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CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

Divine Comedy — Purgatorio

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Dante Alighieri

Translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1867)

Credits

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About:

The second part of Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy. Coming out of Hell on Easter morning of 1300, Dante and Virgil reach the island mountain of Purgatory in the southern hemisphere.

On the slopes of Ante-Purgatory and on the mountain's seven terraces, one for each deadly sin from pride to lust, the repentant souls are purified in hope, singing psalms and hymns, until they rise to the Earthly Paradise at the summit.

It has 33 cantos in terza rima. At the top of the mountain Virgil takes his leave, and Dante meets Beatrice again, who will guide him through Paradise. Purgatorio is the most "human" part of the poem: it speaks of art, friendship, politics and the freedom of the will.

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Manuscripts and images



Dante and Virgil, out of Hell, see the four stars (Canto I).

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The angel boatman brings the souls (Canto II).

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The proud bent under their stones (Canto XII).

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Beatrice appears to Dante (Canto XXX).

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Dante immersed in the river Lethe (Canto XXXI).

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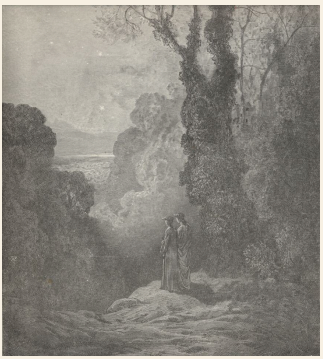
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CANTO I



1-3 To run o'er better waters hoists its sail
The little vessel of my genius now,
That leaves behind itself a sea so cruel;

4-6 And of that second kingdom will I sing
Wherein the human spirit doth purge itself,
And to ascend to heaven becometh worthy.

7-9 But let dead Poesy here rise again,
O holy Muses, since that I am yours,
And here Calliope somewhat ascend,

10-12 My song accompanying with that sound,
Of which the miserable magpies felt
The blow so great, that they despaired of pardon.

13-15 Sweet colour of the oriental sapphire,
That was upgathered in the cloudless aspect
Of the pure air, as far as the first circle,

16-18 Unto mine eyes did recommence delight
Soon as I issued forth from the dead air,
Which had with sadness filled mine eyes and breast.

19-21 The beauteous planet, that to love incites,
Was making all the orient to laugh,
Veiling the Fishes that were in her escort.

22-24 To the right hand I turned, and fixed my mind
Upon the other pole, and saw four stars
Ne'er seen before save by the primal people.

25-27 Rejoicing in their flamelets seemed the heaven.
O thou septentrional and widowed site,
Because thou art deprived of seeing these!

28-30 When from regarding them I had withdrawn,
Turning a little to the other pole,
There where the Wain had disappeared already,

31-33 I saw beside me an old man alone,
Worthy of so much reverence in his look,
That more owes not to father any son.

34-36 A long beard and with white hair intermingled
He wore, in semblance like unto the tresses,
Of which a double list fell on his breast.

37-39 The rays of the four consecrated stars
Did so adorn his countenance with light,
That him I saw as were the sun before him.

40-42 "Who are you? ye who, counter the blind river,
Have fled away from the eternal prison?"
Moving those venerable plumes, he said:

43-45 "Who guided you? or who has been your lamp
In issuing forth out of the night profound,
That ever black makes the infernal valley?

46-48 The laws of the abyss, are they thus broken?
Or is there changed in heaven some council new,
That being damned ye come unto my crags?"

49-51 Then did my Leader lay his grasp upon me,
And with his words, and with his hands and signs,
Reverent he made in me my knees and brow;

52-54 Then answered him: "I came not of myself;
A Lady from Heaven descended, at whose prayers
I aided this one with my company.

55-57 But since it is thy will more be unfolded
Of our condition, how it truly is,
Mine cannot be that this should be denied thee.

58-60 This one has never his last evening seen,
But by his folly was so near to it
That very little time was there to turn.

61-63 As I have said, I unto him was sent
To rescue him, and other way was none
Than this to which I have myself betaken.

64-66 I've shown him all the people of perdition,
And now those spirits I intend to show
Who purge themselves beneath thy guardianship.

67-69 How I have brought him would be long to tell thee.
Virtue descendeth from on high that aids me
To lead him to behold thee and to hear thee.

70-72 Now may it please thee to vouchsafe his coming;
He seeketh Liberty, which is so dear,
As knoweth he who life for her refuses.

73-75 Thou know'st it; since, for her, to thee not bitter
Was death in Utica, where thou didst leave
The vesture, that will shine so, the great day.

76-78 By us the eternal edicts are not broken;
Since this one lives, and Minos binds not me;
But of that circle I, where are the chaste

79-81 Eyes of thy Marcia, who in looks still prays thee,
O holy breast, to hold her as thine own;
For her love, then, incline thyself to us.

82-84 Permit us through thy sevenfold realm to go;
I will take back this grace from thee to her,
If to be mentioned there below thou deignest."

85-87 “Marcia so pleasing was unto mine eyes
While I was on the other side,” then said he,
“That every grace she wished of me I granted;

88-90 Now that she dwells beyond the evil river,
She can no longer move me, by that law
Which, when I issued forth from there, was made.

91-93 But if a Lady of Heaven do move and rule thee,
As thou dost say, no flattery is needful;
Let it suffice thee that for her thou ask me.

94-96 Go, then, and see thou gird this one about
With a smooth rush, and that thou wash his face,
So that thou cleanse away all stain therefrom,

97-99 For ’twere not fitting that the eye o’ercast
By any mist should go before the first
Angel, who is of those of Paradise.

100-102 This little island round about its base
Below there, yonder, where the billow beats it,
Doth rushes bear upon its washy ooze;

103-105 No other plant that putteth forth the leaf,
Or that doth indurate, can there have life,
Because it yieldeth not unto the shocks.

106-108 Thereafter be not this way your return;
The sun, which now is rising, will direct you
To take the mount by easier ascent.”

109-111 With this he vanished; and I raised me up
Without a word, and wholly drew myself
Unto my Guide, and turned mine eyes to him.

112-114 And he began: “Son, follow thou my steps;
Let us turn back, for on this side declines
The plain unto its lower boundaries.”

115-117 The dawn was vanquishing the matin hour
Which fled before it, so that from afar
I recognised the trembling of the sea.

118-120 Along the solitary plain we went
As one who unto the lost road returns,
And till he finds it seems to go in vain.

121-123 As soon as we were come to where the dew
Fights with the sun, and, being in a part
Where shadow falls, little evaporates,

124-126 Both of his hands upon the grass outspread
In gentle manner did my Master place;
Whence I, who of his action was aware,

127-129 Extended unto him my tearful cheeks;
There did he make in me uncovered wholly
That hue which Hell had covered up in me.

130-132 Then came we down upon the desert shore
Which never yet saw navigate its waters
Any that afterward had known return.

133-135 There he begirt me as the other pleased;
O marvellous! for even as he culled
The humble plant, such it sprang up again

136 Suddenly there where he uprooted it.

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CANTO II



1-3 Already had the sun the horizon reached
Whose circle of meridian covers o'er
Jerusalem with its most lofty point,

4-6 And night that opposite to him revolves
Was issuing forth from Ganges with the Scales
That fall from out her hand when she exceedeth;

7-9 So that the white and the vermilion cheeks
Of beautiful Aurora, where I was,
By too great age were changing into orange.

10-12 We still were on the border of the sea,
Like people who are thinking of their road,
Who go in heart and with the body stay;

13-15 And lo! as when, upon the approach of morning,
Through the gross vapours Mars grows fiery red
Down in the West upon the ocean floor,

16-18 Appeared to me—may I again behold it!—
A light along the sea so swiftly coming,
Its motion by no flight of wing is equalled;

19-21 From which when I a little had withdrawn
Mine eyes, that I might question my Conductor,
Again I saw it brighter grown and larger.

22-24 Then on each side of it appeared to me
I knew not what of white, and underneath it
Little by little there came forth another.

25-27 My Master yet had uttered not a word
While the first whiteness into wings unfolded;
But when he clearly recognised the pilot,

28-30 He cried: "Make haste, make haste to bow the knee!
Behold the Angel of God! fold thou thy hands!
Henceforward shalt thou see such officers!

31-33 See how he scorneth human arguments,
So that nor oar he wants, nor other sail
Than his own wings, between so distant shores.

34-36 See how he holds them pointed up to heaven,
Fanning the air with the eternal pinions,
That do not moult themselves like mortal hair!"

37-39 Then as still nearer and more near us came
The Bird Divine, more radiant he appeared,
So that near by the eye could not endure him,

40-42 But down I cast it; and he came to shore
With a small vessel, very swift and light,
So that the water swallowed naught thereof.

43-45 Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot;
Beatitude seemed written in his face,
And more than a hundred spirits sat within.

46-48 "In exitu Israel de Aegypto!"
They chanted all together in one voice,
With whatso in that psalm is after written.

49-51 Then made he sign of holy rood upon them,
Whereat all cast themselves upon the shore,
And he departed swiftly as he came.

52-54 The throng which still remained there unfamiliar
Seemed with the place, all round about them gazing,
As one who in new matters makes essay.

55-57 On every side was darting forth the day.
The sun, who had with his resplendent shafts
From the mid-heaven chased forth the Capricorn,

58-60 When the new people lifted up their faces
Towards us, saying to us: "If ye know,
Show us the way to go unto the mountain."

61-63 And answer made Virgilius: “Ye believe
Perchance that we have knowledge of this place,
But we are strangers even as yourselves.

64-66 Just now we came, a little while before you,
Another way, which was so rough and steep,
That mounting will henceforth seem sport to us.”

67-69 The souls who had, from seeing me draw breath,
Become aware that I was still alive,
Pallid in their astonishment became;

70-72 And as to messenger who bears the olive
The people throng to listen to the news,
And no one shows himself afraid of crowding,

73-75 So at the sight of me stood motionless
Those fortunate spirits, all of them, as if
Oblivious to go and make them fair.

76-78 One from among them saw I coming forward,
As to embrace me, with such great affection,
That it incited me to do the like.

79-81 O empty shadows, save in aspect only!
Three times behind it did I clasp my hands,
As oft returned with them to my own breast!

82-84 I think with wonder I depicted me;
Whereat the shadow smiled and backward drew;
And I, pursuing it, pressed farther forward.

85-87 Gently it said that I should stay my steps;
Then knew I who it was, and I entreated
That it would stop awhile to speak with me.

88-90 It made reply to me: “Even as I loved thee
In mortal body, so I love thee free;
Therefore I stop; but wherefore goest thou?”

91-93 “My own Casella! to return once more
There where I am, I make this journey,” said I;
“But how from thee has so much time been taken?”

94-96 And he to me: “No outrage has been done me,
If he who takes both when and whom he pleases
Has many times denied to me this passage,

97-99 For of a righteous will his own is made.
He, sooth to say, for three months past has taken
Whoever wished to enter with all peace;

100-102 Whence I, who now had turned unto that shore
Where salt the waters of the Tiber grow,
Benignantly by him have been received.

103-105 Unto that outlet now his wing is pointed,
Because for evermore assemble there
Those who tow’rds Acheron do not descend.”

106-108 And I: “If some new law take not from thee
Memory or practice of the song of love,
Which used to quiet in me all my longings,

109-111 Thee may it please to comfort therewithal
Somewhat this soul of mine, that with its body
Hitherward coming is so much distressed."

112-114 "Love, that within my mind discourses with me,"
Forthwith began he so melodiously,
The melody within me still is sounding.

115-117 My Master, and myself, and all that people
Which with him were, appeared as satisfied
As if naught else might touch the mind of any.

118-120 We all of us were moveless and attentive
Unto his notes; and lo! the grave old man,
Exclaiming: "What is this, ye laggard spirits?

121-123 What negligence, what standing still is this?
Run to the mountain to strip off the slough,
That lets not God be manifest to you."

124-126 Even as when, collecting grain or tares,
The doves, together at their pasture met,
Quiet, nor showing their accustomed pride,

127-129 If aught appear of which they are afraid,
Upon a sudden leave their food alone,
Because they are assailed by greater care;

130-132 So that fresh company did I behold
The song relinquish, and go tow'rds the hill,
As one who goes, and knows not whitherward;

133 Nor was our own departure less in haste.

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CANTO III



1-3 Inasmuch as the instantaneous flight
Had scattered them asunder o'er the plain,
Turned to the mountain whither reason spurs us,

4-6 I pressed me close unto my faithful comrade,
And how without him had I kept my course?
Who would have led me up along the mountain?

7-9 He seemed to me within himself remorseful;
O noble conscience, and without a stain,
How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee!

10-12 After his feet had laid aside the haste
Which mars the dignity of every act,
My mind, that hitherto had been restrained,

13-15 Let loose its faculties as if delighted,
And I my sight directed to the hill
That highest tow'rds the heaven uplifts itself.

16-18 The sun, that in our rear was flaming red,
Was broken in front of me into the figure
Which had in me the stoppage of its rays;

19-21 Unto one side I turned me, with the fear
Of being left alone, when I beheld
Only in front of me the ground obscured.

22-24 "Why dost thou still mistrust?" my Comforter
Began to say to me turned wholly round;
"Dost thou not think me with thee, and that I guide thee?

25-27 'Tis evening there already where is buried
The body within which I cast a shadow;
'Tis from Brundusium ta'en, and Naples has it.

28-30 Now if in front of me no shadow fall,
Marvel not at it more than at the heavens,
Because one ray impedeth not another

31-33 To suffer torments, both of cold and heat,
Bodies like this that Power provides, which wills
That how it works be not unveiled to us.

34-36 Insane is he who hopeth that our reason
Can traverse the illimitable way,
Which the one Substance in three Persons follows!

37-39 Mortals, remain contented at the ‘Quia;’
For if ye had been able to see all,
No need there were for Mary to give birth;

40-42 And ye have seen desiring without fruit,
Those whose desire would have been quieted,
Which evermore is given them for a grief.

43-45 I speak of Aristotle and of Plato,
And many others;”—and here bowed his head,
And more he said not, and remained disturbed.

46-48 We came meanwhile unto the mountain’s foot;
There so precipitate we found the rock,
That nimble legs would there have been in vain.

49-51 ’Twixt Lerici and Turbia, the most desert,
The most secluded pathway is a stair
Easy and open, if compared with that.

52-54 “Who knoweth now upon which hand the hill
Slopes down,” my Master said, his footsteps staying,
“So that who goeth without wings may mount?”

