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DANTE

—
INFERNO

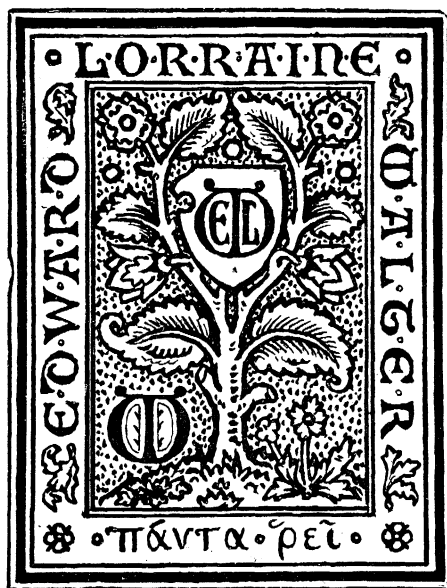
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DANTE'S
DIVINA COMMEDIA.

Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321

DANTE'S DIVINA COMMEDIA.

89666

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,

IN THE METRE AND TRIPLE RHYME
OF THE ORIGINAL.

WITH NOTES.

BY

MRS. RAMSAY.

Inferno.

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PREFACE.

IT is to be feared there is some truth in that French idiom which calls a translator a *traducer*; and one cannot but sympathize with those who would rather learn a language than be content with the shadow of a great original. But there are many people who would gladly have some acquaintance with the literature of other lands, and who yet have not leisure for the labour of acquiring different languages; especially for such labour as is necessary in order thoroughly to understand and appreciate a poet like Dante, whose writings present difficulties even to his own

countrymen : and, in those cases, a faithful translation is better than total ignorance, or even than spelling painfully through a poem, with the aid of grammar and dictionary. But the faithfulness of a translation consists, not merely in the sense, but likewise in the sound ; and therefore I have preferred attempting the very difficult triple rhyme of the original, rather than the easier task of writing in blank verse. I have also, as far as possible, kept the same words, the same rhymes, as in the original, and even its occasionally almost grotesque peculiarities.

This translation of the Divine Comedy was written during a long residence in the land of Dante, in the very scenes where he lived and wrote : beneath the shadow of the Tuscan hills, on the shores of the Bay of Naples, among the ruins of Old Rome. For years, the Italian tongue

has been as familiar to me as my own ; and, during those years, I have enjoyed the privilege of receiving the advice of some of the greatest Italian students of Dante. Their verdict has encouraged me to publish this translation of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* ; to be followed afterwards by the *Paradiso*, the last great work of the greatest Poet of Italy.

C. H. RAMSAY.

LONDON,

November 1st, 1862.

THE
DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE.

INFERNO.

CANTO I.

Argument.

The Poet, having lost his way in a forest, is alarmed by three savage beasts ; the shade of Virgil appears to him, and offers to be his guide.

ABOUT the middle of life's onward way,
I found myself within a darksome dell,
Because from the true path I went astray.

Alas ! how hard a thing it is to tell
Of that dark wood, so rugged and so bare ; 5
Anew I fear when there in thought I dwell.

Scarce death itself more bitterness doth wear ;
Yet, to make known the good which thus I found,
Now all its sorrows shall my tale declare.

I know not how I came within its bound ; 10
Such heavy slumber on mine eyelids weigh'd,
The while I enter'd the forbidden ground.

But when I near a mountain's foot was stay'd,
Hard by the ending of the vale which now
With such sharp terror all my heart affray'd, 15

I upward look'd and saw the summit glow,
Clad in the radiance of that planet's light
Which to all wayfarers the path doth show.

And then the thoughts which caused me dire affright
Were hush'd within me, and I fear'd no more, 20
As I had done in all that dreadful night.

And like to him who cometh to the shore,
With weary breath, from out the stormy sea,
And turns to gaze the perilous waters o'er ;

Thus did my soul, e'en yet intent to flee, 25
Another glance upon the pathway send
That ne'er by living man repassed may be.

Awhile I rested ; then my way did wend,
And from the desert wood which shut me in,
I strove the mountain-summit to ascend. 30

But almost where the steep path doth begin,

A pard came towards me ; swift of foot and light,
And fair it was, with brightly spotted skin,

And would not thence depart from out my sight,
But hinder'd me so sorely in my way, 35
That back I oft would turn in hasty flight.

The time was the beginning of the day ;
The sun arose, with all the stars that were
With him created, when their bright array
By Love Divine was made a thing so fair. 40

And thoughts of hope sprang up within my breast,
From the sweet morning-hour, the pleasant air,
Ev'n from the beauty of the spotted beast ;
But soon the fear which had been thus allay'd
What next I saw of strange and dread increased. 45

A lion towards me came, with lifted head,
And eye as if with raging hunger mad ;
Then the air trembled and did seem afraid ;
And a she-wolf that in her leanness had
An aspect as if fill'd with famish'd wrath ; 50
And many lives, in sooth, she hath made sad.

This savage beast with the fierce mien she hath,
Did unto me such fear and sorrow bring,

I lost all hope to climb the upward path.

Most like to him who finds some precious thing, 55
And the time comes that takes it all away,
And then in thought he weepeth, sorrowing ;

Even so to me, without or rest or stay
The beast towards me coming, pacing slow,
Made me return to where the darkness lay. 0

While I fell back into the vale below,
Before my eyes a semblance did appear,
Who from long silence spake in whispers low.

When thus I saw him in the desert drear,
“ Have pity upon me,” to him I cried, 65
“ Whether thou be a shade or mortal fere.”

“ Not mortal now, once mortal,” he replied.
“ In Lombardy my parents had their home,
And they in Mantua’s city did abide.

The reign of Julius near its end had come 70
When I was born ; I lived beneath the sway
Of good Augustus, and the gods of Rome.

I was a poet, and I sang a lay
Of him, Anchises’ son, who came from Troy,
After in flames proud Ilion pass’d away. 75

But thou, why dost return to such annoy ?
Why dost thou not ascend the pleasant mount
Which is the first beginning of all joy ?”

“ Art thou that Virgil ? and art thou the fount
That shed abroad so large a stream of speech ? ” 80
I then replied to him with rev'rent front.

“ Light of all other poets ! I beseech
Thee now the love and the long toil to pay,
Werewith I sought what all thy volumes teach.

Thou art my leader on the studious way : 85
It was alone from thee I learn'd aright
The beauteous language of each honour'd lay.

Behold the creature which hath caused my flight ;
From it now give me aid, thou sage renown'd !
Fear chills my throbbing pulse at that dread sight.” 90

“ For thee another pathway must be found,”
He then replied, who saw my flowing tears,
“ If thou wouldst flee from out this savage ground :

Because the beast which causes thee such fears
Lets never mortal pass along this way, 95
But killeth him who the fair mountain nears ;
And hath a nature so intent to slay,

That nothing can its hunger satisfy,
Nor any food its raging greed can stay.

With many living things it doth ally 100
And shall with more, until at last the hound
Shall come, that will in anguish make it die ;

The hound with whom nor land nor gold is found,
On love, on strength, on wisdom hath it fed :
Feltro and Feltro doth its nation bound. 105

And he shall save in hour of utmost need,
That Italy for which Camilla died,
For which Euryalus and Turnus bled,
And Nisus. He shall chase from side to side,
The she-wolf, till he send her back to hell, 110
From whence at first she came in envious pride.

Therefore I think for thee it shall be well
That now thou shouldest follow me, and I
Will guide thee where immortal spirits dwell ;
Where thou shalt listen to the doleful cry ; 115
Where thou shalt see the ancient spirit-band
Of those who fain a second time would die ;

And those who ev'n upon the fiery strand
Are happy, since they have the hope one day

To rise and dwell within the Blessèd Land. 120

And if thou wouldst that lofty height assay,
There thou shalt find a worthier guide than I ;
With her I leave thee when I go away,

Because the Lord who reigneth in the sky,
Since erst against his laws I did rebel, 125
Forbids my entrance to his realm on high.

Elsewhere he rules, there doth his radiance dwell ;
There is his city and his glorious throne :
Of his elect who may the gladness tell ?”

“Now by the Deity thou hast not known,” 130
I said, “O Poet, I entreat that thou

Wouldst lead me forth from out this desert lone,

And bring me to the place thou spak'st of now ;
So that St. Peter's gateway I may see,
And those who in such sad estate lie low.” 135

And then he journey'd on, close-followèd by me.

CANTO II.

Argument.

Dante hesitates ; but hearing that Virgil has been sent by
Beatrice, takes courage, and follows him.

AND now the day departed, and the sky
Wore the dusk twilight hue that brings repose
To every living thing ; and only I
To meet the perils of the way arose,
Striving that memory might not in vain 5
Retrace once more the path so full of woes.
O Muse, O lofty genius, aid my strain !
O Mem'ry, let thy greatness here be shown,
Thou who dost all my visions write again !
I said : " O Poet, who wouldst lead me on, 10
Look that my heart be high, that I may be
Strong to descend into the realms unknown.

Thou tellest of the sire of Sylvius ; he
Went in the garment of this mortal life
Into the land of immortality. 15

But if the enemy of every strife
Was gracious, knowing all the purpose high
Of that with which his future fate was rife,

It is not strange unto the thoughtful eye ;
Sire of the sacred sway of Rome, he well 20
Was thus decreed in the empyreal sky.

And Rome and all her empire, truth to tell,
Was stablished for the most holy place,
Where the successors of St. Peter dwell ;

And in the journey whence he won thy praise 25
He heard what caused him vict'ry's wreath to wear,
And did on high the papal mantle raise.

Another chosen One to heavenly air
Ascended to bring comfort to the faith
That first salvation's pathway doth prepare. 30

But who unbars to me the gate of death ?
Eneas I am not ; not Paul am I ;
I know myself unworthy, and the breath
Of others deems me so ; and if I try

The path, I fear some evil will befall : 35

Thou who art wise, more clearly will descry

My meaning." And like him who turns from all
He wish'd, his purpose changing with new thought,
Which him from his intention doth recal,

Thus did I in this dark and doleful spot ; 40
For thinking, still the courage pass'd away,
That at the first was with such gladness fraught.

" If I have heard aright what thou dost say,"
Replied the spirit of the mighty dead,
" Weak cowardice upon thy soul doth weigh ; 45

Which many times, indeed, makes man afraid,
And turns him backward from each high emprise,
Imagining wild beasts in twilight shade.

And of those doubts that I may clear thine eyes,
I tell thee why I came, and what befel 50
When first I thought of thee in pitying guise.

I was with those who rest 'twixt Heaven and Hell :
A lady call'd me, beautiful and bright ;
I hasten'd to obey her gentle spell

Her eyes were glistening with a starry light ; 55
She in a low melodious voice began

Softly to speak, even as an angel might :

‘O spirit of the courteous Mantuan,
Whose glory still doth in the world resound,
And shall until time’s latest moments run, 60

My friend, but sooth not fortune’s friend, is found
On a lone desert bank, where, hinder’d sore,
He would return again to the dark bound.

I fear he may have wander’d far, before
My tardy succour unto him can reach, 65
From what I hear, on the celestial shore.

Now quickly go, that so thou mayest teach
Him to escape from out the valley low,
And rightly guide him with thy silver speech.

For I am Beatrice, who bids thee go ; 70
And back to my bright dwelling would I fain :
Love moved me unto thee this thing to show.

When I shall be before my Lord again,
Of thee I oft will speak in words of praise.’
I answer’d then, when silent was her strain : 75

‘O lady of high virtue, which doth raise
The human species over all the rest
Enclosed within the heavenly circle’s maze

So pleasant unto me is thy behest,
That had I now obey'd, it were too slow ; 80
No further need thy wishes be exprest.

But tell me, why hast thou no fear to go,
From the fair home whereto thou wouldst return,
Into this centre of the gulf below ?'

' Since of this matter thou wouldst somewhat learn,' 85
She answer'd, ' briefly I will tell thee why
I do not fear to come within this bourne.

Ye should have terror but of things whereby
Is work'd some evil, or another's woe ;
And of nought else : therein no hurt doth lie. 90

By God's great mercy, he hath made me so
That all your misery hath no power on me,
Nor am I harm'd within the fiery glow.

In Heaven, a gentle lady weeps to see
The 'wilder'd One to whom thou shalt be guide ; 95
And thus hard justice broken there may be.

This lady called Lucia to her side
And said : " Now hath thy true disciple need
Of thee, and to thy care I him confide."

And she, unfriendly to each cruel deed, 100

Arose and came to me, unto the place

Where I with Rachel sat. Lucià said :

“ O Beatrice, who art of God true praise,

Why dost not succour him who loved thee so,

Who for thy sake came forth from common ways ? 105

Dost thou not hear the wailing of his woe ?

Dost thou not see him, striving in the fight,

Where the wild stream as stormy sea doth show ? ”

Never was living thing so swift in flight,

To ’scape from ill and to attain to good, 110

As I, at her discourse, on footsteps light,

Descended hither from my blest abode ;

Trusting, in sooth, unto thy lovely speech,

That gladdens all who near to thee have stood.’

And as the gentle lady did beseech 115

She turned her tearful shining eyes on me,

So that I strove with quicker step to reach

The place where she had bade me succour thee,

And took thee from before the savage beast

Which thou upon the mountain path didst see. 120

Then wherefore in this valley wouldst thou rest ?

Why dost thou such a coward aspect wear ?

Why dwells no hope or boldness in thy breast,
Since now three Blessèd Ones of thee have care,
On high, amid the radiant heavenly host, 125
And since my speech such promises doth bear ? ”
As close the flow’rets in the midnight frost,
But ope their leaves, whene’er the sunshine bright
Comes forth, their drooping blossoms to accost,
Ev’n thus it happen’d to my wearied might, 130
And so much courage to my soul did flow,
That I began as fill’d with gladness light :
“ Oh, pitiful is she who aids me so,
And courteous thou who thus obedient wert
Unto the voice of her that bade thee go ! 135
And with thy words thou hast disposed my heart,
And made it throb with all its old desires ;
I will return unto mine ancient part.
Now thee and me one only will inspires,
My Lord, my leader, and my master dear.” 140
Thus did I speak and through the tangled briars,
Enter’d the forest wild and dark withouten fear.

CANTO III.

Argument.

Inscription on the gate of Hell.—Punishment of the worthless,
whose deeds were neither good nor evil.—Charon's bark,
and voyage of the souls.

“THROUGH me ye pass the mournful city's door ;
Through me ye go to never-ending woe ;
Through me are with the lost for evermore :

By justice moved, my Maker willed it so,
When I was form'd by the Supremest Mind, 5
From whom all love, and power, and wisdom flow.

Before me, no created thing ye find,
If not eternal ; ever I endure :
O ye who enter here leave hope behind.”

These words were written there, of hue obscure, 10
Above the entrance of a gateway wide.
“ Master,” I said, “ their sense to me is sore.”

And then once more replied my skilful guide :
“ Here must thou leave each unbelieving mood,
Each coward fear must here be put aside. 15

Now we have come unto the dread abode,
Where I have said the doleful spirits lie,
Those who have lost all intellectual good.”

And then he placed his hand in mine, and I,
Who drew much comfort from his cheerful mien, 20
Enter'd with him the land of secrecy.

Here sighs, and groans, and mournful shrieks, I ween
Resounded through the thick and starless air :
I wept when first I entered that sad scene,

For many tongues, and accents of despair, 25
And tones of anguish, words of wildest wrath,
And voices shrill, and gnashing teeth were there.

And ever the eternal darkness hath
A sound of tumult, eddying round and round,
As turns the sand when in the whirlwind's path. 30

I said, who had my mind with error bound :
“ What voices do I hear in sad amaze ?
And who are they who in such grief are found ? ”

My guide replied to me : “ This sorrow weighs

Upon the melancholy souls of those 35

Who lived without or infamy or praise ;

And now they are commingled in the woes

Of those bad angels who did not rebel,

Nor faithful were to God and to his laws.

They lived for self ; therefore they may not dwell 40

In Heaven, that would not have its radiance less,

Nor yet do they bring glory unto Hell."

I said : " My Master, what on them doth press

So sore, that they lament with such a cry ? "

And he : " Now briefly will I tell thee this ; 45

They never more may have the hope to die ;

Their life of darkness is so vile, that they

Look on all other fortune enviously.

On earth they left no record in their day ;

Mercy and Justice hold them in disdain : 50

Speak not of them, but look and pass away."

And now I saw, when that I look'd again,

A banner turning swiftly without rest ;

And after it there came so long a train

Of those who, hast'ning, ever onward prest, 55

In truth, my thought could scarcely realise

So many had been slain at Death's behest.

And after, when I some did recognise,
I look'd, and saw the Shade of him appear,
Who his high office left through cowardice. 60

Immediately to me it was made clear ;
Hated alike of God and those who strive
Against him, were those sinners punish'd here.

These wretched ones, who never were alive,
Were naked all, and sorely were they stung 65
By flies and wasps that here had made their hive.

The blood in furrows from each face had sprung,
And mixed with tears stream'd down unto their feet,
Where filthy serpents lick'd it with their tongue.

And when I further look'd, my glance did meet 70
A company, who by a river great
Stood waiting ; then I said : " Master, permit

That I may know what souls they are who wait,
And wherefore they so willingly would go,
As I discern, though dark this gloomy gate." 75

And he to me replied : " This shalt thou know,
As soon as in our journey we shall reach
The brink where Acheron's sad waters flow."

Then fearing greatly lest to him my speech
Offended, with my eyes bent down in shame, 80
Silent I went unto the river-beach.

And now, behold, a boat towards us came,
With an old man, whose hair with age was hoar,
Crying, "Woe, woe, ye souls of guilty fame !

Now ye shall see the light of heaven no more ; 85
I come to lead you to the further strand,
Into eternal clouds of heat and frore.

And thou, O living One, who mid the band
Of Death hast come, now turn thee back and flee."
But when he saw that yet I there did stand, 90

He said : "By other ways thy path must be ;
This bark for him who lives no entrance hath ;
A lighter vessel is more fit for thee."

My Master answer'd : "Charon, hush thy wrath ;
Ask thou no more, for thus it hath been will'd, 95
Where Will and Power do hold one only path."

Then at those words the quivering rage was still'd
Of him, the boatman of the livid marsh,
Whose eyes with circling flames of fire were fill'd.

Those weary souls, who evermore shall parch 100

In the hot air, now gnashed their teeth and paled,
When they had heard those cruel words and harsh.

Against their parents and their God they rail'd ;
The human species, and the place and hour
And manner of their birth they there bewail'd. 105

Then all together, weeping loud and sore,
They drew anear the stream of dreadful name,
That waits for all who will not God adore.

Charon, the demon with the eyes of flame,
Collecting them with signs upon the brink, 110
Beat with his oar whoever slowly came.

As fall the leaves in autumn days, and sink,
Each following each, until at last the bough
Gives all to earth again ; even so, I think,

It fared with Adam's evil children now ; 115
For one by one they to the shore descend,
As birds that to the fowler's whistle go.

Thus o'er the gloomy wave their course they bend,
And e'er they come unto the further strand,
On this, new multitudes still hither wend. 120

"My son," the courteous Master said, "that band
Are those who having died beneath the ire

Of God, are gathered here from every land ;

And God's great justice doth their wills inspire
With such prompt eagerness to cross the flood, 125
That all their fear is turn'd into desire.

Here never cometh spirit of the good ;
Therefore if Charon doth of thee complain,
Thou know'st the reason of his angry mood."

When he had ceased to speak, the darksome plain 130
Shook with the shuddering of the earthquake's might ;
I tremble even to think of it again.

And from the doleful earth came forth a light
That lighten'd with the crimson fire of Hell ;
I lost all sense and feeling at that sight, 135

And, like to one oppress'd with deepest sleep, I fell.

CANTO IV.

Argument.

The Poet descends into Limbo.—The shades of the great
Heathen.

MY heavy slumber suddenly was broke
By the loud crashing of the thunder's sound ;
I started as doth one by force awoke.
Fresh from repose, my eye now look'd around ;
On every side I gazed, that I might know 5
What place it was which closed me in its bound.
I was upon the pathway that doth go
Into the valley of the dread abyss,
Fill'd with the sounds of everlasting woe.
Such black and fearful depth of gloom was this, 10
When I would fain have gazed adown the steep,
Only the darkness could I see, I wis.

“Now pass we onward to the lower deep,”
The poet thus began, all wan and pale ;
“I go the first, thou in my footsteps keep.” 15

And I replied, who saw his colour fail,
“How can I go into yon darkness drear,
If fear o’er thee, my Comforter, prevail ?”

He said : “The anguish that is suffer’d here
Doth pale my cheek with feelings which belong 20
To pity, not as thou hast thought, to fear.

Now let us go, because the way is long.”
Thus he set forth, and made me enter where
The circles first begin of that dread throng.

We stopp’d to listen to the voices there : 25
They did not shriek, nor wail, but only sighs
For ever trembled in the eternal air.

The great and mighty multitude that lies
Within the place of sorrow without pain,
From them this sound of sighing doth arise, 30

From children, and from women, and from men.
“Why dost not ask ?” my gentle Master said,
“What spirits now have come within thy ken ?

These have not sinn’d ; but if good deeds they did,

'Twas not enough ; for the baptismal rite 35

They knew not, the sole gateway of thy creed ;

Nor duly worshipp'd God with Nature's light,

Those who have lived in the old heathen time ;

And I myself am in this evil plight.

For sins like these, and for no other crime, 40

We are amongst the lost ; our only woe,

To have no hope the bless'd Heaven to climb."

A pang of sorrow through my heart did go

When this I heard ; for great and mighty they

Whom pent within this Limbo did I know. 45

"Now say, my Master, now, my leader, say,"

Thus I inquired, that I might understand

The faith which conquers each erroneous way :

"Did ever any come from out this band,

In whom his own or others' merit found 50

Had power to raise him to the Bless'd Land ?"

He answer'd : "Newly come unto this bound

Was I, when One All-powerful hither came,

Who with the signs of victory was crown'd.

The shade of our first sire he call'd by name ; 55

✻

Abel and Noah ; faithful Abraham ;

Moses, the law-giver, of lowly fame ;

The king who praised his God in sweetest psalm ;
And Israel, with his children and his sire,
And Rachel, for whose sake hard toil was balm ; 60
And many others from this region dire,
And made them blest : but know, until that day,
No human soul to bliss might e'er aspire."

Although we spoke, our steps we did not stay,
But still were passing onward through the wood, 65
The wood wherein those mournful spirits lay ;

And from the summit now not far we stood,
When I perceived a clear and shining light,
That conquer'd all the hemisphere of cloud.

A little distant from its radiance bright 70
Were we, but now I could discern in part
What great and mighty ones possess'd its site.

"Thou who giv'st praise to knowledge and to art,
Who are those souls that here such honour claim,
Which from the common herd doth them dispart ?" 75

And he to me : "Their venerable fame,
Resounding still on earth, o'er them doth shed
Such grace, that to this painless place they came."

And as we went, I heard a voice which said :
“ Honour the poet of the lofty lay ; 80
His Shade returns again from whence it sped.”

The voice was silent which these words did say :
I saw four Mighty Ones toward us come ;
They had a semblance neither sad nor gay.

Then the good Master did his speech resume : 85
“ Now look, for he who cometh, sword in hand,
As power above the rest he did assume,

Is Homer, sovereign of the poet-land ;
The next is Horace, of satiric fame ;
Then Ovid ; Lucan, latest of that band. 90

To sound the praises of the lofty name
Of poet, do their voices all agree ;
And well they honour me in that high theme.”

And thus the great disciples did I see
Of him, the lord of the melodious song 95
Which soars, as doth the eagle, haughtily.

And, as they came, awhile they talk'd among
Themselves ; then turn'd to me with gesture sweet :
My master smiled, as still they pass'd along.

And me with yet more honour did they greet ; 100

For I, a sixth among the band of light,
Was welcomed by them all with rev'rence meet.

Thus we went on unto the radiance bright,
Discoursing what 'tis well that now I should
Keep silent, even as there to speak was right ; 105

We went to where a noble castle stood ;
Seven lofty walls encircled it around,
Defended by a beauteous streamlet's flood,
Which now we cross'd as if 'twere solid ground ;
And with those sages, through seven gates did go : 110
Then we a meadow of fresh verdure found.

The dwellers there had glances grave and slow,
And great authority was in their mien ;
Rarely they spake, with voices soft and low.
We bent our steps upon th' enamell'd green, 115

Toward a place of clear and shining light,
So that from thence could all around be seen.
And on a spot of verdure fresh and bright,
I saw the great ones who from earth have gone ;
Still I rejoice at memory of that sight. 120

I saw Electra in a mingled throng,
And Hector and Eneas I descried,

And Cæsar arm'd, whose eyes as eagles' shone.

And there, beyond, I saw Camilla 'bide ;

Penthesilea, and the Latin king, 125

Who, with his child Lavinia, sat in pride.

Brutus, who from his throne did Tarquin fling ;

Cornelia, Julia, Marcia, and Lucrece ;

And by himself alone, great Saladin.

Then, as with eager eye I did not cease 130

To look, I saw the king of those who know,

Sitting among the mighty minds of Greece.

All gazed on him, all bent before him low ;

And Plato there, and Socrates I saw,

More near to him than other Shades might go. 135

Democritus, who taught that chance was law ;

There Heraclitus sad and Zeno were,

And on wise Thales did I look with awe.

Empedocles I saw in that still air ;

The Cynic ; Anaxagoras, the good. 140

Dioscorides, and Orpheus too, were there.

Livy and Cicero ; Seneca, whose blood,

Soft-flowing, bore him from the tyrant's rage ;

And there Hippocrates and Galen stood ;

Euclid, in geometric science sage, 145
And Avicenna, Ptolemy the Great,
And Averrhoës, famed for learnèd page.

All whom I saw I cannot now relate ;
Because so long already is my strain,
It is too weak for what I would narrate. 150

The six have 'minished unto two again ;
My Master leads me, by another way,
Into the trembling air from that still plain ;
Now we are in a land where shines no light of day.

CANTO V.



Argument.

Minos judges the sinners, and assigns them their punishment.
—The Second Circle, which is that of the incontinent.—
Francesca di Rimini.

FROM the first circle downward did we go
Unto the second, which a smaller space
Contains, but as much more of bitter woe.

There Minos stood, with darkly-frowning face ;
He searches out the sins of those who come ; 5
He judges them, and sends them to their place.

'Tis said, when the lost souls unto their doom
Approach, each deed of guiltiness is told,
And he, the guardian of the place of gloom,

Perceives what gulf of hell their crime should hold, 10
As many grades as they must downward go,
So many times his tail doth round him fold.

Alway before him stands a mournful row :
Slowly in turn they come unto their fate ;
They speak, and hear, and sink unto their woe. 15

“ O thou, who comest to this dolorous gate,”
Said Minos, when he saw me enter there,
Leaving the office of such direful weight,

“ Look well in whom thou trustest, and beware,
Although this place such ample entrance hath.” 20
My Master answer'd : “ Why this angry air ?

Stay not his fated journey with thy wrath :
Ask thou no more ; for thus it hath been will'd,
Where Will and Power do hold one only path.”

And now the air with mournful notes was fill'd, 25
And we were come unto a dismal site,
Where many wailings through my spirit thrill'd.

I came unto a place devoid of light,
Still ever roaring as the stormy sea,
When the strong, adverse winds against it fight. 30

The hellish blasts, that never calm'd may be,
Do with their wrath these mournful spirits drive,
And strike and buffet them eternally.

When they before the shatter'd cliff arrive,

Here against Love Divine breaks forth their ire ; 35
Laments and plaints and cries for ever strive.

And then I knew that to this torment dire
Those guilty ones were brought by carnal sin ;
In life their reason bow'd before desire.

And as the starlings, borne upon the wing, 40
Fly in large flocks in the cold winter air,
Thus did the blast those wretched spirits fling

Through all that dreary clime, now here, now there ;
And never may they hope for happier day
Of rest, or even a lesser pain to bear. 45

As cranes that fly, and, singing still their lay,
Stretch out their lengthen'd line against the sky,
Thus did I see this shadowy array,

Borne onward ever with a mournful cry.
I said : " My Master, who are those that so 50
By the black air are chasten'd dolefully ? "

" The first of those whose story thou wouldst know,"
At once to me he courteously replied,
" Was one before whom many lands did bow.

In such luxurious vice did she abide, 55
That licence was made lawful 'neath her sway ;

Thus to escape the shame of guilt she tried.

She is Semiramis, of whom they say,
She was the wife of Ninus, and his heir ;
She ruled where reigns the Sultan at this day. 60

And she who kill'd herself for love was there,
Who to Sichæus' ashes broke her faith ;
Then Cleopatra came, that wanton fair.

Helen, for whom were done such deeds of death,
I saw ; and great Achilles, on that shore, 65
Who loved and fought until his latest breath.

Paris was there, and Tristan ; many more
He show'd to me, and pointed out by name
Whom love from out the land of mortals bore.

After those knights and dames of ancient fame, 70
To me were shown by my instructor kind :
Deep grief and pity all my heart o'ercame.

Then I began : " O Poet, do thou find
Some means that I may speak unto yon pair,
Who seem to fly so lightly on the wind." 75

He said : " When, borne along the doleful air,
They near us come, adjure them by the love
That leads them on, and they will hear thy prayer."

And when they came, his counsel I did prove,
And said : “ O sad and weary souls, be still 80
And speak, if none forbid.” And as the dove,

Whom the sweet calling of desire doth thrill,
With spread and moveless wing flies to the nest,
Borne onward only by the power of will,
Ev’n thus those two, departing from the rest, 85
Came toward us, through the darksome air malign :
So strong was the appeal to love addrest.

“ O being, who art gracious and benign,
And through the dismal air thy way dost wend
To us, who left on earth a bloody sign, 90

If but the Sovereign Ruler were our friend,
We for thy happiness to him would pray,
Since thou to our sad case dost pity lend.

And now we willingly will hear, and say
Whatever thou wouldst know from this our speech, 95
What time the stormy wind doth silent stay.

The city of my birth is near the beach
Where, with its tributary streams, the Po
Flows to the sea, its place of rest to reach.

Love, that all gentle hearts so quickly know, 100

For my fair form, from me so foully ta'en,
Inspired the soul who by my side doth go.

Love that will have the loved to love again,
So bent my heart towards him, that, e'en yet,
He doth not leave me in this place of pain. 105

And love hath led us to a bloody fate ;
For him who slew us waits the deepest hell.”
She said. And when I heard her thus narrate

The sorrows that those weary souls befel,
In saddest thought I stood, with downcast face ; 110
Until the Poet said to me : “ Now tell

The thing thou ponderest.” I said, “ Alas !
What love and musings sweet those two have led
The downward way unto this dolorous pass ! ”

Then unto them I turn'd myself and said : 115
“ Francesca, on my soul thy sorrow lies
So pitiful, that these sad tears I shed ;

But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs
How did it e'er befall that ye should show
Your mutual love unto each other's eyes ? ” 120

And she replied to me : “ No greater woe
Can be, than to remember happy days,

In misery ; this doth thy Leader know.

But, if desire to hear the early ways
Of our affection so thy spirit fill, 125
I speak as one who weeps for what he says.

One day we read, for pastime, how the thrill
Of love the heart of Lancelot had known ;
We were alone, and had no thought of ill.

And often from the book our eyes had gone, 130
And often did our flushing cheeks grow pale ;
But we were conquer'd by one word alone.

When we had read, within that ancient tale,
How sweet of such a loving one the kiss,
Then he, who from my side shall never fail, 135

His lips to mine all tremblingly did press ;
Galeotto was the author, and his name :
That day we read no more." And then while thus

One spake, such pity all my soul o'ercame,
Beholding the sad tears the other shed, 140
That on the strand of dark and dreadful fame,

Fainting, with sudden shock I fell, as falls the dead.

CANTO VI.



Argument.

Third Circle ; the gluttonous. Discourse upon the discords
of Florence.

AND when my mind to me return'd again,
Which closed before my pity for that pair
Whence all my soul was 'wilder'd with sad pain,
New torments and tormented ones were there,
On every side ; as all around, I wis, 5
My glances wander'd in the gloomy air.
Now we had come unto the third abyss
Of rain eternally accurst and chill ;
And never is its rule or measure less.
Great hail, and snow, and blackest sleet doth fill 10
The cloudy air with its thick-falling shower ;
The earth gives out a stench more fearful still.

There Cerberus, strange beast of cruel power,
With his three throats doth ever fiercely howl,
As those submerged within he would devour. 15

His eyes are red, his beard is black and foul,
His belly large, his hands are arm'd with claws ;
He clutches, tears, and skins each wretched soul.

The rain from them a dog-like whining draws ;
And for themselves, themselves would make a screen, 20
Still as they turn without or rest or pause.

And, soon as we by Cerberus are seen,
He shows his tusks, his hideous mouths expands,
And shakes with rage, in every limb I ween.

Then my wise Leader, stretching forth his hands, 25
Fills them with earth, and flings it, to allay
The greed of him who thus our course withstands,

And like to hungry dogs that loudly bay,
And then are still while they their prey devour,
Since but on food they are intent alway ; 30

In such a manner did those faces sour
Of Cerberus, who so affrights the souls,
That they to hear would gladly have no power.

We pass'd above the Shades on whom there rolls

INFERNO.

Such heavy sleet ; and on their semblance vain,
Which mocks the human form, our footstep falls.

Low on the earth they lay, beneath that rain,
All but one Shade, who suddenly arose,
As though our passing steps he would detain.

“ O thou who walkest through this place of woes,” 40
He said, “ recall to mind the name I bore ;
Thy morn had dawn’d before my evening’s close.”

Thus I replied to him : “ Thine anguish sore,
Perchance, doth so my memory beguile,
It seems I ne’er had look’d on thee before. 45

But tell me who thou art, condemn’d to dwell
Within this place, where sorrow is so rife ?
Though greater grief there be, yet none so vile.”

And he to me : “ Thy city, full of strife,
So that already doth the sack o’erflow, 50
Was erst my home, in the old pleasant life.

