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DANTE
FOR BEGINNERS

DANTE

FOR BEGINNERS

A SKETCH OF THE "DIVINA COMMEDIA"

WITH

TRANSLATIONS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES,
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

ARABELLA SHORE

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PREFACE.



WHEN, several years ago, I began the serious study of Dante, I found the making a résumé of the kind contained in the following pages so helpful to my comprehension and retention as well as enjoyment, of his work, that I was led to think that it might also benefit others who were, as I had been, in the position of beginners. The contents of the Poem are summarized as much in Dante's own words as possible, and wherever occur those special passages of recognised paramount excellence which have stamped the "Divina Commedia" on the hearts of mankind, I have inserted them either in a literal rendering into the simplest English verse, or, where they contain a beauty and a meaning which cannot be transferred to another language, in the original itself, or if they present any peculiar difficulty, in both. The notes are devoted to recalling the historical facts, explaining such obscure allusions as, uncomprehended, confuse the general meaning, and elucidating such allegorical and figurative utterances as do not explain themselves. In the case of doubtful texts or disputed meanings, I have selected what appeared to me the

simplest and most satisfactory. What I have omitted has been mainly what I felt could be best spared, passages—for such occur even in the divine Dante—trivial, merely scholastic, hopelessly obscure, or offensive to modern taste. But, though I have thus shortened and simplified the whole, I should recommend the reading it with, not instead of, the original.

In the way of notes and commentaries, my object has been to admit nothing from external sources that did not directly tend to illustrate or explain the Poem itself. I have not wished to plunge the learner into discussions of disputed texts and enigmatical allusions, nor into the endless controversies as to the metaphysical meanings of particular lines and sentences. That, besides the historical subject, which it has been my first aim to elucidate, there is an undercurrent of mystical and philosophical teaching, expressed in symbolical language, sometimes mingling with, sometimes separate from, that simpler historical purpose, and growing preponderant as the poet advances into the transcendental regions, cannot be doubted. These two meanings I have endeavoured to set forth as simply as possible in the Introduction, hoping that this may serve as a groundwork, whence the Dante reader, when more advanced, may proceed to the study of the subject in all its depth and detail with the help of those learned Commentaries of whose conclusions I have given but an imperfect outline. But it is thought that for young and unadvanced readers the simple enjoyment of the glorious poetry should precede the philosophical, no less than the philological and archæological, investigation of it.

A. S.

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ERRATA.

Page 5, line 10, *for* "1308" *read* "1305."

P. 7, l. 10, *for* "Duomo di Santa Maria del Fior"
read "Baptistery of San Giovanni."

P. 43, l. 25, *for* "Montaperta" *read* "Montaperti."

P. 91, ls. 17, 22, *for* "Ruggiero" *read* "Ruggieri."

P. 110, l. 22, *for* "Pratomagna" *read* "Pratomagno."

P. 141, l. 2 (*foot-note*), *for* "Marco" *read* "Gherardo."

P. 150, l. 15, *for* "à Kempis" *read* "Aquinas."

P. 158, l. 9, *for* "thy" *read* "my."

DANTE

FOR BEGINNERS.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES.

I.—BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

I MUST first give, as briefly as I can, those leading facts of Dante's life on which the "Divina Commedia" is built. I confine myself to the bare outline, the more willingly, because, when we try to fill this up, we find a great conflict of testimony, and no decisive evidence on either side. The most accepted traditions are now being passed through the crucible of stern historical criticism, and put aside as at least wanting confirmation. I give, therefore only the facts for which we have indisputable documentary evidence, or the distinct authority of the Poem itself. The only exception I make is in telling the tale of Beatrice as tradition has always told it. I need not inform the reader that even the fact of her objective existence has long been a matter of doubt; but many may think this figure too beautifully portrayed not to be at least the glorified idealisation of some woman known and loved by the poet in his youth.

Dante, or Durante, degli Alighieri was born in

Florence in 1265, of a family sprung from noble lineage, that of Cacciaguidi Elisei, whom he calls his "bisavo"—that is, his great great-grandfather—and from whose son Alighiero the family name of Alighieri was derived.* The leading incidents of his life of fifty-six years were his love of Beatrice Portinari, his share in the internal history and the conflicting factions of Florence, which became mixed up with the Guelph and Ghibeline struggles of the day, and his long and melancholy exile. With Beatrice he fell in love at nine years old, she being herself a year younger. She married at twenty, and died at twenty-six; and he, devoting to her memory an ideal worship, raised to it an immortal monument in the "*Divina Commedia*," as also in that spiritual romance, the "*Vita Nuova*." After a year of deep grief, he was persuaded to marry Gemma dei Donati, and became a useful and influential citizen and an active politician.

Dante was of a Guelph family, and before his birth the Guelphs had established themselves as rulers of Florence. But as he grew up, the party had split itself into the two factions of the Bianchi and the Neri, respectively led by the two families, the Cerchi and the Donati. The Neri had recourse to the Pope Boniface VIII., whose aid they entreated, and indulged further in conspiracies to hand over the city to the Pope and his ally, Charles of Valois, son of Philip III., the King of France. This was in 1300; Dante

* The house in which Dante was born and lived is still shown, or rather the spot where stood the houses of the Alighieri, in the obscure street of San Martino, amidst two or three little squares. All that remains of the original building is an old doorway.

joined with the Bianchi in resisting this foreign interference. He appears in public life as early as 1296, resisting proposals for a subsidy to be paid to Charles, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, to aid him in subduing his revolted subjects. We find him from this time variously employed in official work, and in the year 1300 he is chosen one of the six Priors; that is, aldermen or magistrates, elected, one for each district, who held office for two months at a time; and who were also called *i signori*, and constituted the executive. In this capacity in different councils he opposed the insolent demands of the Pope, and in repressing the furious conflicts of the two factions he exhibited firmness and impartiality alike. Meanwhile the Bianchi had gained the upper hand, and among them were many Ghibelines; the Neri were devoted Guelphs, and Boniface, determined to uphold them, sent Charles of Valois to Florence with an armed force to restore the Neri and expel their opponents. The opposition which the Bianchi made to this foreign interference naturally drew Dante into their party, and he went, apparently as their spokesman, to Rome, to persuade the Pope to better counsels. It was in vain; Charles of Valois arrived and committed violences; the Pope played into the hands of Dante's enemies in Florence, and during his absence two edicts were passed, the first condemning him, with several others, to a fine and an exile of two years; the second, to be burnt alive on a charge of peculation, trumped up by his enemies. The fine was never paid, his goods were confiscated, and he went forth in 1302 into banishment, never to return to his native city.

From this period we have but scattered and un-

certain notices of the incidents of Dante's life. We know that he spent the nineteen years of life that remained to him in wandering from one town and one state to another, hospitably, nay honourably, received at most of them, but carrying with him an eternal bitterness. We know that he had entirely ceased all connection with the Guelphs, and was constantly seeking to excite sympathy for the banished Ghibelines; also that he wrote in the early years of his exile a pathetic appeal to his countrymen, beginning "*Popule mee, quid tibi feci?*" but in vain. And we know also that some ten years later, a friend of his having become Podestà, a general permission was given to the exiles to return, in which the poet was included, but under humiliating conditions requiring him to make an ignoble submission. In a noble letter to a friend at Florence he rejected this boon, saying that unless he could return honourably he would never return. And he never did, but bore with him to his grave the exile's heart-sick yearnings for his native home, which, mingled with a bitter sense of wrong, produced those burning strains, now of intense love, now of fierce reproach, and again of keen and profound irony, which have made him immortal.

Dante went first to Arezzo, where the greater part of the political exiles were gathered, but he seems ere long to have broken with his earlier associates, and, taking no part in a feeble and violent attempt to force their way back (1304), he left Arezzo. In 1306 we find him in Padua, as appears by a document in which he figures as a witness to a lady's will. In a few weeks he was in Lunigiano, where he was received with the greatest favour by the lords of the place, the two

Marchesi Malaspina. Here he was employed as procuratore to conduct a negotiation of theirs with the Bishop of Luni. But in 1308 he appears to have sought refuge at Verona, with its then sovereign lord, Alboino, the chief of the family della Scala (for it seems certain that he twice resided at different periods in Verona). By this time his old enemy Boniface was dead, and another, not less hostile to him and his cause, wore the tiara—Clement V., who allied himself closely with Charles of Valois, and who in 1308 moved the Papal see from Rome to Avignon.

During this period Dante seems to have turned his hopes to Frederic II., son of Pedro of Aragon and king of Sicily, as the restorer of the Ghibeline cause in Italy, but found the young hero from whom he had expected so much prove incompetent, and he contemptuously abjured him. The Emperor Albert of Austria, whose indifference to Italy he bitterly felt, had in that same year been succeeded by Henry VII. (Count of Luxembourg), on whom Dante's hopes now fixed still more strongly and ardently, and were raised to exultation by his entrance into Italy in the autumn of 1310. He would seem to have been in Paris when he heard of the invasion; he hastened back, reached Milan, where, in January, 1311, the Emperor received the iron crown, and having seen and spoken with him, he wrote a circular to all the kings, nobles, and people of Italy to strengthen their zeal for the deliverer, a letter at once poetical and impassioned, beginning, "*Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile.*" Fired by Henry's successes, he soon after (March, 1311) wrote a most fierce and scathing letter to his countrymen, addressed by "*Dante exsul immeritus,*" to the

"scelestissimis Florentinis," threatening them with most terrible calamities if they resisted the "divus et triumphator Henricus," and bitterly upbraiding their misdeeds. As Henry did not yet proceed to Florence, but continued taking towns in Lombardy, Dante, on the 16th April, wrote to the Emperor himself, recalling his having "seen and heard him," and urging him to apply himself to Florence, on which he heaps every vile and insulting epithet. When the year after Henry attempted the siege of Florence, he failed, and Dante's letters availed only to close for ever the gates of his native city on its noblest citizen, a new decree perpetuating his banishment being issued in 1311. In 1313 the Emperor died, poisoned, as was said, in sacramental wine, and with him perished all the exile's hopes.

After this whither Dante's wanderings took him is but vaguely known; it is certain, however, that during part of the time he was at Lucca, where he was charmed by the lady known as Gentucca. About 1316 he undoubtedly made his second residence in Verona, under the patronage of "il gran Lombardo," Cane Grande della Scala, a splendid prince, a renowned warrior, and the chief support of the Ghibelines. Here, with whatever occasional bitternesses and brief absences, he remained befriended and honoured for some four years. In 1319 or 1320 we find him the guest of the lord of Ravenna, Guido Novello di Polenta. This city was his last earthly home. Of his life there we only know that he was attended by two of his children, Pietro and Beatrice; that he went for Guido on an unsuccessful embassy to Venice, and returned broken with weariness and sorrow to die at

Ravenna, in 1321, and in the fifty-sixth year of his age. He was buried in the Church of the Frati Minori with solemn obsequies by his friend the Signor di Polenta.

We have here given only those facts of Dante's life which are incontestable, or of which the evidence approaches certainty. As for those, perhaps, better known romantic incidents which most of his biographers repeat on little but traditional authority, of which we have recorded a few in the appendix of this work, our readers will find in modern critical essays the evidence for and against their authenticity fairly stated. Of most of them Boccaccio is the first reporter, and he was so nearly a contemporary of Dante that he may well have received his facts from personal witnesses, or from traditions still close to their fountain-head. On the other hand, it must be remembered that he was a professed novelist, and that his biography of Dante is written in an imaginative and exaggerated vein that lessens our reliance on his facts and his opinions.

It remains only to connect, as well as we can, the history of this immortal book with that of the writer's life. The dates of the different parts of the "*Divina Commedia*" are, unfortunately, almost all conjectural, and must for the most part be gathered from the contents. But in its varying strains of hopes and fears, regret and triumph, we can trace more or less the progress of the historical events through which was carried on the mighty work which, as he says, had "*made him lean for many years.*"

The book was unquestionably begun before his exile: the latter half of 1300, or the beginning of 1301, is the earliest date we can assign. The time of his descent into Hell he fixes in March, 1300, and the

first canto well describes the growing troubles of that year. The discords of the Neri and Bianchi, fomented by Pope Boniface, were coming to a head, and, in fact, compelled that act of his Priorate which led to his downfall. The interference of Charles of Valois, also, is looming in the horizon. After this, the political events to which he alludes are necessarily put in the form of prophecy, though during the composition of the first cantica he was holding intercourse with the Malespinas of Lunigiano, the delle Scale of Verona, and many others. It appears to have been finished in 1308 or 1309, and, though circulated, it was evidently not fully published, as from its personal allusions—the many personages “whom he gave his daily dreadful line to”—it scarcely could have been. The “Purgatorio,” we are told, was begun as soon as the “Inferno” was finished, and the first six cantos completed in the same year. As, soon after this, Henry VII. entered Italy, this tale of the “milder shades of purgatory” must have been carried forward amidst new thrills of hope. Then came wandering years, of which we know little, in which the “Paradiso” must have been begun. It was pursued probably in the repose of Verona, and completed there or at Ravenna: if at the latter place, in 1319 or 1320. It has been assumed that the work was finished in 1314, and that the words in the “Paradiso,” Canto xxx., describing the preparation of a throne in heaven for Henry VII., refer to that Emperor’s apparently recent death. But newer commentators assign a later date to the conclusion; and the letter addressed by the poet to Cane Grande della Scala, in which he dedicates to him the last cantica, and explains the object

of the whole work, is regarded as having been written within the last few years of his life. The affectionate record in the "Paradiso" of his first refuge in the early years of his life with "il gran Lombardo," proves that the friendship remained essentially unbroken to the last.

And so "Good-night, dearest Dante!" as the passers-by were wont in Florence to say to him as he sat at sunset on the stone in view of the beautiful Duomo of Santa Maria del Fior, a gentler remembrance than that inscribed in 1483 on his tomb in the convent church at Ravenna—

"Hic claudor Dantes, patriæ extorris ab oris."

II.—CRITICAL NOTICE.

DANTE himself tells us, in his dedication to Cane della Scala, that his poem has "many senses," which we shall understand more clearly if we follow his own division of them. In the first place, there are two distinct subjects, both tending, however, to his one great aim, the reform of man. This reform embraces two objects, the political or civil reform, which is that of the community; and the reform of the individual man. Each of these subjects was treated by a double method, which he calls the literal and the allegorical, or, as we should say, from an objective and a subjective point of view. The first or political subject, regarded from the objective point of view, represents the evils and anarchy of the civil world, more especially of Italy, oppressed by Papal tyranny and foreign

arms, without law, order, or government, and his own aspirations after a deliverer who shall establish a fixed double government, of which the seat shall be Rome; a government at once temporal and spiritual, of Emperor and Pope, a true Monarchy and a true Church. In the abstract or subjective point of view (what Dante calls the allegorical), this reformation signifies the happiness of mankind through its own virtue in the present life, figured by the Earthly Paradise or blessedness in this world, to which we are conducted by human wisdom or the science of human things.

We may quote Dante himself, in "*De Monarchia*," as to the two purposes of the poem. There he says that "there are in man two elements, the corruptible and the incorruptible, tending to two different ends, the first [as we have seen] to earthly blessedness; the second, to the blessedness of eternal life." This second theme, therefore, is the spiritual reform of the human soul, or what we should call regeneration. And here too the same words are to be taken in a double sense: in the concrete or objective sense he takes himself as the soul to be purified and eventually sanctified; in the abstract sense it is humanity in general, which is to be led to the heavenly Paradise by spiritual means—that is, by heavenly wisdom acting through the theological virtues—to enjoy eternal bliss in the fruition of the Divine Paradise.

Another way of putting the double sense in which Dante says the whole poem is to be read is also his own—that the literal and simple sense of it is the state of mortals after death as figured in the real personages, with the acts of their lives punished or

rewarded in actual hell, purgatory and heaven ; while the philosophical sense, allegorically expressed, is the spiritual state of man with his merits and demerits naturally and inevitably leading to happiness or misery. The philosophy, he says, is moral, tending not to speculation, but to practice, and the object is to show man purified, freed, even in this life, from the miseries of sin, and directed to a state of happiness. Read according to this latter interpretation the "Inferno" loses much of what renders it repugnant to our feelings. The gross materialism, the creed of eternal and exultant vengeance, and the mixture of personal rancour, disappear in this subjective and spiritual exegesis.

The allegorical method runs in a varying, irregular thread through the poem, always most conspicuous where the spiritual subject is dwelt upon, and consequently especially in the "Paradiso" where the abstract almost wholly prevails. In the very opening of the poem, however, it is applied to the political subject, which indeed occupies nearly the whole of the first canto, interwoven with his own concrete personality. In the literal and simple sense, Dante is wandering in a dark wood, where he becomes lost amidst fearful creatures, but is rescued by the spirit of Virgil, who tells him that he has been sent by three heavenly ladies to conduct him through the world of the condemned below, and the half-way world of Purgatory, after which the spirit of his own beloved Beatrice will lead him into the regions of heaven.

The political meaning is also very clearly brought forward under the veil of an obvious allegory, the terrors of the scene representing the civil anarchy

of the time, the three fierce creatures three sovereign Powers, and the expected greyhound the political deliverer. But here breaks in the spiritual meaning, for Virgil, who appears, to lead him to the two first supernatural regions where the soul will learn the lessons of truth and right for this world, represents human wisdom or moral philosophy, whom Divine Mercy and Illuminating Grace (figured as two celestial ladies), permit to perform this preliminary task. Thus enlightened and corrected, the soul needs a yet higher flight. Human Wisdom here fails or forsakes it, and Divine Wisdom or Theology appears to conduct the spirit of man to the sublimest conceptions of goodness and felicity.

In the meanwhile the political meaning is carried on without any further allegory through the medium of that fictitious journey in the spirit worlds, which is drawn with such living force that we cannot doubt his intense realisation of it, and the prevailing presence of his own personality. It is true that in the spiritual meaning the chief figure stands for the human soul with its errors, its purification, its final bliss; but to us the hero is Dante himself, the man as he lived in that Florence of the fourteenth century, with his intense local feeling, his patriotism, his pride, his passion for his friends, his hatred of his enemies, his softer thrills of pity, and the bitterness of exile; yes, and the immortal love for Beatrice. For however he may have idealised her in remembrance, and finally glorified her into an abstraction, we feel assured that such exquisite utterance could only have been inspired by the girl beauty and purity beloved from his boyhood.

This personality then, the nucleus of the vast world he creates around him, remains like a star amidst its nebula, distinct, intense, and concrete to realism. His adventures in the supernatural regions are introduced with a kind of journal-like precision, though without the waste of a word; the wildest and weirdest creations are made to seem natural. He reminds us of the strangely inspired artist Blake, in his complete and realistic embodiment of phantoms, in the sharp outline and clear colour he gives to his most mystic conceptions. But Dante on the whole resembles not the painter nor the sculptor, but the engraver; he cuts with the fewest strokes his images deep into our hearts, as the lightning at one flash stamps its impress on the mountain stone.

Yet with all that sublimity he is human still. Where all the actors save himself are the spirits of the dead, shadowy half-lives, fiends, monsters, angels, the warm blood of humanity yet pulses through all. He has a key that reveals all human secrets. Even as he has laid his own heart before us, so all hearts lie bare and beating before him. We meet at every step the men he knew, the historical personages of his own and elder times; they are sometimes just named, sent past us with just a word or two; a look, a gesture, a tone is noted, and we know them at once and for ever. Or, if nothing else, a local reminiscence starts up—the old walls encircling Florence, the gates, the bridges, the hill of Sanminiato; the churches, whose clocks tell the hours; the life of its citizens. And then when some darker and grander figure appears it is stopped and scrutinised, he fixes on it, without and within, a searching, often scorching, gaze that seems to

be anatomising it for our wonder, terror, and pity. Even the supernatural beings are brought by touches of human naturalness within our sphere. Then through the dark spectral world or the dim shades, or the vague blinding splendour, comes a glimpse of nature and home, a bird's song, a morning breeze, spring leaflets, a child's slumber; and the living earthly world with its clear air and "sweet light" comes back upon us.

And then from this typical central point his theme flows out till it fills creation : it is no longer only his city, not even his own country, but the world ; not his fellow-citizens, but the human race, past, present, and to come ; not only himself and Beatrice, but immortal Love and Goodness, the glory of Nature, and God's dealings with the universe. And so this vision of the ten days' journey into the world of spirits comes back to us as a message to mankind for evermore.

LEADING HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL DATES CONNECTED WITH DANTE.

First outbreak of Guelph and Ghibeline quarrels in Florence	1204
Death of Frederic II.	1250
Battle of Montaperto or Arbia	1260
<i>Birth of Dante</i>	1265
Battle of Benevento	1266
Accession of Rodolph of Hapsburg	1273
Sicilian Vespers	1282
Death of Count Ugolino	1288
<i>Dante Marries</i>	1291
Boniface VIII. made Pope	1294
Quarrels of Neri and Bianchi in Florence	1296
<i>Dante is made Prior</i>	1300
Entry of Charles of Valois into Florence	1301
<i>Dante Exiled</i>	1302
Pope Boniface VIII. dies	1303
Clement V. at Avignon	1305
Death of Albert of Austria	1308
Henry VII. enters Italy	1310
His Death	1313
<i>Dante received by Can Grande</i>	1316 or 1317
<i>Dante's Death</i>	1321

NOTES ON OBSOLETE FORMS OF WORDS.

It is interesting to trace in Dante the movement of the Italian language when it was first breaking out of its Latin crust and working through that first stage (after Latin) of all the languages known as the Romance languages, of which we find the best example and the nearest akin to the early Italian in the ancient Provençal. In Italy, it must be remembered, this Romance language sprang, not out of a growth of the language of Rome upon that of Celtic or Gothic barbarians, but out of the ancient dialects spoken there before the rise of Rome, where a kindred dialect became fixed into the classic Latin which has been preserved by literature. These dialects, which varied in the various parts of Italy, were called, even in the time of Dante, the "vulgar" or "popular" language. He himself gives the preference, as being the true Italian, to no single dialect, but to that which he calls "il Volgare illustre," the language, in fact, of educated people, "found in all parts but belonging to none," which was then gradually acquiring a fixed form, and into which scholars imported many more strictly classical words which have helped to form the Italian of this day.

For the convenience of those who like to trace this

progress, I append some examples of the grammatical inflexions and variations of words, now obsolete, which are to be found in the "Divina Commedia."

The obsolete grammatical forms consist mainly of—

1.—Inflexions of verbs; that is, terminations of certain tenses and persons which, though different from those now used, are much more regular than is often supposed. Such are the use of *e* instead of *a* or *i* in the three persons singular of the present indicative and subjunctive, mostly in the second person, sometimes in the third; as, *tu gride, allette, cele*, for *gridi, alletti, celi*, indicative; (*io*) *fosse*, for *fossi*; (*tu*) *disvele, entre, conforte, posse*, for *disveli, &c.*; *sie* for *sia*; *diche* for (*io, tu oregli*) *dica*; (*tu*) *intendi*, for *intenda*; (*tu*) *solve, rade, attinghe*, for *sciolga, rada, attinga*. In other tenses, *io morisse* for *morissi*; *fu* and *fui* both written *fue*.

The termination *ee* (is), *è* in third person singular indicative present, made plural by the addition of *n* or *no*, or *nno*, as *v'en* for *vi sono*; *en* and *enno*; *crede, credeno*; the termination *è* for the third person singular indicative imperfect, as *traè, potiè, condoliè*, instead of *eva, iva*, with *n* or *no* added for the plural, making *potièn, toglièn, movièno, &c.*

The use in the preterito of *è* for *ei*, as *pentèrni* for *pentei* and of *e* added to *l*, as *parturìe*, for *parturi*; also addition of *o* to *è* or *i* as *credèo, uscìo, seguìo*; and in the plural of *ino* and *inno* for *irono*, as *uscino, uggarinno*, while *arono* is represented by *aro*, as *restaro, &c.*; *ero* by *eno*, as *fensi*; or *si feno*, for *si fecero*; also *foro*, for *furono, furo, fur'*.

In the conditional the use of *ia* as the ending of the three persons singular; as *saria* (also *sariè*) for *ci*,

esti, *ebbe*, and in the third person plural of *ieno* for *ebbero*, as *sarien dovrieno* and *seguitieno*, for *sarebbero* *dovrebbero* and *seguiterebbero*; *fieno*, for *saranno* (from *fiant*); *fia* and *fie* for imperative and subjunctive three first persons; also *sie* for the same, and *sieno* for third person plural.

There are also miscellaneous variations, produced by some obsolete original verb form, or springing from the course of phonetic change. As, *venesse* from obsolete infinitive *venere* for *venire*; *ferè* for *fare*; *femi* for *miseci*; *femmi* for *fecemi*; *fersi* for *si fecero*; *tolle*, third person singular indicative present, for *toglie* from *tollere*; *vuogli*, *vuoli* for *vuoi*, and *volse* for *volle* from *vogliere*; *vedhr vedi* from *veire*; *salre* or *sarre* for *salire*, hence *sarria* for *salaria* (*salarebbe*); *sem* for *siamo*; *fia* or *fir* for *sarà*; *fora* for *sarei*, *sarebbe*; *abbo* and *aggio* for *ho*, from *abbere* and *aggere*; *aia* for *abbia* from *aiere*; *ave* for *ha*, and *avem* for *abbiano*; *stea* for *stia*, *dea* for *dia*, from *stere* and *dere*; *calmi*, impersonal, from *calere* (for *curo*), *parsi* for *parvi*, preterit; *crese* for *credé*, &c.

Finally, in verbs still extant, there were forms much closer to the Latin, as *dolve* for *dolse*; *sape* for *sà*; *dicere* for *dire*; *noque* for *nocere*; *requievi*; *luca* for *lucere*; *face* for *facere*; *rape*, *trade*, for *raptrad-isce*; *puote* for *può*; *recepe* for *riceve*; *pasto* for *pasciuto*; *mota* for *mossa* (from *muovere*).

Obsolete forms of nouns, pronouns, &c. Those most close to the Latin are *u'* for *dove* (*ubi*); *i'* for *quivi* (*ibi*); *li*, *i* for *gli* (*illi*), representing both *quelli* and *alui*; *como* for *quomodo*; *unquanche* for *mai*; *quandunque* for *quando*; *in* (prep.) used for *towards* or *against*; *usata* for *usanza* (participles past were then frequently used as nouns, as *destinato* for *destino*, *gelata*

for *gelo*, &c.); *issa* (now) same as *adesso* (*ad ipsum*); *seisso* for *ipse*; *introcque* (*inter hoc*).

Amongst miscellaneous forms which mark a stage in phonetic change, are *ne* for *e* (and) *inveggia* (envy); *giuggiare* (judge); *brolo* (garden); *col* for *come il*; *ridui* for *riduci* (the cognate Provençal being *ni*, *inveja*, *jutjar*, *broth*, *com'el*, *riduire*); *tomare* (to fall); *tue* for *tu*; *sue* for *su* (up); *mé*, *meio*, *mei'* for *meglio*; *maggio* for *maggior*; *feggia* for *ferisca*; *se* for *così* (so may!).

We have finally words wholly obsolete, bearing a distinctly Latin form.

Examples of verbs.—*Tangere*, *adergere* (to rise); *auidivi*; *si cuba* for *riposa*; *pandere* (to open); *meare* (move); *promere* for *manifesta*, *lat. promere* (put forth fruit); *parcere* for *risparmiare*; *chiere* (asks), *lat. quero*; *donnea con* (Provençal *domneiar*), from low Latin *domneare*, to be in love; *continga* for *avvenga*; *attingha* (attain); *indulse*, from *indulgere* (yield); *s'internare* (to make oneself three); *ruire*, from *ruo*; *redole* for *olezza*; *vige*, from *vigere* (flourishes); *solvere*, almost always used for *sciogliere*; *auso*, from *audeo*, for *ardito*; *conflati*; *s'ausi* for *s'avvezzi* (accustom oneself), &c.

Examples of nouns, pronouns, &c.—*Viro* for *uomo*; *cive* for *cittadino*; *fieto* for *pianto*; *miro* for *maraviglioso*; *clavi* for *chiodi*; *fante* for *parlante* (signifying human); *mero* for *puro*; *pusillo* (humble); *sene* for *vecchio*; *gene* for *gote*; *fedo* for *sozzo*; *pranse*; *proterve*; *basterno* (car); *rosato* (dewy); *mane* (morning), &c.

We will conclude this imperfect list with examples of formations peculiarly characteristic of Dante, boldly composed verbs, which have, for the most part, been dropped by modern Italian. *Sinsalare* (enter the sea), from Latin “*intrat salum*,” *dislagare* (go out of the

lake); *dismagare* (make go out of the path); *dismalare* (undo the ill of); *rinfamare* (restore the fame of); *disfamare* (to un-hunger); *accarnare* (pierce within the flesh); *dismentare* (let from the mind, forget); *impietrare* (turn to stone); *sfogliare* (unleaf, strip off leaves); *s'indiare* (make oneself inside God, ingod oneself); *s'io m'intuassi* (if I got inside thee); *s'insemprare* (to be eternal); *s'impennare* (put on wings); *s'immillare* (contain a thousand times more); *s'indovare* (put oneself in a place); *s'adduare* (couple oneself).

It is to be observed that the Latinisms are found much more in the "Paradiso" (owing, no doubt, to the philosophical matter and handling) than in the two other Canticas.

The inchoate yet growing state of the language in the fourteenth century is exemplified by the mixture in Dante of the more modern forms and grammatical inflexions with those enumerated above. He appears to have used indifferently whichever suited the particular verse, the more archaic forms being employed mostly in the rhymes.

HELL.

CANTO I.—DANTE IN THE FOREST.

"IN the midway of our life,"* Dante found himself in a dark wood. How he entered it he could not say, having lost his way from sleepiness. The wood was "*selvaggia, aspra e forte*," and filled him with affright, which, on renewing it only in thought, seemed to him bitter as death. But on reaching the end of this fearful valley, and finding himself at the foot of a hill, which was bright with sunrise, he felt himself somewhat tranquillised.

“As they who, panting sorely, from the deep
Have struggled, gained the shore, and turning, look
Back on the perilous waters ; so my soul,
Still fleeing, turned to gaze upon the pass
That ne’er before let living mortal through.”

(This wood was the entrance into the kingdom of the dead.) Dante, then beginning to climb the steep ascent, met with a light and swift lynx with spotted hide. The lynx stood stopping up his way, and he

* That is in the thirty-fifth year of his age. The date he assigns is the night before Good Friday ; and the whole action of the poem takes ten days, from 25th March to 3rd or 4th April, 1300.

was tempted to turn back ; but the sweet season, the morning hour, and the lynx's beautiful dappled skin, " *la gaietta pelle*," all tended to cheer him and give him hope. But then there appeared to him a lion advancing against him with such ravenous fury that the air seemed to tremble around him, and a lean and hungry wolf. This latter especially so affrighted him that he began to retreat down hill before the " *bestia senza pace*," which kept driving him down into the dark dell, when he suddenly beheld one who seemed to be feeble and exhausted from long solitude and silence (like an apparition, in fact). He called to him, whether shade or " *uomo certo* " to help him.

" ' Not man I am,' he answered ; ' man I was,
Lombards my parents, Montuan both of them.
Late, under Julius, I was born, and lived,
At Rome, beneath the good Augustus' sway ;
And in the time of false gods and false faith,
I was a poet, and I sang that just
Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
When his proud city was consumed. But thou,
Why to such care returnest thou, instead
Of climbing the delightful mount, the seat
And source of perfect bliss ? ' "

Dante asked him eagerly, yet bashfully, if he was indeed that Virgil

" *quella fonte,
Che spande di parlar sì largo fiume.*"

He goes on addressing him as " the light and glory of all other poets," as his own master and inspiring author, from whom only he had learnt " the beautiful style that had won him renown." He then begged him to help him against the wolf. Virgil answered

that he must take another route to get out of this place ; for the creature lets no one pass his way, and is of so fierce a nature that

“ never can he quench his ravening will,
 I ut after meals is hungrier than before.
 With many evil beasts is he allied,
 And will be to yet more, until appear
 The greyhound that shall cause his wretched end.
He will not seek his joy in lands or gold,
 But in love, wisdom, virtue, and his race
 Shall be 'twixt Feltro and Feltro.”

Virgil then proposed to guide Dante, first

“ through the eternal place
 Where thou shalt hear the shriekings of despair,
 Where thou shalt see the sorrowing spirits of old
 Who wail the second death ; then shalt thou see
 The souls that are contented in the fire,
 Hoping some future time to join the blest.
 If thou to those wouldst rise, thy guide shall be
 A spirit than mine more worthy ; for the King
 Who reigns above, since to his law I lived
 A rebel, from his city shuts me out.”

Dante accepted, and they moved on together.

NOTE ON CANTO I.—The wood, the hill, and the three beasts are symbolical of the then state of Italy, political, civil, and moral, and of his own condition as citizen, philosopher, and poet. The wood is primarily Guelphism and the Papal power ; the hill is that re-established monarchy for which Dante and the Ghibeline party hoped in the election of Henry of Luxembourg ; the lynx is Florence ; the lion is the power of France as represented by Charles of Valois, who allied himself with the head of the Guelphs, Pope Benedict VIII., to drive the Ghibelines (and Dante amongst them) out of Florence ; the wolf is the power of Rome ; the greyhound is the expected Deliverer, by some supposed to be of the imperial race ; by others, one of

the Ghibeline captains, who kept up the struggle against the Guelphs, the most distinguished of whom at that time was Can Gran della Scala, of Verona, of whom it was prophesied that his rule should extend from Feltre, a city in Romagna, to Feltro or Monte Feltro in the Trevisan March.

CANTO II.—THE MESSAGE OF BEATRICE.

Dante expressed to Virgil his doubts as to his having sufficient strength and courage for this journey to the infernal regions which he had hastily agreed to. Virgil, to reassure him, explained how he came to be sent on this errand to him, saying,

“ ‘ I was one
Of those suspended betwixt heaven and hell.
A fair and holy lady called to me,
With eyes like stars, and sweet, angelic voice.’ ”

She told him that a friend of hers was in distress and terror, and bade him go and help him on the right way, adding—

“ I who thus bid thee go am Beatrice.
I come from where I fain would be again,
’Twas love that moved me, and that makes me speak.”

Virgil eagerly promised obedience, and asked her how it was that she feared not to descend from bliss into the central depths. She answered that she feared not what could not harm her.

“ Io son fatto da Dio, sua mercè, tale
Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale.”

She added that a lady in heaven (the Virgin Mary)

called to Santa Lucia (apparently Dante's patron saint), and recommended 'to her care "il suo fedele," who had need of her. Lucia thereupon going to Beatrice asked her why she took no care of him who had loved her so much.

" 'Non odi tu la pietà del suo pianto ?'
 [' His pitiful complaining hear'st thou not ?'
 Never on earth did any quicker move
 To gain advantage, or to flee an ill,
 Than I at words like these to quit my bliss,
 And come below to trust my cause to thee."

"So," continues Virgil, "Beatrice spoke,

And turned on me those shining, swimming eyes.
 And so to thee, as she desired, I came."

Virgil continued to reassure Dante, till

"As flowers by nightly frost bent down, and closed,
 When the sun shines on them, lift up their heads,
 All opened, on their stems—

[Qual i fioretti, dal notturno gelo
 Chinati e chiusi, poichè 'l Sol gl' imbianca,
 Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo]"—

he became strong and brave, and answered—

" 'Go; we have now one wish between us two.
 My guide, my sovereign lord, and teacher thou.'
 Then entered I by that strange forest-way."

CANTO III.—THE GATE OF HELL AND CHARON.

" 'Through me into the City of Despair,
 Through me to grief eternal, is the way;
 Through me the way amongst the souls accurst.

Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore,
 Fecemi la Divina Potestate,
 La somma Sapienza, e 'l primo Amore.
 Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,
 Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro :
 Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che entrate.'
 These words I saw in dusky letters writ
 Upon a gate : ' Master,' I said, ' their sense
 Is hard to me '—and he, ' Behoves us here
 To leave all doubt, all baseness here be dead :
 For we have reached the place I told thee of,
 Where thou wilt see the God-abandoned souls.'
 And then he soothed me with his hand on mine.

* * * * *

Here sighs and wails, and piercing cries resounded
 All through the starless air, and drew my tears.
 These diverse tongues and speeches, horrible
 Accents of anger, words of sorrow, deep
 And feeble tones, and sounds of smiting hands,
 Made up a tumult that for ever whirled
 Round in that air stained with eternal gloom
 [Sempre in quell' aria senza tempo tinta],
 As the sand eddies when the whirlwind blows."

Here, Virgil informed Dante, are the souls

" Who lived without or infamy or praise ;
 Mixed with the evil choir of angels, who
 Were neither rebels, nor yet faithful stood
 To God, but only cared for their own selves.

* * * * *

They have no hope of death ; so dark, so base
 Their life, they envy every other lot.
 The world has quite forgotten them ; alike
 Mercy and Justice scorn them ; so of them
 Let us not speak, but look and pass them by
 [Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa]."

Here Dante saw Pietro Morone, the hermit, who

was chosen as Pope, by the name of Celestinus V., and almost immediately resigned :

“Che fece per viltà gran rifiuto;”

and perceives that he was amongst those who were

“Hateful alike to God and to God’s foes.”

They approached the shore of the river Acheron, which they would have to cross, and a white-haired old man comes to them in a boat, crying out to the expectant spirits—

“Woe to you, ye sinful souls !
Hope never to behold the skies. I come
To lead you to the other shore, to heat
And cold, and night eternal.”

The spirits changed colour, and gnashed their teeth when they heard these cruel words :

“God and their parents hearing, they blasphemed,
The place, the time, their ancestors, their birth.”

“Caron demonio” receives them in his boat ; and

“As autumn shakes the leaves until the bough
Yields all its spoils to earth ; so that ill seed
Of Adam on the shore fell one by one,
At Charon’s signal, like the bird that flies
Into the snare.”

As soon as they had landed, another company comes to be ferried over. Says Virgil—

“‘My son, all those who in God’s anger die,
Here from all regions are assembled, spurred
By Divine Justice, so that fear is changed
Into a keen desire to cross yon flood.
No righteous spirit ever passes here ;
So if old Caron grudge to ferry thee,
Thou now canst tell th’ import of his complaint.’”

He ceased, and that dark land so shook that yet
 I tremble at it ; from that tearful clime
 Came forth a wind whence scarlet lightning played,
 Which stupefied all feeling ; and I fell
 As one oppressed by sleep."

CANTO IV.—THE FIRST CIRCLE OF THE UNBAPTISED.

A deep sound woke Dante from his trance, and, thus forcibly aroused, he shook himself, stood up, and looking round found that he was on the brink of the "dolorous abyss." Virgil, "all pale as death," proposed to descend into the "*cieco mondo*," he himself going first. Dante asked how *he* could venture if Virgil who was wont always to encourage him was frightened himself. The poet answered—

"It is the anguish of the souls down here
 Blanches the cheek with pity which thou takest
 For terror ; let us on, the way is long."

They entered the first circle of the abyss.

"Here was no sound of weeping, only sighs,
 That made a trembling in th' eternal air.
 Grief without torment caused it in the crowds
 Of women, babes, and men. 'Dost thou not ask,'
 He said, 'who are these spirits whom thou seest ?
 Know that they have not sinned ; if they did well,
 'Tis not enough, since they were unbaptised,
 Living before Christ came. Of these am I.' "

Dante, grieved at the heart, inquired,

"Master, did ever any hence come forth,
 Or through his own, or through another's merit,
 To be hereafter blessed ?' He replied,

'Yet new was I in this appointed sphere,
When I beheld a Mighty One, who wore
A crown of victory, appear, and thence
Draw our first parent's shade, that of his son,
Abel, and Noah's . . . and many another one,
And made them blest.' . . .

Still going on the while,
We passed through all that thicket, not of trees,
But of close-thronging spirits. [*La selva di spirti spessi.*]"

Dante soon saw a light shining above him, and perceived that it came from a spot inhabited by "onorevol gente," and Virgil informed him that their fame on earth had given them distinction even here. Then he heard a voice saying—

"Onorate l'altissimo Poeta;
L'ombra sua torna, ch'era dipartita."

This was spoken of Virgil, and then advanced to them four lofty shades who seemed "nè tristi nè lieti." The first of them was Homer; then came Horace, Ovid, and Lucan.

"Assembled thus I saw the noble school
Following that lord of loftiest song, who flew
Eagle-like over all."

They spoke together awhile, and then graciously saluted Dante, and made him the sixth in their band. Thus they went on to the light (mentioned as shining from above).

"Parlando cose che il tacere è bello,
Sì com'era il parlar colà dov'era."

They came to the foot of a noble castle, surrounded by a lofty sevenfold wall, and a fair stream, which they

passed through as over dry land, and entered through seven gates into a "meadow of fresh verdure."

"There we found men with slow and serious eyes,
And bearing of command : few words they spoke,
And in soft voices. Thus we stood apart
In that large, luminous, and lofty place,
So as to scan them all. On that green turf
The noble ones of human kind I saw,
Such as, in fancy seeing, even now,
I rise above myself."

He enumerates, amongst many others, Electra, Hector, Brutus, Cæsar, Lucretia, Saladin (apart by himself), Aristotle—

"Honoured by all, the lord of those who know ;"

Socrates, Plato, Euclid, Avicenna. At last the company of the six poets was divided, and

"Out of the calm into the quivering air
We came to where there's nought that giveth light."

CANTO V.—THE SECOND CIRCLE OF THE SINFUL
LOVERS.

They came next to the second circle, where Minos sat and judged the souls that entered, assigning them the sphere of hell which they deserve.

"They speak, they hear, and then are sent below."

Minos was compelled to let the two poets pass.

"Now are the sad notes heard ; now am I come
Where bitter wailings pierce me. I arrived
In a place blank of light [*di luce muto*], a howling spot,
Like seas whose countering blasts awake a storm.

Th' infernal whirlwind, never resting, drives
The spirits with it, whirling, smiting them ;
While shrieks, and wails, and blasphemies resound."

Here were the souls punished for sinful love.

" As starlings flock in winter time in flight,
So flew those guilty souls before that blast,
Which drove them here and there, and up and down.
No hope consoles them ever that their pain
Shall cease or e'en be lessened. As the cranes
Fly twittering, leaving in the air behind
A lengthened track, so did I see them come,
Emitting groans, the shades that tempest bore,
Swept on before it. ' Master,' then I said,
' Who are these tortured thus by the black air ? ' "

Virgil named Semiramis, Dido, Helen, Cleopatra,
Achilles, Paris, Tristan and more than a thousand
others. Dante then observed a pair moving lightly
together, with whom he wished to converse. On his
call—

" Like doves, by love borne swiftly to their nest,
With steady wings widespread, so prompt they came,
Out of the lovelorn band, through that dire air,
So strong in tenderness was that appeal.
' O living soul, so gracious and benign,
That comest through this inky air for us
Whose blood hath dyed our earth, were He our friend,
The King of all the worlds, we would entreat him
On thy behalf, since thou hast pity felt
For our affliction. Whatsoe'er thou wouldst
Or say or hear will we with all comply,
Now that the wind is still.' "

This pair were Francesca and Paolo Malatesta ; the
speaker was Francesca (daughter of Guido di Polenta
of Ravenna, and married to Gianciotto Lord of Rimini,
brother to Paolo), who proceeded to tell their story,

at which Dante was seized with such pity that he fainted.

NOTE TO CANTO V.—Many have been the attempts to render in English this untranslatable and immortal story. The translator ventures to add another to these failures, as follows :—

STORY OF FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

“Siede la terra dove nata fui,” *L.* 97.

“ ‘The land where I was born lies on the shore
Where Po sends all his streams in search of rest ;
Love, who is ever swift to thrall the best,
Seized *him* for that fair form that once I wore,
And lost in horrors that I still live o’er.

“ ‘Love, that constrains the loved to love again,
Seized *me* for him with such a strong delight
That even yet, thou seest, it doth remain.
Love led us to one death ; but to requite
Our slayer, Caina waits.’ Such was their strain.

“ And when I heard these stricken souls, my head,
Musing, I bowed and kept it low so long,
That then, ‘What think’st thou of?’ the poet said.
And I, ‘Alas !—for what sweet thoughts, what strong
Desires, to that dread pass those lovers led !

“ And to those lovers then I turned my speech :
‘Francesca, for thy sorrows to my eyes
Spring tears of tender pity ; I beseech,
How did Love, in the springtime of sweet sighs,
Grant you to read the yearning heart in each ?’

“ And she replied : ‘The worst of all our woes
Is in the midst of misery to recall
A happier time ; and this thy Teacher knows.
But if thou fain wouldst learn how this love rose,
As one who weeps and speaks, will I tell all.