55-57 And while he held his eyes upon the ground
Examining the nature of the path,
And I was looking up around the rock,

58-60 On the left hand appeared to me a throng
Of souls, that moved their feet in our direction,
And did not seem to move, they came so slowly.

61-63 “Lift up thine eyes,” I to the Master said;
“Behold, on this side, who will give us counsel,
If thou of thine own self can have it not.”

64-66 Then he looked at me, and with frank expression
Replied: “Let us go there, for they come slowly,
And thou be steadfast in thy hope, sweet son.”

67-69 Still was that people as far off from us,
After a thousand steps of ours I say,
As a good thrower with his hand would reach,

70-72 When they all crowded unto the hard masses
Of the high bank, and motionless stood and close,
As he stands still to look who goes in doubt.

73-75 “O happy dead! O spirits elect already!”
Virgilius made beginning, “by that peace
Which I believe is waiting for you all,

76-78 Tell us upon what side the mountain slopes,
So that the going up be possible,
For to lose time irks him most who most knows.”

79-81 As sheep come issuing forth from out the fold
By ones and twos and threes, and the others stand
Timidly, holding down their eyes and nostrils,

82-84 And what the foremost does the others do,
Huddling themselves against her, if she stop,
Simple and quiet and the wherefore know not;

85-87 So moving to approach us thereupon
I saw the leader of that fortunate flock,
Modest in face and dignified in gait.

88-90 As soon as those in the advance saw broken
The light upon the ground at my right side,
So that from me the shadow reached the rock,

91-93 They stopped, and backward drew themselves somewhat;
And all the others, who came after them,
Not knowing why nor wherefore, did the same.

94-96 "Without your asking, I confess to you
This is a human body which you see,
Whereby the sunshine on the ground is cleft.

97-99 Marvel ye not thereat, but be persuaded
That not without a power which comes from Heaven
Doth he endeavour to surmount this wall."

100-102 The Master thus; and said those worthy people:
"Return ye then, and enter in before us,"
Making a signal with the back o' the hand

103-105 And one of them began: "Whoe'er thou art,
Thus going turn thine eyes, consider well
If e'er thou saw me in the other world."

106-108 I turned me tow'rds him, and looked at him closely;
Blond was he, beautiful, and of noble aspect,
But one of his eyebrows had a blow divided.

109-111 When with humility I had disclaimed
E'er having seen him, "Now behold!" he said,
And showed me high upon his breast a wound.

112-114 Then said he with a smile: "I am Manfredi,
The grandson of the Empress Costanza;
Therefore, when thou returnest, I beseech thee

115-117 Go to my daughter beautiful, the mother
Of Sicily's honour and of Aragon's,
And the truth tell her, if aught else be told.

118-120 After I had my body lacerated
By these two mortal stabs, I gave myself
Weeping to Him, who willingly doth pardon.

121-123 Horrible my iniquities had been;
But Infinite Goodness hath such ample arms,
That it receives whatever turns to it.

124-126 Had but Cosenza's pastor, who in chase
Of me was sent by Clement at that time,
In God read understandingly this page,

127-129 The bones of my dead body still would be
At the bridge-head, near unto Benevento,
Under the safeguard of the heavy cairn.

130-132 Now the rain bathes and moveth them the wind,
Beyond the realm, almost beside the Verde,
Where he transported them with tapers quenched.

133-135 By malison of theirs is not so lost
Eternal Love, that it cannot return,
So long as hope has anything of green.

136-138 True is it, who in contumacy dies
Of Holy Church, though penitent at last,
Must wait upon the outside this bank

139-141 Thirty times told the time that he has been
In his presumption, unless such decree
Shorter by means of righteous prayers become.

142-144 See now if thou hast power to make me happy,
By making known unto my good Costanza
How thou hast seen me, and this ban beside,

145 For those on earth can much advance us here.”

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CANTO IV



1-3 Whenever by delight or else by pain,
That seizes any faculty of ours,
Wholly to that the soul collects itself,

4-6 It seemeth that no other power it heeds;
And this against that error is which thinks
One soul above another kindles in us.

7-9 And hence, whenever aught is heard or seen
Which keeps the soul intently bent upon it,
Time passes on, and we perceive it not,

10-12 Because one faculty is that which listens,
And other that which the soul keeps entire;
This is as if in bonds, and that is free.

13-15 Of this I had experience positive
In hearing and in gazing at that spirit;
For fifty full degrees uprisen was

16-18 The sun, and I had not perceived it, when
We came to where those souls with one accord
Cried out unto us: “Here is what you ask.”

19-21 A greater opening ofttimes hedges up
With but a little forkful of his thorns
The villager, what time the grape imbrowns,

22-24 Than was the passage-way through which ascended
Only my Leader and myself behind him,
After that company departed from us.

25-27 One climbs Sanleo and descends in Noli,
And mounts the summit of Bismantova,
With feet alone; but here one needs must fly;

28-30 With the swift pinions and the plumes I say
Of great desire, conducted after him
Who gave me hope, and made a light for me.

31-33 We mounted upward through the rifted rock,
And on each side the border pressed upon us,
And feet and hands the ground beneath required.

34-36 When we were come upon the upper rim
Of the high bank, out on the open slope,
“My Master,” said I, “what way shall we take?”

37-39 And he to me: “No step of thine descend;
Still up the mount behind me win thy way,
Till some sage escort shall appear to us.”

40-42 The summit was so high it vanquished sight,
And the hillside precipitous far more
Than line from middle quadrant to the centre.

43-45 Spent with fatigue was I, when I began:
“O my sweet Father! turn thee and behold
How I remain alone, unless thou stay!”

46-48 “O son,” he said, “up yonder drag thyself,”
Pointing me to a terrace somewhat higher,
Which on that side encircles all the hill.

49-51 These words of his so spurred me on, that I
Strained every nerve, behind him scrambling up,
Until the circle was beneath my feet.

52-54 Thereon ourselves we seated both of us
Turned to the East, from which we had ascended,
For all men are delighted to look back.

55-57 To the low shores mine eyes I first directed,
Then to the sun uplifted them, and wondered
That on the left hand we were smitten by it.

58-60 The Poet well perceived that I was wholly
Bewildered at the chariot of the light,
Where ’twixt us and the Aquilon it entered.

61-63 Whereon he said to me: “If Castor and Pollux
Were in the company of yonder mirror,
That up and down conducteth with its light,

64-66 Thou wouldst behold the zodiac’s jagged wheel
Revolving still more near unto the Bears,
Unless it swerved aside from its old track.

67-69 How that may be wouldst thou have power to think,
Collected in thyself, imagine Zion
Together with this mount on earth to stand,

70-72 So that they both one sole horizon have,
And hemispheres diverse; whereby the road
Which Phaeton, alas! knew not to drive,

73-75 Thou’lt see how of necessity must pass
This on one side, when that upon the other,
If thine intelligence right clearly heed.”

76-78 “Truly, my Master,” said I, “never yet
Saw I so clearly as I now discern,
There where my wit appeared incompetent,

79-81 That the mid-circle of supernal motion,
Which in some art is the Equator called,
And aye remains between the Sun and Winter,

82-84 For reason which thou sayest, departeth hence
Tow’rds the Septentrion, what time the Hebrews
Beheld it tow’rds the region of the heat.

85-87 But, if it pleaseth thee, I fain would learn
How far we have to go; for the hill rises
Higher than eyes of mine have power to rise."

88-90 And he to me: "This mount is such, that ever
At the beginning down below 'tis tiresome,
And aye the more one climbs, the less it hurts.

91-93 Therefore, when it shall seem so pleasant to thee,
That going up shall be to thee as easy
As going down the current in a boat,

94-96 Then at this pathway's ending thou wilt be;
There to repose thy panting breath expect;
No more I answer; and this I know for true."

97-99 And as he finished uttering these words,
A voice close by us sounded: "Peradventure
Thou wilt have need of sitting down ere that."

100-102 At sound thereof each one of us turned round,
And saw upon the left hand a great rock,
Which neither I nor he before had noticed.

103-105 Thither we drew; and there were persons there
Who in the shadow stood behind the rock,
As one through indolence is wont to stand.

106-108 And one of them, who seemed to me fatigued,
Was sitting down, and both his knees embraced,
Holding his face low down between them bowed.

109-111 “O my sweet Lord,” I said, “do turn thine eye
On him who shows himself more negligent
Then even Sloth herself his sister were.”

112-114 Then he turned round to us, and he gave heed,
Just lifting up his eyes above his thigh,
And said: “Now go thou up, for thou art valiant.”

115-117 Then knew I who he was; and the distress,
That still a little did my breathing quicken,
My going to him hindered not; and after

118-120 I came to him he hardly raised his head,
Saying: “Hast thou seen clearly how the sun
O’er thy left shoulder drives his chariot?”

121-123 His sluggish attitude and his curt words
A little unto laughter moved my lips;
Then I began: “Belacqua, I grieve not

124-126 For thee henceforth; but tell me, wherefore seated
In this place art thou? Waitest thou an escort?
Or has thy usual habit seized upon thee?”

127-129 And he: “O brother, what’s the use of climbing?
Since to my torment would not let me go
The Angel of God, who sitteth at the gate.

130-132 First heaven must needs so long revolve me round
Outside thereof, as in my life it did,
Since the good sighs I to the end postponed,

133-135 Unless, e'er that, some prayer may bring me aid
Which rises from a heart that lives in grace;
What profit others that in heaven are heard not?"

136-138 Meanwhile the Poet was before me mounting,
And saying: "Come now; see the sun has touched
Meridian, and from the shore the night

139 Covers already with her foot Morocco."

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CANTO V



1-3 I had already from those shades departed,
And followed in the footsteps of my Guide,
When from behind, pointing his finger at me,

4-6 One shouted: “See, it seems as if shone not
The sunshine on the left of him below,
And like one living seems he to conduct him.”

7-9 Mine eyes I turned at utterance of these words,
And saw them watching with astonishment
But me, but me, and the light which was broken!

10-12 “Why doth thy mind so occupy itself,”
The Master said, “that thou thy pace dost slacken?
What matters it to thee what here is whispered?

13-15 Come after me, and let the people talk;
Stand like a steadfast tower, that never wags
Its top for all the blowing of the winds;

16-18 For evermore the man in whom is springing
Thought upon thought, removes from him the mark,
Because the force of one the other weakens."

19-21 What could I say in answer but "I come"?
I said it somewhat with that colour tinged
Which makes a man of pardon sometimes worthy.

22-24 Meanwhile along the mountain-side across
Came people in advance of us a little,
Singing the Miserere verse by verse.

25-27 When they became aware I gave no place
For passage of the sunshine through my body,
They changed their song into a long, hoarse "Oh!"

28-30 And two of them, in form of messengers,
Ran forth to meet us, and demanded of us,
"Of your condition make us cognisant."

31-33 And said my Master: "Ye can go your way
And carry back again to those who sent you,
That this one's body is of very flesh.

34-36 If they stood still because they saw his shadow,
As I suppose, enough is answered them;
Him let them honour, it may profit them."

37-39 Vapours enkindled saw I ne'er so swiftly
At early nightfall cleave the air serene,
Nor, at the set of sun, the clouds of August,

40-42 But upward they returned in briefer time,
And, on arriving, with the others wheeled
Tow'rds us, like troops that run without a rein.

43-45 "This folk that presses unto us is great,
And cometh to implore thee," said the Poet;
"So still go onward, and in going listen."

46-48 "O soul that goest to beatitude
With the same members wherewith thou wast born,"
Shouting they came, "a little stay thy steps,

49-51 Look, if thou e'er hast any of us seen,
So that o'er yonder thou bear news of him;
Ah, why dost thou go on? Ah, why not stay?

52-54 Long since we all were slain by violence,
And sinners even to the latest hour;
Then did a light from heaven admonish us,

55-57 So that, both penitent and pardoning, forth
From life we issued reconciled to God,
Who with desire to see Him stirs our hearts."

58-60 And I: "Although I gaze into your faces,
No one I recognize; but if may please you
Aught I have power to do, ye well-born spirits,

61-63 Speak ye, and I will do it, by that peace
Which, following the feet of such a Guide,
From world to world makes itself sought by me."

64-66 And one began: "Each one has confidence
In thy good offices without an oath,
Unless the I cannot cut off the I will;

67-69 Whence I, who speak alone before the others,
Pray thee, if ever thou dost see the land
That 'twixt Romagna lies and that of Charles,

70-72 Thou be so courteous to me of thy prayers
In Fano, that they pray for me devoutly,
That I may purge away my grave offences.

73-75 From thence was I; but the deep wounds, through which
Issued the blood wherein I had my seat,
Were dealt me in bosom of the Antenori,

76-78 There where I thought to be the most secure;
'Twas he of Este had it done, who held me
In hatred far beyond what justice willed.

79-81 But if towards the Mira I had fled,
When I was overtaken at Oriaco,
I still should be o'er yonder where men breathe.

82-84 I ran to the lagoon, and reeds and mire
Did so entangle me I fell, and saw there
A lake made from my veins upon the ground."

85-87 Then said another: "Ah, be that desire
Fulfilled that draws thee to the lofty mountain,
As thou with pious pity aidest mine.

88-90 I was of Montefeltro, and am Buonconte;
Giovanna, nor none other cares for me;
Hence among these I go with downcast front."

91-93 And I to him: "What violence or what chance
Led thee astray so far from Campaldino,
That never has thy sepulture been known?"

94-96 "Oh," he replied, "at Casentino's foot
A river crosses named Archiano, born
Above the Hermitage in Apennine.

97-99 There where the name thereof becometh void
Did I arrive, pierced through and through the throat,
Fleeing on foot, and bloodying the plain;

100-102 There my sight lost I, and my utterance
Ceased in the name of Mary, and thereat
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remained.

103-105 Truth will I speak, repeat it to the living;
God's Angel took me up, and he of hell
Shouted: 'O thou from heaven, why dost thou rob me?

106-108 Thou bearest away the eternal part of him,
For one poor little tear, that takes him from me;
But with the rest I'll deal in other fashion!'

109-111 Well knowest thou how in the air is gathered
That humid vapour which to water turns,
Soon as it rises where the cold doth grasp it.

112-114 He joined that evil will, which aye seeks evil,
To intellect, and moved the mist and wind
By means of power, which his own nature gave;

115-117 Thereafter, when the day was spent, the valley
From Pratomagno to the great yoke covered
With fog, and made the heaven above intent,

118-120 So that the pregnant air to water changed;
Down fell the rain, and to the gullies came
Whate'er of it earth tolerated not;

121-123 And as it mingled with the mighty torrents,
Towards the royal river with such speed
It headlong rushed, that nothing held it back.

