

Young Ganymede, from his associates 'reft,
 Was snatch'd aloft to the high consistory.
 "Perhaps," thought I within me, "here alone
 He strikes his quarry, and elsewhere disdains
 To pounce upon the prey." Therewith, it seem'd
 A little wheeling in his aëry tour,
 Terrible as the lightning, rush'd he down,
 And snatch'd me upward even to the fire.
 There both, I thought, the eagle and myself
 Did burn; and so intense the imagined flames,
 That needs my sleep was broken off. As erst
 Achilles shook himself, and round him roll'd
 His waken'd eyeballs, wondering where he was,
 Whenas his mother had from Chiron fled
 To Scyros, with him sleeping in her arms;
 There whence the Greeks did after sunder him;¹
 E'en thus I shook me, soon as from my face
 The slumber parted, turning deadly pale,
 Like one ice-struck with dread. Sole at my side
 My comfort stood: and the bright sun was now
 More than two hours aloft: and to the sea
 My looks were turn'd. "Fear not," my master cried,
 "Assured we are at happy point. Thy strength
 Shrink not, but rise dilated. Thou art come
 To Purgatory now. Lo! there the cliff
 That circling bounds it. Lo! the entrance there,
 Where it doth seem disparted. Ere the dawn
 Usher'd the day-light, when thy wearied soul
 Slept in thee, o'er the flowery vale beneath
 A lady came, and thus bespake me: 'I
 'Am Lucia.² Suffer me to take this man,
 'Who slumbers. Easier so his way shall speed.'
 Sordello and the other gentle shapes
 Tarrying, she bare thee up: and, as day shone,
 This summit reach'd: and I pursued her steps.
 Here did she place thee. First, her lovely eyes
 That open entrance show'd me; then at once
 She vanish'd with thy sleep." Like one, whose doubts
 Are chased by certainty, and terror turn'd
 To comfort on discovery of the truth,

¹ To prevent him going to the Trojan war, Thetis took Achilles from the care of Chiron and concealed him in Scyros, where he was afterwards found by Ulysses.

² Illuminating grace. Cf. *Inf.* ii., and *Par.* xxxii.

Such was the change in me : and as my guide
Beheld me fearless, up along the cliff
He moved, and I behind him, towards the height.

Reader ! thou markest how my theme doth rise ;
Nor wonder therefore, if more artfully
I prop the structure. Nearer now we drew,
Arrived whence, in that part, where first a breach
As of a wall appear'd, I could descry
A portal, and three steps beneath, that led
For inlet there, of different colour each ;
And one who watch'd, but spake not yet a word.
As more and more mine eye did stretch its view,
I mark'd him seated on the highest step,
In visage such, as past my power to bear.
Grasp'd in his hand, a naked sword glanced back
The rays so towards me, that I oft in vain
My sight directed. " Speak, from whence ye stand ;"
He cried : " What would ye ? Where is your escort ?
Take heed your coming upward harm ye not."

" A heavenly dame, not skilless of these things,"
Replied the instructor, " told us, even now,
' Pass that way : here the gate is.'"—" And may she,
Befriending, prosper your ascent," resumed
The courteous keeper of the gate : " Come then
Before our steps." We straightway thither came.

The lowest stair was marble white, so smooth
And polish'd, that therein my mirror'd form
Distinct I saw. The next of hue more dark
Than sablest grain, a rough and singed block,
Crack'd lengthwise and across. The third, that lay
Massy above, seem'd porphyry, that flamed
Red as the life-blood spouting from a vein.
On this God's Angel either foot sustain'd,
Upon the threshold seated, which appear'd
A rock of diamond.¹ Up the trinal steps
My leader cheerly drew me. " Ask," said he,
" With humble heart, that he unbar the bolt."
Piously at his holy feet devolved

¹ The Gate of Purgatory is an allegory of the Sacrament of Penance. The Angel represents the priestly confessor, while the three steps are the three essential parts of the Sacrament: Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction, which derives its efficacy from the blood of Christ. The rock of diamond signifies the firm basis of the Church's power to forgive sins.

I cast me, praying him for pity's sake
That he would open to me; but first fell
Thrice on my bosom prostrate. Seven times
The letter, that denotes the inward stain,
He, on my forehead, with the blunted point
Of his drawn sword, inscribed.¹ And "Look," he cried,
"When enter'd, that thou wash these scars away."

Ashes, or earth ta'en dry out of the ground,
Were of one colour with the robe he wore.
From underneath that vestment forth he drew
Two keys, of metal twain: the one was gold,
Its fellow silver. With the pallid first,
And next the burnish'd, he so ply'd the gate,
As to content me well. "Whenever one
Faieth of these, that in the key-hole straight
It turn not, to this alley then expect
Access in vain." Such were the words he spake.
"One is more precious: but the other needs
Skill and sagacity, large share of each,
Ere its good task to disengage the knot
Be worthily perform'd."² From Peter these
I hold, of him instructed that I err
Rather in opening, than in keeping fast;
So but the suppliant at my feet implore."

Then of that hallow'd gate he thrust the door,
Exclaiming, "Enter, but this warning hear:
He forth again departs who looks behind."

As in the hinges of that sacred ward
The swivels turn'd, sonorous metal strong,
Harsh was the grating; nor so surlily
Roar'd the Tarpeian, when by force bereft
Of good Metellus, thenceforth from his loss
To leanness doom'd.³ Attentively I turn'd,
Listening the thunder that first issued forth;
And "We praise thee, O God," methought I heard,
In accents blended with sweet melody.⁴

¹ The seven P's represent the seven capital sins, *peccati capitali*, which are to be purged away in the seven terraces of the mountain.

² The silver key is the science and experience by which the confessor judges of the penitent's worthiness and true repentance; the golden key is the absolution that he pronounces.

³ The Roman tribune, Metellus, vainly attempted to prevent Cæsar plundering the Roman treasury in the Temple of Saturn on the Tarpeian Hill.

⁴ *Te Deum laudamus*, the Ambrosian hymn.

The strains came o'er mine ear, e'en as the sound
Of choral voices, that in solemn chant
With organ mingle, and, now high and clear
Come swelling, now float indistinct away.

CANTO X

ARGUMENT

Being admitted at the gate of Purgatory, our Poets ascend a winding path up the rock, till they reach an open and level space that extends each way round the mountain. On the side that rises, and which is of white marble, are seen artfully engraved many stories of humility, which whilst they are contemplating, there approach the souls of those who expiate the sin of pride, and who are bent down beneath the weight of heavy stones.

WHEN we had past the threshold of the gate,
(Which the soul's ill affection doth disuse,
Making the crooked seem the straighter path,)
I heard its closing sound. Had mine eyes turn'd,
For that offence what plea might have avail'd?

We mounted up the riven rock, that wound
On either side alternate, as the wave
Flies and advances. "Here some little art
Behoves us," said my leader, "that our steps
Observe the varying flexure of the path."

Thus we so slowly sped, that with cleft orb
The moon once more o'erhangs her watery couch,
Ere we that strait have threaded. But when free,
We came, and open, where the mount above
One solid mass retires; I spent with toil,
And both uncertain of the way, we stood,
Upon a plain more lonesome than the roads
That traverse desert wilds. From whence the brink
Borders upon vacuity, to foot
Of the steep bank that rises still, the space
Had measured thrice the stature of a man:
And, distant as mine eye could wing its flight,
To leftward now and now to right dispatch'd,
That cornice equal in extent appear'd.

Not yet our feet had on that summit moved,
When I discover'd that the bank, around,
Whose proud uprising all ascent denied,

Was marble white; and so exactly wrought
 With quaintest sculpture, that not there alone
 Had Polycletus,¹ but e'en nature's self
 Been shamed. The Angel (who came down to earth
 With tidings of the peace so many years
 Wept for in vain, that oped the heavenly gates
 From their long interdict) before us seem'd,
 In a sweet act, so sculptured to the life,
 He look'd no silent image. One had sworn
 He had said "Hail!" for she was imaged there,
 By whom the key did open to God's love;
 And in her act as sensibly impress
 That word, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,"
 As figure seal'd on wax.² "Fix not thy mind
 On one place only," said the guide beloved,
 Who had me near him on that part where lies
 The heart of man. My sight forthwith I turn'd,
 And mark'd, behind the Virgin Mother's form,
 Upon that side where he that moved me stood,
 Another story graven on the rock.

I past athwart the bard, and drew me near,
 That it might stand more aptly for my view.
 There, in the self-same marble, were engraved
 The cart and kine, drawing the sacred ark,
 That from unbidden office awes mankind.³
 Before it came much people; and the whole
 Parted in seven quires. One sense cried "Nay,"
 Another, "Yes, they sing." Like doubt arose
 Betwixt the eye and smell, from the curl'd fume
 Of incense breathing up the well-wrought toil.
 Preceding the blest vessel, onward came
 With light dance leaping, girt in humble guise,
 Israel's sweet harper: in that hap he seem'd
 Less, and yet more, than kingly. Opposite,
 At a great palace, from the lattice forth

¹ A famous Greek sculptor in the fifth century before the Christian era. Dante's "knowledge of Polycletus was probably derived from Aristotle's references to him" (Toynbee).

² On entering each terrace, Dante sees or hears examples of the virtue contrary to the sin to be expiated in that terrace, and, before leaving it, similar examples of the punishment or consequences of that sin. In each case, as here, the first example of virtue is taken from the life of the Blessed Virgin.

³ Dante refers again to the death of Uzzah (2 Sam. vi.) in his letter to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii. 5).

Look'd Michol, like a lady full of scorn
 And sorrow.¹ To behold the tablet next,
 Which, at the back of Michol, whitely shone,
 I moved me. There, was storied on the rock
 The exalted glory of the Roman prince,
 Whose mighty worth moved Gregory to earn
 His mighty conquest, Trajan the Emperor.²
 A widow at his bridle stood, attired
 In tears and mourning. Round about them troop'd
 Full throng of knights; and overhead in gold
 The eagles floated, struggling with the wind.
 The wretch appear'd amid all these to say:
 "Grant vengeance, Sire! for, woe beshrew this heart,
 My son is murder'd." He replying seem'd:
 "Wait now till I return." And she, as one
 Made hasty by her grief: "O Sire! if thou
 Dost not return?"—"Where I am, who then is,
 May right thee."—"What to thee is other's good,
 If thou neglect thy own?"—"Now comfort thee;"
 At length he answers. "It beseemeth well
 My duty be perform'd, ere I move hence:
 So justice wills; and pity bids me stay."

He, whose ken nothing new surveys, produced
 That visible speaking, new to us and strange,
 The like not found on earth. Fondly I gazed
 Upon those patterns of meek humbleness,
 Shapes yet more precious for their Artist's sake;
 When "Lo!" the poet whisper'd, "where this way,
 (But slack their pace) a multitude advance.
 These to the lofty steps shall guide us on."

Mine eyes, though bent on view of novel sights,
 Their loved allurements, were not slow to turn.

Reader! I would not that amazed thou miss
 Of thy good purpose, hearing how just God
 Decrees our debts be cancel'd. Ponder not
 The form of suffering. Think on what succeeds:
 Think that, at worst, beyond the mighty doom
 It cannot pass. "Instructor!" I began,
 "What I see hither tending, bears no trace
 Of human semblance, nor of aught beside

¹ Cf. 2 Sam. vi.

² The legend of this act of justice to the poor widow was said to have inspired St. Gregory the Great to obtain the deliverance of Trajan from Hell by his prayers. See *Par.* xx.

That my foil'd sight can guess." He answering thus :
 " So croub'd to earth, beneath their heavy terms
 Of torment stoop they, that mine eye at first
 Struggled as thine. But look intently thither ;
 And disentangle with thy labouring view,
 What, underneath those stones, approacheth : now,
 E'en now, mayst thou discern the pangs of each."

Christians and proud ! O poor and wretched ones !
 That, feeble in the mind's eye, lean your trust
 Upon unstead perverseness : know ye not
 That we are worms, yet made at last to form
 The winged insect,¹ imp'd with angel plumes,
 That to Heaven's justice unobstructed soars ?
 Why buoy ye up aloft your unfledged souls ?
 Abortive then and shapeless ye remain,
 Like the untimely embryo of a worm.

As, to support incumbent floor or roof,
 For corbel, is a figure sometimes seen,
 That crumples up its knees unto its breast ;
 With the feign'd posture, stirring ruth unfeign'd
 In the beholder's fancy ; so I saw
 These fashion'd, when I noted well their guise.

Each, as his back was laden, came indeed
 Or more or less contracted ; and it seem'd
 As he, who show'd most patience in his look,
 Wailing exclaim'd : " I can endure no more."

CANTO XI

ARGUMENT

After a prayer uttered by the spirits, who were spoken of in the last Canto, Virgil inquires the way upwards, and is answered by one, who declares himself to have been Omberto, son of the Count of Santafiore. Next our Poet distinguishes Oderigi, the illuminator, who discourses on the vanity of worldly fame, and points out to him the soul of Provenzano Salvani.

" O THOU Almighty Father ! who dost make
 The heavens Thy dwelling, not in bounds confined,
 But that, with love intenser, there Thou view'st
 Thy primal effluence ; hallow'd be Thy name :

¹ *L'angelica farfalla*, " the angelic butterfly," the human soul.

Join, each created being, to extol
 Thy might; for worthy humblest thanks and praise
 Is Thy blest Spirit. May Thy kingdom's peace
 Come unto us; for we, unless it come,
 With all our striving, thither tend in vain.
 As, of their will, the Angels unto Thee
 Tender meet sacrifice, circling Thy throne
 With loud hosannas; so of their's be done
 By saintly men on earth. Grant us, this day,
 Our daily manna, without which he roams
 Through this rough desert retrograde, who most
 Toils to advance his steps. As we to each
 Pardon the evil done us, pardon Thou
 Benign, and of our merit take no count.
 'Gainst the old adversary, prove Thou not
 Our virtue, easily subdued; but free
 From his incitements, and defeat his wiles.
 This last petition, dearest Lord! is made
 Not for ourselves; since that were needless now;
 But for their sakes who after us remain."

Thus for themselves and us good speed imploring,
 Those spirits went beneath a weight like that
 We sometimes feel in dreams; all, sore beset,
 But with unequal anguish; wearied all;
 Round the first circuit; purging as they go
 The world's gross darkness off. In our behoof
 If their vows still be offer'd, what can here
 For them be vow'd and done by such, whose wills
 Have root of goodness in them? Well beseems
 That we should help them wash away the stains
 They carried hence; that so, made pure and light,
 They may spring upward to the starry spheres.¹

"Ah! so may mercy-temper'd justice rid
 Your burdens speedily; that ye have power
 To stretch your wing, which e'en to your desire
 Shall lift you; as ye show us on which hand
 Toward the ladder leads the shortest way.
 And if there be more passages than one,
 Instruct us of that easiest to ascend:
 For this man, who comes with me, and bears yet

¹ Cf. 2 Maccabees xii. 46: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (Vulgate).

The charge of fleshly raiment Adam left him,
 Despite his better will, but slowly mounts."
 From whom the answer came unto these words,
 Which my guide spake, appear'd not; but 'twas said:
 "Along the bank to rightward come with us;
 And ye shall find a pass that mocks not toil
 Of living man to climb: and were it not
 That I am hinder'd by the rock, wherewith
 This arrogant neck is tamed, whence needs I stoop
 My visage to the ground; him, who yet lives,
 Whose name thou speak'st not, him I fain would view;
 To mark if e'er I knew him, and to crave
 His pity for the fardel that I bear.
 I was of Latium; of a Tuscan born,
 A mighty one: Aldobrandesco's name,
 My sire's, I know not if ye e'er have heard.
 My old blood and forefathers' gallant deeds
 Made me so haughty, that I clean forgot
 The common mother; and to such excess
 Wax'd in my scorn of all men, that I fell,
 Fell therefore; by what fate, Siena's sons,
 Each child in Campagnatico, can tell.
 I am Omberto: not me, only, pride
 Hath injured, but my kindred all involved
 In mischief with her.¹ Here my lot ordains
 Under this weight to groan, till I appease
 God's angry justice, since I did it not
 Amongst the living, here amongst the dead."

Listening I bent my visage down: and one
 (Not he who spake) twisted beneath the weight
 That urged him, saw me, knew me straight, and call'd;
 Holding his eyes with difficulty fix'd
 Intent upon me, stooping as I went
 Companion of their way. "O!" I exclaim'd,
 "Art thou not Oderigi?² art not thou
 Agobbio's glory, glory of that art
 Which they of Paris call the limner's skill?"

¹ Omberto, the son of Guglielmo Aldobrandesco, one of the Counts of Santafiore (*cf.* above, Canto vi.), so exasperated the Sieneese by his overbearing conduct, that he was assassinated by them, in 1259, at Campagnatico near Grosseto.

² Oderisi, or Oderigi, of Gubbio, a famous Umbrian miniature-painter or illuminator, who worked at Bologna and at Rome, where he died in 1299.

" Brother ! " said he, " with tints, that gayer smile,
 Bolognian Franco's pencil lines the leaves.
 His all the honour now ; my light obscured.¹
 In truth, I had not been thus courteous to him
 The whilst I lived, through eagerness of zeal
 For that pre-eminence my heart was bent on.
 Here, of such pride, the forfeiture is paid.
 Nor were I even here, if, able still
 To sin, I had not turn'd me unto God.
 O powers of man ! how vain your glory, nipt
 E'en in its height of verdure, if an age
 Less bright succeed not. Cimabue thought
 To lord it over painting's field ; and now
 The cry is Giotto's, and his name eclipsed.²
 Thus hath one Guido from the other snatch'd
 The letter'd prize : and he, perhaps, is born,
 Who shall drive either from their nest.³ The noise
 Of worldly fame is but a blast of wind,
 That blows from diverse points, and shifts its name,
 Shifting the point it blows from. Shalt thou more
 Live in the mouths of mankind, if thy flesh
 Part shrivel'd from thee, than if thou hadst died
 Before the coral and the pap were left ;
 Or e'er some thousand years have past ? and that

1 Franco of Bologna, a miniaturist employed by Boniface VIII., said to have been Oderisi's pupil. Cary has missed the full meaning of the line : *l'onore è tutto or suo, e mio in parte* : " the honour is now all his, and mine in part " : Oderisi shares a little of Franco's honour, as having been his master. Franco was still living in 1300.

2 Giovanni Cimabue (1240-1302), the first great painter of Florence, was surpassed by his pupil, Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337), painter, sculptor, and architect, the shepherd-boy who came from the fields to free Italian painting from Byzantine fetters. Both artists were personally known to Dante, and Giotto was probably his intimate friend.

3 " The letter'd prize " ; more literally, " the glory of our language," *la gloria della lingua*. Cf. *De Vulg. El.* i. 13 ; ii. 6 ; *Purg.* xxiv. and xxvi. This is usually taken as meaning that Guido Cavalcanti has eclipsed Guido Guinicelli, and that both will be surpassed by Dante himself. But there is more to be said for Mr. Wicksteed's interpretation : " The older poetic school of Guittone, or Guido, of Arezzo and his companions has been superseded by that of Guido Guinicelli, to which Guido Cavalcanti and Dante himself belong ; and who knows whether the founder of yet another school that shall relegate them all to obscurity, may not already be born ! "

Is, to eternity compared, a space
 Briefer than is the twinkling of an eye
 To the heaven's slowest orb. He there, who treads
 So leisurely before me, far and wide
 Through Tuscany resounded once; and now
 Is in Siena scarce with whispers named:
 There was he sovereign, when destruction caught
 The maddening rage of Florence, in that day
 Proud as she now is loathsome. Your renown
 Is as the herb, whose hue doth come and go;
 And his might withers it, by whom it sprang
 Crude from the lap of earth." I thus to him:
 "True are thy sayings: to my heart they breathe
 The kindly spirit of meekness, and allay
 What tumours rankle there. But who is he,
 Of whom thou spakest but now?" "This," he replied,
 "Is Provenzano. He is here, because
 He reach'd, with grasp presumptuous, at the sway
 Of all Siena. Thus he still hath gone,
 Thus goeth never-resting, since he died.
 Such is the acquittance render'd back of him,
 Who, in the mortal life, too much hath dared."
 I then: "If soul, that to life's verge delays
 Repentance, linger in that lower space,
 Nor hither mount, (unless good prayers befriend,)
 Or ever time, long as it lived, be past;
 How chanced admittance was vouchsafed to him?"¹
 "When at his glory's topmost height," said he,
 "Respect of dignity all cast aside,
 Freely he fix'd him on Siena's plain,
 A suitor to redeem his suffering friend,

¹ Provenzano Salvani was the head of the Ghibelline party in Siena, of which city he became virtually ruler after the defeat of the Florentines at the battle of Montaperti in 1260. He it was who, in the council held at Empoli after the battle, proposed that Florence should be razed to the ground. Cf. *Inf.* x. In June, 1269, while leading a mixed force of Tuscan Ghibellines and foreign mercenaries, he was defeated at Colle by a body of French cavalry under Guy de Montfort, taken prisoner, and murdered by an exiled Siennese Guelf of the Tolomei family. Cf. *Purg.* xiii. He has gained admittance to Purgatory by his humility in begging for the means needed to ransom one of his friends who had fallen into the hands of Charles of Anjou. "Siena's plain" is the famous piazza, known as the *Campo*, in front of the great palace of the Commune.

Who languish'd in the prison-house of Charles;
 Nor, for his sake, refused through every vein
 To tremble. More I will not say; and dark,
 I know, my words are; but thy neighbours soon
 Shall help thee to a comment on the text.¹
 This is the work, that from these limits freed him."

CANTO XII

ARGUMENT

Dante, being desired by Virgil to look down on the ground which they are treading, observes that it is wrought over with imagery exhibiting various instances of pride recorded in history and fable. They leave the first cornice, and are ushered to the next by an Angel who points out the way.

WITH equal pace, as oxen in the yoke,
 I, with that laden spirit, journey'd on,
 Long as the mild instructor suffer'd me;
 But, when he bade me quit him, and proceed,
 (For "Here," said he, "behoves with sail and oars
 Each man, as best he may, push on his bark,")
 Upright, as one disposed for speed, I raised
 My body, still in thought submissive bow'd.

I now my leader's track not loth pursued;
 And each had shown how light we fared along,
 When thus he warned me: "Bend thine eyesight down,
 For thou, to ease the way, shalt find it good
 To ruminate the bed beneath thy feet."

As, in memorial of the buried, drawn
 Upon earth-level tombs, the sculptured form
 Of what was once, appears, (at sight whereof
 Tears often stream forth, by remembrance waked,
 Whose sacred stings the piteous often feel,
 So saw I there, but with more curious skill
 Of portraiture o'erwrought, whate'er of space
 From forth the mountain stretches. On one part
 Him I beheld, above all creatures erst
 Created noblest, lightening fall from Heaven: 2
 On the other side, with bolt celestial pierced,

¹ He will soon learn in banishment how bitter a thing it is to have to crave favours from others.

² Lucifer. Cf. Luke x. 18.

Briareus ; cumbering earth he lay, through dint
 Of mortal ice-stroke.¹ The Thymbræan god,
 With Mars, I saw, and Pallas, round their sire,
 Arm'd still, and gazing on the giants' limbs
 Strewn o'er the ethereal field.² Nimrod I saw :
 At foot of the stupendous work he stood,
 As if bewilder'd, looking on the crowd
 Leagued in his proud attempt on Sennaar's plain.³

O Niobe ! in what a trance of woe
 Thee I beheld, upon that highway drawn,
 Seven sons on either side thee slain.⁴ O Saul !
 How ghastly didst thou look, on thine own sword
 Expiring, in Gilboa, from that hour
 Ne'er visited with rain from heaven, or dew.⁵

O fond Arachne ! thee I also saw,
 Half spider now, in anguish, crawling up
 The unfinish'd web thou weaved'st to thy bane.⁶

O Rehoboam ! here thy shape doth seem
 Louring no more defiance ; but fear-smote,
 With none to chase him, in his chariot whirl'd.⁷

Was shown beside upon the solid floor,
 How dear Alcmaeon forced his mother rate
 That ornament, in evil hour received :⁸
 How, in the temple, on Sennacherib fell
 His sons, and how a corpse they left him there.⁹
 Was shown the scath, and cruel mangling made
 By Tomyris on Cyrus, when she cried,
 " Blood thou didst thirst for : take thy fill of blood." ¹⁰

¹ Cf. *Inf.* xxxi.

² The overthrow of the giants who attempted to storm Heaven. Cf. *Inf.* xxxi. The "Thymbræan god" is Apollo.

³ Cf. *Inf.* xxxi.

⁴ Niobe, daughter of Tantalus and Dione, with her sons and daughters, was slain by Apollo and Artemis for exalting herself above their mother, Leto or Latona.

⁵ Cf. 2 Sam. i. 21.

⁶ Arachne was changed to a spider for her pride in challenging Minerva.

⁷ Cf. 1 Kings xii.

⁸ Eriphyle, wife of Amphiarus (*Inf.* xx.), was bribed by the necklace of Harmonia to reveal the hiding-place of her husband, whereby he was compelled to go to the Theban war, in which he knew that he would be slain. At the latter's bidding, their son Alcmaeon killed Eriphyle for her treachery. Cf. *Par.* iv.

⁹ Cf. 2 Kings xix. 37 ; Isaiah xxxvii.

¹⁰ When Cyrus, King of the Medes and Persians, was defeated and slain by the Massagetæ (B.C. 529), their Queen Tomyris cut

Was shown how routed in the battle fled
 The Assyrians, Holofernes slain, and e'en
 The relics of the carnage.¹ Troy I mark'd,
 In ashes and in caverns. Oh! how fallen,
 How abject, Ilion, was thy semblance there.²

What master of the pencil or the style
 Had traced the shades and lines, that might have made
 The subtlest workman wonder? Dead, the dead;
 The living seem'd alive: with clearer view,
 His eye beheld not, who beheld the truth,
 Than mine what I did tread on, while I went
 Low bending. Now swell out, and with stiff necks
 Pass on, ye sons of Eve! vale not your looks,
 Lest they descry the evil of your path.

I noted not (so busied was my thought)
 How much we now had circled of the mount;
 And of his course yet more the sun had spent;
 When he, who with still wakeful caution went,
 Admonish'd: "Raise thou up thy head: for know
 Time is not now for slow suspense. Behold,
 That way, an Angel hasting towards us. Lo,
 Where duly the sixth handmaid³ doth return
 From service on the day. Wear thou, in look
 And gesture, seemly grace of reverent awe;
 That gladly he may forward us aloft.
 Consider that this day ne'er dawns again."

Time's loss he had so often warn'd me 'gainst,
 I could not miss the scope at which he aim'd.

The goodly shape approach'd us, snowy white
 In vesture, and with visage casting streams
 Of tremulous lustre like the matin star.
 His arms he open'd, then his wings; and spake:
 "Onward! the steps, behold, are near; and now
 The ascent is without difficulty gain'd."⁴

A scanty few are they, who, when they hear

off his head, and threw it into a vessel of blood with the words
 that Dante here quotes from Orosius.

¹ Judith xiii.—xv.

² The pride of Troy was proverbial. This alternation of
 historical or scriptural examples with those drawn from mythology
 is characteristic of Dante.

³ "It is therefore just past noon. The conception of the hours
 as handmaidens serving the day is repeated below, in Canto xxii"
 (Oelsner).

⁴ This is the Angel of Humility.

Such tidings, hasten. O, ye race of men !
 Though born to soar, why suffer ye a wind
 So slight to baffle ye? He led us on
 Where the rock parted; here, against my front,
 Did beat his wings; then promised I should fare
 In safety on my way. As to ascend
 That steep, upon whose brow the chapel stands,
 (O'er Rubaconte, looking lordly down
 On the well-guided city,¹) up the right
 The impetuous rise is broken by the steps
 Carved in that old and simple age, when still
 The registry and label rested safe;²
 Thus is the acclivity relieved, which here,
 Precipitous, from the other circuit falls :
 But, on each hand, the tall cliff presses close.

As, entering, there we turn'd, voices, in strain
 Ineffable, sang : " Blessed are the poor
 In spirit." Ah ! how far unlike to these
 The straits of Hell : here songs to usher us,
 There shrieks of woe. We climb the holy stairs :
 And lighter to myself by far I seem'd
 Than on the plain before ; whence thus I spake :
 " Say, master, of what heavy thing have I
 Been lighten'd ; that scarce aught the sense of toil
 Affects me journeying ?" He in few replied :
 " When sin's broad characters, that yet remain
 Upon thy temples, though well nigh effaced,
 Shall be, as one is, all clean razed out ;
 Then shall thy feet by heartiness of will
 Be so o'ercome, they not alone shall feel
 No sense of labour, but delight much more
 Shall wait them, urged along their upward way."

Then like to one, upon whose head is placed
 Somewhat he deems not of, but from the becks

¹ The reference to Florence as " the well-guided city " is, of course, ironical. The church of San Miniato may be said to look down on Florence over the Ponte Rubaconte, the oldest of the Florentine bridges.

² " In 1299 Messer Niccola Acciaiuoli and Messer Baldo d'Auglione abstracted from the public records a leaf containing the evidence of a disreputable transaction, in which they, together with the Podestà, had been engaged. At about the same time Messer Durante de' Chiaramontesi, being officer of the customs for salt, took away a stave from the standard measure, thus making it smaller " (Butler). Cf. *Par.* xvi.

Of others, as they pass him by; his hand
Lends therefore help to assure him, searches, finds,
And well performs such office as the eye
Wants power to execute; so stretching forth
The fingers of my right hand, did I find
Six only of the letters, which his sword,
Who bare the keys, had traced upon my brow.
The leader, as he mark'd mine action, smiled.

CANTO XIII

ARGUMENT

They gain the second cornice, where the sin of envy is purged; and having proceeded a little to the right, they hear voices uttered by invisible spirits recounting famous examples of charity, and next behold the shades, or souls, of the envious clad in sackcloth, and having their eyes sewed up with an iron thread. Amongst these Dante finds Sapia, a Sienese lady, from whom he learns the cause of her being there.

WE reach'd the summit of the scale, and stood
Upon the second buttress of that mount
Which healeth him who climbs. A cornice there,
Like to the former, girdles round the hill;
Save that its arch, with sweep less ample, bends.

Shadow, nor image there, is seen: all smooth
The rampart and the path, reflecting nought
But the rock's sullen hue. "If here we wait,
For some to question," said the bard, "I fear
Our choice may haply meet too long delay."

Then fixedly upon the sun his eyes
He fasten'd; made his right the central point
From whence to move; and turn'd the left aside.
"O pleasant light, my confidence and hope!
Conduct us thou," he cried, "on this new way,
Where now I venture; leading to the bourn
We seek. The universal world to thee
Owes warmth and lustre. If no other cause
Forbid, thy beams should ever be our guide."

Far, as is measured for a mile on earth,
In brief space had we journey'd; such prompt will
Impell'd; and towards us flying, now were heard
Spirits invisible, who courteously
Unto love's table bade the welcome guest.

The voice, that first flew by, call'd forth aloud,
 "They have no wine," so on behind us past,
 Those sounds reiterating, nor yet lost
 In the faint distance, when another came
 Crying, "I am Orestes," and alike
 Wing'd its fleet way. "O father!" I exclaim'd,
 "What tongues are these?" and as I question'd, lo!
 A third exclaiming, "Love ye those have wrong'd
 you."¹

"This circuit," said my teacher, "knots the scourge
 For envy; and the cords are therefore drawn
 By charity's correcting hand. The curb
 Is of a harsher sound;² as thou shalt hear
 (If I deem rightly) ere thou reach the pass,
 Where pardon sets them free. But fix thine eyes
 Intently through the air; and thou shalt see
 A multitude before thee seated, each
 Along the shelving grot." Then more than erst
 I oped mine eyes; before me view'd; and saw
 Shadows with garments dark as was the rock;
 And when we pass'd a little forth, I heard
 A crying, "Blessed Mary! pray for us,
 Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host!"

I do not think there walks on earth this day
 Man so remorseless, that he had not yearn'd
 With pity at the sight that next I saw.
 Mine eyes a load of sorrow teem'd, when now
 I stood so near them, that their semblances
 Came clearly to my view. Of sackcloth vile
 Their covering seem'd; and, on his shoulder, one
 Did stay another, leaning; and all lean'd
 Against the cliff. E'en thus the blind and poor,
 Near the confessionals, to crave an alms,
 Stand, each his head upon his fellow's sunk;
 So most to stir compassion, not by sound
 Of words alone, but that which moves not less,
 The sight of misery. And as never beam
 Of noon-day visiteth the eyeless man,

¹ These are the examples of charity opposed to envy: the Blessed Virgin at the marriage in Cana (John ii. 3); Pylades offering himself to death for Orestes; Christ's admonition to His disciples (Matt. v. 44).

² The scourge (*ferza*) is the recital of the examples of the contrary virtue, the curb or bit (*freno*) that of the examples of the punishment of the sin itself.

E'en so was Heaven a niggard unto these
 Of his fair light : for, through the orbs of all,
 A thread of wire, impiercing, knits them up,
 As for the taming of a haggard hawk.

It were a wrong, methought, to pass and look
 On others, yet myself the while unseen.
 To my sage counsel therefore did I turn.
 He knew the meaning of the mute appeal,
 Nor waited for my questioning, but said :
 " Speak ; and be brief, be subtile in thy words."

On that part of the cornice, whence no rim
 Engarlands its steep fall, did Virgil come ;
 On the other side me were the spirits, their cheeks
 Bathing devout with penitential tears,
 That through the dread impalement forced a way.

I turn'd me to them, and " O shades !" said I,
 " Assured that to your eyes unveil'd shall shine
 The lofty light, sole object of your wish,
 So may Heaven's grace clear whatsoe'er of foam
 Floats turbid on the conscience, that thenceforth
 The stream of mind roll limpid from its source ;
 As ye declare (for so shall ye impart
 A boon I dearly prize) if any soul
 Of Latium dwell among ye : and perchance
 That soul may profit, if I learn so much."

" My brother ! we are, each one, citizens
 Of one true city.¹ Any, thou wouldst say,
 Who lived a stranger in Italia's land."

So heard I answering, as appear'd, a voice
 That onward came some space from whence I stood.

A spirit I noted, in whose look was mark'd
 Expectance. Ask ye how ? The chin was raised
 As in one reft of sight. " Spirit," said I,
 " Who for thy rise art tutoring, (if thou be
 That which didst answer to me,) or by place,
 Or name, disclose thyself, that I may know thee."

" I was," it answer'd, " of Siena : here
 I cleanse away with these the evil life,
 Soliciting with tears that He, who is,
 *Vouchsafe Him to us. Though Sapia named,
 In sapience I excell'd not ; gladder far
 Of other's hurt, than of the good befel me.

¹ Cary aptly cites Hebrews xiii. 14 : " For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

That thou mayst own I now deceive thee not,
 Hear, if my folly were not as I speak it.
 When now my years sloped waning down the arch,
 It so bechanced, my fellow-citizens
 Near Colle met their enemies in the field;
 And I pray'd God to grant what He had will'd.¹
 There were they vanquish'd, and betook themselves
 Unto the bitter passages of flight.
 I mark'd the hunt; and waxing out of bounds
 In gladness, lifted up my shameless brow,
 And, like the merlin cheated by a gleam,
 Cried: 'It is over. Heaven! I fear thee not.'
 Upon my verge of life I wish'd for peace
 With God; nor yet repentance had supplied
 What I did lack of duty, were it not
 The hermit Piero,² touch'd with charity,
 In his devout oraisons thought on me.
 But who art thou that question'st of our state,
 Who go'st, as I believe, with lids unclosed,
 And breathest in thy talk?"—"Mine eyes," said I,
 "May yet be here ta'en from me; but not long;
 For they have not offended grievously
 With envious glances. But the woe beneath³
 Urges my soul with more exceeding dread,
 That nether load already weighs me down."
 She thus: "Who then, amongst us here aloft,
 Hath brought thee, if thou weenest to return?"
 "He," answered I, "who standeth mute beside me.
 I live: of me ask therefore, chosen spirit!
 If thou desire I yonder yet should move
 For thee my mortal feet."—"Oh!" she replied,
 "This is so strange a thing, it is great sign
 That God doth love thee. Therefore with thy prayer
 Sometime assist me: and, by that I crave,
 Which most thou covetest, that if thy feet
 E'er tread on Tuscan soil, thou save my fame

¹ The defeat of the Sieneſe. Sapia de' Saracini, a noble lady of Siena, was one of the Guelf exiles at Colle in Val d' Elsa. From a tower ſhe watched the rout of her Ghibelline fellow-countrymen at the battle of Colle (June 11, 1269), when Provenzano Salvani was ſlain, and broke out into the expreſſions of exultation here recorded by the Poet.

² Piero Pettignano, a comb-ſeller and Franciſcan tertiary of Siena, who died in 1289, and was beatified.

³ Dante's conſcience accuſed him of pride rather than of envy.

Amongst my kindred. Them shalt thou behold
 With that vain multitude, who set their hope
 On Talamone's haven; there to fail
 Confounded, more than when the fancied stream
 They sought, of Dian call'd: but they, who lead
 Their navies, more than ruin'd hopes shall mourn." ¹

CANTO XIV

ARGUMENT

Our Poet on this second cornice finds also the souls of Guido del Duca of Brettinoro, and Rinieri da Calboli of Romagna; the former of whom, hearing that he comes from the banks of the Arno, inveighs against the degeneracy of all those who dwell in the cities visited by that stream; and afterwards, in like manner, against the inhabitants of Romagna. On leaving these, our Poets hear voices recording noted instances of envy.

"SAY, who is he around our mountain winds,
 Or ever death has pruned his wing for flight;
 That opes his eyes, and covers them at will?"

"I know not who he is, but know thus much;
 He comes not singly. Do thou ask of him,
 For thou art nearer to him; and take heed,
 Accost him gently, so that he may speak."

Thus on the right two spirits, bending each
 Toward the other, talk'd of me; then both
 Addressing me, their faces backward lean'd,
 And thus the one ² began: "O soul, who yet
 Pent in the body, tendest towards the sky!
 For charity, we pray thee, comfort us;
 Recounting whence thou comest, and who thou art:
 For thou dost make us, at the favour shown thee,

¹ Cf. *Inf.* xxix. The Sienese, in 1303, purchased the seaport of Talamone in the Maremma, by means of which they hoped to become a great maritime power. Vast sums of money were spent upon it, but with small results, owing to the unhealthiness of the situation and the impossibility of keeping the harbour clear. Much money had previously been squandered in the quest of the Diana, a subterranean stream supposed to exist under Siena, for which, in 1295, the General Council of the Commune decreed that the search should be undertaken.

² These two spirits are two Romagnole nobles: Guido del Duca degli Onesti, a Ghibelline of Bertinoro (*d. circa 1230*), and Rinier da Calboli, a Guelf of Forli (*d. 1296*). The first speaker is Guido.

Marvel, as at a thing that ne'er hath been."

"There stretches through the midst of Tuscany,"
I straight began, "a brooklet, whose well-head
Springs up in Falterona; with his race
Not satisfied, when he some hundred miles
Hath measured.¹ From his banks bring I this frame.
To tell you who I am were words mis-spent:
For yet my name scarce sounds on rumour's lip."

"If well I do incorporate with my thought
The meaning of thy speech," said he, who first
Address'd me, "thou dost speak of Arno's wave."

To whom the other: "Why hath he conceal'd
The title of that river, as a man
Doth of some horrible thing?" The spirit, who
Thereof was question'd, did acquit him thus:
"I know not: but 'tis fitting well the name
Should perish of that vale; for from the source,²
Where teems so plenteously the Alpine steep
Maim'd of Pelorus, (that doth scarcely pass
Beyond that limit,) even to the point
Where unto ocean is restored what heaven
Drains from the exhaustless store for all earth's streams,
Throughout the space is virtue worried down,
As 'twere a snake, by all, for mortal foe;
Or through disastrous influence on the place,
Or else distortion of misguided wills
That custom goads to evil: whence in those,
The dwellers in that miserable vale,
Nature is so transform'd, it seems as they
Had shared of Circe's feeding. 'Midst brute swine,³
Worthier of acorns than of other food
Created for man's use, he shapeth first
His obscure way; then, sloping onward, finds
Curs,⁴ snarlers more in spite than power, from whom
He turns with scorn aside: still journeying down,
By how much more the curst and luckless foss

¹ The Arno rises in Monte Falterona among the Apennines, and flows into the Mediterranean near Pisa after a course of a hundred and fifty miles.

² "From the rise of the Arno in that 'Alpine steep,' the Apennine, from whence Pelorus in Sicily was torn by a convulsion of the earth, even to the point where the same river unites its waters to the ocean, Virtue is persecuted by all" (Cary).

³ The inhabitants of the Casentino.

⁴ The Aretines.

Swells out to largeness, e'en so much it finds
 Dogs turning into wolves.¹ Descending still
 Through yet more hollow eddies, next he meets
 A race of foxes,² so replete with craft,
 They do not fear that skill can master it.
 Nor will I cease because my words are heard
 By other ears than thine. It shall be well
 For this man, if he keep in memory
 What from no erring spirit I reveal.
 Lo! I behold thy grandson, that becomes
 A hunter of those wolves, upon the shore
 Of the fierce stream; and cows them all with dread.
 Their flesh, yet living, sets he up to sale,
 Then, like an aged beast, to slaughter dooms.
 Many of life he reaves, himself of worth
 And goodly estimation. Smear'd with gore,
 Mark how he issues from the rueful wood;
 Leaving such havoc, that in thousand years
 It spreads not to prime lustihood again."³

As one, who tidings hears of woe to come,
 Changes his looks perturb'd, from whate'er part
 The peril grasp him; so beheld I change
 That spirit, who had turn'd to listen; struck
 With sadness, soon as he had caught the word.

His visage, and the other's speech, did raise
 Desire in me to know the names of both;
 Whereof, with meek entreaty, I inquired.

The shade, who late address'd me, thus resumed:
 "Thy wish imports, that I vouchsafe to do
 For thy sake what thou wilt not do for mine.
 But, since God's will is that so largely shine
 His grace in thee, I will be liberal too.
 Guido of Duca know then that I am.
 Envy so parch'd my blood, that had I seen
 A fellow man made joyous, thou hadst mark'd
 A livid paleness overspread my cheek.
 Such harvest reap I of the seed I sow'd.
 O man! why place thy heart where there doth need

¹ The Florentines.

² The Pisans.

³ Rinier's grandson, Fulcieri da Calboli, was Podestà of Florence from January to September, 1303, by favour of the Neri, and committed the most horrible atrocities upon those of the Bianchi who fell into his hands.

Exclusion of participants in good?
 This is Rinieri's spirit; this, the boast
 And honour of the house of Calboli;
 Where of his worth no heritage remains.
 Nor his the only blood, that hath been stript
 ('Twi'xt Po, the mount, the Reno, and the shore)¹
 Of all that truth or fancy asks for bliss:
 But, in those limits, such a growth has sprung
 Of rank and venom'd roots, as long would mock
 Slow culture's toil. Where is good Lizio?² where
 Mainardi, Traversaro, and Carpigna?³
 O bastard slips of old Romagna's line!
 When in Bologna the low artisan,
 And in Faenza yon Bernardin sprouts,
 A gentle cyon from ignoble stem.⁴
 Wonder not, Tuscan, if thou see me weep,
 When I recal to mind those once loved names,
 Guido of Prata, and of Azzo him
 That dwelt with us; Tignoso and his troop,
 With Traversaro's house and Anastagio's,
 (Each race disherited;)⁵ and beside these,
 The ladies and the knights, the toils and ease,
 That witch'd us into love and courtesy;
 Where now such malice reigns in recreant hearts.
 O Brettinoro!⁶ wherefore tarriest still,

¹ The boundaries of Romagna.

² Lizio da Valbona, a Guelf noble of Bertinoro.

³ Arrigo Mainardi, a Ghibelline of Bertinoro; Pier Traversaro, a Ghibelline of Ravenna (*d.* 1225); Guido da Carpigna, member of an ancient family connected with the Counts of Montefeltro, renowned for his liberality (*d.* between 1270 and 1289). Guido del Duca is contrasting the noble qualities of these past worthies of Romagna, Guelfs and Ghibellines alike, with the degenerate character of their successors.

⁴ The right rendering of these lines is: "When in Bologna shall a Fabbro take root again? When in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco, noble scion of a lowly plant?" (Okey). Fabbro de' Lambertazzi, a noble and valiant Ghibelline soldier of Bologna, died in 1259; Bernardino di Fosco, the son of a field-labourer, and a Guelf (*d.* circa 1250), won for himself a place among the nobles of Faenza.

⁵ Guido da Prata of Ravenna, Ugolino d'Azzo Ubaldini of Faenza (who married a daughter of Provenzano Salvani, and died in 1293), Federigo Tignoso of Rimini; all deceased Romagnole worthies. The Traversari and the Anastagi were noble Ghibelline families of Ravenna, both almost extinct by 1300.

⁶ Bertinoro, from which the noble Ghibelline families, famous for their liberality and hospitality, had been expelled in 1295.

Since forth of thee thy family hath gone,
 And many, hating evil, join'd their steps?
 Well doeth he, that bids his lineage cease,
 Bagnacavallo; Castrocaro ill,
 And Conio worse, who care to propagate
 A race of Counties from such blood as theirs.¹
 Well shall ye also do, Pagani, then
 When from amongst you hies your demon child;²
 Not so, howe'er, that henceforth there remain
 True proof of what ye were. O Hugolin,
 Thou sprung of Fantolini's line! thy name
 Is safe; since none is look'd for after thee
 To cloud its lustre, warping from thy stock.³
 But, Tuscan! go thy ways; for now I take
 Far more delight in weeping, than in words.
 Such pity for your sakes hath wrung my heart."⁴

We knew those gentle spirits, at parting, heard
 Our steps. Their silence therefore, of our way,
 Assured us. Soon as we had quitted them,
 Advancing onward, lo! a voice, that seem'd
 Like volley'd lightening, when it rives the air,
 Met us, and shouted, "Whosoever finds
 Will slay me;" then fled from us, as the bolt
 Lanced sudden from a downward-rushing cloud.
 When it had given short truce unto our hearing,
 Behold the other with a crash as loud

¹ Cary notes on *Counties*: "I have used this word here for 'Counts,' as it is in Shakespeare." The more correct translation is: "Well doth Bagnacavallo that begetteth no more offspring, and ill doth Castrocaro, and Conio worse, that yet troubleth to beget such counts." The Malavicini, Counts of Bagnacavallo (a town between Imola and Ravenna), frequently changed sides. Castrocaro and Conio are small Romagna towns near Forlì, of which the latter was ruled by the Barbiano family. A Count Alberigo da Barbiano of Conio was a famous condottiere in the next epoch, who won the battle of Marino (1379); to him one of St. Catherine's most eloquent letters is addressed.

² *Il demonio loro*, "their demon." The reference is to Maghi-nardo Pagano da Susinana, for whom see notes on *Inf.* xxvii.

³ Ugolino de' Fantolini of Faenza, a man of noble life and pacific disposition, died in 1278, leaving two sons, Ottaviano and Fantolino. The one was killed at Forlì in 1282, fighting for the Guelfs against Guido da Montefeltro (cf. *Inf.* xxvii.), and the other died a few years later, thus ending the family.

⁴ The right reading of this line seems to be: *Si m'ha nostra ragion la mente stretta*: "so hath our discourse wrung my spirit" (Okey).

As the quick-following thunder: "Mark in me
Aglauros, turn'd to rock."¹ I, at the sound
Retreating, drew more closely to my guide.

Now in mute stilness rested all the air;
And thus he spake: "There was the galling bit,
Which should keep man within his boundary.
But your old enemy so baits the hook,
He drags you eager to him. Hence nor curb
Avails you, nor reclaiming call. Heaven calls,
And, round about you wheeling, courts your gaze
With everlasting beauties. Yet your eye
Turns with fond doting still upon the earth.
Therefore he smites you who discerneth all."

CANTO XV

ARGUMENT

An Angel invites them to ascend the next steep. On their way Dante suggests certain doubts, which are resolved by Virgil; and, when they reach the third cornice, where the sin of anger is purged, our Poet, in a kind of waking dream, beholds remarkable instances of patience; and soon after they are enveloped in a dense fog.

As much as 'twixt the third hour's close and dawn,
Appareth of Heaven's sphere, that ever whirls
As restless as an infant in his play;
So much appear'd remaining to the sun
Of his slope journey towards the western goal.
Evening was there, and here the noon of night;²
And full upon our forehead smote the beams.
For round the mountain, circling, so our path
Had led us, that toward the sunset now

¹ Examples of the punishment of envy: Cain (Gen. iv. 14), and Aglauros, daughter of Cecrops, whom Mercury changed into stone for her jealousy of her sister Herse.

² "It was three hours past noon (*vespero* = from 3 to 6, *sera* = from 6 to 9 p.m.) in Purgatory, wherefore it must have been three hours after midnight at Jerusalem, and just midnight at Florence. *Spera* is the sphere in which the sun is fixed, which is said to *spout*, because its great circle—the ecliptic—is always rising or falling, to appearance, in the sky" (Butler). Dante always uses *là* ("there") for Purgatory or Paradise, as the case may be, and *qui* or *qua* ("here") for Italy where he is telling the story of his vision.

Direct we journey'd; when I felt a weight
Of more exceeding splendour, than before,
Press on my front. The cause unknown, amaze
Possess'd me! and both hands against my brows
Lifting, I interposed them, as a screen,
That of its gorgeous superflux of light
Clips the diminish'd orb. As when the ray,
Striking on water or the surface clear
Of mirror, leaps unto the opposite part,
Ascending at a glance, e'en as it fell,
And as much differs from the stone, that falls
Through equal space, (so practis'd skill hath shown);
Thus, with refracted light, before me seem'd
The ground there smitten; whence, in sudden haste,
My sight recoil'd. "What is this, sire beloved!
'Gainst which I strive to shield the sight in vain?"
Cried I, "and which toward us moving seems?"

"Marvel not, if the family of Heaven,"
He answer'd, "yet with dazzling radiance dim
Thy sense. It is a messenger who comes,
Inviting man's ascent.¹ Such sights ere long,
Not grievous, shall impart to thee delight,
As thy perception is by nature wrought
Up to their pitch." The blessed Angel, soon
As we had reach'd him, hail'd us with glad voice:
"Here enter on a ladder far less steep
Than ye have yet encounter'd." We forthwith
Ascending, heard behind us chanted sweet,
"Blessed the merciful," and "Happy thou,
That conquer'st." Lonely each, my guide and I,
Pursued our upward way; and as we went,
Some profit from his words I hoped to win,
And thus of him inquiring, framed my speech:
"What meant Romagna's spirit,² when he spake
Of bliss exclusive, with no partner shared?"

He straight replied: "No wonder, since he knows
What sorrow waits on his own worst defect,
If he chide others, that they less may mourn.
Because ye point your wishes at a mark,
Where, by communion of possessors, part
Is lessen'd, envy bloweth up men's sighs.

¹ The Angel of Fraternal Love.

