the town to keep an inn for money. But there was a stone column in the middle of the town,” (upon which were rings or knockers. Ho if all the front-doors

were there represented,) “and to this, as soon as a stranger made his appearance, he was conducted, and to one of the rings hitched his horse or hung his hat upon it; and thus, as chance decreed, he was taken to the house of the gentleman to whom the ring belonged, and honored according to his rank. This column and its rings were invented to remove all cause of quarrel among the noblemen, who used to run to get possession of a stranger, as nowadays they almost run away from him.”



807. Towns in Romagna. “Bagnacavallo, and Castrocaro, and Conio,” says the *Ottimo*, “were all habitations of courtesy and honor. Now in Bagnacavallo the Counts are extinct; and he (Dante) says it does well to produce no more of them because they had degenerated like those of Conio and Castrocaro. [✉](#)
808. The Pagani were Lords of Faenza and Imola. The head of the family, Mainardo, was surnamed “the Devil.”—See [note 403](#). His bad repute will always be a reproach to the family. [✉](#)
809. A nobleman of Faenza, who died without heirs, and thus his name was safe. [✉](#)
810. Milton, *Comus*:—

“Of calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men’s names.”

These voices in the air proclaim examples of envy. [✉](#)

811. Genesis 4:13, 14:—
- “And Cain said unto the Lord, . . . Every one that findeth me shall slay me.”



812. Aglauros through envy opposed the interview of Mercury with her sister Herse, and was changed by the god into stone. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, Addison's Tr.:—

“‘Then keep thy seat forever,’ cries the god,
And touched the door, wide opening to his rod.
Fain would she rise and stop him, but she found
Her trunk too heavy to forsake the ground;
Her joints are all benumbed, her hands are pale,
And marble now appears in every nail.
As when a cancer in the body feeds,
And gradual death from limb to limb proceeds,
So does the chillness to each vital part
Spread by degrees, and creeps into her heart;
Till hardening everywhere, and speechless grown,
She sits unmoved, and freezes to a stone.
But still her envious hue and sullen mien
Are in the sedentary figure seen.”

↲

813. The falconer's call or lure, which he whirls round in the air to attract the falcon on the wing. ↲

814. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, Dryden's Tr.:—

“Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies.”

↲

815. Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Laws of Candy*, IV 1:—

“Seldom despairing men look up to heaven,
Although it still speak to 'em in its glories;
For when sad thoughts perplex the mind of man,

There is a plummet in the heart that weighs
And pulls us, living, to the dust we came from.”

↖

816. In this canto is described the ascent to the Third Circle of the mountain. The hour indicated by the peculiarly Dantesque introduction is three hours before sunset, or the beginning of that division of the canonical day called Vespers. Dante states this simple fact with curious circumlocution, as if he would imitate the celestial sphere in this *scherzoso* movement. The beginning of the day is sunrise; consequently the end of the third hour, three hours after sunrise, is represented by an arc of the celestial sphere measuring forty-five degrees. The sun had still an equal space to pass over before his setting. This would make it afternoon in Purgatory, and midnight in Tuscany, where Dante was writing the poem. ↲

817. From a perpendicular. ↲

818. Matthew 5:7:—

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”;—sung by the spirits that remained behind. See [note 758](#). ↲

819. Perhaps an allusion to “what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” Revelation 2:7:—

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

And also the “hidden manna,” and the “morning star,” and the “white raiment,” and the name not blotted “out of the book of life.” ↲

820. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 71:—

“Since good the more
Communicated, more abundant grows.”

←

821. *Convito*, IV 20:—

“According to the Apostle, ‘Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and Cometh down from the Father of lights.’ He says then that God only giveth this grace to the soul of him whom he sees to be prepared and disposed in his person to receive this divine act... Whence if the soul is imperfectly placed, it is not disposed to receive this blessed and divine infusion; as when a pearl is badly disposed, or is imperfect, it cannot receive the celestial virtue, as the noble Guido Guinizzelli says in an ode of his, beginning,

‘To noble heart love doth for shelter fly.’

The soul, then, may be ill placed in the person through defect of temperament, or of time; and in such a soul this divine radiance never shines. And of those whose souls are deprived of this light it may be said that they are like valleys turned toward the north, or like subterranean caverns, where the light of the sun never falls, unless reflected from some other place illuminated by it.”

The following are the first two stanzas of Guido’s “Ode”:—

“To noble heart love doth for shelter fly,
As seeks the bird the forest’s leafy shade;
Love was not felt till noble heart beat high,
Nor before love the noble heart was made;
Soon as the sun’s broad flame
Was formed, so soon the clear light filled the air,
Yet was not till he came;
So love springs up in noble breasts, and there
Has its appointed space,
As heat in the bright flame finds its allotted place.

“Kindles in noble heart the fire of love,
As hidden virtue in the precious stone;
This virtue comes not from the stars above,
Till round it the ennobling sun has shone;
But when his powerful blaze
Has drawn forth what was vile, the stars impart
Strange virtue in their rays;
And thus when nature doth create the heart
Noble, and pure, and high,
Like virtue from the star, love comes from woman’s eye.”



822. *Paradiso XIV* 40:—

“Its brightness is proportioned to the ardor,
The ardor to the vision, and the vision
Equals what grace it has above its merit.”



823. *Luke 2:48*:—

“And his mother said unto him. Son, why hast thou thus
dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee
sorrowing.”



824. The contest between Neptune and Minerva for the right of naming
Athens, in which Minerva carried the day by the vote of the women.
This is one of the subjects which Minerva wrought in her trial of skill
with Arachne. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI:—

“Pallas in figures wrought the heavenly powers,
And Mars’s hill among the Athenian towers.
On lofty thrones twice six celestials sate,
Jove in the midst, and held their warm debate;

The subject weighty, and well known to fame,
From whom the city should receive its name.
Each god by proper features was expressed,
Jove with majestic mien excelled the rest.
His three-forked mace the dewy sea-god shook,
And, looking sternly, smote the ragged rock;
When from the stone leapt forth a sprightly steed,
And Neptune claims the city for the deed.
Herself she blazons, with a glittering spear,
And crested helm that veiled her braided hair,
With shield, and scaly breastplate, implements of war.
Struck with her pointed lance, the teeming earth
Seemed to produce a new, surprising birth;
When from the glebe the pledge of conquest sprung,
A tree pale-green with fairest olives hung.”



825. Pisistratus, the tyrant of Athens, who used his power so nobly as to make the people forget the usurpation by which he had attained it. Among his good deeds was the collection and preservation of the Homeric poems, which but for him might have perished. He was also the first to found a public library in Athens. This anecdote is told by Valerius Maximus, *Fact. ac Dict.*, VI I.

826. The stoning of Stephen. Acts 7:54:—

“They gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven.... Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.... And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”



827. He recognizes it to be a vision, but not false, because it symbolized the truth. [←](#)

828. The Third Circle of Purgatory, and the punishment of the Sin of Pride.
[←](#)

829. Poor, or impoverished of its stars by clouds. The same expression is applied to the Arno, Canto XIV 45, to indicate its want of water. [←](#)

830. In the Litany of the Saints:—

“Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord.

“Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
graciously hear us, O Lord.

“Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us!”

[←](#)

831. Still living the life temporal, where time is measured by the calendar.
[←](#)

832. Marco Lombardo was a Venetian nobleman, a man of wit and learning and a friend of Dante. “Nearly all that he gained,” says the *Ottimo*, “he spent in charity.... He visited Paris, and, as long as his money lasted, he was esteemed for his valor and courtesy. Afterwards he depended upon those richer than himself, and lived and died honorably.” There are some anecdotes of him in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. 41, 52, hardly worth quoting.

It is doubtful whether the name of Lombardo is a family name, or only indicates that Marco was an Italian, after the fashion then prevalent among the French of calling all Italians Lombards. See [note 848](#).

Benvenuto says of him that he “was a man of noble mind, but disdainful, and easily moved to anger.”

Buti’s portrait is as follows:—

“This Marco was a Venetian, called Marco Daca; and was a very learned man, and had many political virtues, and was very courteous, giving to poor noblemen all that he gained, and he gained much; for he was a courtier, and was much beloved for his virtue, and much was given him by the nobility; and as he gave to those who were in need, so he lent to all who asked. So that, coming to die, and having much still due to him, he made a will, and among other bequests this, that whoever owed him should not be held to pay the debt, saying, ‘Whoever has, may keep.’”

Portarelli thinks that this Marco may be Marco Polo the traveller; but this is inadmissible, as he was still living at the time of Dante’s death. [←](#)

833. What Guido del Duca has told him of the corruption of Italy, in Canto XIV. [←](#)

834. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X, Ozell’s Tr.:—

“The god upon its leaves
The sad expression of his sorrow weaves,
And to this hour the mournful purple wears
Ai, ai, inscribed in funeral characters.”

[←](#)

835. See the article “Cabala,” at the end of Vol. III. [←](#)

836. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, V Prosa 2, Ridpath’s Tr.:—

“‘But in this indissoluble chain of causes, can we preserve the liberty of the will? Does this fatal Necessity restrain the motions of the human soul?’—‘There is no reasonable being,’ replied she, ‘who has not freedom of will: for every being distinguished with this faculty is endowed with judgment to perceive the differences of things; to discover what he is to avoid or pursue. Now what a person

esteems desirable, he desires; but what he thinks ought to be avoided, he shuns. Thus every rational creature hath a liberty of choosing and rejecting. But I do riot assert that this liberty is equal in all beings. Heavenly substances, who are exalted above us, have an enlightened judgment, an incorruptible will, and a power ever at command effectually to accomplish their desires. With regard to man, his immaterial spirit is also free; but it is most at liberty when employed in the contemplation of the Divine mind; it becomes less so when it enters into a body; and is still more restrained when it is imprisoned in a terrestrial habitation, composed of members of clay; and is reduced, in fine, to the most extreme servitude when, by plunging into the pollutions of vice, it totally departs from reason: for the soul no sooner turns her eye from the radiance of supreme truth to dark and base objects, but she is involved in a mist of ignorance, assailed by impure desires; by yielding to which she increases her thraldom, and thus the freedom which she derives from nature becomes in some measure the cause of her slavery. But the eye of Providence, which sees everything from eternity, perceives all this; and that same Providence disposes everything she has predestinated, in the order it deserves. As Homer says of the sun. It sees everything and hears everything.”

Also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II 557:—

“Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

See also [note 1675.](#) ↪

837. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, V Prosa 3, Ridpath's Tr.:—

“But I shall now endeavor to demonstrate, that, in whatever way the chain of causes is disposed, the event of things which are foreseen is necessary; although prescience may not appear to be the necessitating cause of their befalling. For example, if a person sits, the opinion formed of him that he is seated is of necessity true; but by inverting the phrase, if the opinion is true that he is seated, he must necessarily sit. In both cases, then, there is a necessity; in the latter, that the person sits; in the former, that the opinion concerning him is true: but the person doth not sit, because the opinion of his sitting is true, but the opinion is rather true because the action of his being seated was antecedent in time. Thus, though the truth of the opinion may be the effect of the person taking a seat, there is, nevertheless, a necessity common to both. The same method of reasoning, I think, should be employed with regard to the prescience of God, and future contingencies; for, allowing it to be true that events are foreseen because they are to happen, and that they do not befall because they are foreseen, it is still necessary that what is to happen must be foreseen by God, and that what is foreseen must take place. This then is of itself sufficient to destroy all idea of human liberty.”



838. Ptolemy says, “The wise man shall control the stars”; and the Turkish proverb, “Wit and a strong will are superior to Fate.”
839. Though free, you are subject to the divine power which has immediately breathed into you the soul, and the soul is not subject to the influence of the stars, as the body is.
840. Shakespeare, *Lear*, V 3:—

“And take upon’s the mystery of things,
As if we were God’s spies.”

↑

841. *Convito*, IV 12:—

“The supreme desire of everything, and that first given by nature, is to return to its source; and since God is the source of our souls, and maker of them in his own likeness, as is written, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,’ to him this soul chiefly desireth to return. And like as a pilgrim, who goeth upon a road on which he never was before, thinketh every house he seeth afar off to be an inn, and, not finding it so, directeth his trust to the next, and thus from house to house until he reacheth the inn; in like manner our soul, presently as she entereth the new and untravelled road of this life, turneth her eyes to the goal of her supreme good; and therefore whatever thing she seeth that seemeth to have some good in it, she believeth to be that. And because her knowledge at first is imperfect, not being experienced nor trained, small goods seem great, and therefore with them beginneth her desire. Hence we see children desire exceedingly an apple; and then, going farther, desire a little bird; and farther still, a beautiful dress; and then a horse; and then a woman; and then wealth not very great, and then greater, and then greater still. And this cometh to pass, because she findeth not in any of these things that which she is seeking, and trusteth to find it farther on.”

↑

842. Henry Vaughan, *Sacred Poems*:—

“They are indeed our pillar-fires,
Seen as we go;
They are that city’s shining spires
We travel to.”

↑

843. Leviticus 11:4:—

“The camel because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof: he is unclean to you.”

Dante applies these words to the Pope as temporal sovereign. [✉](#)

844. Worldly goods. As in the old French satirical verses:—

*“Au temps passé du siècle d’or,
Crosse de bois, évêque d’or;
Maintenant changent les lois,
Crosse d’or, évêque de bois.”*

[✉](#)

845. The Emperor and the Pope; the temporal and spiritual power. [✉](#)

846. Lombardy and Romagna. [✉](#)

847. The dissension and war between the Emperor Frederick the Second and Pope Gregory the Ninth. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book X Ch. 3, says:—

“The Empire and the Papacy were now to meet in their last mortal and implacable strife; the two first acts of this tremendous drama, separated by an interval of many years, were to be developed during the pontificate of a prelate who ascended the throne of St. Peter at the age of eighty. Nor was this strife for any specific point in dispute, like the right of investiture, but avowedly for supremacy on one side, which hardly deigned to call itself independence; for independence, on the other, which remotely at least aspired after supremacy. Caesar would bear no superior, the successor of St. Peter no equal. The contest could not have begun under men more strongly contrasted, or more determinedly oppugnant in character, than Gregory the Ninth and Frederick the Second.

Gregory retained the ambition, the vigor, almost the activity of youth, with the stubborn obstinacy, and something of the irritable petulance, of old age. He was still master of all his powerful faculties; his knowledge of affairs, of mankind, of the peculiar interests of almost all the nations in Christendom, acquired by long employment in the most important negotiations both by Innocent the Third and by Honorius the Third; eloquence which his own age compared to that of Tully; profound erudition in that learning which, in the medieval churchman, commanded the highest admiration. No one was his superior in the science of the canon law; the Decretals, to which he afterwards gave a more full and authoritative form, were at his command, and they were to him as much the law of God as the Gospels themselves, or the primary principles of morality. The jealous reverence and attachment of a great lawyer to his science strengthened the lofty pretensions of the churchman.

“Frederick the Second, with many of the noblest qualities which could captivate the admiration of his own age, in some respects might appear misplaced, and by many centuries prematurely born. Frederick having crowded into his youth adventures, perils, successes, almost unparalleled in history, was now only expanding into the prime of manhood. A parentless orphan, he had struggled upward into the actual reigning monarch of his hereditary Sicily; he was even then rising above the yoke of the turbulent magnates of his realm, and the depressing tutelage of the Papal See; he had crossed the Alps a boyish adventurer, and won so much through his own valor and daring that he might well ascribe to himself his conquest, the kingdom of Germany, the imperial crown; he was in undisputed possession of the Empire, with all its rights in Northern Italy; King of Apulia, Sicily, and Jerusalem. He was beginning to be at once the Magnificent Sovereign, the knight, the poet, the lawgiver, the patron of arts, letters, and science; the Magnificent Sovereign, now

holding his court in one of the old barbaric and feudal cities of Germany among the proud and turbulent princes of the Empire, more often on the sunny shores of Naples or Palermo, in southern and almost Oriental luxury; the gallant Knight and troubadour Poet, not forbidding himself those amorous indulgences which were the reward of chivalrous valor and of the ‘gay science’; the Lawgiver, whose farseeing wisdom seemed to anticipate some of those views of equal justice, of the advantages of commerce, of the cultivation of the arts of peace, beyond all the toleration of adverse religions, which even in a more dutiful son of the Church would doubtless have seemed godless indifference. Frederick must appear before us in the course of our history in the full development of all these shades of character; but besides all this, Frederick’s views of the temporal sovereignty were as imperious and autocratic as those of the haughtiest churchman of the spiritual supremacy. The ban of the Empire ought to be at least equally awful with that of the Church; disloyalty to the Emperor was as heinous a sin as infidelity to the head of Christendom; the independence of the Lombard republics was as a great and punishable political heresy. Even in Rome itself, as head of the Roman Empire, Frederick aspired to a supremacy which was not less unlimited because vague and undefined, and irreconcilable with that of the Supreme Pontiff. If ever Emperor might be tempted by the vision of a vast hereditary monarchy to be perpetuated in his house, the princely house of Hohenstaufen, it was Frederick. He had heirs of his greatness; his eldest son was King of the Romans; from his loins might yet spring an inexhaustible race of princes; the failure of his imperial line was his last fear. The character of the man seemed formed to achieve and to maintain this vast design; he was at once terrible and popular, courteous, generous, placable to his foes; yet there was a depth of cruelty in the heart of Frederick towards revolted subjects, which made him look on the

atrocities of his allies, Eccelin di Romano, and the Salinguerras, but as legitimate means to quell insolent and stubborn rebellion....

“It is impossible to conceive a contrast more strong or more irreconcilable than the octogenarian Gregory, in his cloister palace, in his conclave of stern ascetics, with all but severe imprisonment within conventional walls, completely monastic in manners, habits, views, in corporate spirit, in celibacy, in rigid seclusion from the rest of mankind, in the conscientious determination to enslave, if possible, all Christendom to its inviolable unity of faith, and to the least possible latitude of discipline; and the gay and yet youthful Frederick, with his mingled assemblage of knights and ladies, of Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans, of poets and men of science, met, as it were, to enjoy and minister to enjoyment—to cultivate the pure intellect—where, if not the restraints of religion, at least the awful authority of churchmen was examined with freedom, sometimes ridiculed with sportive wit.”

See also [note 145.](#) ↪

848. Currado (Conrad) da Palazzo of Brescia; Gherardo da Camino of Treviso; and Guido da Castello of Reggio. Of these three the *Ottimo* thus speaks:—

“Messer Currado was laden with honor during his life, delighted in a fine retinue, and in political life in the government of cities, in which he acquired much praise and fame.

“Messer Guido was assiduous in honoring men of worth, who passed on their way to France, and furnished many with horses and arms, who came hitherward from France. To all who had honorably consumed their property, and returned more poorly furnished than became them, he gave, without hope of return, horses, arms, and money.

“Messer Gherardo da Camino delighted not in one, but in all noble things, keeping constantly at home.”

He farther says, that his fame was so great in France that he was there spoken of as the “simple Lombard,” just as, “when one says the City, and no more, one means Rome.” Benvenuto da Imola says that all Italians were called Lombards by the French. In the *Histoire et Cronique du petit Jehan de Saintré*, fol. 219, ch. IV, the author remarks:—

“The fifteenth day after Saintré’s return, there came to Paris two young, noble, and brave Italians, whom we call Lombards.”



849. Deuteronomy 18:2:—

“Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.”



850. “This Gherardo,” says Buti, “had a daughter, called, on account of her beauty, Gaja; and so modest and virtuous was she, that through all Italy was spread the fame of her beauty and modesty.”

The *Ottimo*, who preceded Buti in point of time, gives a somewhat different and more equivocal account. He says:—

“Madonna Gaia was the daughter of Messer Gherardo da Camino: she was a lady of such conduct in amorous delectations, that her name was notorious throughout all Italy; and therefore she is thus spoken of here.”



851. The trance and vision of Dante, and the ascent to the Fourth Circle,
where the sin of Sloth is punished. [←](#)

852. *Iliad*, III 10:—

“As the south wind spreads a mist upon the brow of a mountain, by no means agreeable to the shepherd, but to the robber better than night, in which a man sees only as far as he can cast a stone.”

[←](#)

853. In this vision are represented some of the direful effects of anger, beginning with the murder of Itys by his mother, Procne, and her sister, Philomela. Ovid, VI:—

“Now, at her lap arrived, the flattering boy
Salutes his parent with a smiling joy;
About her neck his little arms are thrown,
And he accosts her in a prattling tone.

⋮

When Procne, on revengeful mischief bent,
Home to his heart a piercing poniard sent.
Itys, with rueful cries, but all too late,
Holds out his hands, and deprecates his fate;
Still at his mother’s neck he fondly aims,
And strives to melt her with endearing names;
Yet still the cruel mother perseveres,
Nor with concern his bitter anguish hears.
This might suffice; but Philomela too
Across his throat a shining cutlass drew.”

Or perhaps the reference is to the Homeric legend of Philomela, *Odyssey*, XIX 518:—

“As when the daughter of Pandarus, the swarthy nightingale, sings beautifully when the spring newly

begins, sitting in the thick branches of trees, and she, frequently changing, pours forth her much-sounding voice, lamenting her dear Itylus, whom once she slew with the brass through ignorance.”



854. Esther 7:9, 10:—

“And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king. Behold also, the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said. Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king’s wrath pacified.”



855. Lavinia, daughter of King Latinus and Queen Amata, betrothed to Turnus. Amata, thinking Turnus dead, hanged herself in anger and despair. *Aeneid*, XII 875, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“Mad with her anguish, impotent to bear
The mighty grief, she loathes the vital air.
She calls herself the cause of all this ill,
And owns the dire effects of her ungoverned will;
She raves against the gods, she beats her breast,
She tears with both her hands her purple vest;
Then round a beam a running noose she tied,
And, fastened by the neck, obscenely died

“Soon as the fatal news by fame was blown,
And to her dames and to her daughters known,
The sad Lavinia rends her yellow hair
And rosy cheeks; the rest her sorrow share;
With shrieks the palace rings, and madness of despair.”

↳

856. See *Paradiso* V 134:—

“Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself
By too much light.”

And Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 380:—

“Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear.”

↳

857. Matthew 5:9:—

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”

↳

858. Sloth. See [note 111](#). And Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, XXI 145:—

“*In ira nasce e posa
Accidia niquitosa.*”

↳

859. The first, the object; the second, too much or too little vigor. ↳

860. The sins of Pride, Envy, and Anger. The other is Sloth, or lukewarmness in well-doing, punished in this circle. ↳

861. The sins of Avarice, Gluttony, and Lust. ↳

862. The punishment of the sin of Sloth. ↳

863. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 100:—

“But know that in the soul

Are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, airy shapes,
Which Reason joining or disjoining frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell, when Nature rests.”

✉

864. Bound or taken captive by the image of pleasure presented to it. See
[Canto XVII 91.](#) ✉

865. The region of Fire. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, Ch. CVIII:—

“After the zone of the air is placed the fourth element.
This is an orb of fire without any moisture, which extends
as far as the moon, and surrounds this atmosphere in
which we are. And know that above the fire is first the
moon, and the other stars, which are all of the nature of
fire.”

✉

866. If the soul follows the *appetitus naturalis*, or goes not with another
foot than that of nature. ✉

867. In the language of the Scholastics, Form was the passing from the potential to the actual. “Whatever is Act,” says Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Quaest. LXVI Art. 1, “whatever is Act is Form; *quod est actus est forma.*” And again Form was divided into Substantial Form, which caused a thing to be; and Accidental Form, which caused it to be in a certain way, “as heat makes its subject not simply to be, but to be hot.”

“The soul,” says the same Angelic Doctor, Quaest. LXXVI Art. 4, “is the substantial form of man; *anima est forma substantialis*

hominis." It is segregate or distinct from matter, though united with it.

↖

868. "This" refers to the power that counsels, or the faculty of Reason. ↲

869. Accepts, or rejects like chaff. ↲

870. Dante makes Beatrice say, *Paradiso* V 19:—

"The greatest gift that in his largess God
Creating made, and unto his own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize
Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence
Both all and only were and are endowed."

↖

871. Near midnight of the Second Day of Purgatory. ↲

872. The moon was rising in the sign of the Scorpion, it being now five days after the full; and when the sun is in this sign, it is seen by the inhabitants of Rome to set between the islands of Corsica and Sardinia.

↖

873. Virgil, born at Pietola, near Mantua. ↲

874. The burden of Dante's doubts and questions, laid upon Virgil. ↲

875. Rivers of Boeotia, on whose banks the Thcban crowded at night to invoke the aid of Bacchus to give them rain for their vineyards. ↲

876. The word *falcare*, in French *faucher*, here translated "curve," is a term of equitation, describing the motion of the outer foreleg of a horse in going round in a circle. It is the sweep of a mower's scythe. ↲

877. Luke 1:39:—

“And Mary arose in those days and went into the hillcountry with haste.”



878. Caesar on his way to subdue Ilerda, now Lerida, in Spain, besieged Marseilles, leaving there part of his army under Brutus to complete the work. [←](#)
879. Nothing is known of this Abbot, not even his name. Finding him here, the commentators make bold to say that he was “slothful and deficient in good deeds.” This is like some of the definitions in the *Crusca*, which, instead of the interpretation of a Dantesque word, give you back the passage in which it occurs. [←](#)
880. This is the famous Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who, according to the German popular tradition, is still sitting in a cave in the Kipphaüser mountains, waiting for something to happen, while his beard has grown through the stone-table before him. In 1162 he burned and devastated Milan, Brescia, Piacenza, and Cremona. He was drowned in the Salef in Armenia, on his crusade in 1190, endeavoring to ford the river on horseback in his impatience to cross. His character is thus drawn by Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book VIII Ch. 7, and sufficiently explains why Dante calls him “the good Barbarossa”:—

“Frederick was a prince of intrepid valor, consummate prudence, unmeasured ambition, justice which hardened into severity, the ferocity of a barbarian somewhat tempered with a high chivalrous gallantry; above all, with a strength of character which subjugated alike the great temporal and ecclesiastical princes of Germany; and was prepared to assert the Imperial rights in Italy to the utmost. Of the constitutional rights of the Emperor, of his unlimited supremacy, his absolute independence of, his temporal superiority over, all other powers, even that of the Pope, Frederick proclaimed the loftiest notions. He was to the Empire what Hildebrand and Innocent were to the Papedom. His power was of God alone; to assert that

it was bestowed by the successor of St. Peter was a lie, and directly contrary to the doctrine of St. Peter.”

◀

881. Alberto della Scala, Lord of Verona. He made his natural son, whose qualifications for the office Dante here enumerates, and the commentators repeat. Abbot of the Monastery of San Zeno. ▵

882. See [note 111](#). ▵

883. Numbers 32:11, 12:—

“Surely none of the men that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun; for they have wholly followed the Lord.”

◀

884. The Trojans who remained with Acestes in Sicily, instead of following Aeneas to Italy. *Aeneid*, V:—

“They enroll the matrons for the city, and set on shore as many of the people as were willing—souls that had no desire of high renown.”

◀

885. The end of the Second Day. ▵

886. The ascent to the Fifth Circle, where Avarice is punished. It is the dawn of the Third Day. ▵

887. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, Ch. CXI:—

“Saturn, who is sovereign over all, is cruel and malign and of a cold nature.”



888. Geomancy is divination by points in the ground, or pebbles arranged in certain figures, which have peculiar names. Among these is the figure called the *Fortuna Major*, which is thus drawn:—

and which by an effort of imagination can also be formed out of some of the last stars of Aquarius, and some of the first of Pisces.

Chaucer, *Troil. and Cres.*, III 1415:—

“But whan the cocke, commune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messanger,
Gan for to rise and out his hemes throwe,
And estward rose, to him that could it knowe,
Fortuna Major.”



889. Because the sun is following close behind. ↲

890. This “stammering woman” of Dante’s dream is Sensual Pleasure, which the imagination of the beholder adorns with a thousand charms. The “lady saintly and alert” is Reason, the same that tied Ulysses to the mast, and stopped the ears of his sailors with wax that they might not hear the song of the Sirens.

Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, I:—

“Of such nature
They ben, that with so swete a steven
Like to the melodic of heven
In womannishe vois they singe
With notes of so great likinge,
Of suche mesure, of suche musike,
Wheroft the shippes they beswike
That passen by the costes there.
For whan the shipmen lay an ere
Unto the vois, in here airs
They wene it be a paradis,
Which after is to hem an helle.”



891. "That is," says Buti, "they shall have the gift of comforting their souls."

Matthew 5:4:—

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

↲

892. The three remaining sins to be purged away are Avarice, Gluttony, and Lust. ↲

893. See [Canto XIV 148.](#) ↲

894. Psalms 119:25:—

"My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word."

↲

895. Know that I am the successor of Peter. It is Pope Adrian the Fifth who speaks. He was of the family of the Counts of Lavagna, the family taking its title from the river Lavagna, flowing between Siestri and Chiaveri, towns on the Riviera di Genova. He was Pope only thirty-nine days, and died in 1276. When his kindred came to congratulate him on his election, he said, "Would that ye came to a Cardinal in good health, and not to a dying Pope." ↲

896. Revelation 19:10:—

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me. See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant."

↲

897. Matthew 22:30:—

“For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven.”

He reminds Dante that here all earthly distinctions and relations are laid aside. He is no longer “the Spouse of the Church.” [←](#)

898. Penitence; line 92:—

“In whom weeping ripens
That without which to God we cannot turn.”

[←](#)

899. Madonna Alagia was the wife of Marcello Malespini, that friend of Dante with whom, during his wanderings he took refuge in the Lunigiana, in 1307. [←](#)

900. In this canto the subject of the preceding is continued, namely, the punishment of Avarice and Prodigality. [←](#)

901. To please the speaker. Pope Adrian the Fifth, (who, Canto XIX 139, says,

“Now go, no longer will I have thee linger,”)

Dante departs without further question, though not yet satisfied. [←](#)

902. See the article “Cabala” at the end of Vol. III. [←](#)

903. This is generally supposed to refer to Can Grande della Scala. See [note 22.](#) [←](#)

904. The inn at Bethlehem. [←](#)

905. The Roman Consul who rejected with disdain the bribes of Pyrrhus, and died so poor that he was buried at the public expense, and the Romans were obliged to give a dowry to his daughters. Virgil, *Aeneid*,

VI 844, calls him “powerful in poverty.” Dante also extols him in the *Convito*, IV 5. ↵

906. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, V 13:—

“Betwene the two extremites
Of vice stont the propertes
Of vertue, and to prove it so
Take avarice and take also
The vice of proegalite,
Betwene hem liberalite,
Which is the vertue of largesse
Stant and governeth his noblesse.”

↵

907. This is St. Nicholas, patron saint of children, sailors, and travellers. The incident here alluded to is found in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, the great storehouse of medieval wonders. It may be found also in Mrs. Jameson’s *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II 62, and in her version runs thus:—

“Now in that city there dwelt a certain nobleman who had three daughters, and, from being rich, he became poor; so poor that there remained no means of obtaining food for his daughters but by sacrificing them to an infamous life; and oftentimes it came into his mind to tell them so, but shame and sorrow held him dumb. Meantime the maidens wept continually, not knowing what to do, and not having bread to eat; and their father became more and more desperate. When Nicholas heard of this, he thought it a shame that such a thing should happen in a Christian land; therefore one night, when the maidens were asleep, and their father alone sat watching and weeping, he took a handful of gold, and, tying it up in a handkerchief, he repaired to the dwelling of the poor man. He considered how he might bestow it without making himself known, and, while he stood irresolute, the moon coming from

behind a cloud showed him a window open; so he threw it in, and it fell at the feet of the father, who, when he found it, returned thanks, and with it he portioned his eldest daughter. A second time Nicholas provided a similar sum, and again he threw it in by night; and with it the nobleman married his second daughter. But he greatly desired to know who it was that came to his aid; therefore he determined to watch, and when the good saint came for the third time, and prepared to throw in the third portion, he was discovered, for the nobleman seized him by the skirt of his robe, and flung himself at his feet, saying, O Nicholas! servant of God! why seek to hide thyself?' and he kissed his feet and his hands. But Nicholas made him promise that he would tell no man. And many other charitable works did Nicholas perform in his native city."



908. If we knew from what old chronicle, or from what Professor of the Rue du Fouarre, Dante derived his knowledge of French history, we might possibly make plain the rather difficult passage which begins with this line. The spirit that speaks is not that of the King Hugh Capet, but that of his father, Hugh Capet, Duke of France and Count of Paris. He was son of Robert the Strong. Pasquier, *Rech. de la France*, VI i, describes him as both valiant and prudent, and says that, "although he was never king, yet was he a maker and unmaker of kings," and then goes on to draw an elaborate parallel between him and Charles Martel.

The "malignant plant" is Philip the Fair, whose character is thus drawn by Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XI Ch. 8:—

"In Philip the Fair the gallantry of the French temperament broke out on rare occasions; his first Flemish campaigns were conducted with bravery and skill, but Philip ever preferred the subtle negotiation, the slow and wily encroachment; till his enemies were, if not in his power, at least at great disadvantage, he did not venture on the usurpation or invasion. In the slow systematic pursuit

of his object he was utterly without scruple, without remorse. He was not so much cruel as altogether obtuse to human suffering, if necessary to the prosecution of his schemes; not so much rapacious as, finding money indispensable to his aggrandizement, seeking money by means of which he hardly seemed to discern the injustice or the folly. Never was man or monarch so intensely selfish as Philip the Fair: his own power was his ultimate scope; he extended so enormously the royal prerogative, the influence of France, because he was King of France. His rapacity, which persecuted the Templars, his vindictiveness, which warred on Boniface after death as through life, was this selfishness in other forms.”

He was defeated at the battle of Courtrai, 1302, known in history as the battle of the Spurs of Gold, from the great number found on the field after the battle. This is the vengeance imprecated upon him by Dante. [←](#)

909. For two centuries and a half, that is, from 1060 to 1316, there was either a Louis or a Philip on the throne of France. The succession was as follows:—

Philip I the Amorous, 1060.
Louis VI the Fat, 1108.
Louis VII the Young, 1137.
Philip II Augustus, 1180.
Louis VIII the Lion, 1223.
Louis IX the Saint, 1226.
Philip III the Bold, 1270.
Philip IV the Fair, 1285.
Louis X, 1314.



910. It is doubtful whether this passage is to be taken literally or figuratively. Pasquier, *Rech. de la France*, Liv. VI Ch. I (thinking it is the King Hugh Capet that speaks), breaks forth in indignant protest as follows:—

“From this you can perceive the fatality there was in this family from its beginning to its end, to the disadvantage of the Carlovingians. And moreover, how ignorant the Italian poet Dante was, when in his book entitled Purgatory he says that our Hugh Capet was the son of a butcher. Which word, once written erroneously and carelessly by him, has so crept into the heads of some simpletons, that many who never investigated the antiquities of our France have fallen into this same heresy. François de Villon, more studious of taverns and alehouses than of good books, says in some part of his works,

*“Si feusse les hoirs de Capet
Qui fut extrait de boucherie.”*

And since then Agrippa Alamanni, in his book on the Vanity of Science, chapter “Of Nobility,” on this first ignorance declares impudently against the genealogy of our Capet. If Dante thought that Hugh the Great, Capet’s father, was a butcher, he was not a clever man. But if he used this expression figuratively, as I am willing to believe, those who cling to the shell of the word are greater blockheads still....

“This passage of Dante being read and explained by Luigi Alamanni, an Italian, before Francis the First of that name, he was indignant at the imposture, and commanded it to be stricken out. He was even excited to interdict the reading of the book in his kingdom. But for my part, in order to exculpate this author, I wish to say that under the name of Butcher he meant that Capet was son of a great and valiant warrior.... If Dante understood it thus, I forgive him; if otherwise, he was a very ignorant poet.”

Benvenuto says that the name of Capet comes from the fact that Hugh, in playing with his companions in boyhood, “was in the habit of pulling off their caps and running away with them.” Ducange repeats this story from an old chronicle, and gives also another and more probable origin of the name, as coming from the hood or cowl which Hugh was in the habit of wearing.

The belief that the family descended from a butcher was current in Italy in Dante’s time. Villani, IV 3, says:—

“Most people say that the father was a great and rich burgher of Paris, of a race of butchers or dealers in cattle.”



911. When the Carlovingian race were all dead but one. And who was he? The *Ottimo* says it was Rudolph, who became a monk and afterwards Archbishop of Rhcims. Benvenuto gives no name, but says only “a monk in poor, coarse garments.” Buti says the same. Daniello thinks it was some Friar of St. Francis, perhaps St. Louis, forgetting that these saints did not see the light till some two centuries after the time here spoken of. Others say Charles of Lorraine; and Biagioli decides that it must be either Charles the Simple, who died a prisoner in the castle of Peronne, in 922; or Louis of Outré-Mer, who was carried to England by Hugh the Great, in 936, The Man in Cloth of Gray remains as great a mystery as the Man in the Iron Mask. ↵
912. Hugh Capet was crowned at Rheims, in 987. The expression which follows shows clearly that it is Hugh the Great who speaks, and not Hugh the founder of the Capetian dynasty. ↵
913. Until the shame of the low origin of the family was removed by the marriage of Charles of Anjou, brother of Saint Louis, to the daughter of Raimond Berenger, who brought him Provence as her dower. ↵
914. Making amends for one crime by committing a greater. The particular transaction here alluded to is the seizing by fraud and holding by force these provinces in the time of Philip the Fair. ↵

915. Charles of Anjou. [←](#)

916. Curradino, or Conrardin, son of the Emperor Conrad IV, a beautiful youth of sixteen, who was beheaded in the square of Naples by order of Charles of Anjou, in 1268. Voltaire, in his rhymed chronology at the end of his *Annales de l'Empire*, says,

“*C'est en soixante-huit que la main d'un bourreau
Dans Conrardin son fils éteint un sang si beau.*”

Endeavoring to escape to Sicily after his defeat at Tagliacozzo, he was carried to Naples and imprisoned in the Castel deir Uovo.

“Christendom heard with horror,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XI Ch. 3, “that the royal brother of St. Louis, that the champion of the Church, after a mock trial, by the sentence of one judge, Robert di Lavena—after an unanswerable pleading by Guido de Suzaria, a famous jurist—had condemned the last heir of the Swabian house—a rival king who had fought gallantly for his hereditary throne—to be executed as a felon and a rebel on a public scaffold. So little did Conrardin dread his fate, that, when his doom was announced, he was playing at chess with Frederick of Austria. ‘Slave,’ said Conrardin to Robert of Bari, who read the fatal sentence, ‘do you dare to condemn as a criminal the son and heir of kings? Knows not your master that he is my equal, not my judge?’ He added, ‘I am a mortal, and must die; yet ask the kings of the earth if a prince be criminal for seeking to win back the heritage of his ancestors. But if there be no pardon for me, spare, at least, my faithful companions; or if they must die, strike me first, that I may not behold their death.’ They died devoutly, nobly. Every circumstance aggravated the abhorrence; it was said—perhaps it was the invention of that abhorrence—that Robert of Flanders, the brother of Charles, struck dead the judge who had presumed to read the iniquitous sentence. When Conrardin knelt, with uplifted hands, awaiting the blow of the executioner, he uttered these last words, ‘O my mother! how deep will be thy sorrow at the news of this day!’ Even the followers of Charles could hardly restrain their pity and indignation. With Conrardin died his young and valiant friend, Frederick of Austria, the two Lancias, two of the noble house of

Donaticcio of Pisa. The inexorable Charles would not permit them to be buried in consecrated ground.” [←](#)

917. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor of the Schools, died at the convent of Fossa Nuova in the Campagna, being on his way to the Council of Lyons, in 1274. He is supposed to have been poisoned by his physician, at the instigation of Charles of Anjou. [←](#)
918. Charles of Valois, who came into Italy by invitation of Boniface the Eighth, in 1301. See [*Inferno VI 69.*](#) [←](#)
919. There is in old French literature a poem entitled *Le Tournoyement de l'Antechrist*, written by Hugues de Mery, a monk of the Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, in the thirteenth century, in which he describes a battle between the Virtues under the banner of Christ, and the Vices under that of Antichrist.

In the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, there is a joust between Christ and the foul fiend:—

“Thanne was Feith in a fenestre,
And cryde a *fili David*,
As dooth an heraud of armes,
Whan aventrous cometh to justes.
Old Jewes of Jerusalem
For joye thei songen,
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

“Thanne I frayned at Feith,
What al that fare by-mente,
And who sholde juste in Jerusalem.
'Jhesus,' he seide,
'And fecche that the fend claymeth,
Piers fruyt the Plowman.'

:

““Who shal juste with Jhesus?” quod I,
'Jewes or scrybes?’

“‘Nay,’ quod he; ‘The foule fend,
And fals doom and deeth.’”

↖

920. By the aid of Charles of Valois the Neri party triumphed in Florence, and the Bianchi were banished, and with them Dante. ↲
921. There is an allusion here to the nickname of Charles of Valois, Senzaterra, or Lackland. ↲
922. Charles the Second, son of Charles of Anjou. He went from France to recover Sicily after the Sicilian Vespers. In an engagement with the Spanish fleet under Admiral Rugieri d' Oria, he was taken prisoner. Dante says he sold his daughter, because he married her for a large sum of money to Azzo the Sixth of Este. ↲
923. *Aeneid*, III 56. “Cursed thirst of gold, to what dost thou not drive the hearts of men.” ↲
924. The flower-de-luce is in the banner of France. Borel, *Trésor de Recherches*, cited by Roquefort, *Glossaire*, under the word *Leye*, says:—

“The oriflamme is so called from gold and flame; that is to say, a lily of the marshes. The lilies are the arms of France in a field of azure, which denotes water, in memory that they (the French) came from a marshy country. It is the most ancient and principal banner of France, sown with these lilies, and was borne around our kings on great occasions.”

Roquefort gives his own opinion as follows:—

“The Franks, afterwards called French, inhabited (before entering Gaul properly so called) the environs of the Lys, a river of the Low Countries, whose banks are still covered with a kind of iris or flag of a yellow color, which

differs from the common lily and more nearly resembles the flower-de-luce of our arms. Now it seems to me very natural that the kings of the Franks, having to choose a symbol to which the name of armorial bearings has since been given, should take in its composition a beautiful and remarkable flower, which they had before their eyes, and that they should name it, from the place where it grew in abundance, *flower of the river Lys.*”

These are the lilies of which Drayton speaks in his “Ballad of Agincourt”:—

“... when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
Lopped the French lilies.”



925. This passage alludes to the seizure and imprisonment of Pope Boniface the Eighth by the troops of Philip the Fair at Alagna or Anagni, in 1303. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XI Ch. 9, thus describes the event:—

“On a sudden, on the 7th September (the 8th was the day for the publication of the Bull), the peaceful streets of Anagni were disturbed. The Pope and the Cardinals, who were all assembled around him, were startled with the trampling of armed horse, and the terrible cry, which ran like wildfire through the city, ‘Death to Pope Boniface! Long live the King of France!’ Sciarra Colonna, at the head of three hundred horsemen, the Barons of Cercano and Supino, and some others, the sons of Master Massio of Anagni, were marching in furious haste, with the banner of the king of France displayed. The ungrateful citizens of Anagni, forgetful of their pride in their holy compatriot, of the honor and advantage to their town from

the splendor and wealth of the Papal residence, received them with rebellious and acclaiming shouts.

“The bell of the city, indeed, had tolled at the first alarm; the burghers had assembled; they had chosen their commander; but that commander, whom they ignorantly or treacherously chose, was Arnulf, a deadly enemy of the Pope. The banner of the Church was unfolded against the Pope by the captain of the people of Anagni. The first attack was on the palace of the Pope on that of the Marquis Gaetani, his nephew, and those of three Cardinals, the special partisans of Boniface. The houses of the Pope and of his nephew made some resistance. The doors of those of the Cardinals were beaten down, the treasures ransacked and carried off; the Cardinals themselves fled from the backs of the houses through the common sewer. Then arrived, but not to the rescue, Arnulf, the Captain of the People; he had perhaps been suborned by Reginald of Supino. With him were the sons of Chiton, whose father was pining in the dungeons of Boniface. Instead of resisting, they joined the attack on the palace of the Pope’s nephew and his own. The Pope and his nephew implored a truce; it was granted for eight hours. This time the Pope employed in endeavoring to stir up the people to his defence; the people coldly answered, that they were under the command of their Captain. The Pope demanded the terms of the conspirators. ‘If the Pope would save his life, let him instantly restore the Colonna Cardinals to their dignity, and reinstate the whole house in their honors and possessions; after this restoration the Pope must abdicate, and leave his body at the disposal of Sciarra.’ The Pope groaned in the depths of his heart. ‘The word is spoken.’ Again the assailants thundered at the gates of the palace; still there was obstinate resistance. The principal church of Anagni, that of Santa Maria, protected the Pope’s palace. Sciarra Colonna’s lawless band set fire to the gates; the church was crowded with clergy and laity and traders who had brought their

precious wares into the sacred building. They were plundered with such rapacity that not a man escaped with a farthing.

“The Marquis found himself compelled to surrender, on the condition that his own life, that of his family and of his servants, should be spared. At these sad tidings the Pope wept bitterly. The Pope was alone; from the first the Cardinals, some from treachery, some from cowardice, had fled on all sides, even his most familiar friends: they had crept into the most ignoble hiding-places. The aged Pontiff alone lost not his self-command. He had declared himself ready to perish in his glorious cause; he determined to fall with dignity. ‘If I am betrayed like Christ, I am ready to die like Christ.’ He put on the stole of St. Peter, the imperial crown was on his head, the keys of St. Peter in one hand and the cross in the other: he took his seat on the Papal throne, and, like the Roman Senators of old, awaited the approach of the Gaul.

“But the pride and cruelty of Boniface had raised and infix'd deep in the hearts of men passions which acknowledged no awe of age, of intrepidity, or religious majesty. In William of Nogaret the blood of his Tolosan ancestors, in Colonna, the wrongs, the degradation, the beggary, the exile of all his house, had extinguished every feeling but revenge. They insulted him with contumelious reproaches; they menaced his life. The Pope answered not a word. They insisted that he should at once abdicate the Papacy. ‘Behold my neck, behold my head,’ was the only reply. But fiercer words passed between the Pope and William of Nogaret. Nogaret threatened to drag him before the Council of Lyons, where he should be deposed from the Papacy. ‘Shall I suffer myself to be degraded and deposed by Paterins like thee, whose fathers were righteously burned as Paterins?’ William turned fiery red, with shame thought the partisans of Boniface, more likely with wrath. Sciarra, it was said, would have slain him outright; he was prevented by some of his own followers,

even by Nogaret. ‘Wretched Pope, even at this distance
the goodness of my Lord the King guards thy life.’

“He was placed under close custody, not one of his own attendants permitted to approach him. Worse indignities awaited him. He was set on a vicious horse, with his face to the tail, and so led through the town to his place of imprisonment. The palaces of the Pope and of his nephew were plundered; so vast was the wealth, that the annual revenues of all the kings in the world would not have been equal to the treasures found and carried off by Sciarra’s freebooting soldiers. His very private chamber was ransacked; nothing left but bare walls.

“At length the people of Anagni could no longer bear the insult and the sufferings heaped upon their illustrious and holy fellow-citizen. They rose in irresistible insurrection, drove out the soldiers by whom they had been overawed, now gorged with plunder, and doubtless not unwilling to withdraw. The Pope was rescued, and led out into the street, where the old man addressed a few words to the people: ‘Good men and women, ye see how mine enemies have come upon me, and plundered my goods, those of the Church and of the poor. Not a morsel of bread have I eaten, not a drop have I drunk, since my capture. I am almost dead with hunger. If any good woman will give me a piece of bread and a cup of wine, if she has no wine, a little water, I will absolve her, and any one who will give me their alms, from all their sins.’ The compassionate rabble burst into a cry, ‘Long life to the Pope!’ They carried him back to his naked palace. They crowded, the women especially, with provisions, bread, meat, water, and wine. They could not find a single vessel: they poured a supply of water into a chest. The Pope proclaimed a general absolution to all except the plunderers of his palace. He even declared that he wished to be at peace with the Colonnas and all his enemies. This perhaps was to disguise his intention of retiring, as soon as he could, to Rome.

“The Romans had heard with indignation the sacrilegious attack on the person of the Supreme Pontiff. Four hundred horse under Matteo and Gaetano Orsini were sent to conduct him to the city. He entered it almost in triumph; the populace welcomed him with every demonstration of joy. But the awe of his greatness was gone; the spell of his dominion over the minds of men was broken. His overweening haughtiness and domination had made him many enemies in the Sacred College, the gold of France had made him more. This general revolt is his severest condemnation. Among his first enemies was the Cardinal Napoleon Orsini. Orsini had followed the triumphal entrance of the Pope. Boniface, to show that he desired to reconcile himself with all, courteously invited him to his table. The Orsini coldly answered, ‘that he must receive the Colonna Cardinals into his favor; he must not now disown what had been wrung from him by compulsion.’ ‘I will pardon them,’ said Boniface, ‘but the mercy of the Pope is not to be from compulsion.’ He found himself again a prisoner.

“This last mortification crushed the bodily, if not the mental strength of the Pope. Among the Ghibellines terrible stories were bruited abroad of his death. In an access of fury, either from poison or wounded pride, he sat gnawing the top of his staff, and at length either beat out his own brains against the wall, or smothered himself (a strange notion!) with his own pillows. More friendly, probably more trustworthy, accounts describe him as sadly but quietly breathing his last, surrounded by eight Cardinals, having confessed the faith and received the consoling offices of the Church. The Cardinal-Poet anticipates his mild sentence from the Divine Judge.

“The religious mind of Christendom was at once perplexed and horror-stricken by this act of sacrilegious violence on the person of the Supreme Pontiff; it shocked some even of the sternest Ghibellines. Dante, who brands the pride, the avarice, the treachery of Boniface in his

most terrible words, and has consigned him to the direst doom, (though it is true that his alliance with the French, with Charles of Valois, by whom the poet had been driven into exile, was among the deepest causes of his hatred to Boniface,) nevertheless expresses the almost universal feeling. Christendom shuddered to behold the Fleur-de-lis enter into Anagni, and Christ again captive in his Vicar, the mockery, the gall and vinegar, the crucifixion between living robbers, the insolent and sacrilegious cruelty of the second Pilate.”

Compare this scene with that of his inauguration as Pope, [note 270.](#)



926. This “modern Pilate” is Philip the Fair, and the allusion in the following lines is to the persecution and suppression of the Order of the Knights Templars, in 1307—1312. See Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, Book XII Ch. 2, and Villani, VIII 92, who says the act was committed *per cupidigia di guadagnare*, for love of gain; and says also:—

“The king of France and his children had afterwards much shame and adversity, both on account of this sin and on account of the seizure of Pope Boniface.”



927. What he was saying of the Virgin Mary, line 19. [←](#)

928. The brother of Dido and murderer of her husband. *Aeneid*, I 350: “He, impious and blinded with the love of gold, having taken Sichrcus by surprise, secretly assassinates him before the altar, regardless of his sister’s great affection.” [←](#)

929. The Phrygian king, who, for his hospitality to Silenus, was endowed by Bacchus with the fatal power of turning all he touched to gold. The most laughable thing about him was his wearing ass’s ears, as a punishment for preferring the music of Pan to that of Apollo.

Ovid, XI, Croxall's Tr.:—

“Pan tuned the pipe, and with his rural song
Pleased the low taste of all the vulgar throng;
Such songs a vulgar judgment mostly please:
Midas was there, and Midas judged with these.”

See also Hawthorne's story of “The Golden Touch” in his *Wonder-Book.* [←](#)

930. Joshua 7:21:—

“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”

[←](#)

931. Acts 5:1, 2:—

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

[←](#)

932. The hoof-beats of the miraculous horse in the Temple of Jerusalem, when Heliodorus, the treasurer of King Sclucus, went there to remove the treasure. 2 Maccabees 3:25:—

“For there appeared unto them an horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold.”

⬅

933. *Aeneid*, III 49, Davidson's Tr.:—

"This Polydore unhappy Priam had formerly sent in secrecy, with a great weight of gold, to be brought up by the king of Thrace, when he now began to distrust the arms of Troy, and saw the city with close siege blocked up. He, [Polymnestor,] as soon as the power of the Trojans was crushed, and their fortune gone, espousing Agamemnon's interest and victorious arms, breaks every sacred bond, assassinates Polydore, and by violence possesses his gold. Cursed thirst of gold, to what dost thou not drive the hearts of men!"

⬅

934. Lucinius Crassus, surnamed the Rich. He was Consul with Pompey, and on one occasion displayed his vast wealth by giving an entertainment to the populace, at which the guests were so numerous that they occupied ten thousand tables. He was slain in a battle with the Parthians, and his head was sent to the Parthian king, Hyrodes, who had molten gold poured down its throat. Plutarch does not mention this circumstance in his Life of Crassus, but says:—

"When the head of Crassus was brought to the door, the tables were just taken away, and one Jason, a tragic actor of the town of Tralles, was singing the scene in the Bacchac of Euripides concerning Agave. He was receiving much applause, when Sillaces coming to the room, and having made obeisance to the king, threw down the head of Crassus into the midst of the company. The Parthians receiving it with joy and acclamations, Sillaces, by the king's command, was made to sit down, while Jason handed over the costume of Pentheus to one of the dancers in the chorus, and taking up the head of Crassus, and acting the part of a bacchante in her frenzy, in a rapturous, impassioned manner, sang the lyric passages,

‘We’ve hunted down a mighty chase to-day,
And from the mountain bring the noble
prey.’”



935. This is in answer to Dante’s question, line 35:—

“And why only
Thou dost renew these praises well deserved?”



936. The occasion of this quaking of the mountain is given. Canto XXI
58:—

“It trembles here, whenever any soul
Feels itself pure, so that it soars, or moves
To mount aloft, and such a cry attends it.”



937. An island in the Aegean Sea, in the centre of the Cyclades. It was thrown up by an earthquake, in order to receive Latona, when she gave birth to Apollo and Diana—the Sun and the Moon.

938. Luke 2:13, 14:—

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”



939. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, III 5:—

“When Goddes sone also was bore,
He sent his aungel down therfore,
Whom the shepherdes herden singe:

Pees to the men of welwillinge
In erthe be amonge us here.”



940. This canto is devoted to the interview with the poet Statius, whose release from punishment was announced by the earthquake and the outcry at the end of the last canto. [←](#)

941. John 4:14, 15:—

“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.... The woman saith unto him. Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”



942. Luke 24:13–15:—

“And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.”



943. Among the monks of the Middle Ages there were certain salutations, which had their customary replies or countersigns. Thus one would say, “Peace be with thee!” and the answer would be, “And with thy spirit!” Or, “Praised be the Lord!” and the answer, “World without end!” [←](#)

944. The letters upon Dante’s forehead. [←](#)

945. Lachesis. Of the three Fates, Clotho prepared and held the distaff, Lachesis spun the thread, and Atropos cut it.

“These,” says Plato, *Republic*, X, “are the daughters of Necessity, the Fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos; who, clothed in white robes, with garlands on their heads, chant to the music of the Sirens; Lachesis the events of the Past, Clotho those of the Present, Atropos those of the Future.” [←](#)

946. See Canto XVIII 46:—

“What reason seeth here,
Myself can tell thee; beyond that await
For Beatrice, since ’tis a work of faith.”

So also Cowley, in his poem on the “Use of Reason in Divine Matters”:—

“Though Reason cannot through Faith’s mysteries see,
It sees that there and such they be;
Leads to heaven’s door, and there does humbly keep,
And there through chinks and keyholes peep;
Though it, like Moses, by a sad command
Must not come into the Holy Land,
Yet thither it infallibly does guide,
And from afar ’tis all descried.”

[←](#)

947. Nothing unusual ever disturbs the *religio loci*, the sacredness of the mountain. [←](#)

948. This happens only when the soul, that came from heaven, is received back into heaven; not from any natural causes affecting earth or air. [←](#)

949. The gate of Purgatory, which is also the gate of Heaven. [←](#)

950. Iris, one of the Oceanides, the daughter of Thaumas and Electra; the rainbow. [←](#)

951. The soul in Purgatory feels as great a desire to be punished for a sin, as it had to commit it. [←](#)

952. The siege of Jerusalem under Titus, surnamed the “Delight of Mankind,” took place in the year 70. Statius, who is here speaking, was born at Naples in the reign of Claudius, and had already become famous “under the name that most endures and honors,” that is, as a poet. His works are the *Silvae*, or miscellaneous poems; the *Thebaid*, an epic in twelve books; and the *Achilleid*, left unfinished. He wrote also a tragedy, *Agave*, which is lost.

Juvenal says of him, *Satire VII*, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“All Rome is pleased when Statius will rehearse,
And longing crowds expect the promised verse;
His lofty numbers with so great a gust
They hear, and swallow with such eager lust:
But while the common suffrage crowned his cause,
And broke the benches with their loud applause,
His Muse had starved, had not a piece unread,
And by a player bought, supplied her bread.”

Dante shows his admiration of him by placing him here. [←](#)

953. Statius was not born in Toulouse, as Dante supposes, but in Naples, as he himself states in his *Silvae*, which work was not discovered till after Dante’s death. The passage occurs in Book III Eclogue V, *To Claudia his Wife*, where he describes the beauties of Parthenope, and calls her the mother and nurse of both, *amborum genetrix altrixque*.

Landino thinks that Dante’s error may be traced to Placidus Lactantius, a commentator of the *Thebaid*, who confounded Statius the poet of Naples with Statius the rhetorician of Toulouse. [←](#)

954. Would be willing to remain another year in Purgatory. [←](#)

955. Petrarca uses the same expression—the lightning of the angelic smile, *il lampeggiar dell’ angelica riso*. [←](#)

956. See [Canto XIX 133](#). [←](#)

957. The ascent to the Sixth Circle, where the sin of Gluttony is punished.

↖

958. Matthew 5:6:—

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”

↖

959. The satirist Juvenal, who flourished at Rome during the last half of the first century of the Christian era, and died at the beginning of the second, aged eighty. He was a contemporary of Statius, and survived him some thirty years. ↲

960. *Aeneid*, III 56:—

“O cursed hunger of gold, to what dost thou not drive the hearts of men.”

↖

961. The punishment of the Avaricious and Prodigal. *Inferno* VII 26:—

“With great howls
Rolling weights forward by main force of chest.”

↖

962. Dante says of the Avaricious and Prodigal, *Inferno* VII 56:—

“These from the sepulchre shall rise again
With the fist closed, and these with tresses shorn.”

↖

963. Her two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, of whom Statius sings in the *Thebaid*, and to whom Dante alludes by way of illustration. *Inferno* XXVI 54. See also [note 383](#). ↲

964. Statius begins the *Thebaid* with an invocation to Clio, the Muse of History, whose office it was to record the heroic actions of brave men, I 55:—

“What first, O Clio, shall adorn thy page,
The expiring prophet, or Aetolian’s rage?
Say, wilt thou sing how, grim with hostile blood,
Hippomedon repelled the rushing flood,
Lament the Arcadian youth’s untimely fate,
Or Jove, opposed by Capaneus, relate?”

Skelton, “Elegy on the Earl of Northumberland”:—

“Of hevenly poems, O Clyo calde by name
In the college of musis goddess hystoriale.”

↲

965. Saint Peter. ↲

966. 70, Virgil’s *Bucolics*, Ecl. IV, 5, a passage supposed to foretell the birth of Christ:—

“The last era of Cumaeian song is now arrived; the great series of ages begins anew; now the Virgin returns, returns the Saturnian reign; now a new progeny is sent down from the high heaven.”

↲

967. The Fourth Circle of Purgatory, where Sloth is punished. Canto XVII 85:—

“The love of good, remiss
In what it should have done, is here restored;
Here plied again the ill-belated oar.”

↲

968. Some editions read in this line, instead of *nostra amico*—*nostra antico*, our ancient Terence; but the epithet would be more appropriate to Plautus, who was the earlier writer. [←](#)

969. Plautus, Caecilius, and Terence, the three principal Latin dramatists; Varro, “the most learned of the Romans,” the friend of Cicero, and author of some five hundred volumes, which made St. Augustine wonder how he who wrote so many books could find time to read so many; and how he who read so many could find time to write so many.

[←](#)

970. Persius, the Latin satirist. [←](#)

971. Homer. [←](#)

972. Mrs. Browning, “Wine of Cyprus”:

“Our Euripides, the human—
With his droppings of warm tears;
And his touches of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres.”

But why does Dante make no mention here of “Aeschylus the thunderous” and “Sophocles the royal”?

Antiphon was a tragic and epic poet of Attica, who was put to death by Dionysius because he would not praise the tyrant’s writings. Some editions read Anacreon for Antiphon. [←](#)

973. Simonides, the poet of Cos, who won a poetic prize at the age of eighty, and is said to be the first poet who wrote for money.

Agatho was an Athenian dramatist, of whom nothing remains but the name and a few passages quoted in other writers. [←](#)

974. Some of the people that Statius introduces into his poems. Antigone, daughter of Oedipus; Deiphile, wife of Tideus; Argia, her sister, wife of Polynices; Ismene, another daughter of Oedipus, who is here represented as still lamenting the death of Atys, her betrothed. [←](#)

975. Hypsipile, who pointed out to Adrastus the fountain of Langìa, when his soldiers were perishing with thirst on their march against Thebes.

✉

976. Of the three daughters of Tiresias only Manto is mentioned by Statius in the *Thebaid*. But Dante places Manto among the Soothsayers, *Inferno* XX 55, and not in Limbo. Had he forgotten this? ✉

977. Thetis, the mother of Achilles, and Deidamia, the daughter of Lycomedes. They are among the personages in the *Achilleid* of Statius.

✉

978. Four hours of the day were already passed. ✉

979. Cowley, “The Tree of Knowledge”:—

“The sacred tree ’midst the fair orchard grew,
The phoenix Truth did on it rest
And built his perfumed nest,
That right Porphyrian tree which did true Logic show;
Each leaf did learned notions give
And th’ apples were demonstrative;
So clear their color and divine
The very shade they cast did other lights outshine.”

This tree of Temptation, however, is hardly the tree of Knowledge, though sprung from it, as Dante says of the next, in Canto XXIV 117. It is meant only to increase the torment of the starving souls beneath it, by holding its fresh and dewy fruit beyond their reach. ✉

980. John 2:3:—

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.”

✉

981. Daniel 1:12:—

“Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. . . . And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”



982. Compare the description of the Golden Age in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I:—

“The golden age was first; when man, yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew,
And, with a native bent, did good pursue.
Unforced by punishment, unawed by fear,
His words were simple, and his soul sincere;
Needless was written law, where none opprest:
The law of man was written in his breast:
No suppliant crowds before the judge appeared,
No court erected yet, nor cause was heard:
But all was safe, for conscience was their guard.
The mountain-trees in distant prospect please,
Ere yet the pine descended to the seas;
Ere sails were spread, new oceans to explore;
And happy mortals, unconcerned for more,
Confined their wishes to their native shore.
No walls were yet: nor fence, nor mote, nor mound,
Nor drum was heard, nor trumpet’s angry sound:
Nor swords were forged; but, void of care and crime,
The soft creation slept away their time.
The teeming earth, yet guiltless of the plough,
And unprovoked, did fruitful stores allow:
Content with food, which nature freely bred,
On wildings and on strawberries they fed;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest,
And falling acorns furnished out a feast.
The flowers unsown in fields and meadows reigned;
And western winds immortal spring maintained.
In following years, the bearded corn ensued

From earth unasked, nor was that earth renewed.
From veins of valleys milk and nectar broke,
And honey sweating through the pores of oak.”

Also Boethius, Book II Met. 5, and the Ode in Tasso’s *Aminta*, Leigh Hunt’s Tr., beginning:—

“O lovely age of gold!
Not that the rivers rolled
With milk, or that the woods wept honeydew;
Not that the ready ground
Produced without a wound,
Or the mild serpent had no tooth that slew;
Not that a cloudless blue
Forever was in sight,
Or that the heaven which burns,
And now is cold by turns,
Looked out in glad and everlasting light;
No, nor that even the insolent ships from far
Brought war to no new lands, nor riches worse than war:

“But solely that that vain
And breath-invented pain,
That idol of mistake, that worshipped cheat,
That Honor—since so called
By vulgar minds appalled—
Played not the tyrant with our nature yet.
It had not come to fret
The sweet and happy fold
Of gentle human-kind;
Nor did its hard law bind
Souls nursed in freedom; but that law of gold,
That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted,
Which Nature’s own hand wrote—What pleases, is
permitted.”

