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CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

Divine Comedy — Paradiso

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Dante Alighieri

Translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1867)

Credits

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About:

The third and last part of Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, finished shortly before the poet's death in 1321.

Guided by Beatrice, Dante rises from the Earthly Paradise through the nine heavenly spheres, from the Moon to the Primum Mobile, and meets the souls of saints, theologians, warriors of the faith and just rulers, who explain to him the order of the universe, grace and divine justice.

It has 33 cantos in terza rima. In the Empyrean, beyond time and space, Saint Bernard asks the Virgin Mary to grant Dante the vision of God, and the poem ends in "the Love that moves the sun and the other stars". It is one of the greatest works of Christian theological poetry.

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Manuscripts and images



The souls in the heaven of the Moon (Canto III).

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Beatrice and Dante rise to the heaven of Mars (Canto XIV).

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"Glory to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit" (Canto XXVII).

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The celestial rose of the blessed (Canto XXXI).

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CANTO I

✦

1-3 The glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine
In one part more and in another less.

4-6 Within that heaven which most his light receives
Was I, and things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;

7-9 Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.

10-12 Truly whatever of the holy realm
I had the power to treasure in my mind
Shall now become the subject of my song.

13-15 O good Apollo, for this last emprise
Make of me such a vessel of thy power
As giving the beloved laurel asks!

16-18 One summit of Parnassus hitherto
Has been enough for me, but now with both
I needs must enter the arena left.

19-21 Enter into my bosom, thou, and breathe
As at the time when Marsyas thou didst draw
Out of the scabbard of those limbs of his.

22-24 O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me
So that the shadow of the blessed realm
Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,

25-27 Thou'lt see me come unto thy darling tree,
And crown myself thereafter with those leaves
Of which the theme and thou shall make me worthy.

28-30 So seldom, Father, do we gather them
For triumph or of Caesar or of Poet,
(The fault and shame of human inclinations,)

31-33 That the Peneian foliage should bring forth
Joy to the joyous Delphic deity,
When any one it makes to thirst for it.

34-36 A little spark is followed by great flame;
Perchance with better voices after me
Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond!

37-39 To mortal men by passages diverse
Uprises the world's lamp; but by that one
Which circles four uniteth with three crosses,

40-42 With better course and with a better star
Conjoined it issues, and the mundane wax
Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.

43-45 Almost that passage had made morning there
And evening here, and there was wholly white
That hemisphere, and black the other part,

46-48 When Beatrice towards the left-hand side
I saw turned round, and gazing at the sun;
Never did eagle fasten so upon it!

49-51 And even as a second ray is wont
To issue from the first and reascend,
Like to a pilgrim who would fain return,

52-54 Thus of her action, through the eyes infused
In my imagination, mine I made,
And sunward fixed mine eyes beyond our wont.

55-57 There much is lawful which is here unlawful
Unto our powers, by virtue of the place
Made for the human species as its own.

58-60 Not long I bore it, nor so little while
But I beheld it sparkle round about
Like iron that comes molten from the fire;

61-63 And suddenly it seemed that day to day
Was added, as if He who has the power
Had with another sun the heaven adorned.

64-66 With eyes upon the everlasting wheels
Stood Beatrice all intent, and I, on her
Fixing my vision from above removed,

67-69 Such at her aspect inwardly became
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb that made him
Peer of the other gods beneath the sea.

70-72 To represent transhumanise in words
Impossible were; the example, then, suffice
Him for whom Grace the experience reserves.

73-75 If I was merely what of me thou newly
Createdst, Love who governest the heaven,
Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!

76-78 When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal
Desiring thee, made me attentive to it
By harmony thou dost modulate and measure,

79-81 Then seemed to me so much of heaven enkindled
By the sun's flame, that neither rain nor river
E'er made a lake so widely spread abroad.

82-84 The newness of the sound and the great light
Kindled in me a longing for their cause,
Never before with such acuteness felt;

85-87 Whence she, who saw me as I saw myself,
To quiet in me my perturbed mind,
Opened her mouth, ere I did mine to ask,

88-90 And she began: "Thou makest thyself so dull
With false imagining, that thou seest not
What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it off.

91-93 Thou art not upon earth, as thou believest;
But lightning, fleeing its appropriate site,
Ne'er ran as thou, who thitherward returnest."

94-96 If of my former doubt I was divested
By these brief little words more smiled than spoken,
I in a new one was the more ensnared;

97-99 And said: “Already did I rest content
From great amazement; but am now amazed
In what way I transcend these bodies light.”

100-102 Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh,
Her eyes directed tow’rds me with that look
A mother casts on a delirious child;

103-105 And she began: “All things whate’er they be
Have order among themselves, and this is form,
That makes the universe resemble God.

106-108 Here do the higher creatures see the footprints
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end
Whereto is made the law already mentioned.

109-111 In the order that I speak of are inclined
All natures, by their destinies diverse,
More or less near unto their origin;

112-114 Hence they move onward unto ports diverse
O’er the great sea of being; and each one
With instinct given it which bears it on.

115-117 This bears away the fire towards the moon;
This is in mortal hearts the motive power
This binds together and unites the earth.

118-120 Nor only the created things that are
Without intelligence this bow shoots forth,
But those that have both intellect and love.

121-123 The Providence that regulates all this
Makes with its light the heaven forever quiet,
Wherein that turns which has the greatest haste.

124-126 And thither now, as to a site decreed,
Bears us away the virtue of that cord
Which aims its arrows at a joyous mark.

127-129 True is it, that as oftentimes the form
Accords not with the intention of the art,
Because in answering is matter deaf,

130-132 So likewise from this course doth deviate
Sometimes the creature, who the power possesses,
Though thus impelled, to swerve some other way,

133-135 (In the same wise as one may see the fire
Fall from a cloud,) if the first impetus
Earthward is wrested by some false delight.

136-138 Thou shouldst not wonder more, if well I judge,
At thine ascent, than at a rivulet
From some high mount descending to the lowland.

139-141 Marvel it would be in thee, if deprived
Of hindrance, thou wert seated down below,
As if on earth the living fire were quiet.”

142 Thereat she heavenward turned again her face.

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CANTO II

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1-3 O Ye, who in some pretty little boat,
Eager to listen, have been following
Behind my ship, that singing sails along,

4-6 Turn back to look again upon your shores;
Do not put out to sea, lest peradventure,
In losing me, you might yourselves be lost.

7-9 The sea I sail has never yet been passed;
Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo,
And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.

10-12 Ye other few who have the neck uplifted
Betimes to th' bread of Angels upon which
One liveth here and grows not sated by it,

13-15 Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea
Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you
Upon the water that grows smooth again.

16-18 Those glorious ones who unto Colchos passed
Were not so wonder-struck as you shall be,
When Jason they beheld a ploughman made!

19-21 The con-created and perpetual thirst
For the realm deiform did bear us on,
As swift almost as ye the heavens behold.

22-24 Upward gazed Beatrice, and I at her;
And in such space perchance as strikes a bolt
And flies, and from the notch unlocks itself,

25-27 Arrived I saw me where a wondrous thing
Drew to itself my sight; and therefore she
From whom no care of mine could be concealed,

28-30 Towards me turning, blithe as beautiful,
Said unto me: "Fix gratefully thy mind
On God, who unto the first star has brought us."

31-33 It seemed to me a cloud encompassed us,
Luminous, dense, consolidate and bright
As adamant on which the sun is striking.

34-36 Into itself did the eternal pearl
Receive us, even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken.

37-39 If I was body, (and we here conceive not
How one dimension tolerates another,
Which needs must be if body enter body,)

40-42 More the desire should be enkindled in us
That essence to behold, wherein is seen
How God and our own nature were united.

43-45 There will be seen what we receive by faith,
Not demonstrated, but self-evident
In guise of the first truth that man believes.

46-48 I made reply: “Madonna, as devoutly
As most I can do I give thanks to Him
Who has removed me from the mortal world.

49-51 But tell me what the dusky spots may be
Upon this body, which below on earth
Make people tell that fabulous tale of Cain?”

52-54 Somewhat she smiled; and then, “If the opinion
Of mortals be erroneous,” she said,
“Where’er the key of sense doth not unlock,

55-57 Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee
Now, forasmuch as, following the senses,
Thou seest that the reason has short wings.

58-60 But tell me what thou think’st of it thyself.”
And I: “What seems to us up here diverse,
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense.”

61-63 And she: “Right truly shalt thou see immersed
In error thy belief, if well thou hearest
The argument that I shall make against it.

64-66 Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you
Which in their quality and quantity
May noted be of aspects different.

67-69 If this were caused by rare and dense alone,
One only virtue would there be in all
Or more or less diffused, or equally.

70-72 Virtues diverse must be perforce the fruits
Of formal principles; and these, save one,
Of course would by thy reasoning be destroyed.

73-75 Besides, if rarity were of this dimness
The cause thou askest, either through and through
This planet thus attenuate were of matter,

76-78 Or else, as in a body is apportioned
The fat and lean, so in like manner this
Would in its volume interchange the leaves.

79-81 Were it the former, in the sun's eclipse
It would be manifest by the shining through
Of light, as through aught tenuous interfused.

82-84 This is not so; hence we must scan the other,
And if it chance the other I demolish,
Then falsified will thy opinion be.

85-87 But if this rarity go not through and through,
There needs must be a limit, beyond which
Its contrary prevents the further passing,

88-90 And thence the foreign radiance is reflected,
Even as a colour cometh back from glass,
The which behind itself concealeth lead.

91-93 Now thou wilt say the sunbeam shows itself
More dimly there than in the other parts,
By being there reflected farther back.

94-96 From this reply experiment will free thee
If e'er thou try it, which is wont to be
The fountain to the rivers of your arts.

97-99 Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove
Alike from thee, the other more remote
Between the former two shall meet thine eyes.

100-102 Turned towards these, cause that behind thy back
Be placed a light, illuming the three mirrors
And coming back to thee by all reflected.

103-105 Though in its quantity be not so ample
The image most remote, there shalt thou see
How it perforce is equally resplendent.

106-108 Now, as beneath the touches of warm rays
Naked the subject of the snow remains
Both of its former colour and its cold,

109-111 Thee thus remaining in thy intellect,
Will I inform with such a living light,
That it shall tremble in its aspect to thee.

112-114 Within the heaven of the divine repose
Revolves a body, in whose virtue lies
The being of whatever it contains.

115-117 The following heaven, that has so many eyes,
Divides this being by essences diverse,
Distinguished from it, and by it contained.

118-120 The other spheres, by various differences,
All the distinctions which they have within them
Dispose unto their ends and their effects.

121-123 Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
As thou perceivest now, from grade to grade;
Since from above they take, and act beneath.

124-126 Observe me well, how through this place I come
Unto the truth thou wishest, that hereafter
Thou mayst alone know how to keep the ford

127-129 The power and motion of the holy spheres,
As from the artisan the hammer's craft,
Forth from the blessed motors must proceed.

130-132 The heaven, which lights so manifold make fair,
From the Intelligence profound, which turns it,
The image takes, and makes of it a seal.

133-135 And even as the soul within your dust
Through members different and accommodated
To faculties diverse expands itself,

136-138 So likewise this Intelligence diffuses
Its virtue multiplied among the stars.
Itself revolving on its unity.

139-141 Virtue diverse doth a diverse alloyage
Make with the precious body that it quickens,
In which, as life in you, it is combined.

142-144 From the glad nature whence it is derived,
The mingled virtue through the body shines,
Even as gladness through the living pupil.

145-147 From this proceeds whate'er from light to light
Appeareth different, not from dense and rare:
This is the formal principle that produces,

148 According to its goodness, dark and bright."

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CANTO III



1-3 That Sun, which erst with love my bosom warmed,
Of beauteous truth had unto me discovered,
By proving and reproving, the sweet aspect.

4-6 And, that I might confess myself convinced
And confident, so far as was befitting,
I lifted more erect my head to speak.

7-9 But there appeared a vision, which withdrew me
So close to it, in order to be seen,
That my confession I remembered not.

10-12 Such as through polished and transparent glass,
Or waters crystalline and undisturbed,
But not so deep as that their bed be lost,

13-15 Come back again the outlines of our faces
So feeble, that a pearl on forehead white
Comes not less speedily unto our eyes;

16-18 Such saw I many faces prompt to speak,
So that I ran in error opposite
To that which kindled love ’twixt man and fountain.

19-21 As soon as I became aware of them,
Esteeming them as mirrored semblances,
To see of whom they were, mine eyes I turned,

22-24 And nothing saw, and once more turned them forward
Direct into the light of my sweet Guide,
Who smiling kindled in her holy eyes.

25-27 “Marvel thou not,” she said to me, “because
I smile at this thy puerile conceit,
Since on the truth it trusts not yet its foot,

28-30 But turns thee, as ’tis wont, on emptiness.
True substances are these which thou beholdest,
Here relegate for breaking of some vow.

31-33 Therefore speak with them, listen and believe;
For the true light, which giveth peace to them,
Permits them not to turn from it their feet.”

34-36 And I unto the shade that seemed most wishful
To speak directed me, and I began,
As one whom too great eagerness bewilders:

37-39 “O well-created spirit, who in the rays
Of life eternal dost the sweetness taste
Which being untasted ne’er is comprehended,

40-42 Grateful ’twill be to me, if thou content me
Both with thy name and with your destiny.”
Whereat she promptly and with laughing eyes:

43-45 “Our charity doth never shut the doors
Against a just desire, except as one
Who wills that all her court be like herself.

46-48 I was a virgin sister in the world;
And if thy mind doth contemplate me well,
The being more fair will not conceal me from thee,

49-51 But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda,
Who, stationed here among these other blessed,
Myself am blessed in the slowest sphere.

52-54 All our affections, that alone inflamed
Are in the pleasure of the Holy Ghost,
Rejoice at being of his order formed;

55-57 And this allotment, which appears so low,
Therefore is given us, because our vows
Have been neglected and in some part void.”

58-60 Whence I to her: “In your miraculous aspects
There shines I know not what of the divine,
Which doth transform you from our first conceptions.

61-63 Therefore I was not swift in my remembrance;
But what thou tellest me now aids me so,
That the refiguring is easier to me.

64-66 But tell me, ye who in this place are happy,
Are you desirous of a higher place,
To see more or to make yourselves more friends?"

67-69 First with those other shades she smiled a little;
Thereafter answered me so full of gladness,
She seemed to burn in the first fire of love:

70-72 "Brother, our will is quieted by virtue
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.

73-75 If to be more exalted we aspired,
Discordant would our aspirations be
Unto the will of Him who here secludes us;

76-78 Which thou shalt see finds no place in these circles,
If being in charity is needful here,
And if thou lookest well into its nature;

79-81 Nay, 'tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will divine,
Whereby our very wishes are made one;

82-84 So that, as we are station above station
Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing,
As to the King, who makes his will our will.

85-87 And his will is our peace; this is the sea
To which is moving onward whatsoever
It doth create, and all that nature makes."

88-90 Then it was clear to me how everywhere
In heaven is Paradise, although the grace
Of good supreme there rain not in one measure.

91-93 But as it comes to pass, if one food sates,
And for another still remains the longing,
We ask for this, and that decline with thanks,

94-96 E'en thus did I; with gesture and with word,
To learn from her what was the web wherein
She did not ply the shuttle to the end.

97-99 "A perfect life and merit high in-heaven
A lady o'er us," said she, "by whose rule
Down in your world they vest and veil themselves,

100-102 That until death they may both watch and sleep
Beside that Spouse who every vow accepts
Which charity conformeth to his pleasure.

103-105 To follow her, in girlhood from the world
I fled, and in her habit shut myself,
And pledged me to the pathway of her sect.

106-108 Then men accustomed unto evil more
Than unto good, from the sweet cloister tore me;
God knows what afterward my life became.

109-111 This other splendour, which to thee reveals
Itself on my right side, and is enkindled
With all the illumination of our sphere,

112-114 What of myself I say applies to her;
A nun was she, and likewise from her head
Was ta'en the shadow of the sacred wimple.

115-117 But when she too was to the world returned
Against her wishes and against good usage,
Of the heart's veil she never was divested.

118-120 Of great Costanza this is the effulgence,
Who from the second wind of Suabia
Brought forth the third and latest puissance."

121-123 Thus unto me she spake, and then began
"Ave Maria" singing, and in singing
Vanished, as through deep water something heavy.

124-126 My sight, that followed her as long a time
As it was possible, when it had lost her
Turned round unto the mark of more desire,

127-129 And wholly unto Beatrice reverted;
But she such lightnings flashed into mine eyes,
That at the first my sight endured it not;

130 And this in questioning more backward made me.

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CANTO IV

✦

1-3 Between two viands, equally removed
And tempting, a free man would die of hunger
Ere either he could bring unto his teeth.

4-6 So would a lamb between the ravenings
Of two fierce wolves stand fearing both alike;
And so would stand a dog between two does.

7-9 Hence, if I held my peace, myself I blame not,
Impelled in equal measure by my doubts,
Since it must be so, nor do I commend.

10-12 I held my peace; but my desire was painted
Upon my face, and questioning with that
More fervent far than by articulate speech.

13-15 Beatrice did as Daniel had done
Relieving Nebuchadnezzar from the wrath
Which rendered him unjustly merciless,

16-18 And said: "Well see I how attracteth thee
One and the other wish, so that thy care
Binds itself so that forth it does not breathe.

19-21 Thou arguest, if good will be permanent,
The violence of others, for what reason
Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?

22-24 Again for doubting furnish thee occasion
Souls seeming to return unto the stars,
According to the sentiment of Plato.

25-27 These are the questions which upon thy wish
Are thrusting equally; and therefore first
Will I treat that which hath the most of gall.

28-30 He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God,
Moses, and Samuel, and whichever John
Thou mayst select, I say, and even Mary,

31-33 Have not in any other heaven their seats,
Than have those spirits that just appeared to thee,
Nor of existence more or fewer years;

34-36 But all make beautiful the primal circle,
And have sweet life in different degrees,
By feeling more or less the eternal breath.

37-39 They showed themselves here, not because allotted
This sphere has been to them, but to give sign
Of the celestial which is least exalted.

40-42 To speak thus is adapted to your mind,
Since only through the sense it apprehendeth
What then it worthy makes of intellect.

43-45 On this account the Scripture condescends
Unto your faculties, and feet and hands
To God attributes, and means something else;

46-48 And Holy Church under an aspect human
Gabriel and Michael represent to you,
And him who made Tobias whole again.

49-51 That which Timaeus argues of the soul
Doth not resemble that which here is seen,
Because it seems that as he speaks he thinks.

52-54 He says the soul unto its star returns,
Believing it to have been severed thence
Whenever nature gave it as a form.

55-57 Perhaps his doctrine is of other guise
Than the words sound, and possibly may be
With meaning that is not to be derided.

58-60 If he doth mean that to these wheels return
The honour of their influence and the blame,
Perhaps his bow doth hit upon some truth.

61-63 This principle ill understood once warped
The whole world nearly, till it went astray
Invoking Jove and Mercury and Mars.

64-66 The other doubt which doth disquiet thee
Less venom has, for its malevolence
Could never lead thee otherwhere from me.

67-69 That as unjust our justice should appear
In eyes of mortals, is an argument
Of faith, and not of sin heretical.

70-72 But still, that your perception may be able
To thoroughly penetrate this verity,
As thou desirest, I will satisfy thee.

73-75 If it be violence when he who suffers
Co-operates not with him who uses force,
These souls were not on that account excused;

76-78 For will is never quenched unless it will,
But operates as nature doth in fire
If violence a thousand times distort it.

79-81 Hence, if it yieldeth more or less, it seconds
The force; and these have done so, having power
Of turning back unto the holy place.

82-84 If their will had been perfect, like to that
Which Lawrence fast upon his gridiron held,
And Mutius made severe to his own hand,

85-87 It would have urged them back along the road
Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were free;
But such a solid will is all too rare.

88-90 And by these words, if thou hast gathered them
As thou shouldst do, the argument is refuted
That would have still annoyed thee many times.

91-93 But now another passage runs across
Before thine eyes, and such that by thyself
Thou couldst not thread it ere thou wouldst be weary.

94-96 I have for certain put into thy mind
That soul beatified could never lie,
For it is near the primal Truth,

97-99 And then thou from Piccarda might'st have heard
Costanza kept affection for the veil,
So that she seemeth here to contradict me.

100-102 Many times, brother, has it come to pass,
That, to escape from peril, with reluctance
That has been done it was not right to do,

103-105 E'en as Alcmaeon (who, being by his father
Thereto entreated, his own mother slew)
Not to lose pity pitiless became.

106-108 At this point I desire thee to remember
That force with will commingles, and they cause
That the offences cannot be excused.

109-111 Will absolute consenteth not to evil;
But in so far consenteth as it fears,
If it refrain, to fall into more harm.

112-114 Hence when Piccarda uses this expression,
She meaneth the will absolute, and I
The other, so that both of us speak truth."

115-117 Such was the flowing of the holy river
That issued from the fount whence springs all truth;
This put to rest my wishes one and all.

118-120 “O love of the first lover, O divine,”
Said I forthwith, “whose speech inundates me
And warms me so, it more and more revives me,

121-123 My own affection is not so profound
As to suffice in rendering grace for grace;
Let Him, who sees and can, thereto respond.

124-126 Well I perceive that never sated is
Our intellect unless the Truth illume it,
Beyond which nothing true expands itself.

127-129 It rests therein, as wild beast in his lair,
When it attains it; and it can attain it;
If not, then each desire would frustrate be.

130-132 Therefore springs up, in fashion of a shoot,
Doubt at the foot of truth; and this is nature,
Which to the top from height to height impels us.

133-135 This doth invite me, this assurance give me
With reverence, Lady, to inquire of you
Another truth, which is obscure to me.

136-138 I wish to know if man can satisfy you
For broken vows with other good deeds, so
That in your balance they will not be light.”

139-141 Beatrice gazed upon me with her eyes
Full of the sparks of love, and so divine,
That, overcome my power, I turned my back

142 And almost lost myself with eyes downcast.

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CANTO V



1-3 “If in the heat of love I flame upon thee
Beyond the measure that on earth is seen,
So that the valour of thine eyes I vanquish,

4-6 Marvel thou not thereat; for this proceeds
From perfect sight, which as it apprehends
To the good apprehended moves its feet.

7-9 Well I perceive how is already shining
Into thine intellect the eternal light,
That only seen enkindles always love;

10-12 And if some other thing your love seduce,
’Tis nothing but a vestige of the same,
Ill understood, which there is shining through.

13-15 Thou fain wouldst know if with another service
For broken vow can such return be made
As to secure the soul from further claim."

16-18 This Canto thus did Beatrice begin;
And, as a man who breaks not off his speech,
Continued thus her holy argument:

19-21 "The greatest gift that in his largess God
Creating made, and unto his own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize

22-24 Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence
Both all and only were and are endowed.

25-27 Now wilt thou see, if thence thou reasonest,
The high worth of a vow, if it he made
So that when thou consentest God consents:

28-30 For, closing between God and man the compact,
A sacrifice is of this treasure made,
Such as I say, and made by its own act.

31-33 What can be rendered then as compensation?
Think'st thou to make good use of what thou'st offered,
With gains ill gotten thou wouldst do good deed.