² Guido del Duca.

No fear of that might touch ye, if the love
 Of higher sphere exalted your desire.
 For there, by how much more they call it 'ours,'
 So much propriety of each in good
 Encreases more, and heighten'd charity
 Wraps that fair cloister in a brighter flame.

"Now lack I satisfaction more," said I,
 "Than if thou hadst been silent at the first;
 And doubt more gathers on my labouring thought.
 How can it chance, that good distributed,
 The many, that possess it, makes more rich,
 Than if 'twere shared by few?" He answering thus:
 "Thy mind, reverting still to things of earth,
 Strikes darkness from true light. The highest Good
 Unlimited, ineffable, doth so speed
 To love, as beam to lucid body darts,
 Giving as much of ardour as it finds.
 The sempiternal effluence streams abroad,
 Spreading, wherever charity extends;
 So that the more aspirants to that bliss
 Are multiplied, more good is there to love,
 And more is loved; as mirrors, that reflect,
 Each unto other, propagated light.
 If these my words avail not to allay
 Thy thirsting, Beatrice thou shalt see,
 Who of this want, and of all else thou hast,
 Shall rid thee to the full. Provide but thou,
 That from thy temples may be soon erased,
 E'en as the two already, those five scars,
 That, when they pain thee worst, then kindest heal."
 "Thou," I had said, "content'st me;" when I saw
 The other round was gain'd, and wondering eyes
 Did keep me mute. There suddenly I seem'd
 By an extatic vision wrapt away;
 And in a temple saw, methought, a crowd
 Of many persons; and at the entrance stood
 A dame,¹ whose sweet demeanour did express
 A mother's love, who said, "Child! why hast thou
 Dealt with us thus? Behold thy sire and I
 Sorrowing have sought thee;" and so held her peace;
 And straight the vision fled. A female next

¹ The first example of meekness is the Blessed Virgin. Cf. Luke ii. 48.

Appear'd before me, down whose visage coursed
 Those waters, that grief forces out from one
 By deep resentment stung, who seem'd to say :
 " If thou, Pisistratus, be lord indeed
 Over this city, named with such debate
 Of adverse gods, and whence each science sparkles,
 Avenge thee of those arms, whose bold embrace
 Hath clasp'd our daughter;" and to her, meseem'd,
 Benign and meek, with visage undisturb'd,
 Her sovran spake : " How shall we those requite
 Who wish us evil, if we thus condemn
 The man that loves us?"¹ After that I saw
 A multitude, in fury burning, slay
 With stones a stripling youth,² and shout amain
 " Destroy, destroy;" and him I saw, who bow'd
 Heavy with death unto the ground, yet made
 His eyes, unfolded upward, gates to Heaven,
 Praying forgiveness of the Almighty Sire,
 Amidst that cruel conflict, on his foes,
 With looks that win compassion to their aim.

Soon as my spirit, from her airy flight
 Returning, sought again the things whose truth
 Depends not on her shaping, I observed
 She had not roved to falsehood in her dreams.³

Meanwhile the leader, who might see I moved
 As one who struggles to shake off his sleep,
 Exclaim'd : " What ails thee, that thou canst not hold
 Thy footing firm; but more than half a league
 Hast travel'd with closed eyes and tottering gait,
 Like to a man by wine or sleep o'ercharged?"

" Beloved father! so thou deign," said I,
 " To listen, I will tell thee what appear'd
 Before me, when so fail'd my sinking steps."

He thus : " Not if thy countenance were mask'd
 With hundred vizards, could a thought of thine,
 How small soe'er, elude me. What thou saw'st
 Was shown, that freely thou mightst ope thy heart

¹ Pisistratus, Lord of Athens, when urged by his wife to put to death a young man who had kissed their daughter in public, is said by Valerius Maximus to have given the answer here recorded.

² St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts vii.).

³ " Dante recognised that the scenes which had passed before him were merely visions (*errori*), though visions of events that had actually occurred in times gone by (therefore, *non falsi*)" (Oelsner).

To the waters of peace, that flow diffused
 From their eternal fountain. I not ask'd,
 What ails thee? for such cause as he doth, who
 Looks only with that eye, which sees no more,
 When spiritless the body lies; but ask'd,
 To give fresh vigour to thy foot. Such goads,
 The slow and loitering need; that they be found
 Not wanting, when their hour of watch returns."

So on we journey'd, through the evening sky
 Gazing intent, far onward as our eyes,
 With level view, could stretch against the bright
 Vespertine ray: and lo! by slow degrees
 Gathering, a fog made towards us, dark as night.
 There was no room for 'scaping; and that mist
 Bereft us, both of sight and the pure air.

CANTO XVI

ARGUMENT

As they proceed through the mist, they hear the voices of spirits praying. Marco Lombardo, one of these, points out to Dante the error of such as impute our actions to necessity; explains to him that man is endued with free will; and shows that much of human depravity results from the undue mixture of spiritual and temporal authority in rulers.

HELL's dunnest gloom, or night unlustrous, dark,
 Of every planet reft, and pall'd in clouds,
 Did never spread before the sight a veil
 In thickness like that fog, nor to the sense
 So palpable and gross. Entering its shade,
 Mine eye endured not with unclosed lids;
 Which marking, near me drew the faithful guide,
 Offering me his shoulder for a stay.

As the blind man behind his leader walks,
 Lest he should err, or stumble unawares
 On what might harm him or perhaps destroy;
 I journey'd through that bitter air and foul,
 Still listening to my escort's warning voice,
 "Look that from me thou part not." Straight I heard
 Voices, and each one seem'd to pray for peace,
 And for compassion, to the Lamb of God
 That taketh sins away. Their prelude still
 Was "Agnus Dei;" and through all the choir,

One voice, one measure ran, that perfect seem'd
 The concord of their song. "Are these I hear
 Spirits, O master?" I exclaim'd; and he,
 "Thou aim'st aright: these loose the bonds of wrath."
 "Now who art thou, that through our smoke dost
 cleave,

And speak'st of us, as thou thyself e'en yet
 Dividedst time by calends?"¹ So one voice
 Bespake me; whence my master said, "Reply;
 And ask, if upward hence the passage lead."

"O being! who dost make thee pure, to stand
 Beautiful once more in thy Maker's sight;
 Along with me: and thou shalt hear and wonder."
 Thus I, whereto the spirit answering spake:
 "Long as 'tis lawful for me, shall my steps
 Follow on thine; and since the cloudy smoke
 Forbids the seeing, hearing in its stead
 Shall keep us join'd." I then forthwith began:

"Yet in my mortal swathing, I ascend
 To higher regions; and am hither come
 Thorough the fearful agony of Hell.
 And, if so largely God hath doled His grace,
 That, clean beside all modern precedent,
 He wills me to behold His kingly state;
 From me conceal not who thou wast, ere death
 Had loosed thee; but instruct me: and instruct
 If rightly to the pass I tend; thy words
 The way directing, as a safe escort."

"I was of Lombardy, and Marco call'd: 2
 Not inexperienced of the world, that worth
 I still affected, from which all have turn'd
 The nerveless bow aside. Thy course tends right
 Unto the summit:" and, replying thus,
 He added, "I beseech thee pray for me,
 When thou shalt come aloft." And I to him:
 "Accept my faith for pledge I will perform
 What thou requirest. Yet one doubt remains,
 That wrings me sorely, if I solve it not.
 Singly before it urged me, doubled now

¹ "As though thou wert still alive."

² Marco Lombardo, or "the Lombard," was apparently a Venetian; it is uncertain whether Lombardo was also his family name. Villani describes him as "a wise and worthy courtier"; he was famous for his liberality and his pregnant sayings.

By thine opinion, when I couple that
 With one elsewhere¹ declared; each strengthening
 other.

The world indeed is even so forlorn
 Of all good, as thou speak'st it, and so swarms
 With every evil. Yet, beseech thee, point
 The cause out to me, that myself may see,
 And unto others show it: for in Heaven
 One places it, and one on earth below."

Then heaving forth a deep and audible sigh,
 "Brother!" he thus began, "the world is blind;
 And thou in truth comest from it. Ye, who live,
 Do so each cause refer to Heaven above,
 E'en as its motion, of necessity,
 Drew with it all that moves. If this were so,
 Free choice in you were none; nor justice would
 There should be joy for virtue, woe for ill.
 Your movements have their primal bent from Heaven;
 Not all: yet said I all; what then ensues?
 Light have ye still to follow evil or good,
 And of the will free power, which, if it stand
 Firm and unwearied in Heaven's first assay,
 Conquers at last, so it be cherish'd well,
 Triumphant over all. To mightier force,
 To better nature subject, ye abide
 Free, not constrain'd by that which forms in you
 The reasoning mind uninfluenced of the stars.²
 If then the present race of mankind err,
 Seek in yourselves the cause, and find it there;
 Herein thou shalt confess me no false spy.

"Forth from His plastic hand, who charm'd beholds
 Her image ere she yet exist, the soul
 Comes like a babe, that wantons sportively,³
 Weeping and laughing in its wayward moods;

¹ By Guido del Duca.

² The human soul is freely subject to her Creator. Albertus Magnus holds that there is in man a twofold principle of action, nature and the will. Nature, indeed, is governed by the stars, but the will is free. Notwithstanding this freedom, however, the will will be drawn and inclined by nature, unless it steadfastly resists; and, since nature moves with the movements of the stars, the will then, if it does not resist, begins to be inclined by these stellar movements.

³ Cary aptly notes: "This reminds us of the Emperor Hadrian's verses to his departing soul: *Animula, vagula, blandula*, etc."

As artless, and as ignorant of aught,
 Save that her Maker being one who dwells
 With gladness ever, willingly she turns
 To whate'er yields her joy. Of some slight good
 The flavour soon she tastes; and, snared by that,
 With fondness she pursues it; if no guide
 Recal, no rein direct her wandering course.
 Hence it behoved, the law should be a curb;
 A sovereign hence behoved, whose piercing view
 Might mark at least the fortress and main tower
 Of the true city. Laws indeed there are:
 But who is he observes them? None; not he,
 Who goes before, the shepherd of the flock,
 Who chews the cud but doth not cleave the hoof.¹
 Therefore the multitude, who see their guide
 Strike at the very good they covet most,
 Feed there and look no further. Thus the cause
 Is not corrupted nature in yourselves,
 But ill-conducting, that hath turn'd the world
 To evil. Rome, that turn'd it unto good,
 Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams
 Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.²
 One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword
 Is grafted on the crook; and, so conjoin'd,
 Each must perforce decline to worse, unawed
 By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark
 The blade: each herb is judged of by its seed.
 That land,³ through which Adice and the Po
 Their waters roll, was once the residence
 Of courtesy and valour, ere the day
 That frown'd on Frederick;⁴ now secure may pass
 Those limits, whosoe'er hath left, for shame,
 To talk with good men, or come near their haunts.

¹ Cf. Lev. xi. 4. What Dante says is that no man attends to the observance of the laws, *because* the Pope can chew the cud (*i. e.* meditate and understand the Scriptures), but does not divide the hoof (*i. e.* confuses the spiritual with the temporal power).

² According to Dante, the Papacy and the Empire alike proceed from God, and are inseparably wedded to Rome, from which as two suns they should shed light upon man's spiritual and temporal paths, as divinely ordained by the infinite goodness of Him from whom the power of Peter and of Cæsar branches as from a point. Cf. *Epist.* v. 5, and *Mon.* iii. 16.

³ Lombardy.

⁴ *Prima che Federico avesse briga*, before Frederick II. was opposed by the Popes.

Three aged ones are still found there, in whom
 The old time chides the new : these deem it long
 Ere God restore them to a better world :
 The good Gherardo ; of Palazzo he,
 Conrad ; and Guido of Castello, named
 In Gallic phrase more fitly the plain Lombard.¹
 On this at last conclude. The Church of Rome,
 Mixing two governments that ill assort,
 Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,
 And there herself and burden much defiled."

"O Marco!" I replied, "thine arguments
 Convince me : and the cause I now discern,
 Why of the heritage no portion came
 To Levi's offspring. But resolve me this :
 Who that Gherardo is, that as thou say'st
 Is left a sample of the perish'd race,
 And for rebuke to this untoward age?"

"Either thy words," said he, "deceive, or else
 Are meant to try me ; that thou, speaking Tuscan,
 Appear'st not to have heard of good Gherardo ;
 The sole addition that, by which I know him ;
 Unless I borrow'd from his daughter Gaïa²
 Another name to grace him. God be with you.
 I bear you company no more. Behold
 The dawn with white ray glimmering through the mist.
 I must away—the Angel comes—ere he
 Appear." He said, and would not hear me more.

¹ Three old men of Lombardy, still living in 1300, as a standing reproach to the corruption of the new times : Gherardo da Cammino, Lord of Treviso (*d.* 1306) ; Corrado da Palazzo, a Guelph nobleman of Brescia ; and Guido da Castello, a native of Reggio, highly extolled by Dante in his *Convivio* (iv. 16).

² Marco says in effect that Gherardo da Cammino is famous for his own virtues, and for being the father of Gaia (a lady who died in 1311). It seems uncertain whether Gaia was famous for her beauty and virtue, or notorious for her immoral life. For her brother, Riccardo da Cammino, the husband of Nino Visconti's daughter Giovanna, see *Par.* ix.

CANTO XVII

ARGUMENT

The Poet issues from that thick vapour; and soon after his fancy represents to him in lively portraiture some noted examples of anger. This imagination is dissipated by the appearance of an Angel, who marshals them onward to the fourth cornice, on which the sin of gloominess or indifference¹ is purged; and here Virgil shows him that this vice proceeds from a defect of love, and that all love can be only of two sorts, either natural, or of the soul; of which sorts the former is always right, but the latter may err either in respect of object or of degree.

CALL to remembrance, reader, if thou e'er
 Hast on an Alpine height been ta'en by cloud,
 Through which thou saw'st no better than the mole
 Doth through opacous membrane; then, whene'er
 The watery vapours dense began to melt
 Into thin air, how faintly the sun's sphere
 Seem'd wading through them: so thy nimble thought
 May image, how at first I rebeheld
 The sun, that bedward now his couch o'erhung.

Thus, with my leader's feet still equaling pace,
 From forth that cloud I came, when now expired
 The parting beams from off the nether shores.

O quick and forgetive power!² that sometimes dost
 So rob us of ourselves, we take no mark
 Though round about us thousand trumpets clang;
 What moves thee, if the senses stir not? Light
 Moves thee from Heaven, spontaneous, self-inform'd;
 Or, likelier, gliding down with swift illapse
 By will divine. Portray'd before me came
 The traces of her dire impiety,
 Whose form was changed into the bird, that most
 Delights itself in song:³ and here my mind

¹ The sin purged away on this terrace is simply *Sloth*, the fourth of the seven *peccati capitali*.

² The fantasy or imagination.

³ Procne. Cf. above, Canto ix. According to the Greek form of the story (which Dante follows), Procne, who slew her child Itys, and gave his flesh to his father, Tereus, to eat, was transformed into the nightingale, while her innocent and injured sister Philomela became the swallow. The Latin poets (and our English poets, too, as most notably Mr. Swinburne in his *Itylus*) have generally made Philomela the nightingale, and Procne the swallow; as Virgil in the *Georgics*, which it is doubtful if

Was inwardly so wrapt, it gave no place
 To aught that ask'd admittance from without.
 Next shower'd into my fantasy a shape
 As of one crucified,¹ whose visage spake
 Fell rancour, malice deep, wherein he died;
 And round him Ahasuerus the great king;
 Esther his bride; and Mordecai the just,
 Blameless in word and deed. As of itself
 That unsubstantial coinage of the brain
 Burst, like a bubble, when the water fails
 That fed it; in my vision straight arose
 A damsel weeping loud, and cried, "O queen!
 O mother! wherefore has intemperate ire
 Driven thee to loathe thy being? Not to lose
 Lavinia, desperate thou hast slain thyself.
 Now hast thou lost me.² I am she, whose tears
 Mourn, ere I fall, a mother's timeless end."

E'en as a sleep breaks off, if suddenly
 New radiance strike upon the closed lids,
 The broken slumber quivering ere it dies;
 Thus, from before me, sunk that imagery,
 Vanishing, soon as on my face there struck
 The light, outshining far our earthly beam.
 As round I turn'd me to survey what place
 I had arrived at, "Here ye mount:" exclaim'd
 A voice, that other purpose left me none
 Save will so eager to behold who spake,
 I could not chuse but gaze. As 'fore the sun,
 That weighs our vision down, and veils his form
 In light transcendent, thus my virtue fail'd
 Unequal. "This is Spirit from above,
 Who marshals us our upward way, unsought;
 And in his own light shrouds him.³ As a man
 Doth for himself, so now is done for us.

Dante had read. Dr. Moore suggests that Dante found the former version of the legend, not in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (which does not show which form of the story that poet accepted), but in a passage in a Latin translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where the swallow is called Philomela and a maiden.

¹ Haman. Cf. Esther vii.

² Lavinia, daughter of Latinus and Amata, was first betrothed to Turnus, and then promised by her father to Æneas. Amata, who favoured Turnus, killed herself on a report that the latter had been slain. *Æn.* xiii.

³ The Angel of Meekness or Peace.

For whoso waits imploring, yet sees need
 Of his prompt aidance, sets himself prepared
 For blunt denial, ere the suit be made.
 Refuse we not to lend a ready foot
 At such inviting : haste we to ascend,
 Before it darken : for we may not then,
 Till morn again return." So spake my guide ;
 And to one ladder both address'd our steps ;
 And the first stair approaching, I perceived
 Near me as 'twere the waving of a wing,
 That fann'd my face, and whisper'd : " Blessed they,
 The peace-makers : they know not evil wrath."

Now to such height above our heads were raised
 The last beams, follow'd close by hooded night,
 That many a star on all sides through the gloom
 Shone out. " Why partest from me, O my strength?"
 So with myself I communed ; for I felt
 My o'ertoil'd sinews slacken. We had reach'd
 The summit, and were fix'd like to a bark
 Arrived at land. And waiting a short space,
 If aught should meet mine ear in that new round,
 Then to my guide I turn'd, and said : " Loved Sire !
 Declare what guilt is on this circle purged.
 If our feet rest, no need thy speech should pause."

He thus to me : " The love of good, whate'er
 Wanted of just proportion, here fulfils.
 Here plies afresh the oar, that loiter'd ill.
 But that thou mayst yet clearer understand,
 Give ear unto my words ; and thou shalt cull
 Some fruit may please thee well, from this delay.¹

¹ Virgil now proceeds to expound the whole ethical scheme of the *Purgatorio*, as he had done that of the *Inferno* in a similar pause. " Not only the Creator, but every creature also, is moved by love. Natural love, as that of heavy bodies for the centre, of fire for the circumference, or of plants for their natural habitat, is unerring ; but rational love may err by being misdirected ; or by being disproportionate, by defect or excess. Love directed to primal and essential good, or to secondary good in due measure, cannot lead to sin ; but perverse and disproportionate love is the seed of all sin, just as much as rightly directed and measured love is the seed of all virtue. A human being who has not become a monster cannot love (that is, cannot be drawn towards and take delight in) evil to himself, or evil to the God on whom his very being depends. All perverse rejoicing, then, must be rejoicing in the ill of our neighbour, and this may be caused by pride, envy, or anger, which are purged on the three circles already passed.

"Creator, nor created being, e'er,
 My son," he thus began, "was without love,
 Or natural, or the free spirit's growth.
 Thou hast not that to learn. The natural still
 Is without error: but the other swerves,
 If on ill object bent, or through excess
 Of vigour, or defect. While e'er it seeks
 The primal blessings, or with measure due
 The inferior, no delight, that flows from it,
 Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,
 Or with more ardour than behoves, or less,
 Pursue the good; the thing created then
 Works 'gainst its Maker. Hence thou must infer,
 That love is germin of each virtue in ye,
 And of each act no less, that merits pain.
 Now since it may not be, but love intend
 The welfare mainly of the thing it loves,
 All from self-hatred are secure; and since
 No being can be thought to exist apart,
 And independent of the first, a bar
 Of equal force restrains from hating that.

"Grant the distinction just; and it remains
 The evil must be another's, which is loved.
 Three ways such love is gender'd in your clay.
 There is who hopes (his neighbour's worth deprest)
 Pre-eminence himself; and covets hence,
 For his own greatness, that another fall.¹
 There is who so much fears the loss of power,
 Fame, favour, glory, (should his fellow mount
 Above him,) and so sickens at the thought,
 He loves their opposite:² and there is he,
 Whom wrong or insult seems to gall and shame,
 That he doth thirst for vengeance; and such needs

Apart from these evil gratifications, everyone has at least some confused apprehension of a supreme good wherein the soul can rest, and everyone therefore seeks to gain it. But this supreme love, which is no other than the love of God, may err by defect, either speculative or practical; and the slothful who have thus erred recover their lost tone in the circle the pilgrims have now reached. The innocent or needful enjoyment of which the bodily frame is the seat, cannot confer true bliss, and may be pursued with disproportionate keenness, or in neglect of the divinely imposed restraints. Such sins are purged in the three uppermost circles" (Wicksteed).

¹ Pride.

² Envy.

Must dote on other's evil.¹ Here beneath,
 This threefold love is mourn'd. Of the other sort
 Be now instructed; that which follows good,
 But with disorder'd and irregular course.

“All indistinctly apprehend a bliss,
 On which the soul may rest; the hearts of all
 Yearn after it; and to that wished bourn
 All therefore strive to tend. If ye behold,
 Or seek it, with a love remiss and lax;²
 This cornice, after just repenting, lays
 Its penal torment on ye. Other good
 There is, where man finds not his happiness:
 It is not true fruition; not that blest
 Essence, of every good the branch and root.
 The love too lavishly bestow'd on this,
 Along three circles over us, is mourn'd.³
 Account of that division tripartite
 Expect not, fitter for thine own research.”

CANTO XVIII

ARGUMENT

Virgil discourses further concerning the nature of love. Then a multitude of spirits rush by; two of whom, in van of the rest, record instances of zeal and fervent affection, and another, who was abbot of San Zeno in Verona, declares himself to Virgil and Dante; and lastly follow other spirits, shouting forth memorable examples of the sin for which they suffer. The Poet, pursuing his meditations, falls into a dreamy slumber.

THE teacher ended, and his high discourse
 Concluding, earnest in my looks inquired
 If I appear'd content; and I, whom still
 Unsated thirst to hear him urged, was mute,
 Mute outwardly, yet inwardly I said:
 “Perchance my too much questioning offends.”
 But he, true father, mark'd the secret wish
 By diffidence restrain'd; and, speaking, gave
 Me boldness thus to speak: “Master! my sight
 Gathers so lively virtue from thy beams,

¹ Anger.² Sloth.³ Avarice and Prodigality, Gluttony, Lust.

That all, thy words convey, distinct is seen.
 Wherefore I pray thee, father, whom this heart
 Holds dearest, thou wouldst deign by proof t' unfold
 That love, from which, as from their source, thou
 bring'st

All good deeds and their opposite." He then:
 "To what I now disclose be thy clear ken
 Directed; and thou plainly shalt behold
 How much those blind have err'd, who make themselves
 The guides of men. The soul, created apt
 To love, moves versatile which way soe'er
 Aught pleasing prompts her, soon as she is waked
 By pleasure into act. Of substance true
 Your apprehension¹ forms its counterfeit;
 And, in you the ideal shape presenting,
 Attracts the soul's regard. If she, thus drawn,
 Incline toward it; love is that inclining,
 And a new nature knit by pleasure in ye.
 Then, as the fire points up, and mounting seeks
 His birthplace and his lasting seat, e'en thus
 Enters the captive soul into desire,
 Which is a spiritual motion, that ne'er rests
 Before enjoyment of the thing it loves.
 Enough to show thee, how the truth from those
 Is hidden, who aver all love a thing
 Praise-worthy in itself; although perhaps
 Its matter seem still good.² Yet if the wax
 Be good, it follows not the impression must."

"What love is," I return'd, "thy words, O guide!
 And my own docile mind, reveal. Yet thence
 New doubts have sprung. For, from without, if love
 Be offer'd to us, and the spirit knows
 No other footing; tend she right or wrong,
 Is no desert of hers." He answering thus:
 "What reason here discovers, I have power
 To show thee: that which lies beyond, expect
 From Beatrice, faith not reason's task.
 Spirit, substantial form, with matter join'd,
 Not in confusion mix'd, hath in itself

¹ "Your apprehensive faculty draws an impression from a real object, and unfolds it within you, so that it makes the mind turn thereto" (Okey's translation).

² Love is the material upon which Free Will acts for good or for evil.

Specific virtue of that union born,
Which is not felt except it work, nor proved
But through effect, as vegetable life
By the green leaf.¹ From whence his intellect
Deduced its primal notices of things,
Man therefore knows not, or his appetites
Their first affections; such in you, as zeal
In bees to gather honey; at the first,
Volition, meriting nor blame nor praise.
But o'er each lower faculty supreme,
That, as she list, are summon'd to her bar,
Ye have that virtue² in you, whose just voice
Uttereth counsel, and whose word should keep
The threshold of assent. Here is the source,
Whence cause of merit in you is derived;
E'en as the affections, good or ill, she takes,
Or severs, winnow'd as the chaff. Those men,
Who, reasoning, went to depth profoundest, mark'd
That innate freedom; and were thence induced
To leave their moral teaching to the world.³
Grant then, that from necessity arise
All love that glows within you; to dismiss
Or harbour it, the power is in yourselves.
Remember, Beatrice, in her style,
Denominates free choice by eminence
The noble virtue; if in talk with thee
She touch upon that theme." The moon, well nigh
To midnight hour belated, made the stars
Appear to wink and fade; and her broad disk
Seem'd like a crag on fire, as up the vault
That course she journey'd, which the sun then warms
When they of Rome behold him at his set
Betwixt Sardinia and the Corsic isle.
And now the weight, that hung upon my thought,
Was lighten'd by the aid of that clear spirit,
Who raiseth Andes above Mantua's name.⁴

¹ The rational or human soul is a substantial form, separated from matter and yet abiding in it, which has a specific power by virtue of which it believes and loves.

² Reason.

³ "The great moral philosophers among the heathens" (Cary).

⁴ The literal translation is: "Through whom Pietola is more famous than any Mantuan village," or, perhaps, "than the town of Mantua itself." Pietola, near Mantua, Andes, is identified with the birthplace of Virgil.

I therefore, when my questions had obtain'd
 Solution plain and ample, stood as one
 Musing in dreamy slumber; but not long
 Slumber'd; for suddenly a multitude,
 The steep already turning from behind,
 Rush'd on. With fury and like random rout,
 As echoing on their shores at midnight heard
 Ismenus and Asopus, for his Thebes
 If Bacchus' help were needed;¹ so came these
 Tumultuous, curving each his rapid step,
 By eagerness impell'd of holy love.

Soon they o'ertook us; with such swiftness moved
 The mighty crowd. Two spirits at their head
 Cried, weeping, "Blessed Mary² sought with haste
 The hilly region. Cæsar, to subdue
 Ilerda, darted in Marseilles his sting,
 And flew to Spain."³—"Oh, tarry not: away!"
 The others shouted; "let not time be lost
 Through slackness of affection. Hearty zeal
 To serve reanimates celestial grace."

"O ye! in whom intenser fervency
 Haply supplies, where lukewarm erst ye fail'd,
 Slow or neglectful, to absolve your part
 Of good and virtuous; this man, who yet lives,
 (Credit my tale, though strange,) desires to ascend,
 So morning rise to light us. Therefore say
 Which hand leads nearest to the rifted rock."

So spake my guide; to whom a shade return'd:
 "Come after us, and thou shalt find the cleft.
 We may not linger: such resistless will
 Speeds our unwearied course. Vouchsafe us then
 Thy pardon, if our duty seem to thee
 Discourteous rudeness. In Verona I
 Was abbot of San Zeno, when the hand
 Of Barbarossa grasp'd Imperial sway,
 That name ne'er utter'd without tears in Milan.
 And there is he, hath one foot in his grave,
 Who for that monastery ere long shall weep,
 Ruing his power misused: for that his son,

¹ Ismenus and Asopus are rivers near Thebes, upon the banks of which the people invoked the aid of Bacchus for their vineyards.

² Luke i. 39, 40.

³ Cæsar (B.C. 49) delegated the siege of Marseilles to Brutus, and hastened to attack Pompey's lieutenants at Lerida.

Of body ill compact, and worse in mind,
 And born in evil, he hath set in place
 Of its true pastor." ¹ Whether more he spake,
 Or here was mute, I know not: he had sped
 E'en now so far beyond us. Yet thus much
 I heard, and in remembrance treasured it.

He then, who never fail'd me at my need,
 Cried, "Hither turn. Lo! two with sharp remorse
 Chiding their sin." In rear of all the troop
 These shouted: "First they died, to whom the sea
 Open'd, or ever Jordan saw his heirs:
 And they, who with Æneas to the end
 Endured not suffering, for their portion chose
 Life without glory." ² Soon as they had fled
 Past reach of sight, new thought within me rose
 By others follow'd fast, and each unlike
 Its fellow: till led on from thought to thought,
 And pleased with the fleeting train, mine eye
 Was closed, and meditation changed to dream.

CANTO XIX

ARGUMENT

The Poet, after describing his dream, relates how, at the summoning of an Angel, he ascends with Virgil to the fifth cornice, where the sin of avarice is cleansed, and where he finds Pope Adrian the fifth.

It was the hour, when of diurnal heat
 No reliques chafe the cold beams of the moon,
 O'erpower'd by earth, or planetary sway

¹ The speaker is a certain Gherardo, who was Abbot of San Zeno in the days of the Emperor Frederick I., and died in 1187. He rebukes Alberto della Scala, Lord of Verona (father of Can Grande), already an old man in 1300 (he died in the following year), for having unlawfully made his bastard son Giuseppe abbot of that monastery.

² Examples of the punishment of sloth, or, at least, of lack of perseverance: the Israelites, of whom the Lord said, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers" (Deut. i. 35); the Trojans, who, "having no desire of high renown," were left behind in Sicily by Æneas (*Æn.* v.). The examples are thus taken from the history of the chosen people of the old law and of the imperial race of the new.

Of Saturn; and the geomancer sees
 His Greater Fortune up the east ascend,
 Where grey dawn checkers first the shadowy cone;¹
 When, 'fore me in my dream, a woman's shape
 There came, with lips that stammer'd, eyes aslant,
 Distorted feet, hands maim'd, and colour pale.

I look'd upon her: and, as sunshine cheers
 Limbs numb'd by nightly cold, e'en thus my look
 Unloosed her tongue; next, in brief space, her form
 Decrepit raised erect, and faded face

With love's own hue illumed. Recovering speech,
 She forthwith, warbling, such a strain began,
 That I, how loth soe'er, could scarce have held
 Attention from the song. "I," thus she sang,

"I am the Syren, she, whom mariners
 On the wide sea are wilder'd when they hear;
 Such fulness of delight the listener feels.

I, from his course, Ulysses by my lay
 Enchanted drew. Whoe'er frequents me once,
 Parts seldom: so I charm him, and his heart
 Contented knows no void."² Or ere her mouth
 Was closed, to shame her, at my side appear'd
 A dame of semblance holy.³ With stern voice
 She utter'd: "Say, O Virgil! who is this?"
 Which hearing, he approach'd, with eyes still bent
 Toward that goodly presence: the other seized her,
 And, her robes tearing, open'd her before,
 And show'd the belly to me, whence a smell,
 Exhaling loathsome, waked me. Round I turn'd
 Mine eyes: and thus the teacher: "At the least
 Three times my voice hath call'd thee. Rise, begone.
 Let us the opening find where thou mayst pass."

I straightway rose. Now day, pour'd down from
 high,
 Fill'd all the circuits of the sacred mount;
 And, as we journey'd, on our shoulder smote
 The early ray. I follow'd, stooping low

¹ It is an hour before the dawn, when the last stars in Aquarius and the first in Pisces together form the figure known as *Fortuna Major*.

² The Siren symbolises concupiscence of the flesh.

³ She is variously identified with prevenient grace, reason, and the "wisdom and understanding" of Proverbs vii., which the whole episode rather suggests.

My forehead, as a man, o'ercharged with thought,
 Who bends him to the likeness of an arch
 That midway spans the flood; when thus I heard,
 "Come, enter here," in tone so soft and mild,
 As never met the ear on mortal strand.

With swan-like wings dispred and pointing up,
 Who thus had spoken marshal'd us along,
 Where, each side of the solid masonry,
 The sloping walls retired; then moved his plumes,
 And fanning us, affirm'd that those, who mourn,
 Are blessed, for that comfort shall be theirs.¹

"What aileth thee, that still thou look'st to earth?"
 Began my leader; while the angelic shape
 A little over us his station took.

"New vision," I replied, "hath raised in me
 Surmisings strange and anxious doubts, whereon
 My soul intent allows no other thought
 Or room, or entrance."—"Hast thou seen," said he,
 "That old enchantress, her, whose wiles alone
 The spirits o'er us weep for? Hast thou seen
 How man may free him of her bonds? Enough.
 Let thy heels spurn the earth; and thy raised ken
 Fix on the lure, which Heaven's eternal King
 Whirls in the rolling spheres." As on his feet
 The falcon first looks down, then to the sky
 Turns, and forth stretches eager for the food,
 That woos him thither; so the call I heard:
 So onward, far as the dividing rock
 Gave way, I journey'd, till the plain was reach'd.

On the fifth circle when I stood at large,
 A race appear'd before me, on the ground
 All downward lying prone and weeping sore.
 "My soul² hath cleaved to the dust," I heard
 With sighs so deep, they well nigh choked the words.

"O ye elect of God! whose penal woes
 Both hope and justice mitigate, direct
 Towards the steep rising our uncertain way."

"If ye approach secure from this our doom,
 Prostration, and would urge your course with speed,
 See that ye still to rightward keep the brink."

So them the bard besought; and such the words,
 Beyond us some short space, in answer came.

¹ The Angel of Zeal.

² Psalm cxix.

I noted what remain'd yet hidden from them :¹
 Thence to my liege's eyes mine eyes I bent,
 And he, forthwith interpreting their suit,
 Beckon'd his glad assent. Free then to act
 As pleased me, I drew near, and took my stand
 Over that shade whose words I late had mark'd.
 And, " Spirit ! " I said, " in whom repentant tears
 Mature that blessed hour when thou with God
 Shalt find acceptance, for a while suspend
 For me that mightier care. Say who thou wast ;
 Why thus ye grovel on your bellies prone ;
 And if, in aught, ye wish my service there,
 Whence living I am come. " He answering spake :
 " The cause why Heaven our back toward his cope
 Reverses, shalt thou know : but me know first,
 The successor of Peter, and the name
 And title of my lineage, from that stream
 That 'twixt Chiaveri and Siesti draws
 His limpid waters through the lowly glen.²
 A month and little more by proof I learnt,
 With what a weight that robe of sovereignty
 Upon his shoulder rests, who from the mire
 Would guard it ; that each other fardel seems
 But feathers in the balance. Late, alas !
 Was my conversion : but, when I became
 Rome's pastor, I discern'd at once the dream
 And cozenage of life ; saw that the heart
 Rested not there, and yet no prouder height
 Lured on the climber : wherefore, of that life
 No more enamour'd, in my bosom love
 Of purer being kindled. For till then
 I was a soul in misery, alienate
 From God, and covetous of all earthly things ;

¹ The T. C. editors translate : " I noted what else was concealed in the words ; " and interpret : " We take the ' concealed ' or ' implied ' thing, which was involved in the direct answer to the question, to be a revelation of the fact that souls are purged in as many circles as may be necessary, but that some may pass free through certain circles, if they have not been guilty of the sins purified in them. "

² Cardinal Ottobuono de' Fieschi, of the family of the Counts of Lavagna (who took their title from a river of that name between Chiavari and Sestri on the Gulf of Genoa), was elected Pope on July 11, 1276, under the title of Adrian V., and died on August 16, " a month and little more " later. He had been papal legate to England, and was a man of noble character.

Now, as thou seest, here punish'd for my doting.
 Such cleansing from the taint of avarice,
 Do spirits, converted, need. This mount inflicts
 No direr penalty. E'en as our eyes
 Fasten'd below, nor e'er to loftier clime
 Were lifted; thus hath justice level'd us,
 Here on the earth. As avarice quench'd our love
 Of good, without which is no working; thus
 Here justice holds us prison'd, hand and foot
 Chain'd down and bound, while Heaven's just Lord
 shall please,
 So long to tarry, motionless, outstretch'd."

My knees I stoop'd, and would have spoke; but he,
 Ere my beginning, by his ear perceived
 I did him reverence; and "What cause," said he,
 "Hath bow'd thee thus?"—"Compunction," I re-
 join'd,

"And inward awe of your high dignity."

"Up," he exclaim'd, "brother! upon thy feet
 Arise; err not: thy fellow servant I,
 (Thine and all others') of one Sovran Power.
 If thou hast ever mark'd those holy sounds
 Of gospel truth, 'nor shall be given in marriage,'
 Thou mayst discern the reasons of my speech.¹
 Go thy ways now; and linger here no more.
 Thy tarrying is a let unto the tears,
 With which I hasten that whereof thou spakest.
 I have on earth a kinswoman; her name
 Alagia,² worthy in herself, so ill
 Example of our house corrupt her not:
 And she is all remaineth of me there."

CANTO XX

ARGUMENT

Among those on the fifth cornice, Hugh Capet records illustrious examples of voluntary poverty and of bounty; then tells who himself is, and speaks of his descendants on the French throne; and, lastly, adds some noted instances of avarice. When he has ended, the mountain shakes, and all the spirits sing "Glory to God."

¹ Cf. Rev. xix. 10, and Matt. xxii. 30.

² Alagia de' Fieschi, the Pope's niece, was the wife of the Marquis Moroello Malaspina. See above, notes on Canto viii.

ILL strives the will, 'gainst will more wise that strives :
His pleasure therefore to mine own preferr'd,
I drew the sponge yet thirsty from the wave.

Onward I moved : he also onward moved,
Who led me, coasting still, wherever place
Along the rock was vacant ; as a man
Walks near the battlements on narrow wall.
For those on the other part, who drop by drop
Wring out their all-infecting malady,
Too closely press the verge. Accurst be thou,
Inveterate wolf ! whose gorge ingluts more prey,
Than every beast beside, yet is not fill'd ;
So bottomless thy maw.¹—Ye spheres of Heaven !
To whom there are, as seems, who attribute
All change in mortal state, when is the day
Of his appearing, for whom fate reserves
To chase her hence?²—With wary steps and slow
We pass'd ; and I attentive to the shades,
Whom piteously I heard lament and wail ;
And, 'midst the wailing, one before us heard
Cry out " O blessed Virgin ! " as a dame
In the sharp pangs of childbed ; and " How poor
Thou wast," it added, " witness that low roof
Where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down.³
O good Fabricius ! thou didst virtue chuse
With poverty, before great wealth with vice." ⁴

The words so pleased me, that desire to know
The spirit, from whose lip they seem'd to come,
Did draw me onward. Yet it spake the gift
Of Nicholas, which on the maidens he
Bounteous bestow'd, to save their youthful prime
Unblemish'd.⁵ " Spirit ! who dost speak of deeds

¹ The *Lupa*, the " she-wolf " of Avarice. Cf. *Inf.* i.

² When will the *Veltro*, the " greyhound," the promised deliverer, come? Cf. *Inf.* i. notes.

³ Cf. Luke ii. 7.

⁴ Caius Fabricius, Roman consul and censor (B.C. 282-275), refused the bribes of the Samnites and the magnificent offers of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. Cf. *Conv.* iv. 5; *Mon.* ii. 5.

⁵ St. Nicholas of Myra (fourth century), hearing that the chastity of three maidens was in danger through their poverty, secretly threw three bags of money into the window of their father's house to enable them to be married. He is known as St. Nicholas of Bari, where his shrine is, and is represented in art (as in Raphael's great picture in the National Gallery) in his episcopal robes with some symbol of the three bags of money.

So worthy, tell me who thou wast," I said,
 "And why thou dost with single voice renew
 Memorial of such praise. That boon vouchsafed
 Haply shall meet reward; if I return
 To finish the short pilgrimage of life,
 Still speeding to its close on restless wing."

"I," answer'd he, "will tell thee; not for help,
 Which thence I look for; but that in thyself
 Grace so exceeding shines, before thy time
 Of mortal dissolution. I was root
 Of that ill plant, whose shade such poison sheds
 O'er all the Christian land, that seldom thence
 Good fruit is gather'd.¹ Vengeance soon should come,
 Had Ghent and Douay, Lille and Bruges power,²
 And vengeance I of Heaven's great Judge implore.
 Hugh Capet was I hight: from me descend
 The Philips and the Louis, of whom France
 Newly is govern'd: born of one, who plied
 The slaughterer's trade at Paris. When the race
 Of ancient kings had vanish'd (all save one
 Wrapt up in sable weeds)³ within my gripe
 I found the reins of empire, and such powers
 Of new acquirement, with full store of friends,
 That soon the widow'd circlet of the crown
 Was girt upon the temples of my son,
 He, from whose bones the anointed race begins.
 Till the great dower of Provence had removed
 The stains, that yet obscured our lowly blood,
 Its sway indeed was narrow;⁴ but how'er

¹ This is Hugh Capet, founder of the Capetian dynasty and ancestor of the "evil plant," the royal house of France in general, and Philip the Fair in particular. Hugh became King of France in 987, on the death of the last Carolingian king, Louis V. He died in 996, when he was succeeded by his son Robert, who had previously been crowned king. Dante apparently confuses this Hugh Capet with his father, Hugh the Great, who died in 956, and was supposed by mediæval writers to have been the son of a butcher.

² He alludes to the coming defeat of the French by the Flemings, in 1302, at the battle of Courtrai.

³ On the death of Louis V., the only surviving Carolingian was his uncle, Duke Charles of Lorraine, whom Hugh Capet captured, and imprisoned till his death in 992. Dante has probably confused him with the last of the Merovingians, Childeric III., who was deposed by Pepin le Bref, in 751, and compelled to become a monk.

⁴ Charles I. of Anjou obtained Provence by his marriage, in

It wrought no evil: there, with force and lies,
 Began its rapine: after, for amends,
 Poitou it seized, Navarre and Gascony.¹
 To Italy came Charles; and for amends,
 Young Conradine, an innocent victim, slew;
 And sent the angelic teacher back to Heaven,
 Still for amends.² I see the time at hand,
 That forth from France invites another Charles
 To make himself and kindred better known.
 Unarm'd he issues, saving with that lance,
 Which the arch-traitor tilted with; and that
 He carries with so home a thrust, as rives
 The bowels of poor Florence.³ No increase
 Of territory hence, but sin and shame
 Shall be his guerdon; and so much the more
 As he more lightly deems of such foul wrong.
 I see the other⁴ (who a prisoner late
 Had stept on shore) exposing to the mart

1246, with Beatrice, daughter of Count Raymond Berenger. Cf. *Par. vi.* A more probable interpretation of this line would be: "Until the great dower of Provence took away the sense of shame from my race."

¹ Instead of *Navarre*, read "Normandy." The treble repetition of amends, *per ammenda*, is intense irony.

² Cf. *Inf. xxviii.*; *Purg. iii.* and *vii.* Charles, in 1268, barbarously had Conradin, the last of the house of Suabia, beheaded after the battle of Tagliacozzo. There was a tradition, certainly baseless, that he had St. Thomas Aquinas poisoned in 1274, when the Angelical Doctor was at the abbey of Fossanuova on his way to the Council of Lyons.

³ Charles of Valois, brother of Philip the Fair, entered Florence on November 1, 1301, nominally as papal peacemaker. By treachery and perjury, he obtained authority from the Signoria to pacify the city, which he set about doing by establishing a reign of terror, recalling the Neri, and persecuting the Bianchi. He left Florence in April, 1302, covered with disgrace and laden with the plunder of the city, leaving the Neri absolute masters of the State.

⁴ Charles II. of Anjou, eldest son of Charles I., was defeated and taken prisoner in a naval battle outside Naples, by Ruggiero di Loria, admiral of Peter of Aragon, in 1284. The Sicilians wished to make his life pay for that of Conradin; but he was spared at the intercession of Manfred's daughter Costanza, and sent a prisoner to Spain. He was still in captivity when, in the following year, he succeeded his father as King of Naples. In 1305, he gave his daughter Beatrice as wife to Azzo VIII. d'Este, the Marquis of Ferrara of evil repute (cf. *Inf. xii.*; *Purg. v.*), possibly for pecuniary considerations, or in return for the promised cession of Reggio and Modena—which cities, however, rose in insurrection, and succeeded, temporarily, in shaking off the yoke of the House of Este.

His daughter, whom he bargains for, as do
 The Corsairs for their slaves. O avarice!
 What canst thou more, who hast subdued our blood
 So wholly to thyself, they feel no care
 Of their own flesh? To hide with direr guilt
 Past ill and future, lo! the flower-de-luce
 Enters Alagna; in his Vicar Christ
 Himself a captive, and His mockery
 Acted again. Lo! to His holy lip
 The vinegar and gall once more applied;
 And He 'twixt living robbers doom'd to bleed.¹
 Lo! the new Pilate, of whose cruelty
 Such violence cannot fill the measure up,
 With no decree to sanction, pushes on
 Into the temple his yet eager sails.²

“O sovran Master! when shall I rejoice
 To see the vengeance, which Thy wrath, well-pleased,
 In secret silence broods?—While daylight lasts,
 So long what thou didst hear of her, sole spouse
 Of the Great Spirit, and on which thou turn'dst
 To me for comment, is the general theme
 Of all our prayers; but, when it darkens, then
 A different strain we utter; then record
 Pygmalion, whom his gluttonous thirst of gold
 Made traitor, robber, parricide: the woes
 Of Midas, which his greedy wish ensued,
 Mark'd for derision to all future times:
 And the fond Achan, how he stole the prey,
 That yet he seems by Joshua's ire pursued.
 Sapphira with her husband next we blame;
 And praise the forefeet, that with furious ramp
 Spurn'd Heliodorus. All the mountain round
 Rings with the infamy of Thracia's king,
 Who slew his Phrygian charge: and last a shout
 Ascends: 'Declare, O Crassus! for thou know'st,
 The flavour of thy gold.'³ The voice of each

¹ In September, 1303, Sciarra Colonna and Guillaume de Nogaret, in the name of Philip the Fair, and with the royal banner of France displayed, seized Pope Boniface VIII. at Anagni, and treated the old Pontiff with such barbarity that he died a month after his release from their hands.

² He refers to the persecution of the Order of the Templars by this "new Pilate," King Philip (1307), in order to possess himself of their vast wealth.

³ During the day they rehearse examples of voluntary poverty,

Now high, now low, as each his impulse prompts,
 Is led through many a pitch, acute or grave.
 Therefore, not singly, I erewhile rehearsed
 That blessedness we tell of in the day :
 But near me, none, beside, his accent raised."

From him we now had parted, and essay'd
 With utmost efforts to surmount the way ;
 When I did feel, as nodding to its fall,
 The mountain tremble ; whence an icy chill
 Seized on me, as on one to death convey'd.
 So shook not Delos, when Latona there
 Couch'd to bring forth the twin-born eyes of Heaven.

Forthwith from every side a shout arose
 So vehement, that suddenly my guide
 Drew near, and cried : " Doubt not, while I conduct
 thee."

" Glory !" all shouted (such the sounds mine ear
 Gather'd from those, who near me swell'd the sounds)
 " Glory in the highest be to God." We stood
 Immoveably suspended, like to those,
 The shepherds, who first heard in Bethlehem's field
 That song : till ceased the trembling, and the song
 Was ended : then our hallow'd path resumed,
 Eying the prostrate shadows, who renew'd
 Their custom'd mourning. Never in my breast
 Did ignorance so struggle with desire
 Of knowledge, if my memory do not err,
 As in that moment ; nor through haste dared I
 To question, nor myself could aught discern.
 So on I fared, in thoughtfulness and dread.

beginning with that of the Blessed Virgin, " sole spouse of the Great Spirit." When night comes, they denounce crimes wrought for avarice, or its punishment : the murder of Sichæus by Pygmalion (Virgil, *Æn.* i.) ; the greed of Midas, who obtained from Bacchus that all he touched should turn to gold (Ovid, *Metam.* xi.) ; the stoning of Achan (Josh. vi., vii.) ; Ananias and Sapphira (Acts iv., v.) ; the expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple by the mounted Angel (2 Macc. iii.) ; the murder of Polydorus, son of Priam, by King Polymestor of Thrace (*Æn.* iii. ; cf. *Inf.* xxx.) ; and the fate of Crassus, slain in battle by the Parthians, whose king, Orodes, poured molten gold down his throat.

CANTO XXI

ARGUMENT

The two Poets are overtaken by the spirit of Statius, who, being cleansed, is on his way to Paradise, and who explains the cause of the mountain shaking, and of the hymn; his joy at beholding Virgil.

THE natural thirst, ne'er quench'd but from the well
 Whereof the woman of Samaria craved,¹
 Excited; haste, along the cumber'd path,
 After my guide, impell'd; and pity moved
 My bosom for the 'vengeful doom though just.
 When lo! even as Luke relates, that Christ
 Appear'd unto the two upon their way,
 New-risen from His vaulted grave;² to us
 A shade appear'd, and after us approach'd,
 Contemplating the crowd beneath its feet.
 We were not ware of it; so first it spake,
 Saying, "God give you peace, my brethren!" then
 Sudden we turn'd: and Virgil such salute,
 As fitted that kind greeting, gave; and cried:
 "Peace in the blessed council be thy lot,
 Awarded by that righteous court which me
 To everlasting banishment exiles."
 "How!" he exclaim'd, nor from his speed meanwhile
 Desisting; "If that ye be spirits whom God
 Vouchsafes not room above; who up the height
 Has been thus far your guide?" To whom the bard:
 "If thou observe the tokens,³ which this man,
 Traced by the finger of the Angel, bears;
 'Tis plain that in the kingdom of the just
 He needs must share. But sithence she,⁴ whose wheel
 Spins day and night, for him not yet had drawn
 That yarn, which on the fatal distaff piled,
 Clotho apportions to each wight that breathes;
 His soul, that sister is to mine and thine,
 Not of herself could mount; for not like ours
 Her ken: whence I, from forth the ample gulf

¹ John iv. 15.

² Luke xxiv. 15.

³ The P's on his forehead.

⁴ Lachesis, the one of the three Fates whose office it was to determine the length of the thread of life.

Of Hell, was ta'en, to lead him, and will lead
 Far as my lore avails. But, if thou know,
 Instruct us for what cause, the mount erewhile
 Thus shook, and trembled: wherefore all at once
 Seem'd shouting, even from his wave-wash'd foot."