124-126 My frozen body near unto its outlet
The robust Archian found, and into Arno
Thrust it, and loosened from my breast the cross

127-129 I made of me, when agony o'ercame me;
It rolled me on the banks and on the bottom,
Then with its booty covered and begirt me."

130-132 "Ah, when thou hast returned unto the world,
And rested thee from thy long journeying,"
After the second followed the third spirit,

133-135 “Do thou remember me who am the Pia;
Siena made me, unmade me Maremma;
He knoweth it, who had encircled first,
136 Espousing me, my finger with his gem.”

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CANTO VI

✦

1-3 Whene'er is broken up the game of Zara,
He who has lost remains behind despondent,
The throws repeating, and in sadness learns;

4-6 The people with the other all depart;
One goes in front, and one behind doth pluck him,
And at his side one brings himself to mind;

7-9 He pauses not, and this and that one hears;
They crowd no more to whom his hand he stretches,
And from the throng he thus defends himself.

10-12 Even such was I in that dense multitude,
Turning to them this way and that my face,
And, promising, I freed myself therefrom.

13-15 There was the Aretine, who from the arms
Untamed of Ghin di Tacco had his death,
And he who fleeing from pursuit was drowned.

16-18 There was imploring with his hands outstretched
Frederick Novello, and that one of Pisa
Who made the good Marzucco seem so strong.

19-21 I saw Count Orso; and the soul divided
By hatred and by envy from its body,
As it declared, and not for crime committed,

22-24 Pierre de la Brosse I say; and here provide
While still on earth the Lady of Brabant,
So that for this she be of no worse flock!

25-27 As soon as I was free from all those shades
Who only prayed that some one else may pray,
So as to hasten their becoming holy,

28-30 Began I: "It appears that thou deniest,
O light of mine, expressly in some text,
That orison can bend decree of Heaven;

31-33 And ne'ertheless these people pray for this.
Might then their expectation bootless be?
Or is to me thy saying not quite clear?"

34-36 And he to me: "My writing is explicit,
And not fallacious is the hope of these,
If with sane intellect 'tis well regarded;

37-39 For top of judgment doth not vail itself,
Because the fire of love fulfils at once
What he must satisfy who here installs him.

40-42 And there, where I affirmed that proposition,
Defect was not amended by a prayer,
Because the prayer from God was separate.

43-45 Verily, in so deep a questioning
Do not decide, unless she tell it thee,
Who light 'twixt truth and intellect shall be.

46-48 I know not if thou understand; I speak
Of Beatrice; her shalt thou see above,
Smiling and happy, on this mountain's top."

49-51 And I: "Good Leader, let us make more haste,
For I no longer tire me as before;
And see, e'en now the hill a shadow casts."

52-54 "We will go forward with this day" he answered,
"As far as now is possible for us;
But otherwise the fact is than thou thinkest.

55-57 Ere thou art up there, thou shalt see return
Him, who now hides himself behind the hill,
So that thou dost not interrupt his rays.

58-60 But yonder there behold! a soul that stationed
All, all alone is looking hitherward;
It will point out to us the quickest way."

61-63 We came up unto it; O Lombard soul,
How lofty and disdainful thou didst bear thee,
And grand and slow in moving of thine eyes!

64-66 Nothing whatever did it say to us,
But let us go our way, eying us only
After the manner of a couchant lion;

67-69 Still near to it Virgilius drew, entreating
That it would point us out the best ascent;
And it replied not unto his demand,

70-72 But of our native land and of our life
It questioned us; and the sweet Guide began:
"Mantua,"—and the shade, all in itself recluse,

73-75 Rose tow'rds him from the place where first it was,
Saying: "O Mantuan, I am Sordello
Of thine own land!" and one embraced the other.

76-78 Ah! servile Italy, grief's hostelry!
A ship without a pilot in great tempest!
No Lady thou of Provinces, but brothel!

79-81 That noble soul was so impatient, only
At the sweet sound of his own native land,
To make its citizen glad welcome there;

82-84 And now within thee are not without war
Thy living ones, and one doth gnaw the other
Of those whom one wall and one fosse shut in!

85-87 Search, wretched one, all round about the shores
Thy seaboard, and then look within thy bosom,
If any part of thee enjoyeth peace!

88-90 What boots it, that for thee Justinian
The bridle mend, if empty be the saddle?
Withouten this the shame would be the less.

91-93 Ah! people, thou that oughtest to be devout,
And to let Caesar sit upon the saddle,
If well thou hearest what God teacheth thee,

94-96 Behold how fell this wild beast has become,
Being no longer by the spur corrected,
Since thou hast laid thy hand upon the bridle.

97-99 O German Albert! who abandonest
Her that has grown recalcitrant and savage,
And oughtest to bestride her saddle-bow,

100-102 May a just judgment from the stars down fall
Upon thy blood, and be it new and open,
That thy successor may have fear thereof;

103-105 Because thy father and thyself have suffered,
By greed of those transalpine lands distrained,
The garden of the empire to be waste.

106-108 Come and behold Montecchi and Cappelletti,
Monaldi and Fillippeschi, careless man!
Those sad already, and these doubt-depressed!

109-111 Come, cruel one! come and behold the oppression
Of thy nobility, and cure their wounds,
And thou shalt see how safe is Santafiore!

112-114 Come and behold thy Rome, that is lamenting,
Widowed, alone, and day and night exclaims,
"My Caesar, why hast thou forsaken me?"

115-117 Come and behold how loving are the people;
And if for us no pity moveth thee,
Come and be made ashamed of thy renown!

118-120 And if it lawful be, O Jove Supreme!
Who upon earth for us wast crucified,
Are thy just eyes averted otherwhere?

121-123 Or preparation is 't, that, in the abyss
Of thine own counsel, for some good thou makest
From our perception utterly cut off?

124-126 For all the towns of Italy are full
Of tyrants, and becometh a Marcellus
Each peasant churl who plays the partisan!

127-129 My Florence! well mayst thou contented be
With this digression, which concerns thee not,
Thanks to thy people who such forethought take!

130-132 Many at heart have justice, but shoot slowly,
That unadvised they come not to the bow,
But on their very lips thy people have it!

133-135 Many refuse to bear the common burden;
But thy solicitous people answereth
Without being asked, and crieth: "I submit."

136-138 Now be thou joyful, for thou hast good reason;
Thou affluent, thou in peace, thou full of wisdom!
If I speak true, the event conceals it not.

139-141 Athens and Lacedaemon, they who made
The ancient laws, and were so civilized,
Made towards living well a little sign

142-144 Compared with thee, who makest such fine-spun
Provisions, that to middle of November
Reaches not what thou in October spinnest.

145-147 How oft, within the time of thy remembrance,
Laws, money, offices, and usages
Hast thou remodelled, and renewed thy members?

148-150 And if thou mind thee well, and see the light,
Thou shalt behold thyself like a sick woman,
Who cannot find repose upon her down,

151 But by her tossing wardeth off her pain.

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CANTO VII



1-3 After the gracious and glad salutations
Had three and four times been reiterated,
Sordello backward drew and said, “Who are you?”

4-6 “Or ever to this mountain were directed
The souls deserving to ascend to God,
My bones were buried by Octavian.

7-9 I am Virgilius; and for no crime else
Did I lose heaven, than for not having faith;”
In this wise then my Leader made reply.

10-12 As one who suddenly before him sees
Something whereat he marvels, who believes
And yet does not, saying, “It is! it is not!”

13-15 So he appeared; and then bowed down his brow,
And with humility returned towards him,
And, where inferiors embrace, embraced him.

16-18 "O glory of the Latians, thou," he said,
"Through whom our language showed what it could do
O pride eternal of the place I came from,

19-21 What merit or what grace to me reveals thee?
If I to hear thy words be worthy, tell me
If thou dost come from Hell, and from what cloister."

22-24 "Through all the circles of the doleful realm,"
Responded he, "have I come hitherward;
Heaven's power impelled me, and with that I come.

25-27 I by not doing, not by doing, lost
The sight of that high sun which thou desirest,
And which too late by me was recognized.

28-30 A place there is below not sad with torments,
But darkness only, where the lamentations
Have not the sound of wailing, but are sighs.

31-33 There dwell I with the little innocents
Snatched by the teeth of Death, or ever they
Were from our human sinfulness exempt.

34-36 There dwell I among those who the three saintly
Virtues did not put on, and without vice
The others knew and followed all of them.

37-39 But if thou know and can, some indication
Give us by which we may the sooner come
Where Purgatory has its right beginning."

40-42 He answered: "No fixed place has been assigned us;
'Tis lawful for me to go up and round;
So far as I can go, as guide I join thee.

43-45 But see already how the day declines,
And to go up by night we are not able;
Therefore 'tis well to think of some fair sojourn.

46-48 Souls are there on the right hand here withdrawn;
If thou permit me I will lead thee to them,
And thou shalt know them not without delight."

49-51 "How is this?" was the answer; "should one wish
To mount by night would he prevented be
By others? or mayhap would not have power?"

52-54 And on the ground the good Sordello drew
His finger, saying, "See, this line alone
Thou couldst not pass after the sun is gone;

55-57 Not that aught else would hindrance give, however,
To going up, save the nocturnal darkness;
This with the want of power the will perplexes.

58-60 We might indeed therewith return below,
And, wandering, walk the hill-side round about,
While the horizon holds the day imprisoned."

61-63 Thereon my Lord, as if in wonder, said:
"Do thou conduct us thither, where thou sayest
That we can take delight in tarrying."

64-66 Little had we withdrawn us from that place,
When I perceived the mount was hollowed out
In fashion as the valleys here are hollowed.

67-69 "Thitherward," said that shade, "will we repair,
Where of itself the hill-side makes a lap,
And there for the new day will we await."

70-72 'Twixt hill and plain there was a winding path
Which led us to the margin of that dell,
Where dies the border more than half away.

73-75 Gold and fine silver, and scarlet and pearl-white,
The Indian wood resplendent and serene,
Fresh emerald the moment it is broken,

76-78 By herbage and by flowers within that hollow
Planted, each one in colour would be vanquished,
As by its greater vanquished is the less.

79-81 Nor in that place had nature painted only,
But of the sweetness of a thousand odours
Made there a mingled fragrance and unknown.

82-84 "Salve Regina," on the green and flowers
There seated, singing, spirits I beheld,
Which were not visible outside the valley.

85-87 “Before the scanty sun now seeks his nest,”
Began the Mantuan who had led us thither,
“Among them do not wish me to conduct you.

88-90 Better from off this ledge the acts and faces
Of all of them will you discriminate,
Than in the plain below received among them.

91-93 He who sits highest, and the semblance bears
Of having what he should have done neglected,
And to the others’ song moves not his lips,

94-96 Rudolph the Emperor was, who had the power
To heal the wounds that Italy have slain,
So that through others slowly she revives.

97-99 The other, who in look doth comfort him,
Governed the region where the water springs,
The Moldau bears the Elbe, and Elbe the sea.

100-102 His name was Ottocar; and in swaddling-clothes
Far better he than bearded Winceslaus
His son, who feeds in luxury and ease.

103-105 And the small-nosed, who close in council seems
With him that has an aspect so benign,
Died fleeing and disflowering the lily;

106-108 Look there, how he is beating at his breast!
Behold the other one, who for his cheek
Sighing has made of his own palm a bed;

109-111 Father and father-in-law of France's Pest
Are they, and know his vicious life and lewd,
And hence proceeds the grief that so doth pierce them.

112-114 He who appears so stalwart, and chimes in,
Singing, with that one of the manly nose,
The cord of every valour wore begirt;

115-117 And if as King had after him remained
The stripling who in rear of him is sitting,
Well had the valour passed from vase to vase,

118-120 Which cannot of the other heirs be said.
Frederick and Jacomo possess the realms,
But none the better heritage possesses.

121-123 Not oftentimes upriseth through the branches
The probity of man; and this He wills
Who gives it, so that we may ask of Him.

124-126 Eke to the large-nosed reach my words, no less
Than to the other, Pier, who with him sings;
Whence Provence and Apulia grieve already

127-129 The plant is as inferior to its seed,
As more than Beatrice and Margaret
Costanza boasteth of her husband still.

130-132 Behold the monarch of the simple life,
Harry of England, sitting there alone;
He in his branches has a better issue.

133-135 He who the lowest on the ground among them
Sits looking upward, is the Marquis William,
For whose sake Alessandria and her war

136 Make Monferrat and Canavese weep.”

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CANTO VIII



1-3 'Twas now the hour that turneth back desire
In those who sail the sea, and melts the heart,
The day they've said to their sweet friends farewell,

4-6 And the new pilgrim penetrates with love,
If he doth hear from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day,

7-9 When I began to make of no avail
My hearing, and to watch one of the souls
Uprisen, that begged attention with its hand.

10-12 It joined and lifted upward both its palms,
Fixing its eyes upon the orient,
As if it said to God, "Naught else I care for."

13-15 "Te lucis ante" so devoutly issued
Forth from its mouth, and with such dulcet notes,
It made me issue forth from my own mind.

16-18 And then the others, sweetly and devoutly,
Accompanied it through all the hymn entire,
Having their eyes on the supernal wheels.

19-21 Here, Reader, fix thine eyes well on the truth,
For now indeed so subtile is the veil,
Surely to penetrate within is easy.

22-24 I saw that army of the gentle-born
Thereafterward in silence upward gaze,
As if in expectation, pale and humble;

25-27 And from on high come forth and down descend,
I saw two Angels with two flaming swords,
Truncated and deprived of their points.

28-30 Green as the little leaflets just now born
Their garments were, which, by their verdant pinions
Beaten and blown abroad, they trailed behind.

31-33 One just above us came to take his station,
And one descended to the opposite bank,
So that the people were contained between them.

34-36 Clearly in them discerned I the blond head;
But in their faces was the eye bewildered,
As faculty confounded by excess.

37-39 "From Mary's bosom both of them have come,"
Sordello said, "as guardians of the valley
Against the serpent, that will come anon."

40-42 Whereupon I, who knew not by what road,
Turned round about, and closely drew myself,
Utterly frozen, to the faithful shoulders.

43-45 And once again Sordello: "Now descend we
'Mid the grand shades, and we will speak to them;
Right pleasant will it be for them to see you."

46-48 Only three steps I think that I descended,
And was below, and saw one who was looking
Only at me, as if he fain would know me.

49-51 Already now the air was growing dark,
But not so that between his eyes and mine
It did not show what it before locked up.