34-36 Now art thou certain of the greater point;
But because Holy Church in this dispenses,
Which seems against the truth which I have shown thee,

37-39 Behoves thee still to sit awhile at table,
Because the solid food which thou hast taken
Requireth further aid for thy digestion.

40-42 Open thy mind to that which I reveal,
And fix it there within; for 'tis not knowledge,
The having heard without retaining it.

43-45 In the essence of this sacrifice two things
Convene together; and the one is that
Of which 'tis made, the other is the agreement.

46-48 This last for evermore is cancelled not
Unless complied with, and concerning this
With such precision has above been spoken.

49-51 Therefore it was enjoined upon the Hebrews
To offer still, though sometimes what was offered
Might be commuted, as thou ought'st to know.

52-54 The other, which is known to thee as matter,
May well indeed be such that one errs not
If it for other matter be exchanged.

55-57 But let none shift the burden on his shoulder
At his arbitrament, without the turning
Both of the white and of the yellow key;

58-60 And every permutation deem as foolish,
If in the substitute the thing relinquished,
As the four is in six, be not contained.

61-63 Therefore whatever thing has so great weight
In value that it drags down every balance,
Cannot be satisfied with other spending.

64-66 Let mortals never take a vow in jest;
Be faithful and not blind in doing that,
As Jephthah was in his first offering,

67-69 Whom more beseemed to say, 'I have done wrong,
Than to do worse by keeping; and as foolish
Thou the great leader of the Greeks wilt find,

70-72 Whence wept Iphigenia her fair face,
And made for her both wise and simple weep,
Who heard such kind of worship spoken of.'

73-75 Christians, be ye more serious in your movements;
Be ye not like a feather at each wind,
And think not every water washes you.

76-78 Ye have the Old and the New Testament,
And the Pastor of the Church who guideth you
Let this suffice you unto your salvation.

79-81 If evil appetite cry aught else to you,
Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep,
So that the Jew among you may not mock you.

82-84 Be ye not as the lamb that doth abandon
Its mother's milk, and frolicsome and simple
Combats at its own pleasure with itself."

85-87 Thus Beatrice to me even as I write it;
Then all desireful turned herself again
To that part where the world is most alive.

88-90 Her silence and her change of countenance
Silence imposed upon my eager mind,
That had already in advance new questions;

91-93 And as an arrow that upon the mark
Strikes ere the bowstring quiet hath become,
So did we speed into the second realm.

94-96 My Lady there so joyful I beheld,
As into the brightness of that heaven she entered,
More luminous thereat the planet grew;

97-99 And if the star itself was changed and smiled,
What became I, who by my nature am
Exceeding mutable in every guise!

100-102 As, in a fish-pond which is pure and tranquil,
The fishes draw to that which from without
Comes in such fashion that their food they deem it;

103-105 So I beheld more than a thousand splendours
Drawing towards us, and in each was heard:
“Lo, this is she who shall increase our love.”

106-108 And as each one was coming unto us,
Full of beatitude the shade was seen,
By the effulgence clear that issued from it.

109-111 Think, Reader, if what here is just beginning
No farther should proceed, how thou wouldst have
An agonizing need of knowing more;

112-114 And of thyself thou'lt see how I from these
Was in desire of hearing their conditions,
As they unto mine eyes were manifest.

115-117 "O thou well-born, unto whom Grace concedes
To see the thrones of the eternal triumph,
Or ever yet the warfare be abandoned

118-120 With light that through the whole of heaven is spread
Kindled are we, and hence if thou desirest
To know of us, at thine own pleasure sate thee."

121-123 Thus by some one among those holy spirits
Was spoken, and by Beatrice: "Speak, speak
Securely, and believe them even as Gods."

124-126 "Well I perceive how thou dost nest thyself
In thine own light, and drawest it from thine eyes,
Because they coruscate when thou dost smile,

127-129 But know not who thou art, nor why thou hast,
Spirit august, thy station in the sphere
That veils itself to men in alien rays."

130-132 This said I in direction of the light
Which first had spoken to me; whence it became
By far more lucent than it was before.

133-135 Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself
By too much light, when heat has worn away
The tempering influence of the vapours dense,

136-138 By greater rapture thus concealed itself
In its own radiance the figure saintly,
And thus close, close enfolded answered me

139 In fashion as the following Canto sings.

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CANTO VI

✦

1-3 "After that Constantine the eagle turned
Against the course of heaven, which it had followed
Behind the ancient who Lavinia took,

4-6 Two hundred years and more the bird of God
In the extreme of Europe held itself,
Near to the mountains whence it issued first;

7-9 And under shadow of the sacred plumes
It governed there the world from hand to hand,
And, changing thus, upon mine own alighted.

10-12 Caesar I was, and am Justinian,
Who, by the will of primal Love I feel,
Took from the laws the useless and redundant;

13-15 And ere unto the work I was attent,
One nature to exist in Christ, not more,
Believed, and with such faith was I contented.

16-18 But blessed Agapetus, he who was
The supreme pastor, to the faith sincere
Pointed me out the way by words of his.

19-21 Him I believed, and what was his assertion
I now see clearly, even as thou seest
Each contradiction to be false and true.

22-24 As soon as with the Church I moved my feet,
God in his grace it pleased with this high task
To inspire me, and I gave me wholly to it,

25-27 And to my Belisarius I commended
The arms, to which was heaven's right hand so joined
It was a signal that I should repose.

28-30 Now here to the first question terminates
My answer; but the character thereof
Constrains me to continue with a sequel,

31-33 In order that thou see with how great reason
Men move against the standard sacrosanct,
Both who appropriate and who oppose it.

34-36 Behold how great a power has made it worthy
Of reverence, beginning from the hour
When Pallas died to give it sovereignty.

37-39 Thou knowest it made in Alba its abode
Three hundred years and upward, till at last
The three to three fought for it yet again.

40-42 Thou knowest what it achieved from Sabine wrong
Down to Lucretia's sorrow, in seven kings
O'ercoming round about the neighboring nations;

43-45 Thou knowest what it achieved, borne by the Romans
Illustrious against Brennus, against Pyrrhus,
Against the other princes and confederates.

46-48 Torquatus thence and Quinctius, who from locks
Unkempt was named, Decii and Fabii,
Received the fame I willingly embalm;

49-51 It struck to earth the pride of the Arabians,
Who, following Hannibal, had passed across
The Alpine ridges, Po, from which thou glidest;

52-54 Beneath it triumphed while they yet were young
Pompey and Scipio, and to the hill
Beneath which thou wast born it bitter seemed;

55-57 Then, near unto the time when heaven had willed
To bring the whole world to its mood serene,
Did Caesar by the will of Rome assume it.

58-60 What it achieved from Var unto the Rhine,
Isere beheld and Saone, beheld the Seine,
And every valley whence the Rhone is filled;

61-63 What it achieved when it had left Ravenna,
And leaped the Rubicon, was such a flight
That neither tongue nor pen could follow it.

64-66 Round towards Spain it wheeled its legions; then
Towards Durazzo, and Pharsalia smote
That to the calid Nile was felt the pain.

67-69 Antandros and the Simois, whence it started,
It saw again, and there where Hector lies,
And ill for Ptolemy then roused itself.

70-72 From thence it came like lightning upon Juba;
Then wheeled itself again into your West,
Where the Pompeian clarion it heard.

73-75 From what it wrought with the next standard-bearer
Brutus and Cassius howl in Hell together,
And Modena and Perugia dolent were;

76-78 Still doth the mournful Cleopatra weep
Because thereof, who, fleeing from before it,
Took from the adder sudden and black death.

79-81 With him it ran even to the Red Sea shore;
With him it placed the world in so great peace,
That unto Janus was his temple closed.

82-84 But what the standard that has made me speak
Achieved before, and after should achieve
Throughout the mortal realm that lies beneath it,

85-87 Becometh in appearance mean and dim,
If in the hand of the third Caesar seen
With eye unclouded and affection pure,

88-90 Because the living Justice that inspires me
Granted it, in the hand of him I speak of,
The glory of doing vengeance for its wrath.

91-93 Now here attend to what I answer thee;
Later it ran with Titus to do vengeance
Upon the vengeance of the ancient sin.

94-96 And when the tooth of Lombardy had bitten
The Holy Church, then underneath its wings
Did Charlemagne victorious succor her.

97-99 Now hast thou power to judge of such as those
Whom I accused above, and of their crimes,
Which are the cause of all your miseries.

100-102 To the public standard one the yellow lilies
Opposes, the other claims it for a party,
So that 'tis hard to see which sins the most.

103-105 Let, let the Ghibellines ply their handicraft
Beneath some other standard; for this ever
Ill follows he who it and justice parts.

106-108 And let not this new Charles e'er strike it down,
He and his Guelfs, but let him fear the talons
That from a nobler lion stripped the fell.

109-111 Already oftentimes the sons have wept
The father's crime; and let him not believe
That God will change His scutcheon for the lilies.

112-114 This little planet doth adorn itself
With the good spirits that have active been,
That fame and honour might come after them;

115-117 And whensoever the desires mount thither,
Thus deviating, must perforce the rays
Of the true love less vividly mount upward.

118-120 But in commensuration of our wages
With our desert is portion of our joy,
Because we see them neither less nor greater.

121-123 Herein doth living Justice sweeten so
Affection in us, that for evermore
It cannot warp to any iniquity.

124-126 Voices diverse make up sweet melodies;
So in this life of ours the seats diverse
Render sweet harmony among these spheres;

127-129 And in the compass of this present pearl
Shineth the sheen of Romeo, of whom
The grand and beauteous work was ill rewarded.

130-132 But the Provencals who against him wrought,
They have not laughed, and therefore ill goes he
Who makes his hurt of the good deeds of others.

133-135 Four daughters, and each one of them a queen,
Had Raymond Berenger, and this for him
Did Romeo, a poor man and a pilgrim;

136-138 And then malicious words incited him
To summon to a reckoning this just man,
Who rendered to him seven and five for ten.

139-141 Then he departed poor and stricken in years,
And if the world could know the heart he had,
In begging bit by bit his livelihood,

142 Though much it laud him, it would laud him more.”

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CANTO VII

✦

1-3 “Osanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
Superillustrans claritate tua
Felices ignes horum malahoth!”

4-6 In this wise, to his melody returning,
This substance, upon which a double light
Doubles itself, was seen by me to sing,

7-9 And to their dance this and the others moved,
And in the manner of swift-hurrying sparks
Veiled themselves from me with a sudden distance.

10-12 Doubting was I, and saying, “Tell her, tell her,”
Within me, “tell her,” saying, “tell my Lady,”
Who slakes my thirst with her sweet effluences;

13-15 And yet that reverence which doth lord it over
The whole of me only by B and ICE,
Bowed me again like unto one who drowses.

16-18 Short while did Beatrice endure me thus;
And she began, lighting me with a smile
Such as would make one happy in the fire:

19-21 “According to infallible advisement,
After what manner a just vengeance justly
Could be avenged has put thee upon thinking,

22-24 But I will speedily thy mind unloose;
And do thou listen, for these words of mine
Of a great doctrine will a present make thee.

25-27 By not enduring on the power that wills
Curb for his good, that man who ne'er was born,
Damning himself damned all his progeny;

28-30 Whereby the human species down below
Lay sick for many centuries in great error,
Till to descend it pleased the Word of God

31-33 To where the nature, which from its own Maker
Estranged itself, he joined to him in person
By the sole act of his eternal love.

34-36 Now unto what is said direct thy sight;
This nature when united to its Maker,
Such as created, was sincere and good;

37-39 But by itself alone was banished forth
From Paradise, because it turned aside
Out of the way of truth and of its life.

40-42 Therefore the penalty the cross held out,
If measured by the nature thus assumed,
None ever yet with so great justice stung,

43-45 And none was ever of so great injustice,
Considering who the Person was that suffered,
Within whom such a nature was contracted.

46-48 From one act therefore issued things diverse;
To God and to the Jews one death was pleasing;
Earth trembled at it and the Heaven was opened.

49-51 It should no longer now seem difficult
To thee, when it is said that a just vengeance
By a just court was afterward avenged.

52-54 But now do I behold thy mind entangled
From thought to thought within a knot, from which
With great desire it waits to free itself.

55-57 Thou sayest, 'Well discern I what I hear;
But it is hidden from me why God willed
For our redemption only this one mode.'

58-60 Buried remaineth, brother, this decree
Unto the eyes of every one whose nature
Is in the flame of love not yet adult.

61-63 Verily, inasmuch as at this mark
One gazes long and little is discerned,
Wherefore this mode was worthiest will I say.

64-66 Goodness Divine, which from itself doth spurn
All envy, burning in itself so sparkles
That the eternal beauties it unfolds.

67-69 Whate'er from this immediately distils
Has afterwards no end, for ne'er removed
Is its impression when it sets its seal.

70-72 Whate'er from this immediately rains down
Is wholly free, because it is not subject
Unto the influences of novel things.

73-75 The more conformed thereto, the more it pleases;
For the blest ardour that irradiates all things
In that most like itself is most vivacious.

76-78 With all of these things has advantaged been
The human creature; and if one be wanting,
From his nobility he needs must fall.

79-81 'Tis sin alone which doth disfranchise him,
And render him unlike the Good Supreme,
So that he little with its light is blanched,

82-84 And to his dignity no more returns,
Unless he fill up where transgression empties
With righteous pains for criminal delights.

85-87 Your nature when it sinned so utterly
In its own seed, out of these dignities
Even as out of Paradise was driven,

88-90 Nor could itself recover, if thou notest
With nicest subtilty, by any way,
Except by passing one of these two fords:

91-93 Either that God through clemency alone
Had pardon granted, or that man himself
Had satisfaction for his folly made.

94-96 Fix now thine eye deep into the abyss
Of the eternal counsel, to my speech
As far as may be fastened steadfastly!

97-99 Man in his limitations had not power
To satisfy, not having power to sink
In his humility obeying then,

100-102 Far as he disobeying thought to rise;
And for this reason man has been from power
Of satisfying by himself excluded.

103-105 Therefore it God behoved in his own ways
Man to restore unto his perfect life,
I say in one, or else in both of them.

106-108 But since the action of the doer is
So much more grateful, as it more presents
The goodness of the heart from which it issues,

109-111 Goodness Divine, that doth imprint the world,
Has been contented to proceed by each
And all its ways to lift you up again;

112-114 Nor 'twixt the first day and the final night
Such high and such magnificent proceeding
By one or by the other was or shall be;

115-117 For God more bounteous was himself to give
To make man able to uplift himself,
Than if he only of himself had pardoned;

118-120 And all the other modes were insufficient
For justice, were it not the Son of God
Himself had humbled to become incarnate.

121-123 Now, to fill fully each desire of thine,
Return I to elucidate one place,
In order that thou there mayst see as I do.

124-126 Thou sayst: 'I see the air, I see the fire,
The water, and the earth, and all their mixtures
Come to corruption, and short while endure;

127-129 And these things notwithstanding were created;'
Therefore if that which I have said were true,
They should have been secure against corruption.

130-132 The Angels, brother, and the land sincere
In which thou art, created may be called
Just as they are in their entire existence;

133-135 But all the elements which thou hast named,
And all those things which out of them are made,
By a created virtue are informed.

136-138 Created was the matter which they have;
Created was the informing influence
Within these stars that round about them go.

139-141 The soul of every brute and of the plants
By its potential temperament attracts
The ray and motion of the holy lights;

142-144 But your own life immediately inspires
Supreme Beneficence, and enamours it
So with herself, it evermore desires her.

145-147 And thou from this mayst argue furthermore
Your resurrection, if thou think again
How human flesh was fashioned at that time

148 When the first parents both of them were made."

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CANTO VIII



1-3 The world used in its peril to believe
That the fair Cypria delirious love
Rayed out, in the third epicycle turning;

4-6 Wherefore not only unto her paid honour
Of sacrifices and of votive cry
The ancient nations in the ancient error,

7-9 But both Dione honoured they and Cupid,
That as her mother, this one as her son,
And said that he had sat in Dido's lap;

10-12 And they from her, whence I beginning take,
Took the denomination of the star
That woos the sun, now following, now in front.

13-15 I was not ware of our ascending to it;
But of our being in it gave full faith
My Lady whom I saw more beauteous grow.

16-18 And as within a flame a spark is seen,
And as within a voice a voice discerned,
When one is steadfast, and one comes and goes,

19-21 Within that light beheld I other lamps
Move in a circle, speeding more and less,
Methinks in measure of their inward vision.

22-24 From a cold cloud descended never winds,
Or visible or not, so rapidly
They would not laggard and impeded seem

25-27 To any one who had those lights divine
Seen come towards us, leaving the gyration
Begun at first in the high Seraphim.

28-30 And behind those that most in front appeared
Sounded "Osanna!" so that never since
To hear again was I without desire.

31-33 Then unto us more nearly one approached,
And it alone began: "We all are ready
Unto thy pleasure, that thou joy in us.

34-36 We turn around with the celestial Princes,
One gyre and one gyration and one thirst,
To whom thou in the world of old didst say,

37-39 'Ye who, intelligent, the third heaven are moving;'
And are so full of love, to pleasure thee
A little quiet will not be less sweet."

40-42 After these eyes of mine themselves had offered
Unto my Lady reverently, and she
Content and certain of herself had made them,

43-45 Back to the light they turned, which so great promise
Made of itself, and "Say, who art thou?" was
My voice, imprinted with a great affection.

46-48 O how and how much I beheld it grow
With the new joy that superadded was
Unto its joys, as soon as I had spoken!

49-51 Thus changed, it said to me: "The world possessed me
Short time below; and, if it had been more,
Much evil will be which would not have been.

52-54 My gladness keepeth me concealed from thee,
Which rayeth round about me, and doth hide me
Like as a creature swathed in its own silk.

55-57 Much didst thou love me, and thou hadst good reason;
For had I been below, I should have shown thee
Somewhat beyond the foliage of my love.

58-60 That left-hand margin, which doth bathe itself
In Rhone, when it is mingled with the Sorgue,
Me for its lord awaited in due time,

61-63 And that horn of Ausonia, which is towned
With Bari, with Gaeta and Catona,
Whence Tronto and Verde in the sea disgorge.

64-66 Already flashed upon my brow the crown
Of that dominion which the Danube waters
After the German borders it abandons;

67-69 And beautiful Trinacria, that is murky
'Twixt Pachino and Peloro, (on the gulf
Which greatest scath from Eurus doth receive,)

70-72 Not through Typhoeus, but through nascent sulphur,
Would have awaited her own monarchs still,
Through me from Charles descended and from Rudolph,

73-75 If evil lordship, that exasperates ever
The subject populations, had not moved
Palermo to the outcry of 'Death! death!'

76-78 And if my brother could but this foresee,
The greedy poverty of Catalonia
Straight would he flee, that it might not molest him;

79-81 For verily 'tis needful to provide,
Through him or other, so that on his bark
Already freighted no more freight be placed.

82-84 His nature, which from liberal covetous
Descended, such a soldiery would need
As should not care for hoarding in a chest."

85-87 “Because I do believe the lofty joy
Thy speech infuses into me, my Lord,
Where every good thing doth begin and end

88-90 Thou seest as I see it, the more grateful
Is it to me; and this too hold I dear,
That gazing upon God thou dost discern it.

91-93 Glad hast thou made me; so make clear to me,
Since speaking thou hast stirred me up to doubt,
How from sweet seed can bitter issue forth.”

94-96 This I to him; and he to me: “If I
Can show to thee a truth, to what thou askest
Thy face thou’lt hold as thou dost hold thy back.

97-99 The Good which all the realm thou art ascending
Turns and contents, maketh its providence
To be a power within these bodies vast;

100-102 And not alone the natures are foreseen
Within the mind that in itself is perfect,
But they together with their preservation.

103-105 For whatsoever thing this bow shoots forth
Falls foreordained unto an end foreseen,
Even as a shaft directed to its mark.

106-108 If that were not, the heaven which thou dost walk
Would in such manner its effects produce,
That they no longer would be arts, but ruins.

109-111 This cannot be, if the Intelligences
That keep these stars in motion are not maimed,
And maimed the First that has not made them perfect.

112-114 Wilt thou this truth have clearer made to thee?”
And I: “Not so; for ’tis impossible
That nature tire, I see, in what is needful.”

115-117 Whence he again: “Now say, would it be worse
For men on earth were they not citizens?”
“Yes,” I replied; “and here I ask no reason.”

118-120 “And can they be so, if below they live not
Diversely unto offices diverse?
No, if your master writeth well for you.”

121-123 So came he with deductions to this point;
Then he concluded: “Therefore it behoves
The roots of your effects to be diverse.

124-126 Hence one is Solon born, another Xerxes,
Another Melchisedec, and another he
Who, flying through the air, his son did lose.

127-129 Revolving Nature, which a signet is
To mortal wax, doth practise well her art,
But not one inn distinguish from another;

130-132 Thence happens it that Esau differeth
In seed from Jacob; and Quirinus comes
From sire so vile that he is given to Mars.

133-135 A generated nature its own way
Would always make like its progenitors,
If Providence divine were not triumphant.

136-138 Now that which was behind thee is before thee;
But that thou know that I with thee am pleased,
With a corollary will I mantle thee.

139-141 Evermore nature, if it fortune find
Discordant to it, like each other seed
Out of its region, maketh evil thrift;

142-144 And if the world below would fix its mind
On the foundation which is laid by nature,
Pursuing that, 'twould have the people good.

145-147 But you unto religion wrench aside
Him who was born to gird him with the sword,
And make a king of him who is for sermons;

148 Therefore your footsteps wander from the road."

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CANTO IX

✦

1-3 Beautiful Clemence, after that thy Charles
Had me enlightened, he narrated to me
The treacheries his seed should undergo;

4-6 But said: "Be still and let the years roll round;"
So I can only say, that lamentation
Legitimate shall follow on your wrongs.

7-9 And of that holy light the life already
Had to the Sun which fills it turned again,
As to that good which for each thing sufficeth.

10-12 Ah, souls deceived, and creatures impious,
Who from such good do turn away your hearts,
Directing upon vanity your foreheads!

13-15 And now, behold, another of those splendours
Approached me, and its will to pleasure me
It signified by brightening outwardly.

16-18 The eyes of Beatrice, that fastened were
Upon me, as before, of dear assent
To my desire assurance gave to me.

19-21 "Ah, bring swift compensation to my wish,
Thou blessed spirit," I said, "and give me proof
That what I think in thee I can reflect!"

22-24 Whereat the light, that still was new to me,
Out of its depths, whence it before was singing,
As one delighted to do good, continued:

25-27 "Within that region of the land depraved
Of Italy, that lies between Rialto
And fountain-heads of Brenta and of Piava,

28-30 Rises a hill, and mounts not very high,
Wherefrom descended formerly a torch
That made upon that region great assault.

31-33 Out of one root were born both I and it;
Cunizza was I called, and here I shine
Because the splendour of this star o'ercame me.

34-36 But gladly to myself the cause I pardon
Of my allotment, and it does not grieve me;
Which would perhaps seem strong unto your vulgar.

37-39 Of this so luculent and precious jewel,
Which of our heaven is nearest unto me,
Great fame remained; and ere it die away

40-42 This hundredth year shall yet quintupled be.
See if man ought to make him excellent,
So that another life the first may leave!

43-45 And thus thinks not the present multitude
Shut in by Adige and Tagliamento,
Nor yet for being scourged is penitent.