That questioning so tallied with my wish,
 The thirst did feel abatement of its edge
 E'en from expectance. He forthwith replied:
 "In its devotion, nought irregular
 This mount can witness, or by punctual rule
 Unsanction'd; here from every change exempt,
 Other than that, which Heaven in itself
 Doth of itself receive, no influence
 Can reach us. Tempest none, shower, hail, or snow,
 Hoar frost, or dewy moistness, higher falls
 Than that brief scale of threefold steps: thick clouds,
 Nor scudding rack, are ever seen: swift glance
 Ne'er lightens; nor Thaumantian¹ Iris gleams,
 That yonder often shifts on each side Heaven.
 Vapour adust doth never amount above
 The highest of the trinal stairs, whereon
 Peter's vicegerent stands. Lower perchance,
 With various motion rock'd, trembles the soil:
 But here, through wind in earth's deep hollow pent,
 I know not how, yet never trembled: then
 Trembles, when any spirit feels itself
 So purified, that it may rise, or move
 For rising; and such loud acclaim ensues.
 Purification, by the will alone,
 Is proved, that free to change society
 Seizes the soul rejoicing in her will.
 Desire of bliss is present from the first;
 But strong propension hinders, to that wish
 By the just ordinance of Heaven opposed;
 Propension now as eager to fulfil
 The allotted torment, as erewhile to sin.²

¹ Iris, the rainbow, was daughter of Thaumias, and messenger of the gods, more particularly of Juno.

² Mr. Okey translates: "Of the cleansing the will alone gives proof, which fills the soul, all free to change her cloister, and avails her to will. She wills indeed before, but that desire permits it not which divine justice sets, counter to will, toward the penalty, even as it was toward the sin." The pains of Purgatory are voluntarily endured, since, against the hypothetic or absolute will (*voglia*) with which they desire the bliss of Paradise, the souls

And I, who in this punishment had lain
 Five hundred years and more, but now have felt
 Free wish for happier clime. Therefore thou felt'st
 The mountain tremble; and the spirits devout
 Heard'st, over all his limits, utter praise
 To that liege Lord, whom I entreat their joy
 To hasten." Thus he spake: and, since the draught
 Is grateful ever as the thirst is keen,
 No words may speak my fulness of content.

"Now," said the instructor sage, "I see the net
 That takes ye here; and how the toils are loosed;
 Why rocks the mountain, and why ye rejoice.
 Vouchsafe, that from thy lips I next may learn
 Who on the earth thou wast; and wherefore here,
 So many an age, wert prostrate."—"In that time,
 When the good Titus, with Heaven's King to help,
 Avenged those piteous gashes, whence the blood
 By Judas sold did issue; with the name¹
 Most lasting and most honour'd, there, was I
 Abundantly renown'd," the shade replied,
 "Not yet with faith endued. So passing sweet
 My vocal spirit; from Tolosa, Rome
 To herself drew me, where I merited
 A myrtle garland to inwreath my brow.
 Statius they name me still. Of Thebes I sang,
 And next of great Achilles; but i' the way
 Fell with the second burthen. Of my flame
 Those sparkles were the seeds, which I derived
 From the bright fountain of celestial fire
 That feeds unnumber'd lamps; the song I mean
 Which sounds Æneas' wanderings: that the breast
 I hung at; that the nurse, from whom my veins
 Drank inspiration: whose authority
 Was ever sacred with me. To have lived
 Coeval with the Mantuan, I would bide
 The revolution of another sun
 Beyond my stated years in banishment."

The Mantuan, when he heard him, turn'd to me;
 And holding silence, by his countenance
 Enjoin'd me silence: but the power, which wills,

suffer these purifying pains with the conditional or actual will
 (*talento*), which they formerly had to sin. Cf. *Par.* iv. Their
 wills alone show them when purification is complete.

¹ Of Poet. See note in Index.

Bears not supreme control: laughter and tears
 Follow so closely on the passion prompts them,
 They wait not for the motions of the will
 In natures most sincere. I did but smile,
 As one who winks; and thereupon the shade
 Broke off, and peer'd into mine eyes, where best
 Our looks interpret. "So to good event
 Mayst thou conduct such great emprize," he cried,
 "Say, why across thy visage beam'd, but now,
 The lightning of a smile." On either part
 Now am I straiten'd; one conjures me speak,
 The other to silence binds me: whence a sigh
 I utter, and the sigh is heard. "Speak on,"
 The teacher cried: "and do not fear to speak;
 But tell him what so earnestly he asks."
 Whereon I thus: "Perchance, O ancient spirit!
 Thou marvel'st at my smiling. There is room
 For yet more wonder. He, who guides my ken
 On high, he is that Mantuan, led by whom
 Thou didst presume of men and gods to sing.
 If other cause thou deem'dst for which I smiled,
 Leave it as not the true one: and believe
 Those words, thou spakest of him, indeed the cause."
 Now down he bent to embrace my teacher's feet;
 But he forbade him: "Brother! do it not:
 Thou art a shadow, and behold'st a shade."
 He, rising, answer'd thus: "Now hast thou proved
 The force and ardour of the love I bear thee,
 When I forget we are but things of air,
 And, as a substance, treat an empty shade."

CANTO XXII

ARGUMENT

Dante, Virgil, and Statius mount to the sixth cornice, where the sin of gluttony is cleansed, the two Latin Poets discoursing by the way. Turning to the right, they find a tree hung with sweet-smelling fruit, and watered by a shower that issues from the rock. Voices are heard to proceed from among the leaves, recording examples of temperance.

Now we had left the Angel, who had turn'd
 To the sixth circle our ascending step;
 One gash from off my forehead razed; while they,

Whose wishes tend to justice, shouted forth,
 "Blessed!" and ended with "I thirst;"¹ and I,
 More nimble than along the other straits,
 So journey'd, that, without the sense of toil,
 I follow'd upward the swift-footed shades;
 When Virgil thus began: "Let its pure flame
 From virtue flow, and love can never fail
 To warm another's bosom, so the light
 Shine manifestly forth. Hence, from that hour,
 When, 'mongst us in the purlieus of the deep,
 Came down the spirit of Aquinum's bard,²
 Who told of thine affection, my good will
 Hath been for thee of quality as strong
 As ever link'd itself to one not seen.

Therefore these stairs will now seem short to me.
 But tell me: and, if too secure, I loose
 The rein with a friend's licence, as a friend
 Forgive me, and speak now as with a friend:
 How chanced it covetous desire could find
 Place in that bosom, 'midst such ample store
 Of wisdom, as thy zeal had treasured there?"

First somewhat moved to laughter by his words,
 Statius replied: "Each syllable of thine
 Is a dear pledge of love. Things oft appear,
 That minister false matter to our doubts,
 When their true causes are removed from sight.
 Thy question doth assure me, thou believest
 I was on earth a covetous man; perhaps
 Because thou found'st me in that circle placed.
 Know then I was too wide of avarice:
 And e'en for that excess, thousands of moons
 Have wax'd and waned upon my sufferings.
 And were it not that I with heedful care
 Noted, where thou exclaim'st as if in ire
 With human nature, 'Why, thou cursed thirst
 'Of gold! dost not with juster measure guide
 'The appetite of mortals?' I had met

¹ There are several alternate readings and interpretations of this passage. According to the more plausible, the Angel (of Justice) utters a part of the fifth Beatitude, which in the *Vulgate* has "justice" instead of "righteousness": "He had said to us that those who have their desire set on justice are blessed, and his words ended with *sitiunt*"—those that *thirst after justice*.

² Juvenal, d. circa 130 A.D.

The fierce encounter of the voluble rock.¹
 Then was I ware that, with too ample wing,
 The hands may haste to lavishment; and turn'd,
 As from my other evil, so from this,
 In penitence. How many from their grave
 Shall with shorn locks arise, who living, ay,
 And at life's last extreme, of this offence,
 Through ignorance, did not repent! And know,
 The fault, which lies direct from any sin
 In level opposition, here, with that,
 Wastes its green rankness on one common heap.
 Therefore, if I have been with those, who wail
 Their avarice, to cleanse me; through reverse
 Of their transgression, such hath been my lot."

To whom the sovran of the pastoral song:
 "While thou didst sing that cruel warfare waged
 By the twin sorrow of Jocasta's womb,
 From thy discourse with Clio there, it seems
 As faith had not been thine;² without the which,
 Good deeds suffice not. And if so, what sun
 Rose on thee, or what candle pierced the dark,
 That thou didst after see to hoise the sail,
 And follow where the fisherman³ had led?"

He answering thus: "By thee conducted first,
 I enter'd the Parnassian grots, and quaff'd
 Of the clear spring; illumined first by thee,
 Open'd mine eyes to God. Thou didst, as one
 Who, journeying through the darkness, bears a light
 Behind, that profits not himself, but makes
 His followers wise, when thou exclaimed'st, 'Lo!
 'A renovated world, Justice return'd,
 'Times of primeval innocence restored,
 'And a new race descended from above.'⁴
 Poet and Christian both to thee I owed.

¹ Statius says that he was being punished for prodigality, not for avarice, and that but for Virgil, *Æn.* iii. 56, he would never have seen the wrongfulness of this, and would in consequence have been among the avaricious and prodigal in Hell, who are butting each other to all eternity, as shown in *Inf.* vii.

² Statius's handling of his theme (his dealings with Clio, the Muse of History) in the *Thebaid* (which tells of the strife of Jocasta's sons, Eteocles and Polynices) seems to show that he was a pagan. How, then, does he come to be in Purgatory?

³ St. Peter.

⁴ Virgil's fourth Eclogue.

That thou mayst mark more clearly what I trace,
 My hand shall stretch forth to inform the lines
 With livelier colouring. Soon o'er all the world,
 By messengers from Heaven, the true belief
 Teem'd now prolific; and that word of thine,
 Accordant, to the new instructors chimed.
 Induced by which agreement, I was wont
 Resort to them; and soon their sanctity
 So won upon me, that, Domitian's rage
 Pursuing them, I mix'd my tears with theirs;
 And, while on earth I stay'd, still succour'd them;
 And their most righteous customs made me scorn
 All sects besides. Before I led the Greeks,
 In tuneful fiction, to the streams of Thebes,
 I was baptized; but secretly, through fear,
 Remain'd a Christian, and conform'd long time
 To Pagan rites.¹ Four centuries and more,
 I, for that lukewarmness, was fain to pace
 Round the fourth circle. Thou then, who hast raised
 The covering which did hide such blessing from me,
 Whilst much of this ascent is yet to climb,
 Say, if thou know, where our old Terence bides,
 Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro: ² if condemn'd
 They dwell, and in what province of the deep."
 "These," said my guide, "with Persius and myself,
 And others many more, are with that Greek,
 Of mortals the most cherish'd by the Nine,
 In the first ward of darkness.³ There, oft-times,
 We of that mount hold converse, on whose top
 For aye our nurses live. We have the bard
 Of Pella, and the Teian, Agatho,
 Simonides,⁴ and many a Grecian else

¹ Statius here says that, before he completed the *Thebaid*, he had been secretly converted to Christianity by observing how the teachings of the new religion corresponded with Virgil's fourth Eclogue, which in the Middle Ages was taken as a prophecy of the coming of Christ. Dante's conception of the attitude of Statius towards the Christian religion is probably unhistorical; but Dr. Verrall has recently suggested that there is a certain psychological truth underlying it.

² Terence (*d.* 159 B.C.), Cæcilius (*d.* 168 B.C.), Plautus (*d.* 184 B.C.), Latin comic poets; Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus (82-36 B.C.), epic and satiric poet.

³ These, with Persius Flaccus (Roman satirical poet, 34-62 A.D.), Virgil himself, and Homer, are in Limbo, where they talk of Mount Parnassus, the eternal home of the Muses.

⁴ Euripides (whom Cary—not Dante—calls "of Pella," in

Ingarlanded with laurel. Of thy train,¹
 Antigone is there, Deiphile,
 Argia, and as sorrowful as erst
 Ismene, and who show'd Langia's wave :
 Deidamia with her sisters there,
 And blind Tiresias' daughter, and the bride
 Sea-born of Peleus." Either poet now
 Was silent; and no longer by the ascent
 Or the steep walls obstructed, round them cast
 Inquiring eyes. Four handmaids² of the day
 Had finish'd now their office, and the fifth
 Was at the chariot-beam, directing still
 Its flamy point aloof; when thus my guide :
 "Methinks, it well behoves us to the brink
 Bend the right shoulder, circuiting the mount,
 As we have ever used." So custom there
 Was usher to the road; the which we chose
 Less doubtful, as that worthy shade³ complied.

They on before me went: I sole pursued,
 Listening their speech, that to my thoughts convey'd
 Mysterious lessons of sweet poesy.
 But soon they ceased; for midway of the road
 A tree we found, with goodly fruitage hung,
 And pleasant to the smell: and as a fir,
 Upward from bough to bough, less ample spreads;
 So downward this less ample spread; that none,
 Methinks, aloft may climb. Upon the side,
 That closed our path, a liquid crystal fell

Macedonia, where he died, 405 B.C.); Antiphon, extolled by Aristotle and Plutarch (Cary followed the reading *Anacreonte*, Anacreon, who was born at Teos); Agathon, d. circa 402 B.C., all tragic poets; Simonides of Ceos, the Greek lyrical poet, d. in Sicily, 468 B.C.

¹ Characters celebrated by Statius in the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*: Antigone, sister of Eteocles and Polynices; Deiphile, the mother of Diomedes; Argia, wife of Polynices; Ismene, Antigone's sister; Hypsipyle, who showed the fountain Langia to the seven against Thebes; Deidamia, daughter of the King of Scyros, with whom Thetis, "the bride sea-born of Peleus," had left her son Achilles (cf. *Inf.* xxvi.; *Purg.* ix.). The "daughter of blind Tiresias" is apparently that same Manto whom Dante has seen among the soothsayers in *Inf.* xx., which, Dr. Toynbee observes, "is an unique instance of inaccuracy on Dante's part in a matter of this kind."

² Cf. above, Canto xii. It is past ten o'clock in the morning of Easter Tuesday.

³ Statius.

From the steep rock, and through the sprays above
 Stream'd showering. With associate step the bards
 Drew near the plant; and, from amidst the leaves,
 A voice was heard: "Ye shall be chary of me;"
 And after added: "Mary took more thought
 For joy and honour of the nuptial feast,
 Than for herself, who answers now for you.¹
 The women of old Rome were satisfied
 With water for their beverage. Daniel fed
 On pulse, and wisdom gain'd. The primal age
 Was beautiful as gold: and hunger then
 Made acorns tasteful; thirst, each rivulet
 Run nectar. Honey and locusts were the food,
 Whereon the Baptist in the wilderness
 Fed, and that eminence of glory reach'd
 And greatness, which the Evangelist records."

CANTO XXIII

ARGUMENT

They are overtaken by the spirit of Forese, who had been a friend of our Poet's on earth, and who now inveighs bitterly against the immodest dress of their countrywomen at Florence.

ON the green leaf mine eyes were fix'd, like his
 Who throws away his days in idle chase
 Of the diminutive birds, when thus I heard
 The more than father warn me: "Son! our time
 Asks thriftier using. Linger not: away."

Thereat my face and steps at once I turn'd
 Toward the sages, by whose converse cheer'd
 I journey'd on, and felt no toil: and lo!
 A sound of weeping, and a song: "My lips,
 O Lord!"² and these so mingled, it gave birth
 To pleasure and to pain. "O Sire beloved!
 Say what is this I hear." Thus I inquired.
 "Spirits," said he, "who, as they go, perchance,
 Their debt of duty pay." As on their road
 The thoughtful pilgrims, overtaking some

¹ Mary is now the intercessor in Paradise for the whole human race. The first example is that of the Blessed Virgin at the marriage in Cana.

² A verse of the *Miserere* (Ps. l., Vulgate, li., A.V.): "O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."

Not known unto them, turn to them, and look,
 But stay not; thus, approaching from behind
 With speedier motion, eyed us, as they pass'd,
 A crowd of spirits, silent and devout.

The eyes of each were dark and hollow; pale
 Their visage, and so lean withal, the bones
 Stood staring through the skin. I do not think
 Thus dry and meagre Erisichon show'd,
 When pinch'd by sharp-set famine to the quick.¹

"Lo!" to myself I mused, "the race, who lost
 Jerusalem, when Mary² with dire beak
 Prey'd on her child." The sockets seemed as rings,
 From which the gems were dropt. Who reads the
 name

Of man upon his forehead, there the M
 Had traced most plainly.³ Who would deem, that scent
 Of water and an apple could have proved
 Powerful to generate such pining want,
 Not knowing how it wrought? While now I stood,
 Wondering what thus could waste them, (for the cause
 Of their gaunt hollowness and scaly rind
 Appear'd not,) lo! a spirit turn'd his eyes
 In their deep-sunken cells, and fasten'd them
 On me, then cried with vehemence aloud:
 "What grace is this vouchsafed me?" By his looks
 I ne'er had recognized him: but the voice
 Brought to my knowledge what his cheer conceal'd.
 Remembrance of his alter'd lineaments
 Was kindled from that spark; and I agnized
 The visage of Forese.⁴ "Ah! respect
 This wan and leprous-wither'd skin," thus he

¹ Erisichon, who was punished with insatiable hunger for felling an oak which was sacred to Ceres.

² A Jewess, recorded by Josephus, who devoured her own child during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

³ "He who pretends to distinguish the letters which form OMO in the features of the human face, might easily have traced out the M on their emaciated countenances." The temples, nose, and forehead are supposed to represent this letter; and the eyes the two O's placed within each side of it" (Cary).

⁴ Forese di Simone Donati, brother of Corso (*cf.* below, Canto xxiv.) and of Piccarda Donati (*Par.* iii.), was an intimate associate of Dante's during the years that immediately followed the death of Beatrice. He was a distant kinsman of Dante's wife, Gemma Donati, with whose brother, Forese di Manetto Donati, he has sometimes been confused.

Suppliant implored, " this macerated flesh.
 Speak to me truly of thyself. And who
 Are those twain spirits, that escort thee there?
 Be it not said thou scorn'st to talk with me."

" That face of thine," I answer'd him, " which dead
 I once bewail'd, disposes me not less
 For weeping, when I see it thus transform'd.
 Say then, by Heaven, what blasts ye thus? The whilst
 I wonder, ask not speech from me: unapt
 Is he to speak, whom other will employs."

He thus: " The water and the plant, we pass'd,
 With power are gifted, by the eternal will
 Infused; the which so pines me. Every spirit,
 Whose song bewails his gluttony indulged
 Too grossly, here in hunger and in thirst
 Is purified. The odour, which the fruit,
 And spray that showers upon the verdure, breathe,
 Inflames us with desire to feed and drink.
 Nor once alone, encompassing our route,
 We come to add fresh fuel to the pain:
 Pain, said I? solace rather: for that will,
 To the tree, leads us, by which Christ was led
 To call on Eli, joyful, when He paid
 Our ransom from His vein." I answering thus:
 " Forese! from that day, in which the world
 For better life thou changedst, not five years
 Have circled.¹ If the power of sinning more
 Were first concluded in thee, ere thou knew'st
 That kindly grief which re-espouses us
 To God, how hither art thou come so soon?
 I thought to find thee lower,² there, where time
 Is recompense for time." He straight replied:
 " To drink up the sweet wormwood of affliction
 I have been brought thus early, by the tears
 Stream'd down my Nella's cheeks. Her prayers devout,
 Her sighs have drawn me from the coast, where oft
 Expectance lingers; and have set me free
 From the other circles. In the sight of God
 So much the dearer is my widow prized,
 She whom I loved so fondly, as she ranks

¹ Forese died in July, 1296. When on his deathbed, Dante persuaded him to see a priest and receive the last Sacraments.

² In the ante-purgatory, like Belacqua. Cf. above, Canto iv.

More singly eminent for virtuous deeds.¹
 The tract, most barbarous of Sardinia's isle,
 Hath dames more chaste, and modester by far,
 Than that wherein I left her. O sweet brother!
 What wouldst thou have me say? A time to come
 Stands full within my view, to which this hour
 Shall not be counted of an ancient date,
 When from the pulpit shall be loudly warn'd
 The unblushing dames of Florence, lest they bare
 Unkerchief'd bosoms to the common gaze.
 What savage women hath the world e'er seen,
 What Saracens, for whom there needed scourge
 Of spiritual or other discipline,
 To force them walk with covering on their limbs?
 But did they see, the shameless ones, what Heaven
 Wafts on swift wing toward them while I speak,
 Their mouths were oped for howling: they shall taste
 Of sorrow (unless foresight cheat me here)
 Or e'er the cheek of him be clothed with down,
 Who is now rock'd with lullaby asleep.
 Ah! now, my brother, hide thyself no more:
 Thou seest how not I alone, but all,
 Gaze, where thou veil'st the intercepted sun."

Whence I replied: "If thou recal to mind
 What we were once together, even yet
 Remembrance of those days may grieve thee sore.
 That I forsook that life, was due to him
 Who there precedes me,² some few evenings past,
 When she was round, who shines with sister lamp
 To his that glisters yonder," and I show'd
 The sun. "'Tis he, who through profoundest night
 Of the true dead has brought me, with this flesh
 As true, that follows. From that gloom the aid
 Of his sure comfort drew me on to climb,
 And, climbing, wind along this mountain-steep,
 Which rectifies in you whate'er the world

¹ A curious and unpleasant series of six sonnets, interchanged between Dante and Forese, throws light upon what the Poet says presently of the life that the two led together. In one of these sonnets, Dante casts reflections upon the married life of Forese and his relations with his wife Nella. These beautiful and tender lines are his reparation to her memory.

² In the allegorical sense, human philosophy first made Dante realise the moral unworthiness of the life he led after the death of Beatrice. Cf. below, Cantos xxx., xxxi.

Made crooked and depraved. I have his word,
 That he will bear me company as far
 As till I come where Beatrice dwells :
 But there must leave me. Virgil is that spirit,
 Who thus hath promised," and I pointed to him ;
 " The other is that shade, for whom so late
 Your realm, as he arose, exulting, shook
 Through every pendent cliff and rocky bound."

CANTO XXIV

ARGUMENT

Forese points out several others by name who are here, like himself, purifying themselves from the vice of gluttony; and, amongst the rest, Buonagiunta of Lucca, with whom our Poet converses. Forese then predicts the violent end of Dante's political enemy, Corso Donati; and, when he has quitted them, the Poet, in company with Statius and Virgil, arrives at another tree, from whence issue voices that record ancient examples of gluttony; and proceeding forwards, they are directed by an Angel which way to ascend to the next cornice of the mountain.

OUR journey was not slacken'd by our talk,
 Nor yet our talk by journeying. Still we spake,
 And urged our travel stoutly, like a ship
 When the wind sits astern. The shadowy forms,
 That seem'd things dead and dead again, drew in
 At their deep-delved orbs rare wonder of me,
 Perceiving I had life; and I my words
 Continued, and thus spake: " He journeys up
 Perhaps more tardily than else he would,
 For others' sake.¹ But tell me, if thou know'st,
 Where is Piccarda? ² Tell me, if I see
 Any of mark, among this multitude
 Who eye me thus."—" My sister (she for whom,
 'Twixt beautiful and good, I cannot say
 Which name was fitter) wears e'en now her crown,
 And triumphs in Olympus." Saying this,
 He added: " Since spare diet hath so worn
 Our semblance out, 'tis lawful here to name
 Each one. This," and his finger then he raised,

¹ *Per l'altrui cagione*, "for another's sake." Statius wishes to keep as long as possible in Virgil's company.

² See *Par.* iii.

"Is Buonagiunta,—Buonagiunta, he
Of Lucca :¹ and that face beyond him, pierced
Unto a leaner fineness than the rest,
Had keeping of the Church; he was of Tours,
And purges by wan abstinence away
Bolsena's eels and cups of muscadel."²

He show'd me many others, one by one :
And all, as they were named, seem'd well content ;
For no dark gesture I discern'd in any.
I saw, through hunger, Ubaldino³ grind
His teeth on emptiness; and Boniface,
That waded the crozier o'er a numerous flock.⁴
I saw the Marquis,⁵ who had time erewhile
To swill at Forl with less drought; yet so,
Was one ne'er sated. I howe'er, like him
That, gazing 'midst a crowd, singles out one,
So singled him of Lucca; for methought
Was none amongst them took such note of me.
Somewhat I heard him whisper of Gentucca :
The sound was indistinct, and murmur'd there,
Where justice, that so strips them, fix'd her sting.⁶
"Spirit!" said I, "it seems as thou wouldst fain
Speak with me. Let me hear thee. Mutual wish
To converse prompts, which let us both indulge."
He, answering, straight began: "Woman is born,
Whose brow no wimple shades yet, that shall make
My city please thee, blame it as they may."⁷

¹ Buonagiunta Orbicciani, notary and poet of Lucca, died between 1296 and 1300. Four of his poems are translated by Rossetti in the *Early Italian Poets*.

² Simon de Brie of Tours, who had been papal legate in France, was elected Pope by the influence of Charles of Anjou in 1281, under the title of Martin IV. He died in 1285, and is buried at Viterbo.

³ Ubaldino degli Ubaldini of La Pila, brother of the Cardinal (*Inf.* x.) and father of the Archbishop Ruggieri (*Inf.* xxxiii.).

⁴ Bonifazio de' Fieschi, Archbishop of Ravenna, d. 1295.

⁵ Messer Marchese; *Marchese* ("Marquis") is not his title, but his Christian name. He was either one of the Ordellaffi or of the Argogliosi of Forl, and died shortly before 1300.

⁶ The throat and mouth.

⁷ Buonagiunta tells Dante that a woman then (in 1300) unmarried, and therefore not yet wearing the wimple, will make the city of Lucca pleasant to him. This lady was probably Gentucca Morla, wife of Cosciorino Fondora; Dante's friendship with her is to be assigned to the year 1315, or thereabouts, when he seems to have been at Lucca.

Go then with this forewarning. If aught false
 My whisper too implied, the event shall tell.
 But say, if of a truth I see the man
 Of that new lay the inventor, which begins
 With 'Ladies, ye that con the lore of love.'"¹

To whom I thus: "Count of me but as one,
 Who am the scribe of love; that, when he breathes,
 Take up my pen, and, as he dictates, write."

"Brother!" said he, "the hindrance, which once
 held

The Notary, with Guittone and myself,
 Short of that new and sweeter style I hear,
 Is now disclosed: I see how ye your plumes
 Stretch, as the inditer guides them; which, no question
 Ours did not.² He that seeks a grace beyond,
 Sees not the distance parts one style from other."
 And, as contented, here he held his peace.

Like as the birds,³ that winter near the Nile,
 In squared regiment direct their course,
 Then stretch themselves in file for speedier flight;
 Thus all the tribe of spirits, as they turn'd
 Their visage, faster fled, nimble alike
 Through leanness and desire. And as a man,
 Tired with the motion of a trotting steed,
 Slacks pace, and stays behind his company,
 Till his o'erbreathed lungs keep temperate time;

¹ *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*, the opening line of the first *canzone* of the *Vita Nuova*. There is much contemporary evidence as to the immediate and wide success achieved by this poem, which was accepted at once as a masterpiece revealing a new poet.

² Jacopo da Lentino, "the Notary," was one of the chief poets of the Sicilian school in the first half of the thirteenth century. Seven of his pieces are included in Rossetti's *Early Italian Poets*. An ode of his is quoted anonymously with praise by Dante (*V. E.* i. 12). Guittone del Viva (1230-1294), known as Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, was one of the Frati Gaudenti, and the head of a school of Italian poetry which succeeded to that of the Notary. One of his sonnets (by no means characteristic of him) is given by Rossetti. He was also the author of a number of letters in Italian, which are among the earliest specimens of letters in the vernacular. These two poets, together with Buonagiunta himself, represent the older manner of lyrical poetry, which was artificial, and lacked the genuine inspiration of "the sweet new style," which originated with Guido Guinicelli of Bologna, was developed by Guido Cavalcanti, and brought to perfection in the earlier poetry of Dante himself. Cf. above, Canto xi., and below, Canto xxvi.

³ The cranes. Cf. *Par.* xviii., and *Purg.* xxvi.

E'en so Forese let that holy crew
 Proceed, behind them lingering at my side,
 And saying: "When shall I again behold thee?"
 "How long my life may last," said I, "I know not:
 This know, how soon soever I return,
 My wishes will before me have arrived:
 Sithence the place,¹ where I am set to live,
 Is, day by day, more scoop'd of all its good;
 And dismal ruin seems to threaten it."

"Go now," he cried: "lo! he, whose guilt is most,
 Passes before my vision, dragg'd at heels
 Of an infuriate beast. Toward the vale,
 Where guilt hath no redemption, on it speeds
 Each step increasing swiftness on the last;
 Until a blow it strikes, that leaveth him
 A corse most vilely shatter'd.² No long space
 Those wheels have yet to roll," (therewith his eyes
 Look'd up to Heaven,) "ere thou shalt plainly see
 That which my words may not more plainly tell.
 I quit thee: time is precious here: I lose
 Too much, thus measuring my pace with thine."

As from a troop of well rank'd chivalry,
 One knight, more enterprising than the rest,
 Pricks forth at gallop, eager to display
 His prowess in the first encounter proved;
 So parted he from us, with lengthen'd strides;
 And left me on the way with those twain spirits,
 Who were such mighty marshals of the world.

When he beyond us had so fled, mine eyes
 No nearer reach'd him, than my thought his words,
 The branches of another fruit, thick hung,

¹ Florence (Dante speaks from the standpoint of 1300).

² Forese here foretells the death of his brother, Corso Donati, he "whose guilt is most" for the factions that divided Florence. In 1308, in secret understanding with his father-in-law, Uguccione della Faggiuola, and the papal legate, Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, Corso plotted to overthrow the government and make himself lord of Florence. The plot being discovered, on October 16, he was condemned as a rebel and a traitor. After a strenuous resistance, he fled through the Porta Santa Croce, but was overtaken and murdered by some Catalan mercenaries in the service of the King of Naples. According to Villani, he threw himself from his horse, and was run through with a lance while lying on the ground. Dante's words, if taken literally, imply that he was dragged to death by his horse, which does not appear in any other contemporary version of the tragedy.

And blooming fresh, appear'd. E'en as our steps
 Turn'd thither; not far off, it rose to view.
 Beneath it were a multitude, that raised
 Their hands, and shouted forth I know not what
 Unto the boughs; like greedy and fond brats,
 That beg, and answer none obtain from him,
 Of whom they beg; but more to draw them on,
 He, at arm's length, the object of their wish
 Above them holds aloft, and hides it not.

At length, as undeceived, they went their way:
 And we approach the tree, whom vows and tears
 Sue to in vain; the mighty tree. "Pass on,
 And come not near. Stands higher up the wood,
 Whereof Eve tasted: and from it was ta'en
 This plant." Such sounds from midst the thickets came
 Whence I, with either bard, close to the side
 That rose, pass'd forth beyond. "Remember," next
 We heard, "those unblest creatures of the clouds,¹
 How they their twyfold bosoms, overgorged,
 Opposed in fight to Theseus: call to mind
 The Hebrews, how, effeminate, they stoop'd
 To ease their thirst; whence Gideon's ranks were
 thinn'd,
 As he to Midian march'd adown the hills."²

Thus near one border coasting, still we heard
 The sins of gluttony, with woe erewhile
 Reguerdon'd. Then along the lonely path,
 Once more at large, full thousand paces on
 We travel'd, each contemplative and mute.

"Why pensive journey so ye three alone?"
 Thus suddenly a voice exclaim'd: whereat
 I shook, as doth a scared and paltry beast;
 Then raised my head, to look from whence it came.

Was ne'er, in furnace, glass, or metal, seen
 So bright and glowing red, as was the shape
 I now beheld.³ "If ye desire to mount,"
 He cried; "here must ye turn. This way he goes,
 Who goes in quest of peace." His countenance
 Had dazzled me; and to my guides I faced
 Backward, like one who walks as sound directs.

As when, to harbinger the dawn, springs up

¹ The Centaurs.

² Cf. Judges vii. 4-7.

³ The Angel of Temperance.

On freshen'd wing the air of May, and breathes
 Of fragrance, all impregn'd with herb and flowers ;
 E'en such a wind I felt upon my front
 Blow gently, and the moving of a wing
 Perceived, that, moving, shed ambrosial smell ;
 And then a voice : " Blessed are they, whom grace
 Doth so illume, that appetite in them
 Exhaleth no inordinate desire,
 Still hungering as the rule of temperance wills."

CANTO XXV

ARGUMENT

Virgil and Statius resolve some doubts that have arisen in the mind of Dante from what he had just seen. They all arrive on the seventh and last cornice, where the sin of incontinence is purged in fire ; and the spirits of those suffering therein are heard to record illustrious instances of chastity.

It was an hour, when he who climbs, had need
 To walk uncrippled : for the sun had now
 To Taurus the meridian circle left,
 And to the Scorpion left the night.¹ As one,
 That makes no pause, but presses on his road,
 Whate'er betide him, if some urgent need
 Impel ; so enter'd we upon our way,
 One before other ; for, but singly, none
 That steep and narrow scale admits to climb.

E'en as the young stork lifteth up his wing
 Through wish to fly, yet ventures not to quit
 The nest, and drops it ; so in me desire
 Of questioning my guide arose, and fell,
 Arriving even to the act that marks
 A man prepared for speech. Him all our haste
 Restrain'd not ; but thus spake the sire beloved :
 " Fear not to speed the shaft, that on thy lip
 Stands trembling for its flight." Encouraged thus,
 I straight began : " How there can leanness come,
 Where is no want of nourishment to feed?"²

¹ " In Purgatory it is two o'clock p.m., or later. Aries being on the Purgatory meridian at noon, the succeeding sign of Taurus holds that position at 2 p.m. ; while at the same time Scorpio (the sign opposite Taurus) is on the meridian of Jerusalem, where it is consequently 2 a.m." (Oelsner).

² " How can spirits, that need not corporeal nourishment, be

“ If thou,” he answer’d, “ hadst remember’d thee,
 How Meleager with the wasting brand¹
 Wasted alike, by equal fires consumed;
 This would not trouble thee: and hadst thou thought
 How in the mirror your reflected form
 With mimic motion vibrates; ² what now seems
 Hard, had appear’d no harder than the pulp
 Of summer-fruit mature. But that thy will
 In certainty may find its full repose,
 Lo Staius here! on him I call, and pray
 That he would now be healer of thy wound.”³

“ If, in thy presence, I unfold to him
 The secrets of Heaven’s vengeance, let me plead
 Thine own injunction to exculpate me.”
 So Staius answer’d, and forthwith began:
 “ Attend my words, O son, and in thy mind
 Receive them; so shall they be light to clear
 The doubt thou offer’st. Blood, concocted well,
 Which by the thirsty veins is ne’er imbibed,
 And rests as food superfluous, to be ta’en
 From the replenish’d table, in the heart
 Derives effectual virtue, that informs
 The several human limbs, as being that
 Which passes through the veins itself to make them.
 Yet more concocted it descends, where shame
 Forbids to mention: and from thence distils
 In natural vessel on another’s blood.
 There each unite together; one disposed
 To endure, to act the other, through that power
 Derived from whence⁴ it came; and being met,
 It ’gins to work, coagulating first;
 Then vivifies what its own substance made

subject to leanness?’ This question gives rise to the following explanation of Staius respecting the formation of the human body from the first, its junction with the soul, and the passage of the latter to another world” (Cary).

¹ Cf. Mr. Swinburne’s *Atalanta in Calydon*.

² “ As the reflection of a form in a mirror is modified in agreement with the modification of the form itself; so the soul, separated from the earthly body, impresses the image or ghost of that body with its own affections” (Cary).

³ Virgil calls upon Staius to expound the matter, because, in the mysterious origin of the human soul, Christianity has its word to say as well as natural science.

⁴ *Lo perfetto loco*, the heart.

Consist. With animation now indued,
 The active virtue (differing from a plant
 No further, than that this is on the way,
 And at its limit that) continues yet
 To operate, that now it moves, and feels,
 As sea-sponge¹ clinging to the rock: and there
 Assumes the organic powers its seed convey'd.
 This is the moment, son! at which the virtue,
 That from the generating heart proceeds,
 Is pliant and expansive; for each limb
 Is in the heart by forgeful nature plann'd.
 How babe of animal becomes,² remains
 For thy considering. At this point, more wise,
 Than thou, has err'd, making the soul disjoin'd
 From passive intellect, because he saw
 No organ for the latter's use assign'd.³

"Open thy bosom to the truth that comes.
 Know, soon as in the embryo, to the brain
 Articulation is complete, then turns
 The primal Mover with a smile of joy
 On such great work of nature; and imbreathes
 New spirit replete with virtue, that what here
 Active it finds, to its own substance draws;
 And forms an individual soul, that lives,
 And feels, and bends reflective on itself.
 And that thou less mayst marvel at the word,
 Mark the sun's heat; how that to wine doth change,
 Mix'd with the moisture filter'd through the vine.

"When Lachesis hath spun the thread,⁴ the soul
 Takes with her both the human and divine,
 Memory, intelligence, and will, in act
 Far keener than before; the other powers
 Inactive all and mute. No pause allow'd,

¹ At this stage in generation the foetus is in the condition of a zoöphyte, but with the potentiality of further development.

² How from an animal it becomes a human creature.

³ "At the critical point now reached, Averroës himself went wrong, for, finding no organ in the human body appropriated to the immaterial principle of intelligence, he conceived it to be no part of the individual life of man, but a universal all-pervading principle; whereas in truth the human soul or life is inbreathed direct by God into the perfect animal form of the man that is to be; and thereon it draws into itself all the lower vital functions already active there" (Wicksteed).

⁴ When man's life on earth is at an end. Cf. Canto xxi.

In wondrous sort self-moving, to one strand
 Of those, where the departed roam, she falls :
 Here learns her destined path. Soon as the place
 Receives her, round the plastic virtue beams,
 Distinct as in the living limbs before :
 And as the air, when saturate with showers,
 The casual beam refracting, decks itself
 With many a hue ; so here the ambient air
 Weareth that form, which influence of the soul
 Imprints on it : and like the flame, that where
 The fire moves, thither follows ; so, henceforth,
 The new form on the spirit follows still :
 Hence hath it semblance, and is shadow call'd,
 With each sense, even to the sight, endued :
 Hence speech is ours, hence laughter, tears, and sighs,
 Which thou mayst oft have witness'd on the mount.
 The obedient shadow fails not to present
 Whatever varying passion moves within us.
 And this the cause of what thou marvel'st at."

Now the last flexure of our way we reach'd ;
 And to the right hand turning, other care
 Awaits us. Here the rocky precipice
 Hurls forth redundant flames ; and from the rim
 A blast up-blown, with forcible rebuff
 Driveth them back, sequester'd from its bound.

Behoved us, one by one, along the side,
 That border'd on the void, to pass ; and I
 Fear'd on one hand the fire, on the other fear'd
 Headlong to fall : when thus the instructor warn'd :
 " Strict rein must in this place direct the eyes.
 A little swerving and the way is lost."

Then from the bosom of the burning mass,
 " O God of mercy !" ¹ heard I sung, and felt
 No less desire to turn. And when I saw
 Spirits along the flame proceeding, I
 Between their footsteps and mine own was fain
 To share by turns my view. At the hymn's close
 They shouted loud, " I do not know a man ;" ²
 Then in low voice again took up the strain ;

¹ The matin hymn, *Summæ Parens clementiæ*, before the revision of the Breviary in the seventeenth century, began with the words : *Summæ Deus clementiæ*. It contains a prayer for protection against lust.

² Luke i. 34.

Which once more ended, "To the wood," they cried,
 "Ran Dian, and drave forth Callisto stung
 With Cytherea's poison:"¹ then return'd
 Unto their song; then many a pair extoll'd,
 Who lived in virtue chastely and the bands
 Of wedded love. Nor from that task, I ween,
 Surcease they; whilesoe'er the scorching fire
 Enclasps them. Of such skill appliance needs,
 To medicine the wound that healeth last.

CANTO XXVI

ARGUMENT

The spirits wonder at seeing the shadow cast by the body of Dante on the flame as he passes it. This moves one of them to address him. It proves to be Guido Guinicelli, the Italian poet, who points out to him the spirit of Arnault Daniel, the Provençal, with whom he also speaks.

WHILE singly thus along the rim we walk'd,
 Oft the good master warn'd me: "Look thou well.
 Avail it that I caution thee." The sun
 Now all the western clime irradiate changed
 From azure tinct to white; and, as I pass'd,
 My passing shadow made the umber'd flame
 Burn ruddier. At so strange a sight I mark'd
 That many a spirit marvel'd on his way.

This bred occasion first to speak of me.
 "He seems," said they, "no insubstantial frame:"
 Then, to obtain what certainty they might,
 Stretch'd tow'rd's me, careful not to overpass
 The burning pale. "O thou! who followest
 The others, haply not more slow than they,
 But moved by reverence; answer me, who burn
 In thirst and fire: nor I alone, but these
 All for thine answer do more thirst, than doth
 Indian or Æthiop for the cooling stream.
 Tell us, how is it that thou makest thyself
 A wall against the sun, as thou not yet
 Into the inextricable toils of death

¹ Callisto was driven away by Diana for having yielded to carnal love (*Metam.* ii.). This selection of examples of chastity from the Gospels and Ovid alternately is very characteristic of Dante.

Hadst enter'd?" Thus spake one; and I had straight
 Declared me, if attention had not turn'd
 To new appearance. Meeting these, there came,
 Midway the burning path, a crowd, on whom
 Earnestly gazing, from each part I view
 The shadows all press forward, severally
 Each snatch a hasty kiss, and then away.
 E'en so the emmets, 'mid their dusky troops,
 Peer closely one at other, to spy out
 Their mutual road perchance, and how they thrive.

That friendly greeting parted, ere dispatch
 Of the first onward step, from either tribe
 Loud clamour rises: those, who newly come,
 Shout "Sodom and Gomorrah!" these, "The cow
 Pasiphae enter'd, that the beast she woo'd
 Might rush unto her luxury."¹ Then as cranes,
 That part towards the Riphæan mountains fly,
 Part towards the Lybic sands, these to avoid
 The ice, and those the sun;² so hasteth off
 One crowd, advances the other; and resume
 Their first song, weeping, and their several shout.

Again drew near my side the very same,
 Who had erewhile besought me; and their looks
 Mark'd eagerness to listen. I, who twice
 Their will had noted, spake: "O spirits! secure,
 Whene'er the time may be, of peaceful end;
 My limbs, nor crude, nor in mature old age,
 Have I left yonder: here they bear me, fed
 With blood, and sinew-strung. That I no more
 May live in blindness, hence I tend aloft.
 There is a Dame on high,³ who wins for us
 This grace, by which my mortal through your realm
 I bear. But may your utmost wish soon meet
 Such full fruition, that the orb of Heaven,
 Fullest of love, and of most ample space,
 Receive you; as ye tell (upon my page
 Henceforth to stand recorded) who ye are;
 And what this multitude, that at your backs
 Have past behind us." As one, mountain-bred,
 Rugged and clownish, if some city's walls

¹ Examples of the punishment of lust.

² This image is taken from Lucan, *Phars.* vii. Cf. above, Canto xxiv., and below, *Par.* xviii.

³ The Blessed Virgin.

He chance to enter, round him stares agape,
 Confounded and struck dumb; e'en such appear'd
 Each spirit. But when rid of that amaze,
 (Not long the inmate of a noble heart,)
 He, who before had question'd, thus resumed:
 "O blessed! who, for death preparing, takest
 Experience of our limits, in thy bark;
 Their crime, who not with us proceed, was that
 For which, as he did triumph, Cæsar heard
 The shout of 'queen,' to taunt him.¹ Hence their cry
 Of 'Sodom,' as they parted; to rebuke
 Themselves, and aid the burning by their shame.
 Our sinning was hermaphrodite: but we,
 Because the law of human kind we broke,
 Following like beasts our vile concupiscence,
 Hence parting from them, to our own disgrace
 Record the name of her, by whom the beast
 In bestial tire was acted. Now our deeds
 Thou know'st, and how we sinn'd. If thou by name
 Wouldst haply know us, time permits not now
 To tell so much, nor can I. Of myself
 Learn what thou wishest. Guinicelli I;²
 Who having truly sorrow'd ere my last,
 Already cleanse me." With such pious joy,
 As the two sons upon their mother gazed
 From sad Lycurgus rescued;³ such my joy
 (Save that I more repress'd it) when I heard
 From his own lips the name of him pronounced,

¹ The Roman soldiers are said to have sung a song to this effect in Cæsar's triumph, with reference to his alleged relations with King Nicomedes of Bithynia.

² Guido Guinicelli, or Guinizelli, belonged to the family of the Principi, Ghibellines of Bologna, with whom he was exiled from his native city in 1274. He died a few years afterwards. Guido was the greatest Italian poet before Dante, who here hails him as his father in the poetic art. Cf. *Conv.* iv. 20; *V. N.* § 20; *V. E.* i. 9, i. 15, ii. 5, ii. 6. Six of his poems are translated by Rossetti.

³ Hypsipyle had left her infant charge, the son of Lycurgus, on a bank, where it was destroyed by a serpent, when she went to show the Argive army the river of Langia; and, on her escaping the effects of Lycurgus's resentment, the joy her own children felt at the sight of her was such as our Poet felt on beholding his predecessor Guinicelli. The incidents are beautifully described in Statius (*Theb.* iv., v.), and seem to have made an impression on Dante, for he before (Canto xxii.) characterises Hypsipyle as her 'who show'd Langia's wave' (Cary).

Who was a father to me, and to those
 My betters, who have ever used the sweet
 And pleasant rhymes of love. So nought I heard,
 Nor spake; but long time thoughtfully I went,
 Gazing on him; and, only for the fire,
 Approach'd not nearer. When my eyes were fed
 By looking on him; with such solemn pledge,
 As forces credence, I devoted me
 Unto his service wholly. In reply
 He thus bespake me: "What from thee I hear
 Is graved so deeply on my mind, the waves
 Of Lethe shall not wash it off, nor make
 A whit less lively. But as now thy oath
 Has seal'd the truth, declare what cause impels
 That love, which both thy looks and speech bewray."
 "Those dulcet lays," I answer'd; "which, as long
 As of our tongue the beauty does not fade,
 Shall make us love the very ink that traced them."
 "Brother!" he cried, and pointed at the shade
 Before him, "there is one, whose mother speech
 Doth owe to him a fairer ornament.¹
 He in love ditties, and the tales of prose,
 Without a rival stands; and lets the fools
 Talk on, who think the songster of Limoges²
 O'ertops him. Rumour and the popular voice
 They look to, more than truth; and so confirm
 Opinion, ere by art or reason taught.
 Thus many of the elder time cried up
 Guittone,³ giving him the prize, till truth

¹ This is the Provençal poet, Arnaut Daniel, who wrote at the end of the twelfth century. Both Dante (cf. *V. E.* ii. 2, 6, 10, 13) and Petrarch had a profound admiration for him, and certain of their lyrics show the influence of his peculiar technique. He was the inventor of the *sestina*. The reference to *versi d'amore e prose di romanzi* means, "not that Arnaut wrote better love songs and better prose romances than any one else (for it is practically certain that he wrote no prose at all), but that he surpassed every writer in France, not only the troubadours of the South, but also the authors of the prose romances in the North" (Oelsner). Modern students by no means share Dante's high esteem of this curious writer.

² Giraut de Bornheil, called the "master of the troubadours," was a native of Limoges. He died about 1220. Dante quotes him in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (ii. 2, 5, 6), praising him as a poet of rectitude.

³ Cf. above, Cantos xi., xxiv.; also *V. E.* i. 13, ii. 6.

By strength of numbers vanquish'd. If thou own
 So ample privilege, as to have gain'd
 Free entrance to the cloister, whereof Christ
 Is Abbot of the college; say to him
 One paternoster for me, far as needs¹
 For dwellers in this world, where power to sin
 No longer tempts us." Haply to make way
 For one that follow'd next, when that was said,
 He vanish'd through the fire, as through the wave
 A fish, that glances diving to the deep.

I, to the spirit he had shown me, drew
 A little onward, and besought his name,
 For which my heart, I said, kept gracious room.
 He frankly thus began: ² "Thy courtesy
 So wins on me, I have nor power nor will
 To hide me. I am Arnaut; and with songs,
 Sorely waymenting for my folly past,
 Thorough this ford of fire I wade, and see
 The day, I hope for, smiling in my view.
 I pray ye by the worth that guides ye up
 Unto the summit of the scale, in time
 Remember ye my sufferings." With such words
 He disappear'd in the refining flame.

CANTO XXVII

ARGUMENT

An Angel sends them forward through the fire to the last ascent, which leads to the Terrestrial Paradise, situated on the summit of the mountain. They have not proceeded many steps on their way upward, when the fall of night hinders them from going further; and our Poet, who has lain down with Virgil and Statius to rest, beholds in a dream two females, figuring the active and contemplative life. With the return of morning, they reach the height; and here Virgil gives Dante full liberty to use his own pleasure and judgment in the choice of his way till he shall meet with Beatrice.

Now was the sun so station'd, as when first
 His early radiance quivers on the heights,
 Where stream'd his Maker's blood; while Libra hangs

¹ Cf. above, Canto xi.

² The lines that follow are in Provençal, Dante making Arnaut speak in his own tongue.

Above Hesperian Ebro; and new fires,
Meridian, flash on Ganges' yellow tide.¹

So day was sinking, when the Angel of God
Appear'd before us. Joy was in his mien.
Forth of the flame he stood upon the brink;
And with a voice, whose lively clearness far
Surpass'd our human, "Blessed are the pure
In heart," he sang;² then near him as we came,
"Go ye not further, holy spirits!" he cried,
"Ere the fire pierce you: enter in; and list
Attentive to the song ye hear from thence."

I, when I heard his saying, was as one
Laid in the grave. My hands together clasp'd,
And upward stretching, on the fire I look'd;
And busy fancy conjured up the forms
Erewhile beheld alive consumed in flames.

The escorting spirits turn'd with gentle looks
Toward me; and the Mantuan spake: "My son,
Here torment thou mayst feel, but canst not death.
Remember thee, remember thee, if I
Safe e'en on Geryon brought thee; now I come
More near to God, wilt thou not trust me now?
Of this be sure; though in its womb that flame
A thousand years contain'd thee, from thy head
No hair should perish. If thou doubt my truth,
Approach; and with thy hand thy vesture's hem
Stretch forth, and for thyself confirm belief.
Lay now all fear, oh! lay all fear aside.
Turn hither, and come onward undismay'd."

I still, though conscience urged, no step advanced.

When still he saw me fix'd and obstinate,
Somewhat disturb'd he cried: "Mark now, my son,
From Beatrice thou art by this wall
Divided." As at Thisbe's name the eye
Of Pyramus was open'd, (when life ebb'd
Fast from his veins,) and took one parting glance,
While vermeil dyed the mulberry;³ thus I turn'd
To my sage guide, relenting, when I heard

¹ It was sunrise at Jerusalem, midnight in Spain, noon in India, and sunset on the mountain of Purgation.

² The Angel of Purity.

³ Ovid, *Metam.* iv. The blood of Thisbe and Pyramus, "slain of love in Babylon," changed the colour of the mulberry from white to red.

The name that springs for ever in my breast.