Thy citizens my name as Ciacco know ;
I by the sin of gluttony was led,
Thus, as ye see, to the eternal snow.

* And not alone, within this darkness dread, 55
Am I ; those others to an equal pain

Are doom'd, for equal sin." No more he said ;

I answer'd : "Ciaccio, for thy grief I fain
Would weep ; but tell me if to thee is known

Unto what fate shall come, of weal or bane, 60

The citizens of the divided town ;
If any, there, be just ; and name the cause
Why upon them such discord hath come down."

He said : "They will dispute a while, and pause,
And then will come to blood ; the part who bore 65
The sylvan name, with harsh injurious laws

Will chase their foes ; three years shall last their power ;
The others then shall have triumphant sway,
Aided by him who coasts along the shore.

High they will hold their heads for many a day ; 70
Their enemies shall sorely be opprest,
Although they fret, and fain would strive away.

But two are just, neglected by the rest ;
For envy, pride, and avarice are found,
Three sparks that have set fire to every breast." 75

Here became hush'd the lamentable sound ;
I said : "Now, pray thee, tell me somewhat more
Of those who lie within this dreary bound.

Say where those souls who nobly strove of yore,
Tegghiaio, Rusticucci, Mosca, dwell ; 80
Arrigo ; Farinata, he who bore

A fame which he had merited so well.
I would that what their fate hath been I knew ;
If they rejoice in Heaven, or grieve in Hell.”

“ They are among the souls of blacker hue,” 85
He said : “ for other sins they are brought low ;
Descending, thou their suffering shalt view.

When thou again to the fair world dost go,
I pray thee, my sad memory recall
In life ; from me no further mayst thou know.” 90

The eyes which look'd on me began to roll
Askance ; he bent, and on the dreary shore,
Amid the other blind ones, did he fall.

My Leader said : “ Now he will wake no more,
Till the last trumpet sound ; and then shall come 95
Their enemy, that dread and awful Power,

And each shall find again his mournful tomb,
Again the form he wore on earth shall take,
The while resoundeth his eternal doom.”

Thus we pass'd onward through the filthy lake 100

Of mingled Shades and rain, with paces slow,
And somewhat of the future life we spake.

Wherefore I said : “ My Master, I would know,
After the final sentence if or more,
Or less, or still the same, shall be this woe.” 105

And he to me : “ Return unto thy lore
Which says, that ever the most perfect thing
Hath joy most keen and suffering most sore.

This people, cursed beneath the shadowing
Of God’s great wrath, in truth can ne’er attain 110
Perfection ; yet the final day will bring

To them a fuller life and sharper pain.”
We went, discoursing more than now I tell :
We came to where the way descends again ;
And found the spot where doth the Arch-fiend Pluto 115
dwell.

CANTO VII.



Argument.

Fourth Circle ; the spendthrifts and the avaricious. Fifth
Circle ; the wrathful, and the sullen slothful.

“ PAPÈ Satàn, papè Satàn, aleppè ! ”

Thus Pluto now began with hoarsest voice ;

And the good Sage, who knew what all things be,

Said as to comfort me : “ Let not this noise

Affright thee ; since, whate’er the power he hath, 5

Yet he thy way nor hinders nor destroys.”

Then, turning to that bloated face, he saith :

“ Accursèd wolf, be silent, and consume

Thyself within thee, and thy bestial wrath.

Not without cause seek we the land of gloom ; 10

It is ordain’d on high, whence Michael sent

The haughty rebel headlong to his doom.”

As when strong wind the swelling sails hath bent,
And, if the mast doth break beneath its strain,
They fall ; so fell that beast of fierce intent. 15

Thus the fourth lake of darkness did we gain,
Down by the doleful bank, which doth enclose
Of the whole universe the guilt and pain.

Ah ! justice of our God, that such strange woes
And labours dire hath heap'd within this bourne, 20
Why doth our sin such suffering impose ?

Ev'n as the waves above Charybdis turn
And break, with all that in its pool is cast,
Thus whirl the dwellers in this land forlorn.

Here I beheld a multitude more vast 25
Than elsewhere I had seen ; with a loud cry
From this side and from that they swiftly pass'd,

And with their breasts great burdens roll'd. And aye
Against each other dash'd, they turn'd them back,
And spake aloud : “ Why hold ye fast ? and why 30

Fling ye away ? ” Thus in this region black
They ceaseless whirl and each doth each upbraid,
With voice reproachful, in their mournful track ;
And then when round the circle they had sped

But half, are to the tourney driven once more. 35

And I, whose heart was pierced with sorrow, said :

“ My Master, show, I pray thee, of thy lore,
And say if all are priests among that band,
Who seem as they the priestly tonsure wore.”

And thus he answer'd me : “ Now understand, 40
They were so blinded in their earthly life,
That never in just measure did they spend ;

And thus their voice with sore reproof is rife,
When they at end of the half-circle turn :
For guilt diverse doth cause their ceaseless strife. 45

All those by whom thou seest the tonsure worn
Were priests, and popes, and cardinals, in whom
Foul avarice hath all good things o'erborne.”

I said : “ My Master, ev'n amid this gloom
Methinks that I some souls might recognise, 50
Who by such guilt were brought unto their doom.”

Then he : “ Within thy mind vain thoughts arise ;
The life ignoble which their form bemocks
Now all resemblance hideth from thine eyes.

For ever, come they to those direful shocks ; 55
And these shall from the sepulchre come forth

With closèd hand, and those with close-cut locks.

Ill giving and ill keeping things of earth
Hath lost them bliss, and placed them in this pain :
To paint it, sooth, are words of little worth. 60

And now, my son, thou seest how short the gain
Of goods that in the hand of Fortune lie ;
For which the human race doth strive and strain.

For all the gold that is beneath the sky,
And e'er hath been, yet cannot give repose 65
To one among those weary souls." Then I

Thus spake : " My Master, unto me disclose
What is this Fortune, which thou spak'st of here,
The spring from whence all worldly grandeur flows ? "

And he to me : " O foolish, who do wear 70
An ignorance that e'en yourselves offends !
Unto the words which now I speak give ear.

The Being whose great wisdom far transcends
All knowledge, made the starry myriads bright,
And gave to them a spirit-guide, who blends 75

Each motion, parting equally their light ;
And, in like manner, mundane splendours wane,
At the command of One who guides aright,

And changes, in the rolling years, each vain
Possession of this earth, from race to race, 80
Despite the human power that would restrain.

From nation unto nation, empires pass
At bidding of a Power that lies unseen,
Ev'n as a serpent hid among the grass.

'Gainst her your wisdom all in vain hath been ; 85
She rules her realm, providing for each day,
As doth each other Heavenly Power, I ween.

Her ceaseless changing knows nor truce nor stay ;
With hasty footsteps still she needs must fly ;
So swiftly speeds both good and ill away. 90

And this is she whom men do vilify,
And blame most wrongfully with evil voice ;
When rather they should praise her name for aye.

But she is blest, nor heeds their rude annoys,
And with each bright Intelligence above 95
Revolves her sphere in everlasting joys.

But now to greater woes our steps must move ;
Each star, that dawn'd when first I met thee, now
Is waning and doth our delay reprove."

Across the shadowy circle did we go, 100

Hard by a seething fount, whose waters through
A self-worn channel ever fret and flow.

More dark than dullest lead that river's hue ;
And we pass'd on beside the dismal stream,
And with it enter'd on a pathway new. 105

And now these waters sorrowful and grim
Spread in a stagnant lake whose name is Styx,
Amid the land of mournful darkness dim.

And I, who on the marsh mine eyes did fix,
Saw forms all naked and bemir'd stand, 110
And seem as those whom sharpest sorrow pricks.

They strike themselves, not only with the hand,
But with the head, and eke with breast and feet,
And fiercely with their teeth themselves they rend.

Then the good Master said : " My son, here greet 115
Thee now the souls of those on whom do lie
The penalties of anger ; and ev'n yet

Is more than thou dost see : for know, there sigh
Beneath the water some whose moanings bear
Upward those bubbles that now meet thine eye. 120

Fix'd in the slime they say : ' In the sweet air
And the glad sunshine sadness on us lay,

For sullen sloth we did within us wear ;

Thus now we mourn in the foul, miry clay.'

This strain they gurgle hoarsely in their throat, 125

Which nought with words entire hath power to say."

Thus, in wide circuit, round that region fraught

With foulness, 'twixt the dry and dank we pass'd ;

And still our eyes those souls bemir'd sought ;

Then to the base of a great tower we came at last. 130

CANTO VIII.

—◆—
Argument.

The two Poets, in the bark of Phlegyas, cross the Styx, and
approach the city of Dis.

Now I narrate, continuing my lay,
That ere unto the lofty tower we came,
Our eyes unto its topmost height did stray ;

For there we saw two glimmering lamps of flame,
And then a third the signal did return, 5
Which from long distance pale and weak became.

Now to that sea of knowledge did I turn,
And said : “What thing is this ? and how replies
Yon other fire ? and who doth make it burn ?”

And thus he answer'd me : “This should thine eyes 10
Perceive, were they not hinder'd by the dark
Foul vapours from the filthy marsh that rise.”

Never so swiftly arrow to the mark
Flew from the cord, impell'd through thinnest air,
As here I saw advance a slender bark 15
Across the waters dim ; and it did bear
Only one mariner, who cried amain :
“ At last, O wicked spirit, thou art here ! ”
“ O Phlegyas, Phlegyas, this time all in vain
Thy cry,” my Leader said ; “ of us no more, 20
When thou hast borne us o'er the slime, thou'lt gain.”
As one who lists to some deception sore,
That hath been done to him, in anger sad,
Such was the sullen aspect Phlegyas wore.
My guide went down into the bark and bade 25
That I should follow him ; and only now,
With me it seem'd as though some freight it had.
And when we there were placed, that ancient prow,
Cutting the dark and dismal waters, fled ;
But more than wont, upon the waves lay low. 30
The while across the sullen lake we sped,
A form arose from out the filthy tide,
And, “ Who art thou who comest here ? ” it said.
And I : “ Not long within thy realm I bide ;

But who art thou, that in such mire dost dwell ? ” 35

“ Thou look’st on one who mourneth,” he replied.

And I to him : “ With tears and sorrow fell,
Accurs’d spirit, aye mayst thou remain !

Although thou art so foul, I know thee well.”

Then both his hands toward us did he strain ; 40

But my good Master push’d him back, and spake :

“ Unto thy fellows get thee hence amain ! ”

Then Virgil threw his arms around my neck,
And kiss’d me, saying : “ Righteous is thy wrath,
And she who bore thee bless’d for thy sake ! 45

In life he walk’d in proud disdainful path ;
No worthy deeds his memory do adorn ;
Thus here his furious Shade sad dwelling hath.

How many who have kingly sceptres borne
On earth, shall here, as swine within the sty, 50
Dwell in this filthy marsh, and sorely mourn ! ”

I answer’d thus : “ Good Master, joyfully
I would behold him plunged beneath the mire,
Ere we unto the solid shore draw nigh.”

And he to me : “ What thou dost now require 55
Shall be, before thine eye can reach the banks ;

'Tis well thou shouldst attain thy just desire."

And soon I saw him, mid the filthy ranks
Of those foul beings, handled sore, I ween ;
Whereof to God I still give praise and thanks. 60

They cried : "To Philip Argent !" with fierce mien:
Then tore he his own flesh ; and fain had fled
The spirit of that angry Florentine.

Leave we him here, nor more by me be said ;
But yet I heard a cry of anguish rude, 65
Although, intent, mine eye had onward sped.

"Behold ! my son," thus spake my Master good,
"Unto the walls of Dis thou drawest nigh,
Where sadly dwell a mighty multitude."

And I : "My Master, now its turrets high 70
Plainly within yon valley I discern,
As though of flame were their vermilion dye."

And then he said to me : "The fire etern,
That burns within them, sheds a crimson glow,
Which thou perceivest in this lower bourne." 75

At last, the moat that guards the land of woe
We had attain'd ; and all its haughty pride
Of walls a front of solid steel did show.

Onward we sail'd, in many a circuit wide,
Until our pilot stay'd his bark ; and there, 80
" Now come ye forth ; behold the gate," he cried.

" More than a thousand on the walls there were
Of those erst hurl'd from Heaven ; and fierce they said :
" Now who is this, that ere his death may dare

To journey through the kingdom of the dead ? " 85
Then my wise Master sign'd that he would fain
Speak with them secretly. Whereat they stay'd

In some small measure this their proud disdain,
And said : " Come thou alone ; let him begone,
Who is so bold to enter where we reign. 90

On his mad path let him return alone,
If, sooth, he knoweth how ; and 'bide thou here,
Who through the shadowy land the way hast shown."

Reader, thou well mayst picture my sad fear,
At their accurs'd words ; for never more 95
I hoped to see the summer sunlight clear.

" O Leader well-beloved, who erst me bore
Through sevenfold dangers safely, and by whom
My steps have pass'd along this perilous shore,
Leave me not here to such a dreadful doom," 100

I said ; “ together (if our course be stay’d),
Seek we again our traces mid the gloom.”

And he who hither had my footsteps led
Replied : “ Nay, fear not ; none have power to stay
Our going ; One, more great, our way hath sped. 105

But wait me here ; and on thy spirit lay
This comfort of good hope to give thee cheer,
Ne’er will I leave thee on thy darksome way.”

Thus he departed ; and in doubt and fear,
Left by my gentle father did I bide ; 110
For *yes* and *no* alternate did appear

Unto my weary brain. And undescried
By me his speech ; but little in that place
He stay’d, till with contention they replied.

And then the gates before my ‘Master’s face 115
Our adversaries closed ; and thus repell’d,
He turn’d again to me with tardy pace.

His eyes were bent on earth ; and I beheld
No boldness on his forehead, as with sighs
He said : “ Now who the entrance hath withheld 120

Unto the house of woe ? ” Then on this wise
To me he spake : “ Fear not, though on my brow

Be anger ; I shall daunt their scornful guise.

No new thing is this daring that they show ;

They used it at less secret gate, of yore, 125

Which, to this day, nor lock nor bar doth know.

Erst hast thou seen inscribed above that door, . ,

The characters of death. But now draws nigh

One, all unguided, from a distant shore,

To force the bars wherewith to hinder us they try." 130

CANTO IX.

—◆—
Argument.

The Three Furies.—An Angel comes to open the gate.—
Sixth Circle ; the Misbelievers.

WHEN my good Leader saw the pallid hue
O'erspread my cheek, beholding all in vain
His efforts, soon he smoothed his brow anew,
And stood as one who doth intently strain
To listen ; for but little way the eye 5
Through the thick mist and darkness might attain.

“Surely with us the victory must lie,”
Thus he began—“yet powerful is our aid.
Oh ! with what tardy step he draweth nigh !”

Well I perceiv'd that his speech he stay'd, 10
In other guise than was his first intent ;
But not the less thereby was I afraid,

Because, perchance, where his discourse was rent,
I fill'd the void with words of sadder scope
And yet more fearful purpose than he meant. 15

“ From the first region, to this darksome slope
Doth it e'er chance that any may descend
Of those whose only pain is lack of hope ? ”

I said ; and he replied : “ But rarely tend
The steps of any who among us dwell, 20
Along the path by which my way I wend.

'Tis true, that erst unto this depth of hell,
Conjured by Erichtho I came, when she
Call'd back the spirit, with her cruel spell,

• Unto its corpse once more. New-fallen from me 25
That fleshly raiment, when she sent me here,
To summon hence a Shade, of those who be

With Judas in the lowest and most drear
Abode of sorrow, furthest from the skies :
But well I know the path ; thou need'st not fear. 30

This marsh, whence such ill savour doth arise,
Encircles round the mournful city's wall,
Where we must enter aye in wrathful guise.”

And more he said than I can now recall ;

Because with mind intent I fix'd mine eye 35
On the red summit of the bastion tall.

For there I saw three dreadful Ones on high
Appear ; they seem'd of female form and mien,
The hellish Furies, tinged with bloody dye :

And they were girdled with the hydra green ; 40
Their locks were serpents and the hornéd snake,
Binding their temples with foul, slimy sheen.

And he who knew full well the hags who wake
Around the Queen of everlasting woe,
“Behold the fierce Erinnyës,” he spake. 45

Lo ! at the left doth sad Megæra go ;
Alecto weepeth at the right ; and there,
In midst, Tisiphonë.” And silent now,

My Leader stay'd his speech : then did they tear
Their breast with their own nails, and shriek so shrill, 50
That I to Virgil closely clung in fear.

“Come thou, Medusa, thy revenge fulfil
And turn him unto stone ” (thus with wild cries
They spake) ; “ the deeds of Theseus it were ill

To leave unpunish'd.” “ Turn thee, close thine eyes ; 55
For, if thou seest the Gorgon's dreadful face,

Thou never more mayst look upon the skies.”

Thus Virgil spake ; and he with eager pace
Turn’d me, nor trusting to my hands, amain
His own upon my eyelids did he place.

60

O ye, whose intellects are clear and sane,
Look at the doctrine that is hid beneath
The dusky veil of my mysterious strain.

Now, passing o’er the turbid lake of death,
Came a wild sound of terror ; and each shore
Trembled before the blast of that fierce breath.

65

None otherwise than stormy winds, that roar
Through tracks of adverse heat, with furious might
Tear from the trees, which erst fair blossoms bore,

Branches and boughs, and toss them in the fight ;
Proudly the dusty whirlwinds soar on high,
And put the shepherds and their flocks to flight.

70

Then he unclosed my lids, and said : “ Thine eye
Direct above the foul and ancient lake,
Where thickest clouds of pungent vapour lie.”

75

Even as the frogs before the dreaded snake
Rush through the water, till in fear and haste
To land for safety they themselves betake ;

More than a thousand of those spirits lost,
Thus fled from One who came, and with swift pace 80
Pass'd over Styx dry-shod. And as he cross'd,

Oft with his hand removed he from his face
The filthy air, whereby alone he seem'd
Anguish to feel, or pain, or weariness.

Him as a heavenly messenger I deem'd, 85
And to my Master turn'd ; and he made sign
Of silent rev'rence. Ah ! how brightly gleam'd

From every look and gesture calm disdain !
Unto the gate he came, and with a wand
He open'd it ; for none might him refrain. 90

“ O chased from Heaven, most miserable band ! ”
Now he began, upon the threshold dim,
“ Wherefore so bold, in battle thus to stand ?

Why do ye set at nought the words of Him
Whom none may balk of his most Sovereign Will, 95
And who hath often fill'd unto the brim

Your cup of pain ? To strive with fate is ill ;
Your Cerberus, of that all-powerful wrath,
Bears on his chin and throat the traces still.”

Then back he sped along the filthy path, 100

And unto us he spake not ; in such wise
As doth the man who in his spirit hath

Far other care than what before him lies.

Unto the walls we then our steps did turn,
Securely, since his message from the skies 105

Here he declared. Within the city's bourne,
We went in peace ; and I, who much desired
The manner of this fortress to discern,

When we had enter'd, gazed around, inspired
With wonder, and beheld on every side 110
Great fields all full of woe and pain untired.

For, as at Arles, where Rhone doth stagnant 'bide,
And as at Pola, near Quarnaro's bay,
Which closeth Italy with its salt tide,

The sepulchres are scatter'd, old and gray ; 115
Even thus, in every part they met my eyes,
Save that their manner here more sadly lay ;

Because among the tombs did flames arise,
And burn'd so fiercely that, in sooth, no more
He needs who at the forge the iron tries. 120

Those fiery sepulchres no covering wore,
And forth there issued such a mournful moan

As well might come from suffering sad and sore.

And I : " My Master, fain by me were known
What souls are buried here, who fill the air 125
With wailing voice, and in their anguish groan."

And he to me : " Heresiarchs they were,
And followers of divers sects, with whom,
More than thou deem'st, the graves their load do bear.

Here like with like are buried ; and each tomb 130
With more or less of burning fire doth glow."
Then to the right we turn, amid the gloom,
And 'twixt the sufferers and the lofty walls we go.

CANTO X.



Argument.

Dante holds discourse with the father of Guido Calvacanti,
and with Farinata degli Uberti.

AND now my Master, by a narrow path
Betwixt the walls and those sad graves of fire,
Went, and I follow'd through the land of wrath.

“O lofty Wisdom, who through labours dire
Dost lead me onward at thy will,” I said, 5
“Speak thou, and satisfy my strong desire.

The souls who in these sepulchres are laid,
May any look on them ? Unclosed each tomb
Abides, nor is the eye by hindrance stay'd.”

And he to me : “After the day of doom, 10
All shall be closed, when they return once more
Back from Jehoshaphat's dread vale of gloom ;

Within the bodies left on earth of yore.
 Here Epicurus and his sect do dwell,
 Who say that with the fleshly robe it wore 15
 The spirit dies. But in this zone of Hell
 An answer to thy question shall be brought,
 And e'en unto the wish thou dost not tell."

And I : " Good Master, not from thee my thought
 I hide, save for the fear that I may tire 20
 Thee with much speaking ; as thou erst hast taught."

" O Tuscan, journeying through the land of fire
 With living breath, I pray thee here to rest,
 And hold discourse, although in region dire.

The manner of thy speech doth manifest 25
 Of what a noble country thou art born,
 Which erst, perchance, too much I did molest."

With sudden start this sound I did discern,
 Which from a tomb came forth ; and thus more near
 Unto my gentle Leader did I turn. 30

Then he to me : " Nay ! wherefore dost thou fear ?
 See Farinata from the tomb arise !
 He from the girdle upwards doth appear."

Already on his face I fix'd mine eyes ;

Slowly he lifted up his lordly brow, 35
As though the pains of hell he did despise.

With ready hand my skilful Master now
Me mid the sepulchres toward him sped,
Saying : "Let thy discourse the truth avow."

Soon as beside his tomb my steps were stay'd, 40
Awhile he gaz'd, and then, as in disdain,
"Who were thine ancestors ?" to me he said.

And I, who to obey his 'hest was fain,
Without concealment did the truth rehearse ;
And then he bent his brow with thoughtful mien, 45

And said : "Most fiercely were they all averse
To me, and to my sires, and to my part ;
Thus twice from Florence did I them disperse."

"Yet they return'd, each time when to depart
Thou hadst compell'd them," boldly I replied : 50
"Your faction have not learnt so well that art."

Then rose another Shadow by his side ;
But only to the chin I saw his face :
I think that on his knees he did abide.

And all around he look'd, a little space, 55
As seeking one, of whom he deem'd with me ;

But when, at last, his hope perforce gave place,

Weeping he said : " If for thy worth thou be
Empower'd to journey through this house of woe,
Where is my son ? and wherefore not with thee ? " 60

And I to him : " Not of myself I go :
He who awaits me hither hath me led ;
And him, of yore, thy Guido scorn'd to know."

The manner of his pain, and what he said,
Had taught me soon to read his name aright ; 65
Therefore such plainness on my speech was shed.

And then he started, as with dire affright,
And cried : " Doth he not live ? why say'st ' of yore ? '
Look not his eyes upon the pleasant light ? "

And when he saw me hesitate, before 70
I fram'd an answer unto this his quest,
Supine he fell, nor did I see him more.

But on that other noble one had pass'd
No coward change of aspect ; and his head
Calmly he rais'd, nor bow'd his haughty breast. 75

Then, still continuing his speech, he said :
" If they that art but ill have learnt to know,
It grieves me more than doth this fiery bed.

But yet not fifty times with light shall glow
The face of her who in this realm doth reign, 80
Ere thou thyself shalt taste as bitter woe.

And, as unto the pleasant earth again
Thou would'st return, say, wherefore with such ire
'Gainst me and mine your people fiercely strain ? ”

Then I replied to him : “ The carnage dire, 85
That made Arbia's stream run bloody red,
Such prayers within our temple doth inspire.”

Then, sighing heavily, he shook his head,
And spake : “ Yet not therein was I alone,
Nor without cause I with the others sped : 90

But all alone I stood, what time each one
Lift up his voice fair Florence to destroy ;
And, but for me, that cruel deed were done.”

“ Ah ! as thou wouldst thy seed should find the joy
Of rest,” I said, “ unravel me this knot 95
That with its tangles works me sore annoy.

If well I understand, it seems your thought
Perceives what Time brings with him on his way ;
But of the present hour ye know not aught.”

He said : “ We see, as those whose visual ray 100

Is dimm'd by age, the things that are afar ;
Such light on us the Sovereign Lord doth lay.

But aye, when they draw near, or when they are,
Our intellect is vain ; and nought we see,
Unless some living one remove the bar. 105

Thus may'st thou know that wholly dead shall be
Our consciousness, when Time shall be no more,
And clos'd the portal of Futurity."

I said, as sorrow for my fault I wore :
"Then bear, to him who now hath fallen, my suit, 110
And say his son still dwells upon the shore

Of earth. If I to his demand was mute,
I pray him pardon me, because I lay
Still in the error thou dost here confute."

And now my Master summon'd me away ; 115
Wherefore more eagerly I begg'd that Shade
The names of those who dwelt with him to say.

"More than a thousand spirits here are stay'd ;
The second Frederick, and the man who wore
On earth the rank of Cardinal," he said : 120

"But of the others I disclose no more."
Then to the ancient poet I drew nigh,

Musing upon those words of meaning sore.

He mov'd ; and as we went, he said : " But why
All 'wilder'd and astray dost thou appear ? " 125

And then to his demand I made reply.

" Now in thy mind lay up what thou dost hear ; "
Thus my wise Leader unto me did say,
And pointed upwards : " to my words give ear.

When thou shall bask within the lovely ray 130
Of those bright eyes which all things do discern,
From her the story of thy future day

And course of life full clearly thou may'st learn."
Leaving the wall, our footsteps then we bent
Tow'rds the left hand, unto a dismal bourne 135

Whence foulest smoke arose, with filthy odours blent.

CANTO XI.

Argument.

Virgil explains to Dante the nature of the sins punished in the three following circles, and proves that the penalty is everywhere in just proportion to the guilt.

Now, where great rocks in broken circle lay,
Around the summit of a lofty bank,
Above yet sadder pains we went our way.

And there so dreadful was the odour rank
Which upward from the deep abyss was shed, 5
That near the covering of a tomb we shrank

Whereon those written words I plainly read :
“ Behold ! Pope Anastasius lies below,
Whom erst Photinus from the true path led.”

“ Now must our onward journey needs be slow, 10
Till somewhat unto yon foul breath thy sense
Be harden'd, then in safety may'st thou go.”

The Master thus ; and I : “Some recompense
Then find, that I not wholly be bereft
Of profit. Thou wilt see,” he said, “perchance, 15

That I thereon have thought. Within those cleft
And broken rocks, there are three zones of Hell,
Grade within grade, as those which thou hast left ;

And all are fill'd with souls accursed and fell :
But that it may suffice thee to have seen 20
Their woes, I show thee wherefore here they dwell.

Of all the sins abhorr'd of Heaven, I ween,
Injustice is the end ; which, in all time,
By force or fraud another's wrong hath been.

And, because fraud is wholly human crime, 25
It most displeases God ; and lowest aye
The fraudulent are placed in this dread clime.

In the first circle do the violent lie ;
But since unto three different persons they
Do wrong, three zones enclose them severally. 30

To God, their neighbour, and themselves they may
Do ill in many ways, as I shall now
With clearest reasoning before thee lay.

For death by force, and wounds of cruel woe

Upon their neighbour they inflict, and eke 35

They spoil his goods in mulct and fiery glow ;

Thus homicides, and those who vengeance wreak,

And maim and spoil, this circle doth torment ;

And here for those who rob with violence seek.

Unto himself may man be violent, 40

And to his goods ; thus in the second zone

It needs must be those spirits shall repent,

Who at their will from out your world have gone,

Have lost and squander'd every faculty,

And still have wept where sadness should be none. 45

And they do wrong unto the Deity,

Who Nature and her goodness do despise,

And God blaspheme and in their hearts deny.

Therefore the seal of the last circle lies

On those who in Cahors and Sodom dwelt, 50

And those who sin in proud, despiteful guise.

And fraud, that most the conscience stains with guilt,

A man may use to those who give him faith,

And those who unto him no faith have felt.

This latter only breaks, with its ill breath, 55

The chain of love that Nature round us throws :

Therefore within this second zone of death
Are hypocrites, and flatterers, and those
Who plot against their neighbours, and with lies
Deceive, and cheat, and steal ; and mid these woes 60
They dwell whose sin is simony. In guise
Diverse the manner of their guilt and doom,
Who break the bonds a special friendship ties
Thus in the circle where the Lord of gloom
Has, o'er Creation's central point, his throne, 65
For ever grief the traitor doth consume."

And I : " My Master, clearly now is shown
Thy speech, whereby thou dost depict so well
This gulf, and those who in its dungeons groan.
But they who in the filthy marsh do dwell, 70
Who fly before the rain and tempest dire,
And who each other meet with tauntings fell,
Why are they not within the land of fire
Tormented, if God hath them in his wrath ?
If not, why mourn they thus beneath his ire ? " 75

Then to my quest he answer'd : " Wherefore hath
Thy mind such fancies, with more folly fraught
Than is thy wont ? or on some other path

Dost wander ? Bring again unto thy thought
The words wherewith thine Ethics do dispart 80
The three heart-sins that heaven receiveth not,
Incontinence, maliciousness of heart,
And mad bestiality : and how, of all
Those sins, God doth the least of blame impart
Unto incontinence. If thou recall 85
This sentence to thy mind, and who they be
Who suffer penitence without this wall,
Why they are sever'd thus thou well shalt see,
And punish'd in yon outer land of woe,
By Heavenly Justice, with less agony." 90
"O Sun, who on each troubled eye doth glow
With health, thy solving gives me such content,
To doubt is not less pleasant than to know.
A little backwards let thy speech be bent,
Where thou but now hast said that usury 95
Offendeth God ; and what thy words have meant
Explain." I spake, and thus my Guide to me
Replied : "Philosophy, not in one part
Alone, shines forth to those who clearly see,
And shows how Nature springs from out the Art 100

Of Intellect Divine ; and if thou store
The words of Aristotle in thy heart,

Thou'lt find thy Learning Nature's steps explore,
As scholar heedful of the master's trace ;
Thus almost is it child of God's own lore. 105

Recall the words which in the earliest place
Of Genesis are writ ; and thou shalt know,
Two things are needful for the human race.

The usurer by other paths doth go,
And Nature and her daughter Art despise ; 110
Thus elsewhere garners he his hope. But now,

Follow thou me, for we must needs arise
And go : the Fish on the horizon glide,
And upwards dart ; the Wain o'er Caurus lies ;
And far our path descends, beyond the mournful tide. 115

CANTO XII.



Argument.

Seventh Circle, divided into three zones ; in which the violent are punished. First Zone ; those who have done violence to their neighbour.

Of wild and fearful aspect was the spot
Of our descent ; and somewhat there we spied,
A form with yet more dreadful horror fraught.
Ev'n as the ruin caus'd, when, from the side
Of Adigè by Trent, the cliff gave way, 5
With sudden crash, and smote the foaming tide,
(Perchance from earthquake or from lack of stay)
And from the mountain's summit whence it came,
Unto the plain, so steep the height ye may
Scarce find a path ; thus was this gulf the same. 10
And there, lay stretched upon the highest brow
Of that sharp precipice the Cretan shame,

The monster erst conceived in the false cow ;
And when he saw us, with his teeth he tore
Himself, as one whose ire doth work him woe. 15

Thus spake the sage who led me to this shore :
“Perchance, the Duke of Athens thou dost fear,
Who slew thee in the world above, of yore ?

Go to, thou beast, this mortal comes not here,
Taught by thy sister ; but he journeyeth 20
To see the manner of your torments drear.”

Even as the savage bull who, when he hath
Receiv'd his mortal wound, no more has skill
To turn, but boundeth to and fro in wrath,

Thus did the Minotaur ; and he who still 25
Supported me cried out : “Run to the height ;
Descend while rage doth yet the monster fill.”

Thus did we bend our course along the strait
And stony pathway of the deep descent,
Which yielded oft to my unwonted weight. 30

Pensive I was : “Perchance thy thoughts are bent ”
(Thus Virgil ;) “on yon cliff defended well
By the brute anger I but now have spent.

Know, that when erst unto this depth of hell

I came from out the dim and shadowy bourne, 35
'Twas ere yon rock from the high summit fell.
 A little while (if clearly I discern)
Before He came who snatch'd the mighty prey
Of Dis from out the circling zone supern,
 On every side this valley foul and gray 40
Trembled, as if, methought, the Universe
Was mov'd by love ; the which, there are who say,
 Did many times in chaos wild disperse
The world : and then yon ancient cliff did here,
And elsewhere, fall with sudden strange reverse. 45
 But look thou downwards ; for we now draw near
The bloody river, in whose boiling tide
The violent do find their fitting sphere."
 O blind cupidity, O foolish pride,
Ye spur us on, in our short life, and woe 50
Eternal is the meed we must abide !
 An ample fosse in form of bended bow
I saw, like that which doth the whole embrace,
Ev'n as my guide had said to me. And lo !
 Between the bank and it, in order'd race, 55
Arm'd with their darts we saw the Centaurs run,

As those on earth who go unto the chase.

Perceiving us, they stopp'd, and each began
To gaze in wonder, and then three drew near,

With arrows fitted to the bow. And one 60

Cried from afar : " Now wherefore come ye here ?
And to what punishment the pathway try ?
Speak where ye stand ; if not, expect my spear."

My Master said : " To Cheiron the reply
We make anon : of evil fate to thee 65
Hath been the wrath that brought thee here for aye."

Then touching me, he said : " Know, this is he
Who for the beauteous Dejanira died,
And took his own revenge. He whom we see

In midst, with head upon his breast down-weigh'd, 70
Is the great Cheiron, who Achilles rear'd ;
This other, Pholus, erst so fill'd with pride."