“ ‘ We read, one day, for pastime, of the fate
Of Lancelot, how love upon him grew ;
All unsuspecting, all alone, we sate.
Full oft that reading to each other drew
Our meeting eyes, and often changed our hue.

“ ‘ But one point only quelled us utterly.
For when we read of how the longed-for smile
Was kissed by that true lover, then did he—
(Ne’er be he parted from me!)—all the while
Trembling all over, kiss my lips. Ah me !

“ ‘ That traitor book ! No more that day we read.’
While thus one spirit said her woeful say,
The other, weeping sore, such pity bred
In me, that as in death I swooned away,
And down I fell, as falls a body dead.

CANTO VI.—CIRCLE OF THE GLUTTONOUS.

On coming again to himself, Dante found himself
in the third circle, where the Gluttonous were punished
by a rain

“ Heavy and cold, eternal and accurst,
Ever the same in measure and in kind ;
Huge hail and sullied water and cold snow
Pour through the gloomy air.”

The place was guarded by Cerberus, who seized,
shook, and tore the spirits. When he saw the new-
comers, he opened his three mouths furiously at them.
But Virgil, taking up in both hands large pieces of
earth, threw them into the monster’s jaws, where they
were eagerly devoured. They then passed over the

spirits lying prostrate under the showers, treading on the shades that looked like substance.

“Sopra lor vanità che par persona,”

when one of them rose and hailed Dante as an acquaintance. This was Ciaccio, a fellow-citizen, whom he consulted about the fate of Florence, then torn by faction. Ciaccio said that they would come to bloodshed, and that the one party (the so-called *parte Selvaggia*, otherwise the *Bianchi*) would with great violence expel the other (the *Neri*).^{*} But, he says, in less than three years the defeated party would lift their heads again and overthrow the others by the help of one, his obscure allusion to whom (*che testè piaggia*) may mean either Boniface or Charles of Valois.

Dante then inquired after his own deceased friends, especially Farinata, “*che fur si degni*,” as he wished much to know

“Se ’l ciel gl’addolcia, o l’ inferno gli attosca.”

Ciaccio answered—

“They are among the blackest souls below,
For various sins so deeply are they plunged.
If thou so far descend, thou may’st behold them ;
But when thou art in the sweet world above,
I pray thee to the others speak of me.
No more I’ll tell thee now, no more reply.’
He looked at me a space, then dropped his head,
And sank where all the others blindfold lay.

* The date of this expulsion was 1301. It is given as prophecy, because Dante professes to have made this journey in 1300 ; the work must therefore have been begun after these two events.

And Virgil said, ' No more will these awake
Till sounds the angelic trump, when He will come
Who judges and condemns them. Each will then
Regain the dreary tomb, resume his flesh
And earthly form, and so shall hear the doom
That shall re-echo through eternity.' "

They passed on with slow steps through this "mixture of shadows and rain," touching in their talk a little on the future life, till having gone the circuit of the gulf they came to the place for descending, where they found Pluto, "il gran nemico."

CANTO VII.—THE FOURTH CIRCLE OF THE SPEND-
THRIFTS AND MISERS; THE FIFTH, OF THE
WRATHFUL AND ENVIOUS.

On their entrance into the fourth circle, Pluto called out with a hoarse voice :

" Pape Satàn, Pape Satàn, aleppe ! "

the meaning of which strange words no one now understands, but Virgil apparently did, as he bade Dante not mind him, since he could not hinder their descent. They advanced closer to

" the mournful hollow
That holds the ill of all the world within it."

Here he saw a number of persons revolving, and in their movements rolling great weights, which knocked against each other and then returned on and struck themselves. These were the Avaricious and the Prodigals, who in their constant encounters reviled each other for their respective and contrary sins for which they were being

punished alike. Among them were many priests, popes, and cardinals, known by their shaven crowns, in whom avarice had been in excess, Virgil says :

“ *Mal dare e mal tenere [to waste and to be miserly] il mondo pulcro*
Ha tolto loro, e posto a questa zuffa.
For all the gold that is, or e'er hath been,
Beneath the moon, can never give repose
To one of all these weary spirits.”

Dante asked Virgil who and what was Fortune, of whom he had spoken as a power in the world. Virgil replied that He who made the universe gave to different parts of it a guiding intelligence so that all might shine alike. In this manner He assigned to our earthly sphere a ruler and director of its glories, who distributes wealth, power, and greatness, transferring them from nation to nation at her pleasure.

“ And this is she who is so oft blasphemed
By those who ought to praise her, giving her
Unjustly an ill fame. But blest is she
Nought hearing, happy in her sphere revolving
With other primal creatures.”

They then descended to the fifth circle, which was yet more miserable. In the marshy, murky, Stygian lake lay wretches kicking and gnawing each other to pieces. These are the wrathful and the envious, who with their sighs make the water bubble and boil.

“ Fixed in the mud, they say, ‘ Most sad were we
In that sweet air that’s gladdened by the sun,
Bearing the fume of envy still within.
Now sadder yet we are in this black slime.’
These words confus’dly gurgled in their throat,
Unable perfect utterance to win.”

Thus, going round the circle, the poets arrived at the foot of a tower.

CANTO VIII.—THE CITY OF DIS.

Here they paused and looked up to the top of the tower, where they saw

“ Two little flames that quiver at the top,
And, so far off that scarce the eye could seize it,
A third that seems to answer to their signal.”

Dante asked his guide for an explanation.

“ ‘ What says this light ? what answers yonder fire ?
And who are they who made it ? ’ ”

Virgil explained that there were two towers, in one of which a signal light was kindled whenever any spirit wanted to cross the Styx, to tell the other that a boat might be sent, and the answering light told that the message was received. The two lights were now for these who were to cross.

“ And quicker than an arrow from the string,
Shot forth to us a little boat that held
One boatman, Phlegias, full of flaming ire.”

Virgil stepped into the boat. Dante followed, and then only when “ he was within it, did it seem to be loaded.” On their way across the “ dead pool ” they encountered a spirit soiled with mire, who laid hold of the boat, and whom Virgil pushed away, telling Dante that he had been in life proud and insolent, and full of ire. As they went on, Dante, with great

joy, saw him punished by the other spirits, who scornfully shouted his name—"Philipppo Argenti!" and he, who had been a rich and noble Florentine citizen, gnawed his own hands with fury.

Virgil told him they were now near the city of Dis (to which belonged the two towers and the lights), "with all its crowd of demon-citizens." Dante said—

"E'en now within the vale I see its towers
All red as from a furnace."

He replied—

"'Tis reddened by th' eternal fire below."

They reached the deep fosses—

"Che vallan quella terra sconsolata,"

and the iron walls, and came to the gate, where their boatman in a loud voice bade them get out and enter. There—

"I' vidi più di mille in su le porte
Dal ciel piovuti,"

who cried disdainfully—

"Chi è costui, che senza morte
Va per lo regno della morta gente?"

Virgil made them a sign that he wished to speak in secret with them; and they, somewhat relenting, said *he* might enter, but the other must go back on his mad journey and find his way as he could without his guide. Dante greatly terrified was consoled by Virgil, who

left him to try and persuade the demons, and he remained in doubt

“ Chè 'l sì e 'l no in capo mi tenzona.”

He could not hear what was said, but he saw their foes all rush in hastily, flinging to the gate in the face of his guide, who returned to him with slow steps in deep dejection. He assured Dante, however, that he should conquer their resistance, reminding him that they had done the same when Christ entered that first gate, which was now always unlocked and open. He reminds him of the gate with its *scritta morta* over it, adding—

“ For even now through it descends the steep
He who shall open to us all this world.”

CANTO IX.—THE DESCENT OF THE ANGEL, AND THE
BURNING SEPULCHRES.

While they were waiting here Virgil stood as if listening to a distant sound. “ We must needs conquer in this strife,” he said ; “ if not But why ? with such an one to help us Oh, how long he seems to be in coming ! ” In this broken speech Dante well understood that, beginning with ominous language, he had changed to encouragement ; but he himself feared from his first words even worse than Virgil had intended.

Virgil continued to discourse ; but Dante's attention was directed to the tower with its top on fire where he saw three blood-stained female forms girt with green

hydras and with horned serpents in their locks. These Virgil told him were the three Furies who began to shriek out for Medusa to come, to turn the intruder to stone. Virgil then bade Dante turn round and keep his face hidden ; for if he looked on the Gorgon,

“Nulla (possibilità) sarebbe di tornar mai suso.”

Virgil further covered Dante's eyes with his own hands. Then came a fearful noise, at which both shores trembled, like a wind breaking off the forest boughs. Virgil took his hands away and bade Dante look towards the foaming water ; which he did.

“Thousands I saw of those lost spirits flee
Before a Form who crossed the Styx's flow
With feet unwet, and moved perpetually
His left hand, driving from before him so
The thick black air : well might he weary be
Of that foul task ; for quickly I discerned
In him a messenger from heaven's bright day
Sent hither, and my guide, to whom I turned,
Signed to me to keep still and homage pay.
Ah ! in that face what scornful anger burned !
He reached the gate, and with a slender rod
Touched, and it opened ; hindrance was there none ;
'O race driven out from Heaven, disdained by God !'
On that dread threshold cried th' immortal one ;
'Why hath your folly thus your fate withstood ?
Why spurns your arrogance at that high Will,
That all things must obey ?' He spoke no more,
And took no heed of us, but, swift and still,
Returned on that grim path ; such mien he bore
As one who doth a present task fulfil
With mind intent upon some other care.
We toward the gate moved on, now reassured
By those high words, and safely entered there.

And eagerly mine eye that scene explored :
I saw all round a region of despair.
All ridged with mounds sepulchral that vast space
Was, as at Arles where lies the Rhone, a lake,
Or Pcla, where Quarnaro's waves embrace
Italy's confines and her barrier make.
Such, but of drearier fashion, was this place :
For burning were those tombs with flames that played
Fiercely between them, never on the earth
By furnace so red-hot was iron made ;
Half open were their lids, and thence came forth
Cries as of spirits tortured and dismayed."

These tombs contained the heresiarchs and heretics
of every sect ; like was buried with like in a more or
less intense heat. They passed to the left between
the burning sepulchres and the walls.

CANTO X.—FARINATA AND CAVALCANTI.

Dante observed to Virgil that all these sepulchres
are open, with no guard over them, and asked, Could
one see their inhabitants? Virgil explained that all
would be closed when these souls returned from the
judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat with the bodies
which they had left on earth. He observed that this
was the burial-ground of Epicurus and his followers,
who believed in the death of the soul with that of the
body. He then reverted to Dante's unexpressed
wish to hold intercourse with the two Florentine
spirits—Farinata and Cavalcanti. Suddenly a voice
was heard saying—

“ ‘O Tuscan, who thus walkest living through
The city of fire and speakest reverent words,
I pray thee stay ! Thy speech makes manifest
That thou art of that noble country born,
That haply held me all too troublesome.’
From out of those deep vaults, this sudden voice
Came forth and startled me.”

[This was Farinata, a noble Ghibeline of Florence, who had twice defeated the Guelphs (1240 and 1260), and expelled them from the city.]

“ Startled, I moved a little nearer him
Who led me, and he said, ‘ What fear’st thou ? Turn,
’Tis Farinata who stands there upright.
Up from the girdle thou may’st see him plain.’
I had already fixed my eyes on him,
And he had lifted up to view his brow
And bust, and stood as though disdaining Hell.”

When Dante approached the foot of his tomb, he looked on him as with scorn, and asked, “ Who were thy ancestors ? ”

Dante told him all, and, as his family had been among the Guelphs expelled by Farinata, the latter raised his eyebrows, and said, “ Fiercely hostile were they to me and my forefathers and my party, wherefore I twice dispersed them.

“ ‘ If they were driven away, they yet returned
Both times on every side,’ I made reply :
‘ An art *your* party hath not learned so well.’ ”

While they were thus talking, another shade had risen, apparently on his knees, visible as far as the chin. He looked about him as if seeking for some one, and said, weeping—

“ Where is my son ? why comes he not with thee ? ”

This was another Ghibeline, Cavalcanti, father of Dante's great friend Guido, a lyrical and philosophical poet who despised Virgil and the epic style. Dante, who had discovered by his speech and his punishment who he was, answered—

“ ‘ I come not of myself : he who waits yonder,
He brought me here, one whom your Guido held
Perchance in scorn.’ Then suddenly he rose
Upright, and cried, ‘ How sayest thou he *held* ?
Lives he not still ? and doth not the sweet light
Visit his eyes ? ’ And when he saw me pause
In answering, back he fell and rose no more.
But he, that other lofty one, nor changed
Countenance, nor moved his neck, nor bent his form ;
But thus went on from what was said before :
‘ And if,’ he said, ‘ they ill have learned that art,
That more torments me than this fiery bed ;
But thou, ere fifty times the face of her
Who here is sovereign is re-lit, shalt know
How hardly that same art is learned.’ ” *

He then asked why the people had been so severe in their decrees against his family (the Uberti). Dante explained that it was owing to the bitterness caused by the great slaughter of the Guelphs in the battle of Montaperta which turned the waters of the Arbia red,

“ Sighing, he shook his head. ‘ I was not there
Alone,’ he said, ‘ nor certainly had moved
Thus with the others, had I not had cause.

* That is, not fifty months would have expired ere Dante would have the same fortune—alluding to his banishment and the vain attempts made by the exiles in 1304 to return. Here we have a date unconsciously given us : this canto must have been written after the first two years of Dante's exile.

But then, when 'twas proposed by all to raze
Florence to earth, I *was* the only one
Who face to face opposed it, saving her.' "

Dante observed with wonder that the spirits below seemed to know what was to come, but not what was then happening. To which Farinata answered that they were like the weak-sighted who see far off but not near things, and unless some one tells them, know nothing of what is going on amongst men. But all their knowledge stops at the Judgment-day.

" 'For dead is all our knowledge from that day
That shuts the portals of the future.' Then
Smit with compunction for my fault, I cried,
' Oh, tell that fallen one his son is yet
Amongst the living. If I was at first
Mute to his question, 'twas because my thoughts
Were busy with the error you have cleared.' "

On Dante's inquiring about the spirits there confined, Farinata said that he lay there amongst thousands, of whom were the Emperor Frederic II. and the Cardinal (Ottaviano degl' Ubaldini, a fierce Ghibeline and unbeliever). Then saying, " *Degli altri io taccio,*" he disappeared. Dante, as they walked on, mused sadly on the hostile prophecies made concerning him by Farinata ; and asked by Virgil why he was so bewildered, told him all. Virgil answered—

" 'Keep in thy mind the evil word thus said,
' And listen now,' and he his finger raised,
Pointing : ' When thou art in the lovely light
Of her whose fair eyes see all things, through her
Wilt thou be told the journey of thy life.' "

Now to the left we turned, leaving the wall,
And towards the centre by a path approaching,
Which led us downward to a noisome pit."

CANTO XI.—THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND THE THREE
SPHERES OF THE VIOLENT.

They came thus to the edge of a lofty bank formed by a circular heap of great broken stones which overhung a mass of souls yet more cruelly tormented. To this abyss they descended, slowly at first on account of the horrible stench, and Dante asked his teacher to beguile the way by telling him something. Virgil explained that below these stones were the three remaining circles of the abyss, each growing narrower as they descended, and that the first of these (the seventh in the whole series) was assigned to the violent, and further divided into three spheres, for the three kinds of violence; the classes being, the violent against others, against themselves, and against God, nature, and art. But below this circle of the Violent are, as still more guilty, the Fraudulent, in the eighth and still smaller circle, which again is divided into ten; and lowest of all, and in the ninth and smallest circle, which is in the very centre of the universe and where Lucifer held his seat, are the Traitors. Virgil then recalled to Dante the classification in Aristotle's Ethics of all wickedness in three kinds: Incontinence, Malice, and Bestiality; the first (the least odious to God of the three) being faults committed through the impulse of the passions; the second, deliberate

evil deeds ; the third, the horrible crimes produced by mere brutal ferocity. The first and least criminal class, he pointed out, were not confined in the city of Dis, but allowed to dwell above, under less cruel punishment.

Virgil added some words about Usurers, who are punished in the circle of the Violent as offending against God, nature, and art ; the second of these being the offspring of God, and human art again of nature. All these, he said, require man to draw his sustenance by his own labour, either from the earth in agriculture, or by skilled work and commerce, none of which the usurer does, merely making money beget money.* Virgil then proposed to proceed, as morning was about to dawn.†

CANTO XII.—THE VIOLENT AGAINST OTHERS.

The poets had thus reached the first abyss in the seventh circle ; but they found the descent into it difficult, the bank being mountainous and terrible to behold :

“ Like the fall’n rock which lies below the Trent
By earthquake shock or failed support o’erthrown ;

* Dante’s language about the usurers recalls to us what mischief was done in his time by the exorbitant practices of the money-lenders.

† One day of Dante’s pilgrimage had thus been completed : in the morning he was in the wood, he entered Hell at night-fall, was in the fourth circle by midnight, and now in the city of Dis at the early dawn.

For from the mountain top whence first it fell,
Down to the plain, so shattering its descent,
It makes in ruins now a rugged road"—

and in the hollow made by this shattered mass lay
the Minotaur, gnawing himself for rage at sight of
them. Virgil explained,

“ That first time
That I descended to the depth of Hell,
Not yet that rock was fallen. But, I ween,
Just ere HE came, who took from Dis his prey,
In all the upper circle, on all sides,
The deep dire valley trembled, till I thought
The universe was into chaos falling :
'Twas then this ancient rock was overthrown.”

The violent against others were plunged in a boiling river of blood (which means a boiling spring), and between the abyss in which these lay and the fallen rock ran a troop of Centaurs armed with arrows as when on earth they pursued the chase. On seeing the visitors, three parted off from the band with bows and arrows all ready for use, and one of them shouted from afar to know for what crime they had come.

“ Tell me at once ; if not, I draw the bow.”

Virgil rebuked him, saying he would make his answer to Chiron, near by, adding,

“ *Mal fu la voglia tua sempre si tosta.*”

This centaur, he tells us, was Nessus, “who died for the fair Deianeira.” Meanwhile, the other Centaurs went about in thousands, shooting at whoever of the souls ventured to raise himself out of the blood beyond the mark his punishment assigned. Chiron

had fixed his arrow on the string and was aiming at Dante, when Virgil, approaching him, soothed him with explanations, and Dante was taken up on the back of Nessus in order to proceed on their way along the lake of blood. Here were pointed out to him the tyrants who had stained themselves with blood ; Alexander, Dionysius of Syracuse, Azzolino da Romano, Obizzo d'Este. Many others appeared, showing more and more of their persons above the blood, till it merely wetted their feet. But deeper down on the other side were such malefactors as Attila "che fu flagello in terra," Pyrrhus, Sextus Tarquinius, and certain brigands and corsairs of Italy.

CANTO XIII.—THE VIOLENT AGAINST THEMSELVES.

They then entered a wood, traversed by no paths.

"Not verdant leaves, but dusky, not smooth boughs,
But crook'd and knotted, and not fruit were there,
But poisoned thorns.

[Non frondi verdi, ma di color fosco,
Non rami schietti, ma nodosi e'nvolti ;
Non pomi v'eran, ma stecchi con toscò.]"

The wild beasts which haunt between Cecina and Corneto, abhorring cultured regions, have not such sharp or thick bushes for their lairs. Virgil told him

* Cecina, a river which traverses the districts of Corneto, a small city. This region, which borders on the Tuscan Maremma, was once full of woods and wild copses, the haunts of wild deer, goats, and boars.

that he was now in the second sphere, where were the violent against themselves; but Dante, hearing groans all round, and seeing no one to utter them, stopped bewildered. Virgil bade him break off a bough from one of the trees. He did so, and the stem cried out—

“Why dost thou tear me? Hast no sense of pity?
Men were we once, and now are turned to roots.
Had we been souls of serpents, still thy hand
Should have been more compassionate.”

Dante let the bough fall, and stood as one dismayed. Virgil expressed his sorrow, and asked the speaker who he was, that thus, by way of amends, his friend might renew his fame in the world to which he was permitted to return. The stem answered:

“I' son colei, che tenni ambe le chiavi
Del cor di Federigo, e che le volsi,
Serrando e disserrando, sì soavi
Che dal segreto suo quasi ogni uom tolsi:
Fede portai al glorioso ufizio
Tanto, ch'io ne perdei le vene e i polsi.
La meretrice,* che mai dall' ospizio
Di Cesare non torse gli occhi putti,
Morte comune e delle corti vizio,
Infiammò contra me gli animi tutti,
E gl' infiammati infiammar sì Augusto,
Che i lieti onor tornaro in tristi lutti,
L'animo mio, per disdegnoso gusto,
Credendo col morir fuggir disdegno,
Ingusto fece me contra me giusto.
Per le nuove radici d'esto legno ”

(He swears by his new form of being, that is by his present life,)

* Envy, the common vice of courts.

"Vi giuro, che giammai non ruppi fede
Al mio signor, che fu d' onor sì degno."*

He then begged, whichever of them returned to the world, to restore his now lost reputation. They asked him some further questions about his mode of being.

"Then did the strong stem sigh, and straight that wind
Was turned into a voice."

After his explanation, they stood listening, thinking he had more to tell, when they heard a sudden noise, as one watching might catch the sounds made in the chase of the wild boar. And there came two running, naked and torn by claws, breaking through all the entanglement of boughs. The one in front cried: "Come quick, come quick, Death!" the other, who was slower, said jeeringly:† "Lano, your legs were not quite so nimble in the jousting at il Toppo." Then his breath failed him and he hid himself in a bush, where, however, the dogs found and tore him to pieces. The bush then, bitterly bewailing, addressed itself to Virgil and Dante, entreating them to pick up the leaves which the unfortunate Giacopo had torn off

* The above is the story of Pier delle Vigne, a Capuan, chancellor of Frederic II. of Hohenstauffen, who so completely won his master's confidence as to withdraw it from every one else. But his devoted loyalty was the cause of his ruin through the malignant envy it inspired. The courtiers calumniated him to the Emperor, who had him blinded, and Pietro in despair destroyed himself.

† The first of these was Lano, a rich Sienese youth who, having wasted all his fortune, willingly let himself be killed in a fight at la Pieve al Toppo. The other was Giacopo da San' Andrea, a still more extravagant and giddy spendthrift.

him. The bush added, that he was a Florentine (though not giving his name), and that he had made for himself

“ A gibbet from the beams of his own house.”

CANTO XIV.—THE VIOLENT AGAINST GOD, NATURE,
AND ART.

Dante, moved by love of his native place, picked up the scattered leaves and restored them to the wailing bush. They then arrived at the second sphere of this third circle, where “the horrible art of Justice showed itself.” It was a bare and arid plain, a waste of burning sand, rained upon by fire.

“ That wood of sorrow garlands it all round. . . .

O vendetta di Dio, quanto tu dêi

Esser temuta da ciascun, che legge

Ciò che fu manifesto agli occhi miei ! ”

Crowds of wretched souls were there, some lying supine, more sitting up, the most of them walking incessantly about.

“ Sovra tutto 'l sabbion, d' un cader lento,

Piovean di fuoco dilatate falde,

Come di neve in alpe senza vento. . . . ”

“ And ever without rest went on the play

Of wretched hands, hither and thither still

Shaking away the fire-flakes still renewed.”

Dante inquired :

“ ‘ Whose is yon mighty form that seems to take
No heed of the fierce blaze, but lies flung down
In careless scorn, as though it harmed him not ? ’ ”

And he himself, hearing me ask, cried out :
' What I was living, such still am I dead ; ' "

and went on uttering blasphemies, as :

" Let him shoot at me all his fiercest darts,
His vengeance never shall be glad in me."

This was Capaneus, one of the seven against Thebes, whom Jove, for his impiety, had smitten with his bolts. Virgil then bade Dante come on, being careful not to set his feet on the burning sand, but to keep them always in the wood. Thus, in silence, they came to a spot where out of the forest ran a streamlet whose blood-red hue left an impression of horror on him. It was like the stream that flows out of Bulicame ; * the bottom, as well as the margin and hanging banks, had been turned to stone, and there accordingly they walked. Dante asked where this stream came from, and was answered :

" Amidst the sea there lies a wasted land,
'Tis Crete, beneath whose king earth once was pure.
There was a mountain in it, happy then
In leaves and fountains ; Ida was its name :
*Tis desert now, like a forbidden thing. . . .
Within the mountain stands upright an old
Majestic man, his back towards Damietta,
Gazing at Rome as 't were his looking-glass." †

* Bulicame was a small sulphurous lake two miles from Viterbo, whence flowed a stream of medicinal virtue.

† This "*gran veglio*" is apparently the figure of Universal Monarchy, such as once existed in the Roman Empire, and was in Dante's view the most perfect political form of government, but which was wont to degenerate first to mixed royal and aristocratical rule, then to tyranny and anarchy ; this decadence being symbolised by the composition of the image. He stands in

Virgil went on to describe this figure like the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with head of gold, body of silver and brass, and feet of iron and clay. The whole figure, being in decay, was full of crevices from which tears flowed, and formed the infernal rivers, Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon (this was the burning river they had passed), and finally Cocytus, which lay as a pool at the bottom of the abyss. Lethe, Virgil said, they would not behold till they came out of this infernal world to the region where penitence purified souls and cancelled punishment.

CANTO XV.—CONTINUATION OF THE THIRD CIRCLE.

They went along the hard margin of the stream, the vapour rising from which so gathered in the air as to save the water and its margins from the rain of fire. Such are the dams raised by the Flemings between "Guzzante"* and Bruges to protect them from the sea which, at high tide, threatens the land, and those raised along the Brenta at Padua to defend its villas and castles,

"Ere Chiarentana feels the breath of spring."

(Chiarentana is that part of the Alps where the Brenta

Crete as being the most ancient and happiest kingdom; his back is towards Damietta, to signify the rise of Empire from Egypt and its final establishment in Rome. The miseries resulting from corrupted forms of government are symbolised in the tears which flow thence and swell into rivers of Hell.

* "Guzzante" possibly represents the present Cadzand.

rises, on which lies a great mass of snow, which, melting in the spring, causes the river to overflow.) A troop of spirits met them here, and each one looked at them,

“As in the evening by the new moon’s light
We try to see each other.”

Among these was his old master, Brunetto Latini, who turned back to talk with him a little, explaining that whoever in the troop was left behind would have to lie a hundred years exposed to the flames. He then prophesied to Dante his own future fortune, his glory and his exile.

“‘Follow thy star,’ he said, ‘thou canst not fail
To reach the glorious port. . . .
But that ungrateful and malignant race
That from the ancient Fiesole is sprung,*
And its rude nature to the mountain owes,
For thy own good will be thine enemy;
And justly, for amidst the bitter sobs
The sweet fig cannot ripen. . . .
Long in the world hath fame proclaimed them blind,
An envious, proud, and avaricious race. . . .
Thy fortune keeps in store for thee such praise
That both those parties,† shall have need of thee,
But their desire shall not be satisfied.
Those brutes of Fiesole make their own bed,
In their own way,—no touch of kin have they
With those—if any yet amongst them rise—
In whom the ancient Roman seed revives.”

“Ma quell’ ingrato popolo maligno,
Che discese da Fiesole ab antico,

* Florence is said to have been built by a Roman colony, afterwards augmented by Fiesolans.

† Neri and Bianchi.

E tiene ancor del monte e del macigno,
Ti si farà, per tuo ben far, nemico.
Ed è ragion, chè tra li lazzi sorbi
Si disconvien fruttare il dolce fico.
Vecchia fama nel mondo li chiama orbi :
Gente avara, invidiosa e superba. . . .
La tua fortuna tanto onor ti serba,
Che l'una parte e l'altra avranno fame
Di te ; ma lungi fia dal becco l'erba.
Faccian le bestie Fiesolane strame
Di lor medesme, e non tocchin la pianta,
S'alcuna surge ancor nel lor letame,
In cui riviva la sementa santa
Di quei Roman, che vi rimaser, quando
F'u fatto il nido di malizia tanta."

After a few more remarks, finding that his time was up, Ser Brunetto left them, running like those who, in the country at Verona, at the games of the first Sunday in Lent, ran for the "palio [prize] di drappo verde," and seeming to be he who won, not he who lost.

CANTO XVI.—CONCLUSION OF THE CIRCLE OF THE
VIOLENT.

They had now arrived where Phlegethon fell with a loud noise into the circle below, when three spirits, out of a crowd, came running towards them, and calling to them to stop. These three, who were noble and powerful cavaliers, then approached them, and began spinning round, while they talked to avoid the hundred years' penalty assigned for standing still. One who spoke said that he was Giacompo Rusticucci, a rich Florentine—

“E certo
La fiera moglie, più ch' altro, mi nuoce,”

and that the others were Guidoguerra, a man distinguished alike in council and in war, and Tegghiato Aldobrandini, a brave captain. They asked him about the present state of Florence, if courtesy and valour still existed there.

“La gente nuova e i subiti guadagni
Orgoglio e dism'sura han generata,
Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni.
Così gridai colla faccia levata.”

The three looked approvingly at each other, and after thanking him for his information and bidding him speak of them in the world above, they vanished.

“Un *amen* non saria potuto dirsi
Tosto così, com'ei furo spariti.”

The poets went on, and the sound of the water was now so near that they could hardly hear each other speak. It was like the sound of that river which rises in Mount Veso towards the east, on the left side of the Apennines, and which, going its own free course, is called Acquacheta, till it leaps with an echoing noise at Forlì into the valley where stands a convent of St. Benedict, meant to hold a thousand monks.* Thus, falling from a height, resounded the blood-dyed river of Phlegethon.

* The Acquacheta, a river of Romagna rising in the Alps, changes its name at Forlì to Montone and falls into the sea near Ravenna.

Dante had a cord round his waist, which, at Virgil's desire, he gave to him, having knotted it up for throwing. Virgil turned and threw the rope into the middle of the deep hollow, on whose edge they were standing. Dante said to himself that something wonderful must come in answer to this strange action and to the watching movement of the Master's eye, and reflected with awe on those who see not only with their eyes our works, but with their mind our thoughts. Virgil said, "You will soon see up here what I am waiting for; and what you have only dreamed will soon be revealed to your eyes."

Dante would wish not to utter truths which will be taken for lies—"quel ver ch' a faccia di menzogna"—but here he cannot help himself, and he solemnly avers that he saw ascending through that thick, dark air a weird figure, such as would strike dismay in the firmest heart. It rose with a swimming movement, like one who has gone below, it may be, to let go an anchor, and finds his feet fixed in a rock beneath the waves while his arms stretch upwards.

CANTO XVII.—GERYON AND THE DESCENT.

This monster was Geryon, typical of fraud, who had risen to the marble edge of the upper circle, showing his head and bust above, but with his tail still in the abyss. The face was human, as of a just and kind man; the body was of a serpent, painted all over with cords and shields, with more colours laid on than

ever by Turks and Tartars in their skilfully-embossed cloths.

“As sits the beaver waiting for his prey,
So sat the monster on the marge of stone.”

Virgil then bade Dante go and talk with some figures which were sitting on the sand near the place of descent, while he arranged with Geryon to carry them down on his shoulders. Dante turned to these “sorrowful souls,” whose grief poured from their eyes, while with ever-moving hands they tried to get relief from the vapour and the hot sands. He did not know their faces, concealed as they were in the blaze, but on their breasts hung their family arms, placed not on a shield, but a purse, on which their eyes dwelt with pleasure. These were the usurers (the violent against art), amongst whom were a Paduan and some Florentines. But Dante scarcely stayed to speak with them, for fear of keeping Virgil waiting. He found Virgil already seated on the monster’s back, and bidding him mount and be courageous. But Dante shook as with a quartan fever; yet, rendered resolute by shame, he seated himself, and Virgil bade Geryon descend slowly. He went down like a swimmer, and, when he had free space, turned over and over in the air, still whirling and descending. Dante, horribly terrified, clung hard, though seeing nothing, only feeling the resistance of the air, and gradually perceiving the sounds of woe that came from all sides. At last Geryon, having reached the bottom at the foot of the precipice, shook them off, and vanished like an arrow from a bow.

CANTO XVIII.—THE EIGHTH CIRCLE. MALEBOLGE.

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge (evil pools), all made up of stone of rust colour, like the encircling stone wall down which they had descended. In the midst of this field of malefactors yawned a huge gulf of circular form, the bottom of which was again divided into ten concentric circles or pits, like the many fosses that surround castle walls. And as in such fortresses there were small bridges from the threshold or portals to the banks beyond, so did pieces of rock traverse the banks and fosses till they all converged in the central pit. In these ten pits were punished those guilty of the different species of fraudulent dealing.

They entered the first pit, which was divided in two by a circular line; the sinners within them were moving in opposite directions, the outer ones towards the advancing poets, the inner ones with their backs to them. In the first division were the seducers of women for others; in the second, the seducers for themselves. So in the year of the Jubilee* the Romans arranged for the multitudes that had to traverse the bridge of the Castle Sant' Angelo by dividing it lengthways, so that one stream went towards the castle, the other to the Mount (*Janiculum*). The first division was full of Bolognese, whose greed of money had led them to such infamy; in the second, Virgil said—

“Guarda quel grande che viene,
E per dolor non par lagrima spanda;
Quanto aspetto reale ancor ritiene!
Quegli e Giasone.”

* The year 1300.

They then came to the second pit, where were people grovelling at the bottom in filth, which sent up a foul exhalation. These were the fawners and flatterers, of whom Dante very soon had enough.

CANTO XIX.—THE THIRD PIT OF MALEBOLGE AND
THE SIMONICAL.

They came to the third pit, and stood on the rocky bridge over it, so as to look down right into the middle of the fosse, whose sides and bottom, all formed of stone, were perforated with small round holes, all of equal width. These seemed to him of the same size as the baptismal fonts* in "*il mio bel San Giovanni*," one of which the poet recalled having broken years ago to save a child who was drowning in it. Here were fixed those guilty of simony and trafficking with sacred things, the feet and legs projecting, the rest of the body within, and the feet on fire, the flame moving along the whole surface of the soles. Dante being especially struck by one at the bottom of the pit more burnt than any of the others, and kicking harder, Virgil conveys him down to speak with him.

"Oh thou, whoe'er thou art, thus upside down,
Sad soul,' I said, 'there planted like a stake,
Speak, if thou canst.' I stood there like the priest
Called by the base assassin, in his hole
Fixed, to confess him and delay his death."

* Or rather, it seems the places in which the baptising priests stood; but the meaning is disputed. Dante refers of course to the Baptistery in front of the Duomo of Florence.

This soul was that of Pope Nicholas III., who, taking the man who addressed him for his successor, cried out—

“ ‘Dost thou then stand upright,
Dost thou then stand upright here, Boniface ? . . .
Art thou so quickly wearied of the gains
For which thou didst not scruple to beguile
Our Lady Church, abuse her and destroy ?’
I stood as one who nothing understands
Of what is said, and knows not to reply.
Said Virgil then, ‘Quick tell him, I am not,
I am not he thou tak’st me for.’ And then,
Twisting his feet and sighing, thus bewailed
The spirit, ‘Then what wouldst thou of me ? Know
That I was in the mighty mantle robed,
I was th’ Orsini’s son, and so intent
T’ advance the bear cubs in the world above,
I got the gold into my purse and here
Myself into this hole. . . .
He whom I took thee for will take my place,
But not so long as I will he be here,
Thus planted upside down with feet on fire.*
And after him shall come a guiltier still,
A lawless pastor from the west, who here
Will suffer worse than Boniface and me. . . .’
I know not if ’twas folly urged me here,
To speak these words in which I answered him :
‘Tell me how much of treasure did our Lord
Require first of Saint Peter ere he placed
The keys in his command ?—said He not but,
“Follow thou me” ?
Well art thou punished, but do thou guard well

* There were in fact twenty-three years between the death of Nicholas and that of Boniface who succeeded him, while between that of Boniface and that of Clement V. (the “lawless pastor” from Gascony) elapsed but eleven years. As Clement died in 1314, this part of the poem must have been written after that date.

The ill-got gold that armed thee against Charles.*
 Did not my reverence for those holy keys
 Held upon earth by thee restrain me, I
 Could use yet sterner language—that your greed
 Saddens the world, it tramples down the good,
 And lifts the bad on high. . . . Ye have made your
 god
 Of gold and silver : wherein differ you
 From the idolater, except that he
 Worships one god and you a hundred ? Ah,
 Of how much evil, Constantine, was cause
 Not thy conversion, but the ample dower
 Which the first wealthy Pope received from thee ! ”

The poor Pope only kicked with his feet while thus abused. Virgil, who had listened to it all with great enjoyment, now again took Dante up and carried him to the top, setting him gently down, because of

“ the rough stony rock
 Which were hard passage even for a goat ;
 And thence another pit was opened to me.”

CANTO XX.—THE FOURTH PIT AND THE DIVINERS.

The fourth pit of Malebolge contained the Diviners.

“ I looked into the depth of that abyss
 All bathed with weeping anguish, and I saw

* Nicholas, a bold and sagacious man, had formed the plan of driving all the foreign princes out of Italy, and for this purpose played Charles of Anjou against Rudolf and Rudolf against Charles. But indignant at the latter's refusal of his daughter to a nephew of the Pope, he turned completely against him, and seized, or received, money to carry on a war, which money Dante, with a hit at his known avarice, implies that he appropriated to himself.

Pass through the hollow vale those punished ones,
Silently weeping, with such steps as those
Who in procession walk as penitents (*che fanno le*
*litane.**)”

Their heads were turned round on their shoulders
in a manner which Dante wept to see. But his guide
rebuked him, saying—

“ True pity is to have no pity here. . . .”

He showed him Amphiaras, one of the seven
who besieged Thebes; Tiresias who suffered a
change of sex; and Aronte,

“ Who in the hills of Luni, under which
The husbandmen of fair Carrara dwell,
Amid white marbles in a cavern lodged,
And from that height gazed out on stars and sea.”

These were all false prophets.

Virgil then pointed out to Dante the Sorcerers and
Witches, among them Manto, daughter of Tiresias,
who wandered over the world and came to “*Italia*
bella,” and a lake at the foot of the Alps, called
Benacus.† This lake is fed by more than a thousand
fountains springing from the Apennines, and on the
lowest part of its shores stands the “*bello e forte*
arnese” (castle) of Peschiera, which fronts the Bres-
ciani and the Bergamaschi. Here the lake overflows
into a river, the Mincio, which runs through green
meadows and falls into the Po. In this lonely, un-
cultivated land, Manto, shunning human intercourse,
set herself down to practise her arts, and here she

* Penitential processions were formerly called *letane* (*litanie*);
that is, supplications.

† Now the Lago di Garda.

died. Men came afterwards and built a city over "quell' ossa morte," which was called from her, Mantua.

Virgil finally showed him the Augurs, or Diviners, amongst them Michael Scott, "with his thin sides, who well knew the game of magic frauds;" some Italians; and women who left the needle, the loom, and the spindle, to make spells with herbs and images.

CANTO XXI.—THE FIFTH PIT OF MALEBOLGE; THE
PUBLIC JOBBERS.

Thus going from bridge to bridge, they stopped in the middle of the arch to look down into the fifth pit, which was "marvellously dark." As, in the arsenal of Venice, the pitch is boiled in winter to caulk the keels of the unsound ships; and here they are making, there mending, new and old; putting fresh iron to prow and stern; fashioning oars and twisting cords, and repiecing sails:

"So not by fire, but by the art divine
A thick pitch, boiling, smeared the marge all round.
I saw it, but I saw no more than but
The boiling bubbles, how they swelled and sank. . .
Till said my guide, 'See, see!' and drew me on
Nearer to him; and then I turned as one
Eager to see what he had better flee,
Whom sudden fear makes bold . . . and I beheld
Behind us a black devil o'er the rock
Come running: ah, how fierce in look, how stern
In bearing, open wings and foot how light!"

He carried a sinner, whom he flung into the pit, telling the demons below that this sinner was a Luc-

chese, and that he was going back to Lucca, where there were plenty more of them ; that is, of jobbers in public offices. Virgil bade Dante hide behind a rock, and went fearlessly forth himself to meet them. They rushed at him with their pitchforks, but he quelled them with his calm and proud confidence, and called for one of them to treat with him. Malacoda stepped forth, and Virgil told him that he was there by God's will to show another the road through Hell. He then called to Dante to come forth from his hiding-place, which he did, but seeing them again run at him, he was frightened, even as he had seen the Lucchese soldiers, who

“ With a safe-conduct issued from Caprona
But trembled seeing so many foes around.” *

Malacoda quitted them, and then told Virgil that he could not advance along that rock any further, as the sixth bridge had been quite broken in pieces 1266 years ago ; but he recommended him to go another way, and join the party of ten of his demons whom he was sending to look after the punished spirits, and see that they did not get out of the pitch. Dante begged that they might not have such company, but Virgil said it was all right, and they proceeded on their way.

CANTO XXII.—CONTINUATION OF THE LAST CANTO.

“ I have seen cavaliers upon the march,
Charging in fight, bidding their pennons fly,
And sometimes beating a retreat ; I have seen

* Caprona, a Pisan fortress, having been occupied by the Lucchese in the interest of the Guelphs, was retaken in 1290 by the Ghibeline chief, Guido da Montefeltro.

The flying squadrons ravaging your land,
Ye of Arezzo! troops of horsemen swift
Revolving, tourney fights, and tilting fields,
Full oft with trumpets, bells, and beat of drum,
Signals from fortress towers, of smoke and fire,
And various instruments, or known or strange.
But never saw I such a strange array
As those ten demons who attended us."

Going thus by the side of the boiling pit, Dante watched the various movements of those tormented there, rising partly above the pitch to obtain some alleviation,

"Like dolphins when they show above the wave
Their curving backs, signal the seamen know
To put in port from tempest."

The sinners thus punished were those who had trafficked with the decrees and favours of princes. Among them, one showing his head above the pitch, was caught by one of the demons, who twisted his hook in his pitch-entangled hair. On Virgil's demand, the poor wretch stated that he was a Navarrese, by name Ciampollo, who, placed as a youth in the service of the good king Tebaldo, there trafficked in his lord's favours. The demons were now all so eager to pitchfork him that he had hardly leisure to answer Virgil's question as to whether there were any Italians there "under the pitch." When at last they had left him, he remained, "looking at his wound." Virgil learned that there were two—Frate Gomito, of Gallura in Sardinia, and Michel Zanche, of Logodoro, in the same isle. He broke off, seeing one of the demons grinning and snarling at him, but finally, by a *ruse*, got the better of them, promising to call up dozens more of his comrades underneath to afford them sport

if they would let him alone. Accordingly they flew off, and he plunged down and escaped them. The disappointed demons began wrangling with each other; two of them, clawing each other, fell stuck together into the boiling pitch, where the heat unglued them, and the other demons used their hooks to pull them out. Virgil and Dante left them thus employed.

CANTO XXIII.—THE SIXTH PIT AND THE HYPOCRITES.

“Silent, alone, on moved we, one before
The other, e'en as walk the minor friars.”

Dante continued much frightened lest some of the demons should be following them, and told Virgil so.

“‘I fancy them until I feel them here.’
And he, ‘Were I a mirror, not more quick
Were I to draw thy outward image in,
Than now I take the impress of thy soul,
And stamp it upon stone.’”

“L’imagine di fuor tua non trarrei
Più tosto a me, che quella d’entro impetro.”

He then explained that he had exactly the same thought and the same fear, and proposed that if this side of the next (the sixth) pit was a slope, they should descend into it, and so be lost sight of by the demons. While they were consulting about this, Dante saw that the fiends, with wings extended, were coming after them not far behind. His guide then took him in his arms, and slid with him on his back down the steep slope. Just as they reached the bottom they saw their enemies arrived on the brow

of the hill just above them, but unable to pursue them further.

There below they found a company of people walking round and round with slow steps, weeping, weary, and dejected, in capes, with hoods drawn over the eyes, like those of the monks of Cologne,* these capes being gilt and dazzling outside, but of lead within, and so heavy that those of Frederic seemed made but of straw.†

“O mantle wearisome for ever worn!”

These were the Hypocrites; and Dante asked Virgil to find some one whom they might know of by his name or his deeds. One of these heard Dante’s Tuscan speech, and called to him from behind to let him get up with them.

“I stopped, and saw two, in whose face was writ
Their haste to be with me, but the sore load
And narrow way delayed them. When they reached me
They gazed in wonder, mute, till turning they
Said to each other, ‘This one by his breathing
Seems living; but if both are dead, what power
Hath freed them from the penal stole?’”

Finally they explained that they were two “frati Godenti,” a military order of monks (“frati di Santa Maria” properly), who, in 1266, were chosen by Florence as Conservators of the Peace, and who, thus

* The monks of Cologne wore large, ill-fitting capes and hoods.