46-48 But soon 'twill be that Padua in the marsh
Will change the water that Vicenza bathes,
Because the folk are stubborn against duty;

49-51 And where the Sile and Cagnano join
One lordeth it, and goes with lofty head,
For catching whom e'en now the net is making.

52-54 Feltro moreover of her impious pastor
Shall weep the crime, which shall so monstrous be
That for the like none ever entered Malta.

55-57 Ample exceedingly would be the vat
That of the Ferrarese could hold the blood,
And weary who should weigh it ounce by ounce,

58-60 Of which this courteous priest shall make a gift
To show himself a partisan; and such gifts
Will to the living of the land conform.

61-63 Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them,
From which shines out on us God Judicant,
So that this utterance seems good to us."

64-66 Here it was silent, and it had the semblance
Of being turned elsewhither, by the wheel
On which it entered as it was before.

67-69 The other joy, already known to me,
Became a thing transplendent in my sight,
As a fine ruby smitten by the sun.

70-72 Through joy effulgence is acquired above,
As here a smile; but down below, the shade
Outwardly darkens, as the mind is sad.

73-75 "God seeth all things, and in Him, blest spirit,
Thy sight is," said I, "so that never will
Of his can possibly from thee be hidden;

76-78 Thy voice, then, that for ever makes the heavens
Glad, with the singing of those holy fires
Which of their six wings make themselves a cowl,

79-81 Wherefore does it not satisfy my longings?
Indeed, I would not wait thy questioning
If I in thee were as thou art in me."

82-84 "The greatest of the valleys where the water
Expands itself," forthwith its words began,
"That sea excepted which the earth engarlands,

85-87 Between discordant shores against the sun
Extends so far, that it meridian makes
Where it was wont before to make the horizon.

88-90 I was a dweller on that valley's shore
'Twixt Ebro and Magra that with journey short
Doth from the Tuscan part the Genoese.

91-93 With the same sunset and same sunrise nearly
Sit Buggia and the city whence I was,
That with its blood once made the harbour hot.

94-96 Folco that people called me unto whom
My name was known; and now with me this heaven
Imprints itself, as I did once with it;

97-99 For more the daughter of Belus never burned,
Offending both Sichaeus and Creusa,
Than I, so long as it became my locks,

100-102 Nor yet that Rodophean, who deluded
was by Demophoon, nor yet Alcides,
When Iole he in his heart had locked.

103-105 Yet here is no repenting, but we smile,
Not at the fault, which comes not back to mind,
But at the power which ordered and foresaw.

106-108 Here we behold the art that doth adorn
With such affection, and the good discover
Whereby the world above turns that below.

109-111 But that thou wholly satisfied mayst bear
Thy wishes hence which in this sphere are born,
Still farther to proceed behoveth me.

112-114 Thou fain wouldst know who is within this light
That here beside me thus is scintillating,
Even as a sunbeam in the limpid water.

115-117 Then know thou, that within there is at rest
Rahab, and being to our order joined,
With her in its supremest grade 'tis sealed.

118-120 Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone
Cast by your world, before all other souls
First of Christ's triumph was she taken up.

121-123 Full meet it was to leave her in some heaven,
Even as a palm of the high victory
Which he acquired with one palm and the other,

124-126 Because she favoured the first glorious deed
Of Joshua upon the Holy Land,
That little stirs the memory of the Pope.

127-129 Thy city, which an offshoot is of him
Who first upon his Maker turned his back,
And whose ambition is so sorely wept,

130-132 Brings forth and scatters the accursed flower
Which both the sheep and lambs hath led astray
Since it has turned the shepherd to a wolf.

133-135 For this the Evangel and the mighty Doctors
Are derelict, and only the Decretals
So studied that it shows upon their margins.

136-138 On this are Pope and Cardinals intent;
Their meditations reach not Nazareth,
There where his pinions Gabriel unfolded;

139-141 But Vatican and the other parts elect
Of Rome, which have a cemetery been
Unto the soldiery that followed Peter

142 Shall soon be free from this adultery.”

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CANTO X

✦

1-3 Looking into his Son with all the Love
Which each of them eternally breathes forth,
The Primal and unutterable Power

4-6 Whate'er before the mind or eye revolves
With so much order made, there can be none
Who this beholds without enjoying Him.

7-9 Lift up then, Reader, to the lofty wheels
With me thy vision straight unto that part
Where the one motion on the other strikes,

10-12 And there begin to contemplate with joy
That Master's art, who in himself so loves it
That never doth his eye depart therefrom.

13-15 Behold how from that point goes branching off
The oblique circle, which conveys the planets,
To satisfy the world that calls upon them;

16-18 And if their pathway were not thus inflected,
Much virtue in the heavens would be in vain,
And almost every power below here dead.

19-21 If from the straight line distant more or less
Were the departure, much would wanting be
Above and underneath of mundane order.

22-24 Remain now, Reader, still upon thy bench,
In thought pursuing that which is foretasted,
If thou wouldst jocund be instead of weary.

25-27 I've set before thee; henceforth feed thyself,
For to itself diverteth all my care
That theme whereof I have been made the scribe.

28-30 The greatest of the ministers of nature,
Who with the power of heaven the world imprints
And measures with his light the time for us,

31-33 With that part which above is called to mind
Conjoined, along the spirals was revolving,
Where each time earlier he presents himself;

34-36 And I was with him; but of the ascending
I was not conscious, saving as a man
Of a first thought is conscious ere it come;

37-39 And Beatrice, she who is seen to pass
From good to better, and so suddenly
That not by time her action is expressed,

40-42 How lucent in herself must she have been!
And what was in the sun, wherein I entered,
Apparent not by colour but by light,

43-45 I, though I call on genius, art, and practice,
Cannot so tell that it could be imagined;
Believe one can, and let him long to see it.

46-48 And if our fantasies too lowly are
For altitude so great, it is no marvel,
Since o'er the sun was never eye could go.

49-51 Such in this place was the fourth family
Of the high Father, who forever sates it,
Showing how he breathes forth and how begets.

52-54 And Beatrice began: "Give thanks, give thanks
Unto the Sun of Angels, who to this
Sensible one has raised thee by his grace!"

55-57 Never was heart of mortal so disposed
To worship, nor to give itself to God
With all its gratitude was it so ready,

58-60 As at those words did I myself become;
And all my love was so absorbed in Him,
That in oblivion Beatrice was eclipsed.

61-63 Nor this displeased her; but she smiled at it
So that the splendour of her laughing eyes
My single mind on many things divided.

64-66 Lights many saw I, vivid and triumphant,
Make us a centre and themselves a circle,
More sweet in voice than luminous in aspect.

67-69 Thus girt about the daughter of Latona
We sometimes see, when pregnant is the air,
So that it holds the thread which makes her zone.

70-72 Within the court of Heaven, whence I return,
Are many jewels found, so fair and precious
They cannot be transported from the realm;

73-75 And of them was the singing of those lights.
Who takes not wings that he may fly up thither,
The tidings thence may from the dumb await!

76-78 As soon as singing thus those burning suns
Had round about us whirled themselves three times,
Like unto stars neighbouring the steadfast poles,

79-81 Ladies they seemed, not from the dance released,
But who stop short, in silence listening
Till they have gathered the new melody.

82-84 And within one I heard beginning: "When
The radiance of grace, by which is kindled
True love, and which thereafter grows by loving,

85-87 Within thee multiplied is so resplendent
That it conducts thee upward by that stair,
Where without reascending none descends,

88-90 Who should deny the wine out of his vial
Unto thy thirst, in liberty were not
Except as water which descends not seaward.

91-93 Fain wouldst thou know with what plants is enflowered
This garland that encircles with delight
The Lady fair who makes thee strong for heaven.

94-96 Of the lambs was I of the holy flock
Which Dominic conducteth by a road
Where well one fattens if he strayeth not.

97-99 He who is nearest to me on the right
My brother and master was; and he Albertus
Is of Cologne, I Thomas of Aquinum.

100-102 If thou of all the others wouldst be certain,
Follow behind my speaking with thy sight
Upward along the blessed garland turning.

103-105 That next effulgence issues from the smile
Of Gratian, who assisted both the courts
In such wise that it pleased in Paradise.

106-108 The other which near by adorns our choir
That Peter was who, e'en as the poor widow,
Offered his treasure unto Holy Church.

109-111 The fifth light, that among us is the fairest,
Breathes forth from such a love, that all the world
Below is greedy to learn tidings of it.

112-114 Within it is the lofty mind, where knowledge
So deep was put, that, if the true be true,
To see so much there never rose a second.

115-117 Thou seest next the lustre of that taper,
Which in the flesh below looked most within
The angelic nature and its ministry.

118-120 Within that other little light is smiling
The advocate of the Christian centuries,
Out of whose rhetoric Augustine was furnished.

121-123 Now if thou trainest thy mind's eye along
From light to light pursuant of my praise,
With thirst already of the eighth thou waitest.

124-126 By seeing every good therein exults
The sainted soul, which the fallacious world
Makes manifest to him who listeneth well;

127-129 The body whence 'twas hunted forth is lying
Down in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom
And banishment it came unto this peace.

130-132 See farther onward flame the burning breath
Of Isidore, of Beda, and of Richard
Who was in contemplation more than man.

133-135 This, whence to me returneth thy regard,
The light is of a spirit unto whom
In his grave meditations death seemed slow.

136-138 It is the light eternal of Sigier,
Who, reading lectures in the Street of Straw,
Did syllogize invidious verities."

139-141 Then, as a horologe that calleth us
What time the Bride of God is rising up
With matins to her Spouse that he may love her,

142-144 Wherein one part the other draws and urges,
Ting! ting! resounding with so sweet a note,
That swells with love the spirit well disposed,

145-147 Thus I beheld the glorious wheel move round,
And render voice to voice, in modulation
And sweetness that can not be comprehended,

148 Excepting there where joy is made eternal.

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CANTO XI

✦

1-3 O Thou insensate care of mortal men,
How inconclusive are the syllogisms
That make thee beat thy wings in downward flight!

4-6 One after laws and one to aphorisms
Was going, and one following the priesthood,
And one to reign by force or sophistry,

7-9 And one in theft, and one in state affairs,
One in the pleasures of the flesh involved
Wearied himself, one gave himself to ease;

10-12 When I, from all these things emancipate,
With Beatrice above there in the Heavens
With such exceeding glory was received!

13-15 When each one had returned unto that point
Within the circle where it was before,
It stood as in a candlestick a candle;

16-18 And from within the effulgence which at first
Had spoken unto me, I heard begin
Smiling while it more luminous became:

19-21 "Even as I am kindled in its ray,
So, looking into the Eternal Light,
The occasion of thy thoughts I apprehend.

22-24 Thou doubtest, and wouldst have me to resift
In language so extended and so open
My speech, that to thy sense it may be plain,

25-27 Where just before I said, ‘where well one fattens,’
And where I said, ‘there never rose a second;’
And here ’tis needful we distinguish well.

28-30 The Providence, which governeth the world
With counsel, wherein all created vision
Is vanquished ere it reach unto the bottom,

31-33 (So that towards her own Beloved might go
The bride of Him who, uttering a loud cry,
Espoused her with his consecrated blood,

34-36 Self-confident and unto Him more faithful,)
Two Princes did ordain in her behoof,
Which on this side and that might be her guide.

37-39 The one was all seraphical in ardour;
The other by his wisdom upon earth
A splendour was of light cherubical.

40-42 One will I speak of, for of both is spoken
In praising one, whichever may be taken,
Because unto one end their labours were.

43-45 Between Tupino and the stream that falls
Down from the hill elect of blessed Ubald,
A fertile slope of lofty mountain hangs,

46-48 From which Perugia feels the cold and heat
Through Porta Sole, and behind it weep
Gualdo and Nocera their grievous yoke.

49-51 From out that slope, there where it breaketh most
Its steepness, rose upon the world a sun
As this one does sometimes from out the Ganges;

52-54 Therefore let him who speaketh of that place,
Say not Ascesi, for he would say little,
But Orient, if he properly would speak.

55-57 He was not yet far distant from his rising
Before he had begun to make the earth
Some comfort from his mighty virtue feel.

58-60 For he in youth his father's wrath incurred
For certain Dame, to whom, as unto death,
The gate of pleasure no one doth unlock;

61-63 And was before his spiritual court
'Et coram patre' unto her united;
Then day by day more fervently he loved her.

64-66 She, reft of her first husband, scorned, obscure,
One thousand and one hundred years and more,
Waited without a suitor till he came.

67-69 Naught it availed to hear, that with Amyclas
Found her unmoved at sounding of his voice
He who struck terror into all the world;

70-72 Naught it availed being constant and undaunted,
So that, when Mary still remained below,
She mounted up with Christ upon the cross.

73-75 But that too darkly I may not proceed,
Francis and Poverty for these two lovers
Take thou henceforward in my speech diffuse.

76-78 Their concord and their joyous semblances,
The love, the wonder, and the sweet regard,
They made to be the cause of holy thoughts;

79-81 So much so that the venerable Bernard
First bared his feet, and after so great peace
Ran, and, in running, thought himself too slow.

82-84 O wealth unknown! O veritable good!
Giles bares his feet, and bares his feet Sylvester
Behind the bridegroom, so doth please the bride!

85-87 Then goes his way that father and that master,
He and his Lady and that family
Which now was girding on the humble cord;

88-90 Nor cowardice of heart weighed down his brow
At being son of Peter Bernardone,
Nor for appearing marvellously scorned;

91-93 But regally his hard determination
To Innocent he opened, and from him
Received the primal seal upon his Order.

94-96 After the people mendicant increased
Behind this man, whose admirable life
Better in glory of the heavens were sung,

97-99 Incoronated with a second crown
Was through Honorius by the Eternal Spirit
The holy purpose of this Archimandrite.

100-102 And when he had, through thirst of martyrdom,
In the proud presence of the Sultan preached
Christ and the others who came after him,

103-105 And, finding for conversion too unripe
The folk, and not to tarry there in vain,
Returned to fruit of the Italic grass,

106-108 On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno
From Christ did he receive the final seal,
Which during two whole years his members bore.

109-111 When He, who chose him unto so much good,
Was pleased to draw him up to the reward
That he had merited by being lowly,

112-114 Unto his friars, as to the rightful heirs,
His most dear Lady did he recommend,
And bade that they should love her faithfully;

115-117 And from her bosom the illustrious soul
Wished to depart, returning to its realm,
And for its body wished no other bier.

118-120 Think now what man was he, who was a fit
Companion over the high seas to keep
The bark of Peter to its proper bearings.

121-123 And this man was our Patriarch; hence whoever
Doth follow him as he commands can see
That he is laden with good merchandise.

124-126 But for new pasturage his flock has grown
So greedy, that it is impossible
They be not scattered over fields diverse;

127-129 And in proportion as his sheep remote
And vagabond go farther off from him,
More void of milk return they to the fold.

130-132 Verily some there are that fear a hurt,
And keep close to the shepherd; but so few,
That little cloth doth furnish forth their hoods.

133-135 Now if my utterance be not indistinct,
If thine own hearing hath attentive been,
If thou recall to mind what I have said,

136-138 In part contented shall thy wishes be;
For thou shalt see the plant that's chipped away,
And the rebuke that lieth in the words,

139 'Where well one fattens, if he strayeth not.'"

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CANTO XII



1-3 Soon as the blessed flame had taken up
The final word to give it utterance,
Began the holy millstone to revolve,

4-6 And in its gyre had not turned wholly round,
Before another in a ring enclosed it,
And motion joined to motion, song to song;

7-9 Song that as greatly doth transcend our Muses,
Our Sirens, in those dulcet clarions,
As primal splendour that which is reflected.

10-12 And as are spanned athwart a tender cloud
Two rainbows parallel and like in colour,
When Juno to her handmaid gives command,

13-15 (The one without born of the one within,
Like to the speaking of that vagrant one
Whom love consumed as doth the sun the vapours,)

16-18 And make the people here, through covenant
God set with Noah, presageful of the world
That shall no more be covered with a flood,

19-21 In such wise of those sempiternal roses
The garlands twain encompassed us about,
And thus the outer to the inner answered.

22-24 After the dance, and other grand rejoicings,
Both of the singing, and the flaming forth
Effulgence with effulgence blithe and tender,

25-27 Together, at once, with one accord had stopped,
(Even as the eyes, that, as volition moves them,
Must needs together shut and lift themselves,)

28-30 Out of the heart of one of the new lights
There came a voice, that needle to the star
Made me appear in turning thitherward.

31-33 And it began: "The love that makes me fair
Draws me to speak about the other leader,
By whom so well is spoken here of mine.

34-36 'Tis right, where one is, to bring in the other,
That, as they were united in their warfare,
Together likewise may their glory shine.

37-39 The soldiery of Christ, which it had cost
So dear to arm again, behind the standard
Moved slow and doubtful and in numbers few,

40-42 When the Emperor who reigneth evermore
Provided for the host that was in peril,
Through grace alone and not that it was worthy;

43-45 And, as was said, he to his Bride brought succour
With champions twain, at whose deed, at whose word
The straggling people were together drawn.

46-48 Within that region where the sweet west wind
Rises to open the new leaves, wherewith
Europe is seen to clothe herself afresh,

49-51 Not far off from the beating of the waves,
Behind which in his long career the sun
Sometimes conceals himself from every man,

52-54 Is situate the fortunate Calahorra,
Under protection of the mighty shield
In which the Lion subject is and sovereign.

55-57 Therein was born the amorous paramour
Of Christian Faith, the athlete consecrate,
Kind to his own and cruel to his foes;

58-60 And when it was created was his mind
Replete with such a living energy,
That in his mother her it made prophetic.

61-63 As soon as the espousals were complete
Between him and the Faith at holy font,
Where they with mutual safety dowered each other,

64-66 The woman, who for him had given assent,
Saw in a dream the admirable fruit
That issue would from him and from his heirs;

67-69 And that he might be construed as he was,
A spirit from this place went forth to name him
With His possessive whose he wholly was.

70-72 Dominic was he called; and him I speak of
Even as of the husbandman whom Christ
Elected to his garden to assist him.

73-75 Envoy and servant sooth he seemed of Christ,
For the first love made manifest in him
Was the first counsel that was given by Christ.

76-78 Silent and wakeful many a time was he
Discovered by his nurse upon the ground,
As if he would have said, 'For this I came.'

79-81 O thou his father, Felix verily!
O thou his mother, verily Joanna,
If this, interpreted, means as is said!

82-84 Not for the world which people toil for now
In following Ostiense and Taddeo,
But through his longing after the true manna,

85-87 He in short time became so great a teacher,
That he began to go about the vineyard,
Which fadeth soon, if faithless be the dresser;

88-90 And of the See, (that once was more benignant
Unto the righteous poor, not through itself,
But him who sits there and degenerates,)

91-93 Not to dispense or two or three for six,
Not any fortune of first vacancy,
'Non decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei,'

94-96 He asked for, but against the errant world
Permission to do battle for the seed,
Of which these four and twenty plants surround thee.

97-99 Then with the doctrine and the will together,
With office apostolical he moved,
Like torrent which some lofty vein out-presses;

100-102 And in among the shoots heretical
His impetus with greater fury smote,
Wherever the resistance was the greatest.

103-105 Of him were made thereafter divers runnels,
Whereby the garden catholic is watered,
So that more living its plantations stand.

106-108 If such the one wheel of the Biga was,
In which the Holy Church itself defended
And in the field its civic battle won,

109-111 Truly full manifest should be to thee
The excellence of the other, unto whom
Thomas so courteous was before my coming.

112-114 But still the orbit, which the highest part
Of its circumference made, is derelict,
So that the mould is where was once the crust.

115-117 His family, that had straight forward moved
With feet upon his footprints, are turned round
So that they set the point upon the heel.

118-120 And soon aware they will be of the harvest
Of this bad husbandry, when shall the tares
Complain the granary is taken from them.

121-123 Yet say I, he who searcheth leaf by leaf
Our volume through, would still some page discover
Where he could read, 'I am as I am wont.'

124-126 'Twill not be from Casal nor Acquasparta,
From whence come such unto the written word
That one avoids it, and the other narrows.

127-129 Bonaventura of Bagnoregio's life
Am I, who always in great offices
Postponed considerations sinister.

130-132 Here are Illuminato and Agostino,
Who of the first barefooted beggars were
That with the cord the friends of God became.

133-135 Hugh of Saint Victor is among them here,
And Peter Mangiador, and Peter of Spain,
Who down below in volumes twelve is shining;

136-138 Nathan the seer, and metropolitan
Chrysostom, and Anselmus, and Donatus
Who deigned to lay his hand to the first art;

139-141 Here is Rabanus, and beside me here
Shines the Calabrian Abbot Joachim,
He with the spirit of prophecy endowed.

142-144 To celebrate so great a paladin
Have moved me the impassioned courtesy
And the discreet discourses of Friar Thomas,

145 And with me they have moved this company."

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CANTO XIII

✦

1-3 Let him imagine, who would well conceive
What now I saw, and let him while I speak
Retain the image as a steadfast rock,

4-6 The fifteen stars, that in their divers regions
The sky enliven with a light so great
That it transcends all clusters of the air;

7-9 Let him the Wain imagine unto which
Our vault of heaven sufficeth night and day,
So that in turning of its pole it fails not;

10-12 Let him the mouth imagine of the horn
That in the point beginneth of the axis
Round about which the primal wheel revolves,—

13-15 To have fashioned of themselves two signs in heaven,
Like unto that which Minos' daughter made,
The moment when she felt the frost of death;

16-18 And one to have its rays within the other,
And both to whirl themselves in such a manner
That one should forward go, the other backward;

19-21 And he will have some shadowing forth of that
True constellation and the double dance
That circled round the point at which I was;

22-24 Because it is as much beyond our wont,
As swifter than the motion of the Chiana
Moveth the heaven that all the rest outspeeds.

25-27 There sang they neither Bacchus, nor Apollo,
But in the divine nature Persons three,
And in one person the divine and human.

28-30 The singing and the dance fulfilled their measure,
And unto us those holy lights gave need,
Growing in happiness from care to care.

31-33 Then broke the silence of those saints concordant
The light in which the admirable life
Of God's own mendicant was told to me,

34-36 And said: "Now that one straw is trodden out
Now that its seed is garnered up already,
Sweet love invites me to thresh out the other.

37-39 Into that bosom, thou believest, whence
Was drawn the rib to form the beauteous cheek
Whose taste to all the world is costing dear,

40-42 And into that which, by the lance transfixed,
Before and since, such satisfaction made
That it weighs down the balance of all sin,

43-45 Whate'er of light it has to human nature
Been lawful to possess was all infused
By the same power that both of them created;

46-48 And hence at what I said above dost wonder,
When I narrated that no second had
The good which in the fifth light is enclosed.

49-51 Now ope thine eyes to what I answer thee,
And thou shalt see thy creed and my discourse
Fit in the truth as centre in a circle.

52-54 That which can die, and that which dieth not,
Are nothing but the splendour of the idea
Which by his love our Lord brings into being;

55-57 Because that living Light, which from its fount
Effulgent flows, so that it disunites not
From Him nor from the Love in them intrined,

58-60 Through its own goodness reunites its rays
In nine subsistences, as in a mirror,
Itself eternally remaining One.