Also Don Quixote’s address to the goatherds, *Don Quixote*, Book II Ch. 3, Jarvis’s Tr.:—

“After Don Quixote had satisfied his hunger, he took up an handful of acorns, and, looking on them attentively, gave utterance to expressions like these:—

“Happy times, and happy ages! those to which the ancients gave the name of golden, not because gold (which, in this our iron age, is so much esteemed) was to be had, in that fortunate period, without toil and labor; but because they who then lived were ignorant of these two words, Meum and Tuum. In that age of innocence, all things were in common; no one needed to take any other pains for his ordinary sustenance, than to lift up his hand and take it from the sturdy oaks, which stood inviting him liberally to taste of their sweet and relishing fruit. The limpid fountains, and running streams, offered them, in magnificent abundance, their delicious and transparent waters. In the clefts of rocks, and in the hollow of trees, did the industrious and provident bees form their commonwealths, offering to every hand, without usury, the fertile produce of their most delicious toil. The stout cork-trees, without any other inducement than that of their own courtesy, divested themselves of their light and expanded bark, with which men began to cover their houses, supported by rough poles, only for a defence against the inclemency of the seasons. All then was peace, all amity, all concord. As yet the heavy coulter of the crooked plough had not dared to force open, and search into, the tender bowels of our first mother, who unconstrained offered, from every part of her fertile and spacious bosom, whatever might feed, sustain, and delight those her children, who then had her in possession. Then did the simple and beauteous young shepherdesses trip it from dale to dale, and from hill to hill, their tresses sometimes plaited, sometimes loosely flowing, with no more clothing than was necessary modestly to cover what modesty has always required to be concealed; nor were there ornaments like those nowadays in fashion, to which the Tyrian purple and the so-many-ways martyred silk

give a value; but composed of green dock-leaves and ivy interwoven; with which, perhaps, they went as splendidly and elegantly decked as our court-ladies do now, with all those rare and foreign inventions which idle curiosity hath taught them. Then were the amorous conceptions of the soul clothed in simple and sincere expressions, in the same way and manner they were conceived, without seeking so much deprecate, confound, and perartificial phrases to set them off. Nor secrete her, not daring then to disturb as yet were fraud, deceit, and malice or offend her. As yet the judge did intermixed with truth and plain-dealnot make his own will the measure of ing. Justice kept within her proper justice; for then there was neither bounds; favor and interest, which now cause nor person to be judged.””

↲

983. The punishment of the sin of Gluttony. ↲

984. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II 7:—

“Under the shade of melancholy boughs
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time.”

↲

985. Psalms 51:15:—

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

↲

986. Erisichthon the Thessalian, who in derision cut down an ancient oak in the sacred groves of Ceres. He was punished by perpetual hunger, till, other food failing him, at last he gnawed his own flesh. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, Vernon’s Tr.:—

“Straight he requires, impatient in demand,
Provisions from the air, the seas, the land;
But though the land, air, seas, provisions grant,
Starves at full tables, and complains of want.
What to a people might in dole be paid,
Or victual cities for a long blockade,
Could not one wolfish appetite assuage;
For glutting nourishment increased its rage.
As rivers poured from every distant shore
The sea insatiate drinks, and thirsts for more;
Or as the fire, which all materials burns,
And wasted forests into ashes turns,
Grows more voracious as the more it preys,
Recruits dilate the flame, and spread the blaze:
So impious Erisichthon’s hunger raves,
Receives refreshments, and refreshments craves.
Food raises a desire for food, and meat
Is but a new provocative to eat.
He grows more empty as the more supplied,
And endless cramming but extends the void.”



987. This tragic tale of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus is thus told in Josephus, *Jewish War*, Book VI Ch. 3, Whiston’s Tr.:—

“There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan; her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar, of the village Bethezub, which signifies the house of Hyssop. She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon, such I mean as she had brought with her out of Perea, and removed to the city. What she had treasured up besides, as also what food she had contrived to save, had been also carried off by the rapacious guards, who came every day running into her

house for that purpose. This put the poor woman into a very great passion, and by the frequent reproaches and imprecations she cast at these rapacious villains, she had provoked them to anger against her; but none of them, either out of the indignation she had raised against herself, or out of commiseration of her case, would take away her life. And if she found any food, she perceived her labors were for others and not for herself; and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food, while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow, when also her passion was fired to a degree beyond the famine itself. Nor did she consult with anything but with her passion and the necessity she was in. She then attempted a most unnatural thing, and, snatching up her son who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, ‘O thou miserable infant! For whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves. This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us. Yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on, be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a byword to the world; which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of the Jews.’ As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed. Upon this the seditious came in presently, and, smelling the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately, if she did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied, that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them; and withal uncovered what was left of her son. Hereupon they were seized with a horror and amazement of mind, and stood astonished at the sight, when she said to them: ‘This is mine own son, and what hath been done was mine own doing. Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself. Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a

woman, or more compassionate than a mother. But if you be so scrupulous, and do abominate this my sacrifice, as I have eaten the one half, let the rest be reserved for me also.' After which those men went out trembling, being never so much affrighted at anything as they were at this, and with some difficulty they left the rest of that meat to the mother. Upon which the whole city was full of this horrid action immediately; and while everybody laid this miserable case before their own eyes, they trembled as if this unheard of action had been done by themselves. So those that were thus distressed by the famine were very desirous to die, and those already dead were esteemed happy, because they had not lived long enough either to hear or to see such miseries."



988. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, V 3:—

“And in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost.”



989. In this fanciful recognition of the word *omo* (*homo*, man) in the human face, so written as to place the two *o*'s between the outer strokes of the *m*, the former represent the eyes, and the latter the nose and cheekbones:—

Brother Berthold, a Franciscan monk of Regensburg, in the thirteenth century, makes the following allusion to it in one of his sermons. See Wackernagel, *Deutsches Lesebuch*, I 678. The monk carries out the resemblance into still further detail:—

“Now behold, ye blessed children of God, the Almighty has created you soul and body. And he has written it under your eyes and on your faces, that you are created in his likeness. He has written it upon your very faces with ornamented letters. With great diligence are they embellished and ornamented. This your learned men well understand, but the unlearned may not understand it. The two eyes are two *o*’s. The *h* is properly no letter; it only helps the others; so that *homo* with an *h* means Man. Likewise the brows arched above, and the nose down between them are an *m*, beautiful with three strokes. So is the ear a *d*, beautifully rounded and ornamented. So are the nostrils beautifully formed like a Greek *ε*, beautifully rounded and ornamented. So is the mouth an *i*, beautifully adorned and ornamented. Now behold, ye good Christian people, how skilfully he has adorned you with these six letters, to show that ye are his own, and that he has created

you! Now read me an *o* and an *m* and another *o* together; that spells *homo*. Then read me a *d* and an *e* and an *i* together; that spells *dei*. *Homo dei*, man of God, man of God!"



990. Forese Donati, the brother-in-law and intimate friend of Dante.

"This Forese," says Buti, "was a citizen of Florence, and was brother of Messer Corso Donati, and was very gluttonous; and therefore the author feigns that he found him here, where the Gluttons are punished."

Certain vituperative sonnets, addressed to Dante, have been attributed to Forese. If authentic, they prove that the friendship between the two poets was not uninterrupted. See Rossetti, *Early Italian Poets*, Appendix to Part II. [←](#)

991. The same desire that sacrifice and atonement may be complete. [←](#)

992. Matthew 27:46:—

"*Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani?* that is to say. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"



993. Outside the gate of Purgatory, where those who had postponed repentance till the last hour were forced to wait as many years and days as they had lived impenitent on earth, unless aided by the devout prayers of those on earth. See Canto IV. [←](#)

994. Nella, contraction of Giovannella, widow of Forese. Nothing is known of this good woman but the name, and what Forese here says in her praise. [←](#)

995. Covino, *Descriz. Geograf. dell' Italia*, p. 52, says:—

“In the district of Arborea, on the slopes of the Gennargentu, the most vast and lofty mountain range of Sardinia, spreads an alpine country which in Dante’s time, being almost barbarous, was called the *Barbagia*. ”



996. Sacchetti, the Italian novelist of the fourteenth century, severely criticises the fashions of the Florentines, and their sudden changes, which he says it would take a whole volume of his stories to enumerate. In Nov. 178, he speaks of their wearing their dresses “far below their armpits,” and then “up to their ears”; and continues, in Napier’s version, *Florentine History*, II 539:—

“The young Florentine girls, who used to dress so modestly, have now changed the fashion of their hoods to resemble courtesans, and thus attired they move about laced up to the throat, with all sorts of animals hanging as ornaments about their necks. Their sleeves, or rather their sacks, as they should be called—was there ever so useless and pernicious a fashion! Can any of them reach a glass or take a morsel from the table without dirtying herself or the cloth by the things she knocks down? And thus do the young men, and worse; and such sleeves are made even for sucking babes. The women go about in hoods and cloaks; most of the young men without cloaks, in long, flowing hair, and if they throw off their breeches, which from their smallness may easily be done, all is off, for they literally stick their posteriors into a pair of socks and expend a yard of cloth on their wristbands, while more stuff is put into a glove than a cloak-hood. However, I am comforted by one thing, and that is, that all now have begun to put their feet in chains, perhaps as a penance for the many vain things they are guilty of; for we are but a day in this world, and in that day the fashion is changed a thousand times: all seek liberty, yet all deprive themselves of it: God has made our feet free, and many with long

pointed toes to their shoes can scarcely walk: he has supplied the legs with hinges, and many have so bound them up with close lacing that they can scarcely sit: the bust is tightly bandaged up; the arms trail their drapery along; the throat is rolled in a capuchin; the head so loaded and bound round with caps over the hair that it appears as though it were sawed off. And thus I might go on forever discoursing of female absurdities, commencing with the immeasurable trains at their feet, and proceeding regularly upwards to the head, with which they may always be seen occupied in their chambers; some curling, some smoothing, and some whitening it, so that they often kill themselves with colds caught in these vain occupations.”

[◀](#)

997. Statius. [◀](#)

998. Continuation of the punishment of Gluttony. [◀](#)

999. Continuing the words with which the preceding canto closes, and referring to Statius. [◀](#)

1000. Piccarda, sister of Forese and Corso Donati. She was a nun of Santa Clara, and is seen by Dante in the first heaven of Paradise, which Forese calls “high Olympus.” See *Paradiso* III 49, where her story is told more in detail. [◀](#)

1001. Buonagiunta Urbisani of Lucca is one of the early minor poets of Italy, a contemporary of Dante. Rossetti, *Early Italian Poets*, 77, gives some specimens of his sonnets and canzoni. All that is known of him is contained in Benvenuto’s brief notice:—

“Buonagiunta of Urbisani, an honorable man of the city of Lucca, a brilliant orator in his mother tongue, a facile producer of rhymes, and still more facile consumer of

wines; who knew our author in his lifetime, and sometimes corresponded with him.”

Tiraboschi also mentions him, *Storia della Lett.*, IV 397:—

“He was seen by Dante in Purgatory punished among the Gluttons, from which vice, it is proper to say, poetry did not render him exempt.”



1002. Pope Martin the Fourth, whose fondness for the eels of Bolsena brought his life to a sudden close, and his soul to this circle of Purgatory, has been ridiculed in the well-known epigram—

*“Gaudent anguillae, quod mortuus hic jacet ille
Qui quasi morte reas excoriabat eas.”*

“Martin the Fourth,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 143, “was born at Mont Pence in Brie; he had been Canon of Tours. He put on at first the show of maintaining the lofty character of the Churchman. He excommunicated the Viterbans for their sacrilegious maltreatment of the Cardinals; Rinaldo Annibaldeschi, the Lord of Viterbo, was compelled to ask pardon on his knees of the Cardinal Rosso, and forgiven only at the intervention of the Pope. Martin the Fourth retired to Orvieto.

“But the Frenchman soon began to predominate over the Pontiff; he sunk into the vassal of Charles of Anjou. The great policy of his predecessor, to assuage the feuds of Guelph and Ghibelline, was an Italian policy; it was altogether abandoned. The Ghibellines in every city were menaced or smitten with excommunication; the Lambertazzi were driven from Bologna. Forli was placed under interdict for harboring the exiles; the goods of the citizens were confiscated for the benefit of the Pope. Bertoldo Orsini was deposed from the Countship of Romagna; the office was bestowed on John of Appia, with instructions everywhere to coerce or to chastise the refractory Ghibellines.”

Villani, Book VI Ch. 106, says:—

“He was a good man, and very favorable to Holy Church and to those of the house of France, because he was from Tours.”

He is said to have died of a surfeit. The eels and sturgeon of Bolsena, and the wines of Orvieto and Montefiascone, in the neighborhood of whose vineyards he lived, were too much for him. But he died in Perugia, not in Orvieto. [←](#)

1003. The Lake of Bolsena is in the Papal States, a few miles northwest of Viterbo, on the road from Rome to Siena. It is thus described in Murray’s *Handbook of Central Italy*, p. 199:—

“Its circular form, and being in the centre of a volcanic district, hasted to its being regarded as an extinct crater; but that hypothesis can scarcely be admitted when the great extent of the lake is considered. The treacherous beauty of the lake conceals *malaria* in its most fatal forms; and its shores, although there are no traces of a marsh, are deserted, excepting where a few sickly hamlets are scattered on their western slopes. The ground is cultivated in many parts down to the water’s edge, but the laborers dare not sleep for a single night during the summer or autumn on the plains where they work by day; and a large tract of beautiful and productive country is reduced to a perfect solitude by this invisible calamity. Nothing can be more striking than the appearance of the lake, without a single sail upon its waters, and with scarcely a human habitation within sight of Bolsena; and nothing perhaps can give the traveller who visits Italy for the first time a more impressive idea of the effects of malaria.”

Of the Vernaccia or Vernage, in which Pope Martin cooked his eels, Henderson says. *The History of Ancient and Modern Wines*, p. 296:—

“The Vernage... was a red wine, of a bright color, and a sweetish and somewhat rough flavor, which was grown in

Tuscany and other parts of Italy, and derived its name from the thick-skinned grape, *vernaccia* (corresponding with the *vinaciola* of the ancients), that was used in the preparation of it."

Chaucer mentions it in the "Merchant's Tale":—

"He drinketh ipocras, clarre, and vernage
Of spices hot, to increasen his corage."

And Redi, "Bacchus in Tuscany," Leigh Hunt's Tr., p. 30, sings of it thus:—

"If anybody doesn't like Vernaccia,
I mean that sort that's made in Pietrafitta,
Let him fly
My violent eye;
I curse him, clean, through all the Alpha-beta."



1004. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII, says of Erisichthon, that he

"Deludes his throat with visionary fare,
Feasts on the wind and banquets on the air."



1005. Ubaldin dalla Pila was a brother of the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, mentioned *Inferno* X 120, and father of the Archbishop Ruggieri, *Inferno* XXXIII 14. According to Sacchetti, Nov. 205, he passed most of his time at his castle, and turned his gardener into a priest; "and Messer Ubaldino," continues the novelist, "put him into his church; of which one may say he made a pigsty; for he did not put in a priest, but a pig in the way of eating and drinking, who had neither grammar nor any good thing in him."

Some writers say that this Boniface, Archbishop of Ravenna, was a son of Ubaldino; but this is confounding him with Ruggieri,

Archbishop of Pisa. He was of the Fieschi of Genoa. His pasturing many people alludes to his keeping a great retinue and court, and the free life they led in matters of the table. ↵

1006. Messer Marchese da Forlì, who answered the accusation made against him, that “he was always drinking,” by saying, that “he was always thirsty.” ↵

1007. A lady of Lucca with whom Dante is supposed to have been enamored. “Let us pass over in silence,” says Balbo, *Life and Times of Dante*, II 177, “the consolations and errors of the poor exile.” But Buti says:—

“He formed an attachment to a gentle lady, called Madonna Gentucca, of the family of Rossimpelo, on account of her great virtue and modesty, and not with any other love.”

Benvenuto and the *Ottimo* interpret the passage differently, making *gentucca* a common noun—*gente bassa*, low people. But the passage which immediately follows, in which a maiden is mentioned who should make Lucca pleasant to him, seems to confirm the former interpretation. ↵

1008. In the throat of the speaker, where he felt the hunger and thirst of his punishment. ↵

1009. Chaucer, *Complaint of the Blacke Knight*, 194:—

“But even like as doth a skrivenere,
That can no more tell what that he shal write,
But as his maister beside dothe indite.”

↵

1010. A canzone of the *Vita Nuova*, beginning, in Rossetti’s version, *Early Italian Poets*, p. 255:—

“Ladies that have intelligence in love,

Of mine own lady I would speak with you;
Not that I hope to count her praises through,
But, telling what I may, to ease my mind.”



1011. Jacopo da Lentino, or “the Notary,” was a Sicilian poet who flourished about 1250, in the later days of the Emperor Frederick the Second. Crescimbeni, *L’Istoria Della Volgar Poesia*, III 43, says that Dante “esteemed him so highly, that he even mentions him in his Comedy, doing him the favor to put him into Purgatory.” Tassoni, and others after him, make the careless statement that he addressed a sonnet to Petrarca. He died before Petrarca was born. Rossetti gives several specimens of his sonnets and canzonette in his *Early Italian Poets*, of which the following is one:—

“OF HIS LADY IN HEAVEN.
“I have it in my heart to serve God so
That into Paradise I shall repair—
The holy place through the which everywhere
I have heard say that joy and solace flow.
Without my lady I were loath to go—
She who has the bright face and the bright hair;
Because if she were absent, I being there,
My pleasure would be less than naught, I know.
Look you, I say not this to such intent
As that I there would deal in any sin:
I only would behold her gracious mien,
And beautiful soft eyes, and lovely face,
That so it should be my complete content
To see my lady joyful in her place.”

Fra Guittone d’ Arezzo, a contemporary of the Notary, was one of the Frati Gaudenti, or Jovial Friars, mentioned in [note 336](#). He first brought the Italian Sonnet to the perfect form it has since preserved, and left behind the earliest specimens of Italian letter-writing. These letters are written in a very florid style, and are perhaps more poetical than his verses, which certainly fall very far short of the “sweet new

style." Of all his letters the best is that "To the Florentines," from which a brief extract is given [note 615.](#) ↪

1012. Corso Donati, the brother of Forese who is here speaking, and into whose mouth nothing but Ghibelline wrath could have put these words. Corso was the leader of the Neri in Florence, and a partisan of Charles de Valois. His death is recorded by Villani, VIII 96, and is thus described by Napier, *Florentine History*, I 407:—

"The popularity of Corso was now thoroughly undermined, and the priors, after sounding the Campana for a general assembly of the armed citizens, laid a formal accusation before the Podestà Piero Branca d' Agobbio against him for conspiring to overthrow the liberties of his country, and endeavoring to make himself Tyrant of Florence: he was immediately cited to appear, and, not complying, from a reasonable distrust of his judges, was within one hour, against all legal forms, condemned to lose his head, as a rebel and traitor to the commonwealth.

"Not willing to allow the culprit more time for an armed resistance than had been given for legal vindication, the Scignory, preceded by the Gonfalonier of justice, and followed by the Podestà, the captain of the people, and the executor—all attended by their guards and officers—issued from the palace; and with the whole civic force marshalled in companies, with banners flying, moved forward to execute an illegal sentence against a single citizen, who nevertheless stood undaunted on his defence.

"Corso, on first hearing of the prosecution, had hastily barricaded all the approaches to his palace, but, disabled by the gout, could only direct the necessary operations from his bed; yet thus helpless, thus abandoned by all but his own immediate friends and vassals; suddenly condemned to death; encompassed by the bitterest foes, with the whole force of the republic banded against him, he never cowered for an instant, but courageously

determined to resist, until succored by Uguzzione della Faggiola, to whom he had sent for aid. This attack continued during the greater part of the day, and generally with advantage to the Donati, for the people were not unanimous, and many fought unwillingly, so that, if the Rossi, Bardi, and other friends had joined, and Uguzzoni's forces arrived, it would have gone hard with the citizens. The former were intimidated, the latter turned back on hearing how matters stood; and then only did Corso's adherents lose heart and slink from the barricades, while the townsmen pursued their advantage by breaking down a garden wall opposite the Stinche prisons and taking their enemy in the rear. This completed the disaster, and Corso, seeing no chance remaining, fled towards the Casentino; but, being overtaken by some Catalonian troopers in the Florentine service, he was led back a prisoner from Rovezzano. After vainly endeavoring to bribe them, unable to support the indignity of a public execution at the hands of his enemies, he let himself fall from his horse, and, receiving several stabs in the neck and flank from the Catalan lances, his body was left bleeding on the road, until the monks of San Salvi removed it to their convent, where he was interred next morning with the greatest privacy. Thus perished Corso Donati, 'the wisest and most worthy knight of his time; the best speaker, the most experienced statesman; the most renowned, the boldest, and most enterprising nobleman in Italy: he was handsome in person and of the most gracious manners, but very worldly, and caused infinite disturbance in Florence on account of his ambition.' ... [2105](#) 'People now began to repose, and his unhappy death was often and variously discussed, according to the feelings of friendship or enmity that moved the speaker; but in truth, his life was dangerous, and his death reprehensible. He was a knight of great mind and name, gentle in manners as in blood; of a fine figure even in his old age, with a beautiful countenance, delicate features, and a fair

complexion; pleasing, wise; and an eloquent speaker. His attention was ever fixed on important things; he was intimate with all the great and noble, had an extensive influence, and was famous throughout Italy. He was an enemy of the middle classes and their supporters, beloved by the troops, but full of malicious thoughts, wicked, and artful. He was thus basely murdered by a foreign soldier, and his fellow-citizens well knew the man, for he was instantly conveyed away: those who ordered his death were Rosso della Tosa and Pazzino de' Pazzi, as is commonly said by all; and some bless him and some the contrary. Many believe that the two said knights killed him, and I, wishing to ascertain the truth, inquired diligently, and found what I have said to be true.²¹⁰⁶ Such is the character of Corso Donati, which has come down to us from two authors who must have been personally acquainted with this distinguished chief, but opposed to each other in the general politics of their country.”

See also [note 94.](#) ↩

1013. Virgil and Statius. ↩

1014. Dante had only so far gone round the circle, as to come in sight of the second of these trees, which from distance to distance encircle the mountain. ↩

1015. In the Terrestrial Paradise on the top of the mountain. ↩

1016. The Centaurs, born of Ixion and the Cloud, and having the “double breasts” of man and horse, became drunk with wine at the marriage of Hippodamia and Pirithous, and strove to carry off the bride and the other women by violence. Theseus and the rest of the Lapithae opposed them, and drove them from the feast. This famous battle is described at great length by Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XII, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“For one, most brutal of the brutal brood,

Or whether wine or beauty fired his blood,
Or both at once, beheld with lustful eyes
The bride; at once resolved to make his prize.
Down went the board; and fastening on her hair,
He seized with sudden force the frightened fair.
'Twas Eurytus began: his bestial kind
His crime pursued; and each, as pleased his mind,
Or her whom chance presented, took: the feast
An image of a taken town expressed.

"The cave resounds with female shrieks; we rise
Mad with revenge, to make a swift reprise:
And Theseus first, 'What frenzy has possessed,
O Eurytus,' he cried, 'thy brutal breast,
To wrong Pirithous, and not him alone,
But, while I live, two friends conjoined in one?'"



1017. Judges 7:5, 6:—

"So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water."



1018. The Angel of the Seventh Circle. [←](#)

1019. The ascent to the Seventh Circle of Purgatory, where the sin of Lust is punished. [←](#)

1020. When the sign of Taurus reached the meridian, the sun, being in Aries, would be two hours beyond it. It is now two o'clock of the afternoon. The Scorpion is the sign opposite Taurus. [←](#)

1021. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I 2:—

“And did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak.”

[←](#)

1022. Meleager was the son of Oeneus and Althaea, of Calydon. At his birth the Fates were present and predicted his future greatness. Clotho said that he would be brave; Lachesis, that he would be strong; and Atropos, that he would live as long as the brand upon the fire remained unconsumed.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII:—

“There lay a log unlighted on the hearth,
When she was laboring in the throes of birth
For th’ unborn chief; the fatal sisters came,
And raised it up, and tossed it on the flame
Then on the rock a scanty measure place
Of vital flax, and turned the wheel apace;
And turning sung, ‘To this red brand and thee,
O new-born babe, we give an equal destiny’;
So vanished out of view. The frighted dame
Sprung hasty from her bed, and quenched the flame.
The log, in secret locked, she kept with care,
And that, while thus preserved, preserved her heir.”

Meleager distinguished himself in the Argonautic expedition, and afterwards in the hunt of Calydon, where he killed the famous boar, and gave the boar’s head to Atalanta; and when his uncles tried to take possession of it, he killed them also. On hearing this, and seeing the dead bodies, his mother in her rage threw the brand upon the fire again, and, as it was consumed, Meleager perished.

Mr. Swinburne, *Atalanta in Calydon*:—

CHORUS “When thou dravest the men
 Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again
Nor endured he thy face
 Clothed round with the blush of the battle,
 with light from a terrible place.

OENEUS “Thou shouldst die as he dies
 For whom none sheddeth tears;
Filling thine eyes
 And fulfilling thine ears
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom and
 the beauty, the splendor of spears.

CHORUS “In the ears of the world
 It is sung, it is told,
And the light thereof hurled
 And the noise thereof rolled
From the Acroceraunian snow to the ford of
 the fleece of gold.

MELEAGER “Would God ye could carry me
 Forth of all these;
Heap sand and bury me
 By the Chersonese
Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the
 thunder of Pontic seas.

OENEUS “Dost thou mock at our praise
 And the singing begun
And the men of strange days
 Praising my son
In the folds of the hills of home, high places
 of Calydon?

MELEAGER “For the dead man no home is;
 Ah, better to be
What the flower of the foam is

In fields of the sea,
That the sea-waves might be as my raiment,
the gulf-stream a garment for me.

:

“Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue
Hail thee as holy and worship thee as just
Who art unjust and unholy; and with my
knees
Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,
Dissundering them, devour me; for these
limbs
Are as light dustand Grumblings from mine
urn
Before the fire has touched them; and my
face
As a dead leaf or dead foot’s mark on snow,
And all this body a broken barren tree
That was so strong, and all this flower of life
Disbranched and desecrated miserably,
And minished all that god-like muscle and
might
And lesser than a man’s: for all my veins
Fail me, and all mine ashen down.”



1023. The dissertation which Dante here puts into the mouth of Statius maybe found also in a briefer prose form in the *Convito*, IV 21. It so much excites the enthusiasm of Varchi, that he declares it alone sufficient to prove Dante to have been a physician, philosopher, and theologian of the highest order; and goes on to say:—

“I not only confess, but I swear, that as many times as I have read it, which day and night are more than a thousand, my wonder and astonishment have always

increased, seeming every time to find therein new beauties and new instruction, and consequently new difficulties.”

This subject is also discussed in part by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. CXIX, *De propagations hominis quantum ad corpus*.

Milton, in his Latin poem, *De Idea Platonica*, has touched upon a theme somewhat akin to this, but in a manner to make it seem very remote. Perhaps no two passages could better show the difference between Dante and Milton, than this canto and “Plato’s Archetypal Man,” which in Leigh Hunt’s translation runs as follows:—

“Say, guardian goddesses of woods,
Aspects, felt in solitudes;
And Memory, at whose blessed knee
The Nine, which thy dear daughters be,
Learnt “of the majestic past;
And thou, that in some antre vast
Leaning afar off dost lie,
Otiose Eternity,
Keeping the tablets and decrees
Of Jove, and the ephemerides
Of the gods, and calendars,
Of the ever festal stars;
Say, who was he, the sunless shade,
After whose pattern man was made;
He first, the full of ages, born
With the old pale polar morn,
Sole, yet all; first visible thought,
After which the Deity wrought?
Twin-birth with Pallas, not remain
Doth he in Jove’s o’crshadowed brain;
But though of wide communion,
Dwells apart, like one alone;
And fills the wondering embrace,
(Doubt it not) of size and place.
Whether, companion of the stars,

With their tenfold round he errs;
Or inhabits with his lone
Nature in the neighboring moon;
Or sits with body-waiting souls,
Dozing by the Lethaeian pools:—
Or whether, haply, placed afar
In some blank region of our star,
He stalks, an unsubstantial heap,
Humanity's giant archetype;
Where a loftier bulk he rears
Than Atlas, grappler of the stars,
And through their shadow-touched abodes
Brings a terror to the gods.
Not the seer of him had sight,
Who found in darkness depths of light;²¹⁰⁷
His travelled eyeballs saw him not
In all his mighty gulfs of thought:—
Him the farthest-footed good,
Pleiad Mercury, never showed
To any poet's wisest sight
In the silence of the night:—
News of him the Assyrian priest²¹⁰⁸
Found not in his sacred list,
Though he traced back old king Nine,
And Belus, elder name divine,
And Osiris, endless famed.
Not the glory, triple-named,
Thrice great Hermes, though his eyes
Read the shapes of all the skies,
Left him in his sacred verse
Revealed to Nature's worshippers.

“O Plato! and was this a dream
Of thine in bowery Academe?
Wert thou the golden tongue to tell
First of this high miracle,
And charm him to thy schools below?

O call thy poets back, if so,²¹⁰⁹
Back to the state thine exiles call,
Thou greatest fabler of them all;
Or follow through the self-same gate,
Thou, the founder of the state.”

↖

1024. The heart, where the blood takes the “virtue informative,” as stated in line 40. ↲

1025. The vegetative soul, which in man differs from that in plants, as being in a state of development, while that of plants is complete already. ↲

1026. The vegetative becomes a sensitive soul. ↲

1027. “This was the opinion of Averroes,” says the *Ottimo*, “which is false, and contrary to the Catholic faith.”

In the language of the Schools, the Possible Intellect, *intellectus possibilis*, is the faculty which receives impressions through the senses, and forms from them pictures or *phantasmata* in the mind. The Active Intellect, *intellectus agens*, draws from these pictures various ideas, notions, and conclusions. They represent the Understanding and the Reason. ↲

1028. God. ↲

1029. Redi, “Bacchus in Tuscany”:

“Such bright blood is a ray enkindled
Of that sun, in heaven that shines,
And has been left behind entangled
And caught in the net of the many vines.”

↖

1030. When Lachesis has spun out the thread of life. ↲

1031. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. CXVIII Art. 3:—

“*Anima intellectiva remanet destructo corpore.*”



1032. Either upon the shores of Acheron or of the Tiber. [←](#)

1033. *Aeneid*, VI 723, Davidson's Tr.:—

“In the first place, the spirit within nourishes the heavens, the earth, and watery plains, the moon's enlightened orb, and the Titanian stars; and the mind, diffused through all the members, actuates the whole frame, and mingles with the vast body of the universe. Thence the race of men and beasts, the vital principles of the flying kind, and the monsters which the ocean breeds under its smooth plain. These principles have the active force of fire, and are of a heavenly original, so far as they are not clogged by noxious bodies, blunted by earthborn limbs and dying members. Hence they fear and desire, grieve and rejoice; and, shut up in darkness and a gloomy prison, lose sight of their native skies. Even when with the last beams of light their life is gone, yet not every ill, nor all corporeal stains, are quite removed from the unhappy beings; and it is absolutely necessary that many imperfections which have long been joined to the soul should be in marvellous ways increased and riveted therein. Therefore are they afflicted with punishments, and pay the penalties of their former ills. Some, hung on high, are spread out to the empty winds; in others, the guilt not done away is washed out in a vast watery abyss, or burned away in fire. We each endure his own manes, thence are we conveyed along the spacious Elysium, and we, the happy few, possess the fields of bliss; till length of time, after the fixed period is elapsed, hath done away the inherent stain, and hath left the pure celestial reason, and the fiery energy of the simple spirit.”

←

1034. “God of clemency supreme”; the church hymn, sung at matins on Saturday morning, and containing a prayer for purity. ←

1035. Luke 1:34:—

“Then said Mary unto the angel. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”

←

1036. Helice, or Callisto, was a daughter of Lycaon, king of Arcadia. She was one of the attendant nymphs of Diana, who discarded her on account of an amour with Jupiter, for which Juno turned her into a bear. Arcas was the offspring of this amour. Jupiter changed them to the constellations of the Great and Little Bear.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, Addison’s Tr.:—

“But now her son had fifteen summers told,
Fierce at the chase, and in the forest bold;
When, as he beat the woods in quest of prey,
He chanced to rouse his mother where she lay.
She knew her son, and kept him in her sight,
And fondly gazed: the boy was in a fright,
And aimed a pointed arrow at her breast,
And would have slain his mother in the beast;
But Jove forbad, and snatched them through the air
In whirlwinds up to Heaven, and fixed them there;
Where the new constellations nightly rise,
And add a lustre to the Northern skies,

“When Juno saw the rival in her height,
Spangled with stars, and circled round with light,
She sought old Ocean in his deep abodes,
And Tethys, both revered among the gods.
They ask what brings her there: ‘Ne’er ask,’ says she,
‘What brings me here; Heaven is no place for me.

You'll see, when Night has covered all things o'er,
Jove's starry bastard and triumphant whore
Usurp the heavens; you'll see them proudly roll
In their new orbs, and brighten all the pole.””

✉

1037. The punishment of the sin of Lust. ✉

1038. It is near sunset, and the western sky is white, as the sky always is in
the neighborhood of the sun. ✉

1039. A ghostly or spiritual body. ✉

1040. Pasiphae, wife of Minos, king of Crete, and mother of the Minotaur.
Virgil, *Eclogue VI* 45, Davidson's Tr.:—

“And he soothes Pasiphae in her passion for the snow-white bull: happy woman if herds had never been! Ah, ill-fated maid, what madness seized thee? The daughters of Proetus with imaginary lowings filled the fields; yet none of them pursued such vile embraces of a beast, however they might dread the plough about their necks, and often feel for horns on their smooth foreheads. Ah, ill-fated maid, thou now art roaming on the mountains! He, resting his snowy side on the soft hyacinth, ruminates the blenched herbs under some gloomy oak, or courts some female in the numerous herd.””

✉

1041. The Riphæan mountains are in the north of Russia. The sands are the
sands of the deserts. ✉

1042. Beatrice. ✉

1043. The highest heaven. *Paradiso XXVII.* ✉

1044. In one of Caesar's triumphs the Roman soldiery around his chariot called him "Queen"; thus reviling him for his youthful debaucheries with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia. [←](#)

1045. The cow made by Daedalus. [←](#)

1046. Guido Guinicelli, the best of the Italian poets before Dante, flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century. He was a native of Bologna, but of his life nothing is known. His most celebrated poem is a Canzone on the Nature of Love, which goes far to justify the warmth and tenderness of Dante's praise. Rossetti, *Early Italian Poets*, p. 24, gives the following version of it, under the title of "The Gentle Heart":—

"Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love.
For with the sun, at once,
So sprang the light immediately; nor was
Its birth before the sun's.
And Love hath his effect in gentleness
Of very self; even as
Within the middle fire the heat's excess.

"The fire of Love comes to the gentle heart
Like as its virtue to a precious stone;
To which no star its influence can impart
Till it is made a pure thing by the sun:
For when the sun hath smit
From out its essence that which there was vile,
The star endoweth it.
And so the heart created by God's breath
Pure, true, and clean from guile,
A woman, like a star, enamoreth.

"In gentle heart Love for like reason is
For which the lamp's high flame is fanned and bowed:

Clear, piercing bright, it shines for its own bliss;
Nor would it burn there else, it is so proud.
For evil natures meet
With Love as it were water met with fire,
As cold abhorring heat.
Through gentle heart Love doth a track divine—
Like knowing like; the same
As diamond runs through iron in the mine.

“The sun strikes full upon the mud all day;
It remains vile, nor the sun’s worth is less.
‘By race I am gentle,’ the proud man doth say:
He is the mud, the sun is gentleness.
Let no man predicate
That aught the name of gentleness should have,
Even in a king’s estate,
Except the heart there be a gentle man’s.
The star-beam lights the wave—
Heaven holds the star and the star’s radiance.

“God, in the understanding of high Heaven,
Burns more than in our sight the living sun:
There to behold His Face unveiled is given;
And Heaven, whose will is homage paid to One,
Fulfils the things which live
In God, from the beginning excellent.
So should my lady give
That truth which in her eyes is glorified,
On which her heart is bent,
To me whose service waiteth at her side.

“My lady, God shall ask, ‘What daredst thou?’
(When my soul stands with all her acts reviewed;)
‘Thou passedst Heaven, into My sight, as now,
To make Me of vain love similitude.
To Me doth praise belong,
And to the Queen of all the realm of grace

Who endeth fraud and wrong.'
Then may I plead: 'As though from Thee he came,
Love wore an angel's face:
Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame.'"



1047. Hypsipyle was discovered and rescued by her sons Eumenius and Thoas, (whose father was the "bland Jason," as Statius calls him,) just as King Lycurgus in his great grief was about to put her to death for neglecting the care of his child, who through her neglect had been stung by a serpent.

Statius, *Thebaid*, V 949, says it was Tydeus who saved Hysipyle:—

"But interposing Tydeus rushed between,
And with his shield protects the Lemnian queen."



1048. In the old Romance languages the name of *prosa* was applied generally to all narrative poems, and particularly to the monorhythmic romances. Thus Gonzalo de Berceo, a Spanish poet of the thirteenth century, begins a poem on the *Vida del Glorioso Confessor Santo Domingo de Silos*:—

"De un confessor Sancto quiero fer una prosa,
Quiero fer una prosa en roman paladino,
En qual suele el pueblo fablar á su vecino,
Ca non so tan letrado per fer otro Latino."



1049. Gerault de Berneil of Limoges, born of poor parents, but a man of talent and learning, was one of the most famous Troubadours of the thirteenth century. The old Provençal biographer, quoted by Raynouard, *Choix de Poésies*, V 166, says:—

“He was a better poet than any who preceded or followed him, and was therefore called the Master of the Troubadours.... He passed his winters in study, and his summers in wandering from court to court with two minstrels who sang his songs.”

The following specimen of his poems is from [Taylor’s] *Lays of the Minnesingers and Troubadours*, p. 247. It is an *Aubade*, or song of the morning:—

“Companion dear! or sleeping or awaking,
 Sleep not again! for lo! the morn is nigh,
And in the east that early star is breaking,
 The day’s forerunner, known unto mine eye;
 The morn, the morn is near.

“Companion dear! with carols sweet I call thee;
 Sleep not again! I hear the birds’ blithe song
Loud in the woodlands; evil may befall thee,
 And jealous eyes awaken, tarrying long,
 Now that the morn is near.

“Companion dear! forth from the window looking,
 Attentive mark the signs of yonder heaven;
Judge if aright I read what they betoken:
 Thine all the loss, if vain the warning given;
 The morn, the morn is near.

“Companion dear! since thou from hence wert straying,
 Nor sleep nor rest these eyes have visited;
My prayers unceasing to the Virgin paying,
 That thou in peace thy backward way might tread.
 The morn, the morn is near.

“Companion dear! hence to the fields with me!
 Me thou forbad’st to slumber through the night,
And I have watched that livelong night for thee;
 But thou in song or me hast no delight,

And now the morn is near.

ANSWER.

“Companion dear! so happily sojourning,
So blest am I, I care not forth to speed:
Here brightest beauty reigns, her smiles adorning
Her dwelling place—then wherefore should I heed
The morn or jealous eyes?”

According to Nostrodamus he died in 1278. Notwithstanding his great repute, Dante gives the palm of excellence to Arnaud Daniel, his rival and contemporary. But this is not the general verdict of literary history.

↵

1050. Fra Guittone d' Arezzo. See [note 1011](#). ↵

1051. Venturi has the indiscretion to say:—

“This is a disgusting compliment after the manner of the French; in the Italian fashion we should say, ‘You will do me a favor, if you will tell me your name.’”

Whereupon Biagioli thunders at him in this wise:—

“Infamous dirty dog that you are, how can you call this a compliment after the manner of the French? How can you set off against it what any cobbler might say? Away! and a murrain on you!”

↵

1052. Arnaud Daniel, the Troubadour of the thirteenth century, whom Dante lauds so highly, and whom Petrarca calls “the Grand Master of Love,” was born of a noble family at the castle of Ribeyrac in Périgord. Millot, *Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*, II 479, says of him:—

“In all ages there have been false reputations, founded on some individual judgment, whose authority has prevailed without examination, until at last criticism discusses, the truth penetrates, and the phantom of prejudice vanishes. Such has been the reputation of Arnaud Daniel.”

Raynouard confirms this judgment, and says that, “in reading the works of this Troubadour, it is difficult to conceive the causes of the great celebrity he enjoyed during his life.”

Arnaud Daniel was the inventor of the *Sestina*, a song of six stanzas of six lines each, with the same rhymes repeated in all, though arranged in different and intricate order, which must be seen to be understood. He was also author of the metrical romance of *Lancillotto*, or Launcelot of the Lake, to which Dante doubtless refers in his expression *prose di romanzi*, or proses of romance. The following anecdote is from the old Provençal authority, quoted both by Millot and Raynouard, and is thus translated by Miss Costello, *Early Poetry of France*, p. 37:—

“Arnaud visited the court of Richard Coeur de Lion in England, and encountered there a jongleur, who defied him to a trial of skill, and boasted of being able to make more difficult rhymes than Arnaud, a proficiency on which he chiefly prided himself. He accepted the challenge, and the two poets separated, and retired to their respective chambers to prepare for the contest. The Muse of Arnaud was not propitious, and he vainly endeavored to string two rhymes together. His rival, on the other hand, quickly caught the inspiration. The king had allowed ten days as the term of preparation, five for composition, and the remainder for learning it by heart to sing before the court. On the third day the jongleur declared that he had finished his poem, and was ready to recite it, but Arnaud replied that he had not yet thought of his. It was the jongleur’s custom to repeat his verses out loud every day, in order to learn them better, and Arnaud, who was in vain endeavoring to devise some means to save himself from

the mockery of the court at being outdone in this contest, happened to overhear the jongleur singing. He went to his door and listened, and succeeded in retaining the words and the air. On the day appointed they both appeared before the king. Arnaud desired to be allowed to sing first, and immediately gave the song which the jongleur had composed. The latter, stupefied with astonishment, could only exclaim: ‘It is my song, it is my song.’ ‘Impossible!’ cried the king; but the jongleur, persisting, requested Richard to interrogate Arnaud, who would not dare, he said, to deny it. Daniel confessed the fact, and related the manner in which the affair had been conducted, which amused Richard far more than the song itself. The stakes of the wager were restored to each, and the king loaded them both with presents.”

According to Nostrodamus, Arnaud died about 1189. There is no other reason for making him speak in Provençal than the evident delight which Dante took in the sound of the words, and the peculiar flavor they give to the close of the canto. Raynouard says that the writings of none of the Troubadours have been so disfigured by copyists as those of Arnaud. This would seem to be true of the very lines which Dante writes for him; as there are at least seven different readings of them.

Here Venturi has again the indiscretion to say that Arnaud answers Dante in “a kind of *lingua-franca*, part Provençal and part Catalan, joining together the perfidious French with the vile Spanish, perhaps to show that Arnaud was a clever speaker of the two.” And again Biagioli suppresses him with “that unbridled beast of a Venturi,” and this “most potent argument of his presumptuous ignorance and impertinence.” ↵

1053. Translation:—

So pleases me your courteous demand,
I cannot and I will not hide me from you.
I am Arnaut, who weep and singing go;
Contrite I see the folly of the past,

And joyous see the hoped-for day before me.
Therefore do I implore you, by that power
Which guides you to the summit of the stairs,
Be mindful to assuage my suffering!

✉

1054. The description of the Seventh and last Circle continued.
Cowley, “Hymn to Light”:—

“Say from what golden quivers of the sky
Do all thy winged arrows fly?”

✉

1055. When the sun is rising at Jerusalem, it is setting on the Mountain of Purgatory; it is midnight in Spain, with Libra in the meridian, and noon in India.

“A great labyrinth of words and things,” says Venturi, “meaning only that the sun was setting!” and this time the “*dolce pedagogo*” Biagioli lets him escape without the usual reprimand. ✉

1056. Matthew 5:8:—

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

✉

1057. With the hands clasped and turned palm downwards, and the body straightened backward in attitude of resistance. ✉

1058. *Inferno* XVII. ✉

1059. Knowing that he ought to confide in Virgil and go forward. ✉

1060. The story of the Babylonian lovers, whose trysting-place was under the white mulberry-tree near the tomb of Ninus, and whose blood changed

the fruit from white to purple, is too well known to need comment.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV, Eusden's Tr.:—

“At Thisbe’s name awaked, he opened wide
His dying eyes; with dying eyes he tried
On her to dwell, but closed them slow and died.”

↲

1061. Statius had for a long while been between Virgil and Dante. ↲

1062. Matthew 25:34:—

“Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand.
Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

↲

1063. Dr. Furness’s “Hymn”:—

“Slowly by God’s hand unfurled,
Down around the weary world
Falls the darkness.”

↲

1064. Evening of the Third Day of Purgatory. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV
598:—

“Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad:
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus, that led

The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.”



1065. The vision which Dante sees is a foreshadowing of Matilda and Beatrice in the Terrestrial Paradise. In the Old Testament Leah is a symbol of the Active life, and Rachel of the Contemplative; as Martha and Mary are in the New Testament, and Matilda and Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*.

“Happy is that house,” says Saint Bernard, “and blessed is that congregation, where Martha still complaineth of Mary.”

Dante says in the *Convito*, IV 17:—

“Truly it should be known that we can have in this life two felicities, by following two different and excellent roads, which lead thereto; namely, the Active life and the Contemplative.”

And Owen Feltham in his *Resolves*:—

“The mind can walk beyond the sight of the eye, and, though in a cloud, can lift us into heaven while we live. Meditation is the soul’s perspective glass, whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God as if he were nearer hand. I persuade no man to make it his whole life’s business. We have bodies as well as souls. And even this world, while we are in it, ought somewhat to be cared for. As those states are likely to flourish, where execution follows sound advisements, so is man, when contemplation is seconded by action. Contemplation generates; action propagates. Without the first, the latter is defective. Without the last, the first is but abortive and

embryous. Saint Bernard compares contemplation to Rachel, which was the more fair; but action to Leah, which was the more fruitful. I will neither always be busy and doing, nor ever shut up in nothing but thoughts. Yet that which some would call idleness, I will call the sweetest part of my life, and that is, my thinking.”



1066. Venus, the morning star, rising with the constellation Pisces, two hours before the sun. [←](#)

1067. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 221:—

“This vision of Rachel and Leah has been always, and with unquestionable truth, received as a type of the Active and Contemplative life, and as an introduction to the two divisions of the Paradise which Dante is about to enter. Therefore the unwearied spirit of the Countess Matilda is understood to represent the Active life, which forms the felicity of Earth; and the spirit of Beatrice the Contemplative life, which forms the felicity of Heaven. This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain; but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe: Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *her own* Labor. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *her own* Image. These are the types of the Unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of Man. But Beatrice and Matilda are the same powers, glorified. And how are they glorified? Leah took delight in her own labor; but Matilda, *in operibus manuum Tuarum—in God's labor*: Rachel, in the sight of her own face; Beatrice, in the sight of *God's face*.”



1068. The morning of the Fourth Day of Purgatory. [←](#)

1069. Happiness. [←](#)

1070. The Terrestrial Paradise. Compare Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV 214:—

“In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained:
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to Life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath Ingulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears;
And now, divided into four main streams,
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote

The open field, and where the unpierced shade
Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
Others, whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed;
Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store;
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant: meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
the trembling leaves; while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring.”



1071. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 219:—

“As Homer gave us an ideal landscape, which even a god might have been pleased to behold, so Dante gives us, fortunately, an ideal landscape, which is specially intended for the terrestrial paradise. And it will doubtless be with some surprise, after our reflections above on the general tone of Dante’s feelings, that we find ourselves here first entering a *forest*, and that even a *thick* forest....

“This forest, then, is very like that of Colonos in several respects—in its peace and sweetness, and number of birds; it differs from it only in letting a light breeze through it, being therefore somewhat thinner than the Greek wood; the tender lines which tell of the voices of the birds mingling with the wind, and of the leaves all turning one way before it, have been more or less copied by every poet since Dante’s time. They are, so far as I know, the sweetest passage of wood description which exists in literature.”

Homer’s ideal landscape, here referred to, is in *Odyssey* V, where he describes the visit of Mercury to the Island of Calypso. It is thus translated by Buckley:—

“Immediately then he bound his beautiful sandals beneath his feet, ambrosial, golden; which carried him both over the moist wave, and over the boundless earth, with the breath of the wind.... Then he rushed over the wave like a bird, a seagull, which, hunting for fish in the terrible bays of the barren sea, dips frequently its wings in the brine; like unto this Mercury rode over many waves. But when he came to the distant island, then, going from the blue sea, he went to the continent; until he came to the great cave in which the fair-haired Nymph dwelt; and he found her within. A large fire was burning on the hearth, and at a distance the smell of well-cleft cedar, and of frankincense, that were burning, shed odor through the island: but she within was singing with a beautiful voice, and, going over the web, wove with a golden shuttle. But a flourishing wood sprung up around her grot, alder and poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress. There also birds with spreading wings slept, owls and hawks, and wide tongued crows of the ocean, to which maritime employments are a care. There a vine in its prime was spread about the hollow grot, and it flourished with clusters. But four fountains flowed in succession with white water, turned near one

another, each in different ways; but around there flourished soft meadows of violets and of parsley. There indeed even an immortal coming would admire it when he beheld, and would be delighted in his mind; there the messenger, the slayer of Argus, standing, admired.”

And again, at the close of the same book, where Ulysses reaches the shore at Phaeacia:—

“Then he hastened to the wood; and found it near the water in a conspicuous place, and he came under two shrubs, which sprang from the same place; one of wild olive, the other of olive. Neither the strength of the moistly blowing winds breathes through them, nor has the shining sun ever struck them with its beams, nor has the shower penetrated entirely through them: so thick were they grown entangled with one another; under which Ulysses came.”

The wood of Colonos is thus described in one of the Choruses of the *Oedipus Coloneus* of Sophocles, Oxford Tr., Anon.:—

“Thou hast come, O stranger, to the seats of this land, renowned for the steed; to seats the fairest on earth, the chalky Colonus; where the vocal nightingale, chief abounding, trills her plaintive note in the green vales, tenanting the dark-hued ivy and the leafy grove of the god, untrodden [by mortal foot], teeming with fruits, impervious to the sun, and unshaken by the winds of every storm; where Bacchus ever roams in revelry companioning his divine nurses. And ever day by day the narcissus, with its beauteous clusters, burst into bloom by heaven’s dew, the ancient coronet of the mighty goddesses, and the saffron with golden ray; nor do the sleepless founts that feed the channels of Cephissus fail, but ever, each day, it rushes o’er the plains with its stainless wave, fertilizing the bosom of the earth; nor have the choirs of the Muses spurned this clime; nor Venus, too,

of the golden rein. And there is a tree, such as I hear not to have ever sprung in the land of Asia, nor in the mighty Doric island of Pelops, a tree unplanted by hand, of spontaneous growth, terror of the hostile spear, which flourishes chiefly in this region, the leaf of the azure olive that nourishes our young. This shall neither any one in youth nor in old age, marking for destruction, and having laid it waste with his hand, set its divinity at naught; for the eye that never closes of Morian Jove regards it, and the blue-eyed Minerva.”

We have also Homer’s description of the Garden of Alcinoüs, *Odyssey*, VII, Buckley’s Tr.:—

“But without the hall there is a large garden, near the gates, of four acres; but around it a hedge was extended on both sides. And there tall, flourishing trees grew, pears, and pomegranates, and apple-trees producing beautiful fruit, and sweet figs, and flourishing olives. Of these the fruit never perishes, nor does it fail in winter or summer, lasting throughout the whole year; but the west wind ever blowing makes some bud forth, and ripens others. Pear grows old after pear, apple after apple, grape also after grape, and fig after fig. There a fruitful vineyard was planted: one part of this ground, exposed to the sun in a wide place, is dried by the sun; and some [grapes] they are gathering, and others they are treading, and further on are unripe grapes, having thrown off the flower, and others are slightly changing color. And there are all kinds of beds laid out in order, to the furthest part of the ground, flourishing throughout the whole year: and in it are two fountains, one is spread through the whole garden, but the other on the other side goes under the threshold of the hall to the lofty house, from whence the citizens are wont to draw water.”

Dante's description of the Terrestrial Paradise will hardly fail to recall that of Mount Acidale in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, VI x 6:—

“It was an Hill plaste in an open plaine,
That round about was bordered with a wood
Of matchlesse hight, that seemed th' earth to disdaine;
In which all trees of honour stately stood,
And did all winter as in sommer bud,
Spredding pavilions for the birds to bowre,
Which in their lower braunches sung aloud;
And in their tops the soring hauke did towre,
Sitting like king of fowlcs in maicsty and powre.

“And at the foote thereof a gentle flud
His silver waves did softly tumble downe,
Unmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud;
Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne,
Thereto approch; ne filth mote therein drowne:
But Nymphcs and Faeries by the bancks did sit
In the woods shade which did the waters crowne,
Keeping all noysome things away from it,
And to the waters fall tuning their accents fit.

“And on the top thereof a spacious plaine
Did spred it selfe, to serve to all delight,
Either to daunce, when they to daunce would faine,
Or else to course-about their bases light;
Ne ought there wanted, which for pleasure might
Desired be, or thence to banish bale:
So pleasauntly the Hill with equall hight
Did seeme to overlooke the lowly vale;
Therefore it rightly cleped was Mount Acidale.”

See also Tasso's Garden of Armida, in the *Gerusalemme*, XVI. ↪

1072. Chiassi is on the seashore near Ravenna. “Here grows a spacious pine forest,” says Covino, *Descr. Geog.*, p. 39, “which stretches along the sea between Ravenna and Cervia.” ↪

1073. The river Lethe. [←](#)

1074. This lady, who represents the Active life to Dante's waking eyes, as Leah had done in his vision, and whom Dante afterwards. Canto XXXIII 119, calls Matilda, is generally supposed by the commentators to be the celebrated Countess Matilda, daughter of Boniface, Count of Tuscany, and wife of Guelf, of the house of Suabia. Of this marriage Villani, IV 21, gives a very strange account, which, if true, is a singular picture of the times. Napier, *Florentine History*, I Ch. 4 and 6, gives these glimpses of the Countess:—

“This heroine died in 1115, after a reign of active exertion for herself and the Church against the Emperors, which generated the infant and as yet nameless factions of Guelf and Ghibelline. Matilda endured this contest with all the enthusiasm and constancy of a woman, combined with a manly courage that must ever render her name respectable, whether proceeding from the bigotry of the age, or to oppose imperial ambition in defence of her own defective title. According to the laws of that time, she could not as a female inherit her father's states, for even male heirs required a royal confirmation. Matilda therefore, having no legal right, feared the Emperor and clung to the Popes, who already claimed, among other prerogatives, the supreme disposal of kingdoms....

“The Church had ever come forward as the friend of her house, and from childhood she had breathed an atmosphere of blind and devoted submission to its authority; even when only fifteen she had appeared in arms against its enemies, and made two successful expeditions to assist Pope Alexander the Second during her mother's lifetime.

“No wonder, then, that in a superstitious age, when monarchs trembled at an angry voice from the Lateran, the habits of early youth should have mingled with every action of Matilda's life, and spread an agreeable *mirage* over the prospect of her eternal salvation: the power that

tamed a Henry's pride, a Barbarossa's fierceness, and afterwards withstood the vast ability of a Frederic, might without shame have been reverenced by a girl whose feelings so harmonized with the sacred strains of ancient tradition and priestly dignity. But from whatever motive, the result was a continual aggrandizement of ecclesiastics; in prosperity and adversity; during life and after death; from the lowliest priest to the proudest pontiff.

"The fearless assertion of her own independence by successful struggles with the Emperor was an example not overlooked by the young Italian communities under Matilda's rule, who were already accused by imperial legitimacy of political innovation and visionary notions of government....

"Being then at a place called Monte Baroncione, and in her sixty-ninth year, this celebrated woman breathed her last, after a long and glorious reign of incessant activity, during which she displayed a wisdom, vigor, and determination of character rarely seen even in men. She bequeathed to the Church all those patrimonial estates of which she had previously disposed by an act of gift to Gregory the Seventh, without, however, any immediate royal power over the cities and other possessions thus given, as her will expresses it, 'for the good of her soul, and the souls of her parents.'

"Whatever may now be thought of her chivalrous support, her bold defence, and her deep devotion to the Church, it was in perfect harmony with the spirit of that age, and has formed one of her chief merits with many even in the present. Her unflinching adherence to the cause she had so conscientiously embraced was far more noble than the Emperor Henry's conduct. Swinging between the extremes of unmeasured insolence and abject humiliation, he died a victim to Papal influence over superstitious minds; an influence which, amongst other debasing lessons, then taught the world that a breach of the most sacred ties and dearest affections of human

nature was one means of gaining the approbation of a Being who is all truth and beneficence.

“Matilda’s object was to strengthen the chief spiritual against the chief temporal power, but reserving her own independence; a policy subsequently pursued, at least in spirit, by the Guelphic states of Italy. She therefore protected subordinate members of the Church against feudal chieftains, and its head against the feudal Emperor. True to her religious and warlike character, she died between the sword and the crucifix, and two of her last acts, even when the hand of death was already cold on her brow, were the chastisement of revolted Mantua, and the midnight celebration of Christ’s nativity in the depth of a freezing and unusually inclement winter.”



1075. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* V, Maynwaring’s Tr.:—

“Here, while young Proserpine, among the maids,
Diverts herself in these delicious shades;
While like a child with busy speed and care
She gathers lilies here, and violets there;
While first to fill her little lap she strives,
Hell’s grizzly monarch at the shade arrives;
Sees her thus sporting on the flowery green,
And loves the blooming maid, as soon as seen.
His urgent flame impatient of delay,
Swift as his thought he seized the beauteous prey,
And bore her in his sooty car away.
The frightened goddess to her mother cries,
But all in vain, for now far off she flies.
Far she behind her leaves her virgin train;
To them too cries, and cries to them in vain.
And while with passion she repeats her call,
The violets from her lap, and lilies fall:
She misses them, poor heart! and makes new moan;

Her lilies, ah! are lost, her violets gone.”



1076. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X, Eusden's Tr.:—

“For Cytherëa’s lips while Cupid prest,
He with a heedless arrow razed her breast.
The goddess felt it, and, with fury stung,
The wanton mischief from her bosom flung:
Yet thought at first the danger slight, but found
The dart too faithful, and too deep the wound.
Fired with a mortal beauty, she disdains
To haunt th’ Idalian mount, or Phrygian plains.
She seeks not Cnidos, nor her Paphian shrines,
Nor Amathus, that teems with brazen mines:
Even Heaven itself with all its sweets unsought,
Adonis far a sweeter Heaven is thought.”



1077. When Xerxes invaded Greece he crossed the Hellespont on a bridge of boats with an army of five million. So say the historians. On his return he crossed it in a fishing boat almost alone—"a warning to all human arrogance."

Leander naturally hated the Hellespont, having to swim it so many times. The last time, according to Thomas Hood, he met with a sea nymph, who, enamored of his beauty, carried him to the bottom of the sea. See *Hero and Leander*, stanza 45:—

“His eyes are blinded with the sleety brine,
His ears are deafened with the wildering noise;
He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice,
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero’s name dies bubbling on his lips.

“Look how a man is lowered to his grave,

A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave,
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap;
Anon he is all gone, and nothing seen,
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

“And where he swam, the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.”



1078. Psalm 92:4:—

“For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I
will triumph in the works of thy hands.”



1079. Canto XXI 46:—

“Because that neither rain, nor hail, nor snow,
Nor dew, nor hoar-frost any higher falls
Than the short, little stairway of three steps.”



1080. Only six hours, according to Adam's own account in *Paradiso* XXI
139:—

“Upon the mount which highest o'er the wave
Rises was I, with life or pure or sinful,
From the first hour to that which is the second,
As the sun changes quadrant, to the sixth.”

↖

1081. Above the gate described in Canto IX. ↲
1082. Virgil and Statius smile at this allusion to the dreams of poets. ↲
1083. The Terrestrial Paradise and the Apocalyptic Procession of the Church Triumphant. ↲
1084. Psalm 32:1:—

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

↖

1085. Counted together, their steps were not a hundred in all. ↲
1086. The Muse of Astronomy, or things celestial, represented as crowned with stars and robed in azure. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 1, makes the same invocation:—

“Descend from heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell’st; but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared, or fountain flowed,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song.”

↖

1087. The general form which objects may have in common, and by which they resemble each other. [←](#)

1088. The faculty which lends discourse to reason is apprehension, or the faculty by which things are first conceived. See Canto XVIII 22:—

“Your apprehension from some real thing
An image draws, and in yourselves displays it,
So that it makes the soul turn unto it.”

[←](#)

1089. Revelation 1:12, 20:—

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks . . . And the seven candlesticks . . . are the seven churches.”

Some commentators interpret them as the seven Sacraments of the Church; others, as the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. [←](#)

1090. Delia or Diana, the moon; and her girdle, the halo, sometimes seen around it. [←](#)

1091. Revelation 4:4:—

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”

These four and twenty elders are supposed to symbolize here the four and twenty books of the Old Testament. The crown of lilies indicates the purity of faith and doctrine. [←](#)

1092. The salutation of the angel to the Virgin Mary. Luke 1:28:—

“Blessed art thou among women.”

Here the words are made to refer to Beatrice. ↲

1093. The four Evangelists, of whom the four mysterious animals in Ezekiel are regarded as symbols. Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 99:—

“The general application of the Four Creatures to the Four Evangelists is of much earlier date than the separate and individual application of each symbol, which has varied at different times; that propounded by St. Jerome, in his commentary on Ezekiel, has since his time prevailed universally. Thus, then—

“To St. Matthew was given the CHERUB, or human semblance, because he begins his Gospel with the human generation of Christ; or, according to others, because in his Gospel the human nature of the Saviour is more insisted on than the divine. In the most ancient mosaics, the type is human, not angelic, for the head is that of a man with a beard.

“St. Mark has the LION, because he has set forth the royal dignity of Christ; or, according to others, because he begins with the mission of the Baptist—*‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness,’*—which is figured by the lion: or, according to a third interpretation, the lion was allotted to St. Mark because there was, in the Middle Ages, a popular belief that the young of the lion was born dead, and after three days was awakened to vitality by the breath of its sire; some authors, however, represent the lion as vivifying his young, not by his breath, but by his roar. In either case the application is the same; the revival of the young lion was considered as symbolical of the resurrection, and Mark was commonly called the ‘historian of the resurrection.’ Another commentator observes that Mark begins his Gospel with ‘roaring,’—‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness’; and ends it fearfully with a curse—‘He that believeth not

shall be damned'; and that, therefore, his appropriate attribute is the most terrible of beasts, the lion.

"Luke has the Ox, because he has dwelt on the priesthood of Christ, the *ox* being the emblem of Sacrifice.

"John has the EAGLE, which is the symbol of the highest inspiration, because he soared upwards to the contemplation of the divine nature of the Saviour."



1094. Ezekiel 1:4:—

"And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof, as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass."



1095. In Revelation 4:8, they are described as having "each of them six wings"; in Ezekiel, as having only four. [←](#)

1096. The triumphal chariot is the Church. The two wheels are generally interpreted as meaning the Old and New Testaments; but Dante, *Paradiso XII* 106, speaks of them as St. Dominic and St. Francis. [←](#)

1097. The Griffin, half lion and half eagle, is explained by all the commentators as a symbol of Christ, in his divine and human nature. Didron, in his *Christian Iconography*, interprets it differently. He says, Millington's Tr., I 458:—

“The mystical bird of two colors is understood in the manuscript of Herrade to mean the Church; in Dante, the bi-formed bird is the representative of the Church, the Pope. The Pope, in fact, is both priest and king; he directs the souls and governs the persons of men; he reigns over things in heaven. The Pope, then, is but one single person in two natures, and under two forms; he is both eagle and lion. In his character of Pontiff, or as an eagle, he hovers in the heavens, and ascends even to the throne of God to receive his commands; as the lion or king he walks upon the earth in strength and power.”

He adds in a note:—

“Some commentators of Dante have supposed the griffin to be the emblem of Christ, who, in fact, is one single person with two natures; of Christ, in whom God and man are combined. But in this they are mistaken; there is, in the first place, a manifest impropriety in describing the car as drawn by God as by a beast of burden. It is very doubtful even whether Dante can be altogether freed from the imputation of a want of reverence in harnessing the Pope to the car of the Church.”



1098. The wings of the Griffin extend upward between the middle list or trail of splendor of the seven candles and the three outer ones on each side.



1099. The chariot of the sun, which Phaeton had leave to drive for a day, is thus described by Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, Addison’s Tr.:—

“A golden axle did the work uphold,
Gold was the beam, the wheels were orbed with gold.
The spokes in rows of silver pleased the sight,
The seat with parti-colored gems was bright;
Apollo shined amid the glare of light.”

[←](#)

1100. In smiting Phaeton with a thunderbolt. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II:—

“Jove called to witness every power above,
And even the god whose son the chariot drove,
That what he acts he is compelled to do,
Or universal ruin must ensue.
Straight he ascends the high ethereal throne,
From whence he used to dart his thunder down,
From whence his showers and storms he used to pour,
But now could meet with neither storm nor shower;
Then, aiming at the youth, with lifted hand,
Full at his head he hurled the forked brand,
In dreadful thund’rings. Thus th’ almighty sire
Suppressed the raging of the fires with fire.”