Around the fosse in thousands they appear'd,
Flinging their darts at every Shade who more
Came forth than was his need. And as we near'd 75

Those swift, fierce creatures on the bloody shore,
Cheiron did with an arrow's hilt divide
The shaggy hair which on his lips he wore.

When he had thus reveal'd the cavern wide
Of his huge mouth, unto his mates he said : 80

“ See ye the stones from 'neath the hindmost glide ?

Not thus do pass the footsteps of the dead.”

And Virgil, who approach'd that wondrous sight,
The double nature in one form array'd,

Thus spake : “ In sooth he liveth, and aright 85
To him alone I show the land of flame ;

Necessity doth lead us, not delight.

For, one from singing Hallelujah came,
And gave me the new office that I wear :
No robber this, nor I by deeds of shame 90

Brought hither. By the virtue which doth bear
My steps along this path with dangers fraught,
Give us a guide, who may to us declare

Of yon dark river the most shallow spot ;
And on his shoulders be this mortal sped, 95
Who is no spirit on thin air to float.”

Cheiron then turn'd, and unto Nessus said :
“ Go, be their guide unto the further shore,
And see that none draw near to work them dread.”

Now with our faithful escort we pass'd o'er 100

The space 'twixt us and the vermilion flood,
Where they who there were seeth'd lamented sore.

Some plunged therein unto the eyebrows stood ;
And the great Centaur said : "Tyrants they be,
Who erst in spoil and gore their hands imbrued. 105

Here Alexander mourns ; and here we see
That Dionysius famed in days of old,
Who caused such doleful years to Sicily.

That brow whose locks do hang in dusky fold.
Is Azzolino ; and yon forehead fair, 110
Obizzo d'Este, whom, in truth 'tis told,

His wicked son did unto darkness bear."
Then turn'd I to the Poet, and he said :
"Let Nessus be the first, me second here."

A little further on, the Centaur stay'd, 115
By those who in the boiling stream made moan,
But only to the throat the waves had spread.

He pointed tow'ards a spirit all alone, 120
And thus he spake : "Within God's holy place
He cleft the heart that yet o'er Thames is shown."

Then saw I those who lifted up their face,
And eke their chest, from out the crimson flood ;

And some I could in my remembrance trace.

Thus lessen'd more and more the stream of blood,
Until it only o'er the feet did flow : 125

Here was the spot where now our footsteps should

Pass o'er the wave. "As hitherwards more low
Hath still diminish'd the boiling tide."

(The Centaur spake) "I would that thou should'st know

That more and more increases tow'rd the side 130
To which we look, its depth, till it attain

The spot where sorely mourns the tyrant's pride.

There, Divine Justice pierces with sharp pain
That Attila who was the scourge of God ;
Pyrrhus, and Sextus ; and for aye, in rain, 135

From Regnier da Corneto the red flood
Sad tears doth press ; Regnier de' Pazzi, too,
Who waged such cruel wars upon the road."

Then turn'd he, and re-pass'd the stream of fearful hue.

CANTO XIII.

Argument.

Second Zone of the Seventh Circle ; the suicides, changed into trees, and tormented by the Harpies.—Pier della Vigne, Chancellor of Frederick II.

Nor yet had Nessus gain'd the further bound,
When we drew near, upon the darksome shore,
To a dim wood wherein no path is found.

Not verdure bright, but dusky hues it wore,
Not branches smooth, but gnarl'd in many a knot ; 5
Nor fruits, but sharp and pois'nous thorns it bore.

Less tangled dens 'twixt Cecina are sought
And one Corneto, by wild beasts that rest
In the thick wood, and shun each cultured spot :

And here the hideous Harpies have their nest, 10
Who chased the Trojans from the Strophadës,
With dread announcement of a fate unblest.

Great wings they have, and necks and visages
Of human semblance ; feet with claws ; and vile
Their feather'd bulk : and aye on those strange trees 15

They mourn. Then Virgil : " Ere this sad defile
Thou enterest more, take heed and understand
That in the second zone thou art, the while

Thou journeyest onward to the dreadful sand :
What thou beholdest here shall plainly show 20
The truth which doth within my sermon stand."

On every side I heard the voice of woe,
And yet of those who mourn'd saw I nought ;
Thus, in surprise, no further did I go.

In very truth, I think he thought I thought 25
That mid the branches came those cries of grief
From some who there from us a refuge sought.

Therefore my Master said : " If thou a leaf
Wilt break from those wherewith yon trees are spread,
'Twill cause the thought within thee to be brief." 30

Towards the foliage then my hand I sped,
And pluck'd a branchlet from a lofty thorn :
Then " Wherefore dost thou tear me thus ? " it said.

And dark'ning with red blood where it was torn,

"Why work'st me woe?" again did it begin ; 35

"Within thee is no thought of pity worn ?

Once we were men ; now are we trees, I ween :
And thee more gentleness might well inspire,
Although the souls of serpents we had been."

Even as the brand yet green, when in the fire 40
One end is cast, the other groans, and still
With hissing noise the moisture doth transpire ;

Thus did the splintered stem the same fulfil,
And words and blood gush'd forth : then from my hand
I cast the branch, as one who fears some ill. 45

"O wounded soul, if he might understand
From my discourse alone" (thus Virgil said)
"The manner of the woe within your land,

More sorrow upon thee he had not laid :
But so incredible appear'd this thing, 50
That, to a deed which on my spirit weigh'd,

I led him. Now, if he to thee may bring
Some healing, say who, when on earth, thou wert ;
Thus there again thy fame may freshly spring."

Then spake the stem : "Thou lur'st with such sweet 55
art,

I needs must speak ; then let it not displease
If at some length my story I impart.

Know, I am he who erst held both the keys
Of Frederick's heart ; and I so well had learn'd
To lock it and unlock it with soft ease, 60

All others from his confidence I turn'd.
Such faith to that proud office did I hold,
Thence lost I life : for she whose glances burn'd,

On Cæsar's dwelling still intent, the bold
Vile harlot who in sooth is common death 65
And the great vice of courts, 'gainst me enroll'd

The minds of all, with fiercely glowing wrath ;
And they, in anger, anger'd my august
Imperial master, till in sorrow's breath
My joyous honours pass'd. Disdain's proud gust, 70
Thinking in death e'en from disdain to flee,
Made me unjust 'gainst me who still was just.

I swear by the new roots of this strange tree,
That ne'er the trusting faith did I betray
Of my much honour'd master. And if ye 75

Ascend once more unto the land of day,
Restore thou my fair fame that lieth low,

Struck by the envy which did erst me slay."

Pausing, no further his discourse did go ;

Then said the Poet : "Lose not thou this hour ; 80

But speak, and ask him all that thou wouldst know."

And thus I answer'd : " Ask thou of him more,

Of what thou deem'st may satisfy my need ;

For on my heart doth pity weigh too sore."

Again he spake on this wise : " If indeed 85

Thou wouldst this man should freely grant thy prayer,

Incarcerated spirit, let his meed

Be this ; that unto him thy speech declare

How in these gnarléd boughs a soul may lie ;

And say if any from their bonds can e'er 90

Escape." And now the stem a heavy sigh

Sent forth ; then words the mournful breath did pierce :

" Briefly to your demand I make reply.

Know, in the moment when the spirit fierce

Parts from the body which itself hath torn, 95

The dread command of Minos doth immerse

The Shade in this abyss. Then is it borne

As fortune wills, nor hath it power of choice,

Springs where it falls, as doth a grain of corn,

And as a woodland plant doth it arise ; 100
And aye the Harpies, feeding on its leaves,
Do cause it pain, and give that pain a voice.

Each one again his earthly garb receives,
As others ; yet therewith we are not clad :
The thing whereof a man himself bereaves 105

Is given to him no more. But through the sad
Dark wood our bodies shall we drag, and here
Hang every corpse beneath its thorn's own shade."

Intently listening, still we stood anear
The trunk, expecting that it somewhat more 110
Should speak ; when lo ! there burst upon mine ear

A sound as when ye hear the hunted boar,
Chas'd by the dogs, rush through the tangled wood,
With crash of breaking boughs. And from the shore,

At the left hand, came two all stain'd with blood, 115
And naked, flying wildly from the chase ;
And, all around, the broken boughs were strew'd.

"Come now, O Death !" he shriek'd who led the race ;
The other, deeming his own speed too slow,
Cried "Lano, thou didst move with duller pace,

At Toppo's joust, of yore." And then, as though

Perchance for lack of breath, he sought to gain
A tangled bush, and mid its leaves lay low.

Behind him, through the forest came a train
Of fierce and hungry dogs of blackest hue, 125
Running as greyhounds loosen'd from the chain.

They with their teeth the crouching form pierced
through,
And shred from shred in savage fierceness tore ;
And through the wood the anguish'd limbs they drew. 130

Then my good Master took my hand once more,
And led me to the bush, that, all in vain,
Wept through its bloody, gaping wounds full sore.

"O Jacopo da Sant' Andrea," then
It said, "what shelter hast thou found in me ? 135
What guilt is mine, of all the sins which stain

Thy life ?" When Virgil had drawn near, then he
Thus spake : "Who wert thou, that by many a wound
Breath'st forth thy words with blood so dolorously ?"

And he to us : "O souls, who to this bound 140
Have come to see the miserable strife
Which my sad leaves has scatter'd all around,
Lay them beneath my stem. I dwelt, in life,

Within the town which for the Baptist's sway
Changed its first patron ; whence it still is rife

With the sore ills his art doth on it lay : 145

And were't not that on Arno doth remain
Of him some relics even unto this day,

Those citizens who founded it again,
Above the cinders Attila had left,
Of certainty had labour'd all in vain.— 150

Self-strangled in my house was I of life bereft."

CANTO XIV.

Argument.

Third Zone of the Seventh Circle ; the rebellious against God
exposed to a fiery rain.—The Giant Capaneus.—Source of
the rivers of Hell.

THE love I bore my native place prevail'd ;
Thus gather'd I the scatter'd leaves once more,
And gave them back to him whose voice had fail'd.

We journey'd on, until our steps passed o'er
The bound betwixt the third and second zone, 5
Where God's great justice punishes full sore.

To clearly manifest those things unknown
Till now, I here relate that to a land
We came, where never leaf or plant hath grown.

The doleful forest round it forms a band, 10
Itself enwreath'd by the river dread ;
Here on the utmost border did we stand.

O'er all the space a dry thick sand was shed,
Like that which on the burning desert lies,
Whereon of old the feet of Cato sped. 15

Vengeance of God, what fear of thee should rise
Within the heart of him who readeth here
That which was manifest unto mine eyes !

For now did many a naked soul appear,
All weeping with the mournful sound of woe : 20
And each did seem a different law to bear.

Some, stretch'd supine, upon the earth lay low,
And some were seated, crouching on the shore,
And others ever wander'd to and fro.

They who pass'd on erect were many more, 25
And fewer they who lay upon the strand ;
But these most loudly mourn'd in torment sore.

And ever slowly falling on the sand,
Great flakes of fire came down in burning rain,
As without wind the snow on mountain-land. 30

As Alexander, on the arid plain
Of India, erst beheld the fiery shower
Above his army fall : when he was fain
To cause the multitude to trample o'er

And cry, 'Good Vulcan, aid us with thy fire ;'

And fiercely as of yore on Phlegra's field,
Pierce me with darts ; yet shall he not rejoice
That I beneath his vengeance ere should yield." 60

And then my Leader answer'd, with a voice
Of louder tone than I had heard till then :

"O Capaneus, more sad and sore annoys
Thou hast because thy pride doth work thee pain ;
No suffering, save thine own rage alone, 65
Could to the measure of thy guilt attain."

And then he turn'd and said with softer tone :
"This shade was one of the seven kings of old,
Who erst besieged Thebes ; by him was shown

Disdain of God, whom still he seems to hold 70
In scorn ; but, as I said, he well doth wear,
As fitting ornament, his fierceness bold.

Now follow me, and look thou well that here
Thou plant no footstep on the burning sand,
But ever to the forest keep thou near." 75

Silent we came to where a stream doth wend
Forth from the wood ; its crimson hue doth still
Cause, in my fear, each hair erect to stand.

As from the Bulicamë flows the rill
Which then the harlots each with each divide, 80
Thus through the sand did this red fount distil.

The bed o'er which it pass'd, and each steep side,
And margin all around were turn'd to stone ;
Thus saw I that my steps might there abide.

“Mid all the wonders I to thee have shown, 85
Since we the gate have enter'd, which denies
The right to pass its limit unto none,

There hath not been perceiv'd by thine eyes
So notable a thing as this strange rill ;
For every flame above its vapour dies.” 90

These words my Leader spake to me, and still
I pray'd for yet more largesse from his hand,
The larger longing of my soul to fill.

“Amid the ocean is a desert land,”
He said, “whose name is Crete ; beneath its king 95
The earth was peopled by a sinless band.

A hill is there call'd Ida ; in the spring
Of Time, all gay with streams and verdure bright,
Now is it lone as some forbidden thing.

And Rhea chose, to screen her son from sight, 100

This isle ; and that the spot should be unknown,
Whene'er he wept she waked the cymbal's might.

Within the mount there stands an image lone,
From Damietta backward doth it turn ;

On Rome, as on a mirror, aye is thrown 105

Its glance. The head with finest gold doth burn,
And of pure silver are the arms and breast ;

The body brass ; and thence ye may discern

Downwards of polish'd steel is all the rest,
Save the left foot, of clay, whereon is leant 110

More heavy weight than on the right is prest.

Each part, save only the fine gold, is rent
By a long fissure, aye distilling tears,
Which, gather'd, hew this grot. Their course is bent

Throughout this valley, where their stream appears, 115

As Acheron and Styx : the burning shore

Of Phlegethon is here ; and as it nears

The depth from which ye may descend no more,
Through this strait channel downwards does it flow,
To the sad flood of Cocytus, whose lore 120

I tell not, since thou for thyself shalt know."
Then I : " If in our world its source is found,

How saw we nought thereof until this low

Dim shore ? ” “ Thou know’st this valley’s form is
round,”

He answer’d ; “ though thou many a step hast gone, 125

Still to the left descending its dark bound,

Yet hast thou not encircled all the zone ;

Thus, if some novelty should meet thine eye,

Here on thy brow need no surprise be shown.”

Then I : “ My Master, where may we descry 130

Lethe and Phlegethon ? thou sayest nought

Of one, and that the other’s fount doth lie

Within this rill.” “ Thine every quest is fraught

To me with pleasure,” thus he ’gan to say,

“ Yet this hot wave should partly solve thy thought. 135

Far from this vale, thou Lethe shalt one day

Behold ; where spirits go to be made clean,

When the repented sin is wash’d away.”

And then he said : “ Now walk no more within

The forest ; be thy footsteps on the same 140

Margin whereon I tread ; for there, I ween,

Each vapour soon is spent, and flake of burning flame.”

CANTO XV.

Argument.

Dante meets Brunetto Latini, his early teacher, who announces
to him his future misfortunes.

ALONG the stony margin did we go,
While o'er the streamlet hung a misty veil,
And screen'd the waters from the fiery glow.

Even as in Flanders, when fierce winds prevail
'Twixt Ghent and Bruges, and in fear they deem 5
They needs must raise a fence which shall not fail ;

And as the Paduans by Brenta's stream
Defend their lands and castles from the flood,
Ere Chiarentana feel the sunny beam :

Thus in like manner this strong bulwark stood ; 10
Although the workman (whosoe'er he be)
Framed it less high and wide. Now from the wood

So far remov'd in our course were we,
That, turning, nought thereof could I perceive ;



When, coming slowly toward us, did I see 15

A band of those who in this region grieve :

And still, in drawing near us, did they try

To see us plainly ; as ye strive at eye,

'Neath the new moon, each other to descry :

Thus did they gaze intent, with bended brow, 20

As agèd workmen seek the needle's eye.

And while with straining glance they pass'd me, now

One recognised me, and my garment caught.

And then he spake : "What wondrous thing art thou?"

When thus his outstretch'd arm toward me sought, 25

I fix'd my eyes upon his face, which bore

Trace of the fire wherewith this land is fraught.

And to my memory he return'd once more ;

And then, bent down, I said : "Do I perceive

Thee, Ser Brunetto, on this mournful shore?" 30

He answer'd : "O my son, let it not grieve

Thy soul if here Brunetto turn with thee,

A little while, and these his comrades leave."

I said : "Even so, I pray thee, let it be ;

Or wouldst thou that I here should somewhat stay, 35

If it so pleaseth him who goes with me?"

Alleg.

Then he : " If any of our herd delay
One moment, moveless for a hundred years
He lies beneath the flame. Then go thy way :

I follow near the trace thy footstep wears ; 40
Thereafter to rejoin the troop who wend
Along their course with never-ending tears."

I dared not from the solid path descend,
To walk beside him ; but, with rev'rent mien,
Lowly my head toward him did I bend. 45

Thus he began : " What fortune to this scene
Hath led thee ere the final day of doom ?
And who doth guide thee ? " " In the life serene

Of earth, I wander'd to a vale of gloom,
And lost myself among its depths forlorn, 50
Ere yet I came to manhood's ripest bloom.

From thence I turn'd away but yester-morn :
Yon shade appear'd, to aid me in the war ;
And by this pathway am I homeward borne."

I spake ; and he replied : " If thou thy star 55
Wilt follow, thou a glorious port shalt gain ;
If well I saw in the sweet life afar.

Had I not been by Death so early slain,

Beholding Heaven to thee-ward so benign
My aid and counsel had I given thee fain. 60

But know, this people ingrate and malign,
Who from Fiesole came down of yore,
And still recall, in sooth, their rustic line,
For thy good deeds will hate thee all the more.

Thus it must ever be : ye ill may find 65
The dulcet fig among the crab-tree's store.

Old fame in all the world doth call them blind,
And full of envy, avarice, and pride :
See that thou purge their morals from thy mind.

On thee, one day, such honour shall abide, 70
Each faction gladly to thy fame would cling ;
But to their hunger be the food denied.

Those vile Fiesolans full well may bring
Straw for themselves ; nor let them touch the flower
(If any still doth on their dung-hill spring) 75

Wherein doth live again unto this hour
The seed of those old Romans, who remain'd
When erst was built that nest of lawless power."

"If I unto my every wish attain'd,"
I said, "within this region shouldst thou not, 80

Outlaw'd from human nature, be detain'd.

For still within my heart is fix'd the thought
Of thee, who, in the pleasant days gone by,
Me as a loving father oft hast taught

How the deep soul of man doth live for aye : 85
Thus ever shall my speech the impress bear
Of gratitude to thee, until I die.

That which thou here dost of my fate declare
I keep, with other prophecies, to show
To One who well doth understand ; if e'er 90

Her I behold. I would that thou shouldst know
That if my conscience be but wholly clean,
I care not by what path my fate may go.

No new thing unto me thy words have been ;
Thus let the wheel of Fortune onward speed, 95
And still the peasant drive his plough, I ween."

And then my Master turn'd him round, and said,
The while he gazed on me with fix'd eye :
"In sooth, he listens best who giveth heed."

Yet, as with Ser Brunetto we pass'd by, 100
I did not cease, but ask'd who in this fell
Abode were with him in that company.

And he to me : "To know of some is well ;
But of the others silence is more fit :
The time were short, each history to tell. 105

But know, that all who in this zone are set
Were priests, and men of learning and of fame,
And all were foul with the same sin, while yet
They dwelt on earth. Beneath this burning flame,
Francis d'Accorso doth his debt fulfil : 110

Priscian is there ; and one whom, for his shame,
He who is servant of all servants still,
From Arno sent to Bacchiglione's strand,
Whereon he left the limbs he used so ill.

More I would tell thee ; but I now may wend 115
With thee no longer : for afar I see
New smoke arise from out the burning sand.

A people come with whom I may not be :
Unto my Treasury give heed, I pray ;
There still I live : no more I ask of thee." 120

And then he turn'd, and swiftly pass'd away ;
Like those who with Verona's banner green
Run through the fields : he was, methought, as they
Who win, not lose, the race ; so swift his pace, I ween.

CANTO XVI.



Argument.

Dante meets other Shades in the same place, with whom he
discourses of the state of Florence.

Now had we come unto a place where we
The sound of falling waters well might hear,
As in the hive the humming of the bee,

When with swift pace three shadowy forms drew near,
Leaving a multitude who pass'd along, 5
Beneath the rain of this sharp torment drear.

Approaching us, they cried in accents strong :
“Stay thou, who by thy garment seemst as though
Unto our wicked land thou didst belong.”

Ah me ! what ghastly wounds their limbs did show, 10
Both old and recent, by the fierce flame burnt !
E'en yet, that memory doth work me woe.

Then, at their cry, my Leader stopp'd and turn'd
His face toward me : " Wait them here," he said ;
" Unto those shades must courtesy be learnt, 15
And, wer't not for the fiery arrows shed
On all around, I'd say that it were best
For thee, and not for them, to make such speed."
Once more, as they beheld us thus at rest,
The wail arose ; and when they had drawn nigh, 20
Together like a wheel they circled fast.
Even as the wrestlers measure with their eye
Each other, and their vantage-ground would pace,
Ere in the combat they their prowess try ;
Thus, whirling round, each one did turn his face 25
Towards me, so that still his looks were borne
In diverse manner from his footsteps' trace.
One spake : " If thou our prayers dost hold in scorn
For the sad misery of this region fell,
And the dark hue which on our brows is worn, 30
Yet let our fame prevail on thee to tell
What thou mayst be, whose living feet do tread
Securely thus amid the depths of Hell.
This Shade, by whom my footsteps here are led,

Although all naked and forlorn he be, 35
More than thou think'st was of a lofty grade,
The grandson of the good Gualdrada he ;
His name was Guidoguerra : both with hand
And head, on earth he did right valiantly.
The other, who behind me treads the sand, 40
Was erst Tegghiaio Aldobrandi hight :
Still in esteem his voice on earth should stand,
And I, who with them bear the fiery might,
Was Jacopo Rusticucci : in good sooth,
My haughty wife hath done me most despite." 45
Had I been shelter'd from the flame, in truth
I then had flung myself amid their throng :
I think my Leader, in his gentle ruth,
My wish had granted. But in me so strong
The dread of the fierce burning, that the will 50
It quench'd which to embrace them made me long.
Thus I began : " Not scorn, but grief, doth fill
My soul with such compassion for your sake,
That to express it scarcely have I skill.
As soon as this my much-loved Master spake 55
Words whence I deem'd some mighty one drew nigh,

Within me deepest pity did awake.

For of your land a denizen am I ;
And in my heart, as memory of a friend,
Your works and honour'd names shall ever lie. 60

Leaving the bitter herbs, my way I wend,
To seek the fruits of which my guide doth tell ;
But to the centre I must first descend."

" Say, as thou wouldst that long thy soul should dwell
Within thy limbs," the other then replied, 65
" And that thy fame on earth be durable,

Do courtesy and valour still abide
Within our city, as in days of yore,
Or are they now by all men thrown aside ?

For Borsierë, who to this sad shore 70
Hath lately come, and wendeth with yon train,
Doth grieve our hearts with his discourse full sore."

" New-risen men, and suddenness of gain
Have measureless extravagance and pride,
Florence, in thee engender'd ; thence sharp pain 75

Already makes thee weep," I thus replied ;
And those who heard the answer which I made
Look'd even as though some certain truth they spied.

“If, sooth, so little be the cost,” they said,
“In future times, to answer each demand, 80
’Tis well for thee, who dost not seem afraid
To speak. But if thou from this darksome land
Dost e’er return to see each beauteous star
When thou shalt say, ‘I journey’d to that strand,’
Tell thou of us unto our friends who are 85
On earth.” Then, as the circling wheel they stay,
Their feet seem’d wings to carry them afar.
The little word *Amen* thou couldst not say
So fast as they from out our sight had fled ;
Then Virgil deem’d we now should go our way. 90
I follow’d ; and but little had we sped,
When the deep sound of waters did I hear
So nigh, each knew not what the other said.
Even as the river which doth first appear
From Monte Viso flowing towards the flame 95
Shower’d from the eastern sky ; its waters bear,
On the left side of Apennine, the name
Of Acquacheta, till anear Forlì,
With appellation now no more the same,
Above San Benedetto doth it flee, 100

Springing with thunder-crash from one fierce leap
Unto a thousand more : even so did we

Perceive that dusky water 'neath the steep,
Resounding ever with a sullen roar,
Whence soon the vexèd ear dull pain doth reap. 105

A twisted cord I for a girdle wore,
With which erewhile to take the lynx I sought,
The beast whose skin such beauteous colours bore.

When from my limbs I loosed the girdles knot,
(As my good Master did command) it thus 110
All roll'd together unto him I brought.

Then to the right he turn'd himself, I wis,
And drawing back from where the verge did lie,
He cast it downwards in the deep abyss.

"Now there must needs some novelty reply," 115
I said within myself, "to this new deed,
Which thus my Master follows with his eye."

Ah me ! how cautiously should man give heed,
When near to them who see not works alone,
But with the spirit in our thoughts do read ! 120

For Virgil spake : " Soon shall to thee be shown
What I await ; 'tis well that by thine eye

The thing whereof thou dreamest should be known."

Ever each truth which doth appear a lie
Should mortal man keep silent, if he may ; 125
For there, though guiltless, hath he obloquy.

But here I needs must speak ; and by this lay
I swear that as I would my words should 'dure
Within men's minds unto a distant day,

I saw through the gross atmosphere obscure 130
A living thing, which slowly upwards rose,
Most fearful e'en unto a heart secure ;

Moving as one who in the ocean goes
To loose an anchor tangled in some dim,
Deep grotto which the heaving waves enclose, 135

With arms upraised on high, compress'd each lower
limb.

CANTO XVII.



Argument.

End of the Seventh Circle ; the usurers.—Descent, upon the shoulders of Geryon, to the Eighth Circle, that of the fraudulent ; which is divided into ten valleys, according to the ten different kinds of fraud.

“BEHOLD the monster with sharp-pointed tail,
Who hills doth pass, and walls and armies break,
The beast whose evil odour doth prevail

O'er all the earth.” Thus Virgil 'gan to speak ;
Then bade the creature which did upwards soar 5
Come to the margin of the dreadful lake.

And the foul image of deceit, which wore
Such filthy aspect, raised his head and bust ;
But yet his tail he drew not to the shore.

His face was as the features of the just, 10
Such soft benignity it seem'd to wear,
But like a crawling serpent was the rest.

Two hideous arms he had, all grim with hair ;
His back, and breast, and sides, with many a knot
And shield were painted, which strange hues did bear. 15

Nor with such curious tints the robes are fraught,
By Turk or Tartar woven in varied pride,
Nor e'er such web was by Arachne wrought.

Most like the skiff anear the river side,
Part in the water, part upon the land ; 20
As, where the greedy Teuton hordes abide,

The beaver at his warlike trade doth stand :
Thus in like manner did the monster cling
Upon the stony verge that bounds the sand.

Down from the bank, in many a snake-like ring 25
His tail was wreath'd, with point upturn'd on high,
And, like a scorpion, wore a venom'd sting.

My Leader said : " Our journey now must lie
A little space toward yon being strange,
Whom crouching on the brink we there descry." 30

And thus descending, did we somewhat change
Our course, and went ten paces on the strand,
In safety from the fiery arrows' range.

And when we had drawn near him, on the sand

A little further onward we beheld, 35
Seated by the abyss, a mournful band.

Here spake my Master : " That there be reveal'd
To thee more full experience of this spot,
Go learn the manner of this dismal field.

But quickly be thy wish'd-for knowledge sought, 40
The while I with yon creature speak, that now
We by his strength be on our journey brought."

Thus by the seventh sad circle did I go,
And on its verge I wander'd all alone,
Unto those souls who sat with mournful brow. 45

Their tears burst forth with wailing and with moan ;
Now here, now there, their hands they fain would bring
As shelter from the fire ; yet found they none :

Even as, when summer days succeed to spring,
The dogs with snout and paw would drive away 50
The fleas and gnats, and the fierce gadfly's sting.

And when I fix'd mine eyes on those who lay
Constrain'd the fiery tempest to abide,
I knew not any ; but I saw that they

Had each a money-bag around him tied, 55
Hung from the neck : of divers form and hue

Its manner, and each look'd thereon with pride.

As, gazing still, anear to them I drew,
I saw a purse of golden tint, whereon
An azure lion broidered I knew. 60

A little further when my glance had gone,
Another I beheld, of blood-red glow,
And on its field a milk-white goose was drawn.

And one, who with a huge and azure sow
Had sign'd his sack whose proper hue was white, 65
Said : " Wherefore through this valley dost thou go ?

Depart ; and since unto the sunny light
Of life thou dost return, I tell thee, soon
My neighbour Vitaliano in my sight

On the left hand shall sit. A Paduan 70
Am I, among these Florentines : and me
Oft with their cries and wailing shrieks they stun,

Calling the knight whose purse hath wild goats three."
Then thrust he forth his tongue, in such foul way
As ox who licks his muzzle. Hastily, 75

In fear lest I might grieve with longer stay
Him who to make good speed had erst me told,
I from those weary spirits turn'd away :

Then my good Master did I now behold
Upon the back of the fierce monster spring, 80
And unto me he said : “ Be strong and bold ;

Us on our journey this strange stair shall bring.
Mount thou before me : in the midst I sit ;
Lest ill befall thee from the venom’d sting.”

Like him who is anear the ague fit, 85
And when its first approach his hands doth numb,
He shudders, looking tow’rd the shade, ere yet

He enter it ; even thus did I become,
Hearing these words. But, being menac’d
By shame (which brings good service oft to some 90

Rever’d master), quickly on the dread
And hideous shoulder did I mount, and fain,
“ With thy strong arm embrace me,” I had said ;

But words came not unto my will again.
Yet he who oft had been my succour, there 95
Did with his arm surround me and sustain ;

And said : “ Now, Geryon, move thee through the air ;
Let thy descent be soft, thy circles wide :
Remember the new burden thou dost bear.”

As doth the bark with backward motion glide 100

Out from the port, even thus the shore he left :

Then, when he wholly from the rocky side

Was free, he turn'd him round with motion deft ;

His tail he moved as doth the slimy eel,

And with his arms the air he swiftly cleft. 105

I think that greater terror none did feel,

When Phaëton no more the reins could hold

Whence heaven doth still his scorched path reveal ;

Nor when the wretched Icarus, of old,

Felt his frail waxen plumage melt away, 110

While with loud voice his father cried : “ Too bold

Thy flight ! ” no greater was that dread, I'd say,

Than mine, perceiving all around me spent

View, save of that fierce beast, and dimness gray.

And slowly, slowly, on his course he went ; 115

Turns and descends, but motion seem'd there none,

Saving the breeze that from the deep was sent.

Already on the right I heard the moan

Of gurgling waters in the dread abyss ;

Then gazed I on the forward path unknown. 120

And all the greater was my fear, I wis ;

Flames I perceived, and sounds of wailing sore :

Trembling, I cower'd before those agonies.

Then saw I what was all unseen before ;

The steep descent, and the wide-circling gyre, 125

Which us to divers scenes of torment bore.

Even as the hawk whom flight begins to tire,

No longer tarrying for lure or prey,

Though his descent arouse the falconer's ire,

Yet, weary, seeks the earth ; and thus his way 130

He winds in wheeling curve, until at last

Far from his master's wrath his flight doth stay :

Thus we were placed by that foul monster vast

On foot at foot of the sharp rocky steep ;

And, from our weight set free, away he pass'd, 135

Swift as the speed of dart, which from the bow doth
leap.

CANTO XVIII.

Argument.

The two first valleys of Malebolge ; in one of which are
punished seducers ; in the other, flatterers.

THERE is a place within the depths of Hell,
Call'd Malëbolgë ; form'd of darksome stone
Ferruginous, like that which bounds it well.

And aye, in midst of this malignant zone,
There yawns a wide and dreadful gulf profound, 5
Which my discourse shall in good time make known.

The border that remains still circles round,
Between the gulf and where the ramparts rise :
Ten diverse valleys in its depths are found,
As when, to guard some castle-walls, there lies 10
Fosse within fosse, in duly order'd rank,
And narrowing circuit ; in the selfsame guise

And image here in the far depths they sank :
And ev'n as from the gate are bridges flung,
Spanning each moat, unto the further bank ; 15

Thus from the summit slender archways hung,
That cut each ditch and margin, till the black
Abyss did wholly gather them in one.

We on this spot were cast from the huge back
Of Geryon ; then the Poet turn'd his feet 20
Unto the left, I follow'd in his track.

At the right hand new sorrows did we meet,
New fiend-tormentors, and new agonies,
Wherewith the first sad valley was replete.

The sinful souls within that dire abyss 25
Were naked ; half toward us came ; the rest,
With us, but swifter were their steps, I wis.

As when the Romans (because all too vast
Their multitude, the year of Jubilee)
The bridge in twofold line and order pass'd ; 30

And, thus divided, on one side they see
The castle, and towards St. Peter's go,
And turn'd towards the mount the others be.

Around, upon those rocks of darksome glow,

I hornèd demons saw, with scourges arm'd, 35
Who dealt those sinners many a cruel blow.

Ah me ! how swiftly fled they thence, alarm'd,
At the first stroke ! And for the second, none
Did wait, nor for the third. The while, unharm'd

I went my way, mine eyes did light on one 40
Among those weary souls ; wherefore I said :
“ Surely it is not now I have begun

To see this man.” My footsteps then I stay'd,
And my good Master with me did abide,
And gave me leave to linger. And the Shade, 45

Sore-scourgèd, thought his misery to hide,
Bending his head, but nought did it avail ;
Because I said : “ Thou, who dost turn aside
With downcast eyes, if true thy features' tale,

Art Venedico Caccianemico hight. 50
What crime leads thee where sharpest whips prevail ? ”

And he to me : “ Against my will aright
I speak ; for thy clear accents bring again
The memories of those old days to light.

'Twas I who beauteous Ghisola did gain, 55
And to the Marquis led her for her shame,

As tells the history in evil strain.