He shook his forehead; and, "How long," he said,
 "Linger we now?" then smiled, as one would smile
 Upon a child that eyes the fruit and yields.

Into the fire before me then he walk'd;
 And Statius, who erewhile no little space
 Had parted us, he pray'd to come behind.

I would have cast me into molten glass
 To cool me, when I enter'd; so intense
 Raged the conflagrant mass. The sire beloved,
 To comfort me, as he proceeded, still
 Of Beatrice talk'd. "Her eyes," saith he,
 "E'en now I seem to view." From the other side
 A voice, that sang, did guide us; and the voice
 Following, with heedful ear, we issued forth,
 There where the path led upward. "Come,"¹ we heard,
 "Come, blessed of my Father." Such the sounds,
 That hail'd us from within a light, which shone
 So radiant, I could not endure the view.

"The sun," it added, "hastes: and evening comes.
 Delay not: ere the western sky is hung
 With blackness, strive ye for the pass." Our way
 Upright within the rock arose, and faced
 Such part of heaven, that from before my steps
 The beams were shrouded of the sinking sun.

Nor many stairs were overpast, when now
 By fading of the shadow we perceived
 The sun behind us couch'd; and ere one face
 Of darkness o'er its measureless expanse
 Involved the horizon, and the night her lot
 Held individual, each of us had made
 A stair his pallet; not that will, but power,
 Had fail'd us, by the nature of that mount
 Forbidden further travel. As the goats,
 That late have skipt and wanton'd rapidly
 Upon the craggy cliffs, ere they had ta'en
 Their supper on the herb, now silent lie
 And ruminat beneath the umbrage brown,
 While noonday rages; and the goatherd leans
 Upon his staff, and leaning watches them:
 And as the swain, that lodges out all night

¹ Matt. xxv. 34. The Cherubims with the flaming sword, that "keep the way of the tree of life," are thus welcoming man's restoration to the Garden of Eden.

In quiet by his flock, lest beast of prey
Disperse them : even so all three abode,
I as a goat, and as the shepherds they,
Close pent on either side by shelving rock.

A little glimpse of sky was seen above ;
Yet by that little I beheld the stars,
In magnitude and lustre shining forth
With more than wonted glory. As I lay,
Gazing on them, and in that fit of musing,
Sleep overcame me, sleep, that bringeth oft
Tidings of future hap. About the hour,
As I believe, when Venus from the east
First lighten'd on the mountain, she whose orb
Seems alway glowing with the fire of love,
A lady young and beautiful, I dream'd,
Was passing o'er a lea ; and, as she came,
Methought I saw her ever and anon
Bending to cull the flowers ; and thus she sang :
" Know ye, whoever of my name would ask,
That I am Leah : for my brow to weave
A garland, these fair hands unwearied ply.
To please me at the crystal mirror, here
I deck me. But my sister Rachel, she
Before her glass abides the livelong day,
Her radiant eyes beholding, charm'd no less,
Than I with this delightful task. Her joy
In contemplation, as in labour mine." ¹

And now as glimmering dawn appear'd, that breaks
More welcome to the pilgrim still, as he
Sojourns less distant on his homeward way,
Darkness from all sides fled, and with it fled
My slumber ; whence I rose, and saw my guide
Already risen. " That delicious fruit,
Which through so many a branch the zealous care
Of mortals roams in quest of, shall this day
Appease thy hunger." Such the words I heard
From Virgil's lip ; and never greeting heard,
So pleasant as the sounds. Within me straight

¹ Leah and Rachel are types of the active and contemplative life, respectively. Note that it is only Leah that Dante sees in this dream. Now that the Earthly Paradise has been reached, which represents blessedness of this life, which consists in exercise of man's proper power (*Mon.* iii. 16), the natural powers can be exercised in action and contemplation ; but it is the active life alone that can be perfected out of the Celestial Paradise.

Desire so grew upon desire to mount,
 Thenceforward at each step I felt the wings
 Increasing for my flight. When we had run
 O'er all the ladder to its topmost round,
 As there we stood, on me the Mantuan fix'd
 His eyes, and thus he spake: "Both fires, my son,
 The temporal and eternal, thou hast seen;
 And art arrived, where of itself my ken
 No further reaches. I, with skill and art,
 Thus far have drawn thee. Now thy pleasure take
 For guide. Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way,
 O'ercome the straiter. Lo! the sun that darts
 His beam upon thy forehead: lo! the herb,
 The arborets and flowers, which of itself
 This land pours forth profuse. Till those bright eyes¹
 With gladness come, which, weeping, made me haste
 To succour thee, thou mayst or seat thee down,
 Or wander where thou wilt. Expect no more
 Sanction of warning voice or sign from me,
 Free of thy own arbitrement to chuse,
 Discreet, judicious. To distrust thy sense
 Were henceforth error. I invest thee then
 With crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself."²

CANTO XXVIII

ARGUMENT

Dante wanders through the forest of the Terrestrial Paradise, till he is stopped by a stream, on the other side of which he beholds a fair lady culling flowers. He speaks to her; and she, in reply, explains to him certain things touching the nature of that place, and tells that the water, which flows between them, is here called Lethe, and in another place has the name of Eunoe.

THROUGH that celestial forest, whose thick shade
 With lively greenness the new-springing day
 Attemper'd, eager now to roam, and search

¹ Beatrice.

² *Io te sopra te coronò e mitriò*, "I crown and mitre thee over thyself." The crown refers to temporal, the mitre to spiritual authority. "If man had remained in the state of innocence in which he was made by God, he would have had no need of such directive regimens," which "are remedial against the infirmity of sin" (*Mon.* iii. 4). Dante, purified from sin, has now regained this state of innocence.

Its limits round, forthwith I left the bank ;
Along the champain leisurely my way
Pursuing, o'er the ground, that on all sides
Delicious odour breathed. A pleasant air,
That intermitted never, never veer'd,
Smote on my temples, gently, as a wind
Of softest influence : at which the sprays,
Obedient all, lean'd trembling to that part
Where first the holy mountain casts his shade ;¹
Yet were not so disorder'd, but that still
Upon their top the feather'd quiristers
Applied their wonted art, and with full joy
Welcomed those hours of prime, and warbled shrill
Amid the leaves, that to their jocund lays
Kept tenour ; even as from branch to branch,
Along the piny forests on the shore
Of Chiassi,² rolls the gathering melody,
When Eolus hath from his cavern loosed
The dripping south.³ Already had my steps,
Though slow, so far into that ancient wood
Transported me, I could not ken the place
Where I had enter'd ; when, behold ! my path
Was bounded by a rill, which, to the left,
With little rippling waters bent the grass
That issued from its brink. On earth no wave,
How clean soe'er, that would not seem to have
Some mixture in itself, compared with this,
Transpicuous clear ; yet darkly on it roll'd,
Darkly beneath perpetual gloom, which ne'er
Admits or sun or moon-light there to shine.

My feet advanced not ; but my wondering eyes
Pass'd onward, o'er the streamlet, to survey
The tender may-bloom, flush'd through many a hue,
In prodigal variety : and there,
As object, rising suddenly to view,
That from our bosom every thought beside
With the rare marvel chases, I beheld
A lady⁴ all alone, who, singing, went,

¹ Towards the west.

² The pine-forest of Ravenna.

³ When Aeolus, the ruler of the winds (*Æn. i.*), sets free the *scirocco*.

⁴ This lady is the glorified realisation of the Leah of Dante's dream in the previous Canto. She represents the active life of the

And culling flower from flower, wherewith her way
 Was all o'er painted. "Lady beautiful!
 Thou, who (if looks, that use to speak the heart,
 Are worthy of our trust) with love's own beam
 Dost warm thee," thus to her my speech I framed;
 "Ah! please thee hither towards the streamlet bend
 Thy steps so near, that I may list thy song.
 Beholding thee and this fair place, methinks,
 I call to mind where wander'd and how look'd
 Proserpine, in that season, when her child
 The mother lost, and she the bloomy spring."

As when a lady, turning in the dance,
 Doth foot it featly, and advances scarce
 One step before the other to the ground;
 Over the yellow and vermilion flowers
 Thus turn'd she at my suit, most maiden-like
 Valing her sober eyes; and came so near,
 That I distinctly caught the dulcet sound.
 Arriving where the limpid waters now
 Laved the green sword, her eyes she deign'd to raise,
 That shot such splendour on me, as I ween
 Ne'er glanced from Cytherea's, when her son
 Had sped his keenest weapon to her heart.
 Upon the opposite bank she stood and smiled;
 As through her graceful fingers shifted still
 The intermingling dyes, which without seed
 That lofty land unbosoms. By the stream
 Three paces only were we sunder'd: yet,
 The Hellespont, where Xerxes pass'd it o'er,
 (A curb for ever to the pride of man,)
 Was by Leander not more hateful held
 For floating, with inhospitable wave,
 'Twixt Sestos and Abydos,¹ than by me

new law in the state of Eden, realising in the Church of Christ what Leah had dimly prefigured in the Old Testament; *innocentia bonorum operum*, the virtuous use of earthly things, directly ordered to the love of our neighbour. In Canto xxxiii., her name is given as Matilda. Dante's earliest commentators, with only one exception, identify her with the great Countess Matilda of Tuscany (1046-1115), which still seems the most probable view. In more recent days, ingenious attempts have been made to prove that she is one of the ladies of the *Vita Nuova*.

¹ Leander was drowned in swimming across the Hellespont to see Hero, "the lamp that Marlowe sang into our skies." Xerxes crossed the strait from Abydos to Sestos, in B.C. 480, by a bridge

That flood, because it gave no passage thence.

“ Strangers ye come; and haply in this place,
That cradled human nature in its birth,
Wondering, ye not without suspicion view
My smiles: but that sweet strain of psalmody,
‘Thou, Lord! hast made me glad,’¹ will give ye light,
Which may uncloud your minds. And thou, who
stand’st

The foremost, and didst make thy suit to me,
Say if aught else thou wish to hear: for I
Came prompt to answer every doubt of thine.”

She spake; and I replied: “ I know not how
To reconcile this wave, and rustling sound
Of forest leaves, with what I late have heard
Of opposite report.”² She answering thus:
“ I will unfold the cause, whence that proceeds,
Which makes thee wonder; and so purge the cloud
That hath enwrapt thee. The First Good, whose joy
Is only in himself, created man,
For happiness; and gave this goodly place,
His pledge and earnest of eternal peace.
Favour’d thus highly, through his own defect
He fell; and here made short sojourn; he fell,
And, for the bitterness of sorrow, changed
Laughter unblamed and ever-new delight.
That vapours none, exhaled from earth beneath,
Or from the waters, (which, wherever heat
Attracts them, follow,) might ascend thus far
To vex man’s peaceful state, this mountain rose
So high toward the Heaven, nor fears the rage
Of elements contending; from that part
Exempted, where the gate his limit bars.
Because the circumambient air, throughout,
With its first impulse circles still, unless
Aught interpose to check or thwart its course;
Upon the summit, which on every side
To visitation of the impassive air
Is open, doth that motion strike, and makes
Beneath its sway the umbrageous wood resound:
And in the shaken plant such power resides,
That it impregnates with its efficacy

of boats, with an immense army, and returned, humbled, after the
battle of Salamis, in one small bark. Cf. *Mon.* ii. 9.

¹ Ps. xcii. (xci. Vulgate).

² Cf. above, Canto xxi.

The voyaging breeze, upon whose subtle plume
 That, wafted, flies abroad; and the other land,¹
 Receiving, (as 'tis worthy in itself,
 Or in the clime, that warms it,) doth conceive;
 And from its womb produces many a tree
 Of various virtue. This when thou hast heard,
 The marvel ceases, if in yonder earth
 Some plant, without apparent seed, be found
 To fix its fibrous stem. And further learn,
 That with prolific foison of all seeds
 This holy plain is fill'd, and in itself
 Bears fruit that ne'er was pluck'd on other soil.

“ The water, thou behold'st, springs not from vein,
 Restored by vapour, that the cold converts;
 As stream that intermittently repairs
 And spends his pulse of life; but issues forth
 From fountain, solid, undecaying, sure:
 And, by the Will Omnific, full supply
 Feeds whatsoe'er on either side it pours;
 On this, devolved with power to take away
 Remembrance of offence; on that, to bring
 Remembrance back of every good deed done.
 From whence its name of Lethe on this part;
 On the other, Eunoe: both of which must first
 Be tasted, ere it work; the last exceeding
 All flavours else.² Albeit thy thirst may now
 Be well contented, if I here break off,
 No more revealing; yet a corollary
 I freely give beside: nor deem my words
 Less grateful to thee, if they somewhat pass
 The stretch of promise. They, whose verse of yore

¹ “ The continent, inhabited by the living, and separated from Purgatory by the ocean, is affected (and that diversely, according to the nature of the soil, or the climate) by a virtue, or efficacy, conveyed to it by the winds from plants growing in the Terrestrial Paradise, which is situated on the summit of Purgatory; and this is the cause why some plants are found on earth without any apparent seed to produce them ” (Cary).

² Dante is now on one side of Lethe, Matilda on the other. He will see Eunoe when Lethe is crossed. Eunoe quickens dead virtue, restoring the memory of every good deed in those who have first drunk of Lethe, which takes away the recollection of sin. Aquinas similarly teaches that works done in charity, although in a sense dead through sin, are brought to life through penance. The “ three paces ” that divide Dante from Matilda probably signify Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction.

The golden age recorded and its bliss,
 On the Parnassian mountain, of this place
 Perhaps had dream'd. Here was man guiltless; here
 Perpetual spring, and every fruit; and this
 The far-famed nectar." Turning to the bards,
 When she had ceased, I noted in their looks
 A smile at her conclusion;¹ then my face
 Again directed to the lovely dame.

CANTO XXIX

ARGUMENT

The lady, who in a following Canto is called Matilda, moves along the side of the stream in a contrary direction to the current, and Dante keeps equal pace with her on the opposite bank. A marvellous sight, preceded by music, appears in view.

SINGING, as if enamour'd, she resumed
 And closed the song, with "Blessed they whose sins
 Are cover'd."² Like the wood-nymphs then, that
 tripp'd

Singly across the sylvan shadows; one
 Eager to view, and one to escape the sun;
 So moved she on, against the current, up
 The verdant rivage. I, her mincing step
 Observing, with as tardy step pursued.

Between us not an hundred paces trod,
 The bank, on each side bending equally,
 Gave me to face the orient. Nor our way
 Far onward brought us, when to me at once
 She turn'd, and cried: "My brother! look, and
 hearken."

And lo! a sudden lustre ran across
 Through the great forest on all parts, so bright,
 I doubted whether lightning were abroad;
 But that, expiring ever in the spleen
 That doth unfold it, and this during still,
 And waxing still in splendour, made me question
 What it might be: and a sweet melody
 Ran through the luminous air. Then did I chide,

¹ They recognise with delight that the poetic dreams of the Golden Age find their realisation here.

² Ps. xxxii. 1 (Vulgate xxxi.).

With warrantable zeal, the hardihood
 Of our first parent; for that there, where earth
 Stood in obedience to the Heavens, she only,
 Woman, the creature of an hour, endured not
 Restraint of any veil, which had she borne
 Devoutly, joys, ineffable as these,
 Had from the first, and long time since, been mine.¹

While, through that wilderness of primy sweets
 That never fade, suspense I walk'd, and yet
 Expectant of beatitude more high;
 Before us, like a blazing fire, the air
 Under the green boughs glow'd; and, for a song,
 Distinct the sound of melody was heard.

O ye thrice holy virgins! for your sakes
 If e'er I suffer'd hunger, cold, and watching,
 Occasion calls on me to crave your bounty.
 Now through my breast let Helicon his stream
 Pour copious, and Urania with her choir
 Arise to aid me; while the verse unfolds
 Things, that do almost mock the grasp of thought.²

Onward a space, what seem'd seven trees of gold
 The intervening distance to mine eye
 Falsely presented; but, when I was come
 So near them, that no lineament was lost
 Of those, with which a doubtful object, seen
 Remotely, plays on the misdeeming sense;
 Then did the faculty, that ministers
 Discourse to reason, these for tapers of gold
 Distinguish;³ and i' the singing trace the sound
 "Hosanna." Above, their beauteous garniture
 Flamed with more ample lustre, than the moon
 Through cloudless sky at midnight, in her noon.

I turn'd me, full of wonder, to my guide;
 And he did answer with a countenance

¹ For Dante's curiously harsh judgment of Eve, see also *V. E.* i. 4.

² From Helicon, the mountain sacred to the "thrice holy virgins" (the Muses), sprang the streams Aganippe and Hippocrene. Urania is the muse of astronomy, and thence of heavenly things in general. Dante is now invoking her aid to describe the mystical pageant of the Church: "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2).

³ The seven golden candlesticks (Rev. i. 12, and iv. 5), which represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Cf. *Conv.* iv. 21.

Charged with no less amazement : whence my view
 Reverted to those lofty things, which came
 So slowly moving towards us, that the bride
 Would have outstript them on her bridal day.

The lady call'd aloud : " Why thus yet burns
 Affection in thee for these living lights,
 And dost not look on that which follows them?"

I straightway mark'd a tribe behind them walk,
 As if attendant on their leaders, clothed
 With raiment of such whiteness, as on earth
 Was never. On my left, the watery gleam
 Borrow'd, and gave me back, when there I look'd
 As in a mirror, my left side portray'd.

When I had chosen on the river's edge
 Such station, that the distance of the stream
 Alone did separate me ; there I stay'd
 My steps for clearer prospect, and beheld
 The flames go onward, leaving, as they went,
 The air behind them painted as with trail
 Of liveliest pencils ; so distinct were mark'd
 All those seven listed colours, whence the sun
 Maketh his bow, and Cynthia her zone.¹
 These streaming gonfalons did flow beyond
 My vision ; and ten paces,² as I guess,
 Parted the outermost. Beneath a sky
 So beautiful, came four and twenty elders,
 By two and two, with flower-de-luces crown'd.³
 All sang one song : " Blessed be thou among
 The daughters of Adam ! and thy loveliness
 Blessed for ever !" ⁴ After that the flowers,
 And the fresh herblets, on the opposite brink,
 Were free from that elected race ; as light
 In heaven doth second light, came after them
 Four animals, each crown'd with verdurous leaf.⁵

¹ The working of "the seven Spirits of God" spreads a canopy of glory over the whole progress of the Church.

² Probably the Ten Commandments.

³ Cf. Rev. iv. 4. Here the twenty-four elders stand for the twenty-four books of the Old Testament—the number being obtained by counting the Pentateuch, the historical books, and the three attributed to Solomon as one each.

⁴ Luke i. 42. They are singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin—to whom the Church of Rome sees mystical allusions throughout the sacred Scriptures.

⁵ The four Gospels, crowned with the green colour of hope in Christ.

With six wings each was plumed; the plumage full
 Of eyes; and the eyes of Argus would be such,
 Were they endued with life. Reader! more rhymes
 I will not waste in shadowing forth their form:
 For other need so straitens, that in this
 I may not give my bounty room. But read
 Ezekiel; for he paints them, from the north
 How he beheld them come by Chebar's flood,
 In whirlwind, cloud, and fire; and even such
 As thou shalt find them character'd by him,
 Here were they; save as to the pennons: there,
 From him departing, John accords with me.¹

The space, surrounded by the four, enclosed
 A car triumphal: on two wheels it came,
 Drawn at a Gryphon's neck; and he above
 Stretch'd either wing uplifted, 'tween the midst
 And the three listed hues, on each side, three;
 So that the wings did cleave or injure none;
 And out of sight they rose. The members, far
 As he was bird, were golden; white the rest,
 With vermeil intervein'd.² So beautiful
 A car, in Rome, ne'er graced Augustus' pomp,
 Or Africanus': e'en the sun's itself
 Were poor to this; that chariot of the sun,
 Erroneous, which in blazing ruin fell
 At Tellus' prayer devout, by the just doom
 Mysterious of all-seeing Jove.³ Three nymphs,
 At the right wheel, came circling in smooth dance:
 The one so ruddy, that her form had scarce
 Been known within a furnace of clear flame;
 The next did look, as if the flesh and bones
 Were emerald; snow new-fallen seem'd the third.
 Now seem'd the white to lead, the ruddy now;
 And from her song who led, the others took
 Their measure, swift or slow.⁴ At the other wheel,

¹ Cf. Ezekiel i. 4-24, and Rev. iv. 6-9.

² The triumphal chariot is the Church, its two wheels representing either the Old and New Testaments, or the contemplative and active lives, or the Franciscan and Dominican orders. The Gryphon, half eagle and half lion, is Christ Himself in His divine (eagle of gold) and His human (lion of white and red) Natures.

³ What Cary calls "Tellus" is simply *terra*, the Earth, in the original. Dante refers to the fable of Phaëton. Cf. *Inf.* xvii.

⁴ The three theological virtues: Charity (red), Hope (green),

A band quaternion, each in purple clad,
 Advanced with festal step, as, of them, one
 The rest conducted; one, upon whose front
 Three eyes were seen.¹ In rear of all this group,
 Two old men I beheld, dissimilar
 In raiment, but in port and gesture like,
 Solid and mainly grave; of whom, the one
 Did show himself some favour'd counsellor
 Of the great Coan,² him, whom nature made
 To serve the costliest creature of her tribe:
 His fellow mark'd an opposite intent;
 Bearing a sword, whose glitterance and keen edge,
 E'en as I view'd it with the flood between,
 Appall'd me. Next, four others I beheld,
 Of humble seeming: and, behind them all,
 One single old man, sleeping as he came,
 With a shrewd visage. And these seven,³ each
 Like the first troop were habited; but wore
 No braid of lilies on their temples wreathed.
 Rather, with roses and each vermeil flower,
 A sight, but little distant, might have sworn,
 That they were all on fire above their brow.⁴
 Whenas the car was o'er against me, straight
 Was heard a thundering, at whose voice it seem'd
 The chosen multitude were stay'd; for there,
 With the first ensigns, made they solemn halt.

Faith (white); which perfect man supernaturally. They take their step from the song of Charity, which is the greatest of all virtues, as attaining to God for His own sake. The emerald maiden never leads, because our motives for hope must arise from faith or charity, not faith or charity from hope.

¹ The four moral or cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance; which perfect the intellect and desires of man according to the capacity of human nature. They follow the measure of Prudence, which beholds the past, present, and future, and attains to reason in itself even as Charity does to God.

² Hippocrates, a Greek physician.

³ These seven are usually taken as personifications of the Acts (regarded as the work of St. Luke, "the beloved physician") and the Pauline Epistles (the Apostle of the Gentiles bearing "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"), of the canonical epistles (James, Peter, John, and Jude), and of the Apocalypse (St. John, the seer of Patmos). Benvenuto da Imola, and other commentators, take them as St. Peter (who had entrusted to him the power of healing souls), St. Paul, the four great Latin doctors (Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory), and St. Bernard.

⁴ The glowing red of love of charity.

CANTO XXX

ARGUMENT

Beatrice descends from Heaven, and rebukes the Poet.

SOON as that polar light,¹ fair ornament
 Of the first Heaven, which hath never known
 Setting nor rising, nor the shadowy veil
 Of other cloud than sin, to duty there
 Each one convoying, as that lower doth
 The steersman to his port, stood firmly fix'd;
 Forthwith the saintly tribe, who in the van
 Between the Gryphon and its radiance came,
 Did turn them to the car, as to their rest:
 And one, as if commission'd from above,
 In holy chant thrice shouted forth aloud:
 "Come, spouse! from Libanus:"² and all the rest
 Took up the song.—At the last audit, so
 The blest shall rise, from forth his cavern each
 Uplifting lightly his new-vested flesh;
 As, on the sacred litter, at the voice
 Authoritative of that elder, sprang
 A hundred ministers and messengers
 Of life eternal.³ "Blessed thou, who comest!"
 And, "Oh!" they cried, "from full hands scatter ye
 Unwithering lilies:"⁴ and, so saying, cast
 Flowers overhead and round them on all sides.

I have beheld, ere now, at break of day,
 The eastern clime all roseate; and the sky
 Opposed, one deep and beautiful serene;
 And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
 Attemper'd, at his rising, that the eye
 Long while endured the sight: thus, in a cloud
 Of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
 And down within and outside of the car
 Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreathed,
 A virgin in my view appear'd, beneath

¹ "The seven candlesticks of gold, which he calls the polar light of Heaven itself, because they perform the same office for Christians that the polar star does for mariners, in guiding them to their port" (Cary).

² Song of Solomon, iv. 8.

³ Angels.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 9; *Aeneid*, vi. 883.

Green mantle, robed in hue of living flame :¹
 And o'er my spirit, that so long a time
 Had from her presence felt no shuddering dread,
 Albeit mine eyes discern'd her not, there moved
 A hidden virtue from her, at whose touch
 The power of ancient love was strong within me.²

No sooner on my vision streaming, smote
 The heavenly influence, which, years past, and e'en
 In childhood, thrill'd me, than towards Virgil I
 Turn'd me to leftward; panting, like a babe,
 That flees for refuge to his mother's breast,
 If aught have terrified or work'd him woe:
 And would have cried, "There is no dram of blood,
 That doth not quiver in me. The old flame
 Throws out clear tokens of reviving fire."³

But Virgil had bereaved us of himself;
 Virgil, my best-loved father; Virgil, he
 To whom I gave me up for safety: nor
 All, our prime mother lost, avail'd to save
 My undew'd cheeks from blur of soiling tears.⁴

"Dante! weep not, that Virgil leaves thee; nay,
 Weep thou not yet: behoves thee feel the edge
 Of other sword; and thou shalt weep for that."

As to the prow or stern, some admiral
 Paces the deck, inspiring his crew,
 When 'mid the sail-yards all hands ply aloof;
 Thus, on the left side of the car, I saw
 (Turning me at the sound of mine own name,
 Which here I am compell'd to register)
 The virgin station'd, who before appear'd
 Veil'd in that festive shower angelical.

Towards me, across the stream, she bent her eyes;
 Though from her brow the veil descending, bound
 With foliage of Minerva, suffer'd not

¹ Beatrice thus appears in the three mystical colours—robed in charity, mantled with hope, veiled with faith—and crowned with the olive of wisdom. Here, and further on, where Cary has "virgin," Dante has *donna*, "lady."

² The whole of the first part of the *Vita Nuova* is the only adequate commentary upon these lines.

³ *Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma*. A line taken from Virgil, *Æn.* iv. 23: *Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ*.

⁴ Virgil, his task of leading Dante to the Earthly Paradise fulfilled, has returned to his sad place in Limbo. Not all the bliss of the Garden of Eden can stay Dante's tears.

That I beheld her clearly : then with act
 Full royal, still insulting o'er her thrall,
 Added, as one who, speaking, keepeth back
 The bitterest saying, to conclude the speech :
 " Observe me well. I am, in sooth, I am
 Beatrice. What ! and hast thou deign'd at last
 Approach the mountain ? Knewest not, O man !
 Thy happiness is here ? " Down fell mine eyes
 On the clear fount ; but there, myself espying,
 Recoil'd, and sought the greensward ; such a weight
 Of shame was on my forehead. With a mien
 Of that stern majesty, which doth surround
 A mother's presence to her awe-struck child,
 She look'd ; a flavour of such bitterness
 Was mingled in her pity. There her words
 Brake off ; and suddenly the Angels sang,
 " In thee, O gracious Lord ! my hope hath been : "
 But went no further than, " Thou, Lord ! hast set
 My feet in ample room. " ¹ As snow, that lies,
 Amidst the living rafters on the back
 Of Italy, congeal'd, when drifted high
 And closely piled by rough Sclavonian blasts ;
 Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls,
 And straightway melting it distils away, ²
 Like a fire-wasted taper : thus was I,
 Without a sigh or tear, or ever these
 Did sing, that, with the chiming of Heaven's sphere,
 Still in their warbling chime : but when the strain
 Of dulcet symphony express'd for me
 Their soft compassion, more than could the words,
 " Virgin ! ³ why so consumest him ? " then, the ice,
 Congeal'd about my bosom, turn'd itself
 To spirit and water ; and with anguish forth
 Gush'd, through the lips and eyelids, from the heart.
 Upon the chariot's same edge still she stood,
 Immoveable ; and thus address'd her words
 To those bright semblances with pity touch'd :
 " Ye in the eternal day your vigils keep ;

¹ Ps. xxxi. 1-8.

² " These lines describe the snow on the ridges of the Apennines, first congealed, when the winds blow from the north ; and then dissolved, at the time of the warm and gentle breezes that come from Africa " (Oelsner).

³ In the Italian it is *donna*, " lady. "

So that nor night nor slumber, with close stealth,
Conveys from you a single step, in all
The goings on of time: thence, with more heed
I shape mine answer, for his ear intended,
Who there stands weeping; that the sorrow now
May equal the transgression. Not alone
Through operation of the mighty orbs,
That mark each seed to some predestined aim,
As with aspect or fortunate or ill
The constellations meet; but through benign
Largess of heavenly graces, which rain down
From such a height as mocks our vision, this man
Was, in the freshness of his being,¹ such,
So gifted virtually, that in him
All better habits wondrously had thrived.
The more of kindly strength is in the soil,
So much doth evil seed and lack of culture
Mar it the more, and make it run to wildness.
These looks sometime upheld him; for I show'd
My youthful eyes, and led him by their light
In upright walking. Soon as I had reach'd
The threshold of my second age, and changed
My mortal for immortal; then he left me,
And gave himself to others.² When from flesh
To spirit I had risen, and increase
Of beauty and of virtue circled me,
I was less dear to him, and valued less.
His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,
Following false images of good, that make
No promise perfect. Nor avail'd me aught
To sue for inspirations, with the which,
I, both in dreams of night, and otherwise,

¹ *Questi fu tal nella sua vita nuova*, "this man was such in his new life," by which *new life* is to be understood, not so much "the freshness of his being," as the renovation of that being wrought by his love for Beatrice in the golden days of his youth.

² Dante first saw Beatrice in May, 1274, when she was at the beginning of her ninth year; she died in June, 1290, in her twenty-fifth year. She had thus reached the threshold of her second age, for the first age or period of life, which Dante calls Adolescence, lasts to the twenty-fifth year (*Conv.* iv. 24). She rebukes Dante for the life of moral unworthiness into which he fell after her death—the same to which he had himself alluded in his speech with Forese Donati (Canto xxiii.).

Did call him back; ¹ of them, so little reck'd him,
 Such depth he fell, that all device was short
 Of his preserving, save that he should view
 The children of perdition. To this end
 I visited the purlieus of the dead:
 And one, who hath conducted him thus high,
 Received my supplications urged with weeping.
 It were a breaking of God's high decree,
 If Lethe should be past, and such food tasted,
 Without the cost of some repentant tear."

CANTO XXXI

ARGUMENT

Beatrice continues her reprehension of Dante, who confesses his error, and falls to the ground: coming to himself again, he is by Matilda drawn through the waters of Lethe, and presented first to the four virgins who figure the cardinal virtues; these in their turn lead him to the Gryphon, a symbol of our Saviour; and the three virgins, representing the evangelical virtues, intercede for him with Beatrice, that she would display to him her second beauty.

"O THOU!" her words she thus without delay
 Resuming, turn'd their point on me, to whom
 They, with but lateral edge, seem'd harsh before: ²
 "Say thou, who stand'st beyond the holy stream,
 If this be true. A charge, so grievous, needs
 Thine own avowal." On my faculty
 Such strange amazement hung, the voice expired
 Imperfect, ere its organs gave it birth.

A little space refraining, then she spake:
 "What dost thou muse on? Answer me. The wave
 On thy remembrances of evil yet
 Hath done no injury." ³ A mingled sense
 Of fear and of confusion, from my lips
 Did such a "Yea" produce, as needed help
 Of vision to interpret. As when breaks,
 In act to be discharged, a cross-bow bent

¹ We have the record of one such vision in the *Vita Nuova* itself, § 40.

² "The words of Beatrice, when not addressed directly to himself, but spoken to the Angels of him, Dante had thought sufficiently harsh" (Cary).

³ Thou hast not yet tasted the waters of Lethe.

Beyond its pitch, both nerve and bow o'erstretch'd;
 The flagging weapon feebly hits the mark:
 Thus, tears and sighs forth gushing, did I burst
 Beneath the heavy load: and thus my voice
 Was slacken'd on its way. She straight began:
 "When my desire invited thee to love
 The good, which sets a bound to our aspirings;
 What bar of thwarting foss or linked chain
 Did meet thee, that thou so shouldst quit the hope
 Of further progress? or what bait of ease,
 Or promise of allurements, led thee on
 Elsewhere, that thou elsewhere shouldst rather wait?"

A bitter sigh I drew, then scarce found voice
 To answer; hardly to these sounds my lips
 Gave utterance, wailing: "Thy fair looks withdrawn,
 Things present, with deceitful pleasures, turn'd
 My steps aside." She answering spake: "Hadst thou
 Been silent, or denied what thou avow'st,
 Thou hadst not hid thy sin the more; such eye
 Observes it. But whene'er the sinner's cheek
 Breaks forth into the precious-streaming tears
 Of self-accusing, in our court the wheel
 Of justice doth run counter to the edge.¹
 Howe'er, that thou mayst profit by thy shame
 For errors past, and that henceforth more strength
 May arm thee, when thou hear'st the Syren-voice;
 Lay thou aside the motive to this grief,
 And lend attentive ear, while I unfold
 How opposite a way my buried flesh
 Should have impell'd thee. Never didst thou spy,
 In art or nature, aught so passing sweet,
 As were the limbs that in their beauteous frame
 Enclosed me, and are scatter'd now in dust.
 If sweetest thing thus fail'd thee with my death,
 What, afterward, of mortal, should thy wish
 Have tempted? When thou first hadst felt the dart
 Of perishable things, in my departing
 For better realms, thy wing thou shouldst have pruned
 To follow me; and never stoop'd again,
 To 'bide a second blow, for a slight girl,²

¹ "The weapons of Divine Justice are blunted by the confession and sorrow of the offender" (Cary).

² *Pargoletta*. Cf. Canzone xv. Most probably, Beatrice is making a general accusation, without reference to any special

Or other gaud as transient and as vain.
 The new and inexperienced bird awaits,
 Twice it may be, or thrice, the fowler's aim; ¹
 But in the sight of one whose plumes are full,
 In vain the net is spread, the arrow wing'd."

I stood, as children silent and ashamed
 Stand, listening, with their eyes upon the earth,
 Acknowledging their fault, and self-condemn'd.
 And she resumed: "If, but to hear, thus pains thee,
 Raise thou thy beard, and lo! what sight shall do."

With less reluctance yields a sturdy holm,
 Rent from its fibres by a blast, that blows
 From off the pole, or from Iarbas' land, ²
 Than I at her behest my visage raised:
 And thus the face denoting by the beard,
 I mark'd the secret sting her words convey'd. ³

No sooner lifted I mine aspect up,
 Than I perceived those primal creatures ⁴ cease
 Their flowery sprinkling; and mine eyes beheld
 (Yet unassured and wavering in their view)
 Beatrice; she, who towards the mystic shape,
 That joins two natures in one form, had turn'd:
 And, even under shadow of her veil,
 And parted by the verdant rill that flow'd
 Between, in loveliness she seem'd as much
 Her former self surpassing, as on earth
 All others she surpass'd. Remorseful goads
 Shot sudden through me. Each thing else, the more
 Its love had late beguil'd me, now the more
 Was loathsome. On my heart so keenly smote
 The bitter consciousness, that on the ground
 O'erpower'd I fell: and what my state was then,
 She knows, who was the cause. When now my
 strength
 Flow'd back, returning outward from the heart,
 The lady, ⁵ whom alone I first had seen,

offence. This will hold good whether we regard the *pargoletta* as
 a real woman, or as a merely allegorical figure.

¹ Cf. Proverbs i. 17.

² "Whether by a native wind [from the north] or by that from
 the land of Iarbas"—from the south. Iarbas was a king of
 Libya mentioned by Virgil (*Æn.* iv. 196).

³ He is a man, and not a child to be so easily led away.

⁴ The Angels.

⁵ Matilda.

I found above me. "Loose me not," she cried :
 "Loose not thy hold:" and lo! had dragg'd me high
 As to my neck into the stream; while she,
 Still as she drew me after, swept along,
 Swift as a shuttle, bounding o'er the wave.

The blessed shore approaching, then was heard
 So sweetly, "Tu asperges me,"¹ that I
 May not remember, much less tell the sound.

The beauteous dame, her arms expanding, clasp'd
 My temples, and immersed me where 'twas fit
 The wave should drench me: and, thence raising up,
 Within the fourfold dance of lovely nymphs
 Presented me so laved; and with their arm
 They each did cover me. "Here are we nymphs,
 And in the heaven are stars.² Or ever earth
 Was visited of Beatrice, we,
 Appointed for her handmaids, tended on her.
 We to her eyes will lead thee: but the light
 Of gladness, that is in them, well to scan,
 Those yonder three,³ of deeper ken than ours,
 Thy sight shall quicken." Thus began their song:
 And then they led me to the Gryphon's breast,
 Where, turn'd toward us, Beatrice stood.
 "Spare not thy vision. We have station'd thee
 Before the emeralds,⁴ whence love, erewhile,
 Hath drawn his weapons on thee." As they spake,
 A thousand fervent wishes riveted
 Mine eyes upon her beaming eyes, that stood,
 Still fix'd toward the Gryphon, motionless.
 As the sun strikes a mirror, even thus
 Within those orbs the twyfold being shone;
 For ever varying, in one figure now
 Reflected, now in other.⁵ Reader! muse

¹ A verse of the *Miserere*, Ps. li. 7 (Vulgate l.), which is sung during the sprinkling of the people with holy water before High Mass.

² Cf. Canto i.

³ Faith, Hope, and Charity.

⁴ The eyes of Beatrice.

⁵ "Dante's passionate reminiscences and longings are awed by the august impersonation of Revelation, whom he has found where he looked only for the Florentine maiden he had lost on earth. The divine and human nature of Christ are flashed alternately from the reflection in her eyes, though ever combined in the mysterious being himself" (Wicksteed).

How wondrous in my sight it seem'd, to mark
 A thing, albeit stedfast in itself,
 Yet in its imaged semblance mutable.

Full of amaze, and joyous, while my soul
 Fed on the viand, whereof still desire
 Grows with satiety; the other three,
 With gesture that declared a loftier line,
 Advanced: to their own carol, on they came
 Dancing, in festive ring angelical.

"Turn, Beatrice!" was their song: "Oh! turn
 Thy saintly sight on this thy faithful one,
 Who, to behold thee, many a wearisome pace
 Hath measured. Gracious at our prayer, vouchsafe
 Unveil to him thy cheeks; that he may mark
 Thy second beauty,¹ now conceal'd." O splendour!
 O sacred light eternal! who is he,
 So pale with musing in Pierian shades,
 Or with that fount so lavishly imbued,
 Whose spirit should not fail him in the essay
 To represent thee such as thou didst seem,
 When under cope of the still-chiming Heaven
 Thou gavest to open air thy charms reveal'd?

CANTO XXXII

ARGUMENT

Dante is warned not to gaze too fixedly on Beatrice. The procession moves on, accompanied by Matilda, Statius, and Dante, till they reach an exceeding lofty tree, where divers strange chances befall.

MINE eyes with such an eager coveting
 Were bent to rid them of their ten years' thirst,²
 No other sense was waking: and e'en they
 Were fenced on either side from heed of aught;
 So tangled, in its custom'd toils, that smile
 Of saintly brightness drew me to itself:
 When forcibly, toward the left, my sight
 The sacred virgins turn'd; for from their lips
 I heard the warning sounds: "Too fix'd a gaze!"

¹ Her smile. Cf. *Conv.* iii. 8.

² From her death, in June, 1290, until the assumed date of the vision, April, 1300.

Awhile my vision labour'd; as when late
 Upon the o'erstrained eyes the sun hath smote:
 But soon, to lesser object, as the view
 Was now recover'd, (lesser in respect
 To that excess of sensible, whence late
 I had perforce been sunder'd,) on their right
 I mark'd that glorious army wheel, and turn,
 Against the sun and sevenfold lights, their front.
 As when, their bucklers for protection raised,
 A well-ranged troop, with portly banners curl'd,
 Wheel circling, ere the whole can change their ground;
 E'en thus the goodly regiment of Heaven,
 Proceeding, all did pass us, ere the car
 Had sloped his beam. Attendant at the wheels
 The damsels turn'd; and on the Gryphon moved
 The sacred burden, with a pace so smooth,
 No feather on him trembled. The fair dame,
 Who through the wave had drawn me, companied
 By Statius and myself, pursued the wheel,
 Whose orbit, rolling, mark'd a lesser arch.¹

Through the high wood, now void, (the more her
 blame,

Who by the serpent was beguil'd,) I pass'd,
 With step in cadence to the harmony
 Angelic. Onward had we moved, as far,
 Perchance, as arrow at three several flights
 Full wing'd had sped, when from her station down
 Descended Beatrice. With one voice
 All murmur'd "Adam;" circling next a plant²
 Despoil'd of flowers and leaf, on every bough.
 Its tresses, spreading more as more they rose,
 Were such, as 'midst their forest wilds, for height,
 The Indians might have gazed at. "Blessed thou,

¹ Now that he is purified and illumined, Dante is to see or hear the past, present, and future of the Church and Empire. The pageant has shown him the ideal of the Church, as her Divine Spouse had intended her to be for the guidance of the world; he is now to behold her history, in conjunction with the Empire, from the first coming of Christianity to Rome down to the transference of the papal chair to Avignon; and he is to hear the promise of the future.

² The Tree of knowledge of good and evil, which, since the prohibition to eat of that tree was the beginning of law and of the duty of obedience, has become the symbol of temporal power, of the Empire, and of the obedience due to it.

Gryphon! whose beak hath never pluck'd that tree
 Pleasant to taste: for hence the appetite
 Was warp'd to evil." Round the stately trunk
 Thus shouted forth the rest, to whom return'd
 The animal twice-gender'd: "Yea! for so
 The generation of the just are saved."¹
 And turning to the chariot-pole, to foot
 He drew it of the widow'd branch, and bound
 There, left unto the stock whereon it grew.²

As when large floods of radiance from above
 Stream, with that radiance mingled, which ascends
 Next after setting of the scaly sign,³
 Our plants then burgein, and each wears anew
 His wonted colours, ere the sun have yoked
 Beneath another star his flamy steeds;
 Thus putting forth a hue more faint than rose,
 And deeper than the violet, was renew'd
 The plant, erewhile in all its branches bare.⁴
 Unearthly was the hymn, which then arose.
 I understood it not, nor to the end
 Endured the harmony. Had I the skill
 To pencil forth how closed the unpitying eyes⁵
 Slumbering, when Syrinx warbled, (eyes that paid
 So dearly for their watching,) then, like painter,
 That with a model paints, I might design
 The manner of my falling into sleep.
 But feign who will the slumber cunningly,
 I pass it by to when I waked; and tell,
 How suddenly a flash of splendour rent
 The curtain of my sleep, and one cries out,

¹ Cf. Matt. iii. 15. Justice can be fulfilled only when the Church follows the example of her Divine Founder, and usurps none of the temporal sovereignty of the Empire.

² The chariot-pole is the Cross, which, according to legend, was made from the tree of Eden. It is the binding link between the Church and the Empire. Cf. *Par.* vi., vii.

³ In spring, when the sun enters Aries, the constellation following Pisces.

⁴ The Empire, bare and destitute of virtue until the advent of Christianity, now breaks out into purple leaves and flowers—the colour of the four cardinal virtues, which Dante more particularly associates with the temporal monarchy.

⁵ The many-eyed Argus was lulled to sleep by hearing Mercury tell the story of Syrinx, and then slain. Cary has mistranslated the passage, which should run: "Had I skill to portray how the pitiless eyes fell asleep in hearing of Syrinx."

"Arise: what dost thou?" As the chosen three,
 On Tabor's mount, admitted to behold
 The blossoming of that fair tree,¹ whose fruit
 Is coveted of Angels, and doth make
 Perpetual feast in Heaven; to themselves
 Returning, at the word whence deeper sleeps²
 Were broken, they their tribe diminish'd saw;
 Both Moses and Elias gone, and changed
 The stole their Master wore; thus to myself
 Returning, over me beheld I stand
 The piteous one,³ who, cross the stream, had brought
 My steps. "And where," all doubting, I exclaim'd,
 "Is Beatrice?"—"See her," she replied,
 "Beneath the fresh leaf, seated on its root.
 Behold the associate choir, that circles her.
 The others, with a melody more sweet
 And more profound, journeying to higher realms,
 Upon the Gryphon tend." If there her words
 Were closed, I know not; but mine eyes had now
 Ta'en view of her, by whom all other thoughts
 Were barr'd admittance. On the very ground
 Alone she sat, as she had there been left
 A guard upon the wain, which I beheld
 Bound to the twyform beast. The seven nymphs
 Did make themselves a cloister round about her;
 And, in their hands, upheld those lights secure
 From blast septentrion and the gusty south.⁴

"A little while thou shalt be forester here;
 And citizen shalt be, for ever with me,
 Of that true Rome, wherein Christ dwells a Roman.⁵
 To profit the misguided world, keep now
 Thine eyes upon the car; and what thou seest,
 Take heed thou write, returning to that place."⁶

Thus Beatrice: at whose feet inclined
 Devout, at her behest, my thought and eyes

¹ At the Transfiguration. Cf. Song of Solomon, ii. 3.

² When, at Christ's word, the ruler's daughter and Lazarus were restored to life.

³ Matilda.

⁴ Beatrice, Heavenly Wisdom, is left to watch over the Chariot of the Church, seated beneath the shadow of the Tree of the Empire, upon its root, which is Rome. She is attended by the Virtues, who still guard the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

⁵ In the Emyrean Heaven.

⁶ To the earth.

I, as she bade, directed. Never fire,
 With so swift motion, forth a stormy cloud
 Leap'd downward from the welkin's farthest bound,
 As I beheld the bird of Jove descend
 Down through the tree; and, as he rush'd, the rind
 Disparting crush beneath him; buds much more,
 And leaflets. On the car, with all his might
 He struck;¹ whence, staggering, like a ship it reel'd,
 At random driven, to starboard now, o'ercome,
 And now to larboard, by the vaulting waves.

Next, springing up into the chariot's womb,
 A fox² I saw, with hunger seeming pined
 Of all good food. But, for his ugly sins
 The saintly maid rebuking him, away
 Scampering he turn'd, fast as his hide-bound corpse
 Would bear him. Next, from whence before he came,
 I saw the eagle dart into the hull
 O' the car, and leave it with his feathers lined:³
 And then a voice, like that which issues forth
 From heart with sorrow rived, did issue forth
 From Heaven, and, "O poor bark of mine!" it cried,
 "How badly art thou freighted." Then it seem'd
 That the earth open'd, between either wheel;
 And I beheld a dragon⁴ issue thence,
 That through the chariot fix'd his forked train;
 And like a wasp, that draggeth back the sting,
 So drawing forth his baleful train, he dragg'd
 Part of the bottom forth; and went his way,
 Exulting. What remain'd, as lively turf
 With green herb, so did clothe itself with plumes,
 Which haply had, with purpose chaste and kind,
 Been offer'd; and therewith were clothed the wheels,
 Both one and other, and the beam, so quickly,
 A sigh were not breathed sooner. Thus transform'd,
 The holy structure, through its several parts,
 Did put forth heads; three on the beam, and one
 On every side: the first like oxen horn'd;
 But with a single horn upon their front,

¹ This assault signifies the persecution of the Church by the Roman Emperors figured in the Imperial Eagle.

² The early heresies.

³ The donation of Constantine.

⁴ Either schism (and more particularly that of Mahomet) or the spirit of simony.

The four.¹ Like monster, sight hath never seen.
 O'er it methought there sat, secure as rock
 On mountain's lofty top, a shameless whore,²
 Whose ken roved loosely round her. At her side,
 As 't were that none might bear her off, I saw
 A giant stand;³ and ever and anon
 They mingled kisses. But, her lustful eyes
 Chancing on me to wander, that fell minion
 Scourged her from head to foot all o'er; then full
 Of jealousy, and fierce with rage, unloosed
 The monster, and dragg'd on, so far across
 The forest, that from me its shades alone
 Shielded the harlot and the new-form'd brute.⁴

CANTO XXXIII

ARGUMENT

After a hymn sung, Beatrice leaves the tree, and takes with her the seven virgins, Matilda, Statius, and Dante. She then darkly predicts to our Poet some future events. Lastly, the whole band arrive at the fountain, from whence the two streams, Lethe and Eunoe, separating, flow different ways; and Matilda, at the desire of Beatrice, causes our Poet to drink of the latter stream.

"THE heathen, Lord! are come:"⁵ responsive thus,
 The trinal now, and now the virgin band
 Quaternion, their sweet psalmody began,
 Weeping; and Beatrice listen'd, sad
 And sighing, to the song, in such a mood,
 That Mary, as she stood beside the Cross,
 Was scarce more changed. But when they gave her
 place
 To speak, then, risen upright on her feet,
 She, with a colour glowing bright as fire,
 Did answer: "Yet a little while,⁶ and ye

¹ By clothing itself with the plumes of temporal power and worldly wealth (increased by the Carlovingian Emperors), the Church becomes transformed into an apocalyptic monster (*Cf.* Rev. xvii.), adorned with the seven capital sins.

² The corrupt Papal Court.

³ The royal house of France.

⁴ This signifies the transference of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon. *Cf.* *Inf.* xix.

⁵ *Ps.* lxxix. 1.

⁶ *Cf.* John xvi. 16. Heavenly Wisdom, though concealed for

Shall see me not; and, my beloved sisters!
Again a little while, and ye shall see me."

Before her then she marshal'd all the seven;
And, beckoning only, motion'd me, the dame,
And that remaining sage,¹ to follow her.

So on she pass'd; and had not set, I ween,
Her tenth step to the ground, when, with mine eyes,
Her eyes encounter'd; and, with visage mild,
"So mend thy pace," she cried, "that if my words
Address thee, thou mayst still be aptly placed
To hear them." Soon as duly to her side
I now had hasten'd: "Brother!" she began,
"Why makest thou no attempt at questioning,
As thus we walk together?" Like to those
Who, speaking with too reverent an awe
Before their betters, draw not forth the voice
Alive unto their lips, befel me then
That I in sounds imperfect thus began:
"Lady! what I have need of, that thou know'st;
And what will suit my need." She answering thus:
"Of fearfulness and shame, I will that thou
Henceforth do rid thee; that thou speak no more,
As one who dreams. Thus far be taught of me:
The vessel which thou saw'st the serpent break,
Was, and is not: let him, who hath the blame,
Hope not to scare God's vengeance with a sop.²
Without an heir for ever shall not be
That eagle,³ he, who left the chariot plumed,
Which monster made it first and next a prey.
Plainly I view, and therefore speak, the stars
E'en now approaching, whose conjunction, free
From all impediment and bar, brings on
A season, in the which, one sent from God,

a while by the corruption of the Papal Court, will never permanently desert the Church of God.

¹ Statius.