See also [note 247.](#) [←](#)

1101. The three Theological or Evangelical Virtues, Charity, Hope, and Faith. For the symbolism of colors in Art, see Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, quoted [note 658.](#) [←](#)

1102. The four Cardinal Virtues, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. They are clothed in purple to mark their nobility. Prudence is represented with three eyes, as looking at the past, the present, and the future. [←](#)

1103. St. Luke and St. Paul. [←](#)

1104. St. Luke is supposed to have been a physician; a belief founded on Colossians 4:14:—

“Luke, the beloved physician.”

The animal that nature holds most dear is man. [←](#)

1105. The sword with which St. Paul is armed is a symbol of warfare and martyrdom; "I bring not peace, but a sword." St. Luke's office was to heal; St. Paul's to destroy. Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 188, says:—

"At what period the sword was given to St. Paul as his distinctive attribute is with antiquaries a disputed point; certainly much later than the keys were given to Peter. If we could be sure that the mosaic on the tomb of Otho the Second, and another mosaic already described, had not been altered in successive restorations, these would be evidence that the sword was given to St. Paul as his attribute as early as the sixth century; but there are no monuments which can be absolutely trusted as regards the introduction of the sword before the end of the eleventh century; since the end of the fourteenth century it has been so generally adopted, that in the devotional effigies I can remember no instance in which it is omitted. When St. Paul is leaning on the sword, it expresses his martyrdom; when he holds it aloft, it expresses also his warfare in the cause of Christ: when two swords are given to him, one is the attribute, the other the emblem; but this double allusion does not occur in any of the older representations. In Italy I never met with St. Paul bearing two swords, and the only instance I can call to mind is the bronze statue by Peter Vischer, on the shrine of St. Sebald, at Nuremberg."



1106. The four Apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude, writers of the Canonical Epistles. The red flowers, with which their foreheads seem all aflame, are symbols of martyrdom. Massinger, *Virgin Martyr*, V 1:—

"What flowers are these?
In Dioclesian's gardens, the most beauteous
Compared with these are weeds."

←

1107. St. John, writer of the Apocalypse; here represented as asleep; as if he were “in the spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet.” Or perhaps the allusion may be to the belief of the early Christians that John did not die, but was sleeping till the second coming of Christ. This subject has been represented in medieval Art as follows. Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 139:—

“St. John, habited in priest’s garments, descends the steps of an altar into an open grave, in which he lays himself down, not in death, but in sleep, until the coming of Christ; ‘being reserved alive with Enoch and Elijah (who also knew not death), to preach against the Antichrist in the last days.’ This fanciful legend is founded on the following text: ‘Peter, seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved following, saith unto Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him. If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die.’ (John 21:21, 22.)”

←

1108. Of this canto and those that follow. Barlow, *Study of the Divina Commedia*, p. 270, says:—

“Dante’s sublime pageant of the Church Militant is one of the most marvellous processions ever marshalled on paper. In the invention, arrangement, grouping, and coloring the poet has shown himself a great master in art, familiar with all the stately requirements of solemn shows, festivals, and triumphs. Whatever he may have gathered from the sacred records, and from classic writers, or seen in early mosaics, or witnessed in the streets of Florence with her joyous population, her May-day dancers, and the military pomp of her magnificent Carroccio, like the arc

of the covenant going forth with the host, has here been surpassed in invention and erudition, and a picture produced at once as original as it is impressive, as significant as it is grand. Petrarca was, probably, indebted to it for his ‘Trionfi,’ so frequently in favor with Italian artists.

“This canto with the four that follow form a poem which, though an essential portion of the *Divina Commedia*, may be separately considered as the continuation of the poetic vision mentioned in the *Vita Nuova*, and the fulfilment of the intention there expressed.

“It represents the symbolical passage of the Christian Church, preceded by the Hebrew dispensation, and followed by the disastrous effects of schism, and the corruptions induced by the unholy conduct of political Pontiffs. The soul of this solemn exhibition, the living and glorified principle of the beatitude which Religion pure and holy confers upon those who embrace it, is personified in the ‘Donna,’ to whom Dante from his earliest youth had been more or less devoted, the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, ‘*Loda di Dio vera*,’ who concentrates in herself the divine wisdom with which the Church is inspired, whom angels delight to honor, and whose advent on earth had been prepared from all eternity by the moral virtues.

“Beatrice is here presented as the principle of divine beatitude, or that which confers it, and bears a resemblance to the figure of the New Jerusalem seen by St. John descending from heaven ‘as a bride adorned for her husband’ (Rev. 21:2); a representation of which, in the manner of Raphael, occurs in one of the tapestries of the Vatican, and, though not arrayed in the colors of the Christian virtues. Faith, Hope, and Charity, white and green and red, as was Beatrice, may yet be regarded as a Roman version of her.”

Didron, describing the painting of the Triumph of Christ in the Church of Notre Dame de Brou, *Christian Iconography*, Millington's Tr., I 315, says:—

"In the centre of all rises the Hero of the Triumph, Jesus Christ, who is seated in an open car with four wheels. He alone is adorned with a nimbus formed of rays, departing from each point of the head, and which illumines everything around. With one glance he embraces the past which precedes, and the future which is to succeed him. His face resembles that drawn by Raphael and the masters of the period of Renaissance, agreeing with the description given by Lentulus and Damascenus; it is serious and gentle. In the centre of the chariot is placed a starry globe traversed by the ecliptic, on which the twelve signs of the zodiac are brilliantly figured. This globe is symbolic of the world, and forms a throne for Christ: the Son of God is seated on its summit. The car is placed upon four wheels, and drawn by the four attributes or symbols of the Evangelists. The angel of St. Matthew, and the eagle of St. John, are of celestial whiteness; the lion of St. Mark, and the ox of St. Luke, are of a reddish yellow, symbolizing the earth on which they dwell. The eagle and angel do, in fact, fly; while the lion and the ox walk. Yet upon the painted window all the four have wings. A rein of silver, passing round the neck of each of the four symbols, is attached to the pole of the chariot. The Church, represented by the four most elevated religious potentates, by the Pope, the Cardinal, the Archbishop, and Bishop, or by the four chief Fathers, St. Gregory, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine, drives the four-wheeled car, and, in conjunction with the Evangelists, urges it onward. Jesus guides his triumph, not holding reins, but shedding blessings from his right hand wherever he passes.

"The entire assemblage of persons represented on the window are seen marching onwards, singing with joy.

Within the spaces formed by the mullions which trellis the upper part of the window, forty-six angels are represented with long golden hair, white transparent robes, and wings of yellow, red, violet, and green; they are all painted on a background of azure, like the sky, and celebrate with blended voices, or with musical instruments, the glory of Christ. Some have in their hands instruments of different forms, others books of music. The four animals of the Evangelists seem with sonorous voice to swell the acclamations of the hosts of saints; the ox with his bellowing, the lion with his roar, the eagle with his cry, and the angel with his song, accompany the songs of the forty-six angels who fill the upper part of the window. At the head of the procession is an angel who leads the entire company, and, with a little cross which he holds in his hand, points out to all the Paradise they are to enter. Finally, twelve other angels, blue as the heaven into which they melt, join in adoration before the triumph of Christ....

“Dante has given a description of a similar triumph, but marked by some interesting differences. The Florentine poet formed his cortege of figures taken from the Apocalypse and Christian symbolism. At Brou, with the exception of the attributes of the Evangelists, everything is historical. In the sixteenth century, in fact, history began to predominate over symbolism, which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had reigned supreme. Dante, who was a politic poet, drew the triumph, not of Christ, but of the Church; the triumph of Catholicism rather than of Christianity. The chariot by which he represents the Church is widowed of Christ, whose figure is so important on the window of Brou; the chariot is empty, and Dante neither discovered this deficiency, nor was concerned to rectify it; for he was less anxious to celebrate Christ and his doctrine, for their own sake, than as connected with the organization and administration of the Church. He described the car as drawn by a griffin, thereby

representing the Pope, for the griffin unites in itself the characteristics of both eagle and lion. Now the Pope is also twofold in character; as priest he is the eagle floating in the air; as king, he is a lion, walking upon the earth. The Ultramontane poet regarded the Church, that is the Papacy, in the light of an absolute monarchy; not a limited monarchy as with us, and still less a republic, as amongst the schismatics of Greece and of the East. Consequently, while, at Brou, the Cardinal, the Archbishop, and Bishop assist the Pope in guiding the car of the Church, in the ‘Divina Commedia,’ the Pope is alone, and accepts of no assistance from the other great ecclesiastical dignitaries. At Brou the car is guided by the Evangelists, or by their attributes; ecclesiastical power is content merely to lend its aid. According to the Italian poet, the Evangelists, although present at the Triumph, do not conduct it; the Pope is himself the sole guide of the Church, and permits neither the Evangelists to direct nor ecclesiastics to assist him. The Pope seems to require no assistance; his eye and arm alone are sufficient for him.”



1109. In this canto Beatrice appears.

The Seven Stars, or Septentrion of the highest heaven, are the seven lights that lead the procession, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which all men are guided safely in things spiritual, as the mariner is by the Septentrion, or Seven Stars of the Ursa Minor, two of which are called the “Wardens of the Pole,” and one of which is the Cynosure, or Pole Star. These lights precede the triumphal chariot, as in our heaven the Ursa Minor precedes, or is nearer the centre of rest, than the Ursa Major or Charles’s Wain.

In the Northern Mythology the God Thor is represented as holding these constellations in his hand. The old Swedish *Rhyme Chronicle*, describing the statues in the church of Upsala, says:—

“The God Thor was the highest of them;

He sat naked as a child,
Seven stars in his hand and Charles's Wain.

Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I ii 1:—

“By this the northern wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme behind the steadfast starre
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To all that in the wide deep wandering arre.”

↲

1110. Song of Solomon 4:8:—

“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from
Lebanon.”

↲

1111. At the voice of so venerable an old man. ↲

1112. The cry of the multitude at Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Matthew 21:9:—

“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

↲

1113. *Aeneid*, VI 833:—

“Give me lilies in handfuls; let me scatter purple flowers.”

↲

1114. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I 194:—

“As when the sun new-risen
Shines through the horizontal misty air

Shorn of his beams.”



1115. It will be observed that Dante makes Beatrice appear clothed in the colors of the three Theological Virtues described in Canto XXIX 121. The white veil is the symbol of Faith; the green mantle, of Hope; the red tunic, of Charity. The crown of olive denotes wisdom. This attire somewhat resembles that given by artists to the Virgin. “The proper dress of the Virgin,” says Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, Introd., LIII, “is a close, red tunic, with long sleeves, and over this a blue robe or mantle.... Her head ought to be veiled.”

1116. Beatrice had been dead ten years at the date of the poem, 1300.

1117. Fully to understand and feel what is expressed in this line, the reader must call to mind all that Dante says in the *Vita Nuova* of his meetings with Beatrice, and particularly the first, which is thus rendered by Mr. Norton in his *New Life of Dante*, p. 20:—

“Nine times now, since my birth, the heaven of light had turned almost to the same point in its gyration, when first appeared before my eyes the glorious lady of my mind, who was called Beatrice by many who did not know why they thus called her. She had now been in this life so long, that in its course the starry heaven had moved toward the east one of the twelve parts of a degree; so that about the beginning of her ninth year she appeared to me, and I near the end of my ninth year saw her. She appeared to me clothed in a most noble color, a becoming and modest crimson, and she was girt and adorned in the style that became her extreme youth. At that instant, I say truly, the spirit of life, which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble with such violence, that it appeared fearfully in the least pulses, and, trembling, said these words: *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi!* ‘Behold a god, stronger than I, who, coming, shall rule me!’

“At that instant, the spirit of the soul, which dwells in the high chamber to which all the spirits of the senses bring their perceptions, began to marvel greatly, and, addressing the spirits of the sight, said these words: *Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra*—‘Now hath appeared your bliss.’ “At that instant the natural spirit, which dwells in that part where the nourishment is supplied, began to weep, and, weeping, said these words: *Heu miser! quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps*—‘Woe is me wretched! because frequently henceforth shall I be hindered.’

“From this time forward I say that Love lorded it over my soul, which had been thus quickly put at his disposal; and he began to exercise over me such control and such lordship, through the power which my imagination gave to him, that it behoved me to perform completely all his pleasure. He commanded me many times that I should seek to see this youthful angel, so that I in my boyhood often went seeking her, and saw her of such noble and praiseworthy deportment, that truly of her might be said that saying of the poet Homer: ‘She does not seem the daughter of mortal man, but of God.’ And though her image, which stayed constantly with me, inspired confidence in Love to hold lordship over me, yet it was of such noble virtue, that it never suffered that Love should rule without the faithful counsel of Reason in those matters in which such counsel could be useful.”



1118. Dante here translates Virgil’s own words, as he has done so many times before. *Aeneid*, IV 23:—

“*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammae.*”



1119. The Terrestrial Paradise lost by Eve. [←](#)

1120. Psalm 31:1, 8:—

“In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust... Thou hast set my feet in a large room.”



1121. *Aeneid*, VI 180:—

“Down drop the firs; crashes, by axes felled, the ilex; and the ashen rafters and the yielding oaks are cleft by wedges.”

And IX 87:—

“A wood... dark with gloomy firs, and rafters of the maple.”

Denistoun, *Mem. of the Duke of Urbino* I 4, says:—

“On the summit grew those magnificent pines, which gave to the district of Massa the epithet of ‘Trabaria,’ from the beams which were carried thence for the palaces of Rome, and which are noticed by Dante as

‘The living rafters
Upon the back of Italy.’”



1122. Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*, IV 3:—

“The fanned snow
That’s bolted by the northern blast twice o’er.”

And *Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

“High Taurus’ snow
Fanned with the eastern wind.”

←

1123. Which are formed in such lofty regions, that they are beyond human conception. ←

1124. Beatrice died in 1290, at the age of twenty-five. ←

1125. How far these self-accusations of Dante were justified by facts, and how far they may be regarded as expressions of a sensitive and excited conscience, we have no means of determining. It is doubtless but simple justice to apply to him the words which he applies to Virgil, Canto III 8:—

“O noble conscience, and without a stain,
How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!”

This should be borne in mind when we read what Dante says of his own shortcomings; as, for instance, in his conversation with his brother-in-law Forese, Canto XXIII 115:—

“If thou bring back to mind
What thou with me hast been and I with thee,
The present memory will be grievous still.”

But what shall we say of this sonnet addressed to Dante by his intimate friend, Guido Cavalcanti? Rossetti, *Early Italian Poets*, p. 358:—

“I come to thee by daytime constantly,
But in thy thoughts too much of baseness find:
Greatly it grieves me for thy gentle mind,
And for thy many virtues gone from thee.

It was thy wont to shun much company,
Unto all sorry concourse ill inclined:
And still thy speech of me, heartfelt and kind,
Had made me treasure up thy poetry.

But now I dare not, for thine abject life,
Make manifest that I approve thy rhymes;
Nor come I in such sort that thou may’st know.

Ah! prithee read this sonnet many times:
So shall that evil one who bred this strife
Be thrust from thy dishonored soul, and go.”

↖

1126. In this canto Dante, having made confession of his sins, is drawn by Matilda through the river Lethe. ↲
1127. Hitherto Beatrice has directed her discourse to her attendant handmaidens around the chariot. Now she speaks directly to Dante. ↲
1128. As in a castle or fortress. ↲
1129. As one fascinated and enamored with them. ↲
1130. The sword of justice is dulled by the wheel being turned against its edge. This is the usual interpretation; but a friend suggests that the allusion may be to the wheel of St. Catherine, which is studded with sword-blades. ↲
1131. The grief which is the cause of your weeping. ↲
1132. There is a good deal of gossiping among the commentators about this little girl or *Pargoletta*. Some suppose it to be the same as the Gentucca of Canto XXIV 37, and the Pargoletta of one of the poems in the *Canzoniere*, which in Mr. Lyell's translation runs as follows:—

“Ladies, behold a maiden fair, and young;
To you I come heaven's beauty to display,
And manifest the place from whence I am.
In heaven I dwelt, and thither shall return,
Joy to impart to angels with my light.
He who shall me behold nor be enamored,
Of Love shall never comprehend the charm;
For every pleasing gift was freely given,
When Nature sought the grant of me from him
Who willed that your companion I should be.

Each star upon my eyes its influence sheds,
And with its light and virtue I am blest:
Beauties are mine the world hath never seen,
For I obtained them in the realms above;
And ever must their essence rest unknown,
Unless through consciousness of him in whom
Love shall abide through pleasure of another.

These words a youthful angel bore inscribed
Upon her brow, whose vision we beheld;
And I, who to find safety gazed on her,
A risk incur that it may cost my life;
For I received a wound so deep and wide
From one I saw entrenched within her eyes,
That still I weep, nor peace I since have known.”

Others think the allusion is general. The *Ottimo* says:—

“Neither that young woman, whom in his ‘Rime’ he called
Pargoletta, nor that Lisetta, nor that other mountain
maiden, nor this one, nor that other.”

He might have added the lady of Bologna, of whom Dante sings in one of his sonnets:—

“And I may say
That in an evil hour I saw Bologna,
And that fair lady whom I looked upon.”

Buti gives a different interpretation of the word *pargoletta*, making it the same as *pargultà* or *pargolezza*, “childishness or indiscretion of youth.”

In all this unnecessary confusion one thing is quite evident. As Beatrice is speaking of the past, she could not possibly allude to Gentucca, who is spoken of as one who would make Lucca pleasant to Dante at some future time:—

“‘A maid is born, and wears not yet the veil,’
Began he, ‘who to thee shall pleasant make

My city, howsoever men may blame it.””

Upon the whole, the interpretation of the *Ottimo* is the most satisfactory, or at all events the least open to objection. [←](#)

1133. Proverbs 1:17:—

“Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.”

[←](#)

1134. Iarbas, king of Gaetulia, from whom Dido bought the land for building Carthage. [←](#)

1135. The angels described in Canto XXX 20, as

“Scattering flowers above and round about.”

[←](#)

1136. Matilda, described in Canto XXVIII 40:—

“A lady all alone, who went along
Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
With which her pathway was all painted over.”

[←](#)

1137. Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the river without a bridge:—

“Now I further saw that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over: the river was very deep. At the sight therefore of this river, the pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, ‘You must go through, or you cannot come at the gate.’ ...

“They then addressed themselves to the water, and, entering. Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said, ‘I sink in deep waters; the

billows go over my head, all his waves go over me.
Selah.’...

“Now upon the bank of the river, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore being come out of the river, they saluted them, saying, ‘We are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation.’”



1138. Psalms 51:7:—

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”



1139. The four attendant Nymphs on the left of the triumphal chariot. See Canto XXIX 130:—

“Upon the left hand four made holiday
Vested in purple.”



1140. See [note 537](#).

1141. These four Cardinal Virtues lead to Divine Wisdom, but the three Evangelical Virtues quicken the sight to penetrate more deeply into it.



1142. Standing upon the chariot still; she does not alight till line 36 of the next canto.

1143. The color of Beatrice’s eyes has not been passed over in silence by the commentators. Lani, in his “*Annotazioni*,” says:—

“They were of a greenish blue, like the color of the sea.”

Mechior Messirini, who thought he had discovered a portrait of Beatrice as old as the fourteenth century, affirms that she had “splendid brown eyes.” Dante here calls them emeralds; upon which the *Ottimo* comments thus:—

“Dante very happily introduces this precious stone, considering its properties, and considering that griffins watch over emeralds. The emerald is the prince of all green stones; no gem nor herb has greater greenness; it reflects an image like a mirror; increases wealth; is useful in litigation and to orators; is good for convulsions and epilepsy; preserves and strengthens the sight; restrains lust; restores memory; is powerful against phantoms and demons; calms tempests; stanches blood, and is useful to soothsayers.”

The beauty of green eyes, *ojuelos verdes*, is extolled by Spanish poets; and is not left unsung by poets of other countries. Lycophron in his “tenebrous poem” of “Cassandra,” says of Achilles:—

“Lo! the warlike eagle come,
Green of eye, and black of plume.”

And in one of the old French Mysteries, *Hist. Théat. Franç.*, I 176, Joseph describes the child Jesus as having

“*Les yeux vers, la chair blanche et tendre
Les cheveux blonds.*”

⬅

1144. Monster is here used in the sense of marvel or prodigy. ⏵

1145. Now as an eagle, now as a lion. The two natures, divine and human, of Christ are reflected in Theology, or Divine Wisdom. Didron, who thinks the Griffin a symbol of the Pope, applies this to his spiritual and temporal power:—

“As priest he is the eagle floating in the air; as king he is a lion walking on the earth.”

✉

1146. The Italian *Caribo*, like the English Carol or Roundelay, is both song and dance. Some editions read in this line “singing,” instead of “dancing.” ✉

1147. A mystical canto, in which is described the tree of the forbidden fruit, and other wonderful and mysterious things. ✉

1148. Beatrice had been dead ten years. ✉

1149. Goethe, *Hermann and Dorothea*, Cochrane’s Tr., p. 103:—

“Ev’n as the wanderer, who, ere the sun dips his orb in the ocean,
One last look still takes of the day-god, fast disappearing;
Then, amid rocks rude-piled, umbrageous forests, and
copsewoods,
Sees his similitude float, wherever he fixes his vision;
Finding it glancing before him, and dancing in magical
colors.”

✉

1150. A *disfrenata saetta*, an uncurbed arrow, like that which Pandarus shot at Menelaus, *Iliad*, IV 124:—

“The sharp-pointed arrow sprang forth, eager to rush among the crowd.”

✉

1151. Genesis 2:16:—

“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”

Some commentators suppose that Dante’s mystic tree is not only the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but also a symbol of the Roman Empire. ↵

1152. Virgil, *Georgics*, II 123:—

“The groves which India, nearer the ocean, the utmost skirts of the globe, produces, where no arrows by their flight have been able to surmount the airy summit of the tree; and yet that nation is not slow at archery.”

↵

1153. Christ’s renunciation of temporal power. ↵

1154. The pole of the chariot, which was made of this tree, he left bound to the tree.

Buti says:—

“This chariot represents the Holy Church, which is the congregation of the faithful, and the pole of this chariot is the cross of Christ, which he bore upon his shoulders, so that the author well represents him as dragging the pole with his neck.”

The statement that the cross was made of the tree of knowledge, is founded on an old legend. When Adam was dying, he sent his son Seth to the Garden of Paradise to bring him some drops of the oil of the mercy of God. The angel at the gate refused him entrance, but gave him a branch from the tree of knowledge, and told him to plant it upon Adam’s grave; and that, when it should bear fruit, then should Adam receive the oil of God’s mercy. The branch grew into a tree, but never bore fruit till the passion of Christ; but “of a branch of this tree and of

other wood," says Buti, "the cross was made, and from that branch was suspended such sweet fruit as the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then Adam and other saints had the oil of mercy, inasmuch as they were taken from Limbo and led by Christ into eternal life." ↵

1155. In the month of February, when the sun is in the constellation of the Fishes. Dante here gives it the title of the Lasca, the Roach or Mullet.

↵

1156. The red and white of the appleblossoms is symbolical of the blood and water which flowed from the wound in Christ's side. At least so thinks Vellutelli.

Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 226, says:—

"Some three arrow-flights farther up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers, of a color 'less than that of roses, but more than that of violets.' It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant—that of the appleblossom. Had he employed any simple colorphrase, as a 'pale pink,' or 'violet pink,' or any other such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue; he might perhaps have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness; but by taking the rose-leaf as the type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet gray, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable; and rightly so felt, for of all lovely things which grace the springtime in our fair temperate zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the fairest."

↵

1157. The eyes of Argus, whom Mercury lulled asleep by telling him the story of Syrinx, and then put to death.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, Dryden's Tr.:—

“While Hermes piped, and sung, and told his tale,
The keeper’s winking eyes began to fail,
And drowsy slumber on the lids to creep;
Till all the watchman was at length asleep.
Then soon the god his voice and song supprest,
And with his powerful rod confirmed his rest;
Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
And at one fatal stroke the keeper slew.”

↲

1158. The Transfiguration. The passage in the Song of Solomon 2:3, “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons,” is interpreted as referring to Christ; and Dante here calls the Transfiguration the blossoming of that tree. ↲

1159. Matthew 17:5:—

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said. Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

↲

1160. Matilda. ↲

1161. The seven Virtues holding the seven golden candlesticks, or the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. ↲

1162. The descent of the eagle upon the tree is interpreted by Buti as the persecution of the Christians by the Emperors. The rending of the bark

of the tree is the “breaking down of the constancy and fortitude of holy men”; the blossoms are “virtuous examples or prayers,” and the new leaves, “the virtuous deeds that holy men had begun to do, and which were interrupted by these persecutions.” [←](#)

1163. Buti says:—

“This descent of the eagle upon the chariot, and the smiting it, mean the persecution of the Holy Church and of the Christians by the Emperors, as appears in the chronicles down to the time of Constantine.”

[←](#)

1164. The fox is Heresy. [←](#)

1165. The gift of Constantine to the Church. *Inferno* XIX 125:—

“Ah, Constantine! of how much woe was mother,
Not thy conversion, but that marriagedower
Which the first wealthy Father took from thee!”

[←](#)

1166. Muhammad. Revelation 12:3:—

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.”

[←](#)

1167. These seven heads, say the *Ottimo* and others, “denote the seven deadly sins.” But Biagioli, following Buti, says:—

“There is no doubt that these heads and the horns represent the same that we have said in Canto XIX of the *Inferno*; namely, the ten horns, the Ten Commandments of God; and the seven heads, the Seven Sacraments of the Church.”

Never was there a wider difference of interpretation. The context certainly favors the first. [←](#)

1168. Pope Boniface the Eighth. [←](#)

1169. Philip the Fourth of France. For his character see [note 908](#). [←](#)

1170. This alludes to the maltreatment of Boniface by the troops of Philip at Alagna. See [note 87](#). [←](#)

1171. The removal of the Papal See from Rome to Avignon.

The principal points of the allegory of this canto may be summed up as follows. The triumphal chariot, the Church; the seven Nymphs, the Virtues Cardinal and Evangelical; the seven candlesticks, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; the tree of knowledge, Rome; the Eagle, the Imperial power; the Fox, heresy; the Dragon, Muhammad; the shameless whore, Pope Boniface the Eighth; and the giant, Philip the Fair of France. [←](#)

1172. In this canto Dante is made to drink of the river Eunoë, the memory of things good.

Psalm 79, beginning:—

“O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled.”

The three Evangelical and four Cardinal Virtues chant this psalm, alternately responding to each other. The Latin words must be chanted, in order to make the lines rhythmical, with an equal emphasis on each syllable. [←](#)

1173. When their singing was ended. [←](#)

1174. John 16:16:—

“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father.”

[←](#)

1175. Dante, Matilda, and Statius. [←](#)

1176. As in Canto XXXI 7:—

“My faculties were in so great confusion,
That the voice moved, but sooner was extinct
Than by its organs it was set at large.”

[←](#)

1177. Is no longer what it was. Revelation 17:8:—

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not.”

[←](#)

1178. In the olden time in Florence, if an assassin could contrive to eat a sop of bread and wine at the grave of the murdered man, within nine days after the murder, he was free from the vengeance of the family; and to prevent this they kept watch at the tomb. There is no evading the vengeance of God in this way. Such is the interpretation of this passage by all the old commentators. [←](#)

1179. The Roman Empire shall not always be without an Emperor, as it was then in the eyes of Dante, who counted the “German Albert,” *Alberto tedesco*, as no Emperor, because he never came into Italy. See the appeal to him. Canto VI 96, and the malediction, because he suffered

“The garden of the empire to be waste.”

[←](#)

1180. The Roman numerals making DVX, or Leader. The allusion is to Henry of Luxembourg, in whom Dante placed his hopes of the restoration of the Imperial power. He was the successor of the German Albert of the preceding note, after an interregnum of one year. He died in 1312, shortly after his coronation in Rome. See [note 618](#).

Villani, though a Guelf, pays this tribute of respect to his memory. Book IX Ch. 1:—

“He was wise and just and gracious, valiant in arms, dignified, and catholic; and although of low estate in lineage, he was of a magnanimous heart, feared and redoubted, and if he had lived longer, he would have done great things.”

When Henry entered Italy in September, 1310, Dante hastened to meet him, full of faith and hope. Whether this interview took place at Susa, Turin, or Milan, is uncertain; nor is there any record of it, except the allusion in the following extract from a letter of Dante, “written in Tuscany, at the sources of the Arno, on the 14th of May, 1311, in the first year of the happy journey of the divine Henry into Italy.” Dante was disappointed that his hero should linger so long in the Lombard towns, and wished him to march at once against Florence, the monster “that drinketh neither of the headlong Po, nor of thy Tyber.” In this letter, Mr. Greene’s Tr., he says:—

“The inheritance of peace, as the immense love of God witnesseth, was left us, that in the marvellous sweetness thereof our hard warfare might be softened, and by the use thereof we might deserve the joys of our triumphant country. But the hatred of the ancient and implacable enemy, who ever and secretly layeth snares for human prosperity—disinheriting some of those who were willing—impiously, in the absence of our protector, despoiled us also, who were unwilling. Wherefore we wept long by the rivers of confusion, and incessantly implored the protection of the just king, to scatter the satellites of the cruel tyrant, and restore us to our just

rights. And when thou, successor of Caesar and of Augustus, crossing the chain of the Apennines, brought back the venerable Tarpeian ensigns, our long sighings straightway ceased, the fountains of our tears were stayed, and a new hope of a better age, like a sun suddenly risen, shed its beams over Latium. Then many, breaking forth into jubilant vows, sang with Mars the Saturnian reign, and the return of the Virgin.

“But since our sun (whether the fervor of desire suggests it, or the aspect of truth) is already believed to have delayed, or is supposed to be going back in his course, as if a new Joshua or the son of Amos had commanded, we are compelled in our uncertainty to doubt, and to break forth in the words of the Forerunner: ‘Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?’ And although the fury of long thirst turns into doubt, as is its wont, the things which are certain because they are near, nevertheless we believe and hope in thee, asserting thee to be the minister of God, and the son of the Church, and the promoter of the Roman glory. And I, who write as well for myself as for others, when my hands touched thy feet and my lips performed their office, saw thee most benignant, as becometh the Imperial majesty, and heard thee most clement. Then my spirit exulted within me, and I silently said to myself, ‘Behold the lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.’”

Dante, *Paradiso* XXX 133, sees the crown and throne that await the “noble Henry” in the highest heaven:—

“On that great throne on which thine eyes are fixed
For the crown’s sake already placed upon it,
Before thou suppest at this wedding feast,
Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus
On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come
To reform Italy ere she be prepared.”

[←](#)

1181. Themis, the daughter of Coelus and Terra, whose oracle was famous in Attica, and who puzzled Deucalion and Pyrrha by telling them that, in order to repeople the earth after the deluge, they must throw “their mother’s bones behind them.”

The Sphinx, the famous monster born of Chimaera, and having the head of a woman, the wings of a bird, the body of a dog, and the paws of a lion; and whose riddle, “What animal walks on four legs in the morning, on two at noon, and on three at night?” so puzzled the Thebans, that King Creon offered his crown and his daughter Jocasta to any one who should solve it, and so free the land of the uncomfortable monster; a feat accomplished by Oedipus apparently without much difficulty. [←](#)

1182. The Naiades having undertaken to solve the enigmas of oracles, Themis, offended, sent forth a wild beast to ravage the flocks and fields of the Thebans; though why they should have been held accountable for the doings of the Naiades is not very obvious. The tradition is founded on a passage in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII 757:—

“*Carmina Naïades non intellecta priorum
Solvunt.*”

Heinsius and other critics say that the lines should read,

“*Carmina Laiades non intellecta priorum
Solverat*”;

referring to Oedipus, son of Laius. But Rosa Moranda maintains the old reading, and says there is authority in Pausanias for making the Naiades interpreters of oracles. [←](#)

1183. *Coplas de Manrique*:—

“Our cradle is the starting place,
Life is the running of the race.”

↵

1184. First by the Eagle, who rent its bark and leaves; then by the giant, who bore away the chariot which had been bound to it. ↵

1185. The sin of Adam, and the death of Christ. ↵

1186. Widening at the top, instead of diminishing upward like other trees. ↵

1187. The Elsa is a river in Tuscany, rising in the mountains near Colle, and flowing northward into the Arno, between Florence and Pisa. Its waters have the power of incrusting or petrifying anything left in them. “This power of incrustation,” says Covino, *Descriz. Geog. dell’Italia*, “is especially manifest a little above Colle, where a great pool rushes impetuously from the ground.” ↵

1188. If the vain thoughts thou hast been immersed in had not petrified thee, and the pleasure of them stained thee; if thou hadst not been

“Converted into stone and stained with sin.”

↵

1189. The staff wreathed with palm, the cockleshell in the hat, and the sandal-shoon were all marks of the pilgrim, showing he had been beyond sea and in the Holy Land. Thus in the old ballad of “The Friar of Orders Gray”:—

“And how should I your truelove know
From many another one?
O by his cockle-hat and staff,
And by his sandal-shoone.”

In the *Vita Nuova*, Mr. Norton’s Tr., p. 71, is this passage:—

“Moreover, it is to be known that the people who travel in the service of the Most High are called by three distinct terms. Those who go beyond the sea, whence often they

bring back the palm, are called *palmers*. Those who go to the house of Galicia are called *pilgrims*, because the burial-place of St. James was more distant from his country than that of any other of the Apostles. And those are called *romei* who go to Rome.”



1190. How far Philosophy differs from Religion. Isaiah 4:8:—

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”



1191. Noon of the Fourth Day of Purgatory. [←](#)

1192. Two of the four rivers that watered Paradise. Here they are the same as Lethe and Eunoë, the oblivion of evil, and the memory of good. [←](#)

1193. Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*:—

“I saw then, that they went on their way to a pleasant river, which David the king called ‘the river of GOD’; but John, ‘the river of the water of life.’ Now their way lay just upon the bank of the river: here therefore Christian and his companion walked with great delight: they drank also of the water of the river, which was pleasant, and enlivening to their weary spirits. Besides, on the banks of this river, on either side, were green trees for all manner of fruit; and the leaves they ate to prevent surfeits and other diseases that are incident to those that heat their blood by travels. On either side of the river was also a meadow, curiously beautified with lilies; and it was green all the year long. In this meadow they lay down and slept; for here they might lie down safely. When they awoke, they

gathered again of the fruits of the trees, and drank again of the water of the river, and then lay down again to sleep.”



1194. Sir John Denham says:—

“The sweetest cordial we receive at last
Is conscience of our virtuous actions past.”



1195. The last word in this division of the poem, as in the other two, is the suggestive word “Stars.”

1196. Dante’s theory of the universe is the old one, which made the earth a stationary central point, around which all the heavenly bodies revolved; a theory, that, according to Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII 15, astonished even Adam in Paradise:—

“When I behold this goodly frame, this world,
Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes; this earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal), merely to officiate light
Round this opacious earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides; reasoning I oft admire,
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated; while the sedentary earth,

That better might with far less compass mov
Served by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light—
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.”

The reply that Raphael makes to “our general ancestor,” may be addressed to every reader of the *Paradiso*:—

“Whether the sun, predominant in heaven,
Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the sun;
He from the east his flaming road begin,
Or she from west her silent course advance,
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle; while she paces even,
And bears thee soft with the smooth air along;
Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid.”

Thus, taking the earth as the central point, and speaking of the order of the Ten Heavens, Dante says, *Convito*, II 4:—

“The first is that where the Moon is; the second is that where Mercury is; the third is that where Venus is; the fourth is that where the Sun is; the fifth is that where Mars is; the sixth is that where Jupiter is; the seventh is that where Saturn is; the eighth is that of the Stars; the ninth is not visible, save by the motion mentioned above, and is called by many the Crystalline; that is, diaphanous, or wholly transparent. Beyond all these, indeed, the Catholics place the Empyrean Heaven; that is to say, the Heaven of flame, or luminous; and this they suppose to be immovable, from having within itself, in every part, that which its matter demands. And this is the cause why the Primum Mobile has a very swift motion; from the fervent longing which each part of that ninth heaven has to be conjoined with that Divinest Heaven, the Heaven of Rest, which is next to it, it revolves therein with so great desire,

that its velocity is almost incomprehensible; and quiet and peaceful is the place of that supreme Deity, who alone doth perfectly see himself."

Of the symbolism of these Heavens he says, *Convito*, II 14:—

"As narrated above, the seven Heavens nearest to us are those of the Planets; and above these are two movable Heavens, and one motionless over all. To the first seven correspond the seven sciences of the Trivium and Quadrivium; that is, Grammar, Dialectics, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology. To the eighth, that is, to the starry sphere, Natural Science, called Physics, corresponds, and the first science, which is called Metaphysics; and to the ninth sphere corresponds Moral Science; and to the Heaven of Rest, the Divine Science, which is called Theology."

The details of these correspondences will be given later in their appropriate places.

These Ten Heavens are the heavens of the *Paradiso*; nine of them revolving about the earth as a central point, and the motionless Empyrean encircling and containing all.

In the first Heaven, or that of the Moon, are seen the spirits of those who, having taken monastic vows, were forced to violate them. In the second, or that of Mercury, the spirits of those whom desire of fame incited to noble deeds. In the third, or that of Venus, the spirits of Lovers. In the fourth, or that of the Sun, the spirits of Theologians and Fathers of the Church. In the fifth, or that of Mars, the spirits of Crusaders and those who died for the true Faith. In the sixth, or that of Jupiter, the spirits of righteous Kings and Rulers. In the seventh, or that of Saturn, the spirits of the Contemplative. In the eighth, or that of the Fixed Stars, the Triumph of Christ. In the ninth, or Primum Mobile, the Angelic Hierarchies. In the tenth, or the Empyrean, is the Visible Presence of God.

It must be observed, however, that the lower spheres, in which the spirits appear, are not assigned them as their places or dwellings. They

show themselves in these different places only to indicate to Dante the different degrees of glory which they enjoy, and to show that while on earth they were under the influence of the planets in which they here appear. Dante expressly says, in Canto IV 28:—

“He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God,
Moses, and Samuel, and whichever John
Thou mayst select, I say, and even Mary,
Have not in any other heaven their thrones
Than have those spirits that just appeared to thee,
Nor of existence more or fewer years;
But all make beautiful the primal circle,
And have sweet life in different degrees,
By feeling more or less the eternal breath.
They showed themselves here, not because allotted
This sphere has been to them, but to give sign
Of the celestial which is least exalted.”

The threefold main division of the Paradiso, indicated by a longer prelude, or by a natural pause in the action of the poem, is:—1. From Canto I to Canto X 2. From Canto X to Canto XXIII 3. From Canto XXIII to the end. ↵

1197. Wisdom of Solomon 1:7:—

“For the spirit of the Lord filleth the world”;

and Ecclesiasticus 42:16:—

“The sun that giveth light looketh upon all things, and the work thereof is full of the glory of the Lord.”

↵

1198. The Empyrean. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 57:—

“From the pure Empyrean where he sits
High throned above all highth.”

[←](#)

1199. 2 Corinthians 12:2:—

“I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I can not tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth:) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

[←](#)

1200. *Convito*, III 2:—

“Hence the human soul, which is the noblest form of those created under heaven, receiveth more of the divine nature than any other. . . . And inasmuch as its being depends upon God, and is preserved by him, it naturally desires and wishes to be united with God, in order to strengthen its being.”

And again, *Convito*, III 6:—

“Each thing chiefly desireth its own perfection, and in it quieteth every desire, and for it is each thing desired. And this is the desire which always maketh each delight seem insufficient; for in this life is no delight so great that it can satisfy the thirst of the soul, so that the desire I speak of shall not remain in our thoughts.”

[←](#)

1201. Chaucer, *House of Fame*, III 1:—

“God of science and of light,

Apollo! thorough thy grete might
This litel last boke now thou gye.

:

And if that divine virtue thou
Wilte helpen me to shonen now
That in my hed ymarked is,

:

Thou shalt yse me go as blive
Unto the next laurer I se,
And kysse it for it is thy tre.
Nowe entre in my Brest anone.”

↖

1202. Chaucer, *Ballade in Commendacion of Our Ladie*, 12:—

“O winde of grace! now blowe unto my saile;
O auriate licour of Clio! to write
My penne enspire, of that I woll indite.”

↖

1203. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, Croxall’s Tr.:—

“When straight another pictures to their view
The Satyr’s fate, whom angry Phoebus slew;
Who, raised with high conceit, and puffed with pride,
At his own pipe the skilful God defied.
Why do you tear me from myself, he cries?
Ah, cruel! must my skin be made the prize?
This for a silly pipe? he roaring said,
Meanwhile the skin from off his limbs was flayed.”

And Chaucer, *House of Fame*, 139, changing the sex of Marsyas:—

“And Mercia that lost hire skinne,

Bothe in the face, bodie, and chinne,
For that she would envyen, lo!
To pipen bette than Apollo.”



1204. A town at the foot of Parnassus, dedicated to Apollo, and here used for Apollo.

Chaucer, *Quene Annelida and False Arcite*, 15:—

“Be favorable eke thou, Polymnia!
On Parnassus that, with thy susters glade
By Helicon, and not ferre from Cirrha,
Singed, with voice memoriall, in the shade
Under the laurer, which that maie not fade.”



1205. That point of the horizon where the sun rises at the equinox; and where the Equator, the Zodiac, and the equinoctial Colure meet, and form each a cross with the Horizon.

1206. The world is as wax, which the sun softens and stamps with his seal.



1207. “This word *almost*,” says Buti, “gives us to understand that it was not the exact moment when the sun enters Aries.”

1208. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 593:—

“Not all parts like, but all alike informed
With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.”



1209. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 310:—

“Seems another morn

Risen on mid-noon.”



1210. Glaucus, changed to a sea-god by eating of the salt-meadow grass.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XIII, Rowe’s Tr.:—

“Restless I grew, and every place forsook,
And still upon the seas I bent my look.
Farewell forever! Farewell, land! I said;
And plunged amidst the waves my sinking head.
The gentle powers, who that low empire keep,
Received me as a brother of the deep;
To Tethys, and to Ocean old, they pray
To purge my mortal earthy parts away.”

“As Glaucus,” says Buti, “was changed from a fisherman to a sea-god by tasting of the grass that had that power, so the human soul, tasting of things divine, becomes divine.”

1211. Whether I were spirit only. 2 Corinthians 12:3:—

“Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell;
God knoweth.”

One of the questions which exercised the minds of the Fathers and the Schoolmen was, whether the soul were created before the body or after it. Origen, following Plato, supposes all souls to have been created at once, and to await their bodies. Thomas Aquinas combats this opinion, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. CXVIII 3, and maintains, that “creation and infusion are simultaneous in regard to the soul.” This seems also to be Dante’s belief. See *Purgatorio* XXV 70:—

“The primal Motor turns to it well pleased
At so great art of nature, and inspires
A spirit new, with virtue all replete.”



1212. It is a doctrine of Plato that the heavens are always in motion, seeking the Soul of the World, which has no determinate place, but is everywhere diffused. See also [note 1202.](#) ↵

1213. The music of the spheres.

Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, V 1:—

“Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.”

And Milton, *Hymn on Christ’s Nativity*:—

“Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of Heaven’s deep organ blow;
And, with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.”

Rixner, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, I 100, speaking of the ten heavens, or the Lyre of Pythagoras, says:—

“These ten celestial spheres are arranged among themselves in an order so mathematical and musical, that is so harmonious, that the sphere of the fixed stars, which is above the sphere of Saturn, gives forth the deepest tone in the music of the universe (the World-Lyre strung with ten strings), and that of the Moon the highest.”

Cicero, in his *Vision of Scipio*, inverts the tones. He says, Edmonds's Tr.:—

“Which as I was gazing at in amazement, I said, as I recovered myself, from whence proceed these sounds so strong, and yet so sweet, that fill my ears? ‘The melody,’ replies he, ‘which you hear, and which, though composed in unequal time, is nevertheless divided into regular harmony, is effected by the impulse and motion of the spheres themselves, which, by a happy temper of sharp and grave notes, regularly produces various harmonic effects. Now it is impossible that such prodigious movements should pass in silence; and nature teaches that the sounds which the spheres at one extremity utter must be sharp, and those on the other extremity must be grave; on which account, that highest revolution of the star-studded heaven, whose motion is more rapid, is carried on with a sharp and quick sound; whereas this of the moon, which is situated the lowest, and at the other extremity, moves with the gravest sound. For the earth, the ninth sphere, remaining motionless, abides invariably in the innermost position, occupying the central spot in the universe.

“Now these eight directions, two of which have the same powers, effect seven sounds, differing in their modulations, which number is the connecting principle of almost all things. Some learned men, by imitating this harmony with strings and vocal melodies, have opened a way for their return to this place; as all others have done, who, endued with preeminent qualities, have cultivated in their mortal life the pursuits of heaven.

“The ears of mankind, filled with these sounds, have become deaf, for of all your senses it is the most blunted. Thus, the people who live near the place where the Nile rushes down from very high mountains to the parts which are called Catadupa, are destitute of the sense of hearing, by reason of the greatness of the noise. Now this sound,

which is effected by the rapid rotation of the whole system of nature, is so powerful that human hearing can not comprehend it, just as you cannot look directly upon the sun, because your sight and sense are overcome by his beams.””



1214. The region of fire. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, Ch. CVIII:—

“After the zone of the air is placed the fourth element. This is an orb of fire without any moisture, which extends as far as the moon, and surrounds this atmosphere in which we are. And know that above the fire is first the moon, and the other stars, which are all of the nature of fire.”



1215. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 469:—

“One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good; created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk; from thence the leaves
More aery; last, the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,
Man’s nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual; give both life and sense,

Fancy and understanding: whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive or intuitive.”



1216. Filicaja’s beautiful sonnet on Providence is thus translated by Leigh Hunt:—

“Just as a mother, with sweet, pious face,
Yearns towards her little children from her seat,
Gives one a kiss, another an embrace,
Takes this upon her knees, that on her feet;
And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretences,
She learns their feelings and their various will,
To this a look, to that a word, dispenses,
And, whether stern or smiling, loves them still;—
So Providence for us, high, infinite,
Makes our necessities its watchful task,
Hearks to all our prayers, helps all our wants,
And even if it denies what seems our right,
Either denies because ’t would have us ask,
Or seems but to deny, or in denying grants.”



1217. The Empyrean, within which the Primum Mobile revolves “with so great desire that its velocity is almost incomprehensible.”

1218. *Convito*, III 2:—

“The human soul, ennobled by the highest power, that is by reason, partakes of the divine nature in the manner of an eternal Intelligence; because the soul is so ennobled by that sovereign power, and denuded of matter, that the divine light shines in it as in an angel; and there fore man has been called by the philosophers a divine animal.”

⬅

1219. The Heaven of the Moon, in are seen the spirits of those having taken monastic vows, were forced to violate them.

In Dante's symbolism this heaven represents the first science of the Trivium. *Convito*, II 14:—

"I say that the heaven of the Moon resembles Grammar; because it may be compared therewith; for if the Moon be well observed, two things are seen peculiar to it, which are not seen in the other stars. One is the shadow in it, which is nothing but the rarity of its body, in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate and be reflected as in the other parts. The other is the variation of its brightness, which now shines on one side, and now upon the other, according as the sun looks upon it. And Grammar has these two properties; since, on account of its infinity, the rays of reason do not terminate in it in any special part of its words; and it shines now on this side, and now on that, inasmuch as certain words, certain declinations, certain constructions, are in use which once were not, and many once were which will be again."

For the influences of the Moon.

The introduction to this canto is at once a warning and an invitation. Balbi, *Life and Times of Dante*, II Ch. 15, Mrs. Bunbury's Tr., says:—

"The last part of the Commedia, which Dante finished about this time (1320),... is said to be the most difficult and obscure part of the whole poem. And it is so; and it would be in vain for us to attempt to awaken in the generality of readers that attention which Dante has not been able to obtain for himself. Readers in general will always be repulsed by the difficulties of its numerous allegories, by the series of heavens, arranged according to the now forgotten Ptolemaic system, and more than all by disquisitions on philosophy and theology which often degenerate into mere scholastic themes. With the

exception of the three cantos relating to Cacciaguida, and a few other episodes which recall us to earth, as well as those verses in which frequently Dante's love for Beatrice shines forth, the Paradiso must not be considered as pleasant reading for the general reader, but as an especial recreation for those who find there, expressed in sublime verse, those contemplations that have been the subjects of their philosophical and theological studies.... But few will always be the students of philosophy and theology, and much fewer those who look upon these sciences as almost one and the same thing, pursued by two different methods; these, if I am not mistaken, will find in Dante's Paradiso a treasure of thought, and the loftiest and most soothing words of comfort, forerunners of the joys of Heaven itself. Above all, the Paradiso will delight those who find themselves, when they are reading it, in a somewhat similar disposition of mind to that of Dante when he was writing it; those in short who, after having in their youth lived in the world, and sought happiness in it, have now arrived at maturity, old age, or satiety, and seek by the means of philosophy and theology to know as far as possible of that other world on which their hopes now rest. Philosophy is the romance of the aged, and Religion the only future history for us all. Both these subjects of contemplation we find in Dante's Paradise, and pursued with a rare modesty, not beyond the limits of our understanding, and with due submission to the Divine Law which placed these limits."



1220. In the other parts of the poem "one summit of Parnassus" has sufficed; but in this Minerva, Apollo, and the nine Muses come to his aid, as wind, helmsman, and compass. [←](#)
1221. The bread of the Angels is Knowledge or Science, which Dante calls the "ultimate perfection." *Convito*, I 1:—

“Everything, impelled by the providence of its own nature, inclines towards its own perfection; whence, inasmuch as knowledge is the ultimate perfection of our soul, wherein consists our ultimate felicity, we are all naturally subject to its desire.... O blessed those few who sit at the table where the bread of the Angels is eaten.”



1222. The Argonauts, when they saw their leader Jason ploughing with the wild bulls of Aeëtes, and sowing the land with serpents teeth. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII, Tate’s Tr.:—

“To unknown yokes their brawny necks they yield,
And, like tame oxen, plough the wondering field.
The Colchians stare; the Grecians shout, and raise
Their champion’s courage with inspiring praise.
Emboldened now, on fresh attempts he goes,
With serpent’s teeth the fertile furrows sows;
The glebe, fermenting with enchanted juice,
Makes the snake’s teeth a human crop produce.”



1223. This is generally interpreted as referring to the natural aspiration of the soul for higher things; characterized in *Purgatorio* XXI 1, as

“The natural thirst that ne’er is satisfied,
Excepting with the water for whose grace
The woman of Samaria besought.”

But Venturi says that it means the “being borne onward by the motion of the Primum Mobile, and swept round so as to find himself directly beneath the moon.”

1224. As if looking back upon his journey through the air, Dante thus rapidly describes it in an inverse order, the arrival, the ascent, the departure; the striking of the shaft, the flight, the discharge from the bowstring.

Here again we are reminded of the arrow of Pandarus, *Iliad*, IV 120.

←

1225. Cain with his bush of thorns. See [note 300](#). ←

1226. The spots in the Moon, which Dante thought were caused by rarity or density of the substance of the planet. *Convito*, II 14:—

“The shadow in it, which is nothing but the rarity of its body, in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate and be reflected, as in the other parts.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 419:—

“Whence in her visage round those spots unpurged,
Vapors not yet into her substance turned.”

←

1227. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars. ←

1228. Either the diaphanous parts must run through the body of the Moon, or the rarity and density must be in layers one above the other. ←

1229. As in a mirror, which Dante elsewhere, *Inferno* XXIII 25, calls *impiombato vetro*, leaded glass. ←

1230. The subject of the snow is what lies under it; “the mountain that remains naked,” says Buti. Others give a scholastic interpretation to the word, defining it “the cause of accident,” the cause of color and cold. ←

1231. Shall tremble like a star.

“When a man looks at the stars,” says Buti, “he sees their effulgence tremble, and this is because their splendor scintillates as fire does, and moves to and fro like the flame of the fire.”

The brighter they burn, the more they tremble. [←](#)

1232. The Primum Mobile, revolving in the Empyrean, and giving motion to all the heavens beneath it. [←](#)

1233. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars. "Greek Epigrams," III 62:—

"If I were heaven,
With all the eyes of heaven would I look down on thee."

Also Catullus, "Carm.," V:—

"How many stars, when night is silent,
Look on the furtive loves of men."

And Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 44:—

"Heaven wakes with all his eyes
Whom to behold but thee, nature's desire?"

[←](#)

1234. The Intelligences, ruling and guiding the several heavens, (receiving power from above and distributing it downward, taking their impression from God and stamping it like a seal upon the spheres below,) according to Dionysius the Areopagite are as follows:—

The Seraphim, Primum Mobile.

The Cherubim, The Fixed Stars.

The Thrones, Saturn.

The Dominions, Jupiter.

The Virtues, Mars.

The Powers, The Sun.

The Principalities, Venus.

The Archangels, Mercury.

The Angels, The Moon.

See [note 1986.](#) ↵

1235. The principle which gives being to all created things. ↵

1236. The Heaven of the Moon continued. Of the influence of this planet, Buti, quoting the astrologer Albumasar, says:—

“The Moon is cold, moist, and phlegmatic, sometimes warm, and gives lightness, aptitude in all things, desire of joy, of beauty, and of praise, beginning of all works, knowledge of the rich and noble, prosperity in life, acquisition of things desired, devotion in faith, superior sciences, multitude of thoughts, necromancy, acuteness of mind in things, geometry, knowledge of lands and waters and of their measure and number, weakness of the sentiments, noble women, marriages, pregnancies, nursings, embassies, falsehoods, accusations; the being lord among lords, servant among servants, and conformity with every man of like nature, oblivion thereof, timid, of simple heart, flattering, honorable towards men, useful to them, not betraying secrets, a multitude of infirmities and the care of healing bodies, cutting hair, liberality of food, chastity. These are the significations (influences) of the Moon upon the things it finds, the blame and honor of which, according to the astrologers, belong to the planet; but the wise man follows the good influences, and leaves the bad; though all are good and necessary to the life of the universe.”

↵

1237. Narcissus mistook his shadow for a substance; Dante, falling into the opposite error, mistakes these substances for shadows. ↵

1238. Your destiny; that is, of yourself and the others with you. ↵

1239. Piccarda was a sister of Forese and Corso Donati, and of Gemma, Dante's wife. In *Purgatorio* XXIV 13, Forese says of her:—

“My sister, who, twixt beautiful and good,
I know not which was more, triumphs rejoicing
Already in her crown on high Olympus.”

She was a nun of Santa Clara, and was dragged by violence from the cloister by her brother Corso Donati, who married her to Rosselin della Tosa. As she herself says:—

“God knows what afterward my life became.”

It was such that she did not live long. For this crime the “excellent Baron,” according to the *Ottimo*, had to do penance in his shirt. [←](#)

1240. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII 583:—

“Add Love,
By name to come called Charity, the soul
Of all the rest.”

[←](#)

1241. Constance, daughter of Roger of Sicily. She was a nun at Palermo, but was taken from the convent and married to the Emperor Henry V, son of Barbarossa and father of Frederic II. Of these “winds of Suabia,” or Emperors of the house of Suabia, Barbarossa was the first, Henry V the second, and Frederic II the third, and, as Dante calls him in the *Convito*, IV 3, “the last of the Roman Emperors,” meaning the last of the Suabian line. [←](#)

1242. The Heaven of the Moon continued. [←](#)

1243. Montaigne says:—

“If any one should place us between the bottle and the bacon (*entre la bouteille et le jambon*), with an equal

appetite for food and drink, there would doubtless be no remedy but to die of thirst and hunger.”



1244. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, V, Maynwaring’s Tr.:—

“As when a hungry tiger near him hears
Two lowing herds, awhile he both forbears;
Nor can his hopes of this or that renounce,
So strong he lusts to prey on both at once.”



1245. “A similitude,” says Venturi, “of great poetic beauty, but of little philosophic soundness.”



1246. When he recalled and interpreted the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 2:10:—

“The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth: and there is none other that can show it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”



1247. Plato, *Timaeus*, Davis’s Tr., says:—

“And after having thus framed the universe, he allotted to it souls equal in number to the stars, inserting each in each.... And he declared also, that after living well for the time appointed to him, each one should once more return

to the habitation of his associate star, and spend a blessed and suitable existence.”



1248. The word “thrust,” *pontano*, is here used in its architectural sense, as in *Inferno* XXXII 3. There it is literal, here figurative. [←](#)

1249. *Che più s’india*, that most in-God’s himself. As in Canto IX 81, *S’io m’intuassi come tu t’immii*, “if I could in-thee myself as thou dost in-me thyself”; and other expressions of a similar kind. [←](#)

1250. The dogma of the Peripatetics, that nothing is in Intellect which was not first in Sense. [←](#)

1251. Raphael, “the affable archangel,” of whom Milton says, *Paradise Lost*, V 220:—

“Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.”

See Tobit 12:14:—

“And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter-in-law. I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.”

It must be remarked, however, that it was Tobit, and not Tobias, who was cured of his blindness. [←](#)

1252. Plato’s Dialogue, entitled *Timaeus*, the name of the philosopher of Locri. [←](#)

1253. Plato means it literally, and the Scriptures figuratively. [←](#)

1254. When it was infused into the body, or the body became informed with it.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Quaest. LXXVI I, says:—

“Form is that by which a thing is ... This principle therefore, by which we first think, whether it be called intellect, or intellectual soul, is the form of the body.”

And Spenser, “Hymne in Honour of Beautie,” says:—

“For of the soule the bodie forme doth take,
For soule is forme and doth the bodie make.”



1255. Joachim di Flora, Dante’s “Calabrian Abbot Joachim,” the mystic of the twelfth century, says in his Exposition of the Apocalypse:—

“The deceived Gentiles believed that the planets to which they gave the names of Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Mars, the Moon, and the Sun, were gods.”



1256. Stated in line 20:—

“The violence of others, for what reason
Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?”



1257. St. Lawrence. In Mrs. Jameson’s *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II 156, his martyrdom is thus described:—

“The satellites of the tyrant, hearing that the treasures of the church had been confided to Lawrence, carried him before the tribunal, and he was questioned, but replied not one word; therefore he was put into a dungeon, under the charge of a man named Hippolytus, whom with his whole

family he converted to the faith of Christ, and baptized; and when he was called again before the Prefect, and required to say where the treasures were concealed, he answered that in three days he would show them. The third day being come, St. Lawrence gathered together the sick and the poor, to whom he had dispensed alms, and, placing them before the Prefect, said, ‘Behold, here are the treasures of Christ’s Church.’ Upon this the Prefect, thinking he was mocked, fell into a great rage, and ordered St. Lawrence to be tortured till he had made known where the treasures were concealed; but no suffering could subdue the patience and constancy of the holy martyr. Then the Prefect commanded that he should be carried by night to the baths of Olympias, near the villa of Sallust the historian, and that a new kind of torture should be prepared for him, more strange and cruel than had ever entered into the heart of a tyrant to conceive; for he ordered him to be stretched on a sort of bed, formed of iron bars in the manner of a gridiron, and a fire to be lighted beneath, which should gradually consume his body to ashes: and the executioners did as they were commanded, kindling the fire and adding coals from time to time, so that the victim was in a manner roasted alive; and those who were present looked on with horror, and wondered at the cruelty of the Prefect, who could condemn to such torments a youth of such fair person and courteous and gentle bearing, and all for the lust of gold.”



1258. Plutarch thus relates the story of Mutius Scaevola, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“The story of Mutius is variously given; we, like others, must follow the commonly received statement. He was a man endowed with every virtue, but most eminent in war; and resolving to kill Porsenna, attired himself in the Tuscan habit, and using the Tuscan language, came to the

camp, and approaching the seat where the king sat amongst his nobles, but not certainly knowing the king, and fearful to inquire, drew out his sword, and stabbed one who he thought had most the appearance of king. Mutius was taken in the act, and whilst he was under examination, a pan of fire was brought to the king, who intended to sacrifice; Mutius thrust his right hand into the flame, and whilst it burnt stood looking at Porsenna with a steadfast and undaunted countenance; Porsenna at last in admiration dismissed him, and returned his sword, reaching it from his seat; Mutius received it in his left hand, which occasioned the name of Scaevela, left-handed, and said, ‘I have overcome the terrors of Porsenna, yet am vanquished by his generosity, and gratitude obliges me to disclose what no punishment could extort’; and assured him then, that three hundred Romans, all of the same resolution, lurked about his camp only waiting for an opportunity; he, by lot appointed to the enterprise, was not sorry that he had miscarried in it, because so brave and good a man deserved rather to be a friend to the Romans than an enemy.”



1259. Alcmaeon, who slew his mother Eriphyle to avenge his father Amphiaraüs the soothsayer. See [note 749](#).

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX:—

“The son shall bathe his hands in parent’s blood
And in one act be both unjust and good.”



1260. Beatrice, beloved of God; “that blessed Beatrice, who lives in heaven with the angels and on earth with my soul.” [←](#)

1261. Lessing, *Theol. Schrift.*, I 108:—

“If God held all Truth shut up in his right hand, and in his left only the ever restless instinct for Truth, . . . and said to me, Choose! I should humbly fall down at his left, and say, Father, give! Pure Truth is for Thee alone!”



1262. It must not be forgotten, that Beatrice is the symbol of Divine Wisdom. Dante says, *Convito*, III 15:—

“In her countenance appear things which display some of the pleasures of Paradise”;

and notes particularly “the eyes and smile.” He then adds:—

“And here it should be known that the eyes of Wisdom are its demonstrations, by which the truth is most clearly seen; and its smile the persuasions, in which is displayed the interior light of Wisdom under a veil; and in these two things is felt the exceeding pleasure of beatitude, which is the chief good in Paradise. This pleasure cannot exist in anything here below, except in beholding these eyes and this smile.”



1263. The Heaven of Mercury, where are seen the spirits of those who for the love of fame achieved great deeds. Of its symbolism Dante says, *Convito*, II 14:—

“The Heaven of Mercury may be compared to Dialectics, on account of two properties; for Mercury is the smallest star of heaven, since the quantity of its diameter is not more than two thousand and thirty-two miles, according to the estimate of Alfergano, who declares it to be one twenty-eighth part of the diameter of the Earth, which is six thousand and fifty-two miles. The other property is, that it is more veiled by the rays of the Sun than any other

star. And these two properties are in Dialectics; for Dialectics are less in body than any Science; since in them is perfectly compiled and bounded as much doctrine as is found in ancient and modern Art; and it is more veiled than any Science, inasmuch as it proceeds by more sophistic and probable arguments than any other.”

For the influences of Mercury, see [note 1323.](#) ↵

1264. Burns, “The Vision”:—

“I saw thy pulse’s maddening play
Wild send thee pleasure’s devious way,
Misled by fancy’s meteor ray,
By passion driven;
And yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven.”

↵

1265. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 235:—

“Happiness in his power left free to will,
Left to his own free will, his will though free,
Yet mutable.”

↵

1266. In illustration of this line, Venturi quotes the following epigram:—

“This hospital a pious person built,
But first he made the poor wherewith to fill’t.”

And Biagioli this:—

“*C'est un homme d'honneur, de piété profonde,*
Et qui veut rendre à Dieu ce qu'il a pris au monde.”

↖

1267. That which is sacrificed, or of which an offering is made. ↲

1268. Without the permission of Holy Church, symbolized by the two keys; the silver key of Knowledge, and the golden key of Authority. See *Purgatorio IX* 118:—

“One was of gold, and the other was of silver;

:

More precious one is, but the other needs
More art and intellect ere it unlock,
For it is that which doth the knot unloose.”

↖

1269. The thing substituted must be greater than the thing relinquished. ↲

1270. Judges 11:30:—

“And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering... And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child: besides her he had neither son nor daughter.”

↖

1271. Agamemnon. ↲

1272. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, I 1, Buckley’s Tr.:—

“O thou who rulest over this Grecian expedition, Agamemnon, thou wilt not lead forth thy ships from the ports of this land, before Diana shall receive thy daughter Iphigenia as a victim; for thou didst vow to sacrifice to the light-bearing Goddess whatsoever the year should bring forth most beautiful. Now your wife Clytaemnestra has brought forth a daughter in your house, referring to me the title of the most beautiful, whom thou must needs sacrifice. And so, by the arts of Ulysses, they drew me from my mother under pretence of being wedded to Achilles. But I wretched coming to Aulis, being seized and raised aloft above the pyre, would have been slain by the sword; but Diana, giving to the Greeks a stag in my stead, stole me away, and, sending me through the clear ether, she settled me in this land of the Tauri, where barbarian Thoas rules the land.”



1273. Dante, *Convito*, I 11:—

“These should be called sheep, and not men; for if one sheep should throw itself down a precipice of a thousand feet, all the others would follow, and if one sheep, in passing along the road, leaps from any cause, all the others leap, though seeing no cause for it. And I once saw several leap into a well, on account of one that had leaped in, thinking perhaps it was leaping over a wall; notwithstanding that the shepherd, weeping and wailing, opposed them with arms and breast.”



1274. Lucretius, *Nature of Things*, II 324, Good’s Tr.:—

“The fleecy flocks, o’er yonder hill that browse,
From glebe to glebe, where’er, impearled with dew,
The jocund clover call them, and the lambs

That round them gambol, saturate with milk,
Proving their frontlets in the mimic fray.”