† Frederic II. ordered those guilty of high treason to be wrapped in a leaden vest and so placed in a large vessel on the fire.

appointed, corrupted by the Guelphs, betrayed their office and ruined the Ghibelines. Dante began to answer—

“O friars, your woes!—but more I said not, for
My eyes were caught by sight of one who lay,
Crucified with three stakes, upon the ground.”

This was Caiaphas, doomed to feel every one pass over him as he lay. One of the friars told who he was, and why he was so punished—for his counsel to the Pharisees to put Jesus to death. Virgil, meanwhile, wondered at all this, then asked the friar if he could tell them whether there was any opening on the right side by which they could get out without having to be guided by any of the “angeli neri,” and the friar, in instructing him, warned him against the pass across this pit as being broken. This being exactly the contrary of what the fiend Malacoda had told him, Virgil observed that in that case “the pitchforker of the sinners down there had deceived him.” The friar replied, “I always heard say in Bologna* that the devil had plenty of vices, amongst them that he was a liar and father of lies.” Thereupon Virgil went off with long steps, rather angry, and Dante followed him.

CANTO XXIV.—THE SEVENTH PIT OF THIEVES.

Dante describes the impression made on him by his guide's disturbance of mind and its speedy removal as like the effect in early spring,

* The University of Bologna, where theology was taught.

“When the hoarfrost upon the ground assumes
Th’ image of its white sister, but not long
Lasts the fair copy that it strives to make.
The needy shepherd rises, looks around,
Sees all the country whitened, smites his hands,
And goes, a hapless wretch, bewailing home.
Then he returns, and garners hope again,
Seeing the world with face so quickly changed,
And takes his crook and leads his flock to graze.”

Virgil then helped him over the broken bridge, which they traversed with difficulty, climbing from stone to stone till they reached the top, and then down a still steeper and rougher way descended to the margin of the seventh pit. He heard ascend from the bottom a voice speaking indistinctly in anger, but as he hears without understanding anything, and looks into the bottom of the pit, he begged Dante to take him down to the margin on the other side, which being lower, he could see and hear better there. Virgil complied, and they saw within a swarm of horrible serpents of the most various and strangest kinds. Amongst them were running naked and frightened men, without hope of finding shelter or *helitropia*.* Their hands were tied with serpents behind their backs; serpents fixed their tails or their heads in their loins, and clustered over their bodies. “We saw a serpent approach and coil himself round one near us. He was set on fire, burned, and fell to the ground in ashes, then was instantly re-made as he had been before :

“As one who falls to earth, he knows not how,

* A stone so called—green, with red spots—vulgarly supposed to impart the power of making oneself invisible.

THE DIVINE COMEDY.

Pulled downward by some demon, or assailed
By some strange evil in the vital parts,
Who, when he rises, gazes round, all mazed
By the sore anguish that he hath endured,
And gazing sighs—so rose that sinner then."

Asked who he was, he answered that he was Vanni
Fucci, of Pistoia.

"Vita bestial mi piacque non umana,
Si come a mul' ch' io fui."

They desired to know for what fault he came there,
Dante having known him in life as a man of violence
rather than of fraud. He turned to Dante a face full
of shame, and said—

"It grieves me more that you have seen me here
In this dire plight than for my death on earth.
But I must speak : I was sent lower down
Because I robbed the wealthy sacristy,
And let the blame be charged on others."

But, resolved that Dante shall have no pleasure in
knowing of his punishment, he malignantly prophe-
sied to him the utter destruction of the Bianchi in
the "Campo Piceno."*

* This happened in 1302, after the Pistoians had driven from their city the Neri, who, establishing themselves in Florence and getting the upper hand there, determined to punish the Pistoians and the Bianchi, and, joined with the Lucchese, marched against them, besieged their stronghold of Serravalle, and beat them with great slaughter in a battle which ended in the capture of Serravalle and Pistoia itself, and the ruin of the cause of the Bianchi.

CANTO XXV.—THE SAME PIT; THE MEN CHANGED
TO SERPENTS.

Vanni Fucci, the sacrilegious thief, finished his speech with a defiant blasphemy addressed to God, and fled without another word. A centaur (the monster Cacus) came up furiously, crying out,

“ ‘Where is he, where is the ruffian?’
Ne’er did I think Maremma had such store
Of serpents as he bore upon his back,
Just where the human and the horse unite.
Upon his shoulders lay, with outspread wings,
A dragon.”

He fled past, and three spirits advanced, asking who they were, and then one of them added, “Where is Cianfa staying?” These were three Florentine citizens, who had appropriated public money—Agnello Brunelleschi, Buoso, and Puccio Sciancato. While he was looking at them, a wonder occurred.

“If, reader, thou art slow to give thy faith
To what I now shall tell, I wonder not,
For I who saw it scarce can yield my own.”

A serpent with six feet (this was the transformed Cianfa) sprang upon one of them, and clung to him so that

“Was never ivy rooted to the tree
So closely as that fearful thing entwined
The man’s limbs with his own. Thus clinging they
Like burning wax were molten both together,
Neither appearing what they were before:
As when papyrus burnt gains a dun hue
That is not black, though all the whiteness dies.

The other two beheld and cried, 'Alas!
How art thou changed, Agnello! Thou art now
Nor one nor two.' The two heads had grown one;
Two likenesses in one face were confused,
Two natures drowned there. Twain and none appeared
That image all distorted that withdrew
Slowly . . . Then, like the lightning, there appeared
Another serpent, kindled all with ire,
As black and livid as a grain of pepper."

He approached one of the two and stung him, then fell down at his feet. The one who had been stung gazed, saying nothing, and stood still, yawning, as if fever or slumber had seized upon him. Each looked at the other, the serpent and he, each giving out smoke, one from his wound, the other from his mouth, and the smoke met and mingled.

"And the two natures, front to front opposed,
Changed to each other, not in form alone,
But in their substance, each successive part
Altering in close accord. The serpent clove
His tail in two; the man's feet clung together,
And then the legs and thighs together closed.
The split tail took the form the other lost,
The skin grew soft, while hard the man's became.
Veiled by the smoke which changed each other's hue,
One rose, the other fell, yet neither turned
That dread gaze from each other, under which
They thus were *changing faces*. That thing done,
The smoke too ceased; the one who had turned brute
Fled hissing through the pit; the other stood,
And spoke and spat, then turned his new-made back:
'Let Buoso crawl the earth as I have done.'"

Confused as were Dante's eyes by all that he had seen, he yet perceived that the only one of the three who had remained unchanged was Puccio Sciancato,

and he knew that the one who had turned from serpent into man was Francesco Guercio de' Cavalcanti, who for his robberies was slain by the men of Gaville.

CANTO XXVI.—THE EIGHTH PIT AND THE DECEIVERS
OF ANCIENT GREECE.

Referring to the malefactors in this pit, five of whom were Florentines, Dante says ironically—

“Rejoice, O Florence! that thou art so great
That over land and sea thou flapp’st thy wings,
And even Hell is echoing with thy fame.”

Then in a bitter mood—

“The dream that’s dreamt towards morning cometh true.
As true is this that I now prophesy :
Soon wilt thou feel the vengeance for thy crimes
That not thy foes alone, but *all* require.
If ’twere already fallen, ’twere still too late ;
But since it must be, would ’twere come e’en now,
For sorer shall I feel it in old age.”

The pilgrims then proceeded to mount again up the steps of rough rock, which led up from the margin of the seventh pit to which they had just descended, and brought them to the bridge across the eighth pit.

“As many as the peasant on the hill,
Resting in summertime at evening hour,
Of fireflies sees amid the vale below,
There, haply, where his corn and vineyards are,—
So was that eighth pit all ashine with flames,

As well I saw when I looked down below.
As he who saw Elijah's parting car
When the swift steeds sprang heavenward, with his eye
Could not so follow it, as to behold
Aught save the one bright flame, a quivering cloud
In his ascending,—so these flames did play
About the pit's mouth ; none its booty showed,
Though each one wrapped a sinner. On the rock
I stood on tip-toe to look down, and so
Leaned forward that if I had not laid hold
Upon a rock, I must have fall'n below.
Then said my guide, who saw me so intent,
' Within those fires are spirits ; each of them
Is swathed in that which burns him.' "

Dante saw a flame rising, forked, and asked who was in it. He was told that Ulysses and Diomed,

" Within their flame enclosed, there mourn the snare
Of the wooden horse that made the gate whence forth
Flowed the proud Roman race."

Adjured by Dante so to do, Virgil addressed the
"two within one fire," and asked to know the end of
their history in life.

" Then of that flame of old the loftier horn
Began to shake and murmur e'en as though
The wind were blowing it ; then here and there
Waving its top as though it were the tongue
That uttered words, it spoke : ' When I had left
Circe, who kept me hidden, one long year,
There in Gaëta (ere Æneas yet
Had named it so), neither my son's sweet presence,
Nor pitying care for my old father, nor
The loyal love I owed Penelope
To make her happy, could within me quell
The ardour to explore and know the world,
And human good and evil. So I sailed

The deep, the open sea, in one small barque,
Alone with those tried few who ne'er forsook me.
I saw the shores of Spain and of Morocco,
Sardinia, and the other sea-bathed isles.
I and my comrades now were old and worn,
When to that narrow mouth we came where set
His barriers Hercules, that none might pass
Into the sea beyond. On the left hand
I left Seville, and Ceuta on the right.
'O frati,' dissì, 'che per cento milia
Perigli, siete giunti all' occidente,
A questa tanto picciola vigilia
De' vostri sensi, ch' è del rimanente,
Non vogliate negar l'esperienza,
Diretro al Sol, del mondo senza gente.*
Considerate la vostra semenza ;
Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza.' "

He told further how they pursued their voyage to the West, so bending their course that they saw at night all the stars of the other pole, those of our hemisphere having sunk to the horizon's edge. They had been sailing five months in the wide ocean, and had come in sight of a lofty, distant mountain, when, while they were rejoicing at it, a tempest arose, which whirled their ship round and finally sent it prow downward.

"Infin che 'l mar fu sopra noi richiuso."

* That is, to follow the course of the sun from east to west till they should come to the "unpeopled world;" that is, to the supposed uninhabited half of the globe.

CANTO XXVII.—THE STORY OF GUIDO DA
MONTEFELTRO.

“Now stood the flame that spoke erect and still,
Speaking no more, and moved itself away.”

Then came another ; that is, they saw a flame from which issued a confused noise, the sorrowful words of the afflicted spirit within, turning themselves into the language of the flame in their struggling passage through to the air. But when they had got to the point, they regained the sound first made by the tongue. The voice addressed Virgil, who had been heard speaking in the Lombard dialect to Dante (“O tu, a cui io drizzo la voce, che parlavi mo lombardo, dicendo : ‘Issa ten va’, più non t’adizzo” *), imploring him to stay and speak with him.

“If into this dark world thou art but now
Downfall’n from that sweet Latin land, whence all
My faults I have brought hither—tell me now
If they, the Romagnese, have peace or war ;
For I was from the mountains there, between
Urbino and the ridge whence Tiber parts.”

Dante replied without delay :

“O soul that thus art hidden, thy Romagna
Is not, and never has been, without war,
Fed in her tyrants’ hearts, but none declared
As yet, I left there.
Ravenna stands, as it has stood for years :
The eagle of Polenta broodeth there,
And covers Cervia also with her wings.

* *Issa* and *adizzo* signify in the Lombard dialect, *adesso* and *stimolo* ; *mo* is *pur ora*, that is, “just now.”

The land that stood long trial, and that made
 Red slaughter of the French, is sheltered now
 By the green branch."^{*}

Dante continued to give an account of the condition and rulers of the various cities of Romagna, and concluded :

“ ‘The city [*Cesena*] by the Savio bathed, e'en so
 As betwixt plain and mountains she is set,
 So lives 'twixt tyranny and liberty.
 Now pray thee tell me who thou art thyself.' . . .
 Then somewhat roared the agitated fire,
 And moved its sharp point to and fro ; at last
 Gave forth this breath : ‘If I believed that this
 Reply was given to one who shall return
 To yonder world, this flame would shake no more,
 Settling in silence. But no living soul,
 So hear I, ever from these depths came back,
 So, without fear of infamy, I speak.
 I was a man of arms,* then Cordelier,
 Hoping, thus girt, to expiate my sins ;
 And I should have succeeded, but that he
 (Be he accursèd !) the great Priest, restored me
 To my first state of sin. Long as I lived
 In that same flesh and blood my mother gave me,
 *

* The cities of Ravenna and Cervia were ruled by the lords of Polenta, who had an eagle for their arms. Forlì, led by this Guido da Montefeltro, expelled the French in 1282, and were now swayed by the Ordelaffi, in whose arms was a green bough.

† Guido Conte da Montefeltro, the chief ruler in Romagna, a valiant and sagacious man, who, becoming old and wearied of the world, became a Franciscan monk in 1297. The story told by Dante of the evil advice he gave to Boniface VIII., suggesting the fraud by which he took Preneste, is not borne out by history, which testifies to his pious life and death in the convent of Assisi.

Not leonine, but vulpine were my deeds.
I knew all arts and hidden ways and wiles,
And with their fame made all the earth resound.
When to that stage of life I had arrived
When it behoves us each to strike his sail
And lay his cordage by, then all that once
Pleased me, now gave me pain ; I saw myself
A contrite, shriven penitent to God,
Alas !—and had remained so, but the Prince
Of the new Pharisees, whose war was made
On foes around the Lateran (not on
Or Saracen or Jew, for every foe
Was Christian, none had gone, a renegade,
To conquer Acre, nor for profit feed
The Sultan's hosts), regarded in himself
Nor sacred orders nor high dignity,
Nor yet in me that penitent garb whose rule
Consumed its wearers (" *quel capestro che solea
Far i suoi cinti macri* "); but, as Constantine
Called on Sylvester in Soracte hid
To cure his leprosy, so sought he me,
As leech, to cure the fever of his pride.*
He asked for counsel. I kept silence, deeming
His words the words of frenzy ; then he said,
'Doubt nothing ; I absolve thee : teach me now
How Palestrino I may throw to earth.
Thou know'st I have the keys wherewith to lock
And unlock heaven, those keys so little prized
By my forerunner.' * . . .
Then said I : ' Father, since thou dost absolve me
From this misdeed that 'tis my doom to act,
I tell thee : promise large, fulfilment small,
Will make thee triumph o'er that ancient seat.'
Then died I, and Saint Francis came for me ;
But one of the black cherubim opposed,
Saying, ' Wrong me not thus, bear him not away.
Needs must he go among my slaves below,

* Pope Celestinus, who resigned the Papacy.

For giving that false counsel, thanks to which
 I have him by the hair. He who repents not,
 He cannot be absolved: at once to will
 Sin and repent it, is impossible.'
 Ah me! ah me! How sore was I dismayed
 When the fiend took me, saying, 'Didst thou think
 That I was such a good logician, ha?'
 When he had ended thus his speech, the flame,
 By anguish cloven, twisted and convulsed
 Its pointed horn; and we again passed on."

CANTO XXVIII.—THE NINTH PIT AND THE SOWERS OF
 CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS DISCORD.

"Who fully could narrate the blood and wounds
 That now I saw, though telling o'er and o'er?
 If thou couldst gather in one spot all those
 Who in Apulia's ill-starred land were made
 Corpses by Romans and by the long war
 Which gathered such great spoil of knightly rings,*
 And they who suffered such sore wounds in strife
 With Robert Guiscard and those crowds whose bones
 Are heaped at Ceperan, where traitor proved
 Every Apulian, and at Tagliacozzo,
 Where old Alardo without arms prevailed,†
 And each one showed his mutilated limbs:
 To that ninth pit it yet could not come nigh."

* This alludes to the great slaughter of Roman knights at the battle of Cannæ, as proved by the immense number of rings taken from the bodies of the dead.

† Robert Guiscard, the Norman who defeated the Greek forces sent by the Emperor of Constantinople to reconquer from him the provinces of Calabria and Apulia.—At Ceperan, Manfred, king of the Two Sicilies, was defeated in 1265 by Charles of Anjou. At Tagliacozzo, in 1268, Charles of Anjou worsted and took prisoner Couradin, Manfred's nephew, having chased away the enemy through the wise counsel of a French knight, Alard de St. Valery.

Dante fixed his eyes upon one who was completely cloven from the chin downwards, and who told him that he was Mahomet, that Ali was there weeping with a cloven face, and that all the others there, equally mangled, were sowers of false religions. He then enquired :

“ ‘But who art thou who dalliest on that rock,
As loth to go and bear the penalty
Assigned thee for thy sins ? ’ Then said my guide,
‘ Death hath not reached him yet, nor guilt escorts him
To punishment ; but that he may acquire
Knowledge complete, I who am dead am bid
To lead him round and round through nether Hell.’
More than a hundred spirits, hearing this,
Stood still within the pit to gaze at me,
Their anguish in astonishment forgotten.”

Mahomet resumed—

“ Thou who perhaps wilt shortly see the sun,
Tell Fra Dolcino * now to arm himself—
If he would not soon hither follow me—
With fit supplies, lest the blockade of snow
Yield to the Novarese the victory,
Which else were hard to win.”

After these (the Heretics) Dante saw the authors of political divisions : Pier da Medicina, with his throat cut, who had sowed discord between Bologna and Rimini, and who now foretold an atrocious act by

* Fra Dolcino was a Franciscan monk, who preached a reform of the Church, attacking especially the pride and luxury of the monastic orders, and advocating a pure and spiritual form of religion. For this he was persecuted, fled to the mountains, and was finally, in 1307, taken and burnt alive at Vercelli.

Malatestino, the lord of Rimini, who, by treachery, caused the drowning of two noble gentlemen of Fano : Curio, who for his bad advice given to Cæsar to cross the Rubicon had had his tongue cut out ; then Mosca degl' Uberti, who held up his maimed hands, whence the blood dripped upon his face. He had stirred up the family of the Amidei to kill Buondelmonte for his rejection of their daughter, from which deed sprang all the civil discord of Florence ; "and the destruction of your race," Dante reminded him, whereon he went away in despair. Whilst

"I stayed to view the crowd, I saw a thing
Which I should fear to tell unseconded
By proof or witness, were I not assured
By the clear conscience that doth set me free
Under the breastplate of a heart untainted."

This sight was one walking without his head, which he held by the hair hanging from his hand "like a lantern." He approached Dante, and told him he was Bertrand de Born,* who had set discord between Henry II. of England and his sons, and his punishment was framed in accordance with his crime, the division of his body answering to the division he had made in the Plantagenet family.

* Bertrand de Born, a great warrior and renowned troubadour (whose *Canzones* Dante has praised in another of his works), was a vassal of Henry II., being viscount of the castle of Haute-forte, in Gascony.

CANTO XXIX.—THE TENTH AND LAST PIT AND THE
FALSIFIERS.

“ The crowd of people and their various wounds
Had made my eyes woe-drunken, till they longed
To stream with weeping.”

Virgil urges Dante to proceed, observing that they never would have time to notice every one there, as the pit was twenty-two miles wide. Dante replied that he had a particular reason for stopping to look, and added—

“ ‘ Within yon depth whereon I hold my eyes
So fixed I deem a spirit of my own blood
Is weeping the offence that cost so dear.’
To which the Master answered, ‘ Heed him not ;
I saw him at the bridge’s foot point out
Thee to the other spirits threateningly,
Shaking his finger, and I heard him named
Geri del Bello ; but just then wert thou
So wholly bent on him of Altaforte,
Thou didst not look that way till he was gone.’
‘ Oh, my dear guide,’ I said, ‘ the violent death
That is not yet avenged by those on whom
Their kinship calls to do it hath displeased him.
And so, I think, he went nor spoke to me ;
For which I blame him not, but pity more.’ ”

Thus speaking they reached the edge of the rock from which they were able to look down into the tenth and last pit of Malebolge.

“ These diverse wailings hit me, like to darts,
With iron points of pity,
[Lamenti saettaron me diversi
Che di pietà ferrati avean gli strali.]”

He saw there indistinctly in the dark pit heaps of

recumbent forms ; then descending to the edge, saw more clearly the punishment of the falsifiers of metals. They lay heaped upon each other, writhing about, yet unable to lift their persons, a prey to loathsome maladies and tearing their flesh with their nails. Virgil addressed them, and was answered by two, who were both Italians, Griffolino of Arezzo, who was burnt alive by the Bishop of Siena as an alchemist, besides having pretended to be able to fly ; and "the other leper," Capocchio, also an alchemist and falsifier of metals, who joined in the conversation in a mocking vein, telling stories of luxurious and extravagant Sienese youths, and reminded Dante, with whom he had been a fellow-student of philosophy, how "that he had always been a good buffoon."

CANTO XXX. — CONTINUATION OF LAST CANTO : IMPOSTORS, FORGERS, AND LIARS.

Dante saw in the tenth pit two shades, pallid and naked, running about in a frenzy, and cruelly biting and tearing every one they met. The victims here were the spirits of impostors who had personated others. These two were Myrrha, the daughter of Ciniras, and Gianni Schicchi, who feigned to be Donato Buoso, and forged a will in his own favour. Then came the coiners of false money, the first of them being Maestro Adamo, a Brescian, who, having been burnt alive for this crime in 1280, was now punished with hydropsy. He thus bewailed himself :

“ Living I had enough of all I would,
And now, alas ! I crave a drop of water.
The little rills which from the verdant hills
Of Casentino flow to the Arno down,
Making their cold, clear channels, ever rise
Before me ; not in vain : for even more
Their image tortures me than doth the ill
That makes my face all fleshless. From the place
Where thus I sinned hath rigid Justice drawn
The means to make yet worse my punishment.
For 'twas Romena where I forged the coin
That bears the Baptist's stamp,* for which I left
My body burned up yonder. But if here
I saw the wretched soul of Alessandro,
Or Guido, or their brother,† I would not
Exchange that sight for all sweet Branda's streams.
Within there's one of them already, if
The frenzied souls that run about speak true.
But what avails it me whose limbs are bound ?
If I were but so light that I could go
An inch in a whole hundred years, already
I should have been upon the path to seek him
'Midst this deformèd people . . . 'Tis through them
That I am of the damnèd family ;
They tempted me to coin the florins which
Held three base carats to alloy the gold.' ”

Dante asked “ Messer ” Adamo who were the two wretches who lay bound close to his right side, reeking with the exhalations of fever. He answered that they were two liars, Potiphar's wife and Sinon the Greek, who deceived Priam. At hearing himself so named, Sinon angrily struck Adamo a blow, and a squabble ensued between the two, each bantering

* The gold florin stamped on one side with St. John the Baptist's head. Romena is a castle on one of the hills of Casentino.

† Counts of Romena.

spitefully and abusing the other about his crime and his punishment. Dante, entertained by the wrangle, continued listening, till Virgil reproved him somewhat sharply. Dante, hearing his displeased tone, turned to him utterly abashed :

“ Like one who dreams of ill befalling him
And dreaming wishes it were but a dream,
Deeming of what it is as it were not ;
E'en so did I, to speak unable, yet
Fain to excuse myself, and so in truth
Excused myself, not knowing what I did.”

Virgil at once forgave him, and bade him be comforted, observing that it was well that he should be always by his side if they were to meet more such beings ;

“ For to hear such base things, the wish were base.”

CANTO XXXI.—THE EIGHTH CIRCLE AND THE GIANTS.

They now turned their backs on the Malebolge and its nine pits, and ascended the ridge beyond till they came to the pit in the centre of the eighth circle.

“ Here it was more than night and less than day,
So that my sight reached but a little way
Before me, when I heard a loud deep horn
To which all other sounds were faint and weak.

* * * * *

After that woeful rout when Charlemagne
Lost all his sacred host, Orlando's horn
Rang not so terribly. I turned my head
In that direction, where I seemed to see
Many great towers arise. ‘ Master,’ I said,

'What land is that?' And he: 'In gazing through
 The dark on too far objects thou dost err.
 Soon wilt thou see thine error, but come on.'
 Then lovingly he took my hand, and said,
 'Ere thou hast come quite nigh to those strange forms,
 That not too much the fact affright thee, know
 These are not towers, but giants, in th' abyss,
 Plunged to the girdle' . . . Making our way through
 The dark thick air, and coming nearer still
 And nearer to the shore, then error fled,
 And in its place fear took me.
 [Fuggèmi errore, e giugnèmi paura.]

"As upon

Its circling walls Montereccione wears
 A crown of towers, e'en so the shores that girt
 Th' abyss were turreted by half the forms
 Of giants horrible, whom Jove, whene'er
 He thunders, still is threatening from the sky.

* * * * *

Nature in sooth when she gave up the art
 Of making such huge creatures did aright,
 Thus robbing Mars of instruments too dire;
 And if she yet repents her not of whales
 And elephants, whoe'er looks well therein
 Will hold her but the juster and more wise.
 For where the weapons of the intellect
 Are joined to body's force and evil will,
 No hope and no escape is left to man."

Dante now perceived the face, shoulders, and chest
 of one of these giants; the face was long and large—

"Come la pina di San Pietro a Roma"

(the great pine-cone of bronze which, originally on
 the mausoleum of Hadrian, had been transferred in
 Dante's time to the Piazza di San Pietro in the
 Vatican), and his stature, measuring only the part of
 his body that was visible, beyond that of three lofty

men. He began addressing them in an unintelligible jargon. Virgil, calling him "*anima sciocca*," bade him take to his horn and vent his rage or any other feeling with that. "Feel," he said, "at your neck, and you will find the strap that holds it, O *anima confusa*! hanging down your vast breast." He then told Dante that this was Nimrod, through whose "*mal coto*" (evil thought or design) of building the tower of Babel the world had no longer one common language, and who, as a punishment, had lost his memory and his senses, and could only talk the confused jargon of the builders. It was of no use, he said, to talk to him, as he would neither understand nor be understood. So they passed on, and saw another giant, still fiercer and bigger, with a chain wound five times round his body, which also bound his arms to his sides. This was Ephialtes who was thus punished for having warred against Jove :

"Quando i giganti fer paura di Dei."

"Never did earthquake so tremendous shake
A tower so strong as then when all his body
Did Ephialtes shake ; I should have died
For very fear had I not seen his chains."

They went on and found Antæus, who, not having rebelled, was not chained, and Virgil adjured him to take them down to the bottom of the abyss, where Cocytus ran frozen. Antæus hastily caught up Virgil, and Dante clinging to him, they made one bundle together, and the giant carried them down. As he bent over the abyss to set them down, he seemed to Dante about to fall backward, like the Carisenda, the leaning tower of Bologna, which to any one standing

under it and looking at a cloud passing the other way seems bending in another direction. There was a moment, Dante confesses, when he wished he had been journeying some other way.

“ But lightly in the abyss he set us down,
Nor long stayed bending there, but rose again,
As a mast dips and rises in the storm.”

CANTO XXXII.—THE NINTH CIRCLE ; CAINA AND
ANTENORA.

They had thus reached the ninth and last circle, which was divided into four concentric compartments, in which are punished four different classes of traitors, each class being guilty of that specially foul treachery which is practised against those who have a sacred right to our faith. In the first Caina are the betrayers of their own kin ; in the next, Antenora, the betrayers of their own country ; the third, Ptolomea, holds the betrayers of their friends ; the fourth, the Giudecca, the betrayers of their lords and benefactors.

Dante wishes that he could find in his Italian language sounds rough and harsh enough to picture the horrors of this lowest abyss.

“ 'Tis no play-work to undertake to paint
The bottom of the universe, no theme
For nursery babble.”

When they had descended to the dark pit low down beneath the feet of the giants, and Dante was looking back up to the lofty wall which surrounded it, he heard a voice say—

“Beware how thou dost pass, and trample not
The heads of these thy wretched brethren here.”

He turned, and saw before him and under his feet a frozen lake, which seemed made of glass, not of water. This was the icy pavement of the abyss made by the stagnant waters of Cocytus, which was harder even than the covering laid by winter over the Danube or the Don, so hard that the loftiest mountain falling upon it would not have made a crack even at the edge. Within and up to their faces in the ice were sorrowful shades, whose teeth chattered with a sound like the clapping of the stork's bill. Each one held his face bent down, and their eyes bore witness to their sadness as their teeth did to the cold. Dante saw two joined so closely to each other that their heads seemed as one, and he asked them who they were. They bent back their necks and showed their faces, and from their eyes, already wet with tears, the drops ran down, and were immediately frozen and fixed upon their lips. Another, who had lost his ears from the cold, inquired why Dante looked at them so hard, and told him that these two were the sons of Alberto, a Florentine noble, to whom belonged the valley of the Bisenzio, who quarrelled about their inheritance, and the one killed the other. He then named himself and two others, who were also traitors and murderers.

This was Caina, from which Dante passed on to Antenora, where he found many traitors to their country (Bocca, Buoso da Duera, Beccheria, Gianni del Soldanier, and Tribaldello), till he saw two frozen in one hole, a cavity dividing Antenora from Ptolomea, where traitors to friendship were punished,

the two spirits having respectively committed either offence. The one head was above the other, and the upper one set his teeth in the scull of the other, like one hungrily gnawing bread. Dante addressed him, adjuring him to tell why he bore such horrible malice against "*colui che tu ti mangi*," bargaining with him that if he would tell him this, he, in return, would report about it, as he would wish, in the world above, "if his tongue were not by that time dried up in death."

CANTO XXXIII.—COUNT UGOLINO ; ANTENORA AND
PTOLOMEA.

The sinner who was occupied as above described, "raising his lips from that fierce food," proceeded to inform Dante thus :—

"I was Count Ugolino, and this man
Archbishop Ruggiero. I will tell thee
Why I thus handle him :* that through th' effect
Of his ill thoughts I, who had trusted him,
Was seized, and done to death, needs not to say.

* Ugolino dei Gherardeschi, a Ghibeline count of Pisa, was accused by the Archbishop Ruggiero degli Ubaldini, a former friend and ally, of having, for money, betrayed a castle to the Florentines and Lucchese, and, being made prisoner by him with his two sons and three nephews, was shut up in a tower, which his enemies locked and threw the keys into the Arno. The captives were left there without food and perished miserably, and the place was thenceforth called the Tower of Hunger. It belonged to Gualandi, who, with Sismondi and Lanfranchi, joined against Ugolino. This is the legend, but who were the real perpetrators of the atrocity is doubtful.

But that which thou canst not have heard, how cruel
Was that same death, thou'lt hear, and judge my wrong."

STORY OF UGOLINO.

"A loophole in the prison tower men call
The Tower of Famine—name through me obtained,
Where yet must others languish in like thrall,—
Had through its chink shown many a moon that waned
Ere that dire dream unveiled what should befall.
This villain here—I dreamt he led the hunt
Of wolves and wolf-cubs o'er the hill that bounds
Pisa and Lucca ; next him bore the brunt
Gualandi with his well-trained, well-starved hounds ;
Sismondi and Lanfranchi too in front.
The sire and whelps—I saw them faint and worn
Soon with the chase ; the dogs' keen teeth were shown
Mangling their sides : I woke before the morn,
And heard my children, who were with me, moan
And ask for bread through all their sleep forlorn.
Cruel thou art if thou dost not conceive
Pity for what my heart did prophesy.
And if thou grieve not, what should make thee grieve ?
Now did they waken and the hour was nigh
That wont our food to bring us—but dreams leave
Their message, and each doubted, from his own.
And then the nailing of the door I heard
Below, the horrible tower's sole door : 'twas done !—
I on my children gazed and spoke no word,
Nor wept ; for all my heart was turned to stone.
They wept ; I heard my little Anselm say,
'Father, thou lookest so ! what ails thee ? ' Yet
I wept not, nor made answer all that day ;
Nor the next night, till a new morning let
Into that dismal cell a feeble ray.
And in four faces my own look I saw :
Then both my hands I bit for very grief ;
They thought that I was seeking what to gnaw,
And, rising, cried, 'Father, 't were some relief
If thou couldst life from these our bodies draw ;
This wretched flesh thou gavest, take again.'

Then kept I still, not to make more their woes ;
 Mute did we all for two long days remain.
 Oh ! cruel earth, why didst thou not unclose
 And swallow us ? When came the fourth day's pain,
 Prone at my feet himself did Gaddo throw,
 Crying, ' Oh ! father, canst not help thy son ?'
 Then died he ; and as thou seest me, e'en so
 I saw the other three die one by one
 Between the fifth and sixth days. Faint and slow,
 Grown blind, I groped amongst them then, and through
 Two days I called to those already dead.
 Then famine did what sorrow could not do.'
 Thereon, with glaring eyes, when all was said,
 Fiercely he set his teeth and tore anew
 That wretched skull, as a dog tears a bone.—
 Ah ! Pisa, shame of all whose homes are built
 In the fair land where sounds the ' si's ' * soft tone,
 Since slow are those around to scourge thy guilt.
 Be now Gorgona and Capraia † thrown
 Across the Arno's mouth in one huge mound,
 And every soul that lives in thee be drowned."

They then passed on into Ptolomea, where they
 found the ice binding another set of people, who did
 not stand with faces bent down, but were stretched on
 their backs.

" Their very tears
 Allowed them not to weep ; the grief that found
 Hindrance in eyes with tears already frozen
 Returned within to make their anguish more.
 For like a crystal vizor those first tears
 Filled all the hollow underneath the brow."

Though in their masks of ice, Dante could not see

* Italy, which he distinguishes as the land where the affirmative " si " is used as opposed to southern France, the land of " oc " or " oui."

† Names of two islets in the Adriatic, not far from the mouth of the Arno.

their faces, one of them addressed the new-comers, saying—

“ O souls, so cruel that to you ’s assigned
The lowest sphere in Hell, lift up I pray
This rigid veil from off my face that so
I may discharge the grief that loads my heart
A little space, ere tears congeal again.”

Dante promised to do this, and the spirit then told him that he was Alberigo de' Manfredi of Faenza, who became a friar and caused some of his comrades to be murdered. Dante expressed surprise, as he believed Alberigo to be still living, and the spirit explained that his body was probably still on earth and apparently alive, being inhabited by a demon, as was the case with souls guilty of treachery. The soul fell into Ptolomea before Atropos had put an end to the life, whereupon a demon always took possession of the body. Of this he said there was an instance just behind them, Ser Branco d' Oria, who had been there many years.

“ I said, ‘ Thou dost deceive me ; he is not dead,
This Branco d' Oria, he eats, and drinks, and sleeps,
And speaks like others.’ ‘ Yet,’ said he, ‘ the soul
Of Michel Zanche, him whom he betrayed,
Not yet in Malebranche’s pit up there
Had entered when to Branco’s body, left
By him, a devil came ; another took
That of his kinsman who had shared his crime.”

Finding him so wicked, Dante refused to fulfil his promise of opening his eyes.

“ E cortesia fu lui esser villano.”

Dante then bitterly abuses the Genoese, of whom Branco d' Oria was one, as pestiferous barbarians.

CANTO XXXIV.—THE NINTH CIRCLE AND LUCIFER.

They entered now the fourth division of the ninth circle, Giudecca, which contained the traitors to their masters and benefactors, where the spirits were wholly covered with ice. Virgil observed—

“Behold the banners of the king of Hell
Approaching ! see if thou canst aught discern.”

But Dante perceived only a strong wind blowing, as from a windmill ; at last he discerns spirits, some lying, some upright, some standing head downwards, all seen through the ice, like straws in glass. Then Virgil showed him “*la creatura ch’ ebbe il bel sembiante*”—that is, Lucifer—at the sight of whom he says—

“*Io non morii e non rimasi vivo,*”

as it were, in a state of suspended existence from sudden horror. Lucifer stood with his bust above the frozen mass, an enormous hideous giant with three faces, weeping tears and blood from six eyes, tearing a sinner with each of his three mouths, and three pair of huge bat-like wings, whose continued flutter made that noise of wind that Dante first perceived and froze Cocytus. The three souls whom he was thus horribly gnawing and tearing were Judas Iscariot, who was the worst tormented of all ; Brutus and Cassius, who had each betrayed to death their master and friend. Of Brutus, Virgil observed—

“See how he writhes, and never speaks a word !”

He then warned Dante that night was coming on, and that it was time to quit the infernal regions, as they had seen everything. With Dante clinging to

him, Virgil fixed himself upon Lucifer's shaggy sides, and thus they began to descend through the ice to the centre of the earth, in which Lucifer was standing half way. Here, in order to gain the opposite southern hemisphere to which they were tending, they had to reverse their position, and consequently to ascend instead of descending, a movement accomplished with difficulty, owing to the centripetal force in the centre of the earth. Dante, not understanding the movement, feared they were returning to the Hell they were to leave. But they had now traversed a cavity, piercing through the spherical rock which formed the nucleus of this central region, the upper part of which, bound in ice, formed the *Giudecca*, and in which stood Lucifer, his upper part being in the northern hemisphere, his lower in the southern. They had thus come out on the southern side of the rock, on the edge of which Virgil now seated Dante to rest awhile. Unaware of the revolution that had been performed in going from the northern to the southern hemisphere, and seeing Lucifer's feet projecting beyond the cavity, Dante, believing himself still in the same spot as before, asked Virgil where was the ice, why Lucifer was thus upside down, and why it had so suddenly become morning, whereas the night was just setting in when they began. Virgil explained how they had come out on the other side and now had above them the sky of the southern hemisphere, being at the point exactly opposite that central part of the earth where, as was then supposed, stood Jerusalem, the place in which

“*Consunto*

Fu l' Uom che nacque e visse senza pecca.”

Here, too, from the change of hemisphere it was morning, while in the other it was evening; and Lucifer seemed reversed for the same reason. It was from this part, that is, from the region of heaven over the southern pole, that he first fell, head downwards, with such violence that he cleft the earth, even to the centre where his course stopped. The earth, terrified, rushed from the southern hemisphere to the north, leaving its place filled up by the sea which came in instead, "and perchance," added Virgil, "the earth in these central parts, terrified in its turn, left the place empty and swelled up into a mountain on the southern side" (the Mountain of Purgatory, to which they were now tending) "and this empty spot which it had left in its flight from contact with Lucifer formed the abyss we are now in." There was indeed beyond them a hollow way leading through the earth to the other hemisphere and to Purgatory, so remote and dark

"That not by sight, but sound, is there discerned
A slender rill descending through a cleft
Worn by its passage in the rock."

By this secret way they entered on their return to the light, towards which ascending they saw through a round opening (probably the cavity made by Lucifer in his fall)

"the fair revolving forms of heaven,
And, issuing thence, beheld again the stars."

END OF THE "INFERNO."

PURGATORY.

CANTO I.—THE MOUNT OF PURGATORY AND CATO OF UTICA.

DANTE thus introduces this part of his poem :

“ Per correr miglior acqua alza le vele
Omai la navicella del mio ingegno,
Che lascia dietro a sè mar sì crudele :
E canterò di quel secondo regno,
Ove l' umano spirito sì purga,
E di salire al ciel diventa degno.”

Having issued forth from the centre of the earth, from darkness to daylight, Dante beheld before him the Mount of Purgatory, rising as an island out of the vast ocean surrounding the earth.

“ Dolce color d' oriental zaffiro,
Che s'accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
Dell' aer puro infino al primo giro,
Agli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,
Tosto ch' io uscì fuor dell' aura morta.
Che m' avea contristati gl' occhi e 'l petto.
Lo bel pianeta che ad amar conforta
Faceva tutto rider l' oriente.”

“ The lovely sapphire's oriental hue,
O'er all the heaven in that pure air serene,
Pure air to the horizon's utmost verge

Brought back to me delight so long unseen,
 Soon as I issued from those depths below,
 That air of death that saddened heart and sight.
 And the fair planet that to love allures
 Set all the orient smiling in her light.

* * * *

I turned me to the right and set my mind
 To the other pole, and there beheld four stars,
 Save by the first of men ne'er seen before.*
 The heaven appeared rejoicing in their flames.
 O northern realm, how desolate art thou
 Bereaved of that glad sight ! ”

Dante looked round and saw a venerable old man with a long white beard and white hair, and the “quattro luci sante” shedding such light on his face that “I seemed to see the sun shining there.”

“ You who against the blind dark stream have striven,
 Escaped the eternal prison—who are ye ?
 He said, his white beard shaking, ‘ Who has led you ?
 Who lighted you from out that depth of night,
 Which blackens the eternal vale for ever ?
 The laws of the abyss, have they been broken,
 Or have Heaven’s counsels changed, that souls condemned
 Come to my grotto ? ’ ”

Virgil signified to Dante with “ words and gestures and signs ” that he should make a lowly and reverent salutation to the old man, who was Cato of Utica. This having been done, he (Virgil) explained to Cato the history of his mission to Dante and their journey together, and proceeds thus—

* Two groups of four stars which are seen near the South Pole, of which Dante may have heard from Marco Polo (who crossed the Equator a few years before he wrote), and which, placing Paradise as he does at the top of the mountain of Purgatory, he represents Adam and Eve as able to have discerned.

“ Now be thou pleased to welcome him who comes :
Ever is he in search of Liberty,
That Liberty so dear, as well he knows
Who for her sake can life itself abjure.
Thou know'st it, thou to whom for her was death
In Utica not bitter, leaving there
The mortal garb that shall on the great day
Be so resplendent.”

He then asked leave of Cato, for the sake of his wife Marcia, whose “ chaste eyes were in the same circle ” with himself (Virgil), to take Dante over the seven circles of Purgatory, of which Cato was the warder, as Minos was of Hell. Cato granted it, bidding Dante first bathe his face to purify it from the stains of the infernal atmosphere. He bade him go to the lowest part of the *isoletta*, where it was bathed by the sea, and where no other plant could flourish save certain reeds, and gather one of these wherewith to bind himself. He added that he would not pursue his journey from that point, but would be shown by the sun, which was now rising, an easier ascent.

He then disappeared, and Dante turned silently to Virgil to guide him. The day was now quite risen.

“ L' alba vinceva l' òra mattutina,
Che fuggia innanzi, sì che di lontana
Conobbi il tremolar della marina.
[I caught the tremulous glitter of the sea.]”

They went by the solitary plain down the slope towards the lowest spot, and coming where the dew still resisted the sun and, being in a cool and shady place, had not been dried up, Virgil spread both his hands upon the dewy grass, and Dante turning to him his tearful face, he wiped from it all the stains.

And then we entered on that desert shore
Upon whose waters ne'er did mortal launch
And yet return again."

CANTO II.—THE ARRIVAL OF THE SPIRITS BOUND
FOR PURGATORY.

"Noi eravam lunghezzo 'l mare ancora,
Come gente che pensa suo cammino,
Che va col core, e col corpo dimora;
Ed ecco qual, su 'l presso del mattino,
Per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
Giù nel ponente sopra 'l suo marino."

Like such—that is, the reddening of Mars seen through the morning mist when about to sink in the west (such as he had seen it on earth and hoped to see it yet again)—

"A light upon the waves so swiftly came,
No flight could match its moving."

And when, after turning his eyes away for a moment to ask Virgil what it was, he looked at it again, he saw it larger and brighter.

"Then on each side of it appeared to me
A something white, and under it by degrees
Came forth another whiteness. Still we looked
In silence till the first white grew to wings;
Then when my master saw at last who 't was
Who moved the boat, he cried, 'Bend, bend thy knees!
Behold God's angel! Now shalt thou behold
More of such heavenly ministrants. But see
How he disdains all human instruments,
Needing nor oar, nor sail, save his own wings,
To make his way between such distant shores.'"

* * * *

Then as still near and nearer to us came
 The Bird Divine, distincter it appeared,
 And all too bright to look on. To the shore
 He came in a light skiff, so light, so small
 That it unsinking floated on the waves.
 [Tanto che l' acqua nulla ne inghiottiva.]
 Stood at the prow the heavenly mariner.
 Heaven's blessedness was written on his brow.
 More than a hundred spirits sat within,
 As all together in one voice they sang,
De exitu Israel de Ægypto.
 Then made he them the Holy Cross' sign,
 And simply as he came, away he went.
 They stood and looked around as those who were
 Strange to the place and saw it the first time,
 While from all sides the sun shot down the day
 With his bright arrows."

The newly-arrived souls addressed Virgil and Dante,
 asking the way up the mountain. Virgil answered—

"You think that we are spirits of this place,
 But we are pilgrims like yourselves. We came
 A little before you another way."

The spirits, perceiving by Dante's breathing that he
 was still living, became pale as death with wonder, and
 crowded around him, as people press round "messag-
 gieri che porta olivo," forgetting in their gazing on
 him to go forward to be purified and restored to their
 original beauty. One of them advanced to embrace
 Dante with such tenderness that he was moved to do
 the like. Three times he essayed to put his arms
 round him, and three times they shrank back upon his
 breast. The spirit smiled and retired, and at last
 gently bade him cease. Then Dante knew who he
 was, and prayed him to stay a little and speak with

him ; which he did, saying, " As I loved thee in my mortal body, so I love thee now though freed from

" ' Ma tu perchè vai ?
Casella mio,* per tornare altra volta
Là dove io son, fo io questo viaggia,'
Diss' io : ' Ma a te, come tant' ora è tolta ? ' "

Casella explained that after death he waited three months before the angel could take him in his boat.