² Corruption and simony have so degraded the Church that she is no longer recognisable as the Spouse of Christ; but nothing can save the guilty parties from the vengeance of God. In Dante's days, a murderer could escape the vengeance of his victim's family, by eating a sop of bread and wine at his grave within nine days after the deed.

³ The Empire will not remain vacant for ever. Strictly speaking, no Emperor was recognised by the Italians between Frederick II. (d. 1250) and Henry VII. (elected 1308). Cf. *Conv.* iv. 3.

(Five hundred, five, and ten, do mark him out,)
 That foul one, and the accomplice of her guilt,
 The giant, both, shall slay.¹ And if perchance
 My saying, dark as Themis or as Sphinx,
 Fail to persuade thee, (since like them it foils
 The intellect with blindness,) yet ere long
 Events shall be the Naiads, that will solve
 This knotty riddle; and no damage light
 On flock or field.² Take heed; and as these words
 By me are utter'd, teach them even so
 To those who live that life, which is a race
 To death: and when thou writest them, keep in mind
 Not to conceal how thou hast seen the plant,
 That twice hath now been spoil'd. This whoso robs,
 This whoso plucks, with blasphemy of deed
 Sins against God, who for his use alone
 Creating hallow'd it.³ For taste of this,
 In pain and in desire, five thousand years
 And upward, the first soul did yearn for him
 Who punish'd in himself the fatal gust.⁴

“Thy reason slumbers, if it deem this height,
 And summit thus inverted, of the plant,
 Without due cause: and were not vainer thoughts,
 As Elsa's numbing waters,⁵ to thy soul,

¹ *Un cinquecento diece e cinque messo da Dio*, “a five hundred ten and five, sent from God.” The usual interpretation is that these numbers, slightly transposed, form DVX (*dux*), a leader—who is to be identified with the *Veltro*. Cf. *Inf.* i. Besides Rev. xiii. 18, Dante was probably influenced by Daniel ix. 26, in the Latin version of which the “prince that shall come” is *dux venturus*.

² Dante here follows a corruption in the text of Ovid, *Metam.* vii. 759–761, which reads *Naiades* (Naiads), instead of *Laiades* (Œdipus, son of Laius), which is now the universally accepted reading. Themis, in anger at Œdipus having solved the riddle of the Sphinx, sent a wild beast to destroy the flocks and fields of the Thebans.

³ Dante is to make manifest that the Empire is of divine origin, and to recognise that the precept given by God to our first parents corresponds now with the duty and obedience man owes to the Empire; whoever strives to usurp the imperial prerogatives, sins against God, even as Adam sinned in eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree.

⁴ Cf. *Par.* xxvi. “Dante follows the chronology of Eusebius, according to which Adam was on earth for 930 years, and in Limbo for 4302 years, making 5232 years in all” (Oelsner).

⁵ The Elsa, a small Tuscan river, has petrifying qualities in a part of its course.

And their fond pleasures had not dyed it dark
 As Pyramus the mulberry; thou hadst seen,
 In such momentous circumstance alone,
 God's equal justice morally implied
 In the forbidden tree. But since I mark thee,
 In understanding, harden'd into stone,
 And, to that hardness, spotted too and stain'd,
 So that thine eye is dazzled at my word;
 I will, that, if not written, yet at least
 Painted thou take it in thee, for the cause,
 That one brings home his staff inwreathed with palm."¹

I thus: "As wax by seal, that changeth not
 Its impress, now is stamp'd my brain by thee.
 But wherefore soars thy wish'd-for speech so high
 Beyond my sight, that loses it the more,
 The more it strains to reach it?"—"To the end
 That thou mayst know," she answer'd straight, "the
 school,

That thou hast follow'd;² and how far behind,
 When following my discourse, its learning halts:
 And mayst behold your art, from the divine
 As distant, as the disagreement is
 'Twixt earth and Heaven's most high and rapturous
 orb."

"I not remember," I replied, "that e'er
 I was estranged from thee; nor for such fault
 Doth conscience chide me." Smiling she return'd:
 "If thou canst not remember, call to mind
 How lately thou hast drunk of Lethe's wave;
 And, sure as smoke doth indicate a flame,
 In that forgetfulness itself conclude
 Blame from thy alienated will incurr'd.
 From henceforth, verily, my words shall be
 As naked, as will suit them to appear
 In thy unpractised view." More sparkling now,
 And with retarded course, the sun possess'd
 The circle of mid-day, that varies still
 As the aspect varies of each several clime;³

¹ Pilgrims to the Holy Land brought back their staffs wreathed with palm (cf. *V. N.* § 41). Let Dante similarly bring back these tidings to show where he has been.

² The school of human philosophy, to which there is no disparagement intended in this passage.

³ It is noon in Purgatory.

When, as one, sent in vaward of a troop
For escort, pauses, if perchance he spy
Vestige of somewhat strange and rare; so paused
The sevenfold band, arriving at the verge
Of a dun umbrage hoar, such as is seen,
Beneath green leaves and gloomy branches, oft
To overbrow a bleak and alpine cliff.
And, where they stood, before them, as it seem'd,
I, Tigris and Euphrates both, beheld
Forth from one fountain issue; ¹ and, like friends,
Linger at parting. "O enlightening beam!
O glory of our kind! beseech thee say
What water this, which, from one source derived,
Itself removes to distance from itself?"

To such entreaty answer thus was made:
"Entreat Matilda, that she teach thee this."

And here, as one who clears himself of blame
Imputed, the fair dame return'd: "Of me
He this and more hath learnt; and I am safe
That Lethe's water hath not hid it from him."

And Beatrice: "Some more pressing care,
That oft the memory 'reaves, perchance hath made
His mind's eye dark. But lo, where Eunoe flows!
Lead thither; and, as thou art wont, revive
His fainting virtue." As a courteous spirit,
That proffers no excuses, but as soon
As he hath token of another's will,
Makes it his own; when she had ta'en me, thus
The lovely maiden moved her on, and call'd
To Statius, with an air most lady-like:
"Come thou with him." Were further space allow'd,
Then, Reader! might I sing, though but in part,
That beverage, with whose sweetness I had ne'er
Been sated. But, since all the leaves are full,
Appointed for this second strain, mine art
With warning bridle checks me. I return'd
From the most holy wave, regenerate,
E'en as new plants renew'd with foilage new,
Pure and made apt for mounting to the stars.

¹ Cf. above, Canto xxviii. The mystical source from which both Lethe and Eunoe spring is the fountain of the grace of God.

THE VISION OF DANTE

Paradise

CANTO I

ARGUMENT

The Poet ascends with Beatrice towards the first Heaven; and is, by her, resolved of certain doubts which arise in his mind.

His glory, by whose might all things are moved,
Pierces the universe, and in one part
Sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less. In Heaven,
That largeliest of his light partakes, was I,¹
Witness of things, which, to relate again,
Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence;
For that, so near approaching its desire,
Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd,
That memory cannot follow. Nathless all,
That in my thoughts I of that sacred realm
Could store, shall now be matter of my song.

Benign Apollo! ² this last labour aid;
And make me such a vessel of thy worth,
As thy own laurel claims, of me beloved.
Thus far hath one of steep Parnassus' brows
Sufficed me; henceforth, there is need of both
For my remaining enterprize. Do thou
Enter into my bosom, and there breathe
So, as when Marsyas by thy hand was dragg'd
Forth from his limbs, unsheathed.³ O power divine!

¹ "In that Heaven was I," i.e. in the Empyrean: "the supreme Heaven, containing all the bodies of the universe and contained by love, within which all bodies move (itself abiding in eternal rest), receiving its virtue from no corporeal substance. And it is called the *Empyrean*, which is the same as the heaven flaming with fire or heat, not because there is any material fire or heat in it, but spiritual, to wit holy love or charity" (Letter to Can Grande, *Epist.* x. 24).

² Apollo is here a symbol of Christ or of the Divine Grace.

³ Marsyas challenged Apollo to a musical contest, and was flayed alive for his presumption.

If thou to me of thine impart so much,
 That of that happy realm the shadow'd form
 Traced in my thoughts I may set forth to view;
 Thou shalt behold me of thy favour'd tree
 Come to the foot, and crown myself with leaves:
 For to that honour thou, and my high theme
 Will fit me. If but seldom, mighty Sire!
 To grace his triumph, gathers thence a wreath
 Cæsar, or bard, (more shame for human wills
 Depraved,) joy to the Delphic god must spring
 From the Peneian foliage,¹ when one breast
 Is with such thirst inspired. From a small spark
 Great flame hath risen: after me, perchance,
 Others with better voice may pray, and gain,
 From the Cyrrhæan city,² answer kind.

Through divers passages, the world's bright lamp
 Rises to mortals; but through that which joins
 Four circles with the threefold cross, in best
 Course, and in happiest constellation set,
 He comes;³ and, to the worldly wax, best gives
 Its temper and impression. Morning there,
 Here eve was well nigh by such passage made;
 And whiteness had o'erspread that hemisphere,
 Blackness the other part;⁴ when to the left
 I saw Beatrice turn'd, and on the sun

¹ Daphne, daughter of Peneus, a nymph beloved by Apollo, was changed into a laurel.

² Dante has simply *Cirra*. It is doubtful whether he refers to Cirrha, a peak of Parnassus, or Cirrha, a town near Delphi, both sacred to Apollo.

³ "Where the four circles, the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure join; the last three intersecting each other so as to form three crosses, as may be seen in the armillary sphere" (Cary). In the allegorical sense, the grace of God shines most upon the soul where the cardinal virtues, which attain to human reason, are united to the theological virtues, whose object is God. The "happiest constellation" is Aries. Dante is not actually describing sunrise on the mountain, but merely making a general astronomical statement concerning sunrise at the spring equinox, the time of his ascent.

⁴ "Almost this passage had made (at sunrise) morning there (in the Earthly Paradise) and evening here (on earth); and there that (southern hemisphere) was all bright, and the other region (the inhabited world) was dark." It was now noon in the Earthly Paradise, the noon of the same day as that upon which Dante had drunken of the mystical waters, and therefore midnight at Jerusalem. There is no interval of time between the end of the *Purgatorio* and the beginning of the *Paradiso*.

Gazing, as never eagle fix'd his ken.
 As from the first a second beam is wont
 To issue, and reflected upwards rise,
 Even as a pilgrim bent on his return;
 So of her act, that through the eyesight pass'd
 Into my fancy, mine was form'd: and straight,
 Beyond our mortal wont, I fix'd mine eyes
 Upon the sun. Much is allow'd us there,
 That here exceeds our power; thanks to the place
 Made for the dwelling of the human kind.¹

I suffer'd it not long; and yet so long,
 That I beheld it bickering sparks around,
 As iron that comes boiling from the fire.
 And suddenly upon the day appear'd
 A day new-risen; as he, who hath the power,
 Had with another sun bedeck'd the sky.²

Her eyes fast fix'd on the eternal wheels,³
 Beatrice stood unmoved; and I with ken
 Fix'd upon her, from upward gaze removed,
 At her aspect, such inwardly became
 As Glaucus,⁴ when he tasted of the herb
 That made him peer among the ocean gods:
 Words may not tell of that transhuman change;
 And therefore let the example serve, though weak,
 For these whom grace hath better proof in store.

If I were only what thou didst create,
 Then newly, Love! by whom the Heaven is ruled;⁵
 Thou know'st, who by Thy light didst bear me up.
 Whenas the wheel which Thou dost ever guide,
 Desired Spirit! with its harmony,⁶
 Temper'd of Thee and measured, charm'd mine ear
 Then seem'd to me so much of Heaven to blaze

¹ The Earthly Paradise, from which the Poet is about to ascend.

² Because he has already begun to ascend.

³ "The Heavens, eternal, and always circling" (Cary).

⁴ The fisherman Glaucus (Ovid, *Metam.* xiii.), having tasted certain grass, entered the sea and became a marine god.

⁵ Dante, following St. Paul (2 Corinthians xii. 2), cannot tell whether he was in the body or out of the body. "The Soul is enbreathed by God when the animal body is perfected (*Purg.* xxv.), and is therefore that part of a man which is to be regarded as a new creation by God, not generated by nature" (Wicksteed).

⁶ The music of the spheres as they revolve, the ninth Heaven (*Primum Mobile*) swiftest of all from the fervent longing that each part has to be united to the Empyrean.

With the sun's flame, that rain or flood ne'er made
A lake so broad.¹ The newness of the sound,
And that great light, inflamed me with desire,
Keener than e'er was felt, to know their cause.

Whence she, who saw me, clearly as myself,
To calm my troubled mind, before I ask'd,
Open'd her lips, and gracious thus began:
"With false imagination thou thyself
Makest dull; so that thou seest not the thing,
Which thou hadst seen, had that been shaken off.
Thou art not on the earth as thou believest;
For lightning, scaped from its own proper place,
Ne'er ran, as thou hast hither now return'd."

Although divested of my first-raised doubt
By those brief words accompanied with smiles,
Yet in new doubt was I entangled more,
And said: "Already satisfied, I rest
From admiration deep; but now admire
How I above those lighter bodies rise."

Whence, after utterance of a piteous sigh,
She towards me bent her eyes, with such a look,
As on her frenzied child a mother casts;
Then thus began: "Among themselves all things
Have order; and from hence the form, which makes
The universe resemble God. In this
The higher creatures see the printed steps
Of that eternal worth, which is the end
Whither the line is drawn.² All natures lean,
In this their order, diversly; some more,
Some less approaching to their primal source.
Thus they to different havens are moved on
Through the vast sea of being, and each one
With instinct given, that bears it in its course:
This to the lunar sphere directs the fire;
This moves the hearts of mortal animals;
This the brute earth together knits, and binds.
Nor only creatures, void of intellect,
Are aim'd at by this bow; but even those,
That have intelligence and love, are pierced.³

¹ He is passing through the sphere of fire.

² All nature is ordained to make up the order and beauty of the universe, from which intellectual and rational beings gather the image of the perfection of God, who is the end that all creatures seek.

³ God gives to all creatures a principle of inclination, by which

That Providence, who so well orders all,
 With her own light makes ever calm the Heaven,¹
 In which the substance, that hath greatest speed,²
 Is turn'd: and thither now, as to our seat
 Predestined, we are carried by the force
 Of that strong cord, that never looses dart
 But at fair aim and glad. Yet is it true,
 That as, oft-times, but ill accords the form
 To the design of art, through sluggishness
 Or unreplying matter; so this course
 Is sometimes quitted by the creature, who
 Hath power, directed thus, to bend elsewhere;³
 As from a cloud the fire is seen to fall,
 From its original impulse warp'd, to earth,
 By vitious fondness. Thou no more admire
 Thy soaring, (if I rightly deem,) than lapse
 Of torrent downwards from a mountain's height.
 There would in thee for wonder be more cause,
 If, free of hinderance, thou hadst stay'd below,
 As living fire unmoved upon the earth."

So said, she turn'd toward the Heaven her face.

CANTO II

ARGUMENT

Dante and his celestial guide enter the moon. The cause of the spots or shadows, which appear in that body, is explained to him.

ALL ye, who in small bark have following sail'd,
 Eager to listen, on the adventurous track

He draws all things that He has made back to Himself. Inanimate bodies, like fire and earth, being the furthest removed from God, seek the end to which they are inclined by virtue of this inherent principle. Sensitive natures or brutes, "mortal animals," being a step nearer God, have this natural movement further determined by sense images, that is, from without. Rational beings, "that have intelligence and love," have the inclination in their own power, and freely move themselves.

¹ The motionless Empyrean.

² The *Primum Mobile*.

³ Man, the rational creature, being endowed with free will, although necessarily impelled by his nature to universal good, can turn aside to a particular seeming good, which in reality may be false and contrary to the Divine will. "A ship is moved towards the west by the wind, but the pilot, by turning the helm, can freely direct it to this or that port of the west" (Cornoldi).

Of my proud keel, that singing cuts her way,
 Backward return with speed, and your own shores
 Revisit; nor put out to open sea,
 Where losing me, perchance ye may remain
 Bewilder'd in deep maze. The way I pass,
 Ne'er yet was run: Minerva breathes the gale;
 Apollo guides me; and another Nine,
 To my rapt sight, the arctic beams reveal.
 Ye other few who have outstretch'd the neck
 Timely for food of angels, on which here
 They live, yet never know satiety;
 Through the deep brine ye fearless may put out
 Your vessel; marking well the furrow broad
 Before you in the wave, that on both sides
 Equal returns. Those, glorious, who pass'd o'er
 To Colchis, wonder'd not as ye will do,
 When they saw Jason following the plough.

The increate perpetual thirst,¹ that draws
 Toward the realm of God's own form, bore us
 Swift almost as the Heaven ye behold.

Beatrice upward gazed, and I on her;
 And in such space as on the notch a dart
 Is placed, then loosen'd flies, I saw myself
 Arrived, where wonderous thing engaged my sight.
 Whence she, to whom no care of mine was hid,
 Turning to me, with aspect glad as fair,
 Bespoke me: "Gratefully direct thy mind
 To God, through whom to this first star² we come."

Meseem'd as if a cloud had cover'd us,
 Translucent, solid, firm, and polish'd bright,
 Like adamant, which the sun's beam had smit.
 Within itself the ever-during pearl
 Received us; as the wave a ray of light
 Receives, and rests unbroken. If I then
 Was of corporeal frame, and it transcend
 Our weaker thought, how one dimension thus
 Another could endure, which needs must be
 If body enter body; how much more
 Must the desire inflame us to behold
 That Essence, which discovers by what means
 God and our nature join'd! There will be seen
 That, which we hold through faith; not shown by proof,

¹ The desire of God.

² The moon.

But in itself intelligibly plain,
E'en as the truth that man at first believes.¹

I answer'd: "Lady! I with thoughts devout,
Such as I best can frame, give thanks to Him,
Who hath removed me from the mortal world.
But tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth
Give rise to talk of Cain² in fabling quaint?"

She somewhat smiled, then spake: "If mortals err
In their opinion, when the key of sense
Unlocks not, surely wonder's weapon keen
Ought not to pierce thee: since thou find'st the wings
Of reason to pursue the senses' flight
Are short. But what thy own thought is, declare."

Then I: "What various here above appears,
Is caused, I deem, by bodies dense or rare."³

She then resumed: "Thou certainly wilt see
In falsehood thy belief o'erwhelm'd, if well
Thou listen to the arguments which I
Shall bring to face it. The eighth sphere displays
Numberless lights, the which, in kind and size,
May be remark'd of different aspects:
If rare or dense of that were cause alone,
One single virtue then would be in all;
Alike distributed, or more, or less.
Different virtues needs must be the fruits
Of formal principles; and these, save one,
Will by thy reasoning be destroy'd. Beside,
If rarity were of that dusk the cause,
Which thou inquirest, either in some part
That planet must throughout be void, nor fed
With its own matter; or, as bodies share
Their fat and leanness, in like manner this
Must in its volume change the leaves.⁴ The first,

¹ They reach the moon and inconceivably penetrate into her substance without cleaving it, even as deity penetrated into humanity in Christ; which mystery shall in Heaven be seen as axiomatic truth" (Wicksteed)—a truth, that is, which is self-evident and needs no demonstration.

² Cf. *Inf.* xx.

³ This is the view already expressed by Dante in the *Convivio* (ii. 14), that these spots in the moon are due to relative rarity and density of its substance.

⁴ Starting from the eighth sphere, or Stellar Heaven, where the stars are seen to differ in size and in light, and found (according

If it were true, had through the sun's eclipse
 Been manifested, by transparency
 Of light, as through aught rare beside effused.
 But this is not. Therefore remains to see
 The other cause: and, if the other fall,
 Erroneous so must prove what seem'd to thee.
 If not from side to side this rarity
 Pass through, there needs must be a limit, whence
 Its contrary no further lets it pass.
 And hence the beam, that from without proceeds,
 Must be pour'd back; as colour comes, through glass
 Reflected, which behind it lead conceals.
 Now wilt thou say, that there of murkier hue,
 Than, in the other part, the ray is shown,
 By being thence refracted farther back.
 From this perplexity will free thee soon
 Experience, if thereof thou trial make,
 The fountain whence your arts derive their streams.
 Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove
 From thee alike; and more remote the third,
 Betwixt the former pair, shall meet thine eyes:
 Then turn'd toward them, cause behind thy back
 A light to stand, that on the three shall shine,
 And thus reflected come to thee from all.
 Though that, beheld most distant, do not stretch
 A space so ample, yet in brightness thou
 Wilt own it equaling the rest. But now,
 As under snow the ground, if the warm ray
 Smites it, remains dismantled of the hue
 And cold, that cover'd it before; so thee,
 Dismantled in thy mind, I will inform
 With light so lively, that the tremulous beam
 Shall quiver where it falls. Within the Heaven,
 Where peace divine inhabits,¹ circles round
 A body, in whose virtue lies the being

to the science of Dante's day) to have effects which differ not in degree but in kind, and assuming that the same thing applies to the diversity of the luminous substance of the moon, Beatrice first shows from this general law—that different effects must proceed from different formal principles—that Dante's explanation is wrong, and then points out that, on his own ground, reasoning based upon common experience and a simple experiment proves that his theory will not work. He must seek the real cause in the government of the universe by the celestial intelligences.

¹ The Empyrean Heaven.

Of all that it contains.¹ The following Heaven,
 That hath so many lights, this being divides,
 Through different essences, from it distinct,
 And yet contain'd within it.² The other orbs
 Their separate distinctions variously
 Dispose, for their own seed and produce apt.³
 Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
 As thou beholdest now, from step to step;
 Their influences from above deriving,
 And thence transmitting downwards. Mark me well;
 How through this passage to the truth I ford,
 The truth thou lovest; that thou henceforth, alone,
 Mayst know to keep the shallows, safe, untold.

“The virtue and motion of the sacred orbs,
 As mallet by the workman's hand, must needs
 By blessed movers⁴ be inspired. This Heaven,
 Made beauteous by so many luminaries,
 From the deep spirit, that moves its circling sphere,⁵
 Its image takes and impress as a seal:
 And as the soul, that dwells within your dust,
 Through members different, yet together form'd,
 In different powers resolves itself; e'en so
 The intellectual efficacy unfolds
 Its goodness multiplied throughout the stars;
 On its own unity revolving still.
 Different virtue compact different
 Makes with the precious body it enlivens,
 With which it knits, as life in you is knit.
 From its original nature full of joy,
 The virtue mingled through the body shines,
 As joy through pupil of the living eye.⁶

¹ The ninth Heaven, the *Primum Mobile*.

² The Stellar Heaven.

³ The seven lower Heavens.

⁴ The Angels.

⁵ The Stellar Heaven, which is guided by the Cherubim.

⁶ In the virtue of the *Primum Mobile* lies the existence of all that is contained within it; that is, of all nature. It communicates its divinely received influence to the Stellar Heaven, which in its turn divides among the stars, “the diverse essences distinct from it and contained by it,” and each of the seven lower Heavens similarly receives the influence from the one above it, disposing it differently in its different parts, “receiving from above and working downward.” All the virtue and motion of the Heavens comes from the spirits who move them—the spheres are as hammers in the hands of the Angels to stamp the Divine ideas upon the universe. The Stellar Heaven is animated by the deep spirit

From hence proceeds that which from light to light
 Seems different, and not from dense or rare.
 This is the formal cause, that generates,
 Proportion'd to its power, the dusk or clear."

CANTO III

ARGUMENT

In the moon Dante meets with Piccarda, the sister of Forese, who tells him that this planet is allotted to those, who, after having made profession of chastity and a religious life, had been compelled to violate their vows; and she then points out to him the spirit of the Empress Costanza.

THAT sun,¹ which erst with love my bosom warmed,
 Had of fair truth unveil'd the sweet aspect,
 By proof of right, and of the false reproof;
 And I, to own myself convinced and free
 Of doubt, as much as needed, raised my head
 Erect for speech. But soon a sight appear'd,
 Which, so intent to mark it, held me fix'd
 That of confession I no longer thought.

As through translucent and smooth glass, or wave
 Clear and unmoved, and flowing not so deep
 As that its bed is dark, the shape returns
 So faint of our impictured lineaments,
 That, on white forehead set, a pearl as strong
 Comes to the eye; such saw I many a face,
 All stretch'd to speak; from whence I straight conceived,
 Delusion opposite to that, which raised,
 Between the man and fountain, amorous flame.²

Sudden, as I perceived them, deeming these
 Reflected semblances, to see of whom
 They were, I turn'd mine eyes, and nothing saw;
 Then turn'd them back, directed on the light
 Of my sweet guide, who, smiling, shot forth beams

of the Cherubim, as the soul within the body. Flowing thus direct from God, the mingled virtue of Angel and planet shines through the sphere, manifesting itself diversely in the various stars and in the various parts of each Heaven.

¹ Beatrice.

² "An error the contrary to that of Narcissus; because he mistook a shadow for a substance; I, a substance for a shadow" (Cary).

From her celestial eyes. "Wonder not thou,"
 She cried, "at this my smiling, when I see
 Thy childish judgment; since not yet on truth
 It rests the foot, but, as it still is wont,
 Makes thee fall back in unsound vacancy.
 True substances are these, which thou behold'st,
 Hither through failure of their vow exiled.
 But speak thou with them; listen, and believe,
 That the true light, which fills them with desire,
 Permits not from its beams their feet to stray."

Straight to the shadow, which for converse seem'd
 Most earnest, I address'd me; and began
 As one by over-eagerness perplex'd:
 "O spirit, born for joy! who in the rays
 Of life eternal, of that sweetness know'st
 The flavour, which, not tasted, passes far
 All apprehension; me it well would please,
 If thou wouldst tell me of thy name, and this
 Your station here." Whence she with kindness prompt,
 And eyes glist'ring with smiles: "Our charity,
 To any wish by justice introduced,
 Bars not the door; no more than She above,
 Who would have all her court be like herself.
 I was a virgin sister in the earth;
 And if thy mind observe me well, this form,
 With such addition graced of loveliness,
 Will not conceal me long; but thou wilt know
 Piccarda,¹ in the tardiest sphere thus placed,
 Here 'mid these other blessed also blest.
 Our hearts, whose high affections burn alone
 With pleasure from the Holy Spirit conceived,
 Admitted to His order, dwell in joy.
 And this condition, which appears so low,
 Is for this cause assign'd us, that our vows
 Were, in some part, neglected and made void."

Whence I to her replied: "Something divine
 Beams in your countenances wondrous fair;
 From former knowledge quite transmuting you.
 Therefore to recollect was I so slow.
 But what thou sayst hath to my memory
 Given now such aid, that to retrace your forms
 Is easier. Yet inform me, ye, who here

¹ Piccarda Donati, daughter of Simone, and sister of Corso and Forese Donati. Cf. *Purg.* xxiv.

Are happy; long ye for a higher place,
More to behold, and more in love to dwell?"

She with those other spirits gently smiled;
Then answer'd with such gladness, that she seem'd
With love's first flame to glow: "Brother! our will
Is, in composure, settled by the power
Of charity, who makes us will alone
What we possess, and nought beyond desire:
If we should wish to be exalted more,
Then must our wishes jar with the high will
Of Him, who sets us here; which in these orbs
Thou wilt confess not possible, if here
To be in charity must needs befall,
And if her nature well thou contemplate.
Rather it is inherent in this state
Of blessedness, to keep ourselves within
The Divine Will, by which our wills with His
Are one. So that as we, from step to step,
Are placed throughout this kingdom, pleases all,
Even as our King, who in us plants His will;
And in His will is our tranquillity:
It is the mighty ocean, whither tends
Whatever it creates and nature makes."

Then saw I clearly how each spot in Heaven
Is Paradise, though with like gracious dew
The supreme virtue shower not over all.¹

But as it chances, if one sort of food
Hath satiated, and of another still
The appetite remains, that this is ask'd,
And thanks for that return'd; e'en so did I,
In word and motion, bent from her to learn
What web it was, through which she had not drawn
The shuttle to its point. She thus began:
"Exalted worth and perfectness of life
The Lady higher up inshrine in Heaven,

¹ Piccarda's words enable him to comprehend the mystery of the Mansions of Beatitude. There are degrees in glory, though the vision that gives that glory is the same in all, and each soul is perfectly blessed, for each is perfectly full according to her capacity of the supreme grace of knowledge and love. "The house is one, that is, the penny is one [cf. the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, Matt. xx.]; but there is a diversity of mansions there, that is, difference in brightness; for the supreme good, beatitude, and life of all, God Himself, is also one" (Peter the Lombard).

By whose pure laws upon your nether earth
 The robe and veil they wear; ¹ to that intent,
 That e'en till death they may keep watch, or sleep,
 With their great Bridegroom, who accepts each vow,
 Which to His gracious pleasure love conforms.
 I from the world, to follow her, when young
 Escaped; and, in her vesture mantling me,
 Made promise of the way her sect enjoins.
 Thereafter men, for ill than good more apt,
 Forth snatch'd me from the pleasant cloister's pale.
 God knows how, after that, my life was framed. ²
 This other splendid shape, which thou behold'st
 At my right side, burning with all the light
 Of this our orb, what of myself I tell
 May to herself apply. From her, like me
 A sister, with like violence were torn
 The saintly folds, that shaded her fair brows.
 E'en when she to the world again was brought
 In spite of her own will and better wont,
 Yet not for that the bosom's inward veil
 Did she renounce. This is the luminary
 Of mighty Constance, who from that loud blast,
 Which blew the second over Suabia's realm,
 That power produced, which was the third and last. ³
 She ceased from further talk, and then began
 "Ave Maria" singing; and with that song
 Vanish'd, as heavy substance through deep wave.
 Mine eye, that, far as it was capable,
 Pursued her, when in dimness she was lost,
 Turn'd to the mark where greater want impell'd,

¹ Chiara Scifi of Assisi, now known as St. Clare (1194-1253), the friend and disciple of St. Francis, who founded the order of Franciscan nuns called "the Poor Clares."

² Piccarda, when still a young girl, took the Franciscan habit in the convent of the Poor Clares at Florence, from which she was forcibly abducted by her brother Corso, probably in 1288, and compelled to marry Rossellino della Tosa, a turbulent noble of the Black faction. She died shortly afterwards.

³ Constance, daughter of King Roger and heiress of the Norman sovereigns of Sicily and Naples, was married in 1185 to Henry, son of Frederick Barbarossa, afterwards the Emperor Henry VI. ("the second blast of Suabia"), to whom she bore Frederick II. ("the third and last blast"). Cf. *Purg.* iii. She died in 1198. Dante follows the tradition that she had been a nun, and that she had been taken from her convent, against her will, to make this political marriage for reasons of state.

And bent on Beatrice all its gaze.
 But she, as lightning, beam'd upon my looks ;
 So that the sight sustain'd it not at first.
 Whence I to question her became less prompt.

CANTO IV

ARGUMENT

While they still continue in the moon, Beatrice removes certain doubts which Dante had conceived respecting the place assigned to the blessed, and respecting the will absolute or conditional. He inquires whether it is possible to make satisfaction for a vow broken.

BETWEEN two kinds of food, both equally
 Remote and tempting, first a man might die
 Of hunger, ere he one could freely chuse.
 E'en so would stand a lamb between the maw
 Of two fierce wolves, in dread of both alike :
 E'en so between two deer a dog would stand.
 Wherefore, if I was silent, fault nor praise
 I to myself impute ; by equal doubts
 Held in suspense ; since of necessity
 It happen'd. Silent was I, yet desire
 Was painted in my looks ; and thus I spake
 My wish more earnestly than language could.

As Daniel,¹ when the haughty king he freed
 From ire, that spurr'd him on to deeds unjust
 And violent ; so did Beatrice then.

" Well I discern," she thus her words address'd,
 " How thou art drawn by each of these desires ;²
 So that thy anxious thought is in itself
 Bound up and stifled, nor breathes freely forth.
 Thou arguest : if the good intent remain ;
 What reason that another's violence
 Should stint the measure of my fair desert ?

" Cause too thou find'st for doubt, in that it seems,
 That spirits to the stars, as Plato³ deem'd,

¹ Cf. Daniel ii.

² His desire to have each of his two difficulties solved. The word *dubbio*, which Cary translates "doubt," means simply a "question" or a "difficulty."

³ "In the *Timæus*, which was accessible to Dante in the Latin paraphrase of Chalcidius. Dante's direct knowledge of Plato

Return. These are the questions which thy will
 Urge equally; and therefore I, the first,
 Of that will treat which hath the more of gall.¹
 Of Seraphim he who is most enskied,
 Moses and Samuel, and either John,
 Chuse which thou wilt, nor even Mary's self,
 Have not in any other Heaven their seats,
 Than have those spirits which so late thou saw'st;
 Nor more or fewer years exist; but all
 Make the first circle beauteous, diversely
 Partaking of sweet life, as more or less
 Afflition of eternal bliss pervades them.²
 Here were they shown thee, not that fate assigns
 This for their sphere, but for a sign to thee
 Of that celestial furthest from the height.
 Thus needs, that ye may apprehend, we speak:
 Since from things sensible alone ye learn
 That, which, digested rightly, after turns
 To intellectual. For no other cause
 The Scripture, condescending graciously
 To your perception, hands and feet to God
 Attributes, nor so means: and holy Church
 Doth represent with human countenance
 Gabriel, and Michæel, and him who made
 Tobias whole. Unlike what here thou seest,
 The judgment of Timæus, who affirms
 Each soul restored to its particular star;
 Believing it to have been taken thence,
 When nature gave it to inform her mold:
 Yet to appearance his intention is
 Not what his words declare: and so to shun
 Derision, haply thus he hath disguised

was doubtless confined to this one dialogue. The doctrine ascribed to Plato, implicitly here and explicitly in *Conv.* ii. 14, iv. 21 (compare *Eclogue* ii. 16, 17), goes somewhat beyond the warrant of the text either in the Greek or Latin" (Wicksteed).

¹ More dangerous because opposed to the doctrine of free will.

² These spirits enjoy the Beatific Vision for all eternity in the Empyrean Heaven ("the first circle") together with the divinest order of the Angels and the greatest of the Saints, even the Blessed Virgin herself. They only appear in this lowest sphere to give Dante a visible sign that the grade of their blessedness in the Empyrean is the lowest, albeit it is full and perfect according to their capacity of love and knowledge. The same, in its degree, applies to all the spirits who thus temporarily appear to Dante in the lower Heavens.

His true opinion.¹ If his meaning be,
 That to the influencing of these orbs revert
 The honour and the blame in human acts,
 Perchance he doth not wholly miss the truth.
 This principle, not understood aright,
 Erewhile perverted well nigh all the world;
 So that it fell to fabled names of Jove,
 And Mercury, and Mars. That other doubt,
 Which moves thee, is less harmful; for it brings
 No peril of removing thee from me.

“That, to the eye of man, our justice seems
 Unjust, is argument for faith, and not
 For heretic declension.² But, to the end
 This truth may stand more clearly in your view,
 I will content thee even to thy wish.

“If violence be, when that which suffers, nought
 Consents to that which forceth, not for this
 These spirits stood exculpate. For the will,
 That wills not, still survives unquench'd, and doth,
 As nature doth in fire, though violence
 Wrest it a thousand times; for, if it yield
 Or more or less, so far it follows force.
 And thus did these, when they had power to seek
 The hallow'd place again. In them, had will
 Been perfect, such as once upon the bars
 Held Laurence firm, or wrought in Scævola
 To his own hand remorseless; to the path,
 Whence they were drawn, their steps had hasten'd
 back,
 When liberty return'd: but in too few,
 Resolve, so stedfast, dwells.³ And by these words,
 If duly weigh'd, that argument is void,

¹ From the days of Aristotle downwards, it was disputed as to how far these views expressed by Plato in the *Timæus* should be taken literally.

² “That the ways of Divine Justice are often inscrutable to man, ought rather to be a motive to faith than an inducement to heresy” (Cary). There are several other interpretations of this passage.

³ Aristotle defines a compulsory action as one of which the origination is from without, the agent's will contributing nothing. As regards the proper act of the will itself, no violence can be done to the will. Dante's examples of such firm resolution are drawn, as usual, impartially from religious and secular history; St. Laurence in his fiery martyrdom on the gridiron, and Mucius Scævola burning his own hand before Porsenna.

Which oft might have perplex'd thee still. But now
 Another question thwarts thee, which, to solve,
 Might try thy patience without better aid.
 I have, no doubt, instill'd into thy mind,
 That blessed spirit may not lie; since near
 The source of primal truth it dwells for aye:
 And thou mightst after of Piccarda learn
 That Constance held affection to the veil;
 So that she seems to contradict me here.
 Not seldom, brother, it hath chanced for men
 To do what they had gladly left undone;
 Yet, to shun peril, they have done amiss:
 E'en as Alcmaeon, at his father's suit
 Slew his own mother;¹ so made pitiless
 Not to lose pity. On this point bethink thee,
 That force and will are blended in such wise
 As not to make the offence excusable.
 Absolute will agrees not to the wrong;
 But inasmuch as there is fear of woe
 From non-compliance, it agrees. Of will
 Thus absolute, Piccarda spake, and I
 Of the other;² so that both have truly said."

Such was the flow of that pure rill, that well'd
 From forth the fountain of all truth; and such
 The rest, that to my wandering thoughts I found.

"O thou, of primal love the prime delight,
 Goddess!" I straight replied, "whose lively words
 Still shed new heat and vigour through my soul;
 Affection fails me to requite thy grace
 With equal sum of gratitude: be His
 To recompense, who sees and can reward thee.
 Well I discern, that by that Truth³ alone
 Enlighten'd, beyond which no truth may roam,
 Our mind can satisfy her thirst to know:
 Therein she resteth, e'en as in his lair

¹ Cf. *Inf.* xx. and *Purg.* xii.

² The distinction is between the absolute (or hypothetical) will, which does not consent to what is bad, and the respective (or actual) will, which chooses what under the circumstances seems the lesser evil. The absolute will of Piccarda and Constance kept firm to their vows, but their respective or actual wills yielded to violence; and, in this sense, they fell voluntarily from the state of perfection to which they had been called.

³ God, the First Cause, who as universal truth is the object of the intellect.

The wild beast, soon as she hath reach'd that bound.
 And she hath power to reach it; else desire
 Were given to no end. And thence doth doubt
 Spring, like a shoot, around the stock of truth;
 And it is nature which, from height to height,
 On to the summit prompts us. This invites,
 This doth assure me, Lady! reverently
 To ask thee of another truth, that yet
 Is dark to me. I fain would know, if man
 By other works well done may so supply
 The failure of his vows, that in your scale
 They lack not weight." I spake; and on me straight
 Beatrice look'd, with eyes that shot forth sparks
 Of love celestial, in such copious stream,
 That, virtue sinking in me overpower'd,
 I turn'd; and downward bent, confused, my sight.

CANTO V

ARGUMENT

The question proposed in the last Canto is answered. Dante ascends with Beatrice to the planet Mercury, which is the second Heaven; and here he finds a multitude of spirits, one of whom offers to satisfy him of any thing he may desire to know from them.

"IF beyond earthly wont, the flame of love
 Illume me, so that I o'ercome thy power
 Of vision, marvel not: but learn the cause
 In that perfection of the sight, which, soon
 As apprehending, hasteneth on to reach
 The good it apprehends. I well discern,
 How in thine intellect already shines
 The light eternal, which to view alone
 Ne'er fails to kindle love; and if aught else
 Your love seduces, 'tis but that it shows
 Some ill-mark'd vestige of that primal beam.

"This wouldst thou know: if failure of the vow
 By other service may be so supplied,
 As from self-question to assure the soul."

Thus she her words, not heedless of my wish,
 Began; and thus, as one who breaks not off
 Discourse, continued in her saintly strain.

"Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave

Of His free bounty, sign most evident
 Of goodness, and in His account most prized,
 Was liberty of will; the boon, wherewith
 All intellectual creatures, and them sole,
 He hath endow'd.¹ Hence now thou mayst infer
 Of what high worth the vow, which so is framed,
 That when man offers, God well-pleased accepts:
 For in the compact between God and him,
 This treasure, such as I describe it to thee,
 He makes the victim; and of his own act.
 What compensation therefore may he find?
 If that, whereof thou hast oblation made,
 By using well thou think'st to consecrate,
 Thou wouldst of theft do charitable deed.
 Thus I resolve thee of the greater point.

“ But forasmuch as holy Church, herein
 Dispensing, seems to contradict the truth
 I have discover'd to thee, yet behoves
 Thou rest a little longer at the board,
 Ere the crude aliment which thou hast ta'en,
 Digested fitly, to nutrition turn;
 Open thy mind to what I now unfold;
 And give it inward keeping. Knowledge comes
 Of learning well retain'd, unfruitful else.

“ This sacrifice, in essence, of two things
 Consisteth: one is that, whereof 'tis made;
 The covenant, the other. For the last,
 It ne'er is cancel'd, if not kept: and hence
 I spake, erewhile, so strictly of its force.
 For this it was enjoin'd the Israelites,
 Though leave were given them, as thou know'st, to
 change

The offering, still to offer.² The other part,
 The matter and the substance of the vow,
 May well be such, as that, without offence,
 It may for other substance be exchanged.
 But, at his own discretion, none may shift
 The burden on his shoulders; unreleased
 By either key, the yellow and the white.

¹ “ Nothing in man is more sublime, nothing more worthy than free will. In it man was created to the image of God. Liberty of the will is impressed with the image of changeless eternity and the likeness of the Divine Majesty ” (Richard of St. Victor).

² Cf. Leviticus xxvii.

Nor deem of any change, as less than vain,
 If the last bond be not within the new
 Included, as the quatre in the six.
 No satisfaction therefore can be paid
 For what so precious in the balance weighs,
 That all in counterpoise must kick the beam.¹
 Take then no vow at random: ta'en, with faith
 Preserve it; yet not bent, as Jephthah once,
 Blindly to execute a rash resolve,
 Whom better it had suited to exclaim,
 'I have done ill,' than to redeem his pledge
 By doing worse: or, not unlike to him
 In folly, that great leader of the Greeks;
 Whence, on the aitar, Iphigenia mourn'd
 Her virgin beauty, and hath since made mourn
 Both wise and simple, even all, who hear
 Of so fell sacrifice.² Be ye more staid,
 O Christians! not, like feather, by each wind
 Removeable; nor think to cleanse yourselves
 In every water. Either testament,
 The old and new, is yours: and for your guide,
 The shepherd of the Church. Let this suffice
 To save you. When by evil lust enticed,
 Remember ye be men, not senseless beasts;
 Nor let the Jew, who dwelleth in your streets,
 Hold you in mockery. Be not, as the lamb,
 That, fickle wanton, leaves its mother's milk,
 To dally with itself in idle play."

¹ The essence of a vow comprises two things: the matter that is vowed and the sacrifice of the will. The latter can never be cancelled; the former may be commuted to another matter of greater value, not on the individual's own responsibility, but by the authority of the Church with the keys of judgment and absolution (cf. *Purg.* ix.). But there are some vows for which compensation is impossible, such as the solemn vow of perpetual chastity—a doctrine that mediæval theologians mainly based upon Ecclesiasticus xxvi. 20, which in the Vulgate reads: *Omnis ponderatio non est digna continentis animæ*: "There is no price worthy of a continent soul."

² The examples of rash vows from Scripture and mythology: Jephthah the Gileadite who sacrificed his daughter, in fulfilment of his vow to offer up whatever should come forth of the doors of his house to meet him, when he returned from subduing the children of Ammon; Agamemnon who, having vowed to sacrifice to Artemis the fairest thing that the year brought forth, was compelled to give his daughter Iphigenia as victim (she was, however, saved by the intervention of the goddess).

Such were the words that Beatrice spake :
 These ended, to that region,¹ where the world
 Is liveliest, full of fond desire she turn'd.

Though mainly prompt new question to propose,
 Her silence and changed look did keep me dumb.
 And as the arrow, ere the cord is still,
 Leapeth unto its mark; so on we sped
 Into the second realm. There I beheld
 The dame, so joyous, enter, that the orb
 Grew brighter at her smiles; and, if the star
 Were moved to gladness, what then was my cheer,
 Whom nature hath made apt for every change!

As in a quiet and clear lake the fish,
 If aught approach them from without, do draw
 Towards it, deeming it their food; so drew
 Full more than thousand splendours towards us;
 And in each one was heard: "Lo! one arrived
 To multiply our loves!" and as each came,
 The shadow, streaming forth effulgence new,
 Witness'd augmented joy.² Here, Reader! think,
 If thou didst miss the sequel of my tale,
 To know the rest how sorely thou wouldst crave;
 And thou shalt see what vehement desire
 Possess'd me, soon as these had met my view,
 To know their state. "O born in happy hour!
 Thou, to whom grace vouchsafes, or e'er thy close
 Of fleshly warfare, to behold the thrones
 Of that eternal triumph; know, to us
 The light communicated, which through Heaven
 Expatiates without bound. Therefore, if aught
 Thou of our beams wouldst borrow for thine aid,
 Spare not; and, of our radiance, take thy fill."

Thus of those piteous spirits one bespake me;
 And Beatrice next: "Say on; and trust
 As unto gods."—"How in the light supreme
 Thou harbour'st, and from thence the virtue bring'st,

¹ "The equator is the swiftest part of the heaven (*Conv.* ii. 4). The equinoctial point is the germinal point of the universe (*Par.* x. 1-21). The sun is the source of all mortal life (*Par.* xxii. 116). Dante's words may apply to any of the three; but since, at the date of the Vision, the sun is at the equinoctial point, they all coincide" (Wicksteed).

² The accidental joy of the Saints (as distinguished from their essential joy, which consists in the possession of the Beatific Vision) is increased with every soul that enters Paradise.

That, sparkling in thine eyes, denotes thy joy,
 I mark : but, who thou art, am still to seek ;
 Or wherefore, worthy spirit ! for thy lot
 This sphere assign'd, that oft from mortal ken
 Is veil'd by other's beams." ¹ I said ; and turn'd
 Toward the lustre, that with greeting kind
 Erewhile had hail'd me. Forthwith, brighter far
 Than erst, it wax'd : and, as himself the sun
 Hides through excess of light, when his warm gaze
 Hath on the mantle of thick vapours prey'd ;
 Within its proper ray the saintly shape
 Was, through increase of gladness, thus conceal'd ;
 And, shrouded so in splendour, answer'd me,
 E'en as the tenour of my song declares.

CANTO VI

ARGUMENT

The spirit, who had offered to satisfy the inquiries of Dante, declares himself to be the Emperor Justinian ; and after speaking of his own actions, recounts the victories, before him, obtained under the Roman Eagle. He then informs our Poet that the soul of Romeo the pilgrim is in the same star.

" AFTER that Constantine the eagle turn'd
 Against the motions of the Heaven, that roll'd
 Consenting with its course, when he of yore,
 Lavinia's spouse, was leader of the flight ; ²
 A hundred years twice told and more, his seat
 At Europe's extreme point, the bird of Jove
 Held, near the mountains, whence he issued first ; ³
 There under shadow of his sacred plumes
 Swaying the world, till through successive hands

¹ The planet Mercury, being nearest the sun, is constantly hidden by it. The second part of Dante's question, why this spirit appears in this sphere, is answered at the end of the following Canto.

² " Constantine, in transferring the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, carried the eagle, the imperial ensign, from the west to the east. Æneas, on the contrary, had, with better augury, moved along with the sun's course, when he passed from Troy to Italy " (Cary).

³ " Constantinople being situated at the extreme of Europe, and on the borders of Asia, near those mountains in the neighbourhood of Troy, from whence the first founders of Rome had emigrated " (Cary).

To mine he came devolved. Cæsar I was;
 And am Justinian; destined by the will
 Of that Prime Love, whose influence I feel,
 From vain excess to clear the incumber'd laws.¹
 Or e'er that work engaged me, I did hold
 In Christ one nature only; with such faith
 Contented. But the blessed Agapete,
 Who was chief shepherd, he with warning voice
 To the true faith recall'd me.² I believed
 His words: and what he taught, now plainly see,
 As thou in every contradiction seest
 The true and false opposed. Soon as my feet
 Were to the Church reclaim'd, to my great task,
 By inspiration of God's grace impell'd,
 I gave me wholly; and consign'd mine arms
 To Belisarius, with whom Heaven's right hand
 Was link'd in such conjointment, 'twas a sign
 That I should rest. To thy first question thus
 I shape mine answer, which were ended here,
 But that its tendency doth prompt perforce
 To some addition; that thou well mayst mark,
 What reason on each side they have to plead,
 By whom that holiest banner is withstood,
 Both who pretend its power and who oppose.³

“ Beginning from that hour, when Pallas died ⁴

¹ Justinian the Great became Emperor in 527, “ a hundred years twice told and more ” since Constantine in 324 had transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium. Justinian codified Roman Law, and, by means of his generals, Belisarius and Narses, overthrew the Goths in Italy, and (temporarily) won back Rome for the Empire. According to Dante's reading of Roman history, in Mr. Wicksteed's words, “ the Roman Empire existed for the elaboration and promulgation of Roman Law, as the chosen people for the preparation of the Gospel. ” The discourse, which the Poet puts into the mouth of the imperial legislator, is intended to show the sanctity of the Empire as a thing immeasurably above the turmoil of party politics.

² Justinian does not seem ever to have adhered to the sect of the Monophysites, who held that in Christ there was the Divine nature alone. He protected them for a while, through the influence of his wife Theodora, but was persuaded by Pope Agapetus (536) to take measures against them.

³ The Ghibellines and Guelfs alike, whether they profess to support or to oppose the Empire, are foes to its true mission.

⁴ Pallas, son of Evander, an Arcadian prince who ruled a city on the site of Rome, formed an alliance with Æneas, and was slain by Turnus (*Æneid*, viii.-x.). The summary of Roman history that follows points the moral, inculcated in Book II. of the *De*

To give it rule, behold the valorous deeds
 Have made it worthy reverence. Not unknown
 To thee, how for three hundred years and more
 It dwelt in Alba, up to those fell lists
 Where, for its sake, were met the rival three; ¹
 Nor aught unknown to thee, which it achieved
 Down from the Sabines' wrong to Lucrece' woe,
 With its seven kings conquering the nations round; ²
 Nor all it wrought, by Roman worthies borne
 'Gainst Brennus and the Epirot prince, and hosts
 Of single chiefs, or states in league combined
 Of social warfare: hence, Torquatus stern,
 And Quintius named of his neglected locks,
 The Decii, and the Fabii hence acquired
 Their fame, which I with duteous zeal embalm. ³
 By it the pride of Arab hordes was quell'd,
 When they, led on by Hannibal, o'erpass'd
 The Alpine rocks, whence glide thy currents, Po! ⁴
 Beneath its guidance, in their prime of days
 Scipio and Pompey triumph'd; ⁵ and that hill

Monarchia, and more slightly in the *Convivio* (iv. 4, 5), that the Roman People conquered the world not by force of arms, but by right: "not force but right, and divine right, too, was the beginning of the Roman Empire." The Empire is personified throughout the Canto by the Eagle.

¹ The contention between Alba Longa, where Æneas's son Ascanius had founded his kingdom, and Rome, which had been founded by Romulus, an exile from Alba, was decided by the ordeal of combat between the three Horatii and the three Curiatii: "Then it was that, the three Alban champions and two of the Romans being slain, the palm of victory went over to the Romans under King Hostilius" (*Mon.* ii. 11).