↖

1275. Towards the Sun, where the heaven is brightest. ↲

1276. The Heaven of Mercury. ↲

1277. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I, Ch. 3, says, the planet Mercury “is easily moved according to the goodness or malice of the planets to which it is joined.” Dante here represents himself as being of a peculiarly mercurial temperament. ↲

1278. The joy of spirits in Paradise is shown by greater brightness. ↲

1279. The spirit of Justinian. ↲

1280. Mercury is the planet nearest the Sun, and being thus “veiled with alien rays,” is only visible to the naked eye at the time of its greatest elongation, and then but for a few minutes.

Dante, *Convito*, II 14, says, that Mercury “is more veiled by the rays of the Sun than any other star.” And yet it will be observed that in his planetary system he places Venus between Mercury and the Sun. ↲

1281. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 380:—

“Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven.”

And again, V 598:—

“A flaming mount, whose top
Brightness had made invisible.”

↖

1282. The Heaven of Mercury continued.

In the year 330, Constantine, after his conversion and baptism by Sylvester ([note 409](#)), removed the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, which received from him its more modern name of Constantinople. He called it also New Rome; and, having promised to the Senators and their families that they should soon tread again on Roman soil, he had the streets of Constantinople strewn with earth which he had brought from Rome in ships.

The transfer of the empire from west to east was turning the imperial eagle against the course of heaven, which it had followed in coming from Troy to Italy with Aeneas, who married Lavinia, daughter of King Latinus, and was the founder of the Roman Empire. [←](#)

1283. From 324, when the seat of empire was transferred to Constantinople by Constantine, to 527, when the reign of Justinian began. [←](#)

1284. The mountains of Asia, between Constantinople and the site of Troy.
[←](#)

1285. Caesar, or Kaiser, the general title of all the Roman Emperors.

The character of Justinian is thus sketched by Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XLIII:—

“The Emperor was easy of access, patient of hearing, courteous and affable in discourse, and a master of the angry passions, which rage with such destructive violence in the breast of a despot. Procopius praises his temper to reproach him with calm and deliberate cruelty; but in the conspiracies which attacked his authority and person, a more candid judge will approve the justice or admire the clemency of Justinian. He excelled in the private virtues of chastity and temperance; but the impartial love of beauty would have been less mischievous than his conjugal tenderness for Theodora; and his abstemious diet was regulated, not by the prudence of a philosopher, but the superstition of a monk. His repasts were short and frugal; on solemn fasts he contented himself with water and vegetables; and such was his strength as well as

fervor, that he frequently passed two days, and as many nights, without tasting any food. The measure of his sleep was not less rigorous; after the repose of a single hour the body was awakened by the soul, and, to the astonishment of his chamberlain, Justinian walked or studied till the morning light. Such restless application prolonged his time for the acquisition of knowledge and the despatch of business; and he might seriously deserve the reproach of confounding, by minute and preposterous diligence, the general order of his administration. The Emperor professed himself a musician and architect, a poet and philosopher, a lawyer and theologian; and if he failed in the enterprise of reconciling the Christian sects, the review of the Roman jurisprudence is a noble monument of his spirit and industry. In the government of the empire he was less wise or less successful: the age was unfortunate; the people was oppressed and discontented; Theodora abused her power; a succession of bad ministers disgraced his judgment; and Justinian was neither beloved in his life, nor regretted at his death. The love of fame was deeply implanted in his breast, but he condescended to the poor ambition of titles, honors, and contemporary praise; and while he labored to fix the admiration, he forfeited the esteem and affection of the Romans.”



1286. Of the reform of the Roman Laws, by which they were reduced from two thousand volumes to fifty, Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XLIV, says:—

“The vain titles of the victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust; but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument. Under his reign, and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the CODE, the PANDECT, and the INSTITUTES; the public reason of the Romans has been

silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations. Wise or fortunate is the prince who connects his own reputation with the honor and interest of a perpetual order of men.”

This is what Dante alludes to, *Purgatorio VI* 89:—

“What boots it, that for thee Justinian
The bridle mend, if empty be the saddle?”



1287. The heresy of Eutyches, who maintained that only the Divine nature existed in Christ, not the human; and consequently that the Christ crucified was not the real Christ, but a phantom.
1288. Agapetus was Pope, or Bishop of Rome, in the year 515, and was compelled by King Theodorus the Ostrogoth to go upon an embassy to the Emperor Justinian at Constantinople, where he refused to hold any communication with Anthimus, Bishop of Trebizond, who, against the canon of the Church, had been transferred from his own see to that of Constantinople. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, I 460, says:—

“Agapetus, in a conference, condescended, to satisfy the Emperor as to his own unimpeachable orthodoxy. Justinian sternly commanded him to communicate with Anthimus. ‘With the Bishop of Trebizond,’ replied the unawed ecclesiastic, ‘when he has returned to his diocese, and accepted the Council of Chalcedon and the letters of Leo.’ The Emperor in a louder voice commanded him to acknowledge the Bishop of Constantinople on pain of immediate exile. ‘I came hither in my old age to see, as I supposed, a religious and a Christian Emperor; I find a new Diocletian. But I fear not kings’ menaces, I am ready to lay down my life for the truth.’ The feeble mind of Justinian passed at once from the height of arrogance to

admiration and respect; he listened to the charges advanced by Agapetus against the orthodoxy of Anthimus. In his turn the Bishop of Constantinople was summoned to render an account of his theology before the Emperor, convicted of Eutychianism, and degraded from the see.”



1289. Belisarius, the famous general, to whom Justinian gave the leadership of his armies in Africa and Italy. In his old age he was suspected of conspiring against the Emperor’s life; but the accusation was not proved. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XLI, speaks of him thus:—

“The Africanus of new Rome was born, and perhaps educated, among the Thracian peasants, without any of those advantages which had formed the virtues of the elder and the younger Scipio, a noble origin, liberal studies, and the emulation of a free state. The silence of a loquacious secretary may be admitted, to prove that the youth of Belisarius could not afford any subject of praise: he served, most assuredly with valor and reputation, among the private guards of Justinian; and when his patron became Emperor, the domestic was promoted to military command.”

And of his last years as follows, Ch. XLIII:—

“Capricious pardon and arbitrary punishment embittered the irksomeness and discontent of a long reign; a conspiracy was formed in the palace, and, unless we are deceived by the names of Marcellus and Sergius, the most virtuous and the most profligate of the courtiers were associated in the same designs. They had fixed the time of the execution; their rank gave them access to the royal banquet, and their black slaves were stationed in the vestibule and porticos to announce the death of the tyrant, and to excite a sedition in the capital. But the indiscretion of an accomplice saved the poor remnant of the days of

Justinian. The conspirators were detected and seized, with daggers hidden under their garments; Marcellus died by his own hand, and Sergius was dragged from the sanctuary. Pressed by remorse, or tempted by the hopes of safety, he accused two officers of the household of Belisarius; and torture forced them to declare that they had acted according to the secret instructions of their patron. Posterity will not hastily believe that an hero who, in the vigor of life, had disdained the fairest offers of ambition and revenge, should stoop to the murder of his prince, whom he could not long expect to survive. His followers were impatient to fly; but flight must have been supported by rebellion, and he had lived enough for nature and for glory. Belisarius appeared before the council with less fear than indignation; after forty years' service, the Emperor had prejudged his guilt; and injustice was sanctified by the presence and authority of the patriarch. The life of Belisarius was graciously spared; but his fortunes were sequestered, and from December to July he was guarded as a prisoner in his own palace. At length his innocence was acknowledged; his freedom and honors were restored; and death, which might be hastened by resentment and grief, removed him from the world about eight months after his deliverance. The name of Belisarius can never die; but instead of the funeral, the monuments, the statues, so justly due to his memory, I only read that his treasures, the spoils of the Goths and Vandals, were immediately confiscated for the Emperor. Some decent portion was reserved, however, for the use of his widow; and as Antonina had much to repent, she devoted the last remains of her life and fortune to the foundation of a convent. Such is the simple and genuine narrative of the fall of Belisarius and the ingratitude of Justinian. That he was deprived of his eyes, and reduced by envy to beg his bread—‘Give a penny to Belisarius the general!—is a fiction of later times, which has obtained credit, or rather favor, as a strange example of the vicissitudes, of fortune.”

⬅

1290. The son of Evander, sent to assist Aeneas, and slain by Turnus. Virgil, *Aeneid*, X, Davidson's Tr.:—

“Turnus, long poising a javelin tipped with sharpened steel, darts it at Pallas, and thus speaks: See whether ours be not the more penetrating dart. He said; and with a quivering stroke the point pierces through the mid-shield, through so many plates of iron, so many of brass, while the bull’s hide so many times encompasses it, and through the corselet’s cumbrous folds transfixes his breast with a hideous gash. He in vain wrenches out the reeking weapon from the wound; at one and the same passage the blood and soul issue forth. Down on his wound he falls: over him his armor gave a clang; and in death with bloody jaws he bites the hostile ground.”

⬅

1291. In Alba Longa, built by Ascanius, son of Aeneas, on the borders of the Alban Lake. The period of three hundred years is traditional, not historic. ⏪

1292. The Horatii and Curatii. ⏪

1293. From the rape of the Sabine women, in the days of Romulus, the first of the seven kings of Rome, down to the violence done to Lucretia by Tarquinius Superbus, the last of them. ⏪

1294. Brennus was the king of the Gauls, who, entering Rome unopposed, found the city deserted, and the Senators seated in their ivory chairs in the Forum, so silent and motionless that his soldiers took them for the statues of gods. He burned the city and laid siege to the Capitol, whither the people had fled for safety, and which was preserved from surprise by the cackling of the sacred geese in the Temple of Juno. Finally Brennus and his army were routed by Camillus, and tradition says that not one escaped.

Pyrrhus was a king of Epirus, who boasted his descent from Achilles, and whom Hannibal called “the greatest of commanders.” He was nevertheless driven out of Italy by Curius, his army of eighty thousand being routed by thirty thousand Romans; whereupon he said that, “if he had soldiers like the Romans, or if the Romans had him for a general, he would leave no corner of the earth unseen, and no nation unconquered.” [←](#)

1295. Titus Manlius, surnamed Torquatus, from the collar (*torques*) which he took from a fallen foe; and Quinctius, surnamed Cincinnatus, or “the curly-haired.” [←](#)

1296. Three of the Decii, father, son, and grandson, sacrificed their lives in battle at different times for their country. The Fabii also rendered signal services to the state, but are chiefly known in history through one of their number, Quinctius Maximus, surnamed Cunctator, or the Delayer, from whom we have “the Fabian policy.” [←](#)

1297. The hill of Fiesole, overlooking Florence, where Dante was born. Fiesole was destroyed by the Romans for giving refuge to Catiline and his fellow conspirators. [←](#)

1298. The birth of Christ. Milton, “Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity,” 3, 4:—

“But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:
She, crowned with olive-green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

“No war or battle’s sound
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood

Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.”

✉

1299. Durazzo in Macedonia, and Pharsalia in Thessaly. ✉

1300. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II:—

“That one sleeth, and that other sterveth,
But aboven all his prise deserveth
This knightly Romain; where he rode
His dedly swerd no man abode,
Ayen the which was no defence:
Egipte fledde in his presence.”

✉

1301. Antandros, a city, and Simois, a river, near Troy, whence came the Roman eagle with Aeneas into Italy. ✉

1302. It was an evil hour for Ptolemy, when Caesar took from him the kingdom of Egypt, and gave it to Cleopatra. ✉

1303. Juba, king of Numidia, who protected Pompey, Cato, and Scipio after the battle of Pharsalia. Being conquered by Cassar, his realm became a Roman province, of which Sallust the historian was the first governor.
Milton, *Sams. Agon.*, 1695:—

“But as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.”

✉

1304. Towards Spain, where some remnants of Pompey’s army still remained under his two sons. When these were subdued the civil war was at an

end. [←](#)

1305. Octavius Augustus, nephew of Julius Caesar. At the battle of Philippi he defeated Brutus and Cassius, and established the Empire. [←](#)

1306. On account of the great slaughter made by Augustus in his battles with Mark Antony and his brother Lucius, in the neighborhood of these cities. [←](#)

1307. Augustus closed the gates of the temple of Janus as a sign of universal peace, in the year of Christ's birth. [←](#)

1308. Tiberius Caesar. [←](#)

1309. The crucifixion of Christ, in which the Romans took part in the person of Pontius Pilate. [←](#)

1310. The destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, which avenged the crucifixion. [←](#)

1311. When the Church was assailed by the Lombards, who were subdued by Charlemagne. [←](#)

1312. Referring back to line 31:—

“In order that thou see with how great reason
Men move against the standard sacrosanct,
Both who appropriate and who oppose it.”

[←](#)

1313. The Golden Lily, or Fleur-de-lis of France. The Guelfs, uniting with the French, opposed the Ghibellines, who had appropriated the imperial standard to their own party purposes. [←](#)

1314. Charles II of Apulia, son of Charles of Anjou. [←](#)

1315. Change the imperial eagle for the lilies of France. [←](#)

1316. Mercury is the smallest of the planets, with the exception of the Asteroids, being sixteen times smaller than the Earth. ↪

1317. Speaking of the planet Mercury, Buti says:—

“We are now to consider the effects which Mercury produces upon us in the world below, for which honor and blame are given to the planet; for as Albumasar says in the introduction to his seventh treatise, ninth division, where he treats of the nature of the planets and of their properties, Mercury signifies these twenty-two things among others, namely, desire of knowledge and of seeing secret things; interpretation of the Deity, of oracles and prophecies; foreknowledge of things future; knowledge and profundity of knowledge in profound books; study of wisdom; memory of stories and tales; eloquence with polish of language; subtlety of genius; desire of lordship; appetite of praise and fame; color and subtlety of speech; subtlety of genius in everything to which man betakes himself; desire of perfection; cunning of hand in all arts; practice of trade; selling, buying, giving, receiving, stealing, cheating; concealing thoughts in the mind; change of habits; youthfulness, lust, abundance, murmurs, lies, false testimony, and many other things as being therein contained. And therefore our author feigns, that those who have been active in the world, and have lived with political and moral virtues, show themselves in the sphere of Mercury, because Mercury exercises such influence, according to the astrologers, as has been shown; but it is in man’s free will to follow the good influence and avoid the bad, and hence springs the merit and demerit.”

Milton, “Lycidas,” 70:—

“Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise,
(That last infirmity of noble mind,)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears
And slits the thin-spun life. ‘But not the praise,’
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
‘Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove:
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.’”



1318. Piccarda, Canto III 70, says:—

“Brother, our will is quieted by virtue
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.”



1319. Villani, VI Ch. 90, relates the story of Romeo (in Italian Roméo) as follows, though it will be observed that he uses the word *romeo* not as a proper, but as a common noun, in its sense of pilgrim:—

“There arrived at his court a pilgrim, who was returning from St. James; and hearing of the goodness of Count Raymond, he tarried in his court, and was so wise and worthy, and found such favor with the Count, that he made him master and director of all things. He was always clad in a decent and clerical habit, and in a short time, by his dexterity and wisdom, increased the income of his lord threefold, maintaining always a grand and honorable court.... Four daughters had the Count, and no son. By the wisdom and address of the good pilgrim, he first married the eldest to the good King Louis of France by means of

money, saying to the Count, ‘Let me manage this, and do not be troubled at the cost; for if thou marry the first well, on account of this relationship thou wilt marry all the others better, and at less cost.’ And so it came to pass; for straightway the king of England, in order to be brother-in-law of the king of France, took the second for a small sum of money; then his brother, being elected King of the Romans, took the third; and the fourth still remaining to be married, the good pilgrim said, ‘With this one I want thee to have a brave son, who shall be thy heir’; and so he did. Finding Charles, Count of Anjou, brother of King Louis of France, he said, ‘Give her to this man, for he will be the best man in the world’; prophesying concerning him, and so it was done. Then it came to pass through envy, which spoils every good thing, that the barons of Provence accused the good pilgrim of having badly managed the treasury of the Count, and had him called to a reckoning. The noble pilgrim said: ‘Count, I have served thee a long time, and brought thee from low to high estate, and for this, through false counsel of thy folk, thou art little grateful. I came to thy court a poor pilgrim, and have lived modestly on thy bounty. Have my mule and my staff and scrip given back to me as when I came, and I ask no further wages.’ The Count would not have him go; but on no account would he remain; and he departed as he had come, and never was it known whence he came, nor whither he went. Many thought that his was a sainted soul.”



1320. Lord Bacon says in his “Essay on Adversity”:

“Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God’s favor. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David’s harp,

you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon.”

✉

1321. “Hosanna, holy God of Sabaoth, illuminating with thy brightness the happy fires of these realm.”

Dante is still in the planet Mercury, which receives from the sun six times more light and heat than the Earth. ✉

1322. By Substance is here meant spirit, or angel; the word having the sense of Subsistence. See [note 1541](#). ✉

1323. The rapidity of the motion of the flying spirits is beautifully expressed in these lines. ✉

1324. Namely, the doubt in his mind. ✉

1325. Bice, or Beatrice. ✉

1326. *Convito*, III 8:—

“And in these two places I say these pleasures appear, saying, *In her eyes and in her sweet smile*; which two places by a beautiful similitude may be called balconies of the Lady who inhabits the edifice of the body, that is, the Soul; since here, although as if veiled, she often shows herself. She shows herself in the eyes so manifestly, that he who looks carefully can recognize her present passion. Hence, inasmuch as six passions are peculiar to the human soul, of which the Philosopher makes mention in his Rhetoric, that is, grace, zeal, mercy, envy, love, and shame, with none of these can the Soul be impassioned, without its semblance coming to the window of the eyes, unless it be kept within by great effort. Hence one of old plucked out his eyes, so that his inward shame might not

appear outwardly, as Statius the poet relates of Theban Oedipus, when he says, that in eternal night he hid his shame accursed. She shows herself in the mouth, as color behind glass. And what is laughter but a coruscation of the delight of the soul, that is, a light appearing outwardly, as it exists within? And therefore it behoveth man to show his soul in moderate joy, to laugh moderately with dignified severity, and with slight motion of the arms; so that the Lady who then shows herself, as has been said, may appear modest, and not dissolute. Hence the Book of the Four Cardinal Virtues commands us, ‘Let thy laughter be without cachinnation, that is to say, without cackling like a hen.’ Ah, wonderful laughter of my Lady, that never was perceived but by the eye!”



1327. Referring back to Canto VI 92:—

“To do vengeance
Upon the vengeance of the ancient sin.”



1328. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I 1, the story

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.”



1329. Sincere in the sense of pure.

1330. Plato, *Timaeus*, Davis’s Tr., X:—

“Let us declare then on what account the framing Artificer settled the formation of this universe. He was good; and in the good envy is never engendered about anything whatever. Hence, being free from this, he desired that all things should as much as possible resemble himself.”

Also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I 259:—

“The Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy.”

And again, VIII 491:—

“Thou hast fulfilled
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest.”



1331. Dante here discriminates between the direct or immediate inspirations of God, and those influences that come indirectly through the stars. In the *Convito*, VII 3, he says:—

“The goodness of God is received in one manner by disembodied substances, that is, by the Angels (who are without material grossness, and as it were diaphanous on account of the purity of their form), and in another manner by the human soul, which, though in one part it is free from matter, in another is impeded by it; (as a man who is wholly in the water, except his head, of whom it cannot be said he is wholly in the water nor wholly out of it;) and in another manner by the animals, whose soul is all absorbed in matter, but somewhat ennobled; and in an other manner by the metals, and in another by the earth; because it is the most material, and therefore the most remote from and the most inappropriate for the first most simple and noble virtue, which is solely intellectual, that is, God.”

And in Canto XXIX 136:—

“The primal light, that all irradiates,
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendors wherewith it is mated.”

✉

1332. *Convito*, VII 3:—

“Between the angelic nature, which is an intellectual thing, and the human soul there is no step, but they are both almost continuous in the order of gradation.... Thus we are to suppose and firmly to believe, that a man may be so noble, and of such lofty condition, that he shall be almost an angel.”

✉

1333. The Angels, and the Heavens, and the human soul, being immediately inspired by God, are immutable and indestructible. But the elements and the souls of brutes and plants are controlled by the stars, and are mutable and perishable. ✉

1334. See *Purgatorio* XVI 85:—

“Forth from the hand of Him, who fondles it
Before it is, like to a little girl
Weeping and laughing in her childish sport,
Issues the simple soul, that nothing knows,
Save that, proceeding from a joyous Maker,
Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.”

And also *Purgatorio* XXV 70:—

“The primal Motor turns to it well pleased
At so great art of nature, and inspires
A spirit new with virtue all replete.”

[←](#)

1335. The ascent to the Third Heaven, or that of Venus, where are seen the spirits of Lovers. Of this Heaven Dante says, *Convito*, II 14:—

“The Heaven of Venus may be compared to Rhetoric for two properties; the first is the brightness of its aspect, which is most sweet to look upon, more than any other star; the second is its appearance, now in the morning, now in the evening. And these two properties are in Rhetoric, the sweetest of all the sciences, for that is principally its intention. It appears in the morning when the rhetorician speaks before the face of his audience; it appears in the evening, that is, retrograde, when the letter in part remote speaks for the rhetorician.”

For the influences of Venus, see [note 1384](#). [←](#)

1336. In the days of “the false and lying gods,” when the world was in peril of damnation for misbelief. Cypria, or Cyprigna, was a title of Venus, from the place of her birth, Cyprus. [←](#)

1337. The third Epicycle, or that of Venus, the third planet, was its supposed motion from west to east, while the whole heavens were swept onward from east to west by the motion of the Primum Mobile.

In the *Convito*, II 4, Dante says:—

“Upon the back of this circle (the Equatorial) in the Heaven of Venus, of which we are now treating, is a little sphere, which revolves of itself in this heaven, and whose orbit the astrologers call Epicycle.”

And again, II 7:—

“All this heaven moves and revolves with its Epicycle from east to west, once every natural day; but whether this movement be by any Intelligence, or by the sweep of the

Primum Mobile, God knoweth; in me it would be presumptuous to judge.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII 72:—

“From man or angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scanned by them who ought
Rather admire; or, if they list to try
Conjecture, he his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars; how they will wield
The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive,
To save appearances; how gird the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb.”

See also Nichol, *Solar System*, p. 7:—

“Nothing in later times ought to obscure the glory of Hipparchus, and, as some think, the still greater Ptolemy. Amid the bewilderment of these planetary motions, what could they say, except that the ‘gods never act without design’; and thereon resolve to discern it? The motion of the Earth was concealed from them: nor was aught intelligible or explicable concerning the wanderings of the planets, except the grand revolution of the sky around the Earth. That Earth, small to us, they therefore, on the ground of phenomena, considered the centre of the Universe, thinking, perhaps, not more confinedly than persons in repute in modern days. Around that centre all motion seemed to pass in order the most regular; and if a few bodies appeared to interrupt the regularity of that order, why not conceive the existence of some arrangement by which they might be reconciled with it? It was a strange, but most ingenious idea. They could not tell

how, by any simple system of circular and uniform motion, the ascertained courses of the planets, as *directly observed*, were to be accounted for; but they made a most artificial scheme, that still saved the immobility of the Earth. Suppose a person passing around a room holding a lamp, and all the while turning on his heel. If he turned round uniformly, there would be no actual interruption of the uniform circular motion both of the carrier and the carried; but the light, *as seen by an observer in the interior*, would make strange gyrations. Unable to account otherwise for the irregularities of the planets, they mounted them in this manner, on small circles, whose *centres only* revolved regularly around the Earth, but which, during their revolutionary motion, also revolved around their own centres. Styling these cycles and epicycles, the ancient learned men framed that grand system of the Heavens concerning which Ptolemy composed his ‘Syntax.’”



1338. Shakespeare, *Love's Labor Lost*, III 1:—

“This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;
Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,
The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents.”



1339. Cupid in the semblance of Ascanius. *Aeneid*, I 718, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“She clings to him with her eyes, her whole soul, and sometimes fondles him in her lap, Dido not thinking what a powerful god is settling on her, hapless one. Meanwhile he, mindful of his Acidalian mother, begins insensibly to efface the memory of Sichaeus, and with a living flame

tries to prepossess her languid affections, and her heart,
chilled by long disuse.”

✉

1340. Venus, with whose name this canto begins. ✉

1341. Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I Ch. 3, says that Venus “always follows the sun, and is beautiful and gentle, and is called the Goddess of Love.”

Dante says, it plays with or caresses the sun, “now behind, and now in front.” When it follows, it is Hesperus, the Evening Star; when it precedes, it is Phosphor, the Morning Star. ✉

1342. The rapidity of the motion of the spirits, as well as their brightness, is in proportion to their vision of God. Compare Canto XIV 40:—

“Its brightness is proportioned to the ardor,
The ardor to the vision; and the vision
Equals what grace it has above its worth.”

✉

1343. Made visible by mist and cloud-rack. ✉

1344. Their motion originates in the Primum Mobile, whose Regents, or Intelligences, are the Seraphim. ✉

1345. The Regents, or Intelligences, of Venus are the Principalities. ✉

1346. This is the first line of the first canzone in the *Convito*, and in his commentary upon it, II 5, Dante says:—

“In the first place, then, be it known, that the movers of this heaven are substances separate from matter, that is, Intelligences, which the common people call Angels.”

And farther on, II 6:—

“It is reasonable to believe that the motors of the Heaven of the Moon are of the order of the Angels; and those of Mercury are the Archangels; and those of Venus are the Thrones.”

It will be observed, however, that in line 34 he alludes to the Principalities as the Regents of Venus; and in Canto IX 61, speaks of the Thrones as reflecting the justice of God:—

“Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God Judicant”;

thus referring the Thrones to a higher heaven than that of Venus. ↵

1347. After he had by looks asked and gained assent from Beatrice. ↵

1348. The spirit shows its increase of joy by increase of brightness. As Picarda in Canto III 67:—

“First with those other shades she smiled a little;
Thereafter answered me so joyously,
She seemed to burn in the first fire of love.”

And Justinian, in Canto V 133:—

“Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself
By too much light, when heat has worn away
The tempering influence of the vapors dense,
By greater rapture thus concealed itself
In its own radiance the figure saintly.”

↵

1349. The spirit who speaks is Charles Martel of Hungary, the friend and benefactor of Dante. He was the eldest son of Charles the Lame (Charles II of Naples) and of Mary of Hungary. He was born in 1272, and in 1291 married the “beautiful Clemence,” daughter of Rudolph of

Hapsburg, Emperor of Germany. He died in 1295, at the age of twenty-three, to which he alludes in the words,

“The world possessed me
Short time below.”



1350. That part of Provence, embracing Avignon, Aix, Arles, and Marseilles, of which his father was lord, and which he would have inherited had he lived. This is “the great dowry of Provence,” which the daughter of Raymond Berenger brought to Charles of Anjou in marriage, and which is mentioned in *Purgatorio* XX 61, as taking the sense of shame out of the blood of the Capets. ▵
1351. The kingdom of Apulia in Ausonia, or Lower Italy, embracing Bari on the Adriatic, Gaeta in the Terra di Lavoro on the Mediterranean, and Crotona in Calabria; a region bounded on the north by the Tronto emptying into the Adriatic, and the Verde (or Garigliano) emptying into the Mediterranean. ▵
1352. The kingdom of Hungary. ▵
1353. Sicily, called of old Trinacria, from its three promontories Peloro, Pachino, and Lilibeo. ▵
1354. Pachino is the southeastern promontory of Sicily, and Peloro the northeastern. Between them lies the Gulf of Catania, receiving with open arms the east wind. Horace speaks of Eurus as “riding the Sicilian seas.” ▵
1355. Both Pindar and Ovid speak of the giant Typhoeus, as struck by Jove’s thunderbolt, and lying buried under Aetna. Virgil says it is Enceladus, a brother of Typhoeus. Charles Martel here gives the philosophical, not the poetical, cause of the murky atmosphere of the bay. ▵
1356. Through him from his grandfather Charles of Anjou, and his father-in-law the Emperor Rudolph. ▵

1357. The Sicilian Vespers and revolt of Palermo, in 1282. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VI 155:—

“It was at a festival on Easter Tuesday that a multitude of the inhabitants of Palermo and the neighborhood had thronged to a church, about half a mile out of the town, dedicated to the Holy Ghost. The religious service was over, the merriment begun; tables were spread, the amusements of all sorts, games, dances under the trees, were going gayly on; when the harmony was suddenly interrupted and the joyousness chilled by the appearance of a body of French soldiery, under the pretext of keeping the peace. The French mingled familiarly with the people, paid court, not in the most respectful manner, to the women; the young men made sullen remonstrances, and told them to go their way. The Frenchmen began to draw together. ‘These rebellious Paterins must have arms, or they would not venture on such insolence.’ They began to search some of them for arms. The two parties were already glaring at each other in angry hostility. At that moment the beautiful daughter of Roger Mastrangelo, a maiden of exquisite loveliness and modesty, with her bridegroom, approached the church. A Frenchman, named Drouet, either in wantonness or insult, came up to her, and, under the pretence of searching for arms, thrust his hand into her bosom. The girl fainted in her bridegroom’s arms. He uttered in his agony the fatal cry, ‘Death to the French!’ A youth rushed forward, stabbed Drouet to the heart with his own sword, was himself struck down. The cry, the shriek, ran through the crowd, ‘Death to the French!’ Many Sicilians fell, but, of two hundred on the spot, not one Frenchman escaped. The cry spread to the city: Mastrangelo took the lead; every house was stormed, every hole and corner searched; their dress, their speech, their persons, their manners, denounced the French. The palace was forced; the Justiciary, being luckily wounded in the face, and rolled in the dust, and so undetected,

mounted a horse, and fled with two followers. Two thousand French were slain. They denied them decent burial, heaped them together in a great pit. The horrors of the scene were indescribable; the insurgents broke into the convents, the churches. The friars, especial objects of hatred, were massacred; they slew the French monks, the French priests. Neither old age, nor sex, nor infancy was spared.”

↩

1358. Robert, Duke of Calabria, third son of Charles II and younger brother of Charles Martel. He was King of Sicily from 1309 to 1343. He brought with him from Catalonia a band of needy adventurers, whom he put into high offices of state, “and like so many leeches,” says Biagioli, “they rilled themselves with the blood of that poor people, not dropping off so long as there remained a drop to suck.”

1359. Sicily already heavily laden with taxes of all kinds.

↩

1360. Born of generous ancestors, he was himself avaricious.

↩

1361. Namely, ministers and officials who were not greedy of gain.

↩

1362. In God, where all things are reflected as in a mirror. Rev. 21:6:—

“I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end.”

Buti interprets thus:—

“Because I believe that thou seest my joy in God, even as I see it, I am pleased; and this also is dear to me, that thou seest in God, that I believe it.”

↩

1363. *Convito*, III 14:—

“The first agent, that is, God, sends his influence into some things by means of direct rays, and into others by means of reflected splendor. Hence into the Intelligences the divine light rays out immediately; in others it is reflected from these Intelligences first illuminated. But as mention is here made of light and splendor, in order to a perfect understanding, I will show the difference of these words, according to Avicenna. I say, the custom of the philosophers is to call the Heaven *light*, in reference to its existence in its fountainhead; to call it *ray*, in reference to its passing from the fountainhead to the first body, in which it is arrested; to call it *splendor*, in reference to its reflection upon some other part illuminated.”



1364. If men lived isolated from each other, and not in communities. [←](#)

1365. Aristotle, whom Dante in the *Convito*, III 5, calls “that glorious philosopher to whom Nature most laid open her secrets”; and in *Inferno* IV 131, “the master of those who know.” [←](#)

1366. The Jurist, the Warrior, the Priest, and the Artisan are here typified in Solon, Xerxes, Melchisedec, and Daedalus. [←](#)

1367. Nature, like death, makes no distinction between palace and hovel. Her gentlemen are born alike in each, and so her churls. [←](#)

1368. Esau and Jacob, though twin brothers, differed in character, Esau being warlike and Jacob peaceable. Genesis 25:27:—

“And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.”



1369. Romulus, called Quirinus, because he always carried a spear (*quiris*), was of such obscure birth, that the Romans, to dignify their origin, pretended he was born of Mars. ←

1370. *Convito*, III 3:—

“Animate plants have a very manifest affection for certain places, according to their character; and therefore we see certain plants rooting themselves by the waterside, and others upon mountainous places, and others on the slopes and at the foot of the mountains, which, if they are transplanted, either wholly perish, or live a kind of melancholy life, as things separated from what is friendly to them.”

←

1371. Another allusion to King Robert of Sicily. Villani, XII 9, says of him:—

“This King Robert was the wisest king that had been known among Christians for five hundred years, both in natural ability and in knowledge, being a very great master in theology, and a consummate philosopher.”

And the Postillatore of the Monte Cassino Codex:—

“This King Robert delighted in preaching and studying, and would have made a better monk than king.”

←

1372. The Heaven of Venus is continued in this canto. The beautiful Clemence here addressed is the daughter of the Emperor Rudolph, and wife of Charles Martel. Some commentators say it is his daughter, but for what reason is not apparent, as the form of address would rather indicate the wife than the daughter; and moreover, at the date of the poem, 1300, the daughter was only six or seven years old. So great

was the affection of this “beautiful Clemence” for her husband, that she is said to have fallen dead on hearing the news of his death. [✉](#)

1373. Charles the Lame, dying in 1309, gave the kingdom of Naples and Sicily to his third son, Robert, Duke of Calabria, thus dispossessing Carlo Roberto (or Caroberto), son of Charles Martel and Clemence, and rightful heir to the throne. [✉](#)

1374. Unknown to me by name. [✉](#)

1375. The region here described is the Marca Trivigiana, lying between Venice (here indicated by one of its principal wards, the Rialto) and the Alps, dividing Italy from Germany. [✉](#)

1376. The hill on which stands the Castello di Romano, the birthplace of the tyrant Ezzelino, or Azzolino, whom, for his cruelties, Dante punished in the river of boiling blood, *Inferno* XII 110. Before his birth his mother is said to have dreamed of a lighted torch, as Hecuba did before the birth of Paris, Althaea before the birth of Meleager, and the mother of St. Dominic before the birth of

“The amorous paramour
Of Christian Faith, the athlete consecrate,
Kind to his own and cruel to his foes.”

[✉](#)

1377. Cunizza was the sister of Azzolino di Romano. Her story is told by Rolandino, *Liber Chronicorum*, in Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.*, VIII 173. He says that she was first married to Richard of St. Boniface; and soon after had an intrigue with Sordello, as already mentioned, [note 614](#). “Afterwards she wandered about the world with a soldier of Treviso, named Bonius, taking much solace,” says the old chronicler, “and spending much money,”—*multa habendo solatia, et maximas faciendo expensas*. After the death of Bonius, she was married to a nobleman of Braganzo; and finally and for a third time to a gentleman of Verona.

The *Ottimo* alone among the commentators takes up the defence of Cunizza, and says:—

“This lady lived lovingly in dress, song, and sport; but consented not to any impropriety or unlawful act; and she passed her life in enjoyment, as Solomon says in Ecclesiastes,”

—alluding probably to the first verse of the second chapter:—

“I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; and, behold, this is also vanity.”



1378. Of the influences of the planet Venus, quoting Albumasar, as before, Buti says:—

“Venus is cold and moist, and of phlegmatic temperament, and signifies beauty, liberality, patience, sweetness, dignity of manners, love of dress and ornaments of gold and silver, humility towards friends, pride and adjunction, delectation and delight in singing and use of ornaments, joy and gladness, dancing, song with pipe and lute, bridals, ornaments and precious ointments, cunning in the composition of songs, skill in the game of chess, indolence, drunkenness, lust, adultery, gesticulations, and lasciviousness of courtesans, abundance of perjuries, of lies and all kinds of wantonness, love of children, delight in men, strength of body, weakness of mind, abundance of food and corporal delights, observance of faith and justice, traffic in odoriferous merchandise; and as was said of the Moon, all are not found in one man, but a part in one, and a part in another, according to Divine Providence; and the wise man adheres to the good, and overcomes the others.”



1379. Since God has pardoned me, I am no longer troubled for my past errors, on account of which I attain no higher glory in Paradise. She had tasted of the waters of Lethe, and all the ills and errors of the past were forgotten. *Purgatorio XXXIII* 94:—

“‘And if thou art not able to remember,’
Smiling she answered, ‘recollect thee now
How thou this very day hast drunk of Lethe.’”

Hugo of St. Victor, in a passage quoted by Philalethes in the notes to his translation of the *Divina Commedia*, says:—

“In that city... there will be Free Will, emancipated from all evil, and filled with all good, enjoying without interruption the delight of eternal joys, oblivious of sins, oblivious of punishments; yet not so oblivious of its liberation as to be ungrateful to its liberator. So far, therefore, as regards intellectual knowledge, it will be mindful of its past evils; but wholly unmindful, as regards any feeling of what it has passed through.”



1380. The spirit of Folco, or Folchetto, of Marseilles, as mentioned later in this canto; the famous Troubadour whose renown was not to perish for five centuries, but is small enough now, save in the literary histories of Millot and the Benedictines of St. Maur. ↲

1381. The Marca Trivigiana is again alluded to, lying between the Adige, that empties into the Adriatic south of Venice, and the Tagliamento to the northeast, towards Trieste. This region embraces the cities of Padua and Vicenza in the south, Treviso in the centre, and Feltro in the north.



1382. The rout of the Paduans near Vicenza, in those endless quarrels that run through Italian history like the roll of a drum. Three times the Paduan Guelphs were defeated by the Ghibellines—in 1311, in 1314, and in 1318, when Can Grande della Scala was chief of the Ghibelline

league. The river stained with blood is the Bacchiglione, on which Vicenza stands. [←](#)

1383. In Treviso, where the Sile and Cagnano unite. [←](#)

1384. Riccardo da Camino, who was assassinated while playing at chess. He was a son of the “good Gherardo,” and brother of the beautiful Gaja, mentioned *Purgatorio* XVI 40. He succeeded his father as lord of Treviso; but carried on his love adventures so openly and with so high a hand, that he was finally assassinated by an outraged husband. The story of his assassination is told in the *Hist. Cartusiorum* in Muratori, XII 784. [←](#)

1385. A certain bishop of the town of Feltro in the Marca Trivigiana, whose name is doubtful, but who was both lord spiritual and temporal of the town, broke faith with certain gentlemen of Ferrara, guilty of political crimes, who sought refuge and protection in his diocese. They were delivered up, and executed in Ferrara. Afterward the Bishop himself came to a violent end, being beaten to death with bags of sand. [←](#)

1386. Malta was a prison on the shores of Lake Bolsena, where priests were incarcerated for their crimes. There Pope Boniface VIII imprisoned the Abbot of Monte Cassino for letting the fugitive Celestine V escape from his convent. [←](#)

1387. This “courteous priest” was a Guelph, and showed his zeal for his party in the persecution of the Ghibellines. [←](#)

1388. The treachery and cruelty of this man will be in conformity to the customs of the country. [←](#)

1389. Above in the Crystalline Heaven, or Primum Mobile, is the Order of Angels called Thrones. These are mirrors reflecting the justice and judgments of God. [←](#)

1390. The *Balascio* (in French *rubi balais*) is supposed to take its name from the place in the East where it was found.

Chaucer, *Court of Love*, 78:—

“No saphire of Inde, no rube riche of price,
There lacked then, nor emeraude so grene,
Balais Turkis, ne thing to my devise
That may the castel maken for to shene.”

The mystic virtues of this stone are thus enumerated by Mr. King,
Antique Gems, p. 419:—

“The *Balais Ruby* represses vain and lascivious thoughts, appeases quarrels between friends, and gives health of body. Its powder taken in water cures diseases of the eyes, and pains in the liver. If you touch with this gem the four corners of a house, orchard, or vineyard, they will be safe from lightning, storms, and blight.”



1391. Joy is shown in heaven by greater light, as here on earth by smiles, and as in the infernal regions the grief of souls in torment is by greater darkness. ▲

1392. In Him thy sight is; in the original *tuo veder s'inluia*, thy sight *in-Hims-itself*. ▲

1393. There is a similar passage in one of the Troubadours, who, in an Elegy, commends his departed friend to the Virgin as a good singer.

“He sang so well, that the nightingales grew silent with admiration, and listened to him. Therefore God took him for his own service.... If the Virgin Mary is fond of genteel young men, I advise her to take him.”



1394. The Seraphim, clothed with six wings, as seen in the vision of the Prophet Isaiah 6:2:—

“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.”

↖

1395. In the original, *S'io m'intuassi come tu t'immii*; if I in-theed myself as thou in-meest thyself. Dantesque words, like *inluia*, [note 1398](#). ↲

1396. The Mediterranean, the greatest of seas, except the ocean, surrounding the earth.

Bryant, “Thanatopsis”:

“And poured round all
Old Ocean’s gray and melancholy waste.”

↖

1397. Extending eastward between Europe and Africa. Dante gives the length of the Mediterranean as ninety degrees. Modern geographers make it less than fifty. ↲

1398. Marseilles, about equidistant from the Ebro, in Spain, and the Magra, which divides the Genoese and Tuscan territories. Being a small river, it has but a short journey to make. ↲

1399. Buggia is a city in Africa, on nearly the same parallel of longitude as Marseilles. ↲

1400. The allusion here is to the siege of Marseilles by a portion of Caesar’s army under Tribonius, and the fleet under Brutus. *Purgatorio XVIII* 101:

“And Caesar, that he might subdue Ilerda,
Thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain.”

Lucan, who describes the siege and sea-fight in the third book of his *Pharsalia*, says:

“Meanwhile, impatient of the lingering war,
The chieftain to Iberia bends afar,
And gives the leaguer to Tribonius care.”



1401. Folco, or Folchetto, of Marseilles (Folquet de Marseilles) was a noted Troubadour, who flourished at the end of the twelfth century. He was the son of a rich merchant of Marseilles, and after his father's death, giving up business for pleasure and poetry, became a frequenter of courts and favorite of lords and princes. Among his patrons are mentioned King Richard of England, King Alfonso of Aragon, Count Raymond of Toulouse, and the Sire Barral of Marseilles. The old Provençal chronicler in Raynouard, V 150, says:—

“He was a good Troubadour, and very attractive in person.
He paid court to the wife of his lord, Sire Barral, and
besought her love, and made songs about her. But neither
for prayers nor songs could he find favor with her so as to
procure any mark of love, of which he was always
complaining in his songs.”

Nevertheless this Lady Alazais listened with pleasure to his songs and praises; and was finally moved to jealousy, if not to love. The Troubadour was at the same time paying his homage to the two sisters of the Sire Barral, Lady Laura and Lady Mabel, both beautiful and *de gran valor*, and being accused thereof, fell into disfavor and banishment, the Lady Alazais wishing to hear no more his prayers nor his songs. In his despair he took refuge at the court of William, lord of Montpellier, whose wife, daughter of the Emperor Manuel, “comforted him a little, and besought him not to be downcast and despairing, but for love of her to sing and make songs.”

And now a great change came over him. The old chronicler goes on to say:—

“And it came to pass that the Lady Alazais died; and the Sire Barral, her husband and his lord, died; and died the good King Richard, and the good Count Raymond of

Toulouse, and King Alfonso of Aragon: whereat, in grief for his lady and for the princes who were dead, he abandoned the world, and retired to a Cistercian convent, with his wife and two sons. And he became Abbot of a rich abbey in Provence, called Torondet, and afterwards Bishop of Toulouse, and there he died.”

It was in 1200 that he became a Cistercian, and he died in 1233. It would be pleasant to know that he atoned for his youthful follies by an old age of virtues. But unfortunately for his fame, the old nightingale became a bird of prey. He was deeply implicated in the persecutions of the Albigenses, and the blood of those “slaughtered saints” makes a ghastly rubric in his breviary. [✉](#)

1402. Dido, queen of Carthage. The *Ottimo* says:—

“He seems to mean, that Folco loved indifferently married women, virgins, and widows, gentle and simple.”



1403. Phillis of Thrace, called Rodopeia from Mount Rodope near which she lived, was deserted by her Athenian lover Demophoön, of whom Chaucer, *Legende of Good Women*, 2442, gives this portrait:—

“Men knewe him well and didden hym honour,
For at Athenis duke and lorde was he,
As Theseus his father hath ibe,
That in his tyme was of grete renown,
No man so grete in all his regioun,
And like his father efface and of stature;
And false of love, it came hym of nature;
As doeth the foxe, Renarde the foxes sonne,
Of kinde, he coulde his olde father wonne
Withouten lore; as can a drake swimme,
When it is caught and caried to the brimme.”



1404. Hercules was so subdued by love for Iole, that he sat among her maidens spinning with a distaff. [←](#)

1405. See [note 1385](#). [←](#)

1406. The ways of Providence,

“From seeming evil still educating good.”

[←](#)

1407. Rahab, who concealed the spies of Joshua among the flax-stalks on the roof of her house. Joshua 2:6. [←](#)

1408. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV 776:—

“Now had night measured with her shadowy cone
Half-way up hill this vast sublunar vault.”

[←](#)

1409. The first soul redeemed when Christ descended into Limbo. “The first shall be last, and the last first.” [←](#)

1410. The Crucifixion. If any one is disposed to criticise the play upon words in this beautiful passage, let him remember the *Tu es Petrus et super banc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam*. [←](#)

1411. Hebrews 11:31:—

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”

[←](#)

1412. Forgetful that it was in the hands of the Saracens. [←](#)

1413. The heathen Gods were looked upon by the Christians as demons. Hence Florence was the city of Satan to Dante in his dark hours, when

he thought of Mars; but in his better moments, when he remembered John the Baptist, it was “the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome.” [←](#)

1414. The Lily on the golden florin of Florence. [←](#)

1415. To gain the golden florin the study of the Gospels and the Fathers was abandoned, and the Decretals, or books of Ecclesiastical Law, so diligently conned, that their margins were worn and soiled with thumb-marks. The first five books of the Decretals were compiled by Gregory IX, and the sixth by Boniface VIII. [←](#)

1416. A prophecy of the death of Boniface VIII in 1303, and the removal of the Holy See to Avignon in 1305. [←](#)

1417. The Heaven of the Sun, “a good planet and imperial,” says Brunetto Latini. Dante makes it the symbol of Arithmetic. *Convito*, II 14:—

“The Heaven of the Sun may be compared to Arithmetic on account of two properties; the first is, that with its light all the other stars are informed; the second is, that the eye cannot behold it. And these two properties are in Arithmetic, for with its light all the sciences are illuminated, since their subjects are all considered under some number, and in the consideration thereof we always proceed with numbers; as in natural science the subject is the movable body, which movable body has in it ratio of continuity, and this has in it ratio of infinite number. And the chief consideration of natural science is to consider the principles of natural things, which are three, namely, matter, species, and form; in which this number is visible, not only in all together, but, if we consider well, in each one separately. Therefore Pythagoras, according to Aristotle in the first book of his Physics, gives the odd and even as the principles of natural things, considering all things to be number. The other property of the Sun is also seen in number, to which Arithmetic belongs, for the eye

of the intellect cannot behold it, for number considered in itself is infinite; and this we cannot comprehend.”

In this Heaven of the Sun are seen the spirits of theologians and Fathers of the Church; and its influences, according to Albumasar, cited by Buti, are as follows:—

“The Sun signifies the vital soul, light and splendor, reason and intellect, science and the measure of life; it signifies kings, princes and leaders, nobles and magnates and congregations of men, strength and victory, voluptuousness, beauty and grandeur, subtleness of mind, pride and praise, good desire of kingdom and of subjects, and great love of gold, and affluence of speech, and delight in neatness and beauty. It signifies faith and the worship of God, judges and wise men, fathers and brothers and mediators; it joins itself to men and mingles among them, it gives what is asked for, and is strong in vengeance, that is to say, it punishes rebels and malefactors.”



1418. Adam of St. Victor, “Hymn to the Holy Ghost”:—

“*Veni, Creator Spiritus,
Spiritus recreator,
Tu dans, tu datus coelitus,
Tu donum, tu donator;
Tu lex, tu digitus,
Alens et alitus,
Spirans et spiritus,
Spiratus et spirator.*”



1419. Where the Zodiac crosses the Equator, and the motion of the planets, which is parallel to the former, comes into apparent collision with that

of the fixed stars, which is parallel to the latter. [←](#)

1420. The Zodiac, which cuts the Equator obliquely. [←](#)

1421. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X 668:—

“Some say, he bid his angels turn askance
The poles of earth, twice ten degrees and more,
From the sun’s axle; they with labor pushed
Oblique the centric globe: some say, the sun
Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
Like-distant breadth to Taurus with the seven
Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins,
Up to the tropic Crab: thence down amain
By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,
As deep as Capricorn; to bring in change
Of seasons to each clime: else had the spring
Perpetual smiled on earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to those
Beyond the polar circles; to them day
Had unbrightened shone; while the low sun,
To recompense his distance, in their sight
Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
Or east or west; which had forbid the snow
From cold Estotiland, and south as far
Beneath Magellan.”

[←](#)

1422. The Sun. [←](#)

1423. The Sun in Aries, as indicated in line 9; that being the sign in which
the Sun is at the vernal equinox. [←](#)

1424. Such is the apparent motion of the Sun round the earth, as he rises
earlier and earlier in Spring. [←](#)

1425. No eye has ever seen any light greater than that of the Sun, nor can we conceive of any greater. [←](#)

1426. How the Son is begotten of the Father, and how from these two is breathed forth the Holy Ghost. The Heaven of the Sun being the Fourth Heaven, the spirits seen in it are called the fourth family of the Father; and to these theologians is revealed the mystery of the Trinity.
[←](#)

1427. The moon with a halo about her. [←](#)

1428. The spirit of Thomas Aquinas. [←](#)

1429. The stairway of Jacob's dream, with its angels ascending and descending. [←](#)

1430. Whoever should refuse to gratify thy desire for knowledge, would no more follow his natural inclination than water which did not flow downward. [←](#)

1431. Albertus Magnus, at whose twenty-one ponderous folios one gazes with awe and amazement, was born of a noble Swabian family at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In his youth he studied at Paris and at Padua; became a Dominican monk, and, retiring to a convent in Cologne, taught in the schools of that city. He became Provincial of his Order in Germany; and was afterward made Grandmaster of the Palace at Rome, and then Bishop of Ratisbon. Resigning his bishopric in 1262, he returned to his convent in Cologne, where he died in 1280, leaving behind him great fame for his learning and his labor.

Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 259, says of him:—

“Albert the Great at once awed by his immense erudition and appalled his age. His name, the Universal Doctor, was the homage to his all-embracing knowledge. He quotes, as equally familiar, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Jewish philosophers. He was the first Schoolman who lectured on Aristotle himself, on Aristotle from Graeco-Latin or Arabo-Latin copies. The whole range of the Stagirite’s

physical and metaphysical philosophy was within the scope of Albert's teaching. In later days he was called the Ape of Aristotle; he had dared to introduce Aristotle into the Sanctuary itself. One of his Treatises is a refutation of the Arabian Averrhoes. Nor is it Aristotle and Averrhoes alone that come within the pale of Albert's erudition; the commentators and glossators of Aristotle, the whole circle of the Arabians, are quoted; their opinions, their reasonings, even their words, with the utmost familiarity. But with Albert Theology was still the master-science. The Bishop of Ratisbon was of unimpeached orthodoxy; the vulgar only, in his wonderful knowledge of the secrets of Nature, in his studies of Natural History, could not but see something of the magician. Albert had the ambition of reconciling Plato and Aristotle, and of reconciling this harmonized Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy with Christian Divinity. He thus, in some degree, misrepresented or misconceived both the Greeks; he hardened Plato into Aristotelism, expanded Aristotelism into Platonism; and his Christianity, though Albert was a devout man, while it constantly subordinates, in strong and fervent language, knowledge to faith and love, less a religion than a philosophy."



1432. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor of the Schools. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 265, gives the following sketch of him:—

"Of all the schoolmen Thomas Aquinas has left the greatest name. He was a son of the Count of Aquino, a rich fief in the kingdom of Naples. His mother, Theodora, was of the line of the old Norman kings; his brothers, Reginald and Landolph, held high rank in the Imperial armies. His family was connected by marriage with the Hohenstaufens; they had Swabian blood in their veins, and so the great schoolman was of the race of Frederick II.

Monasticism seized on Thomas in his early youth; he became an inmate of Monte Casino; at sixteen years of age he caught the more fiery and vigorous enthusiasm of the Dominicans. By them he was sent—no unwilling proselyte and pupil—to France. He was seized by his worldly brothers, and sent back to Naples; he was imprisoned in one of the family castles, but resisted even the fond entreaties of his mother and his sisters. He persisted in his pious disobedience, his holy hardness of heart; he was released after two years' imprisonment—it might seem strange—at the command of the Emperor Frederick II. The godless Emperor, as he was called, gave Thomas to the Church. Aquinas took the irrevocable vow of a Friar Preacher. He became a scholar of Albert the Great at Cologne and at Paris. He was dark, silent, unapproachable even by his brethren, perpetually wrapt in profound meditation. He was called, in mockery, the great dumb ox of Sicily. Albert questioned the mute disciple on the most deep and knotty points of theology; he found, as he confessed, his equal, his superior. ‘That dumb ox will make the world resound with his doctrines.’ With Albert the faithful disciple returned to Cologne. Again he went back to Paris, received his academic degrees, and taught with universal wonder. Under Alexander IV he stood up in Rome in defence of his Order against the eloquent William de St. Amour; he repudiated for his Order, and condemned by his authority, the prophesies of the Abbot Joachim. He taught at Cologne with Albert the Great; also at Paris, at Rome, at Orvieto, at Viterbo, at Perugia. Where he taught, the world listened in respectful silence. He was acknowledged by two Popes, Urban IV and Clement IV, as the first theologian of the age. He refused the Archbishopric of Naples. He was expected at the Council of Lyons, as the authority before whom all Christendom might be expected to bow down. He died ere he had passed the borders of Naples, at the Abbey of Rossa Nuova, near Terracina, at the age of forty-eight. Dark tales

were told of his death; only the wickedness of man could deprive the world so early of such a wonder. The University of Paris claimed, but in vain, the treasure of his mortal remains. He was canonized by John XXII.

“Thomas Aquinas is throughout, above all, the Theologian. God and the soul of man are the only objects truly worthy of his philosophic investigation. This is the function of the Angelic Doctor, the mission of the Angel of the Schools. In his works, or rather in his one great work, is the final result of all which has been decided by Pope or Council, taught by the Fathers, accepted by tradition, argued in the schools, inculcated in the confessional. The Sum of Theology is the authentic, authoritative, acknowledged code of Latin Christianity. We cannot but contrast this vast work with the original Gospel: to this bulk has grown the New Testament, or rather the doctrinal and moral part of the New Testament. But Aquinas is an intellectual theologian: he approaches more nearly than most philosophers, certainly than most divines, to pure embodied intellect. He is perfectly passionless; he has no polemic indignation, nothing of the Churchman’s jealousy and suspicion; he has no fear of the result of any investigation; he hates nothing, hardly heresy; loves nothing, unless perhaps naked, abstract truth. In his serene confidence that all must end in good, he moves the most startling and even perilous questions, as if they were the most indifferent, the very Being of God. God must be revealed by syllogistic process. Himself inwardly conscious of the absolute harmony of his own intellectual and moral being, he places sin not so much in the will as in the understanding. The perfection of man is the perfection of his intelligence. He examines with the same perfect self-command, it might almost be said apathy, the converse as well as the proof of the most vital religious truths. He is nearly as consummate a sceptic, almost atheist, as he is a divine and theologian. Secure, as it should seem, in impenetrable armor, he has

not only no apprehension, but seems not to suppose the possibility of danger; he has nothing of the boastfulness of self-confidence, but, in calm assurance of victory, gives every advantage to his adversary. On both sides of every question he casts the argument into one of his clear, distinct syllogisms, and calmly places himself as Arbitrator, and passes judgment in one or a series of still more unanswerable syllogisms. He has assigned its unassailable province to Church authority, to tradition or the Fathers, faith and works; but beyond, within the proper sphere of philosophy, he asserts full freedom. There is no Father, even St. Augustine, who may not be examined by the fearless intellect.”



1433. Gratian was a Franciscan friar, and teacher in the school of the convent of St. Felix in Bologna. He wrote the *Decretum Gratiani*, or “Concord of the Discordant Canons,” in which he brought into agreement the laws of the courts secular and ecclesiastical. [←](#)
1434. Peter Lombard, the “Master of Sentences,” so called from his *Libri Sententiarum*. In the dedication of this work to the Church he says that he wishes “to contribute, like the poor widow, his mite to the treasury of the Lord.” The following account of him and his doctrines is from Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 238:—

“Peter the Lombard was born near Novara, the native place of Lanfranc and of Anselm. He was Bishop of Paris in 1159. His famous Book of the Sentences was intended to be, and became to a great extent, the Manual of the Schools. Peter knew not, or disdainfully threw aside, the philosophical cultivation of his day. He adhered rigidly to all which passed for Scripture, and was the authorized interpretation of the Scripture, to all which had become the creed in the traditions, and law in the decretals, of the Church. He seems to have no apprehension of doubt in his stern dogmatism; he will not recognize any of the

difficulties suggested by philosophy; he cannot, or will not, perceive the weak points of his own system. He has the great merit that, opposed as he was to the prevailing Platonism, throughout the Sentences the ethical principle predominates; his excellence is perspicuity, simplicity, definiteness of moral purpose. His distinctions are endless, subtle, idle; but he wrote from conflicting authorities to reconcile writers at war with each other, at war with themselves. Their quarrels had been wrought to intentional or unintentional antagonism in the ‘Sic et Non’ of Abelard. That philosopher, whether Pyrrhonist or more than Pyrrhonist, had left them all in the confusion of strife; he had set Fathers against Fathers, each Father against himself, the Church against the Church, tradition against tradition, law against law. The Lombard announced himself and was accepted as the mediator, the final arbiter in this endless litigation; he would sternly fix the positive, proscribe the negative or sceptical view in all these questions. The litigation might still go on, but within the limits which he had rigidly established; he had determined those ultimate results against which there was no appeal. The mode of proof might be interminably contested in the schools; the conclusion was already irrefragably fixed. On the sacramental system Peter the Lombard is loftily, severely hierarchical. Yet he is moderate on the power of the keys; he holds only a declaratory power of binding and loosing—of showing how the souls of men were to be bound and loosed.”

Peter Lombard was born at the beginning of the twelfth century, when the Novarese territory, his birthplace, was a part of Lombardy, and hence his name. He studied at the University of Paris, under Abelard; was afterwards made Professor of Theology in the University, and then Bishop of Paris. He died in 1164. [←](#)

1435. Solomon, whose Song of Songs breathes such impassioned love. [←](#)

1436. To know if he were saved or not, a grave question having been raised upon that point by theologians. ↪

1437. Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted by St. Paul. Acts 17:34:—

“Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed; among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite.”

A book attributed to him, on the “Celestial Hierarchy,” was translated into Latin by Johannes Erigena, and became in the Middle Ages the textbook of angelic lore. “The author of those extraordinary treatises,” says Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 189, “which, from their obscure and doubtful parentage, now perhaps hardly maintain their fame for imaginative richness, for the occasional beauty of their language, and their deep piety—those treatises which, widely popular in the West, almost created the angel-worship of the popular creed, and were also the parents of Mystic Theology and of the higher Scholasticism—this Poet-Theologian was a Greek. The writings which bear the venerable name of Dionysius the Areopagite, the proselyte of St. Paul, first appear under a suspicious and suspected form, as authorities cited by the heterodox Severians in a conference at Constantinople. The orthodox stood aghast: how was it that writings of the holy convert of St. Paul had never been heard of before? that Cyril of Alexandria, that Athanasius himself, were ignorant of their existence? But these writings were in themselves of too great power, too captivating, too congenial to the monastic mind, not to find bold defenders. Bearing this venerable name in their front, and leaving behind them, in the East, if at first a doubtful, a growing faith in their authenticity, they appeared in the West as a precious gift from the Byzantine Emperor to the Emperor Louis the Pious. France in that age was not likely to throw cold and jealous doubts on writings which bore the hallowed name of that great Saint, whom she had already boasted to have left his primal Bishopric of Athens to convert her forefathers, whom Paris already held to be her tutelar patron, the rich and powerful Abbey of St. Denys to be her founder. There was living in the West, by happy coincidence, the one man who at that period, by his knowledge

of Greek, by the congenial speculativeness of his mind, by the vigor and richness of his imagination, was qualified to translate into Latin the mysterious doctrines of the Areopagite, both as to the angelic world and the subtle theology. John Erigena hastened to make known in the West the ‘Celestial Hierarchy,’ the treatise ‘on the Name of God’ and the brief chapters on the ‘Mystic Philosophy.’” [←](#)

1438. Paul Orosius. He was a Spanish presbyter, born at Tarragona near the close of the fourth century. In his youth he visited St. Augustine in Africa, who in one of his books describes him thus:—

“There came to me a young monk, in the catholic peace our brother, in age our son, in honor our fellow-presbyter, Orosius, alert in intellect, ready of speech, eager in study, desiring to be a useful vessel in the house of the Lord for the refutation of false and pernicious doctrines, which have slain the souls of the Spaniards much more unhappily than the sword of the barbarians their bodies.”

On leaving St. Augustine, he went to Palestine to complete his studies under St. Jerome at Bethlehem, and while there arraigned Pelagius for heresy before the Bishop of Jerusalem. The work by which he is chiefly known is his “Seven Books of Histories”; a world-chronicle from the creation to his own time. Of this work St. Augustine availed himself in writing his “City of God”; and it had also the honor of being translated into Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred. Dante calls Orosius “the advocate of the Christian centuries,” because this work was written to refute the misbelievers who asserted that Christianity had done more harm to the world than good. [←](#)

1439. Severinus Boethius, the Roman Senator and philosopher in the days of Theodoric the Goth, born in 475, and put to death in 524. His portrait is thus drawn by Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XXXIX:—

“The Senator Boethius is the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman. As a wealthy orphan, he inherited the patrimony and honors of the Anician family, a name

ambitiously assumed by the kings and emperors of the age; and the appellation of Manlius asserted his genuine or fabulous descent from a race of consuls and dictators, who had repulsed the Gauls from the Capitol, and sacrificed their sons to the discipline of the Republic. In the youth of Boethius, the studies of Rome were not totally abandoned; a Virgil is now extant, corrected by the hand of a consul; and the professors of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence were maintained in their privileges and pensions by the liberality of the Goths. But the erudition of the Latin language was insufficient to satiate his ardent curiosity; and Boethius is said to have employed eighteen laborious years in the schools of Athens, which were supported by the zeal, the learning, and the diligence of Proclus and his disciples. The reason and piety of their Roman pupil were fortunately saved from the contagion of mystery and magic, which polluted the groves of the Academy; but he imbibed the spirit, and imitated the method of his dead and living masters, who attempted to reconcile the strong and subtle sense of Aristotle with the devout contemplation and sublime fancy of Plato. After his return to Rome, and his marriage with the daughter of his friend, the patrician Symmachus, Boethius still continued in a palace of ivory and marble to prosecute the same studies. The Church was edified by his profound defence of the orthodox creed against the Arian, the Eutychian, and the Nestorian heresies; and the Catholic unity was explained or exposed in a formal treatise by the *indifference* of three distinct, though consubstantial persons. For the benefit of his Latin readers, his genius submitted to teach the first elements of the arts and sciences of Greece. The geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry, were translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the Roman Senator. And he alone was esteemed capable of

describing the wonders of art, a sundial, a water-clock, or a sphere which represented the motions of the planets. From these abstruse speculations Boethius stooped, or, to speak more truly, he rose to the social duties of public and private life: the indigent were relieved by his liberality; and his eloquence, which flattery might compare to the voice of Demosthenes or Cicero, was uniformly exerted in the cause of innocence and humanity. Such conspicuous merit was felt and rewarded by a discerning prince; the dignity of Boethius was adorned with the titles of Consul and Patrician, and his talents were usefully employed in the important station of Master of the Offices.”

Being suspected of some participation in a plot against Theodoric, he was confined in the tower of Pavia, where he wrote the work which has immortalized his name. Of this Gibbon speaks as follows:—

“While Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or the stroke of death, he composed in the tower of Pavia the *Consolation of Philosophy*; a golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of the author. The celestial guide whom he had so long invoked at Rome and Athens now condescended to illumine his dungeon, to revive his courage, and to pour into his wounds her salutary balm. She taught him to compare his long prosperity and his recent distress, and to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of fortune. Reason had informed him of the precarious condition of her gifts; experience had satisfied him of their real value; he had enjoyed them without guilt; he might resign them without a sigh, and calmly disdain the impotent malice of his enemies, who had left him happiness, since they had left him virtue. From the earth Boethius ascended to heaven in search of the SUPREME GOOD; explored the metaphysical labyrinth of chance and destiny, of prescience and

freewill, of time and eternity; and generously attempted to reconcile the perfect attributes of the Deity with the apparent disorders of his moral and physical government. Such topics of consolation, so obvious, so vague, or so abstruse, are ineffectual to subdue the feelings of human nature. Yet the sense of misfortune may be diverted by the labor of thought; and the sage who could artfully combine, in the same work, the various riches of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, must already have possessed the intrepid calmness which he affected to seek. Suspense, the worst of evils, was at length determined by the ministers of death, who executed, and perhaps exceeded, the inhuman mandate of Theodoric. A strong cord was fastened round the head of Boethius, and forcibly tightened, till his eyes almost started from their sockets; and some mercy may be discovered in the milder torture of beating him with clubs till he expired. But his genius survived to diffuse a ray of knowledge over the darkest ages of the Latin world; the writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of the English kings, and the third Emperor of the name of Otho removed to a more honorable tomb the bones of a Catholic saint, who, from his Arian persecutors, had acquired the honors of martyrdom, and the fame of miracles.”