" I said, ' If this new life have robbed thee not
Of memory or use of that sweet song
That wont to soothe all passions in my breast,
Console now with it, pray thee, this sad soul
That with the body I have carried hither.' "

Casella began to sing some verses of Dante's own :

" Amor che nella mente mi ragiona ; "

so sweetly that Virgil and all the spirits stood fixed to hear him, as though forgetting all beside. Cato then suddenly chided them sharply for their loitering, and bade them haste to the Mount, where they were to be purified from their sins. Then like a flock of doves quietly feeding which, scared by some new sight, suddenly disperse, so did all those startled souls flee in an aimless way ; and he and Virgil followed.

CANTO III.—THE APPROACH TO THE MOUNT AND MANFREDI.

When this sudden flight had dispersed the spirits through the plain, Dante drew closer to his guide, and

* An excellent Florentine musician.

perceived in him the appearance of penitence for having permitted this slight delay :

“ O dignitosa coscienza è netta
Come t' è picciol fallo amaro morso ! ”

Dante then turned his face to the Mount, and saw that the sun which was rising all flaming red behind him cast no shadow in front save his own. Seeing thus the way before him apparently all solitary, he turned in terror, fearing that his dear master had left him. Virgil allayed his fears and explained to him something of the nature of immaterial spirits, winding up with—

“ ‘ Be ye content, O mortals, with the proof
Shown in th' effects ; for, could ye this discern,
There were no need for Mary's heavenly Son.
Nor would ye see, as now, high minds remain
Fruitless, but would behold calmed those desires
That now must yearn through all eternity.
I speak of Plato and of Aristotle,
And many others.' Here he said no more,
And bowed his face to earth remaining sad.”

They had now reached the foot of the Mount, where they found the rock so steep that they knew not where to climb it.

“ The ruin most deserted, most o'erthrown,
Betwixt Lerici and Turbia found,
Would be to that ascent a wide, smooth stair.” *

While they were doubting, a crowd of spirits came towards them from the left,

“ Who moved so slow, they scarcely seemed to move.”

* The Genoese Riviera from the two extreme points Lerici and Turbia is a range of rocky and precipitous hills, Turbia especially.

Virgil approached and addressed them.

“O ben finiti, O già spiriti eletti,
 per quella pace
Ch’ io credo che per voi tutti s’ aspetti
Ditene dove la montagna giace,
Sì che possibil sia l’ andare in suso.”

The crowd which had stopped in wonder to gaze on them, then, when Virgil had spoken.

“As issues from the fold a flock of sheep,
Timidly bending low their eyes and head,
As does the first all doing, close behind,
Stopping if *he* stops, simple, quiet, meek,
Not knowing wherefore—so I saw *them* move.”

Then one of the foremost addressed Dante, bidding him, whoever he was, look at him to see if he knew him. Dante turned and looked fixedly at him.

“Biondo era, e bello, e di gentile aspetto;
Ma l’ un de’ cigli un colpo avea diviso.”

Dante courteously disclaimed having ever seen him, whereupon he showed him a wound in the upper part of his breast.

“Poi disse sorridendo: ‘Io son Manfredi,*
Nipote di Costanza imperadrice.”

He prayed Dante when he returned to earth to go to his fair daughter (Constance, Queen of Aragon) and tell her the truth about him, whatever else might be said by others.

* As the battle of Benevento, in which Manfred fell, took place in 1266, the year after Dante was born, the latter could not have recognised him.

“ When all my form was shattered with two deep
And deadly points, I yielded up myself,
Weeping, to Him who freely doth forgive.
Horrible were my sins, but infinite
Goodness hath ample arms to take in all
Who turn to him. If he, Cosenza’s shepherd,
By Clement sent in search of me had read
Aright that word of God’s that tells His grace,
The bones of my dead corse had still reposed
Beneath the bridge of Benevento, close
Under the guardianship of that grave wall.
Now the rain bathes them, and the wind disturbs,
Beyond the kingdom, far as Verde’s stream,
Whither, with lights put out, they carried them.
Yet not their curse destroys th’ eternal love,
Which, while Hope yet doth wear a germ of green,
[Mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde,]
May still return. ’Tis true that he who dies
Unreconciled to Holy Church, although
Repentant at the end, must stay without,
Upon this shore, full thirty times as long
As in that state he lived, unless kind prayers
Shorten the term. See then if thou to me
Canst bring a blessing, by revealing this
To my dear Constance, how thou saw’st me here,
And this remaining ban : for much by prayer
Of those on earth is won for sinners here.”

* The archbishop of Cosenza was sent by the pope, Clement IV., to Charles of Anjou to stir him up against Manfred. Charles would not allow the body of Manfred, who had been excommunicated by the pope, to be buried in holy ground, so it was laid under the bridge of Benevento, and a wall raised above it. Thence it was dislodged by the archbishop of Cosenza, and sent out of the confines of Naples, which was regarded as the Church’s property, down the stream of Verde. ●

CANTO IV.—THE FIRST CIRCLE OF THE MOUNT AND
THE PROCRASTINATORS.

Dante was so absorbed in hearing and wondering at the spirit that spoke, that the sun had risen fifty degrees above the horizon (an hour had passed in this colloquy) without his perceiving it. The other spirits then called to him, showing him a most steep and difficult path, cut in the rock, and so narrow that

“ A larger gap the farmer closes up
Full often in his fence with one fork’s load
Of thorny brambles, when the grapes grow black.”

They climbed upon hands and feet with great toil and fatigue :

“ Lo sommo era alto che vincea la vista ; ”

and Dante in his weariness told Virgil that if he did not stop he should be left alone. Virgil encouraged him to proceed as far as a certain jutting ledge which ran round the hill which he pointed out, and Dante, spurred on by his words, crawled after him, till he felt the encircling ledge under his feet. They then sat down there and gazed towards the east, whence they had mounted, with the pleasure the traveller takes in reviewing the toils of the past.

“ Chè suole a riguardar giovare l’altrui.”

Dante then observed to his teacher

“ la monte sale
Più che salir non posson gl’ occhi miei.”

Virgil remarked that it was always hardest at the beginning ; at last it would become so soft and easy,

“that thy steps will move
Light as a ship that floats upon the wave.”

Suddenly they beheld a crowd of spirits reclining in the shade behind the rock. One of them was sitting as if weary, embracing his knees, with his head sunk between them. These were the Indolent, who had put off their conversion to the last moment, and this laziest one is a friend of Dante's, Bell'acqua, an excellent maker of musical instruments, who talked in a lazy sort of manner, saying he was doomed to wander there as long as his natural life had lasted.

“Perch' io indugiai al fin li buon sospiri.”

Virgil then called to Dante to arise and go on with him as the sun was already at noonday.

CANTO V.—CONVERSATION WITH A TROOP OF
SPIRITS.

Virgil and Dante had left the shades and were going on together, when one of them called from behind, pointing at him, that the sun shone only on one side of Dante, the rays being interrupted by his solid body, and that he walked like one alive. Virgil asked him why their comments troubled him.

“Come behind me, and let the people talk.
Be steadfast as a tower, that never moves
Its top for blowing winds. Ever the man,
In whom thought crops o'er thought, swerves from his end,
Since one must check the impulse of the other.”

They then met a troop of spirits singing the *Miserere*, verse by verse, which was suddenly suspended

by astonishment at meeting the travellers. Two of them ran forward as messengers to know who these were. Virgil gave the usual assurances, adding—

“ ‘ If ’twas at seeing his shadow that ye stayed,
As I conclude, ye now have your reply.
But do him honour, and it well may be
The better for you.’ Never did I see
So quick the kindled vapours cleave the calm
Of the deep night, or mists of August rise,
When the sun sinks, as those two hastened back
To join the rest, then press on us once more.”

Virgil pointed out how they were coming, but bade him go on and listen to them while walking; meanwhile the souls pathetically adjured him to stop and see if he knew any of them. All of them, they said, had died by violence without time to be absolved; but the light of heaven had brought them true sight, so that “repenting and forgiving” they had been reconciled to God. Dante looked in their faces and said he knew none of them, but bade them tell him what he could do for them, and he swore to do it,

“by that grace
Which, following such a guide, on such a quest,
From world to world, hath sent me.”

One of them then addressed him, praying him if ever he went to Fano, in the country between Naples and Romagna (his birthplace) to bid his friends perform services for the purification of his soul. This was Jacopo del Cassero, who was assassinated by order of Azzo VIII. of Este, son of Obizzo II., both of them most perfidious and bloodthirsty tyrants.

Then another spoke, saying—

“ ‘I was Buonconte
 Of Montefeltro ; nor my wife Giovanna,
 Nor any one, cares for me ; so I go,
 With face declined, amongst these.’ Then I said,
 ‘ What force or fortune sent thee thus astray
 From Campaldino,* so that no one knew
 Thy place of burial ? ’ ‘ Oh,’ said he, ‘ at foot
 Of Casentino runs a stream, by name
 The Archiano, born in the Apennine.
 There where its name it loseth†, I arrived
 With my throat pierced, flying on foot, my blood
 Reddening the plain. Here failed my sight, my speech
 Ceased with the Virgin’s name, and here I fell,
 And left my corpse forsaken. Hear the truth ;
 God’s Angel took me, he from Hell opposed,
 Crying, ‘ Why rob me of him, heaven-born one ?
 Thou bear’st away his part immortal, stolen
 From me by one poor tear ; but otherwise
 His other part I’ll order.’ ”

Then the Demon “ combined his evil will with his intellect,” and brought on such wind and vapour as covered the valley from “ Pratomagna ” to the “ gran giogo ” of the Apennine with cloud, so that torrents of rain fell and swelled the streams, especially descending on the “ fiume reale ” the Arno. His body frozen “ *in su la face* ” was found by the raging Archiano,

“ which drove it forth
 Into the Arno, loosening on my breast

* Buonconte, son of Guido da Montefeltro, was one of the Ghibelines expelled from Florence who, aided by the people of Arezzo, fought against the Guelphs at Campaldino ; they were defeated and Buonconte slain. Dante is said to have been present at this battle.

† “ *Ove ’l vocabol suo diventa vago,* ” where it blends its waters with those of the Arno.

THE DIVINE COMEDY.

The cross that I with my two arms had made
When death o'ercame me [sciolse al mio petto la croce,
Ch' io fèi di me quando il dolor mi vinse],
It whirled me 'twixt its banks and in its depths,
Then with its sands girdled and covered me."

A third spirit here interposes.

"Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia.
Siena mi fe, disfecemi Maremma ;
Salsi colui che, innanellata pria,
Disposato m' avea con la sua gemma." *

CANTO VI.—THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED : MEETING OF VIRGIL AND SORDELLO.

Dante found himself still surrounded by the eagerly
appealing spirits.

"As when, the game of zara † played and over,
The one who lost all sorrowing stays behind,
Reckoning once more the chances, learning thus
Sadly the method that he should have used,
And with the winner all the rest depart.
One goes before and one comes up behind,
And from the side his notice others claim.
And he to whom he gives a hand yields back,
And from the crowd he thus protects himself."

Thus was Dante amidst the spirits, turning here
and there and freeing himself from them by promises.

* Pia Guastelloni, the widow of a Tolomei ("innanellata pria") was married to Nello Pannochieschi, lord of Castel della Pietra, who, suspecting her of infidelity, confined her in the Maremma, till the pestilential air of the marshes destroyed (*disfece*) her.

† A game played with three dice.

He named amongst them many who had perished by violent deaths, chiefly by assassination, and when they were gone, he put questions to Virgil on the efficacy of prayer in their behalf. Virgil in answering referred him to a higher authority.

“ Non so se intendi : io dico di Beatrice.
Tu la vedrai di sopra, in su la vetta
Di questo monte, ridente e felice.”

Dante instantly besought that they should make greater haste, for that he now no longer felt so fatigued as before, and he bade him observe what a shadow the mountain was throwing. Virgil says,

“ ‘ See there a soul that, standing all alone,
Is gazing towards us fixedly : from him
We best shall learn our way.’ To him we came.
O Lombard soul ! how full of proud disdain
Thou stood’st, how slow and stately in their glancing
Were those intrepid eyes ! No word he deigned us,
But let us pass, though watching us the while
Like a couched lion.”

Virgil asked him the way ; he replied not, but asked in turn their nation and way of life. Virgil began, “*Mantuan*,” and the spirit instantly sprang towards him, exclaiming—

“ ‘ O Mantuan, I am thy countryman,
Sordello ! ’ * and the two at once embraced.”

* Sordello de’ Visconti of Mantua was a distinguished *trovatore* of the thirteenth century patronised by Charles of Anjou, and the lover of Cunizza, sister to Ezzelino da Romano. He is represented by Dante as one of those condemned to purgatory for having allowed business and other cares to hinder their salvation to the last.

Dante here breaks out in an apostrophe to Italy :

“ Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,”

comparing this warm brotherly movement of the two Mantuans with the enmities and strifes now distracting the whole country.

“ O Guelphs, who ought to show yourselves devout,
And to let Cæsar have his lawful sway,
As God hath told us, see how ye have let
This Italy run wild, a savage beast
Unchecked, unchastened. How hast thou forsaken,
O German Albert ! * her so tameless grown,
Whose saddle thou shouldst fill ; be sure the stars
Will on thy race let their just judgments fall,
A new, a public doom, that shall affright
Him who succeeds thee. † Why have ye allowed,
Thou and thy father, bent on distant spoils,
The garden of the Empire to lie waste ?
Come, cruel, come, and see thy nobles languish ;
Come, curse their wounds, see Santafiore's woe ; ‡
Come and behold thy Rome that ever weeps,
Alone and widowed, calling night and day,
' My Cæsar, why dost leave me desolate ? '
Come, see thy people, how they love each other,
And, if no pity move thee for our sake,
Come blush for thine own self. O God supreme !
Who for our weal on earth wast crucified,
Are thy just eyes turned elsewhere ? Or dost Thou,
In thy deep councils, plan for us some good
Remote from all our thoughts ? Italian realms
Are choked with tyrants ; every countryman,
Joining in factious strife, turns a Marcellus.”

* Albert of Austria, son and successor in 1299 of Rodolph of Hapsburg, who refused to assist the exiled Ghibelines and never cared to enter Italy.

† Henry VII. When this was written Albert had fallen by his nephew's hand.

‡ An imperial fief lying between Pisa and Siena.

He then attacks Florence in especial in a strain of bitter irony, winding up with

“Couldst thou but see thyself, thou wouldst discern
Thy likeness to the sick man, who can find
No rest on the soft down, but turns and turns,
Seeking to cheat his pain.”

CANTO VII.—SORDELLO AND THE VALLEY OF THE
PRINCES.

After repeated affectionate greetings between the two, Sordello paused to ask, “And who art thou?” Virgil replied—

“‘Before this mount was made the way whereby
Souls might rise heavenward by Octavius’ care
My bones were laid in Naples. I am Virgil;
I lost the heavens because I knew not God.’
As one who suddenly before him sees
A thing so wonderful that he at once
Believes and disbelieves, saying, it is,
And ’tis not; so Sordello stood, and bent
His eyes and humbly turned and kissed the feet
Of him he had embraced; and then he said,
‘O glory of our Latin race, through whom
Our tongue hath shown what it can do! O thou
Immortal honour of my place of birth!
Com’st thou from Hell?—and from what sphere of it?’”

Virgil answered—

“Not from what I have done, but have not done,
I have lost the light thou seekest, that too late
Was known by me. There is a place below
Sad, not with torments, but with darkness only,
Where the laments sound not as groans, but sighs.

Here I abide with infants innocent
Bit by the fangs of death ere they were purged
Of their original sin, and also here
With those who, wearing not the three prime virtues,
Followed all others, and all vice forebore."

He then asked Sordello the way up the mount to Purgatory itself, which they had not yet entered. Sordello said that there was no certain way, but that he would guide them himself as far as he was permitted to go. But as the night was now falling, he would take them first to a place where other spirits reposed and where they would find much delight. He led them accordingly to a spot where the mountain was hollowed into a valley, which they reached by a narrow winding path.

"Silver and gold and red and snow-white dyes,
The shining Indian wood, fresh emerald,
Would all be dim beside the turf and flowers
In that sweet dell. Nor Nature was content
To paint it only, but such sweetness shed
Out of a thousand odours as made up,
In mingling, a delicious mystery.
[Ma di soavita di mille odori
Vi faceva un incognito indistinto].
Seated upon the flowers and turf I saw
Spirits invisible from without the dell,
Salve Regina singing."

These were the Princes who, occupied by their worldly aggrandisement, put off to the last moment the making their peace with God. Sordello would not introduce his friends among these spirits till the sun had set, "prima che 'l poco sole omai s' annidi," that they might have an opportunity of first observing them all from the rock where they stood.

“He who sits highest, with a look as though
He had neglected what he ought to do,
Nor moves his lips in all the others’ song,
Was the Emperor Rodolph, he who could have healed
The wounds that have killed Italy, whom now
Too late seek others to make alive again.”

He then pointed out Philip III. of France, and Henry III. of Navarre, “father and father-in-law” of Philip le Bel, whom Dante stigmatised as “the ill of France.” Both of them were mourning over the unworthiness of this latter :

“Sanno la vita sua viziosa e lorda.”

Another,

“who was of such noble form,”

and was singing in concert with Charles of Anjou, was Pedro III. of Aragon, who married Manfred’s daughter Constance, and acquired Sicily after the famous vespers, and who

“d’ogni virtù portò cinto la corda.”

Had his young son* succeeded him, says Dante,

“Ben andava il valor di vaso in vaso ;”

which, as he says, was not the case with the actual heirs, Giacomo and Federigo. Seldom, he adds, does human virtue extend to the branches of the paternal stem, and he illustrates this further by the case of the before mentioned.

* The “young son” may have been either Alfonso, who succeeded him in Aragon and died early without heir ; or, more likely, Pedro, his youngest, who succeeded to nothing at all.

Sordello next pointed out Henry III. of England, "il re della semplice vita," who sat by himself and was happier in his descendants than the other two; and Guglielmo, Marquis of Monferrato, who sat lower than the rest and looked up to them, on whose account there was long war between Alexandria and the Canavese and Monferrato.*

CANTO VIII.—THE ANGELS AND THE SERPENT, AND
CONRAD MALESPINA.

"'T was now the hour when sailors' bosoms swell,
And on their melting hearts begins to prey
The day when to dear friends they said farewell,
That thrills the yet new pilgrim on his way,
With love, if from afar he hear the bell,
That seems as though it mourned the dying day."

"Era già l' ora che volge il disio
Ai naviganti e 'ntenerisce il core,
Lo di' ch' han detto a' dolci amici addio;
E che il nuovo peregrin d' amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
Che paia il giorno piangere che muore."

All was then silent, when one of the spirits arose,
and, making a sign to the others to listen to him,

"Lifted his folded palms and fixed his eyes
Upon the east, as though he said to God,
'Thou art my only care.' *Te lucis ante*,
Came so devoutly from his lips, in notes
So sweet, it drew my senses quite away.

* The people of the former place, by treachery, made captive the Marquis and shut him in an iron cage where he died of grief in 1292.

And sweetly and devoutly too the rest
Follow him, keeping through the hymn their eyes
Upon the spheres above. . . .
Then all looked down in silence, as with pale
And humble looks expecting. And I saw
Come out of the sky heights and downward fly
Two angels with two flaming swords whose points
Were blunted green, like leaflets just disclosed,
Their robes, that far behind them flew in air,
Fanned by their wings as green. One o'er our heads
Made pause, the other on th' opposing shores.
Their golden locks well saw I, but all sight
Was lost in their bright faces. . . ."

Sordello explained that they came to guard the inhabitants of the valley from a serpent which would soon make his appearance. He added—

"Let us descend
Amongst those mighty shades and speak with them :
Glad will they be to see you."

They descended ; the air was already darkening, yet not so but that Dante and one of the shades recognised each other, and came at once to salute and speak with each other. This was Nino of the house of the Visconti in Pisa, grandson of Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, and a chief of the Guelph party. He thus entreated Dante, on finding that he was still living :

"When o'er the mighty sea thou'rt gone from hence,
Bid thou my child Giovanna pray for me,
There where the prayer of innocence finds response :
I think her mother loves me now no more."

He went on to speak reproachfully of his wife having quitted her widowhood to marry Galeazzo,

Visconti of Milan, a match in which it seems she was not happy.

Nino ceased to speak, and Dante gazed fixedly on the sky, towards the south pole, watching

“ *quelle tre facelle*
Di che il polo di qua tutto quanto arde.”

Sordello pointed out to him that the serpent was at hand, and by the unsheltered part of the valley came

“ ‘ *una biscia,*
Forse qual diede à Eva il cibo amaro.’
I saw not, nor can tell how thither moved
Those divine eagles, only well I saw
They *had* moved thither both. The serpent heard
Those green wings cleave the air, and fled ; and they,
The angels, to their post flew back again.”

While this scene lasted another spirit had been gazing at Dante, never taking his eyes off him, and now began asking of him news of the district of Valdemagra, where, said he,

“ ‘ I once was great ;
Conrado Malespina was my name ;
Not he of old am I, but sprung from him.’
‘ Ne’er was I in your country,’ I replied,
‘ But who is there throughout all Europe who
Knows not its fame ? The glory of your house
Makes famous all your race and all your land.
I swear (so may I to the light return)
That your illustrious race no whit hath dimmed
Its fame for open hand and valiant sword.

* This Conrado, who died in 1250, was marquis of Lunigiano ; and it was probably his grandson who received Dante in his exile.

By use and nature so 'tis privileged
 That while the world's vile head [Pope Boniface]
 Turns all its steps awry, they only walk
 Straight onward, scorning the false path.' "

Then he :

" Soon shall this courteous judgment thou hast passed
 Be fixed into thy soul with stronger nails
 Than any words of others, if the course
 Of destiny be stayed not." *

CANTO IX.—THE VISION, AND THE ANGEL AT THE
 GATE OF PURGATORY.

The morning had just risen :

" Già s' imbiancava al balzo d' oriente
 * * * * *
 Di gemme la sua fronte era lucente,"

when Dante, overcome with fatigue, fell asleep on the grass, where he and the other four (Virgil, he, Sorcello, and Malespina) were seated.

" 'T was in the hour near morning, at the time
 When from the body most estranged and least
 Possessed by outward objects, in its visions
 The spirit becomes prophetic, in my sleep
 I saw an eagle in the air suspended,
 With golden plumage and wide wings outspread
 Intent to swoop, and I, methought, was there
 Whence Ganymede, forsaking all on earth,
 To the high consistory was wrapt away ;
 And thinking, ' Here he's wont to stoop for prey,

* Alluding to the hospitality Dante in exile should receive from one of his family, Franceschino or Moroello.

He scorns all other spots,' I saw him wheel
In airy circles, then, all terrible,
As a descending bolt he lighted down,
And caught me up into the sphere of fire.
Methought that he and I there burned together,
And the imagined fire so made me glow
That sleep perforce was broken. . . .
I woke all pale with dread, but by my side
Was my dear comfort only . . . 'Do not fear,'
He said; 'thou now art come to Purgatory.
See there the rock that closes it all round,
See there the opening where that rock is cleft.
Just at the dawn that ushers in the day,
When deep within thy soul was slumbering
Upon the flowers that so bestrew the vale,
A lady came and said, "I am Lucia;
Him sleeping yonder let me bear on high,
So will I help him on his upward way."
Sordello stayed, and the other noble forms;
She took thee up, and with the brightening day
Bore thee aloft, I following in her track.
Here then she laid thee down, her lovely eyes
First pointing out yon open entrance to me;
Then she and sleep together fled away."

Virgil and Dante then proceeded to the opening which at first seemed a mere break, and then an entrance in a wall. They saw there a door led up to by three steps, and a porter who spoke no word.

"And as my half-dazed eyes I opened more,
I saw him seated on the upper step.
I could not bear the brightness of his face.
A naked sword was in his hand, that so
Mirrored the rays I scarce could gaze that way."

The angel permitted them to ascend the three steps, of which the first was of a white marble, so bright and polished as to reflect his whole form; the

second a dark and mournful grey, burned and cracked all over ; the third, "a flaming porphyry, like blood just spilt." The Angel of God sat on the threshold with his feet on the highest step ; Dante threw himself at his feet, and the angel marked on his forehead with the point of his sword seven P's,* of which the stains were to be washed away within. Then he drew out a gold and a silver key, and with these he unlocked the door, and pushed it open, bidding them enter, but beware of looking back when once they were in.

The door then revolved on its hinges with a noise of thunder. On hearing the first sound, Dante turned attentive to another sound within.

"*Te Deum laudamus* then I seemed to hear
In a voice mingled with that glorious sound ;
It seemed like singing with an organ blent."

CANTO X.—THE FIRST CORNICE IN THE MOUNT OF
PURGATORY.

"We were within the threshold of that door,
So all unused through man's perverted will
That makes the straight to seem the crooked way ;
I heard that portal closed behind me then.

* * * * *

Through a cleft rock we entered, that so wound
From one side to the other, as a wave
Draws nigh and flees again."

Virgil bade him take heed to approach now one edge, now the other, according as the way turned, and thus they went so slowly that it took two hours ; and the moon had set before they were clear of that

* The seven deadly sins, *peccati mortali*.

difficult passage. At last they found themselves on an open space, which was the first cornice or circular ledge round the mountain, which in width from the edge, "*ove confina il vano*," to the foot of the ascending mountain-side was three times a human body's length. Scarcely had they set foot on this ledge than he perceived that that mountain-side which was too steep to be scaled, rising perpendicularly as it did from one cornice to another, was of white marble, carved all over with beautiful sculptures. (These were all illustrative of humility, being the approach to the place where the proud are purified.)

"The angel who came down from Heaven, proclaiming
 The peace so many years had wept to see
 [Col decreto Della molt' anni lagrimata pace],
 Which opened to mankind the long-closed heaven,
 Appeared before us here so truly carved,
 In such sweet guise, it seemed not speechless stone;
 Thou wouldst have sworn that he was saying *Ave*.
 For she was there portrayed who ope'd again
 God's ancient love for man, with that meek word,
Ecco ancilla Dei, on her mien
 Impressed, as is a seal upon the wax."

Another group represented the ark being conveyed by David to Jerusalem.

"So living seemed the choirs that followed it,
 Of my two senses, if one said, 'They sing not,'
 The other answered, 'Yes, they sing.' So too
 So well the incense-smoke was imaged there
 That Yes and No by turns the senses said.
 Before the blessed vessel danced and leapt
 The lowly Psalmist, and in that same act
 Was more and less than king; and opposite
 At a proud palace window was portrayed
 Micol, who looked and wondered with a mien

Of wrath and scorn. I moved aside, to read
 Another tale, told in white marble, nigh.
 [Che diretto a Micol mi biancheggiava.]
 Here was the glory chronicled of him,
 The Roman sovereign whose great virtue won
 For Gregory his greatest victory.*
 I speak of Trajan, emperor of Rome,
 And how a widow, drowned in grief and tears,
 Hung at his bridle-rein, while all around
 A throng of armed horsemen filled the place,
 And overhead the golden eagles flew
 Before the wind. Amongst all these appeared
 Th' unhappy one to cry : ' Vengeance, my lord,
 I pray for my dead son and my grieved heart.'
 And he replied, ' Wait but till I return.'
 Then she, as one impatient in her grief,
 ' My lord, if thou return not ? ' And he said,
 ' He who will then be in my place will do
 What thou dost ask.' ' What will avail for thee,'
 Says she, ' the good another does, if thou
 Neglect it for thyself ? ' Then he replied,
 ' Take comfort, now ; behoves that I perform
 My duty ere I take my onward way.
 Justice demands, and pity keeps me here.'
 [Ond' elli, ' Or ti conforta, ch'è conviene
 Ch'io solva il mio dovere, anzi ch'io muova ;
 Giustizia vuole, e pietà mi ritiene. ']"

God Himself, says the poet, to whom nothing is new or wonderful, wrought this visible speech, so new to us because such sculpture was never beheld in our world.

Virgil in a low voice told Dante that many spirits were coming slowly towards them. Dante turned eagerly and said :

* This was that, according to the legend, Pope Gregory the Great obtained by his prayers the release from Hell of the soul of Trajan, on account of the act of virtue here related.

“ Master, what I see coming towards us now
Appear not to me beings. I know not what :
Trying to see, I’m lost.”

Virgil told him that these souls were bent to earth by the nature of their punishment ; and Dante breaks out in the following apostrophe :

“ O ye proud Christians, weak and wretched ones,
Who, blind of soul, walk backward all your course,
Perceive ye not that we are worms, and born
To form the angelic butterfly that hastes
Defenceless to God’s judgment ? But for you,
Ye are the imperfect worms that cannot gain
The fulness of accomplished angelhood.
As when we see some bracket that sustains
A roof or ceiling moulded in a form
Bending until the knees approach the breast,
So that true grief for that which is but feigned
Possesses the beholder—such appeared
To me these beings when I noted them.
For more or less contracted were their forms
According to the weight they had to bear ;
And even those who had most patient mien
Seemed to say, weeping, ‘ I can bear no more.’ ”

CANTO XI.—MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS SPIRITS OF
THE PROUD.

To these souls, punished for their pride, Virgil addressed himself, asking for directions as to the shortest and best way to the stair which should take them to the next cornice above. A voice came in answer, but they could not tell from whom, saying, “ Come with us to the right hand, and you will find a pass possible for a living man. If I were not hindered by this stone which domes my proud head, and forces me to keep my face low, I would look at *him* who is still living, and does not name himself” (Dante)

"to see if I know him, and move his pity for me. I was Latin and born of a great Tuscan. Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi was my father; I know not if his name was ever heard in your parts." He went on to tell that his name was Omberto, of Siena, and that his exceeding pride in his old and renowned lineage made him so arrogant as to draw on him the hatred of the other Sienese, and he perished accordingly. And thus, he said, he had to bear this load as long as God willed, humbling himself here, "as he had not done it on earth." Dante listened and walked on with him, holding down his head in like manner, and another spirit, twisting himself round under his load, saw and knew him, and called to him. Dante, too, recognised him, and addressed him as Oderisi, "the honour of Agubbio," and of "that art which is called in Paris the art of illuminating." Oderisi told him that the pictures made by another artist were better :

" 'Frate,' diss' egli, 'più ridon le carte
Che pannelleggia Franco Bolognese' "—

but as he had not been generous enough to acknowledge their excellence while living, "di tal superbia qui si paga il fio."

He then broke out on the vanity of human glory, which lasts so short a time, one fame driving out another, as, for example, that of Giotto did that of Cimabue, and also—

"Così ha tolto l'uno all' altro Guido
La gloria della lingua; e forse è nato,
Chi l' uno e l' altro caccerà di nido.
Non è il mondan rumore altro che un fiato
Di vento, ch' or vien quinci ed or vien quindi,
E muta nome, perchè muta lato."

He then pointed out one walking slowly in front, whose fame had once resounded all over Tuscany, and of which now in his own Siena there was scarcely a whisper ; and says he, " Your fame is like the hue of grass, which comes and goes and is bleached by the very sun which called it fresh and living from the earth." Dante, humbly acknowledging the truth of his words, asked who was he of whom he was speaking, and was told that he was Provenzan Salvani, the lord of Siena, who was thus punished for his ambitious attempt to obtain absolute power. [He and the Sienese had routed the Florentines at Montaperti, and afterwards he in his turn was defeated by the Guelphs fighting for Charles of Anjou in 1269, was killed, and his head, fixed on a lance, shown to the camp.]

Dante inquired why the unusual grace was shown Salvani of allowing him at once to enter thus above through the gates of Purgatory, instead of waiting below with the other souls who had not repented till the last moment, as many years as he had lived on earth. Oderisi explained that while he yet lived glorious in Siena, laying down all shame, he had freely planted himself in the public place, and to obtain the ransom of a friend who was languishing in the prison of Charles of Anjou, "*si condusse à tremar per ogni vena.*" This phrase, which meant that he had endured the anguish of publicly asking alms, Oderisi said he would leave thus obscure :

" Ma poco tempo andrà che i tuoi vicini
Faranno sì, che tu potrai chiosarlo."

(alluding to Dante's own banishment and poverty).

CANTO XII.—MORE EXAMPLES OF PRIDE PUNISHED,
AND ENTRANCE INTO THE SECOND CORNICE.

Dante walked on thus side by side with that "anima carca" till Virgil bade him leave the other and proceed more quickly. Dante raised his head and walked as before, though full of thoughts, humbled and cast down by what he had seen. Virgil then directed him to look below "to lighten the way" at "the bed of his footsteps;" and then,

"As, to preserve their memory, the tombs
Of earth above the buried bear inscribed
What once they were, whence, many a time, again
Flow tears at memory's prick, which ever goads
The faithful natures,—so was all that road
By the Divine Artificer engraved."

"Vedea colui che fu nobil creato
Più d' altra creatura, giù dal cielo
Folgoreggiando scendere, da un lato.
Vedeva Briareo, fitto dal telo
Celestial, giacer dall' altra parte,
Grave alla terra per lo mortal gelo.
[Pressing the earth with his dead-frozen weight.]"

He saw other giants and gods, and then,

"O Niobe, con che occhi dolenti
Vedeva io te segnata in su la strada
Tra sette e sette tuoi figliuoli spenti!"

"O Saul, upon thine own sword fallen dead,
How seem'st thou here to lie in Gilboa,
Which never felt henceforth or rain or dew!
O vain Arachne, thee I saw, already
Half spider, on the folds of that torn work
That to thine own destruction thou hadst spun."

He enumerates many other representations—Rehoboam, Sennacherib, Holofernes, etc.

“Morti li morti, e i vivi parean vivi;
Non vide me' di me chi vide il vero,
Quant' io calcai fin che chinato givi.”

“Ah, if ye would be proud, ye sons of Eve,
Go with raised head, and cast not down your eyes
To see your evil road!”

Virgil now bade Dante lift up his head from contemplating these figures and move on, because an angel was coming towards them, and also because it was now the hour of noon.

“Vedi che torna
Dal servizio del di' l'ancella sesta [the sixth hour].
Pensa che questo di' mai non raggiorna.”

“Then that fair creature came to us, white-robed,
And trembled in his face the morning star.
His arms he opened first, and then his wings.”

“A noi venia la creatura bella,
Bianco vestita, e nella faccia quale
Par tremolando mattutina stella.
Le braccia aperse, ed indi aperse l' ale.”

The angel bade them come on where the steps were near and the ascent easy.

“As on the right, in going up that hill,
Where stands the Church that over Rubaconte*
Commands well-governed Florence, the steep toil [ardita
foga]
Is smoothed by stairs made in the times of old,
Pure times when weights and measures were not false.”

* The church of San Miniato, above the bridge of Rubaconte, across the Arno, built in 1237.

'Thus the steep ascent from one cornice to the other was relieved by steps, though the rock often grazed them on each side. Here he heard voices singing sweetly, *Beati pauperes spiritu*, and observes :

“ Ahi quanto son diverse quelle foci [entrances]
Dalle infernali ! chè quivi per canti
S' entra, e quaggiù per lamenti feroci.”

Dante found it so much easier mounting thus than it had been even on the level cornice, that he expressed his astonishment to Virgil, who explained that the gradual disappearance of the seven P's on his forehead would make the ascent perfectly easy to him. Dante felt his forehead, and found one already removed.

“ A che guardando il mio Duca sorrise.”

CANTO XIII.—THE SECOND CORNICE OF THE ENVIOUS.

They now arrived at the second ledge running round the mountain, smaller than the one below, not sculptured, showing only the livid hue of the stone. There was no one to show them the way, and Virgil in his doubt looked fixedly at the sun, which, as it had passed noon, was now to his right, and which he followed accordingly. They had gone but a mile when—

“ Towards us we felt, but saw not, spirits fly
With courteous welcomes to love's table there.”

The voices which they heard passing in the air all

spoke of love and charity ; and Virgil explained that in this circle was corrected the sin of envy, but that it was with a rod of love (the deeds and examples with which the penitents are urged to amend themselves being all of love and loving-kindness). The bridle on the other hand that was to keep them from rushing into the sin of envy would be made up of very different sounds, and Dante must needs hear it before he reached the *Passo del Perdono*, at the foot of the stair leading up to the third ledge, where an angel would cancel the mark of the sin. He bade him look fixedly and he would see figures seated under the mountain in front of them, and doing so he perceived—

“Ombre con manti
Al color della pietra non diversi.”

And as they advanced they heard them crying to the Virgin and other saints to pray for them. Then, coming quite close to them, he felt tears of compassion drawn from his eyes on perceiving that all wore sackcloth, and leaned, as if blind, against the rock and each other, their eyes being sewn up with an iron thread like the eyes of falcons freshly caught. These were the souls of the Envious. Dante felt it as a wrong to them that he should see them without being seen, and, turning to his wonted counsellor, was advised by him to address them briefly. Dante then requested them to tell him if there was any one among them of Italian race.

“One answered : ‘Oh, my brother ! every soul
Is citizen of one true city—God’s.
But thou wouldst ask if any in your land

Has lived a pilgrim.' When I heard that voice,
And marked the quarter that it sounded from,
Nearer I moved, and saw amongst the rest
A shade with mien expectant, upturned face,
As of the blind."

To Dante's inquiry the answer was given that she was Sapia the Sienese, who had been more glad of the misfortunes of others than of her own good fortune. She told how that when her fellow-citizens were encamped at Colle about to engage in battle with the Florentines, she prayed to God for the defeat which was actually inflicted on them.

"And, when I saw them routed, turned and driven
In bitter flight, with gladness past compare,
Boldly I raised my face and cried to God :
'No more I fear thee now!'—assurance vain,
Rash as the merle that fancies summer come
For one mild day in winter."

Though at the last moment of life she repented, she would not have gained even that purgatorial sphere but for the prayers of the holy friar Pietro Pettinagno. "But who," she said, "art thou who askest of our state and wearest thine eyes free as I think, and breathest as thou talkest?" "My eyes, too," answered Dante, "will be closed here, but only for a little while, as they have offended but little with envious looks. More is my doubt and fear of the torment below, feeling that load already upon me (the punishment of the Proud)." Finally he offered to do for her what she might ask in the world above, and she bade him go to her kindred in Siena and clear up her fame and her present condition to them. "Thou wilt find them," she said, "amongst those

vain folk who confide in Talamone, and will lose more hope there than even in the search for the Diana. But their admirals will lose more still." *

CANTO XIV.—THE CORNICE OF THE ENVIOUS
CONTINUED.

“ ‘ Say who is he who wanders round our mount,
Ere death have let his spirit fly, who both
Opens his eyes and closes at his will ? ’
‘ I know not who he is ; he is not alone,
Bid him come nearer us, and softly then
Accost and make him speak. ’ ”

Thus did two spirits, leaning against each other,
talk together about Dante, then they raised their faces,
and one addressed him, and asked him who he was.
He answered :

“ Per mezza Toscana si spazia
Un fiumicel che nasce in Falterona,
E cento miglia di corso nol sazia.
Di sovr' esso rech' io questa persona !
Dirvi chi sia, sarebbe parlare indarno ;
Chè 'l nome mio ancor non molto suona.”

One of them answered :

“ Se ben lo intendimento tuo accarno
Con lo intelletto [If I incorporate your meaning
with my mind] tu parli d'Arno.”

The other asked : “ Why did he hide the name of that

* The Sienese had acquired the castle and harbour of Talamone, and hoped to make it an emporium, and so gain the command of the sea. The Diana was a river supposed to run under Siena, and sought for, at much cost, in vain.

river, as if it were some horrible thing?" The first replied :

"I know not ; but full worthy is that vale
That its name perish. For from its very source,
Where the wild mount, whence cloven is Peloro,
Is so with waters swollen, e'en to there
Where it restores the sea what heaven dried up—
[Ove si rende per ristoro
Di quel che il ciel della marina asciuga]—
Virtue has fled from all as from a snake,
Chased by the evil charm that haunts the place,
Or by the habit of ill-doing ; whence
So have the dwellers of that wretched vale
Transformed their natures, that 'twould seem as though
Circe had had the feeding of them. First
Amongst vile swine it bends its scanty tide,
Then falls amongst the curdops of Arezzo,
And turns away disdainful. Still it flows,
And as it broadens, wretched, cursèd sewer,
Finds the dogs turned to wolves. Then still descending,
It finds the craftiest foxes.* I fear not
To tell thee, whosoe'er be hearing me,"—

[Here the speaker, Guido del Duca da Bestinoro, is addressing his companion, Rinieri de' Calboli]—

"What a true spirit of prophecy reveals.
I see thy grandson, † hunter of these wolves, ‡
Beside that hateful river, scaring all.
He sells their flesh yet living, slays them then,
Like worn-out cattle. Many he robs of life,
Himself of his good name. That wretched city §
Not for a thousand years will bloom again."

* Pisa, whose people were regarded as malignant and cunning.

† Fulcieri de' Calboli, podestà of Florence in 1302, who, bought by the Neri, persecuted the Bianchi.

‡ The "wolves" signify the Guelphs. § Florence.

The other, hearing these words, looked sad and troubled, as one who hears a prophecy of evil. Dante desired to know their names; and the first speaker rejoined :

“ Guido del Duca was I ; all my blood
With envy was burnt up. . . . This is Riniero,
The glory of the house of Calboli.
He has no heir to all his worth ; but not
His race alone, between the Po, the mountains,
Romagna, and the sea, is thus despoiled :
Within those limits all ill roots abound.”

* * * * *

He enumerated many noble cavaliers and their families, who had lived in Romagna, and asked—

“ Where are they now ? ”

“ I weep when I recall
The ladies and the knights, the noble toils,
The splendid pleasures, winning all true hearts—
Now grown perverse—to love and courtesy.

* * * * *

Ben fa Bagna Caval, che non rifiglia,
E mal fa Castrocaro e peggio Conio,
Che di figliar tai conti più s' impiglia.*

* * * * *

O Ugolino de' Fantoli, sicuro
E il nome tuo, da che più non s' aspetta
Chi far lo possa tralignando oscuro.†
Ma va via, Tosco, omai, ch' or mi diletta
Tropo di pianger più che di parlare.”

The poets, now alone, moved on, when a voice, cleaving the air like lightning, came towards them,

* These three territories are congratulated on having no successors to their ruling lords.

† Ugolino de' Fantoli was a good man who was childless.

crying, "Whoever finds me will kill me!" and then fled like thunder rolling away. It was the voice of Cain. Another voice then said—

"I am Aglauros, who became a stone."

Virgil then observes that this was the "duro freno" for the envious, which he had spoken of before, but which availed little against the tempting snares of the devil.

"Heaven calls, and in its calling circles round,
Revealing its eternal beauties so;
Yet are your eyes turned ever to the earth,
Whence he who all discerns shall punish you."

CANTO XV.—ENTRANCE ON THE THIRD CORNICE :
DANTE'S ECSTASY.

It was the hour of vespers, that is, three o'clock, when the poets ascended to the third cornice, and the sun shone in their faces as they went towards the west. Suddenly there struck his brow a light far brighter than that of the sun, from which he could not screen his eyes; and he asked Virgil what was this light that came moving towards them.

"Non ti maravigliar se ancor t'abbaglia
Là famiglia del cielo, a me rispose."

"A messenger is come," he pursued, "to invite us to mount." When they had come to the angel he said to them with a glad voice, "Intrate quinci," showing a stair much less steep than all the others. They ascended, and behind them they heard sung *Beati*

misericordes and "Godi tu che vinci." As they went on, Dante asked Virgil about the vice of envy, and the nature of those joys which provoke it, because, being personal and individual, they cannot be shared with others. And Virgil, answering, contrasted Divine and human love, saying of the former—

"Quello infinito e ineffabil bene
Che lassù è, così corre ad amore,
Come a lucido raggio corpo viene.
Tanto si dà, quanto trova d' ardore :
Sì che quantunque carità si stende,
Cresce sovr' essa l' eterno valore.
E quanta gente più lassù s' intende
Più v' è da bene amare, e più vi s' ama,
E come specchio l' uno all' altro rende."

"That Goodness infinite, ineffable,
That dwells above doth so flow out in love,
As to a lucid body flows the ray.
The ardour that it finds, it so repays,
That, as the flame of charity extends,
So over it the eternal virtue grows
And wheresoe'er are souls that towards it turn
That virtue blessed and blessing more abounds,
And love still grows ; and, like a mirror, one
Gives back the other."

While thus talking, and just as Dante was about to answer Virgil, they arrived at the Third Circle, and his eyes, eagerly wandering around, put an end to his speech. Here an ecstatic vision appeared to seize on him, and bring him to a temple—that of Jerusalem—where Mary gently remonstrates with her son, "Why hast thou thus dealt with us?"—then appeared a furious crowd, crying "Kill ! kill !" and casting stones at a youth.