52-54 Tow'rds me he moved, and I tow'rds him did move;
Noble Judge Nino! how it me delighted,
When I beheld thee not among the damned!

55-57 No greeting fair was left unsaid between us;
Then asked he: "How long is it since thou camest
O'er the far waters to the mountain's foot?"

58-60 "Oh!" said I to him, "through the dismal places
I came this morn; and am in the first life,
Albeit the other, going thus, I gain."

61-63 And on the instant my reply was heard,
He and Sordello both shrank back from me,
Like people who are suddenly bewildered.

64-66 One to Virgilius, and the other turned
To one who sat there, crying, “Up, Currado!
Come and behold what God in grace has willed!”

67-69 Then, turned to me: “By that especial grace
Thou owest unto Him, who so conceals
His own first wherefore, that it has no ford,

70-72 When thou shalt be beyond the waters wide,
Tell my Giovanna that she pray for me,
Where answer to the innocent is made.

73-75 I do not think her mother loves me more,
Since she has laid aside her wimple white,
Which she, unhappy, needs must wish again.

76-78 Through her full easily is comprehended
How long in woman lasts the fire of love,
If eye or touch do not relight it often.

79-81 So fair a hatchment will not make for her
The Viper marshalling the Milanese
A-field, as would have made Gallura’s Cock.”

82-84 In this wise spake he, with the stamp impressed
Upon his aspect of that righteous zeal
Which measurably burneth in the heart.

85-87 My greedy eyes still wandered up to heaven,
Still to that point where slowest are the stars,
Even as a wheel the nearest to its axle.

88-90 And my Conductor: “Son, what dost thou gaze at
Up there?” And I to him: “At those three torches
With which this hither pole is all on fire.”

91-93 And he to me: “The four resplendent stars
Thou sawest this morning are down yonder low,
And these have mounted up to where those were.”

94-96 As he was speaking, to himself Sordello
Drew him, and said, “Lo there our Adversary!”
And pointed with his finger to look thither.

97-99 Upon the side on which the little valley
No barrier hath, a serpent was; perchance
The same which gave to Eve the bitter food.

100-102 ’Twixt grass and flowers came on the evil streak,
Turning at times its head about, and licking
Its back like to a beast that smoothes itself.

103-105 I did not see, and therefore cannot say
How the celestial falcons ’gan to move,
But well I saw that they were both in motion.

106-108 Hearing the air cleft by their verdant wings,
The serpent fled, and round the Angels wheeled,
Up to their stations flying back alike.

109-111 The shade that to the Judge had near approached
When he had called, throughout that whole assault
Had not a moment loosed its gaze on me.

112-114 "So may the light that leadeth thee on high
Find in thine own free-will as much of wax
As needful is up to the highest azure,"

115-117 Began it, "if some true intelligence
Of Valdimagra or its neighbourhood
Thou knowest, tell it me, who once was great there.

118-120 Currado Malaspina was I called;
I'm not the elder, but from him descended;
To mine I bore the love which here refineth."

121-123 "O," said I unto him, "through your domains
I never passed, but where is there a dwelling
Throughout all Europe, where they are not known?

124-126 That fame, which doeth honour to your house,
Proclaims its Signors and proclaims its land,
So that he knows of them who ne'er was there.

127-129 And, as I hope for heaven, I swear to you
Your honoured family in naught abates
The glory of the purse and of the sword.

130-132 It is so privileged by use and nature,
That though a guilty head misguide the world,
Sole it goes right, and scorns the evil way."

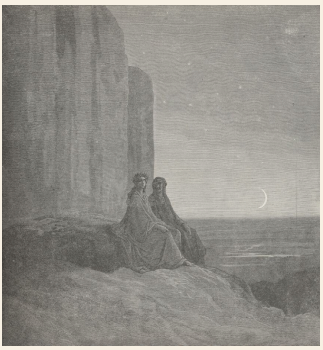
133-135 And he: “Now go; for the sun shall not lie
Seven times upon the pillow which the Ram
With all his four feet covers and bestrides,

136-138 Before that such a courteous opinion
Shall in the middle of thy head be nailed
With greater nails than of another’s speech,

139 Unless the course of justice standeth still.”

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CANTO IX



1-3 The concubine of old Tithonus now
Gleamed white upon the eastern balcony,
Forth from the arms of her sweet paramour;

4-6 With gems her forehead all relucent was,
Set in the shape of that cold animal
Which with its tail doth smite amain the nations,

7-9 And of the steps, with which she mounts, the Night
Had taken two in that place where we were,
And now the third was bending down its wings;

10-12 When I, who something had of Adam in me,
Vanquished by sleep, upon the grass reclined,
There were all five of us already sat.

13-15 Just at the hour when her sad lay begins
The little swallow, near unto the morning,
Perchance in memory of her former woes,

16-18 And when the mind of man, a wanderer
More from the flesh, and less by thought imprisoned,
Almost prophetic in its visions is,

19-21 In dreams it seemed to me I saw suspended
An eagle in the sky, with plumes of gold,
With wings wide open, and intent to stoop,

22-24 And this, it seemed to me, was where had been
By Ganymede his kith and kin abandoned,
When to the high consistory he was rapt.

25-27 I thought within myself, perchance he strikes
From habit only here, and from elsewhere
Disdains to bear up any in his feet.

28-30 Then wheeling somewhat more, it seemed to me,
Terrible as the lightning he descended,
And snatched me upward even to the fire.

31-33 Therein it seemed that he and I were burning,
And the imagined fire did scorch me so,
That of necessity my sleep was broken.

34-36 Not otherwise Achilles started up,
Around him turning his awakened eyes,
And knowing not the place in which he was,

37-39 What time from Chiron stealthily his mother
Carried him sleeping in her arms to Scyros,
Wherefrom the Greeks withdrew him afterwards,

40-42 Than I upstarted, when from off my face
Sleep fled away; and pallid I became,
As doth the man who freezes with affright.

43-45 Only my Comforter was at my side,
And now the sun was more than two hours high,
And turned towards the sea-shore was my face.

46-48 "Be not intimidated," said my Lord,
"Be reassured, for all is well with us;
Do not restrain, but put forth all thy strength.

49-51 Thou hast at length arrived at Purgatory;
See there the cliff that closes it around;
See there the entrance, where it seems disjoined.

52-54 Whilom at dawn, which doth precede the day,
When inwardly thy spirit was asleep
Upon the flowers that deck the land below,

55-57 There came a Lady and said: 'I am Lucia;
Let me take this one up, who is asleep;
So will I make his journey easier for him.'

58-60 Sordello and the other noble shapes
Remained; she took thee, and, as day grew bright,
Upward she came, and I upon her footsteps.

61-63 She laid thee here; and first her beauteous eyes
That open entrance pointed out to me;
Then she and sleep together went away."

64-66 In guise of one whose doubts are reassured,
And who to confidence his fear doth change,
After the truth has been discovered to him,

67-69 So did I change; and when without disquiet
My Leader saw me, up along the cliff
He moved, and I behind him, tow'rd the height.

70-72 Reader, thou seest well how I exalt
My theme, and therefore if with greater art
I fortify it, marvel not thereat.

73-75 Nearer approached we, and were in such place,
That there, where first appeared to me a rift
Like to a crevice that disparts a wall,

76-78 I saw a portal, and three stairs beneath,
Diverse in colour, to go up to it,
And a gate-keeper, who yet spake no word.

79-81 And as I opened more and more mine eyes,
I saw him seated on the highest stair,
Such in the face that I endured it not.

82-84 And in his hand he had a naked sword,
Which so reflected back the sunbeams tow'rds us,
That oft in vain I lifted up mine eyes.

85-87 "Tell it from where you are, what is't you wish?"
Began he to exclaim; "where is the escort?
Take heed your coming hither harm you not!"

88-90 "A Lady of Heaven, with these things conversant,"
My Master answered him, "but even now
Said to us, 'Thither go; there is the portal.'"

91-93 "And may she speed your footsteps in all good,"
Again began the courteous janitor;
"Come forward then unto these stairs of ours."

94-96 Thither did we approach; and the first stair
Was marble white, so polished and so smooth,
I mirrored myself therein as I appear.

97-99 The second, tinct of deeper hue than perse,
Was of a calcined and uneven stone,
Cracked all asunder lengthwise and across.

100-102 The third, that uppermost rests massively,
Porphyry seemed to me, as flaming red
As blood that from a vein is spirting forth.

103-105 Both of his feet was holding upon this
The Angel of God, upon the threshold seated,
Which seemed to me a stone of diamond.

106-108 Along the three stairs upward with good will
Did my Conductor draw me, saying: "Ask
Humbly that he the fastening may undo."

109-111 Devoutly at the holy feet I cast me,
For mercy's sake besought that he would open,
But first upon my breast three times I smote.

112-114 Seven P's upon my forehead he described
With the sword's point, and, "Take heed that thou wash
These wounds, when thou shalt be within," he said.

115-117 Ashes, or earth that dry is excavated,
Of the same colour were with his attire,
And from beneath it he drew forth two keys.

118-120 One was of gold, and the other was of silver;
First with the white, and after with the yellow,
Plied he the door, so that I was content.

121-123 "Whenever faileth either of these keys
So that it turn not rightly in the lock,"
He said to us, "this entrance doth not open.

124-126 More precious one is, but the other needs
More art and intellect ere it unlock,
For it is that which doth the knot unloose.

127-129 From Peter I have them; and he bade me err
Rather in opening than in keeping shut,
If people but fall down before my feet."

130-132 Then pushed the portals of the sacred door,
Exclaiming: "Enter; but I give you warning
That forth returns whoever looks behind."

133-135 And when upon their hinges were turned round
The swivels of that consecrated gate,
Which are of metal, massive and sonorous,

136-138 Roared not so loud, nor so discordant seemed
Tarpeia, when was ta'en from it the good
Metellus, wherefore meagre it remained.

139-141 At the first thunder-peal I turned attentive,
And "Te Deum laudamus" seemed to hear
In voices mingled with sweet melody.

142-144 Exactly such an image rendered me
That which I heard, as we are wont to catch,
When people singing with the organ stand;

145 For now we hear, and now hear not, the words.

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CANTO X



1-3 When we had crossed the threshold of the door
Which the perverted love of souls disuses,
Because it makes the crooked way seem straight,

4-6 Re-echoing I heard it closed again;
And if I had turned back mine eyes upon it,
What for my failing had been fit excuse?

7-9 We mounted upward through a rifted rock,
Which undulated to this side and that,
Even as a wave receding and advancing.

10-12 "Here it behoves us use a little art,"
Began my Leader, "to adapt ourselves
Now here, now there, to the receding side."

13-15 And this our footsteps so infrequent made,
That sooner had the moon's decreasing disk
Regained its bed to sink again to rest,

16-18 Than we were forth from out that needle's eye;
But when we free and in the open were,
There where the mountain backward piles itself,

19-21 I wearied out, and both of us uncertain
About our way, we stopped upon a plain
More desolate than roads across the deserts.

22-24 From where its margin borders on the void,
To foot of the high bank that ever rises,
A human body three times told would measure;

25-27 And far as eye of mine could wing its flight,
Now on the left, and on the right flank now,
The same this cornice did appear to me.

28-30 Thereon our feet had not been moved as yet,
When I perceived the embankment round about,
Which all right of ascent had interdicted,

31-33 To be of marble white, and so adorned
With sculptures, that not only Polycletus,
But Nature's self, had there been put to shame.

34-36 The Angel, who came down to earth with tidings
Of peace, that had been wept for many a year,
And opened Heaven from its long interdict,

37-39 In front of us appeared so truthfully
There sculptured in a gracious attitude,
He did not seem an image that is silent.

40-42 One would have sworn that he was saying, "Ave;"
For she was there in effigy portrayed
Who turned the key to ope the exalted love,

43-45 And in her mien this language had impressed,
"Ecce ancilla Dei," as distinctly
As any figure stamps itself in wax.

46-48 "Keep not thy mind upon one place alone,"
The gentle Master said, who had me standing
Upon that side where people have their hearts;

49-51 Whereat I moved mine eyes, and I beheld
In rear of Mary, and upon that side
Where he was standing who conducted me,

52-54 Another story on the rock imposed;
Wherefore I passed Virgilius and drew near,
So that before mine eyes it might be set.

55-57 There sculptured in the self-same marble were
The cart and oxen, drawing the holy ark,
Wherefore one dreads an office not appointed.

58-60 People appeared in front, and all of them
In seven choirs divided, of two senses
Made one say "No," the other, "Yes, they sing."

61-63 Likewise unto the smoke of the frankincense,
Which there was imaged forth, the eyes and nose
Were in the yes and no discordant made.

64-66 Preceded there the vessel benedight,
Dancing with girded loins, the humble Psalmist,
And more and less than King was he in this.

67-69 Opposite, represented at the window
Of a great palace, Michal looked upon him,
Even as a woman scornful and afflicted.

70-72 I moved my feet from where I had been standing,
To examine near at hand another story,
Which after Michal glimmered white upon me.

73-75 There the high glory of the Roman Prince
Was chronicled, whose great beneficence
Moved Gregory to his great victory;

76-78 'Tis of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking;
And a poor widow at his bridle stood,
In attitude of weeping and of grief.

79-81 Around about him seemed it thronged and full
Of cavaliers, and the eagles in the gold
Above them visibly in the wind were moving.

82-84 The wretched woman in the midst of these
Seemed to be saying: "Give me vengeance, Lord,
For my dead son, for whom my heart is breaking."

85-87 And he to answer her: “Now wait until
I shall return.” And she: “My Lord,” like one
In whom grief is impatient, “shouldst thou not

88-90 Return?” And he: “Who shall be where I am
Will give it thee.” And she: “Good deed of others
What boots it thee, if thou neglect thine own?”

91-93 Whence he: “Now comfort thee, for it behoves me
That I discharge my duty ere I move;
Justice so wills, and pity doth retain me.”

94-96 He who on no new thing has ever looked
Was the creator of this visible language,
Novel to us, for here it is not found.

97-99 While I delighted me in contemplating
The images of such humility,
And dear to look on for their Maker’s sake,

100-102 “Behold, upon this side, but rare they make
Their steps,” the Poet murmured, “many people;
These will direct us to the lofty stairs.”

103-105 Mine eyes, that in beholding were intent
To see new things, of which they curious are,
In turning round towards him were not slow.

106-108 But still I wish not, Reader, thou shouldst swerve
From thy good purposes, because thou hearest
How God ordaineth that the debt be paid;

109-111 Attend not to the fashion of the torment,
Think of what follows; think that at the worst
It cannot reach beyond the mighty sentence.