² Rome was ruled by seven kings, from the rape of the Sabine women under Romulus to the violation of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius, which led to the overthrow of the monarchy in B.C. 510.

³ Brennus, chief of the Senonian Gauls, who sacked Rome, B.C. 390; Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, defeated by Curius Dentatus at Beneventum, B.C. 275; Titus Manlius Torquatus, dictator and consul, B.C. 353-340; Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, dictator, B.C. 458, 439. Three Decii, Publius Decius Mus, died for the commonwealth "in unbroken family succession," B.C. 340, 295, 279 (cf. *Mon.* ii. 5); of the numerous Roman heroes of the Fabian family, the most famous was Quintus Fabius Maximus, who acquired the surname of *Cunctator* from his prudent policy of delay when appointed dictator after Hannibal's victory at Lake Trasimene, B.C. 217.

⁴ By an anachronism, Dante identifies the Carthaginians with the Arabs, the inhabitants of Northern Africa in his own days.

⁵ Scipio Africanus the elder distinguished himself against

Under whose summit thou didst see the light,
 Rued its stern bearing.¹ After, near the hour,
 When Heaven was minded that o'er all the world
 His own deep calm should brood, to Cæsar's hand
 Did Rome consign it; ² and what then it wrought
 From Var unto the Rhine, saw Isere's flood,
 Saw Loire and Seine, and every vale, that fills
 The torrent Rhone. What after that it wrought,
 When from Ravenna it came forth, and leap'd
 The Rubicon, was of so bold a flight,
 That tongue nor pen may follow it. Towards Spain
 It wheel'd its bands, then toward Dyrrachium smote,
 And on Pharsalia, with so fierce a plunge,
 E'en the warm Nile was conscious to the pang;
 Its native shores Antandros, and the streams
 Of Simois revisited, and there
 Where Hector lies; then ill for Ptolemy
 His pennons shook again; lightening thence fell
 On Juba; and the next, upon your west,
 At sound of the Pompeian trump, return'd.³

"What following, and in its next bearer's gripe,
 It wrought, is now by Cassius and Brutus
 Bark'd of in Hell; and by Perugia's sons,
 And Modena's, was mourn'd.⁴ Hence weepeth still
 Sad Cleopatra, who, pursued by it,

Hannibal at the battle of Ticinus, B.C. 218, when seventeen years old; Pompey (Cneius Pompeius Magnus) obtained the title of "the Great" and was awarded a triumph, after his victory over the Numidian Hiarbas, B.C. 81, in his twenty-fifth year.

¹ Fiesole, at the foot of which Florence is situated, was destroyed by the Roman Eagle after the defeat of Catiline, B.C. 62.

² The foundation of the Empire by Julius Cæsar was to prepare the way for that season of universal peace, the earth being united under one monarch, when the Redeemer should be born.

³ In the hands of Cæsar, the Eagle conquered Gaul (B.C. 58-50), crossed the Rubicon, and carried on war against Pompey's adherents in Spain (B.C. 49), fought unsuccessfully at Dyrrachium and won the decisive victory of Pharsalia (B.C. 48), after which Pompey fled to Egypt. In pursuit of Pompey, it visited the Troad (indicated by the river Simois, that "Hector once loved," and Antandros, where Æneas started), whence it had originally come, and in succession overthrew Ptolemy XII. of Egypt (B.C. 47), compelled King Juba of Numidia to commit suicide (B.C. 46), and defeated the sons of Pompey at Munda in Spain (B.C. 45).

⁴ In the hands of Augustus, the Eagle overthrew Brutus and Cassius at Philippi (B.C. 42), and destroyed Perugia (B.C. 40). It had previously (B.C. 43) defeated Mark Antony at Mutina (Modena).

Took from the adder black and sudden death.¹
 With him it ran e'en to the Red Sea coast;
 With him composed the world to such a peace,
 That of his temple Janus barr'd the door.²

“ But all the mighty standard yet had wrought,
 And was appointed to perform thereafter,
 Throughout the mortal kingdom which it sway'd,
 Falls in appearance dwindled and obscured,
 If one with steady eye and perfect thought
 On the third Cæsar³ look; for to his hands,
 The living Justice, in whose breath I move,
 Committed glory, e'en into his hands,
 To execute the vengeance of its wrath.

“ Hear now, and wonder at, what next I tell.
 After with Titus it was sent to wreak
 Vengeance for vengeance⁴ of the ancient sin.
 And, when the Lombard tooth, with fang impure,
 Did gore the bosom of the holy Church,
 Under its wings, victorious Charlemagne
 Sped to her rescue.⁵ Judge then for thyself
 Of those, whom I erewhile accused to thee,
 What they are, and how grievous their offending,
 Who are the cause of all your ills. The one
 Against the universal ensign rears
 The yellow lilies; and with partial aim,
 That, to himself, the other arrogates:
 So that 'tis hard to see who most offends.⁶

¹ After the battle of Actium and suicide of Antony, B.C. 30, Cleopatra killed herself by the bite of an asp.

² Egypt being now annexed to the Roman Empire, the temple of Janus was closed in sign of universal peace.

³ “ The eagle in the hand of Tiberius, the third of the Cæsars, outdid all its achievements, both past and future, by becoming the instrument of that mighty and mysterious act of satisfaction made to the Divine Justice in the Crucifixion of Our Lord ” (Cary).

⁴ The destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. Cf. next Canto.

⁵ Charlemagne, in 774, at the summons of Pope Adrian I., overthrew Desiderius, King of the Lombards, who was assailing the papal dominions. “ Dante could not be ignorant that the reign of Justinian was long prior to that of Charlemagne; but the spirit of the former emperor is represented, both in this instance and in what follows, as conscious of the events that had taken place after his own time ” (Cary).

⁶ The Guelfs oppose the golden lilies of the royal house of France to the imperial Eagle, the Ghibellines degrade the Eagle by making it the badge of a party.

Be yours, ye Ghibellines, to veil your arts¹
 Beneath another standard: ill is this
 Follow'd of him, who severs it and justice:
 And let not with his Guelphs the new-crown'd Charles²
 Assail it; but those talons hold in dread,
 Which from a lion of more lofty port
 Have rent the casing. Many a time ere now
 The sons have for the sire's transgression wail'd:
 Nor let him trust the fond belief, that Heaven
 Will truck its armour for his liliated shield.

"This little star is furnish'd with good spirits,
 Whose mortal lives were busied to that end,
 That honour and renown might wait on them:
 And, when desires thus err in their intention,
 True love must needs ascend with slacker beam.³
 But it is part of our delight, to measure
 Our wages with the merit; and admire
 The close proportion. Hence doth heavenly justice
 Temper so evenly affection in us,
 It ne'er can warp to any wrongfulness.
 Of diverse voices is sweet music made:
 So in our life the different degrees
 Render sweet harmony among these wheels.

"Within the pearl, that now encloseth us,
 Shines Romeo's light,⁴ whose goodly deed and fair

¹ *Faccian lor arte*, "let them ply their art," carry on their petty politics.

² *Esto Carlo novello*, "this new Charles" (as contrasted with the *Carlo Magno* mentioned above): Charles II. of Naples, the head of the Guelphs in Italy in 1300.

³ These are the souls of those who in life wrought great deeds from mixed motives: "those souls whose virtuous deeds had in them some taint of worldly ambition or anxiety for good repute" (Wicksteed).

⁴ Romeo of Villeneuve (1170-1250) was the chamberlain, or seneschal, of Count Raymond Berenger IV. of Provence, who died in 1245, leaving his dominions to his youngest daughter Beatrice, whom he had made his heiress, under Romeo's guardianship. According to the legend (told by Villani, vi. 90), a certain *Romeo* (which means simply "a pilgrim") came to Raymond's court and was made his chief minister. He managed the Count's affairs with fidelity and prudence, and procured royal marriages for his four daughters. Moved by envy, the Provençal barons persuaded Raymond to call upon the Romeo to give an account of his stewardship, upon which the latter demanded his mule, his staff, and his scrip, and departed as mysteriously as he had come. The fact that Raymond's chief minister was named Romeo appears to be the sole foundation for this romantic story.

Met ill acceptance. But the Provençals,
 That were his foes, have little cause for mirth.
 Ill shapes that man his course, who makes his wrong
 Of other's worth. Four daughters were there born
 To Raymond Berenger; and every one
 Became a queen:¹ and this for him did Romeo,
 Though of mean state and from a foreign land.
 Yet envious tongues incited him to ask
 A reckoning of that just one, who return'd
 Twelve fold to him for ten. Aged and poor
 He parted thence: and if the world did know
 The heart he had, begging his life by morsels,
 'Twould deem the praise, it yields him, scantly dealt."

CANTO VII

ARGUMENT

In consequence of what had been said by Justinian, who together with the other spirits has now disappeared, some doubts arise in the mind of Dante respecting the human redemption. These difficulties are fully explained by Beatrice.

*" Hosanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
 Superillustrans claritate tuâ
 Felices ignes horum malachoth."*²

Thus chanting saw I turn that substance bright,
 With fourfold lustre to its orb again,
 Revolving;³ and the rest, unto their dance,
 With it, moved also; and, like swiftest sparks,
 In sudden distance from my sight were veil'd.
 Me doubt possess'd; and " Speak," it whisper'd me,

¹ Raymond's eldest daughter, Margaret, married St. Louis IX. of France; the second, Eleanor, married Henry III. of England; the third, Sancha, married Henry's brother, Richard of Cornwall, titular King of the Romans; Beatrice, the youngest, inherited Provence from her father, and, after his death, married Charles the elder of Anjou, who later became King of Naples and Sicily. Provence thus became subject to the house of Anjou, under whose sway the Provençals had " little cause for mirth." Cf. *Purg.* vii. and xx.

² " Hosanna, holy God of Sabaoth, that with Thy brightness from on high dost illumine the blessed fires of these kingdoms."

³ More accurately: " Thus, revolving to its own note, I saw that spirit [Justinian] singing, upon whom the double lustre [of Legislator and of Emperor] is combined."

" Speak, speak unto thy lady; that she quench
 Thy thirst with drops of sweetness." Yet blank awe,
 Which lords it o'er me, even at the sound
 Of Beatrice's name, did bow me down
 As one in slumber held. Not long that mood
 Beatrice suffer'd: she, with such a smile,
 As might have made one blest amid the flames,
 Beaming upon me, thus her words began:
 " Thou in thy thought art pondering (as I deem,
 And what I deem is truth) how just revenge
 Could be with justice punish'd: ¹ from which doubt
 I soon will free thee; so thou mark my words;
 For they of weighty matter shall possess thee.
 Through suffering not a curb upon the power
 That will'd in him, to his own profiting,
 That man, who was unborn, ² condemn'd himself;
 And, in himself, all, who since him have lived,
 His offspring: whence, below, the human kind
 Lay sick in grievous error many an age;
 Until it pleased the Word of God to come
 Amongst them down, to His own person joining
 The nature from its Maker far estranged,
 By the mere act of His eternal love.
 Contemplate here the wonder I unfold:
 The nature with its Maker thus conjoin'd,
 Created first was blameless, pure and good;
 But, through itself alone, was driven forth
 From Paradise, because it had eschew'd
 The way of truth and life, to evil turn'd.
 Ne'er then was penalty so just as that
 Inflicted by the Cross, if thou regard
 The nature in assumption doom'd; ne'er wrong
 So great, in reference to Him, who took
 Such nature on Him, and endured the doom.
 So different effects flow'd from one act:
 For by one death God and the Jews were pleased;

¹ The connection of the Roman Empire with the Atonement is regarded by Dante as a sovereign argument that its power is derived from the Divine Will. Even as Christ by His birth, under the edict of Augustus, confirmed the imperial jurisdiction from which that edict proceeded, so, by His death under the vicar of Tiberius, He confirmed the universal penal jurisdiction of the Emperor over all the human race which was to be punished in His flesh (*Mon.* ii. 12, 13).

² Adam.

And Heaven was open'd, though the earth did quake.
 Count it not hard henceforth, when thou dost hear
 That a just vengeance was, by righteous court,
 Justly revenged.¹ But yet I see thy mind,
 By thought on thought arising, sore perplex'd;
 And, with how vehement desire, it asks
 Solution of the maze. What I have heard,
 Is plain, thou sayst: but wherefore God this way
 For our redemption chose, eludes my search.

“ Brother! no eye of man not perfected,
 Nor fully ripen'd in the flame of love,
 May fathom this decree. It is a mark,
 In sooth, much aim'd at, and but little kenn'd:
 And I will therefore show thee why such way
 Was worthiest. The celestial Love, that spurns
 All envying in its bounty, in itself
 With such effulgence blazeth, as sends forth
 All beauteous things eternal. What distils
 Immediate thence, no end of being knows;
 Bearing its seal immutably imprest.
 Whatever thence immediate falls, is free,
 Free wholly, uncontrollable by power
 Of each thing new: by such conformity
 More grateful to its Author, whose bright beams,
 Though all partake their shining, yet in those
 Are liveliest, which resemble Him the most.²
 These tokens of pre-eminence on man
 Largely bestow'd, if any of them fail,
 He needs must forfeit his nobility,
 No longer stainless. Sin alone is that,
 Which doth disfranchise him, and make unlike
 To the Chief Good; for that its light in him
 Is darken'd. And to dignity thus lost

¹ The “righteous court” possibly means the imperial jurisdiction, Dante regarding the Crucifixion as a judicial penalty inflicted upon the whole of human nature, by the sentence of a regular judge who had lawfully jurisdiction over the whole world. It was only as the work of the Jews, shedding innocent blood for envy, and wrought upon Christ alone, that it was rightfully avenged by Titus in the destruction of Jerusalem.

² Creation is the work of Divine Love. What God creates immediately, without the intervention of secondary causes, is immortal, utterly free, most like to its Creator, and therefore most beloved by Him. With these three high prerogatives was the human soul endowed. Man lost them when, by Adam's sin, he was cast out of the Earthly Paradise.

Is no return; unless, where guilt makes void,
 He for ill pleasure pay with equal pain.
 Your nature, which entirely in its seed
 Transgress'd, from these distinctions fell, no less
 Than from its state in Paradise; nor means
 Found of recovery (search all methods out
 As strictly as thou may) save one of these,
 The only fords were left through which to wade:
 Either, that God had of His courtesy
 Released him merely: or else, man himself
 For his own folly by himself atoned.

"Fix now thine eye, intently as thou canst,
 On the everlasting counsel; and explore,
 Instructed by my words, the dread abyss.

"Man in himself had ever lack'd the means
 Of satisfaction, for he could not stoop
 Obeying, in humility so low,
 As high, he, disobeying, thought to soar:
 And, for this reason, he had vainly tried,
 Out of his own sufficiency, to pay
 The rigid satisfaction. Then behoved
 That God should by His own ways lead him back
 Unto the life, from whence he fell, restored;
 By both His ways, I mean, or one alone.
 But since the deed is ever prized the more,
 The more the doer's good intent appears;
 Goodness celestial, whose broad signature
 Is on the universe, of all its ways
 To raise ye up, was fain to leave out none.
 Nor aught so vast or so magnificent,
 Either for Him who gave or who received,
 Between the last night and the primal day,
 Was or can be. For God more bounty show'd,
 Giving Himself to make man capable
 Of his return to life, than had the terms
 Been mere and unconditional release.
 And for His justice, every method else
 Were all too scant, had not the Son of God
 Humbled Himself to put on mortal flesh.¹

¹ The lost prerogatives of the human race could only be recovered by God freely pardoning, or by man making satisfaction. The latter course is impossible; a creature's disobedience to an infinite Creator must be expiated by an act of infinite humility, and man's satisfaction is finite. It remained, therefore, for God to restore

" Now, to content thee fully, I revert;
And further in some part unfold my speech,
That thou mayst see it clearly as myself.

" I see, thou sayst, the air, the fire I see,
The earth and water, and all things of them
Compounded, to corruption turn, and soon
Dissolve. Yet these were also things create.
Because, if what were told me, had been true,
They from corruption had been therefore free.

" The Angels, O my brother! and this clime
Wherein thou art, impassible and pure,
I call created, even as they are
In their whole being. But the elements,
Which thou hast named, and what of them is made,
Are by created virtue inform'd: create,
Their substance; and create, the informing virtue
In these bright stars, that round them circling move.
The soul of every brute and of each plant,
The ray and motion of the sacred lights,
Draw from complexion with meet power endued.¹
But this our life the Eternal Good inspires
Immediate, and enamours of itself;
So that our wishes rest for ever here.

" And hence thou mayst by inference conclude
Our resurrection certain, if thy mind
Consider how the human flesh was framed,
When both our parents at the first were made."²

man by the way of mercy, or by the way of justice, or by both; and the last course (mercy and justice combined) was most in accordance with the Divine Goodness—God giving Himself to man that the Divine Justice might be satisfied by the infinite humiliation of the Word made Flesh.

¹ The Angels and the Heavens, being created immediately by God, are immortal and incorruptible, as also is the primal matter, which is the same in all bodies and still remains through all changes. But the substantial forms, which give actual being to matter, are produced by secondary causes, by the "informing virtue" which God has created in the stars. By the influence of these "sacred lights," the vital principles of plants and animals ("vegetative" and "sensitive" souls) are similarly drawn out of their stage of mere potentiality in this primal matter, and given actual being. All corporeal substances, thus brought into being by secondary causes, are subject to corruption and decay. But the soul of man is created immediately by God, who has made it immortal and restless till it rests in Him.

² Since the flesh of Adam and Eve was created immediately by God, and man is to be restored to the prerogatives which were lost by their fall, the human body also should be immortal.

CANTO VIII

ARGUMENT

The Poet ascends with Beatrice to the third Heaven, which is the planet Venus; and here finds the soul of Charles Martel, King of Hungary, who had been Dante's friend on earth, and who now, after speaking of the realms to which he was heir, unfolds the cause why children differ in disposition from their parents.

THE world was, in its day of peril dark,
 Wont to believe the dotage of fond love,
 From the fair Cyprian deity, who rolls
 In her third epicycle,¹ shed on men
 By stream of potent radiance: therefore they
 Of elder time, in their old error blind,
 Not her alone with sacrifice adored
 And invocation, but like honours paid
 To Cupid and Dione, deem'd of them
 Her mother, and her son, him whom they feign'd
 To sit in Dido's bosom:² and from her,
 Whom I have sung preluding, borrow'd they
 The appellation of that star, which views
 Now obvious, and now averse, the sun.³

I was not ware that I was wafted up
 Into its orb; but the new loveliness,
 That graced my lady, gave me ample proof
 That we had enter'd there. And as in flame
 A sparkle is distinct, or voice in voice
 Discern'd, when one its even tenour keeps,
 The other comes and goes; so in that light
 I other luminaries saw, that coursed
 In circling motion, rapid more or less,
 As their eternal vision each impels.⁴

Never was blast from vapour charged with cold,
 Whether invisible to eye or no,⁵
 Descended with such speed, it had not seem'd

¹ The third epicycle is the smaller sphere upon which the planet of Venus revolves in the third Heaven. Cf. *Conv.* ii. 4.

² *Æneid*, i. 718.

³ Venus appears as a morning star at one part of the year, and as an evening star at another.

⁴ "As each, according to their several deserts, partakes more or less of the Beatific Vision." (Cary).

⁵ Wind or lightning.

To linger in dull tardiness, compared
 To those celestial lights, that towards us came,
 Leaving the circuit of their joyous ring,
 Conducted by the lofty Seraphim.
 And after them, who in the van appear'd,
 Such an Hosanna sounded as hath left
 Desire, ne'er since extinct in me, to hear
 Renew'd the strain. Then, parting from the rest,
 One near us drew, and sole began: "We all
 Are ready at thy pleasure, well disposed
 To do thee gentle service. We are they
 To whom thou in the world erewhile didst sing;
 'O ye! whose intellectual ministry
 'Moves the third Heaven:'¹ and in one orb we roll,
 One motion, one impulse, with those who rule
 Princedoms in Heaven;² yet are of love so full,
 That to please thee 'twill be as sweet to rest."

After mine eyes had with meek reverence
 Sought the celestial guide, and were by her
 Assured, they turn'd again unto the light,
 Who had so largely promised; and with voice
 That bare the lively pressure of my zeal,
 "Tell who ye are," I cried. Forthwith it grew
 In size and splendour, through augmented joy;
 And thus it answer'd: "A short date, below,
 The world possess'd me. Had the time been more,
 Much evil, that will come, had never chanced.
 My gladness hides thee from me, which doth shine
 Around, and shroud me, as an animal
 In its own silk enswathed. Thou lovedst me well,
 And hadst good cause;³ for had my sojourning

¹ *Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete*: "Ye who, by understanding, move the third Heaven;" the opening line of the first canzone of the *Convivio*.

² In the *Convivio* (ii. 6), Dante supposed that it was the Angelic order of the Thrones that ruled the third Heaven; he now learns that it is the Princedoms, or Principalities.

³ The speaker is Charles Martel (1271-1295), eldest son of Charles II. of Naples and Mary of Hungary, daughter of Stephen IV. Dante probably made his acquaintance in March, 1295, when he came in great state to Florence, and made himself exceedingly popular. His death in the following August, in the flower of his youth, dispelled the hopes that had been raised by his amiable character and gallant bearing. The allusion below, to "a race of monarchs, sprung through me from Charles and Rodolph," perhaps indicates the work that Dante expected his

Been longer on the earth, the love I bare thee
 Had put forth more than blossoms. The left bank,
 That Rhone, when he hath mixed with Sorga, laves,¹
 In me its lord expected, and that horn
 Of fair Ausonia, with its boroughs old,
 Bari, and Croton, and Gaeta piled,
 From where the Trento disembogues his waves,
 With Verde mingled, to the salt-sea flood.²
 Already on my temples beam'd the crown,
 Which gave me sovereignty over the land
 By Danube wash'd whenas he strays beyond
 The limits of his German shores.³ The realm,
 Where, on the gulf by stormy Eurus lash'd,
 Betwixt Pelorus and Pachynian heights,
 The beautiful Trinacria lies in gloom,
 (Not through Typhœus, but the vapoury cloud
 Bituminous upsteam'd), that too did look
 To have its sceptre wielded by a race
 Of monarchs, sprung through me from Charles and
 Rodolph;⁴
 Had not ill-lording, which doth desperate make
 The people ever, in Palermo raised
 The shout of 'death,' re-echoed loud and long.
 Had but my brother's foresight kenn'd as much,
 He had been warier, that the greedy want
 Of Catalonia might not work his bale.⁵

friend to do for Italy. Married through the influence of Gregory X., the peacemaking Pope, to Clemenza, or Clementina, the daughter of the Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg, his issue might have reconciled the claims of Guelf and Ghibelline. Cf. Villani, viii. 13, and *Purg.* vii. He now describes the regions over which he would have ruled, had he lived.

¹ Provence, of which the Angevin sovereigns of Naples were Counts in succession to the elder Charles.

² The kingdom of Naples.

³ Hungary, of which he had already (1290) been crowned king at Naples in his mother's right.

⁴ Sicily, too, would have expected his issue as her kings, had not the misgovernment of his house led to the Sicilian Vespers in Palermo (1282), the general rising against the French which resulted in the island accepting the rule of the house of Aragon.

⁵ Let the speaker's brother Robert, Duke of Calabria, take warning from the Sicilian Vespers. While Robert and his brothers, Louis and John, were hostages in Spain after the release of their father Charles in 1288 [cf. *Purg.* xx.], until 1295, the former made the acquaintance of a number of needy Catalan adventurers who accompanied him to Italy, and were given

And truly need there is that he forecast,
Or other for him, lest more freight be laid
On his already over-laden bark.

Nature in him, from bounty fallen to thrift,
Would ask the guard of braver arms, than such
As only care to have their coffers fill'd."

"My liege! it doth enhance the joy thy words
Infuse into me, mighty as it is,
To think my gladness manifest to thee,
As to myself, who own it, when thou look'st
Into the source and limit of all good,
There, where thou markest that which thou dost speak,
Thence prized of me the more. Glad thou hast made
me :

Now make intelligent, clearing the doubt
Thy speech hath raised in me; for much I muse,
How bitter can spring up,¹ when sweet is sown."

I thus inquiring; he forthwith replied :
"If I have power to show one truth, soon that
Shall face thee, which thy questioning declares
Behind thee now conceal'd. The Good, that guides
And blessed makes this realm which thou dost mount,
Ordains its providence to be the virtue
In these great bodies : nor the natures only
The all-perfect Mind provides for, but with them
That which preserves them too; for nought, that lies
Within the range of that unerring bow,
But is as level with the destined aim,
As ever mark to arrow's point opposed.²

office and employment by him when he succeeded to the throne of Naples. Their grasping conduct made both them and their master detested. The lines that follow are supposed to allude to Robert's shipwreck in 1301.

¹ How is it that, in spite of what we read in the Gospels about a good tree bringing forth good fruit, the contrary is actually found among mankind?

² "The Supreme Being uses these spheres as the intelligent instruments of His providence in the conduct of terrestrial natures; so that these natures cannot but be conducted aright, unless these heavenly bodies should themselves fail from not having been made perfect at first, or the Creator of them should fail. To this Dante replies, that nature, he is satisfied, thus directed must do her part. Charles Martel then reminds him, that he had learned from Aristotle, that human society requires a variety of conditions, and consequently a variety of qualifications in its members. Accordingly, men, he concludes, are born with different powers and

Were it not thus, these Heavens, thou dost visit,
 Would their effect so work, it would not be
 Art, but destruction; and this may not chance,
 If th' intellectual powers, that move these stars,
 Fail not, and who, first faulty made them, fail.
 Wilt thou this truth more clearly evidenced?"

To whom I thus: "It is enough: no fear,
 I see, lest nature in her part should tire."

He straight rejoin'd: "Say, were it worse for man,
 If he lived not in fellowship on earth?"

"Yea," answer'd I; "nor here a reason needs."

"And may that be, if different estates
 Grow not of different duties in your life?
 Consult your teacher,¹ and he tells you 'no.'"

Thus did he come, deducing to this point,
 And then concluded: "For this cause behoves,
 The roots, from whence your operations come,
 Must differ. Therefore one is Solon born;
 Another, Xerxes; and Melchisedec
 A third; and he a fourth, whose airy voyage
 Cost him his son. In her circuitous course,
 Nature, that is the seal to mortal wax,
 Doth well her art, but no distinction owns
 'Twixt one or other household.² Hence befalls
 That Esau is so wide of Jacob: hence
 Quirinus³ of so base a father springs,

capacities, caused by the influence of the heavenly bodies at the time of their nativity; on which influence, and not on their parents, those powers and capacities depend. Having thus resolved the question proposed, Charles Martel adds, by way of corollary, that the want of observing their natural bent in the destination of men to their several offices in life, is the occasion of much of the disorder that prevails in the world" (Cary).

¹ Aristotle, in the *Politics*, shows that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing, but like a mere part in relation to the whole. A State is a body of citizens sufficing for the purposes of life. In order that a State should be self-sufficing, there must be distribution of functions and of duties. Cf. *Conv.* iv. 4.

² This diversity in offices and professions being necessary, it must proceed from the diversity of different dispositions in man—there must be different dispositions, that is, to produce this result. The legislator (Solon), the leader of armies (Xerxes), the priest (Melchisedec), and the craftsman (Dædalus) are all needed, and the revolving Heavens stamp men with these qualities without regard to the origin of the individual.

³ "Romulus, born of so obscure a father that his parentage was attributed to Mars" (Cary).

He dates from Mars his lineage. Were it not
 That Providence celestial overruled,
 Nature, in generation, must the path
 Traced by the generator still pursue
 Unswervingly. Thus place I in thy sight
 That, which was late behind thee. But, in sign
 Of more affection for thee, 'tis my will
 Thou wear this corollary. Nature ever,
 Finding discordant fortune, like all seed
 Out of its proper climate, thrives but ill.
 And were the world below content to mark
 And work on the foundation nature lays,
 It would not lack supply of excellence.
 But ye perversely to religion strain
 Him, who was born to gird on him the sword,
 And of the fluent phraseman make your king :
 Therefore your steps have wander'd from the path." ¹

CANTO IX

ARGUMENT

The next spirit, who converses with our Poet in the planet Venus, is the amorous Cunizza. To her succeeds Folco, or Folques, the Provençal bard, who declares that the soul of Rahab the harlot is there also; and then, blaming the Pope for his neglect of the Holy Land, prognosticates some reverse to the papal power.

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 destined years come round."
 Nor may I tell thee more, save that the meed
 Of sorrow well-deserved shall quit your wrongs.²

¹ "The Wisdom of God hath divided the Genius of men according to the different affairs of the World; and varied their inclination according to the variety of Actions to be performed therein. Which they who consider not, rudely rushing upon professions and ways of life unequal to their natures, dishonour not only themselves and their Functions, but pervert the harmony of the whole World" (Sir Thomas Browne, *Vulgar and Common Errors*). The "fluent phraseman" is Robert of Calabria, who as king was sur-named "the wise," and highly extolled by Petrarch.

² The Clemenza here addressed, as one living while Dante is relating his vision, is the daughter of Charles Martel and wife of Louis X. of France. Her mother, the elder Clemenza, died in

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."¹ 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 depraved 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 shent the region.² 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 nought repine,
 Nor grudge myself the cause of this my lot:

1296. On the death of Charles II., in 1309, Robert usurped the crown of Naples, to the exclusion of Carobert, the son of Charles Martel, who had become King of Hungary in 1308.

¹ In the Beatific Vision the spirits see all that it concerns them to see, even thoughts that have not found utterance. Let this soul prove this by answering Dante's unspoken questions.

² In the castle of Romano, between Venice and the sources of the Brenta and Piave, was born the horrible tyrant Ezzelino (cf. *Inf.* xii.). The speaker is his sister, Cunizza da Romano, famous for her amorous intrigues. She was successively the wife of four husbands and the mistress of various lovers, of whom the poet Sordello (*Purg.* vi.-viii.) was one; but she had also a reputation for deeds of charity. In 1265, in the house of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, she executed a deed liberating the serfs of her father's family (of which she was the sole survivor). She died, probably in Florence, in 1279 or 1280. Dante places her here as the type of a penitent.

Which haply vulgar hearts can scarce conceive.¹

“ 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.² Yet they
Care not for this, the crowd that now are girt
By Adice and Tagliamento, still
Impenitent, though scourged.³ The hour is near
When for their stubbornness, at Padua's marsh
The water shall be changed, that laves Vicenza.⁴
And where Cagnano meets with Sile, one
Lords it, and bears his head aloft, for whom
The web is now a-warping.⁵ Feltro too
Shall sorrow for its godless shepherd's fault,
Of so deep stain, that never, for the like,
Was Malta's bar unclosed. Too large should be
The skillet that would hold Ferrara's blood,
And wearied he, who ounce by ounce would weigh it,
The which this priest, in show of party-zeal,
Courteous will give; ⁶ 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: ⁷
Whence these our sayings we avouch for good.”

¹ She no longer remembers the sins of her past, nor desires a higher place in Paradise.

² “ When the mortal life of man may be attended by so lasting and glorious a memory, which is a kind of second life ” (Cary). This “ jewel ” is Folco, of whom more below.

³ The inhabitants of the March of Treviso (the scene of her own sinful life), bounded by the Adige and the Tagliamento.

⁴ The Bacchiglione shall be dyed red with blood of the Paduans defeated by Can Grande in 1314.

⁵ Riccardo da Cammino, brother of Gaia (*Purg.* xvi.) and husband of Giovanna Visconti (*Purg.* viii.), was treacherously murdered at Treviso, where the rivers Sile and Cagnano meet, in 1312.

⁶ In 1314, the Bishop of Feltre, Alessandro Novello, surrendered certain Ferrarese gentlemen who had sought his protection to Pino della Tosa, who then governed Ferrara as vicar of King Robert, by whom they were put to death. Malta was either a tower near Padua where Ezzelino incarcerated his victims, or a papal prison for criminal priests either at Viterbo or on the Lake of Bolsena.

⁷ The Angelic order of the Thrones are the mirrors of God's judgments, which He executes by them.

She ended; and appear'd on other thoughts
 Intent, re-entering on the wheel she late
 Had left. That other joyance¹ 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.²

"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 Heaven, the which those Ardours sing,
 That cowl them with six shadowing wings outspread?³
 I would not wait thy asking, wert thou known
 To me, as throughly I to thee am known."

He, forthwith answering, 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 the horizon.⁴ 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.⁵

¹ Folco.

² "As joy is expressed by laughter on earth, so is it by an increase of splendour in Paradise; and, on the contrary, grief is betokened in Hell by augmented darkness" (Cary).

³ Cf. Isaiah vi. 2. The Seraphim, the Angels that represent the Divine Love, set the measure to the mystical music of Paradise.

⁴ "At Gibraltar, where the Mediterranean ['the valley of waters'] flows out of the ocean, the sun (according to Dante's geography) is on the horizon when it is noon-day on the Levant. Thus the stretch of the sea makes zenith at its end of what is horizon at its beginning; i. e. it extends over a quadrant" (Wicksteed).

⁵ He describes Marseilles, which is on nearly the same meridian as Bougia in Algeria. The bloodshed referred to was on the occasion of Cæsar's victory in B.C. 49. The troubadour Folquet, whom the Italians call Folco, or Folchetto, a Genoese by origin, was born at Marseilles shortly before 1160. A famous lover in early manhood, he became a Cistercian monk, and in 1205 was made Bishop of Toulouse, in which capacity he befriended St.

Who knew my name, were wont to call me Folco;
 And I did bear impression of this Heaven,
 That now bears mine: for not with fiercer flame
 Glow'd Belus' daughter, injuring alike
 Sichæus and Creusa,¹ than did I,
 Long as it suited the unripen'd down
 That fledged my cheek; nor she of Rhodope,
 That was beguiled of Demophoon;²
 Nor Jove's son, when the charms of Iole
 Were shrined within his heart.³ And yet there bides
 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.⁴ Here
 The skill is look'd into, that fashioneth
 With such effectual working, and the good
 Discern'd, accruing to the lower world
 From this above.⁵ 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 sunbeam doth
 On the clear wave. Know then, the soul of Rahab⁶
 Is in that gladsome harbour; to our tribe
 United, and the foremost rank assign'd.
 She to this Heaven, at which the shadow ends

Dominic, and carried on a sanguinary persecution of the Albigenses until his death in 1231.

¹ By her intrigue with Æneas, Dido wronged the memory of the latter's wife Creusa and of her own husband Sychæus.

² The Thracian ("Rhodopeian") Phyllis slew herself for love of Demophoon, the son of Theseus.

³ Dante has not "Jove's son," but *Alcide*, Hercules, whose love for Iole caused his death.

⁴ *Ma del valor ch'ordinò e provide*, "but for the Power which ordained and provided."

⁵ *Il bene per che al mondo di su quel di giù torna*: "the good whereby the world below is brought back unto the world above." Mr. Wicksteed explains: "In Heaven there is no repentance, because the sin is only seen or remembered as the occasion of the act of God by which the fallen one was uplifted again into his true element: and it is on this divine power and grace that the soul's whole thought and love are centred."

⁶ Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, was regarded by the Fathers as a type of the Church, the scarlet cord being a symbol of the blood of Christ, and the two spies she received from Joshua being the two Testaments.

Of your sublunar world,¹ was taken up,
 First, in Christ's triumph, of all souls redeem'd:
 For well behoved, that, in some part of Heaven,
 She should remain a trophy, to declare
 The mighty conquest won with either palm;²
 For that she favour'd first the high exploit
 Of Joshua on the Holy Land, whereof
 The Pope reck's 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.³ For this,
 The Gospel and great teachers laid aside,
 The decretals, as their stuff margins show,
 Are the sole study.⁴ Pope and Cardinals,
 Intent on these, ne'er journey but in thought
 To Nazareth, where Gabriel oped 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 adulterous bond."⁵

CANTO X

ARGUMENT

Their next ascent carries them into the sun, which is the fourth Heaven. Here they are encompassed with a wreath of blessed spirits, twelve in number. Thomas Aquinas, who is one of these, declares the names and endowments of the rest.

LOOKING into His First-Born with the Love,
 Which breathes from both eternal, the first Might

¹ The third Heaven is the last of the three spheres which, according to the astronomy of Dante's day, lie within reach of the conical shadow cast by the earth through space. In the allegory, it signifies the earthly taint in the lives of the three classes of blessed spirits that appear to Dante in these three lower spheres.

² When His hands were nailed to the Cross.

³ Florence, founded by Mars (who is here identified with Satan), coins the lily-stamped florin which is seducing Pope and people alike.

⁴ The Scriptures and the writings of the great Doctors are neglected for the study of the books of canon and ecclesiastical law, in which lies the way to preferment. Cf. *Epist.* viii. 7, and *Mon.* iii. 3.

⁵ He refers most probably to the general reformation and renovation of the Church that is to follow the coming of the *Veltrio*.

Ineffable, wherever eye or mind
 Can roam, hath in such order all disposed,
 As none may see and fail to enjoy. Raise, then,
 O reader! to the lofty wheels, with me,
 Thy ken directed to the point, whereat
 One motion strikes on the other.¹ There begin
 Thy wonder of the mighty Architect,
 Who loves His work so inwardly, His eye
 Doth ever watch it. See, how thence oblique
 Brancheth the circle, where the planets roll²
 To pour their wished influence on the world;
 Whose path not bending thus, in Heaven above
 Much virtue would be lost, and here on earth
 All power well nigh extinct: or, from direct
 Were its departure distant more or less,
 I' the universal order, great defect
 Must, both in Heaven and here beneath, ensue.³

Now rest thee, reader! on thy bench, and muse
 Anticipative of the feast to come;
 So shall delight make thee not feel thy toil.
 Lo! I have set before thee; for thyself
 Feed now: the matter I indite, henceforth
 Demands entire my thought. Join'd with the part,
 Which late we told of, the great minister
 Of nature, that upon the world imprints
 The virtue of the Heaven, and doles out
 Time for us with his beam, went circling on
 Along the spires, where each hour sooner comes;⁴
 And I was with him, weetless of ascent,
 But as a man, that weets his thought, ere thinking.⁵
 For Beatrice, she who passeth on

¹ The equinoctial point where the equator and the zodiac intersect, and the daily and the annual movements of the sun may therefore be said to strike one upon the other.

² The zodiac.

³ "Let him reflect how the influences of the sun and planets—the seasons and other alternations—would be effective over a smaller part of the earth if the inclination of the ecliptic were less, and would be too violent in their contrasts if it were greater" (Wicksteed).

⁴ The sun, which moves along a spiral up or down, had reached the spring equinoctial point in his upward spiral, during which he rises earlier every day.

⁵ "But of the ascent I was not conscious, otherwise than a man is conscious, before the beginning of a thought, of its coming" (Vernon).

So suddenly from good to better, time
 Counts not the act, oh then how great must needs
 Have been her brightness! What there was i' th'
 sun,

(Where I had enter'd,) not through change of hue,
 But light transparent—did I summon up
 Genius, art, practice—I might not so speak,
 It should be e'er imagined: yet believed
 It may be, and the sight be justly craved.
 And if our fantasy fail of such height,
 What marvel, since no eye above the sun
 Hath ever travel'd? Such are they dwell here,
 Fourth family of the Omnipotent Sire,
 Who of His Spirit and of His Offspring shows;
 And holds them still enraptured with the view.¹
 And thus to me Beatrice: "Thank, oh thank
 The Sun of Angels, Him, who by His grace
 To this perceptible hath lifted thee."

Never was heart in such devotion bound,
 And with complacency so absolute
 Disposed to render up itself to God,
 As mine was at those words: and so entire
 The love for Him, that held me, it eclipsed
 Beatrice in oblivion. Nought displeased
 Was she, but smiled thereat so joyously,
 That of her laughing eyes the radiance brake
 And scatter'd my collected mind abroad.

Then saw I a bright band, in liveliness
 Surpassing, who themselves did make the crown,
 And us their centre: yet more sweet in voice,
 Than, in their visage, beaming. Cinctured thus,
 Sometime Latona's daughter we behold,
 When the impregnate air retains the thread
 That weaves her zone. In the celestial court,
 Whence I return, are many jewels found,
 So dear and beautiful, they cannot brook
 Transporting from that realm: and of these lights
 Such was the song. Who doth not prune his wing
 To soar up thither, let him look from thence

¹ "Such was here the fourth family of the high Father (the fourth group of Saints, the Doctors and great Teachers), who ever satiates it by showing how He breathes and how He begets"—by revealing to them the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Ghost.

For tidings from the dumb.¹ When, singing thus,
 Those burning suns had circled round us thrice,
 As nearest stars around the fixed pole;
 Then seem'd they like to ladies, from the dance
 Not ceasing, but suspense, in silent pause,
 Listening, till they have caught the strain anew:
 Suspended so they stood: and, from within,
 Thus heard I one, who spake: "Since with its beam
 The Grace, whence true love lighteth first his flame,
 That after doth increase by loving, shines
 So multiplied in thee, it leads thee up
 Along this ladder, down whose hallow'd steps
 None e'er descend, and mount them not again;
 Who from his phial should refuse thee wine
 To slake thy thirst, no less constrained were,
 Than water flowing not unto the sea.²
 Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that
 bloom

In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds
 This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for Heaven.
 I, then, was of the lambs, that Dominic
 Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way
 Where well they thrive, not swoln with vanity.
 He, nearest on my right hand, brother was,
 And master to me: Albert of Cologne
 Is this; and, of Aquinum, Thomas I.³
 If thou of all the rest wouldst be assured,
 Let thine eye, waiting on the words I speak,
 In circuit journey round the blessed wreath.
 That next resplendence issues from the smile

¹ The song cannot be translated into mortal speech, but will be comprehended by those who win their way to Paradise.

² "The rivers might as easily cease to flow towards the sea, as we could deny thee thy request" (Cary).

³ Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) of Cologne, "the Universal Doctor," and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), of the Counts of Aquino in the kingdom of Naples, "the Angelical Doctor," master and pupil, are the great theological lights of the Dominican order. Albertus began what is known as "christianising" Aristotle, adopting his wisdom and philosophical method to give a new shape to the truths of revelation. Aquinas completed this work in his Aristotelian treatises, in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, and his *Summa Theologica*—by all of which Dante was profoundly influenced. A man of extraordinary sweetness and holiness, he was canonized in 1323, two years after Dante's death. His *Summa Theologica* is still regarded as of supreme authority in the Church of Rome.

Of Gratian, who to either forum lent
 Such help, as favour wins in Paradise.¹
 The other, nearest, who adorns our quire,
 Was Peter, he that with the widow gave
 To holy Church his treasure.² The fifth light,
 Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired,
 That all your world craves tidings of his doom :
 Within, there is a lofty light, endow'd
 With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,
 That with a ken of such wide amplitude
 No second hath arisen.³ Next behold
 That taper's radiance, to whose view was shown,
 Clearliest, the nature and the ministry
 Angelical, while yet in flesh it dwelt.⁴
 In the other little light serenely smiles
 That pleader for the christian temples, he,
 Who did provide Augustin of his lore.⁵
 Now, if thy mind's eye pass from light to light,
 Upon my praises following, of the eighth
 Thy thirst is next. The saintly soul, that shows
 The world's deceitfulness, to all who hear him,
 Is, with the sight of all the good that is,
 Blest there. The limbs, whence it was driven, lie
 Down in Cieldauro; ⁶ and from martyrdom

¹ Franciscus Gratianus, an Italian Benedictine monk of the twelfth century, strove to bring civil and ecclesiastical law into harmony.

² Peter the Lombard (*d. circa 1160*), an Augustinian, known as the "Master of the Sentences," wrote the four books of *Sentences*, the chief summary of mediæval theology before the advent of St. Thomas Aquinas, who composed a commentary upon it. In the prologue, Peter speaks of himself as "desiring with the poor widow (Luke xxi. 1-4) to cast something out of our poverty into the treasury of the Lord."

³ Solomon, concerning whose salvation men disputed in the Middle Ages.

⁴ Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts xvii.), to whom were ascribed certain mystical writings, especially one on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, which were probably composed in the fifth or sixth century. Cf. *Par. xxviii.*

⁵ Paolus Orosius, whose *Historiæ adversum Paganos* was written at the suggestion of St. Augustine, to show by the evidence of history that Christianity had not ruined the world as the Pagans asserted. For "christian temples," read "christian times."

⁶ This "saintly soul" is Boëthius (Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boëthius), Roman consul and philosopher, who was tortured to death at Pavia by order of Theodoric in 525. While in prison awaiting his end, he wrote his great book, *De Consolatione*

And exile came it here. Lo! further on,
 Where flames the arduous spirit of Isidore;¹
 Of Bede;² and Richard, more than man, erewhile,
 In deep discernment.³ Lastly this, from whom
 Thy look on me reverteth, was the beam
 Of one, whose spirit, on high musings bent,
 Rebuked the lingering tardiness of death.
 It is the eternal light of Sigebert
 Who 'scaped not envy, when of truth he argued,
 Reading in the straw-litter'd street."⁴ Forthwith,
 As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God⁵
 To win her Bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
 Each part of other fitly drawn and urged,
 Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,
 Affection springs in well-disposed breast;
 Thus saw I move the glorious wheel; thus heard
 Voice answering voice, so musical and soft,
 It can be known but where day endless shines.

Philosophia, "a book of noble pagan morality and religion, maintaining that even in this world, and as judged by human reason, the life of the virtuous man is to be preferred before that of the vicious, and the ways of God to man may be justified" (Wicksteed). Cf. *Conv.* ii. 13. He was buried in S. Piero Cieldauro at Pavia. His persecutors being Arians, the Church has claimed him as a Catholic martyr. His influence upon Dante is very marked throughout the *Convivio* and the *Divina Commedia*.

¹ Isidore of Seville, d. 636, the writer of the chief mediæval encyclopedia.

² Venerable Bede, the English ecclesiastical historian, died at Jarrow in 735.

³ Richard of St. Victor, the great Augustinian mystic and friend of St. Bernard (d. 1173). In the letter to Can Grande (*Epist.* x. 28), Dante appeals to Richard's chief treatise on Contemplation (known as *Benjamin major*).

⁴ Sigier of Brabant, a professor in the University of Paris in the latter part of the thirteenth century, opposed the mendicant orders and was driven from his chair. He was either murdered by a fanatical friar, or executed by the papal authorities at Orvieto, probably in 1283. The "straw-litter'd street" is the Rue du Fouarre in Paris, where he delivered his lectures.

⁵ The Church.

CANTO XI

ARGUMENT

Thomas Aquinas enters at large into the life and character of St. Francis; and then solves one of two difficulties, which he perceived to have risen in Dante's mind from what he had heard in the last Canto.

O FOND anxiety of mortal men!
 How vain and inconclusive arguments
 Are those, which make thee beat thy wings below.
 For statutes one, and one for aphorisms
 Was hunting; ¹ this the priesthood follow'd; that,
 By force or sophistry, aspired to rule;
 To rob, another; and another sought,
 By civil business, wealth; one, moiling, lay
 Tangled in net of sensual delight;
 And one to wistless indolence resign'd;
 What time from all these empty things escaped,
 With Beatrice, I thus gloriously
 Was raised aloft, and made the guest of Heaven.

They of the circle to that point, each one,
 Where erst it was, had turn'd; and steady glow'd,
 As candle in his socket. Then within
 The lustre, ² that erewhile bespake me, smiling
 With merer gladness, heard I thus begin:

"E'en as His beam illumines me, so I look
 Into the Eternal Light, and clearly mark
 Thy thoughts, from whence they rise. Thou art in
 doubt,

And wouldst, that I should bolt my words afresh
 In such plain open phrase, as may be smooth
 To thy perception, where I told thee late
 That 'well they thrive;' and that 'no second such
 Hath risen,' which no small distinction needs.

"The Providence, that governeth the world,
 In depth of counsel by created ken
 Unfathomable, to the end that she, ³
 Who with loud cries was 'spoused in precious blood,
 Might keep her footing towards her well-beloved, ⁴
 Safe in herself and constant unto Him,

¹ One was studying law, another medicine.

² The spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas.

⁴ Christ.

³ The Church.

Hath two ordain'd, who should on either hand
 In chief escort her : one, seraphic all
 In fervency ; for wisdom upon earth,
 The other, splendour of cherubic light.
 I but of one will tell : he tells of both,
 Who one commendeth, which of them soe'er
 Be taken : for their deeds were to one end.¹

“ Between Tupino, and the wave that falls
 From blest Ubaldo's chosen hill, there hangs
 Rich slope of mountain high, whence heat and cold
 Are wafted through Perugia's eastern gate :
 And Nocera with Gualdo, in its rear,
 Mourn for their heavy yoke.² Upon that side,
 Where it doth break its steepness most, arose
 A sun upon the world, as duly this
 From Ganges doth : therefore let none, who speak
 Of that place, say *Ascesi* ; for its name
 Were lamely so deliver'd ; but the East,
 To call things rightly, be it henceforth styled.³
 He was not yet much distant from his rising,
 When his good influence 'gan to bless the earth.
 A dame,⁴ to whom none openeth pleasure's gate
 More than to death, was, 'gainst his father's will,
 His stripling choice : and he did make her his,
 Before the spiritual court, by nuptial bonds,
 And in his father's sight :⁵ from day to day,
 Then loved her more devoutly. She, bereaved

¹ St. Francis, the seraphical saint of love, and St. Dominic, the cherubical saint of wisdom, gave new life to the Church. Aquinas, as a Dominican, utters the panegyric of St. Francis, and bewails the degeneration of his own order.

² Aquinas describes Assisi (where St. Francis was born in 1182), between the Tupino and the Chiascio, which rises in a mountain near Gubbio, where St. Ubaldo (*d.* 1160) chose out a hermitage. Nocera and Gualdo, small towns in central Italy, were subjected to the heavy yoke of the house of Anjou.

³ “ *Ascesi*, an old form of Assisi, may be translated ‘ I have ascended.’ A play upon the word, in connection with *Oriente*, is found by some commentators. The comparison of Francis to the rising Sun is ancient and widespread. ‘ Glowing as the light-bearer and as the morning star, yea, even as the rising Sun, illuminating, cleansing and fertilising the world like some new luminary, was Francis seen to arise,’ says the Prologue of one of the ‘ earliest Lives ’ (Wicksteed).

⁴ Holy Poverty.

⁵ Francis renounced his possessions before the Bishop of Assisi, in the presence of his father, Pietro Bernardone.