1440. Boethius was buried in the church of San Pietro di Cieldauro in Pavia.



1441. St. Isidore, a learned prelate of Spain, was born in Cartagena, date unknown. In 600 he became Bishop of Seville, and died 636. He was indefatigable in converting the Visigoths from Arianism, wrote many theological and scientific works, and finished the Mosarabic missal and breviary, begun by his brother and predecessor St. Leander.

“The Venerable Bede,” or Beda, an Anglo-Saxon monk, was born at Wearmouth in 672, and in 735 died and was buried in the monastery of

Yarrow, where he had been educated and had passed his life. His bones were afterward removed to the Cathedral of Durham, and placed in the same coffin with those of St. Cuthbert. He was the author of more than forty volumes; among which his *Ecclesiastical History of England* is the most known and valued, and, like the *Histories* of Orosius, had the honor of being translated by King Alfred from the Latin into Anglo-Saxon. On his deathbed he dictated the close of his translation of the Gospel of John. "Dearest master," said his scribe, "one chapter still remains, but it is difficult for thee to speak." The dying monk replied, "Take thy pen and write quickly." Later the scribe said, "Only one sentence remains"; and the monk said again, "Write quickly." And writing, the scribe said, "It is done." "Thou hast said rightly," answered Bede, "it is done"; and died, repeating the "Gloria Patri," closing the service of his long life with the closing words of the service of the Church. The following legend of him is from Wright's *Biog. Britan. Lit.*, I 269:—

"The reputation of Bede increased daily, and we find him spoken of by the title of Saint very soon after his death. Boniface in his epistles describes him as the lamp of the Church. Towards the ninth century he received the appellation of The Venerable, which has ever since been attached to his name. As a specimen of the fables by which his biography was gradually obscured, we may cite the legends invented to account for the origin of this latter title. According to one, the Anglo-Saxon scholar was on a visit to Rome, and there saw a gate of iron, on which were inscribed the letters P.P.P.S.S.S.R.R.R.F.F.F., which no one was able to interpret. Whilst Bede was attentively considering the inscription, a Roman who was passing by said to him rudely, 'What seest thou there, English ox?' to which Bede replied, 'I see your confusion'; and he immediately explained the characters thus: *Pater Patrice Perditus, Sapientia Secum Sublata, Ruef Regnum Romae, Ferro Flamma Fame*. The Romans were astonished at the acuteness of their English visitor, and decreed that the title of Venerable should be thenceforth given to him.

According to another story, Bede, having become blind in his old age, was walking abroad with one of his disciples for a guide, when they arrived at an open place where there was a large heap of stones; and Bede's companion persuaded his master to preach to the people who, as he pretended, were assembled there and waiting in great silence and expectation. Bede delivered a most eloquent and moving discourse, and when he had uttered the concluding phrase, *Per omnia saecula saeculorum*, to the great admiration of his disciple, the stones, we are told, cried out aloud, 'Amen, Venerabilis Beda!' There is also a third legend on this subject which informs us that, soon after Bede's death, one of his disciples was appointed to compose an epitaph in Latin Leonines, and carve it on his monument, and he began thus,

'Hac sunt in fossa Bedae ossa,'

intending to introduce the word *sancti* or *presbyteri*; but as neither of these words would suit the metre, whilst he was puzzling himself to find one more convenient, he fell asleep. On awaking he prepared to resume his work, when to his great astonishment he found that the line had already been completed on the stone (by an angel, as he supposed), and that it stood thus:—

'Hac sunt in fossa Bedae Venerabilis ossa.'"

Richard of St. Victor was a monk in the monastery of that name near Paris, "and wrote a book on the Trinity," says the *Ottimo*, "and many other beautiful and sublime works"; praise which seems justified by Dante's words, if not suggested by them. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 241, says of him and his brother Hugo:—

"Richard de St. Victor was at once more logical and more devout, raising higher at once the unassisted power of man, yet with even more supernatural interference—less ecclesiastical, more religious. Thus the silent, solemn

cloister was, as it were, constantly balancing the noisy and pugnacious school. The system of the St. Victors is the contemplative philosophy of deep-thinking minds in their profound seclusion, not of intellectual gladiators: it is that of men following out the train of their own thoughts, not perpetually crossed by the objections of subtle rival disputants. Its end is not victory, but the inward satisfaction of the soul. It is not so much conscious of ecclesiastical restraint, it is rather self-restrained by its inborn reverence; it has no doubt, therefore no fear; it is bold from the inward consciousness of its orthodoxy.”



1442. As to many other life-weary men, like those mentioned in *Purgatorio* XVI 122:—

“And late they deem it
That God restore them to the better life.”



1443. “This is Master Sigier,” says the *Ottimo*, “who wrote and lectured on Logic in Paris.” Very little more is known of him than this, and that he was supposed to hold some odious, if not heretical opinions. Even his name has perished out of literary history, and survives only in the verse of Dante and the notes of his commentators.

1444. The Rue du Fouarre, or Street of Straw, originally called Rue de l’École, is famous among the old streets of Paris, as having been the cradle of the University. It was in early times a hay and straw market, and hence derives its name. In the old poem of “*Les Rues de Paris*,” Barbazan, II 247, are these lines:—

“*En près est rue de l’École,*
Là demeure Dame Nicole;
En celle rue, ce me samble,
Vent-on et fain et fuerre ensamble.”

Others derive the name from the fact, that the students covered the benches of their lecture-rooms with straw, or used it instead of benches; which they would not have done if a straw-market had not been near at hand.

Dante, moved perhaps by some pleasant memory of the past, pays the old scholastic street the tribute of a verse. The elegant Petrarca mentions it frequently in his Latin writings, and always with a sneer. He remembers only “the disputationis city of Paris, and the noisy Street of Straw”; or “the plaudits of the Petit Pont and the Rue du Fouarre, the most famous places on earth.”

Rabelais speaks of it as the place where Pantagruel first held disputes with the learned doctors, “having posted up his nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-four theses in all the carrefours of the city”; and Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, III 85, justifies the mention of it in Paradise as follows:—

“A common idealist would have been rather alarmed at the thought of introducing the name of a street in Paris—Straw Street (Rue du Fouarre)—into the midst of a description of the highest heavens.... What did it matter to Dante, up in heaven there, whether the mob below thought him vulgar or not! Sigier *had* read in Straw Street; that was the fact, and he had to say so, and there an end.

“There is, indeed, perhaps, no greater sign of innate and *real* vulgarity of mind or defective education, than the want of power to understand the universality of the ideal truth; the absence of sympathy with the colossal grasp of those intellects, which have in them so much of divine, that nothing is small to them, and nothing large; but with equal and unoffended vision they take in the sum of the world, Straw Street and the seventh heavens, in the same instant. A certain portion of this divine spirit is visible even in the lower examples of all the true men; it is, indeed, perhaps the clearest test of their belonging to the true and great group, that they are continually touching what to the multitude appear vulgarities. The higher a man

stands, the more the word ‘vulgar’ becomes unintelligible to him.”

The following sketch from the note book of a recent traveller shows the Street of Straw in its present condition:—

“I went yesterday in search of the Rue du Fouarre. I had been hearing William Guizot’s lecture on Montaigne, and from the Collège de France went down the Rue St. Jacques, passing at the back of the old church of St. Severin, whose gargoyles still stretch out their long necks over the street. Turning into the Rue Galande, a few steps brought me to the Fouarre. It is a short and narrow street, with a scanty footway on one side, on the other only a gutter. The opening at the farther end is filled by a picturesque vista of the transept gable and great rose-window of Notre Dame, over the river, with the slender central spire. Some of the houses on either side of the street were evidently of a comparatively modern date; but others were of the oldest, and the sculptured stone wreaths over the doorways, and the remains of artistic ironwork in the balconies, showed them to have been once of some consideration. Some dirty children were playing at the door of a shop where fagots and *charbon de terre de Paris* were sold. A coachman in glazed hat sat asleep on his box before the shop of a *blanchisseuse de fin*. A woman in a bookbinder’s window was folding the sheets of a French grammar. In an angle of the houses under the high wall of the hospital garden was a cobbler’s stall. A stout, red-faced woman, standing before it, seeing me gazing round, asked if Monsieur was seeking anything in special. I said I was only looking at the old street; it must be very old. ‘Yes, one of the oldest in Paris.’ ‘And why is it called “*du Fouarre*”?’ ‘O, that is the old French for *foin*; and hay used to be sold here. Then, there were famous schools here in the old days; Abelard used to lecture here.’ I was delighted to find the traditions of the place still surviving,

though I cannot say whether she was right about Abelard, whose name may have become merely typical; it is not improbable, however, that he may have made and annihilated many a man of straw, after the fashion of the doctors of dialectics, in the Fouarre. His house was not far off on the Quai Napoléon in the Cité; and that of the Canon Fulbert on the corner of the Rue Basse des Ursins. Passing through to the Pont au Double, I stopped to look at the books on the parapet, and found a voluminous Dictionnaire Historique, but, oddly enough, it contained neither Sigier's name, nor Abelard's. I asked a ruddy-cheeked boy on a doorstep if he went to school. He said he worked in the daytime, and went to an evening school in the Rue du Fouarre, No. 5. That primary night school seems to be the last feeble descendant of the ancient learning. As to straw, I saw none except a kind of rude straw matting placed round the corner of a wine-shop at the entrance of the street; a sign that oysters are sold within, they being brought to Paris in this kind of matting.”



1445. Buti interprets thus:—

“Lecturing on the Elenchi of Aristotle, to prove some truths he formed certain syllogisms so well and artfully, as to excite envy.”

Others interpret the word *invidiosi* in the Latin sense of odious—truths that were odious to somebody; which interpretation is supported by the fact that Sigier was summoned before the primate of the Dominicans on suspicion of heresy, but not convicted.

1446. Milton, “At a Solemn Mustek”:—

“Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven’s joy;
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse;

Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure concert,
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim, in burning row,
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow;
And the cherubic host, in thousand choirs,
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere-long
To his celestial concert us unite,
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light!"

✉

1447. The Heaven of the Sun continued. The praise of St. Francis by Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican. ✉

1448. Lucretius, *Nature of Things*, Book II i, Good's Tr.:—

"How sweet to stand, when tempests tear the main,
On the firm cliff, and mark the seaman's toil!
Not that another's danger soothes the soul,
But from such toil how sweet to feel secure!

How sweet, at distance from the strife, to view
Contending hosts, and hear the clash of war!
But sweeter far on Wisdom's heights serene,
Upheld by Truth, to fix our firm abode;
To watch the giddy crowd that, deep below,
Forever wander in pursuit of bliss;
To mark the strife for honors and renown,
For wit and wealth, insatiate, ceaseless urged
Day after day, with labor unrestrained.”



1449. Thomas Aquinas. [←](#)

1450. The spirits see the thoughts of men in God, as in Canto VIII 87:—

“Because I am assured the lofty joy
Thy speech infuses into me, my Lord,
Where every good thing doth begin and end,
Thou seest as I see it.”



1451. Canto X 94:—

“The holy flock
Which Dominic conducteth by a road
Where well one fattens if he strayeth not.”



1452. Canto X 112:—

“Where knowledge
So deep was put, that, if the true be true,
To see so much there never rose a second.”



1453. The Church. Luke 23:46:—

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”



1454. Romans 8:38:—

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”



1455. St. Francis and St. Dominic. Mr. Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors*, I 7, says:—

“In warring against Frederic, whose courage, cunning, and ambition gave them ceaseless cause for alarm, and in strengthening and extending the influence of the Church, much shaken by the many heresies which had sprung up in Italy and France, the Popes received invaluable assistance from the Minorites and the Preaching Friars, whose orders had been established by Pope Innocent III in the early part of the century, in consequence of a vision, in which he saw the tottering walls of the Lateran basilica supported by an Italian and a Spaniard, in whom he afterwards recognized their respective founders, SS. Francis and Dominic. Nothing could be more opposite than the means which these two celebrated men employed in the work of conversion; for while St. Francis used persuasion and tenderness to melt the hard-hearted, St. Dominic forced and crushed them into submission. St. Francis,

*'La cui mirabil vita
Meglio in gloria del ciel si canterebbe,'*

was inspired by love for all created things, in the most insignificant of which he recognized a common origin with himself. The little lambs hung up for slaughter excited his pity, and the captive birds his tender sympathy; the swallows he called his sisters, *sororcule meae*, when he begged them to cease their twitterings while he preached; the worm he carefully removed from his path, lest it should be trampled on by a less careful foot; and, in love with poverty, he lived upon the simplest food, went clad in the scantiest garb, and enjoined chastity and obedience upon his followers, who within four years numbered no less than fifty thousand; but St. Dominic, though originally of a kind and compassionate nature, sacrificed whole hecatombs of victims in his zeal for the Church, showing how far fanaticism can change the kindest heart, and make it look with complacency upon deeds which would have formerly excited its abhorrence.”



1456. The Seraphs love most, the Cherubs know most. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. CVIII 5, says, in substance, that the Seraphim are so called from burning; according to the three properties of fire, namely, continual motion upward, excess of heat, and of light. And again, in the same article, that Cherubim, being interpreted, is plenitude of knowledge, which in them is fourfold; namely, perfect vision of God, full reception of divine light, contemplation of beauty in the order of things, and copious effusion of the divine cognition upon others. [←](#)
1457. Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican, here celebrates the life and deeds of St. Francis, leaving the praise of his own Saint to Bonaventura, a Franciscan, to show that in heaven there are no rivalries nor jealousies between the two orders, as there were on earth. [←](#)

1458. The town of Ascesi, or Assisi, as it is now called, where St. Francis was born, is situated between the rivers Tupino and Chiasi, on the slope of Monte Subaso, where St. Ubald had his hermitage. From this mountain the summer heats are reflected, and the cold winds of winter blow through the Porta Sole of Perugia. The towns of Nocera and Gualdo are neighboring towns, that suffered under the oppression of the Perugians.

Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 256, says:—

“Having been twice at Perugia, I have experienced the double effect of Mount Ubaldo, which the poet says makes this city feel the cold and heat.

‘*Onde Perugia sente freddo e caldo,*’

that is, which by turns reflects upon it the rays of the sun, and sends it icy winds. I have but too well verified the justice of Dante’s observation, particularly as regards the cold temperature, which Perugia, when it is not burning hot, owes to Mount Ubaldo. I arrived in front of this city on a brilliant autumnal night, and had time to comment at leisure upon the winds of the Ubaldo, as I slowly climbed the winding road which leads to the gates of the city fortified by a Pope.”



1459. Revelation 7:2:—

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.”

These words Bonaventura applies to St. Francis, the beautiful enthusiast and *Pater Seraphicus* of the Church, to follow out whose wonderful life through the details of history and legend would be too long for these notes. A few hints must suffice.

St. Francis was the son of Peter Bernadone, a wool-merchant of Assisi, and was-born in 1182. The first glimpse we catch of him is that

of a joyous youth in gay apparel, given up to pleasure, and singing with his companions through the streets of his native town, like St. Augustine in the streets of Carthage. He was in the war between Assisi and Perugia, was taken prisoner, and passed a year in confinement. On his return home a severe illness fell upon him, which gave him more serious thoughts. He again appeared in the streets of Assisi in gay apparel, but meeting a beggar, a fellow-soldier, he changed clothes with him. He now began to visit hospitals and kiss the sores of lepers. He prayed in the churches, and saw visions. In the church of St. Damiano he heard a voice say three times, "Francis, repair my house, which thou seest falling." In order to do this, he sold his father's horse and some cloth at Foligno, and took the money to the priest of St. Damiano, who to his credit refused to receive it. Through fear of his father, he hid himself; and when he reappeared in the streets was so ill-clad that the boys pelted him and called him mad. His father shut him up in his house; his mother set him free. In the presence of his father and the Bishop he renounced all right to his inheritance, even giving up his clothes, and putting on those of a servant which the Bishop gave him. He wandered about the country, singing the praises of the Lord aloud on the highways. He met with a band of robbers, and said to them, "I am the herald of the Great King." They beat him and threw him into a ditch filled with snow. He only rejoiced and sang the louder. A friend in Gubbio gave him a suit of clothes, which he wore for two years, with a girdle and a staff. He washed the feet of lepers in the hospital, and kissed their sores. He begged from door to door in Assisi for the repairs of the church of St. Damiano, and carried stones for the masons. He did the same for the church of St. Peter; he did the same for the church of Our Lady of Angels at Portiuncula, in the neighborhood of Assisi, where he remained two years. Hearing one day in church the injunction of Christ to his Apostles, "Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purse, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," he left off shoes and staff and girdle, and girt himself with a cord, after the manner of the shepherds in that neighborhood. This cord became the distinguishing mark of his future Order. He kissed the ulcer of a man from Spoleto, and healed him; and St. Bonaventura says, "I know not which I ought most to admire, such a kiss or such a cure." Bernard of Quintavalle and

others associated themselves with him, and the Order of the Benedictines was founded.

As his convent increased, so did his humility and his austerities. He sewed his rough habit with packthread to make it rougher; he slept on the ground with a stone for his pillow; he drank water; he ate bread; he fasted eight lents in the year; he called his body "Brother Ass," and bound it with a halter, the cord of his Order; but a few days before his death he begged pardon of his body for having treated it so harshly. As a penance, he rolled himself naked in the snow and among brambles; he commanded his friars to revile him, and when he said, "O Brother Francis, for thy sins thou hast deserved to be plunged into hell"; Brother Leo was to answer, "It is true; thou hast deserved to be buried in the very bottom of hell."

In 1215 his convent was removed to Alvernia, among the solitudes of the Apennines. In 1219 he went to Egypt to convert the Sultan, and preached to him in his camp near Damietta, but without the desired effect. He returned to the duties of his convent with unabated zeal; and was sometimes seen by his followers lifted from the ground by the fervor of his prayers; and here he received in a vision of the Crucifixion the stigmata in his hands and feet and side. Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, X 100, says:—

"The marks of nails began to appear on his hands and feet, resembling those he had seen in the vision of the man crucified. His hands and feet seemed bored through in the middle with four wounds, and these holes appeared to be pierced with nails of hard flesh; the heads were round and black, and were seen in the palms of his hands, and in his feet in the upper part of the instep. The points were long, and appeared beyond the skin on the other side, and were turned back as if they had been clenched with a hammer. There was also in his right side a red wound, as if made by the piercing of a lance; and this often threw out blood, which stained the tunic and drawers of the saint."

Two years afterwards St. Francis died, exclaiming, "Welcome, Sister Death"; and multitudes came to kiss his sacred wounds. His body was

buried in the church of St. George at Assisi, but four years afterwards removed to a church outside the walls. See [note 1483](#).

In the life of St. Francis it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the facts of history and the myths of tradition; but through all we see the outlines of a gentle, beautiful, and noble character. All living creatures were his brothers and sisters. To him the lark was an emblem of the Cherubim, and the lamb an image of the Lamb of God. He is said to have preached to the birds; and his sermon was, “Brother birds, greatly are ye bound to praise the Creator, who clotheth you with feathers, and giveth you wings to fly with, and a purer air to breathe, and who careth for you, who have so little care for yourselves.”

Forsyth, describing his visit to La Verna, *Italy*, p. 123, says:—

“Francis appears to me a genuine hero, original, independent, magnanimous, incorruptible. His powers seemed designed to regenerate society; but, taking a wrong direction, they sank men into beggars.”

Finally, the phrase he often uttered when others praised him may be here repeated, “What every one is in the eyes of God, that he is and no more.” [✉](#)

1460. Namely, in winter, when the sun is far south; or, as Biagioli prefers, glowing with unwonted splendor. [✉](#)

1461. It will be noticed that there is a play of words on the name Ascesi (I ascended), which Padre Venturi irreverently calls a *congetto di tre quattrini*. [✉](#)

1462. His vow of poverty, in opposition to the wishes of his father. [✉](#)

1463. In the presence of his father and of the Bishop of the diocese. [✉](#)

1464. After the death of Christ, she waited eleven hundred years and more till St. Francis came. [✉](#)

1465. The story of Caesar’s waking the fisherman Amyclas to take him across the Adriatic is told by Lucan, *Pharsalia*, V:—

“There through the gloom his searching eyes explored,
Where to the mouldering rock a bark was moored.
The mighty master of this little boat
Securely slept within a neighboring cot:
No massy beams support his humble hall,
But reeds and marshy rushes wove the wall;
Old, shattered planking for a roof was spread,
And covered in from rain the needy shed.
Thrice on the feeble door the warrior struck,
Beneath the blow the trembling dwelling shook.
‘What wretch forlorn,’ the poor Amyclas cries,
‘Driven by the raging seas, and stormy skies,
To my poor lowly roof for shelter flies?’

“O happy poverty! thou greatest good,
Bestowed by Heaven, but seldom understood!
Here nor the cruel spoiler seeks his prey,
Nor ruthless armies take their dreadful way:
Security thy narrow limits keeps,
Safe are thy cottages, and sound thy sleeps.
Behold! ye dangerous dwellings of the great,
Where gods and godlike princes choose their seat;
See in what peace the poor Amyclas lies,
Nor starts, though Caesar’s call commands to rise.”

Dante also writes, *Convito*, IV 13:—

“And therefore the wise man says, that the traveller
empty-handed on his way would sing in the very presence
of robbers. And that is what Lucan refers to in his fifth
book, when he commends the security of poverty, saying:
O safe condition of poverty! O narrow habitations and
hovels! O riches of the Gods not yet understood! At what
times and at what walls could it happen, the not being
afraid of any noise, when the hand of Caesar was
knocking? And this says Lucan, when he describes how

Caesar came by night to the hut of the fisherman Amyclas, to pass the Adrian Sea.”



1466. St. Francis, according to Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, X 78, used to say that “he possessed nothing of earthly goods, being a disciple of Him who, for our sakes, was born a stranger in an open stable, lived without a place of his own wherein to lay his head, subsisting by the charity of good people, and died naked on a cross in the close embraces of holy poverty.”



1467. Bernard of Quintavalle, the first follower of St. Francis. Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, X 75, says:—

“Many began to admire the heroic and uniform virtue of this great servant of God, and some desired to be his companions and disciples. The first of these was Bernard of Quintaval, a rich tradesman of Assisium, a person of singular prudence, and of great authority in that city, which had been long directed by his counsels. Seeing the extraordinary conduct of St. Francis, he invited him to sup at his house, and had a good bed made ready for him near his own. When Bernard seemed to be fallen asleep, the servant of God arose, and falling on his knees, with his eyes lifted up, and his arms across, repeated very slow, with abundance of tears, the whole night, *Deus meus et Omnia*, ‘My God and my All.’ ... Bernard secretly watched the saint all night, by the light of a lamp, saying to himself, ‘This man is truly a servant of God’; and admiring the happiness of such a one, whose heart is entirely filled with God, and to whom the whole world is nothing. After many other proofs of the sincere and admirable sanctity of Francis, being charmed and vanquished by his example, he begged the saint to make him his companion. Francis recommended the matter to God for some time; they both heard mass together, and took advice that they might learn the will of God. The

design being approved, Bernard sold all his effects, and divided the sum among the poor in one day.”



1468. Giles, or Egidius, the second follower of St. Francis, died at Perugia, in 1272. He was the author of a book called *Verba Aurea*, Golden Words. Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, VII 162, note, says of him:—

“None among the first disciples of St. Francis seems to have been more perfectly replenished with his spirit of perfect charity, humility, meekness, and simplicity, as appears from the golden maxims and lessons of piety which he gave to others.”

He gives also this anecdote of him on p. 164:—

“Brother Giles said, ‘Can a dull idiot love God as perfectly as a great scholar?’ St. Bonaventure replied, ‘A poor old woman may love him more than the most learned master and doctor in theology.’ At this Brother Giles, in a sudden fervor and jubilation of spirit, went into a garden, and, standing at a gate toward the city (of Rome), he looked that way, and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Come, the poorest, most simple, and most illiterate old woman, love the Lord our God, and you may attain to an higher degree of eminence and happiness than Brother Bonaventure with all his learning.’ After this he fell into an ecstasy, in which he continued in sweet contemplation without motion for the space of three hours.”

Sylvester, the third disciple, was a priest who sold stone to St. Francis for the repairs of the church of St. Damiano. Some question arising about the payment, St. Francis thrust his hand into Bernard’s bosom and drew forth a handful of gold, which he added to the previous payment. Sylvester, smitten with remorse that he, an old man, should be so greedy of gold, while a young man despised it for the love of God, soon after became a disciple of the saint.

1469. Peter Bernadone, the father of St. Francis, was a wool-merchant. Of this humble origin the saint was not ashamed. [←](#)
1470. The permission to establish his religious Order, granted by Pope Innocent III, in 1214. [←](#)
1471. Better here in heaven by the Angels, than on earth by Franciscan friars in their churches, as the custom was. Or perhaps, as Buti interprets it, better above in the glory of Paradise, “where is the College of all the Saints,” than here in the Sun. [←](#)
1472. The permission to found the Order of Minor Friars, or Franciscans, granted by Pope Innocent III, in 1214, was confirmed by Pope Honorius III, in 1223. [←](#)
1473. The title of Archimandrite, or Patriarch, was given in the Greek Church to one who had supervision over many convents. [←](#)
1474. Namely, before the Sultan of Egypt in his camp near Damietta. [←](#)
1475. In the words of Ben Jonson,
- “Potential merit stands for actual,
Where only opportunity doth want,
Not will nor power.”
- [←](#)
1476. On Mount Alvernia, St. Francis, absorbed in prayer, received in his hands and feet and breast the stigmata of Christ, that is, the wounds of the nails and the spear of the crucifixion, the final seal of the Order.
Forsyth, *Italy*, p. 122:—
- “This singular convent, which stands on the cliffs of a lofty Apennine, was built by St. Francis himself, and is celebrated for the miracle which the motto records. Here reigns all the terrible of nature—a rocky mountain, a ruin of the elements, broken, sawn, and piled in sublime

confusion—precipices crowned with old, gloomy, visionary woods—black chasms in the rock where curiosity shudders to look down—haunted caverns, sanctified by miraculous crosses—long excavated stairs that restore you to daylight.... On entering the Chapel of the Stigmata, we caught the religion of the place; we knelt round the rail, and gazed with a kind of local devotion at the holy spot where St. Francis received the five wounds of Christ. The whole hill is legendary ground. Here the Seraphic Father was saluted by two crows which still haunt the convent; there the Devil hurled him down a precipice, yet was not permitted to bruise a bone of him.”



1477. When St. Francis was dying, he desired to be buried among the malefactors at the place of execution, called the *Colle d’Inferno*, or Hill of Hell. A church was afterwards built on this spot; its name was changed to *Colle di Paradiso*, and the body of the saint transferred thither in 1230. The popular tradition is, that it is standing upright under the principal altar of the chapel devoted to the saint. [←](#)
1478. If St. Francis were as here described, what must his companion, St. Dominic, have been, who was Patriarch, or founder, of the Order to which Thomas Aquinas belonged. To the degeneracy of this Order the remainder of the canto is devoted. [←](#)
1479. The Order of the Dominicans diminished in numbers, by its members going in search of prelacies and other ecclesiastical offices, till it is like a tree hacked and hewn. [←](#)
1480. Buti interprets this passage differently. He says:—

“*Vedrai ’l corregger*; that is, thou, Dante, shalt see St. Dominic, whom he calls *corregger*, because he wore about his waist the *correggia*, or leathern thong, and made his friars wear it, as St. Francis made his wear the cord;—*che argomenta*, that is, who proves by true arguments in

his constitutions, that his friars ought to study sacred theology, studying which their souls will grow fat with a good fatness; that is, with the grace of God, and the knowledge of things divine, if they do not go astray after the other sciences, which are vanity, and make the soul vain and proud.”

[◀](#)

1481. The Heaven of the Sun continued. The praise of St. Dominic by St. Bonaventura, a Franciscan. [◀](#)

1482. By this figure Dante indicates that the circle of spirits was revolving horizontally, and not vertically. In the *Convito*, III 5, he makes the same comparison in speaking of the apparent motion of the sun; *non a modo di mola, ma di rota*, not in fashion of a millstone, but of a wheel.

[◀](#)

1483. Ezekiel 1:28:—

“As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.”

[◀](#)

1484. Iris, Juno’s messenger. [◀](#)

1485. Echo. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, Addison’s Tr.:—

“The Nymph, when nothing could Narcissus move,
Still dashed with blushes for her slighted love,
Lived in the shady covert of the woods,
In solitary caves and dark abodes;
Where pining wandered the rejected fair,
Till harassed out, and worn away with care,
The sounding skeleton, of blood bereft,
Besides her bones and voice had nothing left.

Her bones are petrified, her voice is found
In vaults, where still it doubles every sound.”



1486. Genesis 9:13:—

“I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token
of a covenant between me and the earth.”

And Campbell, “To the Rainbow”:—

“When o’er the green undeluged earth
Heaven’s covenant thou didst shine,
How came the gray old fathers forth
To watch thy sacred sign.”



1487. It is the spirit of St. Bonaventura, a Franciscan, that speaks. [←](#)

1488. St. Dominic, by whom, through the mouth of his follower, St. Francis
has been eulogized. [←](#)

1489. As in Canto XI 40:—

“One will I speak of, for of both is spoken
In praising one, whichever may be taken,
Because unto one end their labors were.”



1490. The Church rallied and rearmed by the death of Christ against “all evil
and mischief,” and “the crafts and assaults of the Devil.” [←](#)

1491. In Canto XI 35:—

“Two Princes did ordain in her behoof,
Which on this side and that might be her guide.”

[←](#)

1492. In the west of Europe, namely in Spain. [←](#)
1493. The town of Calahorra, the birthplace of St. Dominic, is situated in the province of Old Castile. [←](#)
1494. In one of the quarterings of the arms of Spain the Lion is above the Castle, in another beneath it. [←](#)
1495. St. Dominic. [←](#)
1496. Dante believed with Thomas Aquinas, that “the creation and infusion” of the soul were simultaneous. [←](#)
1497. Before the birth of St. Dominic, his mother dreamed that she had brought forth a dog, spotted black and white, and bearing a lighted torch in his mouth; symbols of the black and white habit of the Order, and of the fiery zeal of its founder. In art the dog has become the attribute of St. Dominic, as may be seen in many paintings, and in the statue over the portal of the convent of St. Mark at Florence. [←](#)
1498. The godmother of St. Dominic dreamed that he had a star on the forehead, and another on the back of his head, which illuminated the east and the west. [←](#)
1499. Dominicus, from Dominus, the Lord. [←](#)
1500. St. Dominic, Founder of the Preaching Friars, and Persecutor of Heretics, was born in the town of Calaroga, now Calahorra, in Old Castile, in the year 1170, and died in Bologna in 1221. He was of the illustrious family of the Guzmans; in his youth he studied ten years at the University of Palencia; was devout, abstemious, charitable; sold his clothes to feed the poor, and even offered to sell himself to the Moors, to ransom the brother of a poor woman who sought his aid. In his twenty-fifth year he became a canon under the Bishop of Osma, preaching in the various churches of the province for nine years, and at times teaching theology at Palencia. In 1203 he accompanied his

Bishop on a diplomatic mission to Denmark; and on his return stopped in Languedoc, to help root out the Albigensian heresy; but how far he authorized or justified the religious crusades against these persecuted people, and what part he took in them, is a contested point—enough it would seem to obtain for him, from the Inquisition of Toulouse, the title of the Persecutor of Heretics.

In 1215, St. Dominic founded the Order of Preaching Friars, and in the year following was made Master of the Sacred Palace at Rome. In 1219 the centre of the Order was established at Bologna, and there, in 1221, St. Dominic died, and was buried in the church of St. Nicholas.

It has been generally supposed that St. Dominic founded the Inquisition. It would appear, however, that the special guardianship of that institution was not entrusted to the Dominicans till the year 1233, or twelve years after the death of their founder. [←](#)

1501. Matthew 19:21:—

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

While still a young man and a student, in a season of great want, St. Dominic sold his books, and all that he possessed, to feed the poor.

[←](#)

1502. Felix signifying happy, and Joanna, full of grace. [←](#)

1503. Henry of Susa, Cardinal, and Bishop of Ostia, and thence called Ostiense. He lived in the thirteenth century, and wrote a commentary on the Decretals or Books of Ecclesiastical Law.

Taddeo Alderotti was a distinguished physician and Professor of Bologna, who flourished in the thirteenth century, and translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle. Villani, VIII 66, says of him:—

“At this time (1303) died in Bologna Maestro Taddeo, surnamed the Bolognese, though he was a Florentine, and our fellow-citizen; he was the greatest physicist in all Christendom.”

The allusion here is to the pursuit of wordly things, instead of divine, the same as in the introduction to Canto XI:—

“One after laws and one to aphorisms.”

✉

1504. Buti says that in early times the prelates used to divide the incomes of the Church into four parts; “the first, for the prelate personally; the second, for the clergy who performed the services; the third, for the embellishment of the Church; the fourth, for Christ’s poor; which division is nowadays little observed.” ✉
1505. Pope Boniface VIII, whom Dante never forgets, and to whom he never fails to deal a blow. ✉
1506. He did not ask of the Holy See the power of grasping six, and giving but two or three to pious uses; not the first vacant benefice; nor the tithes that belonged to God’s poor; but the right to defend the faith, of which the four-and-twenty spirits in the two circles around them were the seed. ✉
1507. One wheel of the chariot of the Church Militant, of which St. Francis was the other. ✉
1508. The track made by this wheel of the chariot; that is, the strict rule of St. Francis, is now abandoned by his followers. ✉
1509. Good wine produces crust in the cask, bad wine mould. ✉
1510. Set the points of their feet upon the heel of the footprints, showing that they walked in a direction directly opposite to that of their founder. ✉
1511. When they find themselves in Hell, and not in Paradise. Matthew 13:30:—

“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first

the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

↖

1512. Whoever examines one by one the members of our Order, as he would turn over a book leaf by leaf, will find some as good and faithful as the first. ↲

1513. In 1287, Matteo d' Acquasparta, general of the Franciscans, relaxed the severities of the Order. Later a reaction followed; and in 1310 Frate Ubaldino of Casale became the head of a party of zealots among the Franciscans who took the name of Spiritualists, and produced a kind of schism in the Order, by narrower or stricter interpretation of the Scriptures. ↲

1514. In this line Dante uses the word *life* for *spirit*.

John of Fidanza, surnamed Bonaventura—who “postponed considerations sinister,” or made things temporal subservient to things spiritual, and of whom one of his teachers said that it seemed as if in him “Adam had not sinned,”—was born in 1221 at Bagnoregio, near Orvieto. In his childhood, being extremely ill, he was laid by his mother at the feet of St. Francis, and healed by the prayers of the Saint, who, when he beheld him, exclaimed, “*O buona ventura!*” and by this name the mother dedicated her son to God. He lived to become a Franciscan, to be called the “Seraphic Doctor,” and to write the Life of St. Francis; which, according to the Spanish legend, being left unfinished at his death, he was allowed to return to earth for three days to complete it. There is a strange picture in the Louvre, attributed to Murillo, representing this event. Mrs. Jameson gives an engraving of it in her *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 303.

St. Bonaventura was educated in Paris under Alexander Hales, the Irrefragable Doctor, and in 1245, at the age of twenty-four, became a Professor of Theology in the University. In 1256 he was made General of his Order; in 1273, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano. The nuncios of Pope Gregory, who were sent to carry him his cardinal's hat, found

him in the garden of a convent near Florence, washing the dishes; and he requested them to hang the hat on a tree, till he was ready to take it.

St. Bonaventura was one of the great Schoolmen, and his works are voluminous, consisting of seven imposing folios, two of which are devoted to Expositions of the Scriptures, one to Sermons, two to Peter Lombard's Book of Sentences, and two to minor works. Among these may be mentioned the Legend of St. Francis; the Itinerary of the Mind towards God; the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; the Bible of the Poor, which is a volume of essays on moral and religious subjects; and Meditations on the Life of Christ. Of others the mystic titles are, The Mirror of the Soul; The Mirror of the Blessed Virgin; On the Six Wings of the Seraphim; On the Six Wings of the Cherudim; On the Sandals of the Apostles. One golden sentence of his cannot be too often repeated:—

“The best perfection of a religious man is to do common things in a perfect manner. A constant fidelity in small things is a great and heroic virtue.”

Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 274, 276, says of him:—

“In Bonaventura the philosopher *recedes*; religious edification is his mission. A much smaller proportion of his voluminous works is pure Scholasticism: he is teaching by the Life of his Holy Founder, St. Francis, and by what may be called a new Gospel, a legendary Life of the Saviour, which seems to claim, with all its wild traditions, equal right to the belief with that of the Evangelists. Bonaventura himself seems to deliver it as his own unquestioning faith. Bonaventura, if not ignorant of, feared or disdained to know much of Aristotle or the Arabians: he philosophizes only because in his age he could not avoid philosophy.... The raptures of Bonaventura, like the raptures of all Mystics, tremble on the borders of Pantheism: he would still keep up the distinction between the soul and God; but the soul must aspire to absolute unity with God, in whom all ideas are in

reality one, though many according to human thought and speech. But the soul, by contemplation, by beatific vision, is, as it were, to be lost and merged in that Unity.”



1515. Of these two barefooted friars nothing remains but the name and the good report of holy lives. The *Ottimo* says they were authors of books.

Bonaventura says that Illuminato accompanied St. Francis to Egypt, and was present when he preached in the camp of the Sultan. Later he overcame the scruples of the Saint, and persuaded him to make known to the world the miracle of the stigmata.

Agostino became the head of his Order in the Terra di Lavoro, and there received a miraculous revelation of the death of St. Francis. He was lying ill in his bed, when suddenly he cried out, “Wait for me! Wait for me! I am coming with thee!” And when asked to whom he was speaking, he answered, “Do ye not see our Father Francis ascending into heaven?” and immediately expired.

1516. Hugh of St. Victor was a monk in the monastery of that name near Paris. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, VIII 240, thus speaks of him:—

“The mysticism of Hugo de St. Victor withdrew the contemplator altogether from the outward to the inner world—from God in the works of nature, to God in his workings on the soul of man. This contemplation of God, the consummate perfection of man, is immediate, not mediate. Through the Angels and the Celestial Hierarchy of the Areopagite it aspires to one God, not in his Theophany, but in his inmost essence. All ideas and forms of things are latent in the human soul, as in God, only they are manifested to the soul by its own activity, its meditative power. Yet St. Victor is not exempt from the grosser phraseology of the Mystic—the tasting God, and other degrading images from the senses of men. The ethical system of Hugo de St. Victor is that of the Church,

more free and lofty than the dry and barren discipline of Peter Lombard.”

↵

1517. Peter Mangiadore, or Peter Comestor, as he is more generally called, was born at Troyes in France, and became in 1164 Chancellor of the University of Paris. He was the author of a work on Ecclesiastical History, “from the beginning of the world to the times of the Apostles”; and died in the monastery of St. Victor in 1198. He was surnamed Comestor, the Eater, because he was a great devourer of books.

Peter of Spain was the son of a physician of Lisbon, and was the author of a work on Logic. He was Bishop of Braga, afterwards Cardinal and Bishop of Tusculum, and in 1276 became Pope, under the title of John XIX. In the following year he was killed by the fall of a portion of the Papal palace at Viterbo. ↵

1518. Why Nathan the Prophet should be put here is a great puzzle to the commentators. “*Buon salto!* a good leap,” says Venturi. Lombardi thinks it is no leap at all. The only reason given is, that Nathan said to David, “Thou art the man.” As Buti says:—

“The author puts him among these Doctors, because he revealed his sin to David, as these revealed the vices and virtues in their writings.”

↵

1519. John, surnamed from his eloquence Chrysostom, or Golden Mouth, was born in Antioch, about the year 344. He was first a lawyer, then a monk, next a popular preacher, and finally metropolitan Bishop of Constantinople. His whole life, from his boyhood in Antioch to his death in banishment on the borders of the Black Sea—his austerities as a monk, his fame as a preacher, his troubles as Bishop of Constantinople, his controversy with Theophilus of Alexandria, his exile by the Emperor Arcadius and the earthquake that followed it, his

triumphant return, his second banishment, and his death—is more like a romance than a narrative of facts.

“The monuments of that eloquence,” says Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. XXXII, “which was admired near twenty years at Antioch and Constantinople, have been carefully preserved; and the possession of near one thousand sermons or homilies has authorized the critics of succeeding times to appreciate the genuine merit of Chrysostom. They unanimously attribute to the Christian orator the free command of an elegant and copious language; the judgment to conceal the advantages which he derived from the knowledge of rhetoric and philosophy; an inexhaustible fund of metaphors and similitudes, of ideas and images, to vary and illustrate the most familiar topics; the happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue; and of exposing the folly, as well as the turpitude, of vice, almost with the truth and spirit of a dramatic representation.”

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born at Aosta in Piedmont, about the year 1033, and was educated at the abbey of Bee in Normandy, where, in the year 1060, he became a monk, and afterwards prior and abbot. In 1093 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury by King William Rufus; and after many troubles died, and was buried in his cathedral, in 1109. His life was written by the monk Eadmer of Canterbury. Wright, *Biog. Britan. Lit.*, Anglo-Norman Period, p. 59, says of him:—

“Anselm was equal to Lanfranc in learning, and far exceeded him in piety. In his private life he was modest, humble, and sober in the extreme. He was obstinate only in defending the interests of the Church of Rome, and, however we may judge the claims themselves, we must acknowledge that he supported them from conscientious motives. Reading and contemplation were the favorite occupations of his life, and even the time required for his meals, which were extremely frugal, he employed in discussing philosophical and theological questions.”

Aelius Donatus was a Roman grammarian, who flourished about the middle of the fourth century. He had St. Jerome among his pupils, and

was immortalized by his Latin Grammar, which was used in all the schools of the Middle Ages, so that the name passed into a proverb. In the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, 2889, we find it alluded to,

“Then drewe I me among drapers
My donet to lerne”;

and Chaucer, *Testament of Love*, says,

“No passe I to vertues of this Marguerite
But therein all my donet can I lerne.”

According to the note in Warton, *Eng. Poet.*, Sect. VIII, to which I owe these quotations, Bishop Pecock wrote a work with the title of “Donat into Christian Religion,” using the word in the sense of Introduction.

◀

1520. Rabanus Maurus, a learned theologian, was born at Mayence in 786, and died at Winfel, in the same neighborhood, in 856. He studied first at the abbey of Fulda, and then at St. Martin’s of Tours, under the celebrated Alcuin. He became a teacher at Fulda, then Abbot, then Bishop of Mayence. He left behind him works that fill six folios. One of them is entitled “The Universe, or a Book about All Things”; but they chiefly consist of homilies, and commentaries on the Bible. ◀

1521. This distinguished mystic and enthusiast of the twelfth century was born in 1130 at the village of Celio, near Cosenza in Calabria, on the river Busento, in whose bed the remains of Attila were buried. A part of his youth was passed at Naples, where his father held some office in the court of King Roger; but from the temptations of this gay capital he escaped, and, like St. Francis, renouncing the world, gave himself up to monastic life.

“A tender and religious soul,” says Roussetot in his *Histoire de l’Évangile Éternel*, p. 15, “an imagination ardent and early turned towards asceticism, led him from his first youth to embrace the monastic life. His spirit, naturally exalted, must have received the most lively impressions from the spectacle offered him by the place of his birth: mountains arid or burdened with forests, deep valleys furrowed

by the waters of torrents; a soil, rough in some places, and covered in others with a brilliant vegetation; a heaven of fire; solitude, so easily found in Calabria, and so dear to souls inclined to mysticism—all combined to exalt in Joachim the religious sentiment. There are places where life is naturally poetical, and when the soul, thus nourished by things external, plunges into the divine world, it produces men like St. Francis of Accesi and Joachim of Flora.

“On leaving Naples he had resolved to embrace the monastic life, but he was unwilling to do it till he had visited the Holy Land. He started forthwith, followed by many pilgrims whose expenses he paid; and as to himself, clad in a white dress of some coarse stuff, he made a great part of the journey barefooted. In order to stop in the Thebaid, the first centre of Christian asceticism, he suffered his companions to go on before; and there he was nigh perishing from thirst. Overcome by the heat in a desert place, where he could not find a drop of water, he dug a grave in the sand, and lay down in it to die, hoping that his body, soon buried by the sand heaped up by the wind, would not fall a prey to wild beasts. Barius attributes to him a dream, in which he thought he was drinking copiously; at all events, after sleeping some hours he awoke in condition to continue his journey. After visiting Jerusalem, he went to Mount Tabor, where he remained forty days. He there lived in an old cistern; and it was amid watchings and prayers on the scene of the Transfiguration that he conceived the idea of his principal writings: ‘The Harmony of the Old and New Testaments’; ‘The Exposition of the Apocalypse’; and ‘The Psalter of Ten Strings.’”

On his return to Italy, Joachim became a Cistercian monk in the monastery of Corazzo in Calabria, of which ere long he became Abbot; but, wishing for greater seclusion, he soon withdrew to Flora, among the mountains, where he founded another monastery, and passed the remainder of his life in study and contemplation. He died in 1202, being seventy-two years of age.

“His renown was great,” says Rousselot, *Histoire de l’Évangile Éternel*, p. 27, “and his duties numerous; nevertheless his functions as Abbot of the monastery which he had founded did not prevent him from giving himself up to the composition of the writings which he had for a long time meditated. This was the end he had proposed to himself; it was to attain it that he had wished to live in solitude. If his

desire was not wholly realized, it was so in great part; and Joachim succeeded in laying the foundations of the Eternal Gospel. He passed his days and nights in writing and in dictating. ‘I used to write,’ says his secretary Lucas, ‘day and night in copybooks, what he dictated and corrected on scraps of paper, with two other monks whom he employed in the same work.’ It was in the middle of these labors that death surprised him.”

In Abbot Joachim’s time at least, this Eternal Gospel was not a book, but a doctrine, pervading all his writings. Later, in the middle of the thirteenth century, some such book existed, and was attributed to John of Parma. In the *Romance of the Rose*, Chaucer’s Tr., 1798, it is thus spoken of:—

“‘A thousande and two hundred yere
Five-and-fifte, farther ne nere,
Broughten a boke with sorie grace,
To yeven ensample in common place,
That sayed thus, though it were fable,
This is the Gospel! pardurable
That fro the Holie Ghost is sent.
Well were it worthy to be ybrent.
Entitled was in soche manere,
This boke of whichè I tell here;
There n as no wight in al Paris,
Beforne our Ladle at Parvis
That thei ne might the bokè by.

:

“The Universite, that was a slepe,
Gan for to braied, and taken kepe;
And at the noise the hedde up cast;
Ne never, sithen, slept it [so] fast:
But up it stert, and armes toke
Ayenst this false horrible boke,
All redy battaile for to make,
And to the judge the boke thei take.”

The Eternal Gospel taught that there were three epochs in the history of the world, two of which were already passed, and the third about to begin. The first was that of the Old Testament, or the reign of the Father; the second, that of the New Testament, or the reign of the Son; and the third, that of Love, or the reign of the Holy Spirit. To use his own words, as quoted by Rousselot, *Histoire de l'Évangile Éternel*, p. 78:—

“As the letter of the Old Testament seems to belong to the Father, by a certain peculiarity of resemblance, and the letter of the New Testament to the Son; so the spiritual intelligence, which proceeds from both, belongs to the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the age when men were joined in marriage was the reign of the Father; that of the Preachers is the reign of the Son; and the age of Monks, *ordo monachorum*, the last, is to be that of the Holy Spirit. The first before the law, the second under the law, the third with grace.”

The germ of this doctrine, says the same authority, p. 59, is in Origen, who had said before the Abbot Joachim:—

“We must leave to believers the historic Christ and the Gospel, the Gospel of the letter; but to the Gnostics alone belongs the Divine Word, the Eternal Gospel, the Gospel of the Spirit.”



1522. The Heaven of the Sun continued. Let the reader imagine fifteen of the largest stars, and to these add the seven of Charles's Wain, and the two last stars of the Little Bear, making in all twenty-four, and let him arrange them in two concentric circles, revolving in opposite directions, and he will have the image of what Dante now beheld. 

1523. *Iliad*, XVIII 487:—

“The Bear, which they also call by the appellation of the Wain, which there revolves and watches Orion; but it alone is free from the baths of the ocean.”



1524. The constellation of the Little Bear as much resembles a horn as it does a bear. Of this horn the Pole Star forms the smaller end.

1525. Ariadne, whose crown was, at her death, changed by Bacchus into a constellation. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII, Croxall’s Tr.:—

“And bids her crown among the stars be placed,
With an eternal constellation graced.
The golden circlet mounts; and, as it flies,
Its diamonds twinkle in the distant skies;
There, in their pristine form, the gemmy rays
Between Alcides and the dragon blaze.”

Chaucer, *Legende of Good Women*:—

“And in the sygne of Taurus men may se
The stones of hire corowne shyne clere.”

And Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, VI x 13:—

“Looke! how the crowne which Ariadne wore
Upon her yvory forehead that same day
That Theseus her unto his bridale bore,
When the bold Centaures made that bloudy fray
With the fierce Lapithes which did them dismay,
Being now placed in the firmament,
Through the bright heaven doth her beams display,
And is unto the starres an ornament,
Which round about her move in order excellent.”



1526. The Chiana empties into the Arno near Arezzo. In Dante's time it was a sluggish stream, stagnating in the marshes of Valdichiana. See [note 440.](#) [←](#)

1527. The Primum Mobile. [←](#)

1528. St. Thomas Aquinas, who had related the life of St. Francis. [←](#)

1529. The first doubt in Dante's mind was in regard to the expression in Canto X 96,

“Where well one fattens if he strayeth not,”

which was explained by Thomas Aquinas in Canto XI. The second, which he now prepares to thresh out, is in Canto X 114,

“To see so much there never rose a second,”

referring to Solomon, as being peerless in knowledge. [←](#)

1530. Adam. [←](#)

1531. Christ. [←](#)

1532. Solomon. [←](#)

1533. All things are but the thought of God, and by him created in love. [←](#)

1534. The living Light, the Word, proceeding from the Father, is not separated from Him nor from his Love, the Holy Spirit. [←](#)

1535. Its rays are centred in the nine choirs of Angels, ruling the nine heavens, here called subsistences, according to the definition of Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. XXIX 2:—

“What exists by itself, and not in anything else, is called subsistence.”



1536. From those nine heavens it descends to the elements, the lowest potencies, till it produces only imperfect and perishable results, or mere contingencies. [✉](#)
1537. These contingencies are animals, plants, and the like, produced by the influences of the planets from seeds, and certain insects and plants, believed of old to be born without seed. [✉](#)
1538. Neither their matter nor the influences of the planets being immutable, the stamp of the divinity is more or less clearly seen in them, and hence the varieties in plants and animals. [✉](#)
1539. If the matter were perfect, and the divine influence at its highest power, the result would likewise be perfect; but by transmission through the planets it becomes more and more deficient, the hand of nature trembles, and imperfection is the result. [✉](#)
1540. But if Love (the Holy Spirit) and the Vision (the Son), proceeding from the Primal Power (the Father), act immediately, then the work is perfect, as in Adam and the human nature of Christ. [✉](#)
1541. Then how was Solomon so peerless, that none like him ever existed?
[✉](#)
1542. 1 Kings 3:5:—

“In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so

that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.”

◀

1543. The number of the celestial Intelligences, or Regents of the Planets. ▵

1544. Whether from two premises, one of which is necessary, and the other contingent, or only possible, the conclusion drawn will be necessary; which Buti says is a question belonging to “the garrulity of dialectics.”

◀

1545. Whether the existence of a first motion is to be conceded. ▵

1546. That is, a triangle, one side of which shall be the diameter of the circle.

◀

1547. If thou notest, in a word, that Solomon did not ask for wisdom in astrology, nor in dialects, nor in metaphysics, nor in geometry. ▵

1548. The peerless seeing is a reference to Canto X 114:—

“To see so much there never rose a second.”

It will be observed that the word “rose” is the Biblical word in the phrase “neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee,” as given in note 93. ▵

1549. Parmenides was an Eleatic philosopher, and pupil of Xenophanes. According to Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, I 450, Morrison’s Tr., his theory was, that:—

“Being is uncreated and unchangeable,

‘Whole and self-generate, unchangeable,
illimitable,
Never was nor yet shall be its birth; All is
already

One from eternity.””

And farther on:—

“It is but a mere human opinion that things are produced and decay, are and are not, and change place and color. The whole has its principle in itself, and is in eternal rest; for powerful necessity holds it within the bonds of its own limits, and encloses it on all sides: being cannot be imperfect; for it is not in want of anything—for if it were so, it would be in want of all.”

Melissus of Samos was a follower of Parmenides, and maintained substantially the same doctrines.

Brissus was a philosopher of less note. Mention is hardly made of him in the histories of philosophy, except as one of those who pursued that *Fata Morgana* of mathematicians, the quadrature of the circle. ↵

1550. “Infamous heresiarchs,” exclaims Venturi, “put as an example of innumerable others, who, having erred in the understanding of the Holy Scriptures, persevered in their errors.””

Sabellius was by birth an African, and flourished as Presbyter of Ptolemais, in the third century. He denied the three persons in the Godhead, maintaining that the Son and Holy Ghost were only temporary manifestations of God in creation, redemption, and sanctification, and would finally return to the Father.

Arius was a Presbyter of Alexandria in the fourth century. He believed the Son to be equal in power with the Father, but of a different essence or nature, a doctrine which gave rise to the famous Heterousian and Homoiousian controversy, that distracted the Church for three hundred years.

These doctrines of Sabellius and of Arius are both heretical, when tried by the standard of the *Quicunque vult*, the authoritative formula of the Catholic faith; “which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastinglly,” says St. Athanasius, or some one in his name. ↵

1551. These men, say some of the commentators, were as swords that mutilated and distorted the Scriptures. Others, that in them the features of the Scriptures were distorted, as the features of a man reflected in the grooved or concave surface of a sword. ↵

1552. Names used to indicate any common simpletons and gossips. ↵

1553. In writing this line Dante had evidently in mind the beautiful wise words of St. Francis:—

“What every one is in the eyes of God, that he is, and no more.”

Mr. Wright, in the notes to his translation, here quotes the well-known lines of Burns, “Address to the Unco Guid”:—

“Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

“Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord its various tone,
Each spring its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute;
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.”

↵

1554. The ascent to the planet Mars, where are seen the spirits of Martyrs, and Crusaders who died fighting for the Faith. ↵

1555. In this similitude Dante describes the effect of the alternate voices of St. Thomas Aquinas in the circumference of the circle, and of Beatrice in the centre. [←](#)

1556. Life is here used, as before, in the sense of spirit. [←](#)

1557. Chaucer, *Troil. and Cres.*, the last stanza:—

“Thou One, and Two, and Thre! eterne on live,
That raignest aie in Thre, and Two, and One,
Uncircumscrip, and all maist circumscribe!”

Also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 372:—

“Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,
Fountain of light, thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt’st
Throned inaccessible; but when thou shadest
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
Thee next they sang of all creation first,
Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
Whom else no creature can behold: on thee
Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides;
Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.”

[←](#)

1558. The voice of Solomon. [←](#)

1559. According to Buti, “Spirits newly arrived”; or Angels, such being the interpretation given by the Schoolmen to the word Subsistences. See [note 1541.](#) ↪

1560. The planet Mars. Of this planet Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I iii 3, says:—

“Mars is hot and warlike and evil, and is called the God of Battles.”

Of its symbolism Dante, *Convito*, II 14, says:—

“The Heaven of Mars may be compared to Music, for two properties. The first is its very beautiful relation [to the others]; for, enumerating the movable heavens, from whichsoever you begin, whether from the lowest or the highest, the Heaven of Mars is the fifth; it is the centre of all.... The other is, that Mars dries up and burns things, because its heat is like to that of the fire; and this is the reason why it appears fiery in color, sometimes more, and sometimes less, according to the density and rarity of the vapors which follow it, which sometimes take fire of themselves, as is declared in the first book of *Meteors*. (And therefore Albumasar says, that the ignition of these vapors signifies death of kings, and change of empires, being effects of the dominion of Mars. And accordingly Seneca says that at the death of the Emperor Augustus a ball of fire was seen in the heavens. And in Florence, at the beginning of its downfall, a great quantity of these vapors, which follow Mars, were seen in the air in the form of a cross.) And these two properties are in Music, which is wholly relative, as may be seen in harmonized words, and in songs, in which the more beautiful the relation, the sweeter the harmony, since such is chiefly its intent. Also Music attracts to itself the spirits of men, which are principally as it were vapors of the heart, so that they almost cease from any operation; so entire is the soul when it listens, and the power of all as it were runs to the sensible spirit that hears the sounds.”

Of the influences of Mars, Buti, as usual following Albumasar, writes:—

“Its nature is hot, igneous, dry, choleric, of a bitter savor, and it signifies youth, strength, and acuteness of mind; heats, fires, and burnings, and every sudden event; powerful kings, consuls, dukes, and knights, and companies of soldiery; desire of praise and memory of one’s name; strategies and instruments of battle; robberies and machinations, and scattering of relations by plunderings and highway robberies; boldness and anger; the unlawful for the lawful; torments and imprisonments; scourges and bonds; anguish, flight, thefts, pilfering of servants, fears, contentions, insults, acuteness of mind, impiety, inconstancy, want of foresight, celerity and anticipation in things, evil eloquence and ferocity of speech, foulness of words, incontinence of tongue, demonstrations of love, gay apparel, insolence and falseness of words, swiftness of reply and sudden penitence therefor, want of religion, unfaithfulness to promises, multitude of lies and whisperings, deceits and perjuries; machinations and evil deeds; want of means; waste of means; multitude of thoughts about things; instability and change of opinion in things, from one to another; haste to return; want of shame; multitude of toils and cares; peregrinations, solitary existence, bad company; . . . breaking open of tombs, and spoliations of the dead.”



1561. Buti interprets this, as redder than the Sun, to whose light Dante had become accustomed, and continues:—

“Literally, it is true that the splendor of Mars is more fiery than that of the Sun, because it is red, and the Sun is yellow; but allegorically we are to understand, that a greater ardor of love, that is, more burning, is in those

who fight and conquer the three enemies mentioned above [the world, the flesh, and the devil], than in those who exercise themselves with the Scriptures.”



1562. The silent language of the heart.

1563. In Hebrew, *El, Eli*, God, from which the Greeks made Helios, the Sun.
As in St. Hildebert's hymn “Ad Patrem”:

“*Alpha et Omega, magne Deus,
Heli, Heli, Deus meus.*”



1564. Dante, *Convito*, II 15, says:

“It must be known that philosophers have different opinions concerning this Galaxy. For the Pythagoreans said that the Sun once wandered out of his way, and passing through other regions not adapted to his heat, he burned the place through which he passed, and traces of the burning remained. I think they took this from the fable of Phaeton, which Ovid narrates in the beginning of the second book of the Metamorphoses. Others, and among them Anaxagoras and Democritus, that it was the light of the Sun reflected in that part. And these opinions they prove by demonstrative reasons. What Aristotle says of this we cannot well know; for his opinion is not the same in one translation as in the other. And I think this was an error of the translators; for in the new one he appears to say, that it was a gathering of vapors under the stars of that region, for they always attract them; and this does not appear to be the true reason. In the old, it says, that the Galaxy is only a multitude of fixed stars in that region, so small that they cannot be distinguished here below; but from them is apparent that whiteness which we call the

Galaxy. And it may be that the heaven in that part is more dense, and therefore retains and reflects that light; and this opinion seems to have been entertained by Aristotle, Avicenna, and Ptolemy."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 577:—

"A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
And pavement stars, as stars to thec appear,
Seen in the Galaxy, that Milky Way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest
Powdered with stars."



1565. The sign of the cross, drawn upon the planet Mars, as upon the breast of a crusader. The following Legend of the Cross, and its significance, is from Didron, *Christian Iconography*, Millington's Tr., I 367:—

"The cross is more than a mere figure of Christ; it is in Iconography either Christ himself or his symbol. A legend has, consequently, been invented, giving the history of the cross, as if it had been a living being. It has been made the theme and hero of an epic poem, the germ of which may be discovered in books of apocryphal tradition. This story is given at length in the Golden Legend, *Legenda Aurea*, and is detailed and completed in works of painting and sculpture from the fourteenth century down to the sixteenth.... After the death of Adam, Seth planted on the tomb of his father a shoot from the Tree of Life, which grew in the terrestrial Paradise. From it sprang three little trees, united by one single trunk. Moses thence gathered the rod with which he by his miracles astonished the people of Egypt, and the inhabitants of the desert. Solomon desired to convert that same tree, which had become gigantic in size, into a column for his palace; being either too short or too long, it was rejected, and served as a bridge over a torrent. The Queen of Sheba

refused to pass over on that tree, declaring that it would one day occasion the destruction of the Jews. Solomon commanded that the predestined beam should be thrown into the probationary pool (Pool of Bethesda), and its virtues were immediately communicated to the waters. When Christ had been condemned to suffer the death of a malefactor, his cross was made of the wood of that very tree. It was buried on Golgotha, and afterwards discovered by St. Helena. It was carried into captivity by Chosroes, king of Persia, delivered, and brought back in triumph to Jerusalem, by the Emperor Heraclius. Being afterwards dispersed in a multitude of fragments throughout the Christian universe, countless miracles were performed by it; it restored the dead to life, and gave sight to the blind, cured the paralytic, cleansed lepers, put demons to flight, and dispelled various maladies with which whole nations were afflicted, extinguished conflagrations, and calmed the fury of the raging waves.

“The wood of the cross was born with the world, in the terrestrial paradise; it will reappear in heaven at the end of time, borne in the arms of Christ or of his angels, when the Lord descends to judge the world at the last day.

“After reading this history, some conception may be formed of the important place held by the cross in Christian Iconography. The cross, as has been said, is not merely the instrument of the punishment of Jesus Christ, but is also the figure and symbol of the Saviour. Jesus, to an Iconologist, is present in the cross as well as in the lamb, or in the lion. Chosroes flattered himself that, in possessing the cross, he possessed the Son of God, and he had it enthroned on his right hand, just as the Son is enthroned by God the Father. So also the earliest Christian artists, when making a representation of the Trinity, placed a cross beside the Father and the Holy Spirit; a cross only, without our crucified Lord. The cross did not only recall Christ to mind, but actually showed him. In Christian

Iconography, Christ is actually present under the form and semblance of the cross.

“The cross is our crucified Lord in person. Where the cross is, there is the martyr, says St. Paulinus.

Consequently it works miracles, as does Jesus himself: and the list of wonders operated by its power is in truth immense....

“The world is in the form of a cross; for the east shines above our heads, the north is on the right, the south at the left, and the west stretches out beneath our feet. Birds, that they may rise in air, extend their wings in the form of a cross; men, when praying, or when beating aside the water while swimming, assume the form of a cross. Man differs from the inferior animals, in his power of standing erect, and extending his arms.

“A vessel, to fly upon the seas, displays her yardarms in the form of a cross, and cannot cut the waves, unless her mast stands cross-like, erect in air; finally, the ground cannot be tilled without the sacred sign, and the *tau*, the cruciform letter, is the letter of salvation.

“The cross, it is thus seen, has been the object of a worship and adoration resembling, if not equal to, that offered to Christ. That sacred tree is adored almost as if it were equal with God himself; a number of churches have been dedicated to it under the name of the Holy Cross. In addition to this, most of our churches, the greatest as well as the smallest, cathedrals as well as chapels, present in their ground plan the form of a cross.”



1566. Chaucer, *Lament of Marie Magdaleine*, 204:—

“I, loking up unto that ruffull rode,
Sawe first the visage pale of that figure;
But so pitous a sight spotted with blode
Sawe never, yet, no living creature;

So it exceeded the boundes of mesure,
That mannes minde with al his wittes five
Is nothing able that paine to discribe."



1567. From arm to arm of the cross, and from top to bottom. ↲

1568. Mr. Gary here quotes Chaucer, "Wif of Bath's Tale," 6450:—

"As thikke as motes in the sonnebeme."

And Milton, "*Penseroso*," 8:—

"As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeam."

To these Mr. Wright adds the following from Lucretius, II 113, which in Good's Tr. runs as follows:—

"Not unresembling, if aright I deem,
Those motes minute, that, when the obtrusive sun
Peeps through some crevice in the shuttered shade
The day-dark hall illumining, float amain
In his bright beam, and wage eternal war."



