

When from their game of dice men separate,
He, who hath lost, remains in sadness fix'd,
Revolving in his mind, what luckless throws
He cast: but meanwhile all the company
Go with the other; one before him runs,
And one behind his mantle twitches, one
Fast by his side bids him remember him.
He stops not; and each one, to whom his hand
Is stretch'd, well knows he bids him stand aside;
And thus he from the press defends himself.
E'en such was I in that close-crowding throng;
And turning so my face around to all,
And promising, I 'scap'd from it with pains.
Here of Arezzo him I saw, who fell
By Ghino's cruel arm; and him beside,
Who in his chase was swallow'd by the stream.
Here Frederic Novello, with his hand
Stretch'd forth, entreated; and of Pisa he,
Who put the good Marzuco to such proof
Of constancy. Count Orso I beheld;
And from its frame a soul dismiss'd for spite
And envy, as it said, but for no crime:
I speak of Peter de la Brosse; and here,
While she yet lives, that Lady of Brabant
Let her beware; lest for so false a deed
She herd with worse than these. When I was freed
From all those spirits, who pray'd for others' prayers

To hasten on their state of blessedness;
Straight I began: "O thou, my luminary!
It seems expressly in thy text denied,
That heaven's supreme decree can never bend
To supplication; yet with this design
Do these entreat. Can then their hope be vain,
Or is thy saying not to me reveal'd?"
He thus to me: "Both what I write is plain,
And these deceiv'd not in their hope, if well
Thy mind consider, that the sacred height
Of judgment doth not stoop, because love's flame
In a short moment all fulfils, which he
Who sojourns here, in right should satisfy.
Besides, when I this point concluded thus,
By praying no defect could be supplied;
Because the pray'r had none access to God.
Yet in this deep suspicion rest thou not
Contented unless she assure thee so,
Who betwixt truth and mind infuses light.
I know not if thou take me right; I mean
Beatrice. Her thou shalt behold above,
Upon this mountain's crown, fair seat of joy."
Then I: "Sir! let us mend our speed; for now
I tire not as before; and lo! the hill
Stretches its shadow far." He answer'd thus:
"Our progress with this day shall be as much
As we may now dispatch; but otherwise

Than thou supposest is the truth. For there
Thou canst not be, ere thou once more behold
Him back returning, who behind the steep
Is now so hidden, that as erst his beam
Thou dost not break. But lo! a spirit there
Stands solitary, and toward us looks:
It will instruct us in the speediest way.”
We soon approach’d it. O thou Lombard spirit!
How didst thou stand, in high abstracted mood,
Scarce moving with slow dignity thine eyes!
It spoke not aught, but let us onward pass,
Eyeing us as a lion on his watch.
But Virgil with entreaty mild advanc’d,
Requesting it to show the best ascent.
It answer to his question none return’d,
But of our country and our kind of life
Demanded. When my courteous guide began,
“Mantua,” the solitary shadow quick
Rose towards us from the place in which it stood,
And cry’d, “Mantuan! I am thy countryman
Sordello.” Each the other then embrac’d.
Ah slavish Italy! thou inn of grief,
Vessel without a pilot in loud storm,
Lady no longer of fair provinces,
But brothel-house impure! this gentle spirit,
Ev’n from the Pleasant sound of his dear land
Was prompt to greet a fellow citizen

With such glad cheer; while now thy living ones
In thee abide not without war; and one
Malicious gnaws another, ay of those
Whom the same wall and the same moat contains,
Seek, wretched one! around thy sea-coasts wide;
Then homeward to thy bosom turn, and mark
If any part of the sweet peace enjoy.
What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand
Befitted, if thy saddle be unpress'd?
Nought doth he now but aggravate thy shame.
Ah people! thou obedient still shouldst live,
And in the saddle let thy Caesar sit,
If well thou marked'st that which God commands.
Look how that beast to felness hath relaps'd
From having lost correction of the spur,
Since to the bridle thou hast set thine hand,
O German Albert! who abandon'st her,
That is grown savage and unmanageable,
When thou should'st clasp her flanks with forked heels.
Just judgment from the stars fall on thy blood!
And be it strange and manifest to all!
Such as may strike thy successor with dread!
For that thy sire and thou have suffer'd thus,
Through greediness of yonder realms detain'd,
The garden of the empire to run waste.
Come see the Capulets and Montagues,
The Philippeschi and Monaldi! man

Who car'st for nought! those sunk in grief, and these
With dire suspicion rack'd. Come, cruel one!
Come and behold the' oppression of the nobles,
And mark their injuries: and thou mayst see.
What safety Santafigiore can supply.
Come and behold thy Rome, who calls on thee,
Desolate widow! day and night with moans:
"My Caesar, why dost thou desert my side?"
Come and behold what love among thy people:
And if no pity touches thee for us,
Come and blush for thine own report. For me,
If it be lawful, O Almighty Power,
Who wast in earth for our sakes crucified!
Are thy just eyes turn'd elsewhere? or is this
A preparation in the wond'rous depth
Of thy sage counsel made, for some good end,
Entirely from our reach of thought cut off?
So are the' Italian cities all o'erthrong'd
With tyrants, and a great Marcellus made
Of every petty factious villager.
My Florence! thou mayst well remain unmov'd
At this digression, which affects not thee:
Thanks to thy people, who so wisely speed.
Many have justice in their heart, that long
Waiteth for counsel to direct the bow,
Or ere it dart unto its aim: but shine
Have it on their lip's edge. Many refuse

To bear the common burdens: readier thine
Answer unall'd, and cry, "Behold I stoop!"
Make thyself glad, for thou hast reason now,
Thou wealthy! thou at peace! thou wisdom-fraught!
Facts best witness if I speak the truth.
Athens and Lacedaemon, who of old
Enacted laws, for civil arts renown'd,
Made little progress in improving life
Tow'rd thee, who usest such nice subtlety,
That to the middle of November scarce
Reaches the thread thou in October weav'st.
How many times, within thy memory,
Customs, and laws, and coins, and offices
Have been by thee renew'd, and people chang'd!
If thou remember'st well and can'st see clear,
Thou wilt perceive thyself like a sick wretch,
Who finds no rest upon her down, but oft
Shifting her side, short respite seeks from pain.