61-63 Thence it descends to the last potencies,
Downward from act to act becoming such
That only brief contingencies it makes;

64-66 And these contingencies I hold to be
Things generated, which the heaven produces
By its own motion, with seed and without.

67-69 Neither their wax, nor that which tempers it,
Remains immutable, and hence beneath
The ideal signet more and less shines through;

70-72 Therefore it happens, that the selfsame tree
After its kind bears worse and better fruit,
And ye are born with characters diverse.

73-75 If in perfection tempered were the wax,
And were the heaven in its supremest virtue,
The brilliance of the seal would all appear;

76-78 But nature gives it evermore deficient,
In the like manner working as the artist,
Who has the skill of art and hand that trembles.

79-81 If then the fervent Love, the Vision clear,
Of primal Virtue do dispose and seal,
Perfection absolute is there acquired.

82-84 Thus was of old the earth created worthy
Of all and every animal perfection;
And thus the Virgin was impregnate made;

85-87 So that thine own opinion I commend,
That human nature never yet has been,
Nor will be, what it was in those two persons.

88-90 Now if no farther forth I should proceed,
'Then in what way was he without a peer?'
Would be the first beginning of thy words.

91-93 But, that may well appear what now appears not,
Think who he was, and what occasion moved him
To make request, when it was told him, 'Ask.'

94-96 I've not so spoken that thou canst not see
Clearly he was a king who asked for wisdom,
That he might be sufficiently a king;

97-99 'Twas not to know the number in which are
The motors here above, or if 'necesse'
With a contingent e'er 'necesse' make,

100-102 'Non si est dare primum motum esse,'
Or if in semicircle can be made
Triangle so that it have no right angle.

103-105 Whence, if thou notest this and what I said,
A regal prudence is that peerless seeing
In which the shaft of my intention strikes.

106-108 And if on 'rose' thou turnest thy clear eyes,
Thou'lt see that it has reference alone
To kings who're many, and the good are rare.

109-111 With this distinction take thou what I said,
And thus it can consist with thy belief
Of the first father and of our Delight.

112-114 And lead shall this be always to thy feet,
To make thee, like a weary man, move slowly
Both to the Yes and No thou seest not;

115-117 For very low among the fools is he
Who affirms without distinction, or denies,
As well in one as in the other case;

118-120 Because it happens that full often bends
Current opinion in the false direction,
And then the feelings bind the intellect.

121-123 Far more than uselessly he leaves the shore,
(Since he returneth not the same he went,)
Who fishes for the truth, and has no skill;

124-126 And in the world proofs manifest thereof
Parmenides, Melissus, Brissus are,
And many who went on and knew not whither;

127-129 Thus did Sabellius, Arius, and those fools
Who have been even as swords unto the Scriptures
In rendering distorted their straight faces.

130-132 Nor yet shall people be too confident
In judging, even as he is who doth count
The corn in field or ever it be ripe.

133-135 For I have seen all winter long the thorn
First show itself intractable and fierce,
And after bear the rose upon its top;

136-138 And I have seen a ship direct and swift
Run o'er the sea throughout its course entire,
To perish at the harbour's mouth at last.

139-141 Let not Dame Bertha nor Ser Martin think,
Seeing one steal, another offering make,
To see them in the arbitrament divine;

142 For one may rise, and fall the other may.”

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CANTO XIV



1-3 From centre unto rim, from rim to centre,
In a round vase the water moves itself,
As from without 'tis struck or from within.

4-6 Into my mind upon a sudden dropped
What I am saying, at the moment when
Silent became the glorious life of Thomas,

7-9 Because of the resemblance that was born
Of his discourse and that of Beatrice,
Whom, after him, it pleased thus to begin:

10-12 "This man has need (and does not tell you so,
Nor with the voice, nor even in his thought)
Of going to the root of one truth more.

13-15 Declare unto him if the light wherewith
Blossoms your substance shall remain with you
Eternally the same that it is now;

16-18 And if it do remain, say in what manner,
After ye are again made visible,
It can be that it injure not your sight."

19-21 As by a greater gladness urged and drawn
They who are dancing in a ring sometimes
Uplift their voices and their motions quicken;

22-24 So, at that orison devout and prompt,
The holy circles a new joy displayed
In their revolving and their wondrous song.

25-27 Whoso lamenteth him that here we die
That we may live above, has never there
Seen the refreshment of the eternal rain.

28-30 The One and Two and Three who ever liveth,
And reigneth ever in Three and Two and One,
Not circumscribed and all things circumscribing,

31-33 Three several times was chanted by each one
Among those spirits, with such melody
That for all merit it were just reward;

34-36 And, in the lustre most divine of all
The lesser ring, I heard a modest voice,
Such as perhaps the Angel's was to Mary,

37-39 Answer: "As long as the festivity
Of Paradise shall be, so long our love
Shall radiate round about us such a vesture.

40-42 Its brightness is proportioned to the ardour,
The ardour to the vision; and the vision
Equals what grace it has above its worth.

43-45 When, glorious and sanctified, our flesh
Is reassumed, then shall our persons be
More pleasing by their being all complete;

46-48 For will increase whate'er bestows on us
Of light gratuitous the Good Supreme,
Light which enables us to look on Him;

49-51 Therefore the vision must perforce increase,
Increase the ardour which from that is kindled,
Increase the radiance which from this proceeds.

52-54 But even as a coal that sends forth flame,
And by its vivid whiteness overpowers it
So that its own appearance it maintains,

55-57 Thus the effulgence that surrounds us now
Shall be o'erpowered in aspect by the flesh,
Which still to-day the earth doth cover up;

58-60 Nor can so great a splendour weary us,
For strong will be the organs of the body
To everything which hath the power to please us."

61-63 So sudden and alert appeared to me
Both one and the other choir to say Amen,
That well they showed desire for their dead bodies;

64-66 Nor sole for them perhaps, but for the mothers,
The fathers, and the rest who had been dear
Or ever they became eternal flames.

67-69 And lo! all round about of equal brightness
Arose a lustre over what was there,
Like an horizon that is clearing up.

70-72 And as at rise of early eve begin
Along the welkin new appearances,
So that the sight seems real and unreal,

73-75 It seemed to me that new subsistences
Began there to be seen, and make a circle
Outside the other two circumferences.

76-78 O very sparkling of the Holy Spirit,
How sudden and incandescent it became
Unto mine eyes, that vanquished bore it not!

79-81 But Beatrice so beautiful and smiling
Appeared to me, that with the other sights
That followed not my memory I must leave her.

82-84 Then to uplift themselves mine eyes resumed
The power, and I beheld myself translated
To higher salvation with my Lady only.

85-87 Well was I ware that I was more uplifted
By the enkindled smiling of the star,
That seemed to me more ruddy than its wont.

88-90 With all my heart, and in that dialect
Which is the same in all, such holocaust
To God I made as the new grace beseemed;

91-93 And not yet from my bosom was exhausted
The ardour of sacrifice, before I knew
This offering was accepted and auspicious;

94-96 For with so great a lustre and so red
Splendours appeared to me in twofold rays,
I said: "O Helios who dost so adorn them!"

97-99 Even as distinct with less and greater lights
Glimmers between the two poles of the world
The Galaxy that maketh wise men doubt,

100-102 Thus constellated in the depths of Mars,
Those rays described the venerable sign
That quadrants joining in a circle make.

103-105 Here doth my memory overcome my genius;
For on that cross as levin gleamed forth Christ,
So that I cannot find ensample worthy;

106-108 But he who takes his cross and follows Christ
Again will pardon me what I omit,
Seeing in that aurora lighten Christ.

109-111 From horn to horn, and ’twixt the top and base,
Lights were in motion, brightly scintillating
As they together met and passed each other;

112-114 Thus level and aslant and swift and slow
We here behold, renewing still the sight,
The particles of bodies long and short,

115-117 Across the sunbeam move, wherewith is listed
Sometimes the shade, which for their own defence
People with cunning and with art contrive.

118-120 And as a lute and harp, accordant strung
With many strings, a dulcet tinkling make
To him by whom the notes are not distinguished,

121-123 So from the lights that there to me appeared
Upgathered through the cross a melody,
Which rapt me, not distinguishing the hymn.

124-126 Well was I ware it was of lofty laud,
Because there came to me, “Arise and conquer!”
As unto him who hears and comprehends not.

127-129 So much enamoured I became therewith,
That until then there was not anything
That e’er had fettered me with such sweet bonds.

130-132 Perhaps my word appears somewhat too bold,
Postponing the delight of those fair eyes,
Into which gazing my desire has rest;

133-135 But who bethinks him that the living seals
Of every beauty grow in power ascending,
And that I there had not turned round to those,

136-138 Can me excuse, if I myself accuse
To excuse myself, and see that I speak truly:
For here the holy joy is not disclosed,

139 Because ascending it becomes more pure.

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CANTO XV

✦

1-3 A will benign, in which reveals itself
Ever the love that righteously inspires,
As in the iniquitous, cupidity,

4-6 Silence imposed upon that dulcet lyre,
And quieted the consecrated chords,
That Heaven's right hand doth tighten and relax.

7-9 How unto just entreaties shall be deaf
Those substances, which, to give me desire
Of praying them, with one accord grew silent?

10-12 'Tis well that without end he should lament,
Who for the love of thing that doth not last
Eternally despoils him of that love!

13-15 As through the pure and tranquil evening air
There shoots from time to time a sudden fire,
Moving the eyes that steadfast were before,

16-18 And seems to be a star that changeth place,
Except that in the part where it is kindled
Nothing is missed, and this endureth little;

19-21 So from the horn that to the right extends
Unto that cross's foot there ran a star
Out of the constellation shining there;

22-24 Nor was the gem dissevered from its ribbon,
But down the radiant fillet ran along,
So that fire seemed it behind alabaster.

25-27 Thus piteous did Anchises' shade reach forward,
If any faith our greatest Muse deserve,
When in Elysium he his son perceived.

28-30 "O sanguis meus, O superinfusa
Gratia Dei, sicut tibi, cui
Bis unquam Coeli janua reclusa?"

31-33 Thus that effulgence; whence I gave it heed;
Then round unto my Lady turned my sight,
And on this side and that was stupefied;

34-36 For in her eyes was burning such a smile
That with mine own methought I touched the bottom
Both of my grace and of my Paradise!

37-39 Then, pleasant to the hearing and the sight,
The spirit joined to its beginning things
I understood not, so profound it spake;

40-42 Nor did it hide itself from me by choice,
But by necessity; for its conception
Above the mark of mortals set itself.

43-45 And when the bow of burning sympathy
Was so far slackened, that its speech descended
Towards the mark of our intelligence,

46-48 The first thing that was understood by me
Was "Benedight be Thou, O Trine and One,
Who hast unto my seed so courteous been!"

49-51 And it continued: "Hunger long and grateful,
Drawn from the reading of the mighty volume
Wherein is never changed the white nor dark,

52-54 Thou hast appeased, my son, within this light
In which I speak to thee, by grace of her
Who to this lofty flight with plumage clothed thee.

55-57 Thou thinkest that to me thy thought doth pass
From Him who is the first, as from the unit,
If that be known, ray out the five and six;

58-60 And therefore who I am thou askest not,
And why I seem more joyous unto thee
Than any other of this gladsome crowd.

61-63 Thou think'st the truth; because the small and great
Of this existence look into the mirror
Wherein, before thou think'st, thy thought thou showest.

64-66 But that the sacred love, in which I watch
With sight perpetual, and which makes me thirst
With sweet desire, may better be fulfilled,

67-69 Now let thy voice secure and frank and glad
Proclaim the wishes, the desire proclaim,
To which my answer is decreed already."

70-72 To Beatrice I turned me, and she heard
Before I spake, and smiled to me a sign,
That made the wings of my desire increase;

73-75 Then in this wise began I: “Love and knowledge,
When on you dawned the first Equality,
Of the same weight for each of you became;

76-78 For in the Sun, which lighted you and burned
With heat and radiance, they so equal are,
That all similitudes are insufficient.

79-81 But among mortals will and argument,
For reason that to you is manifest,
Diversely feathered in their pinions are.

82-84 Whence I, who mortal am, feel in myself
This inequality; so give not thanks,
Save in my heart, for this paternal welcome.

85-87 Truly do I entreat thee, living topaz!
Set in this precious jewel as a gem,
That thou wilt satisfy me with thy name.”

88-90 “O leaf of mine, in whom I pleasure took
E’en while awaiting, I was thine own root!”
Such a beginning he in answer made me.

91-93 Then said to me: “That one from whom is named
Thy race, and who a hundred years and more
Has circled round the mount on the first cornice,

94-96 A son of mine and thy great-grandsire was;
Well it behoves thee that the long fatigue
Thou shouldst for him make shorter with thy works.

97-99 Florence, within the ancient boundary
From which she taketh still her tierce and nones,
Abode in quiet, temperate and chaste.

100-102 No golden chain she had, nor coronal,
Nor ladies shod with sandal shoon, nor girdle
That caught the eye more than the person did.

103-105 Not yet the daughter at her birth struck fear
Into the father, for the time and dower
Did not o'errun this side or that the measure.

106-108 No houses had she void of families,
Not yet had thither come Sardanapalus
To show what in a chamber can be done;

109-111 Not yet surpassed had Montemalo been
By your Uccellatojo, which surpassed
Shall in its downfall be as in its rise.

112-114 Bellincion Berti saw I go begirt
With leather and with bone, and from the mirror
His dame depart without a painted face;

115-117 And him of Nerli saw, and him of Vecchio,
Contented with their simple suits of buff
And with the spindle and the flax their dames.

118-120 O fortunate women! and each one was certain
Of her own burial-place, and none as yet
For sake of France was in her bed deserted.

121-123 One o'er the cradle kept her studious watch,
And in her lullaby the language used
That first delights the fathers and the mothers;

124-126 Another, drawing tresses from her distaff,
Told o'er among her family the tales
Of Trojans and of Fesole and Rome.

127-129 As great a marvel then would have been held
A Lapo Salterello, a Cianghella,
As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.

130-132 To such a quiet, such a beautiful
Life of the citizen, to such a safe
Community, and to so sweet an inn,

133-135 Did Mary give me, with loud cries invoked,
And in your ancient Baptistery at once
Christian and Cacciaguida I became.

136-138 Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo;
From Val di Pado came to me my wife,
And from that place thy surname was derived.

139-141 I followed afterward the Emperor Conrad,
And he begirt me of his chivalry,
So much I pleased him with my noble deeds.

142-144 I followed in his train against that law's
Iniquity, whose people doth usurp
Your just possession, through your Pastor's fault.

145-147 There by that execrable race was I
Released from bonds of the fallacious world,
The love of which defileth many souls,

148 And came from martyrdom unto this peace."

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CANTO XVI



1-3 O thou our poor nobility of blood,
If thou dost make the people glory in thee
Down here where our affection languishes,

4-6 A marvellous thing it ne'er will be to me;
For there where appetite is not perverted,
I say in Heaven, of thee I made a boast!

7-9 Truly thou art a cloak that quickly shortens,
So that unless we piece thee day by day
Time goeth round about thee with his shears!

10-12 With 'You,' which Rome was first to tolerate,
(Wherein her family less perseveres,)
Yet once again my words beginning made;

13-15 Whence Beatrice, who stood somewhat apart,
Smiling, appeared like unto her who coughed
At the first failing writ of Guenever.

16-18 And I began: "You are my ancestor,
You give to me all hardihood to speak,
You lift me so that I am more than I.

19-21 So many rivulets with gladness fill
My mind, that of itself it makes a joy
Because it can endure this and not burst.

22-24 Then tell me, my beloved root ancestral,
Who were your ancestors, and what the years
That in your boyhood chronicled themselves?

25-27 Tell me about the sheepfold of Saint John,
How large it was, and who the people were
Within it worthy of the highest seats."

28-30 As at the blowing of the winds a coal
Quickens to flame, so I beheld that light
Become resplendent at my blandishments.

31-33 And as unto mine eyes it grew more fair,
With voice more sweet and tender, but not in
This modern dialect, it said to me:

34-36 "From uttering of the 'Ave,' till the birth
In which my mother, who is now a saint,
Of me was lightened who had been her burden,

37-39 Unto its Lion had this fire returned
Five hundred fifty times and thirty more,
To reinflame itself beneath his paw.

40-42 My ancestors and I our birthplace had
Where first is found the last ward of the city
By him who runneth in your annual game.

43-45 Suffice it of my elders to hear this;
But who they were, and whence they thither came,
Silence is more considerate than speech.

46-48 All those who at that time were there between
Mars and the Baptist, fit for bearing arms,
Were a fifth part of those who now are living;

49-51 But the community, that now is mixed
With Campi and Certaldo and Figghine,
Pure in the lowest artisan was seen.

52-54 O how much better 'twere to have as neighbours
The folk of whom I speak, and at Galluzzo
And at Trespiano have your boundary,

55-57 Than have them in the town, and bear the stench
Of Aguglione's churl, and him of Signa
Who has sharp eyes for trickery already.

58-60 Had not the folk, which most of all the world
Degenerates, been a step-dame unto Caesar,
But as a mother to her son benignant,

61-63 Some who turn Florentines, and trade and discount,
Would have gone back again to Simifonte
There where their grandsires went about as beggars.

64-66 At Montemurlo still would be the Counts,
The Cerchi in the parish of Acone,
Perhaps in Valdigrieve the Buondelmonti.

67-69 Ever the intermingling of the people
Has been the source of malady in cities,
As in the body food it surfeits on;

70-72 And a blind bull more headlong plunges down
Than a blind lamb; and very often cuts
Better and more a single sword than five.

73-75 If Luni thou regard, and Urbisaglia,
How they have passed away, and how are passing
Chiusi and Sinigaglia after them,

76-78 To hear how races waste themselves away,
Will seem to thee no novel thing nor hard,
Seeing that even cities have an end.

79-81 All things of yours have their mortality,
Even as yourselves; but it is hidden in some
That a long while endure, and lives are short;

82-84 And as the turning of the lunar heaven
Covers and bares the shores without a pause,
In the like manner fortune does with Florence.

85-87 Therefore should not appear a marvellous thing
What I shall say of the great Florentines
Of whom the fame is hidden in the Past.

88-90 I saw the Ughi, saw the Catellini,
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi,
Even in their fall illustrious citizens;

91-93 And saw, as mighty as they ancient were,
With him of La Sannella him of Arca,
And Soldanier, Ardinghi, and Bostichi.

94-96 Near to the gate that is at present laden
With a new felony of so much weight
That soon it shall be jetsam from the bark,

97-99 The Ravignani were, from whom descended
The County Guido, and whoe'er the name
Of the great Bellincione since hath taken.

100-102 He of La Pressa knew the art of ruling
Already, and already Galigajo
Had hilt and pommel gilded in his house.

103-105 Mighty already was the Column Vair,
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifant, and Barucci,
And Galli, and they who for the bushel blush.

106-108 The stock from which were the Calfucci born
Was great already, and already chosen
To curule chairs the Sizii and Arrigucci.

109-111 O how beheld I those who are undone
By their own pride! and how the Balls of Gold
Florence enflowered in all their mighty deeds!

112-114 So likewise did the ancestors of those
Who evermore, when vacant is your church,
Fatten by staying in consistory.

115-117 The insolent race, that like a dragon follows
Whoever flees, and unto him that shows
His teeth or purse is gentle as a lamb,

118-120 Already rising was, but from low people;
So that it pleased not Ubertin Donato
That his wife's father should make him their kin.

121-123 Already had Caponsacco to the Market
From Fesole descended, and already
Giuda and Infangato were good burghers.

124-126 I'll tell a thing incredible, but true;
One entered the small circuit by a gate
Which from the Della Pera took its name!

127-129 Each one that bears the beautiful escutcheon
Of the great baron whose renown and name
The festival of Thomas keepeth fresh,

130-132 Knighthood and privilege from him received;
Though with the populace unites himself
To-day the man who binds it with a border.

133-135 Already were Gualterotti and Importuni;
And still more quiet would the Borgo be
If with new neighbours it remained unfed.

136-138 The house from which is born your lamentation,
Through just disdain that death among you brought
And put an end unto your joyous life,

139-141 Was honoured in itself and its companions.
O Buondelmonte, how in evil hour
Thou fled'st the bridal at another's promptings!

142-144 Many would be rejoicing who are sad,
If God had thee surrendered to the Ema
The first time that thou camest to the city.

145-147 But it behoved the mutilated stone
Which guards the bridge, that Florence should provide
A victim in her latest hour of peace.

148-150 With all these families, and others with them,
Florence beheld I in so great repose,
That no occasion had she whence to weep;

151-153 With all these families beheld so just
And glorious her people, that the lily
Never upon the spear was placed reversed,

154 Nor by division was vermilion made."

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CANTO XVII

✦

1-3 As came to Clymene, to be made certain
Of that which he had heard against himself,
He who makes fathers chary still to children,

4-6 Even such was I, and such was I perceived
By Beatrice and by the holy light
That first on my account had changed its place.

7-9 Therefore my Lady said to me: “Send forth
The flame of thy desire, so that it issue
Imprinted well with the internal stamp;

10-12 Not that our knowledge may be greater made
By speech of thine, but to accustom thee
To tell thy thirst, that we may give thee drink.”

13-15 “O my beloved tree, (that so dost lift thee,
That even as minds terrestrial perceive
No triangle containeth two obtuse,

16-18 So thou beholdest the contingent things
Ere in themselves they are, fixing thine eyes
Upon the point in which all times are present,)

19-21 While I was with Virgilius conjoined
Upon the mountain that the souls doth heal,
And when descending into the dead world,

22-24 Were spoken to me of my future life
Some grievous words; although I feel myself
In sooth foursquare against the blows of chance.

25-27 On this account my wish would be content
To hear what fortune is approaching me,
Because foreseen an arrow comes more slowly."

28-30 Thus did I say unto that selfsame light
That unto me had spoken before; and even
As Beatrice willed was my own will confessed.

31-33 Not in vague phrase, in which the foolish folk
Ensnared themselves of old, ere yet was slain
The Lamb of God who taketh sins away,

34-36 But with clear words and unambiguous
Language responded that paternal love,
Hid and revealed by its own proper smile:

37-39 "Contingency, that outside of the volume
Of your materiality extends not,
Is all depicted in the eternal aspect.

40-42 Necessity however thence it takes not,
Except as from the eye, in which 'tis mirrored,
A ship that with the current down descends.

43-45 From thence, e'en as there cometh to the ear
Sweet harmony from an organ, comes in sight
To me the time that is preparing for thee.

46-48 As forth from Athens went Hippolytus,
By reason of his step-dame false and cruel,
So thou from Florence must perforce depart.

49-51 Already this is willed, and this is sought for;
And soon it shall be done by him who thinks it,
Where every day the Christ is bought and sold.

52-54 The blame shall follow the offended party
In outcry as is usual; but the vengeance
Shall witness to the truth that doth dispense it.

55-57 Thou shalt abandon everything beloved
Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
Which first the bow of banishment shoots forth.

58-60 Thou shalt have proof how savoureth of salt
The bread of others, and how hard a road
The going down and up another's stairs.

61-63 And that which most shall weigh upon thy shoulders
Will be the bad and foolish company
With which into this valley thou shalt fall;

64-66 For all ingrate, all mad and impious
Will they become against thee; but soon after
They, and not thou, shall have the forehead scarlet.