112-114 "Master," began I, "that which I behold
Moving towards us seems to me not persons,
And what I know not, so in sight I waver."

115-117 And he to me: "The grievous quality
Of this their torment bows them so to earth,
That my own eyes at first contended with it;

118-120 But look there fixedly, and disentangle
By sight what cometh underneath those stones;
Already canst thou see how each is stricken."

121-123 O ye proud Christians! wretched, weary ones!
Who, in the vision of the mind infirm
Confidence have in your backsliding steps,

124-126 Do ye not comprehend that we are worms,
Born to bring forth the angelic butterfly
That flieth unto judgment without screen?

127-129 Why floats aloft your spirit high in air?
Like are ye unto insects undeveloped,
Even as the worm in whom formation fails!

130-132 As to sustain a ceiling or a roof,
In place of corbel, oftentimes a figure
Is seen to join its knees unto its breast,

133-135 Which makes of the unreal real anguish
Arise in him who sees it, fashioned thus
Beheld I those, when I had ta'en good heed.

136-138 True is it, they were more or less bent down,
According as they more or less were laden;
And he who had most patience in his looks

139 Weeping did seem to say, "I can no more!"

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CANTO XI

✦

1-3 "Our Father, thou who dwellest in the heavens,
Not circumscribed, but from the greater love
Thou bearest to the first effects on high,

4-6 Praised be thy name and thine omnipotence
By every creature, as befitting is
To render thanks to thy sweet effluence.

7-9 Come unto us the peace of thy dominion,
For unto it we cannot of ourselves,
If it come not, with all our intellect.

10-12 Even as thine own Angels of their will
Make sacrifice to thee, Hosanna singing,
So may all men make sacrifice of theirs.

13-15 Give unto us this day our daily manna,
Withouten which in this rough wilderness
Backward goes he who toils most to advance.

16-18 And even as we the trespass we have suffered
Pardon in one another, pardon thou
Benignly, and regard not our desert.

19-21 Our virtue, which is easily o'ercome,
Put not to proof with the old Adversary,
But thou from him who spurs it so, deliver.

22-24 This last petition verily, dear Lord,
Not for ourselves is made, who need it not,
But for their sake who have remained behind us.”

25-27 Thus for themselves and us good furtherance
Those shades imploring, went beneath a weight
Like unto that of which we sometimes dream,

28-30 Unequally in anguish round and round
And weary all, upon that foremost cornice,
Purging away the smoke-stains of the world.

31-33 If there good words are always said for us,
What may not here be said and done for them,
By those who have a good root to their will?

34-36 Well may we help them wash away the marks
That hence they carried, so that clean and light
They may ascend unto the starry wheels!

37-39 “Ah! so may pity and justice you disburden
Soon, that ye may have power to move the wing,
That shall uplift you after your desire,

40-42 Show us on which hand tow’rd the stairs the way
Is shortest, and if more than one the passes,
Point us out that which least abruptly falls;

43-45 For he who cometh with me, through the burden
Of Adam’s flesh wherewith he is invested,
Against his will is chary of his climbing.”

46-48 The words of theirs which they returned to those
That he whom I was following had spoken,
It was not manifest from whom they came,

49-51 But it was said: "To the right hand come with us
Along the bank, and ye shall find a pass
Possible for living person to ascend.

52-54 And were I not impeded by the stone,
Which this proud neck of mine doth subjugate,
Whence I am forced to hold my visage down,

55-57 Him, who still lives and does not name himself,
Would I regard, to see if I may know him
And make him piteous unto this burden.

58-60 A Latian was I, and born of a great Tuscan;
Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi was my father;
I know not if his name were ever with you.

61-63 The ancient blood and deeds of gallantry
Of my progenitors so arrogant made me
That, thinking not upon the common mother,

64-66 All men I held in scorn to such extent
I died therefor, as know the Sienese,
And every child in Campagnatico.

67-69 I am Omberto; and not to me alone
Has pride done harm, but all my kith and kin
Has with it dragged into adversity.

70-72 And here must I this burden bear for it
Till God be satisfied, since I did not
Among the living, here among the dead."

73-75 Listening I downward bent my countenance;
And one of them, not this one who was speaking,
Twisted himself beneath the weight that cramps him,

76-78 And looked at me, and knew me, and called out,
Keeping his eyes laboriously fixed
On me, who all bowed down was going with them.

79-81 "O," asked I him, "art thou not Oderisi,
Agobbio's honour, and honour of that art
Which is in Paris called illuminating?"

82-84 "Brother," said he, "more laughing are the leaves
Touched by the brush of Franco Bolognese;
All his the honour now, and mine in part.

85-87 In sooth I had not been so courteous
While I was living, for the great desire
Of excellence, on which my heart was bent.

88-90 Here of such pride is paid the forfeiture;
And yet I should not be here, were it not
That, having power to sin, I turned to God.

91-93 O thou vain glory of the human powers,
How little green upon thy summit lingers,
If't be not followed by an age of grossness!

94-96 In painting Cimabue thought that he
Should hold the field, now Giotto has the cry,
So that the other's fame is growing dim.

97-99 So has one Guido from the other taken
The glory of our tongue, and he perchance
Is born, who from the nest shall chase them both.

100-102 Naught is this mundane rumour but a breath
Of wind, that comes now this way and now that,
And changes name, because it changes side.

103-105 What fame shalt thou have more, if old peel off
From thee thy flesh, than if thou hadst been dead
Before thou left the 'pappo' and the 'dindi,'

106-108 Ere pass a thousand years? which is a shorter
Space to the eterne, than twinkling of an eye
Unto the circle that in heaven wheels slowest.

109-111 With him, who takes so little of the road
In front of me, all Tuscany resounded;
And now he scarce is lisped of in Siena,

112-114 Where he was lord, what time was overthrown
The Florentine delirium, that superb
Was at that day as now 'tis prostitute.

115-117 Your reputation is the colour of grass
Which comes and goes, and that discolours it
By which it issues green from out the earth."

118-120 And I: "Thy true speech fills my heart with good
Humility, and great tumour thou assuagest;
But who is he, of whom just now thou spakest?"

121-123 "That," he replied, "is Provenzan Salvani,
And he is here because he had presumed
To bring Siena all into his hands.

124-126 He has gone thus, and goeth without rest
E'er since he died; such money renders back
In payment he who is on earth too daring."

127-129 And I: "If every spirit who awaits
The verge of life before that he repent,
Remains below there and ascends not hither,

130-132 (Unless good orison shall him bestead,)
Until as much time as he lived be passed,
How was the coming granted him in largess?"

133-135 "When he in greatest splendour lived," said he,
"Freely upon the Campo of Siena,
All shame being laid aside, he placed himself;

136-138 And there to draw his friend from the duress
Which in the prison-house of Charles he suffered,
He brought himself to tremble in each vein.

139-141 I say no more, and know that I speak darkly;
Yet little time shall pass before thy neighbours
Will so demean themselves that thou canst gloss it.

142 This action has released him from those confines.”

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CANTO XII



1-3 Abreast, like oxen going in a yoke,
I with that heavy-laden soul went on,
As long as the sweet pedagogue permitted;

4-6 But when he said, “Leave him, and onward pass,
For here ’tis good that with the sail and oars,
As much as may be, each push on his barque;”

7-9 Upright, as walking wills it, I redressed
My person, notwithstanding that my thoughts
Remained within me downcast and abashed.

10-12 I had moved on, and followed willingly
The footsteps of my Master, and we both
Already showed how light of foot we were,

13-15 When unto me he said: “Cast down thine eyes;
’Twere well for thee, to alleviate the way,
To look upon the bed beneath thy feet.”

16-18 As, that some memory may exist of them,
Above the buried dead their tombs in earth
Bear sculptured on them what they were before;

19-21 Whence often there we weep for them afresh,
From pricking of remembrance, which alone
To the compassionate doth set its spur;

22-24 So saw I there, but of a better semblance
In point of artifice, with figures covered
Whate’er as pathway from the mount projects.

25-27 I saw that one who was created noble
More than all other creatures, down from heaven
Flaming with lightnings fall upon one side.

28-30 I saw Briareus smitten by the dart
Celestial, lying on the other side,
Heavy upon the earth by mortal frost.

31-33 I saw Thymbraeus, Pallas saw, and Mars,
Still clad in armour round about their father,
Gaze at the scattered members of the giants.

34-36 I saw, at foot of his great labour, Nimrod,
As if bewildered, looking at the people
Who had been proud with him in Sennaar.

37-39 O Niobe! with what afflicted eyes
Thee I beheld upon the pathway traced,
Between thy seven and seven children slain!

40-42 O Saul! how fallen upon thy proper sword
Didst thou appear there lifeless in Gilboa,
That felt thereafter neither rain nor dew!

43-45 O mad Arachne! so I thee beheld
E'en then half spider, sad upon the shreds
Of fabric wrought in evil hour for thee!

46-48 O Rehoboam! no more seems to threaten
Thine image there; but full of consternation
A chariot bears it off, when none pursues!

49-51 Displayed moreo'er the adamantine pavement
How unto his own mother made Alcmaeon
Costly appear the luckless ornament;

52-54 Displayed how his own sons did throw themselves
Upon Sennacherib within the temple,
And how, he being dead, they left him there;

55-57 Displayed the ruin and the cruel carnage
That Tomyris wrought, when she to Cyrus said,
"Blood didst thou thirst for, and with blood I glut thee!"

58-60 Displayed how routed fled the Assyrians
After that Holofernes had been slain,
And likewise the remainder of that slaughter.

61-63 I saw there Troy in ashes and in caverns;
O Ilion! thee, how abject and debased,
Displayed the image that is there discerned!

64-66 Whoe'er of pencil master was or stile,
That could portray the shades and traits which there
Would cause each subtile genius to admire?

67-69 Dead seemed the dead, the living seemed alive;
Better than I saw not who saw the truth,
All that I trod upon while bowed I went.

70-72 Now wax ye proud, and on with looks uplifted,
Ye sons of Eve, and bow not down your faces
So that ye may behold your evil ways!

73-75 More of the mount by us was now encompassed,
And far more spent the circuit of the sun,
Than had the mind preoccupied imagined,

76-78 When he, who ever watchful in advance
Was going on, began: "Lift up thy head,
'Tis no more time to go thus meditating.

79-81 Lo there an Angel who is making haste
To come towards us; lo, returning is
From service of the day the sixth handmaiden.

82-84 With reverence thine acts and looks adorn,
So that he may delight to speed us upward;
Think that this day will never dawn again."

85-87 I was familiar with his admonition
Ever to lose no time; so on this theme
He could not unto me speak covertly.

88-90 Towards us came the being beautiful
Vested in white, and in his countenance
Such as appears the tremulous morning star.

91-93 His arms he opened, and opened then his wings;
"Come," said he, "near at hand here are the steps,
And easy from henceforth is the ascent."

94-96 At this announcement few are they who come!
O human creatures, born to soar aloft,
Why fall ye thus before a little wind?

97-99 He led us on to where the rock was cleft;
There smote upon my forehead with his wings,
Then a safe passage promised unto me.

100-102 As on the right hand, to ascend the mount
Where seated is the church that lordeth it
O'er the well-guided, above Rubaconte,

103-105 The bold abruptness of the ascent is broken
By stairways that were made there in the age
When still were safe the ledger and the stave,

106-108 E'en thus attempered is the bank which falls
Sheer downward from the second circle there;
But on this, side and that the high rock graze.

109-111 As we were turning thitherward our persons,
"Beati pauperes spiritu," voices
Sang in such wise that speech could tell it not.

112-114 Ah me! how different are these entrances
From the Infernal! for with anthems here
One enters, and below with wild laments.

115-117 We now were hunting up the sacred stairs,
And it appeared to me by far more easy
Than on the plain it had appeared before.

118-120 Whence I: "My Master, say, what heavy thing
Has been uplifted from me, so that hardly
Aught of fatigue is felt by me in walking?"

121-123 He answered: "When the P's which have remained
Still on thy face almost obliterate
Shall wholly, as the first is, be erased,

124-126 Thy feet will be so vanquished by good will,
That not alone they shall not feel fatigue,
But urging up will be to them delight."

127-129 Then did I even as they do who are going
With something on the head to them unknown,
Unless the signs of others make them doubt,

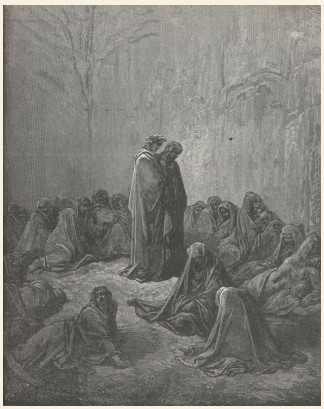
130-132 Wherefore the hand to ascertain is helpful,
And seeks and finds, and doth fulfill the office
Which cannot be accomplished by the sight;

133-135 And with the fingers of the right hand spread
I found but six the letters, that had carved
Upon my temples he who bore the keys;

136 Upon beholding which my Leader smiled.

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CANTO XIII



1-3 We were upon the summit of the stairs,
Where for the second time is cut away
The mountain, which ascending shriveth all.

4-6 There in like manner doth a cornice bind
The hill all round about, as does the first,
Save that its arc more suddenly is curved.

7-9 Shade is there none, nor sculpture that appears;
So seems the bank, and so the road seems smooth,
With but the livid colour of the stone.

10-12 "If to inquire we wait for people here,"
The Poet said, "I fear that peradventure
Too much delay will our election have."

13-15 Then steadfast on the sun his eyes he fixed,
Made his right side the centre of his motion,
And turned the left part of himself about.

16-18 “O thou sweet light! with trust in whom I enter
Upon this novel journey, do thou lead us,”
Said he, “as one within here should be led.

19-21 Thou warmest the world, thou shinest over it;
If other reason prompt not otherwise,
Thy rays should evermore our leaders be!”

22-24 As much as here is counted for a mile,
So much already there had we advanced
In little time, by dint of ready will;

25-27 And tow’rds us there were heard to fly, albeit
They were not visible, spirits uttering
Unto Love’s table courteous invitations,

28-30 The first voice that passed onward in its flight,
“Vinum non habent,” said in accents loud,
And went reiterating it behind us.

31-33 And ere it wholly grew inaudible
Because of distance, passed another, crying,
“I am Orestes!” and it also stayed not.

34-36 “O,” said I, “Father, these, what voices are they?”
And even as I asked, behold the third,
Saying: “Love those from whom ye have had evil!”