Nor only I do wear Bologna's name,
In this abode ; her citizens are here,
In such great multitude, that fewer frame 60

Their tongues 'twixt Reno and Savena fair,
Where *Yes* in their discourse is *Sipa* call'd :
And, wouldst have proof of that which I declare,
Recall our avarice." But now, behold,
A demon struck him, saying : " Wretch, away, 65
Here are no women to be bought and sold."

No longer now did I my footsteps stay,
But by my Master's side pass'd on to where
There sprang from out the wall a narrow way.
Lightly we mounted on this arch'd stair, 70
And, to the right hand turning, on its height
Our ceaseless circuit ended. And when there

In the deep gulf the scourged ones met my sight,
Still hunted to and fro with mournful moan,
My Leader said : " Now fix thine eyes aright 75

Upon those spirits who are still unknown
To thee, nor yet hast thou beheld their face ;
For in like course with ours their steps have gone."

Then from that ancient bridge, upon the trace
We gazed of the approaching mournful band, 80
Whom, in the self-same guise, the scourge did chase.

And Virgil spake, nor waited my demand :
“Behold yon mighty one, whom torment sore
Bows not to weep ; and still, on this sad strand,
How royal the mien he weareth, as of yore ! 85
That Shade is Jason, who, by strength and guile,
Long since the golden fleece from Colchis bore.

He on his journey pass'd by Lemnos' isle,
After the bold and ruthless women slew
Each male inhabitant : with many a wile, 90

Unto himself Hypsipylë he drew,
Deceiving thus the maiden young and fair,
Who erst deceived the others. Then anew,
Leaving her all alone and pregnant there,
He fled : such guilt condemns him to such pain ; 95
And eke Medea's vengeance he doth bear.

With him are those who wear an equal stain :
Enough be this of the first vale to know,
And of the souls its circuit doth contain.

And now we by the narrow pathway go, 100

Until it tow'rds another wall did turn,
Whence it once more an archèd span doth throw.

And there we heard the voice of those who mourn,
Down in the deep abyss, with pantings sore,
And smite themselves. The sides of this sad bourne 105

With filthy mould were grimed and plaster'd o'er
By the rank breath ascending from the deep,
Which unto eyes and nose foul horrors bore.

So dark the gloom which doth this valley steep,
That to behold its depths we needs must go 110
Where highest springs the slender archway's leap.

And thence we saw, in the dim fosse below,
Some who were stifled in foul ordure dank,
Which seem'd from human filthiness to flow.

One, while my searching eyes still downward sank, 115
I saw ; but yet by none might be descried,
If priest or layman were on earth his rank,

So foul his head with slime. To me he cried :
"Why dost thou gaze intently on me, more
Than on my fellows ?" And I thus replied : 120

"Since, if I err not, with dry locks of yore
I thee have seen ; from Lucca thou art sprung ;

Interminei the name thy kindred bore ;
Thyself Alessio : thus mine eyes have hung
More fixèdly on thee." He spake again : 125
" Here am I plunged by my false flattering tongue,
That ne'er with lies was weary." And for pain
He beat his brow ; and then my Leader said :
" A little bend, that so thou mayst attain
To see yon slut with foul, dishevell'd head, 130
Scratching herself with filthy fingers sore,
Who now doth crouch, and upright now is stay'd.
That is the harlot Thais, who of yore,
When by her lover ask'd if he found grace
With her, said : ' E'en surpassingly.' No more 135
Here let us seek to know of this most evil place."

CANTO XIX.

Argument.

Those guilty of simony ; and, among them, Pope Nicholas III.,
who announces that he waits the coming of Boniface VIII.
and Clement V.

O FOLLOWERS of Simon Magus ! ye
Rapacious ones, who take the things of God,
Which unto good should consecrated be,
And souls for silver and for gold defraud !
Here must I sound the trumpet of your doom, 5
For in this third abyss is your abode.
Now we had come unto the next sad tomb,
Mounting upon the rock, above that part
Which o'er the precipice doth darkly loom.
O highest Wisdom, how sublime thine art, 10
In heaven, on earth, and in the world of sighs !
How justly doth thy rule to each impart !

W. W. W.

As to the depth below I strain'd mine eyes,
I saw the livid stone, on every side
All pierced with holes, of selfsame shape and guise. 15

They did not seem more ample nor less wide
Than those in my fair temple of St. John,
Made for the place of the baptismal tide.

One of those fonts, not many years agone,
I broke, to save a child that drown'd within : 20
Thus let the truth to all men be made known.

Forth issuing from every grave were seen
A sinner's feet and legs, unto the knee ;
And all the rest was there enclosed, I ween.

Upon the feet of each whom I did see 25
Was fire, whereby such strong convulsions came,
Each binding cord were broken utterly.

Ev'n as upon anointed things the flame
Doth only on the upper surface run,
The manner of this torment was the same. 30

"Now who is this, my Master?" I began,
"Whom fiercer pains convulse than others there ?
A redder flame than his is found on none."

He said : "If thou desirest me to bear

Thee downwards to yon lower bank of hell, 35
Of him and of his deeds thou then shalt hear."

And I : " What pleases thee to me is well ;
Thou art my guide, and know'st how I obey
Thy will, and know'st e'en what I do not tell."

Then to the fourth descent we wend our way, 40
And ever to the left our pathway lies,
Down to the bottom, pierced in strange array ;

Nor from beside him did my Master wise
Permit me to depart, until we came
To him whose feet were pain'd in such sad guise. 45

" Thou mournful soul, who standest with thy frame
Revers'd, and fix'd as in the earth a stake,
Now speak, if here thou mayest without blame."

And still I stood before him as I spake ;
Like him who doth confess the wretch, whose fear 50
Would from his punishment some respite take.

And he cried out : " So soon art thou come here,
So soon art thou come here, O Boniface ?
The prophecy has lied by many a year.

So quickly art thou sated with the place 55
And the possessions which thou didst obtain,

As one who first deceiveth, and then slays ?”

All silent and amazed did I remain,
Because I understood not what was said,
And knew not how to answer it again. 60

Then Virgil thus : “ Now answer him with speed,
‘ I am not what thou takest me to be : ’ ”
And to my Master’s bidding I gave heed.

The spirit writhed his feet in agony ;
And now he spake in voice of anguish sore, 65
And said : “ What dost thou seek for then from me ?

If such desire hath led thee to this shore,
To know of me and of my deeds, give ear ;
For I the mantle of St. Peter wore.

And truly I was offspring of the bear ; 70
So greedy was I to advance my race,
That, as in life I lock’d up gold, so here

Myself am lock’d. Beneath, in lower place,
Fix’d in the fissure of the stone, are those
Who went before in Simon Magus’ trace. 75

Also on me the sepulchre must close,
When he shall come whom I believed thou wert
When in such sudden speech my voice arose.

Already longer it hath been my part,
With burning feet, inverted thus to stand, 80
Than from his ancles the red flames shall dart ;

For, after him, from out a western land,
A lawless pastor, of more evil deed,
Shall come, to dwell above me in this strand.

New Jason he shall be, of whom ye read 85
In Maccabees ; who with his king did hold
Such grace as he with him who now doth lead

The realm of France.” Perchance I was too bold,
That on this manner my reply should be :
“ Now say how much of silver or of gold 90

Our Saviour sought, when first each holy key
He gave unto the fisher of the lake ?
He did but ask of him, ‘ Follow thou me.’

Nor did St. Peter from Matthias take
A bribe, when he was chosen to fill the room 95
Of him who sold his Lord for lucre’s sake.

Then richly hast thou merited thy doom ;
And hold thou fast the evil-gotten gain,
Which made thee in the face of Charles presume.

And were it not that somewhat I refrain, 100

From reverence for the most holy keys,
Which thou didst, in thine earthly life, retain,

I well might speak more wrathful words than these :
Ye spoil the good, and ye raise up the bad,
And sadden earth with your great avarice. 105

Of pastors such as you, the prophet had
A vision, when before his eyes arose
The harlot, who on many waters sat

And sinn'd with kings ; seven heads she did disclose ;
And she unto the Law's ten horns did pay 110
Respect, as long as virtue pleased her spouse.

Ye have made gods of gold and silver ; say,
Where are ye better than the pagan ? He
Worships but one, where ye to hundreds pray.

Ah ! Constantine, what evil fruits there be, 115
Not sprung from thy conversion, but the gain
Which the first wealthy Father had from thee !”

And while I spake unto him in this strain,
Whether or wrath or conscience did impel,
With both his feet he struggled, as in pain. 120

In sooth, I think it pleased my Leader well ;
With gladsome air he listen'd to the sound

Of the true words that from my lips thus fell.

And gently then his arms he round me wound,
And after he had raised me to his breast, 125
Went back the path which led us to this bound.

Nor loaded thus, had he desire for rest,
But bore me to the summit of the way
Joining this margin to the next ; at last,
Then softly there his burden did he lay, 130
Softly upon the steep and rugged rock,
That to the goat scarce offer'd step or stay ;
Its height before me did another vale unlock.

CANTO XX.

—+—
Argument.

Sorcerers, condemned to look backwards.—Description of the
Lago di Garda.—Origin of Mantua.—Virgil's birth-place.

Now of new penalties my verse must tell,
And give material for the twentieth strain
Of my first song, which is of those whom Hell
For aye devours. And I, in sooth, was fain
To look on those in the uncover'd deep, 5
From whom sad tears of anguish'd sorrow rain.

And souls were there whose eyes for ever weep ;
Silent they came, as those who on this earth
The solemn pace of litanies do keep.

While lower unto them my looks went forth, 10
Transform'd in wondrous guise did they appear,
Each from the chin to where the chest hath birth ;

For backwards each his countenance did wear,
And backwards they must march ; no power to see
Before them have the mournful dwellers here. 15

Perchance, the force of dread paralysie
May thus distort : but this I have not seen ;
Nor do I think, in truth, such thing can be.

Reader, if God doth grant thee skill to glean
Some fruit from what thou readest, thou mayst know 20
How hard to gaze with tearless eyes had been

My task, when thus man's image fair I saw
So twisted, that the rain from their sad eyes
Adown their hinder parts in streams did flow.

And leaning thus against a stone which lies 25
On the hard rock, I wept ; till Virgil said :
“ E'en in thy heart do thoughts of folly rise ?

Here pity lives when well it might be dead.
Who is more wicked than the man whose pride
Blasphemes divinest justice ? Raise thy head ; 30

Look on those spirits, till thou hast descried
Him whom before the Thebans' eyes, of old,
The gaping earth did swallow ; thus they cried :

‘ O Amphiaraus, wherefore art not bold

To join the battle ? whither dost thou flee ?' 35

Yet sank he down to Minos' deadly hold.

Look, as a chest to him his shoulders be !
Because his forward glance too far would range,
Now only backwards hath he power to see.

Behold Tiresias, who his form did change, 40
When erst from male a female he became,
And all his limbs knew metamorphose strange ;

And he again must needs have struck the same
Entangled serpents, ere to him once more,
As at the first, his manly semblance came. 45

The next is Aruns ; he who dwelt of yore
Among the hills of Luna, where the brave
And patient Carrarese still labour sore.

'Mid the white marble summits a dim cave
Was his abode : there, from its entrance nought 50
Conceal'd the starry sky and ocean wave.

And she who hides her breasts, still vainly sought,
With her long tresses loosen'd from their bands,
Where all with locks redundant there is fraught,

Was Manto, wand'rer erst through many a land ; 55
Then rested she where first I saw the light :

Therefore a little to my words attend.

After her father's death, 'neath Creon's might,
Did Bacchus' city lie a vanquish'd slave ;
And through the world, for long, she took her flight. 60

High in fair Italy a lake doth lave
The Alpine walls which Germany enclose,
O'er Tyrol ; and Benacus is its wave.

From thousand founts and more its water flows,
'Twixt Garda and Camonica, to bathe 65

The Apennines, before each streamlet knows

Its place of rest. A spot in midst it hath,
Where, sooth, the Brescian and the Veronese
And Trentine pastor, journeying on that path,

Give benediction. There the voyager sees 70
Fair Peschiera stand, which aye hath been

A fortress strong, where most the banks decrease

Tow'rds Bergamesc and Brescian. There, I ween,
The waves, too ample for Benacus, flow
A gentle river through the pastures green. 75

Soon as the stream in downward course doth go,
Benacus then no longer is it hight,
But Mincio, till it falls into the Po,

Anear Governo. And not far its flight,
Till in a miry plain its waters spread, 80
Whence rise foul mists when summer days are bright.

Thus saw the cruel virgin, as she fled,
That the dank, stagnant marsh some land did bind,
Lone and uncultured. Swiftly there she sped,
And wholly sever'd from all human kind, 85
Dwelt with her slaves, intent upon her art,
And lived, and left her corpse. Then did they find

Who, scatter'd, dwelt around, on every part
What strength invincible the marshy soil
And circling wave did to that isle impart ; 90

They built the city o'er her mortal spoil,
And for her name who chose at first the spot,
They call'd it Mantua ; nor further toil

Of sacrificial augury they sought.
But many more, in sooth, the dwellers there, 95
Ere Casalodi, with strange folly fraught,

Did Pinamontè's treach'rous counsel hear :
I charge thee, then, if other tale they tell,
Admit thou not their counsel to thine ear."

And I replied : " My Master, now so well 100

Thy speech persuades me with such certain faith,
That even as ashes where no light doth dwell

Shall be to me each tale of lying breath :
But of those others here (if worthy) speak,
For only this desire my spirit hath.” 105

Then Virgil said : “Yon shade, adown whose cheek
The beard descends upon his shoulders brown,
Was augur, when there scarce remain’d a Greek

Within his native land, save babes alone ;
From him, with Calchas erst the signal fell, 110
In Aulis, ere one sail from thence had flown.

Eurypylos his name ; of him doth tell
My lofty tragedy, in some high scene,
As thou, in sooth, shouldst know, who know’st it well.

That other, whom thou seest with form so lean, 115
The wizard Michael Scot, who, verily,
Most skill’d of all in magic lore hath been.

Guido Bonatti also thou mayst see :
Asdenté, who would fain that he had still
Kept to the awl and last ; but now doth he 120

Too late repent. And they who left the reel,
The needle, and the distaff, here do mourn

Of herbs and images their evil skill.

But now arise ; for on the watery bourne,
Touching both hemispheres, doth rest the light, 125
Anear Seville, of Cain who bears the thorn.

And, sooth, the moon was full but yesternight :
This thou shouldst well remember, for her smile
'Mid the deep forest-gloom did aid thy flight."

With me he thus discoursed ; we journey'd on the 130
while.

—♦—

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One mends the poop, another mends the prow ;
Some form the oars, and some the ropes entwine ;
The mainsail some, the topsail others sew : 15

Thus not by fire, but by the Art Divine,
A lake of pitch aye seeth'd in the abyss,
And with thick glue bemired the bank malign.

I saw it, yet perceived I not in this
Aught but the bubbles its fierce boiling raised, 20
Upheaving now, and now compress'd, I wis.

The while with fix'd glance I downward gazed,
My Leader said to me : " Beware ! " and drew
Me tow'rds him from the spot where I was placed.

Then turn'd I round, as one who would imbue 25
His eyes with that from which he needs must flee ;
And then such sudden terror doth ensue,

No longer stays he in his flight to see :
For lo ! behind us a black demon sped,
Swift-running on the rocky ledge. Ah me ! 30

How hideous was he in his aspect dread !
How fierce his mien, in onward course impell'd,
On nimble feet, and with his wings outspread !

Now on his curv'd shoulders I beheld

A sinner who on their sharp ridge was laid, 35
And him the fiend by both his ancles held.

And from our bridge, "O Malëbranch," he said,
"I here a noble of St. Zita bring ;
Cast him below, till I again have sped

For others to that land where rife they spring. 40
All, save Bonturo, there, are rogues ; and gold
Makes them put *no* for *yes*." Then did he fling

His burden down where the foul billows roll'd ;
And swifter than the unchain'd mastiff goes
To chase the thief, he fled from this dark hold. 45

The wretch first sank, then to the surface rose ;
But from beneath the bridge the demons cried :
"This place, in sooth, no Holy Image knows.

Here swim ye not as in the Serchio's tide ;
And, if thou wouldst not feel our claws, take heed 50
That still beneath the pitch thou dost abide."

More than a hundred prongs now made him bleed :
And, "Cover'd must thou dance," the demons spake ;
"In secret, if thou canst, content thy greed."

Thus, when the cauldron boils, the cook doth make 55
The kitchen-boys with sharp prong'd flesh-hook smite

That which they seethe, lest from the pot it break.

Then my good Master said : "From out their sight
Crouch 'neath this rock ; that thou from it may wear
Some shield and shelter from their foul despite. 60

And whatsoe'er their wrath 'gainst me, yet fear
Thou nought ; the manner of this place I know,
For here, of old, like warfare did I bear."

Then from the bridge towards them did he go ;
And, sooth, when he to the sixth margin came, 65
Great was his need of an undaunted brow.

For, as the dogs rush forth with eyes aflame,
In fury and fierce ire against some wretch
Who, pausing, thence doth beg ; thus with the same

Wild rage they sprang from 'neath the bridge, and each 70
Against him turn'd their darts ; then did he cry :

"Hush your ferocious wrath ; and ere ye stretch

Your weapons tow'rds me, one of you draw nigh,
And to the words that I shall speak give ear :
Thereafter, with your claws to tear me try." 75

All spake : "Then, Malacoda, go thou near."
And one approach'd ; the rest their footsteps stay'd,
While to my guide he cried : "What wouldst thou here?"

“Believ’st thou, Malacoda,” Virgil said,
“To see me journey through this land malign, 80
Secure from all your herd, without the aid
Of Fate propitious, and the Will Divine?
Stay not my course, for Heaven doth bid me show
This wild and dismal path to living eyne.”
At this discourse his fierceness sank so low, 85
That from his grasp there fell the sharp-tooth’d dart,
And to the rest he said : “Be silent now.”
Then Virgil unto me : “O thou who art
Hid by the bridge that spans the boiling lake,
In safety from its shelter thou mayst part.” 90
And quickly I came tow’rds him as he spake ;
But, as I moved, the demons all drew near,
So that I trembled they their pact would break.
Thus did I once behold the soldiers fear,
When from Caprona they came forth and stood 95
’Mid those who did such mien ferocious wear.
I to my Leader clung in tim’rous mood,
Nor for a moment turn’d mine eyes away
From off their semblance, which had nought of good.
With lower’d weapons each to each did say : 100

“Dost think ’twere well to hit him on the rear?”

And answer’d : “Yes, on him thy sharp claws stay.”

But now the demon who had first drawn near
Unto my Leader, quickly turn’d and said :

“Down, Scarmiglione !” Then to us : “Ye here 105

No further on this bridge of rock may tread :
For the sixth arch a shatter’d ruin lies,
Down in the valley, all in fragments shred.

And if ye would proceed, now must ye rise,
And by this upper margin ye must climb ; 110
Near, is another ridge in the like guise.

And yesterday, five hours beyond this time,
Twelve hundred years and sixty-six did end,
Since here the way was broken.—Tow’rds the slime

Of the hot lake some of my troop I send, 115
To see if any from the pitch look out :

Ye may go with them ; they will not offend.”

And now to them he said : “Go, for this bout,
Cagnazzo, Alichin, and Calcabrine ;
And eke let Barbariccia guide the rout : 120

Let Libicocco march with them in line ;
And long-tusk’d Ciriatto, Farfarel,

And Draghignazzo, Graffiacan malign,

And the mad Rubicanët. Seek ye well
Around the pitch ; and let those voy'gers be 125
In safety, till they pass our dens of hell."

"Alas ! my Master, what is this I see ?

Said I ; "ah ! without escort let us go,
If that thou canst : I ask it not, for me.

If thou, in truth, thy wonted skill dost show, 130
Perceiv'st thou not how they do grind their teeth,
While, with fierce brows, they menace us with woe ?"

"Yet fear thou not, though wrath they seem to
breathe,"

He said, "and let them grind their teeth at will ;
It is for those who in yon slime do seethe." 135

Then to the left their course they did fulfil :
But, ere they started, each thrust forth his tongue
Unto the guiding fiend with gesture ill ;

And from the rearward he their signal trump had
rung.

CANTO XXII.

Argument.

The same place : cunning of one of the seething wretches, in order to escape from the fiends ; who, being baffled, quarrel among themselves.

OfT have I seen the horseman leave his tent,
And in the order'd line of battle stand,
And sometimes fly from thence, on safety bent ;

I have beheld swift troops o'er-run your land
For plunder, ye who in Arezzo dwell; 5

And jousts and tournaments with arm'd band,
At sound of trumpet move, and sound of bell,
With drums and with the beacon's burning light,
And eke of other signals could I tell :

But never did there move, within my sight, 10
Nor foot nor horseman at so strange a sign,
Nor ship by warning fire or pole-star bright.

We journey'd onward with the fiends malign ;
A dreadful company ! but in the church
We pray with saints, and in the tavern dine 15
With gluttons. Wholly then my eager search
Was tow'rd the boiling pitch, that I might know
The manner of the souls it did submerge.
As dolphins, when their arch'd backs they show
To sailors, ere the ocean-billows dash, 20
Who thence escape before the storm-winds blow ;
Thus to the surface rise, with motion rash,
The Shades, to dull their sufferings' sharp edge,
Then hide them, swifter than the lightning's flash :
And as ye see the frogs around some ledge, 25
Their heads thrust forth, amid the water stand,
With feet and uncouth bulk among the sedge ;
Thus stood on every side the sinful band :
But soon as Barbariccia they did see,
No longer tarried they anear the land. 30
I saw (and still it bears a pang to me)
One linger thus, as it doth sometimes chance
A frog remains, the while the others flee ;
And Graffiacan, who next him did advance,

With sharp-hook'd weapon clutch'd his pitchy hair, 35
And drew him upwards, till unto my glance

 The semblance of an otter he did wear.
(The demons' names I knew, for I applied
To list what appellation each might bear,

 When they were call'd to be to us a guide.) 40
"O Rubicantë, him with sharp claws flay,"
With one accord the fiends accurs'd cried.

 And I, "My Master, if thou canst, I pray,
Know who yon wretch may be, so sorely torn
By those his enemies, in evil way." 45

 My Leader then drew near that soul forlorn,
And ask'd him whence he came ; and he replied :
"I in the kingdom of Navarre was born :

 My mother placed me with a lordly guide ;
For me unto a spendthrift she did bear, 50
Waster of self and goods. I by the side

 Of good King Tybalt dwelt : but soon I there
Betook myself to deeds of little worth :
Whence in this heat do sharpest pains me tear."

 And Ciriatto, from whose mouth came forth, 55
On either side, long tusks as of a sow,

Now made him feel their points, with hellish mirth.

The mouse had fallen 'mong cats of evil claw ;
But Barbariccia did the wretch embrace,
And said : " Keep off, for he is mine by law ! " 60

Unto my Master then he turn'd his face :
" Now ask him more (if eager thus thou art
To know) before my fellows him deface."

He said ; and Virgil : " Then to us impart
If any souls of Latium here abide 65
Beneath the pitch." And he : " I did depart,

But now, from one who stood anear my side ;
And still with him I would I were conceal'd,
Nor fearing hook nor claw." To him replied
Fierce Libicocco : " Now, in sooth, we yield 70
Our sport too long : " and with sharp flesh-hook tore
His arm, which thence a bloody wound reveal'd.

And 'gainst his legs foul Draghignazzo bore
His dart : but quickly their decurion then
Turn'd upon them a look of menace sore. 75

And when the fiends were pacified again,
No longer did my Master wise delay,
But ask'd of him, still gazing on his pain :

“ Who was the Shade whom thou but now didst say
That thou hast left, to journey an ill road ? ” 80

“ Frate Gomita was he in his day,

He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,”

He said ; “ when he his master’s foes did hold,
Of every villain won he thanks and laud.

He let them go in peace, and took their gold, 85
As he himself relates ; in much besides,
No small but sovereign cheat was he, of old.

With him full oft Don Michael Zanchè ’bides
Who ruled in Logodoro ; to their breath,
In talk Sardinian, no fatigue betides. 90

Alas ! behold yon fiend who grinds his teeth !
More would I say ; but fear the angry mood
Of him who now to tear me hasteneth.”

Then turn’d the chief to Farfarel, who stood,
With rolling eyeballs, all intent to smite, 95
And said : “ Get hence, thou bird of evil brood ! ”

Again the wretch began, in dire affright :
“ If thou on Tuscan or on Lombard Shade
Wouldst look, full soon I’ll bring them to thy sight.

But now stand back, that none may be afraid ; 100

For when no longer your revenge they fear,
Then, seated on the bank, by my sole aid,

For one, with your sharp hooks, ye seven may tear ;
When the shrill whistle of the wary scout,
As pledge of safety, from my lips they hear.” 105

At this discourse, Cagnazzo raised his snout,
And shook his head, and said : “ Now hear his guile,
Contrived to ’scape our vengeance, for this bout !”

And he, whose brain was fill’d with many a wile,
Replied : “ I guileful am, indeed ; who fain 110
Would cause my fellows greater woe, the while.”

Then Alichin no longer could refrain,
But ’gainst them all, said : “ If thou dare to spring,
Not with swift feet alone shall I attain

To thee, but o’er the pitch will beat my wing ; 115
Now let him go, and be the bank a screen,
Whence we may see if he alone can bring

More skill unto this work than ours, I ween.”
Reader, new sport now mayst thou hear : aside
Each turn’d, he first who cruelest had been ; 120

And well the Navarrese his time did ’bide ;
For both his feet he firmly placed, and then

At once he sprang towards the pitchy tide.

And all were struck with sudden wrath amain,
But he the most who this mischance did cause ; 125
Thus he gave chase, and cried : "Thou'rt mine again !"

But all in vain, because his wing'd claws
Were not so swift as fear ; the wretch arrives
Safe 'neath the flood : his foe then turns and shows

His breast up-raised. Even thus the wild duck dives 130
Before the hawk, and with the wave doth mix ;
And then to soar the vex'd pursuer strives.

But Calcabrina, anger'd 'gainst such tricks,
Still flew behind him, pleased with this his loss,
Because on him the quarrel he would fix. 135

And, as the rogue from out their sight did pass,
Against his mate he turn'd with fiendish yell,
And clutch'd him, struggling, above the fosse.

But yet the other's claws could tear as well
As his, in sooth, and thus it chanced the two 140
In midst of the thick, boiling liquid fell.

And them full soon the heat asunder drew ;
But now to raise themselves their power was none,
With wings beplaster'd sore with slimy glue.

Then Barbariccia and his fellows run, 145
Grieved at this chance ; and four descend the coast,
With all the darts, to seek what might be done.

And quickly they betake them to their post,
And, helpful, stretch the weapons which they bear
To those who now are cook'd within the crust : 150
But we went on our way, and left them tangled there.

CANTO XXIII.

—♦—
Argument.

New fear of Dante, followed by the demons.—Sixth valley ; the hypocrites.—Caiaphas crucified on the path.

SILENT, alone, without an escort, now
We one by one upon our journey went,
As Minor Friars walk with bended brow.

My mind on Esop's fable was intent,
From what had chanced within the dire abyss ; 5
Because he tells of what the frog had meant
To do unto the mouse. For, *aye* and *yes*
Are not more like than this and that, if well
End and beginning are compared in this.

As thought doth spring from thought, it now befel 10
There woke within my brain another dread,
Which greatly my first terror did excel.

“Those fiends for us,” within myself I said,
“Are scorn’d with hurt and mocking laughter shrill ;
And well from thence may wrath in them be bred. 15

 If anger doth succeed to their ill-will,
They will pursue us with more cruel mind
Than dogs when they the panting lev’ret kill.

 And now cold shuddering through my veins did wind ;
Intently listening then with backward glance 20
I said : “ My Master, if thou dost not find

 Some means to hide both thee and me at once,
Great fear have I of Malëbranch ; for he
Doth with his crew in chase of us advance ;

 Methinks I feel his claws.” And then to me 25
Virgil replied : “ Were I a mirror clear,
No plainer there thine outward mien would be

 Portray’d than now in me thy thought I bear ;
For thine and mine do wear the selfsame face,
And form one counsel. If it be that here 30

 The bank inclines as elsewhere in this place,
We thence may to the next abyss descend,
And safely hide from the imagined chace.”

 Already scarcely did his counsel end,

When I descried them coming with spread wing 35
(And not afar) to take us. Then my Friend
And Master suddenly his arms did fling
Around me with a mother's gentle care,
As she who, in the fearful wakening
At the dread cry of fire, yet doth not spare 40
A thought save but to catch her child and flee,
Though scarce a scanty garment she doth wear.
Then from the edge of the firm bank did he
Supine glide down the hanging rocks which close
This from the next abyss. Ne'er did I see 45
The water run so swiftly, when it goes
To turn the mill-wheel, and, its course nigh done,
Most near unto the whirling spokes it flows,
As my good Master down this ledge pass'd on,
And bore me on his breast as though I were 50
Not his companion, but his much loved son.
Scarce did the solid ground his footsteps bear,
When the dark fiends arrived with flying pace,
Above our heads : but nought was there to fear ;
For the high Providence that gave this race 55
As stewards of the fifth sad vale, doth well

Deprive them of all power to quit their place.

Beneath, a strangely painted people dwell ;
Who wander'd round and round with footsteps slow,
With mournful mien and tears which ever fell : 60
And cloaks they wore, with close-drawn hoods which
flow

Before their eyes, in the like form and law
As those of monks who in Cologne do go.

All gilt without, their dazzling ray I saw ;
But lead within, so heavily they lie, 65
That near them Frederick's casques had seem'd of straw :

In sooth a weary mantle, worn for aye !
To the left hand we turn'd with them, intent
To list each mournful plaint and wailing sigh.

But, for the weight that those sad spirits bent, 70
So slowly they advanced, that we renew'd
Our company at every step we went.

Then spake I thus unto my Master good :
“ I pray thee, seek for some whom I may know
By word or deed.” And one who near us stood, 75

Hearing the Tuscan voice, cried : “ If more slow
Ye now will journey, nor so hastily

Through the dim air of this sad valley go,
That which thou seek'st, perchance, thou'lt find in me."
Wherefore my Leader turn'd, and said : "Await 80
Their coming, and then let thy footsteps be
At one with theirs." And two I saw, whose gait
Show'd that they fain toward me would advance,
But could not, for their load, and pathway strait.
When they had join'd me, long with look askance 85
They gaze, and with surprise their eyeballs roll ;
Then to each other said : "How doth it chance
That as a living man doth breathe this soul ?
If he be dead, what privilege is his
To go uncover'd by the heavy stole ?" 90
And then to me : "O Tuscan, who to this
Sad college of the hypocrites hast sped,
Scorn not to tell thy name." And then, I wis,
Thus I made auswer : "I was born and bred
In the fair city upon Arno's stream, 95
And with my mortal body here am led.
But who are ye from whom (if well I deem)
Sore anguish trickles o'er your cheeks adown ?
What is the grief which sheds so bright a gleam ?"

“The golden seeming cloaks,” he answer’d, thrown 100
Round us, are lead ; such heavy weights are these,
That aye the balances do sigh and groan.

For jolly monks were we, and Bolognese ;
I, Catalano named ; this shade anear,
Is Loderingo : erst, to keep the peace, 105

Thy city chose us both at once, to bear
The wonted rule ye give to men who know
No tie among you ; and like us appear
Some in Gardingo still.” I said : “ Your woe,
My brothers” ——— and no more ; for I perceived 110
One crucified, who on the path lay low,

And, by three stakes transfix’d, for ever grieved.
Then, seeing me, he writhed with many a sigh ;
And Catalano, who aright conceived

My wonder, said : “ Lo ! he who here doth lie 115
Counsell’d the Pharisees that it were well,
And fitting, One should for the people die.

Stretch’d out and naked he doth ever dwell,
As here thou seest ; and needs for aye must bear
Whatever footstep treads this depth of Hell. 120

And he who ruled with him still suffers here

And those who with ill counsel did beguile
The Jews, and seed of such sore evil were."

Now Virgil seem'd to marvel much, the while,
At him who lay extended like a cross, 125
For ever in eternal exile vile.

And to the friar then he raised his voice :
" Now may it please thee, if thou canst, to say
If to the right hand we may safely pass,
And issue forth upon our onward way, 130
Withouten hurt from the dark angels' wrath,
Who from yon bourne have hunted us away."

" Nearer than thou dost think, there lies a path,"
He answer'd, " by a bridge of rock that springs
From the great circle, and each valley hath 135

Within. But broken here alone, it brings
To us no covering ; ye well may go
And mount the fragments which its ruin flings."

My leader stood awhile with bended brow ;
Then said : " To us he spake in falsest guise, 140
Who yonder adds unto the sinners' woe."

" I, in Bologna, heard of many a vice
Of the foul fiend ; they call him 'mong the rest,

A liar, and the father of all lies:”

Thus spake the friar. Virgil then in haste

145

Departed with a somewhat angry mien ;

And I from those sore-burden'd spirits pass'd,

Still following the track of his dear steps, I ween.

CANTO XXIV.

Argument.

Difficult ascent to the seventh valley, where theft is punished.—
Strange metamorphoses.—One of the Shades discourses of
the *Bianchi* and *Neri*.

OFF in the early spring-time of the year,
When 'neath Aquarius the sun lies low ;
Ere Night doth equally with Day appear,
 When the hoar-frost upon the earth doth show
The image of her white-robed sister (yet 5
But short the life her glistening plumes do know),
 The country-swain who forage fain would get,
Rises and looks, beholding all the plains
Veil'd with white, whence he doth fume and fret ;
 Home he returns, and here, and there, complains 10
With restless motion, as some wretch who strives
For what he knows not ; then his hope regains,

Seeing the change which in short space arrives
O'er all the earth ; and now he takes his crook
And forth the flocks he to the pasture drives. 15

Thus fear'd I greatly at my Master's look,
When I beheld the cloud upon his brow ;
Then for my wound a healing balm I took.

For when unto the broken bridge below
We came, the self-same gentle mien he wore 20
That on the mountain's summit erst I saw.