67-69 Of their bestiality their own proceedings
Shall furnish proof; so 'twill be well for thee
A party to have made thee by thyself.

70-72 Thine earliest refuge and thine earliest inn
Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Who on the Ladder bears the holy bird,

73-75 Who such benign regard shall have for thee
That 'twixt you twain, in doing and in asking,
That shall be first which is with others last.

76-78 With him shalt thou see one who at his birth
Has by this star of strength been so impressed,
That notable shall his achievements be.

79-81 Not yet the people are aware of him
Through his young age, since only nine years yet
Around about him have these wheels revolved.

82-84 But ere the Gascon cheat the noble Henry,
Some sparkles of his virtue shall appear
In caring not for silver nor for toil.

85-87 So recognized shall his magnificence
Become hereafter, that his enemies
Will not have power to keep mute tongues about it.

88-90 On him rely, and on his benefits;
By him shall many people be transformed,
Changing condition rich and mendicant;

91-93 And written in thy mind thou hence shalt bear
Of him, but shalt not say it"—and things said he
Incredible to those who shall be present.

94-96 Then added: “Son, these are the commentaries
On what was said to thee; behold the snares
That are concealed behind few revolutions;

97-99 Yet would I not thy neighbours thou shouldst envy,
Because thy life into the future reaches
Beyond the punishment of their perfidies.”

100-102 When by its silence showed that sainted soul
That it had finished putting in the woof
Into that web which I had given it warped,

103-105 Began I, even as he who yearneth after,
Being in doubt, some counsel from a person
Who seeth, and uprightly wills, and loves:

106-108 “Well see I, father mine, how spurreth on
The time towards me such a blow to deal me
As heaviest is to him who most gives way.

109-111 Therefore with foresight it is well I arm me,
That, if the dearest place be taken from me,
I may not lose the others by my songs.

112-114 Down through the world of infinite bitterness,
And o’er the mountain, from whose beauteous summit
The eyes of my own Lady lifted me,

115-117 And afterward through heaven from light to light,
I have learned that which, if I tell again,
Will be a savour of strong herbs to many.

118-120 And if I am a timid friend to truth,
I fear lest I may lose my life with those
Who will hereafter call this time the olden."

121-123 The light in which was smiling my own treasure
Which there I had discovered, flashed at first
As in the sunshine doth a golden mirror;

124-126 Then made reply: "A conscience overcast
Or with its own or with another's shame,
Will taste forsooth the tartness of thy word;

127-129 But ne'ertheless, all falsehood laid aside,
Make manifest thy vision utterly,
And let them scratch wherever is the itch;

130-132 For if thine utterance shall offensive be
At the first taste, a vital nutriment
'Twill leave thereafter, when it is digested.

133-135 This cry of thine shall do as doth the wind,
Which smiteth most the most exalted summits,
And that is no slight argument of honour.

136-138 Therefore are shown to thee within these wheels,
Upon the mount and in the dolorous valley,
Only the souls that unto fame are known;

139-141 Because the spirit of the hearer rests not,
Nor doth confirm its faith by an example
Which has the root of it unknown and hidden,

142 Or other reason that is not apparent.”

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CANTO XVIII



1-3 Now was alone rejoicing in its word
That soul beatified, and I was tasting
My own, the bitter tempering with the sweet,

4-6 And the Lady who to God was leading me
Said: “Change thy thought; consider that I am
Near unto Him who every wrong disburdens.”

7-9 Unto the loving accents of my comfort
I turned me round, and then what love I saw
Within those holy eyes I here relinquish;

10-12 Not only that my language I distrust,
But that my mind cannot return so far
Above itself, unless another guide it.

13-15 Thus much upon that point can I repeat,
That, her again beholding, my affection
From every other longing was released.

16-18 While the eternal pleasure, which direct
Rayed upon Beatrice, from her fair face
Contented me with its reflected aspect,

19-21 Conquering me with the radiance of a smile,
She said to me, "Turn thee about and listen;
Not in mine eyes alone is Paradise."

22-24 Even as sometimes here do we behold
The affection in the look, if it be such
That all the soul is wrapt away by it,

25-27 So, by the flaming of the effulgence holy
To which I turned, I recognized therein
The wish of speaking to me somewhat farther.

28-30 And it began: "In this fifth resting-place
Upon the tree that liveth by its summit,
And aye bears fruit, and never loses leaf,

31-33 Are blessed spirits that below, ere yet
They came to Heaven, were of such great renown
That every Muse therewith would affluent be.

34-36 Therefore look thou upon the cross's horns;
He whom I now shall name will there enact
What doth within a cloud its own swift fire."

37-39 I saw athwart the Cross a splendour drawn
By naming Joshua, (even as he did it,)
Nor noted I the word before the deed;

40-42 And at the name of the great Maccabee
I saw another move itself revolving,
And gladness was the whip unto that top.

43-45 Likewise for Charlemagne and for Orlando,
Two of them my regard attentive followed
As followeth the eye its falcon flying.

46-48 William thereafterward, and Renouard,
And the Duke Godfrey, did attract my sight
Along upon that Cross, and Robert Guiscard.

49-51 Then, moved and mingled with the other lights,
The soul that had addressed me showed how great
An artist 'twas among the heavenly singers.

52-54 To my right side I turned myself around,
My duty to behold in Beatrice
Either by words or gesture signified;

55-57 And so translucent I beheld her eyes,
So full of pleasure, that her countenance
Surpassed its other and its latest wont.

58-60 And as, by feeling greater delectation,
A man in doing good from day to day
Becomes aware his virtue is increasing,

61-63 So I became aware that my gyration
With heaven together had increased its arc,
That miracle beholding more adorned.

64-66 And such as is the change, in little lapse
Of time, in a pale woman, when her face
Is from the load of bashfulness unladen,

67-69 Such was it in mine eyes, when I had turned,
Caused by the whiteness of the temperate star,
The sixth, which to itself had gathered me.

70-72 Within that Jovial torch did I behold
The sparkling of the love which was therein
Delineate our language to mine eyes.

73-75 And even as birds uprisen from the shore,
As in congratulation o'er their food,
Make squadrons of themselves, now round, now long,

76-78 So from within those lights the holy creatures
Sang flying to and fro, and in their figures
Made of themselves now D, now I, now L.

79-81 First singing they to their own music moved;
Then one becoming of these characters,
A little while they rested and were silent.

82-84 O divine Pegasea, thou who genius
Dost glorious make, and render it long-lived,
And this through thee the cities and the kingdoms,

85-87 Illume me with thyself, that I may bring
Their figures out as I have them conceived!
Apparent be thy power in these brief verses!

88-90 Themselves then they displayed in five times seven
Vowels and consonants; and I observed
The parts as they seemed spoken unto me.

91-93 'Diligite justitiam,' these were
First verb and noun of all that was depicted;
'Qui judicatis terram' were the last.

94-96 Thereafter in the M of the fifth word
Remained they so arranged, that Jupiter
Seemed to be silver there with gold inlaid.

97-99 And other lights I saw descend where was
The summit of the M, and pause there singing
The good, I think, that draws them to itself.

100-102 Then, as in striking upon burning logs
Upward there fly innumerable sparks,
Whence fools are wont to look for auguries,

103-105 More than a thousand lights seemed thence to rise,
And to ascend, some more, and others less,
Even as the Sun that lights them had allotted;

106-108 And, each one being quiet in its place,
The head and neck beheld I of an eagle
Delineated by that inlaid fire.

109-111 He who there paints has none to be his guide;
But Himself guides; and is from Him remembered
That virtue which is form unto the nest.

112-114 The other beatitude, that contented seemed
At first to bloom a lily on the M,
By a slight motion followed out the imprint.

115-117 O gentle star! what and how many gems
Did demonstrate to me, that all our justice
Effect is of that heaven which thou ingemmest!

118-120 Wherefore I pray the Mind, in which begin
Thy motion and thy virtue, to regard
Whence comes the smoke that vitiates thy rays;

121-123 So that a second time it now be wroth
With buying and with selling in the temple
Whose walls were built with signs and martyrdoms!

124-126 O soldiery of heaven, whom I contemplate,
Implore for those who are upon the earth
All gone astray after the bad example!

127-129 Once 'twas the custom to make war with swords;
But now 'tis made by taking here and there
The bread the pitying Father shuts from none.

130-132 Yet thou, who writest but to cancel, think
That Peter and that Paul, who for this vineyard
Which thou art spoiling died, are still alive!

133-135 Well canst thou say: “So steadfast my desire
Is unto him who willed to live alone,
And for a dance was led to martyrdom,

136 That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul.”

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CANTO XIX



1-3 Appeared before me with its wings outspread
The beautiful image that in sweet fruition
Made jubilant the interwoven souls;

4-6 Appeared a little ruby each, wherein
Ray of the sun was burning so enkindled
That each into mine eyes refracted it.

7-9 And what it now behoves me to retrace
Nor voice has e'er reported, nor ink written,
Nor was by fantasy e'er comprehended;

10-12 For speak I saw, and likewise heard, the beak,
And utter with its voice both 'I' and 'My,'
When in conception it was 'We' and 'Our.'

13-15 And it began: “Being just and merciful
Am I exalted here unto that glory
Which cannot be exceeded by desire;

16-18 And upon earth I left my memory
Such, that the evil-minded people there
Commend it, but continue not the story.”

19-21 So doth a single heat from many embers
Make itself felt, even as from many loves
Issued a single sound from out that image.

22-24 Whence I thereafter: “O perpetual flowers
Of the eternal joy, that only one
Make me perceive your odours manifold,

25-27 Exhaling, break within me the great fast
Which a long season has in hunger held me,
Not finding for it any food on earth.

28-30 Well do I know, that if in heaven its mirror
Justice Divine another realm doth make,
Yours apprehends it not through any veil.

31-33 You know how I attentively address me
To listen; and you know what is the doubt
That is in me so very old a fast.”

34-36 Even as a falcon, issuing from his hood,
Doth move his head, and with his wings applaud him,
Showing desire, and making himself fine,

37-39 Saw I become that standard, which of lauds
Was interwoven of the grace divine,
With such songs as he knows who there rejoices.

40-42 Then it began: “He who a compass turned
On the world’s outer verge, and who within it
Devised so much occult and manifest,

43-45 Could not the impress of his power so make
On all the universe, as that his Word
Should not remain in infinite excess.

46-48 And this makes certain that the first proud being,
Who was the paragon of every creature,
By not awaiting light fell immature.

49-51 And hence appears it, that each minor nature
Is scant receptacle unto that good
Which has no end, and by itself is measured.

52-54 In consequence our vision, which perforce
Must be some ray of that intelligence
With which all things whatever are replete,

55-57 Cannot in its own nature be so potent,
That it shall not its origin discern
Far beyond that which is apparent to it.

58-60 Therefore into the justice sempiternal
The power of vision that your world receives,
As eye into the ocean, penetrates;

61-63 Which, though it see the bottom near the shore,
Upon the deep perceives it not, and yet
'Tis there, but it is hidden by the depth.

64-66 There is no light but comes from the serene
That never is o'ercast, nay, it is darkness
Or shadow of the flesh, or else its poison.

67-69 Amply to thee is opened now the cavern
Which has concealed from thee the living justice
Of which thou mad'st such frequent questioning.

70-72 For saidst thou: 'Born a man is on the shore
Of Indus, and is none who there can speak
Of Christ, nor who can read, nor who can write;

73-75 And all his inclinations and his actions
Are good, so far as human reason sees,
Without a sin in life or in discourse:

76-78 He dieth unbaptised and without faith;
Where is this justice that condemneth him?
Where is his fault, if he do not believe?'

79-81 Now who art thou, that on the bench wouldst sit
In judgment at a thousand miles away,
With the short vision of a single span?

82-84 Truly to him who with me subtilizes,
If so the Scripture were not over you,
For doubting there were marvellous occasion.

85-87 O animals terrene, O stolid minds,
The primal will, that in itself is good,
Ne'er from itself, the Good Supreme, has moved.

88-90 So much is just as is accordant with it;
No good created draws it to itself,
But it, by raying forth, occasions that."

91-93 Even as above her nest goes circling round
The stork when she has fed her little ones,
And he who has been fed looks up at her,

94-96 So lifted I my brows, and even such
Became the blessed image, which its wings
Was moving, by so many counsels urged.

97-99 Circling around it sang, and said: "As are
My notes to thee, who dost not comprehend them,
Such is the eternal judgment to you mortals."

100-102 Those lucent splendours of the Holy Spirit
Grew quiet then, but still within the standard
That made the Romans reverend to the world.

103-105 It recommenced: "Unto this kingdom never
Ascended one who had not faith in Christ,
Before or since he to the tree was nailed.

106-108 But look thou, many crying are, 'Christ, Christ!'
Who at the judgment shall be far less near
To him than some shall be who knew not Christ.

109-111 Such Christians shall the Ethiop condemn,
When the two companies shall be divided,
The one for ever rich, the other poor.

112-114 What to your kings may not the Persians say,
When they that volume opened shall behold
In which are written down all their dispraises?

115-117 There shall be seen, among the deeds of Albert,
That which ere long shall set the pen in motion,
For which the realm of Prague shall be deserted.

118-120 There shall be seen the woe that on the Seine
He brings by falsifying of the coin,
Who by the blow of a wild boar shall die.

121-123 There shall be seen the pride that causes thirst,
Which makes the Scot and Englishman so mad
That they within their boundaries cannot rest;

124-126 Be seen the luxury and effeminate life
Of him of Spain, and the Bohemian,
Who valour never knew and never wished;

127-129 Be seen the Cripple of Jerusalem,
His goodness represented by an I,
While the reverse an M shall represent;

130-132 Be seen the avarice and poltroonery
Of him who guards the Island of the Fire,
Wherein Anchises finished his long life;

133-135 And to declare how pitiful he is
Shall be his record in contracted letters
Which shall make note of much in little space.

136-138 And shall appear to each one the foul deeds
Of uncle and of brother who a nation
So famous have dishonoured, and two crowns.

139-141 And he of Portugal and he of Norway
Shall there be known, and he of Rascia too,
Who saw in evil hour the coin of Venice.

142-144 O happy Hungary, if she let herself
Be wronged no farther! and Navarre the happy,
If with the hills that gird her she be armed!

145-147 And each one may believe that now, as hansel
Thereof, do Nicosia and Famagosta
Lament and rage because of their own beast,

148 Who from the others' flank departeth not."

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CANTO XX



1-3 When he who all the world illuminates
Out of our hemisphere so far descends
That on all sides the daylight is consumed,

4-6 The heaven, that erst by him alone was kindled,
Doth suddenly reveal itself again
By many lights, wherein is one resplendent.

7-9 And came into my mind this act of heaven,
When the ensign of the world and of its leaders
Had silent in the blessed beak become;

10-12 Because those living luminaries all,
By far more luminous, did songs begin
Lapsing and falling from my memory.

13-15 O gentle Love, that with a smile dost cloak thee,
How ardent in those sparks didst thou appear,
That had the breath alone of holy thoughts!

16-18 After the precious and pellucid crystals,
With which begemmed the sixth light I beheld,
Silence imposed on the angelic bells,

19-21 I seemed to hear the murmuring of a river
That clear descendeth down from rock to rock,
Showing the affluence of its mountain-top.

22-24 And as the sound upon the cithern's neck
Taketh its form, and as upon the vent
Of rustic pipe the wind that enters it,

25-27 Even thus, relieved from the delay of waiting,
That murmuring of the eagle mounted up
Along its neck, as if it had been hollow.

28-30 There it became a voice, and issued thence
From out its beak, in such a form of words
As the heart waited for wherein I wrote them.

31-33 "The part in me which sees and bears the sun
In mortal eagles," it began to me,
"Now fixedly must needs be looked upon;

34-36 For of the fires of which I make my figure,
Those whence the eye doth sparkle in my head
Of all their orders the supremest are.

37-39 He who is shining in the midst as pupil
Was once the singer of the Holy Spirit,
Who bore the ark from city unto city;

40-42 Now knoweth he the merit of his song,
In so far as effect of his own counsel,
By the reward which is commensurate.

43-45 Of five, that make a circle for my brow,
He that approacheth nearest to my beak
Did the poor widow for her son console;

46-48 Now knoweth he how dearly it doth cost
Not following Christ, by the experience
Of this sweet life and of its opposite.

49-51 He who comes next in the circumference
Of which I speak, upon its highest arc,
Did death postpone by penitence sincere;

52-54 Now knoweth he that the eternal judgment
Suffers no change, albeit worthy prayer
Maketh below to-morrow of to-day.

55-57 The next who follows, with the laws and me,
Under the good intent that bore bad fruit
Became a Greek by ceding to the pastor;

58-60 Now knoweth he how all the ill deduced
From his good action is not harmful to him,
Although the world thereby may be destroyed.

61-63 And he, whom in the downward arc thou seest,
Guglielmo was, whom the same land deplores
That weepeth Charles and Frederick yet alive;

64-66 Now knoweth he how heaven enamoured is
With a just king; and in the outward show
Of his effulgence he reveals it still.

67-69 Who would believe, down in the errant world,
That e'er the Trojan Ripheus in this round
Could be the fifth one of the holy lights?

70-72 Now knoweth he enough of what the world
Has not the power to see of grace divine,
Although his sight may not discern the bottom."

73-75 Like as a lark that in the air expatiates,
First singing and then silent with content
Of the last sweetness that doth satisfy her,

76-78 Such seemed to me the image of the imprint
Of the eternal pleasure, by whose will
Doth everything become the thing it is.

79-81 And notwithstanding to my doubt I was
As glass is to the colour that invests it,
To wait the time in silence it endured not,

82-84 But forth from out my mouth, "What things are these?"
Extorted with the force of its own weight;
Whereat I saw great joy of coruscation.

85-87 Thereafterward with eye still more enkindled
The blessed standard made to me reply,
To keep me not in wonderment suspended:

88-90 "I see that thou believest in these things
Because I say them, but thou seest not how;
So that, although believed in, they are hidden.

91-93 Thou doest as he doth who a thing by name
Well apprehendeth, but its quiddity
Cannot perceive, unless another show it.

94-96 'Regnum coelorum' suffereth violence
From fervent love, and from that living hope
That overcometh the Divine volition;

97-99 Not in the guise that man o'ercometh man,
But conquers it because it will be conquered,
And conquered conquers by benignity.

100-102 The first life of the eyebrow and the fifth
Cause thee astonishment, because with them
Thou seest the region of the angels painted.

103-105 They passed not from their bodies, as thou thinkest,
Gentiles, but Christians in the steadfast faith
Of feet that were to suffer and had suffered.

106-108 For one from Hell, where no one e'er turns back
Unto good will, returned unto his bones,
And that of living hope was the reward,—

109-111 Of living hope, that placed its efficacy
In prayers to God made to resuscitate him,
So that 'twere possible to move his will.

112-114 The glorious soul concerning which I speak,
Returning to the flesh, where brief its stay,
Believed in Him who had the power to aid it;

115-117 And, in believing, kindled to such fire
Of genuine love, that at the second death
Worthy it was to come unto this joy.

118-120 The other one, through grace, that from so deep
A fountain wells that never hath the eye
Of any creature reached its primal wave,

121-123 Set all his love below on righteousness;
Wherefore from grace to grace did God unclose
His eye to our redemption yet to be,

124-126 Whence he believed therein, and suffered not
From that day forth the stench of paganism,
And he reproved therefor the folk perverse.

127-129 Those Maidens three, whom at the right-hand wheel
Thou didst behold, were unto him for baptism
More than a thousand years before baptizing.

130-132 O thou predestination, how remote
Thy root is from the aspect of all those
Who the First Cause do not behold entire!

133-135 And you, O mortals! hold yourselves restrained
In judging; for ourselves, who look on God,
We do not know as yet all the elect;

136-138 And sweet to us is such a deprivation,
Because our good in this good is made perfect,
That whatsoe'er God wills, we also will."

139-141 After this manner by that shape divine,
To make clear in me my short-sightedness,
Was given to me a pleasant medicine;

142-144 And as good singer a good lutanist
Accompanies with vibrations of the chords,
Whereby more pleasantness the song acquires,

145-147 So, while it spake, do I remember me
That I beheld both of those blessed lights,
Even as the winking of the eyes concords,

148 Moving unto the words their little flames.

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CANTO XXI



1-3 Already on my Lady's face mine eyes
Again were fastened, and with these my mind,
And from all other purpose was withdrawn;

4-6 And she smiled not; but "If I were to smile,"
She unto me began, "thou wouldst become
Like Semele, when she was turned to ashes.

7-9 Because my beauty, that along the stairs
Of the eternal palace more enkindles,
As thou hast seen, the farther we ascend,

10-12 If it were tempered not, is so resplendent
That all thy mortal power in its effulgence
Would seem a leaflet that the thunder crushes.

13-15 We are uplifted to the seventh splendour,
That underneath the burning Lion's breast
Now radiates downward mingled with his power.

16-18 Fix in direction of thine eyes the mind,
And make of them a mirror for the figure
That in this mirror shall appear to thee."

19-21 He who could know what was the pasturage
My sight had in that blessed countenance,
When I transferred me to another care,

22-24 Would recognize how grateful was to me
Obedience unto my celestial escort,
By counterpoising one side with the other.

25-27 Within the crystal which, around the world
Revolving, bears the name of its dear leader,
Under whom every wickedness lay dead,

28-30 Coloured like gold, on which the sunshine gleams,
A stairway I beheld to such a height
Uplifted, that mine eye pursued it not.

31-33 Likewise beheld I down the steps descending
So many splendours, that I thought each light
That in the heaven appears was there diffused.

34-36 And as accordant with their natural custom
The rooks together at the break of day
Bestir themselves to warm their feathers cold;

37-39 Then some of them fly off without return,
Others come back to where they started from,
And others, wheeling round, still keep at home;

40-42 Such fashion it appeared to me was there
Within the sparkling that together came,
As soon as on a certain step it struck,

43-45 And that which nearest unto us remained
Became so clear, that in my thought I said,
"Well I perceive the love thou showest me;

46-48 But she, from whom I wait the how and when
Of speech and silence, standeth still; whence I
Against desire do well if I ask not."

49-51 She thereupon, who saw my silentness
In the sight of Him who seeth everything,
Said unto me, "Let loose thy warm desire."

52-54 And I began: "No merit of my own
Renders me worthy of response from thee;
But for her sake who granteth me the asking,

55-57 Thou blessed life that dost remain concealed
In thy beatitude, make known to me
The cause which draweth thee so near my side;

58-60 And tell me why is silent in this wheel
The dulcet symphony of Paradise,
That through the rest below sounds so devoutly."

61-63 “Thou hast thy hearing mortal as thy sight,”
It answer made to me; “they sing not here,
For the same cause that Beatrice has not smiled.

64-66 Thus far adown the holy stairway’s steps
Have I descended but to give thee welcome
With words, and with the light that mantles me;

67-69 Nor did more love cause me to be more ready,
For love as much and more up there is burning,
As doth the flaming manifest to thee.

70-72 But the high charity, that makes us servants
Prompt to the counsel which controls the world,
Allotteth here, even as thou dost observe.”

73-75 “I see full well,” said I, “O sacred lamp!
How love unfettered in this court sufficeth
To follow the eternal Providence;

76-78 But this is what seems hard for me to see,
Wherefore predestinate wast thou alone
Unto this office from among thy consorts.”

