

After solution of my doubt, thy Charles,  
O fair Clemenza, of the treachery spake  
That must befall his seed: but, "Tell it not,"  
Said he, "and let the destin'd years come round."  
Nor may I tell thee more, save that the meed  
Of sorrow well-deserv'd shall quit your wrongs.

And now the visage of that saintly light  
Was to the sun, that fills it, turn'd again,  
As to the good, whose plenitude of bliss  
Sufficeth all. O ye misguided souls!  
Infatuate, who from such a good estrange  
Your hearts, and bend your gaze on vanity,  
Alas for you!—And lo! toward me, next,  
Another of those splendent forms approach'd,  
That, by its outward bright'ning, testified  
The will it had to pleasure me. The eyes  
Of Beatrice, resting, as before,  
Firmly upon me, manifested forth  
Approval of my wish. "And O," I cried,  
"Blest spirit! quickly be my will perform'd;  
And prove thou to me, that my inmost thoughts  
I can reflect on thee." Thereat the light,  
That yet was new to me, from the recess,  
Where it before was singing, thus began,  
As one who joys in kindness: "In that part  
Of the deprav'd Italian land, which lies

Between Rialto, and the fountain-springs  
Of Brenta and of Piava, there doth rise,  
But to no lofty eminence, a hill,  
From whence erewhile a firebrand did descend,  
That sorely sheet the region. From one root  
I and it sprang; my name on earth Cunizza:  
And here I glitter, for that by its light  
This star o'ercame me. Yet I naught repine,  
Nor grudge myself the cause of this my lot,  
Which haply vulgar hearts can scarce conceive.

“This jewel, that is next me in our heaven,  
Lustrous and costly, great renown hath left,  
And not to perish, ere these hundred years  
Five times absolve their round. Consider thou,  
If to excel be worthy man's endeavour,  
When such life may attend the first. Yet they  
Care not for this, the crowd that now are girt  
By Adice and Tagliamento, still  
Impenitent, tho' scourg'd. The hour is near,  
When for their stubbornness at Padua's marsh  
The water shall be chang'd, that laves Vicena  
And where Cagnano meets with Sile, one  
Lords it, and bears his head aloft, for whom  
The web is now a-warping. Feltro too  
Shall sorrow for its godless shepherd's fault,  
Of so deep stain, that never, for the like,

Was Malta's bar unclos'd. Too large should be  
The skillet, that would hold Ferrara's blood,  
And wearied he, who ounce by ounce would weight it,  
The which this priest, in show of party-zeal,  
Courteous will give; nor will the gift ill suit  
The country's custom. We descry above,  
Mirrors, ye call them thrones, from which to us  
Reflected shine the judgments of our God:  
Whence these our sayings we avouch for good."

She ended, and appear'd on other thoughts  
Intent, re-ent'ring on the wheel she late  
Had left. That other joyance meanwhile wax'd  
A thing to marvel at, in splendour glowing,  
Like choicest ruby stricken by the sun,  
For, in that upper clime, effulgence comes  
Of gladness, as here laughter: and below,  
As the mind saddens, murkier grows the shade.

"God seeth all: and in him is thy sight,"  
Said I, "blest Spirit! Therefore will of his  
Cannot to thee be dark. Why then delays  
Thy voice to satisfy my wish untold,  
That voice which joins the inexpressive song,  
Pastime of heav'n, the which those ardours sing,  
That cowl them with six shadowing wings outspread?  
I would not wait thy asking, wert thou known

To me, as thoroughly I to thee am known.”

He forthwith answ’ring, thus his words began:

“The valley’ of waters, widest next to that  
Which doth the earth engarland, shapes its course,  
Between discordant shores, against the sun  
Inward so far, it makes meridian there,  
Where was before th’ horizon. Of that vale  
Dwelt I upon the shore, ’twixt Ebro’s stream  
And Macra’s, that divides with passage brief  
Genoan bounds from Tuscan. East and west  
Are nearly one to Begga and my land,  
Whose haven erst was with its own blood warm.  
Who knew my name were wont to call me Folco:  
And I did bear impression of this heav’n,  
That now bears mine: for not with fiercer flame  
Glow’d Belus’ daughter, injuring alike  
Sichaeus and Creusa, than did I,  
Long as it suited the unripen’d down  
That fledg’d my cheek: nor she of Rhodope,  
That was beguiled of Demophoon;  
Nor Jove’s son, when the charms of Iole  
Were shrin’d within his heart. And yet there hides  
No sorrowful repentance here, but mirth,  
Not for the fault (that doth not come to mind),  
But for the virtue, whose o’erruling sway  
And providence have wrought thus quaintly. Here

The skill is look'd into, that fashioneth  
With such effectual working, and the good  
Discern'd, accruing to this upper world  
From that below. But fully to content  
Thy wishes, all that in this sphere have birth,  
Demands my further parle. Inquire thou wouldst,  
Who of this light is denizen, that here  
Beside me sparkles, as the sun-beam doth  
On the clear wave. Know then, the soul of Rahab  
Is in that gladsome harbour, to our tribe  
United, and the foremost rank assign'd.  
He to that heav'n, at which the shadow ends  
Of your sublunar world, was taken up,  
First, in Christ's triumph, of all souls redeem'd:  
For well behoov'd, that, in some part of heav'n,  
She should remain a trophy, to declare  
The mighty contest won with either palm;  
For that she favour'd first the high exploit  
Of Joshua on the holy land, whereof  
The Pope recks little now. Thy city, plant  
Of him, that on his Maker turn'd the back,  
And of whose envying so much woe hath sprung,  
Engenders and expands the cursed flower,  
That hath made wander both the sheep and lambs,  
Turning the shepherd to a wolf. For this,  
The gospel and great teachers laid aside,  
The decretals, as their stuff margins show,

Are the sole study. Pope and Cardinals,  
Intent on these, ne'er journey but in thought  
To Nazareth, where Gabriel op'd his wings.  
Yet it may chance, ere long, the Vatican,  
And other most selected parts of Rome,  
That were the grave of Peter's soldiery,  
Shall be deliver'd from the adult'rous bond."