"E lui vedea chinarsi per la morte
Che l' aggravava già, in ver la terra,

Ma degli occhi facea sempre al cielo porte.
[But those fixed, gazing eyes
Seemed ever gateways opened into heaven.]”

Then, when the vision had left him, and—

“Quando l’ anima mia tornò di fuori
Alle cose, che son fuor di lei vere,
Io riconobbi i miei non falsi errori”—

they then went on through the vesper hour, gazing forward as far as their eyes could reach, fronting the “shining evening rays,” when lo! by degrees, a cloud of smoke came towards them, dark as the night, from which there was no place of refuge, taking from them the use of their sight and their breathing.

CANTO XVI.—THE THIRD CIRCLE AND THE PURIFICATION FROM ANGER.

“Darkness of Hell, night reft of every star,
Engloomed in cloud with scarce a glimpse of sky,
Made not before my face so thick a veil
As did that smoke that here enshrouded us.”

Virgil offered Dante the support of his shoulder, and he went with him, like a blind man, “through the bitter and blackened air,” listening to his guide, who bade him take care not to stir from him. He heard the while voices, which all seemed praying to the Lamb of God for mercy and peace; it was the same word, the same tone in all. “Master, who are these spirits?” asked Dante. “Thou wilt soon learn,” he answered; “they are working out their pardon for the sin of anger.”—“Thou, who art thou who cleavest

our smoke, and speakest of us as if thou didst still live in a world where time is regularly measured?" One voice was heard thus speaking; and Dante, at Virgil's desire, addressed him: "O creature, who art cleansing thyself in order to return in beauty to Him who made thee; come nearer if thou wouldst hear a wondrous thing!" "I will follow thee as far as I am allowed," said the voice, "and if the smoke prevents us seeing each other, our hearing will keep us together instead." Dante implored him to say who he was. He answered, "Marco, the Lombard; I knew the world, and loved that virtue which is now everywhere relaxed."

Dante then expressed a doubt which he felt within, and could no longer keep to himself, as to the cause of that universal social corruption which he had twice heard of, first from Guido del Duca, and now from him, adding that there were different explanations given of it.

"A deep sigh urged by sorrow to a groan
He heaved and answered me: 'The world is blind,
My brother, and you come from it. For you
Who live refer all causes to the skies,
As though all things moved by fatality.
If so it were, in you would be destroyed
Free will, nor were it justice to reward
With joy well-doing, evil-doing with pain;
The skies first prompt your impulses, but light
Is given the good and evil to discern,
And the free will which, if it battle hard,
Outlasts the skyey powers, and so prevails.
Free, and yet subject to a higher nature
And greater might, are ye; 'twas that which formed
In you the reason by the stars unswayed,
Yet, if the present world hath gone astray

The fault is all in you as I will show.
The simple soul that nothing knows save this,
That, by her blessed Maker, moved by him
Who formed her fair in his idea ere yet
He called her out of nothing, willingly
She turns to what delights her—that same soul
In trivial pleasure tastes a sweetness first ;
And so beguiled runs toward it straight, if guide
Or bridle check not that unwise desire.
Whence law is needed for a wholesome rein ;
A king is needed, one to see and point,
At least, the towers of the true City out.
Yea, laws there are ; but who enforces them ?
None ; for the pastor knows and doth not act,
The people too who see its guide given up
To that base worldly pleasure, doth the same,
Feeds on it and demands no more. Thou seest
Ill guidance is the cause of this world's crime,
And not corrupted nature. Rome, whose rule
And faith made once a world of holiness,
[Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo]
Was wont to have two suns, that shone upon
Two roads alike, the world's and that of God.*
Now one hath quenched the other ; now is the sword
One with the pastoral crook, and, thus confused,
Needs must they thus do ill, for neither checks
Nor fears the other. If thou doubt my word,
Regard the ripened grain, for best the seed
Is by the fruit discerned.' "

He added that in the country watered by the Adige and the Po (that is, the Trivignano, Lombardy, and Romagna) virtue and courtesy once prevailed ; now villains and churls may walk there freely without meeting their opposites. Nevertheless, he said, there are still there three men of antique virtue, now old,

* The two authorities, the temporal and the spiritual ; that is, the Imperial and the Papal.

and thinking God is long in calling them to Him and a better life. These were Currado da Palazzo, Gherardo and Guido da Castel, better named, in French style, the "honest Lombard." *

Dante replied that he now understood why the Levites were excluded from temporal possessions. He wished further to know who was this Gherardo, whom Marco had described as a relic of an extinct race, and a standing reproof to this lawless age. "Thou art deceiving me," answered Marco, "or merely trying me—thou who, speaking Tuscan, seemest to know nothing of the good Gherardo. I know him by no other name, unless it be as the father of Gaïa.† God be with you," he added; "I can go no further with you."

" ' See the young morning gleaming through the muck,
'Tis whitening now, and I must haste away.
The Angel will be here ere day have broke.'
He spoke, would hear no more, and left me so."

CANTO XVII.—INSTANCES OF ANGER, AND ARRIVAL
AT FOURTH CORNICE.

" If ever, reader, in the Alps a cloud
Seized thee and blotted out all vision, then
Remember how, those vapours thick and damp
Beginning to disperse, feebly through them
The sun's sphere met thine eyes—and so conceive
How I again beheld the sun that now

* The French called all Italians "Lombards."

† Gaïa, the daughter of Marco, is reported to have been very beautiful and very dissolute; Dante thus satirically indicates her as one of the depraved new generation.

Already was nigh setting.
 O Spirit of Fancy that so often stealest
 Us from the world without, so that we fail
 E'en to discern it, for the sound within
 Of all thy thousand clarions ; what inspires thee
 If the sense doth not ? 'tis the light, from heaven
 Proceeding, or self-moved, or by God's will.

* * * * *

My mind all self-involved could take in nought
 Of outside things, but its own pictures made.
 Then rained in on my heightened fantasy
 The image of a form upon a cross
 With stern and scornful looks, and thus he died."

This was Haman.

" And as this image broke and of itself
 Dispersed, as melts the bubble, there arose
 On my mind's eye a maiden weeping fast,
 And saying, ' Oh, mother, why hast slain thyself ?
 (Perchè per ira hai voluto esser nulla ?) "

This was Lavinia.

" As breaks a dream asunder, when new light
 On the closed eyes strikes suddenly, but yet
 Flutters and quivers ere it wholly dies,
 So fell my fancies stricken by a light
 Stranger than that of earthly day. I turned
 To see where I might be, when a voice said
 ' Mount this way.' Eagerly I looked to learn
 Who spoke ; but as the sun in sovereign splendour
 Veils his face from us, so this sight was hid.
 ' This is a spirit divine,' my guide began,
 ' Who shows to us unprayed the upward way,
 And hides in his own light. Ascend we then.'
 On the first step straight was I, when I felt
 A waving as of wings that fanned my face,
 And heard a voice that gently said, *Beati
 Pacifici*, from sinful anger free."

Having reached the top of the stairs, to the Fourth Circle,

“ They stood still like a ship that touches land.
Awhile I stood attent, if I might hear
Some sound in that new sphere.”

He asked Virgil what offence was punished here, and was answered that here the love of goodness, when less than it ought to be, is restored to its due proportions.

“ ‘ Never,’ he said,
‘ Was creature or creator without love,
Natural or spiritual [naturale o d’ animo].
That first love,
Which is instinctive, never errs ; the other
May err from wrongful object, from too much
Or from too little vigour. E’en so long
As on the first and highest good ’tis bent
And in the secondary keeps due measure,
It cannot be the source of sinful pleasure ;
But when to ill ’tis warped, or cares too much
For earthly good, too little for divine,
Against the Maker strives the thing He made.’ ”

He then explained that, as no one hates himself or God, his first cause, this *mal che s’ ama* (that is, *hate*) must be for his neighbour ; and this love or hate is of three kinds, springing from pride, envy, or anger, desire, that is, of self-exaltation, depression of others, and vengeance for injuries. From this he recurred to the love which errs—not as this, from having an evil object—but from the “ too much,” or “ too little,” that is, caring too much for its object when it is for earthly things, or insufficiently when it is for divine objects, or for our duties.

"Dimly doth each conceive and crave a good
Which calms and fills the soul, and strive to gain it.
Lukewarmness in perception or in search,
If penitence have first atoned in life,
Is purified in this sphere. There is yet
A good that makes not happy,* that is not
The love of the true Essence, root and fruit
Of all our happiness; and all the souls
Abandoned to this love must expiate
Their fault in the three circles over us."

These were the Avaricious, the Gluttonous, and the Luxurious.

CANTO XVIII.—DISSERTATION ON LOVE, THE ENVIOUS
AND THE NON-ENVIOUS.

Dante asked Virgil more about the nature of love, and he explained philosophically how that it is in itself an inevitable instinct, a tendency to the enjoyment of the thing that pleases, worthy neither of praise nor blame. They, he says, are wrong who maintain that all love is praiseworthy; it is true the *material* (or natural disposition to love) is good, but not always the form it takes. Every soul has a specific virtue of its own, known only by its working and effects, as is life in a plant by its green leaves. The origin of our first ideas (axiomatic truths) and primary affections cannot be known: these are instinctive. But as to these first instincts are other wills and tendencies joined, there is given to us also an innate virtue

* This good comprises material things good in themselves, but which become mischievous when indulged in to excess.

(Reason or Free Will) which guides their working, and is to be praised or blamed according as it loves good or bad objects. From this "innate liberty" joined with the laws of morality, it was concluded that, whilst all affections arose in us by necessity, there yet was in us the power to control them. He added that Beatrice (here typical of Theology) would explain all this more fully.

The moon (on this, the fifth day of Dante's pilgrimage rising at midnight) made all the stars dim when this explanation was finished; and Dante was feeling confused and dizzy with it all when he was aroused by a crowd of spirits coming after them. With their eager running—

"Like the wild trampling rush in Bacchic rites
By night along the Theban river sides,"

they soon came up with Virgil and Dante, the two foremost of them citing instances of zeal and promptitude to urge to exertion the others, who were offenders from lukewarmness. Virgil asked one of the spirits to show them a passage through the mountains, and one of them replied, "Follow us, and thou wilt find the opening." He apologised for not stopping to speak on account of their eagerness to get on, and said he was the Abbot of San Zeno at Verona, "under the empire of the good Barbarossa," and that he who had chosen his successor in that see,* "putting him in the place of the true Abbot," had already one foot in the grave, and would soon repent what he had

* Alberto della Scala, Lord of Verona, who in 1292 forced his illegitimate son on this monastery as its head, died in 1301.

done to that monastery in bestowing it on his son,
"ill-born, deformed in body, and depraved in mind."
While speaking thus, he had passed far ahead of them;
and when all these shades had gone out of sight,

"New thoughts arose within me, whence were born
So many more of various kinds, and I
Felt myself so from one to other tost
That the bewilderment sealed up my eyes,
And all my wandering thoughts were turned to dreams."

CANTO XIX.—THE FIFTH CIRCLE AND THE
AVARICIOUS.

In this sleep, and at the last hour of the night,
Dante dreamed that he saw a woman squinting, stam-
mering, maimed, and of a livid hue, who, as he gazed
at her, became beautiful, and, singing in a lovely voice,
said, "I am the sweet siren who lead astray the
mariners in the midst of the sea, and who charmed
Ulysses from his course.

"And he who once is bound by love to me
Seldom departs, so wholly I delight him."

But ere she had done speaking, another woman,
of holy aspect, suddenly approached to confound
her.* Then he awoke, and turning his eyes, saw
Virgil, who told him he had already called him three
times, and bade him arise and move on. The moun-
tain ledges were already lighted up with the sun, as
Dante walked slowly on, bowed in thought. Then
he heard a voice saying, "Venite, qui si varca," "in
tones too sweet for mortal regions."

* This holy woman is probably Lucia or Illuminating Grace.

“ With swan-like wings wide-spread, did he who spoke
Lead us the way above ’twixt the two walls
Of stony rock ; then waved his wings, and blew
My stamp of sin away.”

As they went up, following the angel who called them, Virgil, seeing Dante's eyes fixed on the ground and his thoughts still strangely troubled by the ugly vision he had seen, bade him think no more of it ; it was the type of the three vices (Avarice, Gluttony, and Luxury) which were being punished in the spheres above them, and he exhorted him to hasten on, looking up at God's beautiful worlds revolving overhead. Then, like the falcon, which always looks at its feet before it flies—

“ *Quale il falcon che prima a' piè si mira
Indi si volge al grido, e si protende
Per lo disio del pasto che là il tira,*”—

he went up through the cleft of the rock to where the circle above began (the Fifth, where the Avaricious were punished). Here he found souls lying flat, with their faces to the ground, and dolefully crying out, “ *Adhæsit pavimento anima mea.*” Dante approached one of these prostrate figures, saying—

“ Spirit, whose weeping ripens that pure work
Without which none can turn to God, lay by
For me this once thy chiefest care, and say
Who art thou, why thou liest here, and if aught
Thou wouldst that I should win for thee above
Where I moved living.”

The spirit told him that he was Pope Adrian V. (who died in 1276, forty days after his election).

“ A month—scarce more—I proved how heavy weighs
The mighty mantle upon him who seeks

To guard it from all soil, so that all loads
 Besides seem but as down. Full late, alas!
 Was my conversion; not till I was made
 Shepherd of Rome, found I how false is life.
 I saw that there the heart can find no rest,
 Nor in this life can any higher rise;
 Whence love of life eternal in me grew."

He then told how avaricious he had been, for which he was now punished, God decreeing that those whose eyes were never raised to heaven, but fixed on earthly things, should be doomed to grovel on the earth immovably stretched out. Dante knelt beside him, and Adrian, guessing by his voice his altered position, asked him why. Dante replied that it was from reverence for his past dignity, whereon Adrian bade him instantly arise:—

" 'Err not,' he said; 'with thee and others I
 Am fellow-servant to one mighty Power. . . .
 Go now, I would not thou shouldst longer stay;
 For so thou hinderest my tears whose flow
 Must, as before thou saidest, bring the fruit
 Of my salvation to maturity.' "

CANTO XX.—THE FIFTH CIRCLE CONTINUED:

HUGH CAPET.

Dante left Pope Adrian at his desire—unwillingly

"trassi dell' acqua non sazia la spugna
 [withdrew from the water the sponge yet unfilled]."

They moved on along the edge of the rock as one, who walking on the top of a castle wall, keeps close to the battlements, avoiding the unguarded side,

in the narrow pathway left them by the crowd of spirits who lay there weeping away their sins of Avarice. Dante anathematises Rome, "the ancient wolf," whose boundless voracity has chiefly brought about this plague, and says—

"O heavens whose revolutions, 'tis believed,
Transmute the state of mortals here below,
When shall *he* come who shall this pest destroy?"

As he went slowly on listening to the mourning shades, he heard a voice call on the blessed Virgin, and then recite two instances of noble poverty. This pleased Dante so much, that he stopped to speak with the spirit, asking him why he dwelt only on those praiseworthy examples, and promising to do his best for him—

"If I return to finish my short course
Of life that's ever flying to its goal."

The spirit thanked him, not because he expected any comfort from any appeal to his descendants for their prayers, but because of the goodness shown in his promise. He says—

"I fui radice della mala pianta
Che la terra Cristiana tutta aduggia
Sì, che buon frutto rado se ne schianta."

But, he said, if Douai, Ghent, Lille, and Bruges could do it,* they would soon take vengeance on that bad race—

"As I implore of Him who judges all."

* These Flemish towns were seized by Philip le Bel of France, in 1299; in 1302 the French were driven out thence.

He was Hugh Capet (Hugo, called the Great, Count of Paris, and father to Hugh, the first of the French Kings). He then recited his own history and that of his race, how he, the son of a butcher of Paris, in the days of the degenerate Carolingians, found in his own hands the reins of government which he so used, that his son succeeded to the Crown (left vacant by the death of Louis V.), and bequeathed it to his descendants. These were harmless enough until the marriages into the Count of Provence's family, when they became through "*la gran dote*," ambitious and rapacious. He instanced Charles of Anjou who—

" Vittima fe di Curradino, e poi
Ripinse al ciel Tommaso."

(St. Thomas à Kempis, whom he is said to have caused to be poisoned by a physician on his way to the Council of Lyons), then Charles of Valois (who entered Italy in 1301).

" Senza armi esce e solo con la lancia
Con la qual giostrò Giuda ; "

that is, treachery, whereby he gained possession of, and pillaged, Florence. Again, Charles II. of Anjou* sold his daughter, Beatrice, to the old Marquis Azzo d'Este—

" Come fan li corsar dell' altre schiave."

He then denounced Philip le Bel for his treatment of Boniface VIII., the vicegerent of Christ, and exclaimed—

* Second king of the Two Sicilies who was "*preso di nave*," that is, taken prisoner in a sea fight by Pedro of Aragon's admiral Ruggier Loria, 1284.

" O Signor mio, quando sarò io lieto
A veder la vendetta, che nascosa
Fa dolce l' ira tua nel tuo segreto."

" Oh, when, my God, shall I then be so blest
As to behold that vengeance, hidden now,
In which thy wrath all secretly delights."

He then explained what had first excited Dante's curiosity, saying that by day they are ordered to recite instances of poverty and liberality, and at night, examples of the contrary, such as Pygmalion, Midas, Acharis, etc.

Dante had now left Hugh Capet, and they were toiling on in their upward road—

" Quand' io senti', come cosa che cada,
Tremar lo monte ; onde mi prese un gielo,
Qual prender suol colui che a morte vada,
And then began from every part a cry
Of ' Glory in the highest be to God ! ' "

* * * *

" Suspended, motionless, did we remain,
As did the shepherds who first heard that song ;
Till ceased the trembling and the hymn was done,
And then we sought our sacred path again,

* * * *

Never did ignorance with such a war
Of wishes wake the wild desire to know,
As then I felt ; yet dared I not inquire,
Nor yet could of myself aught understand.
So lost in thought and timid I moved on."

CANTO XXI.—THE SPIRIT OF STATIUS.

As thus he walked on, he saw a shade who came behind them, looking at all those prostrate figures at his feet, who presently addressed them with :

"Fрати miei, Dio vi dea pace."

Virgil courteously returned this salutation, saying,

"May peace be thine in that high court of heaven
Assigned thee by the council of the blest,
That to eternal exile sends me back."

The shade asked who, if they were condemned spirits, had led them so far up the staircase to heaven? Virgil explained, and asked him the cause of the trembling of the mount, and of the cry of all the spirits together. He answered,

"There's nothing here befalls the holy hill
Out of the settled order; all is fixed
And bound by custom. Here no natural change
Disturbs it; only such as Heaven makes
When it receives souls from it. Rain nor hail,
Nor snow, nor dew, nor hoarfrost falleth here;
For winds hid in earth's breast it trembles not.
It trembles when some soul that's purified
Rises, to mount above, and that cry wakes
In concert. That sole wish to rise bespeaks
The cleansed and chastened spirit; but, howe'er
It long to fly, the will to undergo
Purgation due, so prompted by Divine
Justice, opposes, and detains it here.
And I, who have five hundred years and more
Lain in this grief, have never felt till now,
Unchecked, the will to reach a better sphere.
But thou hast heard the earthquake and the sound
Of pious spirits on the mountain speaking
The praise of Him who, as I trust, will soon
Call them to Heaven."

Virgil then begged to know who he was, and was answered that he lived in the time of Titus, that he bore the glorious name of a poet and was called Statius. He went on:

“ So sweet my vocal spirit was, that Rome
Drew me, a stranger, to herself, and deemed
My brows of myrtle worthy

But what lit

My ardour to a blaze, were the sparks sown
By that divinest flame that thousands more
Hath kindled. Of the *Æneid* 'tis I speak,
My mother-song, and my poetic nurse.”

He added that to have lived when Virgil lived, he would consent to stay a year more than his due time in Purgatory.

“ Then Virgil at that utterance turned to me
A face both hushed and hushing. But the Will
Cannot do all things ; smile and tear we see
Rise from their source so suddenly, that still
The will must follow them, no longer free.
So answering with a meaning look, I smiled ;
Then ceased the Shade and gazed into my eyes,
For there the spirit speaks : ‘ If of this wild
Adventure,’ said he, ‘ thou hast won the prize,
Say is it thence thou’rt smiling like a child ? ’
Caught, as it seemed, on either side I stood ;
One bade me hush, the other bade me speak,
And so I sighed, and so was understood.
‘ Speak,’ said my master, ‘ have no terrors weak ;
Tell what he asks thee in such earnest mood.’
‘ Thou wonderest at my smile,’ I answered then,
‘ Spirit of eld ! but thou wilt wonder more
At what I tell, for he who guides my pen
To things on high is Virgil, who of yore
Inspired thy soul to sing of gods and men.
Seek not for this my smile a cause more meet,
Than those same words thou spak’st of him but now.’
Thereon he bent to kiss my Master’s feet,
Who said, ‘ Not so, my brother, art not thou
A shade, and seest a shade ? ’ ‘ Oh Poet sweet ! ’
Rising he said, ‘ now mayst thou judge how far

Doth love of thee my inmost soul pervade ;
Since thus, forgetting quite what now we are,
I as with substance dealt with empty shade."

CANTO XXII.—THE TALK WITH STATIUS AND THE
SIXTH CIRCLE OF THE GLUTTONOUS.

They now went up the stair to the Sixth Circle, having passed the angel who guarded it and who erased a third P from his forehead. Virgil then said to Statius that love kindled by virtue arouses returning love in the person towards whom it is felt. Thus when Juvenal came down to the Limbo where was Virgil, the report that he gave of Statius's affection for him (Virgil), kindled in that latter a feeling for Statius beyond anything ever experienced for an unknown person "*si ch' or mi parran corte queste scale.*" "But tell me," he added, "and pardon me as a friend if I give myself too much freedom; how could you find within yôu place for avarice, with all that wisdom which it must have taken you such labour to acquire?"

Statius smiled, and told him that it was for the contrary fault, extravagance, that he was there; but having repented in time he was not doomed to hell for it; and he explained that there, as in hell, the two contrary vices were punished together, as in the present case, Avarice and Prodigality.

Virgil then asked him by what light he, a heathen singer, as shown in his "*Thebais*," had thus been guided out of the darkness of paganism? He answered:

"Thou first didst lure me to Parnassus' grot,
To drink its springs, then lightedst me along
The way to God. Thou didst as they who walk
By night, and bear a lamp that lights not them,
But warns who come behind; when thou didst say
'A new bright age is coming; righteousness
And the world's early times return! from heaven
Comes a new offspring down.' Through thee a poet
Was I, through thee a Christian . . . All the world
Was then with the true faith impregnated
Sown by th' Eternal Ruler's messengers.
That word of thine I quoted was in tune
With the new preachers, so I sought them oft.
I saw them holy, and I was baptised,
But still through fear concealed my Christian faith;
So for four hundred years must I revolve."

Statius then asked Virgil about the destiny of other poets, Greek and Latin, and learnt that they were most of them in Limbo with him. They then paused and looked round, for they had got to the top of the stair and its enclosing mountain walls. So they went on along the new (sixth) ledge, turning to the left as before, Dante following by himself behind and gathering poetical inspiration from their talk. But in the midst of the road they found a tree bearing fragrant and sweet apples, which grew too high to be got at. At the side a clear stream dripped from the rock over its leaves; and a voice from within the leaves warned all those who approached it, citing as instances of temperance, Daniel who fed on pulse; the ancient Roman ladies who drank only water; Mary indifferent to the feast at Cana of Galilee; and the Baptist who fed on locusts and wild honey.

CANTO XXIII.—THE SIXTH CIRCLE AND FORESE DE'
DONATI.

Dante fixed his eyes on the foliage of this tree, "like the sportsman watching in the boughs the bird he is aiming at," till Virgil bade him notice the spirits advancing who wept and sang, so that—

"Both sorrow and delight at once they wrought."

These shades now came towards them like pensive pilgrims meeting strangers on their way.

"They all had dim and hollow eyes, and wan
Faces, and round the sharp bones clung the skin.
Their eyes seemed rings whose jewels had been lost."

While Dante was wondering what could have reduced them to this misery, behold one of the shades turned those eyes, deep sunken in his head, towards him, gazed on him fixedly, and cried out, "What favour is this that is shown me?" Dante would never have recognised his face, so changed as it was, but by the voice he knew Forese (one of the Donati and his kinsman by marriage).

Donato explained to him that all these weepers and singers were persons who, having been gluttonous to excess, were here purifying themselves by hunger and thirst, the sight of these fruits and water, which they could not attain, being their punishment.

"And circling thus, not once, but many times,
Our pain renews itself: our pain I say,
And ought to call it solace."

Dante asked him how he had come so soon to so high a circle of Purgatory, and he said—

"I was led so soon
To drink this blessed gall of healing pains

By my dear Nella with her pleading tears.
Her prayers and sighs devout first drew me forth
From yon expectant shore, and set me free
From all the other circles. Dear to God
Is she my widow, whom as my young wife
I loved so well—dear all the more that she
Is in good works so wholly solitary."

He then denounced the other Florentine ladies for their immodesty, especially in their style of dress, and prophesied that they would soon be mourning their shamelessness and insolence. He then adjured Dante to tell him who his companions were—

" 'Virgil is *he*,' I said, pointing him out.
'That other is the shade for whom just now
Did every rock shake in your kingdom when
It felt him part from it.' "

CANTO XXIV.—THE CIRCLE OF THE GLUTTONOUS
CONTINUED,

Dante and Forese thus went on talking, while—

"The shades that seemed like things twice dead yet turned
From the deep cavities of their eyes a gaze
On me, whom they saw living."

Dante then asked where Piccarda was* (sister to Forese, who had taken the veil at the convent of Santa Clara, and being forced out of it by another brother Corso, to marry a man to whom he had promised her, soon sickened and died), and if there was there any one else worthy of note. "My sister," he said, "of whom I know not whether she was more beautiful or more good, is now happy and triumphantly crowned in high Olympus." He then pointed out to

him Buonagiunta of Lucca, and the Pope Martin IV., as well as several others. Dante paid most attention to Buonagiunta, who seemed desirous to speak with him—

“He murmured somewhat
Of one ‘Gentucca’ * and I prayed him then
To make me understand, and he replied
‘A woman hath been born, and wears not yet
The veil of marriage, who will make thee love
Thy city though ill spoken of by men.
Let this foreknowledge be enough for thee.
But tell me, see I here in thee the man
Who fashioned those new verses that begin
“Fair ladies, all who have a soul for love” ?’ †
I answered, ‘I am one who when love breathes
Note and record it as it speaks within.’
‘Brother,’ he said, ‘I see now the hard knot,
That twined itself to keep back me, Guittone,
Aye, and Notaio, from the sweet new style ‡
I hear and love. I see now how your wings
Close follow Love, our Sovereign, closer far
Than ours did ; ‘twixt us, sooth, is no compare.’
And then he held his peace as one content.

* * * * *

He asked me, ‘When shall I again behold thee ?’
‘How long I yet may live,’ said I, ‘I know not.
But long ere I in person shall return,
My wishes will have borne me to this shore ;
Because the place where I was set to live
Is daily emptied more and more of good,
And seems to doleful ruin running fast.’”

* A young lady of Lucca, with whom Dante, in his exile, passing through Lucca, fell in love, of which incident this is supposed to be a prophecy.

† “Donne ch’ avete intelletto d’amore.” The first line of a canzone in ‘La Vita Nuova.’

‡ “Le vostre penne,” including with Dante other poets of the new style.

Buonagiunta, to console Dante, prophesied to him the shameful and violent end of one of his adversaries.* He saw him, he said, dragged at the tail of a horse, which galloping ever faster, kicked him in his course so that his body was vilely disfigured, and his soul went to the vale whence none can be redeemed (Hell). Referring him to the near future for the accomplishment of this prophecy, he told Dante that the time was too precious in that region for him to delay any longer in talk with him :

“ And as a rider in a troop of horse
Starts at a gallop, glorying in the first
Encounter with his foe, so parted he
From us with longer strides.”

Dante now remained with Virgil and Statius, and beheld another tree loaded with fruit, and there saw people under it—

“ Raising their hands and crying out strange cries
Towards its leaves, like children vainly longing,
Who pray and to their prayer find no response,
Save that, to sharpen further their desire,
High up is held the object full in sight.”

Then they dispersed as though undeceived, and the pilgrims advancing to the great tree—

“ Che tanti prieghi e lagrime rifiuta ”—

heard a voice saying, “ Pass further on without going

* Corso Donati, brother of Forese and head of the Neri, whom Dante here does not name, as he was his kinsman by marriage, was killed in fight, 1308.

nigh ; the tree of which Eve ate is higher up, and this is a shoot of it." They went on some way—

"Contemplando ciascun senza parola.
Che andate pensando sì voi sol trè ?
Subita voce disse ; ond' io mi scossi,
Come fan bestie spaventate e poltre.
Drizzai la testa per veder chi fossi ;
E giammai non si videro in fornace
Vetri o metalli sì lucenti e rossi
Com' i' vidi un che dicea : ' S'a voi piace
Montare in su, qui si convien dar volta.' "

This was an angel whose brightness so dazzled Dante that he could only fall behind his companions, and walked as one who guides himself by his hearing, not by his sight.

"E quale, annunziatrice degl' albori,
L' aura di maggio movesi ed olezza,
Tutta impregnata dall' erba e da' fiori ;
Tal mi senti' un vento dar per mezza
La fronte, e ben senti' mover la piuma
Che fe sentir d' ambrosia l' orezza."

The angel then uttered a blessing upon the temperate—

"Esuriendo sempre quanto è giusto."

CANTO XXV.—THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND EXAMPLES
OF PURITY.

There was now no time to be lost, as it was two hours past noon ; and the three
the Seventh Circle, the passage 1
they had to go one by one.

Dante was very anxious, and half afraid to ask a question of Virgil, so—

“ Like the young stork that fain would fly, and lifts
His wing and dares not yet forsake the nest,
And lets it fall,”

so did he move his lips without fully speaking. His gentle guide perceived his attempt, and said,

“ Let fly the arrow now thou hast bent the bow.”

Dante then inquired how spirits, who had no need of nourishment, could become thin. Virgil referred him to Statius, who gave him a long account of the generation of human beings, and how that, when the brain has been perfected, the “*spirito di virtù formativa*,” inspired by God, forms in that substance a single individual thinking and feeling soul. When this soul is disjoined by death from the body, that “*virtù formativa*,” raying itself all round, forms in the adjoining air a body like to that which animated it before, but as it is only an aerial body it is called a shade.

“ And as the air when charged with rain reflects
The rays of the opposing sun and thus
Adorns itself with various hues, e'en so
Doth here the neighbouring air take on the shape
That's stamped upon it by the soul enclosed,
And like the flame that follows still the fire
In all its changes, that new form pursues
The spirit which every organ frames of sense,
Even to sight ; 'tis thus we speak and smile,
Hence come the tears and sighs that thou hast seen
Upon the mount ; fashions itself the shade
After the impulses by which we're stirred.”

Having come to the last circle, Dante's attention was now distracted by another subject, namely, how to find a safe way through the flames which shot forth

from the mountain side, leaving a narrow path for them, close to the unprotected side of the ledge, where he walked, fearing on one side to fall into the flames, on the other over the precipice. In the midst of this great blaze he heard voices singing the hymn *Summæ Deus clementiæ*, and saw spirits moving through the flame, he watching, by turns, their steps and his own. They alternately sang hymns in a low voice, and then in a loud one recited instances of purity of life, which exercise was continued all the time they were in the flame, as the purgation of their sin of unchastity.

CANTO XXVI.—THE SEVENTH CORNICE CONTINUED.

This canto contains examples of the crimes punished in this circle, among the sinners being several poets, and ends with a song in Provençal by Arnaldo Daniello. Speaking of the *stolti*, who preferred to this latter an inferior poet, Gerault de Berneil of Limoges, he says—

“More than to truth, to fame they turn their ear,
Cry after cry, only in praise of *him*,
Till Truth with nobler spokesmen wins the day.”

CANTO XXVII.—ENTRANCE OF DANTE INTO THE
EARTHLY PARADISE.

It was now sunset when they approached the stair which was to lead them to the top of the mount. The flames raged between; but an angel appeared with

gladsome face just outside them, singing *Beati mundo corde*, and bidding them advance in spite of the fire. Dante hearing, became—

“ Qual è colui che nella fossa è messo.’
With hands stretched forth and clasped, I viewed the fire,
Wildly imagining that there I saw,
What once I had beheld, live bodies burning.”*

Virgil comforted him, saying—

“ My son, here may be torment, but not death ;”
and then, that if he were to stay in the heart of the flames a thousand years they would not burn a hair of his head, bidding him, for proof, put a fold of his garment in the fire. But finding Dante still unwilling to move, he said somewhat displeased—

“ ‘ Now see, my son,
This wall divides thy Beatrice and thee.’
And as at Thisbe’s name raised Pyramus
His dying lids and looked at her, the while
The mulberry was crimsoned with his blood,
So did I melt and turn to my sage guide,
Hearing that name, for ever in my mind.
He shook his head, and saying, ‘ How then ? we
Wish still to linger here,’ smiled as we do
When with an apple we have lured a child.”

They entered the flames, Statius following, and Dante felt as if he could have thrown himself for cooling into a furnace of molten glass. Virgil, to comfort him, kept on talking to him of Beatrice, saying—

“ Methinks already I behold her eyes.”

Guided by a voice of singing beyond, and a splendour (an angel) from which the voice issued, they

* Criminals condemned in Italy to be burnt alive.

went on upward to the east, with the sun setting behind them till it became quite dark.

“ Ciascun di noi d' un grado fece letto,”

it being impossible to ascend the mountain without light.

“ As goats that swift and wanton leapt along
The mountain tops, when they have had their meal
Lie quiet in the shade while the sun burns,
Watched by the shepherd leaning on his staff.

* * * * *

Closed in the grotto, little could we see
Of outside sky, but through that little shone
The stars, beyond their wont, there large and bright.
Thus gazing and thus musing, sleep surprised me,
Sleep that so often knows the things to be.
It was the hour when first beamed from the east
Love's star upon the mountain. In my dream
I saw a young, fair woman, straying o'er
A meadow, gathering flowers; singing, she said,
' Know, whoso asks my name, that I am Leah,
And ever keep in play my lovely hands
To make me garlands; I adorn myself
Here, that I may with pleasure afterward
Look in the glass; but from her mirror ne'er
My sister Rachel stirs, but sits all day,
Beholding with delight her beauteous eyes,
As I the adornment, fashioned by my hands:
Her it contents to see, and me to work.' *
Now, at the gleams ere daybreak that arise,
So dear to pilgrims who, returning, rest
Less far off from their homes, the darkness fled
On every side, and fled with it my sleep.”

Waking, he found the two poets already risen, and

* Leah and Rachel represent respectively the active and the contemplative life as practised before Christianity; Matilda and Beatrice also the active and contemplative life, but in the full Christian light.

Virgil told him he was now on the threshold of Paradise. At these words—

“Wish upon wish so pressed me to be there
That at each upward step I felt as though
Wings were in me unfolding. When the stair
Was all surmounted and we stood upon
The upper step, then Virgil fixed his eyes
Upon me, and thus spoke, ‘Now hast thou seen,
My son, the temporal and th’ eternal fire,
And now art come to regions where myself
No further can discern. I led thee hither
With skill and art ; now take for guide thy pleasure.
Thou art beyond the steep and narrow ways.
See there the sun which shines in front of thee,
Behold the grass, the blooming shrubs and flowers,
Here by the all-uncultured earth produced.
When *she* comes to thee glad with those fair eyes
Whose tears sent me to thee, then canst thou sit
Or walk amongst them with her. But expect
No further word nor sign from me ; thy will
Is free, direct, and healthy, and ’twere wrong
To heed not its direction, since I’ve crowned thee
Absolute lord and master of thyself.”

CANTO XXVIII.—THE EARTHLY PARADISE AND
MATILDA.

“Eager to search that divine forest through,
So thick with leaves and flowers, whose richness made
A screen ’twixt the new day-beams and our view,
I left the mountain’s edge and slowly strayed
Where from the sod my steps a fragrance drew,
A sweet and steady air my brow caressed,
Than a soft breath no stronger, yet did shake
The leaves, that all bowed trembling to the west ;
But troubled not the birds who, now awake,
Amid the tree tops, joyously addressed

The morning, singing 'mid the leaves that sing
A refrain to the roundelays they pour ;
Such as from bough to bough runs murmuring,
Through that pine forest on the Chiassian shore,
When o'er it waves the moist Scirocco's wing.
So deep was I in that wood-wilderness,
Where first I had entered to my sight was lost,
And now a rill, whose ripples with their ki-s
Bent the low grass, my further passage crossed ;
Turbid were all earth's waters, seen by this—
So clear its depths were shown, though dark it rose,
'Neath that perpetual shade no ray could dare
To pierce athwart ; I paused the scene to scan.
My eyes o'er passed the streamlet, prompt to share
The boundless flowery wealth that there began.
Then I beheld a sight there—such a thing,
As snatches suddenly all sense away,
Save wonder—'twas a lady wandering
Alone, who singing went, and many a spray
Chose from the flowers that painted all her way.
' Ah, lovely lady ! who art surely caught
In love's sweet net, if I may judge by look
And tone, the heart's true signs '—I thus besought—
' I pray thee, hither come where runs this brook ;
That what thou singest to mine ear be brought.
Thou mindest me of Proserpine of yore,
When her mother lost, and she the spring.'
Then as in dance a girl, who stood before
With feet close-joined, turns, slowly hovering,
She towards me moved, o'er all that blossomy floor ;
With her pure eyes cast down, in maiden-wise,
She at my prayer approached, till I could hear
The sweet voice, and the meaning recognise ;
And when she reached the rivulet so clear,
She gifted me with sight of those fair eyes."

The splendour of her face so transported Dante that the three steps whereby the river divided them seemed to him worse than the Hellespont to Xerxes or Leander. She made him a long explanation about

Paradise, telling him that the streams by which it was watered flowed from one unchanging fount, which, when they parted in two, became, the one Lethe, of which whoso drank forgot all his earthly sins; the other Eunoe, which revived the memory of what had been done right in those who first had drunk of the water of Lethe, and added—

“ They who of yore sang of the age of gold
Dreamed haply in Parnassus of this spot.”

“ Qui fu innocente il uman radice
Qui primavera sempre ed ogni frutto.”

Dante, at these words, turned round to his poets, and saw that they were smiling; then he turned again to the lovely lady.*

CANTO XXIX.—THE EARTHLY PARADISE, AND THE
CAR OF BEATRICE.

“ Thus singing, like a maiden touched by love,
Did she pass on, and like to nymphs astray
In the wild woodlands, seeking some to shun,
And some to feel, the sun, did we beside
The streamlet walk, I evenly with her
Small steps with small pursuing.
[Picciol passo con picciol seguitando.] ”

Suddenly the lady turned to him and said, “ My brother, look and hear.” A sudden splendour, like

* The name of this “ bella Donna ” is given us afterwards (in Canto xxxiii.) as “ Matilda ; ” she appears to symbolise, like the Leah of the vision, active virtue.

lightning, filled the whole forest, but, unlike lightning, remained, and grew more and more splendid.

“Ed una melodia dolce correva
Per l' aer luminoso.”

“And whilst I went amidst such sweet beginning
Of never-ending joys, all in suspense,
And all desirous still of more delights,
Before us was the air like kindled fire
Under green boughs, and the sweet sound was now
Grown audible in song.”

Then he saw moving towards him seven golden trees, as they seemed, which proved to be the Seven Golden Candlesticks. They shone so bright—like the moon at midnight, and at the full—that Dante turned, full of admiration, to Virgil, who (instead of explaining them to him, as he was wont to do in their former travel) could only reply to him with a look of equal astonishment.

“Those lofty things
Then came so slowly towards us—not so slow
Moves on the new-made bride.”

They left the air behind them painted with streamers of fire, which made seven distinct streaks, like the rainbow, under which advanced twenty-four old men, crowned with white lilies, and singing canticles. Then came four winged animals, crowned with green leaves, circling around a car drawn by a griffin. Round this car danced three maidens, dressed one in red, like the fire around them, the second in green, as if her very body was of emerald, the third in white, like new fallen snow (these were Charity, Hope, and Faith). Four others in purple (the other four cardinal virtues) were on the other side. Near this group were two old men,

St. Luke and St. Paul, then four other apostles, and behind these one old man, alone—

“Who moved there dreaming, yet with open eyes,”

[Saint John as when beholding visions at Patmos.]
All these were garlanded with red roses, looking at a distance as if their heads were crowned with fire. The car advanced towards him with a loud sound, and these seven stopped their motion, and stood still beside the seven candlesticks.

CANTO XXX.—BEATRICE.

The surroundings of the car began to sing a hymn.

“As at the last great summons will the blest
Rise ready, each one from his cavern house,
With his restored voice chaunting ‘Alleluia,’
So rose a hundred voices o’er the car,
Angels and ministers of grace divine. . . .
I saw, as in the dawning of the day
Shadowed with dewy vapour the sun’s face,
That the eye long can look on ; so within
A cloud of flowers flung by angelic hands
Beneath a white veil, girt by olive wreath,
In a green mantle, I beheld a maid
Arrayed in red as in a robe of flame.
My soul, that for long years had ceased to feel
The thrill and tremor by her presence made,
E’en now, without the knowledge of mine eyes,
Warned by a secret virtue breathed from her,
Felt the strange might of that long-cherished love.
Soon as that sight revived the ancient spell
Cast on me ere from childhood I had passed,
I turned with such a gaze as when a child
Runs to his mother sorrowing or dismayed,
To say to Virgil, ‘Not a drop of blood

Remains in me that thrills not ; well do I
The traces of that first flame recognise,'
But Virgil, my loved father, Virgil, whom
I trusted with my welfare—he was gone ;
Nor all those joys that our first mother lost
Availed to keep my cheeks unbathed with tears.
'Dante, because thy Virgil's gone from thee,
Weep not so, weep not yet ; for other cause
Needs must thou weep.' At sound of my own name
I turned and saw the lady who had first
Appeared to me in that angelic pomp,
Bending her eyes on me across the stream.
But through the veil that from her head fell down,
Wreathed with the olive, saw I not her face.
In proud and queenly guise she thus went on,
As one who keeps the best speech to the last :
'Look at me well ; I am indeed Beatrice.
Hast thou then deigned in truth to ascend this mount ?
Dost thou not know that here the blessed dwell ?'
I cast my eyes down to the glassy stream,
But seeing there myself, I sought the turf,
So stricken was my brow with grievous shame.
As seems a lofty mother to a child,
So did she seem to me ; for bitter oft
We feel the taste of piety austere.
Then she ceased speaking, and the angels sang. . . .
As when the snow amid the living pillars [*vive travi*]
Of Italy's ridged back,* blown on and smit
By winds Sclavonian, thaws and liquefied
Melts in the shadowless and torrid earth,
As melts a waxen taper in the flame—
So I remained all stupefied, nor heard
The songs of angels following still the notes
Of the eternal spheres. But, since I felt
In those sweet strains their pity for my pain
More than if they had said in words express,
'Lady, why grieve him so ?' the ice I felt,

* The pine-trees of the Apennines during the blowing of winds from the Istrian coast.

Choking my heart dissolved in breath and flood,
And through my lips and eyes the agony
Burst from my bosom. She, still standing firm
Upon the car, to those celestial forms
Thus turned her speech : ' Ye in eternal day
So watch, that night nor slumber hide from you
One step that in their course the ages take.
So 'tis for him who yonder weeps, I make
My answer so precise that fault and grief
In him may match each other. Not alone
Through working of the heavenly wheels that guide
Each germ to its conclusion, as the star
Accompanying it decides—but through that grace
Whose rain has source in vapours fixed so high
Our sight cannot approach them—in his youth,
This man received such virtue that his life
Would have made wondrous proof of all that's good ;
But so much more the soil sown with ill seed
Or not at all, with mischief and wild growths
Teems, as its natural vigour more abounds.
Some while did I sustain him with my face ;
My youthful eyes turned on him, led him on
In the straight path with me. But, soon as I
Stood on the threshold of the second life
And changed my being, he withdrew from me,
And to another gave himself. I rose
From flesh to spirit, and beheld increased
Beauty and virtue in me, and became
To him less dear and charming ; and he bent
His steps in ways not right, pursuing false
Visions of good that ne'er fulfil their promise.
Nor yet did it avail me to beseech
Divine inspirings, through whose power, in dreams
And other ways, I sought to call him back.
He heeded nought, and fell at last so low
No means remained to save him, save to show
The lost in Hell to him. For this did I
Visit the portals of the dead, and there
My tears and prayers were borne to *him* whose hand
Guided him down below. God's mighty law

Would have been broken had he passed the stream
Of Lethe, and oblivion's waters drunk
Without a tribute of atoning tears.' "

CANTO XXXI.—PURIFICATION OF DANTE.