37-39 And the good Master said: “This circle scourges
The sin of envy, and on that account
Are drawn from love the lashes of the scourge.

40-42 The bridle of another sound shall be;
I think that thou wilt hear it, as I judge,
Before thou comest to the Pass of Pardon.

43-45 But fix thine eyes athwart the air right steadfast,
And people thou wilt see before us sitting,
And each one close against the cliff is seated.”

46-48 Then wider than at first mine eyes I opened;
I looked before me, and saw shades with mantles
Not from the colour of the stone diverse.

49-51 And when we were a little farther onward,
I heard a cry of, “Mary, pray for us!”
A cry of, “Michael, Peter, and all Saints!”

52-54 I do not think there walketh still on earth
A man so hard, that he would not be pierced
With pity at what afterward I saw.

55-57 For when I had approached so near to them
That manifest to me their acts became,
Drained was I at the eyes by heavy grief.

58-60 Covered with sackcloth vile they seemed to me,
And one sustained the other with his shoulder,
And all of them were by the bank sustained.

61-63 Thus do the blind, in want of livelihood,
Stand at the doors of churches asking alms,
And one upon another leans his head,

64-66 So that in others pity soon may rise,
Not only at the accent of their words,
But at their aspect, which no less implores.

67-69 And as unto the blind the sun comes not,
So to the shades, of whom just now I spake,
Heaven's light will not be bounteous of itself;

70-72 For all their lids an iron wire transpierces,
And sews them up, as to a sparhawk wild
Is done, because it will not quiet stay.

73-75 To me it seemed, in passing, to do outrage,
Seeing the others without being seen;
Wherefore I turned me to my counsel sage.

76-78 Well knew he what the mute one wished to say,
And therefore waited not for my demand,
But said: "Speak, and be brief, and to the point."

79-81 I had Virgilius upon that side
Of the embankment from which one may fall,
Since by no border 'tis engarlanded;

82-84 Upon the other side of me I had
The shades devout, who through the horrible seam
Pressed out the tears so that they bathed their cheeks.

85-87 To them I turned me, and, “O people, certain,”
Began I, “of beholding the high light,
Which your desire has solely in its care,

88-90 So may grace speedily dissolve the scum
Upon your consciences, that limpidly
Through them descend the river of the mind,

91-93 Tell me, for dear ’twill be to me and gracious,
If any soul among you here is Latian,
And ’twill perchance be good for him I learn it.”

94-96 “O brother mine, each one is citizen
Of one true city; but thy meaning is,
Who may have lived in Italy a pilgrim.”

97-99 By way of answer this I seemed to hear
A little farther on than where I stood,
Whereat I made myself still nearer heard.

100-102 Among the rest I saw a shade that waited
In aspect, and should any one ask how,
Its chin it lifted upward like a blind man.

103-105 “Spirit,” I said, “who stoopest to ascend,
If thou art he who did reply to me,
Make thyself known to me by place or name.”

106-108 “Sienese was I,” it replied, “and with
The others here recleanse my guilty life,
Weeping to Him to lend himself to us.

109-111 Sapient I was not, although I Sapia
Was called, and I was at another's harm
More happy far than at my own good fortune.

112-114 And that thou mayst not think that I deceive thee,
Hear if I was as foolish as I tell thee.
The arc already of my years descending,

115-117 My fellow-citizens near unto Colle
Were joined in battle with their adversaries,
And I was praying God for what he willed.

118-120 Routed were they, and turned into the bitter
Passes of flight; and I, the chase beholding,
A joy received unequalled by all others;

121-123 So that I lifted upward my bold face
Crying to God, 'Henceforth I fear thee not,'
As did the blackbird at the little sunshine.

124-126 Peace I desired with God at the extreme
Of my existence, and as yet would not
My debt have been by penitence discharged,

127-129 Had it not been that in remembrance held me
Pier Pettignano in his holy prayers,
Who out of charity was grieved for me.

130-132 But who art thou, that into our conditions
Questioning goest, and hast thine eyes unbound
As I believe, and breathing dost discourse?"

133-135 “Mine eyes,” I said, “will yet be here ta’en from me,
But for short space; for small is the offence
Committed by their being turned with envy.

136-138 Far greater is the fear, wherein suspended
My soul is, of the torment underneath,
For even now the load down there weighs on me.”

139-141 And she to me: “Who led thee, then, among us
Up here, if to return below thou thinkest?”
And I: “He who is with me, and speaks not;

142-144 And living am I; therefore ask of me,
Spirit elect, if thou wouldst have me move
O’er yonder yet my mortal feet for thee.”

145-147 “O, this is such a novel thing to hear,”
She answered, “that great sign it is God loves thee;
Therefore with prayer of thine sometimes assist me.

148-150 And I implore, by what thou most desirest,
If e’er thou treadest the soil of Tuscany,
Well with my kindred reinstate my fame.

151-153 Them wilt thou see among that people vain
Who hope in Talamone, and will lose there
More hope than in discovering the Diana;

154 But there still more the admirals will lose.”

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CANTO XIV

✦

1-3 “Who is this one that goes about our mountain,
Or ever Death has given him power of flight,
And opes his eyes and shuts them at his will?”

4-6 “I know not who, but know he’s not alone;
Ask him thyself, for thou art nearer to him,
And gently, so that he may speak, accost him.”

7-9 Thus did two spirits, leaning tow’rds each other,
Discourse about me there on the right hand;
Then held supine their faces to address me.

10-12 And said the one: “O soul, that, fastened still
Within the body, tow’rds the heaven art going,
For charity console us, and declare

13-15 Whence comest and who art thou; for thou mak’st us
As much to marvel at this grace of thine
As must a thing that never yet has been.”

16-18 And I: “Through midst of Tuscany there wanders
A streamlet that is born in Falterona,
And not a hundred miles of course suffice it;

19-21 From thereupon do I this body bring.
To tell you who I am were speech in vain,
Because my name as yet makes no great noise.”

22-24 “If well thy meaning I can penetrate
With intellect of mine,” then answered me
He who first spake, “thou speakest of the Arno.”

25-27 And said the other to him: “Why concealed
This one the appellation of that river,
Even as a man doth of things horrible?”

28-30 And thus the shade that questioned was of this
Himself acquitted: “I know not; but truly
’Tis fit the name of such a valley perish;

31-33 For from its fountain-head (where is so pregnant
The Alpine mountain whence is cleft Peloro
That in few places it that mark surpasses)

34-36 To where it yields itself in restoration
Of what the heaven doth of the sea dry up,
Whence have the rivers that which goes with them,

37-39 Virtue is like an enemy avoided
By all, as is a serpent, through misfortune
Of place, or through bad habit that impels them;

40-42 On which account have so transformed their nature
The dwellers in that miserable valley,
It seems that Circe had them in her pasture.

43-45 ’Mid ugly swine, of acorns worthier
Than other food for human use created,
It first directeth its impoverished way.

46-48 Curs findeth it thereafter, coming downward,
More snarling than their puissance demands,
And turns from them disdainfully its muzzle.

49-51 It goes on falling, and the more it grows,
The more it finds the dogs becoming wolves,
This maledict and misadventurous ditch.

52-54 Descended then through many a hollow gulf,
It finds the foxes so replete with fraud,
They fear no cunning that may master them.

55-57 Nor will I cease because another hears me;
And well 'twill be for him, if still he mind him
Of what a truthful spirit to me unravels.

58-60 Thy grandson I behold, who doth become
A hunter of those wolves upon the bank
Of the wild stream, and terrifies them all.

61-63 He sells their flesh, it being yet alive;
Thereafter slaughters them like ancient beeves;
Many of life, himself of praise, deprives.

64-66 Blood-stained he issues from the dismal forest;
He leaves it such, a thousand years from now
In its primeval state 'tis not re-wooded."

67-69 As at the announcement of impending ills
The face of him who listens is disturbed,
From whate'er side the peril seize upon him;

70-72 So I beheld that other soul, which stood
Turned round to listen, grow disturbed and sad,
When it had gathered to itself the word.

73-75 The speech of one and aspect of the other
Had me desirous made to know their names,
And question mixed with prayers I made thereof,

76-78 Whereat the spirit which first spake to me
Began again: "Thou wishest I should bring me
To do for thee what thou'lt not do for me;

79-81 But since God willeth that in thee shine forth
Such grace of his, I'll not be chary with thee;
Know, then, that I Guido del Duca am.

82-84 My blood was so with envy set on fire,
That if I had beheld a man make merry,
Thou wouldst have seen me sprinkled o'er with pallor.

85-87 From my own sowing such the straw I reap!
O human race! why dost thou set thy heart
Where interdict of partnership must be?

88-90 This is Renier; this is the boast and honour
Of the house of Calboli, where no one since
Has made himself the heir of his desert.

91-93 And not alone his blood is made devoid,
'Twixt Po and mount, and sea-shore and the Reno,
Of good required for truth and for diversion;

94-96 For all within these boundaries is full
Of venomous roots, so that too tardily
By cultivation now would they diminish.

97-99 Where is good Lizio, and Arrigo Manardi,
Pier Traversaro, and Guido di Carpigna,
O Romagnuoli into bastards turned?

100-102 When in Bologna will a Fabbro rise?
When in Faenza a Bernardin di Fosco,
The noble scion of ignoble seed?

103-105 Be not astonished, Tuscan, if I weep,
When I remember, with Guido da Prata,
Ugolin d' Azzo, who was living with us,

106-108 Frederick Tignoso and his company,
The house of Traversara, and th' Anastagi,
And one race and the other is extinct;

109-111 The dames and cavaliers, the toils and ease
That filled our souls with love and courtesy,
There where the hearts have so malicious grown!

112-114 O Brettinoro! why dost thou not flee,
Seeing that all thy family is gone,
And many people, not to be corrupted?

115-117 Bagnacaval does well in not begetting
And ill does Castrocaro, and Conio worse,
In taking trouble to beget such Counts.

118-120 Will do well the Pagani, when their Devil
Shall have departed; but not therefore pure
Will testimony of them e'er remain.

121-123 O Ugolin de' Fantoli, secure
Thy name is, since no longer is awaited
One who, degenerating, can obscure it!

124-126 But go now, Tuscan, for it now delights me
To weep far better than it does to speak,
So much has our discourse my mind distressed."

127-129 We were aware that those beloved souls
Heard us depart; therefore, by keeping silent,
They made us of our pathway confident.

130-132 When we became alone by going onward,
Thunder, when it doth cleave the air, appeared
A voice, that counter to us came, exclaiming:

133-135 "Shall slay me whosoever findeth me!"
And fled as the reverberation dies
If suddenly the cloud asunder bursts.

136-138 As soon as hearing had a truce from this,
Behold another, with so great a crash,
That it resembled thunderings following fast:

139-141 "I am Aglaurus, who became a stone!"
And then, to press myself close to the Poet,
I backward, and not forward, took a step.

142-144 Already on all sides the air was quiet;
And said he to me: “That was the hard curb
That ought to hold a man within his bounds;

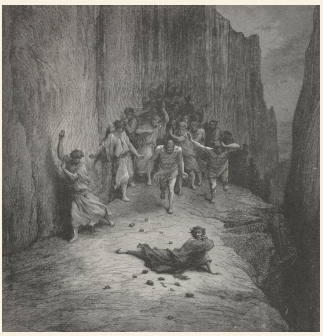
145-147 But you take in the bait so that the hook
Of the old Adversary draws you to him,
And hence availeth little curb or call.

148-150 The heavens are calling you, and wheel around you,
Displaying to you their eternal beauties,
And still your eye is looking on the ground;

151 Whence He, who all discerns, chastises you.”

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CANTO XV



1-3 As much as 'twixt the close of the third hour
And dawn of day appeareth of that sphere
Which aye in fashion of a child is playing,

4-6 So much it now appeared, towards the night,
Was of his course remaining to the sun;
There it was evening, and 'twas midnight here;

7-9 And the rays smote the middle of our faces,
Because by us the mount was so encircled,
That straight towards the west we now were going

10-12 When I perceived my forehead overpowered
Beneath the splendour far more than at first,
And stupor were to me the things unknown,

13-15 Whereat towards the summit of my brow
I raised my hands, and made myself the visor
Which the excessive glare diminishes.

16-18 As when from off the water, or a mirror,
The sunbeam leaps unto the opposite side,
Ascending upward in the selfsame measure

19-21 That it descends, and deviates as far
From falling of a stone in line direct,
(As demonstrate experiment and art,)

22-24 So it appeared to me that by a light
Refracted there before me I was smitten;
On which account my sight was swift to flee.

25-27 "What is that, Father sweet, from which I cannot
So fully screen my sight that it avail me,"
Said I, "and seems towards us to be moving?"

28-30 "Marvel thou not, if dazzle thee as yet
The family of heaven," he answered me;
"An angel 'tis, who comes to invite us upward.

31-33 Soon will it be, that to behold these things
Shall not be grievous, but delightful to thee
As much as nature fashioned thee to feel."

34-36 When we had reached the Angel benedight,
With joyful voice he said: "Here enter in
To stairway far less steep than are the others."

37-39 We mounting were, already thence departed,
And “Beati misericordes” was
Behind us sung, “Rejoice, thou that o’ercomest!”

40-42 My Master and myself, we two alone
Were going upward, and I thought, in going,
Some profit to acquire from words of his;

43-45 And I to him directed me, thus asking:
“What did the spirit of Romagna mean,
Mentioning interdict and partnership?”

46-48 Whence he to me: “Of his own greatest failing
He knows the harm; and therefore wonder not
If he reprove us, that we less may rue it.

49-51 Because are thither pointed your desires
Where by companionship each share is lessened,
Envy doth ply the bellows to your sighs.

52-54 But if the love of the supernal sphere
Should upwardly direct your aspiration,
There would not be that fear within your breast;

55-57 For there, as much the more as one says ‘Our,’
So much the more of good each one possesses,
And more of charity in that cloister burns.”

58-60 “I am more hungering to be satisfied,”
I said, “than if I had before been silent,
And more of doubt within my mind I gather.

61-63 How can it be, that boon distributed
The more possessors can more wealthy make
Therein, than if by few it be possessed?”

64-66 And he to me: “Because thou fixest still
Thy mind entirely upon earthly things,
Thou pluckest darkness from the very light.

67-69 That goodness infinite and ineffable
Which is above there, runneth unto love,
As to a lucid body comes the sunbeam.

70-72 So much it gives itself as it finds ardour,
So that as far as charity extends,
O’er it increases the eternal valour.