Of her first husband,¹ slighted and obscure,
 Thousand and hundred years and more, remain'd
 Without a single suitor, till he came.
 Nor aught avail'd, that, with Amyclas,² she
 Was found unmoved at rumour of his voice,
 Who shook the world : nor aught her constant boldness,
 Whereby with Christ she mounted on the Cross,
 When Mary stay'd beneath. But not to deal
 Thus closely with thee longer, take at large
 The lovers' titles—Poverty and Francis.
 Their concord and glad looks, wonder and love,
 And sweet regard gave birth to holy thoughts,
 So much, that venerable Bernard³ first
 Did bare his feet, and, in pursuit of peace
 So heavenly, ran, yet deem'd his footing slow.
 O hidden riches ! O prolific good !
 Egidius bares him next, and next Sylvester,⁴
 And follow, both, the bridegroom : so the bride
 Can please them. Thenceforth goes he on his way,
 The father and the master, with his spouse,
 And with that family, whom now the cord
 Girt humbly : nor did abjectness of heart
 Weigh down his eyelids, for that he was son
 Of Pietro Bernardone, and by men
 In wonderous sort despised. But royally
 His hard intention he to Innocent
 Set forth ; and, from him, first received the seal
 On his religion.⁵ Then, when numerous flock'd
 The tribe of lowly ones, that traced his steps,
 Whose marvelous life deservedly were sung
 In heights empyreal ; through Honorius' hand
 A second crown, to deck their Guardian's virtues,

¹ Christ.

² The fisherman Amyclas, secure in his poverty, was unawed at Caesar's summons and untouched by the tumults of the times. Cf. Lucan, *Phars.* v. 520-531.

³ Bernard of Quintavalle, a wealthy citizen of Assisi, gave up all his possessions and became the first follower of St. Francis.

⁴ Egidio (Giles) was the third companion of St. Francis (Dante does not mention Peter of Catania, the second); his sayings, *Verba Aurea*, are still read. He died in 1261. Silvestro was a priest of Assisi, the only ecclesiastic among the first Franciscans; he was a kinsman of St. Clare.

⁵ The Franciscan rule was approved by Pope Innocent III. in 1210.

Was by the eternal Spirit inwreath'd :¹ and when
 He had, through thirst of martyrdom, stood up
 In the proud Soldan's presence, and there preach'd
 Christ and His followers,² but found the race
 Unripen'd for conversion ; back once more
 He hasted, (not to intermit his toil,
 And reap'd Ausonian lands. On the hard rock,
 'Twixt Arno and the Tiber, he from Christ
 Took the last signet, which his limbs two years
 Did carry.³ Then, the season come that He,
 Who to such good had destined him, was pleased
 To advance him to the meed, which he had earn'd
 By his self-humbling ; to his brotherhood,
 As their just heritage, he gave in charge
 His dearest lady : and enjoin'd their love
 And faith to her ; and, from her bosom, will'd
 His goodly spirit should move forth, returning
 To its appointed kingdom ; nor would have
 His body laid upon another bier.⁴

“ Think now of one, who were a fit colleague
 To keep the bark of Peter, in deep sea,
 Helm'd to right point ; and such our Patriarch⁵ was.
 Therefore who follow him as he enjoins,
 Thou mayst be certain, take good lading in.
 But hunger of new viands tempts his flock ;⁶
 So that they needs into strange pastures wide
 Must spread them : and the more remote from him
 The stragglers wander, so much more they come
 Home, to the sheep-fold, destitute of milk.
 There are of them, in truth, who fear their harm,
 And to the shepherd cleave ; but these so few,
 A little stuff may furnish out their cloaks.

¹ The papal approbation was confirmed by Honorius III. in 1223.

² In 1219, Francis went to the East and attempted to convert the Soldan of Egypt.

³ The third and final confirmation of his work was given to Francis by Christ Himself, when in 1224, on “ the hard rock ” of La Verna, he received the *stigmata*, the imprint of the five wounds of the Lord's Passion.

⁴ He died at Assisi, October 4, 1226—stretched naked on the ground, according to his wish, in the arms of Poverty, “ his dearest lady.”

⁵ St. Dominic.

⁶ The Dominicans, who have deserted their founder's sheep-fold in the quest of ecclesiastical honours and preferment.

" Now, if my words be clear; if thou have ta'en
 Good heed; if that, which I have told, recal
 To mind; thy wish may be in part fulfill'd:
 For thou wilt see the plant from whence they split;¹
 And he shall see, who girds him, what that means,²
 ' That well they thrive, not swoln with vanity.' "

CANTO XII

ARGUMENT

A second circle of glorified souls encompasses the first. Buonaventura, who is one of them, celebrates the praises of Saint Dominic, and informs Dante who the other eleven are, that are in this second circle or garland.

SOON as its final word the blessed flame
 Had raised for utterance, straight the holy mill³
 Began to wheel; nor yet had once revolved,
 Or e'er another, circling, compass'd it,
 Motion to motion, song to song, conjoining;
 Song, that as much our muses doth excel,
 Our Syrens with their tuneful pipes, as ray
 Of primal splendour doth its faint reflex.

As when, if Juno bid her handmaid forth,
 Two arches parallel, and trick'd alike,
 Span the thin cloud, the outer taking birth
 From that within (in manner of that voice
 Whom love did melt away, as sun the mist),⁴

¹ The rule ordained by St. Dominic.

² There are two alternative readings: *vedrai il coregger che argomenta*, " thou shalt see the rebuke that is intended;" and *vedrai il coreggier che argomenta*, " thou shalt see the leather-girt friar (the ideal Dominican) what he means," when he thus rebukes his degenerate order. The Dominicans wear a leather girdle instead of the Franciscan cord.

³ As soon as Aquinas has ended, the circle of blessed spirits moves round the Poet.

⁴ " One rainbow giving back the image of the other, as sound is reflected by Echo, that nymph who was melted away by her fondness for Narcissus, as vapour is melted by the sun. The reader will observe in the text not only a second and third simile within the first, but two mythological and one sacred allusion bound up together with the whole. Even after this accumulation of imagery, the two circles of spirits, by whom Dante and Beatrice were encompassed, are by a bold figure termed two garlands of never-fading roses. Indeed there is a fulness of splendour, even to prodigality, throughout the beginning of this Canto " (Cary).

And they who gaze, presageful call to mind
The compact, made with Noah, of the world
No more to be o'erflow'd; about us thus,
Of sempiternal roses, bending, wreathed
Those garlands twain; and to the innermost
E'en thus the external answer'd. When the footing,
And other great festivity, of song,
And radiance, light with light accordant, each
Jocund and blythe, had at their pleasure still'd,
(E'en as the eyes, by quick volition moved,
Are shut and raised together,) from the heart
Of one amongst the new lights moved a voice,
That made me seem like needle to the star,
In turning to its whereabouts;¹ and thus
Began: "The love, that makes me beautiful,
Prompts me to tell of the other guide, for whom
Such good of mine is spoken. Where one is,
The other worthily should also be;
That as their warfare was alike, alike
Should be their glory. Slow, and full of doubt,
And with thin ranks, after its banner moved
The army of Christ, (which it so dearly cost
To reappoint,) when its imperial Head,
Who reigneth ever, for the drooping host
Did make provision, thorough grace alone,
And not through its deserving. As thou heard'st,
Two champions to the succour of His spouse
He sent, who by their deeds and words might join
Again His scatter'd people. In that clime
Where springs the pleasant west-wind to unfold
The fresh leaves, with which Europe sees herself
New-garmented; nor from those billows far,
Beyond whose chiding, after weary course,
The sun doth sometimes hide him; safe abides

¹ This spirit out of the second circle, who makes Dante turn to him as the magnetic needle to the pole, is the Franciscan "Seraphic Doctor," St. Bonaventura (1221-1274), whose name in the world was Giovanni Fidenza. In life he was an intimate friend and colleague of Thomas Aquinas. As minister-general of the Franciscans, he wrote the official life of St. Francis, which Dante has closely followed in the previous Canto. Shortly before his death, he was made Cardinal and Bishop of Albano by Gregory X. He was a voluminous writer on mystical and scholastic theology. Following the example of Aquinas, he now proceeds to extol St. Dominic, and to rebuke the corruption of his own Franciscan order.

The happy Callaroga,¹ under guard
 Of the great shield, wherein the lion lies
 Subjected and supreme. And there was born
 The loving minion of the Christian faith,
 The hallow'd wrestler, gentle to his own,
 And to his enemies terrible.² So replete
 His soul with lively virtue, that when first
 Created, even in the mother's womb,
 It prophesied. When, at the sacred font,
 The spousals were complete 'twixt faith and him,
 Where pledge of mutual safety was exchanged,
 The dame, who was his surety, in her sleep
 Beheld the wondrous fruit, that was from him
 And from his heirs to issue.³ And that such
 He might be construed, as indeed he was,
 She was inspired to name him of his owner,
 Whose he was wholly; and so call'd him Dominic.⁴
 And I speak of him, as the labourer,
 Whom Christ in His own garden chose to be
 His help-mate. Messenger he seem'd, and friend
 Fast-knit to Christ; and the first love he show'd,
 Was after the first counsel⁵ that Christ gave.
 Many a time his nurse, at entering, found
 That he had risen in silence, and was prostrate,
 As who should say, 'My errand was for this.'
 O happy father! Felix rightly named.
 O favour'd mother! rightly named Joanna;
 If that do mean, as men interpret it.⁶
 Not for the world's sake, for which now they toil
 Upon Ostiense and Taddeo's lore;⁷

¹ Calahorra, near the Gulf of Gascony, under the rule of the kings of Castile, in whose arms the lion is now above, now below the castle.

² St. Dominic (Guzman) was born at Calahorra in 1170, and died at Bologna in 1221.

³ Before his birth, Dominic's mother dreamed that she was going to bring forth a dog with a burning torch in his mouth that would set the world aflame. His godmother had a vision, in which she saw a star upon his brow that illumined all the earth.

⁴ *Dominicus* = belonging to the Lord.

⁵ Evangelical Poverty. Matt. xix. 21.

⁶ Felix, "favoured by fortune;" Joanna, "grace of the Lord."

⁷ Henry of Susa, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia (*d.* 1271), a famous Decretalist; Taddeo Alderotti (*d.* 1303), a writer on medicine who made a bad translation into Italian of Aristotle's *Ethics* (*cf.* *Conv.* i. 10).

But for the real manna, soon he grew
 Mighty in learning; and did set himself
 To go about the vineyard, that soon turns
 To wan and wither'd, if not tended well:
 And from the see,¹ (whose bounty to the just
 And needy is gone by, not through its fault,
 But his who fills it basely,) he besought,
 No dispensation for commuted wrong,
 Nor the first vacant fortune, nor the tenths
 That to God's paupers rightly appertain,
 But, 'gainst an erring and degenerate world,
 Licence to fight, in favour of that seed
 From which the twice twelve cions gird thee round.²
 Then, with sage doctrine and good will to help,
 Forth on his great apostleship he fared,
 Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein;
 And, dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,³
 Smote fiercest, where resistance was most stout.
 Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd,
 Over the garden catholic to lead
 Their living waters, and have fed its plants.

"If such, one wheel⁴ of that two-yoked car,
 Wherein the holy Church defended her,
 And rode triumphant through the civil broil;
 Thou canst not doubt its fellow's excellence,⁵
 Which Thomas, ere my coming, hath declared
 So courteously unto thee. But the track,
 Which its smooth fellies made, is now deserted:
 That, mouldy mother is, where late were lees.⁶
 His family, that wont to trace his path,

¹ "The apostolic see, which no longer continues its wonted liberality towards the indigent and deserving; not indeed through its own fault, as its doctrines are still the same, but through the fault of the pontiff, who is seated in it" (Cary).

² When Dominic went to Rome (in 1202), he did not ask leave to make unjust gains on condition of devoting a part to pious purposes, nor for the next fat benefice vacant, nor to apply tithes to his own advantage, but leave to fight against the heretics in behalf of Catholic truth, the seed from which these twenty-four blessed spirits have sprung. He founded his order of Dominicans, or Friars Preachers, at Toulouse in 1215.

³ The Albigenses.

⁴ St. Dominic.

⁵ The excellence of St. Francis.

⁶ "But the rule of St. Francis is already deserted; and the lees of the wine are turned into mouldiness" (Cary).

Turn backward, and invert their steps ; ere long
 To rue the gathering in of their ill crop,
 When the rejected tares in vain shall ask
 Admittance to the barn. I question not
 But he, who search'd our volume, leaf by leaf,
 Might still find page with this inscription on't,
 'I am as I was wont.' Yet such were not
 From Acquasparta nor Casale, whence,
 Of those who come to meddle with the text,
 One stretches and another cramps its rule.¹
 Bonaventura's life in me behold,
 From Bagnoregio ; one, who, in discharge
 Of my great offices, still laid aside
 All sinister aim.² Illuminato here,
 And Agostino join me :³ two they were,
 Among the first of those barefooted meek ones,
 Who sought God's friendship in the cord : with them
 Hugues of Saint Victor ; Pietro Mangiadore ;
 And he of Spain in his twelve volumes shining ;
 Nathan the prophet ; Metropolitan
 Chrysostom ; and Anselmo ; and, who deign'd
 To put his hand to the first art, Donatus.
 Raban is here ;⁴ and at my side there shines

¹ There are some faithful followers of St. Francis still ; but such will not be found among the adherents of Matteo d'Acquasparta, the minister-general of the order at the epoch of the vision, who relaxed the rule, nor those of Ubertino da Casale, who was leading the "spirituals," or party of the strict observance, who wished to make the said rule impossibly severe. Matteo, one of the Cardinals of Boniface VIII., interfered as papal legate in the Florentine factions, in 1300 and 1301, with disastrous results ; Ubertino, to avoid making a fresh schism among the Franciscans, left the order in 1317.

² *Sempre posposi la sinistra cura*, "always placed the care of temporal affairs behind." Bonaventura was born at Bagnoregio, or Bagnorea, near Bolsena. As minister-general of the Franciscans, he attempted at once to put a check upon the relaxations of one party and to restrain the spiritual vagaries of the other.

³ Illuminato accompanied St. Francis in his mission to the Soldan, and was still living, as Bishop of Assisi, in 1282 ; Agostino died on the same day as St. Francis, after a wonderful vision of the latter's going up into Paradise.

⁴ Hugh of St. Victor (*d.* 1141), the master of Peter the Lombard and Richard of St. Victor, was the first of the Augustinian school of mystics that flourished at the abbey of St. Victor's at Paris ; to which also belonged Pietro Mangiadore (Petrus Comestor, "Peter the Eater of Books," *d.* 1170), who wrote the *Historia Scholastica*, a history of the Church from Genesis to the Acts of

Calabria's abbot, Joachim, endow'd
 With soul prophetic.¹ The bright courtesy
 Of friar Thomas and his goodly lore,
 Have moved me to the blazon of a peer
 So worthy; ² and with me have moved this throng."

CANTO XIII

ARGUMENT

Thomas Aquinas resumes his speech. He solves the other of those doubts which he discerned in the mind of Dante, and warns him earnestly against assenting to any proposition without having duly examined it.

LET him, who would conceive what now I saw,
 Imagine, (and retain the image firm
 As mountain rock, the whilst he hears me speak,)
 Of stars, fifteen, from midst the ethereal host
 Selected, that, with lively ray serene,
 O'ercome the massiest air: thereto imagine
 The wain, that, in the bosom of our sky,

the Apostles. Peter of Spain wrote a much-used treatise on Logic in twelve books; he was Pope for a few months as John XXI., in succession to Adrian V. (*Purg.* xix.), and was killed in 1277 by the fall of the papal palace at Viterbo. Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. xii.) and John Chrysostom (*d.* 407), Archbishop of Constantinople, alike, under the old law and the new, rebuked wickedness in high places. St. Anselm (1033-1109), Archbishop of Canterbury, who wrote profound treatises on the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation, is side by side with Ælius Donatus, who wrote an elementary Latin grammar in the fourth century. Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mayence (*d.* 856), a Benedictine who had been a pupil of Alcuin, may be said in his voluminous writings to sum up the learning of the ninth century.

¹ Joachim, called of Flora, or Fiore, in Calabria, where he founded a monastery, was a Cistercian monk who died in 1202. He claimed to have a peculiar gift from God of interpreting the prophetic books of the Scriptures with special reference to the history of the Church. He taught that a new dispensation was at hand, the third epoch, which would be one of perfect love and spiritual freedom. This was known as the "Eternal Gospel" (*cf.* Rev. xiv. 6), and was greedily seized upon by the spiritual party among the Franciscans, one of whom, Fra Gherardo da Borgo San Donnino, wrote a book entitled *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*, which in 1256 was condemned as heretical. Bonaventura himself was, probably against his own will, largely concerned in the persecution of the friars who held these views and were known as Joachimists.

² *Cotanto paladino*, St. Dominic.

Spins ever on its axle night and day,
 With the bright summit of that horn, which swells
 Due from the pole, round which the first wheel rolls,
 To have ranged themselves in fashion of two signs
 In Heaven, such as Ariadne made,
 When death's chill seized her; and that one of them
 Did compass in the other's beam; and both
 In such sort whirl around, that each should tend
 With opposite motion;¹ and, conceiving thus,
 Of that true constellation, and the dance
 Twofold, that circled me, he shall attain
 As 'twere the shadow; for things there as much
 Surpass our usage, as the swiftest Heaven
 Is swifter than the Chiana.² There was sung
 No Bacchus, and no Io Pæan, but
 Three Persons in the Godhead, and in one
 Person that nature and the human join'd.

The song and round were measured: and to us
 Those saintly lights attended, happier made
 At each new ministering. Then silence brake
 Amid the accordant sons of Deity,
 That luminary,³ in which the wondrous life
 Of the meek man of God was told to me;
 And thus it spake: "One ear o' the harvest thresh'd,
 And its grain safely stored, sweet charity
 Invites me with the other to like toil."⁴

"Thou know'st, that in the bosom, whence the rib
 Was ta'en to fashion that fair cheek, whose taste
 All the world pays for; and in that, which pierced
 By the keen lance, both after and before
 Such satisfaction offer'd as outweighs
 Each evil in the scale; whate'er of light

¹ "Whoever would conceive the sight that now presented itself to me, must imagine to himself fifteen of the brightest stars in Heaven, together with seven stars of Arcturus Major and two of Arcturus Minor, ranged in two circles, one within the other, each resembling the crown of Ariadne, and moving round in opposite directions" (Cary).

² A river in Tuscany, noted in Dante's time for its slow motion, flowing through the pestilential Valdichiana into the Tiber. Its course was completely altered in the nineteenth century.

³ Thomas Aquinas, who had related the life of St. Francis.

⁴ He has answered Dante's first difficulty, touching the ideals of the mendicant orders, and will now solve the second, concerning the wisdom of Solomon.

To human nature is allow'd, must all
 Have by His virtue been infused, who form'd
 Both one and other: and thou thence admirest
 In that I told thee, of beatitudes,
 A second there is none to him enclosed
 In the fifth radiance.¹ Open now thine eyes
 To what I answer thee; and thou shalt see
 Thy deeming and my saying meet in truth,
 As centre in the round. That which dies not,
 And that which can die, are but each the beam
 Of that idea, which our Sovereign Sire
 Engendereth loving; ² for that lively light,
 Which passeth from His splendour,³ not disjoin'd
 From Him, nor from His love triune with them,⁴
 Doth, through His bounty, congregate itself,
 Mirror'd, as 'twere, in new existences; ⁵
 Itself unalterable, and ever one.

"Descending hence unto the lowest powers,⁶
 Its energy so sinks, at last it makes
 But brief contingencies; for so I name
 Things generated, which the heavenly orbs
 Moving, with seed or without seed, produce.
 Their wax, and that which molds it, differ much:
 And thence with lustre, more or less, it shows
 The ideal stamp imprest: ⁷ so that one tree,
 According to his kind, hath better fruit,
 And worse: and, at your birth, ye, mortal men,
 Are in your talents various. Were the wax

¹ Adam and Christ must have had all the perfection of human nature. How then could the wisdom of Solomon, the spirit in the fifth light of the first circle, have been peerless?

² All created things, immortal or mortal, are reflections of the Divine Idea, the Word of God.

³ *Quella viva luce che si mea dal suo lucente*, "that living Light [the Word] that emanates from its Source of Light;" the *lumen de lumine* of the Nicene Creed.

⁴ The Holy Spirit.

⁵ The right reading is *nove sussistenze*, "nine existences," either the nine moving Heavens or the nine orders of Angels.

⁶ Lowest potentialities, the lowest vegetative and sensitive life.

⁷ The substantial form, that which gives a thing its being, is the likeness of a Divine idea stamped upon matter. But the primal matter ("their wax"), and the influence of the heavenly spheres ("that which molds it") which give form to what is not created immediately by God, are not uniformly correspondent ("molded with nice exactness") and in their best disposition; and, therefore, the idea is more or less imperfectly expressed.

Molded with nice exactness, and the Heaven
 In its disposing influence supreme,
 The brightness of the seal should be complete :
 But nature ¹ renders it imperfect ever ;
 Resembling thus the artist, in her work,
 Whose faltering hand is faithless to his skill.
 Therefore, if fervent Love dispose, and mark
 The lustrous Image of the primal Virtue,
 There all perfection is vouchsafed ; and such
 The clay was made, accomplish'd with each gift,
 That life can teem with ; such the burden fill'd
 The virgin's bosom : ² so that I commend
 Thy judgment, that the human nature ne'er
 Was, or can be, such as in them it was.

" Did I advance no further than this point ;
 ' How then had he no peer ? ' thou might'st reply.
 But, that what now appears not, may appear
 Right plainly, ponder, who he was, and what
 (When he was bidden ' Ask ') the motive, sway'd
 To his requesting. I have spoken thus,
 That thou mayst see, he was a king, who ask'd
 For wisdom, to the end he might be king
 Sufficient : not, the number to search out
 Of the celestial movers ; or to know,
 If necessary with contingent e'er
 Have made necessity ; or whether that
 Be granted, that first motion is ; or if,
 Of the mid circle, can by art be made
 Triangle, with its corner blunt or sharp. ³

" Whence, noting that, which I have said, and this,
 Thou kingly prudence and that ken mayst learn,
 At which the dart of my intention aims.
 And, marking clearly, that I told thee, ' Risen, '
 Thou shalt discern it only hath respect
 To kings, of whom are many, and the good

¹ God's instrument when He employs secondary causes.

² When the Blessed Trinity (the primal Virtue or Power of the Father, the clear Vision—i. e. Wisdom, hardly " lustrous image "—of the Son, the fervent Love of the Holy Spirit) creates immediately, all perfection is acquired. Therefore, in Adam and in the humanity of Christ, human nature was at its highest perfection.

³ Solomon did not ask for the wisdom that would enable him to comprehend all theological, metaphysical, or scientific problems, but simply the wisdom that would fit him to be a king ; " an understanding heart to judge the people." Cf. 1 Kings iii.

Are rare. With this distinction take my words;
 And they may well consist with that which thou
 Of the first human father dost believe,
 And of our well-beloved.¹ And let this
 Henceforth be lead unto thy feet, to make
 Thee slow in motion, as a weary man,
 Both to the 'yea' and to the 'nay' thou seest not.
 For he among the fools is down full low,
 Whose affirmation, or denial,² is
 Without distinction, in each case alike.
 Since it befalls, that in most instances
 Current opinion leans to false: and then
 Affection bends the judgment to her ply.

"Much more than vainly doth he loose from shore,
 Since he returns not such as he set forth,
 Who fishes for the truth and wanteth skill.
 And open proofs of this unto the world
 Have been afforded in Parmenides,
 Melissus, Bryso,³ and the crowd beside,
 Who journey'd on, and knew not whither: so did
 Sabellius, Arius,⁴ and the other fools,
 Who, like to scymitars, reflected back
 The scripture-image by distortion marr'd.

"Let not the people be too swift to judge;
 As one who reckons on the blades in field,
 Or e'er the crop be ripe. For I have seen
 The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,
 And after bear the rose upon its top;
 And bark, that all her way across the sea
 Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last
 E'en in the haven's mouth. Seeing one steal,
 Another bring his offering to the priest,
 Let not Dame Birtha and Sir Martin thence
 Into Heaven's counsels deem that they can pry;⁵
 For one of these may rise, the other fall."

¹ Adam and Christ.

² Cary quotes Plato, *Theætetus*: "For any one might make yet absurder concessions than these, not paying strict attention to terms, according to the way in which we are for the most part accustomed both to affirm and to deny."

³ These three Greek philosophers are held up by Aristotle as examples of false reasoning; Dante refers to the Stagirite's confutation of the two former in *Mon.* iii. 4.

⁴ The famous heretics of the third and fourth centuries.

⁵ "Let not short-sighted mortals presume to decide on the

CANTO XIV

ARGUMENT

Solomon, who is one of the spirits in the inner circle, declares what the appearance of the blest will be after the resurrection of the body. Beatrice and Dante are translated into the fifth Heaven, which is that of Mars; and here behold the souls of those, who had died fighting for the true faith, ranged in the sign of a cross, athwart which the spirits move to the sound of a melodious hymn.

FROM centre to the circle, and so back
 From circle to the centre, water moves
 In the round chalice, even as the blow
 Impels it, inwardly, or from without.
 Such was the image¹ glanced into my mind,
 As the great spirit of Aquinum ceased;
 And Beatrice, after him, her words
 Resumed alternate: "Need there is (though yet
 He tells it to you not in words, nor e'en
 In thought) that he should fathom to its depth
 Another mystery. Tell him, if the light,
 Wherewith your substance blooms, shall stay with you
 Eternally, as now; and, if it doth,
 How, when ye shall regain your visible forms,²
 The sight may without harm endure the change,
 That also tell." As those, who in a ring
 Tread the light measure, in their fitful mirth
 Raise loud the voice, and spring with gladder bound;
 Thus, at the hearing of that pious suit,
 The saintly circles, in their tourneying
 And wondrous note, attested new delight.

Whoso laments, that we must doff this garb
 Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live
 Immortally above; he hath not seen
 The sweet refreshing of that heavenly shower.

future doom of any man, from a consideration of his present character and actions.' This is meant as an answer to the doubts entertained respecting the salvation of Solomon" (Cary). *Donna Berta* and *Ser Martino*, proverbial names for a gossip, or "the man in the street."

¹ "The voice of Thomas Aquinas proceeding from the circle to the centre; and that of Beatrice, from the centre to the circle" (Cary).

² At the resurrection of the body.

Him, who lives ever, and for ever reigns
In mystic union of the Three in One,
Unbounded, bounding all, each spirit thrice
Sang, with such melody, as, but to hear,
For highest merit were an ample meed.
And from the lesser orb the goodliest light,¹
With gentle voice and mild, such as perhaps
The Angel's once to Mary, thus replied :
" Long as the joy of Paradise shall last,
Our love shall shine around that raiment, bright
As fervent ; fervent as, in vision, blest ;
And that as far, in blessedness, exceeding,
As it hath grace, beyond its virtue, great.
Our shape, regarmented with glorious weeds
Of saintly flesh, must, being thus entire,
Show yet more gracious. Therefore shall increase
Whate'er, of light, gratuitous imparts
The Supreme Good ; light, ministering aid,
The better to disclose His glory : whence,
The vision needs increasing, must increase
The fervour, which it kindles ; and that too
The ray, that comes from it. But as the glee
Which gives out flame, yet in its whiteness shines
More lively than that, and so preserves
Its proper semblance ; thus this circling sphere
Of splendour shall to view less radiant seem,
Than shall our fleshly robe, which yonder earth
Now covers. Nor will such excess of light
O'erpower us, in corporeal organs made
Firm, and susceptible of all delight."

So ready and so cordial an " Amen "
Follow'd from either choir, as plainly spoke
Desire of their dead bodies ; yet perchance
Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they loved,
Ere they were made imperishable flame.

And lo ! forthwith there rose up round about
A lustre, over that already there ;
Of equal clearness, like the brightening up
Of the horizon. As at evening hour
Of twilight, new appearances through Heaven
Peer with faint glimmer, doubtfully descried ;

¹ Solomon, speaking from the brightest light of the inner circle.

So, there, new substances,¹ methought, began
To rise in view beyond the other twain,
And wheeling, sweep their ampler circuit wide.

O genuine glitter of eternal Beam!
With what a sudden whiteness did it flow,
O'erpowering vision in me. But so fair,
So passing lovely, Beatrice show'd,
Mind cannot follow it, nor words express
Her infinite sweetness. Thence mine eyes regain'd
Power to look up; and I beheld myself,
Sole with my lady, to more lofty bliss
Translated:² for the star, with warmer smile
Impurpled, well denoted our ascent.

With all the heart, and with that tongue which speaks
The same in all, an holocaust I made
To God, befitting the new grace vouchsafed.
And from my bosom had not yet upsteam'd
The fuming of that incense, when I knew
The rite accepted. With such mighty sheen
And mantling crimson, in two listed rays
The splendours shot before me, that I cried,
"God of Sabaoth! that dost prank them thus!"

As leads the galaxy from pole to pole,
Distinguish'd into greater lights and less,
Its pathway, which the wisest fail to spell;³
So thickly studded, in the depth of Mars,
Those rays described the venerable sign,
That quadrants in the round conjoining frame.⁴

Here memory mocks the toil of genius. Christ
Beam'd on that cross; and pattern fails me now.
But whoso takes his cross, and follows Christ,
Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
When in the flecker'd dawning he shall spy

¹ A third circle of spirits, dimly at first and then with dazzling vividness, appears beyond the two circles that already surround Dante and Beatrice. A mysterious passage of which various allegorical explanations have been offered. It has been plausibly connected with the Joachist doctrine of the third epoch, the kingdom or dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

² To the fifth Heaven, the sphere of Mars.

³ In the *Convivio* (ii. 15), Dante discusses the various opinions held by philosophers concerning the origin of the galaxy, or milky way.

⁴ Not simply a Cross, but a blood-red figure of the Crucified Lord Himself: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

The glitterance of Christ. From horn to horn,
 And 'tween the summit and the base, did move
 Lights, scintillating, as they met and pass'd.¹
 Thus oft are seen with ever-changeable glance,
 Straight or athwart, now rapid and now slow,
 The atomies of bodies, long or short,
 To move along the sunbeam, whose slant line
 Checkers the shadow interposed by art
 Against the noontide heat. And as the chime
 Of minstrel music, dulcimer, and harp
 With many strings, a pleasant dinning makes
 To him, who heareth not distinct the note;
 So from the lights, which there appear'd to me,
 Gather'd along the cross a melody,
 That, indistinctly heard, with ravishment
 Possess'd me. Yet I mark'd it was a hymn
 Of lofty praises; for there came to me
 "Arise," and "Conquer," as to one who hears
 And comprehends not. Me such ecstasy
 O'ercame, that never, till that hour, was thing
 That held me in so sweet imprisonment.

Perhaps my saying overbold appears,
 Accounting less the pleasure of those eyes,
 Whereon to look fulfilleth all desire.
 But he,² who is aware those living seals
 Of every beauty work with quicker force,
 The higher they are risen; and that there
 I had not turn'd me to them; he may well
 Excuse me that, whereof in my excuse
 I do accuse me, and may own my truth;
 That holy pleasure here not yet reveal'd,³
 Which grows in transport as we mount aloof.

¹ These are the souls of those who fought for the chosen people of the old law, or for Christ's Church in the new.

² "He, who considers that the eyes of Beatrice became more radiant the higher we ascended, must not wonder that I do not except even them, as I had not yet beheld them since our entrance into this planet" (Cary).

³ The alternative explanation given by Cary in a note, "that holy pleasure not excluded here," is the one more usually adopted.

CANTO XV

ARGUMENT

The spirit of Cacciaguida, our Poet's ancestor, glides rapidly to the foot of the cross; tells who he is; and speaks of the simplicity of the Florentines in his days, since then much corrupted.

TRUE love, that ever shows itself as clear
 In kindness, as loose appetite in wrong,
 Silenced that lyre harmonious, and still'd
 The sacred cords, that are by Heaven's right hand
 Unwound and tighten'd. How to righteous prayers
 Should they not hearken, who, to give me will
 For praying, in accordance thus were mute?
 He hath in sooth good cause for endless grief,
 Who, for the love of thing that lasteth not,
 Despoils himself for ever of that love.

As oft along the still and pure serene,
 At nightfall, glides a sudden trail of fire,
 Attracting with involuntary heed
 The eye to follow it, erewhile at rest;
 And seems some star that shifted place in Heaven,
 Only that, whence it kindles, none is lost,
 And it is soon extinct: thus from the horn,
 That on the dexter of the cross extends,
 Down to its foot, one luminary ran
 From mid the cluster shone there; yet no gem
 Dropp'd from its foil: and through the beamy list,
 Like flame in alabaster, glow'd its course.

So forward stretch'd him (if of credence aught
 Our greater muse¹ may claim) the pious ghost
 Of old Anchises, in the Elysian bower,
 When he perceived his son. "O thou, my blood!
 O most exceeding grace divine! to whom,
 As now to thee, hath twice the heavenly gate
 Been e'er unclosed?" So spake the light: whence I
 Turn'd me toward him; then unto my dame
 My sight directed: and on either side
 Amazement waited me; for in her eyes
 Was lighted such a smile, I thought that mine

¹ He refers to Virgil's account of the meeting of Anchises and Æneas in Elysium. *Æn.* vi. 679-694.

Had dived unto the bottom of my grace
 And of my bliss in Paradise. Forthwith,
 To hearing and to sight grateful alike,
 The spirit to his proem added things
 I understood not, so profound he spake :
 Yet not of choice, but through necessity,
 Mysterious ; for his high conception soar'd
 Beyond the mark of mortals. When the flight
 Of holy transport had so spent its rage,
 That nearer to the level of our thought
 The speech descended ; the first sounds I heard
 Were, " Blest be Thou, Triunal Deity !
 That hast such favour in my seed vouchsafed."
 Then follow'd : " No unpleasant thirst, though long,¹
 Which took me reading in the sacred book,
 Whose leaves or white or dusky never change,
 Thou hast allay'd, my son ! within this light,
 From whence my voice thou hear'st : more thanks to
 her,

Who, for such lofty mounting, has with plumes
 Begirt thee. Thou dost deem thy thoughts to me
 From Him transmitted, who is first of all,
 E'en as all numbers ray from unity ;²
 And therefore dost not ask me who I am,
 Or why to thee more joyous I appear,
 Than any other in this gladsome throng.
 The truth is as thou deem'st ; for in this life
 Both less and greater in that Mirror look,
 In which thy thoughts, or e'er thou think'st, are shown.
 But, that the love, which keeps me wakeful ever,
 Urging with sacred thirst of sweet desire,
 May be contented fully ; let thy voice,
 Fearless, and frank, and jocund, utter forth
 Thy will distinctly, utter forth the wish,
 Whereto my ready answer stands decreed."

I turn'd me to Beatrice ; and she heard
 Ere I had spoken, smiling an assent,
 That to my will gave wings ; and I began :

¹ Reading in the Divine Mirror, wherein all times are present, Cacciaguida had learned that this ecstatic pilgrimage of Dante to the world beyond the grave was decreed by God, and would inevitably come to pass.

² The Saints see in God all that it concerns them to know, even as all numbers are known in the clear conception of the mathematical unit.

"To each among your tribe,¹ what time ye kenn'd
 The nature, in whom nought unequal dwells,
 Wisdom and love were in one measure dealt;
 For that they are so equal in the Sun,
 From whence ye drew your radiance and your heat,
 As makes all likeness scant. But will and means,
 In mortals, for the cause ye well discern,
 With unlike wings are fledged. A mortal, I
 Experience inequality like this;
 And therefore give no thanks, but in the heart,
 For thy paternal greeting. This howe'er
 I pray thee, living topaz! that ingemm'st
 This precious jewel; let me hear thy name."

"I am thy root, O leaf! whom to expect
 Even, hath pleased me." Thus the prompt reply
 Prefacing, next it added: "He, of whom
 Thy kindred appellation comes, and who,
 These hundred years and more, on its first ledge
 Hath circuited the mountain, was my son,
 And thy great-grandsire.² Well befits, his long
 Endurance should be shorten'd by thy deeds.

"Florence, within her ancient limit-mark,
 Which calls her still to matin prayers and noon,³
 Was chaste and sober, and abode in peace.
 She had no armlets and no head-tires then;
 No purpled dames; no zone, that caught the eye
 More than the person did. Time was not yet,
 When⁴ at his daughter's birth the sire grew pale,
 For fear the age and dowry should exceed,
 On each side, just proportion. House was none

¹ "God who is the supreme 'equality,' *i. e.* in whom all things realise their absolute proportion and perfection, fills the blessed spirits with love and insight in equal measure, so that their utterance is the perfect expression of their emotion, but we mortals find our wills out-flying our power of utterance" (Wicksteed).

² Alighiero I., Cacciaguida's son and Dante's great-grandfather, is here said to have been more than a hundred years in the first terrace of Purgatory; but there is documentary evidence that he was alive in 1201.

³ The Badia, from which the canonical hours sounded, is close to the site of the ancient circle of walls, within which, in Cacciaguida's days, Florence was still enclosed. The second circle of walls was built in 1173; the third circle, which in part still stands, at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

⁴ "When the women were not married at too early an age, and did not expect too large a portion" (Cary).

Void¹ of its family : nor yet had come
 Sardanapalus, to exhibit feats
 Of chamber prowess.² Montemalo yet
 O'er our suburban turret rose ; as much
 To be surpast in fall, as in its rising.³
 I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad
 In leathern girdle, and a clasp of bone ;
 And, with no artful colouring on her cheeks,
 His lady leave the glass. The sons I saw
 Of Nerli, and of Vecchio, well content
 With unrobed jerkin ; and their good dames handling
 The spindle and the flax :⁴ O happy they !
 Each sure of burial in her native land,
 And none left desolate a-bed for France.⁵
 One waked to tend the cradle, hushing it
 With sounds that lull'd the parent's infancy :
 Another, with her maidens, drawing off
 The tresses from the distaff, lectured them
 Old tales of Troy, and Fesole, and Rome.
 A Salterello and Cianghella we
 Had held as strange a marvel, as ye would
 A Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.⁶

“ In such composed and seemly fellowship,
 Such faithful and such fair equality,
 In so sweet household, Mary⁷ at my birth

¹ Through exile, as Guelfs or Ghibellines alternately got the upper hand.

² Sardanapalus, King of Assyria, is here taken as a type of luxury.

³ “ Montemalo was not yet surpassed by your Uccellatoio.” Montemario is the first point at which Rome is seen by one coming from Viterbo, Uccellatoio the first where Florence is visible on the old road from Bologna. Florence had not yet attempted to rival Rome in her magnificence.

⁴ In Cacciaguida's days, the Florentine nobles and their wives were merely members of a society of unpretentious citizens. Bellincion Berti de' Ravignani, whom Villani calls “ the greatest and most honoured knight of Florence,” was the father of the good Gualdrada (*cf.* notes on *Inf.* xvi.) ; the Nerli and the Vecchietti were old Guelf families of the city.

⁵ “ None fearful either of dying in banishment, or of being deserted by her husband on a scheme of traffic in France ” (*Cary*).

⁶ Such degenerate women and corrupt political lawyers of Dante's own day as Cianghella della Tosa and Lapo Salterello (one of the White exiles of 1302) would have seemed as strange then as a Cornelia or a Cincinnatus in the Florence that the Poet knew.

⁷ The name of the Blessed Virgin was invoked in child-birth (*Madonna del parto*). *Cf.* *Purg.* xx.

Bestow'd me, call'd on with loud cries; and there,
 In your old baptistery, I was made
 Christian at once and Cacciaguida; as were
 My brethren, Eliseo and Moronto.

"From Val dipado¹ came to me my spouse;
 And hence thy surname grew. I follow'd then
 The Emperor Conrad: and his knighthood he
 Did gird on me; in such good part he took
 My valiant service. After him I went
 To testify against that evil law,
 Whose people, by the Shepherd's fault, possess
 Your right usurp'd. There I by that foul crew
 Was disentangled from the treacherous world
 Whose base affection many a spirit soils;
 And from the martyrdom came to this peace."²

CANTO XVI

ARGUMENT

Cacciaguida relates the time of his birth; and, describing the extent of Florence when he lived there, recounts the names of the chief families who then inhabited it. Its degeneracy, and subsequent disgrace, he attributes to the introduction of families from the neighbouring country and villages, and to their mixture with the primitive citizens.

O SLIGHT respect of man's nobility!
 I never shall account it marvellous,
 That our infirm affection here below
 Thou movest to boasting; when I could not chuse,
 E'en in that region of unwarp'd desire,
 In Heaven itself, but make my vaunt in thee.
 Yet cloak thou art soon shorten'd; for that Time,
 Unless thou be eked out from day to day,
 Goes round thee with his shears. Resuming then,
 With greeting³ such as Rome was first to bear,

¹ From the Valley of the Po. Cacciaguida's wife is (rather questionably) said to have been Alighiera of the Aldighieri family of Ferrara.

² Cacciaguida took part in the Crusade of 1147, under the Emperor Conrad III., and was slain. For the papal neglect of the Holy Land, cf. *Par.* ix.

³ To show his reverence, Dante addresses Cacciaguida as *voi* (instead of *tu*)—the plural form supposed to have been first given by Rome to Julius Cæsar.

But since hath disaccustom'd, I began :
 And Beatrice, that a little space
 Was sever'd, smiled;¹ reminding me of her,
 Whose cough embolden'd (as the story holds)
 To first offence the doubting Guenever.²

"You are my sire," said I: "you give me heart
 Freely to speak my thought: above myself
 You raise me. Through so many streams with joy
 My soul is fill'd, that gladness wells from it;
 So that it bears the mighty tide, and bursts not.
 Say then, my honour'd stem! what ancestors
 Were those you sprang from, and what years were
 mark'd

In your first childhood? Tell me of the fold,³
 That hath Saint John for guardian, what was then
 Its state, and who in it were highest seated!"

As embers, at the breathing of the wind,
 Their flame enliven; so that light I saw
 Shine at my blandishments; and, as it grew
 More fair to look on, so with voice more sweet,
 Yet not in this our modern phrase, forthwith
 It answer'd: "From the day,⁴ when it was said
 'Hail Virgin!' to the throes by which my mother,
 Who now is sainted, lighten'd her of me
 Whom she was heavy with, this fire had come
 Five hundred times and fourscore, to relume
 Its radiance underneath the burning foot
 Of its own lion. They, of whom I sprang,
 And I, had there our birth-place, where the last
 Partition of our city first is reach'd
 By him that runs her annual game.⁵ Thus much

¹ Beatrice stands apart, because this conversation has little to do with Divine Philosophy, but smiles indulgently at Dante's keenness in such matters.

² "She who coughed at the first fault recorded of Guenever." The Lady of Malehaut coughed during the first interview of Lancelot with the Queen. Cf. notes on *Inf.* v. Cary has mis-translated the passage; the lovers were by no means "emboldened" by her conduct.

³ Florence.

⁴ From the Incarnation of Christ to the birth of Cacciaguida, the planet Mars had returned to the constellation of Leo five hundred and eighty times (according to the reading, probably rightly, here adopted). Taking the period of the revolution of Mars as 687 days, this gives us 1091 as the year in which Cacciaguida was born.

⁵ Florence was divided into six sections, *sesti*. In the annual

Suffice of my forefathers : who they were,
 And whence they hither came, more honourable
 It is to pass in silence than to tell.
 All those, who at that time were there, betwixt
 Mars and the Baptist, fit to carry arms,
 Were but the fifth of them this day alive.
 But then the citizen's blood, that now is mix'd
 From Campi and Certaldo and Fighine,
 Ran purely through the last mechanic's veins.¹
 O how much better were it, that these people
 Were neighbours to you ; and that at Galluzzo
 And at Trespiano ye should have your boundary ;
 Than to have them within, and bear the stench
 Of Aguglione's hind, and Signa's, him,
 That hath his eye already keen for bartering.²
 Had not the people, which of all the world
 Degenerates most, been stepdame unto Cæsar,³
 But, as a mother to her son, been kind,
 Such one, as hath become a Florentine,
 And trades and traffics, hath been turn'd adrift
 To Simifonte,⁴ where his grandsire plied
 The beggar's craft : the Conti were possess
 Of Montemurlo⁵ still : the Cerchi still
 Were in Acone's parish : nor had haply

race the *Sesto di San Piero* was the last to be entered ; the Elisei, with whom the Alighieri were connected, had their house at the beginning of this *sesto*, near the Mercato Vecchio.

¹ The Baptistery and the statue of Mars at the Ponte Vecchio are here taken as the northern and southern boundaries of the city. The population in Cacciaguida's time was a fifth of that at the epoch of the vision, but pure Florentine, not yet contaminated by the immigration of new families from the towns of the Contado.

² In the eleventh century, Galuzzo and Trespiano were the southern and northern limits of Florentine territory—which, therefore, did not include Aguglione and Signa, from which were to come Baldo and Bonifazio, respectively, two unscrupulous lawyers and corrupt Guelf politicians of Dante's own day. There is an allusion to Baldo d'Aguglione in *Purg.* xii. ; it was he who, in 1311, drew up the "reform" by which Dante was included among the exiles for ever to be excepted from amnesty.

³ If the clergy had not caused the Guelf and Ghibelline factions by their hostility to the Emperors.

⁴ Simifonti, a fortress in the Valdelsa destroyed by the Florentines in 1202. The person meant is doubtfully identified with Lippo del Velluto, an opponent of Giano della Bella (see below).

⁵ The Conti Guidi, being unable to defend their castle of Montemurlo from the Pistoians, sold it to Florence in 1254.

From Valdigreve past the Buondelmonti.¹
 The city's malady hath ever source
 In the confusion of its persons, as
 The body's, in variety of food :
 And the blind bull falls with a steeper plunge,
 Than the blind lamb : and oftentimes one sword
 Doth more and better execution,
 Than five. Mark Luni ; Urbisaglia mark ;
 How they are gone ; and after them how go
 Chiusi and Sinigaglia !² and 'twill seem
 No longer new, or strange to thee, to hear
 That families fail, when cities have their end.
 All things that appertain to ye, like yourselves,
 Are mortal : but mortality in some
 Ye mark not ; they endure so long, and you
 Pass by so suddenly. And as the moon
 Doth, by the rolling of her heavenly sphere,
 Hide and reveal the strand unceasingly ;
 So fortune deals with Florence. Hence admire not
 At what of them I tell thee, whose renown
 Time covers, the first Florentines. I saw
 The Ughi, Catilini, and Filippi,
 The Alberichi, Greci, and Ormanni,
 Now in their wane, illustrious citizens ;
 And great as ancient, of Sannella him,
 With him of Arca saw, and Soldanieri,
 And Ardinghi, and Bostichi.³ At the poop
 That now is laden with new felony
 So cumbrous it may speedily sink the bark,
 The Ravignani sat, of whom is sprung
 The County Guido, and whoso hath since
 His title from the famed Bellincion ta'en.⁴

¹ But for the quarrel between the Church and the Empire, the Cerchi and the Buondelmonti (who played a leading part in the factions of 1300 and 1215, respectively) would still be in their former homes in the country, and not have come to cause dissensions in the city.

² Four decayed or decaying Italian cities. Chiusi and Sinigaglia, however, still survive.

³ Ancient families of Cacciaguیدا's day. The Bostichi were still powerful at the date of the vision.

⁴ For "at the poop," read "over the gate" (*sopra la porta*). Shortly before 1300, the Cerchi purchased the houses over the Porta San Piero, which had been those of the Ravignani, from whom (through Bellincion Berti's daughter Gualdrada) the Conti Guidi were descended.

Fair governance was yet an art well prized
 By him of Pressa : Galigaio show'd
 The gilded hilt and pommel,¹ in his house :
 The column, clothed with verrey,² still was seen
 Unshaken ; the Sacchetti still were great,
 Giuochi, Fifanti, Galli, and Barucci,
 With them³ who blush to hear the bushel named.
 Of the Calfucci still the branchy trunk
 Was in its strength : and, to the curule chairs,
 Sizii and Arrigucci yet were drawn.
 How mighty them⁴ I saw, whom, since, their pride
 Hath undone ! And in all their goodly deeds
 Florence was, by the bullets of bright gold,⁵
 O'erflourish'd. Such the sires of those, who now,
 As surely as your church is vacant, flock
 Into her consistory, and at leisure
 There stall them and grow fat.⁶ The o'erweening
 brood,
 That plays the dragon after him that flees,
 But unto such as turn and show the tooth,
 Ay or the purse, is gentle as a lamb,
 Was on its rise, but yet so slight esteem'd,
 That Ubertino of Donati grudged
 His father-in-law should yoke him to its tribe.⁷
 Already Caponsacco⁸ had descended
 Into the mart from Fesole : and Giuda

¹ The insignia of knighthood.

² The arms of the Pigli.

³ The Chiaramontesi, one of which family had committed the fraud referred to in *Purg.* xii.

⁴ The Uberti. Cf. *Inf.* x.

⁵ The Lamberti. Cf. *Inf.* xxviii.

⁶ The ancestors of the Visdomini and the della Tosa, families which, having the revenues of the bishopric of Florence in their hands, were accused of perverting them to their own uses whenever the see was vacant.

⁷ The Adimari, to one branch of which family Filippo Argenti (*Inf.* viii.) belonged. Ubertino Donati, the ancestor of Dante's wife, had married one of the daughters of Bellincion Berti (a sister, therefore, of Gualdrada), and strongly objected to his father-in-law giving a third daughter in marriage to one of the Adimari. It has recently been shown (by Zingarelli) that Dante's son Pietro asserts that a fourth daughter of Bellincion was the wife of the poet's great-grandfather, Alighiero I.

⁸ The Caponsacchi had come down from Fiesole to live in the Mercato Vecchio.

And Infangato¹ were good citizens.
 A thing incredible I tell, though true :
 The gateway, named from those of Pera, led
 Into the narrow circuit of your walls.²
 Each one, who bears the sightly quarterings
 Of the great Baron,³ (he whose name and worth
 The festival of Thomas still revives,
 His knighthood and his privilege retain'd ;
 Albeit one,⁴ who borders them with gold,
 This day is mingled with the common herd.
 In Borgo yet the Gualterotti dwelt,
 And Importuni : well for its repose,
 Had it still lack'd of newer neighbourhood.⁵
 The house,⁶ from whence your tears have had their
 spring,
 Through the just anger, that hath murder'd ye
 And put a period to your gladsome days,
 Was honour'd ; it, and those consorted with it.
 O Buondelmonte ! what ill counseling
 Prevail'd on thee to break the plighted bond ?
 Many, who now are weeping, would rejoice,
 Had God to Ema given thee, the first time
 Thou near our city camest. But so was doom'd :
 Florence ! on that maim'd stone which guards the
 bridge,
 The victim, when thy peace departed, fell.⁷

¹ The Giudi and Infangati were Ghibelline families who shared the ruin of their faction.

² This probably means, it seems incredible that the della Pera were ever of such importance as to have a gate of the city named after them.

³ Ugo, Marquis of Tuscany and imperial vicar of Otho III., ennobled several Florentine families, and gave them the right to bear his arms. Dying on the feast of St. Thomas, December 21, 1101, he was buried in the Badia which had been founded by his mother, where he is still annually commemorated on that day.

⁴ Giano della Bella, who bore the arms of the Marquis, barry red and white, bordered with gold, identified himself with the popular cause in Florence, and was instrumental in establishing the Ordinances of Justice in 1293, whereby the nobles were excluded from office and subjected to severe penalties for offences against the people. It is doubtful whether he, or his family in general, is indicated.