79-81 No sooner had I come to the last word,
Than of its middle made the light a centre,
Whirling itself about like a swift millstone.

82-84 When answer made the love that was therein:
“On me directed is a light divine,
Piercing through this in which I am embosomed,

85-87 Of which the virtue with my sight conjoined
Lifts me above myself so far, I see
The supreme essence from which this is drawn.

88-90 Hence comes the joyfulness with which I flame,
For to my sight, as far as it is clear,
The clearness of the flame I equal make.

91-93 But that soul in the heaven which is most pure,
That seraph which his eye on God most fixes,
Could this demand of thine not satisfy;

94-96 Because so deeply sinks in the abyss
Of the eternal statute what thou askest,
From all created sight it is cut off.

97-99 And to the mortal world, when thou returnest,
This carry back, that it may not presume
Longer tow'rd such a goal to move its feet.

100-102 The mind, that shineth here, on earth doth smoke;
From this observe how can it do below
That which it cannot though the heaven assume it?"

103-105 Such limit did its words prescribe to me,
The question I relinquished, and restricted
Myself to ask it humbly who it was.

106-108 "Between two shores of Italy rise cliffs,
And not far distant from thy native place,
So high, the thunders far below them sound,

109-111 And form a ridge that Catria is called,
'Neath which is consecrate a hermitage
Wont to be dedicate to worship only."

112-114 Thus unto me the third speech recommenced,
And then, continuing, it said: "Therein
Unto God's service I became so steadfast,

115-117 That feeding only on the juice of olives
Lightly I passed away the heats and frosts,
Contented in my thoughts contemplative.

118-120 That cloister used to render to these heavens
Abundantly, and now is empty grown,
So that perforce it soon must be revealed.

121-123 I in that place was Peter Damiano;
And Peter the Sinner was I in the house
Of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.

124-126 Little of mortal life remained to me,
When I was called and dragged forth to the hat
Which shifteth evermore from bad to worse.

127-129 Came Cephas, and the mighty Vessel came
Of the Holy Spirit, meagre and barefooted,
Taking the food of any hostelry.

130-132 Now some one to support them on each side
The modern shepherds need, and some to lead them,
So heavy are they, and to hold their trains.

133-135 They cover up their palfreys with their cloaks,
So that two beasts go underneath one skin;
O Patience, that dost tolerate so much!”

136-138 At this voice saw I many little flames
From step to step descending and revolving,
And every revolution made them fairer.

139-141 Round about this one came they and stood still,
And a cry uttered of so loud a sound,
It here could find no parallel, nor I

142 Distinguished it, the thunder so o’ercame me.

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CANTO XXII

✦

1-3 Oppressed with stupor, I unto my guide
Turned like a little child who always runs
For refuge there where he confideth most;

4-6 And she, even as a mother who straightway
Gives comfort to her pale and breathless boy
With voice whose wont it is to reassure him,

7-9 Said to me: “Knowest thou not thou art in heaven,
And knowest thou not that heaven is holy all
And what is done here cometh from good zeal?

10-12 After what wise the singing would have changed thee
And I by smiling, thou canst now imagine,
Since that the cry has startled thee so much,

13-15 In which if thou hadst understood its prayers
Already would be known to thee the vengeance
Which thou shalt look upon before thou diest.

16-18 The sword above here smiteth not in haste
Nor tardily, howe’er it seem to him
Who fearing or desiring waits for it.

19-21 But turn thee round towards the others now,
For very illustrious spirits shalt thou see,
If thou thy sight directest as I say.”

22-24 As it seemed good to her mine eyes I turned,
And saw a hundred spherules that together
With mutual rays each other more embellished.

25-27 I stood as one who in himself represses
The point of his desire, and ventures not
To question, he so feareth the too much.

28-30 And now the largest and most luculent
Among those pearls came forward, that it might
Make my desire concerning it content.

31-33 Within it then I heard: "If thou couldst see
Even as myself the charity that burns
Among us, thy conceits would be expressed;

34-36 But, that by waiting thou mayst not come late
To the high end, I will make answer even
Unto the thought of which thou art so chary.

37-39 That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands
Was frequented of old upon its summit
By a deluded folk and ill-disposed;

40-42 And I am he who first up thither bore
The name of Him who brought upon the earth
The truth that so much sublimateth us.

43-45 And such abundant grace upon me shone
That all the neighbouring towns I drew away
From the impious worship that seduced the world.

46-48 These other fires, each one of them, were men
Contemplative, enkindled by that heat
Which maketh holy flowers and fruits spring up.

49-51 Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus,
Here are my brethren, who within the cloisters
Their footsteps stayed and kept a steadfast heart."

52-54 And I to him: "The affection which thou showest
Speaking with me, and the good countenance
Which I behold and note in all your ardours,

55-57 In me have so my confidence dilated
As the sun doth the rose, when it becomes
As far unfolded as it hath the power.

58-60 Therefore I pray, and thou assure me, father,
If I may so much grace receive, that I
May thee behold with countenance unveiled."

61-63 He thereupon: "Brother, thy high desire
In the remotest sphere shall be fulfilled,
Where are fulfilled all others and my own.

64-66 There perfect is, and ripened, and complete,
Every desire; within that one alone
Is every part where it has always been;

67-69 For it is not in space, nor turns on poles,
And unto it our stairway reaches up,
Whence thus from out thy sight it steals away.

70-72 Up to that height the Patriarch Jacob saw it
Extending its supernal part, what time
So thronged with angels it appeared to him.

73-75 But to ascend it now no one uplifts
His feet from off the earth, and now my Rule
Below remaineth for mere waste of paper.

76-78 The walls that used of old to be an Abbey
Are changed to dens of robbers, and the cowls
Are sacks filled full of miserable flour.

79-81 But heavy usury is not taken up
So much against God's pleasure as that fruit
Which maketh so insane the heart of monks;

82-84 For whatsoever hath the Church in keeping
Is for the folk that ask it in God's name,
Not for one's kindred or for something worse.

85-87 The flesh of mortals is so very soft,
That good beginnings down below suffice not
From springing of the oak to bearing acorns.

88-90 Peter began with neither gold nor silver,
And I with orison and abstinence,
And Francis with humility his convent.

91-93 And if thou lookest at each one's beginning,
And then regardest whither he has run,
Thou shalt behold the white changed into brown.

94-96 In verity the Jordan backward turned,
And the sea's fleeing, when God willed were more
A wonder to behold, than succour here."

97-99 Thus unto me he said; and then withdrew
To his own band, and the band closed together;
Then like a whirlwind all was upward rapt.

100-102 The gentle Lady urged me on behind them
Up o'er that stairway by a single sign,
So did her virtue overcome my nature;

103-105 Nor here below, where one goes up and down
By natural law, was motion e'er so swift
That it could be compared unto my wing.

106-108 Reader, as I may unto that devout
Triumph return, on whose account I often
For my transgressions weep and beat my breast,—

109-111 Thou hadst not thrust thy finger in the fire
And drawn it out again, before I saw
The sign that follows Taurus, and was in it.

112-114 O glorious stars, O light impregnated
With mighty virtue, from which I acknowledge
All of my genius, whatsoe'er it be,

115-117 With you was born, and hid himself with you,
He who is father of all mortal life,
When first I tasted of the Tuscan air;

118-120 And then when grace was freely given to me
To enter the high wheel which turns you round,
Your region was allotted unto me.

121-123 To you devoutly at this hour my soul
Is sighing, that it virtue may acquire
For the stern pass that draws it to itself.

124-126 "Thou art so near unto the last salvation,"
Thus Beatrice began, "thou oughtest now
To have thine eves unclouded and acute;

127-129 And therefore, ere thou enter farther in,
Look down once more, and see how vast a world
Thou hast already put beneath thy feet;

130-132 So that thy heart, as jocund as it may,
Present itself to the triumphant throng
That comes rejoicing through this rounded ether."

133-135 I with my sight returned through one and all
The sevenfold spheres, and I beheld this globe
Such that I smiled at its ignoble semblance;

136-138 And that opinion I approve as best
Which doth account it least; and he who thinks
Of something else may truly be called just.

139-141 I saw the daughter of Latona shining
Without that shadow, which to me was cause
That once I had believed her rare and dense.

142-144 The aspect of thy son, Hyperion,
Here I sustained, and saw how move themselves
Around and near him Maia and Dione.

145-147 Thence there appeared the temperateness of Jove
'Twixt son and father, and to me was clear
The change that of their whereabout they make;

148-150 And all the seven made manifest to me
How great they are, and eke how swift they are,
And how they are in distant habitations.

151-153 The threshing-floor that maketh us so proud,
To me revolving with the eternal Twins,
Was all apparent made from hill to harbour!

154 Then to the beauteous eyes mine eyes I turned.

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CANTO XXIII

✦

1-3 Even as a bird, 'mid the beloved leaves,
Quiet upon the nest of her sweet brood
Throughout the night, that hideth all things from us,

4-6 Who, that she may behold their longed-for looks
And find the food wherewith to nourish them,
In which, to her, grave labours grateful are,

7-9 Anticipates the time on open spray
And with an ardent longing waits the sun,
Gazing intent as soon as breaks the dawn:

10-12 Even thus my Lady standing was, erect
And vigilant, turned round towards the zone
Underneath which the sun displays less haste;

13-15 So that beholding her distraught and wistful,
Such I became as he is who desiring
For something yearns, and hoping is appeased.

16-18 But brief the space from one When to the other;
Of my awaiting, say I, and the seeing
The welkin grow resplendent more and more.

19-21 And Beatrice exclaimed: "Behold the hosts
Of Christ's triumphal march, and all the fruit
Harvested by the rolling of these spheres!"

22-24 It seemed to me her face was all aflame;
And eyes she had so full of ecstasy
That I must needs pass on without describing.

25-27 As when in nights serene of the full moon
Smiles Trivia among the nymphs eternal
Who paint the firmament through all its gulfs,

28-30 Saw I, above the myriads of lamps,
A Sun that one and all of them enkindled,
E'en as our own doth the supernal sights,

31-33 And through the living light transparent shone
The lucent substance so intensely clear
Into my sight, that I sustained it not.

34-36 O Beatrice, thou gentle guide and dear!
To me she said: "What overmasters thee
A virtue is from which naught shields itself.

37-39 There are the wisdom and the omnipotence
That oped the thoroughfares 'twixt heaven and earth,
For which there erst had been so long a yearning."

40-42 As fire from out a cloud unlocks itself,
Dilating so it finds not room therein,
And down, against its nature, falls to earth,

43-45 So did my mind, among those aliments
Becoming larger, issue from itself,
And that which it became cannot remember.

46-48 "Open thine eyes, and look at what I am:
Thou hast beheld such things, that strong enough
Hast thou become to tolerate my smile."

49-51 I was as one who still retains the feeling
Of a forgotten vision, and endeavours
In vain to bring it back into his mind,

52-54 When I this invitation heard, deserving
Of so much gratitude, it never fades
Out of the book that chronicles the past.

55-57 If at this moment sounded all the tongues
That Polyhymnia and her sisters made
Most lubrical with their delicious milk,

58-60 To aid me, to a thousandth of the truth
It would not reach, singing the holy smile
And how the holy aspect it illumed.

61-63 And therefore, representing Paradise,
The sacred poem must perforce leap over,
Even as a man who finds his way cut off;

64-66 But whoso thinketh of the ponderous theme,
And of the mortal shoulder laden with it,
Should blame it not, if under this it tremble.

67-69 It is no passage for a little boat
This which goes cleaving the audacious prow,
Nor for a pilot who would spare himself.

70-72 "Why doth my face so much enamour thee,
That to the garden fair thou turnest not,
Which under the rays of Christ is blossoming?

73-75 There is the Rose in which the Word Divine
Became incarnate; there the lilies are
By whose perfume the good way was discovered."

76-78 Thus Beatrice; and I, who to her counsels
Was wholly ready, once again betook me
Unto the battle of the feeble brows.

79-81 As in the sunshine, that unsullied streams
Through fractured cloud, ere now a meadow of flowers
Mine eyes with shadow covered o'er have seen,

82-84 So troops of splendours manifold I saw
Illumined from above with burning rays,
Beholding not the source of the effulgence.

85-87 O power benignant that dost so imprint them!
Thou didst exalt thyself to give more scope
There to mine eyes, that were not strong enough.

88-90 The name of that fair flower I e'er invoke
Morning and evening utterly enthralled
My soul to gaze upon the greater fire.

91-93 And when in both mine eyes depicted were
The glory and greatness of the living star
Which there excelleth, as it here excelled,

94-96 Athwart the heavens a little torch descended
Formed in a circle like a coronal,
And cinctured it, and whirled itself about it.

97-99 Whatever melody most sweetly soundeth
On earth, and to itself most draws the soul,
Would seem a cloud that, rent asunder, thunders,

100-102 Compared unto the sounding of that lyre
Wherewith was crowned the sapphire beautiful,
Which gives the clearest heaven its sapphire hue.

103-105 "I am Angelic Love, that circle round
The joy sublime which breathes from out the womb
That was the hostelry of our Desire;

106-108 And I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, while
Thou followest thy Son, and mak'st diviner
The sphere supreme, because thou enterest there."

109-111 Thus did the circulated melody
Seal itself up; and all the other lights
Were making to resound the name of Mary.

112-114 The regal mantle of the volumes all
Of that world, which most fervid is and living
With breath of God and with his works and ways,

115-117 Extended over us its inner border,
So very distant, that the semblance of it
There where I was not yet appeared to me.

118-120 Therefore mine eyes did not possess the power
Of following the incoronated flame,
Which mounted upward near to its own seed.

121-123 And as a little child, that towards its mother
Stretches its arms, when it the milk has taken,
Through impulse kindled into outward flame,

124-126 Each of those gleams of whiteness upward reached
So with its summit, that the deep affection
They had for Mary was revealed to me.

127-129 Thereafter they remained there in my sight,
'Regina coeli' singing with such sweetness,
That ne'er from me has the delight departed.

130-132 O, what exuberance is garnered up
Within those richest coffers, which had been
Good husbandmen for sowing here below!

133-135 There they enjoy and live upon the treasure
Which was acquired while weeping in the exile
Of Babylon, wherein the gold was left.

136-138 There triumpheth, beneath the exalted Son
Of God and Mary, in his victory,
Both with the ancient council and the new,

139 He who doth keep the keys of such a glory.

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CANTO XXIV

✦

1-3 "O company elect to the great supper
Of the Lamb benedight, who feedeth you
So that for ever full is your desire,

4-6 If by the grace of God this man foretaste
Something of that which falleth from your table,
Or ever death prescribe to him the time,

7-9 Direct your mind to his immense desire,
And him somewhat bedew; ye drinking are
For ever at the fount whence comes his thought."

10-12 Thus Beatrice; and those souls beatified
Transformed themselves to spheres on steadfast poles,
Flaming intensely in the guise of comets.

13-15 And as the wheels in works of horologes
Revolve so that the first to the beholder
Motionless seems, and the last one to fly,

16-18 So in like manner did those carols, dancing
In different measure, of their affluence
Give me the gauge, as they were swift or slow.

19-21 From that one which I noted of most beauty
Beheld I issue forth a fire so happy
That none it left there of a greater brightness;

22-24 And around Beatrice three several times
It whirled itself with so divine a song,
My fantasy repeats it not to me;

25-27 Therefore the pen skips, and I write it not,
Since our imagination for such folds,
Much more our speech, is of a tint too glaring.

28-30 "O holy sister mine, who us implorest
With such devotion, by thine ardent love
Thou dost unbind me from that beautiful sphere!"

31-33 Thereafter, having stopped, the blessed fire
Unto my Lady did direct its breath,
Which spake in fashion as I here have said.

34-36 And she: "O light eterne of the great man
To whom our Lord delivered up the keys
He carried down of this miraculous joy,

37-39 This one examine on points light and grave,
As good beseemeth thee, about the Faith
By means of which thou on the sea didst walk.

40-42 If he love well, and hope well, and believe,
From thee 'tis hid not; for thou hast thy sight
There where depicted everything is seen.

43-45 But since this kingdom has made citizens
By means of the true Faith, to glorify it
'Tis well he have the chance to speak thereof."

46-48 As baccalaureate arms himself, and speaks not
Until the master doth propose the question,
To argue it, and not to terminate it,

49-51 So did I arm myself with every reason,
While she was speaking, that I might be ready
For such a questioner and such profession.

52-54 "Say, thou good Christian; manifest thyself;
What is the Faith?" Whereat I raised my brow
Unto that light wherefrom was this breathed forth.

55-57 Then turned I round to Beatrice, and she
Prompt signals made to me that I should pour
The water forth from my internal fountain.

58-60 "May grace, that suffers me to make confession,"
Began I, "to the great centurion,
Cause my conceptions all to be explicit!"

61-63 And I continued: "As the truthful pen,
Father, of thy dear brother wrote of it,
Who put with thee Rome into the good way,

64-66 Faith is the substance of the things we hope for,
And evidence of those that are not seen;
And this appears to me its quiddity."

67-69 Then heard I: "Very rightly thou perceivest,
If well thou understandest why he placed it
With substances and then with evidences."

70-72 And I thereafterward: “The things profound,
That here vouchsafe to me their apparition,
Unto all eyes below are so concealed,

73-75 That they exist there only in belief,
Upon the which is founded the high hope,
And hence it takes the nature of a substance.

76-78 And it behoveth us from this belief
To reason without having other sight,
And hence it has the nature of evidence.”

79-81 Then heard I: “If whatever is acquired
Below by doctrine were thus understood,
No sophist’s subtlety would there find place.”

82-84 Thus was breathed forth from that enkindled love;
Then added: “Very well has been gone over
Already of this coin the alloy and weight;

85-87 But tell me if thou hast it in thy purse?”
And I: “Yes, both so shining and so round
That in its stamp there is no peradventure.”

88-90 Thereafter issued from the light profound
That there resplendent was: “This precious jewel,
Upon the which is every virtue founded,

91-93 Whence hadst thou it?” And I: “The large outpouring
Of Holy Spirit, which has been diffused
Upon the ancient parchments and the new,

94-96 A syllogism is, which proved it to me
With such acuteness, that, compared therewith,
All demonstration seems to me obtuse."

97-99 And then I heard: "The ancient and the new
Postulates, that to thee are so conclusive,
Why dost thou take them for the word divine?"

100-102 And I: "The proofs, which show the truth to me,
Are the works subsequent, whereunto Nature
Ne'er heated iron yet, nor anvil beat."

103-105 'Twas answered me: "Say, who assureth thee
That those works ever were? the thing itself
That must be proved, nought else to thee affirms it."

106-108 "Were the world to Christianity converted,"
I said, "withouten miracles, this one
Is such, the rest are not its hundredth part;

109-111 Because that poor and fasting thou didst enter
Into the field to sow there the good plant,
Which was a vine and has become a thorn!"

112-114 This being finished, the high, holy Court
Resounded through the spheres, "One God we praise!"
In melody that there above is chanted.

115-117 And then that Baron, who from branch to branch,
Examining, had thus conducted me,
Till the extremest leaves we were approaching,

118-120 Again began: “The Grace that dallying
Plays with thine intellect thy mouth has opened,
Up to this point, as it should opened be,

121-123 So that I do approve what forth emerged;
But now thou must express what thou believest,
And whence to thy belief it was presented.”

124-126 “O holy father, spirit who beholdest
What thou believedst so that thou o’ercamest,
Towards the sepulchre, more youthful feet,”

127-129 Began I, “thou dost wish me in this place
The form to manifest of my prompt belief,
And likewise thou the cause thereof demandest.

130-132 And I respond: In one God I believe,
Sole and eterne, who moveth all the heavens
With love and with desire, himself unmoved;

133-135 And of such faith not only have I proofs
Physical and metaphysical, but gives them
Likewise the truth that from this place rains down

136-138 Through Moses, through the Prophets and the Psalms,
Through the Evangel, and through you, who wrote
After the fiery Spirit sanctified you;

139-141 In Persons three eterne believe, and these
One essence I believe, so one and trine
They bear conjunction both with ‘sunt’ and ‘est.’

142-144 With the profound condition and divine
Which now I touch upon, doth stamp my mind
Ofttimes the doctrine evangelical.

145-147 This the beginning is, this is the spark
Which afterwards dilates to vivid flame,
And, like a star in heaven, is sparkling in me.”

148-150 Even as a lord who hears what pleaseth him
His servant straight embraces, gratulating
For the good news as soon as he is silent;

151-153 So, giving me its benediction, singing,
Three times encircled me, when I was silent,
The apostolic light, at whose command

154 I spoken had, in speaking I so pleased him.

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CANTO XXV

✦

1-3 If e'er it happen that the Poem Sacred,
To which both heaven and earth have set their hand,
So that it many a year hath made me lean,

4-6 O'ercome the cruelty that bars me out
From the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slumbered,
An enemy to the wolves that war upon it,

7-9 With other voice forthwith, with other fleece
Poet will I return, and at my font
Baptismal will I take the laurel crown;

10-12 Because into the Faith that maketh known
All souls to God there entered I, and then
Peter for her sake thus my brow encircled.

13-15 Thereafterward towards us moved a light
Out of that band whence issued the first-fruits
Which of his vicars Christ behind him left,

16-18 And then my Lady, full of ecstasy,
Said unto me: "Look, look! behold the Baron
For whom below Galicia is frequented."

19-21 In the same way as, when a dove alights
Near his companion, both of them pour forth,
Circling about and murmuring, their affection,

22-24 So one beheld I by the other grand
Prince glorified to be with welcome greeted,
Lauding the food that there above is eaten.

25-27 But when their gratulations were complete,
Silently ‘coram me’ each one stood still,
So incandescent it o’ercame my sight.

28-30 Smiling thereafterwards, said Beatrice:
“Illustrious life, by whom the benefactions
Of our Basilica have been described,

31-33 Make Hope resound within this altitude;
Thou knowest as oft thou dost personify it
As Jesus to the three gave greater clearness.”—

34-36 “Lift up thy head, and make thyself assured;
For what comes hither from the mortal world
Must needs be ripened in our radiance.”

37-39 This comfort came to me from the second fire;
Wherefore mine eyes I lifted to the hills,
Which bent them down before with too great weight.

40-42 “Since, through his grace, our Emperor wills that thou
Shouldst find thee face to face, before thy death,
In the most secret chamber, with his Counts,

43-45 So that, the truth beholden of this court,
Hope, which below there rightfully enamours,
Thereby thou strengthen in thyself and others,

46-48 Say what it is, and how is flowering with it
Thy mind, and say from whence it came to thee."
Thus did the second light again continue.

49-51 And the Compassionate, who piloted
The plumage of my wings in such high flight,
Did in reply anticipate me thus:

52-54 "No child whatever the Church Militant
Of greater hope possesses, as is written
In that Sun which irradiates all our band;

55-57 Therefore it is conceded him from Egypt
To come into Jerusalem to see,
Or ever yet his warfare be completed.

58-60 The two remaining points, that not for knowledge
Have been demanded, but that he report
How much this virtue unto thee is pleasing,

61-63 To him I leave; for hard he will not find them,
Nor of self-praise; and let him answer them;
And may the grace of God in this assist him!"

64-66 As a disciple, who his teacher follows,
Ready and willing, where he is expert,
That his proficiency may be displayed,

67-69 "Hope," said I, "is the certain expectation
Of future glory, which is the effect
Of grace divine and merit precedent.