" 'O thou,' she said, and turned direct to me
Her speech which e'en addressed to others pierced me,
Pursuing without pause 'say, say if this
Be true ; let thy confession seal the charge.'
But so confused were all my faculties
That my voice quivered and expired unheard.
Awhile she waited, then, 'What thoughts are thine ?'
She said ; 'reply to me ; for Lethe's stream
Hath not effaced those grievous memories.'
Fear and confusion mingled from my lips
Forced such a *yes* as needed to assure it
The witness of the eyes. As, when the cord
Is strained too tight, the crossbow snaps in twain,
And the shaft, faltering, feebly hits the mark,
So burst my heart beneath its heavy load,
Discharging tears and sighs ; my accents died
In passing through my lips. Then she to me :
'In following my desires, towards the good
Beyond which there is none, what obstacles,
What chains controlled thee, making thee abjure
The hope of passing onward, or what charms
Didst find on other brows to draw thy steps
Into their presence ? ' "

Dante confessed his wrong-doing, and Beatrice accepting his confession as palliation, nevertheless went on reprimanding him ; and while he stood there penitent, bade him lift his head and look at her. The angels having ceased covering her with flowers, he

beheld her seated on the double-natured griffin, and, in spite of her veil and her distance across the stream, she seemed to him as much to exceed in loveliness her former self as in life she had done all other women. So overpowered was he that he fell fainting ; but when he returned to life, he saw bending over him Matilda, who drew him into the stream and passing lightly over it led him with her, and when they were near the other shore, gently plunged him in the water ; thus purified she presented him to the four fair nymphs* dancing round the car, who singing told him that in heaven they were stars, appointed for the handmaids of Beatrice before she descended to the world. They bade him accompany them to “ see the eyes that had pierced him with love.” And there he saw those eyes shining upon the griffin and reflecting as in a mirror his double nature in two forms, while the griffin himself remained single and unchanged. While Dante gazed in a happy astonishment, the three superior virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity), singing, implored Beatrice to unveil her full splendour “ al tuo fedele.”

“ O splendour of eternal living light,
Who that hath paled beneath Parnassus’ shade,
And drunk from its pure well, but yet would find
His thoughts all dim and dusky, should he strive
To render thee such as thou didst appear,
There where the heavens with all their harmonies
Encircled thee, no longer veiled by aught,
Amidst the open air ? ”

* These were the moral virtues attendant on Divine Wisdom or Theology, and in a more literal sense on Beatrice herself when she lived in the world.

CANTO XXXII.—VISIONS AND CONVERSATION WITH
BEATRICE.

“ So fixed and eager were mine eyes to quench
Their ten years’ thirst, all other sense was stilled.
[A disbramarsi la decenne sete.]
A wall on every side appeared to rise
’Twixt them and every sight—that holy smile
So drew them to it with the charm of yore,
Till toward the left my face by force was drawn,
Hearing a voice amongst them say ‘ Too fixed.’ ”

The car moved on preceded by all the band with Dante and Statius following it, guided by the fair lady who had taken him across the stream. Through this lofty forest, made empty by Eve’s sin, they had gone the space of three arrow-flights, when the car stopped and Beatrice descended. He heard from all the murmured word “ Adam ! ” Then they encircled a lofty and leafless tree (in the literal sense the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in the allegorical, the Imperial Monarchy of Rome). To this the car was tied.

“ And as in spring when falls the sun’s great light
Upon our trees, and they begin to swell,
And each renews its hue, so did this Tree.”

He fell asleep, he knows not how, and can only say that he was awakened by a splendour and a voice which said, “ Rise ; what dost thou ? ”

“ As, to behold the blossoming of the vine
Which makes the angels evermore athirst
For its most holy grapes, and makes in heaven
An endless wedding-feast, Peter and John
And James were led and, overwhelmed, were yet

Called back to life by that same voice whose sound
A deeper sleep had broken, and beheld
Their number less by Moses and Elias,
And changed their Master's raiment—so did I
Return, and saw my lovely guide stand there,
And, doubtful, asked her, 'Where is Beatrice?'

He was told that she was sitting under the "renewed tree" in company of the seven nymphs, the others having all gone back to heaven. There he saw her as guardian of the mystic car. She said to him :

"Here shalt thou bide a while a forester,
Then be with me th' eternal citizen
Of that true Rome whose Emperor is Christ,"

(Italy is the forest; the kingdom of heaven is the "true Rome,") and bade him when he returned report what he had seen.

An Eagle (symbolising the Emperors) then lighted on the tree, injured its flowers, leaves, and even its stem, then struck the car, whence crawled out a fox. This was driven away by Beatrice, then from the tree the Eagle descended on the car and left there its feathers, and a voice as from a grieving heart came from heaven saying :

"O my own bark, how ill a freight hast thou."

Then the earth opened and a dragon came forth, and fixing his tail in the car, drew the bottom of it apart. The rest remained covered with the eagle's feathers, and the car, all changed from its original form, put forth five heads, horned and monstrous; whereat, as well as other sights, Dante alarmed, went to hide himself in the wood.

NOTE.—All this latter part is an obvious allegory, of which

the general meaning is as follows :—The double-natured griffin and the car represent Christ guiding the Church of Rome. The eagle who strikes the tree and the car signifies the various persecuting emperors of early Rome ; the fox, probably, symbolises the Heresiarch ; and the eagle's descending on the car and leaving there his feathers, typifies the corrupting gifts of Constantine to the Church. The dragon who drew out the bottom of the car was Satan who, infecting the Papacy, destroyed the humility of the Church, and the five monstrous heads it put forth denote the temporal powers and Guelph cities with which the Papacy allied itself against the Imperial Government. The alliance and quarrels between the Princes of France and the Popes Boniface and Clement V. are further symbolised in the union of a giant and a courtesan. All this Canto strikingly illustrates the threefold meanings underlying Dante's text : the literal, the historical, and the allegorical or spiritual.

CANTO XXXIII.—DANTE AND STATIUS BAPTISED IN
THE RIVER EUNOE.

Beholding all these visions Beatrice "*sospirando e pia*" turned pale, as did the Virgin Mary, at the cross ; then changing her tone and glowing with zeal, she stood up, and dismissing all the attendant maidens, remained alone with Matilda, Dante, and Statius. Then addressing Dante especially, she prophesied the coming of an heir to the eagle who had left his plumage on the car,

"And first became a monster, then a prey."

This heir was to be a leader who should destroy the temporal power of the Pope and the French dominion in Italy. She bade him note this prediction, obscure as it at present was, and teach it to the living, "del

viver ch' è un correre alla morte," and not to conceal that he had seen the Trée, "which had now been twice pillaged and stripped here," but which whoso robs or injures "con bestemmia di fatto offende Dio, Che solo all' uso suo la creò santa." She told him that, were not his mind stupefied as by the waters of Elsa,* by the vain thoughts which filled it, he would understand the justice of God in all this.

"Ma, perch' io veggio te nell' intelletto
Fatto di pietra e in petrato tinto,
Sì che t' abbaglia il lume del mio detto,
Voglio anche, e se non scritto, almen dipinto."

" 'That so thou bear my words within thy soul
As sign of what thou'st seen, as pilgrims bear
The pilgrim's staff with palm-leaves girt around.'
'My brain is stamped by thee,' I answered her,
'As seal by wax whose form there changes never.
But tell me why so high beyond my sight
Flies that dear speech of thine, that most 'tis lost
When most its help is sought?'"

She replied that it was in order that he might see how vain is all his human science and how remote his way on earth from the heavenly way. "I do not remember," answered Dante, "that I ever estranged myself from thee; I have no prick of conscience on that score." "And if thou canst not remember that," she rejoined, "it is because thou hast just drunk of the stream of Lethe, which blots out remembrance of our offences; my words shall now be plain even to thy dull mental vision."

Meanwhile the Seven Virtues who had been moving on—

* A river in Tuscany which turned all things dipped in it to stone.

“ Per un’ ombra smorta
Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
Sovra suoi freddi rivi l’ Alpe porta,”—

stopped at last, as scouts, sent forward at the head of a band, stop on coming upon something new and unexpected.

“ In front of them I seemed to see Euphrates
And Tigris issue from one fount, and then,
Like tender friends, part lingeringly. I said,
‘ O light and glory of the human race !
What rivers are these two that rise and part ? ’
‘ Ask thou Matilda,’ she replied ; then spoke
The lovely lady as self-justifying,
‘ All this and more I told him, and am sure
That Lethe’s waters washed it not away.’
‘ A deeper care, perchance,’ said Beatrice,
‘ Such as full oft bereaves of memory,
Hath darkened his mind’s sight. But yonder see
Rise Eunoe ; * conduct him thither thou,
And as thou’rt wont, revive his torpid powers.’
And, as a gentle spirit that not gainsays,
But makes another’s will its own as soon
As that by any sign is manifest,
Did that fair lady take my hand, and move,
Saying to Statius, with sweet woman-grace,
‘ Come with him.’ ”

“ Reader, had I time, I would
Sing that sweet draught that ne’er could sate desire.

* * * * *

From that most holy wave did I withdraw,
E’en so new made as plants with leaves renewed,
[Rifatto sì, come piante novelle,
Rinnovellate di novella fronda,]
All pure and prompt for mounting to the stars.
[Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.] ”

* The stream which restored the memory of past good. See Canto xxviii.

PARADISE.

FROM THE EARTHLY PARADISE TO THE FIRST SPHERE OF HEAVEN.

DANTE begins this last canticle by observing that the glory of the Eternal Mover of all things, penetrating the universe, shines yet more in one part than another. He himself had been in that heaven, "*che più della sua luce prende*" (that is, the Empyrean, the Highest Heaven), and saw things which none returning thence can repeat, because once arrived at God himself—

"Nostro intelletto sì profonda tanto [is so absorbed in the
vision]

Che retro la memoria non può ire."

"But all that I can in my inmost soul
Make treasure of, shall now supply my song.

O great Apollo ! for this last great work

Make of me such a vessel of thy grace,

'Come dimandi per dar l' amato alloro'

[As thou requirest him to be to whom thou shalt give thy
beloved laurel]."

"O divine virtue, if thou give thyself
So much to me that I may manifest
Some shadow of the blessed kingdom left
Still lingering in my mind, then shalt thou see me

Come to thy cherished tree, and crown myself
 With that same foliage, since the theme and thou
 Shalt make me worthy of it. For so rarely,
 Father, thou findest one with power to triumph
 As Cæsar or as poet (fault and shame
 Of human wills) that when 'tis once attained
 Gladness from that Peneian leaf should spring
 In the most blessed Delphian deity."

It was morning on one side of the earth, evening on the other ; Purgatory was all bright, and the opposite hemisphere all dark. Beatrice had turned to the left (where was the sunrise) and gazed upon the sun.

"Never did eagle fix such gaze upon it."

Dante did the same, and found that here one could look at it beyond mortal use.

"Fixed on th' eternal wheels [the revolving universe] still
 Beatrice

Gazed all intent, and I, my eyes removed
 From these, on *her* had fixed them ; in her look
 I seemed to grow divine ; words cannot speak
 That passing forth beyond humanity.
 [Trasumanar significar per verba
 Non si poria]
 Thou know'st, O Love, who governest the skies,
 Thou who didst raise me to the light, if then
 I was but that which thou didst last create
 In me—pure spirit, or yet blent with flesh."

Astonished at the harmony of the spheres, and the fire from the sun lighting up the heavens with a very lake of lustre, Dante wished to ask Beatrice the cause. She, knowing his thoughts, forestalled him by telling him that he was no longer on earth, as he supposed, but in heaven.

These words, that came in smiles, so few, so sweet,
 "queste sorrise parolette brevi," removed the first
 doubt, but he then wondered how his heavy body
 had mounted up so quickly. She then, with a pious
 sigh, turned her eyes on him as a mother looks on
 her sick child, and said,

"All natures in their diverse essence tend,
 Or more or less, to their great source; all move
 In various paths through the great Sea of Being.

* * * *

That Divine Providence that orders all
 Makes with its light for ever quiet the heaven
 'Neath which the swifter moves."

(The supreme heaven, the Empyrean, is above the
 Primum Mobile, which revolves more rapidly.) To
 this, she said, all things tend as an arrow from a bow.

"But as full oft the moulded form accords
 Ill with the art's intent [*forma non s' accorda*
Molte fiata all' intenzion dell' arte], because that slow
 Is matter to reply to soul's demand;
 So oft the creature from this course departs,
 And has the power to bend the other way,
 As flame may fall from cloud, when turned to earth
 By false desire that primal impulse is.

* * * *

And then to Heaven she turned her face again."

CANTO II.—THE FIRST HEAVENLY SPHERE, THE MOON.

"O ye who in a little skiff, intent
 To listen, follow after this my bark,
 That singing moves—return to your own shores,

Tempt not the ocean ; haply losing me,
 Ye there may wander vainly. Ne'er before
 Ran vessel on this sea where I am launched.

* * * *

Ye few who've early sought for angels' food,
 And, so sustained, are yet not sated, ye
 On the deep ocean fearless may embark,
 Pursuing still my furrow on the wave
 Quickly smoothed over [All' acqua che ritorne eguale].

* * * *

The innate longing for God's realm of bliss
 Bore us as swiftly as the heavens revolve.
 Beatrice gazed above and I on her.
 Till fleet as bolt from crossbow we arrived
 Where the great marvel drew my eyes away,
 And she who knew my soul's thirst, turned to me
 Happy as beautiful, and thus she said—
 'Direct thy grateful thoughts to God, to Him
 Who now hath led us to the first of stars.'
 It seemed to me that a cloud covered it,
 Thick, solid, lucid, polished, as it were
 A diamond smitten by the sun. And then
 Th' eternal pearl received us in itself,
 As water doth a ray of light, and still
 Remains entire as erst.
 [Per entro sè l' eterna margherita
 Ne ricevette, com' acqua recepe
 Raggio di luce permanendo unita.]''

This mystery, he adds, of body entering into body
 should kindle in us a stronger desire to see that
 essence, Christ, in which the Divine nature was
 united with ours.

"There in that heavenly essence we one day
 Shall see what we as yet hold but by faith,
 Unproved, intuitively, as we hold
 First truths, whence spring our actions."

Dante then inquired about the spots in the moon. She observed :

"Dietro a' sensi
Vedi che la ragione ha corte l' ali."

That is, guided only by the senses, reason cannot go far. She then entered into a long explanation, which ended thus :

" Lo moto e la virtù de' santi giri,
Come dal fabbro l' arte del martello,
Da' beati motor convien che spiri,
E il ciel, cui tanti lumi fanno bello
Dalla mente profonda che lui volve,
Prende l' image, e fassene suggello."

" The movement and the virtue of all these
Revolving heavens, as comes the hammer's art
From him who holds it, from angelic movers
Emanates, and the sky, made beautiful
By all these lights, receives th' imprinted image
From the deep thought of Him who guides its course,
And of that image makes itself the seal."

CANTO III.—THE SPIRITS IN THE MOON.

Looking up at Beatrice after this explanation, and wishing to acknowledge his errors corrected, Dante beheld a vision which made him forget what he had wished to say.

" E'en as through bright transparent glass, or through
Clear tranquil waters, yet not so profound
As to make dark the bottom, come so dim
The mirrored outlines of our faces back,
That not a pearl on a white forehead set
Shows fainter to our eyes ; so I beheld
Those faces, and in them reversed the error

That kindled in the man love for the fount.*
 Sudden, as I perceived them, deeming them
 But mirrored semblances, I turned me round
 To see whose shades they were, but nothing saw,
 And turned again full facing my sweet guide,
 Whose holy eyes blazed with a gentle smile.

“Quali per verti trasparenti e tersi,
 O ver per acque nitide e tranquille,
 Non sì profonde che i fondi sien persi,
 Tornan de' nostri visi le postille,
 Debili sì che perla in bianca fronte
 Non vien men forte alle nostre pupille;
 Tali vid' io più facce a parlar pronte,
 Perch' io dentro all' error contrario corsi
 A quel ch' accese amor tra l' uomo e il fonte.
 Subito, sì com' io di lor m' accorsi,
 Quelle stimando specchiati sembianti,
 Per veder di cui fosser, gl' occhi torsi,
 E nulla vidi, e ritorsili avanti.
 Dritti nel lume della dolce guida,
 Che sorridendo ardea negl' occhi santi.”

Beatrice, telling him that she was smiling at his childish error, informed him that these were all real beings, who had been sent from heaven to sojourn temporarily in the moon, partly to show their glory, partly on account of vows not perfectly kept on earth. She bade him speak with them, and they would be sure to tell him true. He turned to the spirit who had seemed most eager to speak, and begged her to tell him her name and history. Promptly and with smiles she replied :

“I was a virgin-sister in the world,
 And if with mind intent thou look upon me,

* Narcissus believed his reflection in the fountain to be a real person ; Dante believed these real persons to be reflections.

And closed me in the habit, and my vow
 Made, in her path to walk. But evil men *
 Dragged me from my sweet cloister forth ; God knows
 What then my life was ! And this other splendour,
 Whom at my right you see, who shines with all
 The glory of our spheres, to her applies
 What of myself I say ; a sister she,
 And of the sacred garb despoiled as I.
 But to the world brought back, 'gainst will and right,
 Yet never from her heart the veil was taken.
 This is the noble Constance,† this is she
 Who to the second ‡ Swabian bore the third,
 Last ruler of their house.' Thus spoke she to me,
Ave Maria then began to sing,
 And, singing, passed away as drowned from view.
 My eyes, which followed her as far as sight
 Was possible, when she was lost, returned
 To its one highest object of desire,
 And wholly was absorbed in Beatrice.
 But in the radiance of her look my sight
 Was dazzled, and 'twas long ere I could speak."

CANTO IV.—CONVERSATION WITH BEATRICE.

" My choice between two equal wishes lost,
 Silence perforce I kept, but my desire

* Corso Donati, her brother, whom she does not choose to name, came to her convent with Farinata, a cut-throat, and twelve other ruffians, scaled the walls, carried her off, and forced her to marry one Della Tosa.

† Constance, daughter to King Roger of Sicily, was married in 1186 to the Emperor Henry VI., the son of Frederic Barbarossa. The story of her nunship and violent abduction from her convent must be regarded as a fiction.

‡ Meaning the second Swabian who came into Italy, Frederic Barbarossa having been the first, although the second Emperor of that race.

Was painted in my face, and Beatrice,
The double thought divining, thus replied."

She told him that his first difficulty was, why any fault should be imputed to those who, like Piccarda, were forced to break their vows ; his second, whether, as, according to Plato's doctrine, souls came first from the stars, and after death returned to them. She took the latter doubt first, and showed him that Plato was wholly wrong in his notion, and that all the blessed souls dwelt in the Empyrean, or Highest Heaven ; but, as they had more or less of glory and felicity according to their merits, some who had less came down to show themselves in the inferior sphere of the moon as an acknowledgment of the same. She said that this language was accommodated to his understanding, which could receive intellectual matter only through the senses, and that thus Scripture adapts itself, using images to convey a different meaning ("altro intende"), as when attributing human organs to the archangels and to God himself. In this manner, also, she explained Plato's apparent error, his idea about the souls and the stars being, perhaps, only figurative.

She then explained about Piccarda and the vows, which she said was a simpler case and more open to his comprehension. In such cases she said the will had not been wholly dissentient from the violence used.

" Se fosse stato il lor volere intero,
Come tenne Lorenzo in su la grada,
E fece Muzio alla sua man severo,
Così l' avria ripinte per la strada
Ond' eran tratte, come furo sciolte ;
Ma così salda voglia è troppo rada."

She added that as to what he had heard from Piccarda that Constance had remained a nun in heart, which seemed to contradict what she herself had just said, it often happened that, to escape a danger, one did unwillingly what ought not to be done, and in this way will mixes with force (*"la forza al voler si mischia"*), and they do what must be regarded as a sin. The will, purely and absolutely considered, does not consent to ill ; but it consents conditionally, so far as it fears, if it resists, to fall into worse trouble.

" Thus it flowed on, that holy stream of speech,
Out of the mountain whence all truth proceeds.
' O loved of the First Lover, heavenly one,'
I said, ' whose talk so fills and kindles me ! '

* * * * *

I see our mind can ne'er be satisfied,
Save by the sunbeams of that truth, beyond
Whose bounds no truth is found. In that we rest,
As the wild creature in its lair, as soon
As we have reached it—e'en as reach we may ;
Or else were our desires a fruitless pain.
And so beside a stem of truth springs up
Doubt like a shoot of it—'tis nature's law
Climbing from steep to steep to reach the height.
'Tis this invites, assures me, reverently,
Lady, to ask thee of another truth
Which still is dark to me. I fain would know
If man for unaccomplished vows can make
Such satisfaction by his other deeds
As shall avail with heavenly justice.' Then
Beatrice looked at me with eyes all filled
With sparks of love, eyes so divine, they caused
Mine all bewildered to be turned away."

CANTO V.—ENTRANCE INTO MERCURY, THE SECOND
SPHERE.

Beatrice discoursed with Dante on the nature of vows, arguing that as the liberty of the will was the most precious gift God had given us, which, in making a vow, we rendered up to Him, if this vow was "such that God consented even when we consented," there was nothing else of equal value that we could give Him instead. Yet holy Church could, in a manner, dispense us from keeping our vow, not in the essence of it, but in the form which we had devised, as was permitted to the Jews. Finally she enjoined that vows should not be taken lightly and inconsiderately, as did Jephtha and Agamemnon—

"Onde pianse Ifigénia il suo bel volto,"

and made weep all, wise and foolish, who heard of that strange sacrifice. "You have," she concluded "the Old and New Testament, and the Pastor of the Church to guide you ; let this suffice for your salvation. If cupidity leads you to seek more, be men, not feeble sheep, nor like lambs who leave their mother's milk for their own idle games."

When Beatrice had thus spoken, she turned to gaze at that part of the heavens where there was most life and glory.

"And like an arrow that hath hit its aim,
Ere yet the string has ceased to quiver, we
Flew to the second kingdom [Mercury]."

Beatrice's bright smile made the place itself more luminous.

“E se la stella si cambiò e rise,
Qual mi fec’ io, che pur di mia natura
Trasmutabile son per tutte guise!
[A being made up of body and soul is of more change-
able nature than the solid substance of a star.]”

“More than a thousand splendours towards us drew,
And there was heard in each a voice that said,
‘Lo, here comes one who will increase our loves,’
And each in coming toward us seemed o’erfilled
With joy from his own brightness.”

One of these spirits addressed Dante, encouraging him to ask questions; Beatrice bade him speak fearlessly, and he said—

“I see how thou in thine own light dost wrap
Thyself, and how it pours out from thine eyes
All glittering as thou smilest. But I know not,
Or who thou art or why, O blessed soul,
Thou habitest this sphere, that most is shrouded,
By the sun’s neighbouring light from mortal eyes.”

On thus being addressed—

“E’en as the sun that hides itself in light
When vapours are dried up, the sainted form
Was hidden quite in its own rays of joy,
And thus all closed and veiled, it made reply.”

CANTO VI.—JUSTINIAN.

This luminous shade was the Emperor Justinian, who proceeded to give him a historical sketch of the Roman Empire, describing the progress of the eagle, which he said was turned by Constantine against its original heaven-intended course, meaning the transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium:

“ For twice a hundred years the Bird of God
In the far ends of Europe hid itself
Close to the mountains whence it first arose [the hills of Troy].
Beneath the shadow of the sacred wings
The empire of the world from hand to hand
Went down, until at last it came to mine.”

He told how, by the help of the Holy Spirit, he had reformed the laws, embraced orthodoxy, fought successful battles through Belisarius, and so attained to ruling in peace. He then sketched the progress of the empire :

“ Thou seest the valour that of old did crown
That Sacred Standard, dating from the hour
When Pallas fell, to make it lord of all.
Thou know'st that it in Alba made its home,
Three hundred years and more, till at the end
The three against the three contended for it.
Thou know'st what it did e'en from the days
Of Sabine warfare, till Lucretia's fate,
Through the seven reigns, for ever conquering
The neighbouring nations ; also what it did,
Borne by the noble Romans against Brennus,
Pyrrhus and other princes and colleagues.
Whence to Torquatus, Quintus, Decius, Fabius,
Arose the fame I strew with incense now [che volontier mirro].
Again, that standard crushed the Punic pride,
That followed Hannibal in passage through
Those Alpine rocks thou lovest, Padus ; that
Made the young Scipio and young Pompey triumph.

* * * * *

Then, at the time when heaven had willed to bring
A holy quietude o'er all the earth,
Cæsar—for so willed Rome—laid hold of it ;
And what it did from Varus to the Rhine,
Isara saw and Era, Senna too,
And every valley traversed by the Rhone.
What then it did when from Ravenna's gates
He passed, and leapt the Rubicon, was such

That tongue nor pen can follow in its flight.
His hosts turned first toward Spain, then toward Durazzo,
And struck Pharsalia so, that burning Nile
Vibrated to the blow. Antandro's heights,
And Simois its birth-place, and the spot
Where Hector sleeps, it saw again ; then shook
Its wings to Ptolemy's cost, thence, thundering on,
Struck Juba, then turned back toward your West,
Where Pompey's trump was blown ; what then it did,
'Neath his successor, Brutus, plunged in hell,
With Cassius, direfully makes manifest,
And Modena and Perugia felt and mourned.
Still the sad Cleopatra weeps for it,
Who, fleeing before it, from the serpent took
A dark and sudden death. With him it flew
On to the Red Sea shore, with him made peace
O'er all the world, so deep that then were shut
The gates of Janus. But what first that sign
I speak of had achieved, and was to do,
Through all the human kingdom at its feet,
Becomes but dim and scanty when 'tis seen
In the third Cæsar's hand ; for that divine
Justice that now inspires me, granted it,
So placed, the glory to fulfil his wrath
In a stern vengeance, then with Titus sped
Vengeance for that avenging crime to take.*
When by the Lombard tooth the Holy Church
Was bitten, under her own blessed wings
Fought Charlemagne and saved her. Now canst thou
Judge of those foes whom I accused before
[These are the Guelphs and Ghibelines]
And of their crimes, the cause of all your ills.
The one against that world-great ensign roused
The yellow lilies [France], and the other seized it
For its own private ends ; so that 'tis hard
To say which sinned most. Let the Ghibelines

* In the reign of Tiberius, God, he asserts, took vengeance on the sins of the world by the death of Christ, which sin itself was avenged by Titus upon the Jews.

Beneath another standard ply their schemes.
For ill falls him who makes of it a tool
For evil deeds ; nor will the second Charles
O'erthrow it with his Guelphs ; those eagle claws
Have torn a stronger lion than is he.
Let him not think, as did his father erst,
That God will change that eagle for his lilies.—
This little star is with those spirits adorned
That laboured in good works, for fame and honour.
That search for earthly fame and honour dimmed
Somewhat the flame of love that rose to God.
But we in this are happily content
That to our merits our reward with such
Nice hand is meted out, nor less nor more.

* * * * *

Sweet music is by various voices made ;
Thus of our life the various grades bring out
Sweet harmony in these revolving spheres.
And in this planet-pearl shines fair the light
Of Romeo, him who did the noble work
That was so ill requited. But no joy
Have the Provençals reaped from crushing him.
Four daughters had Count Raymond, each of them
The lowly pilgrim Romeo made a queen.
But tongues malignant moved the Count to call
That just man to a reckoning, who had so
Increased his treasury ; so went he forth
Aged and poor ; and did the world but know
With what brave heart he still endured his lot,
Begging the scanty alms that kept his life,
Much as it praises him, 'twould praise him more."

* Romeo, a name meaning a pilgrim, was given distinctively to this man, a Provençal, who became minister and treasurer to Count Raymond, of Provence, and being calumniated by envious enemies, was dismissed with ignominy. The four queens were the wives of Louis IX. of France, of Henry III. of England, of his brother Richard, elected King of Germany and Charles of Anjou.

CANTO VII.—CONVERSATION OF DANTE AND BEATRICE.

Justinian's spirit moved on with the revolving sphere
he inhabited, singing as he went.

“ And with him in that dance the other shades
Moved, and like swiftest sparks were veiled from me
In sudden distance.”

Dante then turned to Beatrice with new doubts,
which had arisen in his mind, about the justice of the
Crucifixion of Christ, and of the punishment of the
Jews for the act ; also why so extraordinary a mode
of restoring the human race was chosen. Beatrice
proceeded to explain both points by the usual theo-
logical methods, beginning the first with—

“ Through suffering not the rein meant for his good,
The man who ne'er was born, when his own self
Condemning, all his race condemned as well.”

The second point she begins on thus :

“ My brother, that decree lies buried deep
From eyes of all in whom the intellect
Hath not been nourished in the flame of love ”

And having set it forth, she says :

“ Nor betwixt the last night and the first day
Was e'er through Mercy or through Justice seen
Process so high and so magnificent.”

“ Nè tra l' ultima notte e il primo giorno
Sì alto e sì magnifico processo,
O per l' una o per l' altro fue o fie.”

CANTO VIII.—THE THIRD HEAVEN, IN THE PLANET
VENUS.

Dante now ascended with Beatrice, only perceiving his ascent by her increased beauty, into the third heaven, the planet Venus, where are placed the souls that from the love of the human being have raised themselves to the love of the Creator.

“And as we in the flame discern the spark,
And in the music separate voice from voice,
When one is fixed and the other comes and goes;
I in this light saw other luminaries,
Moving in circles, rapid more or less,
As more or less profound their view of God.

* * * *

They came to us leaving the circling course,
First in the highest heaven begun, and moved
By impulse of the burning Seraphim.”

One of these divine lights approached Dante, telling him that they were of the celestial choirs—

“To whom ere now thou in the world didst say,
‘Ye whose intelligence moves the third sphere,’*
Yet are so full of love that for thy pleasure
It is as sweet to us to rest as move.”

Dante, after consulting his lady’s eyes, begged to know who the spirit was.

“And oh, how brighter far, in the new joy
That grew on joy, appeared he when I spoke!”

The spirit answered—

* “Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete.” The first line of the first Canzone in the *Convito*.

“The gladness raying round me hides me from thee,
As is the silkworm covered with its sheath.
Yet didst thou love me well, and hadst good cause,
For, had I longer lived, I would have shown thee
More than the outward flowers and leaves of love.”

This spirit was Charles Martel, son of Charles II. of Naples, heir, by his mother, to the crown of Hungary, who died before his father, at the age of twenty-three, in 1295, having once lived at Florence, and there formed a warm friendship with Dante. He then described the realms to which he was heir; Provence, which on the left is bathed by the mingled streams of the Rhone and the Sorga; Hungary, washed by the Danube as soon as it leaves Germany; the extreme south of Italy, which is sprinkled with the cities of Bari, Gaeta, and Crotona, and on the north begins from the river Tronto, which falls into the Adriatic, and the river Verde into the Mediterranean; and Sicily, which would not have rebelled against his race but for the bad government which moved Palermo to cry, *Die, die* (the Sicilian Vespers). He then spoke of his brother Robert (who succeeded their father on the throne of Naples), and his choice of needy and grasping Catalans for ministers, to the misery and discontent of the people; as also of his own niggardly nature, which rather required a different class of ministers—

“Si ch’ a sua barca

Carica più di carco non si pogna.

[That so to his already overloaded bark a further load
might not be added.]”

Dante then asked Charles Martel how a bad son could come from a good father, as in this case, a niggardly from a liberal one. Charles Martel, answer-

ing, showed him how dispositions and characters must necessarily vary. He added that if nature and fortune find themselves in discord, that is if persons are placed in condition, office, or profession unfitted to them, like seed sown in unsuitable climate or soil, the result will be evil ; and that those who are responsible (governors or parents) should study the dispositions of those under them, so as to choose for them the professions most fit for them.

“ Ma voi torcete alla religione
Tal che fu nato a cingersi la spada,
E fate re di tal ch' è da sermone ;
Onde la traccia vostra è fuor di strada.”

CANTO IX.—OTHER INHABITANTS OF VENUS.

Charles Martel then proceeded to tell Dante of the frauds by which his own descendants would be wronged;* but he added, “Taci e lascia volger gl' anni,” so that Dante could tell us nothing but that these offences would be avenged. The spirit then disappeared, losing itself in the light of the sun, and another “di quelli splendori” came in his place, showing the wish to please Dante by increased external brightness. Dante prayed the spirit to satisfy his desires, and she came from the centre of the planet, where she had

* This wrong was the depriving Carobert, son of Charles Martel, of the crown of Naples (1309), and giving it to Robert, Charles's younger brother, supposed to be punished by the war with the Emperor, Henry VII., which sprung up soon after.

been singing, "Come a cui di ben far giova." She then thus spoke to him—

"In that part of th' unblest Italian land,
Betwixt Rialto and the fountain heads
Of Brenta and of Piave, stands a hill
Of no proud height,* where once a fatal torch
Was kindled, that upon the country round
Dealt ruin ; of one stock sprang he and I.
I am Cunizza, and am beaming here
Because on earth this star's soft light o'ercame me.
But gladly do I pardon in myself
The cause of this my lot, nor grieve at it,
Strange as to common minds may this appear."

She then spoke of a spirit at her side, as a rich and precious jewel, whose fame would last for ages, and observed how well worth while it was for a man to be "eccellente" for the sake of that second life which by reason of his merits succeeds to the earlier one. She then began to inveigh against the wickedness of the then generation, and spoke of the dwellers between the Tagliamento and the Adige (boundaries of the Trevisano) ; of the Paduans punished for their sins in three defeats by the Ghibelines at Vicenza ; of Tre-vigi, whose proud lord would soon be assassinated ; of Feltro with its "empio pastor," the bishop and temporal lord thereof, who received some Ferrarese fugitives courteously, and then had them imprisoned and murdered.

* *The territory between the Trevisano, where rises the river Piave, the region of Padua, where flows the Bienta, and Venezia signified by the name of the Rialto, the island on which Venice was first built. This was Romano, the country scourged by the tyrant, Ezzelino III., whose sister was this Cunizza.*

“For huge must be the vessel that should hold
That blood, and weary he who should essay
To weigh it ounce by ounce ; which he shall pour,
That courteous priest, to prove how staunch he is
To the Pope's party—worthy of the race
In Feltro sprung, such blood-stained gifts will be.”

She ceased to speak, and departed in her revolving movements, and then the other spirit already pointed out by her to Dante, became so resplendent that the latter addressed him, imploring him to tell him who he was, saying :

“ ‘ God who sees all hath made thy sight like his,’
I said, ‘ O blessed spirit, causing thus
No wish of mine to be obscure to thee.
Why doth not then thy voice that charms all heaven
Ever with song inspired by those blest flames
That mantle o’er their forms with six bright wings,—
Why satisfies it not my longing ears ? ’ ”

The spirit answered that he was a dweller on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, between a Spanish river Ebro and an Italian one, Macra ; that is, at Marseilles. His name was Folco,* famous in the world.

“ E questo cielo ” [of Venus]

“ Di mi s’ impronta com’ io fe’ di lui.”

He had been so passionate a lover that not Dido, Phyllis, or Alcides surpassed him.

“ Not that we here repent, but rather smile—
Not at the fault which comes not to our mind—
But at the Will that ordered and provides.”

* Folco, son of a merchant of Genoa, a renowned Troubadour, enamoured of the wife of his lord ; died about 1213.

He then told him that the luminous form beside him was Rahab, the first soul raised to that sphere (Venus) through the triumph of Christ. He then changed the subject to the degeneracy of Florence and the Papacy.

“Thy city which was planted first by him *
 Who first on his Creator turned his back,
 Whose dire malignity has caused such woe,
 Produces and expands the accursèd flower †
 That hath made sheep and lambs to go astray,
 Since of the shepherd it hath made a wolf.
 Through this, the Gospels and the ‘Dottor magni’
 Are all neglected, only the Decretals ‡
 Are studied, as too well their margins show.
 The Popes and Cardinals I speak of now;
 Their thoughts go never forth to Nazareth,
 Where Gabriel in greeting spread his wings:
 But Vatican and other chosen spots
 Of Rome, the sepulchres of that blest host,
 The noble army that in Peter’s steps
 Went on to martyrdom, will soon be freed
 From that accursèd wedding bond of shame.”

CANTO X.—THE SUN OR FOURTH HEAVEN, AND THE
 * SOULS OF THE DIVINES.

Dante bids his readers now raise their sight with him to that part of the revolving heavens where the paths of the sun and the fixed stars cross, and admire

* Satan is here meant, though tradition represented Mars as the founder of Florence, the Christian theology of that time regarding the pagan gods as evil spirits.

† The florin.

‡ The Decretals, or books of the canon law, compiled by two of the Popes, were common objects of study with the priests as leading to preferment and wealth.

the influences of the heavenly bodies upon all the earth. He speaks then of that greatest minister of Nature (the sun), who impresses on the world the virtues of the heavens, and measures out time by his light. To this, he says, he was drawn up so quick that—

“ Del salire

Non m' accors' io, se non com' uom s' accorge,

Anzi il primo pensier, del suo venire.

That I perceived not my ascending more

Than man perceives where he is come, ere yet

A thought of it has entered in his mind.

But Beatrice perceived it, she whose gift

It was to lead the soul so rapidly

From good to better, that the act appears

An instantaneous thing.”

No language, he says, can give an idea of the splendour within the sun, where the forms are shown, not by colour, but by light.

“ So can we but believe and long to see.

* * * *

Such in this Fourth Heaven was the family

Of the great Father, who contents it ever,

Showing how Son and Spirit proceed from him.

[Mostrando come spira e come figlia.]

And Beatrice began thus : ‘ Thank, oh, thank

The Sun of Angels who hath raised thee up

To this, the sensible, material one.’

Never was heart of mortal so inclined

To devout yielding of itself to God

With all its will and wants, as at this word

I made myself ; and all my love in him

Was so absorbed, that Beatrice became

Eclipsed as though forgotten. Nor thereat

Was she displeased, but smiled, so that her eyes

Scattered to diverse points my thoughts before

So wholly fixed on One. And then I saw

Living and conquering splendours which made us
Their centre, circling round us like a wreath,
And sweeter still in voice than bright in face.
Thus sometimes do we see the moon enzoned,
When all the air is filled with vapour so
That it retains the colours as the thread
That forms the halo. In heaven's courts there are
Jewels too rare to be transported thence.
The song of those fair lights was one of these,
And he who hath not to himself made wings
To fly up thither, might as well await
News of them from the dumb. Thus singing then,
These ardent suns around us thrice revolved
As round fixed poles the stars; they seemed to me
Like maidens in the dance who, yet awhile
Their steps suspending, silent, listening, stand
Till the new notes by all are gathered up."

A voice from one of them then addressed him.

"Thou seek'st to know who they may be who make
The blossoms of this garland, circling thus,
And worshipping, thy beauteous guide to heaven.
One of the lambs was I of that blest flock
Whose guide on the heaven-way was Dominic,
Where he who strays not thence finds pasture meet.
Thomas Aquinas I, and he who stands
Upon my right, brother and master both,
Is Albert of Cologne. . . . That other flame
Comes from Graziano's smile; he reconciled
Civil and canon law most saintly. Yonder
Is that Pietro* who gave up his all,
Like the poor widow, to the Holy Church."

He then named the eight others composing the circle: Solomon, "la luce ch' è trà noi più bella;" Dionysius the Areopagite; Paul Orosius, "piccioletta luce;" Boethius, of whom he says:

* Pietro Lombardo, Bishop of Paris and a theological writer, who dedicated his book to the Church.

"The body whence this holy soul was driven
Lies in Cieldauro tombed ; the soul from exile
And martyrdom hath come to this repose."

Isidore, Bede, Riccardo, Sigieri, the latter—

"A spirit to whom,
Ever in solemn thought death seemed too slow.

* * * *

And as a clock that calls the Bride of God
To sing her matins to the heavenly Spouse,
So did I see that glorious wheel revolve
And breathe out voice by voice with modulation
And sweetness such as only can be known
There where joy is for ever."

CANTO XI.—ST. FRANCIS AND ST. DOMINIC.

St. Thomas went on with his discourse, resolving some doubts that had arisen in Dante's mind, and told him that in order to preserve the fidelity of the Bride (that is, the Church) to her Beloved, Providence had instituted two guides to lead her on her way, one ardent, like the seraphim, the other wise, as the cherubim. These were St. Francis* and St. Dominic. He went on to relate the career and virtues of the former, observing that what was said of the one would do for the other.

First, he described Assisi, where St. Francis was born, placed between two streams on the fertile slope of a lofty hill, which also sheltered Perugia. He was yet young when he displeased his father by choosing to embrace poverty, of whom said St. Thomas :

"Of her first husband widowed, she hath lived
A thousand and a hundred years and more,

* Born, 1182 ; died, 1226.

Obscure and slighted without one to woo,
 Until he came. . . . and then their union sweet,
 Their happy bearing and their wondrous love
 Inspired like holy thoughts in others ; thus
 The venerable Bernard, thus Silvestro,
 Egidio, rushed the first to follow him,
 And gain such peace. O wealth ! the unknown, the true !

* * * *

Then nobly his austere intention he
 To Innocent unfolded, and from him
 Had the first seal to this his solemn vow."

He thus became the head of a new order, the Frati Minori, in which he was again confirmed by Pope Honorius III. ; then, "from thirst of martyrdom," he preached Christ to the Sultan—vainly, however ; and returned to Italy. On the "*crudo sasso dell' Alvernia*," "*intra Tevere ed Arno*," "*prese l'ultimo sigillo*" (the stigmata), which he bore two years :—

"When He who chose him out for such good works
 Was pleased to call him up to the reward
 That well his deep humility had won,
 He to his brother friars, as lawful heirs,
 Committed his dear lady to receive
 Their love and faith ; and so the glorious soul,
 As if had lived, departed with no pomp
 Of funeral rites. Now think what too was he
 Who was the worthy comrade of that saint,
 To keep St. Peter's vessel in its course
 In the deep sea. Such was our patriarch.*

* * * *

But, greedy of the world's false cates, his flock
 Are spread in various pastures far and wide,
 And still the further that these wandering sheep
 Stray from him, all the more do they return
 Empty and hungry home."

* St. Dominic, of whose order was St. Thomas Aquinas.

CANTO XII.—ST. BONAVENTURA AND ST. DOMINIC.

The saintly flame ceased speaking and began revolving with the holy wreath, which had not made a whole circle when another wreath came and enclosed it, copying exactly its music and song :—

“As through a light thin cloud two arches bend,
The same in form and hues, the one without
Born from the one within, reflected like
The voice of that fair nymph who pined for love
Of young Narcissus, wasting so away
As vapours in the sun. . . .
E’en so towards us revolved of those two wreaths
Th’ eternal roses, so the outermost
Responded to the inner.”

Dante heard a voice “from the heart of one of these new lights,” and turned to it as the needle to the Pole star. This one was San Bonaventura (a Franciscan friar), who observed that he, who had heard his own master so well praised by a Dominican, was moved to speak of the other leader, since it was just that they who had fought the same battle together should share the same glory. He went on :—

“Christ’s host which it had cost so dear to arm
Again, against the Fiend, moved on behind
Its banner, few and scattered, doubtful, slow ;
When He, its Everlasting Chief, foresaw
And saved that host in peril of defeat
Solely through His free grace unmerited.
Then rescued he his Bride by two brave knights,
Won by whose words and deeds that straying flock
Came back to the right way. In that fair realm
Of Italy where the sweet zephyr wakes

To open the new foliage in whose dress
 All Europe's drest anew [*le novelle fronde*
Di che l' Europa si vede rivestire], nigh the seashore
 Stands Callaroga, happy 'neath the guard
 Of the great shield on which the lion's shown*
 There lives the man enamoured of the faith,
 The holy athlete, gracious to his friends,
 And bitter to his foes." †

Wonders were told of his infantine devotion and of
 his resolute and holy poverty :—

"Not for the world, for the world's gain and glory,
 But for the love of the true manna, he,
 Yet young, became in all high learning wise,
 And set himself to guard the Vine that soon
 Withers beneath a faithless husbandman.
 That Holy See that then to all the poor
 And just was kindlier than 'tis now, through fault
 Not of itself, but him who sits thereon,
 He sued, but not for leave a scanty dole
 To give where thrice as much was seized or stolen,
 [*Non dispensare o due o trè per sei,*]
 Nor the first vacant benefice to obtain
 Nor yet the tithes that to God's poor are due,
 But leave to war against the erring world
 For that good seed of which yon twenty-four
 Encircling spirits are the blessed fruit.
 Armed then with will and doctrine both, to ply
 The Apostle's task, like a wild torrent rushing
 From a deep source, he started on his course ;
 And sharpest struck the shock of his assault
 On roots heretical, where'er it met

* Under the protection of the King of Castile, whose arms were two castles and two lions.