1569. Words from a hymn in praise of Christ, say the commentators, but they do not say from what hymn. ↲

1570. The living seals are the celestial spheres, which impress themselves on all beneath them, and increase in power as they are higher. ↲

1571. That is, to the eyes of Beatrice, whose beauty he may seem to postpone, or regard as inferior to the splendors that surround him. He excuses himself by saying that he does not speak of them, well

knowing that they have grown more beautiful in ascending. He describes them in line 33 of the next canto:—

“For in her eyes was burning such a smile
That with mine own methought I touched the bottom
Both of my grace and of my Paradise!”

↲

1572. Sincere in the sense of pure; as in Dryden’s line—

“A joy which never was sincere till now.”

↲

1573. The Heaven of Mars continued. ↲

1574. This star, or spirit, did not, in changing place, pass out of the cross, but along the right arm and down the trunk or body of it. ↲

1575. A light in a vase of alabaster. ↲

1576. *Aeneid*, VI, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“But father Anchises, deep in a verdant dale, was surveying with studious care the souls there enclosed, who were to revisit the light above; and happened to be reviewing the whole number of his race, his dear descendants, their fates and fortunes, their manners and achievements. As soon as he beheld Aeneas advancing toward him across the meads, he joyfully stretched out both his hands, and tears poured down his cheeks, and these words dropped from his mouth: Are you come at length, and has that piety experienced by your sire surmounted the arduous journey?”

↲

1577. Biagioli and Fraticelli think that this ancestor of Dante, Cacciaguida, who is speaking, makes use of the Latin language because it was the language of his day in Italy. It certainly gives to the passage a certain gravity and tinge of antiquity, which is in keeping with this antique spirit and with what he afterwards says. His words may be thus translated:—

“O blood of mine! O grace of God infused
Superlative! To whom as unto thee
Were ever twice the gates of heaven unclosed.”



1578. His longing to see Dante. ↲

1579. The mighty volume of the Divine Mind, in which the dark or written parts are not changed by erasures, nor the white spaces by interlineations. ↲

1580. The Pythagorean doctrine of numbers. Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Morrison's Tr., I 361, says:—

“In the Pythagorean doctrine, number comprises within itself two species—odd and even; it is therefore the unity of these two contraries; it is the odd and the even. Now the Pythagoreans said also that one, or the unit, is the odd and the even; and thus we arrive at this result, that one, or the unit, is the essence of number, or number absolutely. As such, it is also the ground of all numbers, and is therefore named the first one, of whose origin nothing further can be said. In this respect the Pythagorean theory of numbers is merely an expression for ‘all is from the original one,’—from one being, to which they also gave the name of God; for in the words of Philolaus, ‘God embraces and actuates all, and is but one.’...”

“But in the essence of number, or in the first original one, all other numbers, and consequently the elements of numbers, and the elements of the whole world, and all

nature, are contained. The elements of number are the even and the odd; on this account the first one is the even-odd, which the Pythagoreans, in their occasionally strained mode of symbolizing, attempted to prove thus; that one being added to the even makes odd, and to the odd, even."

Cowley, "Rural Solitude":—

"Before the branchy head of Number's tree
Sprang from the trunk of one."



1581. All the spirits of Paradise look upon God, and see in him as in a mirror even the thoughts of men. ↲

1582. The first Equality is God, all whose attributes are equal and eternal; and living in Him, the love and knowledge of spirits are also equal. ↲

1583. Will and power. Dante would fain thank the spirit that has addressed him, but knows not how. He has the will, but not the power. Dante uses the word argument in this sense of power, or means, or appliance, *Purgatorio* II 31:—

"See how he scorns all human arguments,
So that nor oar he wants, nor other sail
Than his own wings, between so distant shores."



1584. Dante calls the spirit of Cacciaguida a living topaz set in the celestial cross, probably from the brilliancy and golden light of this precious stone. He may also have had in his mind the many wonderful qualities, as well as the beauty, of the gem. He makes use of the same epithet in Canto XXX 76.

The *Ottimo* says, that he who wears the topaz cannot be injured by an enemy; and Mr. King, *Antique Gems*, p. 427, says:—

“If thrown into boiling water, the water cools immediately; hence this gem cools lust, calms madness and attacks of frenzy.”

In the same work he gives a translation of the *Lapidarium* of Marbodus, or Marboeuf, Bishop of Rennes in 1081. Of the chrysolite, which is supposed to be the same as the topaz, this author says:—

“The golden *Chrysolite* a fiery blaze
Mixed with the hue of ocean’s green displays;
Enchased in gold, its strong protective might
Drives far away the terrors of the night;
Strung on a hair plucked from an ass’s tail,
The mightiest demons neath its influence quail.”

✉

1585. He had been waiting for the coming of Dante, with the “hunger long and grateful” spoken of in line 49. ✉

1586. The first of the family who bore the name of Alighieri, still punished in the circle of Pride in Purgatory, and needing the prayers and good offices of Dante to set him free. ✉

1587. Barlow, *Study of the Divina Commedia*, p. 441, says:—

“The name of Florence has been variously explained. With the old chroniclers the prevalent opinion was, that it was derived from *Fiorino*, the Praetor of Metellus, who during the long siege of Fiesole by the Romans commanded an intrenched camp between the River and the Rock, and was here surprised and slain by the enemy. The meadows abounded in flowers, especially lilies, and the ancient ensign, a white lily on a red ground, subsequently reversed (XVI 154), and similar to the form on the florin (*fiorino*), with the name given to the Duomo, St. Maria del Fiore, tend to show that the name was taken from the flowery mead, rather than from the name of a Roman praetor.

Leonardo Aretino states that the name of the city originally was *Fluentia*, so called because situated between the Arno and the Mugnone: and that subsequently, from the flourishing state of the colony, it was called *Florentia*. Scipione Ammirato affirms that its name from the first was *Florenzia*.

“The form and dimensions of the original city have not been very accurately recorded, In shape, probably, it resembled a Roman camp. Malespini says that it was ‘*quasi a similitudine di bastie.*’ The wall was of burnt bricks, with solid round towers at intervals of twenty cubits, and it had four gates, and six posterns. The Campidoglio, where now is the Mercato Vecchio, was an imitation of that of the parent city, Rome, whose fortunes her daughter for many centuries shared....

“The *cerchia antica* of Cacciaguida was the first circle of the new city, which arose from the ruins of the Roman one destroyed by Totila; it included the Badia, which the former did not; Dante, therefore, in mentioning this circumstance, shows how accurately he had informed himself of the course of the previous wall. The walls of Dante’s time were begun in 1284, but not finished until nine years after his death; they are those of the present day.”



1588. Tierce, or *Terza*, is the first division of the canonical day, from six to nine; Nones, or *Nona*, the third, from twelve to three in the afternoon. See [note 526](#). The bells of the Abbey within the old walls of Florence still rang these hours in Dante’s time, and measured the day of the Florentines, like the bells of morning, noon, and night in our New England towns. In the *Convito*, IV 23, Dante says:—

“The service of the first part of the day, that is, of Tierce, is said at the end of it; and that of the third and fourth, at the beginning.... And therefore be it known unto all, that

properly Nones should always ring at the beginning of the seventh hour of the day.”



1589. Napier, *Florentine History*, I 572, writes as follows:—

“The simplicity of Florentine manners in 1260, described by Villani and Malespini, justifies a similar picture as drawn by their great poet. ‘Then,’ say these writers, ‘the Florentines lived soberly on the simplest food at little expense; many of their customs were rough and rude, and both men and women went coarsely clad; many even wearing plain leather garments without fur or lining: they wore boots on their feet and caps on their head: the women used unornamented buskins, and even the most distinguished were content with a close gown of scarlet serge or camlet, confined by a leathern waist-belt of the ancient fashion, and a hooded cloak lined with miniver; and the poorer classes wore a coarse green cloth dress of the same form. A hundred lire was the common dowry of a girl, and two and three hundred were then considered splendid fortunes: most young women waited until they were twenty years old and upwards before they married. And such was the dress, and such the manners and simple habits of the Florentines of that day; but loyal in heart, faithful to each other, zealous and honest in the execution of public duties; and with their coarse and homely mode of life they gained more virtue and honor for themselves and their country than they who now live so delicately are able to accomplish.’”

What Florence had become in Dante’s time may be seen from the following extract from Frate Francesco Pippino, who wrote in 1313, and whose account is thus given by Napier, II 542:—

“Now indeed, in the present luxurious age, many shameful practices are introduced instead of the former customs;

many indeed to the injury of people's minds, because frugality is exchanged for magnificence; the clothing being now remarkable for its exquisite materials, workmanship, and superfluous ornaments of silver, gold, and pearls; admirable fabrics; wide-spreading embroidery; silk for vests, painted or variously colored, and lined with divers precious furs from foreign countries. Excitement to gluttony is not wanting; foreign wines are much esteemed, and almost all the people drink in public. The viands are sumptuous; the chief cooks are held in great honor; provocatives of the palate are eagerly sought after; ostentation increases; moneymakers exert themselves to supply these tastes; hence usuries, frauds, rapine, extortion, pillage, and contentions in the commonwealth: also unlawful taxes; oppression of the innocent; banishment of citizens, and the combinations of rich men. Our true god is our belly; we adhere to the pomps which were renounced at our baptism, and thus desert to the great enemy of our race. Well indeed does Seneca, the instructor of morals, in his book of orations, curse our times in the following words: 'Daily, things grow worse because the whole contest is for dishonorable matters. Behold! the indolent senses of youth are numbed, nor are they active in the pursuit of any one honest thing. Sleep, languor, and a carefulness for bad things, worse than sleep and languor, have seized upon their minds; the love of singing, dancing, and other unworthy occupations possesses them: they are effeminate: to soften the hair, to lower the tone of their voice to female compliments; to vie with women in effeminacy of person, and adorn themselves with unbecoming delicacy, is the object of our youth.'"



1590. Villani, *Cronica*, VI 69, as quoted in [note 1595](#):—

“The women used unornamented buskins, and even the most distinguished were content with a close gown of scarlet serge or camlet, confined by a leathern waistbelt of the ancient fashion, and a hooded cloak lined with miniver; and the poorer classes wore a coarse green cloth dress of the same form.”



1591. Dante, *Convito*, I 10:—

“Like the beauty of a woman, when the ornaments of her apparel cause more admiration than she herself.”



1592. Eastern effeminacy in general; what Boccaccio calls the *morbidezze d'Egitto*. Paul Orosius, “the advocate of the Christian centuries,” as quoted by the *Ottimo*, says:—

“The last king of Syria was Sardanapalus, a man more corrupt than a woman, (*corrotto piu che femmina?*) who was seen by his prefect Arabetes, among a herd of courtesans, clad in female attire.”



1593. Montemalo, or Montemario, is the hill from which the traveller coming from Viterbo first catches sight of Rome. The Uccellatojo is the hill from which the traveller coming from Bologna first catches sight of Florence. Here the two hills are used to signify what is seen from them; namely, the two cities; and Dante means to say, that Florence had not yet surpassed Rome in the splendor of its buildings; but as Rome would one day be surpassed by Florence in its rise, so would it be in its downfall.

Speaking of the splendor of Florence in Dante's age, Napier, *Florentine History*, II 581, says:—

“Florence was at this period well studded with handsome dwellings; the citizens were continually building, repairing, altering, and embellishing their houses; adding every day to their ease and comforts, and introducing improvements from foreign nations. Sacred architecture of every kind partook of this taste; and there was no popular citizen or nobleman but either had built or was building fine country palaces and villas, far exceeding their city residence in size and magnificence; so that many were accounted crazy for their extravagance.

“‘And so magnificent was the sight’ says Villani, ‘that strangers unused to Florence, on coming from abroad, when they beheld the vast assemblage of rich buildings and beautiful palaces with which the country was so thickly studded for three miles round the ramparts, believed that all was city like that within the Roman walls; and this was independent of the rich palaces, towers, courts, and walled gardens at a greater distance, which in other countries would be denominated castles. In short,’ he continues, ‘it is estimated that within a circuit of six miles round the town there are rich and noble dwellings enough to make two cities like Florence.’ And Ariosto seems to have caught the same idea when he exclaims—

‘While gazing on thy villa-studded hills
Twould seem as though the earth grew
palaces
As she is wont by nature to bring forth
Young shoots, and leafy plants, and flowery
shrubs:
And if within one wall and single name
Could be collected all thy scattered halls,
Two Romes would scarcely form thy
parallel.’”



1594. The “which” in this line refers to Montemalo of the preceding. [←](#)
1595. Bellincion Berti, whom Dante selects as a type of the good citizen of Florence in the olden time, and whom Villani calls “the best and most honored gentleman of Florence,” was of the noble family of the Ravignani. He was the father of the “good Gualdrada,” whose story shines out so pleasantly in Boccaccio’s commentary. See [note 224](#). [←](#)
1596. “Two ancient houses of the city,” says the *Ottimo*; “and he saw the chiefs of these houses were content with leathern jerkins without any drapery; he who should dress so nowadays would be laughed at: and he saw their dames spinning, as who should say, ‘Nowadays not even the maid will spin, much less the lady.’” And Buti upon the same text:—
- “They wore leathern dresses without any cloth over them; they did not make to themselves long robes, nor cloaks of scarlet lined with vaire, as they do now.”
- [←](#)
1597. They were not abandoned by their husbands, who, content with little, did not go to traffic in France. [←](#)
1598. Monna Cianghella della Tosa was a gay widow of Florence, who led such a life of pleasure that her name has passed into a proverb, or a common name for a dissolute woman.
- Lapo Salterello was a Florentine lawyer, and a man of dissipated habits; and Crescimbeni, whose mill grinds everything that comes to it, counts him among the poets, *Volgar Poesia*, III 82, and calls him a *Rimatore di non poco grido*, a rhymer of no little renown. Unluckily he quotes one of his sonnets. [←](#)
1599. Quintius, surnamed Cincinnatus from his neglected locks, taken from his plough and made Dictator by the Roman Senate, and, after he had defeated the Volscians and saved the city, returning to his plough again.

Cornelia, daughter of Scipio Africanus, and mother of the Gracchi, who preferred for her husband a Roman citizen to a king, and boasted that her children were her only jewels.

Shakespeare, *Tit. Andron.*, IV 1:—

“Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care
Read to her sons, than she hath read to thee
Sweet poetry, and Tally’s Orator.”



1600. The Virgin Mary, invoked in the pains of childbirth, as mentioned
Purgatorio XX 19:—

“And I by peradventure heard ‘Sweet Mary!’
Uttered in front of us amid the weeping,
Even as a woman does who is in child-birth.”



1601. The Baptistry of the church of St. John in Florence; *il mio bel San Giovanni*, my beautiful St. John, as Dante calls it, *Inferno* XIX 17. ↲

1602. Of this ancestor of Dante, Cacciaguida, nothing is known but what the poet here tells us, and so clearly that it is not necessary to repeat it in prose. ↲

1603. Cacciaguida’s wife came from Ferrara in the Val di Pado, or Val di Po, the Valley of the Po. She was of the Aldighieri or Alighieri family, and from her Dante derived his surname. ↲

1604. The Emperor Conrad III of Swabia, uncle of Frederic Barbarossa. In 1143 he joined Louis VII of France in the Second Crusade, of which St. Bernard was the great preacher. He died in 1152, after his return from this crusade. ↲

1605. Cacciaguida was knighted by the Emperor Conrad. ↲

1606. The law or religion of Muhammad. [←](#)

1607. The Heaven of Mars continued.

Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Book III Prosa 6,
Ridpath's Tr.:—

“But who is there that does not perceive the emptiness and futility of what men dignify with the name of high extraction, or nobility of birth? The splendor you attribute to this is quite foreign to you: for nobility of descent is nothing else but the credit derived from the merit of your ancestors. If it is the applause of mankind, and nothing besides, that illustrates and confers fame upon a person, no others can be celebrated and famous, but such as are universally applauded. If you are not therefore esteemed illustrious from your own worth, you can derive no real splendor from the merits of others: so that, in my opinion, nobility is in no other respect good, than as it imposes an obligation upon its possessors not to degenerate from the merit of their ancestors.”

[←](#)

1608. The use of You for Thou, the plural for the singular, is said to have been introduced in the time of Julius Caesar. Lucan, V, Rowe's Tr.:—

“Then was the time when sycophants began
To heap all titles on one lordly man.”

Dante uses it by way of compliment to his ancestor; though he says the descendants of the Romans were not so persevering in its use as other Italians. [←](#)

1609. Beatrice smiled to give notice to Dante that she observed his flattering style of address; as the Lady of Malehault coughed when she saw Launcelot kiss Queen Guinevere, as related in the old romance of Launcelot of the Lake. [←](#)

1610. Rejoiced within itself that it can endure so much joy. ↪
1611. The city of Florence, which, in Canto XXV 5, Dante calls “the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slumbered.” It will be remembered that St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of Florence. ↪
1612. Not in Italian, but in Latin, which was the language of cultivated people in Cacciaguida’s time. ↪
1613. From the Incarnation of Christ down to his own birth, the planet Mars had returned to the sign of the Lion five hundred and eighty times, or made this number of revolutions in its orbit. Brunetto Latini, Dante’s schoolmaster, *Tresor*, I Ch. CXI, says, that Mars “goes through all the signs in II years and I month and XXX days.” This would make Cacciaguida born long after the crusade in which he died. But Dante, who had perhaps seen the astronomical tables of King Alfonso of Castile, knew more of the matter than his schoolmaster, and was aware that the period of a revolution of Mars is less than two years. Witte, who cites these tables in his notes to this canto, says they give “686 days 22 hours and 24 minutes”; and continues: “Five hundred and eighty such revolutions give then (due regard being had to the leap-years) 1090 years and not quite four months. Cacciaguida, therefore, at the time of the Second Crusade, was in his fifty-seventh year.”

Pietro di Dante (the poet’s son and commentator, and who, as Biagioli, with rather gratuitous harshness, says, was “smaller compared to his father than a point is to the universe”) assumed two years as a revolution of Mars; but as this made Cacciaguida born in 1160, twelve years after his death, he suggested the reading of “three,” instead of “thirty,” in the text, which reading was adopted by the Cruscan Academy, and makes the year of Cacciaguida’s birth 1106.

But that Dante computed the revolution of Mars at less than two years is evident from a passage in the *Convito*, II 15, referred to by Philalethes, where he speaks of half a revolution of this planet as *un anno quasi*, almost a year. The common reading of “thirty” is undoubtedly then the true one.

In Astrology, the Lion is the House of the Sun; but Mars, as well as the Sun and Jupiter, is a Lord of the Lion; and hence Dante says “its

Lion.” [←](#)

1614. The house in which Cacciaguida was born stood in the Mercato Vecchio, or Old Market, at the beginning of the last ward or *sesto* of Florence toward the east, called the Porta San Pietro.

The city of Florence was originally divided into Quarters or Gates, which were, San Pancrazio on the west, San Pietro on the east, the Duomo on the north, and Santa Maria on the south. Afterwards, when the new walls were built and the city enlarged, these Quarters were changed to *Sesti*, or Sixths, by dividing Santa Maria into the Borgo and San Pietro Scheraggio, and adding the Oltrarno (beyond the Arno) on the southern bank. [←](#)

1615. The annual races of Florence on the 24th of June, the festival of St. John the Baptist. The prize was the *Pallio*, or mantle of “crimson silk velvet,” as Villani says; and the race was run from San Pancrazio, the western ward of the city, through the Mercato Vecchio, to the eastern ward of San Piero. According to Benvenuto, the Florentine races were horse-races; but the Pallio of Verona, where the prize was the “Green Mantle,” was manifestly a footrace. See *Inferno* XV 122.

[←](#)

1616. Between the Ponte Vecchio, where once stood the statue of Mars, and the church of St. John the Baptist. [←](#)

1617. Campi is a village between Prato and Florence, in

“The valley whence Bisenzio descends.”

Certaldo is in the Val d’ Elsa, and is chiefly celebrated as being the birth place of Boccaccio, “true *Bocca d’ Oro*, or Mouth of Gold,” says Benvenuto, with enthusiasm, “my venerated master, and a most diligent and familiar student of Dante, and who wrote a certain book that greatly helps us to understand him.”

Figgine, or Figline, is a town in the Val d’ Arno, some twelve miles distant from Florence; and hateful to Dante as the birthplace of the “ribald lawyer, Ser Dego,” as Campi was of another ribald lawyer, Ser Fozio; and Certaldo of a certain Giacomo, who thrust the Podestà of

Florence from his seat, and undertook to govern the city. These men, mingling with the old Florentines, corrupted the simple manners of the town. ↵

1618. Galluzzo lies to the south of Florence on the road to Siena, and Trespiano about the same distance to the north, on the road to Bologna.
↵

1619. Aguglione and Signa are also Tuscan towns in the neighborhood of Florence. According to Covino, *Descriz. Geog. dell'Italia*, p. 18, it was a certain Baldo d'Aguglione, who condemned Dante to be burned; and Bonifazio da Signa, according to Buti, “tyrannized over the city, and sold the favors and offices of the Commune.” ↵

1620. The clergy.

“Popes, cardinals, bishops, and archbishops, who govern the Holy Church,” says Buti; and continues: “If the Church had been a mother, instead of a stepmother to the Emperors, and had not excommunicated, and persecuted, and published them as heretics, Italy would have been well governed, and there would have been none of those civil wars, that dismantled and devastated the smaller towns, and drove their inhabitants into Florence, to trade and discount.”

Napier, *Florentine History*, I 597, says:—

“The *Arte del Cambio*, or moneytrade, in which Florence shone preeminent, soon made her bankers known and almost necessary to all Europe.... But amongst all foreign nations they were justly considered, according to the admission of their own countrymen, as hard, griping, and exacting; they were called *Lombard dogs*; hated and insulted by nations less acquainted with trade and certainly less civilized than themselves, when they may only have demanded a fair interest for money lent at a great risk to lawless men in a foreign country.... All

countinghouses of Florentine bankers were confined to the old and new marketplaces, where alone they were allowed to transact business: before the door was placed a bench, and a table covered with carpet, on which stood their moneybags and account-book for the daily transactions of trade.”



1621. Simifonte, a village near Certaldo. It was captured by the Florentines, and made part of their territory, in 1202. [←](#)
1622. In the valley of the Ombrone, east of Pistoia, are still to be seen the ruins of Montemurlo, once owned by the Counts Guidi, and by them sold to the Florentines in 1203, because they could not defend it against the Pistoians. [←](#)
1623. The *Pivier d'Accone*, or parish of Accone, is in the *Val di Sieve*, or Valley of the Sieve, one of the affluents of the Arno. Here the powerful family of the Cerchi had their castle of Monte di Croce, which was taken and destroyed by the Florentines in 1053, and the Cerchi and others came to live in Florence, where they became the leaders of the *Parte Bianca*. See [note 95](#). [←](#)
1624. The Buondelmonti were a wealthy and powerful family of Valdigrive, or Valley of the Grieve, which, like the Sieve, is an affluent of the Arno. They too, like the Cerchi, came to Florence, when their lands were taken by the Florentines, and were in a certain sense the cause of Guelf and Ghibelline quarrels in the city. See [note 137](#). [←](#)
1625. The downfall of a great city is more swift and terrible than that of a smaller one; or, as Venturi interprets, “The size of the body and greater robustness of strength in a city and state are not helpful, but injurious to their preservation, unless men live in peace and without the blindness of the passions, and Florence, more poor and humble, would have flourished longer.”

Perhaps the best commentary of all is that contained in the two lines of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseide*, II 1385—aptly quoted by

Mr. Gary:—

“For swifter course cometh thing that is of wight,
Whan it descendeth, than done thinges light.”

✉

1626. In this line we have in brief Dante's political faith, which is given in detail in his treatise “*De Monarchia*. ” ✉
1627. Luni, an old Etruscan city in the Lunigiana; and Urbisaglia, a Roman city in the Marca d' Ancona. ✉
1628. Chiusi is in the Sienese territory, and Sinigaglia on the Adriatic, east of Rome. This latter place has somewhat revived since Dante's time. ✉
1629. Boccaccio seems to have caught something of the spirit of this canto, when, lamenting the desolation of Florence by the plague in 1348, he says in the Introduction to the *Decameron*:—

“How many vast palaces, how many beautiful houses, how many noble dwellings, aforetime filled with lords and ladies and trains of servants, were now untenanted even by the lowest menial! How many memorable families, how many ample heritages, how many renowned possessions, were left without an heir! How many valiant men, how many beautiful women, how many gentle youths, breakfasted in the morning with their relatives, companions, and friends, and, when the evening came, supped with their ancestors in the other world!”

✉

1630. Lowell, “To the Past”:—

“Still as a city buried neath the sea,
Thy courts and temples stand;
Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry

Of saints and heroes grand,
Thy phantasms grope and shiver,
Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently
Into Time's gnawing river."

"Our fathers," says Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial*, V, "find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks.... Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day; and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment."

↖

1631. Shirley, "Death's Final Conquest":—

"The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

↖

1632. The lives of men are too short for them to measure the decay of things around them. ↲

1633. It would be an unprofitable task to repeat in notes the names of these

"Great Florentines
Of whom the fame is hidden in the Past,"

and who flourished in the days of Cacciaguida and the Emperor Conrad. It will be better to follow Villani, as he points out with a sigh their dwellings in the old town, and laments over their decay. In his *Cronica*, Book IV, he speaks as follows:—

“Ch. X. As already mentioned, the first rebuilding of Little Florence was divided by Quarters, that is, by four gates; and that we may the better make known the noble races and houses, which in those times, after Fiesole was destroyed, were great and powerful in Florence, we will enumerate them by the quarters where they lived.

“And first those of the Porta del Duomo, which was the first fold and habitation of the new Florence, and the place where all the noble citizens resorted and met together on Sunday, and where all marriages were made, and all reconciliations, and all pomps and solemnities of the Commune.... At the Porta del Duomo lived the descendants of the Giovanni and of the Guineldi, who were the first that rebuilt the city of Florence, and from whom descended many noble families in Mugello and in Valdarno, and many in the city, who now are common people, and almost come to an end. Such were the Barucci, who lived at Santa Maria Maggiore, who are now extinct; and of their race were the Scali and Palermini. In the same quarter were also the Arrigucci, the Sizii, and the sons of Delia Tosa; and the Delia Tosa were the same race as the Bisdomini, and custodians and defenders of the bishopric; but one of them left his family at the Porta San Piero, and took to wife a lady named Delia Tosa, who had the inheritance, whence the name was derived. And there were the Delia Pressa, who lived among the Chiavaiuoli, men of gentle birth.

“Ch. XI. In the quarter of Porta San Piero were the Bisdomini, who, as above mentioned, were custodians of the bishopric; and the Alberighi, to whom belonged the church of Santa Maria Alberighi, of the house of the Donati, and now they are naught. The Rovignani were

very great, and lived at the Porta San Pietro; and then came the houses of the Counts Guidi, and then of the Cerchi, and from them in the female line were born all the Counts Guidi, as before mentioned, of the daughter of good Messer Bellincion Berti; in our day all this race is extinct. The Galligari and Chiarmontesi and Ardinghi, who lived in the Orto San Michele, were very ancient; and so were the Giuochi, who now are *popolani*, living at Santa Margherita; the Elisei, who likewise are now *popolani*, living near the Mercato Vecchio. And in that place lived the Caponsacchi, who were nobles of Fiesole; the Donati, or Calfucci, for they were all one race, but the Calfucci are extinct; and the Delia Bella of San Martino, also become *popolani*; and the Adimari, who descended from the house of Cosi, who now live at Porta Rossa, and who built Santa Maria Nipotecosa; and although they are now the principal family of that ward of Florence, in those days they were not of the oldest.

“Ch. XII. At the Porta San Pancrazio, of great rank and power were the Lamberti, descended from the Della Magna; the Ughi were very ancient, and built Santa Maria Ughi, and all the hill of Montughi belonged to them, and now they have died out; the Catellini were very ancient, and now they are forgotten. It is said that the Tieri were illegitimate descendants of theirs. The Pigli were great and noble in those times, and the Soldanieri and Vecchietti. Very ancient were the Dell’ Area, and now they are extinct; and the Migliorelli, who now are naught; and the Trinciavelli da Mosciano were very ancient.

“Ch. XIII. In the quarter of Porta Santa Maria, which is now in the ward of San Piero Scheraggio and of Borgo, there were many powerful and ancient families. The greatest were the Uberti, whose ancestors were the Della Magna, and who lived where now stand the Piazza de’ Priori and the Palazzo del Popolo; the Fifanti, called Bogolesi, lived at the corner of Porta Santa Maria; the Galli, Cappiardi, Guidi, and Filippi, who now are nothing,

were then great and powerful, and lived in the Mercato Nuovo. Likewise the Greci, to whom all the Borgo de' Greci belonged, have now perished and passed away, except some of the race in Bologna; and the Ormanni, who lived where now stands the forementioned Palazzo del Popolo, and are now called Foraboschi. And behind San Piero Scheraggio, where are now the houses of the Petri, lived the Delia Pera, or Peruzza, and from them the postern gate there was called Porta Peruzza. Some say that the Peruzzi of the present day are of that family, but I do not affirm it. The Sacchetti, who lived in the Garbo, were very ancient; around the Mercato Nuovo the Bostichi were great people, and the Delia Sanella, and Giandonati and Infangati; great in Borgo Santi Apostoli were the Gualterotti and Importuni, who now are *popolani*. The Buondelmonti were noble and ancient citizens in the rural districts, and Montebuoni was their castle, and many others in Valdigieve; at first they lived in Oltrarno, and then came to the Borgo. The Pulci, and the Counts of Gangalandi, Ciuffagni, and Nerli of Oltrarno were at one time great and powerful, together with the Giandonati and Della Bella, named above; and from the Marquis Hugo, who built the Abbey, or Badia, of Florence, received arms and knighthood, for they were very great around him."

To the better understanding of this extract from Villani, it must be borne in mind that, at the time when he wrote, the population of Florence was divided into three classes, the Nobles, the Popolani, or middle class, and the Plebeians. ↲

1634. Gianni del Soldanier is put among the traitors "with Ganellon and Tebaldello," *Inferno* XXXII 121. ↲
1635. The Cerchi, who lived near the Porta San Piero, and produced dissension in the city with their White and Black factions;—such a cargo, that it must be thrown overboard to save the ship. See [note 95.](#)
↲

1636. The County Guido, for Count Guido, as in Shakespeare the County Paris and County Palatine, and in the old song in Scott's *Quentin Durward*:—

“Ah, County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea.”

↲

1637. Bellincion Berti. See [Canto XV 112](#), and [note 224](#). ↲

1638. The insignia of knighthood. ↲

1639. The Billi, or Pigli, family; their arms being “a Column Vair in a red field.” The Column Vair was the bar of the shield “variegated with argent and azure.” The vair, in Italian *vajo*, is a kind of squirrel; and the heraldic mingling of colors was taken from its spotted skin. ↲

1640. The Chiaramontesi, one of whom, a certain Ser Durante, an officer in the customs, falsified the bushel, or *stajo*, of Florence, by having it made one stave less, so as to defraud in the measure. Dante alludes to this in *Purgatorio* XII 105. ↲

1641. The Uberti, of whom was Farinata. See [Inferno X 32](#). ↲

1642. The Balls of Gold were the arms of the Lamberti family. Dante mentions them by their arms, says the Ottimo, “as who should say, as the ball is the symbol of the universe, and gold surpasses every other metal, so in goodness and valor these surpassed the other citizens.” Dante puts Mosca de' Lamberti among the Schismatics in *Inferno* XXVIII 103, with both hands cut off, and

“The stumps uplifting through the dusky air.”

↲

1643. The Vidomini, Tosinghi, and Cortigiani, custodians and defenders of the Bishopric of Florence. Their fathers were honorable men, and, like

the Lamberti, embellished the city with their good name and deeds; but they, when a bishop died, took possession of the episcopal palace, and, as custodians and defenders, feasted and slept there till his successor was appointed. [←](#)

1644. The Adimari. One of this family, Boccaccio Adimari, got possession of Dante's property in Florence when he was banished, and always bitterly opposed his return. [←](#)

1645. Ubertin Donate, a gentleman of Florence, had married one of the Ravignani, and was offended that her sister should be given in marriage to one of the Adimari, who were of ignoble origin. [←](#)

1646. The Caponsacchi lived in the Mercato Vecchio, or Old Market. One of the daughters was the wife of Folco Portinari and mother of Beatrice. [←](#)

1647. The thing incredible is that there should have been so little jealousy among the citizens of Florence as to suffer one of the city gates, Porta Peruzza, to be named after a particular family. [←](#)

1648. Five Florentine families, according to Benvenuto, bore the arms of the Marquis Hugo of Brandenburg, and received from him the titles and privileges of nobility. These were the Pulci, Nerli, Giandonati, Gangalandi, and Delia Bella.

This Marquis Hugo, whom Dante here calls "the great baron," was Viceroy of the Emperor Otho III in Tuscany. Villani, *Cronica*, IV, Ch. 2, relates the following story of him:—

"It came to pass, as it pleased God, that, while hunting in the neighborhood of Bonsollazzo, he was lost in the forest, and came, as it seemed to him, to a smithy. Finding there men swarthy and hideous, who, instead of iron, seemed to be tormenting human beings with fire and hammers, he asked the meaning of it. He was told that these were lost souls, and that to a like punishment was condemned the soul of the Marquis Hugo, on account of his worldly life, unless he repented. In great terror he commended himself

to the Virgin Mary; and, when the vision vanished, remained so contrite in spirit, that, having returned to Florence, he had all his patrimony in Germany sold, and ordered seven abbeys to be built; the first of which was the Badia of Florence, in honor of Santa Maria; the second, that of Bonsollazzo, where he saw the vision.”

The Marquis Hugo died on St. Thomas’s day, December 31, 1006, and was buried in the Badia of Florence, where every year on that day the monks, in grateful memory of him, kept the anniversary of his death with great solemnity. [←](#)

1649. Giano della Bella, who disguised the arms of Hugo, quartered in his own, with a fringe of gold. A nobleman by birth and education, he was by conviction a friend of the people, and espoused their cause against the nobles. By reforming the abuses of both parties, he gained the ill-will of both; and in 1294, after some popular tumult which he in vain strove to quell, went into voluntary exile, and died in France.

Sismondi, *Ital. Rep.*, p. 113 (Lardner’s Cyclopaedia), gives the following succinct account of the abuses which Giano strove to reform, and of his summary manner of doing it:—

“The arrogance of the nobles, their quarrels, and the disturbance of the public peace by their frequent battles in the streets, had, in 1292, irritated the whole population against them. Giano della Bella, himself a noble, but sympathizing in the passions and resentment of the people, proposed to bring them to order by summary justice, and to confide the execution of it to the gonfalonier whom he caused to be elected. The Guelfs had been so long at the head of the republic, that their noble families, whose wealth had immensely increased, placed themselves above all law. Giano determined that their nobility itself should be a title of exclusion, and a commencement of punishment; a rigorous edict, bearing the title of ‘ordinance of justice,’ first designated thirty-seven Guelf families of Florence, whom it declared noble

and great, and on this account excluded forever from the *signoria*; refusing them at the same time the privilege of renouncing their nobility, in order to place themselves on a footing with the other citizens. When these families troubled the public peace by battle or assassination, a summary information, or even common report, was sufficient to induce the gonfalonier to attack them at the head of the militia, raze their houses to the ground, and deliver their persons to the Podestà, to be punished according to their crimes. If other families committed the same disorders, if they troubled the state by their private feuds and outrages, the *signoria* was authorized to ennable them, as a punishment of their crimes, in order to subject them to the same summary justice.”

Dino Compagni, a contemporary of Giano, *Cronica Fiorentina*, Book I, says of him:—

“He was a manly man, of great courage, and so bold that he defended those causes which others abandoned, and said those things which others kept silent, and did all in favor of justice against the guilty, and was so much feared by the magistrates that they were afraid to screen the evildoers. The great began to speak against him, threatening him, and they did it, not for the sake of justice, but to destroy their enemies, abominating him and the laws.”

Villani, *Cronica*, VIII ch. 8, says:—

“Giano della Bella was condemned and banished for contumacy, . . . and all his possessions confiscated, . . . whence great mischief accrued to our city, and chiefly to the people, for he was the most loyal and upright *popolano* and lover of the public good of any man in Florence.”

And finally Macchiavelli, *Istorie Fiorentine*, Book II, calls him “a lover of the liberty of his country,” and says, “he was hated by the nobility for undermining their authority, and envied by the richer of the commonalty, who were jealous of his power”; and that he went into voluntary exile in order “to deprive his enemies of all opportunity of injuring him, and his friends of all opportunity of injuring the country”; and that “to free the citizens from the fear they had of him, he resolved to leave the city, which, at his own charge and danger, he had liberated from the servitude of the powerful.” [←](#)

1650. The Borgo Santi Apostoli would be a quieter place, if the Buondelmonti had not moved into it from Oltrarno. [←](#)
1651. The house of Amidei, whose quarrel with the Buondelmonti was the origin of the Guelf and Ghibelline parties in Florence, and put an end to the joyous life of her citizens. See [note 137](#). [←](#)
1652. See the story of Buondelmonte, as told by Giovanni Fiorentino in his *Pecorone*, and quoted [note 137](#). [←](#)
1653. Much sorrow and suffering would have been spared, if the first Buondelmonte that came from his castle of Montebuono to Florence had been drowned in the Ema, a small stream he had to cross on the way. [←](#)
1654. Young Buondelmonte was murdered at the foot of the mutilated statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio, and after this Florence had no more peace. [←](#)
1655. The banner of Florence had never been reversed in sign of defeat. [←](#)
1656. The arms of Florence were a white lily in a field of red; after the expulsion of the Ghibellines, the Guelfs changed them to a red lily in a field of white. [←](#)
1657. The Heaven of Mars continued. The prophecy of Dante’s banishment. In *Inferno* X 127, as Dante is meditating on the dark words of Farinata that foreshadow his exile, Virgil says to him:—

“‘Let memory preserve what thou hast heard
Against thyself,’ that Sage commanded me,
‘And now attend here’; and he raised his finger.
‘When thou shalt be before the radiance sweet
Of her whose beauteous eyes all things be hold,
From her thou ’lt learn the journey of thy life.’”

And afterwards, in reply to Brunetto Latini, Dante says, *Inferno* XV
88:—

“What you narrate of my career I write,
And keep it for a lady, who will know,
To gloss with other text, if e’er I reach her.”

The time for this revelation has now come; but it is made by
Cacciaguida, not by Beatrice. [←](#)

1658. Phaeton, having heard from Epaphus that he was not the son of Apollo, ran in great eagerness and anxiety to his mother, Clymene, to ascertain the truth. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, Dryden’s Tr.:—

“Mother, said he, this infamy was thrown
By Epaphus on you, and me your son.
He spoke in public, told it to my face;
Nor durst I vindicate the dire disgrace:
Even I, the bold, the sensible of wrong,
Restrained by shame, was forced to hold my tongue.
To hear an open slander, is a curse:
But not to find an answer, is a worse.
If I am heaven-begot, assert your son
By some sure sign; and make my father known,
To right my honor, and redeem your own.
He said, and, saying, cast his arms about
Her neck, and begged her to resolve the doubt.”



1659. The disaster that befell Phaeton while driving the steeds of Apollo, makes fathers chary of granting all the wishes of children. ↵
1660. Who seest in God all possible contingencies as clearly as the human mind perceives the commonest geometrical problem. ↵
1661. God, “whose centre is everywhere, whose circumference nowhere.” ↵
1662. The heavy words which Dante heard on the mount of Purgatory, foreshadowing his exile, are those of Currado Malaspina, *Purgatorio* VIII 133:—

“For the sun shall not lie
Seven times upon the pillow which the Ram
With all his four feet covers and bestrides,
Before that such a courteous opinion
Shall in the middle of thy head be nailed
With greater nails than of another’s speech,
Unless the course of justice standeth still”;

and those of Oderisi d’ Agobbio, *Purgatorio* XI 139:—

“I say no more, and know that I speak darkly;
Yet little time shall pass before thy neighbors
Will so demean themselves that thou canst gloss it.”

↵

1663. The words he heard “when descending into the dead world,” are those of Farinata, *Inferno* X 79:—

“But fifty times shall not rekindled be
The countenance of the Lady who reigns here,
Ere thou shalt know how heavy is that art”;

and those of Brunetto Latini, *Inferno* XV 61:—

“But that ungrateful and malignant people,

Which from Fiesole of old descended,
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite,
Will make itself, for thy good deeds, thy foe.”

↖

1664. Aristotle, *Ethics*, I ch. 10:—

“Always and everywhere the virtuous man bears
prosperous and adverse fortune prudently, as a perfect
tetragon.”

↖

1665. To the spirit of Cacciaguida. ↲

1666. Not like the ambiguous utterance of oracles in Pagan times. ↲

1667. The word here rendered Language is in the original *Latin*; used as in
Canto XII 144. ↲

1668. Contingency, accident, or casualty, belongs only to the material world,
and in the spiritual world finds no place. As Dante makes St. Bernard
say, in Canto XXXII 53:—

“Within the amplitude of this domain
No casual point can possibly find place,
No more than sadness can, or thirst, or hunger;
For by eternal law has been established
Whatever thou beholdest.”

↖

1669. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, V Prosa 3, Ridpath’s Tr.:—

“But I shall now endeavor to demonstrate, that, in
whatever way the chain of causes is disposed, the event of
things which are foreseen is necessary; although

prescience may not appear to be the necessitating cause of their befalling. For example, if a person sits, the opinion formed of him that he is seated, is of necessity true; but by inverting the phrase, if the opinion is true that he is seated, he must necessarily sit. In both cases then there is a necessity; in the latter, that the person sits; in the former, that the opinion concerning him is true: but the person doth not sit, because the opinion of his sitting is true; but the opinion is rather true, because the action of his being seated was antecedent in time. Thus though the truth of the opinion may be the effect of the person taking a seat, there is nevertheless a necessity common to both. The same method of reasoning, I think, should be employed with regard to the prescience of God, and future contingencies; for allowing it to be true, that events are foreseen because they are to happen, and that they do not befall because they are foreseen, it is still necessary, that what is to happen must be foreseen by God, and that what is foreseen must take place.”

And again, in Prosa 4 of the same Book:—

“But how is it possible, said I, that those things which are foreseen should not befall?—I do not say, replied she, that we are to entertain any doubt but the events will take place, which Providence foresees are to happen; but we are rather to believe, that although they do happen, yet that there is no necessity in the events themselves, which constrains them to do so. The truth of which I shall thus endeavor to illustrate. We behold many things done under our view, such as a coachman conducting his chariot and governing his horses, and other things of a like nature. Now, do you suppose these things are done by the compulsion of a necessity?—No, answered I; for, if everything were moved by compulsion, the effects of art would be vain and fruitless.—If things then, which are doing under our eye, added she, are under no present

necessity of happening, it must be admitted that these same things, before they befell, were under no necessity of taking place. It is plain, therefore, that some things befall, the event of which is altogether unconstrained by necessity. For I do not think any person will say that such things as are at present done, were not to happen before they were done. Why, therefore, may not things be foreseen, and not necessitated in their events? As the knowledge then of what is present imposes no necessity on things now done, so neither does the foreknowledge of what is to happen in future necessitate the things which are to take place."

Also Chaucer, *Troil. and Cres.*, IV 995:—

“Eke, this is an opinion of some
That have hir top ful high and smoth ishore;
Thei sain right thus; that thing is nat to come
For-that the prescience hath sene before,
That it shal come: but thei sain that therefore
That it shall come, therefore the purveiaunce
Wote it beforne withouten ignoraunce.

“And in this maner, this necessite,
Retourneth in his place contrary, againe;
For nedefully, behoveth it nat be,
That thilke thinges fallen in certaine
That ben purveyed; but, nedefully, as thei saine,
Behoveth it, that thinges which that fall,
That thei in certaine ben purveyed all:—

“I mene, as though I laboured me in this,
To enquire which thing cause of which thing be,
As whether that the prescience of God is
The certaine cause of the necessite
Of thinges that to comen be, parde,
Or, if necessite of thing coming
Be the cause certaine of the purveying?

“But, now, ne enforce I me not, in shewing
How the order of the causes stant; but wot I,
That it behoveth that the befalling
Of thinges, wiste before certainly,
Be necessarie al seme it not therby
That prescience put falling necessayre
To thing to come, al fal it foule or faire:

“For, if there sit a man yonde on a see,
Than by necessite behoveth it
That, certes, thine opinion sothe be
That wenest or conjectest that he sit.
And, furtherover, now ayenwarde yet,
Lo, right so is it on the part contrarie;
As thus; now herken, for I wol nat tarie:

“I say, that if the opinion of the
Be sothe, for-that he sit; than say I this,
That he mote sitten, by necessite.
And thus necessite, in either, is.
For in him nede of sitting is, iwis;
And in the, nede of sothe: and thus, forsothe,
There mote necessite ben in you bothe.

“But thou maist saine, the man sit nat therefore
That thine opinion of his sitting soth is:
But, rather, for the man sate there before,
Therefore is thine opinion sothe iwis:
And I say, Though the cause of sothe of this
Cometh of his sitting; yet necessite
Is enterchaunged bothe in him and the.”



1670. As Hippolytus was banished from Athens on the false and cruel accusations of Phaedra, his stepmother, Dante shall be from Florence on accusations equally false and cruel. ↵

1671. By instigation of Pope Boniface VIII in Rome, as Dante here declares. In April, 1302, the Bianchi were banished from Florence on account or under pretext of a conspiracy against Charles of Valois, who had been called to Florence by the Guelfs as pacifier of Tuscany. In this conspiracy Dante could have had no part, as he was then absent on an embassy to Rome.

Dino Compagni, *Cron. Flor.*, II, gives a list of many of the exiles. Among them is “Dante Aldighieri, ambassador at Rome”; and at the end of the names given he adds, “and many more, as many as six hundred men, who wandered here and there about the world, suffering much want.” At first, the banishment was for two years only; but a second decree made it for life, with the penalty that, if any one of the exiles returned to Florence, he should be burned to death.

On the exile of Dante, M. Ampère has written an interesting work under the title of *Voyage Dantesque*, from which frequent extracts have been made in these notes.

“I have followed him, step by step,” he says, “in the cities where he lived, in the mountains where he wandered, in the asylums that welcomed him, always guided by the poem, in which he has recorded, with all the sentiments of his soul and all the speculations of his intelligence, all the recollections of his life; a poem which is no less a confession than a vast encyclopaedia.”

See also the Letter of Frate Ilario, the passage from the *Convito*. [←](#)

1672. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, I Prosa 4, Ridpath’s Tr.:—

“But my miseries are complete, when I reflect that the majority of mankind attend less to the merit of things, than to their fortuitous event; and believe that no undertakings are crowned with success, but such as are formed with a prudent foresight. Hence it is, that the unprosperous immediately lose the good opinion of mankind. It would give me pain to relate to you the rumors that are flying among the people, and the variety of discordant and inconsistent opinions entertained concerning me.”

↖

1673. At the beginning of *Inferno* XXVI. Dante foreshadows the vengeance of God that is to fall on Florence, and exclaims:—

“And if it now were, it were not too soon;
Would that it were, seeing it needs must be,
For 'twill aggrieve me more the more I age.”

For an account of these disasters see [note 377.](#) ↲

1674. Upon this passage Mr. Wright, in the notes to his translation, makes the following extracts from the Bible, Shakespeare, and Spenser:—

Ecclesiasticus 29:24 and 40:28, 29:—

“It is a miserable thing to go from house to house; for where thou art a stranger, thou darest not open thy mouth. Thou shalt entertain, and feast, and have no thanks: moreover, thou shalt hear bitter words.... These things are grievous to a man of understanding—the upbraiding of houserom, and reproaching of the lender.”

“My son, lead not a beggar's life, for better it is to die than to beg. The life of him that dependeth on another man's table is not to be counted for a life.”

Richard II, III 1:—

“Myself
Have stooped my neck under your injuries,
And sighed my English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment.”

Spenser, “Mother Hubberd's Tale,” 895:—

“Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What Hell it is, in suing long to bide:
To lose good days, that might be better spent;

To waste long nights, in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy Prince's grace, yet want her Peer's,
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
To eat thy heart with comfortless despairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

✉

1675. Among the fellow-exiles of Dante, as appears by the list of names preserved, was Lapo Salterello, the Florentine lawyer, of whom Dante speaks so contemptuously in Canto XV 128. Benvenuto says he was “a litigious and loquacious man,” and very annoying to Dante during his exile. Altogether the company of his fellow-exiles seems to have been disagreeable to him, and it better suited him to “make a party by himself.” ✉

1676. Shall blush with shame. ✉

1677. Bartolommeo della Scala, Lord of Verona. The arms of the Scaligers were a golden ladder in a red field, surmounted by a black eagle. “For a tyrant,” says Benvenuto, “he was reputed just and prudent.” ✉

1678. Can Grande della Scala, at this time only nine years old, but showing, says Benvenuto, “that he would be a true son of Mars, bold and prompt in battle, and victorious exceedingly.” He was a younger brother of Bartolommeo, and became sole Lord of Verona in 1311. He was the chief captain of the Ghibellines, and his court the refuge of some of the principal of the exiles. Dante was there in 1317 with Guido da Castello and Uguccione della Faggiuola. To Can Grande he dedicated some cantos of the Paradiso, and presented them with that long Latin letter so difficult to associate with the name of Dante.

At this time the court of Verona seems to have displayed a kind of barbaric splendor and magnificence, as if in imitation of the gay court of Frederick II of Sicily. Arrivabene, *Comento Storico*, III 255, says:—

“Can Grande gathered around him those distinguished personages whom unfortunate reverses had driven from their country; but he also kept in his pay buffoons and musicians, and other merry persons, who were more caressed by the courtiers than the men famous for their deeds and learning. One of the guests was Sagacio Muzio Gazzata, the historian of Reggio, who has left us an account of the treatment which the illustrious and unfortunate exiles received. Various apartments were assigned to them in the palace, designated by various symbols; a Triumph for the warriors; Groves of the Muses for the poets; Mercury for the artists; Paradise for the preachers; and for all, inconstant Fortune. Can Grande likewise received at his court his illustrious prisoners of war, Giacomo di Carrara, Vanne Scornazano, Albertino Mussato, and many others. All had their private attendants, and a table equally well served. At times Can Grande invited some of them to his own table, particularly Dante, and Guido di Castel of Reggio, exiled from his country with the friends of liberty, and who for his simplicity was called the ‘Simple Lombard.’”

The harmony of their intercourse seems finally to have been interrupted, and Dante to have fallen into that disfavor which he hints at below, hoping that, having been driven from Florence, he may not also be driven from Verona:—

“That, if the dearest place be taken from me,
I may not lose the others by my songs.”

Balbo, *Life of Dante*, Mrs. Bunbury’s Tr., II 207, says:—

“History, tradition, and the after fortunes of Dante, all agree in proving that there was a rupture between him and Cane; if it did not amount to a quarrel, there seems to have been some misunderstanding between the magnificent protector and his haughty client. But which of the two was in fault? I have collected all the memorials that remain

relating to this, and let every one judge for himself. But I must warn my readers that Petrarch, the second of the three fathers of the Italian language, showed much less veneration than our good Boccaccio for their common predecessor Dante. Petrarch speaks as follows: ‘My fellow-citizen, Dante Alighieri, was a man highly distinguished in the vulgar tongue, but in his style and speech a little daring and rather freer than was pleasing to delicate and studious ears, or gratifying to the princes of our times. He then, while banished from his country, resided at the court of Can Grande, where the afflicted universally found consolation and an asylum. He at first was held in much honor by Cane, but afterwards he by degrees fell out of favor, and day by day less pleased that lord. Actors and parasites of every description used to be collected together at the same banquet; one of these, most impudent in his words and in his obscene gestures, obtained much importance and favor with many. And Cane, suspecting that Dante disliked this, called the man before him, and, having greatly praised him to our poet, said: “I wonder how it is that this silly fellow should know how to please all, and should be loved by all, and that thou canst not, who art said to be so wise!” Dante answered: “Thou wouldest not wonder if thou knewest that friendship is founded on similarity of habits and dispositions.”’

“It is also related, that at his table, which was too indiscriminately hospitable, where buffoons sat down with Dante, and where jests passed which must have been offensive to every person of refinement, but disgraceful when uttered by the superior in rank to his inferior, a boy was once concealed under the table, who, collecting the bones that were thrown there by the guests, according to the custom of those times, heaped them up at Dante’s feet. When the tables were removed, the great heap appearing, Cane pretended to show much astonishment, and said, ‘Certainly, Dante is a great devourer of meat.’ To which

Dante readily replied, ‘My lord, you would not have seen so many bones had I been a dog (*cane*).’”

Can Grande died in the midst of his wars, in July, 1329, from drinking at a fountain. A very lively picture of his court, and of the life that Dante led there, is given by Ferrari in his comedy of *Dante a Verona*. [←](#)

1679. The Gascon is Clement V, Archbishop of Bordeaux, and elected Pope in 1305. The noble Henry is the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg, who, the *Ottimo* says, “was valiant in arms, liberal and courteous, compassionate and gentle, and the friend of virtue.” Pope Clement is said to have been secretly his enemy, while publicly he professed to be his friend; and finally to have instigated or connived at his death by poison. See [note 618](#). Henry came to Italy in 1310, when Can Grande was about nineteen years of age. [←](#)

1680. The commentary on the things told to Dante in the Inferno and Purgatorio. See [note 1663](#). [←](#)

1681. Habakkuk 2:2:—

“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

[←](#)

1682. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III 2:—

“Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.”

[←](#)

1683. The Heaven of Mars continued; and the ascent to the Heaven of Jupiter, where are seen the spirits of righteous kings and rulers. [←](#)

1684. Enjoying his own thought in silence.
Shakespeare, “Sonnet XXX”:—

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past.”



1685. Relinquish the hope and attempt of expressing.

1686. Wordsworth, “Excursion,” Book IV:—

“’Tis by comparison an easy task
Earth to despise; but to converse with heaven—
This is not easy:—to relinquish all
We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
That ’tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul’s desires;
And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
—Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.”

And again in “Tintern Abbey”:—

“That blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened.”



1687. Paradise, or the system of the heavens, which lives by the divine influences from above, and whose fruit and foliage are eternal. The

fifth resting-place or division of this tree is the planet Mars. [←](#)

1688. Joshua, the leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses, to whom God said, Joshua 1:5:—

“As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”



1689. The great Maccabee was Judas Maccabaeus, who, as is stated in Biblical history, 1 Maccabees 3:3, “gat his people great honor, and put on a breastplate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him, and he made battles, protecting the host with his sword. In his acts he was like a lion, and like a lion’s whelp roaring for his prey.” [←](#)

1690. *Aeneid*, VII, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“As at times a whip-top whirling under the twisted lash, which boys intent on their sport drive in a large circuit round some empty court, the engine driven about by the scourge is hurried round and round in circling courses; the unpractised throng and beardless band are lost in admiration of the volatile boxwood: they lend their souls to the stroke.”



1691. The form in which Charlemagne presented himself to the imagination of the Middle Ages may be seen by the following extract from Turpin’s *Chronicle*, Ch. XX:—

“The Emperor was of a ruddy complexion, with brown hair; of a well made, handsome form, but a stern visage. His height was about eight of his own feet, which were very long. He was of a strong, robust make; his legs and thighs very stout, and his sinews firm. His face was thirteen inches long; his beard a palm; his nose half a

palm; his forehead a foot over. His lion-like eyes flashed fire like carbuncles; his eyebrows were half a palm over. When he was angry, it was a terror to look upon him. He required eight spans for his girdle, besides what hung loose. He ate sparingly of bread; but a whole quarter of lamb, two fowls, a goose, or a large portion of pork; a peacock, a crane, or a whole hare. He drank moderately of wine and water. He was so strong, that he could at a single blow cleave asunder an armed soldier on horseback, from the head to the waist, and the horse likewise. He easily vaulted over four horses harnessed together, and could raise an armed man from the ground to his head, as he stood erect upon his hand.”

Orlando, the famous paladin, who died at Roncesvalles; the hero of Pulci’s *Morgante Maggiore*, Bojardo’s *Orlando Innamorato*, and Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. His sword Durandel is renowned in fiction, and his ivory horn Olivant could be heard eight miles. ↪

1692. “This William,” says Buti, being obliged to say something, “was a great prince, who fought and died for the faith of Christ; I have not been able to find out distinctly who he was.”

The *Ottimo* says it is William, Count of Orange in Provence; who, after fighting for the faith against the Saracens, “took the cowl, and finished his life holily in the service of God; and he is called Saint William of the Desert.”

He is the same hero, then, that figures in the old romances of the Twelve Peers of France, as Guillaume au Court Nez, or William of the Short Nose, so called from having had his nose cut off by a Saracen in battle. In the monorhythmic romance which bears his name, he is thus represented:—

“Great was the court in the hall of Loön,
The tables were full of fowl and venison,
On flesh and fish they feasted every one;
But Guillaume of these viands tasted none,

Brown crusts ate he, and water drank alone.
When had feasted every noble baron,
The cloths were removed by squire and scullion.
Count Guillaume then with the king did thus reason:
'What thinketh now,' quoth he, 'the gallant Charlon?
Will he aid me against the prowess of Mahon?'
Quoth Loéis, 'We will take counsel thereon,
To-morrow in the morning shalt thou conne,
If aught by us in this matter can be done.'
Guillaume heard this—black was he as carbon,
He louted low, and seized a baton,
And said to the king, 'Of your fief will I none,
I will not keep so much as a spur's iron;
Your friend and vassal I cease to be anon;
But come you shall, whether you will or non.'"

He is said to have been taken prisoner and carried to Africa by the Moorish King Tobaldo, whose wife Arabella he first converted to Christianity, and then eloped with.

And who was Renouard? He was a young Moor, who was taken prisoner and brought up at the court of Saint Louis with the king's daughter Alice, whom, after achieving unheard of wonders in battle and siege, he, being duly baptized, married. Later in life he also became a monk, and frightened the brotherhood by his greediness, and by going to sleep when he should have gone to mass. So say the old romances. [←](#)

1693. Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, and leader of the First Crusade. He was born in 1061, and died, king of Jerusalem, in 1109. Gibbon thus sketches his character, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. LVIII:—

"The first rank both in war and council is justly due to Godfrey of Bouillon; and happy would it have been for the Crusaders, if they had trusted themselves to the sole conduct of that accomplished hero, a worthy representative of Charlemagne, from whom he was descended in the female line. His father was of the noble

race of the Counts of Boulogne; Brabant, the lower province of Lorraine, was the inheritance of his mother; and by the Emperor's bounty he was himself invested with that ducal title which has been improperly transferred to his lordship of Bouillon in the Ardennes. In the service of Henry IV he bore the great standard of the Empire, and pierced with his lance the breast of Rodolph, the rebel king; Godfrey was the first who ascended the walls of Rome; and his sickness, his vow, perhaps his remorse for bearing arms against the Pope, confirmed an early resolution of visiting the holy sepulchre, not as a pilgrim, but a deliverer. His valor was matured by prudence and moderation; his piety, though blind, was sincere; and, in the tumult of a camp, he practised the real and fictitious virtues of a convent. Superior to the private factions of the chiefs, he reserved his enmity for the enemies of Christ; and though he gained a kingdom by the attempt, his pure and disinterested zeal was acknowledged by his rivals. Godfrey of Bouillon was accompanied by his two brothers—by Eustace, the elder, who had succeeded to the county of Boulogne, and by the younger, Baldwin, a character of more ambiguous virtue. The Duke of Lorraine was alike celebrated on either side of the Rhine; from his birth and education he was equally conversant with the French and Teutonic languages; the barons of France, Germany, and Lorraine assembled their vassals; and the confederate force that marched under his banner was composed of fourscore thousand foot and about ten thousand horse."



1694. Robert Guiscard, founder of the kingdom of Naples, was the sixth of the twelve sons of the Baron Tancred de Hauteville of the diocese of Coutance in Lower Normandy, where he was born in the year 1015. In his youth he left his father's castle as a military adventurer, and crossed the Alps to join the Norman army in Apulia, whither three of

his brothers had gone before him, and whither at different times six others followed him. Here he gradually won his way by his sword; and having rendered some signal service to Pope Nicholas II, he was made Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and of the lands in Italy and Sicily which he wrested from the Greeks and Saracens. Thus from a needy adventurer he rose to be the founder of a kingdom.

“The Italian conquests of Robert,” says Gibbon, “correspond with the limits of the present kingdom of Naples; and the countries united by his arms have not been dissevered by the revolutions of seven hundred years.”

The same historian, *Rise and Fall*, Ch. LVI, gives the following character of Guiscard:—

“Robert was the eldest of the seven sons of the second marriage; and even the reluctant praise of his foes has endowed him with the heroic qualities of a soldier and a statesman. His lofty stature surpassed the tallest of his army; his limbs were cast in the true proportion of strength and gracefulness; and to the decline of life, he maintained the patient vigor of health and the commanding dignity of his form. His complexion was ruddy, his shoulders were broad, his hair and beard were long and of a flaxen color, his eyes sparkled with fire, and his voice, like that of Achilles, could impress obedience and terror amidst the tumult of battle. In the ruder ages of chivalry, such qualifications are not below the notice of the poet or historian; they may observe that Robert, at once, and with equal dexterity, could wield in the right hand his sword, his lance in the left; that in the battle of Civitella he was thrice unhorsed; and that in the close of that memorable day he was adjudged to have borne away the prize of valor from the warriors of the two armies. His boundless ambition was founded on the consciousness of superior worth; in the pursuit of greatness he was never

arrested by the scruples of justice, and seldom moved by the feelings of humanity; though not insensible of fame, the choice of open or clandestine means was determined only by his present advantage. The surname of *Guiscard* was applied to this master of political wisdom, which is too often confounded with the practice of dissimulation and deceit; and Robert is praised by the Apulian poet for excelling the cunning of Ulysses and the eloquence of Cicero. Yet these arts were disguised by an appearance of military frankness; in his highest fortune he was accessible and courteous to his fellow-soldiers; and while he indulged the prejudices of his new subjects, he affected in his dress and manners to maintain the ancient fashion of his country. He grasped with a rapacious, that he might distribute with a liberal hand; his primitive indigence had taught the habits of frugality; the gain of a merchant was not below his attention; and his prisoners were tortured with slow and unfeeling cruelty to force a discovery of their secret treasure. According to the Greeks, he departed from Normandy with only five followers on horseback and thirty on foot; yet even this allowance appears too bountiful; the sixth son of Tancred of Hauteville passed the Alps as a pilgrim; and his first military band was levied among the adventurers of Italy. His brothers and countrymen had divided the fertile lands of Apulia; but they guarded their shares with the jealousy of avarice; the aspiring youth was driven forwards to the mountains of Calabria, and in his first exploits against the Greeks and the natives it is not easy to discriminate the hero from the robber. To surprise a castle or a convent, to ensnare a wealthy citizen, to plunder the adjacent villages for necessary food, were the obscure labors which formed and exercised the powers of his mind and body. The volunteers of Normandy adhered to his standard; and, under his command, the peasants of Calabria assumed the name and character of Normans.”

Robert died in 1085, on an expedition against Constantinople, undertaken at the venerable age of seventy-five. Such was the career of Robert the Cunning, this being the meaning of the old Norman word *guiscard*, or *guischarde*. For an instance of his cunning see [note 418.](#) ↵

1695. The miracle is Beatrice, of whom Dante says, in the *Vita Nuova*:—

“Many, when she had passed, said, ‘This is not a woman, rather is she one of the most beautiful angels of heaven.’ Others said, ‘She is a miracle. Blessed be the Lord, who can perform such a marvel!’”

↵

1696. The change from the red light of Mars to the white light of Jupiter.

“This planet,” says Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, I Ch. CXI, “is gentle and piteous, and full of all good things.” Of its symbolism Dante, *Convito*, II 14, says:—

“The heaven of Jupiter may be compared to Geometry on account of two properties. The first is, that it moves between two heavens repugnant to its good temperateness, as are that of Mars and that of Saturn; whence Ptolemy says, in the book cited, that Jupiter is a star of a temperate complexion, midway between the coldness of Saturn and the heat of Mars. The second is, that among all the stars it shows itself white, almost silvery. And these two things are in Geometry. Geometry moves between two opposites; as between the point and the circle (and I call in general everything round, whether a solid or a surface, a circle); for, as Euclid says, the point is the beginning of Geometry, and, as he says, the circle in its most perfect figure, and may therefore be considered its end; so that between the point and the circle, as between beginning and end, Geometry moves. And these two are opposed to its exactness; for the point, on account of its indivisibility, is immeasurable; and the circle, on account of its arc, it is impossible to square, and therefore it is impossible to

measure it exactly. And moreover Geometry is very white, inasmuch as it is without spot of error, and very exact in itself and its handmaiden, which is called Perspective.”

