

Then "Glory to the Father, to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit," rang aloud
Throughout all Paradise, that with the song
My spirit reel'd, so passing sweet the strain:
And what I saw was equal ecstasy;
One universal smile it seem'd of all things,
Joy past compare, gladness unutterable,
Imperishable life of peace and love,
Exhaustless riches and unmeasur'd bliss.

Before mine eyes stood the four torches lit;
And that, which first had come, began to wax
In brightness, and in semblance such became,
As Jove might be, if he and Mars were birds,
And interchang'd their plumes. Silence ensued,
Through the blest quire, by Him, who here appoints
Vicissitude of ministry, enjoin'd;
When thus I heard: "Wonder not, if my hue
Be chang'd; for, while I speak, these shalt thou see
All in like manner change with me. My place
He who usurps on earth (my place, ay, mine,
Which in the presence of the Son of God
Is void), the same hath made my cemetery
A common sewer of puddle and of blood:
The more below his triumph, who from hence
Malignant fell." Such colour, as the sun,
At eve or morning, paints an adverse cloud,

Then saw I sprinkled over all the sky.
And as th' unblemish'd dame, who in herself
Secure of censure, yet at bare report
Of other's failing, shrinks with maiden fear;
So Beatrice in her semblance chang'd:
And such eclipse in heav'n methinks was seen,
When the Most Holy suffer'd. Then the words
Proceeded, with voice, alter'd from itself
So clean, the semblance did not alter more.
"Not to this end was Christ's spouse with my blood,
With that of Linus, and of Cletus fed:
That she might serve for purchase of base gold:
But for the purchase of this happy life
Did Sextus, Pius, and Callixtus bleed,
And Urban, they, whose doom was not without
Much weeping seal'd. No purpose was of our
That on the right hand of our successors
Part of the Christian people should be set,
And part upon their left; nor that the keys,
Which were vouchsaf'd me, should for ensign serve
Unto the banners, that do levy war
On the baptiz'd: nor I, for sigil-mark
Set upon sold and lying privileges;
Which makes me oft to bicker and turn red.
In shepherd's clothing greedy wolves below
Range wide o'er all the pastures. Arm of God!
Why longer sleepest thou? Caorsines and Gascona

Prepare to quaff our blood. O good beginning
To what a vile conclusion must thou stoop!
But the high providence, which did defend
Through Scipio the world's glory unto Rome,
Will not delay its succour: and thou, son,
Who through thy mortal weight shall yet again
Return below, open thy lips, nor hide
What is by me not hidden." As a Hood
Of frozen vapours streams adown the air,
What time the she-goat with her skiey horn
Touches the sun; so saw I there stream wide
The vapours, who with us had linger'd late
And with glad triumph deck th' ethereal cope.
Onward my sight their semblances pursued;
So far pursued, as till the space between
From its reach sever'd them: whereat the guide
Celestial, marking me no more intent
On upward gazing, said, "Look down and see
What circuit thou hast compass'd." From the hour
When I before had cast my view beneath,
All the first region overpast I saw,
Which from the midmost to the bound'ry winds;
That onward thence from Gades I beheld
The unwise passage of Laertes' son,
And hitherward the shore, where thou, Europa!
Mad'st thee a joyful burden: and yet more
Of this dim spot had seen, but that the sun,

A constellation off and more, had ta'en
His progress in the zodiac underneath.

Then by the spirit, that doth never leave
Its amorous dalliance with my lady's looks,
Back with redoubled ardour were mine eyes
Led unto her: and from her radiant smiles,
Whenas I turn'd me, pleasure so divine
Did lighten on me, that whatever bait
Or art or nature in the human flesh,
Or in its limn'd resemblance, can combine
Through greedy eyes to take the soul withal,
Were to her beauty nothing. Its boon influence
From the fair nest of Leda rapt me forth,
And wafted on into the swiftest heav'n.

What place for entrance Beatrice chose,
I may not say, so uniform was all,
Liveliest and loftiest. She my secret wish
Divin'd; and with such gladness, that God's love
Seem'd from her visage shining, thus began:
"Here is the goal, whence motion on his race
Starts; motionless the centre, and the rest
All mov'd around. Except the soul divine,
Place in this heav'n is none, the soul divine,
Wherein the love, which ruleth o'er its orb,
Is kindled, and the virtue that it sheds;

One circle, light and love, enclasping it,
As this doth clasp the others; and to Him,
Who draws the bound, its limit only known.
Measur'd itself by none, it doth divide
Motion to all, counted unto them forth,
As by the fifth or half ye count forth ten.
The vase, wherein time's roots are plung'd, thou seest,
Look elsewhere for the leaves. O mortal lust!
That canst not lift thy head above the waves
Which whelm and sink thee down! The will in man
Bears goodly blossoms; but its ruddy promise
Is, by the dripping of perpetual rain,
Made mere abortion: faith and innocence
Are met with but in babes, each taking leave
Ere cheeks with down are sprinkled; he, that fasts,
While yet a stammerer, with his tongue let loose
Gluts every food alike in every moon.
One yet a babbler, loves and listens to
His mother; but no sooner hath free use
Of speech, than he doth wish her in her grave.
So suddenly doth the fair child of him,
Whose welcome is the morn and eve his parting,
To negro blackness change her virgin white.

"Thou, to abate thy wonder, note that none
Bears rule in earth, and its frail family
Are therefore wand'ers. Yet before the date,

When through the hundredth in his reck'ning drops
Pale January must be shor'd aside
From winter's calendar, these heav'nly spheres
Shall roar so loud, that fortune shall be fain
To turn the poop, where she hath now the prow;
So that the fleet run onward; and true fruit,
Expected long, shall crown at last the bloom!"