73-75 And the more people thitherward aspire,
More are there to love well, and more they love there,
And, as a mirror, one reflects the other.

76-78 And if my reasoning appease thee not,
Thou shalt see Beatrice; and she will fully
Take from thee this and every other longing.

79-81 Endeavour, then, that soon may be extinct,
As are the two already, the five wounds
That close themselves again by being painful.”

82-84 Even as I wished to say, “Thou dost appease me,”
I saw that I had reached another circle,
So that my eager eyes made me keep silence.

85-87 There it appeared to me that in a vision
Ecstatic on a sudden I was rapt,
And in a temple many persons saw;

88-90 And at the door a woman, with the sweet
Behaviour of a mother, saying: “Son,
Why in this manner hast thou dealt with us?

91-93 Lo, sorrowing, thy father and myself
Were seeking for thee;”—and as here she ceased,
That which appeared at first had disappeared.

94-96 Then I beheld another with those waters
Adown her cheeks which grief distils whenever
From great disdain of others it is born,

97-99 And saying: “If of that city thou art lord,
For whose name was such strife among the gods,
And whence doth every science scintillate,

100-102 Avenge thyself on those audacious arms
That clasped our daughter, O Pisistratus;”
And the lord seemed to me benign and mild

103-105 To answer her with aspect temperate:
“What shall we do to those who wish us ill,
If he who loves us be by us condemned?”

106-108 Then saw I people hot in fire of wrath,
With stones a young man slaying, clamorously
Still crying to each other, “Kill him! kill him!”

109-111 And him I saw bow down, because of death
That weighed already on him, to the earth,
But of his eyes made ever gates to heaven,

112-114 Imploring the high Lord, in so great strife,
That he would pardon those his persecutors,
With such an aspect as unlocks compassion.

115-117 Soon as my soul had outwardly returned
To things external to it which are true,
Did I my not false errors recognize.

118-120 My Leader, who could see me bear myself
Like to a man that rouses him from sleep,
Exclaimed: "What ails thee, that thou canst not stand?

121-123 But hast been coming more than half a league
Veiling thine eyes, and with thy legs entangled,
In guise of one whom wine or sleep subdues?"

124-126 "O my sweet Father, if thou listen to me,
I'll tell thee," said I, "what appeared to me,
When thus from me my legs were ta'en away."

127-129 And he: "If thou shouldst have a hundred masks
Upon thy face, from me would not be shut
Thy cogitations, howsoever small.

130-132 What thou hast seen was that thou mayst not fail
To ope thy heart unto the waters of peace,
Which from the eternal fountain are diffused.

133-135 I did not ask, ‘What ails thee?’ as he does
Who only looketh with the eyes that see not
When of the soul bereft the body lies,

136-138 But asked it to give vigour to thy feet;
Thus must we needs urge on the sluggards, slow
To use their wakefulness when it returns.”

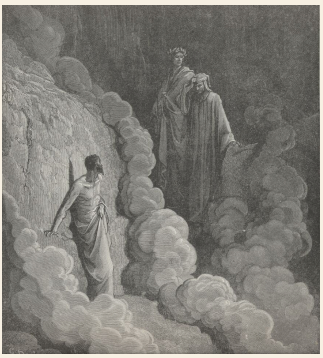
139-141 We passed along, athwart the twilight peering
Forward as far as ever eye could stretch
Against the sunbeams serotine and lucent;

142-144 And lo! by slow degrees a smoke approached
In our direction, sombre as the night,
Nor was there place to hide one’s self therefrom.

145 This of our eyes and the pure air bereft us.

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CANTO XVI



1-3 Darkness of hell, and of a night deprived
Of every planet under a poor sky,
As much as may be tenebrous with cloud,

4-6 Ne'er made unto my sight so thick a veil,
As did that smoke which there enveloped us,
Nor to the feeling of so rough a texture;

7-9 For not an eye it suffered to stay open;
Whereat mine escort, faithful and sagacious,
Drew near to me and offered me his shoulder.

10-12 E'en as a blind man goes behind his guide,
Lest he should wander, or should strike against
Aught that may harm or peradventure kill him,

13-15 So went I through the bitter and foul air,
Listening unto my Leader, who said only,
"Look that from me thou be not separated."

16-18 Voices I heard, and every one appeared
To supplicate for peace and misericord
The Lamb of God who takes away our sins.

19-21 Still "Agnus Dei" their exordium was;
One word there was in all, and metre one,
So that all harmony appeared among them.

22-24 "Master," I said, "are spirits those I hear?"
And he to me: "Thou apprehendest truly,
And they the knot of anger go unloosing."

25-27 "Now who art thou, that cleavest through our smoke
And art discoursing of us even as though
Thou didst by calends still divide the time?"

28-30 After this manner by a voice was spoken;
Whereon my Master said: "Do thou reply,
And ask if on this side the way go upward."

31-33 And I: "O creature that dost cleanse thyself
To return beautiful to Him who made thee,
Thou shalt hear marvels if thou follow me."

34-36 "Thee will I follow far as is allowed me,"
He answered; "and if smoke prevent our seeing,
Hearing shall keep us joined instead thereof."

37-39 Thereon began I: “With that swathing band
Which death unwindeth am I going upward,
And hither came I through the infernal anguish.

40-42 And if God in his grace has me infolded,
So that he wills that I behold his court
By method wholly out of modern usage,

43-45 Conceal not from me who ere death thou wast,
But tell it me, and tell me if I go
Right for the pass, and be thy words our escort.”

46-48 “Lombard was I, and I was Marco called;
The world I knew, and loved that excellence,
At which has each one now unbent his bow.

49-51 For mounting upward, thou art going right.”
Thus he made answer, and subjoined: “I pray thee
To pray for me when thou shalt be above.”

52-54 And I to him: “My faith I pledge to thee
To do what thou dost ask me; but am bursting
Inly with doubt, unless I rid me of it.

55-57 First it was simple, and is now made double
By thy opinion, which makes certain to me,
Here and elsewhere, that which I couple with it.

58-60 The world forsooth is utterly deserted
By every virtue, as thou tellest me,
And with iniquity is big and covered;

61-63 But I beseech thee point me out the cause,
That I may see it, and to others show it;
For one in the heavens, and here below one puts it."

64-66 A sigh profound, that grief forced into Ai!
He first sent forth, and then began he: "Brother,
The world is blind, and sooth thou comest from it!

67-69 Ye who are living every cause refer
Still upward to the heavens, as if all things
They of necessity moved with themselves.

70-72 If this were so, in you would be destroyed
Free will, nor any justice would there be
In having joy for good, or grief for evil.

73-75 The heavens your movements do initiate,
I say not all; but granting that I say it,
Light has been given you for good and evil,

76-78 And free volition; which, if some fatigue
In the first battles with the heavens it suffers,
Afterwards conquers all, if well 'tis nurtured.

79-81 To greater force and to a better nature,
Though free, ye subject are, and that creates
The mind in you the heavens have not in charge.

82-84 Hence, if the present world doth go astray,
In you the cause is, be it sought in you;
And I therein will now be thy true spy.

85-87 Forth from the hand of Him, who fondles it
Before it is, like to a little girl
Weeping and laughing in her childish sport,

88-90 Issues the simple soul, that nothing knows,
Save that, proceeding from a joyous Maker,
Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.

91-93 Of trivial good at first it tastes the savour;
Is cheated by it, and runs after it,
If guide or rein turn not aside its love.

94-96 Hence it behoved laws for a rein to place,
Behoved a king to have, who at the least
Of the true city should discern the tower.

97-99 The laws exist, but who sets hand to them?
No one; because the shepherd who precedes
Can ruminate, but cleaveth not the hoof;

100-102 Wherefore the people that perceives its guide
Strike only at the good for which it hankers,
Feeds upon that, and farther seeketh not.

103-105 Clearly canst thou perceive that evil guidance
The cause is that has made the world depraved,
And not that nature is corrupt in you.

106-108 Rome, that reformed the world, accustomed was
Two suns to have, which one road and the other,
Of God and of the world, made manifest.

109-111 One has the other quenched, and to the crosier
The sword is joined, and ill beseemeth it
That by main force one with the other go,

112-114 Because, being joined, one feareth not the other;
If thou believe not, think upon the grain,
For by its seed each herb is recognized.

115-117 In the land laved by Po and Adige,
Valour and courtesy used to be found,
Before that Frederick had his controversy;

118-120 Now in security can pass that way
Whoever will abstain, through sense of shame,
From speaking with the good, or drawing near them.

121-123 True, three old men are left, in whom upbraids
The ancient age the new, and late they deem it
That God restore them to the better life:

124-126 Currado da Palazzo, and good Gherardo,
And Guido da Castel, who better named is,
In fashion of the French, the simple Lombard:

127-129 Say thou henceforward that the Church of Rome,
Confounding in itself two governments,
Falls in the mire, and soils itself and burden."

130-132 "O Marco mine," I said, "thou reasonest well;
And now discern I why the sons of Levi
Have been excluded from the heritage.

133-135 But what Gherardo is it, who, as sample
Of a lost race, thou sayest has remained
In reprobation of the barbarous age?”

136-138 “Either thy speech deceives me, or it tempts me,”
He answered me; “for speaking Tuscan to me,
It seems of good Gherardo naught thou knowest.

139-141 By other surname do I know him not,
Unless I take it from his daughter Gaia.
May God be with you, for I come no farther.

142-144 Behold the dawn, that through the smoke rays out,
Already whitening; and I must depart—
Yonder the Angel is—ere he appear.”

145 Thus did he speak, and would no farther hear me.

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CANTO XVII

✦

1-3 Remember, Reader, if e'er in the Alps
A mist o'ertook thee, through which thou couldst see
Not otherwise than through its membrane mole,

4-6 How, when the vapours humid and condensed
Begin to dissipate themselves, the sphere
Of the sun feebly enters in among them,

7-9 And thy imagination will be swift
In coming to perceive how I re-saw
The sun at first, that was already setting.

10-12 Thus, to the faithful footsteps of my Master
Mating mine own, I issued from that cloud
To rays already dead on the low shores.

13-15 O thou, Imagination, that dost steal us
So from without sometimes, that man perceives not,
Although around may sound a thousand trumpets,

16-18 Who moveth thee, if sense impel thee not?
Moves thee a light, which in the heaven takes form,
By self, or by a will that downward guides it.

19-21 Of her impiety, who changed her form
Into the bird that most delights in singing,
In my imagining appeared the trace;

22-24 And hereupon my mind was so withdrawn
Within itself, that from without there came
Nothing that then might be received by it.

25-27 Then reigned within my lofty fantasy
One crucified, disdainful and ferocious
In countenance, and even thus was dying.

28-30 Around him were the great Ahasuerus,
Esther his wife, and the just Mordecai,
Who was in word and action so entire.

31-33 And even as this image burst asunder
Of its own self, in fashion of a bubble
In which the water it was made of fails,

34-36 There rose up in my vision a young maiden
Bitterly weeping, and she said: "O queen,
Why hast thou wished in anger to be naught?

37-39 Thou'st slain thyself, Lavinia not to lose;
Now hast thou lost me; I am she who mourns,
Mother, at thine ere at another's ruin."

40-42 As sleep is broken, when upon a sudden
New light strikes in upon the eyelids closed,
And broken quivers ere it dieth wholly,

43-45 So this imagining of mine fell down
As soon as the effulgence smote my face,
Greater by far than what is in our wont.

46-48 I turned me round to see where I might be,
When said a voice, “Here is the passage up;”
Which from all other purposes removed me,

49-51 And made my wish so full of eagerness
To look and see who was it that was speaking,
It never rests till meeting face to face;

52-54 But as before the sun, which quells the sight,
And in its own excess its figure veils,
Even so my power was insufficient here.

55-57 “This is a spirit divine, who in the way
Of going up directs us without asking,
And who with his own light himself conceals.

58-60 He does with us as man doth with himself;
For he who sees the need, and waits the asking,
Malignly leans already tow’rds denial.

61-63 Accord we now our feet to such inviting,
Let us make haste to mount ere it grow dark;
For then we could not till the day return.”

64-66 Thus my Conductor said; and I and he
Together turned our footsteps to a stairway;
And I, as soon as the first step I reached,

67-69 Near me perceived a motion as of wings,
And fanning in the face, and saying, “‘Beati
Pacifici,’ who are without ill anger.”

70-72 Already over us were so uplifted
The latest sunbeams, which the night pursues,
That upon many sides the stars appeared.

73-75 "O manhood mine, why dost thou vanish so?"
I said within myself; for I perceived
The vigour of my legs was put in truce.

76-78 We at the point were where no more ascends
The stairway upward, and were motionless,
Even as a ship, which at the shore arrives;

79-81 And I gave heed a little, if I might hear
Aught whatsoever in the circle new;
Then to my Master turned me round and said:

82-84 "Say, my sweet Father, what delinquency
Is purged here in the circle where we are?
Although our feet may pause, pause not thy speech."

85-87 And he to me: "The love of good, remiss
In what it should have done, is here restored;
Here plied again the ill-belated oar;

88-90 But still more openly to understand,
Turn unto me thy mind, and thou shalt gather
Some profitable fruit from our delay.

91-93 Neither Creator nor a creature ever,
Son," he began, "was destitute of love
Natural or spiritual; and thou knowest it.

94-96 The natural was ever without error;
But err the other may by evil object,
Or by too much, or by too little vigour.

97-99 While in the first it well directed is,
And in the second moderates itself,
It cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure;

100-102 But when to ill it turns, and, with more care
Or lesser than it ought, runs after good,
'Gainst the Creator works his own creation.

103-105 Hence thou mayst comprehend that love must be
The seed within yourselves of every virtue,
And every act that merits punishment.

106-108 Now inasmuch as never from the welfare
Of its own subject can love turn its sight,
From their own hatred all things are secure;

109-111 And since we cannot think of any being
Standing alone, nor from the First divided,
Of hating Him is all desire cut off.

112-114 Hence if, discriminating, I judge well,
The evil that one loves is of one's neighbour,
And this is born in three modes in your clay.

115-117 There are, who, by abasement of their neighbour,
Hope to excel, and therefore only long
That from his greatness he may be cast down;

118-120 There are, who power, grace, honour, and renown
Fear they may lose because another rises,
Thence are so sad that the reverse they love;

121-123 And there are those whom injury seems to chafe,
So that it makes them greedy for revenge,
And such must needs shape out another's harm.

124-126 This threefold love is wept for down below;
Now of the other will I have thee hear,
That runneth after good with measure faulty.