First at the rocks he look'd, as though some lore
He conn'd within himself ; and then embraced
Me with his arm, and softly upwards bore,

As one by whom each future step is traced 25
While nought of present toil doth he abate ;
Thus me unto a jutting rock he raised,

And thence another ledge did indicate,
And said : " Now to yon stone thy hand extend ;
But prove thou first if it will bear thy weight." 30

This was no path in heavy stole to wend ;
For I, supported, he, an airy sprite,
Yet scarcely could from stone to stone ascend.

And were it not that all this precinct's height

Is less than elsewhere, and the way more short, 35
For him I know not, but my earthly might

Had soon been vanquished. But towards the Court
Where Hell is deepest, Malëbolgë tends,
And thus each vale is form'd in such a sort

That one side is raised up, and one descends ; 40
And now unto the point we came, at last,
Where the first stone above the valley bends.

My breath with that sore labour came so fast,
I could no more, when I the height attain'd,
But, weary, on the ground my limbs I cast. 45

“Now needs must here thine every nerve be
strain'd,”

My Master said, “for on a bed of down,
In cushion'd ease, no worthy fame is gain'd ;

Without which, he whose mortal life hath flown,
Leaves such a vestige of himself on earth, 50
As smoke in air, or the white foam that shone

One moment on the wave. Then put thou forth
The energy that conquers in each fight,
If not weigh'd down by limbs of mortal birth.

For thou must mount unto a loftier height ; 55

'Tis not enough, from these steep stairs to part :

Take courage, if thou understand'st aright,

The words wherewith to thee I'd teach this art."

Then I arose with freer breath, and said :

"Go on, for I am strong and bold of heart." 60

And up by the projecting rock we sped,

A path most straight and arduous ; and eke

Far steeper than where first our feet did tread.

Yet I discoursed, lest he should think me weak ;

Whereat a voice came forth from out the deep, 65

Unfit, in sooth, with accents clear to speak.

I know not what it said, though on the steep

Ridge of the archway did we now abide ;

But in the tone was wrath. Yet did I keep

Downward mine eyes, but nought might be descried 70

By living wight, in that dim vale of woe ;

Wherefore I said : " My Master, from this side

Let us descend, and to yon circle go ;

For hence I hear, and nought I comprehend,

And downward see, and nothing clearly know." 75

" None other answer unto thee I send "

He said, " but to comply ; for deeds alone

Should follow silently each just demand."

Then we descended from the bridge's crown,
Joining this circle to the eighth ; and stood 80
Where I could see the things within its zone.

For in its depth I saw a fearful brood
Of serpent-forms ; so hideous, that again,
E'en yet, their memory doth freeze my blood.

Less dire the snakes from Libya's sandy plain 85
That spring, the fiery flying serpent, each
Fierce speckled asp, and dreadful amphisbene.

Nor doth all Ethiopia's wide reach
Show such a noisome race as here doth dwell,
Nor crawls such venom on the Red Sea beach. 90

Amid the swarm of pois'nous reptiles fell,
A naked and affrighted band abide,
Nor hope for shelter, nor the magic spell

Of heliotrope. Their hands behind were tied
With snakes, which as a girdle they did wear, 95
Whose folds before them in a knot were plied.

And lo ! on one who to the bank was near
A serpent threw itself, and fix'd its bite
There where the shoulder-joint the throat doth bear.

Nor *O* nor *I* ye could so quickly write, 100
As with red fire he kindled, and became
A heap of burnt-out cinders, in my sight.

When thus consumed to ashes by the flame,
The dust, as though instinct with life, once more
Collected, and arose in form the same. 105

Even thus the tale is told, in sagest lore,
Of how the Phoenix dies, and doth renew
His life, when his five-hundredth year is o'er :

And never corn nor herb as food he knew,
But tears of incense and of balm alone ; 110
And myrrh and spikenard he around him drew

For his last swaddling-clothes. As one who, thrown,
By force of evil demon, on the ground,
Or by some strange convulsion-fit unknown,

When he recovers, gazes all around, 115
Bewilder'd by his agonising woes ;
And, while he looks, he moans with mournful sound :

Thus did this sinful soul when he arose.
O Heavenly Justice, how severe, I wis,
Art thou, who punishest with such sharp blows ! 120

My leader ask'd him who he was, and thus,

"From Tuscany I fell," he answer'd then,

"Not long ago, into this dire abyss.

I lived the life of beasts, and not of men ;
Even like the mule I was : Fucci my name ; 125
A beast, Pistoia was my worthy den."

And I : "Now bid him stay ; and ask what blame
Hath sent him here, this fearful path to tread :
I knew him once, a man of bloody fame."

The sinner heard my words, and turn'd his head 130
Towards me willingly, nor strove to feign,
Though mournful shame upon his brow I read.

He spake : "In sooth, it causes me more pain
That thou shouldst see me in my bitter grief,
Than when I from my earthly life was ta'en. 135

I may not keep from thee this answer brief :
Here am I placed so low, because, of yore,
I of the precious jewels was the thief,

From out the sacristy ; while falsely bore
Another all the blame. But, that to thee 140
Accrue no gladness from my torment sore,

I tell thee, from Pistoia thou shalt see
Cast out the Neri ; Florence in her laws

And people then shall wholly changèd be.

From Val di Magra Mars a vapour draws, 145

Robed in the dusky raiment of the storm ;

And when, in furious wrath, the tempest blows,

Above Piceno's field with wild alarm,

Sudden he shall burst forth from the thick cloud,

And the Bianchi wound with deadly harm : 150

And this I tell thee now, to grieve thy humour proud."

CANTO XXV.

Argument.

The same place.—Cacus in form of a Centaur.—New metamorphoses.

As thus the villain his discourse did end,
He raised his hands with gest obscene, and cried :
“Take that, O God ; such sign to thee I send !”

Therefore, the serpents were to me allied
In friendship ; because one around his neck 5
Entwined, as though it said : “Now hush thy pride.”

And round his arms another spotted snake
Twisted its coils, in such an evil way,
That thence he might not even a finger shake.

Ah me, Pistoia ! wherefore dost thou stay, 10
Nor light the brand that shall thy walls consume,
Since in ill deeds thou dost advance, each day ?

Through all the circles of the realm of gloom,
Ne'er saw I spirit of such daring pride
Tow'rds God ; not even the Shade who met his doom 15

From off the walls of Thebes. With hasty stride,
Swift sped the shadowy form and spake no more :
Then came a Centaur, fill'd with wrath, who cried :

“ Where is the vile blasphemer ? ” Not the shore
Of sad Maremma such foul swarms hath bred 20
Of serpents as on his huge back he bore :

Above his shoulders broad, behind his head,
With outstretch'd pinions lay a wing'd snake,
Whose breath o'er all he met fierce burning shed.

“ Lo ! this is Cacus ” (thus my Master spake), 25
“ He who beneath the rock of Aventine
Of yore hath made full oft a bloody lake.

Nor with his brethren, in their order'd line,
He goes ; and this for his most cunning guilt,
When on the herds he cast his greedy eyne. 30

Then ceased his frauds, when his life-blood was spilt
Beneath the club of Hercules ; who strake
A hundred blows, whereof not ten he felt.”

The Shade pass'd on, while yet my Master spake :

And now three spirits drew anear our side, 35

Unseen by us until their voice did wake

Our consciousness ; as “Who are ye ?” they cried ;

And then the speech that we had held was stay’d,

And but to hearken unto them we tried.

I knew them not ; but one of them was led 40

(As oft doth chance when men converse with men)

To name another, as these words he said :

“Canst tell where Cianfa now hath gone ?” And

then,

Thinking thereto my Leader’s mind to draw,

I with uplifted finger made a sign. 45

If to believe my story thou art slow,

O Reader, sooth I marvel not ; for I

Scarce credit it, who all that wonder saw.

For, while I gazed on them, I did descry

A serpent with six feet full swiftly dart 50

On one, and his foul coils around him ply.

The middle feet embraced him near his heart ;

The foremost clutch’d him by his arms and breast,

While in both cheeks his fangs he did insert :

The hinder limbs around his thighs were prest ; 55

Between them, his sharp-pointed tail pass'd through,
And by the back and loins it held him fast.

The clinging ivy ne'er so closely grew
Unto the tree, as that fierce snake, I ween,
Did with the other's limbs his own imbue : 60

And then, as ye the melted wax have seen
Together fused, in mingling colours spread ;
Thus neither seem'd the thing he erst had been :

Even like the burning heat of flame, when shed
On the scorch'd paper, with a dubious hue, 65
As yet not black, though whiteness there be dead.

A glance of fear on him the others threw,
And cried : "Alas ! Agnèl, what thing is done
To thee ? In truth thou art nor one nor two."

Already the two heads were fused in one, 70
Which, strangely mingled, twofold features wore,
In the one face whose double form was gone.

The arms were two, where branches erst were four ;
The legs, the belly, and the chest were now
Limbs, such as ne'er were seen the like before. 75

Each primal aspect wholly changed did show ;
The perverse image seem'd two and nought :

And thus it pass'd away, with footsteps slow.

Even as the lizard when the sun is hot,
Changing its shelt'ring hedge, upon the path 80
Is like a lightning flash, more swift than thought ;

Thus, aiming at the other's heart, in wrath
Approach'd a foul and livid serpent fierce,
Black as a grain of spice. The spot whence hath
The child its earliest food it now did pierce 85
In one ; then seem'd as though its life had fail'd,
And at his feet it fell with swift reverse.

The pierced one gazed, and neither spake nor wail'd ;
But gaping stood in half unconscious guise,
As he by sleep or fever were assail'd. 90

They on each other look'd with fix'd eyes ;
One through his lips, the other through his wound
Sent forth thick smoke, which mingling did arise.

Be Lucan silent, where the tale is found
Of sad Sabellus' and Nassidius' woe, 95
And now give ear unto my voice's sound.

Be Ovid hush'd, where he the fate doth show
Of Arethusa and of Cadmus ; he
Became a snake, and she a fountain's flow :

Yet, sooth, I envy not that poesy ; 100
For, never yet, two natures, face to face,
Their substance interchanged so readily.

And each obey'd the law of this dread place :
His limbs in one the wounded man did twine,
And cleft in two was now the serpent's trace ; 105

The human legs and thighs, in every line,
Together clung ; and soon ye might no more
Of this their junction see the faintest sign.

The cloven tail the self-same likeness wore,
Lost elsewhere ; and the rude and scaly skin 110
Grew soft ; the soft a snake-like texture bore.

The arms now crept the shoulder-blades within ;
The reptile's two forefeet, erst short, grew long,
Swift as the other's shrank away, I ween.

The hinder feet, that close together clung, 115
Became the member which a man conceals ;
And to the wretch, instead, two feet belong.

While the thick vapour each strange being veils
With colours new, and sheds the hair on one,
Which from the other now it wholly steals, 120
The one arose, the other sank adown ;

Yet turn'd they not away their impious eyes,
Beneath the which such wondrous change was known.

He who stood up drew back the part which lies
Round the projecting mouth ; and from its store, 125
The ears from out the formless cheeks arise.

That which was left another semblance bore :
From its superfluous mass was formed the nose ;
The lips increased, till they due fulness wore.

He who lay prone his snout push'd forward shows, 130
The ears retiring close within the head,
Even like the crawling snail, that backward draws

Its horns. The tongue, which erst had promptly said
Each word, was cleft ; and that which had been dumb
Was fit for speech : and lo ! the smoke was stay'd. 135

The soul which thus a reptile had become
Fled hissing through the dark and doleful bourne ;
The other's wrath in sputtering words did come.

And then his new found shoulders did he turn,
And said : " I would that Buoso, even as I, 140
To grovel prone upon the earth should learn."

Thus saw I changed the wretches foul who lie
In this seventh valley : and let my excuse,

If the pen somewhat err, be novelty.

But though it greatly did mine eyes confuse, 145

And 'maze my thoughts, yet did it not befall

That I the knowledge of these souls should lose.

Puccio Sciancato did I well recall ;

And he alone it was who of the three

That came at first had known no change at all : 150

The other was the Shade still mourn'd, Gaville, by
thee.

CANTO XXVI.

Argument.

Eighth valley ; deceitful counsellors.—The fate of
Ulysses.

FLORENCE, rejoice, who dost so much excel,
That thou dost spread thy wing o'er sea and land,
And thy name soundeth through the depths of Hell !

Five of thy sons amid the robber-band
I found ; which brings unto my cheek shame's hue, 5
And in great honour, sooth, thou dost not stand.

But if it be that morning-dreams are true,
A little while, and thou shalt feel the woe,
Which Prato, even as others, deems thy due. 10

And not too soon, in sooth, if it were now ; 10
Since thus it needs must be, I would it were :
'Twill grieve me more, the more that on my brow

The snows of age have fallen. The same stair
Form'd of the rock, erst used for our descent,
My leader climb'd, and with him me did bear. 15

While thus our solitary way we went,
Mid the sharp, rugged stones of this sad bourne,
Our hands unto our feet much succour lent.

I mourn'd then, and now once more I mourn,
When I recall what in this vale I saw : 20
And more than wont the curb my mind hath worn,

That it be guided aye by wisdom's law ;
Lest, if by fortune's star, or higher skill,
Some good be mine, I thence might evil draw.

Even as the peasant, resting on the hill, 25
In the sweet time when he whose warm rays steep
The earth in joy is longest with us still,

When gnats come forth, and buzzing flies go sleep,
Down in the valley sees the golden light
Of fireflies ; it may be, where he doth reap : 30

Thus flash'd the glittering flames' resplendence bright,
Throughout this eighth abyss of anguish dire,
While, gazing, its far depths I saw aright.

As one, aveng'd by the she-bear's ire,

Beheld Elijah's chariot rise on high, 35
And heavenward soar, borne up by steeds of fire,
In light too radiant for the mortal eye
Which follow'd, seeing but the flame, I wis,
As a bright cloud ascending to the sky ;
Thus ever moved they o'er the dim abyss ; 40
The theft within them was by none reveal'd,
Though each a sinner hid. And while on this
Still bent, my steps upon the bridge I stay'd,
And to the rocky ledge so near I came,
That if thereon my hand I had not laid, 45
I thence had fallen. Then Virgil mark'd my frame
Intent, and said : " Lo ! there do spirits dwell ;
Each wanders girded with a robe of flame."
I said : " My Master, for thy words I well
May be more certain ; but I deem'd aright, 50
Before thou spak'st : and would that thou shouldst tell
Who is within yon flame, whose double light
Is parted, even as rising from the pyre
Whereon Eteocles, when slain in fight,
Was with his brother laid ?" " Within that fire," 55
He said, " Ulysses dwells, and Diomed,

Together in their pain as in their ire.

And thus in flame they mourn their treach'rous deed,
The feignèd horse of wood, which oped the path
From whence came forth the Romans' noble seed. 60

They ever weep the acts from which, in death,
Still for Achilles Deidamia mourns,
And still for the Palladium doth fierce wrath

Pursue them." "Mid the fire that ever burns,
I said, "if they may speak, my guide, I pray, 65
And pray with the redoubled force which earns

Reply, that now thou wouldst not say me nay,
But tarry till yon double flame draws near :
See how my longing bends me tow'rds its ray."

And thus he answer'd me : "In truth, thy prayer 70
Doth merit praise, and I thereto agree ;
But see that now from speech thou dost forbear.

Leave thou the care of thy discourse to me ;
Thy purpose do I know : they, who are Greek,
Hearing thy words, may somewhat scornful be." 75

Then, when the fire towards us seem'd to seek,
My Master, deeming that the season came,
Even on this manner now began to speak :

“Ye who are two enclosed within one flame,
If aught I merited in days of yore, 80

If aught my meed of less or greater fame,
What time I wrote on earth my lofty lore,
Pass not away ; but one of you make known
Where, lost, he saw the light of day no more.”

Now of the ancient flame the highest cone, 85
With murmuring sound, began to wave and shake,
As when the fire by stormy wind is blown.

The summit moved and bent, and seem'd to wake,
As though it were a tongue endow'd with speech,
And human voice sent forth, and thus it spake : 90

“When I departed, on the lone sea-beach,
From Circe's spell, which for a year and more
Imprison'd me near Gaeta (the which

Was by Eneas yet unnamed), the hoar
White hairs of my old father, nor the sweet 95
Caresses of my son, nor all the store

Of love that should have cheer'd my wife, could yet
The longing quell which ever dwelt in me,
The world and all its good and ill to greet.

Thus I set sail upon the open sea, 100

With but one ship alone, and the small band
Who ne'er forsook me. Onward did we flee

And saw each shore of the Hesperian land,
Even to Morocco, and Sardinia's isle,
And many another ocean-bathèd strand.

105

I and my comrades had grown old, the while,
When we drew near unto the narrow way
Where Hercules erst sign'd each mountain pile,
That man beyond them might no further stray ;
On the right hand we Seville's shore had gain'd,
And on the left already Ceuta lay.

110

I said : ' My brothers, who have now attain'd
To the far west through thousand dangers run,
Here to the light that hath not wholly waned,
The vigil of your life, not wholly done,
Deny ye not the fair experience new
Of the unpeopled world behind the sun.

115

Consider well the seed from which ye grew ;
To live as do the brutes ye were not made,
But virtuous deeds and knowledge to ensue.'

120

Even from those simple words which I had said,
Such eagerness was by my comrades worn,

That scarcely now their course I could have stay'd.

And then our prow we turn'd from the morn ;
The wing'd oars sped on, the while we steer 125
Our ship in her rash flight, still southward borne.

And now each star of the new hemisphere
We saw by night ; and ours had sunk so low,
No more from out the wave did they appear.

Five times lit up, five times the moonlight's glow 130
Had wan'd from the sea, since our small bark
Enter'd the wild, wide ocean, when we saw

Far off a mountain-summit dim and dark
From the great distance ; and it seem'd so high,
The like I never till that hour did mark. 135

Then we were glad : but soon our joy pass'd by ;
Because from out the land so newly found
Sprang forth the storm-wind with an angry cry,

And smote our bark. Three times it whirl'd it round ;
And at the fourth, the stern on high uprose : 140
As fate had will'd, the prow, with sudden bound,

Sank, till above our heads the stormy waters close."

CANTO XXVII.

—•—
Argument.

In the same valley Dante meets the Shade of Count Guido da Montefeltro, punished here for the evil counsel given to Boniface the Eighth.

STILL and unbending now remain'd the flame,
And spake no more, and from us pass'd away,
With gentle Virgil's leave ; and then there came
Another, following in the selfsame way,
And towards its summit made us turn our eyes,
By murmuring sounds that issued from its ray.

5

Like the Sicilian bull, whose voice did rise,
For the first time, in bellowings loud and fierce
(Even as, in sooth, 'twas meet), with the sad cries

Of him who made it with intent perverse ;
And though of brass, yet by its wailings dire,
It seem'd as torture all its limbs did pierce :

10

Thus, from its first beginning did the fire,
Because no way nor outlet it had found,
In notes most sad and sorrowful transpire ; 15

Until it reach'd its journey's furthest bound,
And issued from the point, which 'gan to shake,
As when the human tongue gives forth a sound.

"O thou to whom I raise my voice," it spake,
"And who but now in Lombard accents said, 20
'Thou mayst depart ; no more thy voice I wake,'

Though hither somewhat late my steps are led,
Let it not grieve thee to discourse with me ;
For me it grieves not, who in fire am stay'd.

If thou but lately in this evil sea 25
Hast fallen from the sweet Latin land afar,
Whence all my sins and all my sorrows be,

Say if Romagna now hath peace or war ;
For I was of the mountains which between
Urbino and the Tiber's birthplace are." 30

Intently listening, forwards did I lean,
When Virgil touch'd me on the side, and said :

"Now speak ; he is of Latin race, I ween."

And from my lips my ready answer sped :

(For I my words delay'd not to prepare ;) 35

“O Spirit, who in this abyss art hid,

Know, thy Romagna is not, nor was e'er
Wholly at peace its tyrants' hearts within ;
But open discord now doth not appear.

Ravenna is as it for years hath been ; 40
There doth Polenta's eagle brood, and o'er
Cervia still its outspread wing is seen.

The land that such resistance made of yore,
And of the French hath raised a bloody pile,
'Neath the green claws doth find itself once more, 45

Verrucchio's mastiffs, old and young, the while,
Who erst Montagna used so cruelly,
Within their wonted place do gnaw the spoil.

Lamonë's and Santerno's towns still be
Led by the lion of the snow-white den, 50
Who, from the winter, ere ye summer see,

Hath changed. The walls where Savio flows amain
Dwell between tyranny and freedom's state,
Even as betwixt the mountains and the plain.

Now, who thou art I pray thou wouldst narrate : 55
Be not more hard than others who have gone ;

Thus still thy name shall in the world be great."

After the fire awhile had made its moan,
The pointed summit bent from side to side,
And on this manner did its tale make known : 60

"In truth, did I believe I now replied
To one who might unto the earth return,
Still and unmoving should my flame abide ;
Yet, because never from this darksome bourne
Did any turn again to see the sky, 65
I answer thee, unstay'd by fear of scorn.

First, man of arms, a friar then was I ;
Thinking, thus girt, to make amends for all :
And, sooth, it thus had been, with certainty,
But the Great Priest (whom may some ill befall) 70
Me in my former guiltiness hath set ;
And how and why I will to thee recall.

While I my earthly members wore as yet,
With me was aye the manner of each deed
Not lionlike, but for the fox more fit. 75

Much was I skill'd in crook'd paths which lead
To secret ends ; so well I knew this art,
E'en to earth's furthest bounds the fame did speed.

But when my life attained unto that part
When man should drop the oar and leave the sail, 80
The thing which once was pleasant to my heart
Now seem'd to me good cause that I should wail ;
Repentant, I confess'd my sore disease,
And woe is me ! it then might well avail.
But now the Prince of the new Pharisees, 85
Striving, anear the Lateran, in fight,
(And not with Jew nor Saracen ; for these
His foes believed the Christian faith aright,
And none had gone to conquer Acre's wall,
Nor to the Sultan sold themselves,) his height 90
Of holy place regarded not, nor all
His sacred vows, nor yet on me the cord
Which makes its wearers lean : but like the call
Of Constantine, when he the help implored
Of him who in Soractë's cave did hide, 95
The good Sylvester, that his holy word
Might cure the leprosy ; thus, sick with pride,
He summon'd me to cure his feverish woe,
And counsel sought : yet silent did I bide,
Deeming his words most mad. Then spake he : ' Go ! 100

I here absolve thee ; let thy heart be bold,
And teach me to lay Palestrina low.

For I can ope and shut the heavenly fold,
As well thou knowest : yet those double keys
My predecessor cared not long to hold.' 105

And then, impelled by reasonings such as these,
(For silence did the worst to me appear,)

I said : ' O Father, since it thee doth please
To cleanse me from the sin I here may bear,
Great promises with small fulfilment aye 110
Shall make thee triumph on the papal chair.'

And when the hour was come that I should die,
St. Francis came for me : but ' Touch him not ;
Do me no wrong,' a dusky fiend did cry.

' Among my crew must henceforth be his lot, 115
Because he gave the counsel fraudulent,
Since which I closely to his side have sought.

He is absolved not who doth not repent ;
Nor evil will can with repentance go :
The contradiction here doth not consent.' 120

O mournful me ! I shook with fear and woe,
When now he seized me, saying : ' It may be,

My powers of logic then thou didst not know.'

To Minos now he carried me ; and he

Eight times his serpent-tail did round him turn, 125

And bit his flesh in brute ferocity,

And said : ' Bear thou this wretch unto the bourne

Of robber-flames.' Thus am I lost for aye,

And clothed in this guise I ever mourn."

When he had ended thus, with doleful sigh, 130

Swiftly the flame from out our sight was gone,

Bending its horned point as it passed by.

I and my Master now our way went on,

Up by the rocks, till on that arch we came

Which covers the abyss wherein they moan, 135

Who discord sow'd on earth, and here do bear the
blame.

CANTO XXVIII.

—◆—
Argument.

Ninth valley ; schismatics and sowers of discord.—Bertram de
Born condemned to carry his own head as a lantern.

BUT who that history may, e'en in prose,
Narrate, and tell of every bloody wound
Which here I saw, and now would fain disclose ?

In sooth, our language still too weak is found ;
For human speech and memory may not hold 5
So vast a theme in such a narrow bound.

If all the bloody corpses which, of old,
Sadly Apulia's fated land did bear,
Might rise again ; the Roman legions bold,

And those who died in the long wars that were, 10
When of the rings so rich a spoil was brought,
As Livy writes, whose pen doth never err ;

With those, sore-wounded in the battles fought
'Gainst Robert Guiscard ; and the piles of slain,
Whose bones, unto this day, ye find unsought, 15

Anear Ceprano, where Apulia's men
Were faithless ; and on Tagliacozzo's field
Where, without arms, Alard did victory gain ;
And piercèd some, and maim'd be some reveal'd :

Yet all shall seem as nought, when ye descry 20
The sorrow in this ninth abyss conceal'd.

Never, in sooth, did wine-cask meet mine eye
So broken, when a stave or hoop hath sprung,
As one, who from the chin unto the thigh

Was cleft ; between his legs his bowels hung ; 25
The heart appear'd, and each intestine foul,
Which every aliment transmutes to dung.

And while I gazed thereat with all my soul,
He look'd at me, and oped his breast, to show
Its gash, and said : " Behold me, who am all 30

Sore-mangled ; see how Mahomet doth go.
Before me, Ali doth for ever mourn,
Cleft upwards from the chin unto the brow.
And all the rest, who dwell within this bourne,

The seeds of schism in their life did leave ; 35

And thus by them such doleful wounds are worn.

Beyond us stands a fiend, who us doth cleave

So cruelly, and with his sharp sword-blade

Aye smites again each wretch who here must grieve,

When we once more the circuit drear have made ; 40

Because our ghastly wounds do ever close,

Ere, in our course, before him we are stay'd.

But who art thou, who on the rocks dost muse,

As to the pain decreed thou wouldst not wend,

For sins whereof thy Judge doth thee accuse ?" 45

"Nor Death hath met him yet, nor guilt doth send

Him to this torment ;" then my Master said :

"To give him full experience of this land

I, who myself am number'd with the dead,

Must lead him downwards through each zone of Hell ; 50

And this is truth that from my lips is shed."

More than a hundred, when they heard his tale,

Stood still to look on me ; and, for amaze,

Forgot their pain. "I pray thee, do not fail,

Thou who, it may be, soon once more shalt gaze 55

On the warm sun, to counsel Fra Dolcin,

Provision good to make 'gainst wintry days,
Would he not quickly follow me, I ween ;
Lest, favour'd by the snow, Novara's band
Should gain a victory which else had been 60
Not easy." Thus did the false prophet stand,
With foot upraised in act to go, and spake ;
Then pass'd away, upon the mournful strand.
Another, with pierced throat and cloven cheek,
And nose cut off, from where the brow doth rise, 65
And but one ear alone, now staid to seek
Some knowledge of us, gazing in surprise,
As did the rest ; yet, ere the rest his throat
He oped (and, sooth, 'twas stain'd in bloody guise)
And said : "O thou who guiltless here art brought, 70
Whom erst in Italy mine eyes did find,
(If too much likeness doth deceive me not)
Pierre of Medecina call to mind,
When thou returnest to the pleasant plain,
From Marcabò unto Vercel inclined ; 75
And say to the two best of Fano's men,
Unto Sir Guido and to Angiolel,
That if my powers of foresight be not vain,

Cast from the ship wherein they soon shall sail,
Death waits them near Cattolica, by guile 80
And treason of a cruel tyrant fell.

Between Majorca and the Cyprian isle,
Ne'er saw the ocean-god, in ancient days,
Such crime of corsair, nor Argolic wile.

The traitor who through but one eye doth gaze, 85
And holds the land which one who dwells with me
Most gladly ne'er had seen, in crafty ways

Will call them to discourse with him ; and he
Their voy'ge will order, that they may not need
To pray for safety 'gainst the winds which he 90

Anear Focara." "Tell me," now I said,
"As thou wouldst have me speak of thee on earth,
Who is it on whose sight such grief is shed ?"

Then to his neighbour he his hand stretch'd forth,
And oped the other's mouth, and thus he cried : 95
"Behold him ; from his lips no words have birth.

For he, an exile, whelm'd beneath the tide
The doubts of Cæsar ; and affirm'd that aye,
When ready, danger in delay doth bide."

Curio, what terror in thy gaze did lie, 100

With tongue thus wholly rooted from thy throat,
Which erst gave counsel all too daringly !

And one, with both his hands cut off, now sought
To raise the stumps amid the darksome air,
So that his face with the foul blood was fraught : 105

He cried : “ For Mosca, too, some memory spare ;
Who said, alas ! ‘ What’s done is well begun ;’
Which for the Tuscans such ill seed did bear.”

I added then : “ And death unto each son
Of thine.” Thus pass’d he on with wilder moan, 110
As when fierce madness hunts some frenzied one.

But still I gazed, and ’mid that band was shown
To me a thing which, if no proof made sure,
I well might fear but to recount alone ;

Were it not that my conscience is secure, 115
That good companion who doth set us free,
Under the hauberk of a heart that’s pure.

In truth I saw, and still I seem to see,
A headless body through the dismal air,
Walking amid that mournful company. 120

And its own head it carried by the hair,
Even as a lantern ; and it gazed on us,

And said : " Oh ! woe is me ! " Still did it bear

Light from itself unto itself ; and thus

Was ever one in two, and two in one : 125

But He alone who all things made, I wis,

Knows how so great a marvel may be done.

It stood beneath the bridge, and raised on high

Its arm which held the severed head ; that none

Of all its words might in the distance die ; 130

And thus it spake : " O thou with living breath,

Who journey'st where the sinful dead do lie,

Look if my sorrow any equal hath.

Bertrand de Born am I, that evil guide

Who counsell'd the young king, with words of death. 135

I did the father from the son divide ;

Nor more Achitophel did Absalom

Stir up 'gainst David in rebellious pride.

Since thus I parted others, is my doom

Parted for aye to bear my brain, alas ! 140

Cut from the trunk whence its first fount doth come ;

Thus ye behold on me a righteous judgment pass."

CANTO XXIX.

Argument.

THE mournful crowd, thus wounded sore and deep,
Mine eyes had 'wilder'd with such sad amaze,
That from my course I fain had staid to weep.

And wherefore do thy visual orbs return 5

Thus didst thou not within each former bourne ;
Think, if to count them all thou need'st must try,
For twenty miles and two this vale doth turn.

And little time is granted to us now,
Though much remains still hidden from thine eye."

Then quickly did I answer him : " If thou
Hadst noted that whereon my gaze was bent,
Perhaps more leniency to me thou'dst show." 15

My Guide the while pass'd onward ; and I went
Still in his footsteps' track, as I replied,
And added : " In yon dusky cavern pent,
Whereon so fixèdly mine eyes did 'bide,
I think a spirit of my blood doth weep 20
The sin that here such payment must betide."

Then spake my Master : " See thou dost not keep
Thy thoughts on him with such a stedfast hold ;
To others turn, and leave him in this deep.

But now, beneath the bridge did I behold 25
Him point to thee, and menace with his hand ;
Geri del Bello did I hear him call'd.

But thou thy mind didst so entirely bend
On him who Hautfort held, that hither sped
Thy glance too late, as he away did wend." 30

" My Leader, for his violent death," I said,
" Not yet avenged of those to whom the wrong
Is kindred by the blood of kindred shed,
He is disdainful ; thus he pass'd along,

Nor spake to me, if I conceive aright : 35
Therefore for him my pity is more strong."

Thus we discoursed, ascending to the height,
Whence all the valley to its furthest deep
Were seen, if by less dim and troubled light.

When we were now above the last dread steep 40
Of Malëbolgë, so that thence were seen
Its cloister'd 'habitants, I heard them weep

With many-voiced lamentings ; and, I ween,
So sore they piercèd me, that both my hands
I raised, mine ears from their sad woe to screen. 45

If all the anguish, in the marshy lands
Of sad Maremma and of Chiana's vale,
'Twixt July and September, and the strands

Of the Sardinian isle, by fever pale
Still haunted, were collected on one shore, 50
Thus was it here ; and mingled with their wail

Rose the foul odour of a putrid sore.
To the last brink of the long ridge we went,
Aye to the left ; and then I gazed, still more

Intently eager, tow'rds the deep descent, 55
Where the infallible divine decrees

Punish the forgers who are hither sent.

In Egina, no greater griefs than these
Fell on its dwellers sickly and infirm,
When all the air was full of sore disease, 60

And every living thing, to the small worm,
Did perish ; till that ancient race was fain
(As poets in their songs do still affirm)

From seed of ants to be renew'd again :
No greater griefs, than in this darksome vale 65
Oppress'd those spirits, piled like heaps of slain.

Some on their bellies lay, and others fell
Across their neighbours ; some on hands and knees
Trail'd themselves onward in the path of wail.

With footsteps slow we pass'd, nor spake to these, 70
But ever look'd and listen'd as we went ;
For none had power their weary limbs to raise.

Two I beheld, who on each other leant,
As platters placed to warm before the fire ;
And they were stained with blotches of foul tint, 75

From head to foot. No groom, in haste most dire,
Awaited by his master, rubs his steed,
Nor he whom toil and vigil long doth tire,

As with their nails they here full oft did speed
To scrape themselves, for the fierce itchings sore, 80
Which here alone find the relief they need.

And oft the scabs with eager nails they tore,
Even as ye might with a sharp knife each scale
Cut from the bream, or other fish that wore
Like clothing. "Thou who dost thy coat of mail 85
Tear with thy fingers," Virgil did begin,
"Using thy hands as hooks, I pray thee, tell
If 'mong those miserable souls within
Be any sons of Latium, wouldst thou aye
Have nails to ease thy penalty of sin." 90

"We whom thou seest," thus did he reply,
And wept the while, "did both in Latium dwell ;
But who art thou, who ask'st of those that lie

In this abyss ?" "Throughout each circle fell,"
My Leader said, "I go from grade to grade, 95
To show this living man the depths of Hell."