70-72 From many stars this light comes unto me;
But he instilled it first into my heart
Who was chief singer unto the chief captain.

73-75 'Sperent in te,' in the high Theody
He sayeth, 'those who know thy name;' and who
Knoweth it not, if he my faith possess?

76-78 Thou didst instil me, then, with his instilling
In the Epistle, so that I am full,
And upon others rain again your rain."

79-81 While I was speaking, in the living bosom
Of that combustion quivered an effulgence,
Sudden and frequent, in the guise of lightning;

82-84 Then breathed: "The love wherewith I am inflamed
Towards the virtue still which followed me
Unto the palm and issue of the field,

85-87 Wills that I breathe to thee that thou delight
In her; and grateful to me is thy telling
Whatever things Hope promises to thee."

88-90 And I: "The ancient Scriptures and the new
The mark establish, and this shows it me,
Of all the souls whom God hath made his friends.

91-93 Isaiah saith, that each one garmented
In his own land shall be with twofold garments,
And his own land is this delightful life.

94-96 Thy brother, too, far more explicitly,
There where he treateth of the robes of white,
This revelation manifests to us."

97-99 And first, and near the ending of these words,
"Sperent in te" from over us was heard,
To which responsive answered all the carols.

100-102 Thereafterward a light among them brightened,
So that, if Cancer one such crystal had,
Winter would have a month of one sole day.

103-105 And as uprises, goes, and enters the dance
A winsome maiden, only to do honour
To the new bride, and not from any failing,

106-108 Even thus did I behold the brightened splendour
Approach the two, who in a wheel revolved
As was beseeming to their ardent love.

109-111 Into the song and music there it entered;
And fixed on them my Lady kept her look,
Even as a bride silent and motionless.

112-114 "This is the one who lay upon the breast
Of him our Pelican; and this is he
To the great office from the cross elected."

115-117 My Lady thus; but therefore none the more
Did move her sight from its attentive gaze
Before or afterward these words of hers.

118-120 Even as a man who gazes, and endeavours
To see the eclipsing of the sun a little,
And who, by seeing, sightless doth become,

121-123 So I became before that latest fire,
While it was said, “Why dost thou daze thyself
To see a thing which here hath no existence?

124-126 Earth in the earth my body is, and shall be
With all the others there, until our number
With the eternal proposition tallies.

127-129 With the two garments in the blessed cloister
Are the two lights alone that have ascended:
And this shalt thou take back into your world.”

130-132 And at this utterance the flaming circle
Grew quiet, with the dulcet intermingling
Of sound that by the trinal breath was made,

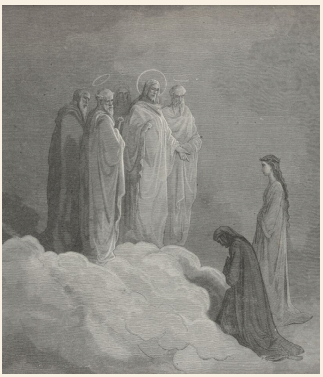
133-135 As to escape from danger or fatigue
The oars that erst were in the water beaten
Are all suspended at a whistle’s sound.

136-138 Ah, how much in my mind was I disturbed,
When I turned round to look on Beatrice,
That her I could not see, although I was

139 Close at her side and in the Happy World!

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CANTO XXVI



1-3 While I was doubting for my vision quenched,
Out of the flame refulgent that had quenched it
Issued a breathing, that attentive made me,

4-6 Saying: “While thou recoverest the sense
Of seeing which in me thou hast consumed,
’Tis well that speaking thou shouldst compensate it.

7-9 Begin then, and declare to what thy soul
Is aimed, and count it for a certainty,
Sight is in thee bewildered and not dead;

10-12 Because the Lady, who through this divine
Region conducteth thee, has in her look
The power the hand of Ananias had.”

13-15 I said: "As pleaseth her, or soon or late
Let the cure come to eyes that portals were
When she with fire I ever burn with entered.

16-18 The Good, that gives contentment to this Court,
The Alpha and Omega is of all
The writing that love reads me low or loud."

19-21 The selfsame voice, that taken had from me
The terror of the sudden dazzlement,
To speak still farther put it in my thought;

22-24 And said: "In verity with finer sieve
Behoveth thee to sift; thee it behoveth
To say who aimed thy bow at such a target."

25-27 And I: "By philosophic arguments,
And by authority that hence descends,
Such love must needs imprint itself in me;

28-30 For Good, so far as good, when comprehended
Doth straight enkindle love, and so much greater
As more of goodness in itself it holds;

31-33 Then to that Essence (whose is such advantage
That every good which out of it is found
Is nothing but a ray of its own light)

34-36 More than elsewhither must the mind be moved
Of every one, in loving, who discerns
The truth in which this evidence is founded.

37-39 Such truth he to my intellect reveals
Who demonstrates to me the primal love
Of all the sempiternal substances.

40-42 The voice reveals it of the truthful Author,
Who says to Moses, speaking of Himself,
'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.'

43-45 Thou too revealest it to me, beginning
The loud Evangel, that proclaims the secret
Of heaven to earth above all other edict."

46-48 And I heard say: "By human intellect
And by authority concordant with it,
Of all thy loves reserve for God the highest.

49-51 But say again if other cords thou feelest,
Draw thee towards Him, that thou mayst proclaim
With how many teeth this love is biting thee."

52-54 The holy purpose of the Eagle of Christ
Not latent was, nay, rather I perceived
Whither he fain would my profession lead.

55-57 Therefore I recommenced: "All of those bites
Which have the power to turn the heart to God
Unto my charity have been concurrent.

58-60 The being of the world, and my own being,
The death which He endured that I may live,
And that which all the faithful hope, as I do,

61-63 With the forementioned vivid consciousness
Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse,
And of the right have placed me on the shore.

64-66 The leaves, wherewith embowered is all the garden
Of the Eternal Gardener, do I love
As much as he has granted them of good."

67-69 As soon as I had ceased, a song most sweet
Throughout the heaven resounded, and my Lady
Said with the others, "Holy, holy, holy!"

70-72 And as at some keen light one wakes from sleep
By reason of the visual spirit that runs
Unto the splendour passed from coat to coat,

73-75 And he who wakes abhorreth what he sees,
So all unconscious is his sudden waking,
Until the judgment cometh to his aid,

76-78 So from before mine eyes did Beatrice
Chase every mote with radiance of her own,
That cast its light a thousand miles and more.

79-81 Whence better after than before I saw,
And in a kind of wonderment I asked
About a fourth light that I saw with us.

82-84 And said my Lady: "There within those rays
Gazes upon its Maker the first soul
That ever the first virtue did create."

85-87 Even as the bough that downward bends its top
At transit of the wind, and then is lifted
By its own virtue, which inclines it upward,

88-90 Likewise did I, the while that she was speaking,
Being amazed, and then I was made bold
By a desire to speak wherewith I burned.

91-93 And I began: "O apple, that mature
Alone hast been produced, O ancient father,
To whom each wife is daughter and daughter-in-law,

94-96 Devoutly as I can I supplicate thee
That thou wouldst speak to me; thou seest my wish;
And I, to hear thee quickly, speak it not."

97-99 Sometimes an animal, when covered, struggles
So that his impulse needs must be apparent,
By reason of the wrappage following it;

100-102 And in like manner the primeval soul
Made clear to me athwart its covering
How jubilant it was to give me pleasure.

103-105 Then breathed: "Without thy uttering it to me,
Thine inclination better I discern
Than thou whatever thing is surest to thee;

106-108 For I behold it in the truthful mirror,
That of Himself all things parhelion makes,
And none makes Him parhelion of itself.

109-111 Thou fain wouldst hear how long ago God placed me
Within the lofty garden, where this Lady
Unto so long a stairway thee disposed.

112-114 And how long to mine eyes it was a pleasure,
And of the great disdain the proper cause,
And the language that I used and that I made.

115-117 Now, son of mine, the tasting of the tree
Not in itself was cause of so great exile,
But solely the o'erstepping of the bounds.

118-120 There, whence thy Lady moved Virgilius,
Four thousand and three hundred and two circuits
Made by the sun, this Council I desired;

121-123 And him I saw return to all the lights
Of his highway nine hundred times and thirty,
Whilst I upon the earth was tarrying.

124-126 The language that I spake was quite extinct
Before that in the work interminable
The people under Nimrod were employed;

127-129 For nevermore result of reasoning
(Because of human pleasure that doth change,
Obedient to the heavens) was durable.

130-132 A natural action is it that man speaks;
But whether thus or thus, doth nature leave
To your own art, as seemeth best to you.

133-135 Ere I descended to the infernal anguish,
‘El’ was on earth the name of the Chief Good,
From whom comes all the joy that wraps me round

136-138 ‘Eli’ he then was called, and that is proper,
Because the use of men is like a leaf
On bough, which goeth and another cometh.

139-141 Upon the mount that highest o’er the wave
Rises was I, in life or pure or sinful,
From the first hour to that which is the second,

142 As the sun changes quadrant, to the sixth.”

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CANTO XXVII



1-3 "Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
And Holy Ghost!" all Paradise began,
So that the melody inebriate made me.

4-6 What I beheld seemed unto me a smile
Of the universe; for my inebriation
Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.

7-9 O joy! O gladness inexpressible!
O perfect life of love and peacefulness!
O riches without hankering secure!

10-12 Before mine eyes were standing the four torches
Enkindled, and the one that first had come
Began to make itself more luminous;

13-15 And even such in semblance it became
As Jupiter would become, if he and Mars
Were birds, and they should interchange their feathers.

16-18 That Providence, which here distributeth
Season and service, in the blessed choir
Had silence upon every side imposed.

19-21 When I heard say: "If I my colour change,
Marvel not at it; for while I am speaking
Thou shalt behold all these their colour change.

22-24 He who usurps upon the earth my place,
My place, my place, which vacant has become
Before the presence of the Son of God,

25-27 Has of my cemetery made a sewer
Of blood and stench, whereby the Perverse One,
Who fell from here, below there is appeased!"

28-30 With the same colour which, through sun adverse,
Painteth the clouds at evening or at morn,
Beheld I then the whole of heaven suffused.

31-33 And as a modest woman, who abides
Sure of herself, and at another's failing,
From listening only, timorous becomes,

34-36 Even thus did Beatrice change countenance;
And I believe in heaven was such eclipse,
When suffered the supreme Omnipotence;

37-39 Thereafterward proceeded forth his words
With voice so much transmuted from itself,
The very countenance was not more changed.

40-42 "The spouse of Christ has never nurtured been
On blood of mine, of Linus and of Cletus,
To be made use of in acquest of gold;

43-45 But in acquest of this delightful life
Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus,
After much lamentation, shed their blood.

46-48 Our purpose was not, that on the right hand
Of our successors should in part be seated
The Christian folk, in part upon the other;

49-51 Nor that the keys which were to me confided
Should e'er become the escutcheon on a banner,
That should wage war on those who are baptized;

52-54 Nor I be made the figure of a seal
To privileges venal and mendacious,
Whereat I often redden and flash with fire.

55-57 In garb of shepherds the rapacious wolves
Are seen from here above o'er all the pastures!
O wrath of God, why dost thou slumber still?

58-60 To drink our blood the Caorsines and Gascons
Are making ready. O thou good beginning,
Unto how vile an end must thou needs fall!

61-63 But the high Providence, that with Scipio
At Rome the glory of the world defended,
Will speedily bring aid, as I conceive;

64-66 And thou, my son, who by thy mortal weight
Shalt down return again, open thy mouth;
What I conceal not, do not thou conceal."

67-69 As with its frozen vapours downward falls
In flakes our atmosphere, what time the horn
Of the celestial Goat doth touch the sun,

70-72 Upward in such array saw I the ether
Become, and flaked with the triumphant vapours,
Which there together with us had remained.

73-75 My sight was following up their semblances,
And followed till the medium, by excess,
The passing farther onward took from it;

76-78 Whereat the Lady, who beheld me freed
From gazing upward, said to me: "Cast down
Thy sight, and see how far thou art turned round."

79-81 Since the first time that I had downward looked,
I saw that I had moved through the whole arc
Which the first climate makes from midst to end;

82-84 So that I saw the mad track of Ulysses
Past Gades, and this side, well nigh the shore
Whereon became Europa a sweet burden.

85-87 And of this threshing-floor the site to me
Were more unveiled, but the sun was proceeding
Under my feet, a sign and more removed.

88-90 My mind enamoured, which is dallying
At all times with my Lady, to bring back
To her mine eyes was more than ever ardent.

91-93 And if or Art or Nature has made bait
To catch the eyes and so possess the mind,
In human flesh or in its portraiture,

94-96 All joined together would appear as nought
To the divine delight which shone upon me
When to her smiling face I turned me round.

97-99 The virtue that her look endowed me with
From the fair nest of Leda tore me forth,
And up into the swiftest heaven impelled me.

100-102 Its parts exceeding full of life and lofty
Are all so uniform, I cannot say
Which Beatrice selected for my place.

103-105 But she, who was aware of my desire,
Began, the while she smiled so joyously
That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice:

106-108 "The nature of that motion, which keeps quiet
The centre and all the rest about it moves,
From hence begins as from its starting point.

109-111 And in this heaven there is no other Where
Than in the Mind Divine, wherein is kindled
The love that turns it, and the power it rains.

112-114 Within a circle light and love embrace it,
Even as this doth the others, and that precinct
He who encircles it alone controls.

115-117 Its motion is not by another meted,
But all the others measured are by this,
As ten is by the half and by the fifth.

118-120 And in what manner time in such a pot
May have its roots, and in the rest its leaves,
Now unto thee can manifest be made.

121-123 O Covetousness, that mortals dost ingulf
Beneath thee so, that no one hath the power
Of drawing back his eyes from out thy waves!

124-126 Full fairly blossoms in mankind the will;
But the uninterrupted rain converts
Into abortive wildings the true plums.

127-129 Fidelity and innocence are found
Only in children; afterwards they both
Take flight or e'er the cheeks with down are covered.

130-132 One, while he prattles still, observes the fasts,
Who, when his tongue is loosed, forthwith devours
Whatever food under whatever moon;

133-135 Another, while he prattles, loves and listens
Unto his mother, who when speech is perfect
Forthwith desires to see her in her grave.

136-138 Even thus is swarthy made the skin so white
In its first aspect of the daughter fair
Of him who brings the morn, and leaves the night.

139-141 Thou, that it may not be a marvel to thee,
Think that on earth there is no one who governs;
Whence goes astray the human family.

142-144 Ere January be unwintered wholly
By the centesimal on earth neglected,
Shall these supernal circles roar so loud

145-147 The tempest that has been so long awaited
Shall whirl the poops about where are the prows;
So that the fleet shall run its course direct,

148 And the true fruit shall follow on the flower."

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CANTO XXVIII



1-3 After the truth against the present life
Of miserable mortals was unfolded
By her who doth imparadise my mind,

4-6 As in a looking-glass a taper's flame
He sees who from behind is lighted by it,
Before he has it in his sight or thought,

7-9 And turns him round to see if so the glass
Tell him the truth, and sees that it accords
Therewith as doth a music with its metre,

10-12 In similar wise my memory recollecteth
That I did, looking into those fair eyes,
Of which Love made the springes to ensnare me.

13-15 And as I turned me round, and mine were touched
By that which is apparent in that volume,
Whenever on its gyre we gaze intent,

16-18 A point beheld I, that was raying out
Light so acute, the sight which it enkindles
Must close perforce before such great acuteness.

19-21 And whatsoever star seems smallest here
Would seem to be a moon, if placed beside it.
As one star with another star is placed.

22-24 Perhaps at such a distance as appears
A halo cincturing the light that paints it,
When densest is the vapour that sustains it,

25-27 Thus distant round the point a circle of fire
So swiftly whirled, that it would have surpassed
Whatever motion soonest girds the world;

28-30 And this was by another circumcinct,
That by a third, the third then by a fourth,
By a fifth the fourth, and then by a sixth the fifth;

31-33 The seventh followed thereupon in width
So ample now, that Juno's messenger
Entire would be too narrow to contain it.

34-36 Even so the eighth and ninth; and every one
More slowly moved, according as it was
In number distant farther from the first.

37-39 And that one had its flame most crystalline
From which less distant was the stainless spark,
I think because more with its truth imbued.

40-42 My Lady, who in my anxiety
Beheld me much perplexed, said: “From that point
Dependent is the heaven and nature all.

43-45 Behold that circle most conjoined to it,
And know thou, that its motion is so swift
Through burning love whereby it is spurred on.”

46-48 And I to her: “If the world were arranged
In the order which I see in yonder wheels,
What’s set before me would have satisfied me;

49-51 But in the world of sense we can perceive
That evermore the circles are diviner
As they are from the centre more remote

52-54 Wherefore if my desire is to be ended
In this miraculous and angelic temple,
That has for confines only love and light,

55-57 To hear behoves me still how the example
And the exemplar go not in one fashion,
Since for myself in vain I contemplate it.”

58-60 “If thine own fingers unto such a knot
Be insufficient, it is no great wonder,
So hard hath it become for want of trying.”

61-63 My Lady thus; then said she: “Do thou take
What I shall tell thee, if thou wouldst be sated,
And exercise on that thy subtlety.

64-66 The circles corporal are wide and narrow
According to the more or less of virtue
Which is distributed through all their parts.

67-69 The greater goodness works the greater weal,
The greater weal the greater body holds,
If perfect equally are all its parts.

70-72 Therefore this one which sweeps along with it
The universe sublime, doth correspond
Unto the circle which most loves and knows.

73-75 On which account, if thou unto the virtue
Apply thy measure, not to the appearance
Of substances that unto thee seem round,

76-78 Thou wilt behold a marvellous agreement,
Of more to greater, and of less to smaller,
In every heaven, with its Intelligence.”

79-81 Even as remaineth splendid and serene
The hemisphere of air, when Boreas
Is blowing from that cheek where he is mildest,

82-84 Because is purified and resolved the rack
That erst disturbed it, till the welkin laughs
With all the beauties of its pageantry;

85-87 Thus did I likewise, after that my Lady
Had me provided with her clear response,
And like a star in heaven the truth was seen.

88-90 And soon as to a stop her words had come,
Not otherwise does iron scintillate
When molten, than those circles scintillated.

91-93 Their coruscation all the sparks repeated,
And they so many were, their number makes
More millions than the doubling of the chess.

94-96 I heard them sing hosanna choir by choir
To the fixed point which holds them at the 'Ubi,'
And ever will, where they have ever been.

97-99 And she, who saw the dubious meditations
Within my mind, "The primal circles," said,
"Have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim.

100-102 Thus rapidly they follow their own bonds,
To be as like the point as most they can,
And can as far as they are high in vision.

103-105 Those other Loves, that round about them go,
Thrones of the countenance divine are called,
Because they terminate the primal Triad.

106-108 And thou shouldst know that they all have delight
As much as their own vision penetrates
The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest.

109-111 From this it may be seen how blessedness
Is founded in the faculty which sees,
And not in that which loves, and follows next;

112-114 And of this seeing merit is the measure,
Which is brought forth by grace, and by good will;
Thus on from grade to grade doth it proceed.

115-117 The second Triad, which is germinating
In such wise in this sempiternal spring,
That no nocturnal Aries despoils,

118-120 Perpetually hosanna warbles forth
With threefold melody, that sounds in three
Orders of joy, with which it is intrined.

121-123 The three Divine are in this hierarchy,
First the Dominions, and the Virtues next;
And the third order is that of the Powers.

124-126 Then in the dances twain penultimate
The Principalities and Archangels wheel;
The last is wholly of angelic sports.

127-129 These orders upward all of them are gazing,
And downward so prevail, that unto God
They all attracted are and all attract.

130-132 And Dionysius with so great desire
To contemplate these Orders set himself,
He named them and distinguished them as I do.

133-135 But Gregory afterwards dissented from him;
Wherefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes
Within this heaven, he at himself did smile.

136-138 And if so much of secret truth a mortal
Proffered on earth, I would not have thee marvel,
For he who saw it here revealed it to him,

139 With much more of the truth about these circles.”

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CANTO XXIX

✦

1-3 At what time both the children of Latona,
Surmounted by the Ram and by the Scales,
Together make a zone of the horizon,

4-6 As long as from the time the zenith holds them
In equipoise, till from that girdle both
Changing their hemisphere disturb the balance,

7-9 So long, her face depicted with a smile,
Did Beatrice keep silence while she gazed
Fixedly at the point which had o'ercome me.

10-12 Then she began: "I say, and I ask not
What thou dost wish to hear, for I have seen it
Where centres every When and every 'Ubi.'

13-15 Not to acquire some good unto himself,
Which is impossible, but that his splendour
In its resplendency may say, 'Subsisto,'

16-18 In his eternity outside of time,
Outside all other limits, as it pleased him,
Into new Loves the Eternal Love unfolded.

19-21 Nor as if torpid did he lie before;
For neither after nor before proceeded
The going forth of God upon these waters.

22-24 Matter and Form unmingled and conjoined
Came into being that had no defect,
E'en as three arrows from a three-stringed bow.

25-27 And as in glass, in amber, or in crystal
A sunbeam flashes so, that from its coming
To its full being is no interval,

28-30 So from its Lord did the triform effect
Ray forth into its being all together,
Without discrimination of beginning.

31-33 Order was con-created and constructed
In substances, and summit of the world
Were those wherein the pure act was produced.

34-36 Pure potentiality held the lowest part;
Midway bound potentiality with act
Such bond that it shall never be unbound.

37-39 Jerome has written unto you of angels
Created a long lapse of centuries
Or ever yet the other world was made;

40-42 But written is this truth in many places
By writers of the Holy Ghost, and thou
Shalt see it, if thou lookest well thereat.

43-45 And even reason seeth it somewhat,
For it would not concede that for so long
Could be the motors without their perfection.

46-48 Now dost thou know both where and when these Loves
Created were, and how; so that extinct
In thy desire already are three fires.

49-51 Nor could one reach, in counting, unto twenty
So swiftly, as a portion of these angels
Disturbed the subject of your elements.

52-54 The rest remained, and they began this art
Which thou discernest, with so great delight
That never from their circling do they cease.

55-57 The occasion of the fall was the accursed
Presumption of that One, whom thou hast seen
By all the burden of the world constrained.

58-60 Those whom thou here beholdest modest were
To recognise themselves as of that goodness
Which made them apt for so much understanding;

61-63 On which account their vision was exalted
By the enlightening grace and their own merit,
So that they have a full and steadfast will.

64-66 I would not have thee doubt, but certain be,
'Tis meritorious to receive this grace,
According as the affection opens to it.

67-69 Now round about in this consistory
Much mayst thou contemplate, if these my words
Be gathered up, without all further aid.

70-72 But since upon the earth, throughout your schools,
They teach that such is the angelic nature
That it doth hear, and recollect, and will,

73-75 More will I say, that thou mayst see unmixed
The truth that is confounded there below,
Equivocating in such like prelections.

76-78 These substances, since in God's countenance
They jocund were, turned not away their sight
From that wherefrom not anything is hidden;

79-81 Hence they have not their vision intercepted
By object new, and hence they do not need
To recollect, through interrupted thought.

82-84 So that below, not sleeping, people dream,
Believing they speak truth, and not believing;
And in the last is greater sin and shame.