Of the influences of Jupiter, Buti, quoting as usual Albumasar, speaks thus:—

“The planet Jupiter is of a cold, humid, airy, temperate nature, and signifies the natural soul, and life, and animate bodies, children and grandchildren, and beauty, and wise men and doctors of laws, and just judges, and firmness, and knowledge, and intellect, and interpretation of dreams, truth and divine worship, doctrine of law and faith, religion, veneration and fear of God, unity of faith and providence thereof, and regulation of manners and behavior, and will be laudable, and signifies patient observation, and perhaps also to it belong swiftness of mind, improvidence and boldness in dangers, and patience and delay, and it signifies beatitude, and acquisition, and victory, ... and veneration, and kingdom, and kings, and rich men, nobles and magnates, hope and joy, and cupidity in commodities, also of fortune, in new kinds of grain, and harvests, and wealth, and security in all things, and good habits of mind, and liberality, command and goodness, boasting and bravery of mind, and boldness, true love and delight of supremacy over the citizens of a city, delight of potentates and magnates, ... and beauty and ornament of dress, and joy and laughter, and affluence of speech, and glibness of tongue, ... and hate of evil, and attachments among men, and command of the known, and avoidance of the unknown. These are the significations of the planet Jupiter, and such the influences it exerts.”



1697. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 425:—

“Part loosely wing the region, part more wise

In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their airy caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight;—so steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage, borne on winds;—the air
Floats as they pass.”

✉

1698. The first letters of the word *Diligite*, completed afterward. ✉

1699. Dante gives this title to the Muse, because from the hoof-beat of Pegasus sprang the fountain of the Muses, Hippocrene. The invocation is here to Calliope, the Muse of epic verse. ✉

1700. Wisdom of Solomon 1:1:—

“Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth.”

✉

1701. Tennyson, “Morte d’Arthur”:—

“And drove his heel into the smouldered log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.”

✉

1702. Divination by fire, and other childish fancies about sparks, such as wishes for golden sequins, and nuns going into a chapel.
Cowper, “Names of Little Note in the Biogr. Brit.”:—

“So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year’s news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, O illustrious spark!

And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!"

✉

1703. In this eagle, the symbol of Imperialism, Dante displays his political faith. Among just rulers, this is the shape in which the true government of the world appears to him. In the invective against Pope Boniface VIII, with which the canto closes, he gives still further expression of his intense Imperialism. ✉
1704. The simplest interpretation of this line seems to me preferable to the mystic meaning which some commentators lend it. The Architect who built the heavens teaches the bird how to build its nest after the same model;—

"The Power which built the starry dome on high,
And poised the vaulted rafters of the sky,
Teaches the linnet with unconscious breast
To round the inverted heaven of her nest."

✉

1705. The other group of beatified spirits. ✉

1706. As Tertullian says:—

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

✉

1707. The bad example of the head of the Church. ✉

1708. By excommunication, which shut out its victims from the table of the Lord. ✉

1709. Pope Boniface VIII, who is here accused of dealing out ecclesiastical censures only to be paid for revoking them. ✉

1710. John the Baptist. But here is meant his image on the golden florin of Florence. [←](#)

1711. The Heaven of Jupiter continued. [←](#)

1712. The eagle speaks as one person, though composed of a multitude of spirits. Here Dante's idea of unity under the Empire finds expression. [←](#)

1713. This mirror of Divine Justice is the planet Saturn, to which Dante alludes in Canto IX 61, where, speaking of the Intelligences of Saturn, he says:—

“Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God Judicant.”

[←](#)

1714. Whether a good life outside the pale of the holy Catholic faith could lead to Paradise. [←](#)

1715. Dante here calls the blessed spirits lauds, or “praises of the grace divine,” as in *Inferno* II 103 he calls Beatrice “the true praise of God.” [←](#)

1716. Mr. Gary quotes, Proverbs 8:27:—

“When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, . . . then I was by him.”

And Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 224:—

“And in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things.
One foot he centred, and the other turned

Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said: It; ‘Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O World!””



1717. The Word or Wisdom of the Deity far exceeds any manifestation of it in the creation. ↲

1718. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, III 2:—

“Fling away ambition,
By that sin fell the angels.”



1719. Dryden, “*Religio Laici*,” 39:—

“How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach infinity?
For what could fathom God is more than He.”



1720. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 168:—

“Boundless the deep, because I Am, who fill
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.”



1721. The human mind can never be so powerful but that it will perceive the Divine Mind to be infinitely beyond its comprehension; or, as Buti interprets—reading *gli è parvente*, which reading I have followed—“much greater than what appears to the human mind, and what the human intellect sees.” ↲

1722. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I 63:—

“No light, but rather darkness visible.”



1723. Galatians 3:23:—

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”



1724. Matthew 7:21:—

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”



1725. Dryden, “Religio Laici,” 208:—

“Then those who followed Reason’s dictates right,
Lived up, and lifted high her natural light,
With Socrates may see their Maker’s face,
While thousand rubric martyrs want a place.”



1726. Matthew 12:41:—

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.”



1727. The righteous and the unrighteous at the day of judgment.

1728. Revelation 20:12:—

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



1729. This is the “German Albert” of *Purgatorio* VI 97:—

“O German Albert, who abandonest her
That has grown savage and indomitable,
And oughtest to bestride her saddle-bow,
May a just judgment from the stars down fall
Upon thy blood, and be it new and open
That thy successor may have fear thereof;
Because thy father and thyself have suffered,
By greed of those transalpine lands distrained,
The garden of the empire to be waste.”

The deed which was so soon to move the pen of the Recording Angel
was the invasion of Bohemia in 1303. [←](#)

1730. Philip the Fair of France, who, after his defeat at Courtray in 1302, falsified the coin of the realm, with which he paid his troops. He was killed in 1314 by a fall from his horse, caused by the attack of a wild boar. Dante uses the word *cotenna*, the skin of the wild boar, for the boar itself. [←](#)

1731. The allusion here is to the border wars between John Baliol of Scotland, and Edward I of England. [←](#)

1732. Most of the commentators say that this king of Spain was one of the Alphonsoes, but do not agree as to which one. Tommaseo says it was Ferdinand IV (1295–1312), and he is probably right. It was this monarch, or rather his generals, who took Gibraltar from the Moors. In 1312 he put to death unjustly the brothers Carvajal, who on the scaffold summoned him to appear before the judgment seat of God

within thirty days; and before the time had expired he was found dead upon his sofa. From this event he received the surname of *El Emplazado*, the Summoned. It is said that his death was caused by intemperance.

The Bohemian is Winceslaus II, son of Ottocar. He is mentioned, *Purgatorio VII* 101, as one “who feeds in luxury and ease.” [←](#)

1733. Charles II, king of Apulia, whose virtues may be represented by a unit and his vices by a thousand. He was called the “Cripple of Jerusalem,” on account of his lameness, and because as king of Apulia he also bore the title of King of Jerusalem. See [note 922](#). [←](#)

1734. Frederick, son of Peter of Aragon, and king, or in some form ruler of Sicily, called from Mount Etna the “Island of the Fire.” The *Ottimo* comments thus: “Peter of Aragon was liberal and magnanimous, and the author says that this man is avaricious and pusillanimous.” Perhaps his greatest crime in the eyes of Dante was his abandoning the cause of the Imperialists. [←](#)

1735. According to Virgil, Anchises died in Sicily, “on the joyless coast of Drepanum.” *Aeneid*, III 708, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“Here, alas! after being tossed by so many storms at sea, I lose my sire Anchises, my solace in every care and suffering. Here thou, best of fathers, whom in vain, alas! I saved from so great dangers, forsakest me, spent with toils.”

[←](#)

1736. In diminutive letters, and not in Roman capitals, like the DILIGITE JUSTITIAM of Canto XVIII 91, and the record of the virtues and vices of the “Cripple of Jerusalem.” [←](#)

1737. The uncle of Frederick of Sicily was James, king of the Balearic Islands. He joined Philip the Bold of France in his disastrous invasion of Catalonia; and in consequence lost his own crown.

The brother of Frederick was James of Aragon, who, on becoming king of that realm, gave up Sicily, which his father had acquired.

By these acts they dishonored their native land and the crowns they wore. [←](#)

1738. Dionysius, king of Portugal, who reigned from 1279 to 1325. The *Ottimo* says that, “given up wholly to the acquisition of wealth, he led the life of a merchant, and had money dealings with all the great merchants of his reign; nothing regal, nothing magnificent, can be recorded of him.”

Philalethes is disposed to vindicate the character of Dionysius against these aspersions, and to think them founded only in the fact that Dionysius loved the arts of peace better than the more shining art of war, joined in no crusade against the Moors, and was a patron of manufactures and commerce.—

The *Ottimo*’s note on this nameless Norwegian is curious:—

“As his islands are situated at the uttermost extremities of the earth, so his life is on the extreme of reasonableness and civilization.”

Benvenuto remarks only that:—

“Norway is a cold northern region, where the days are very short, and whence come excellent falcons.”

Buti is still more brief. He says:—

“That is, the king of Norway.”

Neither of these commentators, nor any of the later ones, suggest the name of this monarch, except the Germans, Philalethes and Witte, who think it may be Eric the Priest-hater, or Hakon Longshanks. [←](#)

1739. Rascia or Ragusa is a city in Dalmatia, situated on the Adriatic, and capital of the kingdom of that name. The king here alluded to is Uroscius II, who married a daughter of the Emperor Michael Palaeologus, and counterfeited Venetian coin. [←](#)

1740. In this line I have followed the reading *male ha visto*, instead of the more common one, *male aggiustò*. ↪

1741. The *Ottimo* comments as follows:—

“Here he reproves the vile and unseemly lives of the kings of Hungary, down to Andrea” (Dante’s contemporary),
“whose life the Hungarians praised, and whose death they wept.”

↪

1742. If it can make the Pyrenees a bulwark to protect it against the invasion of Philip the Fair of France. It was not till four centuries later that Louis XIV made his famous boast, “*Il n’y a plus de Pyrénées.*” ↪

1743. In proof of this prediction the example of Cyprus is given. ↪

1744. Nicosia and Famagosta are cities of Cyprus, here taken for the whole island, in 1300 badly governed by Henry II of the house of the Lusignani. “And well he may call him beast,” says the *Ottimo*, “for he was wholly given up to lust and sensuality, which should be far removed from every king.” ↪

1745. Upon this line Benvenuto comments with unusual vehemence.

“This king,” he says, “does not differ nor depart from the side of the other beasts; that is, of the other vicious kings. And of a truth, Cyprus with her people differeth not, nor is separated from the bestial life of the rest; rather it surpasseth and exceedeth all peoples and kings of the kingdoms of Christendom in superfluity of luxury, gluttony, effeminacy, and every kind of pleasure. But to attempt to describe the kinds, the sumptuousness, the variety, and the frequency of their banquets, would be disgusting to narrate, and tedious and harmful to write. Therefore men who live soberly and temperately should avert their eyes from beholding, and their ears from

hearing, the meretricious, lewd, and fetid manners of that island, which, with God's permission, the Genoese have now invaded, captured, and evil entreated and laid under contribution."



1746. The Heaven of Jupiter continued. [←](#)

1747. Coleridge, "Ancient Mariner":—

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark."



1748. Blanco White, "Night":—

"Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
Thee, from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we, then, shun death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?"



1749. King David, who carried the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjathjearim to the house of Obed-Edom, and thence to Jerusalem. See 2 Samuel 6.



1750. In so far as the Psalms were the result of his own free will, and not of divine inspiration. As in Canto VI 118:—

“But in commensuration of our wages
With our desert is portion of our joy,
Because we see them neither less nor greater.”

↖

1751. The Emperor Trajan, whose soul was saved by the prayers of St. Gregory. For the story of the poor widow, see [Purgatorio X 73](#), and [note 710.](#) ↲

1752. King Hezekiah. ↲

1753. 2 Kings 20:11:—

“And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord; and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.”

↖

1754. Constantine, who transferred the seat of empire, the Roman laws, and the Roman standard to Byzantium, thus in a poetic sense becoming a Greek. ↲

1755. This refers to the supposed gift of Constantine to Pope Sylvester, known in ecclesiastical history as the patrimony of Saint Peter. *Inferno XXI 115:*—

“Ah, Constantine! of how much woe was mother,
Not thy conversion, but that marriage-dower
Which the first wealthy Father took from thee!”

↖

1756. William the Second, surnamed the Good, son of Robert Guiscard, and king of Apulia and Sicily, which kingdoms were then lamenting the living presence of such kings as Charles the Lame, “the Cripple of Jerusalem,” king of Apulia, and Frederick of Aragon, king of Sicily.

“King Guilielmo,” says the *Ottimo*, “was just and reasonable, loved his subjects, and kept them in such peace, that living in Sicily might then be esteemed living in a terrestrial paradise. He was liberal to all, and proportioned his bounties to the virtue [of the receiver]. And he had this rule, that if a vicious or evil-speaking courtier came to his court, he was immediately noticed by the masters of ceremony, and provided with gifts and robes, so that he might have a cause to depart. If he was wise, he departed; if not, he was politely dismissed.” The Vicar of Wakefield seems to have followed the example of the good King William, for he says: “When any one of our relations was found to be a person of very bad character, a troublesome guest, or one we desired to get rid of, upon his leaving my house I ever took care to lend him a ridingcoat, or a pair of boots, or sometimes a horse of small value, and I always had the satisfaction of finding he never came back to return them.” [←](#)

1757. A Trojan hero slain at the sack of Troy. *Aeneid*, II 426:—

“Ripheus also falls, the most just among the Trojans, and most observant of the right.”

Venturi thinks that, if Dante must needs introduce a Pagan into Paradise, he would have done better to have chosen Aeneas, who was the hero of his master, Virgil, and, moreover, the founder of the Roman empire. [←](#)

1758. The word “expatiate” is here used in the sense given it by Milton in the following passage, *Paradise Lost*, I 768:—

“As bees,
In spring-time when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they, among fresh dews and flowers,
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,

The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state-affairs.”

Landor, *Pentameron*, p. 92, says:—

“All the verses that ever were written on the nightingale
are scarcely worth the beautiful triad of this divine poet on
the lark. In the first of them, do not you see the twinkling
of her wings against the sky? As often as I repeat them,
my ear is satisfied, my heart (like hers) contented.”



1759. In scholastic language the quiddity of a thing is its essence, or that by
which it is what it is. [←](#)

1760. Matthew 11:12:—

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the
kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take
it by force.”



1761. Trajan and Ripheus. [←](#)

1762. Ripheus lived before Christ, and Trajan after.

Shakespeare, King *Henry IV*, I 1:—

“In those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed,
For our advantage, on the bitter cross.”



1763. Trajan. [←](#)

1764. Being in hell, he could not repent; being resuscitated, his inclinations could turn towards good. [←](#)

1765. The legend of Trajan is, that by the prayers of St. Gregory the Great he was restored to life, after he had been dead four hundred years; that he lived long enough to be baptized, and was then received into Paradise. See [note 710.](#) [←](#)

1766. Ripheus.

“This is a fiction of our author,” says Buti, “as the intelligent reader may imagine; for there is no proof that Ripheus the Trojan is saved.”

[←](#)

1767. Faith, Hope, and Charity. *Purgatorio* XXIX 121:—

“Three ladies at the right wheel in a circle
Came onward dancing; one so very red
That in the fire she hardly had been noted.
The second was as if her flesh and bones
Had all been fashioned out of emerald;
The third appeared as snow but newly fallen.”

[←](#)

1768. Romans 9:20:—

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?
Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Had not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”

[←](#)

1769. The Heaven of Saturn, where are seen the Spirits of the Contemplative.

“This planet,” says Brunetto Latini, “is cruel, felonious, and of a cold nature.” Dante, *Convito*, II 14, makes it the symbol of Astrology:—

“The Heaven of Saturn,” he says, “has two properties by which it may be compared to Astrology. The first is the slowness of its movement through the twelve signs; for, according to the writings of Astrologers, its revolution requires twenty-nine years and more. The second is, that it is the highest of all the planets. And these two properties are in Astrology; for in completing its circle, that is, in learning it, a great space of time passes; both on account of its demonstrations, which are more than in any of the above-mentioned sciences, and on account of the experience which is necessary to judge rightly in it. And, moreover, it is the highest of all; for, as Aristotle says at the beginning of his treatise on the Soul, Science is of high nobility, from the nobleness of its subject, and from its certainty; and this more than any of the above-mentioned is noble and high, from its noble and high subject, which is the movement of the heavens; and high and noble from its certainty, which is without any defect, as one that proceeds from a most perfect and regular source. And if any one thinks there is any defect in it, the defect is not on the side of the Science, but, as Ptolemy says, it comes from our negligence, and to that it should be attributed.”

Of the influences of Saturn, Buti, quoting Albumasar, says:—

“The nature of Saturn is cold, dry, melancholy, sombre, of grave asperity, and may be cold and moist, and of ugly color, and is of much eating and of true love, . . . And it signifies ships at sea, and journeyings long and perilous, and malice, and envy, and tricks, and seductions, and boldness in dangers, . . . and singularity, and little companionship of men, and pride and magnanimity, and

simulation and boasting, and servitude of rulers, and every deed done with force and malice, and injuries, and anger, and strife, and bonds and imprisonment, truth in words, delight, and beauty, and intellect; experiments and diligence in cunning, and affluence of thought, and profoundness of counsel . . . And it signifies old and ponderous men, and gravity and fear, lamentation and sadness, embarrassment of mind, and fraud, and affliction, and destruction, and loss, and dead men, and remains of the dead; weeping and orphanhood, and ancient things, ancestors, uncles, elder brothers, servants and muleteers, and men despised, and robbers, and those who dig graves, and those who steal the garments of the dead, and tanners, vituperators, magicians, and warriors, and vile men.”



1770. Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, who besought her lover, Jupiter, to come to her, as he went to Juno, “in all the pomp of his divinity.” Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, Addison’s Tr.:—

“The mortal dame, too feeble to engage
The lightning’s flashes and the thunder’s rage,
Consumed amidst the glories she desired,
And in the terrible embrace expired.”



1771. To the planet Saturn, which was now in the sign of the Lion, and sent down its influence warmed by the heat of this constellation. [←](#)

1772. The peaceful reign of Saturn, in the Age of Gold. [←](#)

1773. “As in Mars,” comments the *Ottimo*, “he placed the Cross for a stairway, to denote that through martyrdom the spirits had ascended to God; and in Jupiter, the Eagle, as a sign of the Empire; so here he places a golden stairway, to denote that the ascent of these souls,

which was by contemplation, is more supreme and more lofty than any other.” [←](#)

1774. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, III 2:—

“The crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood.”

Henry Vaughan, “The Bee”:—

“And hard by shelters on some bough
Hilarion’s servant, the wise crow.”

And Tennyson, “Locksley Hall”:—

“As the many-wintered crow that leads the clangling
rookery home.”

[←](#)

1775. The spirit of Peter Damiano. [←](#)

1776. Beatrice. [←](#)

1777. Because your mortal ear could not endure the sound of our singing, as
your mortal eye could not the splendor of Beatrice’s smile. [←](#)

1778. As in Canto XII 3:—

“Began the holy millstone to revolve.”

[←](#)

1779. As in Canto XIV 40:—

“Its brightness is proportioned to its ardor,
The ardor to the vision; and the vision
Equals what grace it has above its worth.”

←

1780. Among the Apennines, east of Arezzo, rises Mount Catria, sometimes called, from its forked or double summit, the Forca di Fano. On its slope stands the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana. Troya, in his *Veltro Allegorico*, as quoted in Balbo's *Life and Times of Dante*, Mrs. Bunbury's Tr., II 218, describes this region as follows:—

“The monastery is built on the steepest mountains of Umbria. Catria, the giant of the Apennines, hangs over it, and so overshadows it that in some months of the year the light is frequently shut out. A difficult and lonely path through the forests leads to the ancient hospitium of these courteous hermits, who point out the apartments where their predecessors lodged Alighieri. We may read his name repeatedly on the walls; the marble effigy of him bears witness to the honorable care with which the memory of the great Italian is preserved from age to age in that silent retirement. The Prior Moricone received him there in 1318, and the annals of Avellana relate this event with pride. But if they had been silent, it would be quite sufficient to have seen Catria, and to have read Dante's description of it, to be assured that he ascended it. There, from the woody summit of the rock, he gazed upon his country, and rejoiced in the thought that he was not far from her. He struggled with his desire to return to her; and when he was able to return, he banished himself anew, not to submit to dishonor. Having descended the mountain, he admired the ancient manners of the inhabitants of Avellana, but he showed little indulgence to his hosts, who appeared to him to have lost their old virtues. At this time, and during his residence near Gubbio, it seems that he must have written the five cantos of the Paradiso after the twentieth; because when he mentions Florence in the twenty-first canto he speaks of Catria, and in what he says in the twenty-fifth, of wishing to receive his poetic crown at his baptismal font, we can perceive his hope to be

restored to his country and his beautiful fold (*ovile*) when time should have overcome the difficulties of the manner of his return."

Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, p. 265, describes his visit to the monastery of Fonte Avellana, and closes thus:—

"They took particular pleasure in leading us to an echo, the wonder of Avellana, and the most powerful I ever heard. It repeats distinctly a whole line of verse, and even a line and a half. I amused myself in making the rocks address to the great poet, whom they had seen wandering among their summits, what he said of Homer—

"Onorate l' altissimo poeta."

The line was distinctly articulated by the voice of the mountain, which seemed to be the far-off and mysterious voice of the poet himself....

"In order to find the recollection of Dante more present than in the cells, and even in the chamber of the inscription, I went out at night, and sat upon a stone a little above the monastery. The moon was not visible, being still hidden by the immense peaks; but I could see some of the less elevated summits struck by her first glimmerings. The chants of the monks came up to me through the darkness, and mingled with the bleating of a kid lost in the mountains. I saw through the window of the choir a white monk prostrate in prayer. I thought that perhaps Dante had sat upon that stone, that he had contemplated those rocks, that moon, and heard those chants always the same, like the sky and the mountains."



1781. This hermitage, according to Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, II 212, was founded by the blessed Ludolf, about twenty years before Peter Damiano came to it.

1782. Thus it began speaking for the third time. [←](#)

1783. St. Peter Damiano was born of a poor family at Ravenna, about 988; and, being left an orphan in his childhood, went to live with an elder brother, who set him to tending swine. Another brother, who was a priest at Ravenna, took compassion on him, and educated him. He in turn became a teacher; and, being of an ascetic turn of mind, he called himself Peter the Sinner, wore a hair shirt, and was assiduous in fasting and prayer. Two Benedictine monks of the monastery of Fonte Avellana, passing through Ravenna, stopped at the house where he lodged; and he resolved to join their brotherhood, which he did soon afterward. In 1041 he became Abbot of the monastery, and in 1057, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia. In 1062 he returned to Fonte Avellana; and in 1072, being “fourscore and three years old,” died on his way to Rome, in the convent of Our Lady near Faenza.

Of his life at Fonte Avellana, Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, (Feb. 23,) II 217, says:—

“Whatever austerities he prescribed to others he was the first to practise himself, remitting nothing of them even in his old age. He lived shut up in his cell as in a prison, fasted every day, except festivals, and allowed himself no other subsistence than coarse bread, bran, herbs, and water, and this he never drank fresh, but what he had kept from the day before. He tortured his body with iron girdles and frequent disciplines, to render it more obedient to the spirit. He passed the three first days of every Lent and Advent without taking any kind of nourishment whatsoever; and often for forty days together lived only on raw herbs and fruits, or on pulse steeped in cold water, without touching so much as bread, or anything which had passed the fire. A mat spread on the floor was his bed. He used to make wooden spoons and suchlike useful mean things, to exercise himself at certain hours in manual labor.”



1784. It is a question whether Peter Damiano and Peter the Sinner are the same person, or whether by the latter is meant Peter Onesti of Ravenna; for both in their humility took that name. The solution of the question depends upon the reading *fui* or *fu* in this line; and of twenty-eight printed editions consulted by Barlow, fourteen were for *fui*, and fourteen for *fu*. Of the older commentators, the *Ottimo* thinks two distinct persons are meant; Benvenuto and Buti decide in favor of one.

Benvenuto interprets thus:—

“In Catria I was called Peter Damiano, and I was Peter the Sinner in the monastery of Santa Maria in Porto at Ravenna on the shore of the Adriatic. Some persons maintain, that this Peter the Sinner was another monk of the order, which is evidently false, because Damiano gives his real name in Catria, and here names himself [Sinner] from humility.”

Buti says:—

“I was first a friar called Peter the Sinner, in the Order of Santa Maria. . . And afterwards he went from there to the monastery at the hermitage of Catria, having become a monk.”

↲

1785. In 1057, when he was made Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia. ↲

1786. Cephas is St. Peter. John 1:42:—

“Thou art Simon the son of Jona; Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone.”

The *Ottimo* seems to have forgotten this passage of Scripture when he wrote:—

“Cephas, that is, St. Peter, so called from the large head he had (*cephas*, that is to say, head).”

The mighty Vessel of the Holy Spirit is St. Paul. Acts 9:15:—

“He is a chosen vessel unto me.”



1787. Luke 10:7:—

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire.”



1788. The commentary of Benvenuto da Imola upon this passage is too striking to be omitted here. The reader may imagine the impression it produced upon the audience when the Professor first read it publicly in his lectures at Bologna, in 1389, eighty-eight years after Dante's death, though this impression may have been somewhat softened by its being delivered in Latin:—

“Here Peter Damiano openly rebukes the modern shepherds as being the opposite of the Apostles before-mentioned, saying,

‘Now some one to support them on each side
The modern shepherds need’;

that is to say, on the right and on the left;

‘And some to lead them,
So heavy are they’;

that is, so fat and corpulent. I have seen many such at the court of Rome. And this is in contrast with the leanness of Peter and Paul before mentioned.

‘And to hold their trains,’

because they have long cloaks, sweeping the ground with their trains. And this too is in contrast with the nakedness of the aforementioned Apostles. And therefore, stung with grief, he adds,

‘They cover up their palfreys with their cloaks,’

fat and sleek, as they themselves are; for their mantles are so long, ample, and capacious, that they cover man and horse. Hence he says,

‘So that two beasts go underneath one skin’;

that is, the beast who carries, and he who is carried, and is more beastly than the beast himself. And, truly, had the author lived at the present day he might have changed this phrase and said,

‘So that three beasts go underneath one skin’;

namely, cardinal, concubine, and horse; as I have heard of one, whom I knew well, who used to carry his concubine to hunt on the crupper of his horse or mule. And truly he was like a horse or mule, in which there is no understanding; that is, without reason. On account of these things, Peter in anger cries out to God,

‘O Patience, that dost tolerate so much! ’’

↵

1789. A cry so loud that he could not distinguish the words these spirits uttered. ↵

1790. The Heaven of Saturn continued; and the ascent to the Heaven of the Fixed Stars. ↵

1791. It is the spirit of St. Benedict that speaks. [←](#)

1792. Not far from Aquinum in the Terra di Lavoro, the birthplace of Juvenal and of Thomas Aquinas, rises Monte Cassino, celebrated for its Benedictine monastery. The following description of the spot is from a letter in the *London Daily News*, February 26, 1866, in which the writer pleads earnestly that this monastery may escape the doom of all the Religious Orders in Italy, lately pronounced by the Italian Parliament:—

“The monastery of Monte Cassino stands exactly halfway between Rome and Naples. From the top of the Monte Cairo, which rises immediately above it, can be seen to the north the summit of Monte Cavo, so conspicuous from Rome; and to the south, the hill of the Neapolitan Camaldoli. From the terrace of the monastery the eye ranges over the richest and most beautiful valley of Italy, the

*‘Rura quae Liris quietâ
Mordet aqua taciturnus amnis.’*

The river can be traced through the lands of Aquinum and Pontecorvo, till it is lost in the haze which covers the plain of Sinuessa and Minturnae; a small strip of sea is visible just beyond the mole of Gaeta.

“In this interesting but little known and uncivilized country, the monastery has been the only centre of religion and intelligence for nearly 1350 years. It was founded by St. Benedict in 529, and is the parent of all the greatest Benedictine monasteries in the world. In 589 the monks, driven out by the Lombards, took refuge in Rome, and remained there for 130 years. In 884 the monastery was burned by the Saracens, but it was soon after restored. With these exceptions it has existed without a break from its foundation till the present day.

“There is scarcely a Pope or Emperor of importance who has not been personally connected with its history.

From its mountain crag it has seen Goths, Lombards, Saracens, Normans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, scour and devastate the land which, through all modern history, has attracted every invader.

“It is hard that, after it has escaped the storms of war and rapine, it should be destroyed by peaceful and enlightened legislation.

“I do not, however, wish to plead its cause on sentimental grounds. The monastery contains a library which, in spite of the pilfering of the Popes, and the wanton burnings of Championnet, is still one of the richest in Italy; while its archives are, I believe, unequalled in the world. Letters of the Lombard kings who reigned at Pavia, of Hildebrand and the Countess Matilda, of Gregory and Charlemagne, are here no rarities. Since the days of Paulus Diaconus in the eighth century, it has contained a succession of monks devoted to literature. His mantle has descended in these later days to Abate Tosti, one of the most accomplished of contemporary Italian writers. In the Easter of last year, I found twenty monks in the monastery: they worked harder than anybody of Oxford or Cambridge fellows I am acquainted with; they educated two hundred boys, and fifty novices; they kept up all the services of their cathedral; the care of the archives included a laborious correspondence with literary men of all nations; they entertained hospitably any visitors who came to them; besides this, they had just completed a facsimile of their splendid manuscript of Dante, in a large folio volume, which was edited and printed by their own unassisted labor. This was intended as an offering to the kingdom of Italy in its new capital, and rumor says that they have incurred the displeasure of the Pope by their liberal opinions. On every ground of respect for prescription and civilization, it would be a gross injustice to destroy this monastery.

“‘If we are saved,’ one of the monks said to me, ‘it will be by the public opinion of Europe.’ It is the most

enlightened part of that opinion which I am anxious to rouse in their behalf.”

In the palmy days of the monastery the Abbot of Monte Cassino was the First Baron of the realm, and is said to have held all the rights and privileges of other barons, and even criminal jurisdiction in the land. This the inhabitants of the town of Cassino found so intolerable, that they tried to buy the right with all the jewels of the women and all the silver of their households. When the law for the suppression of the convents passed, they are said to have celebrated the event with great enthusiasm; but the monks, as well they might, sang an *Oremus* in their chapel, instead of a *Te Deum*.

For a description of the library of Monte Cassino in Boccaccio’s time, see [note 1803.](#) ↪

1793. St. Benedict was born at Norcia, in the Duchy of Spoleto, in 480, and died at Monte Cassino in 543. In his early youth he was sent to school in Rome; but being shocked at the wild life of Roman school-boys, he fled from the city at the age of fourteen, and hid himself among the mountains of Subiaco, some forty miles away. A monk from a neighboring convent gave him a monastic dress, and pointed out to him a cave, in which he lived for three years, the monk supplying him with food, which he let down to him from above by a cord.

In this retreat he was finally discovered by some shepherds, and the fame of his sanctity was spread through the land. The monks of Vicovara chose him for their Abbot, and then tried to poison him in his wine. He left them and returned to Subiaco; and there built twelve monasteries, placing twelve monks with a superior in each.

Of the scenery of Subiaco, Lowell, *Fireside Travels*, p. 271, gives the following sketch:—

“Nothing can be more lovely than the scenery about Subiaco. The town itself is built on a kind of cone rising from the midst of a valley abounding in olives and vines, with a superb mountain horizon around it, and the green Anio cascading at its feet. As you walk to the high-perched convent of San Benedetto, you look across the

river on your right just after leaving the town, to a cliff over which the ivy pours in torrents, and in which dwellings have been hollowed out. In the black doorway of every one sits a woman in scarlet bodice and white headgear, with a distaff, spinning, while overhead countless nightingales sing at once from the fringe of shrubbery. The glorious great white clouds look over the mountain-tops into our enchanted valley, and sometimes a lock of their vapory wool would be torn off, to lie for a while in some inaccessible ravine like a snowdrift; but it seemed as if no shadow could fly over our privacy of sunshine today. The approach to the monastery is delicious. You pass out of the hot sun into the green shadows of ancient ilexes, leaning and twisting every way that is graceful, their branches velvety with brilliant moss, in which grow feathery ferns, fringing them with a halo of verdure. Then comes the convent, with its pleasant old monks, who show their sacred vessels (one by Cellini) and their relics, among which is a finger-bone of one of the Innocents. Lower down is a convent of Santa Scolastica, where the first book was printed in Italy.”

In the gardens of the convent of San Benedetto still bloom, in their season, the roses, which the legend says have been propagated from the briars in which the saint rolled himself as a penance. But he had outward foes, as well as inward, to contend with, and they finally drove him from Subiaco to Monte Cassino.

Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, Authorized Tr., II 16, says:—

“However, Benedict had the ordinary fate of great men and saints. The great number of conversions worked by the example and fame of his austerity awakened a homicidal envy against him. A wicked priest of the neighborhood attempted first to decry and then to poison him. Being unsuccessful in both, he endeavored, at least, to injure him in the object of his most tender solicitude—in the souls of his young disciples. For that purpose he

sent, even into the garden of the monastery where Benedict dwelt and where the monks labored, seven wretched women, whose gestures, sports, and shameful nudity were designed to tempt the young monks to certain fall. Who does not recognize in this incident the mixture of barbarian rudeness and frightful corruption which characterize ages of decay and transition? When Benedict, from the threshold of his cell, perceived these shameless creatures, he despaired of his work; he acknowledged that the interest of his beloved children constrained him to disarm so cruel an enmity by retreat. He appointed superiors to the twelve monasteries which he had founded, and, taking with him a small number of disciples, he left forever the wild gorges of Subiaco, where he had lived for thirty-five years.

“Without withdrawing from the mountainous region which extends along the western side of the Apennines, Benedict directed his steps towards the south, along the Abruzzi, and penetrated into that Land of Labor, the name of which seems naturally suited to a soil destined to be the cradle of the most laborious men whom the world has known. He ended his journey in a scene very different from that of Subiaco, but of incomparable grandeur and majesty. There, upon the boundaries of Samnium and Campania, in the centre of a large basin, half surrounded by abrupt and picturesque heights, rises a scarped and isolated hill, the vast and rounded summit of which overlooks the course of the Liris near its fountainhead, and the undulating plain which extends south towards the shores of the Mediterranean, and the narrow valleys which, towards the north, the east, and the west, lost themselves in the lines of the mountainous horizon. This is Monte Cassino. At the foot of this rock, Benedict found an amphitheatre of the time of the Caesars, amidst the ruins of the town of Casinum, which the most learned and pious of Romans, Varro, that pagan Benedictine, whose memory and knowledge the sons of Benedict took pleasure in

honoring, had rendered illustrious. From the summit the prospect extended on one side towards Arpinum, where the prince of Roman orators was born, and on the other towards Aquinum, already celebrated as the birthplace of Juvenal, before it was known as the country of the Doctor Angelicus, which latter distinction should make the name of this little town known among all Christians.

“It was amidst these noble recollections, this solemn nature, and upon that predestinated height, that the patriarch of the monks of the West founded the capital of the monastic order. He found paganism still surviving there. Two hundred years after Constantine, in the heart of Christendom, and so near Rome, there still existed a very ancient temple of Apollo and a sacred wood, where a multitude of peasants sacrificed to the gods and demons. Benedict preached the faith of Christ to these forgotten people; he persuaded them to cut down the wood, to overthrow the temple and the idol.”

On the ruins of this temple he built two chapels, and higher up the mountain, in 529, laid the foundation of his famous monastery. Fourteen years afterward he died in the church of this monastery, standing with his arms stretched out in prayer.

“St. Bennet,” says Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, III 235, “calls his Order a school in which men learn how to serve God; and his life was to his disciples a perfect model for their imitation, and a transcript of his rule. Being chosen by God, like another Moses, to conduct faithful souls into the true promised land, the kingdom of heaven, he was enriched with eminent supernatural gifts, even those of miracles and prophecy. He seemed like another Eliseus, endued by God with an extraordinary power, commanding all nature, and, like the ancient prophets, foreseeing future events. He often raised the sinking courage of his monks, and baffled the various artifices of the Devil with the sign of the cross, rendered the heaviest stone light in building his monastery by a short prayer, and, in presence of a multitude of people, raised to life a novice who had been crushed by the fall of a wall at Mount Cassino.”

A story of St. Benedict and his sister Scholastica is thus told by Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of Monastic Orders*, p. 12:—

“Towards the close of his long life Benedict was consoled for many troubles by the arrival of his sister Scholastica, who had already devoted herself to a religious life, and now took up her residence in a retired cell about a league and a half from his convent. Very little is known of Scholastica, except that she emulated her brother’s piety and self-denial; and although it is not said that she took any vows, she is generally considered as the first Benedictine nun. When she followed her brother to Monte Cassino, she drew around her there a small community of pious women; but nothing more is recorded of her, except that he used to visit her once a year. On one occasion, when they had been conversing together on spiritual matters till rather late in the evening, Benedict rose to depart; his sister entreated him to remain a little longer, but he refused. Scholastica then, bending her head over her clasped hands, prayed that Heaven would interfere and render it impossible for her brother to leave her. Immediately there came on such a furious tempest of rain, thunder, and lightning, that Benedict was obliged to delay his departure for some hours. As soon as the storm had subsided, he took leave of his sister, and returned to the monastery: it was a last meeting; St. Scholastica died two days afterwards, and St. Benedict, as he was praying in his cell, beheld the soul of his sister ascending to heaven in the form of a dove. This incident is often found in the pictures painted for the Benedictine nuns.”

For the history of the monastery of Monte Cassino see the *Chron. Monast. Casiniensis*, in Muratori, *Script. Rer. Ital.*, IV, and Dantier, *Monastères Bénédictins d’Italie*. ↪

1794. St. Macarius, who established the monastic rule of the East, as St. Benedict did that of the West, was a confectioner of Alexandria,

who, carried away by religious enthusiasm, became an anchorite in the Thebaid of Upper Egypt, about 335. In 373 he came to Lower Egypt, and lived in the Desert of the Cells, so called from the great multitude of its hermit-cells. He had also hermitages in the deserts of Scetè and Nitria; and in these several places he passed upwards of sixty years in holy contemplation, saying to his soul, “Having taken up thine abode in heaven, where thou hast God and his holy angels to converse with, see that thou descend not thence; regard not earthly things.”

Among other anecdotes of St. Macarius, Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, I 50, relates the following:—

“Our saint happened one day inadvertently to kill a gnat that was biting him in his cell; reflecting that he had lost the opportunity of suffering that mortification, he hastened from his cell for the marshes of Scetè, which abound with great flies, whose stings pierce even wild boars. There he continued six months exposed to those ravaging insects; and to such a degree was his whole body disfigured by them with sores and swellings, that when he returned he was only to be known by his voice.”

St. Romualdus, founder of the Order of Camaldoli, or Reformed Benedictines, was born of the noble family of the Onesti, in Ravenna, about 956. Brought up in luxury and ease, he still had glimpses of better things, and, while hunting the wild boar in the pine woods of Ravenna, would sometimes stop to muse, and, uttering a prayer, exclaim: “How happy were the ancient hermits who had such habitations.”

At the age of twenty he saw his father kill his adversary in a duel; and, smitten with remorse, imagined that he must expiate the crime by doing penance in his own person. He accordingly retired to a Benedictine convent in the neighborhood of Ravenna, and became a monk. At the end of seven years, scandalized with the irregular lives of the brotherhood, and their disregard of the rules of the Order, he undertook the difficult task of bringing them back to the austere life of their founder. After a conflict of many years, during which he encountered and overcame the usual perils that beset the path of a

reformer, he succeeded in winning over some hundreds of his brethren, and established his new Order of Reformed Benedictines.

St. Romualdus built many monasteries; but chief among them is that of Camaldoli, thirty miles east of Florence, which was founded in 1009. It takes its name from the former owner of the land, a certain Maldoli, who gave it to St. Romualdus. Campo Maldoli, say the authorities, became Camaldoli. It is more likely to be the Tuscan Ca' Maldoli, for Casa Maldoli.

"In this place," says Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, II 86, "St. Romuald built a monastery, and, by the several observances he added to St. Benedict's rule, gave birth to that new Order called Camaldoli, in which he united the cenobitic and eremitical life. After seeing in a vision his monks mounting up a ladder to heaven all in white, he changed their habit from black to white. The hermitage is two short miles distant from the monastery. It is a mountain quite overshadowed by a dark wood of fir-trees. In it are seven clear springs of water. The very sight of this solitude in the midst of the forest helps to fill the mind with compunction, and a love of heavenly contemplation. On entering it, we meet with a chapel of St. Antony for travellers to pray in before they advance any farther. Next are the cells and lodgings for the porters. Somewhat farther is the church, which is large, well built, and richly adorned. Over the door is a clock, which strikes so loud that it may be heard all over the desert. On the left side of the church is the cell in which St. Romuald lived, when he first established these hermits. Their cells, built of stone, have each a little garden walled round. A constant fire is allowed to be kept in every cell on account of the coldness of the air throughout the year; each cell has also a chapel in which they may say mass."

See also [note 595](#). The legend of St. Romualdus says that he lived to the age of one hundred and twenty. It says, also, that in 1466, nearly four hundred years after his death, his body was found still uncorrupted; but that four years later, when it was stolen from its tomb, it crumbled into dust. [←](#)

1795. In that sphere alone; that is, in the Empyrean, which is eternal and immutable.

Lucretius, *Nature of Things*, III 530, Good's Tr.:—

“But things immortal ne’er can be transposed,
Ne’er take addition, nor encounter loss;
For what once changes, by the change alone
Subverts immediate its anterior life.”



1796. Genesis 28:12:—

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



1797. So neglected, that it is mere waste of paper to transcribe it. In commenting upon this line, Benvenuto gives an interesting description of Boccaccio’s visit to the library of Monte Casino, which he had from his own lips.

“To the clearer understanding of this passage,” he says, “I will repeat what my venerable preceptor Boccaccio of Certaldo pleasantly narrated to me. He said, that when he was in Apulia, being attracted by the fame of the place, he went to the noble monastery of Monte Cassino, of which we are speaking. And being eager to see the library, which he had heard was very noble, he humbly—gentle creature that he was!—besought a monk to do him the favor to open it. Pointing to a lofty staircase, he answered stiffly, ‘Go up; it is open.’ Joyfully ascending, he found the place of so great a treasure without door or fastening; and having entered, he saw the grass growing upon the windows, and all the books and shelves covered with dust. And, wondering, he began to open and turn over, now this book and now that, and found there many and various volumes of ancient and rare works. From some of them whole sheets had been torn out, in others the margins of the leaves were clipped, and thus they were greatly

defaced. At length, full of pity that the labors and studies of so many illustrious minds should have fallen into the hands of such profligate men, grieving and weeping he withdrew. And coming into the cloister, he asked a monk whom he met, why those most precious books were so vilely mutilated. He replied, that some of the monks, wishing to gain a few ducats, cut out a handful of leaves, and made psalters which they sold to boys; and likewise of the margins they made breviaries which they sold to women. Now therefore, O scholar, rack thy brains in the making of books!"



1798. To dens of thieves.

"And the monks' hoods and habits are full," says Buti, "of wicked and sinful souls, of evil thoughts and ill-will. And as from bad flour bad bread is made, so from ill-will, which is in the monks, come evil deeds."



1799. The usurer is not so offensive to God as the monk who squanders the revenues of the Church in his own pleasures and vices. [←](#)

1800. Psalm 114:5:—

"What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?"

The power that wrought these miracles can also bring help to the corruptions of the Church, great as the impossibility may seem. [←](#)

1801. Paradise.

"Truly," says Buti, "the glory of Paradise may be called a triumph, for the blessed triumph in their victory over the

world, the flesh, and the Devil.”



1802. The sign that follows Taurus is the sign of the Gemini, under which Dante was born. [←](#)

1803. Of the influences of Gemini, Buti, quoting Albumasar, says:—

“The sign of the Gemini signifies great devotion and genius, such as became our author speaking of such lofty theme. It signifies, also, sterility, and moderation in manners and in religion, beauty, and deportment, and cleanliness, when this sign is in the ascendant, or the lord of the descendant is present, or the Moon; and largeness of mind, and goodness, and liberality in spending.”



1804. Dante was born May 14th, 1265, when the Sun rose and set in Gemini; or as Barlow, *Study of the Divina Commedia*, p. 505, says, “the day on which in that year the Sun entered the constellation Gemini.” He continues:—

“Giovanni Villani (Lib. VI Ch. 92) gives an account of a remarkable comet which preceded the birth of Dante by nine months, and lasted three, from July to October.... This marvellous meteor, much more worthy of notice than Donna Bella’s dream related by Boccaccio, has not hitherto found its way into the biography of the poet.”



1805. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars. Of the symbolism of this heaven, Dante, *Convito*, II 15, says:—

“The Starry Heaven may be compared to Physics on account of three properties, and to Metaphysics on

account of three others; for it shows us two visible things, such as its many stars, and the Galaxy; that is, the white circle which the vulgar call the Road of St. James; and it shows us one of its poles, and the other it conceals from us; and it shows us only one motion from east to west, and another which it has from west to east, it keeps almost hidden from us. Therefore we must note in order, first its comparison with Physics, and then with Metaphysics. The Starry Heaven, I say, shows us many stars; for, according as the wise men of Egypt have computed, down to the last star that appears in their meridian, there are one thousand and twenty-two clusters of the stars I speak of. And in this it bears a great resemblance to Physics, if these three members, namely, two and twenty and a thousand, are carefully considered; for by the two is understood the local movement, which of necessity is from one point to another; and by the twenty is signified the movement of modification; for, inasmuch as from the ten upwards we proceed only by modifying this ten with the other nine, and with itself, and the most beautiful modification which it receives is that with itself, and the first which it receives is twenty, consequently the movement aforesaid is signified by this number. And by the thousand is signified the movement of increase; for in name this thousand is the greatest number, and cannot increase except by multiplying itself. And Physics show these three movements only, as is proved in the fifth chapter of its first book. And on account of the Galaxy this heaven has great resemblance to Metaphysics. For it must be known that of this Galaxy the philosophers have held diverse opinions. For the Pythagoreans said that the Sun once wandered out of his path; and, passing through other parts not adapted to his heat, he burned the place through which he passed, and the appearance of the burning remained there. I think they were influenced by the fable of Phaeton which Ovid narrates at the beginning of the second book of his Metamorphoses. Others, as Anaxagoras and

Democritus, said that it was the light of the Sun reflected in that part. And these opinions they proved by demonstrative reasons. What Aristotle said upon this subject cannot be exactly known, because his opinion is not the same in one translation as in the other. And I think this was an error of the translators; for in the new he seems to say that it is a collection of vapors beneath the stars in that part, which always attract them; and this does not seem to be very reasonable. In the old he says, that the Galaxy is nothing but a multitude of fixed stars in that part, so small that we cannot distinguish them here below, but from them proceeds that brightness which we call the Galaxy. And it may be that the heaven in that part is more dense, and there fore retains and reflects that light; and this seems to be the opinion of Aristotle, Avicenna, and Ptolemy. Hence, inasmuch as the Galaxy is an effect of those stars which we cannot see, but comprehend by their effects, and Metaphysics treats of first substances, which likewise we cannot comprehend except by their effects, it is manifest that the starry heaven has great resemblance to Metaphysics. Still further, by the pole which we see it signifies things obvious to sense, of which, taking them as a whole, Physics treats; and by the pole which we do not see it signifies the things which are immaterial, which are not obvious to sense, of which Metaphysics treats; and therefore the aforesaid heaven bears a great resemblance to both these sciences. Still further, by its two movements it signifies these two sciences; for, by the movement in which it revolves daily and makes a new circuit from point to point, it signifies the corruptible things in nature, which daily complete their course, and their matter is changed from form to form; and of this Physics treats; and by the almost insensible movement which it makes from west to east of one degree in a hundred years, it signifies the things incorruptible, which had from God the beginning of existence, and shall never have an end; and of these Metaphysics treats.”

←

1806. Cicero, *Vision of Scipio*, Edmonds's Tr., p. 294:—

“Now the place my father spoke of was a radiant circle of dazzling brightness amid the flaming bodies, which you, as you have learned from the Greeks, term the Milky Way; from which position all other objects seemed to me, as I surveyed them, marvellous and glorious. There were stars which we never saw from this place, and their magnitudes were such as we never imagined; the smallest of which was that which, placed upon the extremity of the heavens, but nearest to the earth, shone with borrowed light. But the globular bodies of the stars greatly exceeded the magnitude of the earth, which now to me appeared so small, that I was grieved to see our empire contracted, as it were, into a very point....

“Which as I was gazing at in amazement, I said, as I recovered myself, from whence proceed these sounds so strong, and yet so sweet, that fill my ears? ‘The melody,’ replies he, ‘which you hear, and which, though composed in unequal time, is nevertheless divided into regular harmony, is effected by the impulse and motion of the spheres themselves, which, by a happy temper of sharp and grave notes, regularly produces various harmonic effects. Now it is impossible that such prodigious movements should pass in silence; and nature teaches that the sounds which the spheres at one extremity utter must be sharp, and those on the other extremity must be grave; on which account that highest revolution of the star-studded heaven, whose motion is more rapid, is carried on with a sharp and quick sound; whereas this of the moon, which is situated the lowest, and at the other extremity, moves with the gravest sound. For the earth, the ninth sphere, remaining motionless, abides invariably in the innermost position, occupying the central spot in the universe.

“Now these eight directions, two of which have the same powers, effect seven sounds, differing in their modulations, which number is the connecting principle of almost all things. Some learned men, by imitating this harmony with strings and vocal melodies, have opened a way for their return to this place; as all others have done, who, endued with preeminent qualities, have cultivated in their mortal life the pursuits of heaven.

“The ears of mankind, filled with these sounds, have become deaf, for of all your senses it is the most blunted. Thus the people who live near the place where the Nile rushes down from very high mountains to the parts which are called Catadupa, are destitute of the sense of hearing, by reason of the greatness of the noise. Now this sound, which is effected by the rapid rotation of the whole system of nature, is so powerful, that human hearing cannot comprehend it, just as you cannot look directly upon the sun, because your sight and sense are overcome by his beams.””

Also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II 1051:—

“And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.”



1807. The Moon, called in heaven Diana, on earth Luna, and in the infernal regions Proserpina; as in the curious Latin distich:—

“*Terret, lustrat, agit, Proserpina, Luna, Diana,*
Ima, suprema, feras, sceptro, fulgore, sagittâ.”



1808. See Canto II 59:—

“And I: ‘What seems to us up here diverse,
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense.’”



1809. The Sun. [←](#)

1810. Mercury, son of Maia, and Venus, daughter of Dione. [←](#)

1811. The temperate planet Jupiter, between Mars and Saturn. In Canto XVIII 68, Dante calls it “the temperate star”; and in the *Convito*, II 14, quoting the opinion of Ptolemy:—

“Jupiter is a star of a temperate complexion, midway
between the coldness of Saturn and the heat of Mars.”



1812. Bryant, “Song of the Stars”:—

“Look, look, through our glittering ranks afar,
In the infinite azure, star after star,
How they brighten and bloom as they swiftly pass!
How the verdure runs o’er each rolling mass!
And the path of the gentle winds is seen,
Where the small waves dance, and the young woods lean.

“And see, where the brighter day-beams pour,
How the rainbows hang in the sunny shower;
And the morn and eve, with their pomp of hues,
Shift o’er the bright planets and shed their dews;
And ’twixt them both, o’er the teeming ground,
With her shadowy cone the night goes round!”



1813. The threshing-floor, or little area of our earth. The word *ajuola* would also bear the rendering of garden-plot; but to Dante this world was

rather a threshing-floor than a flower bed. The word occurs again in Canto XXVII 86, and in its Latin form in the *Monarchia*, III:—

“*Ut scilicet in areola mortalium libere cum pace vivatur.*”

Perhaps Dante uses it to signify in general any small enclosure.

Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, II Prosa 7, Ridpath's Tr.:—

“You have learned from astronomy that this globe of earth is but as a point in respect to the vast extent of the heavens; that is, the immensity of the celestial sphere is such that ours, when compared with it, is as nothing, and vanishes. You know likewise, from the proofs that Ptolemy adduces, there is only one fourth part of this earth, which is of itself so small a portion of the universe, inhabited by creatures known to us. If from this fourth you deduct the space occupied by the seas and lakes, and the vast sandy regions which extreme heat and want of water render uninhabitable, there remains but a very small proportion of the terrestrial sphere for the habitation of men. Enclosed then and locked up as you are, in an unperceivable point of a point, do you think of nothing but of blazing far and wide your name and reputation? What can there be great or pompous in a glory circumscribed in so narrow a circuit?”

↖

1814. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. The Triumph of Christ. ↲

1815. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 38:—

“As the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note.”

↖

1816. Towards the meridian, where the sun seems to move slower than when nearer the horizon. ↪

1817. Didron, *Christian Iconography*, Millington's Tr., I 308:—

“The triumph of Christ is, of all subjects, that which has excited the most enthusiasm amongst artists; it is seen in numerous monuments, and is represented both in painting and sculpture, but always with such remarkable modifications as impart to it the character of a new work. The eastern portion of the crypt of the cathedral of Auxerre contains, in the vaulting of that part which corresponds with the sanctuary, a fresco painting, executed about the end of the twelfth century, and representing, in the most simple form imaginable, the triumph of Christ. The background of the picture is intersected by a cross, which, if the transverse branches were a little longer, would be a perfect Greek cross. This cross is adorned with imitations of precious stones, round, oval, and lozenge-shaped, disposed in quincunxes. In the centre is a figure of Christ, on a white horse with a saddle; he holds the bridle in his left hand, and in the right, the hand of power and authority, a black staff, the rod of iron by which he governs the nations. He advances thus, having his head adorned with an azure or bluish nimbus, intersected by a cross gules; his face is turned towards the spectator. In the four compartments formed by the square in which the cross is enclosed are four angels who form the escort of Jesus; they are all on horseback, like their master, and with wings outspread; the right hand of each, which is free, is open and raised, in token of adoring admiration. ‘And I saw heaven opened, and be hold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture

dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean.' Such is the language of the Apocalypse, and this the fresco at Auxerre interprets, although with some slight alterations, which it will be well to observe."

See also [note 1108.](#) [←](#)

1818. By the beneficent influences of the stars. [←](#)

1819. The Moon. Trivia is one of the surnames of Diana, given her because she presided over all the places where three roads met.

Purg. XXXI 106:—

"We here are Nymphs, and in the Heaven are stars."

Iliad, VIII 550, Anon. Tr.:—

"As when in heaven the beauteous stars appear round the bright moon, when the air is breathless, and all the hills and lofty summits and forests are visible, and in the sky the boundless ether opens, and all the stars are seen, and the shepherd is delighted in his soul."

[←](#)

1820. Christ. [←](#)

1821. The old belief that the stars were fed by the light of the sun. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII 364:—

"Hither as to their fountain other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light."

And Calderon, *El Principe Constants*, sonnet in Jor. II:—

"Those glimmerings of light, those scintillations,

That by supernal influences draw
Their nutriment in splendors from the sun.”

↵

1822. Beatrice speaks. ↵

1823. The Muse of harmony. Skelton, “Elegy on the Earl of Northumberland,” 155:—

“If the hole quere of the musis nyne
In me all onely wer sett and comprisyde,
Enbreathed with the blast of influence dyvyne,
And perfightly as could be thought or devysyde;
To me also allthouche it were promysyde
Of laureat Phebus holy the eloquence,
All were to littill for his magnyfiscence.”

↵

1824. Beatrice speaks again. ↵

1825. The Virgin Mary, *Rosa Mundi, Rosa Mystica*. ↵

1826. The Apostles, by following whom the good way was found. Shirley, “Death’s Final Conquest”:—

“Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.”

↵

1827. The struggle between his eyes and the light. ↵

1828. Christ, who had re-ascended, so that Dante’s eyes, too feeble to bear the light of his presence, could now behold the splendor of this “meadow of flowers.” ↵

1829. The Rose, or the Virgin Mary, to whom Beatrice alludes in line 73. Afterwards he hears the hosts of heaven repeat her name, as described in line 110:—

“And all the other lights
Were making to resound the name of Mary.”

↲

1830. This greater fire is also the Virgin, greatest of the remaining splendors.
↲

1831. *Stella Maris*, *Stella Matutina*, are likewise titles of the Virgin, who surpasses in brightness all other souls in heaven, as she did here on earth. ↲

1832. The Angel Gabriel. ↲

1833. The mystic virtues of the sapphire are thus enumerated by Marbodus in his *Lapidarium*, King’s *Antique Gems*, p. 395:—

“By nature with superior honors graced,
As gem of gems above all others placed;
Health to preserve and treachery to disarm,
And guard the wearer from intended harm.
No envy bends him, and no terror shakes;
The captive’s chains its mighty virtue breaks;
The gates fly open, fetters fall away,
And send their prisoner to the light of day.
E’en Heaven is moved by its force divine
To list to vows presented at its shrine.”

Sapphire is the color in which the old painters arrayed the Virgin, “its hue,” says Mr. King, “being the exact shade of the air or atmosphere in the climate of Rome.” This is Dante’s

“*Dolce color d’oriental zaffiro,*”

in *Purgatorio* I 13. [↖](#)

1834. Haggai 2:7:—

“The desire of all nations shall come.”

[↖](#)

1835. The Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, which infolds all the other volumes or rolling orbs of the universe like a mantle. [↖](#)

1836. Cowley, “Hymn to Light”:—

“Thou Scythian-like dost round thy lands above
The sun’s gilt tent forever move;
And still as thou in pomp dost go,
The shining pageants of the world attend thy show.”

[↖](#)

1837. The Virgin ascending to her son. Fray Luis Ponce de Leon,
“Assumption of the Virgin”:—

“Lady! thine upward flight
The opening heavens receive with joyful song;
Blest who thy mantle bright
May seize amid the throng,
And to the sacred mount float peacefully along!

“Bright angels are around thee,
They that have served thee from thy birth are there;
Their hands with stars have crowned thee;
Thou, peerless Queen of air,
As sandals to thy feet the silver moon dost wear!”

[↖](#)

1838. An Easter Hymn to the Virgin:—

*“Regina coeli, laetare! Alleluia.
Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia.
Resurrexit, sicut dixit. Alleluia.”*

This hymn, according to Collin de Plancy, *Légendes des Commandements de l’Église*, p. 14, Pope Gregory the Great heard the angels singing, in the pestilence of Rome in 890, and on hearing it added another line:—

“Ora pro nobis Deum! Alleluia.”

↖

1839. Caring not for gold and silver in the Babylonian exile of this life, they laid up treasures in the other. ↲

1840. St. Peter, keeper of the keys, with the saints of the Old and New Testament.

Milton, “Lycidas,” 108:—

“Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).”

And Fletcher, “Purple Island,” VII 62:—

“Not in his lips, but hands, two keys he bore,
Heaven’s doors and Hell’s to shut and open wide.”

↖

1841. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. St. Peter examines Dante on Faith.

Revelation 19:9:—

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.”



1842. The carol was a dance as well as a song; or, to speak more exactly, a dance accompanied by a song.

Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, VI:—

“And if it nedes so betide,
That I in company abide,
Where as I must daunce and singe
The hove daunce and carolinge.”

It is from the old French *karole*. See passage from the “*Roman de la Rose*,” in [note 1864](#). See also Roquefort, *Glossaire*: “KAROLE, dance, concert, divertissement; de *chorea, chorus*”; and “KAROLER, sauter, danser, se divertir.”

*Et li borjéois y furent en present
Karolent main à main, et chantent hautement.
Vie de Du Guesdin.*”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 618:—

“That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill,
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, interwolved, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God’s own ear
Listens delighted.”



1843. “That is,” says Buti, “of the abundance of their beatitude . . . And this swiftness and slowness signified the fervor of love which was in them.”

←

1844. From the brightest of these carols or dances. ←

1845. St. Peter. ←

1846. Three times, in sign of the Trinity. ←

1847. Tints too coarse and glaring to paint such delicate draperies of song. ←

1848. St. Peter speaks to Beatrice. ←

1849. Fixed upon God, in whom all things are reflected. ←

1850. The captain of the first cohort of the Church Militant. ←

1851. St. Paul. Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 159, says:—

“The early Christian Church was always considered under two great divisions: the church of the converted Jews, and the church of the Gentiles. The first was represented by St. Peter, the second by St. Paul. Standing together in this mutual relation, they represent the universal church of Christ; hence in works of art they are seldom separated, and are indispensable in all ecclesiastical decoration. Their proper place is on each side of the Saviour, or of the Virgin throned; or on each side of the altar; or on each side of the arch over the choir. In any case, where they stand together, not merely as Apostles, but Founders, their place is next after the Evangelists and the Prophets.”

←

1852. Hebrews 11:1:—

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

◀

1853. In Scholastic language the essence of a thing, distinguishing it from all other things, is called its *quiddity*; in answer to the question, *Quid est?*

◀

1854. Jeremy Taylor says:—

“Faith is a certain image of eternity; all things are present to it; things past and things to come are all so before the eyes of faith, that he in whose eye that candle is enkindled beholds heaven as present, and sees how blessed a thing it is to die in God’s favor, and to be chimed to our grave with the music of a good conscience. Faith converses with the angels, and antedates the hymns of glory; every man that hath this grace is as certain that there are glories for him, if he perseveres in duty, as if he had heard and sung the thanksgiving song for the blessed sentence of doomsday.”

◀

1855. “The purified, righteous man,” says Tertullian, “has become a coin of the Lord, and has the impress of his King stamped upon him.” ▵

1856. The Old and New Testaments. ▵

1857. In the Middle Ages titles of nobility were given to the saints and to other renowned personages of sacred history. Thus Boccaccio, in his story of Fra Cipolla, *Decameron*, Gior. VI Nov. 10, speaks of the Baron Messer Santo Antonio; and in Juan Lorenzo’s “*Poema de Alexandra*,” we have Don Job, Don Bacchus, and Don Satan. ▵

1858. The word *donnea*, which I have rendered “like a lover plays,” is from the Provençal *domnear*. In its old French form, *dosnoier*, it occurs in some editions of the “*Roman de la Rose*,” line 1305:—

“*Les karoles jà remanoient;*

*Car tuit li plusors s'en aloient
O leurs amies umbroier
Sous ces arbres pour dosnoier."*

Chaucer translates the passage thus:—

“The daunces then ended ywere;
For many of hem that daunced there
Were, with hir loves, went away
Under the trees to have hir play.”

The word expresses the gallantry of the knight towards his lady. ↪

1859. St. John was the first to reach the sepulchre, but St. Peter the first to enter it. John 20:4:—

“So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.”

↪

1860. Dante, *Convito*, II 4, speaking of the motion of the Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, which moves all the others, says:—

“From the fervent longing which each part of that ninth heaven has to be conjoined with that Divinest Heaven, the Heaven of Rest, which is next to it, it revolves therein with so great desire, that its velocity is almost incomprehensible.”

↪

1861. St. Peter and the other Apostles after Pentecost. ↪

1862. Both three and one, both plural and singular. [←](#)

1863. Again the sign of the Trinity. [←](#)

1864. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. St. James examines Dante on Hope. [←](#)

1865. Florence the Fair, *Fiorenza la bella*. In one of his *Canzoni*, Dante says:—

“O mountain song of mine, thou goest thy way;
Florence my town thou shalt perchance behold,
Which bars me from itself,
Devoid of love and naked of compassion.”

[←](#)

1866. In one of Dante's *Eclogues*, written at Ravenna and addressed to Giovanni del Virgilio of Bologna, who had invited him to that city to receive the poet's crown, he says:—

“Were it not better, on the banks of my native Arno, if ever I should return thither, to adorn and hide beneath the interwoven leaves my triumphal gray hairs, which once were golden?... When the bodies that wander round the earth, and the dwellers among the stars, shall be revealed in my song, as the infernal realm has been, then it will delight me to encircle my head with ivy and with laurel.”

It would seem from this extract that Dante's hair had once been light, and not black, as Boccaccio describes it.

See also the Extract from the *Convito*. [←](#)

1867. This allusion to the church of San Giovanni, where Dante was baptized, and which in *Inferno* XIX 17 he calls “*il mio bel San Giovanni*,” is a fitting prelude to the canto in which St. John is to appear. [←](#)

1868. As described in Canto XXIV 152:—

“So, giving me its benediction, singing,
Three times encircled me, when I was silent,
The apostolic light.”



1869. The band or carol in which St. Peter was. James 1:18:—

“That we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”



1870. St. James, to whose tomb at Compostella, in Galicia, pilgrimages were and are still made. The legend says that the body of St. James was put on board a ship and abandoned to the sea; but the ship, being guided by an angel, landed safely in Galicia. There the body was buried; but in the course of time the place of its burial was forgotten, and not discovered again till the year 800, when it was miraculously revealed to a friar.

Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 211, says:—

“Then they caused the body of the saint to be transported to Compostella; and in consequence of the surprising miracles which graced his shrine, he was honored not merely in Galicia, but throughout all Spain. He became the patron saint of the Spaniards, and Compostella, as a place of pilgrimage, was renowned throughout Europe. From all countries bands of pilgrims resorted there, so that sometimes there were no less than a hundred thousand in one year. The military order of Saint Jago, enrolled by Don Alphonso for their protection, became one of the greatest and richest in Spain.

