

Such as the youth, who came to Clymene
To certify himself of that reproach,
Which had been fasten'd on him, (he whose end
Still makes the fathers chary to their sons),
E'en such was I; nor unobserv'd was such
Of Beatrice, and that saintly lamp,
Who had erewhile for me his station mov'd;
When thus by lady: "Give thy wish free vent,
That it may issue, bearing true report
Of the mind's impress; not that aught thy words
May to our knowledge add, but to the end,
That thou mayst use thyself to own thy thirst
And men may mingle for thee when they hear."

"O plant! from whence I spring! rever'd and lov'd!
Who soar'st so high a pitch, thou seest as clear,
As earthly thought determines two obtuse
In one triangle not contain'd, so clear
Dost see contingencies, ere in themselves
Existent, looking at the point whereto
All times are present, I, the whilst I scal'd
With Virgil the soul purifying mount,
And visited the nether world of woe,
Touching my future destiny have heard
Words grievous, though I feel me on all sides
Well squar'd to fortune's blows. Therefore my will
Were satisfied to know the lot awaits me,

The arrow, seen beforehand, slacks its flight.”

So said I to the brightness, which erewhile
To me had spoken, and my will declar’d,
As Beatrice will’d, explicitly.
Nor with oracular response obscure,
Such, as or ere the Lamb of God was slain,
Beguil’d the credulous nations; but, in terms
Precise and unambiguous lore, replied
The spirit of paternal love, enshrin’d,
Yet in his smile apparent; and thus spake:
“Contingency, unfolded not to view
Upon the tablet of your mortal mold,
Is all depictur’d in the’ eternal sight;
But hence deriveth not necessity,
More then the tall ship, hurried down the flood,
Doth from the vision, that reflects the scene.
From thence, as to the ear sweet harmony
From organ comes, so comes before mine eye
The time prepar’d for thee. Such as driv’n out
From Athens, by his cruel stepdame’s wiles,
Hippolytus departed, such must thou
Depart from Florence. This they wish, and this
Contrive, and will ere long effectuate, there,
Where gainful merchandize is made of Christ,
Throughout the livelong day. The common cry,
Will, as ’t is ever wont, affix the blame

Unto the party injur'd: but the truth
Shall, in the vengeance it dispenseth, find
A faithful witness. Thou shall leave each thing
Belov'd most dearly: this is the first shaft
Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
How salt the savour is of other's bread,
How hard the passage to descend and climb
By other's stairs, But that shall gall thee most
Will be the worthless and vile company,
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits.
For all ungrateful, impious all and mad,
Shall turn 'gainst thee: but in a little while
Theirs and not thine shall be the crimson'd brow
Their course shall so evince their brutishness
T' have ta'en thy stand apart shall well become thee.

"First refuge thou must find, first place of rest,
In the great Lombard's courtesy, who bears
Upon the ladder perch'd the sacred bird.
He shall behold thee with such kind regard,
That 'twixt ye two, the contrary to that
Which falls 'twixt other men, the granting shall
Forerun the asking. With him shalt thou see
That mortal, who was at his birth impress
So strongly from this star, that of his deeds
The nations shall take note. His unripe age
Yet holds him from observance; for these wheels

Only nine years have compass him about.
But, ere the Gascon practice on great Harry,
Sparkles of virtue shall shoot forth in him,
In equal scorn of labours and of gold.
His bounty shall be spread abroad so widely,
As not to let the tongues e'en of his foes
Be idle in its praise. Look thou to him
And his beneficence: for he shall cause
Reversal of their lot to many people,
Rich men and beggars interchanging fortunes.
And thou shalt bear this written in thy soul
Of him, but tell it not;" and things he told
Incredible to those who witness them;
Then added: "So interpret thou, my son,
What hath been told thee.—Lo! the ambushment
That a few circling seasons hide for thee!
Yet envy not thy neighbours: time extends
Thy span beyond their treason's chastisement."

Soon, as the saintly spirit, by his silence,
Had shown the web, which I had stretch'd for him
Upon the warp, was woven, I began,
As one, who in perplexity desires
Counsel of other, wise, benign and friendly:
"My father! well I mark how time spurs on
Toward me, ready to inflict the blow,
Which falls most heavily on him, who most

Abandoned himself. Therefore 't is good
I should forecast, that driven from the place
Most dear to me, I may not lose myself
All others by my song. Down through the world
Of infinite mourning, and along the mount
From whose fair height my lady's eyes did lift me,
And after through this heav'n from light to light,
Have I learnt that, which if I tell again,
It may with many woefully disrelish;
And, if I am a timid friend to truth,
I fear my life may perish among those,
To whom these days shall be of ancient date."

The brightness, where enclos'd the treasure smil'd,
Which I had found there, first shone glisteningly,
Like to a golden mirror in the sun;
Next answer'd: "Conscience, dimm'd or by its own
Or other's shame, will feel thy saying sharp.
Thou, notwithstanding, all deceit remov'd,
See the whole vision be made manifest.
And let them wince who have their withers wrung.
What though, when tasted first, thy voice shall prove
Unwelcome, on digestion it will turn
To vital nourishment. The cry thou raisest,
Shall, as the wind doth, smite the proudest summits;
Which is of honour no light argument,
For this there only have been shown to thee,

Throughout these orbs, the mountain, and the deep,
Spirits, whom fame hath note of. For the mind
Of him, who hears, is loth to acquiesce
And fix its faith, unless the instance brought
Be palpable, and proof apparent urge.”