† St. Dominic was born in 1170 at Calahorra, in Spain, and died at Bologna in 1221. The epithet "*crudo*" applied to him in the text refers to the severities practised on the Albigenses and the establishment of the Inquisition.

Strongest resistance.* From his fount proceeded,
Watering the Catholic orchard and its trees
Making more greenly flourish, diverse streams.
Such then was one wheel of the Church's car
Whereby she conquered in the field her own
Rebellious sons. And well to thee is known
The excellence of the other in whose praise
E'en now St. Thomas spoke so courteously.
But by his followers now is quite forsaken
The orbit that he moved in. . . .
His family that once straight onward moved
In his own steps now goes opposing ways.
Soon will it rue its evil culture in
The direful harvest when the tares bewail
The granary exchanged for penal fire.
I tell thee who-so searches through and through
Our order, as one turning leaf by leaf
A volume, yet may find perchance a page
In which is written 'what I was, I am.'
But not from *Acquasparta* nor *Casal* †
Will come such pages; *these* are they of whom
One slights, the other with too rigorous strain
Presses, the holy rules by Francis given."

Bonaventura then named himself and his eleven companions, amongst whom were the Prophet Nathan, St. Chrysostom, and Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, all but the former being philosophers, theologians, and Franciscan friars.

* In the crusade against the Albigenses.

† These were two places whence came one general of the Order (in 1287) of too great laxity, and another, Friar Ubertino (in 1310), made himself head of the Spiritualists, or Zelanti, a species of schism.

CANTO XIII.—THE SPHERE OF THE SUN CONTINUED.

Dante now bids us imagine this double garland of spirits and their double dance, comparing them with twenty-four of the most brilliant stars of heaven. When they had completed the song and motion, they turned to him and Beatrice, and bent their attention on them. Thomas Aquinas then spoke again, explaining to him a point in theology which had been touched on in his former discourse. He then, having reconciled an apparent inconsistency, bade him beware of hasty judgments :—

- “ Let this, like lead about thy feet, make slow
 Thy movement, as a weary man's, toward
 The *yes* and *no* in things thou dost not see.
 For he in depths of folly is the lowest,
 Who in affirming or denying aught
 Makes no distinction, whatsoe'er the case.
 For many a time, as he will find, the rash
 Opinion into false conclusions runs ;
 And self-love shackles too the intellect.
 Far worse than vainly doth he leave the shore
 • Who without skill goes forth to fish for truth,
 Far worse by far returns he than he went.”

He instanced various pagan philosophers “ who had gone they knew not whither,” and Christian heretics who had distorted the meanings of the divine writings :—

- “ Then be not in your judgments too assured ;
 As they who judge the corn that in the field
 Hath not grown fully ripe. For I have seen,
 All through the winter, thorny, stiff, and bare,
 The briar that after crowned itself with roses.
 And I have seen the vessel swift and straight
 Sweep on its destined way along the seas,

And perish as it entered in the port.
Let not the vulgar then,—because they see
One rob, the other pious offerings make,—
Believe they thus can read the will divine ;
For well the one may rise, the other fall.”

CANTO XIV.—MARS, THE FIFTH SPHERE.

Beatrice then bade the shining spirits inform Dante touching the state of their bodies after the resurrection ; and in the midst of the most resplendent light of the inner circle, he heard a “*voce modesta*,” perhaps that of the angel who hailed Mary, thus answering—

“ ‘ Long as it lasts, the feast of Paradise,
So long our love will round us shed these rays
That robe us. For their brightness followeth
The measure of our ardour, that in turn
Is measured by our vision of the Lord,
Which is according to the grace that’s given
Beyond our natural faculty. And when
We shall put on again the robe of flesh
Made glorious then and ho’y, so much more
Will these our present forms be dear to us,
Because the sum of light that’s freely given
By the Almighty, thus will be increased—
Which light enables us to gaze on Him.
So will the vision grow, and so will grow
The ardour kindled by it, and so grow
The rays that spring therefrom. . . .
Yet e’en as flame is conquered by the coal
That yields it, so this radiance circling us
Will visibly be conquered by the flesh,
Which the earth yet doth hold in sepulchre.
Nor will such glory harm our sight, for all
The bodily organs will be then made strong

For all that may delight us.' When he ceased,
 So prompt and eagerly, it seemed to me,
 Did either choir of spirits say Amen,
 As showed how they for their lost bodies yearned ;
 Yet haply not for their own sakes, but for
 Their fathers, mothers, all whom they had loved
 Ere they were changed to pure immortal fire.
 And lo ! in equal brightness rose around
 A light beyond the light of those two crowns,
 Like the horizon brightening to the day.
 And as when Night first climbs her heavenly arch
 New forms appear in heaven, so that the sight
 At once seems true and not, so did I seem
 To see there new existences that made
 A circle round the other two. O true
 Outbeaming of the Spirit Divine, how swift
 And burning didst thou rise upon my view
 That could no more sustain it ! But so fair
 And smiling then looked Beatrice, the mind
 Ceased all the other objects to pursue."

He then found himself translated to the fifth circle
 (Mars), and is made aware of the ascent—

" Per l' affocato riso della stella,
 Che mi pareva più roggio che l' usato. . . .
 Within I saw two shining lights, and as
 Glitters betwixt heaven's poles the Milky Way,
 Star-clustered thus, all in the depth of Mars,
 Those rays made up the venerable sign
 That in a circle two diameters
 Make intersecting. Here my memory
 O'erpowers my intellect, for in that cross
 CHRIST beamed.
 Along both arms and 'twixt the top and base,
 Moved lights that sparkled thickly as they met,
 And joined or crossed each other.
 As lute or lyre, with harmony that's woven
 Of many chords, a lovely tinkling makes
 In ears that understand not music's art ;

So, from those lights that there appeared to me,
 A melody through all that cross was breathed
 That ravished me who knew not what was said,
 Only I knew that 'twas a hymn of praise,
 Because the words, 'Arise and conquer,' came
 To me who heard as understanding not.
 And with that music was I so in love,
 That nothing had I met till then which bound me
 In such sweet fetters."

CANTO XV.—CACCIAGUIDA.

The desire of the spirits to hear and satisfy Dante's inquiries

"Silenzio pose a quella dolce lira
 E fece quietar le sante corde
 Che la destra del cielo allenta e tira."

"How should to righteous prayers those Beings be deaf,
 Who for the simple question on my lips,
 At once all paused to listen! . . .
 As in the pure and tranquil summer night,
 Shoots forth from time to time a sudden fire,
 That draws eyes blankly listless after it.
 [Movendo gl'occhi che stavan sicuri.]
 A star it seems departing from its place,
 Only that where 'twas lit no star is missed;
 And all as swift it vanishes again.
 So from that Cross' right arm to its foot,
 From out that glittering constellation ran
 A star, that fled not from the zone 'twas set in,
 But passing o'er the glittering row, appeared
 Flame behind alabaster."

This light addressed itself to Dante as its son.
 This spirit was Cacciaguida his ancestor (great great
 grandfather), who in the joy of seeing and hearing, spoke

to him with thoughts so profound in a language so lofty that they transcended mortal comprehension. This was not by choice, but by necessity, which raised his ideas to such a height ; but when the ardent emotion had thus discharged itself, his speech descended to the human level ; and the first words that Dante understood were these—

“ A yearning, welcome though prolonged, my son,
Thou now hast quenched in me who speak to thee
Within this Light, a yearning raised when first
In that great Book I read, where what is writ,
And what is blank, remain for ever so.”

He then bade him speak his wishes freely, for that his answer to them was already prepared, through the holy love which filled him with “*dolce desio*” to express itself. Dante turned to Beatrice :

“ And she, who heard
Before I spoke, smiled me a sign that gave
Wings to my wish.”

Dante then thus addressed him :

“ “ I do adjure thee, heavenly topaz, who
Dost gem this precious Form, to satisfy
My wishes with thy name.’ ‘ O leaf of mine,
Whom I have fondly waited for,’ he said,
‘ I am thy root.’ ”

He then told him that his own son Alighieri, from whom Dante, his great grandson, derived his surname, had now for a hundred years and more

“ *Girato il monte in la prima cornice ;* ”

that is, he was still in the circle of Purgatory where pride is punished, and that it behoved Dante to shorten by his good works the long toil he was en-

during. He then described what Florence was in his day :

“ Florence, within that ancient circle where
 The church clock told the hours,* lived once in peace,
 Sober and modest ; there were then no chains,
 Coronets, nor rich sandals, worn by dames,
 Nor gorgeous zones attracting every eye.
 No father then a daughter’s birth dismayed,
 Lest they should wed untimely, or demand
 Measureless dowries ; there were then no houses
 Empty of families ; none practised then
 Sardanapalian vices. Nor was then
 The pomp of Rome from Montemalo shown
 Dwarfed by that seen from your Uccellatoio,
 As by your Florence ’twill ere long in ruin
 As now in splendour be surpassed.
 I saw Bellincion Berti † walk in pride
 With leathern belt, while from her mirror went
 His wife with face unpainted ; by their side
 The Nerli and the Vecchi wore content
 Skins unadorned, and as contented plied
 Their wives the loom and spindle—happy they !
 Each sure of her last resting-place, and none
 Left to a lonely bed, to weep and pray,
 By husbands gone to France gain seeking.‡ One,
 Beside a cradle, soothed small griefs away
 With the sweet prate to parents’ hearts so dear ;
 Another drew the busy threads at home,
 Telling old legends to each glad young ear,
 Of Trojans and of Fiesole and Rome ;

* Close to the ancient wall of Florence was the famous Abbey or Badia, built in the tenth century, with its church (still standing), which sounded all the hours.

† This and the others after mentioned were families of the highest nobility.

‡ Many of the Florentine citizens went to France for commercial purposes.

Our wanton dames and youths would then appear
 As strange as Scipio or Cornelia now.
 To such a noble, placid burgher life,
 Loyal to duties that did yet allow
 Such bliss in home so sweet, so free from strife,
 Was I admitted, when with many a vow
 My mother sought in pangs the Virgin's aid ;
 Then was I in your ancient Baptistery,
 Christian at once and Cacciaguida made.
 Two brothers and a Paduan bride had I ;
 From her came thine own name. When manhood bade
 I followed Conrad, emperor renowned ;
 He girt me with the title of his knight,
 Such favour in his eyes my service found.
 With him I went against that creed to fight,*
 Whose evil champions, in the blessed ground
 That should be ours—thanks to the Pope—installed,
 Work their base will ; there by those heathen foes
 Was I from yon ensnaring world unthralled,
 And came through martyrdom to this repose."

CANTO XVI.—REVIEW OF FLORENTINE HISTORY BY
 CACCIAGUIDA,

"O poor nobility of this blood of ours !
 What wonder that the race of earth such pride
 Have in thee, they whose thoughts are poor and low,
 When I in heaven, midst love of loftier things,
 Could glory in my own ! Thou art in truth
 A mantle shortening still from day to day
 So that time soon, if unrepaired 'tis left,
 Will clip it all to nothing ! Then I spoke
 ' You are my father, you have given me all

* This was in the second Crusade, which took place at St. Bernard's preaching in 1147, in the time of Louis VII. of France. Dante has already censured the indifference of the Popes about regaining the Holy Land.

Boldness of speech and you have raised me so
That I no more am I. My heart's o'erflowed
With gladness by so many streams that e'en
Not quite to burst beneath it is fresh joy.
But tell me then, O dear forefather mine,
Who were your ancestors, your date of birth ;
And tell me too of San Giovanni's fold,*
What it was then and whose amongst them were
The most distinguished names.' "

Cacciaguida smiled with added brightness at his praises, and with a yet sweeter voice, but not in the modern Florentine dialect, but in the Latin speech of his age, proceeded to answer, stated the year of his birth (which appears to have been 1090), and then made him a long historical and political harangue. He said that the population was in his time only a fifth part of what it had become, and that then they were, even to the lowest artisan, all pure Florentines. Now, he complained, they were mixed with families from the surrounding districts, who came only intent on gain, and introduced confusion and degeneracy. He laid the fault to the Papal court, which had depressed the Ghibeline party, that so many intriguing, money-making foreigners had become citizens, while the great old families lost their castles and lands.

" As the moon's revolutions make the tides
In turn now cover, now lay bare, the shores,
So do the fortunes of your Florence now
Empty, now fill."

He then enumerated the great names of old—

* Florence, whose patron saint was St. John.

“ Some of them
 Illustrious citizens e'en in their decline,
 And some still great as ancient . . . who abode
 Over the gate that now is loaded so
 With felonies that soon must wreck the State.” *

Other families there were “ who knew how to govern well ; ” one had attained the “ gilded sword hilt ” of nobility ; one bore on their shield a column painted with the colour of fur of minever ; others had risen to the curule chair, or seat of magistracy. He speaks of others whom he had seen great, now “ undone by their pride,”

“ Whose golden balls
 Had so decked Florence as a tree its flowers.”

These he contrasted with the presumptuous brood :

“ che s' indraca
 Dietro a chi fugge, ed a chi mostra il dente
 Ovver la borsa, com' agnel si placa.”

“ A dragon in pursuit of those who flee ;
 Toward those who show their teeth or purse, a lamb.” †

He then spoke of the Amidei, the house through whose “ giusto disdegno ” came all the misfortunes of Florence ;

“ Which put an end to all your happy days.
 That house was honoured then, with all its kin.

* The Porta San Piero, near which in Dante's time dwelt the Cerchi and Donati, the traitors whose quarrels were ruining the Republic.

† Here Dante alludes to the Adimari, a family of obscure origin, one of whom had taken possession of his property and fiercely opposed his return from exile.

O Buondelmonte,* ill didst thou to flee
 Nuptials with such a house, for other joys.
 Glad had been many now who are in grief,
 Had God to Ema † given thee for its own
 Ere thou didst enter Florence, . . .
 With these and such as these did I behold
 Florence in such deep peace that cause was none
 For any care. I saw her people then
 So just and glorious that her lily ne'er
 Was in her arms reversed, nor crimsoned yet
 By civil warfare."

CANTO XVII.—THE PROPHECY OF CACCIAGUIDA.

Dante, anxious to know the truth of the predictions about himself which he had heard on his way, encouraged by Beatrice, thus addressed Cacciaguida :

" O thou, who gazing on the point divine,
 To which all things are present, seest things
 To be as if they were a present truth ; "

and saying that in Hell and Purgatory future misfortunes had been foretold to him, and that it behoved him

" to oppose
 An equal front against misfortune's blows
[ch' io mi senta
 Ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura] ; "

and that he wished to be prepared—

" Since slower comes the arrow we foresee."

* Buondelmonte, a youth who, betrothed to a daughter of the Amidei, preferred to her one of the Donati, was slain by the former family, and hence arose the conflicts which took form in the war of the Guelphs and Ghibelines.

† A streamlet flowing outside Florence.

Cacciaguida answered that though all events are foreseen by God, yet foresight does not make necessity, no more than seeing a current obliges a vessel to sail down it.

"Thou must depart from Florence ; this is willed
And planned already,—and will there be wrought
Where every day the Christ is bought and sold."

[In Rome by Pope Boniface VIII.]

"The blow will strike the weaker, as 'tis wont ;
But vengeance will bear witness to the truth.
All thou most dearly lovest thou must leave,
And this is the first shaft with which the bow
Of exile will assail thee. Thou wilt learn
How bitter is a stranger's bread, how hard
To mount and to descend a stranger's stairs."

He then told him how odious to him would be the society of the other banished Florentines, "*la compagnia malvagia e scempia*," who would despise his counsels and speedily come to shame in consequence; and he seeing their contemptible proceedings would applaud himself for not having joined them.*

* But thy first refuge, thy first dwelling place
Will be through the great Lombard's courtesy,†

* This appears to allude to the attempt made, in 1304, by the exiled Bianchi, at Arezzo, to return to Florence and the attack under Alessandro da Romena in which they were defeated.

† All the evidence indicates that Dante is here speaking of Bartolommeo della Scala, who was elected Lord of Verona in 1301. He held this post but three years, and was succeeded by his brother Alboin, who was no friend to Dante, but with whom was joined in sovereignty Bartolommeo's son, the famous Cane Grande, who became sole Lord in 1311, at the age of twenty. On the arms of the Delle Scale appear a staircase or ladder and an eagle.

Who on the stair the bird imperial bears.
Thee will he hold in such benign regard
As that, between you two, doing will come
Before the asking, first what elsewhere comes
The latest. [*Che del fatto e del chiedere, tra voi due,
Fia primo quel che tra gl' altri è più tardo.*]

With him he told him he should see his son, at that time only nine years of age, who, impressed at his birth by the influence of "that strong star" (Mars), should do deeds of renown.

"But soon, ere yet the Gascon shall beguile
The noble Henry,* there will sparks appear
Of his bright virtues."

He praised his indifference to wealth, his munificence and justice. He added—

"The things that I predict to thee of him,
Thou'lt bear in memory, but thou wilt not tell them.'
Then said he things incredible to hear."

He ended by assuring Dante that he would live to see his enemies punished; and Dante, seeing that he had finished answering the questions he had asked him as to his future, replied:

"Too well, I see, my father, how the time
Towards me hastes, to deal me such a blow
As hardest hits who yields to it the most.
[*Tal ch' è più grave a chi più s' abbandona.*]
So must I guard me well, that, having lost
The dearest spot on earth, I may not lose
All others through the boldness of my song.
Down in the world of endless bitterness
And on the mount from whose fair top the eyes
Of my bright Lady lifted me, and then

* Clement V. held out to Henry VII. false hopes of his assistance.

In heaven from light to light, I've learnt such truths
 Which, should I tell again, would seem to many
 Of bitter flavour. Yet if I should be
 A timid lover of the truth, I fear
 To forfeit my existence amongst them
 Who will call these times old.' Thereat became
 The light of Cacciaguida like a spark
 Bright as a golden mirror that gives back
 The sunbeam; then he answered."

He encouraged him to speak fearlessly, for that his words would prick only the guilty consciences, and that, however bitter at first, they would prove afterwards to be vital nourishment.

"Like the strong wind that doth the hardest smite
 The loftiest tops, this cry of thine shall be."

He added that in these spheres (Hell and Purgatory) had been shown to Dante the spirits only of illustrious persons; because that examples drawn from the obscure and unknown do not affect the mind.

CANTO XVIII.—DISTINGUISHED PERSONS IN MARS
 AND JUPITER.

Beatrice began then to comfort Dante for his future misfortunes.

"Io mi rivolsi all' amoroso suono
 Del mio conforto, e quale io allor vidi
 Negli occhi santi l' amor, qui l' abbandono.
 * * * * *
 Tanto poss' io di quel punto ridire

Che, rimirando lei, il mio affetto
 Libero fu da ogni altro disire."

* * * * *

"With her resplendent smile subduing me,
 Then said she to me, ' Turn again and listen ;
 Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise.' "

Cacciaguida then spoke again, and said that in this planet Mars, the fifth grade of heaven, are the spirits which were of great fame on earth. He bade Dante look at the arms of the cross, and whomever he names as being there would give a flash like lightning from the cloud. Dante then saw on the cross Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, Charlemagne, Roland, Godfrey de Bouillon, Robert Guiscard, and others, who had fought in defence of the true religion. Cacciaguida then showed Dante how great an artist amidst the heavenly choir he was

(" Quale era tra i cantor del cielo artista ")

by beginning again to sing. Dante turned to Beatrice and saw again her pure and joyful eyes conquering all other sights and impressions.

" And, as the man who places all his joy
 In righteous works, from day to day perceives
 His virtue growing, so was I aware
 While gazing on that miracle's increase
 Of beauty, that my circling course around
 Those heavens revolving took a wider sweep.
 And as in little space of time a pale
 Fair face resumes its natural whiteness when
 The sudden blush of shame has passed away,
 So seemed the whiteness of that tempered flame
 Of the sixth planet Jupiter that now
 Received me
 As birds arising from a river's brink,
 That, as rejoicing from their banquet there

Fly now in clusters, now in lengthened lines,
 So sang and fluttered round within the lights
 These holy creatures."

They danced about, forming the letters of a sacred text in their movements, and singing the while, and whenever they had formed a letter stopping and becoming silent. Thus they formed *Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis terram*, and when they had formed the last letter M, millions of lights arose like sparks from embers that are stirred, and then, resting each in its place, formed distinctly the head and neck of an eagle. Other lights, that had seemed content at first only to form a wreath of lilies around the M, now completed the figure of the eagle, fixed there like so many gems. Dante addressed the planet Jupiter, which was considered the dispenser of justice on earth.

" Oh, may the Mind divine from which thou hast
 Thy virtue and thy motion, turn thy gaze
 Upon the smoke that here pollutes thy ray.
 So yet once more may'st thou be wroth with those
 Who buy and sell within the shrine whose walls
 Are built of martyrs and of miracles.
 * O sacred host of heaven whom I behold,
 Pray ye for those on earth who've gone astray,
 Misled by ill example. Once with swords
 Was warfare made ; but now, of the soul's bread,
 Denied to none by our blest Father, is,
 First one, then other, robbed.* But thou † who writest

* By interdicts and excommunications alike against peoples and individuals.

† It is not easy to say which Pope is meant here, as Boniface VIII. was reigning at the supposed time of his vision, Clement V. at the actual time of his writing, but the words suit Dante's opinion of either.

God's law to only make a traffic of it,
Think'st thou that Paul or Peter, who on earth
Died for the Vine thou spoilest, live in heaven ?
Nay thou, devoted only to the Saint
Stamped on the golden florin,* hast forgotten
Paul and the fi-her both."

CANTO XIX.—THE DISCOURSE OF THE EAGLE.

" Before me then appeared with wings outspread
The lovely image, that with the sweet sight
Of God made blest the souls inwoven there.
Each one appeared a ruby and therein,
So kindled, burned the sunbeams that methought
Each was itself a sun."

The eagle then spoke, and its voice said, *I* and
Mine, as if it were the eagle only, though it was, in
fact, the whole body of spirits that spoke, the meaning
thus being *we* and *ours*. They spoke of the glory to
which they were exalted for their just deeds, and then
Dante addressed them :

" O ye unfading flowers
Of the eternal joy ; in whom, through all
Your odours breathed, I yet perceive but one."

He then entreated them to solve his great doubt
and difficulty as to the justice of God's judgment,
which, however, he does not name, saying they know
what it is—

" And, as a falcon from his hood set free,
Exults with flapping wings, tossing his head,

* John the Baptist, whose image is on the coins of the Republic, indicating the Pope's exclusive worship of money.

Proud of his beauty, longing to take flight ;
I saw that emblem, woven of the praises
Of Divine Goodness, stir and pour forth songs
Such as triumphant spirits alone can frame.
Then it began."

The eagle explained that the mind of God is beyond man's comprehension, especially since it was darkened by the Fall.

" Yet with that sight that God hath given can men
Pierce the eternal justice, as the eye
Can plunge into the sea ; near to the shore
It through the shallower water may discern
The bottom, yet not so in open sea,
Since by its very depth 'tis hidden there.

* * * * *

Then, as the stork, when she hath fed her brood,
Wheels round the nest, and as the young ones fed
Gaze on their mother, so that blessed form
Revolved, with wings moved by so many wills ;
And so I gazed on it that wheeled and sang,
And singing said, ' Such as my notes appear
To thee who understandest not their art,
Are to you mortals the divine decrees."

Then the eagle began speaking of those wicked ones, who, knowing Christ and calling on his name, will be less near to Him in the last day than those who knew Him not.

" The Ethiop such false Christians will condemn
When the two flocks divide for weal or woe ;
What to your kings will kings of Persia say
When in the open Book they read their shame ?"

He enumerated Catholic princes who have sinned ;
Albert of Austria, who laid waste the kingdom of

Bohemia ; Philip the Fair, who debased the coin ; the Kings of England and Scotland with their foolish wars ; Charles II. of Naples " with his one virtue and thousand vices ; " the avarice and baseness of Frederic of Sicily, and of his uncle and brother (James of Majorca and James of Aragon) ; the Kings of Portugal and Norway ; and finally, he deplored and expressed alarm for Hungary, then governed by Andrew III., and for Navarre and Cyprus.

CANTO XX.—THE SPIRITS THAT COMPOSE THE
EAGLE.

" When he who lightens all the world descends
From this our atmosphere, and on all sides
The day is wasting, heaven which was at first
Lighted by him, is suddenly again
Made visible by countless lustres—this
Aspect of Heaven recurred to me, when hushed
Was that imperial ensign's sacred beak.
For all those living lights, made brighter still,
Burst into songs that from my memory fade.

* * * * *

But, when those precious jewels, that I saw
Gem the sixth star, hushed their angelic choirs,
Methought I heard the murmur of a stream
That, dripping clear adown from stone to stone,
Reveals th' abundance of its parent-spring."

This was the eagle speaking again in a single voice and bidding Dante look at the particular lights which composed his face, which were all of superior lustre to the others, especially that of his eyes, which contained the spirit of King David :

“The singer by the Holy Spirit moved.”

Five other lights encircling his brow were Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William II. of Sicily, and Riphæus of Troy, all good and pious sovereigns.

“And as a lark disporting in the air
That singeth first, then hushes in content
At the last notes, so satisfying-sweet
[Dell’ ultima dolcezza che la sazia] ;
Such seemed to me that Image moulded by
Th’ eternal Will at whose desire all things
Become whate’er they are. And though my soul
With its doubt in it, was before their eyes
As glass through which a colour is discerned,
To wait in silence could I not endure,
But from my lips my question was impelled,
When I beheld the festal glitter lit
By glad goodwill in them.”

His doubt was how two Pagans like Trajan and Riphæus could be translated to heaven ; and the eagle thus explained :

“The heavenly kingdom suffered violence
From ardent love and lively hope, subduing
The will divine, not as man masters man,
But conquering that which *would* be conquered, that
Which, conquered, conquers with its graciousness.”

He said that the souls of these two came out of their bodies not Gentile but Christian.

“the one believing in the past,
The other in the future, Crucified
[Quel de’ passuri, e quel de’ piedi passi].”

The spirit of Trajan returned to his body from hell at the earnest prayer of St. Gregory,* and thus, having

* On account of the good deed mentioned in *Purg.* x. 74.

come back for a short time to mortal life, believed with such fervour in God, that at his second death he was judged worthy to enter into blessedness. For the other, Riphæus (one of the Trajan heroes, who was a just ruler, and died fighting for his country)—

“ per grazia che da sì profonda
Fontana stilla, che mai creatura
Non pinse l' occhio insino alla prim' onda,
Tutto suo amor pose a drittura ;
Perchè di grazia in grazia Dio gl' aperse
L' occhio alla nostra redenzion futura.”

Thus he rejected Paganism, and was baptised by the three theological virtues, “ a thousand years before baptism existed.” The eagle then bade mortals not judge others, since even they in heaven did not know the full number of the elect ; but even this imperfect knowledge, he said, was sweet to them :

“ Perchè il ben nostro in questo ben s' affina [perfects itself],
Che quel che vuole Dio, noi volemo.”

So spoke the eagle, and

“ As to the singer the lute player makes
The thrilling strings accord, to add delight
To the song's sweetness, so while thus he spoke,
As I remember, those two blessed lights [Trajan and
Riphæus]
Like eyes whose glances move in unison,
Followed the words with quivering of their flames.”

CANTO XXI.—SATURN, THE SEVENTH SPHERE, AND
THE HEAVENLY STAIR.

Dante, gazing on his lady's face, now found that she smiled no longer, and she explained to him that the higher he ascended "the steps of this eternal palace," the more dazzling her beauty grew, so that if she did not temper it, his mortal power, vanquished by its splendour, would be

"A leaf the thunder tears and flings to earth."

They had now risen to Saturn, where the blessed spirits remain in contemplation ; and where he saw a golden staircase, ascending so high that the eye could not follow it, from which were descending so many splendours, that he thought all the stars in the sky were diffusing their light there. One of these spirits came close to Dante, and he asked him who he was, and why "the sweet symphony of heaven" was mute in this sphere. For the same reason, he replied, as Beatrice does not smile. Dante then propounded to him his difficulties about predestination ; how, following as they were the free promptings of love, each blessed spirit was yet only fulfilling a predestined part. The spirit answered—

"The soul in heaven whose vision is most clear,
The seraph with the eyes most fixed on God,
This thy inquiry could not satisfy.
For he who seeks to know dives down so deep
Into the abyss of the eternal law,
That he is cut off from all created sights.
When thou returnest to the mortal world
Report this, that men may no more presume
To pierce this mighty secret."

Dante withdrew his question and contented himself with humbly asking who the spirit was. He was told that he had lived where "between the two shores of Italy" rise to a great height hills not far from Dante's country (the Apennines), where, beneath a mass of rock, call Catria, was a hermitage, devoted solely to divine contemplation. Here he had lived, given up to God's service, feeding only on olive-oil, indifferent to heat and cold, "content in contemplation." That cloister, he said, was wont to yield a fruitful harvest, but now remained barren. He was Pietro Damiani (celebrated for his learning and virtue, who retired to the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, was made a Cardinal by Pope Stephen IX., and died in 1073. Dante himself resided in that monastery about 1318).

" Small space of mortal life remained to me
When I was sought and to that honour drawn
Which now descends from bad to worse. Once came
Cephas, and he,* the mighty vessel filled
With the Holy Spirit, meagre, barefooted,
To any lowly roof for their scant bread.
Now must our modern pastors carefully
Be clad and softly led and well sustained,
Covering with their full robes their palfreys o'er.
Oh, heavenly patience, what dost thou endure ! "

CANTO XXII.—ST. BENEDICT AND THE SPHERE OF
THE FIXED STARS.

Dante, oppressed with the sudden radiance of the descending and revolving spirits, and with the accom-

* St. Paul.

panying loud sounds, turned to his dear guide, and she, soothing him, said—

“ Knowest thou not then that thou art in heaven ?
 And know'st thou not that heaven is holy all,
 And all is pure and true that here is done ?
 Now canst thou think, how with my smile, the song
 Had shattered thee since this sound shakes thee so.
 If in this sound thou couldst have heard the prayer,
 At once the vengeance would be known to thee,
 That yet thou shalt behold before thou die.
 The sword of God cuts not in haste, nor late,
 Save in th' idea of him who waits for it
 Or dreading or desiring.”

He then, at her desire, turned his eyes to the spirits and saw a hundred spheres, shining by each other's light. One of them replying, as usual, directly to his unuttered thoughts, said—

“ That mountain, on whose side Cassino stands,
 Once had its summit haunted by the race
 Misled and reprobate. And I am he
 Who first came hither in the name of Him
 Who brought on earth the truth that raises us
 To heights sublime. Such grace shone forth in me
 That I brought back the people dwelling round
 From the false worship that had snared the world.

* * * *

Maccario here and Romoaldo see,
 And here my brothers of the cloister-shade
 Who kept their heart and footing firm and strong.”

(This was St. Benedict, the founder of the monastic orders of the West in the fifth century. The two others were monks and founders of orders, the one in the fourth and fifth centuries, the other in the tenth.)

Dante answered him that the affection shown in

the Saint's words and in the bearing of all, had made his confidence expand—

“ as by the sun the rose
Is opened to her utmost.”

He then entreated that he might behold St. Benedict
“ con imagine scoverta,” not veiled, as now, by light.

“ ‘ Brother,’ he answered, ‘ this thy high desire
Shall be fulfilled in that last, loftiest sphere
Where mine and all the others are fulfilled.’ ”

There, he said, is no movement, nothing changes
place nor revolves, because there is neither space nor
pole.

“ Our stair goes upward to that sphere until
The top is lost from sight ; the patriarch Jacob
Did once behold its summit rise, what time
'Twas laden so with angels. Now to mount it
None moves from earth his feet, and there my rule
Remains unused, as worthless as the spoiled
Parchment on which 'tis writ. The walls that once
Enclosed a home of saints have now been turned
To dens of robbers.”

He spoke of the wealth used by the monks for their
pleasures, which ought to have been kept for those
who ask in God's name (the poor), and of the short
duration of good institutions, not lasting

“ Dal nascer della quercia al far la ghianda.”
“ Peter began with gold nor silver none,
And I with prayer and fasting, Francis with
His lowly convent-hut. If thou wilt trace
The Church's course from those beginnings, soon
Thou'lt see the white turned brown.”

Beatrice gently impelled Dante by a sign up the

stair, which he mounted with supernatural ease and rapidity, and arrived at the eighth heaven, that of the fixed stars, where he saw the sign of the Gemini under which he was born—

“when first I breathed the Tuscan air.
O glorious stars! to you devoutly” now
My soul sighs for due strength in this dread pass
Which draws me to itself.”

Beatrice told him that he was now so near “all’ ultima salute” that his sight would be clearer and keener; but before entering further, she bade him look down below and see—

“quanto mondo
Sotto li piedi già esser ti fei.”

Dante looked and saw the seven spheres below him, and this globe—

“Tal ch’ io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante.” *

* There is a remarkable resemblance to this passage in a passage of Chaucer’s “Troilus and Cressida,” where, after Troilus’ death, we are told—

“His lightē ghost full blissfully is went,
Up to the hollowness of the seventh sphere.
* * * *

And there he saw . . .
Th’ erratic starrēs hearkening harmony.
* * * *

And down from thennēs fast he ’gan advise
This little spot of earth that with the sea
Embraced is; and fully ’gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanity
In respect of the plein felicity
That is in heaven above.”

He saw the moon, the sun, and all the planets with the variations "di lor dove" (their distances, more or less, from the sun and this earth).

"And this round globe, so filled with cruel men,
All from the mountains to the sea lay bare.
Then to those lovely eyes I turned again."

CANTO XXIII.—THE APPARITION OF THE HEAVENLY COURT.

"As in her home of leaves, with brooding wings
The mother bird set fondly on her nest,
All through the night that hides the form of things,
Longing to see her young and ply in quest
Of food for them, her toil more sweet than rest,
Foretells the hour, through openings in the boughs,
And, gazing ever where the dawn shall rise,
Seems to await the sun with ardent vows ;
So stood my Lady motionless, with eyes
Intently fixed upon the middle skies."

Dante then beheld a brightening light, and Beatrice said :

"Behold the bands of Christ triumphant ; see
The fruit that's gathered from those turning spheres.

* * * * *

As in the tranquil nights of the full moon
She smiles amidst th' immortal nymphs that gild

The last line or two is almost a translation of those in Dante following "del suo vil sembiante"—

"E quel consiglio per migliore approbo
Che l' ha per meno ; e chi ad altro pensa
Chiamar si puote veramente probo."

The skies all over, so 'mid thousand lights
I saw a sun that conquered all the rest.
The shining substance in my face diffused
Its living blaze too brightly to endure.
' O Beatrice ! my guide beloved and sweet !'
I cried, and she—"

She told him that this appearance which he could not bear was that of Jesus Christ descending, attended by the Virgin and saints:

" This is the wisdom and the power that made
That opening of the ways 'twixt heaven and earth
That was so long desired."

Dante, utterly confused and oppressed, felt his mind, as it were, "go forth out of itself":

" E, che si fesse, rimembrar non sape. [*sa.*] "

Beatrice then bade him open his eyes and look at her, for, having seen such splendour, he could now again endure her smile :

" As one recalling a forgotten dream,
Who vainly strives to bring it to his mind,
Was I this gracious proffer when I heard."

Nor could he ever hope to describe the sweetness of that "santo riso." Then said Beatrice :

" Why art thou so enamoured of my face
As not to turn to the blest garden here
Blooming beneath Christ's rays ? Here is the rose
In which the Word Divine took flesh ; and here
The lilies whose sweet odour marked for men
The path that they shall follow."

He looked, and as in other days he had seen, lighted by the sun's rays through a mist, a meadow of flowers, so now he saw a crowd of splendours without

discerning the source of light that kindled them—the vision of Christ having re-ascended to the heaven above, that he might have power to see. Then descended a flame which encircled the head of the Virgin with a revolving light like a crown :

“ Whatever melody heard here below
Sounds sweetest, drawing most the soul to it,
Would seem th’ ear-rending crash from out a cloud,
Beside the song of that celestial lyre,
That crowned the lovely sapphire, in whose light
Heaven’s azure is yet brighter.* Thus he sang,
‘ I am th’ angelic light that circling sing
The high delight breathed for us from the form
That harboured Him we longed for.
And circle thus I shall, O Queen of Heaven,
While thou dost follow thy dear Son and make
The supreme sphere more glorious, entering there.’
So closed th’ encircling melody and all
The other lights sang forth Maria’s name.
The royal mantle of the other heavens
That more intensely lives and burns within
The breath of God’s perfections, o’er our heads
Was spread so distant that I saw it not.
Nor could my eyes pursue the crownèd flame
That rose toward her Son.”

The “ *fiamma coronata* ” (that is, the Virgin Mary) passed away upward through the Ninth Heaven or *Primum Mobile*, which revolved between the eighth heaven, where Dante now stood, and the Empyrean, where God dwells, and of which, though it is in itself crystalline and diaphanous, the upper part is so distant that his eye could not follow her as she ascended to it :—

* The “ sapphire ” is the Virgin, and that which is described as both flame and lyre, the angel Gabriel.

“ Then like a child,
 Stretching its arms toward its mother, moved
 By the dear love that like a flame breaks out
 In all its movements, did those glories each
 Rise to its height and, standing, thus they sang,
Regina Cali with a sweetness such
 As never left my soul. O harvest rich
 Sown by those blessed husbandmen on earth
 And garnered now in heaven ! Here now they live
 And here enjoy the treasure that was gathered
 With tears in Babylonian banishment.
 Here in his victory triumphs, with the Son
 Of God and Mary and the company
 Of saints by either covenant redeemed,
 He who the keys of all this glory holds [St. Peter].”

CANTO XXIV.—DANTE CATECHISED BY ST. PETER.

“ Then Beatrice, ‘ O ye, the chosen guests
 At the great supper of the Lamb of God,
 Who with his food are ever satisfied,
 If by heaven’s grace hath he ye see here had
 A foretaste of your banquet, e’en before
 The time by death appointed, give your thought
 To his intense desire, bedew it with
 Some favouring drops [roratelo alquanto] ye who for ever drink
 From the great Fountain whence comes all his care.’ ”

The spirits then began to circle like spheres round fixed poles, luminous wheels dancing with different motions, now quick, now slow. From one of these luminous circles composed of spirits, and the most beautiful of them all, came forth a flame, which revolved three times round Beatrice, then stopped and accosted her, and she replying addressed him as the “*gran viro, a cui nostro Signor portò le chiave*” (St. Peter), and entreated him to examine Dante about his faith.

Dante prepared himself as a candidate in the university does for the master's questions. The examining spirit asked him, "What is faith?" Dante replied by quoting St. Paul, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," etc. After some further questions and answers, St. Peter asked him, "What is the proof of the Divine authority of the Bible?" He answered, "The miracles,—

"I' opere à che natura
Non scaldò ferro mai, nè battè ancude,"

"Who," rejoined Peter, "proves these miracles? If you prove them by the Book, you are arguing in a circle." Dante politely stated that St. Peter's planting of the Christian faith was miracle enough to prove all the others. This answer was much applauded, and "quel Baron," as Dante calls him, asked him further as to the nature and articles of his faith. Dante professed his belief in one God sole and eternal, and in the Trinity.

"Che sofferà congiunto *sunt et este*. [*est.*]"

St. Peter was so pleased with this answer that, like a master who rewards a servant for bringing him good news by embracing him, he surrounded Dante three times with his light, singing and blessing him.

CANTO XXV.—DANTE'S INTERVIEWS WITH ST. JAMES
AND ST. JOHN.

"If e'er it happen that the sacred song
To which both heaven and earth have lent a hand,
And which has made me lean for many years,

O'ercome the cruelty that keeps me now
 Exiled from that fair fold where I, a lamb,
 Slept, stranger to the wolves that wasted it,
 Then with another voice, another garb,
 Shall I return, a poet, and assume,
 On my baptismal font, the laurel wreath ;
 Since there I entered on the faith that makes
 Our spirits near to God."

Then approached St. James, or, as Beatrice called him,

" il Barone
 Per cui laggiù si visita Galizia."

" As, when a dove down nestles by his mate,
 Each, murmuring and caressing, utters forth
 Its tenderness : "

thus did the two apostles meet each other. Beatrice, addressing St. James, bade him speak of hope, as St. Peter had done of faith, these being the virtues symbolised by those two, as charity was by St. John. St. James then addressed Dante, observing that through divine grace he was called to face

" Lo nostro Imperadore, anzi la morte,
 Nell' aula più segreta, co' suoi Conti,"

and bade him say what hope is, and how it arose in his mind. Dante said that it was first infused into his mind by David,

" il sommo cantor del sommo duce,"

in his Psalms ; and then by St. James himself in his Epistle. While he was thus speaking,

" Within that splendour's living heart, a swift
 And sudden gleam, like lightning, trembled forth
 Its frequent flashes, then these words he breathed :
 ' The love I burn with for that virtue, that

Which followed me e'en to the martyr's palm,
And to the exit from life's battlefield,
Bids me again to speak to thee thereof,
And ask thee of the things hope promises.'''

Dante referred to Isaiah and St. John ; Isaiah prophesies that each one in his own land shall wear

“ The double robe of glory both of soul
And body ; and that promised land is here
In this sweet life ; and he, thy brother,* speaks
Yet clearer to us of the garments white
Given to the blessed.”

As Dante thus spoke, a bright light appeared :

“ As rises, moves, and floats into the dance
A virgin joyous in the honour paid
To some fair bride, and not for vain delight ;
So came that splendour to the other two.
* * * * *
And on them did my Lady fix her eyes,
Silent, unmoving as a new-made bride.”

She told him that this was St. John, and still continued gazing as fixedly as before. Dante then looked at St. John.

“ As one who looks and looks and strives to see
The sun's eclipse beginning till he can,
For very seeing, see no more. Then he :
' Why blindest thou thyself in search of that
Which has no place here ? Earth in earth is now
My body, and with others so shall rest
Till the appointed number be made up.
For only Christ and Mary now in heaven's
Cloister the double robe of glory wear.'
Then ceased the sweet commixture made by song

* St. John in the Apocalypse.

And dance in that blest three ; as when to shun
 A peril or to pause from toil, the oars,
 Ere dipped again in water, all together
 Rest at a whistled signal. And the while,
 Ah, how my soul was troubled when I turned
 To gaze on Beatrice, and could not see her,
 Although I was so near her and in heaven ! ”

CANTO XXVI.—DANTE CATECHISED BY ST. JOHN—A
 FOURTH LIGHT.

“ Whilst I perplexed mused o’er my vision quenched,
 Forth from the glowing flame that quenched it, came
 A voice that won my ear.”

St. John bade him be comforted as his sight was only suspended, not destroyed, and Beatrice would restore it. He then proceeded to question him about charity and whence he drew his knowledge of the love of God. Dante said that he first learned from Plato the nature of divine love as the motive power of the eternal substances ; from the voice of God speaking to Moses, and from the Gospel of St. John himself,

“ Whose lofty book beyond all other books
 In its first words proclaims the secret brought
 From here to there below.”

St. John questioned him further as to what other motives he might have for the love of God, and he answered,

“ Every goad
 That turns the heart to God, blends in my love.
 For the world’s being and my being, the death

He bore that I might live, the hope that's shared
With me by all the faithful, and the intense
Foreknowledge granted me, all drew me forth
Out of the sea of sinful love, and on
The shore of Love Celestial set me down.
And all the leaves that deck the garden ground
Of the Eternal Gardener do I love,
As He hath showered upon them grace and good.'
Then when I ceased, a lovely melody
Through heaven resounded, and my saintly guide
Said with the others 'Holy, holy, holy.' "

He then perceived a fourth light, and Beatrice told him that—

“ ‘ Within those rays
Doth the first soul by primal virtue made
Adore his Maker.’ As the leaf that bends
To the passing of the wind, and rises then
By its own nature lifted, so did I
In wonder while she spoke, quickly restored
By the strong will to speak.”

Adam (this fourth light), as usual, forestalled his unspoken inquiries as to how long ago he lived, how long he lived, what was the cause of God's wrath against him, and what language he spoke. Adam told him that it was now four thousand three hundred and two years since he descended to Limbo ; that he lived but seven hours in the earthly paradise, and that the language which he spoke perished with the building of the Tower of Babel. He observed that no language had ever lasted long, it being allowed to mortals to vary their speech as they pleased. Even the name of God had changed, for—

“ The use of mortals is as are the leaves
Upon a bough, one goes, another comes.”

CANTO XXVII.—SAINT PETER'S WRATH WITH THE
PAPACY, AND DANTE'S ASCENT TO THE
PRIMUM MOBILE.

"To Father and to Son and Holy Ghost
Sang Glory then all Paradise, and filled
My soul with sweet enchantment. What I saw
Seemed as the smile of the great Universe,
The rapture entering in at eye and ear."