No more each leant on each ; as though afraid,
Trembling they turn'd towards me, with the rest
Who heard the echo of his words. Then said

My Master, wholly unto me address : 100

“ Now speak to them, of what is in thine heart.”

And I, when he had thus his will exprest :

“ If ye would have your memory not depart
From earth, but in the minds of men have place,
And last through many a year, to me impart 105

Who ye in life have been, and of what race ;
Let not your filthy and disgusting pain
Affright you, that ye should not grant this grace.”

“ I of Arezzo was,” thus one began,
“ And Albert of Sienna erst me drew 110
To death by fire ; yet ’twas not for the stain

Which brought me here. I said to him, ’tis true,
Speaking in jest, ‘ I through the air can fly ;’
And he, whose curious mind but little knew,
Would have me teach that art ; and then, since I 115
Could not make him a Dædalus, he made
One in whose heart he as a son did lie,

Doom me unto the flames. But to this dread
Tenth zone doth Minos, who can never err,
Condemn me, since on earth I oft essay’d 120

The art of alchemy.” “ Do any bear”
(To Virgil thus I spake) “ fame spread so wide

For vanity as the Siennese wear ?

Not even, in sooth, the French.” And then replied

That other leper who had heard my speech : 125

“Save Stricca, who in measured path could ’bide,

And Nicholas, who dainty arts did teach

Of food clove-season’d ; in the soil where best

Such seed might spring, and to perfection reach :

And save the company, wherein dispersed 130

Were all Asciano’s vineyards speedily,

And Abbagliato his wise thoughts rehearsed.

But that thou mayst perceive who doth agree

In wrath ’gainst the Siennese, fix thine eye,

So that my face may well respond to thee ; 135

And thus Capocchio’s shade shalt thou descry,

Skill’d in each art of alchemy : and well

Each metal I could ape and falsify ;

As thou dost know, if true the tale thy features tell.”

CANTO XXX.

Argument.

The same valley ; other kinds of falsehood.

WHEN Juno's wrath wax'd high, in days of yore,
For Semelë, against the Theban race,
(As many a time she show'd) then did such sore
And frenzied madness fall on Athamas,
That he, when he his hapless wife descried, 5
With her two children clasp'd in her embrace,
" Now spread the nets, that I may snare," he cried,
" The lioness and lion-cubs aright !"
And then his ruthless arms extended wide,
And one of them he seized, Learchus hight, 10
And dash'd him fiercely down against a stone ;
While his sad mother, in her hasty flight,

Sprang with her burden where the billows moan.
And when the Trojan pride that all things dared,
And king and kingdom were by fate cast down, 15
A mournful captive, Hecuba was spared,
Only to gaze on Polyxena dead
And on the ocean-strand to her appeared
The corpse of Polydorus, hither sped
By stormy waves ; then madden'd by her woe, 20
Transform'd, as a dog she howl'd and bay'd.
But ne'er did Thebes nor Troy such furies show,
Inspiring with their wrath so cruelly
Or man or beast, as in this vale I saw
In two, who did all pale and naked fly, 25
And strove to bite as they rush'd on in haste,
Even like a sow escaping from the sty.
One on Capocchio sprang, as on he pass'd,
And with his tusks he struck him on the neck,
So that he prone upon the earth was cast. 30
He of Arezzo, who with fear did shake,
Said : " Gianni Scacchi is yon madman's name,
Who fiercely on the rest his ire doth wreak."
I said : " As thou wouldst not endure the same

Sharp teeth, then be not my request denied ; 35
Say who his neighbour is that bears like blame."

 "It is the ancient shade," he thus replied,
"Of wicked Myrrha ; who unto her sire
In more than lawful love was erst allied ;

 For she to sin with him in guilt most dire, 40
Herself in other form did falsify :

And he who yonder runneth, to acquire
 The fairest of the troop, with many a lie
Buoso Donati feign'd himself, and writ
His testament with due legality." 45

 After those frenzied ones did past me flit,
On whom my eyes were fix'd, I turn'd once more
Unto the wretched crew remaining yet.

 One I beheld, who the same semblance wore
As doth a lute ; if but his limbs had been 50
Cut off from where the thighs their burden bore.

 The dropsy which deform'd him thus, I ween,
Did in such humours foul his blood convert,
With body swollen, and visage sad and lean ;

 And made him ever hold his lips apart, 55
As when with hectic fever ye respire,

And upwards one, one downwards doth revert.

“O ye, who journey through the penal fire
Unharm’d (nor know I wherefore this should be),”

He said to us, “behold the pain most dire 60

Of Master Adam’s doleful misery.

All I desired I had in life ; and now,

Alas ! a drop of water is to me

Denied. The streams which to the Arno flow

From the green hills by Casentino’s plain, 65

With the cool moisture which their channels show,

Are ever in my sight ; and not in vain ;

Because their image parches me yet more

Than the disease which makes my visage lean.

The rigid justice, searching me so sore, 70

Draws from the place where I in guilt did ’bide

A pang to swell my sorrows’ ample store.

There is Romena, where I falsified

The metal with the Baptist’s image seal’d,

Wherefore a fiery death did me betide ; 75

But if I here the wretched shades beheld

Of Guy, or Alexander, or their kin,

Than Branda’s fount more dear such sight were held.

Already one of them doth mourn within,
If those wild, wandering spirits speak aright ; 80
But what is that to me who power have none

To move a limb ? If I were but so light
That I in hundred years one inch could go,
I had ere now set forth with all my might,

To seek him 'mid the filthy crew, although 85
The valley for eleven long miles doth wind,
And less than half in breadth it doth not show.

They caused me here to have such place assign'd ;
For they to coin the florins did me guide,
Wherein three carats of alloy ye find." 90

"Who may those wretches be," I then replied,
"Who steam as a wet hand in winter froze,
And lying near to thy right hand abide?"

"I found them here, when I fell down, of yore,
From earth ; nor have they moved since then," he said, 95
"Nor deem I they will move for evermore.

Know, one is she who Joseph slander'd ;
The other, Sinon, the false Greek of Troy :
And yon foul steam is by sharp fever fed."

And one of them, who felt, perchance, annoy, 100

To be so named in contumelious strain,
Now smote his paunch who erst used base alloy.

The swollen belly gave such sound again
As when ye strike a drum ; then angrily
Its owner struck the other's face amain, 105

With hand as hard, and said : " Although ye see
My limbs so heavy from my sickness sore,
Yet for this purpose still my arm is free."

The other said : " Less prompt thine arm, of yore,
When thee unto a fiery death they drew ; 110
But when thou coinedst, 'twas as free and more."

And then the dropsical : " Here speak'st thou true ;
But not so true the counsel thou didst lend
To them of Troy, who soon thy guile did rue."

" If I spake falsely, thou the coin didst blend 115
With false alloy ; here for one crime I 'bide ;
And thou for more than any other fiend."

Thus Sinon spake ; the swollen one then replied :
" Remember, perjured wretch, the horse, and grieve ;
By the whole world thy treachery is 'spied." 120

" Grieve thou, for thirst which thus thy tongue doth
cleave,"

He answer'd ; " and foul humours which prevail
To make thy belly as a hedge up-heave."

The coiner said : " Thou grinnest wide, as fell
As is thy wont, some evil words to speak :
If I have thirst, and humours which me swell, 125

Fever is thine, and much thy head doth ache ;
And, sooth, to lick Narcissus' mirror, thou
Few words of invitation here wouldst take."

On them my mind was fix'd intent ; when lo !
My Master thus address'd me : " Now beware ! 130
Because 'gainst thee well nigh my wrath doth glow."

And when I heard his words this anger wear,
Turning to him, such shame my mind did fill,
Even yet in memory its pain I bear.

And like to him who dreams of his own ill, 135
And dreaming ever, would it were a dream ;
And that which is, as though it were not, still

Desires : thus did I, who would fain to him
Have made excuse, excusing me, while yet,
Of this unto myself I did not deem. 140

" Less shame a greater fault would palliate,"
My Master said, " than thy defect hath been ;

Thus, lay aside thy sorrow's heavy weight.

Remember, by thy side I still am seen,

145

If fate doth will that thou again shouldst go

Where any lie in such foul plight : I ween,

To list their words doth argue idle tastes and low."

CANTO XXXI.

Argument.

The Giants.—Antæus conveys the two Poets down the abyss
which separates the *Eighth* from the *Ninth Circle*.

Now the same tongue which erst did give me pain,
Whence on my cheek the hue of shame I wore,
Brought sweetest balm unto my hurt again.

Thus have I heard that, in the days of yore,
With wounds at first, with balsam then was fraught 5
The lance Achilles and his father bore.

We turn'd from the dark vale in saddest thought,
Up by the bank encircling all this bourne,
And as we cross'd its ridge, still spake we nought.

Here it was less than night, and less than morn, 10
And but a little way our glance could go,
When now I heard the blast of a loud horn,

Compared with which the thunder's voice were low ;
And 'gainst its course the self-same path I held,
Intent to seek from whence the sound might flow. 15

After the doleful rout on the sad field,
When Charlemagne erst lost the high emprise,
Less dread the blast Orlando's horn had peal'd.

A little further on I turn'd mine eyes,
And many lofty towers, meseem'd, I saw : 20
" Master, what city now before us lies ? "

I ask'd ; and he made answer : " They do show
So dimly through the mists wherein they dwell,
For the great distance ; thus thy mind doth go

In devious path. Thou shalt discern full well, 25
Approaching, how when thou afar dost stand,
Sense is deceived : more swiftly then impel

Thy steps." And tenderly he took my hand,
And said : " That thou mayst feel no strange alarms,
Know, ere we nearer to the brink descend, 30

These are no towers thou seest, but giant forms ;
And in the deep abyss they dwell for aye,
And guard the circling wall like men-at-arms.

As, when the mists before the wind do fly,

By slow degrees unto the eyes appear 35
The things which hidden in the clouds did lie ;
Thus, piercing through this grossest atmosphere,
And more and more approaching to the strand,
My error fled, and in its place was fear.
Because, as rising from her circling band, 40
Monteregionë crowns herself with towers,
Even so the rampart girdling all this land
Was turreted with those dread giant Powers,
In half their height ; those fearful Ones, whom aye
Jove threatens, when the thunder-tempest lowers. 45
Of some, the face I plainly could descry,
The chest and shoulders, and the greater part
Of the huge body ; and the arms, which lie
Down by their sides. When Nature did depart
From making those strange beings, she did well 50
To take from Mars such servants of his art.
And though great whales and elephants she still
Doth form, yet he who gazes subtly
May see herein her wisdom and her skill ;
For, where the powers of mind and reason be 55
Join'd to an evil will, and to a strong

Brute force, from thence there is no place to flee.

Each face appear'd to me as wide and long
As, nigh St. Peter's, doth the Roman pine :
Like measure did unto the rest belong. 60

So that the bank which, with its circling line
Reach'd to their middle, let so much appear
Above, that did three Frieslanders combine
In height, yet scarce might they attain their hair ;
For thirty times the measure of a palm 65
Was seen, from where the mantle's clasp ye wear.

And now, " Rafël maï amech zabi alm,"
That mouth ferocious 'gan to shriek aloud,
With lips unsuited to a sweeter psalm.

My Leader then : " Insensate soul and proud, 70
Keep to thy horn ; thus vent thine angry mind,
When wrathful passions on thy brain do crowd.

Seek at thy throat, and thou the cord shalt find
Which holds it tied, O spirit most confused,
And see the thing which round thy chest doth wind." 75

And then to me : " This being is accused
E'en by himself ; 'tis Nimrod, for whose sake
No more one language in the world is used.

Let him alone ; it is not well to speak
To vacancy : for thus to him each tongue, 80
As his to others, doth no meaning take."

Then to the left our way was now more long ;
And at an arrow's flight from thence we found
Another giant much more fierce and strong.

Who was the hero that his limbs had bound, 85
In sooth, I know not ; but a chain he wore,
Five several times around his form enwound.

The huge right arm he aye behind him bore,
Tied with the chain that hung in heavy weight
Down from his neck, the left was fix'd before. 90

"This proud one would have risen to be more great
In haughtiness, than e'en the mighty Jove,"
My Leader said ; "thus merits he such fate.

His name is Ephialtes ; who did prove
His strength, when erst the giants caused such dread 95
Unto the Gods : since then, he may not move

His arms for evermore." And then I said :
"Now fain Briareus I would behold,
If thus it may be." And he answer'd :
"Thine eyes shall look upon Antæus bold, 100

Anear to us ; he speaks, nor is he bound ;
And he shall bear us to Hell's deepest hold.

The other thou wouldst see, afar is found ;
And he is chain'd like him upon whose woe
Thou look'st, but fiercer doth he gaze around." 105

Less mighty is the dreadful earthquake's throe ;
Which some strong tower doth shake with heaving
breath,

Than Ephialtes' struggles, in the glow

Of rage. Then more than ever fear'd I death ;
Such fear might well have had the power to slay, 110
Had I not seen the bands that stay'd his wrath.

And we towards Antæus went our way,
Who to the throat five ells and more did stand
Forth from the deep. Then did my Master say :

"Thou who, of yore, within the fated land 115
That gave to Scipio such a glorious name
When Hannibal turn'd back with all his band,

Victor o'er thousand lions won thy fame
(And still they say, so great thine arm'd worth,
That hadst thou with thy brethren join'd, their aim 120

Were surely gain'd by the great Sons of Earth)

Scorn not to aid us in our downward way,
Where the cold waves of Cocytus have birth.

And unto Typhon send us not, this day,
Nor unto Tityus, of like strength sublime ; 125
But bend thee now, nor turn from us, I pray.

This man can give thee fame, as in thy prime :
He lives ; and length of life may still be his,
If grace do call him not before his time."

And then the giant from the deep abyss 130
Stretch'd out his arm, and Virgil seized, as when
He fought, in days of old, with Hercules.

Soon as my Master felt his grasp, again
He spake to me : " Come hither, that my hand
May clasp thee : " closely did he strain me then 135

Bound to his side. As, often, when ye stand
'Neath Carisenda's tower, and there hath stray'd
A cloud above it, and it seems to bend,

Thus show'd Antæus unto me, who staid
Intent to see him stoop ; and then I well 140
Had wish'd my path by other way were made.

But where with Judas Lucifer doth dwell
Us lightly in the deep did he repose ;

Nor long remain'd bent down in that dark dell,

But, swiftly, like the mast of some great ship, he ¹⁴⁵

rose.

CANTO XXXII.

Argument.

Ninth and last Circle ; the traitors imprisoned in ice.—Count
Ugolino gnawing the head of the Archbishop Ruggieri.

IF I had rhymes as harsh and rough, I ween,
As might be fitting for this dismal vale,
Towards which every other rock doth lean,
The juice of my conceit I should not fail
To press more fully ; but I have them not ; 5
Therefore in fear I come to tell my tale.

It is not meet, in sooth, there should he brought,
To sing of the deep central universe,
A careless tongue with childish accents fraught.

But may those maidens come, to aid my verse, 10
Who gave Amphion help to raise the wall
Of Thebes ; that thus my words be not diverse

From truth. O ye, most wretched above all,
Who in this region sharpest pains endure,
Better had ye been beasts within the stall ! 15

When we were come within the deep obscure
Beneath the giant's feet, and yet more low,
While gazing on the walls that did immure

Us wholly, "Now beware how thou dost go,"
A voice began ; "and see thou dost not tread 20
On us, thy brethren in this land of woe."

Therefore I stood, and saw before me spread,
And 'neath my feet, a frozen lake that bore
Semblance of glass, not water. Ne'er was shed,

In Austria, on Danube's stream, such store 25
Of icy coverture, piled high and thick,
Nor on the Tanais, in winter froze,

As here was seen : in sooth, if Tabernicch
Had fallen, or e'en Pietrapana's mount,
Ye had not heard the ice or crack or creak. 30

As, from the water, oft the frogs are wont,
Croaking, to thrust their snouts, when harvest-dreams
The slumber of the peasant-maid do haunt ;

Livid, to where shame sendeth forth its gleams,

Those wretched spirits, fix'd within the ice, 35

Tremble, with sound of chattering teeth that seems

Like the stork's note. And each bent down his face ;

Cold from the mouth, and from the eyes sad pain

Here plainly show'd, in sooth, most doleful trace.

When I had somewhat gazed around, I then 40

Look'd down, and saw two Shades with mingling hair ;

Such close embrace did them together strain.

I said : " Now tell me who, in life, ye were,

Who here are clasp'd thus." And then their brows

They raise, and all the moisture that they bear 45

Within their eyelids, thence wells forth, and flows

A down their cheeks ; and the great cold congeal'd

The tears within those lids, and firmly froze.

Ne'er might ye wood with wood so closely weld :

Therefore, like goats they butted in fierce fight, 50

Each against each ; such anger them impell'd.

And one, who both his ears from the sharp might

Of freezing cold had lost, with face bent down

Said : " Wherefore dost thou seek, 'mong us, aright

Thy face to mirror ? If thou wouldst be shown 55

Who these may be, the vale from whence doth flow

Bisénzio, once was ruled by them alone,

And by their father Albert. If ye go
Throughout Caïna, there no spirits rest,
More worthy of this frozen land of woe.

60

Not him, in sooth, whose shadow and whose breast
Were piercéd, at one blow, in days of yore,
By Arthur's hand ; Foccaccia's meed unblest,

Of bloodiest revenge ; nor him who o'er
Me leaneth, Sassol Mascheroni named :
If thou be Tuscan, I need say no more.

65

And that by me no longer speech be framed,
Know, Camicion de' Pazzi was I hight,
And wait Carlino that I less be blamed."

A thousand faces in this dismal plight
Hideous with cold I saw ; thus fear doth fill
My soul the while I shudder at the sight

70

Of frozen pools. And journeying onward still
Unto the point where all things gravitate,
I trembled in the everlasting chill.

75

And if 'twere Providence, or chance, or fate,
I know not ; but of one I struck the head,
As I pass'd on, with all my footsteps' weight.

Weeping he cried : " Why thus on me dost tread ?
 If not to add unto the pain I bear 80
 For Mont' Aperti, wherefore on me shed
 More suffering ?" " My Master, wait me here,"
 I said, " for somewhat I of him would learn ;
 Then will I hasten, even as shall appear
 Good in thy sight." He stay'd ; then did I turn 85
 To him who still blasphemed, and thus I spake :
 " Who mayst thou be, that with such ire dost
 burn ?"
 " Now who art thou, who thus thy way dost take
 Through Antenora, and too strongly e'en
 For living man," he said, " dost smite my cheek ?" 90
 " In truth, I live ; and thou from me mayst win
 Fame, if unto such meed thou dost aspire,"
 I said, " for I can store thy name within
 My strain." " The contrary is my desire,"
 He answer'd ; " get thee hence, and vex me not : 95
 Ill thou dost flatter in this valley dire."
 Him by his locks full quickly then I caught,
 And said : " Now needs thy name must thou declare,
 Or hair upon thy head in vain be sought."

Whence he to me : "Though thou my head mak'st 100
bare,

I will not tell thee who I am, nor show

My face, if thousand strokes should be my share."

Then, twisted 'mong his locks, my hand did draw
Forth from his head, in sooth, an ample store ;
The while he howl'd, with eyes bent downward low. 105

Till one cried out aloud : "What evil sore
Hath ta'en thee, Bocca ? art not satisfied
To chatter with thy teeth, but thou must roar
Like a wild beast ? what fiend is by thy side ?"

"Thou wicked traitor, now no more I seek 110
That thou shouldst ope thy lips," I then replied ;

"For, to thy shame, the truth of thee I'll speak."
"Speak what thou wilt," he said, "but get thee hence ;
And yet of him with tongue so prompt to break

Its silence, see thou tell. The gold of France 115
Here to bewail for ever is he brought :

Relate that on Duera didst thou chance,

Mid sinners in ill plight. Still seek'st thou aught,
On Beccharia look, whose treacheries
Were such that Florence through his gorget saw'd. 120

I think that Gianni Soldanieri lies
Beyond, with Ganellon, and Tribaldel
Who oped Faënza when sleep seal'd all eyes."

We had departed from those spirits fell,
When two, fast-frozen in one cleft, I saw ; 125
One head bent o'er the other, so that well

Its covering it had been. And as ye gnaw
A crust for hunger, he who leant above,
There where the brain from out the neck doth grow,

Struck his sharp teeth. As erst did anger move 130
Tydeus, when in his fiercest rage he fed
On Menalippus' skull, this Shade did prove

The same. "O thou who show'st such wrath," I said,
"Against this man, and still dost gnaw his brain,
Say why on him such brutal hate is shed : 135

For, if with cause thou dost of him complain,
In knowing who ye be, and what his crime,
I upon earth may pay it thee again ;

If that with which I speak fail not before its time."

Count Ugolino.—Third zone of the ninth circle.—The souls
of those whose bodies are still alive.

Then he began : “ Thou wouldst I should renew
The desperate grief that all my heart doth steep,
Only to think thereon, ere speech ensue.

5

I know not who thou art, nor by what law 10
Thou to this depth hast come ; but yet thy speech
Doth seem thy Florentine descent to show.

I was Count Ugolino ; and this wretch,
The Archbishop Ruggieri : unto thee
I tell the bond which binds us each to each. 15

Sooth, the effect of his vile treachery,
Wherewith I, trusting fully to his word,
Was ta'en, and done to death, no need to be

To thee declared. But what thou hast not heard,
Namely, the manner of my cruel pain, 20
Now hear, and know if justly in me stirr'd

Be wrath. A narrow window in the den,
Which now of Hunger bears the name for me,
And where imprison'd some may be again,
Of many a changing moon had let me see 25
The light, ere yet the evil sleep I slept
That rent the curtain of futurity.

This man appear'd to lead the hounds that swept,
Chasing the wolf and cubs unto the mount
Which from the Pisans' ken doth intercept 30

The view of Lucca. With lean dogs and gaunt,
Gualandi and Sismondi and Lanfranc
Had set themselves to lead the battle's front.

But, weary with short course, full quickly sank

The father and the sons ; and sharp teeth sped, 35
Methought, with bloody wounds to rend each flank.

When I awoke, before the night had fled,
I heard my children wailing in their sleep,
Those who were with me, and demanding bread.

Thou must be cruel, if thou here canst keep 40
Dry eyes at thought of what my heart forecast ;
If not at this, what thing can make thee weep ?

And they awoke, and now the hour was past
When, at the first, our food to us was borne ;
And for his dream each doubted. And at last 45

Within the lock below I heard them turn
The key of the dread tower ; then on each son
I gazed, but neither did I speak nor mourn.

I wept not ; for within I was as stone.
They wept ; and then my little Anselm said : 50
‘Thou look’st so, father ! what is’t they have done ?’

And yet I did not weep ; nor answer’d,
For all that day and all the after night,
Till a new sun on earth its beams had shed.

When in our prison-house a little light 55
Had enter’d, and I thus might well descry

Four faces that gave back mine own aright,

Then both my hands, for anguish, did I try
To gnaw and tear ; and they, who deem'd I fain
Would eat, did all, at once, arise and cry : 60

‘ Father, to us it would be lesser pain
If thou wouldst feed on us ; from thee we had
These wretched bodies ; take them back again.’

Then I was calm, lest they should be more sad ;
And that day and the next we spake not aught : 65
Ah ! cruel earth, why wert not openèd ?

After unto the fourth day we were brought,
Then at my feet extended, Gaddo fell,
Crying : ‘ My father, why dost help me not ?’

And there he died ; and as thou see'st me well, 70
The three remaining, one by one, I saw
Fall, 'twixt the fifth day and the sixth. Then still,

I blindly groping over them did go :
Two days I called them after they were dead ;
Thereafter, hunger was more strong than woe.” 75

With eyes askance, when he these words had said,
He gnaw'd the wretched skull again, with teeth
Of doglike strength on hardest bone to feed.

Ah ! Pisa, thou disgrace of those who breathe
In the fair country where the “*si*” doth sound, 80
E’en if thy neighbours’ vengeance tarrieth,

Let Gorgona and eke Capraia bound
The place where to the sea flows Arno’s stream,
So that within thee all thy sons be drown’d.

For if among you ye did truly deem 85
Count Ugolino had your forts betray’d,
To slay his sons did justice ill beseem.

New Thebes ! most innocent were surely made,
By youth, Brigata, Uguccion, and they,
The two of whom but now my words were said ! 90

Then we pass’d on to where a people lay,
Fast-frozen in a winding-sheet of ice,
Not downward bent, but stretch’d upon the way

Supine. And of this vale the sad device
Stay’d them from tears : and grief which might not flow 95
Turn’d inward, to increase their agonies.

Because the drops to a hard knot did grow,
And, like a crystal vizier, wholly fill’d
And closed the cavity beneath each brow.

And though by the great cold I was so chill’d 100

That from my face all feeling now was flown,
As when some callous place the blood hath still'd,

Yet here it seem'd as if some wind had blown.

Then I : " My Master, whence doth this arise ?

In this far depth is any vapour known ?" 05

Whence he to me : " Soon shalt thou with thine eyes

Behold of this strange thing the reason just,
Which moves the air in such unwonted guise."

And then a wretch within the icy crust

Cried with loud voice to us : " O spirits fell, 110

Whose guilt hath merited the last dread post,

Lift from mine eyes a moment their hard veil,

And let the grief which all my heart doth steep
Flow forth, ere yet the frost again prevail."

And I to him : " If by my help thou 'dst weep, 115

Say who thou art ; and if I give not aid,

May I descend unto the icy deep."

" Know, I am Brother Alberic," he said,

" He of the fruit which grew in evil soil,

Who here, instead of figs, on dates am fed." 120

" Oh !" I replied, " then art thou dead, the while ?"

He answer'd : " If that mortal garb of mine

When to the limbs where erst abode yon wretch, 145
And to his traitor-comrade's, there was brought
A demon, in their stead. Thy hand now stretch,
And ope mine eyes." But yet I did it not ;
And, sooth, did to that treach'rous one rehearse
Discourtesy with courteous justice fraught. 150
Ah ! Genoese, a people most perverse,
Full of deceit, and alien from all good,
Why doth not Providence your race disperse ?
Where the worst spirit of Romagna stood,
I found your son, who, for his deeds of ill, 155
In soul was bathed in Coeytus' dark flood,
And in his body seem'd on earth to linger still.

CANTO XXXIV.

Argument.

Centre of the Universe, where Lucifer is fixed in the eternal ice.
There, is punished treason to benefactors, and there Judas,
Brutus, and Cassius, are found.—Virgil bears Dante through
the centre of the earth, and rises with him in the opposite
hemisphere.

“BEHOLD ! the banners of the King of Hell
Come tow’rd us ; therefore look before thee now,”
My Master said, “ wouldst thou discern them well.”

As, when the air to a thick mist doth grow,
Or when night falleth on our hemisphere, 5
Ye see a windmill from afar ; even so,

Like edifice did to mine eyes appear :
Then from the blast I shelter’d me, behind
My Guide ; none other covert was there here.

In sooth, to tell it fear doth fill my mind ; 10
But now I look’d on Shades within the ice,
Descried as straws which in clear glass ye find.

One stands upright, another prostrate lies ;
Some, on their heads, and some, upon their feet,
And others, like a bow, inverted-wise. 15

When we so far had gone as seem'd meet
Unto my Master, that he thence might show
The Being, erst of semblance fair and sweet,

Me he now placed before him, saying : " Lo !
The dreadful throne of Dis thou dost behold ; 20
Well arm'd with courage here thou needs must go."

How then my limbs became all weak and cold,
Demand not, reader, that to thee I strive
To tell ; no words such hist'ry may unfold.

I died not ; nor did yet remain alive : 25
Paint for thyself, if thou canst understand,
His state whom ye of life and death deprive.

The Sovereign Ruler of the doleful land
With half his chest from out the ice was seen :
More like to one of the huge giant-band 30

Am I, than they unto his arm had been ;
Thus mayst thou see how great must be the whole,
Proportion'd to such monstrous limbs, I ween.

If he was erst as fair as since his fall

He hath grown foul, and yet he raised his brow 35
Against his Maker, it is well that all

Of sorrow flow from him. And much I now
Did marvel, gazing on his faces three :
One look'd before, and gleam'd with blood-red glow ;

And, of the others which I there did see, 40
Rising from out each shoulder's mighty pile,
And join'd beneath his crest, one unto me

Appear'd of pale and sallow hue ; the while
The other seem'd as of the region old,
Which hideth the far fountains of the Nile. 45

'Neath each, two wide-spread wings he did unfold,
As fitting for a bird of such huge size ;
Like sails on ocean ne'er did I behold.

No plumage had they ; but in bat-like guise
Were fashion'd : and they swiftly beat the air, 50
So that from thence three diverse winds arise.

Thence Cocytus its icy flood doth bear :
Six eyes shed tears ; and down three several chins
Flows bloody spittle, mix'd with the salt tear.

Each mouth aye crunches one who for his sins 55
Is ground ev'n as the grist within the mill ;

And thus, for three, just punishment he wins.

Unto the first, the gnawing teeth were still
As nought compar'd with the sharp claws that tore
His flesh, and bore away the skin, which fell 60

In shreds. "Yon soul, whose torment is most sore,
Judas Iscariot was erst ; and he
Is here with head within, and legs which o'er

Those bloody lips do lie. Of those who be
Head-downwards hung, in the black jaws reveal'd 65
Is Brutus ; see him writhing silently :

The other, Cassius, he of sinewy build.
But night once more doth rise again ; and now
'Tis time to go : all things thou hast beheld."

Thus Virgil spake ; my arms I then did throw 70
Ev'n as he bade me, round his neck full fast :
And when the wide-spread wings fit moment show,

Unto the velvet sides he clung ; and pass'd
From hair to hair, while he did thus descend
'Twixt the thick fur and the hard icy crust. 75

When we attain'd to where the thigh doth bend,
My leader with much toil and anguish sore,
(As he once more the upward path would wend)

With head now where his feet had been before
Did firmly cling ; while climbing still he sped, 80
So that to Hell I thought to turn once more.

“ Now hold thee fast ; for by such stairs,” he said,
Panting like one with weariness opprest,
“ Man from these depths of evil must be led.”

Then from a crevice he came forth at last, 85
And placed me on a rock, and show'd to me
The pathway intricate by which we pass'd.

I rais'd my eyes, and deem'd that I should see
Still Lucifer as he at first had been ;
But saw him stand inverted. Thus may ye 90

Unletter'd ones, who know not aught, I ween,
Touching the point beyond which we had sped,
Perceive how much, at that which I had seen,

I marvell'd. “ Now arise,” my Master said ;
“ The way is long, and evil is the path, 95
And the eighth portion of the day is fled.”

No royal road, in sooth, he followeth
Who climbs this steep ; but a wild cavern rude,
That little light and roughest footing hath.

I said, when ready to depart I stood : 100

“My Master, ere I turn from the abyss,
Lest in my mind some error should intrude,
Say, where is now the ice? The form of Dis,
How standeth it inverted? and hath pass’d
The sun from morn to eve so soon, I wis?” 105

“Thou dost imagine that thy footsteps rest,”
He said, “beyond the point whence I did wend
Along his hide who is enclosed fast,
Piercing the earth. While I did yet descend,
In truth it was so; when I turn’d again, 110
We pass’d the spot to which all weights do tend.

And now we to that hemisphere attain
Oppos’d to the great solid tract of earth,
Upon whose central point the man was slain,
Who was all sinless both in life and birth : 115
Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere
Which forms Giudecca. Evening goeth forth

There, when the morning light is dawning here ;
And he, on whom to us a path was given,
Is fix’d still as first he did appear. 120

And at this spot it was he fell from Heaven ;
And all the land which here was erst outspread,

Veil'd 'neath the sea, and hence in terror driven,
Rose in our hemisphere. Perchance, there fled
Before him, leaving a wide, vacant spot, 125
The mountain which beyond us rears its head."

There is a place, from Beelzebub remote
As far as doth his sepulchre extend,
Unknown to sight, but by the sound and note
Of a small stream that hither doth descend, 130
Wearing a rocky bed through which it flows
In winding path, and little doth impend.

My guide and I that hidden pathway chose,
To turn again to the clear world of light :
We had no thought or care to seek repose, 135
But still pass'd on, I following aright,
Until the lovely things of heaven afar
Through a round aperture now met my sight ;
And thence we issued forth to see again each star.

NOTES.

CANTO I.

V. 1.—“*About the middle of life's onward way*”

Dante was born A.D. 1265 ; consequently, at the full moon of March, 1300, the date assigned by him to his journey into the threefold realm of Death, he was in his thirty-fifth year : and therefore midway between birth and the allotted term of threescore years and ten.

V. 2.—“*I found myself within a darksome dell ;*”

Throughout his poem, Dante shadows forth an allegory not only twofold, as his commentators in general say, but manifold. Here he seems to allude to his own aberrations after the death of Beatrice ; to the human soul in its struggles from darkness into light ; and to the distracted state of Italy at the period at which he wrote. The “*selva*,” or “wood,” is several times used by him as a symbol of Florence.

V. 13.—“*But when I near a mountain's foot was stay'd,*”

The “mountain” may have the same triple signification as the “wood ;” politically, referring to the triumph of order and

prosperity over anarchy, oppression, and misery ; morally, to Christian purification of heart and life ; and personally, to Dante's own repentance and amendment.

V. 32.—“*A pard came tow'rd me*” &c.

The pard, with its fair aspect, and brightly spotted skin, is supposed to mean the pleasures and gaieties of Florence.

V. 46.—“*A lion tow'rds me came*” &c.

The lion is generally used by Dante as the symbol of pride ; and here in the twofold sense of hindering political improvement, and private repentance. Some commentators find here an allusion also to Charles of Valois.

V. 49.—“*And a she-wolf,*” &c.

The wolf usually signifies avarice : also, according to most Italian commentators, the temporal power of the Pope ; to which Dante, though a sincere and fervent Catholic, was stedfastly opposed, especially in his latter years, in deeds as well as words. V. Cesare Balbo, Bianchi, and others.