⁵ Well had it been for the peace of Florence, if the Buondelmonti had never left the Valdigueve (*cf.* above) and settled in the Borgo Santi Apostoli, near the old families of Gualterotti and Importuni !

⁶ The Amidei.

⁷ The refusal of Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti, at the instigation

“ With these and others like to them, I saw
 Florence in such assured tranquillity,
 She had no cause at which to grieve : with these
 Saw her so glorious and so just, that ne'er
 The lily from the lance had hung reverse,
 Or through division been with vermeil dyed.”¹

CANTO XVII

ARGUMENT

Cacciaguida predicts to our Poet his exile and the calamities he had to suffer; and, lastly, exhorts him to write the present poem.

SUCH as the youth,² 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 unobserved was such
 Of Beatrice, and that saintly lamp,³
 Who had erewhile for me his station moved;
 When thus my 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! revered and loved!
 Who soar'st so high a pitch, that thou as clear,
 As earthily thought determines two obtuse
 In one triangle not contain'd, so clear

of Gualdrada Donati, to keep his plighted troth to a maiden of the Amidei, led to his murder, in 1215, at the foot of the statue of Mars, “ the maimed stone which guards the bridge,” and the division of the whole city into Guelfs and Ghibellines. Cf. *Inf.* xiii. and xxviii. The Ema is the small stream over which the Buondelmonti would have to pass in coming from the Valdigueve to Florence.

¹ The lily on the Florentine standard was never reversed in derision by victorious foes, nor changed from white to red, as it was by the Guelfs in 1251 (the idea of its being stained red by the blood of citizens slain in civil war is likewise to be understood).

² Phaëton came to his mother Clymene to know if he were really Apollo's son. Cf. *Inf.* xvii.

³ Cacciaguida.

Dost see contingencies, ere in themselves
 Existent, looking at the point whereto
 All times are present; ¹ I, the whilst I scaled
 With Virgil the soul-purifying mount
 And visited the nether world of woe,
 Touching my future destiny have heard
 Words grievous, ² though I feel me on all sides
 Well squared to fortune's blows. Therefore my will
 Were satisfied to know the lot awaits me;
 The arrow, seen beforehand, slacks his flight."

So said I to the brightness, which erewhile
 To me had spoken; and my will declared,
 As Beatrice will'd, explicitly.

Nor with oracular response obscure,
 Such as, or e'er the Lamb of God was slain,
 Beguiled the credulous nations: but, in terms
 Precise, and unambiguous lore, replied
 The spirit of paternal love, enshrined,
 Yet in his smile apparent; and thus spake:

"Contingency, whose verge extendeth not
 Beyond the tablet of your mortal mold,
 Is all depicted in the eternal sight;
 But hence deriveth not necessity,
 More than the tall ship, hurried down the flood,
 Is driven by the eye that looks on it."³

From thence, ⁴ as to the ear sweet harmony
 From organ comes, so comes before mine eye
 The time prepared for thee. Such as driven out
 From Athens, by his cruel stepdame's wiles,

¹ As clearly as we see that a triangle cannot contain two obtuse angles, so do the blessed behold contingent things (things which depend upon the free action of the human will) in their vision of God, to whom all things and all times are present.

² Cf. *Inf.* x., xv., xxv., and *Purg.* xi.

³ Contingency, as opposed to necessity, includes all that happens but might not have done so; all things that depend upon the acts freely determined by the human will. It has no place beyond man's material limitations, and, though all beheld by the Divine Vision, does not become necessary because of this, any more than a ship's course down a stream from the eye of one who is gazing at her. Boëthius (*De Cons. Philos.* v.) shows that God's prescience is not foreknowledge as of something future, but knowledge of a never-passing moment: "If we may, without unfitness, compare God's present and man's, just as ye see certain things in this your temporary present, so does He see all things in His eternal present" (H. R. James's translation).

⁴ From the vision of God.

Hippolytus departed; ¹ such must thou
 Depart from Florence. This they wish, and this
 Contrive, and will ere long effectuate, there, ²
 Where gainful merchandize is made of Christ
 Throughout the live-long day. The common cry,
 Will, as 'tis ever wont, affix the blame
 Unto the party injured: but the truth
 Shall, in the vengeance it dispenseth, find
 A faithful witness. Thou shalt leave each thing
 Beloved 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,
 To have ta'en thy stand apart shall well become thee. ³
 "First refuge thou must find, first place of rest,
 In the great Lombard's ⁴ 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 'fals 'twixt other men, the granting shall
 Forerun the asking. With him shalt thou see
 That mortal, ⁵ who was at his birth imprest
 So strongly from this star, that of his deeds

¹ Phædra wrongfully accused Hippolytus of her own unchaste desires; so will the corrupt citizens of Florence accuse Dante of malversation and treason.

² In the Court of Pope Boniface at Rome.

³ Documentary evidence shows that Dante broke away from his fellow-exiles between June 8, 1302, and June 18, 1303; that is, before the worst of the misfortunes here foretold fell upon them.

⁴ Bartolommeo della Scala, Lord of Verona, the arms of whose family were a ladder surmounted by the imperial eagle. Dante took refuge with him sometime between the summer of 1302 and his death in March, 1304.

⁵ Bartolommeo's younger brother, Can Grande della Scala (1291-1329), destined to be the greatest Italian soldier of his age, and the chief upholder of the imperial cause in northern Italy. At the epoch of the vision (April, 1300), he was nine years and a month old.

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 practise on great Harry,¹
 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;²
 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 silence, mark'd
 Completion of that web, which I had stretch'd
 Before it, warp'd for weaving; 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
 Abandoneth himself. Therefore 'tis good
 I should forecast, that, driven from the place
 Most dear to me, I may not lose myself³
 All other 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 Heaven, from light to light;

¹ Pope Clement V., by origin a Gascon, at first seemed to favour the Emperor Henry VII. (1308-1313), but afterwards secretly opposed him. Cf. *Inf.* xix. and *Par.* xxx. Before the latter date, Can Grande showed his mettle by recovering Brescia and taking Vicenza in 1311.

² "Incredible even to those who shall witness them." Cf. *Inf.* i. and *Purg.* xxxiii.

³ "That being driven out of my country, I may not deprive myself of every other place by the boldness with which I expose in my writings the vices of mankind" (Cary).

Have I learnt that, which if I tell again,
 It may with many wofully 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 enclosed the treasure¹ smiled,
 Which I had found there, first shone glisteringly,
 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 removed,
 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.²
 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."

CANTO XVIII

ARGUMENT

Dante sees the souls of many renowned warriors and crusaders in the planet Mars; and then ascends with Beatrice to Jupiter, the sixth Heaven, in which he finds the souls of those who had administered justice rightly in the world, so disposed, as to form the figure of an eagle. The Canto concludes with an invective against the avarice of the clergy, and especially of the Pope.

Now in his word, sole, ruminating, joy'd
 That blessed spirit : and I fed on mine,
 Tempering the sweet with bitter.³ She meanwhile,

¹ The soul of Cacciaguida.

² Let him fearlessly assail wickedness in the highest places; for this very purpose has the vision been vouchsafed to him. Cf. the opening of the third book of the *De Monarchia*.

³ *Verbo*, "word," is here taken as meaning "thought," or "conception."

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 gazed 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." ¹

As here, we sometimes in the looks may see
The affection mark'd, when that its sway hath ta'en
The spirit wholly ; thus the hallow'd light,²
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,³ whose life
Is from its top, whose fruit is ever fair
And leaf unwithering, blessed spirits abide,
That were below, ere they arrived in Heaven,
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,⁴ another move
With whirling speed ; and gladness was the scourge
Unto that top. The next for Charlemagne

¹ In the allegorical sense, blessedness must be sought after, not only in the contemplation of revealed truth, but also by following the examples set by those who have done great deeds for the Kingdom of Heaven.

² The soul of Cacciaguida.

³ The fifth sphere of Paradise.

⁴ Joshua, the original conqueror of the Holy Land, and Judas Maccabæus, the champion of the chosen people against their oppressors.

And for the peer Orlando,¹ two my gaze
Pursued, intently, as the eye pursues
A falcon flying. Last, along the cross,
William, and Renard,² and Duke Godfrey drew
My ken, and Robert Guiscard.³ And the soul
Who spake with me, among the other lights
Did move away, and mix; and with the quire
Of heavenly songsters proved his tuneful skill.

To Beatrice on my right I bent,
Looking for intimation, or by word
Or act, what next behoved; and did descry
Such mere effulgence in her eyes, such joy,
It pass'd 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 perceived,
Of my ascent, together with the Heaven,
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,⁴

¹ Charlemagne (742-814), the historical restorer of the Western Empire and legendary builder of Florence, is placed in Paradise as the warrior of the Church, not as the righteous ruler. Cf. *Par. vi.* and *Mon. iii.* 11. Orlando, or Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, the chief hero of the Carolingian cycle of romances, was slain at Roncevalles in 778. Cf. *Inf. xxxi.*

² William of Orange, a hero of French romance, was historically one of Charlemagne's knights, who, after a strenuous career of warfare against the Saracens, died a monk in 812; Renard, or Renouard, his brother-in-law, a converted Saracen who became his companion on the field and in the cloister, is a purely mythical personage.

³ Godfrey of Bouillon, a descendant of Charlemagne in the female line, led the first Crusade which captured Jerusalem in 1099, and ruled as king until his death in the following year, refusing the royal crown and title. Robert Guiscard, son of Tancred de Hauteville, founded the Norman dynasty in southern Italy and Sicily (*d.* 1085); he is presumably here for his services against the Greeks and Saracens, rather than his defence of Pope Gregory VII., in which he perpetrated the fearful sack of Rome, of which the traces may still be seen on the Cælian Hill. Cf. *Inf. xxviii.*

⁴ According to Ptolemaic astronomy, Jupiter is a star of temperate composition, between the cold of Saturn and the heat of

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,¹ 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, figured i' the air.
 First singing to their notes they moved; then, one
 Becoming of these signs, a little while
 Did rest them, and were mute. O nymph divine,
 Of Pegasean race!² who souls, which thou
 Inspirest, makest glorious and long-lived, 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.³
 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 the unwise;⁴
 Thus more than thousand twinkling lustres hence
 Seem'd reascending; and a higher pitch
 Mars. Also, it appears white among the stars, as though of
 silver (*Conv.* ii. 14).

¹ Cranes on the banks of the Nile. The image is from Lucan,
Phars. v. 711-716.

² The Muse to whom Hippocrene, the fountain struck out by
 the hoof of Pegasus, is sacred.

³ The spirits form successively the letters of the opening text
 of the Book of Wisdom in the Vulgate: *Diligite justitiam qui
 judicatis terram*: "Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the
 earth;" until they rest in the *M* of *terram*, the initial letter of
 "Monarchia," which for Dante is synonymous with the Empire.

⁴ Who prognosticate their luck according to the number of
 sparks which rise.

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, livelily
 Graved 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,¹ that seem'd
 Erewhile, with liliated crowning, well content
 To over-canopy the M, moved forth,
 Following gently the impress of the bird.

Sweet star! what glorious and thick-studded gems
 Declared to me our justice on the earth
 To be the effluence of that Heaven, 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 more²
 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!
 O beg ye grace for those, that are, on earth,
 All after ill example gone astray.
 War once had for his instrument the sword:
 But now 'tis made, taking the bread away,³
 Which the good Father locks from none.—And thou,
 That writest but to cancel,⁴ think, that they,

¹ The other band of spirits. By a series of transformations—in the course of which the lily is temporarily combined with the M, perhaps in allusion to the brief period during which the Monarchy belonged to the Franks (whom Dante did not discriminate from French)—the M becomes transformed into an heraldic Eagle, the symbol of the Roman People, which with Dane represents Law and Justice. The meaning is that this sign of the Roman Empire is the idea of dominion within the mind of God, and its power therefore comes direct from Him.

² Matt. xxi. 12, 13; Luke xix. 45, 46; John ii. 14-17. Cf. *Epist.* viii. 4.

³ Excommunication, by which men are deprived of the Blessed Sacrament, is used as a weapon of political warfare.

⁴ This is addressed to John XXII. (1316-1334), the reigning Pontiff while Dante was actually writing. The suggestion is that he excommunicates in order to cancel the sentence for money.

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 lived in solitude remote,
 And for a dance was dragg'd to martyrdom,
 I wist not of the Fisherman nor Paul." ¹

CANTO XIX

ARGUMENT

The eagle speaks as with one voice proceeding from a multitude of spirits, that compose it; and declares the cause for which it is exalted to that state of glory. It then solves a doubt, which our Poet had entertained, respecting the possibility of salvation without belief in Christ; exposes the inefficacy of a mere profession of such belief; and prophesies the evil appearance that many Christian potentates will make at the day of judgment.

BEFORE my sight appear'd, with open wings,
 The beauteous image; in fruition sweet,
 Gladdening the thronged spirits. Each did seem
 A little ruby, whereon so intense
 The sun-beam glow'd, that to mine eyes it came
 In clear refraction. And that, which next
 Befals me to pourtray, voice hath not utter'd,
 Nor hath ink written, nor in fantasy
 Was e'er conceived. For I beheld and heard
 The beak discourse; and, what intention form'd
 Of many, singly as of one express,
 Beginning: "For that I was just and piteous,
 I am exalted to this height of glory,
 The which no wish exceeds: and there on earth
 Have I my memory left, e'en by the bad
 Commended, while they leave its course untrod." ²

Thus is one heat from many embers felt;
 As in that image many were the loves,

¹ The Pope is so much absorbed in worshipping the Baptist on the golden florins of Florence (which bore the impression of the Saint as well as that of the Lily), that he has forgotten St. Peter and St. Paul.

² "The just Kings, who compose the eagle of Jupiter, speak as one person, just as many brands give out one warmth, so indicating that the work of all righteous governors is one and the same, the voice of all of them being the one voice of justice" (Wicksteed).

And one the voice, that issued from them all :
 Whence I address'd them : " O perennial flowers
 Of gladness everlasting ! that exhale
 In single breath your odours manifold ;
 Breathe now : and let the hunger be appeased,
 That with great craving long hath held my soul,
 Finding no food on earth. This well I know ;
 That if there be in Heaven a realm, that shows
 In faithful mirror the celestial Justice,
 Yours without veil reflects it. Ye discern
 The heed, wherewith I do prepare myself
 To hearken ; ye, the doubt, that urges me
 With such inveterate craving." ¹ Straight I saw,
 Like to a falcon issuing from the hood,
 That rears his head, and claps him with his wings,
 His beauty and his eagerness bewraying ;
 So saw I move that stately sign, with praise
 Of grace divine inwoven, and high song
 Of inexpressive joy. " He," it began,
 " Who turn'd His compass ² on the world's extreme,
 And in that space so variously hath wrought,
 Both openly and in secret ; in such wise
 Could not, through all the universe, display
 Impression of His glory, that the Word ³
 Of His omniscience should not still remain
 In infinite excess. In proof whereof,
 He first through pride supplanted, who was sum
 Of each created being, ⁴ waited not
 For light celestial ; and abortive fell.
 Whence needs each lesser nature is but scant
 Receptacle unto that Good, which knows
 No limit, measured by itself alone.

¹ The question of the justice of the exclusion of the righteous heathen from eternal blessedness. Cf. *Mon.* ii. 8 : " There are certain judgments of God to which human reason, albeit unable to attain of its proper strength, is nevertheless raised by dint of faith in what is said to us in the sacred writings ; as, for instance, this : That no one, however perfect in the moral and intellectual virtues, both as to disposition and practice, may be saved without faith, if he have never heard aught of Christ. For human reason of itself cannot see that this is just, but helped by faith it may."

² Cf. Proverbs viii. 27.

³ The Divine Wisdom, which is in infinite excess of what a finite intellect can apprehend. All God's perfections, including His Justice, are identified in His Divine Essence.

⁴ Lucifer. Cf. *V. E.* i. 2.

Therefore your sight, of the omnipresent Mind
 A single beam, its origin must own
 Surpassing far its utmost potency.
 The ken, your world is gifted with, descends
 In the everlasting Justice as low down,
 As eye doth in the sea; which, though it mark
 The bottom from the shore, in the wide main
 Discerns it not; and ne'ertheless it is;
 But hidden through its deepness. Light is none,
 Save that which cometh from the pure serene
 Of ne'er disturbed ether: for the rest,
 'Tis darkness all; or shadow of the flesh,
 Or else its poison. Here confess reveal'd
 That covert, which hath hidden from thy search
 The living justice, of the which thou madest
 Such frequent question; for thou said'st—'A man
 Is born on Indus' banks, and none is there
 Who speaks of Christ, nor who doth read nor write;
 And all his inclinations and his acts,
 As far as human reason sees, are good;
 And he offendeth not in word or deed:
 But unbaptized he dies, and void of faith.
 Where is the justice that condemns him? where
 His blame, if he believeth not?'—What then,
 And who art thou, that on the stool wouldst sit
 To judge at distance of a thousand miles
 With the short-sighted vision of a span?
 To him,¹ who subtilizes thus with me,
 There would assuredly be room for doubt
 Even to wonder, did not the safe word
 Of Scripture hold supreme authority.

"O animals of clay! O spirits gross!
 The Primal Will, that in itself is good,
 Hath from itself, the chief Good, ne'er been moved.
 Justice consists in consonance with it,
 Derivable by no created good,
 Whose very cause depends upon its beam."²

¹ "He, who should argue, on the words I have just used, respecting the fate of those who have wanted means of knowing the Gospel, would certainly have cause enough to doubt, if he did not defer to the authority of Scripture, which pronounces God to be thoroughly just" (Cary).

² Justice is the Primal Will, the will of God, neither more nor less, and the will of God is Justice. Cf. *Mon.* ii. 2.

As on her nest the stork, that turns about
 Unto her young, whom lately she hath fed,
 Whiles they with upward eyes do look on her;
 So lifted I my gaze; and, bending so,
 The ever-blessed image waved its wings,
 Labouring with such deep counsel. Wheeling round
 It warbled, and did say: "As are my notes
 To thee, who understand'st them not; such is
 The eternal judgment unto mortal ken."

Then still abiding in that ensign ranged,
 Wherewith the Romans overawed the world,
 Those burning splendours of the Holy Spirit
 Took up the strain; and thus it spake again:
 "None ever hath ascended to this realm,
 Who hath not a believer been in Christ,
 Either before or after the blest limbs
 Were nail'd upon the wood. But lo! of those
 Who call 'Christ, Christ,'¹ there shall be many found,
 In judgment, further off from him by far,
 Than such to whom His name was never known.
 Christians like these the Æthiop² shall condemn:
 When that the two assemblages shall part;
 One rich eternally, the other poor.

"What may the Persians say unto your kings,
 When they shall see that volume,³ in the which
 All their dispraise is written, spread to view?
 There amidst Albert's works shall that be read,
 Which will give speedy motion to the pen,
 When Prague shall mourn her desolated realm.⁴
 There shall be read the woe, that he doth work
 With his adulterate money on the Seine,
 Who by the tusk will perish;⁵ there be read
 The thirsting pride, that maketh fool alike

¹ Cf. Matt. vii. 21.

³ Cf. Rev. xx. 12.

² Cf. Matt. xii. 41.

⁴ The Eagle passes over the map of Europe, whose princes "join no philosophical authority to their government" (*Conv.* iv. 6), and in every land finds the temporal rulers (no less than Dante had found the spiritual) obscuring the light of justice. The first offender is the Emperor himself, Albert of Hapsburg (cf. *Purg.* vi.), who is about to plunge into an unjust war of aggression against Bohemia (1304).

⁵ Philip the Fair of France, who debased the coinage, was killed in 1314, through his horse being overthrown by the attack of a wild boar.

The English and Scot, impatient of their bound.¹
 There shall be seen the Spaniard's luxury;²
 The delicate living there of the Bohemian,³
 Who still to worth has been a willing stranger.
 The halter of Jerusalem⁴ shall see
 A unit for his virtue; for his vices,
 No less a mark than million. He,⁵ who guards
 The isle of fire by old Anchises honour'd,
 Shall find his avarice there and cowardice;
 And better to denote his littleness,
 The writing must be letters maim'd, that speak
 Much in a narrow space. All there shall know
 His uncle and his brother's filthy doings,
 Who so renown'd a nation and two crowns
 Have bastardized.⁶ And they, of Portugal
 And Norway, there shall be exposed, with him
 Of Ratza, who hath counterfeited ill
 The coin of Venice.⁷ O blest Hungary!
 If thou no longer patiently abidest
 Thy ill-entreating:⁸ and, O blest Navarre!
 If with thy mountainous girdle thou wouldst arm thee.
 In earnest of that day, e'en now are heard
 Wailings and groans in Famagosta's streets
 And Nicosia's, grudging at their beast,
 Who keepeth even footing with the rest."⁹

¹ He refers to the Scotch wars of Edward I., who was reigning in England in 1300.

² Ferdinand IV., King of Castile and Leon (1295-1312).

³ Wenceslaus IV. of Bohemia (1278-1305). Cf. *Purg.* vii.

⁴ Charles II. of Naples (1285-1309), titular King of Jerusalem. He was called *il Ciotto*, "the cripple," because slightly lame. Cf. *Purg.* vii. and xx.

⁵ Frederick II., King of Sicily (1296-1337). Cf. *Purg.* iii. and vii.

⁶ James, King of the Balearic Islands (1276-1311), brother of Peter III. of Aragon, and therefore uncle of Frederick; James II., King of Aragon (1291-1327), son of Peter, and elder brother of Frederick. Cf. *Purg.* vii.

⁷ Dionysius, King of Portugal (1279-1325); Hakon V. of Norway (1299-1319); Stephen Ouros II. of Servia, called *Rascia* from its capital (1275-1321).

⁸ Hungary in 1300 was ruled by Andrew III., who had usurped the crown that belonged by right to Carobert, the son of Charles Martel.

⁹ Happy would Navarre be, if the Pyrenees could preserve her independence from France, to which she was destined to be annexed in 1314! As a warning to her (*per arra di questo*, "as a pledge of this," which Cary wrongly translates "in earnest of that

CANTO XX

ARGUMENT

The eagle celebrates the praise of certain kings, whose glorified spirits form the eye of the bird. In the pupil is David; and, in the circle round it, Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William II. of Sicily, and Ripheus. It explains to our Poet, how the souls of those whom he supposed to have had no means of believing in Christ, came to be in Heaven; and concludes with an admonition against presuming to fathom the counsels of God.

WHEN, disappearing from our hemisphere,
 The world's enlightener vanishes, and day
 On all sides wasteth; suddenly the sky,
 Erewhile irradiate only with his beam,
 Is yet again unfolded, putting forth
 Innumerable lights wherein one shines.¹
 Of such vicissitude in Heaven I thought;
 As the great sign, that marshalet the world
 And the world's leaders, in the blessed beak
 Was silent: for that all those living lights,
 Waxing in splendour, burst forth into songs,
 Such as from memory glide and fall away.

Sweet Love, that dost apparel thee in smiles!
 How lustrous was thy semblance in those sparkles,
 Which merely are from holy thoughts inspired.

After the precious and bright beaming stones,
 That did ingem the sixth light, ceased the chiming
 Of their angelic bells; methought I heard
 The murmuring of a river, that doth fall
 From rock to rock transpicuous, making known
 The richness of his spring-head: ² and as sound
 Of cittern, at the fret-board, or of pipe,
 Is, at the wind-hole, modulate and tuned;
 Thus up the neck, as it were hollow, rose
 That murmuring of the eagle; and forthwith

day," and refers to "the last doom"), the cities of Cyprus are bewailing the evil government of their French King, Henry II. of Lusignan (*d.* 1324).

¹ As the stars in Dante's astronomy reflect the light of the sun, so does the power of minor kings and princes proceed from that of the Emperor. The "great sign" is, of course, the imperial Eagle.

² After the spirits in this sixth Heaven have ceased their song, the Eagle, speaking for all, sets forth the glory of their six leaders.

Voice there assumed; and thence along the beak
 Issued in form of words, such as my heart
 Did look for, on whose tables I inscribed them.

“The part¹ in me, that sees and bears the sun
 In mortal eagles,” it began, “must now
 Be noted stedfastly: for, of the fires
 That figure me, those, glittering in mine eye,
 Are chief of all the greatest. This, that shines
 Midmost for pupil, was the same who² sang
 The Holy Spirit’s song, and bare about
 The ark from town to town: now doth he know
 The merit of his soul-impassion’d strains
 By their well-fitted guerdon. Of the five,
 That make the circle of the vision, he,³
 Who to the beak is nearest, comforted
 The widow for her son: now doth he know,
 How dear it costeth not to follow Christ;
 Both from experience of this pleasant life,
 And of its opposite. He next,⁴ who follows
 In the circumference, for the over-arch,
 By true repenting slack’d the pace of death:
 Now knoweth he, that the decrees of Heaven
 Alter not, when, through pious prayer below,
 To-day is made to-morrow’s destiny.⁵
 The other following, with the laws and me,
 To yield the Shepherd room, pass’d o’er to Greece;⁶
 From good intent, producing evil fruit:
 Now knoweth he, how all the ill, derived
 From his well doing, doth not harm him aught;
 Though it have brought destruction on the world.

¹ The eye. The head of the Eagle is seen in profile.

² David, the ancestor of Christ according to the flesh, the King who was born at the time when Æneas came to Italy, thus making manifest the Divine election of the Roman Empire (*Conv.* iv. 5).

³ The Emperor Trajan (98–117). Cf. *Purg.* x.

⁴ Hezekiah, King of Judah. Cf. 2 Kings xx.

⁵ Aquinas teaches that the immutability of God’s decrees is consistent with the efficacy of prayer, because prayer does not alter the Divine plan, but simply fulfils what God has ordained to be fulfilled by prayer.

Constantine the Great (*d.* 337) transferred the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, in order (according to ecclesiastical tradition supported by the famous forged “Donation”) to make over Rome to the Pope. Cf. *Inf.* xix., *Purg.* xxxii., and *Mon.* ii. 12, 13, iii. 10, 13.

That, which thou seest in the under bow,
 Was William,¹ whom that land bewails, which weeps
 For Charles and Frederick living : now he knows,
 How well is loved in Heaven the righteous king ;
 Which he betokens by his radiant seeming.
 Who, in the erring world beneath, would deem
 That Trojan Ripheus,² in this round, was set,
 Fifth of the saintly splendours ? now he knows
 Enough of that, which the world cannot see ;
 The grace divine : albeit e'en his sight
 Reach not its utmost depth." Like to the lark,
 That warbling in the air expatiates long,
 Then, trilling out his last sweet melody,
 Drops, satiate with the sweetness ; such appear'd
 That image, stamp'd by the everlasting pleasure,
 Which fashions, as they are, all things that be.

I, though my doubting were as manifest,
 As is through glass the hue that mantles it,
 In silence waited not ; for to my lips
 " What things are these ? " involuntary rush'd,
 And forced a passage out : whereat I mark'd
 A sudden lightening and new revelry.
 The eye was kindled ; and the blessed sign,
 No more to keep me wondering and suspense,
 Replied : " I see that thou believest these things,
 Because I tell them, but discern'st not how ;
 So that thy knowledge waits not on thy faith :
 As one, who knows the name of thing by rote,
 But is a stranger to its properties,
 Till other's tongue reveal them. Fervent love,
 And lively hope, with violence assail
 The Kingdom of the Heavens, and overcome
 The will of the Most High ; not in such sort
 As man prevails o'er man ; but conquers it,

¹ William II., called the Good, Norman King of Sicily and Naples (1166-1189), the realms ruled in 1300 by the Aragonese Frederick II. and the Angevin Charles II., respectively. Cf. *Conv.* iv. 6, and *V. E.* i. 12. He was the nephew of the Empress Constance (*Par.* iii.).

² Ripheus the Trojan, described by Virgil (*Æn.* ii. 426) as "above all others the most just among the Trojans, and the strictest observer of right." Dante connects this with Acts x. 34, 35 : "God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." The Vulgate has *justitia*, where the English version reads "righteousness."

Because 'tis willing to be conquer'd; still,
Though conquer'd, by its mercy, conquering.

"Those, in the eye who live the first and fifth,
Cause thee to marvel, in that thou behold'st
The region of the Angels deck'd with them.
They quitted not their bodies, as thou deem'st,
Gentiles, but Christians; in firm rooted faith,
This, of the feet in future to be pierced,
That, of feet nail'd already to the Cross.¹
One from the barrier of the dark abyss,
Where never any with good will returns,²
Came back unto his bones. Of lively hope
Such was the meed; of lively hope, that wing'd
The prayers sent up to God for his release,
And put power into them to bend his will.³
The glorious Spirit, of whom I speak to thee,
A little while returning to the flesh,
Believed in Him, who had the means to help;
And, in believing, nourish'd such a flame
Of holy love, that at the second death
He was made sharer in our gamesome mirth.
The other,⁴ through the riches of that grace,
Which from so deep a fountain doth distil,
As never eye created saw its rising,
Placed all his love below on just and right:
Wherefore, of grace, God oped in him the eye
To the redemption of mankind to come;
Wherein believing, he endured no more
The filth of Paganism, and for their ways
Rebuked the stubborn nations. The three nymphs,⁵

¹ By the power of Love and Hope, respectively, Ripheus and Trajan died with faith in the Redeemer, who was to suffer, or had suffered, for man.

² Cary has mistranslated this passage. By his prayers, St. Gregory the Great (cf. *Purg.* x.) was said to have obtained from God that Trajan should be brought back to life from Hell—*u' non si riede giammai a buon voler*, "where no soul ever returns to good will"—free will in the damned being for ever fixed upon evil.

³ *Si che potesse sua voglia esser mossa*, "so that his [Trajan's] will could be moved to good."

⁴ Ripheus. "A man may prepare himself for the reception of faith through what is contained in natural reason. Wherefore it is said that, if any one who is born in barbarous nations does what lieth in him, God will reveal to him what is necessary for salvation, either by inspiration or by sending a teacher" (Aquinas).

⁵ The theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Cf. *Purg.*

Whom at the right wheel thou beheld'st advancing,
 Were sponsors for him, more than thousand years
 Before baptizing. O how far removed,
 Predestination! is thy root from such
 As see not the First Cause entire: and ye,
 O mortal men! be wary how ye judge:
 For we, who see our Maker, know not yet
 The number of the chosen; and esteem
 Such scantiness of knowledge our delight:
 For all our good is, in that primal good,
 Concentrate; and God's will and ours are one."

So, by that form divine, was given to me
 Sweet medicine to clear and strengthen sight.
 And, as one handling skilfully the harp,
 Attendant on some skilful songster's voice
 Bids the chord vibrate; and therein the song
 Acquires more pleasure: so the whilst it spake,
 It doth remember me, that I beheld
 The pair¹ of blessed luminaries move,
 Like the accordant twinkling of two eyes,
 Their beamy circlets, dancing to the sounds.

CANTO XXI

ARGUMENT

Dante ascends with Beatrice to the seventh Heaven, which is the planet Saturn; wherein is placed a ladder, so lofty, that the top of it is out of his sight. Here are the souls of those who had passed their life in holy retirement and contemplation. Piero Damiano comes near them, and answers questions put to him by Dante; then declares who he was on earth; and ends by declaiming against the luxury of pastors and prelates in those times:

AGAIN mine eyes were fix'd on Beatrice;
 And, with mine eyes, my soul that in her looks
 Found all contentment. Yet no smile she wore:
 And, "Did I smile," quoth she, "thou wouldst be
 straight
 Like Semele when into ashes turn'd: ²
 For, mounting these eternal palace-stairs,

¹ Trajan and Ripheus.

² Semele, daughter of Cadmus and mother of Bacchus, was destroyed by the splendour of Jupiter's divine aspect. Cf. *Inf.* xxx.

My beauty, which the loftier it climbs,
 As thou hast noted, still doth kindle more,
 So shines, that, were no tempering interposed,
 Thy mortal puissance would from its rays
 Shrink, as the leaf doth from the thunderbolt.
 Into the seventh splendour are we wafted,
 That, underneath the burning lion's breast,
 Beams, in this hour, commingled with his might.¹
 Thy mind be with thine eyes; and, in them, mirror'd
 The shape, which in this mirror shall be shown."²

Whoso can deem, how fondly I had fed
 My sight upon her blissful countenance,
 May know, when to new thoughts I changed, what joy
 To do the bidding of my heavenly guide;
 In equal balance, poising either weight.³

Within the crystal, which records the name
 (As its remoter circle girds the world)
 Of that loved monarch, in whose happy reign
 No ill had power to harm,⁴ I saw rear'd up,
 In colour like to sun-illumined gold,
 A ladder, which my ken pursued in vain,
 So lofty was the summit; down whose steps
 I saw the splendours in such multitude
 Descending, every light in Heaven, methought,
 Was shed thence. As the rooks, at dawn of day,
 Bestirring them to dry their feathers chill,
 Some speed their way a-field; and homeward some,
 Returning, cross their flight; while some abide,
 And wheel around their airy lodge: so seem'd
 That glitterance,⁵ wafted on alternate wing,
 As upon certain stair it came, and clash'd
 Its shining. And one, lingering near us, wax'd
 So bright, that in my thought I said: "The love,
 Which this betokens me, admits no doubt."

Unwillingly from question I refrain;
 To her, by whom my silence and my speech

¹ Saturn was then in the constellation of Leo.

² Let him look upon the sign that will appear to him in this sphere.

³ "The joy of contemplation against that of obedience" (Wicksteed).

⁴ Saturn. Cf. *Inf.* xiv.

⁵ "*Quello sfavillar*. That multitude of shining spirits, who, coming to a certain point of the ladder, made those different movements, which he has described as made by the birds" (Cary).

Are order'd, looking for a sign : whence she,
 Who in the sight of Him, that seeth all,
 Saw wherefore I was silent, prompted me
 To indulge the fervent wish ; and I began :
 " I am not worthy, of my own desert,
 That thou shouldst answer me : but for her sake,
 Who hath vouchsafed my asking, spirit blest,
 That in thy joy art shrouded ! say the cause,
 Which bringeth thee so near : and wherefore, say,
 Doth the sweet symphony of Paradise
 Keep silence here, pervading with such sounds
 Of rapt devotion every lower sphere ?"
 " Mortal art thou in hearing, as in sight ;"
 Was the reply : " and what forbade the smile
 Of Beatrice interrupts our song.¹

Only to yield thee gladness of my voice,
 And of the light that vests me, I thus far
 Descend these hallow'd steps : not that more love
 Invites me ; for, lo ! there aloft,² as much
 Or more of love is witness'd in those flames :
 But such my lot by charity assign'd,
 That makes us ready servants, as thou seest,
 To execute the counsel of the Highest."

" That in this court," said I, " O sacred lamp !
 Love no compulsion needs, but follows free
 The eternal Providence, I well discern :
 This harder find to deem : why, of thy peers,
 Thou only, to this office wert foredoom'd."

I had not ended, when, like rapid mill,
 Upon its centre whirl'd the light ; and then
 The love that did inhabit there, replied :
 " Splendour eternal, piercing through these folds,
 Its virtue to my vision knits ; and thus
 Supported, lifts me so above myself,
 That on the sovran Essence, which it wells from,
 I have the power to gaze : and hence the joy,
 Wherewith I sparkle, equaling with my blaze
 The keenness of my sight. But not the soul,
 That is in Heaven most lustrous, nor the Seraph,
 That hath his eyes most fix'd on God, shall solve

¹ Consideration for Dante's mortal powers, that cannot yet sustain such glory.

² He disclaims any excess of charity over the other spirits of this sphere.

What thou hast ask'd : ¹ for in the abyss it lies
 Of th' everlasting statute sunk so low,
 That no created ken may fathom it.
 And, to the mortal world when thou return'st,
 Be this reported : that none henceforth dare
 Direct his footsteps to so dread a bourn.
 The mind, that here is radiant, on the earth
 Is wrapt in mist. Look then if she may do
 Below, what passeth her ability
 When she is ta'en to Heaven." By words like these
 Admonish'd, I the question urged no more ;
 And of the spirit humbly sued alone
 To instruct me of its state. " 'Twixt either shore
 Of Italy, nor distant from thy land,
 A stony ridge ariseth ; in such sort,
 The thunder doth not lift his voice so high.
 They call it Catria : ² at whose foot, a cell
 Is sacred to the lonely Eremite ;
 For worship set apart and holy rites."
 A third time thus it spake ; then added : " There
 So firmly to God's service I adhered,
 That with no costlier viands than the juice
 Of olives, easily I pass'd the heats
 Of summer and the winter frosts ; content
 In heaven-ward musings. Rich were the returns
 And fertile, which that cloister once was used
 To render to these Heavens : now 'tis fallen
 Into a waste so empty, that ere long
 Detection must lay bare its vanity.
 Pietro Damiano ³ there was I y-clept :
 Pietro the sinner, when before I dwelt,
 Beside the Adriatic, in the house
 Of our blest Lady. ⁴ Near upon my close

¹ Not the most glorious of the Saints, nor the most love-illumined of the Angels, can penetrate the mysteries of predestination.

² Monte Catria in the Apennines, near Gubbio. Beneath it is the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, of which Peter Damian was some time abbot. Here Dante is said to have found refuge after the death of Henry VII.

³ St. Peter Damian of Ravenna was an ardent reformer of Church discipline, and one of the chief ecclesiastical writers of the eleventh century. He was a friend and ally of Hildebrand, afterwards St. Gregory VII. He died at Faenza in 1072.

⁴ The monastery in question, "the house of our blest Lady," is now believed to be that of Pomposa near Comacchio. St. Peter Damian frequently signs his letters *Petrus peccator*, "Peter the

Of mortal life, through much importuning
 I was constrain'd to wear the hat,¹ that still
 From bad to worse is shifted.—Cephas came;
 He came, who was the Holy Spirit's vessel;²
 Barefoot and lean; eating their bread, as chanced,
 At the first table. Modern Shepherds need
 Those who on either hand may prop and lead them,
 So burly are they grown; and from behind,
 Others to hoist them. Down the palfrey's sides
 Spread their broad mantles, so as both the beasts
 Are cover'd with one skin. O patience! thou
 That look'st on this, and dost endure so long."

I at those accents saw the splendours down
 From step to step alight, and wheel, and wax,
 Each circuiting, more beautiful. Round this³
 They came, and stay'd them; utter'd then a shout
 So loud, it hath no likeness here: nor I
 Wist what it spake, so deafening was the thunder.

CANTO XXII

ARGUMENT

He beholds many other spirits of the devout and contemplative; and amongst these is addressed by Saint Benedict, who, after disclosing his own name and the names of certain of his companions in bliss, replies to the request made by our Poet that he might look on the form of the saint, without that covering of splendour, which then invested it; and then proceeds, lastly, to inveigh against the corruption of the monks. Next Dante mounts with his heavenly conductress to the eighth Heaven, or that of the fixed stars, which he enters at the constellation of the Twins; and thence looking back, reviews all the space he has past between his present station and the earth.

ASTOUNDED, to the guardian of my steps
 I turn'd me, like the child, who always runs
 Thither for succour, where he trusteth most:
 And she was like the mother, who her son

Sinner." There are several alternative readings and interpretations of these lines.

¹ The cardinal's hat. Peter Damian, against his will, was made Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia by Pope Stephen IX. in 1058.

² St. Peter and St. Paul.

³ Round Peter Damian to confirm his testimony against the modern pastors of the Church.

Beholding pale and breathless, with her voice
 Soothes him, and he is cheer'd; for thus she spake,
 Soothing me: "Know'st not thou, thou art in Heaven?
 And know'st not thou, whatever is in Heaven,
 Is holy; and that nothing there is done,
 But is done zealously and well? Deem now,
 What change in thee the song, and what my smile
 Had wrought, since thus the shout had power to move
 thee;

In which, couldst thou have understood their prayers,
 The vengeance¹ were already known to thee,
 Which thou must witness ere thy mortal hour.
 The sword of Heaven is not in haste to smite,
 Nor yet doth linger; save unto his seeming,
 Who, in desire or fear, doth look for it.
 But elsewhere now I bid thee turn thy view;
 So shalt thou many a famous spirit behold."

Mine eyes directing, as she will'd, I saw
 A hundred little spheres, that fairer grew
 By interchange of splendour. I remain'd,
 As one, who fearful of o'er-much presuming,
 Abates in him the keenness of desire,
 Nor dares to question; when, amid those pearls,
 One largest and most lustrous² onward drew,
 That it might yield contentment to my wish;
 And, from within it, these the sounds I heard.

"If thou, like me, beheld'st the charity
 That burns amongst us; what thy mind conceives
 Were utter'd. But that, ere the lofty bound
 Thou reach, expectance may not weary thee;
 I will make answer even to the thought,
 Which thou hast such respect of. In old days,
 That mountain, at whose side Cassino rests,
 Was, on its height, frequented by a race
 Deceived and ill-disposed: and I it was,
 Who thither carried first the name of Him,
 Who brought the soul-subliming truth to man.³

¹ Dante is probably not alluding to events that had already happened while he was writing (such as the death of Boniface VIII.), but to such future contingencies as the coming of the *Veltro*.

² St. Benedict.

³ These lines are the literal translation of a passage in the account of the Life and Miracles of St. Benedict, which forms the second book of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. In 528,

And such a speeding grace shone over me,
That from their impious worship I reclaim'd
The dwellers round about, who with the world
Were in delusion lost. These other flames,
The spirits of men contemplative, were all
Enliven'd by that warmth, whose kindly force
Gives birth to flowers and fruits of holiness.
Here is Macarius; ¹ Romoaldo ² here;

And here my brethren, who their steps refrain'd
Within the cloisters, and held firm their heart."

I answering thus: "Thy gentle words and kind,
And this the cheerful semblance I behold,
Not unobservant, beaming in ye all,
Have raised assurance in me; wakening it
Full-blossom'd in my bosom, as a rose
Before the sun, when the consummate flower
Has spread to utmost amplitude. Of thee
Therefore intreat I, father, to declare
If I may gain such favour, as to gaze
Upon thine image by no covering veil'd."

"Brother!" he thus rejoin'd, "in the last sphere ³
Expect completion of thy lofty aim:
For there on each desire completion waits,
And there on mine; where every aim is found
Perfect, entire, and for fulfilment ripe.
There all things are as they have ever been:
For space is none to bound; nor pole divides.

Benedict founded the famous abbey of Monte Cassino, on a mountain in Campania between Rome and Naples, where a temple of Apollo then stood. Here he converted the people round to Christianity, and instituted the great Benedictine order, and here, too, he died in 543, "and was buried in the oratory of St. John Baptist, which himself built, when he overthrew the altar of Apollo."

¹ Either St. Macarius the Egyptian (*d.* 391), the disciple of St. Anthony, or St. Macarius the Alexandrian (*d.* 405), the friend of Palladius (who wrote the famous histories of the fathers of the desert called the *Paradise*).

² St. Romualdus (*d.* 1027), a nobleman of the Onesti family of Ravenna, who "saw in a vision a ladder stretching from earth to Heaven, whereby men in white raiment ascended and descended," and was thereby inspired to found the order of the Camaldolese, white-robed monks who formed a stricter branch of the Benedictine rule.

³ The Empyrean Heaven, where all the Saints possess the Beatific Vision, and are seen by Dante in the glorified semblance of the forms they bore on earth.

Our ladder reaches even to that clime;
 And so, at giddy distance, mocks thy view.
 Thither the patriarch Jacob¹ saw it stretch
 Its topmost round; when it appear'd to him
 With Angels laden. But to mount it now
 None lifts his foot from earth: and hence my rule
 Is left a profitless stain upon the leaves;
 The walls, for abbey rear'd, turn'd into dens;
 The cowls, to sacks choak'd up with musty meal.
 Foul usury doth not more lift itself
 Against God's pleasure, than that fruit, which makes,
 The hearts of monks so wanton: for whate'er
 Is in the Church's keeping, all pertains
 To such, as sue for Heaven's sweet sake; and not
 To those, who in respect of kindred claim,
 Or on more vile allowance. Mortal flesh
 Is grown so dainty, good beginnings last not
 From the oak's birth unto the acorn's setting.
 His convent Peter founded without gold
 Or silver; I, with prayers and fasting, mine;
 And Francis, his in meek humility.
 And if thou note the point, whence each proceeds,
 Then look what it hath err'd to; thou shalt find
 The white grown murky. Jordan was turn'd back:
 And a less wonder, than the reflux sea,
 May, at God's pleasure, work amendment here."

So saying, to his assembly back he drew:
 And they together cluster'd into one;
 Then all roll'd upward, like an eddying wind.
 The sweet dame beckon'd me to follow them:
 And, by that influence only, so prevail'd
 Over my nature, that no natural motion,
 Ascending or descending here below,
 Had, as I mounted, with my pennon vied.

So, reader, as my hope is to return
 Unto the holy triumph, for the which
 I oft-times wail my sins, and smite my breast;
 Thou hadst been longer drawing out and thrusting
 Thy finger in the fire, than I was, ere
 The sign,² that followeth Taurus, I beheld,

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12. The ladder here symbolises Contemplation, which mystics call "the science of love."

² The constellation of the Gemini, in which the sun was when Dante was born. "This fixes Dante's birthday as somewhere

And enter'd its precinct. O glorious stars!
 O light impregnate with exceeding virtue!
 To whom whate'er of genius lifteth me
 Above the vulgar, grateful I refer;
 With ye the parent of all mortal life
 Arose and set, when I did first inhale
 The Tuscan air; and afterward, when grace
 Vouchsafed me entrance to the lofty wheel¹
 That in its orb impels ye, fate decreed
 My passage at your clime. To you my soul
 Devoutly sighs, for virtue, even now,
 To meet the hard emprise that draws me on.

"Thou art so near the sum of blessedness,"
 Said Beatrice, "that behoves thy ken
 Be vigilant and clear. And, to this end,
 Or ever thou advance thee further, hence
 Look downward, and contemplate, what a world
 Already stretch'd under our feet there lies:
 So as thy heart may, in its blithest mood,
 Present itself to the triumphal throng,
 Which, through the ethereal concave, comes rejoicing."

I straight obey'd; and with mine eye return'd
 Through all the seven spheres; and saw this globe
 So pitiful of semblance, that perforce
 It moved my smiles: ² and him in truth I hold
 For wisest, who esteems it least; whose thoughts
 Elsewhere are fix'd, him worthiest call and best.
 I saw the daughter of Latona ³ shine
 Without the shadow, whereof late I deem'd
 That dense and rare were cause. Here I sustain'd
 The visage, Hyperion, of thy son; ⁴
 And mark'd, how near him with their circles, round

between May 18 and June 17 (both inclusive), the time during which the sun was in Gemini" (Wicksteed).

¹ The eighth or Stellar Heaven.

² Boëthius similarly argues the pettiness of human glory from the narrow limits within which it is necessarily circumscribed: "The whole of the earth's globe, as thou hast learned from the demonstration of astronomy, compared with the expanse of Heaven, is found no bigger than a point: that is to say, if measured by the vastness of Heaven's sphere, it is held to occupy absolutely no space at all" (H. R. James's translation).

³ The moon, whose upper surface is free from the spots of the lower. Cf. *Par.* ii.

⁴ Ovid describes the sun as the offspring of Hyperion.

Move Maia and Dione; ¹ here discern'd
 Jove's tempering 'twixt his sire and son; ² and hence,
 Their changes and their various aspects,
 Distinctly scann'd. Nor might I not descry
 Of all the seven, how bulky each, how swift;
 Nor, of their several distances, not learn.
 This petty area, (o'er the which we stride
 So fiercely,) as along the eternal Twins
 I wound my way, appear'd before me all,
 Forth from the havens stretch'd unto the hills.³
 Then, to the beauteous eyes, mine eyes return'd.

CANTO XXIII

ARGUMENT

He sees Christ triumphing with his Church. The Saviour ascends, followed by his Virgin Mother. The others remain with Saint Peter.

E'EN as the bird, who midst the leafy bower
 Has, in her nest, sat darkling through the night,
 With her sweet brood; impatient to descry
 Their wished looks, and to bring home their food,
 In the fond quest unconscious of her toil:
 She, of the time prevenient, on the spray,
 That overhangs their couch, with wakeful gaze
 Expects the sun; nor ever, till the dawn,
 Removeth from the east her eager ken:
 So stood the dame erect, and bent her glance
 Wistfully on that region,⁴ where the sun
 Abateth most his speed; that, seeing her
 Suspense and wondering, I became as one,
 In whom desire is waken'd, and the hope
 Of somewhat new to come fills with delight.

Short space ensued; I was not held, I say,

¹ Mercury, the son of Maia; Venus, the daughter of Dione.

² Between the cold of Saturn and the heat of Mars.

³ The close of this Canto is somewhat like a vision ascribed by St. Gregory to St. Benedict, in which "the whole world, gathered as it were together under one beam of the sun, was presented before his eyes" (*Dialogues*, ii. 35). Mr. Wicksteed, however, urges that it does not mean that the whole inhabited area of the earth was then visible to the Poet.

⁴ "Towards the south, where the course of the sun appears less rapid, than when he is in the east or the west" (Cary).

Long in expectance, when I saw the Heaven
 Wax more and more resplendent; and, "Behold,"
 Cried Beatrice, "the triumphal hosts
 Of Christ, and all the harvest gather'd in,
 Made ripe by these revolving spheres."¹ Meseem'd,
 That, while she spake, her image all did burn;
 And in her eyes such fulness was of joy,
 As I am fain to pass unconstrued by.

As in the calm full moon, when Trivia smiles,
 In peerless beauty, 'mid the eternal nymphs,²
 That paint through all its gulfs the blue profound;
 In bright pre-eminence so saw I there
 O'er million lamps a Sun, from whom all drew
 Their radiance, as from ours the starry train:
 And, through the living light, so lustrous glow'd
 The substance, that my ken endured it not.

O Beatrice! sweet and precious guide,
 Who cheer'd me with her comfortable words:
 "Against the virtue, that o'erpowereth thee,
 Avails not to resist. Here is the Might,
 And here the Wisdom,³ which did open lay
 The path, that had been yearned for so long,
 Betwixt the Heaven and earth." Like to the fire,
 That, in a cloud imprison'd, doth break out
 Expansive, so that from its womb enlarged,
 It falleth against nature to the ground;
 Thus, in that heavenly banqueting, my soul
 Outgrew herself; and, in the transport lost,
 Holds now remembrance none of what she was.

"Ope thou thine eyes, and mark me: thou hast seen
 Things, that empower thee to sustain my smile."

I was as one, when a forgotten dream
 Doth come across him, and he strives in vain
 To shape it in his fantasy again:
 Whenas that gracious boon was proffer'd me,

¹ "Dante has seen in the seven planetary spheres the different classes and grades of blessedness representing the 'many mansions.' Now, in the heaven of the stars, he sees in varied groups the whole fruit of creation and history gathered together, as typifying the 'one home.' The 'circling of these spheres' signifies the whole cosmic evolution, and the working of the spirit of God upon man" (Wicksteed).

² The moon (Trivia = Diana) among the stars.

³ The might and wisdom of the Saviour, who is the Sun from which all the Saints draw their light.