85-87 Below you do not journey by one path
Philosophising; so transporteth you
Love of appearance and the thought thereof.

88-90 And even this above here is endured
With less disdain, than when is set aside
The Holy Writ, or when it is distorted.

91-93 They think not there how much of blood it costs
To sow it in the world, and how he pleases
Who in humility keeps close to it.

94-96 Each striveth for appearance, and doth make
His own inventions; and these treated are
By preachers, and the Evangel holds its peace.

97-99 One sayeth that the moon did backward turn,
In the Passion of Christ, and interpose herself
So that the sunlight reached not down below;

100-102 And lies; for of its own accord the light
Hid itself; whence to Spaniards and to Indians,
As to the Jews, did such eclipse respond.

103-105 Florence has not so many Lapi and Bindi
As fables such as these, that every year
Are shouted from the pulpit back and forth,

106-108 In such wise that the lambs, who do not know,
Come back from pasture fed upon the wind,
And not to see the harm doth not excuse them.

109-111 Christ did not to his first disciples say,
'Go forth, and to the world preach idle tales,'
But unto them a true foundation gave;

112-114 And this so loudly sounded from their lips,
That, in the warfare to enkindle Faith,
They made of the Evangel shields and lances.

115-117 Now men go forth with jests and drolleries
To preach, and if but well the people laugh,
The hood puffs out, and nothing more is asked.

118-120 But in the cowl there nestles such a bird,
That, if the common people were to see it,
They would perceive what pardons they confide in,

121-123 For which so great on earth has grown the folly,
That, without proof of any testimony,
To each indulgence they would flock together.

124-126 By this Saint Anthony his pig doth fatten,
And many others, who are worse than pigs,
Paying in money without mark of coinage.

127-129 But since we have digressed abundantly,
Turn back thine eyes forthwith to the right path,
So that the way be shortened with the time.

130-132 This nature doth so multiply itself
In numbers, that there never yet was speech
Nor mortal fancy that can go so far.

133-135 And if thou notest that which is revealed
By Daniel, thou wilt see that in his thousands
Number determinate is kept concealed.

136-138 The primal light, that all irradiates it,
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendours wherewith it is mated.

139-141 Hence, inasmuch as on the act conceptive
The affection followeth, of love the sweetness
Therein diversely fervid is or tepid.

142-144 The height behold now and the amplitude
Of the eternal power, since it hath made
Itself so many mirrors, where ’tis broken,

145 One in itself remaining as before.”

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CANTO XXX

✦

1-3 Perchance six thousand miles remote from us
Is glowing the sixth hour, and now this world
Inclines its shadow almost to a level,

4-6 When the mid-heaven begins to make itself
So deep to us, that here and there a star
Ceases to shine so far down as this depth,

7-9 And as advances bright exceedingly
The handmaid of the sun, the heaven is closed
Light after light to the most beautiful;

10-12 Not otherwise the Triumph, which for ever
Plays round about the point that vanquished me,
Seeming enclosed by what itself encloses,

13-15 Little by little from my vision faded;
Whereat to turn mine eyes on Beatrice
My seeing nothing and my love constrained me.

16-18 If what has hitherto been said of her
Were all concluded in a single praise,
Scant would it be to serve the present turn.

19-21 Not only does the beauty I beheld
Transcend ourselves, but truly I believe
Its Maker only may enjoy it all.

22-24 Vanquished do I confess me by this passage
More than by problem of his theme was ever
O'ercome the comic or the tragic poet;

25-27 For as the sun the sight that trembles most,
Even so the memory of that sweet smile
My mind depriveth of its very self.

28-30 From the first day that I beheld her face
In this life, to the moment of this look,
The sequence of my song has ne'er been severed;

31-33 But now perforce this sequence must desist
From following her beauty with my verse,
As every artist at his uttermost.

34-36 Such as I leave her to a greater fame
Than any of my trumpet, which is bringing
Its arduous matter to a final close,

37-39 With voice and gesture of a perfect leader
She recommenced: "We from the greatest body
Have issued to the heaven that is pure light;

40-42 Light intellectual replete with love,
Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness.

43-45 Here shalt thou see the one host and the other
Of Paradise, and one in the same aspects
Which at the final judgment thou shalt see."

46-48 Even as a sudden lightning that disperses
The visual spirits, so that it deprives
The eye of impress from the strongest objects,

49-51 Thus round about me flashed a living light,
And left me swathed around with such a veil
Of its effulgence, that I nothing saw.

52-54 "Ever the Love which quieteth this heaven
Welcomes into itself with such salute,
To make the candle ready for its flame."

55-57 No sooner had within me these brief words
An entrance found, than I perceived myself
To be uplifted over my own power,

58-60 And I with vision new rekindled me,
Such that no light whatever is so pure
But that mine eyes were fortified against it.

61-63 And light I saw in fashion of a river
Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt two banks
Depicted with an admirable Spring.

64-66 Out of this river issued living sparks,
And on all sides sank down into the flowers,
Like unto rubies that are set in gold;

67-69 And then, as if inebriate with the odours,
They plunged again into the wondrous torrent,
And as one entered issued forth another.

70-72 “The high desire, that now inflames and moves thee
To have intelligence of what thou seest,
Pleaseth me all the more, the more it swells.

73-75 But of this water it behoves thee drink
Before so great a thirst in thee be slaked.”
Thus said to me the sunshine of mine eyes;

76-78 And added: “The river and the topazes
Going in and out, and the laughing of the herbage,
Are of their truth foreshadowing prefaces;

79-81 Not that these things are difficult in themselves,
But the deficiency is on thy side,
For yet thou hast not vision so exalted.”

82-84 There is no babe that leaps so suddenly
With face towards the milk, if he awake
Much later than his usual custom is,

85-87 As I did, that I might make better mirrors
Still of mine eyes, down stooping to the wave
Which flows that we therein be better made.

88-90 And even as the penthouse of mine eyelids
Drank of it, it forthwith appeared to me
Out of its length to be transformed to round.

91-93 Then as a folk who have been under masks
Seem other than before, if they divest
The semblance not their own they disappeared in,

94-96 Thus into greater pomp were changed for me
The flowerets and the sparks, so that I saw
Both of the Courts of Heaven made manifest.

97-99 O splendour of God! by means of which I saw
The lofty triumph of the realm veracious,
Give me the power to say how it I saw!

100-102 There is a light above, which visible
Makes the Creator unto every creature,
Who only in beholding Him has peace,

103-105 And it expands itself in circular form
To such extent, that its circumference
Would be too large a girdle for the sun.

106-108 The semblance of it is all made of rays
Reflected from the top of Primal Motion,
Which takes therefrom vitality and power.

109-111 And as a hill in water at its base
Mirrors itself, as if to see its beauty
When affluent most in verdure and in flowers,

112-114 So, ranged aloft all round about the light,
Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand
All who above there have from us returned.

115-117 And if the lowest row collect within it
So great a light, how vast the amplitude
Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves!

118-120 My vision in the vastness and the height
Lost not itself, but comprehended all
The quantity and quality of that gladness.

121-123 There near and far nor add nor take away;
For there where God immediately doth govern,
The natural law in naught is relevant.

124-126 Into the yellow of the Rose Eternal
That spreads, and multiplies, and breathes an odour
Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun,

127-129 As one who silent is and fain would speak,
Me Beatrice drew on, and said: "Behold
Of the white stoles how vast the convent is!

130-132 Behold how vast the circuit of our city!
Behold our seats so filled to overflowing,
That here henceforward are few people wanting!

133-135 On that great throne whereon thine eyes are fixed
For the crown's sake already placed upon it,
Before thou suppest at this wedding feast

136-138 Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus
On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come
To redress Italy ere she be ready.

139-141 Blind covetousness, that casts its spell upon you,
Has made you like unto the little child,
Who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse.

142-144 And in the sacred forum then shall be
A Prefect such, that openly or covert
On the same road he will not walk with him.

145-147 But long of God he will not be endured
In holy office; he shall be thrust down
Where Simon Magus is for his deserts,

148 And make him of Alagna lower go!”

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CANTO XXXI



In fashion then as of a snow-white rose
Displayed itself to me the saintly host,
Whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride,

But the other host, that flying sees and sings
The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
And the goodness that created it so noble,

Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers
One moment, and the next returns again
To where its labour is to sweetness turned,

Sank into the great flower, that is adorned
With leaves so many, and thence reascended
To where its love abideth evermore.

13-15 Their faces had they all of living flame,
And wings of gold, and all the rest so white
No snow unto that limit doth attain.

16-18 From bench to bench, into the flower descending,
They carried something of the peace and ardour
Which by the fanning of their flanks they won.

19-21 Nor did the interposing 'twixt the flower
And what was o'er it of such plenitude
Of flying shapes impede the sight and splendour;

22-24 Because the light divine so penetrates
The universe, according to its merit,
That naught can be an obstacle against it.

25-27 This realm secure and full of gladsomeness,
Crowded with ancient people and with modern,
Unto one mark had all its look and love.

28-30 O Trinal Light, that in a single star
Sparkling upon their sight so satisfies them,
Look down upon our tempest here below!

31-33 If the barbarians, coming from some region
That every day by Helice is covered,
Revolving with her son whom she delights in,

34-36 Beholding Rome and all her noble works,
Were wonder-struck, what time the Lateran
Above all mortal things was eminent,—

37-39 I who to the divine had from the human,
From time unto eternity, had come,
From Florence to a people just and sane,

40-42 With what amazement must I have been filled!
Truly between this and the joy, it was
My pleasure not to hear, and to be mute.

43-45 And as a pilgrim who delighteth him
In gazing round the temple of his vow,
And hopes some day to retell how it was,

46-48 So through the living light my way pursuing
Directed I mine eyes o'er all the ranks,
Now up, now down, and now all round about.

49-51 Faces I saw of charity persuasive,
Embellished by His light and their own smile,
And attitudes adorned with every grace.

52-54 The general form of Paradise already
My glance had comprehended as a whole,
In no part hitherto remaining fixed,

55-57 And round I turned me with rekindled wish
My Lady to interrogate of things
Concerning which my mind was in suspense.

58-60 One thing I meant, another answered me;
I thought I should see Beatrice, and saw
An Old Man habited like the glorious people.

61-63 O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks
With joy benign, in attitude of pity
As to a tender father is becoming.

64-66 And "She, where is she?" instantly I said;
Whence he: "To put an end to thy desire,
Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.

67-69 And if thou lookest up to the third round
Of the first rank, again shalt thou behold her
Upon the throne her merits have assigned her."

70-72 Without reply I lifted up mine eyes,
And saw her, as she made herself a crown
Reflecting from herself the eternal rays.

73-75 Not from that region which the highest thunders
Is any mortal eye so far removed,
In whatsoever sea it deepest sinks,

76-78 As there from Beatrice my sight; but this
Was nothing unto me; because her image
Descended not to me by medium blurred.

79-81 "O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong,
And who for my salvation didst endure
In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,

82-84 Of whatsoever things I have beheld,
As coming from thy power and from thy goodness
I recognise the virtue and the grace.

85-87 Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom,
By all those ways, by all the expedients,
Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.

88-90 Preserve towards me thy magnificence,
So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed,
Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."

91-93 Thus I implored; and she, so far away,
Smiled, as it seemed, and looked once more at me;
Then unto the eternal fountain turned.

94-96 And said the Old Man holy: "That thou mayst
Accomplish perfectly thy journeying,
Whereunto prayer and holy love have sent me,

97-99 Fly with thine eyes all round about this garden;
For seeing it will discipline thy sight
Farther to mount along the ray divine.

100-102 And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn
Wholly with love, will grant us every grace,
Because that I her faithful Bernard am."

103-105 As he who peradventure from Croatia
Cometh to gaze at our Veronica,
Who through its ancient fame is never sated,

106-108 But says in thought, the while it is displayed,
"My Lord, Christ Jesus, God of very God,
Now was your semblance made like unto this?"

109-111 Even such was I while gazing at the living
Charity of the man, who in this world
By contemplation tasted of that peace.

112-114 "Thou son of grace, this jocund life," began he,
"Will not be known to thee by keeping ever
Thine eyes below here on the lowest place;

115-117 But mark the circles to the most remote,
Until thou shalt behold enthroned the Queen
To whom this realm is subject and devoted."

118-120 I lifted up mine eyes, and as at morn
The oriental part of the horizon
Surpasses that wherein the sun goes down,

121-123 Thus, as if going with mine eyes from vale
To mount, I saw a part in the remoteness
Surpass in splendour all the other front.

124-126 And even as there where we await the pole
That Phaeton drove badly, blazes more
The light, and is on either side diminished,

127-129 So likewise that pacific oriflamme
Gleamed brightest in the centre, and each side
In equal measure did the flame abate.

130-132 And at that centre, with their wings expanded,
More than a thousand jubilant Angels saw I,
Each differing in effulgence and in kind.

133-135 I saw there at their sports and at their songs
A beauty smiling, which the gladness was
Within the eyes of all the other saints;

136-138 And if I had in speaking as much wealth
As in imagining, I should not dare
To attempt the smallest part of its delight.

139-141 Bernard, as soon as he beheld mine eyes
Fixed and intent upon its fervid fervour,
His own with such affection turned to her

142 That it made mine more ardent to behold.

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CANTO XXXII

✦

1-3 Absorbed in his delight, that contemplator
Assumed the willing office of a teacher,
And gave beginning to these holy words:

4-6 "The wound that Mary closed up and anointed,
She at her feet who is so beautiful,
She is the one who opened it and pierced it.

7-9 Within that order which the third seats make
Is seated Rachel, lower than the other,
With Beatrice, in manner as thou seest.

10-12 Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and her who was
Ancestress of the Singer, who for dole
Of the misdeed said, 'Miserere mei,'

13-15 Canst thou behold from seat to seat descending
Down in gradation, as with each one's name
I through the Rose go down from leaf to leaf.

16-18 And downward from the seventh row, even as
Above the same, succeed the Hebrew women,
Dividing all the tresses of the flower;

19-21 Because, according to the view which Faith
In Christ had taken, these are the partition
By which the sacred stairways are divided.

22-24 Upon this side, where perfect is the flower
With each one of its petals, seated are
Those who believed in Christ who was to come.

25-27 Upon the other side, where intersected
With vacant spaces are the semicircles,
Are those who looked to Christ already come.

28-30 And as, upon this side, the glorious seat
Of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats
Below it, such a great division make,

31-33 So opposite doth that of the great John,
Who, ever holy, desert and martyrdom
Endured, and afterwards two years in Hell.

34-36 And under him thus to divide were chosen
Francis, and Benedict, and Augustine,
And down to us the rest from round to round.

37-39 Behold now the high providence divine;
For one and other aspect of the Faith
In equal measure shall this garden fill.

40-42 And know that downward from that rank which cleaves
Midway the sequence of the two divisions,
Not by their proper merit are they seated;

43-45 But by another's under fixed conditions;
For these are spirits one and all assoiled
Before they any true election had.

46-48 Well canst thou recognise it in their faces,
And also in their voices puerile,
If thou regard them well and hearken to them.

49-51 Now doubtest thou, and doubting thou art silent;
But I will loosen for thee the strong bond
In which thy subtile fancies hold thee fast.

52-54 Within the amplitude of this domain
No casual point can possibly find place,
No more than sadness can, or thirst, or hunger;

55-57 For by eternal law has been established
Whatever thou beholdest, so that closely
The ring is fitted to the finger here.

58-60 And therefore are these people, festinate
Unto true life, not 'sine causa' here
More and less excellent among themselves.

61-63 The King, by means of whom this realm reposes
In so great love and in so great delight
That no will ventureth to ask for more,

64-66 In his own joyous aspect every mind
Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace
Diversely; and let here the effect suffice.

67-69 And this is clearly and expressly noted
For you in Holy Scripture, in those twins
Who in their mother had their anger roused.

70-72 According to the colour of the hair,
Therefore, with such a grace the light supreme
Consenteth that they worthily be crowned.

73-75 Without, then, any merit of their deeds,
Stationed are they in different gradations,
Differing only in their first acuteness.

76-78 'Tis true that in the early centuries,
With innocence, to work out their salvation
Sufficient was the faith of parents only.

79-81 After the earlier ages were completed,
Behoved it that the males by circumcision
Unto their innocent wings should virtue add;

82-84 But after that the time of grace had come
Without the baptism absolute of Christ,
Such innocence below there was retained.

85-87 Look now into the face that unto Christ
Hath most resemblance; for its brightness only
Is able to prepare thee to see Christ."

88-90 On her did I behold so great a gladness
Rain down, borne onward in the holy minds
Created through that altitude to fly,

91-93 That whatsoever I had seen before
Did not suspend me in such admiration,
Nor show me such similitude of God.

94-96 And the same Love that first descended there,
"Ave Maria, gratia plena," singing,
In front of her his wings expanded wide.

97-99 Unto the canticle divine responded
From every part the court beatified,
So that each sight became serener for it.

100-102 "O holy father, who for me endurest
To be below here, leaving the sweet place
In which thou sittest by eternal lot,

103-105 Who is the Angel that with so much joy
Into the eyes is looking of our Queen,
Enamoured so that he seems made of fire?"

106-108 Thus I again recourse had to the teaching
Of that one who delighted him in Mary
As doth the star of morning in the sun.

109-111 And he to me: "Such gallantry and grace
As there can be in Angel and in soul,
All is in him; and thus we fain would have it;

112-114 Because he is the one who bore the palm
Down unto Mary, when the Son of God
To take our burden on himself decreed.

115-117 But now come onward with thine eyes, as I
Speaking shall go, and note the great patricians
Of this most just and merciful of empires.

118-120 Those two that sit above there most enrapture
As being very near unto Augusta,
Are as it were the two roots of this Rose.

121-123 He who upon the left is near her placed
The father is, by whose audacious taste
The human species so much bitter tastes.

124-126 Upon the right thou seest that ancient father
Of Holy Church, into whose keeping Christ
The keys committed of this lovely flower.

127-129 And he who all the evil days beheld,
Before his death, of her the beauteous bride
Who with the spear and with the nails was won,

130-132 Beside him sits, and by the other rests
That leader under whom on manna lived
The people ingrate, fickle, and stiff-necked.

133-135 Opposite Peter seest thou Anna seated,
So well content to look upon her daughter,
Her eyes she moves not while she sings Hosanna.

136-138 And opposite the eldest household father
Lucia sits, she who thy Lady moved
When to rush downward thou didst bend thy brows.

139-141 But since the moments of thy vision fly,
Here will we make full stop, as a good tailor
Who makes the gown according to his cloth,

142-144 And unto the first Love will turn our eyes,
That looking upon Him thou penetrate
As far as possible through his effulgence.

145-147 Truly, lest peradventure thou recede,
Moving thy wings believing to advance,
By prayer behoves it that grace be obtained;

148-150 Grace from that one who has the power to aid thee;
And thou shalt follow me with thy affection
That from my words thy heart turn not aside."

151 And he began this holy orison.

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CANTO XXXIII

✦

1-3 "Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,

4-6 Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make himself its creature.

7-9 Within thy womb rekindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.

10-12 Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountain-head of hope.

13-15 Lady, thou art so great, and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.

16-18 Not only thy benignity gives succour
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Forerunneth of its own accord the asking.

19-21 In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature.

22-24 Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as here has seen
One after one the spiritual lives,

25-27 Supplicate thee through grace for so much power
That with his eyes he may uplift himself
Higher towards the uttermost salvation.

28-30 And I, who never burned for my own seeing
More than I do for his, all of my prayers
Proffer to thee, and pray they come not short,

31-33 That thou wouldst scatter from him every cloud
Of his mortality so with thy prayers,
That the Chief Pleasure be to him displayed.

34-36 Still farther do I pray thee, Queen, who canst
Whate'er thou wilt, that sound thou mayst preserve
After so great a vision his affections.

37-39 Let thy protection conquer human movements;
See Beatrice and all the blessed ones
My prayers to second clasp their hands to thee!"

40-42 The eyes beloved and revered of God,
Fastened upon the speaker, showed to us
How grateful unto her are prayers devout;

43-45 Then unto the Eternal Light they turned,
On which it is not credible could be
By any creature bent an eye so clear.

46-48 And I, who to the end of all desires
Was now approaching, even as I ought
The ardour of desire within me ended.

49-51 Bernard was beckoning unto me, and smiling,
That I should upward look; but I already
Was of my own accord such as he wished;

52-54 Because my sight, becoming purified,
Was entering more and more into the ray
Of the High Light which of itself is true.

55-57 From that time forward what I saw was greater
Than our discourse, that to such vision yields,
And yields the memory unto such excess.

58-60 Even as he is who seeth in a dream,
And after dreaming the imprinted passion
Remains, and to his mind the rest returns not,

61-63 Even such am I, for almost utterly
Ceases my vision, and distilleth yet
Within my heart the sweetness born of it;

64-66 Even thus the snow is in the sun unsealed,
Even thus upon the wind in the light leaves
Were the soothsayings of the Sibyl lost.

67-69 O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,

70-72 And make my tongue of so great puissance,
That but a single sparkle of thy glory
It may bequeath unto the future people;

73-75 For by returning to my memory somewhat,
And by a little sounding in these verses,
More of thy victory shall be conceived!

76-78 I think the keenness of the living ray
Which I endured would have bewildered me,
If but mine eyes had been averted from it;

79-81 And I remember that I was more bold
On this account to bear, so that I joined
My aspect with the Glory Infinite.

82-84 O grace abundant, by which I presumed
To fix my sight upon the Light Eternal,
So that the seeing I consumed therein!

85-87 I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up with love together in one volume,
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;

88-90 Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is one simple light.

91-93 The universal fashion of this knot
Methinks I saw, since more abundantly
In saying this I feel that I rejoice.

94-96 One moment is more lethargy to me,
Than five and twenty centuries to the emprise
That startled Neptune with the shade of Argo!

97-99 My mind in this wise wholly in suspense,
Steadfast, immovable, attentive gazed,
And evermore with gazing grew enkindled.

100-102 In presence of that light one such becomes,
That to withdraw therefrom for other prospect
It is impossible he e'er consent;

103-105 Because the good, which object is of will,
Is gathered all in this, and out of it
That is defective which is perfect there.

106-108 Shorter henceforward will my language fall
Of what I yet remember, than an infant's
Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast.

109-111 Not because more than one unmingled semblance
Was in the living light on which I looked,
For it is always what it was before;

112-114 But through the sight, that fortified itself
In me by looking, one appearance only
To me was ever changing as I changed.

115-117 Within the deep and luminous subsistence
Of the High Light appeared to me three circles,
Of threefold colour and of one dimension,

118-120 And by the second seemed the first reflected
As Iris is by Iris, and the third
Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed.

121-123 O how all speech is feeble and falls short
Of my conceit, and this to what I saw
Is such, 'tis not enough to call it little!

124-126 O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!

127-129 That circulation, which being thus conceived
Appeared in thee as a reflected light,
When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,

130-132 Within itself, of its own very colour
Seemed to me painted with our effigy,
Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.

133-135 As the geometrician, who endeavours
To square the circle, and discovers not,
By taking thought, the principle he wants,

136-138 Even such was I at that new apparition;
I wished to see how the image to the circle
Conformed itself, and how it there finds place;

139-141 But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote
A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.

142-144 Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy:
But now was turning my desire and will,
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,

145 The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.

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