V. 103.—“*The hound with whom nor land nor gold is found*”

Boccaccio, who was born while Dante was writing his great poem, and who may therefore fairly be supposed to understand the historical allusions at least as well as more modern commentators do, confessed himself totally unable to explain this verse. But in the five centuries that have elapsed since then, many and extraordinary have been the opinions expressed and zealously contended for. Some have supposed Guido da Montefeltro to be the “Veltro,” or greyhound. But Guido da Montefeltro did not at all take the part here ascribed to him.

On the contrary, Dante elsewhere accuses him (possibly erroneously) of having aided Boniface VIII. in his treacherous conquest of Palestrina. Besides, Dante does not say that his nation is *near* Feltro, but *between* Feltro and Feltro; that is, between Feltre near Treviso, and Montefeltro in Romagna. Other commentators understand "feltro" to mean, not a city of that name, but any kind of coarse clothing, or, symbolically, poverty. The most probable opinion seems to be, that Dante did not allude to any warrior of his own time, or perhaps not to a warrior at all; but merely expressed his hopes of what might come to pass in after ages. It is worthy of remark, that Dante does not here make any allusion to force of arms, but to wisdom, and virtue, and love.

"Ma sapienza e amore e virtute."

CANTO II.

V. 13.—"*Thou tellest of the sire of Sylvius,*" &c.

Eneas, who went down into Hades.

V. 28.—"*Another chosen One,*" &c.

St. Paul.

V. 52.—"*I was with those who rest 'twixt Heaven and Hell.*"

In Limbo, where Dante places the great and good Heathen.

V. 53.—"*A Lady call'd me, beautiful and bright,*"

The blessed spirit of Beatrice de' Portanari, Dante's early love; or, metaphorically, Divine Theology.

V. 94.—“*In Heaven, a gentle Lady weeps*” &c.

The Virgin Mary ; or, symbolically, Divine Clemency.

V. 97.—“*This Lady call'd Lucia to her side,*”

Lucia, from *lux*, signifying here Illuminating Grace. Ordinary Italian readers generally ignore this mystical sense, and imagine an allusion to St. Lucy of Syracuse.

V. 102.—“*Where I with Rachel sat*” &c.

Rachel is here and elsewhere the symbol of the contemplative life, as Leah of the active life.

V. 103.—“*O Beatrice, who art of God true praise,*”

The name Beatrice signifies “one who blesses ;” thus, the true praise of God is in making blessed.

CANTO III.

V. 42.—“*Nor yet may they bring glory unto Hell.*”

“*Chè alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli.*”

This is a much disputed passage. Most commentators explain it thus : the Angels who took no part in the struggle in Heaven, were chased from thence because they had not fought against evil ; but, being less guilty than those who followed Satan, Hell is not permitted to have them, lest it should thereby receive some lingering rays of glory. Some, on the contrary, understand it in an exactly opposite sense, and one perhaps more akin to Dante's habits of thought. Monti takes “alcuna” in the sense of “aucune,” and supposes the meaning to be,

that as the lukewarm and time-servers are viler than open enemies, thus Hell disdains those Angels and the human souls who resemble them, and refuses to receive them. This seems to agree better with the context ; as Virgil says, a little further on—

“*Misericordia e Giustizia gli sdegnà.*”

CANTO IV.

V. 6.—“*What place it was which clos'd me in its bound*”

Dante has thus been conveyed across the Acheron, during his trance-like slumber.

V. 52, 53.—“*He answer'd : 'Newly come unto this bound
Was I, when One All-Powerful hither came'*”

Virgil died nineteen years before the Christian era ; consequently about half a century before the descent of our Saviour into Hades.

V. 124.—“*And there, beyond, I saw Camilla 'bide,*”

Camilla, Queen of the Volsci, who fought against Eneas, and was slain by the soothsayer Arans. Her step was so light that she could run across a field of corn without bending the blades ; and, like Orion, across the sea without wetting her feet.

CANTO V.

V. 61.—“*And she who kill'd herself for love was there*”

Dido.

V. 67.—“*Paris was there, and Tristan*” &c.

Tristan, one of the Knights of the Round Table, and nephew of the King of Cornwall ; by whom he was slain on account of his love for the Queen.

V. 74.—“*Some means that I may speak unto yon pair*”

Francesca di Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, her brother-in-law.

V. 97.—“*The city of my birth*” &c.

Ravenna : Francesca di Rimini was daughter of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna ; she was married, by an artifice, to the deformed Gianciotto Malatesta, lord of Rimini, while she believed herself to be the wife of his brother Paolo.

V. 127.—“*One day we read, for pastime, how the thrill
Of love the heart of Lancelot had known.*”

Sir Lancelot, the lover of Queen Guinevere.

V. 137.—“*Galeotto was the author, and his name*”

Galeotto, the name of the author of the book, means also, in Italian, a go-between.

CANTO VI.

V. 52.—“*Thy citizens my name as Ciacco know*”

Ciacco, a Florentine of noble birth, and great powers of wit and humour ; but, it would appear, of small fortune and less self-respect. Induced by his gluttonous tastes, he became a buffoon and parasite at rich men's tables. *Ciacco* is a contrac-

tion of *Jacopo*, probably his name ; it also means *hog*. The Italian populace have always delighted in these punning sarcasms.

V. 61.—“ *The citizens of the divided town* ”

Florence, then distracted by the divisions and subdivisions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, Bianchi and Neri.

V. 66.—“ *The sylvan name* ” &c.

The faction of the Bianchi, called “ *la parte selvaggia*,” because its leaders, the Cerchi family, came from the woods of Val di Sieve.

V. 67.—“ *Will chase their foes* ” &c.

These foes were the Neri, led by the Donati family.

V. 69.—“ *Aided by him who coasts along the shore.* ”

Aided by Charles of Valois, who coasted along the shore, in a double sense : literally, in his voyage to Florence ; and figuratively, in flattering all parties ; *trimming*, in fact.

V. 73.—“ *But two are just, neglected by the rest* ”

These two just men are generally supposed to be Dante himself, and his friend Guido Cavalcanti.

V. 80.—“ *Tegghiaio, Rustiucci, Mosca,* ” &c.

Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, a Florentine, of the illustrious family of the Adimari. He, wiser than the rest of his citizens, opposed the unfortunate expedition against Sienna, which ended in the defeat of Montaperti (1260), and the ruin of the Guelph party in Florence. Dante meets him, later, in the third zone of the

seventh circle.—Jacopo Rusticucci, a Florentine, of low birth, but of great wealth, generosity, and prudence. Dante afterwards meets him with Tegghiaio Aldobrandi.—Mosca Lamberti excited the Amidei to murder Buondelmonte, saying, “Cosa fatta capo ha.” Buondelmonte had offended the Amidei by breaking his promise to marry their sister, and espousing instead a young girl of the Donati family. His murder was the beginning of the bloody quarrels between the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Florence; and Mosca Lamberti, as the instigator of it, is placed by Dante in Malebolge, among the sowers of discord.

V. 81.—“*Arrigo, Farinata,*” &c.

Arrigo Fifanti, one of the murderers of Buondelmonte, is not again mentioned in the poem.—Farinata degli Uberti we shall hear more of hereafter.

V. 106.—“*And he to me: ‘Return unto thy lore’*”

The Aristotelian philosophy, of which Dante was a zealous disciple.

V. 111, 112. ————“*the final day will bring
To them a fuller life and sharper pain.*”

This is the doctrine of St. Augustine.

CANTO VII.

V. 1.—“*Pape Satan, Pape Satan, aleppe!*”

No passage in Dante has had more written about it, or with less result, than this. The greater number of the ancient, and

some of the modern commentators, explain *pape* as the Latin interjection *papæ*, or the Greek *παπα*; and *aleppe* as an exclamation of grief, equivalent to *alas*. Petrus Dantis takes *aleppe* for aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in the sense of *chief* or *beginning*. The fact of Dante having maintained, in one of his other works, that Hebrew was the original language of man, may have suggested this opinion.—Other explanations have been given, too numerous to mention. That of Benvenuto Cellini is perhaps the most extraordinary; he reads it as, “Paix, paix, Satan, paix, paix, Satan, allez, paix!” Rosetti’s reading is also curious; thus,

“Pap’è Satan, pap’è Satan, aleppe!”

still taking *aleppe* in the Hebrew sense of *chief*. Monti, weary (and no wonder) of all these fruitless conjectures, considers Pluto’s words as a mere combination of sounds, without any meaning whatever. Costa, the Florentine edition, and Ugo Foscolo, pass this verse without comment.

V. 56, 57.—“*And these shall from the sepulchre come forth
With closed hand; and those with close-cut locks.*”

The Shades with closed hand are the avaricious; those with close-cut locks the prodigal, alluding to the Italian proverb, which says of a spendthrift, “he wastes all, even to his hair.”

CANTO VIII.

V. 32.—“*A form arose from out the filthy tide.*”

Filippo Argenti, of the noble family of the Cavicciuli Adimari, a man of great wealth and influence, but subject to fits

of furious anger for the merest trifle. The name of *Argenti* was given to him because he had his horse shod with silver.

V. 39.—“*Although thou art so foul, I know thee well*”

Filippo Argenti was one of Dante's bitterest enemies, and had constantly opposed his return from exile; thus the poet here revenges himself.

V. 125.—“*They used it at less secret gate, of yore*”

Dante supposes that the devils assembled themselves at the upper portal of Hell, to oppose our Saviour's entrance; who thereupon broke down the gate, which has since then remained open.

CANTO IX.

V. 44.—“*Around the Queen of everlasting woe*”

Proserpine, as Queen of Hell.

V. 80.—“*Thus fled from One who came*” &c.

All commentators, with, as far as I am aware, only two exceptions, agree in believing this to be an Angel; which, indeed, seems the obvious and only possible interpretation. But one ancient writer has suggested *Mercury*: and one modern, of great erudition, maintains the “*Messo del cielo*,” “*Messenger of Heaven*,” to be *Eneas*! The reasons given are as curious as the theory. Probably most readers will agree with the learned Bianchi, who says, “there seems no more cause to believe him *Eneas*, than *Julius Cæsar* or *Saladin*.”

V. 98, 99.—“ *Your Cerberus, of that all-powerful wrath
Bears on his chin and throat the traces still.*”

Cerberus was dragged from Hell by Hercules, when he went to bring back Alcestis.

CANTO X.

V. 12.—“ *Back from Jehosaphat's dread vale of gloom*”

The Jews believe that the Last Judgment will be in the valley of Jehosaphat.

V. 32.—“ *See Farinata from the tomb arise.*”

The celebrated Farinata degli Uberti, chief of the Ghibellines of Florence, and strongly opposed to the family of Dante.

V. 52.—“ *Then rose another Shadow by his side*”

Cavalcante Cavalcanti, father of Guido Cavalcanti, the friend of Dante.

V. 63.—“ *And him, of yore, thy Guido scorned to know*”

It seems that Guido Cavalcanti, himself a poet, loved the lays of the Troubadours better than the stately epics of old Rome.

V. 77.—“ *If they that art but ill have learnt to know*”

The art of returning to power after exile.

V. 79, 80.—“ *But yet not fifty times with light shall glow
The face of her who in this realm doth reign*”

Farinata here prophesies that before fifty moons have come, Dante and his party will endeavour to return from exile, and fail; which came to pass in the year 1304. The reader must bear in mind that Dante began the *Divina Commedia* about 1307; consequently, the events which have happened between 1300 (the date he assigns to his journey among the Dead) and 1307 are, in the poem, treated prophetically.

V. 85, 86.—“ *Then I replied to him : ‘ The carnage dire
That made Arbia’s stream run bloody red.’ ”*

At Mont’ Aperti, near the river Arbia, Farinata degli Uberti, at the head of the Ghibellines, defeated the Guelphs in a sanguinary battle (1260); and, entering Florence, exiled all his enemies, and, among them, the family of Dante. Afterwards, when the Guelphs regained their power, the Uberti were always excluded from the acts of amnesty conceded to the other Ghibellines.

V. 91, 92.—“ *But all alone I stood, what time each one
Lift up his voice fair Florence to destroy*”

After the battle of Mont’ Aperti, the Ghibellines proposed to raze Florence to the ground, and transfer the seat of government to Empoli, in Val d’Arno; but Farinata successfully opposed the scheme.

V. 119, 120.—“ ‘ *The second Frederick, and the man who wore
On earth the rank of Cardinal,’ he said*”

The second Frederick was of the house of Suabia, Emperor of Germany, and King of Naples and Sicily; one of the greatest

sovereigns of the Middle Ages, but not at all a devout Catholic. He believed in astrology, however, if in nothing else ; and, it having been foretold that he should die in Florentine territory, he would never enter Florence. Like other oracles, the prediction had an unexpected fulfilment ; for he died in Castel Fiorentino, in Apulia, after a reign of thirty-one years as Emperor, and fifty-two as King of the Two Sicilies. He was father of Manfred. The Cardinal, mentioned in the same line, was Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, who said, in anger against Frederick, by whom he considered himself ungratefully treated, "If there be such a thing as a soul, I have lost mine for the Ghibellines." Therefore, Dante has placed him among the unbelievers.

CANTO XI.

V. 8, 9.—"*Behold! Pope Anastasius lies below,
Whom erst Photinus from the true path led.*"

Dante, in placing Pope Anastasius II. among the heretics, followed an opinion common at that time. This Pope, who lived towards the end of the fifth century, showed himself more conciliating towards the Oriental Church than his predecessors had been ; and even entered into negotiations, through the deacon Photinus, of Thessalonica, to bring about a union between the East and the West. He died in the middle of these negotiations, and some among the more bigoted of the Roman clergy branded his name with the reproach of heresy. This false accusation does not appear, however, to have been universally believed, as it did not prevent his canonization.

V. 106, 107.—“*Recal the words which in the earliest place
Of Genesis are writ,*” &c.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”—Gen. iii. 19.

V. 108, 109.—“*Two things are needful for the human race.
The usurer by other paths doth go,*”

Dante's idea is, that all men ought to labour, with head or hands; and that the guilt of usury consists, not in the exaction of a cruel and excessive rate of interest, but simply in living in idleness, while money reproduces itself. This opinion, of the sinfulness of taking even the most moderate interest for money lent, was universal in those ages when commerce, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist.

V. 113, 114.—“*————the Fish on the horizon glide,
And upwards dart; the Wain o'er Caurus lies;*”

The constellation of Pisces rises in the east two hours before the sun, when in Aries. Thus, Virgil here signifies that it is near dawn. Also, at the same hour and season, Charles' Wain is seen high in the north-west. The north-west wind was, by the Latins, called Caurus.

CANTO XII.

V. 19, 20.—“*————this mortal comes not here,
Taught by thy sister,*”

Ariadne, who gave Theseus the clue by which he saved himself from the Minotaur.

V. 109-111.—“*That brow whose locks do hang in dusky fold
Is Azzolino ; and yon forehead fair
Obizzo d’Este,*” &c.

Azzolino, or Ezzolino di Romano, Imperial Vicar of the Marca Trevigiana, and one of the most ferocious tyrants of his time. He was imprisoned after the defeat of Soncino (1259); and, on being exhorted to repent of his sins, answered, “The only thing I repent of is, that I did not kill all my enemies.” In prison he refused all nourishment; and, after some days, finding death come too slowly, he tore the bandages from his wounds, and died from loss of blood.—Obizzo d’Este was Obizzo II., Marquis of Ferrara and the March of Ancona, another cruel tyrant. He was a furious Guelph (Bianchi calls him “Guelfo accanito”), and leagued with Charles of Anjou, against Manfred and Conradin.

Dante’s evident sympathy, here and elsewhere, with the Ghibellines, and dislike of the Guelphs, may excite surprise, as his own family and ancestors were of the latter party; but it must be remembered that, though he began his career as a Guelph, he had become a zealous Ghibelline before writing his great poem.

V. 118.—“*He pointed to a spirit all alone,*”

The Shade of Guy de Montfort, who murdered, in the Cathedral of Viterbo, just at the moment of the elevation of the host, the young Prince Henry, nephew of Henry III. of England. Giovanni Villani says that the heart of the murdered prince “was put into a golden cup, and placed on a pillar at London Bridge, for a memorial to the English of the said outrage.” Guy de Montfort was lieutenant of Charles of Anjou in Tuscany.

V. 135.—“*Pyrrhus and Sextus*,” &c.

Sextus, by some commentators, is supposed to be Sextus Pompeius; by others, Tarquinius Sextus. The former opinion is supported by the greater number of writers; but the latter seems the more probable, as the son of Tarquin was a much worse tyrant than the son of Pompey.

V. 136, 137.—“*From Regnier da Corneto the red flood
Sad tears doth press: Regnier di Pazzi, too.*”

Rinier da Cornato, a famous pirate on the Roman coast, and father of Uguccione della Faggiuola, Lord of Pisa. Riniero Pazzo, a Florentine, of the noble house of the Pazzi, and a noted brigand in Val d’Arno.

CANTO XIII.

V. 7-9.—“*Less tangled dens ’twixt Cecina are sought
And lone Corneto, by wild beasts that rest
In the thick wood, and shun each cultured spot.*”

The river Cecina flows through the Tuscan Maremma to the sea. Corneto is a small town, built on the site of Tarquinii, the religious metropolis of ancient Etruria. It is about twelve miles north of Civit  Vecchia. This tract of land between Corneto and the Cecina includes nearly the whole coast of the Maremma, a country then, as now, desolate and uncultivated, the haunt of wild boars.

V. 11.—“*Who chased the Trojans from the Strophades.*”

The Strophades, two islands in the Ionian Sea, on the western

coast of the Peloponnesus. Eneas, with his fleet, stopped there, but was driven away by the Harpies.

V. 20, 21.—“*What thou beholdest here shall plainly show
The truth which doth within my sermon stand.*”

This passage has been much disputed. Some commentators have understood it in the sense I have here given ; others, in one exactly contrary. They explain the words “*torrien fede al mio sermone*,” as meaning “take away faith from my discourse,” make it seem incredible ; instead of, as I have understood it, “give faith to my discourse,” prove its truth. I have been induced more confidently to adopt this latter version, by finding that one edition has “*daran fede al mio sermone* ;” which certainly has the meaning I have given. Other writers have supposed that by “*il mio sermone*,” Virgil meant a passage in the Eneid. This is possible ; but appears scarcely a natural interpretation, as “sermone” is more applicable to a discourse in prose than to a poem. It is very frequently used in the Divina Commedia, and, I think, usually in the sense of an instructive discourse ; though sometimes, also, of speech, in general.

V. 25.—“*In very truth, I think he thought I thought*”

In the original,

“*I'credo ch'ei credette ch'io credesse.*”

V. 64, 65.—“*———— the bold*

Vile harlot who, in sooth, is common death”

Envy.

V. 115.—“*At the left hand came two, all stain'd with blood.*”

The first is Lano of Sienna, a Guelph, who wasted all his pos-

sessions in riotous living. Being reduced to poverty, he sought and found death at the battle of Pieve del Toppo (1280). The other is Jacopo da Sant' Andrea, a Paduan. It is related of him that, among other extravagances, he set fire to one of his houses, in order to enjoy the spectacle of the blazing pile.

V. 124, 125.—“ *Behind him, through the forest, came a train
Of fierce and hungry dogs,*” &c.

The dogs, according to Pier di Dante, represent the spendthrift's creditors.

V. 131, 132.—“ *————the bush that all in vain,
Wept through its bloody, gaping wounds full sore.*”

This is supposed, by some commentators, to be Rocco de' Mozzi, who hanged himself to escape poverty, after having spent all his fortune ; by others, Lotto degli Agli, whose history was nearly the same.

V. 143, 144.—“ *————the town, which for the Baptist's sway
Changed its first patron ;*” &c.

Florence, of which Mars was the protector in pagan times, and St. John the Baptist after its conversion to Christianity. The bloody strifes, which afflicted the city in the Middle Ages, were superstitiously ascribed to the anger of the offended God of War. The common belief in those days was, that the heathen deities were demons, having a real and personal existence, and capable of revenging themselves on those who forsook their worship. The relics alluded to as remaining on Arno, are supposed to be the fragments of a statue of Mars. The whole passage has, with more ingenuity than probability, been explained by some commentators in an allegorical sense. They suppose that the “first patron” is warlike strength ; the “Bap-

tist," the Florentine money, which at that time was called "Battista," from the impress on it; and the allusion to the relics they interpret as the contest between ancient simplicity of manners and modern luxury. But this explanation seems forced and unnatural.

CANTO XIV.

V. 46, 47.—"*Who is yon Shade who seems as though he cared
Nought for the torment, lying in fierce pride,*"

Capaneus, a noble Argive, one of the seven kings who went to besiege Thebes. He boasted that he would take the city in spite of Jupiter; and the god, enraged, killed him with a thunderbolt.

V. 58.—"*And fiercely as of yore on Phlegra's field,*"

Capaneus here bids Jupiter strike him as fiercely as the giants had, of old, been smitten on the field of Phlegra.

V. 79.—"*As from the Bulicamē flows the rill,*"

The Bulicamē, a warm sulphurous spring, about two miles from Viterbo.

V. 95, 96.—"*———— beneath its king,
The earth was peopled by a sinless band.*"

Under Saturn, during the Golden Age.

V. 100, 101.—"*And Rhea chose, to screen her son from sight,
This isle,*" &c.

Rhea concealed her son, the infant Jupiter, in the island of Crete, that he might not be devoured by his father Saturn.

V. 104.—“*From Damietta backward doth it turn.*”

That is, turns its back to the east, and looks westward.

CANTO XV.

V. 23.—“*One recognised me, and my garments caught,*”

Brunetto Latini, the instructor of Dante.

V. 58.—“*Had I not been by Death so early slain,*”

Early, only with respect to Dante's age ; for Brunetto Latini lived to the age of 74.

V. 61, 62.—“*But know, this people ingrate and malign,
Who from Fiesole came down of yore,*”

The Florentines, descended partly from the Fiesolans.

V. 67.—“*Old fame in all the world doth call them blind.*”

The Italian proverb is, “*Fiorentini ciechi, Pisani traditori.*” It is said to have arisen thus. When the Florentines assisted the Pisans by guarding their city during their absence on an expedition against Majorca, they, as a proof of gratitude, offered Florence either two very fine bronze gates, or two porphyry columns. The latter being chosen, the Pisans accordingly sent them, wrapped in scarlet cloth. When uncovered, they proved to be so burnt by fire as to be totally defaced. These columns are still to be seen, dark and shattered, one on each side of the eastern gate of the Baptistry in Florence.

V. 77.—“*The seed of those old Romans who remain'd,*”

Some of the Florentines claimed as ancestors the Romans who

destroyed Fiesole ; the family of Dante was of this number, and the poet seems to have highly valued his Roman descent.

V. 110-113.—“ *Francis d'Accorso doth his debt fulfil :*

*Priscian is there ; and one whom, for his
shame,*

He who is servant of all servants still,

From Arno sent to Bacchiglione's strand.”

Francesco d'Accorso, of a Florentine family, and a learned Professor of Law in Bologna, where he died in 1294. Priscian, a grammarian of the 6th century. He who was sent, by the “servant of all servants,” *i. e.*, the Pope, from Arno to Bacchiglione, that is, from Florence to Vicenza, is supposed to be Andrea de' Mozzi, Bishop of Florence, in the end of the 13th century.

V. 119.—“ *Unto my Treasury give heed, I pray ;*”

The “Tesoro,” a book written by Brunetto Latini, and answering to what we should now term an Encyclopedia.

V. 122, 123.—“ *Like those who with Verona's banner green
Run through the fields” &c.*

This alludes to races which, in the Middle Ages, took place at Verona, outside the walls, on the first Sunday in Lent.

CANTO XVI.

V. 21.—“ *Together, like a wheel, they circled fast,*”

Because it was not permitted them to stand still for a moment.

V. 37, 38.—“ *The grandson of the good Gualdrada he ;
His name was Guidoguerra ;* ” &c.

Gualdrada was daughter of Bellincion Berti de' Ravignani, a noble Florentine. She married Guido il Vecchio, of a German family, which had passed into Italy with Otho the Great, in the 10th century. Among other sons of Gualdrada was Ruggeri, father of the Guidoguerra here mentioned. A brave and skilful soldier, Guidoguerra bore a prominent part in the victory of Charles of Anjou over Manfred at Benevento, in 1266.

V. 40, 41.—“ *The other, who behind me treads the sand
Was erst Tegghiaio Aldobrandi hight,* ”

See note to Canto VI., v. 80.

V. 43, 44.—“ *And I, who with them bear the fiery might,*
Was Jacopo Rusticucci ; ” &c.

See note to Canto VI., v. 80.

V. 70.—“ *For Borsierë, who to this sad shore
Hath lately come,* ” &c.

Guglielmo Borsiere, a Florentine knight, of great bravery and courtly wit.

V. 99.—“ *With appellation now no more the same,* ”
The Acquacheta, at Forlì, changes its name to *Montone*.

V. 106.—“ *A twisted cord I for a girdle wore,* ”

Different meanings have been given to this passage. The most probable, and that followed by the most trustworthy commentators, appears to be, that it alludes to the cord worn by the Order of St. Francis, which Dante had, in his youth,

thought of entering, and even adopted the Franciscan rule and habit for a time, though without taking the vows. If this interpretation be the true one, the meaning would be that Dante had betaken himself, in his youth, to monastic austerities, in order to counteract the pleasures and gaities of Florence, typified here and elsewhere by the pard, with its fair, spotted skin : and that, in maturer years, under the guidance of Reason, typified, according to the usual explanation by Virgil, he abandoned these practices ; and was led, first into the depths of suffering, then, step by step, through repentance, up to the highest Fount of Light, where Human Reason fails, and he is placed under the guidance of Divine Theology, symbolized by Beatrice. But these mystical meanings must be always, to a certain extent, doubtful in their details.

CANTO XVII.

V. 1.—“*Behold the monster with sharp-pointed tail,*”

No passage in Dante has been more the subject of conjecture than this. Some commentators see here an allusion to Charles of Valois ; others, to some of his emissaries, and particularly to a certain Guglielmo di Nogareto, of whom Dino Compagni says, “Charles of Valois sent to Florence Master Guglielmo, a French ecclesiastic : a man wicked and traitorous, although in appearance he seemed good and benign.” But the best authorities consider Geryon merely as a personification of Fraud, in general, without any individual application.

V. 21.—“*As, where the greedy Teuton hordes abide,*”

The shores of the Danube.

V. 35, 36.—“ *A little further onward we beheld,
Seated by the abyss, a mournful band :*”

The usurers.

V. 59, 60.—“ *I saw a purse of golden tint, whereon
An azure lion broidered I knew,*”

The azure lion on a golden shield was the arms of the Gianfigliuzzi of Florence.

V. 62, 63.—“ *Another I beheld, of blood-red glow,
And on its field a milk-white goose was drawn.*”

The arms of the Ubbriachi family, of Florence.

V. 64, 65.—“ *And one, who with a huge and azure sow
Had sign'd his sack, whose proper hue was white.*”

The arms of the noble family of the Scrovigni, of Padua. The name *Scrovigni* is derived from the Italian word *scrofa*, a sow.

V. 69.—“ *My neighbour Vitaliano*” &c.

Vitaliano del Dente, of Padua, a noted usurer.

V. 70, 71.—“ *————A Paduan
Am I, among these Florentines.*”

The speaker is Rinaldo Scrovigni.

V. 73.—“ *Calling the Knight whose purse hath wild goats three.*”

This is Giovanni Buiamonte, the most dishonest usurer of his time.

V. 134.—“ *On foot at foot of the sharp, rocky steep ;*”

In the original,

“ *A piede a piè della stagliata rocca ;*”

CANTO XVIII.

V. 28-33.—“*As when the Romans (because all too vast
 Their multitude, the year of Jubilee,)
 The bridge in twofold rule and order pass'd,
 And thus divided, on one side they see
 The castle, and towards St. Peter's go,
 And turn'd toward the mount the others be.*”

In Rome, in the year 1300, being the year of Jubilee, the concourse was so enormous, that Boniface 8th, in order to prevent crowding and confusion, had a barrier put up along the middle of the bridge of St. Angelo, and enacted that all those going to St. Peter's (and consequently facing the Castle of St. Angelo) should pass on one side, and those returning, on the other.

V. 50.—“*Art Venedico Caccianemico*” &c.

Venedico Caccianemico was a Bolognese, who for a sum of money persuaded his sister Ghisola to become the mistress of Obizzo d'Este.

V. 61.—“———’*twixt Reno and Savena fair,*”

The Reno and the Savena, two small streams which flow near Bologna, and inclose part of its territory.

V. 62.—“*Where yes, in their discourse, is sipa call'd.*”

The Bolognese say *sipa* or *sipo*, for *yes*, instead of the proper Italian *sì*.

V. 72.—“*Our ceaseless circuit ended.*”

Virgil and Dante now proceed in a straight line, by the bridges, towards the centre, instead of circling round it.

V. 117.—“*If priest or layman were on earth his rank,*”

Owing to the filth covering his head, it could not be seen whether he wore the tonsure or not.

V. 123.—“*Interminei the name thy kindred bore,
Thyself Alessio ;*” &c.

Alessio Interminei, or Interminelli, a Lucchese, of noble family, but noted for the vileness of his flatteries.

CANTO XIX.

V. 19-21.—“*One of those fonts, not many years ago,
I broke, to save a child who drown'd within :
Thus let the truth to all men be made known.*”

Dante, on one occasion, broke part of the font in the Baptistery of Florence (dedicated to St. John the Baptist), in order to save a child that, by some accident, had fallen in. His enemies took advantage of this circumstance, to accuse him of sacrilege.

V. 50, 51.—“*Like him who doth confess the wretch whose fear
Would from his punishment some respite take,*”

It appears that, during the Middle Ages, one of the punishments for assassination was this : the criminal was buried alive, head downwards, in a deep hole, which was then filled up with

earth. It often happened that to obtain some respite, he called back the confessor, on pretext of having something further to say. The latter then stood, with head bent down towards the hole, in order to hear the confession.

V. 52, 53.—“*And he cried out : ‘So soon art thou come here,
So soon art thou come here, O Boniface ?’*”

The speaker is Pope Nicholas III., who reigned from 1277 to 1280. His head being buried in the ground, he does not see who draws near, and imagines it to be Boniface VIII., who was alive at the assigned date of Dante's descent into Hell, though dead before the poem was actually written.

V. 70.—“*And truly I was offspring of the bear ;*”

Nicholas III. was of the Orsini family, whose name is derived from *orso*, a bear. According to Dante, he devoted himself entirely to enriching his own relations.

V. 79-81.—“*Already longer it hath been my part,
With burning feet, inverted thus to stand,
Than from his ancles the red flames shall dart :’*”

That is, Boniface shall stand thus, a shorter time than he who is now speaking. Nicholas III., who died in 1280, had, in 1300, suffered this torture for twenty years ; whereas, between the death of Boniface VIII. and that of Clement V., to whom Nicholas alludes in the next verse, scarcely eleven years intervened.

V. 82.—“*For, after him, from out a western land,*” &c.

Clement V., a Gascon, born at Bordeaux, was made Pope by the favour of Philip le Bel, and transferred the Papal See from

Rome to Avignon, in order to please his royal patron. Thus Dante compares him to Jason, the brother of Onias the High Priest, in the days of the Maccabees. This Jason offered Antiochus Epiphanes three hundred and twenty talents of silver, to make him High Priest in the room of his brother; and a hundred and fifty more, for leave to introduce heathen education among the Jews.

V. 99.—“*Which made thee in the face of Charles presume.*”

This alludes to the then prevalent opinion, that John of Procida bribed Nicholas III. to aid him against Charles of Anjou.

V. 110.—“*And she unto the Law's ten horns*” &c.

The ten horns of the Law here mean the ten commandments.

CANTO XX.

V. 34, 35.—“*O Amphiaraus, wherefore art not bold
To join the battle?*” &c.

Amphiaraus, one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and famed for his magical insight into futurity. When war was declared against Thebes, Amphiaraus hid himself in order to avoid joining an expedition in which he knew he must perish. His place of concealment was betrayed, however, and he was obliged to accompany the army. Accordingly, beneath the walls of Thebes, in the midst of the battle, the earth opened, and swallowed him alive.

V. 40.—“*Behold Tiresias,*” &c.

Tiresias, a celebrated magician of Thebes. He drew his prophecies sometimes from the flight and the voices of birds; and sometimes he called spirits from Hades to tell him of futurity.

V. 46.—“*The next is Aruns; he who dwelt, of yore,
Among the hills of Luna,*” &c.

Aruns, the most venerated of the Etruscan augurs; he lived among the Carrara mountains.

V. 55.—“*Was Manto, wand'rer erst through many a land;*”

Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, and also skilled in magic. There are different versions of her history. One is the legend here mentioned by Virgil: the other is, that after the death of her father, she left Thebes (the city of Bacchus) and came to Italy, where she married Tiberinus, king of Alba. Her son Ocnus founded Mantua, to which he gave this name in honour of his mother.

V. 68-70.—“*Where, sooth, the Brescian and the Veronese
And Trentine pastors, journeying on that path,
Give benediction.*”

There is a place near the Lago di Gardo, where the Bishops of Brescia, of Verona, and of Trent, all have jurisdiction.

V. 96, 97.—“*Ere Casalodi, with strange folly fraught,
Did Pinamonte's treacherous counsel hear.*”

Pinamonte de' Buonaccorsi persuaded Count Alberto di Casalodi, lord of Mantua, to banish some of the most powerful nobles, who kept the ambition of the former in check; then, favoured by the populace, he overthrew the government of

Alberto, massacred many of the inhabitants, and exiled others ; thus the population of Mantua was greatly diminished.

