

Now in his word, sole, ruminating, joy'd  
That blessed spirit; and I fed on mine,  
Tempting the sweet with bitter: she meanwhile,  
Who led me unto God, admonish'd: "Muse  
On other thoughts: bethink thee, that near Him  
I dwell, who recompenseth every wrong."

At the sweet sounds of comfort straight I turn'd;  
And, in the saintly eyes what love was seen,  
I leave in silence here: nor through distrust  
Of my words only, but that to such bliss  
The mind remounts not without aid. Thus much  
Yet may I speak; that, as I gaz'd on her,  
Affection found no room for other wish.  
While the everlasting pleasure, that did full  
On Beatrice shine, with second view  
From her fair countenance my gladden'd soul  
Contented; vanquishing me with a beam  
Of her soft smile, she spake: "Turn thee, and list.  
These eyes are not thy only Paradise."

As here we sometimes in the looks may see  
Th' affection mark'd, when that its sway hath ta'en  
The spirit wholly; thus the hallow'd light,  
To whom I turn'd, flashing, bewray'd its will  
To talk yet further with me, and began:  
"On this fifth lodgment of the tree, whose life

Is from its top, whose fruit is ever fair  
And leaf unwith'ring, blessed spirits abide,  
That were below, ere they arriv'd in heav'n,  
So mighty in renown, as every muse  
Might grace her triumph with them. On the horns  
Look therefore of the cross: he, whom I name,  
Shall there enact, as doth in summer cloud  
Its nimble fire." Along the cross I saw,  
At the repeated name of Joshua,  
A splendour gliding; nor, the word was said,  
Ere it was done: then, at the naming saw  
Of the great Maccabee, another move  
With whirling speed; and gladness was the scourge  
Unto that top. The next for Charlemagne  
And for the peer Orlando, two my gaze  
Pursued, intently, as the eye pursues  
A falcon flying. Last, along the cross,  
William, and Renard, and Duke Godfrey drew  
My ken, and Robert Guiscard. And the soul,  
Who spake with me among the other lights  
Did move away, and mix; and with the choir  
Of heav'nly songsters prov'd his tuneful skill.

To Beatrice on my right I bent,  
Looking for intimation or by word  
Or act, what next behoov'd: and did descry  
Such mere effulgence in her eyes, such joy,

It past all former wont. And, as by sense  
Of new delight, the man, who perseveres  
In good deeds doth perceive from day to day  
His virtue growing; I e'en thus perceiv'd  
Of my ascent, together with the heav'n  
The circuit widen'd, noting the increase  
Of beauty in that wonder. Like the change  
In a brief moment on some maiden's cheek,  
Which from its fairness doth discharge the weight  
Of pudency, that stain'd it; such in her,  
And to mine eyes so sudden was the change,  
Through silvery whiteness of that temperate star,  
Whose sixth orb now enfolded us. I saw,  
Within that Jovial cresset, the clear sparks  
Of love, that reign'd there, fashion to my view  
Our language. And as birds, from river banks  
Arisen, now in round, now lengthen'd troop,  
Array them in their flight, greeting, as seems,  
Their new-found pastures; so, within the lights,  
The saintly creatures flying, sang, and made  
Now D. now I. now L. figur'd I' th' air.

First, singing, to their notes they mov'd, then one  
Becoming of these signs, a little while  
Did rest them, and were mute. O nymph divine  
Of Pegasean race! whose souls, which thou  
Inspir'st, mak'st glorious and long-liv'd, as they

Cities and realms by thee! thou with thyself  
Inform me; that I may set forth the shapes,  
As fancy doth present them. Be thy power  
Display'd in this brief song. The characters,  
Vocal and consonant, were five-fold seven.  
In order each, as they appear'd, I mark'd.  
Diligite Justitiam, the first,  
Both verb and noun all blazon'd; and the extreme  
Qui judicatis terram. In the M.  
Of the fifth word they held their station,  
Making the star seem silver streak'd with gold.  
And on the summit of the M. I saw  
Descending other lights, that rested there,  
Singing, methinks, their bliss and primal good.  
Then, as at shaking of a lighted brand,  
Sparkles innumerable on all sides  
Rise scatter'd, source of augury to th' unwise;  
Thus more than thousand twinkling lustres hence  
Seem'd reascending, and a higher pitch  
Some mounting, and some less; e'en as the sun,  
Which kindleth them, decreed. And when each one  
Had settled in his place, the head and neck  
Then saw I of an eagle, lively  
Grav'd in that streaky fire. Who painteth there,  
Hath none to guide him; of himself he guides;  
And every line and texture of the nest  
Doth own from him the virtue, fashions it.

The other bright beatitude, that seem'd  
Erewhile, with lili'd crowning, well content  
To over-canopy the M. mov'd forth,  
Following gently the impress of the bird.

Sweet star! what glorious and thick-studded gems  
Declar'd to me our justice on the earth  
To be the effluence of that heav'n, which thou,  
Thyself a costly jewel, dost inlay!  
Therefore I pray the Sovran Mind, from whom  
Thy motion and thy virtue are begun,  
That he would look from whence the fog doth rise,  
To vitiate thy beam: so that once more  
He may put forth his hand 'gainst such, as drive  
Their traffic in that sanctuary, whose walls  
With miracles and martyrdoms were built.

Ye host of heaven! whose glory I survey I  
O beg ye grace for those, that are on earth  
All after ill example gone astray.  
War once had for its instrument the sword:  
But now 't is made, taking the bread away  
Which the good Father locks from none. —And thou,  
That writes but to cancel, think, that they,  
Who for the vineyard, which thou wastest, died,  
Peter and Paul live yet, and mark thy doings.  
Thou hast good cause to cry, "My heart so cleaves

To him, that liv'd in solitude remote,  
And from the wilds was dragg'd to martyrdom,  
I wist not of the fisherman nor Paul."