“Now, if I should proceed to recount all the wonderful deeds enacted by Santiago in behalf of his chosen people, they would fill a volume. The Spanish historians number thirty-eight visible apparitions, in which this glorious saint

descended from heaven in person, and took the command of their armies against the Moors.”

◀

1871. Before me. ▵

1872. James 1:5 and 17:—

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.... Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

In this line, instead of *largezza*, some editions read *allegrezza*; but as James describes the bounties of heaven, and not its joys, the former reading is undoubtedly the correct one. ▵

1873. St. Peter personifies Faith; St. James, Hope; and St. John, Charity. These three were distinguished above the other Apostles by clearer manifestations of their Master’s favor, as, for example, their being present at the Transfiguration. ▵

1874. These words are addressed by St. James to Dante. ▵

1875. In the radiance of the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity. ▵

1876. To the three Apostles luminous above him and overwhelming him with their light. Psalm 121:1:—

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

◀

1877. With the most august spirits of the celestial city. See [note 1863](#). ▵

1878. Beatrice. [←](#)

1879. In God, or, as Dante says in Canto XXIV 42:—

“There where depicted everything is seen.”

And again, Canto XXVI 106:—

“For I behold it in the truthful mirror,
That of Himself all things parhelion makes,
And none makes Him parhelion of itself.”

[←](#)

1880. “Say what it is,” and “whence it came to be.” [←](#)

1881. The answer to these two questions involves no self-praise, as the answer to the other would have done, if it had come from Dante’s lips.

[←](#)

1882. This definition of Hope is from Peter Lombard’s *Lib. Sent.*, Book III Dist. 26:—

“*Est spes certa expectatio futurae beatitudinis, veniens ex Dei gratia, et meritis praecedentibus.*”

[←](#)

1883. The Psalmist David. [←](#)

1884. In his divine songs, or songs of God. Psalm 9:10:—

“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.”

[←](#)

1885. Your rain; that is, of David and St. James. [←](#)

1886. According to the legend, St. James suffered martyrdom under Herod Agrippa. ←

1887. "The mark of the high calling and election sure," namely Paradise, which is the aim and object of all the "friends of God"; or, as St. James expresses it in his Epistle 1:12:—

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

←

1888. This expression is from the Epistle of James 2:23:—

"And he was called the Friend of God."

←

1889. The spiritual body and the glorified earthly body. Isaiah 61:7:—

"Therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them."

←

1890. St. John in Revelation 7:9:—

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands."

←

1891. St. John. ←

1892. If Cancer, which in winter rises at sunset, had one star as bright as this, it would turn night into day. [←](#)

1893. Any failing, such as vanity, ostentation, or the like. [←](#)

1894. St. Peter and St. James. [←](#)

1895. This symbol or allegory of the Pelican, applied to Christ, was popular during the Middle Ages, and was seen not only in the songs of poets, but in sculpture on the portals of churches.

Thibaut, Roi de Navarre, Chanson LXV, says:—

*“Diex est ensi comme li Pelicans,
Qui fait son nit el plus haut arbre sus,
Et li mauvais oseau, qui vient de jus
Ses oisellons ocist, tant est puans;
Li père vient destrois et angosseux,
Dou bec s’ocist, de son sane dolereus
Vivre refait tantost ses oisellons;
Diex fist autel, quant vint sa passions,
De son douc sane racheta ses enfans
Dou Deable, qui tant parest poissans.”*

[←](#)

1896. John 19:27:—

“Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

[←](#)

1897. St. John. Dante—bearing in mind the words of Christ, John 21:22:—

“If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?... Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die”—

looks to see if the spiritual body of the saint be in any way eclipsed by his earthly body. St. John, reading his unspoken thought, immediately undeceives him.

Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I 139, remarks:—

“The legend which supposes St. John reserved alive has not been generally received in the Church, and as a subject of painting it is very uncommon. It occurs in the *Menologium Graecum*, where the grave into which St. John descends is, according to the legend, *fossa in crucis figuram* (in the form of a cross). In a series of the deaths of the Apostles, St. John is ascending from the grave; for, according to the Greek legend, St. John died without pain or change, and immediately rose again in bodily form, and ascended into heaven to rejoin Christ and the Virgin.”



1898. Till the predestined number of the elect is complete. Revelation 6:11:—

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”



1899. The spiritual body and the glorified earthly body. [←](#)

1900. Christ and the Virgin Mary. Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, VIII 173, says:—

“It is a traditionary pious belief, that the body of the Blessed Virgin was raised by God soon after her death, and assumed to glory, by a singular privilege, before the general resurrection of the dead. This is mentioned by the

learned Andrew of Crete in the East, in the seventh, and by St. Gregory of Tours in the West, in the sixth century.... So great was the respect and veneration of the fathers towards this most holy and most exalted of all pure creatures, that St. Epiphanius durst not affirm that she ever died, because he had never found any mention of her death, and because she might have been preserved immortal, and translated to glory without dying."



1901. By the sacred trio of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John. [←](#)

1902. Because his eyes were so blinded by the splendor of the beloved disciple. Speaking of St. John, Claudio, the German poet, says:—

"It delights me most of all to read in John: there is in him something so entirely wonderful—twilight and night, and through it the swiftly darting lightning—a soft evening cloud, and behind the cloud the broad full moon bodily; something so deeply, sadly pensive, so high, so full of anticipation, that one cannot have enough of it. In reading John it is always with me as though I saw him before me, lying on the bosom of his Master at the last supper: as though his angel were holding the light for me, and in certain passages would fall upon my neck and whisper something in mine ear. I am far from understanding all I read, but it often seems to me as if what John meant were floating before in the distance; and even when I look into a passage altogether dark, I have a foretaste of some great, glorious meaning, which I shall one day understand, and for this reason I grasp so eagerly after every new interpretation of the Gospel of John. Indeed, most of them only play upon the edge of the evening cloud, and the moon behind it has quiet rest."



1903. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. St. John examines Dante on Charity, in the sense of Love, as in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII 583:—

“Love,
By name to come called Charity.”

◀

1904. Ananias, the disciple at Damascus, whose touch restored the sight of Saul. Acts 9:17:—

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

◀

1905. God is the beginning and end of all my love. ▲

1906. The commentators differ as to which of the philosophers Dante here refers; whether to Aristotle, Plato, or Pythagoras. ▲

1907. The angels. ▲

1908. Exodus 33:19:—

“And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee.”

◀

1909. John 1:1:—

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made

flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.”

↲

1910. By all the dictates of human reason and divine authority. ↲

1911. In Christian art the eagle is the symbol of St. John, indicating his more fervid imagination and deeper insight into divine mysteries.

Sometimes even the saint was represented with the head and feet of an eagle, and the hands and body of a man. ↲

1912. All living creatures. ↲

1913. Isaiah 6:3:—

“As one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

↲

1914. The soul of Adam. ↲

1915. “Tell me, of what age was Adam when he was created?” is one of the questions in the Anglo-Saxon “Dialogue between Saturn and Solomon”; and the answer is, “I tell thee, he was thirty winters old.” And Buti says:—

“He was created of the age of thirty-three, or thereabout; and therefore the author says that Adam alone was created by God in perfect age and stature, and no other man.”

And Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, § 39:—

“Some divines count Adam thirty years old at his creation, because they suppose him created in the perfect age and stature of man.”

Stehelin, *Traditions of the Jews*, I 16, quotes Rabbi Eliezer as saying “that the first man reached from the earth to the firmament of heaven;

but that, after he had sinned, God laid his hands on him and reduced him to a less size." And Rabbi Salomon writes, that "when he lay down, his head was in the east and his feet in the west." ↵

1916. Parhelion is an imperfect image of the sun, formed by reflection in the clouds. All things are such faint reflections of the Creator; but he is the reflection of none of them.

Buti interprets the passage differently, giving to the word *pareglia* the meaning of *ricettacolo*, receptacle. ↵

1917. In Limbo, longing for Paradise, where the only punishment is to live in desire, but without hope. *Inferno* IV 41:—

"Lost are we, and are only so far punished,
That without hope we live on in desire."

↵

1918. Most of the Oriental languages claim the honor of being the language spoken by Adam in Paradise. Juan Bautista de Erro claims it for the Basque, or Vascongada. See *Alphabet of Prim. Lang. of Spain*, Pt. II Ch. 2, Erving's Tr. ↵

1919. See Canto XVI 79:—

"All things of yours have their mortality,
Even as yourselves."

↵

1920. Dante, *De Volgari Eloquio*, I Ch. 4, says, speaking of Adam:—

"What was the first word he spake will, I doubt not,
readily suggest itself to every one of sound mind as being
what God is, namely, *El*, either in the way of question or
of answer."

↵

1921. The word used by Matthew 27:46, is *Eli*, and by Mark 15:34, *Eloi*, which Dante assumes to be of later use than *El*. There is, I believe, no authority for this. *El* is God; *Eli*, or *Eloi*, my God. ↵

1922. Horace, "Ars Poet.," 60:—

"As the woods change their leaves in autumn, and the earliest fall, so the ancient words pass away, and the new flourish in the freshness of youth.... Many that now have fallen shall spring up again, and others fall which now are held in honor, if usage wills, which is the judge, the law, and the rule of language."

↵

1923. The mount of Purgatory, on whose summit was the Terrestrial Paradise. ↵

1924. The sixth hour is noon in the old way of reckoning; and at noon the sun has completed one quarter or quadrant of the arc of his revolution, and changes to the next. The hour which is second to the sixth, is the hour which follows it, or one o'clock. This gives seven hours for Adam's stay in Paradise; and so says Peter Comestor (Dante's Peter Mangiador) in his ecclesiastical history.

The Talmud, as quoted by Stehelin, *Tradition of the Jews*, I 20, gives the following account:—

"The day has twelve hours. In the first hour the dust of which Adam was formed was brought together. In the second, this dust was made a rude, unshapely mass. In the third, the limbs were stretched out. In the fourth, a soul was lodged in it. In the fifth, Adam stood upon his feet. In the sixth, he assigned the names of all things that were created. In the seventh, he received Eve for his consort. In the eighth, two went to bed and four rose out of it; the begetting and birth of two children in that time, namely, Cain and his sister. In the ninth, he was forbid to eat of the fruit of the tree. In the tenth, he disobeyed. In the eleventh,

he was tried, convicted, and sentenced. In the twelfth, he was banished, or driven out of the garden."



1925. The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. The anger of St. Peter; and the ascent to the Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven.

Dante, *Convito*, II 15, makes this crystalline Heaven the symbol of Moral Philosophy. He says:—

"The Crystalline Heaven, which has previously been called the Primum Mobile, has a very manifest resemblance to Moral Philosophy; for Moral Philosophy, as Thomas says in treating of the second book of the Ethics, directs us to the other sciences. For, as the Philosopher says in the fifth of the Ethics, legal justice directs us to learn the sciences, and orders them to be learned and mastered, so that they may not be abandoned; so this heaven directs with its movement the daily revolutions of all the others, by which daily they all receive here below the virtue of all their parts. For if its revolution did not thus direct, little of their virtues would reach here below, and little of their sight. Hence, supposing it were possible for this ninth heaven to stand still, the third part of heaven would not be seen in each part of the earth; and Saturn would be hidden from each part of the earth fourteen years and a half; and Jupiter, six years; and Mars, almost a year; and the Sun, one hundred and eighty-two days and fourteen hours (I say days, that is, so much time as so many days would measure); and Venus and Mercury would conceal and show themselves nearly as the Sun; and the Moon would be hidden from all people for the space of fourteen days and a half. Truly there would be here below no production, nor life of animals, nor plants; there would be neither night, nor day, nor week, nor month, nor year; but the whole universe would be deranged, and the movement of the stars in vain.

And not otherwise, were Moral Philosophy to cease, the other sciences would be for a time concealed, and there would be no production, nor life of felicity, and in vain would be the writings or discoveries of antiquity.
Wherefore it is very manifest that this heaven bears a resemblance to Moral Philosophy."

↲

1926. Without desire for more. ↲

1927. St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and Adam. ↲

1928. If the white planet Jupiter should become as red as Mars. ↲

1929. Pope Boniface VIII, who won his way to the Popedom by intrigue. See [note 49](#), and [note 270](#). ↲

1930. The Vatican hill, to which the body of St. Peter was transferred from the catacombs. ↲

1931. Luke 23:44:—

“And there was darkness over all the earth.... And the sun was darkened.”

↲

1932. Linus was the immediate successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome, and Cletus of Linus. They were both martyrs of the first age of the Church. ↲

1933. Sixtus and Pius were Popes and martyrs of the second age of the Church; Calixtus and Urban, of the third. ↲

1934. On the right hand of the Pope the favored Guelfs, and on the left the persecuted Ghibellines. ↲

1935. The Papal banner, on which are the keys of St. Peter. [←](#)

1936. The wars against the Ghibellines in general, and particularly that waged against the Colonna family, ending in the destruction of Palestrina. *Inferno XXVII. 85:*—

“But he, the Prince of the new Pharisees,
Having a war near unto Lateran,
And not with Saracens nor with the Jews,
For each one of his enemies was Christian,
And none of them had been to conquer Acre,
Nor merchandising in the Sultan’s land.”

[←](#)

1937. The sale of indulgences, stamped with the Papal seal, bearing the head of St. Peter. [←](#)

1938. Matthew 7:15:—

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

[←](#)

1939. Psalm 44:23:—

“Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?”

[←](#)

1940. Clement V of Gascony, made Pope in 1305, and John XXII of Cahors in France, in 1316. Buti makes the allusion more general:—

“They of Cahors and Gascony are preparing to drink the blood of the martyrs, because they were preparing to be Popes, cardinals, archbishops and bishops, and prelates in

the Church of God, that is built with the blood of the martyrs.”



1941. Dante alludes elsewhere to this intervention of Providence to save the Roman Empire by the hand of Scipio. *Convito*, IV 5, he says:—

“Is not the hand of God visible, when in the war with Hannibal, having lost so many citizens, that three bushels of rings were carried to Africa, the Romans would have abandoned the land, if that blessed youth Scipio had not undertaken the expedition to Africa, to secure its freedom?”



1942. Boccaccio, “*Ninfale d’Ameto*,” describing a battle between two flocks of swans, says the spectators “saw the air full of feathers, as when the nurse of Jove [Amalthaea, the Goat] holds Apollo, the white snow is seen to fall in flakes.”

And Whittier, *Snowbound*:—

“Unwarmed by any sunset light,
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag wavering to and fro
Crossed and recrossed the winged snow.”



1943. When the sun is in Capricorn; that is, from the middle of December to the middle of January. [←](#)

1944. The spirits described in Canto XXII 131, as

“The triumphant throng

That comes rejoicing through this rounded ether,”

and had remained behind when Christ and the Virgin Mary ascended.

↖

1945. Till his sight could follow them no more, on account of the exceeding vastness of the space between. ↲

1946. Canto XXII 133. ↲

1947. The first climate is the torrid zone, the first from the equator. From midst to end, is from the meridian to the horizon. Dante had been, then, six hours in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars; for, as Milton says, *Paradise Lost*, V 580:—

“Time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future.”

↖

1948. Being now in the meridian of the Straits of Gibraltar, Dante sees to the westward of Cadiz the sea Ulysses sailed, when he turned his stern unto the morning and made his oars wings for his mad flight, as described in *Inferno* XXVI. ↲

1949. Eastward he almost sees the Phoenician coast; almost, and not quite, because, say the commentators, it was already night there. ↲

1950. Europa, daughter of King Agenor, borne to the island of Crete on the back of Jupiter, who had taken the shape of a bull.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, II, Addison’s Tr.:—

“Agenor’s royal daughter, as she played
Among the fields, the milk-white bull surveyed,
And viewed his spotless body with delight,
And at a distance kept him in her sight.
At length she plucked the rising flowers, and fed

The gentle beast, and fondly stroked his head.

:

Till now grown wanton and devoid of fear,
Not knowing that she pressed the Thunderer,
She placed herself upon his back, and rode
O'er fields and meadows, seated on the god.

“He gently marched along, and by degrees
Left the dry meadow, and approached the seas;
Where now he dips his hoofs and wets his thighs,
Now plunges in, and carries off the prize.”

✉

1951. See [note 1819](#). ✉

1952. The sun was in Aries, two signs in advance of Gemini, in which Dante then was. ✉

1953. *Donnea* again. See [note 1811](#). ✉

1954. *Purgatorio* XXXI 49:—

“Never to thee presented art or nature
Pleasure so great as the fair limbs wherein
I was enclosed, which scattered are in earth.”

✉

1955. The Gemini, or Twins, are Castor and Pollux, the sons of Leda. And as Jupiter, their father, came to her in the shape of a swan, this sign of the zodiac is called the nest of Leda. Dante now mounts up from the Heaven of the Fixed Stars to the Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven. ✉

1956. Dante's desire to know in what part of this heaven he was. ✉

1957. All the other heavens have their Regents or Intelligences. See [Notes 1240](#). But the Primum Mobile has the Divine Mind alone. [✉](#)

1958. By that precinct Dante means the Empyrean, which embraces the Primum Mobile, as that does all the other heavens below it. [✉](#)

1959. The half of ten is five, and the fifth is two. The product of these, when multiplied together, is ten. [✉](#)

1960. Wordsworth, “Intimations of Immortality”:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
 From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature’s Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.”

[✉](#)

1961. Aurora, daughter of Hyperion, or the Sun. *Purgatorio II 7*:

“So that the white and the vermillion cheeks
 Of beautiful Aurora, where I was,
 By too great age were changing into orange.”

↲

1962. Or, perhaps, to steer, and

“Over the high seas to keep
The barque of Peter to its proper bearings.”

↲

1963. This neglected centesimal was the omission of some inconsiderable fraction or centesimal part, in the computation of the year according to the Julian calendar, which was corrected in the Gregorian, some two centuries and a half after Dante’s death. By this error, in a long lapse of time, the months would cease to correspond to the seasons, and January be no longer a winter, but a spring month.

Sir John Herschel, *Treatise on Astronomy*, Ch. XIII, says:—

“The Julian rule made every fourth year, without exception, a bissextile. This is, in fact, an over-correction; it supposes the length of the tropical year to be $365\frac{1}{4}$ d., which is too great, and thereby induces an error of 7 days in 900 years, as will easily appear on trial. Accordingly, so early as the year 1414, it began to be perceived that the equinoxes were gradually creeping away from the 21st of March and September, where they ought to have always fallen had the Julian year been exact, and happening (as it appeared) too early. The necessity of a fresh and effectual reform in the calendar was from that time continually urged, and at length admitted. The change (which took place under the Popedom of Gregory XIII) consisted in the omission of ten nominal days after the 4th of October, 1582 (so that the next day was called the 15th, and not the 5th), and the promulgation of the rule already explained for future regulation.”

It will appear from the verse of Dante, that this error and its consequences had been noticed a century earlier than the year

mentioned by Herschel. Dante speaks ironically; naming a very long period, and meaning a very short one. ↵

1964. Dante here refers either to the reforms he expected from the Emperor Henry VII, or to those he as confidently looked for from Can Grande della Scala, the Veltro, or greyhound, of *Inferno* I 101, who was to slay the she-wolf, and make her “perish in her pain,” and whom he so warmly eulogizes in Canto XVII of the Paradiso. Alas for the vanity of human wishes! Patient Italy has waited more than five centuries for the fulfilment of this prophecy, but at length she has touched the bones of her prophet, and “is revived and stands upon her feet.” ↵

1965. The Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, continued. ↵

1966. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV 505:—

“Thus these two,
Imparadised in one another’s arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss.”

↵

1967. That Crystalline Heaven, which Dante calls a volume, or scroll, as in Canto XXIII 112:—

“The regal mantle of the volumes all.”

↵

1968. The light of God, represented as a single point, to indicate its unity and indivisibility. ↵

1969. Iris, or the rainbow. ↵

1970. These nine circles of fire are the nine Orders of Angels in the three Celestial Hierarchies. Dante, *Convito* II 16, says that the Holy Church divides the Angels into, “three Hierarchies, that is to say, three holy or

divine Principalities; and each Hierarchy has three Orders; so that the Church believes and affirms nine Orders of spiritual beings. The first is that of the Angels; the second, that of the Archangels; the third, that of the Thrones. And these three Orders form the first Hierarchy; not first in reference to rank nor creation (for the others are more noble, and all were created together), but first in reference to our ascent to their height. Then follow the Dominions; next the Virtues; then the Principalities; and these form the second Hierarchy. Above these are the Powers, and the Cherubim, and above all are the Seraphim; these form the third Hierarchy.”

It will be observed that this arrangement of the several Orders does not agree with that followed in the poem. [←](#)

1971. Barlow, *Study of the Divina Commedia*, p. 533, remarks:—

“Within a circle of ineffable joy, circumscribed only by light and love, a point of intense brightness so dazzled the eyes of Dante that he could not sustain the sight of it. Around this vivid centre, from which the heavens and all nature depend, nine concentric circles of the Celestial Hierarchy revolved with a velocity inversely proportioned to their distance from it, the nearer circles moving more rapidly, the remoter ones less. The poet at first is surprised at this, it being the reverse of the relative movement, from the same source of propulsion, of the heavens themselves around the earth as their centre. But the infallible Beatrice assures him that this difference arises, in fact, from the same cause, proximity to the Divine presence, which in the celestial spheres is greater the farther they are from the centre, but in the circles of angels, on the contrary, it is greater the nearer they are to it.”

[←](#)

1972. Because the subject has not been investigated and discussed. [←](#)

1973. The nine heavens are here called corporal circles, as we call the stars the heavenly bodies. Latimer says:—

“A corporal heaven, . . . where the stars are.”



1974. The Primum Mobile, in which Dante and Beatrice now are. [←](#)

1975. The nearer God the circle is, so much greater virtue it possesses. Hence the outermost of the heavens, revolving round the earth, corresponds to the innermost of the Orders of Angels revolving round God, and is controlled by it as its Regent or Intelligence. To make this more intelligible I will repeat here the three Triads of Angels, and the heavens of which they are severally the Intelligences, as already given in [note 1240.](#)

The Seraphim, Primum Mobile.

The Cherubim, The Fixed Stars.

The Thrones, Saturn.

The Dominions, Jupiter.

The Virtues, Mars.

The Powers, The Sun.

The Principalities, Venus.

The Archangels, Mercury.

The Angels, The Moon.



1976. *Aeneid*, XII 365, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“As when the blast of Thracian Boreas roars on the Aegean Sea, and to the shore pursues the waves, wherever the winds exert their incumbent force, the clouds fly through the air.”

Each of the four winds blows three different blasts; either directly in front, or from the right cheek, or the left. According to Boccaccio, the northeast wind in Italy is milder than the northwest. ↵

1977. Dante uses this comparison before, Canto I 60:—

“But I beheld it sparkle round about
Like iron that comes molten from the fire.”

↵

1978. The inventor of the game of chess brought it to a Persian king, who was so delighted with it, that he offered him in return whatever reward he might ask. The inventor said he wished only a grain of wheat, doubled as many times as there were squares on the chessboard; that is, one grain for the first square, two for the second, four for the third, and so on to sixty-four. This the king readily granted; but when the amount was reckoned up, he had not wheat enough in his whole kingdom to pay it. ↵

1979. Their appointed place or whereabout. ↵

1980. Thomas Aquinas, the *Doctor Angelicas* of the Schools, treats the subject of Angels at great length in the first volume of his *Summa Theologica*, from Quaest. L to LXIV, and from Quaest. CVI to CXIV. He constantly quotes Dionysius, sometimes giving his exact words, but oftener amplifying and interpreting his meaning. In Quaest. CVIII he discusses the names of the Angels, and of the Seraphim and Cherubim speaks as follows:—

“The name of Seraphim is not given from love alone, but from excess of love, which the name of heat or burning implies. Hence Dionysius (Cap. VII *Coel. Hier.*, a princ.) interprets the name Seraphim according to the properties of fire, in which is excess of heat. In fire, however, we may consider three things. First, a certain motion which is upward, and which is continuous; by which is signified, that they are unchangingly moving towards God.

Secondly, its active power, which is heat;... and by this is signified the influence of this kind of Angels, which they exercise powerfully on those beneath them, exciting them to a sublime fervor, and thoroughly purifying them by burning. Thirdly, in fire its brightness must be considered; and this signifies that such Angels have within themselves an inextinguishable light, and that they perfectly illuminate others.

“In the same way the name of Cherubim is given from a certain excess of knowledge; hence it is interpreted *plenitudo scientiae*; which Dionysius (*Cap. VII Coel. Hier.*, a princ.) explains in four ways: first, as perfect vision of God; secondly, full reception of divine light; thirdly, that in God himself they contemplate the beauty of the order of things emanating from God; fourthly, that, being themselves full of this kind of knowledge, they copiously pour it out upon others.”



1981. The love of God, which holds them fast to this central point as with a band. Job 38:31:—

“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?”



1982. Canto IX 61:—

“Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God Judicant.”

Of the Thrones, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, CVIII 5, says:—

“The Order of Thrones excels the inferior Orders in this, that it has the power of perceiving immediately in God the

reasons of the Divine operations.... Dionysius (Cap. VII *Coel. Hier.*) explains the name of Thrones from their resemblance to material chairs, in which four things are to be considered. First, in reference to position, because chairs are raised above the ground; and thus these Angels, which are called Thrones, are raised so far that they can perceive immediately in God the reasons of things. Secondly, in material chairs firmness must be considered, because one sits firmly in them; but this is *e converso*, for the Angels themselves are made firm by God. Thirdly, because the chair receives the sitter, and he can be carried in it; and thus the Angels receive God in themselves, and in a certain sense carry him to their inferiors. Fourthly, from their shape, because the chair is open on one side, to receive the sitter; and thus these Angels, by their promptitude, are open to receive God and to serve him."

↳

1983. Dante, *Convito*, I 1, says:—

"Knowlege is the ultimate perfection of our soul, in which consists our ultimate felicity."

It was one of the great questions of the Schools, whether the beatitude of the soul consisted in knowing or in loving. Thomas Aquinas maintains the former part of this proposition, and Duns Scotus the latter. ↳

1984. By the grace of God, and the cooperation of the good will of the recipient. ↳

1985. The perpetual spring of Paradise, which knows no falling autumnal leaves, no season in which Aries is a nocturnal sign. ↳

1986. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. CVIII 6, says:—

“And thus Dionysius (Cap. VII *Coel. Hier.*), from the names of the Orders inferring the properties thereof, placed in the first Hierarchy those Orders whose names were given them in reference to God, namely, the *Seraphim*, *Cherubim*, and *Thrones*; but in the middle Hierarchy he placed those whose names designate a certain common government or disposition, that is, the *Dominions*, *Virtues*, and *Powers*; and in the third Order he placed those whose names designate the execution of the work, namely, the *Principalities*, *Angels*, and *Archangels*.... But to the rule of government three things belong, the first of which is the distinction of the things to be done, which is the province of the *Dominions*; the second is to provide the faculty of fulfilling, which belongs to the *Virtues*; but the third is to arrange in what way the things prescribed, or defined, can be fulfilled, so that some one may execute them, and this belongs to the *Powers*. But the execution of the angelic ministry consists in announcing things divine. In the execution, however, of any act, there are some who begin the act, and lead the others, as in singing the precentors, and in battle those who lead and direct the rest; and this belongs to the *Principalities*. There are others who simply execute, and this is the part of the *Angels*. Others hold an intermediate position, which belongs to the *Archangels*.”



1987. The Athenian convert of St. Paul. Acts 17:34:—

“Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed; among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite.”

Dante places him among the theologians in the Heaven of the Sun. See Canto X 115:—

“Near by behold the lustre of that taper,
Which in the flesh below looked most within

The angelic nature and its ministry.”

To Dionysius was attributed a work, called *The Celestial Hierarchy*, which is the great storehouse of all that relates to the nature and operations of Angels. Venturi calls him “the false Areopagite”; and Dalbaeus, *De Script. Dion. Areop.*, says that this work was not known till the sixth century.

The *Legenda Aurea* confounds St. Dionysius the Areopagite with St. Denis, Bishop of Paris in the third century, and patron saint of France. It says he was called the Areopagite from the quarter where he lived; that he was surnamed Theosoph, or the Wise in God; that he was converted, not by the preaching of St. Paul, but by a miracle the saint wrought in restoring a blind man to sight; and that “the woman named Damaris,” who was converted with him, was his wife. It quotes from a letter of his to Polycarp, written from Egypt, where he was with his friend and fellow-student Apollophanes, and where he witnessed the darkening of the sun at the Crucifixion:—

“We were both at Heliopolis, when suddenly we saw the moon conceal the surface of the sun, though this was not the time for an eclipse, and this darkness continued for three hours, and the light returned at the ninth hour and lasted till evening.”

And finally it narrates, that when Dionysius was beheaded, in Paris, where he had converted many souls and built many churches, “straightway the body arose, and, taking its head in its arms, led by an angel, and surrounded by a celestial light, carried it a distance of two miles, from a place called the Mount of Martyrs, to the place where it now reposes.”

For an account of the *Celestial Hierarchy*, see [note 1443](#). ↵

1988. St. Gregory differed from St. Dionysius in the arrangement of the Orders, placing the Principalities in the second triad, and the Virtues in the third. ↵

1989. St. Paul, who, 2 Corinthians 12:4, “was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” ↵

1990. The Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, continued.

The children of Latona are Apollo and Diana, the Sun and Moon. [←](#)

1991. When the Sun is in Aries and the Moon in Libra, and when the Sun is setting and the full Moon rising, so that they are both on the horizon at the same time. [←](#)

1992. So long as they remained thus equipoised, as if in the opposite scales of an invisible balance suspended from the zenith. [←](#)

1993. God, whom Dante could not look upon, even as reflected in the eyes of Beatrice. [←](#)

1994. What Dante wishes to know is, where, when, and how the Angels were created. [←](#)

1995. Every When and every Where. [←](#)

1996. Dante, *Convito*, III 14, defines splendor as “reflected light.” Here it means the creation; the reflected light of God.

Job 38:7:—

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

And again, 35:—

“Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?”

[←](#)

1997. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. LXI 3:—

“The angelic nature was made before the creation of time, and after eternity.”

[←](#)

1998. In the creation of the Angels. Some editions read *nove Amori*, the nine Loves, or nine choirs of Angels. [←](#)

1999. Genesis 1:2:—

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”



2000. Pure Matter, or the elements; pure Form, or the Angels; and the two conjoined, the human race.

Form, in the language of the Schools, and as defined by Thomas Aquinas, is the principle “by which we first think, whether it be called intellect, or intellectual soul.” See [note 1260](#). [←](#)

2001. Genesis 1:31:—

“And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”



2002. The Angels. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. L 2, says:—

“Form is act. Therefore whatever is form alone, is pure act.”

For his definition of form, see [note 2006](#). [←](#)

2003. Pure matter, which is passive and only possesses potentiality, or power of assuming various forms when united with mind.

“It is called potentiality,” comments Buti, “because it can receive many forms; and the forms are called act, because they change, and act by changing matter into various forms.”

↙

2004. The union of the soul and body in man, who occupies the intermediate place between Angels and pure matter. ↙

2005. This bond, though suspended by death, will be resumed again at the resurrection, and remain forever. ↙

2006. St. Jerome, the greatest of the Latin Fathers of the Church, and author of the translation of the Scriptures known, as the Vulgate, was born of wealthy parents in Dalmatia, in 342. He studied at Rome under the grammarian Donatus, and became a lawyer in that city. At the age of thirty he visited the Holy Land, and, withdrawing from the world, became an anchorite in the desert of Chalcida, on the borders of Arabia. Here he underwent the bodily privations and temptations, and enjoyed the spiritual triumphs, of the hermit's life. He was "haunted by demons, and consoled by voices and visions from heaven." In one of his letters, cited by Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, IX 362, he writes:—

"In the remotest part of a wild and sharp desert, which, being burnt up with the heats of the scorching sun, strikes with horror and terror even the monks that inhabit it, I seemed to myself to be in the midst of the delights and assemblies of Rome. I loved solitude, that in the bitterness of my soul I might more freely bewail my miseries, and call upon my Saviour. My hideous emaciated limbs were covered with sackcloth: my skin was parched dry and black, and my flesh was almost wasted away. The days I passed in tears and groans, and when sleep overpowered me against my will, I cast my wearied bones, which hardly hung together, upon the bare ground, not so properly to give them rest, as to torture myself. I say nothing of my eating and drinking; for the monks in that desert, when they are sick, know no other drink but cold water, and look upon it as sensuality ever to eat anything dressed by fire. In this exile and prison, to which, for the fear of hell, I had voluntarily condemned myself, having

no other company but scorpions and wild beasts, I many times found my imagination filled with lively representations of dances in the company of Roman ladies, as if I had been in the midst of them.... I often joined whole nights to the days, crying, sighing, and beating my breast till the desired calm returned. I feared the very cell in which I lived, because it was witness to the foul suggestions of my enemy; and being angry and armed with severity against myself, I went alone into the most secret parts of the wilderness, and if I discovered anywhere a deep valley, or a craggy rock, that was the place of my prayer, there I threw this miserable sack of my body. The same Lord is my witness, that after so many sobs and tears, after having in much sorrow looked long up to heaven, I felt most delightful comforts and interior sweetness; and these so great, that, transported and absorpt, I seemed to myself to be amidst the choirs of angels; and glad and joyful I sung to God: *After Thee, O Lord, we will run in the fragrancy of thy celestial ointments.*"

In another letter, cited by Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, Auth. Tr., I 404, he exclaims:—

"O desert, enamelled with the flowers of Christ! O solitude, where those stones are born of which, in the Apocalypse, is built the city of the Great King! O retreat, which rejoicest in the friendship of God! What doest thou in the world, my brother, with thy soul greater than the world? How long wilt thou remain in the shadow of roofs, and in the smoky dungeons of cities? Believe me, I see here more of the light."

At the end of five years he was driven from his solitude by the persecution of the Eastern monks; and lived successively in Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Rome, and Alexandria. Finally, in 385, he returned to the Holy Land, and built a monastery at Bethlehem. Here

he wrote his translation of the Scriptures, and his Lives of the Fathers of the Desert; but in 416 this monastery, and others that had risen up in its neighborhood, were burned by the Pelagians, and St. Jerome took refuge in a strong tower or fortified castle. Four years afterwards he died, and was buried in the ruins of his monastery. ↵

2007. This truth of the simultaneous creation of mind and matter, as stated in line 29. ↵
2008. The opinion of St. Jerome and other Fathers of the Church, that the Angels were created long ages before the rest of the universe, is refuted by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. LXI 3. ↵
2009. That the Intelligences or Motors of the heavens should be so long without any heavens to move. ↵
2010. The subject of the elements is the earth, so called as being the lowest, or underlying the others, fire, air, and water. ↵
2011. The pride of Lucifer, who lies at the centre of the earth, towards which all things gravitate, and

“Down upon which thrust all the other rocks.”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V 856, makes the rebel angels deny that they were created by God:—

“Who saw
When this creation was? Rememberest thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us; self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native heaven, ethereal sons.”

↵

2012. The merit consists in being willing to receive this grace. [←](#)

2013. St. Chrysostom, who in his preaching so carried away his audiences that they beat the pavement with their swords and called him the “Thirteenth Apostle,” in one of his Homilies thus upbraids the custom of applauding the preacher:—

“What do your praises advantage me, when I see not your progress in virtue? Or what harm shall I receive from the silence of my auditors, when I behold the increase of their piety? The praise of the speaker is not the acclamation of his hearers, but their zeal for piety and religion; not their making a great stir in the times of hearing, but their showing diligence at all other times. Applause, as soon as it is out of the mouth, is dispersed into the air, and vanishes; but when the hearers grow better, this brings an incorruptible and immortal reward both to the speaker and the hearer. The praise of your acclamation may render the orator more illustrious here, but the piety of your souls will give him greater confidence before the tribunal of Christ. Therefore, if any one love the preacher, or if any preacher love his people, let him not be enamored with applause, but with the benefit of the hearers.”

[←](#)

2014. Lapo is the abbreviation of Jacopo, and Bindu of Aldobrandi, both familiar names in Florence. [←](#)

2015. Milton, “Lycidas,” 113:—

“How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest!
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scannel pipes of wretched straw:
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed;
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said:
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”



2016. Cowper, “Task,” II:—

“He that negotiates between God and man,
As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. ’Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and t’ address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God’s commission to the heart!”

For a specimen of the style of popular preachers in the Middle Ages,
see the story of Frate Cipolla, in the *Decameron*, Gior. VI Nov. 10. See
also Scheible’s *Kloster*, and Menin’s *Predicatoriana*.

2017. The Devil, who is often represented in early Christian art under the
shape of a coal-black bird. See Didron, *Christian Iconography*, I.

2018. In early paintings the swine is the symbol of St. Anthony, as the cherub
is of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, and the eagle of St. John. There
is an old tradition that St. Anthony was once a swineherd. Brand, *Pop.
Antiquities*, I 358, says:—

“In the World of Wonders is the following translation of an epigram:—

‘Once fed’st thou, Anthony, an heard of
swine,
And now an heard of monkes thou feedest
still:—
For wit and gut, alike both charges bin:
Both loven filth alike; both like to fill
Their greedy paunch alike. Nor was that kind
More beastly, sottish, swinish than this last.
All else agrees: one fault I onely find,
Thou feedest not thy monkes with oken
mast.’

“The author mentions before, persons ‘who runne up and downe the country, crying, Have you anything to bestow upon my lord S. Anthonie’s swine?’”

Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II 380, remarks:—

“I have read somewhere that the hog is given to St. Anthony, because he had been a swineherd, and cured the diseases of swine. This is quite a mistake. The hog was the representative of the demon of sensuality and gluttony, which Anthony is supposed to have vanquished by the exercises of piety and by divine aid. The ancient custom of placing in all his effigies a black pig at his feet, or under his feet, gave rise to the super stition that this unclean animal was especially dedicated to him, and under his protection. The monks of the Order of St. Anthony kept herds of consecrated pigs, which were allowed to feed at the public charge, and which it was a profanation to steal or kill: hence the proverb about the fatness of a ‘Tantony pig.’”

Halliwell, *Dict. of Arch. and Prov. Words*, has the following definition:—

“ANTHONY-PIG. The favorite or smallest pig of the litter. A Kentish expression, according to Grose. ‘To follow like a tantony pig,’ i.e. to follow close at one’s heels. Some derive this saying from a privilege enjoyed by the friars of certain convents in England and France, sons of St. Anthony, whose swine were permitted to feed in the streets. These swine would follow any one having greens or other provisions, till they obtained some of them; and it was in those days considered an act of charity and religion to feed them. St. Anthony was invoked for the pig.”

Mr. Howells, *Venetian Life*, p. 341, alludes to the same custom as once prevalent in Italy:—

“Among other privileges of the Church, abolished in Venice long ago, was that ancient right of the monks of St. Anthony Abbot, by which their herds of swine were made free of the whole city. These animals, enveloped in an odor of sanctity, wandered here and there, and were piously fed by devout people, until the year 1409, when, being found dangerous to children, and inconvenient to everybody, they were made the subject of a special decree, which deprived them of their freedom of movement. The Republic was always opposing and limiting the privileges of the Church!”



2019. Giving false indulgences, without the true stamp upon them, in return for the alms received. [←](#)

2020. The nature of the Angels. [←](#)

2021. Daniel 7:10:—

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

↖

2022. That irradiates this angelic nature. ↲

2023. The splendors are the reflected lights, or the Angels. ↲

2024. The fervor of the Angels is proportioned to their capacity of receiving the divine light. ↲

2025. The ascent to the Empyrean, the tenth and last Heaven. Of this Heaven, Dante, *Convito*, II 4, says:—

“This is the sovereign edifice of the world, in which the whole world is included, and outside of which nothing is. And it is not in space, but was formed solely in the primal Mind, which the Greeks call Protonoe. This is that magnificence of which the Psalmist spake, when he says to God, ‘Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.’”

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III 56:—

“Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure empyrean where he sits
High throned above all highth, bent down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view.
About him all the sanctities of heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance.”

↖

2026. The sixth hour is noon, and when noon is some six thousand miles away from us, the dawn is approaching, the shadow of the earth lies almost on a plane with it, and gradually the stars disappear. ↲

2027. The nine circles of Angels, described in Canto XXVIII. ↲

2028. From the Crystalline Heaven to the Empyrean. Dante, *Convito*, II 15, makes the Empyrean the symbol of Theology, the Divine Science:—

“The Empyrean Heaven, by its peace, resembles the Divine Science, which is full of all peace; and which suffers no strife of opinions or sophistical arguments, because of the exceeding certitude of its subject, which is God. And of this he says to his disciples, ‘My peace I give unto you; my peace I leave you’; giving and leaving them his doctrine, which is this science of which I speak. Of this Solomon says: ‘There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; my dove, my undefiled, is but one.’ All sciences he calls queens and paramours and virgins; and this he calls a dove, because it is without blemish of strife; and this he calls perfect, because it makes us perfectly to see the truth in which our soul has rest.”

⟵

2029. Philippians 4:7:—

“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”

⟵

2030. The Angels and the souls of the saints. ⟵

2031. The Angels will be seen in the same aspect after the last judgment as before; but the souls of the saints will wear “the twofold garments,” spoken of in Canto XXV 92, the spiritual body, and the glorified earthly body. ⟵

2032. Daniel 7:10:—

“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him.”

And Revelation 22:1:—

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

↩

2033. The sparks are Angels, and the flowers the souls of the blessed. ↩

2034. For the mystic virtues of the ruby, see [note 658](#). ↩

2035. For the mystic virtues of the topaz, see [note 1584](#). ↩

2036. “By the length,” says Venturi, “was represented the outpouring of God upon his creatures; by the roundness, the return of this outpouring to God, as to its first source and ultimate end.”

↩

2037. Dante repeats the word *vidi*, I saw, three times, as a rhyme, to express the intenseness of his vision. ↩

2038. Buti thinks that this light is the Holy Ghost; Philalethes, that it is the Logos, or second person of the Trinity; Tommaseo, that it is Illuminating Grace. ↩

2039. Didron, *Christian Iconography*, I 234, says:—

“It was in the centre, at the very heart of this luminous eternity, that the Deity shone forth. Dante no doubt wished to describe one of those roses with a thousand petals, which light the porches of our noblest cathedrals—the rose-windows, which were contemporaneous with the Florentine poet, and which he had no doubt seen in his travels in France. There in fact, in the very depth of the chalice of that rose of colored glass, the Divine Majesty shines out resplendently.”

↩

2040. The word convent is here used in its original meaning of a coming together, or assembly. ↩
2041. The name of Augustus is equivalent to Kaiser, Caesar, or Emperor. In Canto XXXII 119, the Virgin Mary is called Augusta, the Queen of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Empress of “the most just and merciful of empires.” ↩
2042. This is Henry of Luxembourg, to whom in 1300 Dante was looking as the regenerator of Italy. He became Emperor in 1308, and died in 1311, ten years before Dante. See [note 618](#), and [note 1180](#). ↩
2043. At the *Curia Romana*, or Papal court. ↩
2044. Pope Clement V (1305–1314). See [note 272](#). The allusion here is to his double dealing with Henry of Luxembourg. See [note 1685](#). ↩
2045. Among the Simoniacs in the third round of Malebolge. Of Simon Magus, Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, II 97, writes thus:—
- “Unless Simon was in fact a personage of considerable importance during the early history of Christianity, it is difficult to account for his becoming, as he is called by Beausobre, the hero of the Romance of Heresy. If Simon was the same with that magician, a Cypriot by birth, who was employed by Felix as agent in his intrigue to detach Drusilla from her husband, this part of his character accords with the charge of licentiousness advanced both against his life and his doctrines by his Christian opponents. This is by no means improbable; and indeed, even if he was not a person thus politically prominent and influential, the early writers of Christianity would scarcely have concurred in representing him as a formidable and dangerous antagonist of the Faith as a kind of personal rival of St. Peter, without some other groundwork for the fiction besides the collision recorded in the Acts. The

doctrines which are ascribed to him and to his followers, who continued to exist for several centuries, harmonize with the glimpse of his character and tenets in the writings of St. Luke. Simon probably was one of that class of adventurers which abounded at this period, or like Apollonius of Tyana, and others at a later time, with whom the opponents of Christianity attempted to confound Jesus and his Apostles. His doctrine was Oriental in its language and in its pretensions. He was the first Aeon or emanation, or rather perhaps the first manifestation of the primal Deity. He assumed not merely the title of the Great Power or Virtue of God, but all the other Appellations—the Word, the Perfection, the Paraclete, the Almighty, the whole combined attributes of the Deity. He had a companion, Helena, according to the statement of his enemies, a beautiful prostitute, whom he found at Tyre, who became in like manner the first conception (the Ennoea) of the Deity; but who, by her conjunction with matter, had been enslaved to its malignant influence, and, having fallen under the power of evil angels, had been in a constant state of transmigration, and, among other mortal bodies, had occupied that of the famous Helen of Troy. Beausobre, who elevates Simon into a Platonic philosopher, explains the Helena as a sublime allegory. She was the Psyche of his philosophic romance. The soul, by evil influences, had become imprisoned in matter. By her the Deity had created the angels: the angels, enamored of her, had inextricably entangled her in that polluting bondage, in order to prevent her return to heaven. To fly from their embraces she had passed from body to body. Connecting this fiction with the Grecian mythology, she was Minerva, or impersonated Wisdom; perhaps, also, Helena, or embodied Beauty.”



2046. Pope Boniface VIII, a native of Alagna, now Anagni. See [note 270](#), and [note 925](#).

Dante has already his punishment prepared. He is to be thrust head downward into a narrow hole in the rock of Malebolge, and to be driven down still lower when Clement V shall follow him. [✉](#)

2047. The White Rose of Paradise. [✉](#)

2048. *Iliad*, II 86, Anon. Tr.:—

“And the troops thronged together, as swarms of crowding bees, which come ever in fresh numbers from the hollow rock, and fly in clusters over the vernal flowers, and thickly some fly in this direction, and some in that.”

[✉](#)

2049. The nymph Callisto, or Helice, was changed by Jupiter into the constellation of the Great Bear, and her son into that of the Little Bear. See [note 1036](#). [✉](#)

2050. Rome and her superb edifices, before the removal of the Papal See to Avignon. [✉](#)

2051. Speaking of Petrarch’s visit to Rome, Mr. Norton, *Travel and Study Italy*, p. 288, says:—

“The great church of St. John Lateran, ‘the mother and head of all the churches of the city and the world,’—*mater urbis et orbis*—had been almost destroyed by fire, with its adjoining palace, and the houses of the canons, on the Eve of St. John, in 1308. The palace and the canons houses were rebuilt not long after; but at the time of Petrarch’s latest visit to Rome, and for years afterward, the church was without a roof, and its walls were ruinous. The poet addressed three at least of the Popes at Avignon with urgent appeals that this disgrace should no longer be permitted—but the Popes gave no heed to his words; for

the ruin of Roman churches, or of Rome itself, was a matter of little concern to these Transalpine prelates.”



2052. From the highest regions of the air to the lowest depth of the sea. [\[Note\]](#)

2053. St. Bernard, the great Abbot of Clairvaux, the “Doctor Mellifluus” of the Church, and preacher of the disastrous Second Crusade, was born of noble parents in the village of Fontaine, near Dijon, in Burgundy, in the year 1190. After studying at Paris, at the age of twenty he entered the Benedictine monastery of Citeaux; and when, five years later, this monastery had become overcrowded with monks, he was sent out to found a new one.

Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 149, says:—

“The manner of going forth on these occasions was strikingly characteristic of the age;—the abbot chose twelve monks, representing the twelve Apostles, and placed at their head a leader, representing Jesus Christ, who, with a cross in his hand, went before them. The gates of the convent opened—then closed behind them—and they wandered into the wide world, trusting in God to show them their destined abode.

“Bernard led his followers to a wilderness, called the *Valley of Wormwood*, and there, at his biding, arose the since renowned abbey of Clairvaux. They felled the trees, built themselves huts, tilled and sowed the ground, and changed the whole face of the country round; till that which had been a dismal solitude, the resort of wolves and robbers, became a land of vines and corn, rich, populous, and prosperous.”

This incident forms the subject of one of Murillo’s most famous paintings, and is suggestive of the saint’s intense devotion to the Virgin, which Dante expresses in this line.

Mr. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, I 145, gives the following sketch of St. Bernard:—

“With Bernard the monastic life is the one thing needful. He began life by drawing after him into the convent all his kindred; sweeping them one by one from the high seas of the world with the irresistible vortex of his own religious fervor. His incessant cry for Europe is, Better monasteries, and more of them. Let these ecclesiastical castles multiply; let them cover and command the land, well garrisoned with men of God, and then, despite all heresy and schism, theocracy will flourish, the earth shall yield her increase, and all people praise the Lord. Who so wise as Bernard to win souls for Christ, that is to say, recruits for the cloister? With what eloquence he paints the raptures of contemplation, the vanity and sin of earthly ambition or of earthly love! Wherever in his travels Bernard may have preached, there, presently, exultant monks must open wide their doors to admit new converts. Wherever he goes, he bereaves mothers of their children, the aged of their last solace and last support; praising those the most who leave most misery behind them. How sternly does he rebuke those Rachels who mourn and will not be comforted for children dead to them forever! What vitriol does he pour into the wounds when he asks if they will drag their son down to perdition with themselves by resisting the vocation of Heaven; whether it was not enough that they brought him forth sinful to a world of sin, and will they now, in their insane affection, cast him into the fires of hell? Yet Bernard is not hard-hearted by nature. He can pity this disgraceful weakness of the flesh. He makes such amends as superstition may. I will be a father to him, he says. Alas! cold comfort. You, their hearts will answer, whose flocks are countless, would nothing content you but our ewe lamb? Perhaps some cloister will be, for them too, the last resource of their desolation. They will fly for ease in their pain to the system which caused it. Bernard hopes so. So inhuman is the humanity of asceticism; cruel its tender mercies; thus

does it depopulate the world of its best in order to improve it....

“Bernard had his wish. He made Clairvaux the cynosure of all contemplative eyes. For any one who could exist at all as a monk, with any satisfaction to himself, that was the place above all others. Brother Godfrey, sent out to be first Abbot of Fontenay—as soon as he has set all things in order there, returns, only too gladly, from that rich and lovely region, to reenter his old cell, to walk around, delightedly revisiting the well-remembered spots among the trees or by the waterside, marking how the fields and gardens have come on, and relating to the eager brethren (for even Bernard’s monks have curiosity) all that befell him in his work. He would sooner be third Prior at Clairvaux, than Abbot of Fontenay. So, too, with Brother Humbert, commissioned in like manner to regulate Igny Abbey (fourth daughter of Clairvaux). He soon comes back, weary of the labor and sick for home, to look on the Aube once more, to hear the old mills go drumming and droning, with that monotony of muffled sound—the associate of his pious reveries—often heard in his dreams when far away; to set his feet on the very same flagstone in the choir where he used to stand, and to be happy. But Bernard, though away in Italy, toiling in the matter of the schism, gets to hear of his return, and finds time to send him across the Alps a letter of rebuke for this criminal self-pleasing, whose terrible sharpness must have darkened the poor man’s meditations for many a day.

“Bernard had further the satisfaction of improving and extending monasticism to the utmost; of sewing together, with tolerable success, the rended vesture of the Papacy; of suppressing a more popular and more Scriptural Christianity, for the benefit of his despotic order; of quenching for a time, by the extinction of Abelard, the spirit of free inquiry; and of seeing his ascetic and superhuman ideal of religion everywhere accepted as the genuine type of Christian virtue.”

↖

2054. The Veronica is the portrait of our Saviour impressed upon a veil or kerchief, preserved with great care in the church of the Santi Apostoli at Rome. Collin de Plancy, *Légendes des Saintes Images*, p. 11, gives the following account of it:—

“Properly speaking, the Veronica (*vera icon*) is the true likeness of Our Lord; and the same name has been given to the holy woman who obtained it, because the name of this holy woman was uncertain. According to some, she was a pious Jewess, called Seraphia; according to others, she was Berenice, niece of Herod. It is impossible to decide between the different traditions, some of which make her a virgin, and others the wife of Zaccheus.

“However this may be, the happy woman who obtained the venerable imprint of the holy face lived not far from the palace of Pilate. Her house is still shown to pilgrims at Jerusalem; and a Canon of Mayence, who went to the Holy Land in 1483, reported that he had visited the house of the Veronica.

“When she saw Our Lord pass, bearing his cross, covered with blood, spittle, sweat, and dust, she ran to meet him, and, presenting her kerchief, tried to wipe his adorable face. Our Lord, leaving for an instant the burden of the cross to Simon the Cyrenean, took the kerchief, applied it to his face, and gave it back to the pious woman, marked with the exact imprint of his august countenance.”

Of the Veronica there are four copies in existence, each claiming to be the original; one at Rome, another at Paris, a third at Laon, and a fourth at Xaen in Andalusia. The traveller who has crossed the Sierra Morena cannot easily forget the stone column, surmounted by an iron cross, which marks the boundary between La Mancha and Andalusia, with the melancholy stone face upon it, and the inscription, “*El verdadero Retrato de la Santa Cara del Dios de Xaen.*” ↲

2055. The Virgin Mary, *Regina Coeli*. [←](#)
2056. The chariot of the sun. [←](#)
2057. St. Bernard, absorbed in contemplation of the Virgin. [←](#)
2058. Eve. St. Augustine, Serm. 18 “*De Sanctis*,” says: “*Ilia percussit, ista sanavit.*” [←](#)
2059. Rachel is an emblem of Divine Contemplation. *Inferno* II 101,
Beatrice says:—
- “And came unto the place
Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.”
- [←](#)
2060. Ruth the Moabitess, ancestress of King David. [←](#)
2061. “Have mercy upon me,” are the first words of Psalm 51, “a Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him.” [←](#)
2062. The saints of the Old Testament. [←](#)
2063. The saints of the New Testament. [←](#)
2064. John the Baptist, seated at the point of the mystic Rose, opposite to the Virgin Mary. He died two years before Christ’s resurrection, and during these two years was in the Limbo of the Fathers. [←](#)
2065. The row of seats which divides the Rose horizontally, and crosses the two vertical lines of division, made by the seat of the Virgin Mary and those of the other Hebrew women on one side, and on the other the seats of John the Baptist and of the other saints of the New Testament beneath him. [←](#)
2066. That is to say, by the faith of their parents, by circumcision, and by baptism, as explained line 76 et seq. [←](#)

2067. *Festinata gente*, dying in infancy, and thus hurried into the life eternal.
Shakespeare, *King Lear*, III 7:—

“Advise the Duke, where you are going, to a most
festinate preparation.”



2068. Jacob and Esau. Genesis 25:22:—

“And the children struggled together within her.”

And Romans 9:11:—

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done
any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to
election, might stand, not of works, but of him that
 calleth.”



2069. Buti comments thus:—

“As it pleased God to give black hair to one, and to the
other red, so it pleased him to give more grace to one than
to the other.”

And the *Ottimo* says:—

“One was red, the other black; which colors denote the
temperaments of men, and accordingly the inclination of
their minds.”



2070. The keenness of vision with which they are originally endowed. [←](#)

2071. From Adam to Abraham. [←](#)

2072. From Abraham to Christ. Genesis 17:10:—

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”



2073. The face of the Virgin Mary. Didron, in his *Christian Iconography*, I 242, devotes a chapter to the “History of the Portraits of God the Son.” Besides the Veronica and the Santo Volto, attributed to Nicodemus, he mentions others which tradition traces back to Pilate and St. Luke, and a statue erected to Christ by the woman who was cured of the bloody flux. In the following extract several others are referred to:—

“Abgarus, king of Edessa, having learnt, says Damascenus, the wonderful things related of our Saviour, became inflamed with Divine love; he sent ambassadors to the Son of God, inviting him to come and visit him, and should the Saviour refuse to grant his request, he charged his ambassadors to employ some artist to make a portrait of our Lord. Jesus, from whom nothing is hidden, and to whom nothing is impossible, being aware of the intention of Abgarus, took a piece of linen, applied it to his face, and depicted thereon his own image. This very portrait, continues Damascenus, is in existence at the present day, and in perfect preservation.

“At the same epoch, a minute verbal description of the appearance of Christ was in circulation. The following description, which is of great importance, was sent to the Roman Senate by Publius Lentulus, Proconsul of Judaea, before Herod. Lentulus had seen the Saviour, and had made him sit to him, as it were, that he might give a written description of his features and physiognomy. His portrait, apocryphal though it be, is at least one of the first upon record; it dates from the earliest period of the Church, and has been mentioned by the most ancient fathers. Lentulus writes to the Senate as follows: ‘At this

time appeared a man who is still living and endowed with mighty power; his name is Jesus Christ. His disciples call him the Son of God; others regard him as a powerful prophet. He raises the dead to life, and heals the sick of every description of infirmity and disease. This man is of lofty stature, and well-proportioned; his countenance severe and virtuous, so that he inspires beholders with feelings both of fear and love. The hair of his head is of the color of wine, and from the top of the head to the ears straight and without radiance, but it descends from the ears to the shoulders in shining curls. From the shoulders the hair flows down the back, divided into two portions, after the manner of the Nazarenes; his forehead is clear and without wrinkle, his face free from blemish, and slightly tinged with red, his physiognomy noble and gracious. The nose and mouth faultless. His beard is abundant, the same color as the hair, and forked. His eyes blue and very brilliant. In reproving or censuring he is awe-inspiring; in exhorting and teaching, his speech is gentle and caressing. His countenance is marvellous in seriousness and grace. He has never once been seen to laugh; but many have seen him weep. He is slender in person, his hands are straight and long, his arms beautiful. Grave and solemn in his discourse, his language is simple and quiet. He is in appearance the most beautiful of the children of men.'

"The Emperor Constantine caused pictures of the Son of God to be painted from this ancient description.

"In the eighth century, at the period in which Saint John Damascenus wrote, the lineaments of this remarkable figure continued to be the same as they are to this day.

"The hair and the beard, the color of which is somewhat undetermined in the letter of Lentulus, for wine may be pale, golden, red, or violet color, is distinctly noted by Damascenus, who also adds the tint of the complexion; moreover, the opinion of Damascenus, like that of Lentulus, is decidedly in favor of the beauty of Christ, and

the former severely censures the Manichaeans, who entertained a contrary opinion. Thus, then, Christ, in taking upon him the form of Adam, assumed features exactly resembling those of the Virgin Mary.... In the West, a century later than the time of Damascenus, Christ was always thus depicted. S. Anschaire, Archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen, who beheld Christ [in a vision], described him as ‘tall, clad in the manner of the Jews, and beautiful in face, the splendor of Divinity darted like a flame from the eyes of the Redeemer, but his voice was full of sweetness.’”

↖

2074. The Angel Gabriel. Luke 1:28:—

“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”

↖

2075. The countenance of each saint became brighter. ↲

2076. The word in the original is *abbelliva*, which Dante here uses in the sense of the Provençal, *abellis*, of *Purgatorio* XXVI 140. He uses the word in the same sense in *Convito*, II 7:—

“In all speech the speaker is chiefly bent on persuasion, that is, on pleasing the audience, *all’abbellire dell’audienza*, which is the source of all other persuasions.”

↖

2077. The star of morning delighting in the sun, is from Canto VIII 12, where Dante speaks of Venus as

“The star

That wooes the sun, now following, now in front.”

↖

2078. The Virgin Mary, the Queen of this empire. ↲

2079. Adam. ↲

2080. St. Peter. ↲

2081. St. John, who lived till the evil days and persecutions of the Church,
the bride of Christ, won by the crucifixion. ↲

2082. Moses. ↲

2083. Exodus 32:9:—

“And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people,
and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.”

↖

2084. Anna, mother of the Virgin Mary. ↲

2085. Santa Lucia, virgin and martyr. Dante, *Inferno* II 100, makes her, as the
emblem of illuminating grace, intercede with Beatrice for his
salvation. ↲

2086. Trusting only to thine own efforts. ↲

2087. Chaucer, “Second Nonnes Tale”:—

“Thou maide and mother, doughter of thy son,
Thou well of mercy, sinful soules cure,
In whom that God of bountee chees to won;
Thou humble and high over every creature,
Thou nobledest so fer forth our nature,
That no desdaine the maker had of kinde

His son in blood and flesh to clothe and winde.

“Within the cloystre blisful of thy sides,
Toke mannes shape the eternal love and pees,
That of the trine compas Lord and gide is,
Whom erthe, and see, and heven out of relees
Ay herien; and thou, virgine wemmeles,
Bare of thy body (and dweltest maiden pure)
The creatour of every creature.

“Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swiche pitee,
That thou, that art the sonne of excellencye,
Not only helpest hem that praien thee,
But oftentime of thy benignitee
Ful freely, or that men thin helpe beseche,
Thou goest beforne, and art hir lives leche.”

See also his “Ballade of Our Ladie,” and “*La Priere de Nostre Dame*.²



2088. As St. Macarius said to his soul:—

“Having taken up thine abode in heaven, where thou hast
God and his holy angels to converse with, see that thou
descend not thence; regard not earthly things.”



2089. Finished the ardor of desire in its accomplishment. ²

2090. *Aeneid*, III 442, Davidson’s Tr.:—

“When, wafted thither, you reach the city Cumae, the
hallowed lakes, and Avernus resounding through the
woods, you will see the raving prophetess, who, beneath a
deep rock, reveals the fates, and commits to the leaves of
trees her characters and words. Whatever verses the virgin

has inscribed on the leaves, she ranges in harmonious order, and leaves in the cave enclosed by themselves: uncovered they remain in their position, nor recede from their order. But when, upon turning the hinge, a small breath of wind has blown upon them, and the door [by opening] hath discomposed the tender leaves, she never afterward cares to catch the verses as they are fluttering in the hollow cave, nor to recover their situation, or join them together.”



2091. Luke 9:62:—

“No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”



2092. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. IV 2:—

“If therefore God be the first efficient cause of things, the perfections, of all things must preexist preeminently in God.” And Buti: “In God are all things that are made, as in the First Cause, that foresees everything.”



2093. Of all the commentaries which I have consulted, that of Buti alone sustains this rendering of the line. The rest interpret it, “What I say is but a simple or feeble glimmer of what I saw.”



2094. There are almost as many interpretations of this passage as there are commentators. The most intelligible is, that Dante forgot in a single moment more of the glory he had seen, than the world had forgotten in five and twenty centuries of the Argonautic expedition, when Neptune wondered at the shadow of the first ship that ever crossed the sea.



2095. Aristotle, *Ethics*, I 1, Gillies's Tr.:—

“Since every art and every kind of knowledge, as well as all the actions and all the deliberations of men, constantly aim at something which they call good, good in general may be justly defined, that which all desire.”

↲

2096. In the same manner the reflection of the Griffin in Beatrice's eyes, *Purgatorio* XXXI 124, is described as changing, while the object itself remained unchanged:—

“Think, Reader, if within myself I marvelled,
When I beheld the thing itself stand still,
And in its image it transformed itself.”

↲

2097. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Quaest. XXIX 2:—

“What exists by itself, and not in another, is called subsistence.”

↲

2098. The three Persons of the Trinity. ↲

2099. The second circle, or second Person of the Trinity. ↲

2100. The human nature of Christ; the incarnation of the Word. ↲

2101. In this new light of God's grace, the mystery of the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ is revealed to Dante. ↲

2102. Wordsworth, “Resolution and Independence”:—

“As a cloud...
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,

And moveth all together, if it move at all.”

[←](#)

2103. 1 John 4:16:—

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

[←](#)

2104. In the Spanish schools the color of our Saviour’s mantle is generally a deep rich violet. [←](#)

2105. Villani, VIII Ch. 96. [←](#)

2106. Dino Compagni, III 76. [←](#)

2107. Tiresias, who was blind. [←](#)

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2109. Whom Plato banished from his imaginary republic. [←](#)

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Acknowledgments



Very special thanks go to: André Dias, Angus van der Vaart, Anibal Almendra, Beatriz Sapata, Benedetta Patrini, Bianca Bellucci, Bruno Chaves, Celia Kalis, Chiara Fumagalli, Cihan Andaç, Claudia Scholten, David Jonas, Desiree Monrooij, Elise Roest, Estelle Gassier, Eveliina Ketola, Felipe Regis, Irene Mommers, Jeanine Boogaard, Jip van der Heijden, Joana Soares, João Martins, Jorge Caetano Alves, Jos Hoes, Julia Eidler, Kim Vissers, Koen Houtman, Koos Vaes, Kristine Bardsen, Linnea Bolmstedt, Loïs Geerlings, Martine Bolder, Marzia Polese, Nick van Sprang, Nora Guerra, Otis Guerra, Rane Hyvönen, Raquel Guerra, Ricardo Gonçalves, Rui Guerra, Sana Larjani, Selena Pinchart-Deny, Simon Brunel, Szymon Schatton, Tessa Mendez and Tonke Huizing.

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