

Now had I left those spirits, and pursued
The steps of my Conductor, when beheld
Pointing the finger at me one exclaim'd:
"See how it seems as if the light not shone
From the left hand of him beneath, and he,
As living, seems to be led on." Mine eyes
I at that sound reverting, saw them gaze
Through wonder first at me, and then at me
And the light broken underneath, by turns.
"Why are thy thoughts thus riveted?" my guide
Exclaim'd, "that thou hast slack'd thy pace? or how
Imports it thee, what thing is whisper'd here?
Come after me, and to their babblings leave
The crowd. Be as a tower, that, firmly set,
Shakes not its top for any blast that blows!
He, in whose bosom thought on thought shoots out,
Still of his aim is wide, in that the one
Sicklies and wastes to nought the other's strength."
What other could I answer save "I come?"
I said it, somewhat with that colour ting'd
Which ofttimes pardon meriteth for man.
Meanwhile traverse along the hill there came,
A little way before us, some who sang
The "Miserere" in responsive Strains.
When they perceiv'd that through my body I
Gave way not for the rays to pass, their song
Straight to a long and hoarse exclaim they chang'd;

And two of them, in guise of messengers,
Ran on to meet us, and inquiring ask'd:
"Of your condition we would gladly learn."
To them my guide. "Ye may return, and bear
Tidings to them who sent you, that his frame
Is real flesh. If, as I deem, to view
His shade they paus'd, enough is answer'd them.
Him let them honour, they may prize him well."
Ne'er saw I fiery vapours with such speed
Cut through the serene air at fall of night,
Nor August's clouds athwart the setting sun,
That upward these did not in shorter space
Return; and, there arriving, with the rest
Wheel back on us, as with loose rein a troop.

"Many," exclaim'd the bard, "are these, who throng
Around us: to petition thee they come.
Go therefore on, and listen as thou go'st."
"O spirit! who go'st on to blessedness
With the same limbs, that clad thee at thy birth."
Shouting they came, "a little rest thy step.
Look if thou any one amongst our tribe
Hast e'er beheld, that tidings of him there
Thou mayst report. Ah, wherefore go'st thou on?
Ah wherefore tarriest thou not? We all
By violence died, and to our latest hour
Were sinners, but then warn'd by light from heav'n,

So that, repenting and forgiving, we
Did issue out of life at peace with God,
Who with desire to see him fills our heart.”
Then I: “The visages of all I scan
Yet none of ye remember. But if aught,
That I can do, may please you, gentle spirits!
Speak; and I will perform it, by that peace,
Which on the steps of guide so excellent
Following from world to world intent I seek.”
In answer he began: “None here distrusts
Thy kindness, though not promis’d with an oath;
So as the will fail not for want of power.
Whence I, who sole before the others speak,
Entreat thee, if thou ever see that land,
Which lies between Romagna and the realm
Of Charles, that of thy courtesy thou pray
Those who inhabit Fano, that for me
Their adorations duly be put up,
By which I may purge off my grievous sins.
From thence I came. But the deep passages,
Whence issued out the blood wherein I dwelt,
Upon my bosom in Antenor’s land
Were made, where to be more secure I thought.
The author of the deed was Este’s prince,
Who, more than right could warrant, with his wrath
Pursued me. Had I towards Mira fled,
When overta’en at Oriaco, still

Might I have breath'd. But to the marsh I sped,
And in the mire and rushes tangled there
Fell, and beheld my life-blood float the plain."
Then said another: "Ah! so may the wish,
That takes thee o'er the mountain, be fulfill'd,
As thou shalt graciously give aid to mine.
Of Montefeltro I; Buonconte I:
Giovanna nor none else have care for me,
Sorrowing with these I therefore go." I thus:
"From Campaldino's field what force or chance
Drew thee, that ne'er thy sepulture was known?"
"Oh!" answer'd he, "at Casentino's foot
A stream there courseth, nam'd Archiano, sprung
In Apennine above the Hermit's seat.
E'en where its name is cancel'd, there came I,
Pierc'd in the heart, fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
Fail'd me, and finishing with Mary's name
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remain'd.
I will report the truth; which thou again
Tell to the living. Me God's angel took,
Whilst he of hell exclaim'd: "O thou from heav'n!
Say wherefore hast thou robb'd me? Thou of him
Th' eternal portion bear'st with thee away
For one poor tear that he deprives me of.
But of the other, other rule I make."
"Thou knowest how in the atmosphere collects

That vapour dank, returning into water,
Soon as it mounts where cold condenses it.
That evil will, which in his intellect
Still follows evil, came, and rais'd the wind
And smoky mist, by virtue of the power
Given by his nature. Thence the valley, soon
As day was spent, he cover'd o'er with cloud
From Pratomagno to the mountain range,
And stretch'd the sky above, so that the air
Impregnate chang'd to water. Fell the rain,
And to the fosses came all that the land
Contain'd not; and, as mightiest streams are wont,
To the great river with such headlong sweep
Rush'd, that nought stay'd its course. My stiffen'd frame
Laid at his mouth the fell Archiano found,
And dash'd it into Arno, from my breast
Loos'ning the cross, that of myself I made
When overcome with pain. He hurl'd me on,
Along the banks and bottom of his course;
Then in his muddy spoils encircling wrapt."

"Ah! when thou to the world shalt be return'd,
And rested after thy long road," so spake
Next the third spirit; "then remember me.
I once was Pia. Sienna gave me life,
Maremma took it from me. That he knows,
Who me with jewell'd ring had first espous'd."