V. 116.—“*The wizard, Michael Scot,*” &c.

The famous wizard, of whom so many wild and fearful tales are told. He lived about fifty years before Dante’s time ; and had the reputation of greater skill in all dark and potent spells than any other necromancer, ancient or modern. He is buried in Melrose Abbey.

V. 118.—“*Guido Bonatti also thou mayst see :*”

A fortune-teller of Forlì, and author of a treatise on astrology. He lived in the thirteenth century.

V. 119, 120.—“*Asdentè, who would fain that he had still
Kept to the awl and lust ;*” &c.

A cobbler of Parma, who abandoned his trade for the study of magic.

V. 125, 126.—“*Touching both hemispheres, doth rest the light,
Anear Seville, of Cain who bears the thorn.*”

That is, the moon is setting in the western sea. Dante, in spite of his astronomical studies, seems to have adhered to the old belief that the Man in the Moon is Cain with a bundle of thorns.

CANTO XXI.

V. 37.—“*And from our ridge, ‘O Malèbranch,’ he said,*”

Malebranche means *evil claws* ; alluding to the hooks with which the demons in this valley were armed.

V. 38.—“*I here a noble of St. Zita bring,*”

That is, a magistrate of the City of Lucca, of which St. Zita is the patron saint.

V. 40.—“*For others to that land where rife they spring,*”

According to Dante, the Lucchese of that day did not deserve the high character for honesty and fidelity, which they now so justly bear.

V. 41.—“*All, save Bonturo, there, are rogues ;*” &c.

This is said ironically ; for Bonturo Bonturi, of the Dati family, had the reputation of being the most dishonest and faithless of all the Lucchese. Finally, he betrayed his own party in 1314.

V. 48.—“*This place, in sooth, no Holy Image knows.*”

The Holy Image of Lucca is an ancient crucifix, carved in cedar-wood, and supposed to have been made by Nicodemus. According to tradition, it was miraculously brought to Lucca in 782; and has ever since been held in great veneration by the people. The favourite oath of William Rufus, and one which he very frequently used, was, “*per vultem di Luca* ;” which does not mean “the face of Luke,” as some modern writers have translated it.

V. 49.—“*Here swim ye not as in the Serchio's tide.*”

The Serchio flows near Lucca.

V. 95.—“*When from Caprona they came forth,*” &c.

Caprona, a fortress of the Pisans, near the Arno. The Luc-

chese, in league with the other Guelphs of Tuscany, had taken it, in the war which they then waged against Pisa, as chief of the Ghibelline cities. But being afterwards besieged by the Pisan troops, under Count Guido da Montefeltro, in 1290, the Lucchese garrison, straitened for want of water, surrendered on condition that their lives should be spared. This promise was made and kept; but when they passed through the rank of their enemies the latter called out, "Hang them up, hang them up!" "Wherefore," the historian says, "these poor Lucchese felt the greatest fear in the world." Dante was present on this occasion.

V. 105.—"*Down, Scarmiglione!*" &c.

The name of this fiend is, perhaps, derived from the verb *scarmigliare*, to wrestle.

V. 111.—"*Near, is another ridge in the like guise.*"

This afterwards proves to be a falsehood.

V. 112-114.—"*And yesterday, five hours before this time,
Twelve hundred years and sixty-six did end,
Since here the way was broken.*"

That is, since the earthquake which accompanied the Crucifixion.

CANTO XXII.

V. 5. ——— "*ye who in Arezzo dwell;*"

Arezzo is here named, because its inhabitants suffered much, at that period from the incursions of their enemies; and also

because, in time of peace, they greatly delighted in jousts and tournaments.

V. 48.—“*I in the kingdom of Navarre was born.*”

The speaker is Giampolo, or Gian Paolo, a Navarrese. His father having spent all his fortune, and reduced his family to poverty, Giampolo was placed by his mother in the household of Thibault, Count of Champagne and King of Navarre, the son-in-law of St. Louis, and one of the best sovereigns of the Middle Ages, besides being the noblest of the old French poets. Although the court of Thibault was a school of all chivalrous virtue, Giampolo proved most unworthy of his royal master's favour, betaking himself to what would, now-a-days, be termed swindling.

V. 81.—“*Frate Gomita was he in his day.*”

Frate Gomita was a monk of the island of Sardinia. Having acquired high favour with Nino Visconti, lord of Pisa, he enriched himself by selling offices, taking bribes from criminals, and by other acts of fraud. The island of Sardinia was at that time in possession of the Pisans, and was divided into four judicatures, viz., Cagliari, Logodoro, Gallura, and Alborea.

V. 88.—“*With him full oft Don Michael Zanche's bides*”

Michael Zanche was governor of Logodoro. The historians of Sardinia relate that Adelasia, daughter of Mariano III., lord of Logodoro, having first married Baldo II., lord of Gallura, after some years of widowhood, married Hensius, illegitimate son of the Emperor Frederick II. ; thereby bringing him as her dowry the judicature of Logodoro, the largest province of Sardinia. Adelasia died in 1243, and, by her will, made Pope Gregory IX.

heir of all her domains ; but Hensius being proclaimed king of Sardinia by his father the Emperor, occupied the provinces of Logodoro and Gallura, and retained them till 1249, when he was taken prisoner at the battle of Fossalto, by the Bolognese, and kept in prison till his death, twenty-two years after. During this captivity Michael Zanche, seneschal of Hensius, possessed himself of the sovereign authority in his name, and having married Bianca Lanzi, mother of the unfortunate young king, misgoverned the province till 1275, in which year Zanche was treacherously murdered by his son-in-law, Branca d'Oria, of Genoa.

CANTO XXIII.

V. 63.—“*As those of monks who in Cologne do go.*”

The monks of Cologne, it would appear, wore peculiarly large and heavy cloaks.

V. 66.—“*That near them, Frederick's casques had seem'd of straw.*”

The Emperor Frederick II. caused helmets of lead to be put on criminals guilty of high treason.

V. 95.—“*In the fair city upon Arno's stream,*”

Florence.

V. 103.—“*For jolly monks were we, and Bolognese.*”

These were knights of the order of St. Mary, instituted, like that of St. John of Jerusalem, to fight against the infidels. But the populace, in allusion to their careless and luxurious lives, called them *Frati Godenti*; literally, jolly monks.

V. 104, 105.—“*I, Catalano named ; this Shade anear
Is Loderingo ?*” &c.

The speaker is Catalano dei Malavolti ; the other, Loderingo degli Andalo : both Bolognese, and both elected *podestà*, or chief magistrates of Florence, in 1266. By a singular law, the *podestà* was never to be a Florentine, but always of some other city ; this being supposed the only guarantee for perfect impartiality of government. The office of these magistrates was to keep the peace within the city ; no sinecure, certainly, in the days of the Guelphs and Ghibellines.

V. 108, 109. ———“*and like us appear
Some in Gardingo still,*” &c.

When Catalano and Loderingo governed Florence, they being bribed by the Guelphs, attacked the Ghibellines, persecuting them, and burning their houses, especially those of the Uberti family, who lived in the street anciently called *Gardingo*, near the Palazzo Vecchio.

V. 111.—“*One, crucified, who on the path lay low,*”
Caiaphas, the Jewish High Priest.

V. 121.—“*And he who ruled with him still suffers here*”
Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas.

V. 124.—“*Now Virgil seem'd to marvel much, the while,*”

Virgil, the great Heathen, with all his vast knowledge and clear intellect, yet stands in dim and sorrowful perplexity before the mysteries of the Christian faith.

CANTO XXIV.

V. 87.—“*Pierce speckled asp, and dreadful amphibene.*”

From the Greek *αμφίβαυα*, a kind of serpent which was anciently believed to have two heads, and thus to be able to crawl backwards or forwards without turning.

V. 94, 95. ———“*nor the magic spell
Of heliotrope.*”

Not the flower heliotrope ; but a precious stone of the same name, anciently believed to have the property of rendering its wearer invisible.

V. 125. ———“*Fucci my name ;*”

Vanni Fucci was the illegitimate son of Fuccio de' Lazzari, a noble of Pistoia.

V. 138.—“*I of the jewels was the thief.*”

Vanni Fucci, Vanni della Monna, and Vanni Mironne concerted a scheme for robbing the treasury of the church of S. Jacopo, in Pistoia. They carried off a quantity of jewels, but were scared by hearing a noise, before they had secured all their plunder. When the robbery was discovered, several persons were arrested, on suspicion of being concerned in it ; and especially one Rampino di Ranuccio was believed guilty, and condemned to be beheaded : which sentence would have been carried into effect, had not Vanni della Monna, on being taken, confessed the whole truth. This occurred in 1293.

V. 142, 143.—“*I tell thee, from Pistoia thou shalt see
Cast out the Neri,*” &c.

The division of the citizens of Pistoia into Bianchi and Neri happened in 1300; and in 1301, the Bianchi of Pistoia, with the aid of those of Florence, chased the Neri from the city. The latter took refuge in Florence, conspired with those of their own faction within its walls, and prevailed over their opponents; then, having, as usual, exiled the defeated party, completely changed the government and the governors of Florence.

V. 145.—“*From Val di Magra Mars a vapour draws,*”

The leader of the Neri, at this time, was Moroello Malaspina, lord of the Lunigiana, through which flows the Magra. The territory of the Lunigiana formed the principality of Massa di Carrara, and remained in possession of the Malaspinas, till the marriage of the heiress of that ancient house with the last of the D'Estes of Modena. Of this marriage there was but one child, Maria Beatrix, who married an Austrian Arch-Duke, and died at Vienna, in 1829. The family of Malaspina is one of the noblest in Italy, having been sovereign princes in the eleventh century. Its sons, like Tasso, have been great both with sword and pen; for the celebrated Troubadour, the Monk of the Golden Isles, was a Cibo Malaspina.

V. 148.—“*Above Piceno's field with wild alarm,*”

Piceno's field is the plain between Serravalle and Monte Catini; this being the territory of Pistoia, Dante calls it “Campo Piceno,” from the Latin *Piscense*.

CANTO XXV.

V. 18.—“*Then came a Centaur,*” &c.

Dante erroneously imagines Cacus to have been a Centaur, because Virgil has described him as half man, half beast : “*Semihominis Caci.*”

V. 29. ——— “*and this for his most cunning guilt,*”

When Cacus stole the cows of Hercules, which were feeding on the Aventine, he drew them by the tail into his cave, in order that Hercules might not be able to track them. Their lowing, however, betrayed the theft, and Hercules killed Cacus with his club.

V. 35.—“*And now three spirits drew anear our side,*”

These three are Agnel Brunelleschi, Buoso degli Abate, and Puccio Sciancato de' Galigai, citizens of Florence ; who, being placed in the highest offices of the State, enriched themselves at the public expense.

V. 43.—“*Canst tell where Cianfa now hath gone ?*” &c.

Cianfa was of the Donati family, of Florence ; and thus connected with Dante by marriage. Dante's wife was Gemma Donati.

V. 50.—“*A serpent with six feet,*” &c.

Cianfa, in the form of a serpent, or rather dragon, with six feet, darts at Agnel Brunelleschi.

V. 82.—“*Thus, aiming at the other's heart in wrath*”

At the heart of Buoso degli Abati.

V. 83.—“*Approached a foul and livid serpent fierce,*”

The transformed Shade of Francesco Guercio Cavalcanti.

V. 95.—“*Of sad Sabellus and Nassidius' woe,*”

Sabellus and Nassidius were soldiers of the army which Cato led across the African desert, after the death of Pompey. Among the sands of Libya, these two soldiers were stung by serpents. The body of Sabellus was burnt by the poison, and in a short time reduced to ashes ; while that of Nassidius became so swollen that his cuirass burst.

V. 151.—“*The other was the Shade still mourn'd, Gaville, by thee.*”

Francesco Guercio Cavalcanti was murdered in a small place called Gaville, in Val d'Arno ; and, in revenge for this, many of its inhabitants were put to death.

CANTO XXVI.

V. 7-9.—“*But if it be that morning dreams are true,*

A little while and thou shalt feel the woe

Which Prato, even as others, deems thy due.”

According to an old superstition, that which is dreamt at dawn always comes to pass. This prophecy, of evil in store for Florence, was fulfilled shortly after, in many ways ; by civil broils, by a conflagration of 1700 houses at one time, and by

the dreadful loss of life occasioned by the breaking down of the Ponte alla Carraja, on May-day morning, 1304. Villani relates that the "merry companies" of St. Friano, or Frediano, were performing a sort of dramatic representation of the next world, on a scaffolding erected on rafts moored in the Arno. This spectacle drew such enormous crowds, that the bridge gave way, and those who were on it were, for the most part, either drowned in the river, or crushed by the fragments. So great was the number killed, that scarcely one family in Florence was exempt from the general calamity.

V. 28.—"*When gnats come forth, and buzzing flies go sleep,*"

That is, at evening.

V. 54, 55.—"*Whereon they laid Eteocles, when in fight,*

He with his brother fell."

Eteocles, a son of Œdipus and Jocasta. After his father's death, it was agreed between him and his brother Polynices, that they should reign alternately, each a year at a time. Eteocles, being the elder, first assumed the government; but at the end of the year, he refused to give up the throne to his brother. Polynices accordingly made war against him, assisted by Adrastus, King of Argos. After much blood had been shed in unavailing battles, Eteocles and Polynices resolved to decide the dispute by single combat. They fought furiously, and at last both fell dead at once. When the bodies were laid on the funeral pyre, the flame parted in two, as if they refused to be reconciled, even in death.

V. 61, 62.—"*They even weep the arts whereby, in death,*

Still for Achilles Deidamia mourns,"

By the arts of Ulysses and Diomed, Achilles was discovered

at the Court of Lycomedes, King of Scyros, father of Deidamia, and obliged to accompany them to the Trojan war.

CANTO XXVII.

V. 7.—“*Like the Sicilian bull, whose voice did rise,*”

The brazen bull, made for Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, by Perillus, an Athenian. This machine was so constructed, that, on the criminal being enclosed in it, and a fire lighted beneath, his cries sounded like the roaring of a bull. The first who was tortured in this manner was Perillus, the inventor.

V. 29, 30.—“*For I was of the mountains which between
Urbino and the Tiber’s birthplace are.*”

The speaker is Guido de Montefeltro, lord of Urbino.

V. 40-42.—“*Ravenna is as it for years hath been :
There doth Polenta’s eagle brood ; and o’er
Cervia still its outspread wing is seen.*”

The Polenta family, lords of Ravenna, had the eagle for armorial bearings. Cervia is a small city, about six leagues from Ravenna.

V. 43.—“*The land that such resistance made*” &c.

Forlì ; which, when under the rule of Guido da Montefeltro, was besieged by an army composed chiefly of French, and sent against it by Pope Martin V., a Frenchman. The city held out stedfastly, and the slaughter of the French was very great.

V. 45.—“*Neath the green claws doth find itself once more,*”

That is, under the dominion of the Ordelaifi, whose coat of arms was a green lion.

V. 46.—“*Verrucchio's mastiffs, old and young, the while,*”

The two Malatestas, father and son, lords of Rimini; called “Verrucchio's mastiffs,” from the fierceness of their character. The castle of Verrucchio was given by the city of Rimini to the first of the Malatestas, and from it, ever after, they took their title.

V. 47.—“*Who erst Montagna used so cruelly,*”

Montagna, of Rimini, a noble Ghibelline chief, cruelly put to death by the Malatestas.

V. 49.—“*Lamonè's and Santerno's towns*” &c.

Faënza, on the river Lamone, and Imola, on the Santerno.

V. 50.—“*Led by the lion of the snow-white den,*”

Governed by Mainardi Pagani, whose arms were an azure lion on a white field.

V. 52.—“*The walls where Savio flows amain*”

Cesena, washed by the river Savio.

V. 67.—“*First, man of arms, a friar then was I;*”

Guido da Montefeltro became a Franciscan friar in 1296.

V. 70.—“*But the great Priest*” &c.

Pope Boniface VIII.

V. 86.—“*Striving, anear the Lateran, in fight,*”

Being at war with the Colonna family, who lived in Rome, near the Lateran Basilica.

V. 104, 105. ———— “*those double keys*
My predecessor cared not long to hold,”

The predecessor of Boniface VIII. was Celestin V., who abdicated.

V. 110.—“*Great promises with small fulfilment*” &c.

Following the counsels of Guido da Montefeltro, the Pope signified to the Colonnas his willingness to accede to terms of peace. Then, by means of promises which he never fulfilled, he easily obtained possession of Palestrina.

V. 128.—“*Of robber-flames.*”

Robber-flames, not because robbers were punished therein; but because, according to Dante's idea, the flames stole away the spirits, concealing them from all eyes.

CANTO XXVIII.

V. 8.—“*Sadly Apulia's fated land did bear,*”

Apulia, in ancient times, and in the Middle Ages, was, like Lombardy, the battle-field of nations.

V. 10.—“*And those who died in the long wars*” &c.

The second Punic war, which lasted three lustres.

V. 11.—“ *When of the rings so rich a spoil was brought,*”

After the battle of Cannæ, Hannibal sent to Carthage three bushels of gold rings, which had been taken from 5630 Roman knights slain in the fight.

V. 13, 14.—“ *With those sore-wounded in the battles fought
'Gainst Robert Guiscard ;*”

The Saracens, whom Robert Guiscard, in 1071, drove from Sicily and Apulia, and of whom he made a great slaughter.

V. 14-17. ——— “ *and the piles of slain,
Whose bones, unto this day, ye find unsought,
Anear Ceprano, where Apulia's men
Were faithless.*”

Those who were slain at Ceprano, in the first battle between Manfred and Charles of Anjou. “Apulia's men” are here called faithless, because, having sworn fealty to Manfred, many of them deserted to Charles.

V. 18.—“ *Where, without arms, Alard did vict'ry gain.*”

Alard, or Erard de Valéry, Constable of Champagne, gained, by his wise counsels, the battle of Tagliacozzo for Charles of Valois against Conradin of Suabia.

V. 52.—“ *Before me, Ali doth for ever mourn,*”

The son-in-law of Mahomet, and founder of the sect of the Shiites.

V. 56. ——— “ *to counsel Fra Dolcin,*”

A heretic, who preached community of goods and of wives, and who, followed by more than three thousand men, wandered

about for a long time, living by brigandage. At last, shut up, in deep snow, among the Novarese mountains, and reduced by want of provisions, he was taken by the men of Novara, and burnt alive. This occurred in 1307. Other authorities say that the charges against Fra Dolcino were mere calumnies, and that he was a reformer of the purest life and doctrine. But the first-mentioned opinion is more in accordance with historical facts.

V. 73.—“*Pierre of Medecina call to mind,*”

Medecina, a town between Bologna and Imola. Pierre, or Pietro, who belonged to a powerful family of this place, was known to have sown discord between the lords of Ravenna and of Rimini.

V. 74, 75. ——— “*the pleasant plain,*
From Marcabò unto Vercèl inclin'd.”

That is, the plain of Lombardy.

V. 76.—“*And say to the two best of Fano's men,*”

Guido del Cassero and Angiolello da Cagnano, nobles of Fano, who were treacherously invited by Malatestino, the vile tyrant of Rimini, to come to a conference with him at La Cattolica, a village on the Adriatic, between Rimini and Pesaro. They set sail; and, according to the secret instructions given by Malatestino, were thrown into the sea near Cattolica.

V. 85.—“*The traitor who through but one eye doth gaze,*”

Malatestino was blind of an eye.

V. 90, 91.—“ *To pray for safety 'gainst the winds which be
Anear Focara.*”

Focara, a mountain near La Cattolica, from whence sudden storms frequently arise.

V. 97, 98.—“ *For he, an exile, whelm'd beneath the tide
The doubts of Cæsar.*”

Advising him to cross the Rubicon.

V. 106. — “ *For Mosca, too, some memory spare ;*”

Mosca Lamberti. See Canto VI., 80.

V. 134.—“ *Bertram de Born am I ;*” &c.

Lord of Hautefort in Gascony, a celebrated troubadour and warrior. He first sowed dissension between Prince Henry and his brother, Richard Cœur de Lion, and afterwards between Henry and his father. At last, he became a monk, and ended his stormy life in the stillness of the cloister.

■ CANTO XXIX.

V. 10.—“ *The moon already 'neath our feet doth lie ;*”

That is, it was now one hour past noon.

V. 27.—“ *Geri del Bello did I hear him call'd.*”

Geri was son of Bello, and grandson of Alighiero, great-grandfather of Dante. But Dante was not descended from Bello, but from Bellincione, another son of Alighiero. This Bellincione was Dante's grandfather.

V. 29.—“*On him who Hautfort held*”

On Bertram de Borne.

V. 31, 32. ———“*for his violent death,
Not yet avenged,*” &c.

Geri del Bello, a man of violent disposition and a fomentor of discord, was treacherously killed by one of the Sacchetti family. This murder was as yet unavenged, at the time Dante wrote.

V. 46, 47.—“*If all the anguish in the marshy lands
Of sad Maremma, and of Chiana’s vale,*”

The Maremma, or the coast between Leghorn and Civitavecchia, is still the haunt of malaria-fever. The Val di Chiana is now well drained and cultivated, and no longer unhealthy; on the contrary, it is one of the most fertile and smiling provinces of Tuscany.

V. 60.—“*When all the air was full of sore disease,*”

In the island of Egina, during a dreadful pestilence, all the inhabitants, and even the animals, died; upon which, Æacus, the king, begged Jupiter to re-people his realm. The God, accordingly, transformed into men the ants in an old oak-tree; and these new inhabitants were therefore called *myrmidons*, from the Greek *μύρμηξ*, an *ant*.

V. 73.—“*Two I beheld, who on each other leant,*”

The first of these is Griffolino, of Arezzo, an alchemist, who boasted that he could fly, and promised to teach the secret to Albert of Sienna. He, enraged at finding himself deceived, accused Griffolino of necromancy; and, in consequence, the alchemist was burnt alive, by order of the bishop of Sienna.

The second of the two lepers is Capocchio, of Sienna, also an alchemist and most skilful falsifier of the precious metals.

V. 126.—“*Save Stricca, who in measur'd path could 'bide*”

Said ironically ; for Stricca was an unmeasured spendthrift.

V. 127, 128.—“*And Nicholas, who dainty arts did teach,
Of food clove-season'd,*” &c.

This Nicholas, of a noble Siennese family, invented a way of roasting pheasants with cloves and other spices.

V. 130, 131.—“*And save the company, wherein dispers'd
Were all Asciano's vineyards speedily,*”

It is related that a number of young and wealthy Siennese joined in a merry company, which was called “the spendthrift brigade,” or “brigata spendereccia,” sold their possessions, amounting to 200,000 ducats, and spent the whole in a few months. Among them was Caccia d'Asciano.

V. 132.—“*And Abbagliato his wise thoughts rehears'd.*”
“*E l'Abbagliato il suo senno proferse.*”

Said ironically of Abbagliato, another young noble of Sienna. The literal meaning of his name is *dazzled* ; and some commentators understand it as an adjective, in the sense of *bewildered*, *gone astray*, referring to “senno.” This interpretation is not inconsistent with the grammatical construction ; but the general opinion is, that *Abbagliato* is a proper name ; or perhaps a nickname given, as Italians delight in doing, to express the character of this young Siennese.

CANTO XXX.

V. 3, 4. ——— “*then did such sore
And frenzied madness fall on Athamas,*”

Athamas, King of Thebes in Bœotia, inspired with madness by Tisiphone, one of the Furies, sent by Juno.

V. 25.—“*In two, who did all pale and naked fly,*”

One is Gianni Schicchi, of the Cavalcanti family, of Florence; who, upon the death of Buoso Donati, caused his body to be carried away, and, placing himself in the bed, personated him so well, that all men were deceived. He then dictated a will, in favour of Simone Donati; and, in reward for this good office, received a famous mare, the finest in Buoso Donati's stud, and called, according to an ancient commentary, Madonna Tonina. The other Shade is Myrrha.

V. 49, 50.—“*One I beheld, who the same semblance wore
As doth a lute.*”

Master Adam of Brescia; who, at the instigation of the Counts of Romena, a castle among the hills of the Casentino, falsified the coin of Florence, and for this crime was burnt alive.

V. 74.—“*The metal with the Baptist's image seal'd,*”

The golden florin, which bore on one side the image of St. John the Baptist, and, on the other, a lily; from this *flower* it was called *florin*.

V. 77.—“*Of Guy, or Alexander, or their kin,*”

Guido and Alessandro di Romena.

V. 78.—“*Than Branda's fount more dear such sight were held.*”

All the ancient commentators suppose this to be the Fonte Branda at Sienna. But there is another Fonte Branda, near the Castle of Romena, in the Casentino, or upper valley of the Arno ; and some modern writers believe this to be the fountain in question : an opinion the more probable, as Master Adam expresses such vehement longing for the rills of Casentino, and moreover, says it was at Romena he coined the base money.

V. 98.—“*The other, Sinon, the false Greek of Troy.*”

Sinon, who deceived Priam, and persuaded him to admit the wooden horse within the walls of Troy.

CANTO XXXI.

V. 6.—“*The lance Achilles and his father bore.*”

The spear of Achilles and his father Peleus possessed the virtue of healing the wounds it made.

V. 41.—“*Montereggiōne crowns herself with towers,*”

In the original,

“*Montereggione di torri si corona.*”

Hence Macaulay's

“*And where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.*”

Montereggione, a castle of the Siennese, is surrounded by a circle of towers like a diadem.

V. 59.—“*As nigh St. Peter's, doth the Roman pine:*”

The huge pine-cone of bronze, eleven feet high, found in the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and now to be seen in the garden of the Vatican.

V. 63, 64. ———“*did three Frieslanders combine,
In height, yet scarce might they attain their hair.*”

The Frieslanders, believed to be the tallest of European nations.

V. 67. ———“*Rafêl mai amech zabi alm,*”

This passage has been as much commented on as Pluto's celebrated exclamation at the beginning of Canto VII. ; and with as little result. The Abate Lanci, in a learned discourse, printed in Rome in 1819, attempts to show that these words are Arabic, and signify, “Exalt my splendour in the abyss, even as it shall shine throughout the world !” But there is no apparent reason why Nimrod should speak Arabic, rather than any other language ; and besides, this exclamation does not seem particularly appropriate, in the circumstances. The Abate Giuseppe Venturo, of Verona, is of opinion that the words of Nimrod are Syriac, and a counsel to Dante to turn back and hide himself. The most probable explanation, however, appears to be, that they are only a confused mixture of oriental words, without any meaning at all. Virgil says expressly, a little later, that the language of Nimrod is understood by no man ; which also agrees with the allusion to the Tower of Babel.

V. 94.—“*His name is Ephialtes :*” &c.

A giant, who grew nine inches every month.

V. 98.—“*Now fain Briareus I would behold.*”

Briareus, with a hundred arms and fifty heads, the son of Earth and Heaven.

V. 100.—“*Thine eyes shall look upon Antæus bold,*”

One of the giants, son of the Earth and the Sea. When he fought with Hercules, Antæus received new strength from his mother, whenever he touched the ground; the hero therefore lifted him in his arms, and squeezed him to death.

V. 124.—“*And unto Typhon send us not this day,*”

By Typhon is here meant Typhæus, the famous hundred-headed giant, whose breath was flame, the son of Earth and Hell. His wars with the gods were ended by Jupiter crushing him under Mount Etna.

V. 125.—“*Nor unto Tityus*” &c.

Another giant, who, when stretched on the ground, covered nine acres.

V. 137.—“*’Neath Carisenda’s tower,*”

One of the leaning towers of Bologna.

CANTO XXXII.

V. 10-12.—“*But may those maidens come, to aid my verse,
Who gave Amphion help to raise the wall
Of Thebes;*”

The Muses, by whose gifts of music and poetry Amphion

caused the stones of Mount Cithaeron to descend and form the walls of Thebes.

V. 28. ———— “*in sooth, if Tabernick*”

Supposed to be either the Fruskagora mountain, near Tovar-nicho, in Slavonia ; or the Javornick, near Adelsberg, in Carniola. The former seems the more probable, as the Fruskagora range is near the Danube, and runs parallel with it, on the right bank.

V. 29. ———— “*or e'en Pietrapana's mount*”

A mountain, nearly 7000 feet high, in the Garfagnana of Modena.

V. 41. ———— “*two Shades with mingling hair,*”

Alessandro and Napoleone, Counts of Mangona, and sons of Alberto degli Alberti, a noble Florentine. After their father's death they quarrelled over the inheritance, and at last one treacherously killed the other. Therefore, as fratricides, they are appropriately placed in that abode of Hell which is named from Cain.

V. 49.—“*Ne'er might ye wood with wood so firmly weld,*”

The strongest fastening that can be invented ; as has been rediscovered in modern times by architects of railway bridges, &c. : and, as was well known to the son of Sirach, when he said, “Timber girt and bound together cannot be loosed with shaking.”

V. 56-58. ———— “*the vale from whence doth flow
Bisenzio, once was ruled by them alone,
And by their father Albert.*”

That is, the plain and city of Prato.

V. 61-63.—“ *Not him, in sooth, whose shadow and whose breast
Were piercèd at one blow, in days of yore,
By Arthur's hand.*”

Mordrec, who lay in wait to kill his father, King Arthur ; but, this treachery being observed, the king pierced him with his lance in such a manner that a sunbeam passed through the wound.

V. 63. ——— “ *Foccaccia's meed unblest,*”

Foccaccia de' Cancellieri, a noble of Pistoia, whose cruelty in cutting off the hand of one of his relatives, was the first beginning of the factions of Bianchi and Neri.

V. 65. ——— “ *Sassol Mascheroni nam'd ;*”

A Florentine, who murdered his nephew, in order to obtain their inheritance ; and, for this crime, was beheaded.

V. 68.—“ *Know, Camicion de' Pazzi was I hight,*”

Alberto Camicione de' Pazzi, of Val d'Arno, who treacherously murdered his relation, Ubertino.

V. 69.—“ *And wait Carlino that I less be blam'd.*”

Carlino de' Pazzi, of the Bianchi faction, treacherously surrendered to the Neri, for a bribe, the castle of Piano di Trevigne ; and thus many of the noblest exiles of Florence were killed or taken prisoners.

V. 77. ———— “ *of one I struck the head,*”

The head of Bocca degli Abati, a Guelph of Florence, by whose treachery in cutting off the hand of their standard-bearer, and thereby discouraging the troops, the Guelphs lost the battle of Mont' Aperti.

V. 89.—“*Through Antenora,*”

One of the four divisions of the traitor's place of doom, and named from Antenor, the Trojan, said to have betrayed his country. Thus, those guilty of treason are here punished.

V. 114, 115.—“*And yet of him with tongue so prompt to break
Its silence,*” &c.

Buoso da Duera, of Cremona ; who, for a bribe offered him by Guy de Montfort, commander of the French army, allowed him to pass without opposition ; thus betraying Manfred, by whom he had been placed near Parma in order to stop the progress of the French.

V. 119.—“*On Beccherià look,*” &c.

The Abbot of Vallombrosa, beheaded by the Florentines in consequence of the discovery of a conspiracy made by him against the Guelphs, and in favour of the Ghibelline exiles of Florence, whither he had been sent as legate, by Pope Alexander IV.

V. 121-123.—“*I think that Gianni Soldanieri lies
Beyond, with Ganellon and Tribaldel,
Who oped Faënza when sleep seal'd all eyes.*”

Gianni Soldanieri, a Ghibelline of Florence, who, with the help of Tribaldello de' Zambrasi, betrayed his own party, and opened the gates of Faënza to the Bolognese. Ganellone, or Gano, by his treachery caused Charlemagne to lose the battle of Roncesvalles.

V. 131, 132.—“*Tydeus, when in his fiercest rage he fed
On Menalippus' skull,*”

Tydeus, one of the seven chiefs who went against Thebes.

He slew many of those opposed to him; till at last he was wounded by Menalippus. Though the stroke was mortal, Tydeus sprang at his enemy, and killed him. After he was carried off the field of battle, he requested the corpse of Menalippus to be brought to him; and, ordering his head to be cut off, began to tear out the brains with his teeth. This savage brutality displeased Pallas, who was descending from heaven to make him immortal, and she left him to die.

CANTO XXXIII.

V. 80.—“*In the fair country where the “sì” doth sound,*”

Here taken for Italy, though it is not the only country where *sì* means *yes*.

V. 89, 90. —“*Brigata, Uguccio, and they,
The two of whom but now my words were said!*”

Uguccio was the son, Brigata the grandson of Count Ugolino. The two others are Anselm, or Anselmuccio, his son, and Gaddo, his grandson.

V. 118-120.—“*‘Know, I am Brother Alberic,’ he said,
‘He of the fruit which grew in evil soil,
Who here, instead of figs, on dates am fed.’*”

Alberic, of the Manfredi family, lords of Faënza, was one of the “Fratì Godenti,” as the pleasure-loving knights of St. Mary were commonly called. See note to Canto XXIII. 103. This

Alberic, wishing to be revenged on some of his enemies, feigned a reconciliation, and invited them to a magnificent banquet. After dinner, the order to place fruit on the table was, as had been previously concerted, the signal for the assassins to enter, and despatch them all. "To receive dates for figs" is an Italian proverb, signifying to receive more than one gives, to be well paid ; dates being more valuable than figs.

V. 124.—"*This Tolomea doth such powers combine,*"

Tolomea, the third division of the last circle of Hell.

V. 137.—"*He is Sir Branca d'Oria ;*"

Branca d'Oria, of Genoa, assassinated his father-in-law, Michael Zanche.

CANTO XXXIV.

V. 1, 2.—"*Behold ! the banners of the King of Hell
Come toward us ;*"

The original is,

"*Vexilla Regis prodeunt Inferni.*"

The three first words are the beginning of a Latin hymn to the Holy Cross.

V. 18.—"*The Being, erst of semblance fair and sweet,*"

Lucifer, Son of the Morning.

V. 92.—“*Touching the point beyond which we had sped,*”

The point of gravitation.

V. 117.—“*Which forms Giudecca.*”

Giudecca, the central point of Hell, where Judas Iscariot is for ever devoured by Satan.

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