He saw the faces of the four lights kindled, especially that of St. Peter,

"Whose aspect then became
What Jove's would be, if he and Mars were birds,
And so exchanged their plumage."

That is, it changed from white to red with anger. St. Peter then bade him not marvel at his altered colour, for what he was going to say would change the colour of them all; and then he burst into a tirade against the then Pope Boniface VIII., even stammering with anger.

"He who usurps my place, my place, my place
Now vacant in the sight of the Son of God.'
As virtuous maid who stands herself secure,
Yet, in but hearing of another's fall,
Grows fearful and ashamed, so Beatrice
Changed countenance; and I saw that heavenly host
All with that hue suffused that dyes a cloud
At morn or even, opposite the sun."

St. Peter then proceeded, with a voice as changed as his aspect, denouncing the favour shown to the Guelphs and the persecution of the Ghibelines by the Pope.

" 'Twas not our purpose that the human race
By my successor should be parted thus
On his right hand and left, nor that the keys
To me assigned, in papal banners set,
Should be a sign of war with Christian men ;
Nor that my image should become a seal
For venal and mendacious privileges.
In shepherd's garb rapacious wolves are seen
In all the pastures there.—Vengeance of God ?
O how art thou entranced ! Our blood the priests
From Cahors and Gascoigne prepare to drink.
O fair beginning ! to what odious end
Art thou degraded."

He prophesied vengeance, however, and added—

" ' And thou, my son, who wilt again resume
Thy mortal burden, ope thy lips, nor hide
That which I have not hidden.'
As in midwinter doth our air grow thick
With frozen vapour, so I saw above
The ether deck itself with vaporous forms
Of those triumphant spirits who had once
Sojourned on earth with us.
[In su vid' io così l' etere adorno
Farsi e fioccar di vapori trionfanti.]
My eyes, their forms pursuing, followed on
Till the vast space between took from me sight
Of those that passed the foremost."

Beatrice bade him note how, since he last looked down he had revolved with the heavens a quarter of the sphere (that is, six hours had passed), being now in the sign of the Gemini ; and, looking down, he saw from Cadiz to the Phœnician coast. But, as usual, he turned from the view to her,

" If art or nature sought, by feeding eyes
On objects of delight, in living form
Or lifeless painting, to enchant the soul,

All would seem nought to that divine delight
Which glowed upon me from her smiling face."

In the virtue of this contemplation Dante was rapt to the "swiftest heaven," that called the *Primum Mobile*. Beatrice explained to him that they were approaching the central heaven, which alone was still while the outer ones revolve; this is the *Empyrean*, between which and the revolving ones this heaven (the ninth) was the boundary, and also the origin and the measure of the movements of all the others. She then broke out in declamation against the cupidity and corruption of the world, but prophesied that "before January becomes spring,"* these celestial circles will rouse a storm which will drive the world at last in the right direction.

CANTO XXVIII.—THE DIVINE ESSENCE AND THE
ANGELIC ORDERS.

"When thus the miseries of mortal life
• Had been presented to my view by her
Who for my whole soul made a Paradise
[Quella che imparadisò la mia mente],
I saw a point that held a light so keen
The eyes it shone upon perforce must close
Before such dazzling power."

Around this luminous point revolved nine circles, one within the other, moving quicker and quicker in

* That is, before the particles of time not calculated in the Julian calendar came to such an amount that the period now allotted to January would be really spring.

proportion as they approached the centre, and brightening also in the same measure. Beatrice explained to him that this point is the Divine Essence, and the nine circles around it composed of angelic spirits. The two first circles were of cherubim and seraphim ; the two next were called "*Troni del divino aspetto*" ; the next "*Ternaro*," "which budded forth in this eternal spring, and, like the birds that sing away the winter, did they chaunt Hosanna in three melodies," was composed of Virtues, Dominations, and Powers. The seventh and eighth circles were Principalities and Archangels ; and the ninth, which was the outermost, were simply angels without any especial distinction.

St. Gregory, it seems, made a mistake as to the order of two of these nine circles ;

"Whence, soon as in this heaven his eyes unclosed,
He smiled at his own self."

CANTO XXIX.—ON THE MODE OF CREATION OF
ANGELS.

"Col volto di riso dipinto
Si tacque Beatrice, riguardando
Fiso nel punto che m' aveva vinto."

Then she answered Dante's unspoken question as to the mode of creation of the angels. "Not for His own benefit," she said, "did Eternal Love, in His eternity beyond time and beyond all comprehension, unfold Himself in new loves, but that His splendour, made thus more spendid still, might say, 'I subsist in

these.' Nor did He lie torpid before, for there was no *first* nor *then* in God's brooding on these waters.

("Che nè prima nè poscia precedette
Lo discorrer di Dio sovra quest' acque.")

She then told him how the angels, the skies, and sublunary bodies were created together, the angels "in cima nel mondo"—that is, above the skies—solely to act on other bodies; the skies, both to receive the action of others and to act themselves, the sublunary bodies solely to be acted upon. All this is set forth at great length. She then gave him the history of the angels who fell "to disturb our element," and of those who remained above to practise the art of spinning about, which they had kept on with till now, and would never leave off.

She then commented on the erroneous opinions held by men as to the nature of angels, to whom they attributed the human faculties, especially that of memory; whereas, all things being present at once to an angel's mind, there is no need of a separate act of remembering. Next she vehemently reprehended the false theologians and preachers of the day who warped the Scriptures, misconstruing texts through vanity and love of show.

"Florence hath not so many Smiths and Browns *
As foolish fables yearly crying out
In parchments here and there; so that the poor
Ignorant flock return from pasture, fed
With wind, nor doth their ignorance excuse them.
Christ said not to his holy College, 'Go,

* "Lapi e Bindi," contractions of *Giacopo* and (some say) of *Aldobrandino*.

Preach to the world vain jests,* but gave them true
Foundations which so sounded from their tongues,
That for the fight in which the faith should be
Kindled on earth, they of the Evangel made
Both shield and lance. Now go the preachers forth
With quibbles and buffooneries, and if
Men do but laugh, conceit puffs out their hoods,
And they ask nothing more. But in that hood
Nestles a bird of such strange kind [the devil], as did
The vulgar see, they would too well discern
What absolution 'tis to which they trust."

She speaks of the impostors who, offering indulgences and making every kind of false promise, lure crowds of credulous fools—

"And so grows fat the hog of Antony ; *
And others worse than hogs who with false coin
Repay their devotees."

She then reverted to the subject of the angels, who, she said, go on multiplying from grade to grade, till their number can neither be expressed nor imagined.

"The Primal Light, that doth illumine all,
In them is in such various modes received
As various are the splendours it combines with.
Whence, since th' affection is proportioned to
The vision and conception of the Lord,
So variously in each the love divine
Glows, less or more. See thus, the excellence
And largeness of th' Eternal Virtue, making
So many mirrors, there divides himself,
Yet in himself remains One as before."

* Meaning the friars of St. Antony's order, of which the hog is the symbol, who enriched themselves by selling indulgences.

CANTO XXX.—THE EMPYREAN AND THE HEAVENLY
ROSE.

“ As when, an hour ere daylight, clearer grows
The mid heaven's hollow depth and star by star
Begins to vanish from us, and the more
Advances the bright handmaid of the sun,
Heaven closes one by one its shining eyes,
Till lost is e'en the fairest ; so from me
Went slowly fading the triumphal choir
That danced around the Point* whose splendour quenched
My vision.”

He turned to Beatrice and found her beauty now
so transcendent that none but its Creator could under-
stand or enjoy it.

“ E'en as the sun o'erpowers a feeble eye,
So the remembrance of that lovely smile
O'erpowers my spirit now. From the first day
That in this life I saw her face, till now,
My song hath never failed to dwell on her ;
But now it needs must fail to dwell upon
That beauty in its poet art, as fails
The artist at the limits of *his* art.”

Beatrice then observed that they had passed from
the largest corporeal heaven to the Empyrean, which
is pure light.

“ An intellectual light all filled with love,
A sacred love of truth all filled with joy,
A joy that every sweetness doth transcend.”

Dante's eyes were here utterly blinded by the light

* That Point is God.

that surrounded him ; but Beatrice's few words gave him strength to rise above himself—

“ And kindled in me new and better sight,
So that no light could be too pure and bright
But that my eyes could bear it. And I saw
A light that like a luminous river ran
Betwixt two banks, painted with wondrous spring.

Or

All painted with the miracles of spring.
[Dipinti di mirabil primavera].
And from that river living sparks came forth,
And everywhere they turned themselves to flowers
Like rubies set in gold ; then drunk with odours
Replunged into the marvellous flood of light,
And, while one entered, came another forth.”

Beatrice then bade him drink of this river, adding,
“ The river, the topazes that go in and out, and the
flowers that laugh over the turf, are shadowy prefigure-
ments of reality ” (that is, the lights and flowers were
human spirits).

Dante hastened to drink, and while so doing—

“ As they who had been masked show other faces
Than first seemed theirs, disrobing th' unreal
Semblance in which they first withdrew from sight,
So to more glorious aspect changed themselves
The flowers and sparks, so that both courts of heaven
I there saw manifest.” *

The river then grew rounding and widening till it
became a circle surpassing the circumference of the
sun.

* There are supposed to be two armies in heaven, one, of the
angels who had fought against the rebel spirits, the other of the
holy men who had fought on earth against vice.

"And as a hill in water round its foot
 Glasses itself, to see how fair it is,
 When richly decked in verdure and in flowers;
 So ranged around that lake of light I saw
 There mirrored, on their thousand thrones, the souls
 Of all who have from us returned to God.

* * * * *

Nor was my sight lost e'en in that vast space,
 But near and far all equally was seen;
 For where God rules directly hath no power
 The law of nature. In th' expanding heart
 Of that eternal Rose arise and breathe
 Odours of praise to our great Sun who here
 Makes never-ending Spring."

Beatrice then exclaimed—

"Behold yon company of snowy stoles!
 Behold our city thus revolving ever!

* * * * *

In yonder lofty seat on which thou gazest,
 Marked by the crown placed over it, shall sit,
 Ere yet thou com'st to share our feast of bliss,
 The soul that yet on earth will be august,
 The noble Henry,* who will seek to guide
 Italy ere she's ripe for better things.
 For one will then be ruler in the Church
 Who, openly and covertly, will still
 Oppose him; † but not long will God endure
 Him in the holy office, thence thrust forth
 To Simon Magus' fate, and lower yet
 He of Alagna ‡ will be forced to go."

* Henry VII. of Luxembourg, who was crowned in 1308, seven years after the supposed date of this prophecy, and died in 1313, evidently before these words were written.

† Clement V., who died in 1314.

‡ Boniface VIII., who died in 1303.

CANTO XXXI.—ST. BERNARD AND THE MOTHER
OF GOD.

“ Thus in the form of a fair Rose appeared
To me the blessed host whom with his blood
Christ had espoused, the human ; while the other
That flying sees and sings the glory of Him
It loveth, and the grace that made it such,—
Like to a swarm of bees that now is lost
In flowers, and now to its sweet toil returns
[*Là dove suo lavoro s'insapora*],—
To that great Flower with all its circling leaves
Descended, then remounted where their love
For ever sojourns.”

Dante addressing the Holy Trinity and speaking of his wonder at all these sights, says, if the Barbarians, coming from their northern regions, were astonished at the sight of Rome with her glorious palaces—

“ With what astonishment must I have then
Been filled, who thus from human to divine,
From time unto eternity, had come,
From Florence to a people just and wise !

* * * * *

And like a pilgrim who, as though new made,
Stands gazing in the temple of his vows,
And hopes to tell again how fair 'twas built,—
So, passing to and fro in that pure light,
Now up and down and now around I gazed.”

He turned to question Beatrice about all this, and found by his side instead of her an old man attired in glory like the rest, with a cheerful, benignant countenance as of a tender father. “ She—where is she ? ” he asked, and the old man answered that Beatrice had desired him to come to satisfy Dante's desires.

“ ‘ If thou to the third circle dost look up,
Thou'lt see her on the throne whence virtuous love

Made her descend.' Without replying, straight
 I raised my eyes and saw her in a crown
 Of the eternal rays reflected from her."

High as she was above him even as the sky from
 the bottom of the sea, he saw her distinctly without
 any obstacle, and addressed her with passionate
 homage—

* * * * *

"Thus did I pray and she, though so far off,
 Smiled, as it seemed, and looked down on me, then
 To the Eternal Fountain turned again."

The old man explained to him that he was St.
 Bernard, the Virgin's especial devotee, and bade him
 not look below, but to the furthest verge of the circle,
 where he would see the Queen of Heaven, whose
 faithful subjects they all were. Dante looked, and
 lifting his eyes as from the bottom of a valley to the
 top of a hill beheld at the extreme point a light which
 surpassed all the rest (the Virgin).

"And in that central point I round her saw
 Thousands of angels with their wings outspread,
 Each one distinct in radiance and delight.
 And in their games and songs did I see smile
 A beauty which lit up with joy the eyes
 Of all the other saints. On that blest form,
 That peaceful oriflamme, I gazed, and gazed
 St. Bernard, ever more and more intent."

CANTO XXXII.—THE SOULS IN PARADISE.

St. Bernard, still gazing passionately on the Virgin,
 began to inform Dante about the occupants of the

thrones, pointing out in the third row the souls of holy women ; Eve sitting at Mary's feet, Rachel, Sara, Rebekah, Judith, and St. Anne. A division is made between those who believed in Christ to come and Christ already come ; but they all equally make up the eternal Rose. He then pointed out the souls of those who were glorified through no merits of their own, as for instance those of infants.

“ This canst thou by their faces well discern,
And by their childish voices, if thou look
And listen.
For every grade of merit here is fixed
An equal grade of glory fitting well
As a ring on a finger.
The King for whom reposes
This kingdom in such love and such delight.
No will could dare soar to the wish for more,
All souls creating in His blessed sight,
With various graces gifts them at His will.”

He bade Dante look at the face which most resembles Christ's, and whose glory will enable him to look at His. He gazed on Mary, the sight of whom filled all the surrounding faces with joy, and asked,

“ O blessed father, who for me dost brook
To be down here, leaving the happy place
Where thy eternal seat had been assigned,
Who is that Angel who with such delight
Gazes on our Queen's eyes, enamoured so
As to seem all on fire ? ”

Bernard answered that it was Gabriel, who brought down the palm to Mary. He then pointed out to Dante the most illustrious spirits there present, “ the

great patricians of this holy empire," Adam, St. Peter, St. John, Moses, St. Anne—

“So all content to gaze upon her Daughter
That not th’ Hosannas made her turn her eyes”—

and St. Lucia. But, he said, as the time was near when Dante should wake from his vision, he would point out no more of these, but direct his eyes to God, the source of love.

CANTO XXXIII.—THE PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD—THE
SUPREME SIGHT—THE VISION ENDS.

“O Virgin Mother, Daughter to thy Son,
Lowliest and loftiest of all creatures born,
Fixed consummation of th’ Eternal Thought,
Thou’rt she who didst our human nature so
Ennoble that our Maker did not scorn
To make Himself a part of it. In thee
Rekindled was the love through whose pure glow
Unfolded, in eternal peace, this Flower.
Here thou for us art as the noonday torch
Of Charity ; to mortals there below
The living fount of Hope. Lady, so great
And of such power thou art that he who would
Have grace and doth not seek to thee for it,
Is one who without wings desires to fly.
In thee is Mercy, Pity is in thee,
In thee Munificence, in thee combined
Is all of good in every creature found.
Now he, who, from the very lowest depth
Of the whole Universe unto this spot,
Has one by one the lives of spirits seen,
Implores from thee the favour of such power
As to lift up his eyes yet higher towards

The final source of life. And I who never
Craved for myself such sight more than for him
Offer thee all my prayers. . . .

I pray thee too,

O Queen, who what thou wilt canst do, to keep
After such wondrous vision his soul pure.
See Beatrice how she, with all the saints,
Aids my petition with her clasped hands.
The eyes beloved and honoured of our Lord,
Fixed on the speaker, showed how sweet to her
Were prayers of the devout. . . .
And I who to this goal of my desires
Was drawing nigh, calmed down, as then behoved,
The ardour of my cravings. Bernard signed me,
Smiling, to look on high ; but of myself
I had already done it."

Dante's vision, becoming ever clearer, pierced more and more into the depth of the Divine Light ; but what he saw surpassed all language and effaced remembrance.

"As he who in a dream sees something, when
The dream is past, keeps on his mind impressed
The passion, yet forgets the dream itself ;
So I that vision utterly have lost,
Yet feel my heart still steeped in its delight.
So in the sun the snow melts out of form
[Così la nevè al Sol si disigilla] ;
So did the wind, with all their oracles,
The light leaves of the Sybil blow away."

He prays for grace to be able to report something of what he had seen, so as to convey a spark of God's glory to times to come. He so fixed his eyes, he says, on the Eternal Light that his sight seemed consumed by it. He saw the forms, substance, and qualities of all things in the universe all bound up together as in a volume.

"That which combines all these and knits up all,
 The universal Form, I deem I saw,
 Because in speaking of it in my heart
 I feel an ampler joy. One point alone *
 More wholly from my memory is effaced,
 Than have five hundred years effaced the deed
 That awestruck Neptune, when the Argo cast
 Her shadow on the waters. . . .
 Now will my tale be shorter, from the scant
 Material furnished by my memory,
 Than is an infant's measure of discourse.
 'Twas not that, in the living light I gazed on,
 More than one simple aspect did appear,
 For what it was before it still abides.
 But as my power of sight kept gaining strength,
 That one sole semblance with my changing vision
 Changed also. In the bright, profound existence
 Of that pure light Three Circles I beheld,
 Three colours, and One measure. As we see
 Iris from Iris, so reflected here
 Was one from th' other, and the third seemed fire
 Breathed equally from both."

This was the Trinity, in which

"The second Circle which appeared in that
 Eternal Light, as its reflection seemed
 Divinely painted, yet upon that colour
 * There was a human likeness. . . . All perplexed
 Was I at that new sight; I strove to see
 How with the Circle did the Image there
 Accord, and how the human nature could
 House itself in't. But my own wings for this
 Were not sufficient, had not grace divine
 Struck my mind with the lightning of its will.
 Here failed for that high vision all my powers;
 But, like the equal movements of a wheel,
 My wish and will were guided now by Love,
 The Love that moves the heaven and all the stars."

* The sight of God Himself.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATIONS.

I WILL give here in a very few words a summary of the interpretation of this poem, founded on Dante's own words, which has been more fully worked out in the Critical Notice.

The poem has for its theme the *two-fold object* of man's temporal and spiritual reformation; that is, it has its civil (or political) and its philosophical application. It has also a *double method*, the literal and the allegorical, and the two are shot together, being, as it were, the two sides of one object. The literal method is used to represent the state of mortals after death; this is what we should call its *objective* meaning, and by this method, of which Dante's own personality is the centre, the political subject is for the most part treated. But the final happiness of man on earth, which is the object of the civil reformation, is allegorically set forth in the Earthly Paradise; just as the spiritual reformation, the sanctification of the human soul, is figured in the Heavenly Paradise. And both these final aims are preceded by, and as it were veiled in, Dante's personal adventures and concrete experiences in the invisible regions which are indeed supernatural, but, as represented by him, as material as the earth we live on.

In my brief explanations of the spiritual meanings of the "Divina Commedia," I have not touched on those theories which represent the whole in all its parts as but a mystical parable every detail of which is a symbol of some esoteric mystery believed in by various secret sects. The truth I believe to be that Dante, almost as a matter of course, adopted, as most

suitable to a serious subject, the form which had become prevalent in that age for didactic discourse whether in prose or verse—that of allegory. But his genius was in its nature concrete, human, and, we may say, descriptive and dramatic; himself, his city, and his people were his engrossing themes. To give dignity and importance to these, he extended the local politics to a more abstract view of society in general, and the personal interest was made to symbolise the state of the human soul.

NOTE B.—UNITY OF THE “DIVINA COMMEDIA.”

In the Critical Notice I was not able even to attempt to do justice to the grand unity of Dante’s poem. The gradations, the contrasts, the uniformities, are equally marvellous. It is like perfect architecture, symmetrical yet varied as Nature herself. A few words may draw attention to the leading points of this artistic unity, with the progress of the form of language in which it is built up.

The “*Inferno*” begins with a dismal wood, and three terrible creatures with a threefold signification. Virgil, or Human Wisdom, is Dante’s conductor to the realms where his first lessons are to be learnt; Charon is his introducer into Hell. There are nine circles or abysses: the first is Limbo, where dwell the unbaptised, not punished, yet not blest; the second, where the Voluptuous are punished, is guarded by Minos, the severe judge of morals; the third, the abode of the Gluttonous, by Cerberus, the ravenous hound; the fourth, of the Avaricious, by Pluto; the fifth, of the Wrathful, by the furious Phlegias; the sixth, opened by a stern Angel, of the Epicureans and Heresiarchs; * the seventh, guarded by the unnatural monster the Minotaur, of the Violent against God, themselves, and their neighbour; the eighth, divided into ten pits where ten species of the fraudulent are confined, by Geryon, the symbol of fraud; the ninth, where pine those whom Dante evidently considers the greatest sinners of all—Traitors, is guarded by the most monstrous of the human kind, Primæval Giants. The centre of all this horror is Lucifer himself. A dark

* This condemnation of unbelievers would seem almost to be perfunctory, for Dante exhibits a decided friendship for some of them, as Dolcino and Farinata.

passage, alternately downward and upward, leads through the earth :

“ E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.”

The “ *Inferno*,” after the introductory allegory, has a remarkable realism : what meaning underlies the objective supernatural is most conspicuously historical or political. The “ *Purgatorio* ” continues in a softened form the same realism, or one may say humanness ; the interest is even more personal, the historical melts into the biographical ; Dante meets far more friends and acquaintances. The pictures are no longer grim, the punishments are tempered, and there are rare bits of tender, beautiful painting. Contrast the opening of the one *Cantica* with that of the other—not now a dark wild wood and then infernal night lighted only by the red-hot castle of Dis ; here are sea and sky and the morning star, and a soothing softness of air and light. Instead of Charon, we have Cato, type of the virtue of the ancient world, that is, Human Philosophy without spiritual life—and here there are penitence and hope, though not yet purification and fruition. Instead of descent into the pit of Hell, and the nine circles where hopeless sinners are punished, there is the ascent up the Mount of Pardon by seven circular ledges where are purified those guilty of the seven deadly sins, but who repented just in time to escape Hell. Each of these cornices is guarded, not by an appropriate monster, but by an angel, each one of whom strikes off the sign of one of these sins from Dante’s forehead. In Hell but one angel appears, and he as doing police duty, dispersing with his wand, “ *pieno di dispetto*,” a rabble of furious demons. In Purgatory the angels are of a type suitable to the “ *milder shades*,” the subdued, pensive atmosphere ; they are white-robed “ *creature belle* ” with soft brightness, and have something of the humanness that pervades the whole.

Thus it continues, till we come to the Earthly Paradise at the top of the Mount, the perfection and climax of terrestrial beauty though lighted with a ray from the heaven that lies beyond its border. For here, after some exquisite natural painting, the mystical and the spiritual begin. As in the first canto of the “ *Inferno*,” so in this last of the “ *Purgatorio*,” we have a forest and an allegory—but how different ! The forest is no longer the dark, perplexing, terrifying vestibule to the under world,

but the happy borderland of the Heavenly Paradise. And the figures met within it are in keeping. There is Matilda, the type of active virtue, the lovely inmate of a lovely world, but subordinate to the full splendour of Beatrice, or spiritual wisdom, who comes from heaven to conduct Dante to the very heart of bliss.

This *Cantica* ends like the "*Inferno*," with the stars, but with an evident progress, for the pilgrim does not issue from the dark to see them, but, fresh bathed in the waters of Eden, stands—

"Puro e disposto a salir alle stelle."

And then begins the wondrous flight upward from Heaven to Heaven, the nine spheres ending in the Empyrean, where, as Lucifer was the central form of the nether world, God Himself is the heart and the pervading essence of all. Here, instead of angels, are blessed spirits, and they contrast with the tender ministrants of Purgatory by their overwhelming splendour, their triumphant smiles, excess of felicity, and rapture of movement, and of music. And thus, amidst ineffable light and colour, celestial harmonies and a burning flame of love and joy, the scene closes; and once more the stars are introduced to crown and complete the whole glorious Poem in that last line—

"L' amor che muove il sole e l' altre stelle."

NOTE C.—STYLE OF DANTE.

We may remark how his style alters and rises as his course through the worlds proceeds, and the totally different colour of his phraseology according to the world he is describing; lurid in Hell, tenderly beautiful in Purgatory, increasing in richness as he comes to the Earthly Paradise, and large, exuberant, splendid in Heaven. The stern almost matter-of-factness with which the tale of Hell is told (as if its flames had withered up the foliage and play of mere fancy) only interspersed here and there with grim comedy, changes to the higher music and dignity of Purgatory (see *Canto ix.*), where, after the vision of Lucia, he observes, "come io innalzo la mia materia," and bids the reader not marvel if he "dresses up with more art his more sublime matter." Thus he gradually rises to the grandeur of Paradise, and the ever-mounting style is well fitted to the transcendent nature, the "*transumanare*," of the heavenly sphere. In describing that

joy and love of the spirits which expresses itself in radiance, we feel even the monotony and repetition of the images, the constant light, stars, gems, as all deepening the effect of unity and intensity. The "Inferno" has realistic grandeur, the "Purgatorio" imaginative human beauty, the "Paradiso" spiritual sublimity. The poetic passages in the first are flames, in the second flowers, in the third stars. The absence of humanity and the long and laboured theological disquisitions of the third cantica make it somewhat more difficult to read, and we are slower to enjoy; but perhaps the single strokes of genius are more wonderful here than anywhere also, and the masterly art with which the whole is grouped, the symmetry, the progress and the climax, put, as it were, the crowning dome on the majestic structure of the Poem.

Of Dante's language generally we may say that his meaning is packed as close, his sentences are as condensed (with more of the old Latin than the new Italian idiom in it) as the laws of language will allow. Of his narrative style it is to be noted that everything is *seen*, and described as it appeared on the spot and at the moment; there is no stopping to explain or prepare us for anything. All is stated as he *then* knew; we see no more and no less than he saw himself. It is not narrative so much as a stage with successive scenes.

It has very often been observed that even Dante's unequalled sublimities of conception and expression are not more remarkable than the small touches so faithful to the simplest every-day human nature as to give to the supernatural an air of the commonest reality. To enumerate these inspired felicities would be impossible; besides, they lose half their beauty detached from the context into which they have stolen so naturally, half familiar, half a surprise. Even on the grim background of Hell appear some of these little *naïvetés* like a child's smile. They abound in the "Purgatorio"—natural mistakes, small fears, passing mortifications, disappointments and innocent joys. In the "Paradiso" there are fewer of these homely touches; the subject seems too exalted for them; all is beyond human experience, and the traits of descriptive or dramatic genius appeal by their grandeur to the imagination rather than charm or touch us by their reality. One, however, may be noted. When the spirit in Mars (Canto xiv. 61) has prophesied the return of

the flesh to the spirit after the resurrection, the prompt and eager *Amen*, uttered by all the blessed spirits there, shows how they yearned for their bodies, "haply not for their own sakes, but for those whom they loved, still kept absent from them in Purgatory."

We may notice, too, many of those life-like touches, by which some fact is not formally told, but naturally inferred. Unlike what constantly occurred in Hell and Purgatory, no one in Heaven asked who he was, or expressed surprise at his appearance, because the glorified spirits knew all about him from the intuition of their heavenly nature.

NOTE D.

The anecdotes respecting Dante handed down by tradition are not very many nor very important, nor indeed mainly of any great interest, except so far as they illustrate the general impression of his stern personality. This personality in fact remains like that of the other mighty and astonishing world genius, Shakspeare,—in spite of diligent research, and of the large amount of historical light that we have on the ages they lived in,—a mystery, covered by a nimbus, like that which veiled the divinities, through which pierce here and there glimpses of light whereby in Dante we discern only or chiefly the marking traits of haughty independence and reserve, even as in Shakspeare we catch an impression of cheerful geniality and good sense. Dante's life and character are best conceived from what he tells us himself and from the general historical facts with which he was connected. Personal legends more often indicate the moral and intellectual scope of the society surrounding such a man than of the man himself who is beyond their range or the really telling facts of his life, and are apt to be trivial, inconsequential, and contradictory. We shall select only a few traits from his life by Boccaccio, written some fifty years after his death, and some anecdotes or touches of description which have floated down through tradition and been recorded by nearly contemporary or somewhat later authors.

Boccaccio begins his account of Dante with a mention of the earliest ancestor traced in chronicle, Elisei, a noble youth of Rome, who was among the first comers under Carl the Great when he first re-built and re-peopled Florence. Elisei was

appointed one of the superintendents of the building and framer of the decrees, and during this work he fell so much in love with Florence that he took up his permanent abode there. He left an illustrious progeny, who took for their race the personal name of their founder, and were called Elisei. Among these was Cacciaguida, who married a daughter of the Aldighieri of Ferrara. "She, after the wont of women," says Boccaccio, "called one of her sons by her family name, softened into Alighieri." His great worth made his descendants take his name instead of Elisei; of these, one in Frederic II.'s reign was the father of the immortal poet, heralded of course by a wonderful dream of his wife's, which caused her to give him the name of Durante or Dante.

The paternal house was easy in its fortunes as things then went (from other sources we learn that the Alighieri belonged to the Guild of Wool, *Arte della Lana*, which had extensive premises in that locality). Dante in his early childhood having learnt the elements of letters, gave continued study to the liberal arts. As he grew up he devoted himself to reading the great poets—Virgil, Horace, Statius, Ovid, and every other famous singer. And he sought to imitate them, esteeming that "under their fables and marvels much fruit of historic and philosophic truth lay hid." He then gave himself up entirely to the delights of discovering Divine truth, becoming deeply learned in theology. He also knew various sciences, studying under various doctors. He learned first in his own country, then went to Bologna, and, when advanced in age, to Paris, where he disputed several times with great success; and some always called him poet, some philosopher, many theologian. "Studies such as his," says Boccaccio, "especially the speculative, require solitude, remoteness, and tranquillity of mind." Accordingly he lived much by himself, and had a great power of abstraction. Once in Siena, at a grocer's shop, he so absorbed himself in a book, famous but not known to him, which he found there that putting himself with his breast against the ledge in front, he placed the book before him and, though it was a "*festa*" with music, dancing, and games all round him, never stirred from the hour of noon till past vespers, and had been aware of nothing that was passing.

His appearance was as follows: Of middling stature, slightly

stooping, with a grave and quiet walk, always dressed most respectably; a long face, aquiline nose, rather large eyes, large jaws, upper lip projecting over the under, brown complexion, hair and beard thick, black and crisp,* his face thoughtful and melancholy. He was most modest, and, in eating and drinking, regular in his hours, simple in diet, and abhorring gluttony. He vexed his wife and family by his devotion to his studies till at last they got accustomed (and perhaps indifferent) to it. He spoke seldom, unless addressed, but then most fluently and well. In his youth he loved music and song, himself composed, and was the friend of every great musician and singer. Being at Verona, after the "Inferno" had appeared and made him famous, he once passed by a door where sat several women, and one said, loud enough to be heard by Dante and his friends, "Do you see that man who goes down to Hell and comes back when he chooses, and brings news up here of those who are below?" "Surely that is true," said another, "for look how his beard is curled and his complexion all black and scorched with the heat and smoke down there!" He smiled, and perceiving their simple belief, passed on well pleased.

The notices of Dante by other writers contain, as we have said, little of certain authenticity or importance. Leonardo Bruno tells of his politeness, gravity, slow and rare speech and subtle replies. Giovanni Villani, and his nephew Filippo, say mainly the same things. We have certain assurance of his friendship with Giotto, which was intimate, in spite of eleven years difference of age. It is believed that they two and Oderisi of Gubbio (see "Purgatorio," c. xi.) both learned draw-

* But Dante says of himself in his first Eclogue to Giovanni del Virgilio, who invited him to Bologna to take the laurel crown:—

"E non fia meglio
Ch' io m' ornì e copra sotto il trionfale
Serto le chiome, ove alla patria io torni,
Che saran bianche, e bionde eran sull' Arno?"

A touching allusion to the hope he long cherished of being recalled with honour to his own city. See similar words in "Paradiso," c. xxv.

ing in Cimabue's "bottega." Vasari tells this of Oderisi, and it is certain that they were all of the same time, place, and profession. "Giotto, coming back from Rome," says Vasari, "in 1301, painted the fresco in the chapel of the Podestà's palace; a procession with Dante's figure in it" (though the sweet, young, pensive face hardly suits with the stern man of thirty-six that he then was). Benvenuto Cellini tells us that the two went together to France, and that then (1317) Giotto received Dante in his house at Padua, where he was painting the chapel dei Scrovigni; and Salvatico says that he there made a new portrait of Dante, very like that in the Florentine fresco, with a *malagrana* (pomegranate, emblem of hell) in his hand.

We know even less of Dante's wife and his relations with her than of Beatrice Portinari. The marriages of poets have often been unhappy, and the obscure wife, of whom we hear only through the poet's admirers, is generally presumed to be in fault. Poor Gemma dei Donati was no exception to the rule. Dante, like many men of genius, was, we may judge, not easy to live with; but all we know on this subject is Boccaccio's statement that "she was so garrulous and indiscreet, that when he had left her he would never return to her nor let her go where he was,"—a fact which, if true, reflects discredit, we think, rather on the husband than on the wife.

Of that which seems, as we have said, to have been one of the leading traits of the poet's character, Dante betrays his consciousness in the peculiar sympathy which he shows with the sufferings of the Proud in Purgatory ("Purgatorio," c. xi.), and in his candid confession when amongst those who are expiating the sin of envy, that though he has not much to fear from the penalty for a like fault in himself, yet that he seems to feel already the burden which will be his punishment for excess of pride. This quality appears to have been a family characteristic, as in the "Paradiso" (c. xv.) Dante incidentally mentions that his great-grandfather, the first Alighieri, had for a hundred years and more been doomed to pace the "prima cornice," where the proud were enduring their penance.

With respect to Dante's friendships, and, in especial, his relations with high-placed men, we can see evidence that wherever he went he was gladly welcomed, and esteemed and honoured by those whose friendship was a distinction. The two Marchesi

Malaspini, Counts Guidi di Casentino, Uguccone Signor of Pisa, the illustrious Delle Scale and Count Guido di Polenta of Ravenna, were all his friends and entertainers. His proud independence of spirit, it is true, and a temper doubtless embittered by exile and wrong, may have caused his frequent changes from one asylum to another, and such occasional jars as are typified in his traditional answer to Can Grande, who, as the poet sat silent at his board, where all the rest were laughing at the jests of the buffoon, asked him, "Is it not strange that this fool should amuse us so much, while you, a wise man, sit there and say nothing at all?" Dante answered, "No, it is not strange, if you remember the proverb, 'like to like.'" But we have the best proof that his regard for Della Scala remained unaltered to the last, and his poem is full of evidences of many a warm and tender friendship. That with Charles Martel has already been noticed.

Dante's judgments on historical and contemporary characters are remarkably sound and impartial; in a few words he gives a verdict which stands the test of time. The great foe of the southern Italians, Charles of Anjou, is shown us in the reconciling shades of Purgatory, seated side by side with his life-long rival, Pedro of Aragon. His faults are not concealed, but the merits of both are done justice to. Bitterly as several popes are scourged—Adrian, Nicholas, Boniface, and Clement—the lash is laid on in the right spot. It is true that in two or three cases Florentines who had done him shameful wrong are specially consigned to punishment, but for the most part Dante surveys as from a height the strifes of factions and the crimes of princes and peoples.* Guelphs and Ghibelines receive alike his condemnation; the latter, to whom in his protest against Papal tyranny

* The only case where we seem to recognise distinct injustice is his final bitter condemnation of Frederic of Sicily. This prince, having allied himself with Henry VII. in his invasion of Italy, on the sudden death of the latter abandoned an enterprise which could only have ended in disaster. He had enough to do to hold his own in Sicily against the Angevines and the Pope, and this he did heroically, so as to gain the devotion of his subjects and a glorious reputation. But Dante could not pardon the downfall of his own especial hopes.

and foreign invasion he had allied himself, proved unworthy of their mission, and he shook himself free, but remained the same high-hearted patriot and preacher of civil and social reform as ever. Ghibelinism with him deepened and expanded into Italianism, the longing which had already begun to possess the distracted people of the different States of Italy. "Amidst the tumult," says Amari, "of so many passions, those of municipalities, parties, the Pontificate itself, there now spoke to men's souls the secret voice of the national Latin sentiment. Race, climate, usages, situation of places, the laws of Rome, Latin letters, splendid historical traditions, all awakened this thought."* Dante dreamed of the restoration of the Roman Empire under kings of Germanic blood. This no doubt had drawn him to the Ghibeline party; but the aspirations of Latinism, as it was called, soon rose beyond these appellations of factions.

The prettiest of all the traditions about Dante is that which represents him as sitting on a stone in the Piazza del Duomo, of a summer evening, in view of his beloved Baptistery, and of the grand work already begun which was to convert the fair church of Santa Reparata, or, as it was soon called, Santa Maria del Fior, into the stately cathedral of Arnolfo di Cambio, and of him who crowned it with his cupola, Brunelleschi. Here sat the poet, and the passers-by saluted him with "Good night, dearest Dante."

The house in which Dante was born and lived was in the little street of San Martino, in the heart of the old burgher city, amidst a busy, crowded population, opening into three petty obscure squares, one of which is cut in two by the little church of San Martino. Here, or in the larger church of which it was once the chapel, Dante was married to Gemma dei Donati, a family whose houses adjoined his. In a street close by lived the Portinari, parents of his first love, Beatrice. In front of the church stood the tall tower of the Badia, or Abbey, in which, till a little before Dante's birth, the Podestà, or Governor of Florence, had his dwelling. The Badia stood near the old walls which formed the earliest circuit of Florence, and from its church were heard the chimes fondly recalled by Dante in "*Paradiso*," c. xv., l. 98. In 1261 the Podestà and priors removed their dwelling

* Amari's "*Guerra del Vespro Siciliano*," vol. I, chap. v.

to the Bargello, a massive building opposite the Badia. This pile, still called the Palace of the Podestà, rises, with its lofty tower, a conspicuous object, as in the days when it sternly met Dante's eyes close to his father's home. Of that home there remains now only a quaint old door and archway, on which an inscription tells us that there Dante was born.

NOTE E.—ON THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF BEATRICE IN
CANTO XXX. OF THE "PURGATORIO."

We have already expressed our opinion as to the reality of Dante's love for Beatrice Portinari, as well as of the development in the poem of the earthly individuality into a spiritual abstraction in keeping with the tenor of the whole. An objection may naturally be made to the first belief from the shadowy nature of the relations as pictured by Dante, the rare occasions of meeting, the slight acquaintance, the vague blank in which all particulars about her are left, so that we know not whether she loved him in return, nor have we even her marriage alluded to by him; in short, amidst all his profusion of adoring words, and seemingly minute detail,* we gather little of external fact, save that he saw her and loved, and that she died still young. A consideration of the manner of life of those days, and of the form which, by prescribed fashion, professed love took, mitigates this sense of unreality.

A man could not in those days court a girl in the open fashion and with the intimacy of these. Love must have contented itself with few occasional sights, shy looks, rare and slight favours. Nor could he hope merely because he loved her to gain her in marriage, in social spheres where a girl's hand was bestowed by the parents at their own will and from worldly considerations alone. The result of all this would be that courtship and marriage would but seldom be associated, and married women, who appeared more publicly and could be addressed more freely, would attract more homage, especially of the poetical kind. But according to the rules of chivalry and the usages established by Provençal songs and courts of love, the passion

* I refer here especially to the "Vita Nuova," the history of his love.

must be what is called platonic; at any rate, it must comport itself as such, whatever the secret feelings might be. In this way it was easy, without compromising the lady, to assume the part of her worshipper, and laud her in verse with all possible fervency, while the lady was always to be coy and reserved, whatever might be her secret inclinations. Thus in the midst of the general grossness of morals, a kind of sacred sphere was created and fenced in with every safeguard of feeling, custom, and popular opinion—a sphere where the better and higher parts of our nature should regulate the universal passion, where love should be accompanied by purity and reverence and the generous service that asks for no return.

To a love thus rigidly restricted the fact of marriage or singleness in the lady would not necessarily be an important point, and the very scanty opportunities allowed would naturally leave the poet little to say in the way of personal details about his mistress. If it be said that a sentiment so unpractical and indefinite in its object must also be unreal, we may grant that doubtless in many cases it *was* fictitious and merely a following of the fashion, while in others a real and strong passion sometimes overleaped the barriers. But, allowing for the part that imagination always plays in these matters, fostered, too, as it is by outer restraint, we must remember that even the most genuine passion is necessarily coloured by the influences of time, race, climate, creed, social customs, and the conventional laws of life. The Southern nature and the poetical temperament could take fire under conditions which would chill the easier-going children of the North of modern days and business-like tendencies. And it is impossible to read the pages which Dante has given to his love without feeling that a true love for a real object is throbbing through them all.

As for the second point, the light in which Beatrice is portrayed, we must consider here the object of the poem and the progress of its narrative. We have already explained how, in order to harmonise with the growing transcendental character of the vision, all the strictly personal is made to expand to something larger, loftier, and more unconditioned, and it cannot be denied that Beatrice shares the general tendency to become an abstraction. Till her first appearance in this canto, Dante's remembrances and regrets are those of an earthly love for a

mortal beloved, but *there* her allegorical meaning comes uppermost : the triumphal car, the griffin, the winged animals and the apostles surrounding it, with the seven golden candlesticks, would all be grotesquely incongruous with the simple young Italian girl, but suit very well with the typical Theology. The severe reproof, too, which she bestows on him, while quite in keeping with the idea of heavenly wisdom censuring a backslider from her paths, would savour too much of feminine jealousy, of the *spretæ injuria formæ*, if we suppose it uttered by Beatrice because of his fancies for other women after her death.

Yet even so, what exquisite threads of human tenderness are interwoven here and there, showing that the real daughter of Portinari was not quite forgotten. The instinctive feeling that it was she even before he could see her face, which makes him "tremble in every drop of his blood ;" the shame at her reproof, under which he looks down into the stream, and there, seeing his own guilty face, turns his eyes away again ; and finally, when she fully unveiled her beauty to him, his eyes fixed on her, eager to "*disbramarsi la decenne sete.*" And we may note in the discourse of Beatrice one of those subtly natural touches by which Dante makes the strangest situation real. She regards her past with respect to him, not as *he* always did in speaking of her death, as wholly dividing him and her. She speaks as having only "changed her life and entered on a second stage," still observing and interesting herself in him, and expecting from him the same regard as if she were still on earth.

But when they have entered Heaven—inexhaustibly beautiful as the references to her always are—Beatrice becomes too palpably nothing but Theology, resembling in smile, bearing, and speech, and in general illumination of aspect, only the angels, the learned doctors, and the allegorical virtues amongst whom she moves. We have tried to show how a due reverence and a perfect sense of art seemed to require this of the poet.

But except this first presentment of Beatrice and the immortal episode of Francesca da Rimini, hardly the slightest mention of love is to be found in this austere and high-pitched song. The passion no doubt lay amongst the profoundest things of the poet's nature, but it did not flower on the surface. In the whole even of the milder sphere of Purgatory, it is not once

named (unless we except the glancing allusion to Gentucca) ; and in the "Paradiso," when we are brought to the planet Venus, dwelt in by those over whom love had on earth too strong a sway, there is nothing appropriate either in the figures or their deportment. Charles Martel says not a word on his earthly tendencies, but dwells on the dispossession of his heirs ; even Cunizza, who says she is there "because on earth this star's soft light o'ercame her," and Folchetto, give but a few indifferent words to the cause of their location, and launch out, Cunizza on the treachery and bloodshed in Venetia, Folchetto on the degeneracy of Florence and the Papacy.

Yet we recognise, I think, in the episode of Matilda (see "Purgatorio," c. xxix.) a something recalling the lighter human fee'ings, which, however it might startle us in the heavenly regions, seems not so out of place in the half natural conditions of the earthly paradise. There is a pretty tenderness in his description of her, and a playful gallantry in his supposed address which incline one to think that Matilda, who cannot be identified with any known character, is the name of some lady whom he knew and had had pleasant relations with ; so that, putting aside the allegorical interpretation, the introduction of her in this garden is a piece of graceful flattery. I am disposed to take the same view of the allusion to "Gentucca ;" there seems nothing to justify the idea of a serious love affair, which, for the rest, he would hardly bring into a song dedicated to her whom he calls

"Quella che imparadisa la mia mente."

THE END.