127-129 Each one confusedly a good conceives
Wherein the mind may rest, and longeth for it;
Therefore to overtake it each one strives.

130-132 If languid love to look on this attract you,
Or in attaining unto it, this cornice,
After just penitence, torments you for it.

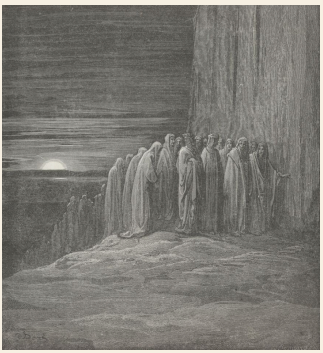
133-135 There's other good that does not make man happy;
'Tis not felicity, 'tis not the good
Essence, of every good the fruit and root.

136-138 The love that yields itself too much to this
Above us is lamented in three circles;
But how tripartite it may be described,

139 I say not, that thou seek it for thyself."

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CANTO XVIII



1-3 An end had put unto his reasoning
The lofty Teacher, and attent was looking
Into my face, if I appeared content;

4-6 And I, whom a new thirst still goaded on,
Without was mute, and said within: "Perchance
The too much questioning I make annoys him."

7-9 But that true Father, who had comprehended
The timid wish, that opened not itself,
By speaking gave me hardihood to speak.

10-12 Whence I: "My sight is, Master, vivified
So in thy light, that clearly I discern
Whate'er thy speech importeth or describes.

13-15 Therefore I thee entreat, sweet Father dear,
To teach me love, to which thou dost refer
Every good action and its contrary."

16-18 "Direct," he said, "towards me the keen eyes
Of intellect, and clear will be to thee
The error of the blind, who would be leaders.

19-21 The soul, which is created apt to love,
Is mobile unto everything that pleases,
Soon as by pleasure she is waked to action.

22-24 Your apprehension from some real thing
An image draws, and in yourselves displays it
So that it makes the soul turn unto it.

25-27 And if, when turned, towards it she incline,
Love is that inclination; it is nature,
Which is by pleasure bound in you anew

28-30 Then even as the fire doth upward move
By its own form, which to ascend is born,
Where longest in its matter it endures,

31-33 So comes the captive soul into desire,
Which is a motion spiritual, and ne'er rests
Until she doth enjoy the thing beloved.

34-36 Now may apparent be to thee how hidden
The truth is from those people, who aver
All love is in itself a laudable thing;

37-39 Because its matter may perchance appear
Aye to be good; but yet not each impression
Is good, albeit good may be the wax."

40-42 "Thy words, and my sequacious intellect,"
I answered him, "have love revealed to me;
But that has made me more impregned with doubt;

43-45 For if love from without be offered us,
And with another foot the soul go not,
If right or wrong she go, 'tis not her merit."

46-48 And he to me: "What reason seeth here,
Myself can tell thee; beyond that await
For Beatrice, since 'tis a work of faith.

49-51 Every substantial form, that segregate
From matter is, and with it is united,
Specific power has in itself collected,

52-54 Which without act is not perceptible,
Nor shows itself except by its effect,
As life does in a plant by the green leaves.

55-57 But still, whence cometh the intelligence
Of the first notions, man is ignorant,
And the affection for the first allurements,

58-60 Which are in you as instinct in the bee
To make its honey; and this first desire
Merit of praise or blame containeth not.

61-63 Now, that to this all others may be gathered,
Innate within you is the power that counsels,
And it should keep the threshold of assent.

64-66 This is the principle, from which is taken
Occasion of desert in you, according
As good and guilty loves it takes and winnows.

67-69 Those who, in reasoning, to the bottom went,
Were of this innate liberty aware,
Therefore bequeathed they Ethics to the world.

70-72 Supposing, then, that from necessity
Springs every love that is within you kindled,
Within yourselves the power is to restrain it.

73-75 The noble virtue Beatrice understands
By the free will; and therefore see that thou
Bear it in mind, if she should speak of it."

76-78 The moon, belated almost unto midnight,
Now made the stars appear to us more rare,
Formed like a bucket, that is all ablaze,

79-81 And counter to the heavens ran through those paths
Which the sun sets aflame, when he of Rome
Sees it 'twixt Sardes and Corsicans go down;

82-84 And that patrician shade, for whom is named
Pietola more than any Mantuan town,
Had laid aside the burden of my lading;

85-87 Whence I, who reason manifest and plain
In answer to my questions had received,
Stood like a man in drowsy reverie.

88-90 But taken from me was this drowsiness
Suddenly by a people, that behind
Our backs already had come round to us.

91-93 And as, of old, Ismenus and Asopus
Beside them saw at night the rush and throng,
If but the Thebans were in need of Bacchus,

94-96 So they along that circle curve their step,
From what I saw of those approaching us,
Who by good-will and righteous love are ridden.

97-99 Full soon they were upon us, because running
Moved onward all that mighty multitude,
And two in the advance cried out, lamenting,

100-102 "Mary in haste unto the mountain ran,
And Caesar, that he might subdue Ilerda,
Thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain."

103-105 "Quick! quick! so that the time may not be lost
By little love!" forthwith the others cried,
"For ardour in well-doing freshens grace!"

106-108 "O folk, in whom an eager fervour now
Supplies perhaps delay and negligence,
Put by you in well-doing, through lukewarmness,

109-111 This one who lives, and truly I lie not,
Would fain go up, if but the sun relight us;
So tell us where the passage nearest is."

112-114 These were the words of him who was my Guide;
And some one of those spirits said: "Come on
Behind us, and the opening shalt thou find;

115-117 So full of longing are we to move onward,
That stay we cannot; therefore pardon us,
If thou for churlishness our justice take.

118-120 I was San Zeno's Abbot at Verona,
Under the empire of good Barbarossa,
Of whom still sorrowing Milan holds discourse;

121-123 And he has one foot in the grave already,
Who shall erelong lament that monastery,
And sorry be of having there had power,

124-126 Because his son, in his whole body sick,
And worse in mind, and who was evil-born,
He put into the place of its true pastor."

127-129 If more he said, or silent was, I know not,
He had already passed so far beyond us;
But this I heard, and to retain it pleased me.

130-132 And he who was in every need my succour
Said: "Turn thee hitherward; see two of them
Come fastening upon slothfulness their teeth."

133-135 In rear of all they shouted: “Sooner were
The people dead to whom the sea was opened,
Than their inheritors the Jordan saw;

136-138 And those who the fatigue did not endure
Unto the issue, with Anchises’ son,
Themselves to life withouten glory offered.”

139-141 Then when from us so separated were
Those shades, that they no longer could be seen,
Within me a new thought did entrance find,

142-144 Whence others many and diverse were born;
And so I lapsed from one into another,
That in a reverie mine eyes I closed,

145 And meditation into dream transmuted.

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CANTO XIX



1-3 It was the hour when the diurnal heat
No more can warm the coldness of the moon,
Vanquished by earth, or peradventure Saturn,

4-6 When geomancers their Fortuna Major
See in the orient before the dawn
Rise by a path that long remains not dim,

7-9 There came to me in dreams a stammering woman,
Squint in her eyes, and in her feet distorted,
With hands dissevered and of sallow hue.

10-12 I looked at her; and as the sun restores
The frigid members which the night benumbs,
Even thus my gaze did render voluble

13-15 Her tongue, and made her all erect thereafter
In little while, and the lost countenance
As love desires it so in her did colour.

16-18 When in this wise she had her speech unloosed,
She ’gan to sing so, that with difficulty
Could I have turned my thoughts away from her.

19-21 “I am,” she sang, “I am the Siren sweet
Who mariners amid the main unman,
So full am I of pleasantness to hear.

22-24 I drew Ulysses from his wandering way
Unto my song, and he who dwells with me
Seldom departs so wholly I content him.”

25-27 Her mouth was not yet closed again, before
Appeared a Lady saintly and alert
Close at my side to put her to confusion.

28-30 “Virgilius, O Virgilius! who is this?”
Sternly she said; and he was drawing near
With eyes still fixed upon that modest one.

31-33 She seized the other and in front laid open,
Rending her garments, and her belly showed me;
This waked me with the stench that issued from it.

34-36 I turned mine eyes, and good Virgilius said:
“At least thrice have I called thee; rise and come;
Find we the opening by which thou mayst enter.”

37-39 I rose; and full already of high day
Were all the circles of the Sacred Mountain,
And with the new sun at our back we went.

40-42 Following behind him, I my forehead bore
Like unto one who has it laden with thought,
Who makes himself the half arch of a bridge,

43-45 When I heard say, "Come, here the passage is,"
Spoken in a manner gentle and benign,
Such as we hear not in this mortal region.

46-48 With open wings, which of a swan appeared,
Upward he turned us who thus spake to us,
Between the two walls of the solid granite.

49-51 He moved his pinions afterwards and fanned us,
Affirming those 'qui lugent' to be blessed,
For they shall have their souls with comfort filled.

52-54 "What aileth thee, that aye to earth thou gazest?"
To me my Guide began to say, we both
Somewhat beyond the Angel having mounted.

55-57 And I: "With such misgiving makes me go
A vision new, which bends me to itself,
So that I cannot from the thought withdraw me."

58-60 "Didst thou behold," he said, "that old enchantress,
Who sole above us henceforth is lamented?
Didst thou behold how man is freed from her?

61-63 Suffice it thee, and smite earth with thy heels,
Thine eyes lift upward to the lure, that whirls
The Eternal King with revolutions vast."

64-66 Even as the hawk, that first his feet surveys,
Then turns him to the call and stretches forward,
Through the desire of food that draws him thither,

67-69 Such I became, and such, as far as cleaves
The rock to give a way to him who mounts,
Went on to where the circling doth begin.

70-72 On the fifth circle when I had come forth,
People I saw upon it who were weeping,
Stretched prone upon the ground, all downward turned.

73-75 "Adhaesit pavimento anima mea,"
I heard them say with sighings so profound,
That hardly could the words be understood.

76-78 "O ye elect of God, whose sufferings
Justice and Hope both render less severe,
Direct ye us towards the high ascents."

79-81 "If ye are come secure from this prostration,
And wish to find the way most speedily,
Let your right hands be evermore outside."

82-84 Thus did the Poet ask, and thus was answered
By them somewhat in front of us; whence I
In what was spoken divined the rest concealed,

85-87 And unto my Lord's eyes mine eyes I turned;
Whence he assented with a cheerful sign
To what the sight of my desire implored.

88-90 When of myself I could dispose at will,
Above that creature did I draw myself,
Whose words before had caused me to take note,

91-93 Saying: "O Spirit, in whom weeping ripens
That without which to God we cannot turn,
Suspend awhile for me thy greater care.

94-96 Who wast thou, and why are your backs turned upwards,
Tell me, and if thou wouldst that I procure thee
Anything there whence living I departed."

97-99 And he to me: "Wherefore our backs the heaven
Turns to itself, know shalt thou; but beforehand
'Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.'

100-102 Between Siestri and Chiaveri descends
A river beautiful, and of its name
The title of my blood its summit makes.

103-105 A month and little more essayed I how
Weighs the great cloak on him from mire who keeps it,
For all the other burdens seem a feather.

106-108 Tardy, ah woe is me! was my conversion;
But when the Roman Shepherd I was made,
Then I discovered life to be a lie.

109-111 I saw that there the heart was not at rest,
Nor farther in that life could one ascend;
Whereby the love of this was kindled in me.

112-114 Until that time a wretched soul and parted
From God was I, and wholly avaricious;
Now, as thou seest, I here am punished for it.

115-117 What avarice does is here made manifest
In the purgation of these souls converted,
And no more bitter pain the Mountain has.

118-120 Even as our eye did not uplift itself
Aloft, being fastened upon earthly things,
So justice here has merged it in the earth.

121-123 As avarice had extinguished our affection
For every good, whereby was action lost,
So justice here doth hold us in restraint,

124-126 Bound and imprisoned by the feet and hands;
And so long as it pleases the just Lord
Shall we remain immovable and prostrate."

127-129 I on my knees had fallen, and wished to speak;
But even as I began, and he was 'ware,
Only by listening, of my reverence,

130-132 "What cause," he said, "has downward bent thee thus?"
And I to him: "For your own dignity,
Standing, my conscience stung me with remorse."

133-135 “Straighten thy legs, and upward raise thee, brother,”
He answered: “Err not, fellow-servant am I
With thee and with the others to one power.

136-138 If e’er that holy, evangelic sound,
Which sayeth ‘neque nubent,’ thou hast heard,
Well canst thou see why in this wise I speak.

139-141 Now go; no longer will I have thee linger,
Because thy stay doth incommode my weeping,
With which I ripen that which thou hast said.

142-144 On earth I have a grandchild named Alagia,
Good in herself, unless indeed our house
Malevolent may make her by example,

145 And she alone remains to me on earth.”

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CANTO XX



1-3 Ill strives the will against a better will;
Therefore, to pleasure him, against my pleasure
I drew the sponge not saturate from the water.

4-6 Onward I moved, and onward moved my Leader,
Through vacant places, skirting still the rock,
As on a wall close to the battlements;

7-9 For they that through their eyes pour drop by drop
The malady which all the world pervades,
On the other side too near the verge approach.

10-12 Accursed mayst thou be, thou old she-wolf,
That more than all the other beasts hast prey,
Because of hunger infinitely hollow!

13-15 O heaven, in whose gyrations some appear
To think conditions here below are changed,
When will he come through whom she shall depart?

16-18 Onward we went with footsteps slow and scarce,
And I attentive to the shades I heard
Piteously weeping and bemoaning them;

19-21 And I by peradventure heard "Sweet Mary!"
Uttered in front of us amid the weeping
Even as a woman does who is in child-birth;

22-24 And in continuance: "How poor thou wast
Is manifested by that hostelry
Where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down."

25-27 Thereafterward I heard: "O good Fabricius,
Virtue with poverty didst thou prefer
To the possession of great wealth with vice."

28-30 So pleasurable were these words to me
That I drew farther onward to have knowledge
Touching that spirit whence they seemed to come.

31-33 He furthermore was speaking of the largess
Which Nicholas unto the maidens gave,
In order to conduct their youth to honour.

34-36 "O soul that dost so excellently speak,
Tell me who wast thou," said I, "and why only
Thou dost renew these praises well deserved?

37-39 Not without recompense shall be thy word,
If I return to finish the short journey
Of that life which is flying to its end."

40-42 And he: "I'll tell thee, not for any comfort
I may expect from earth, but that so much
Grace shines in thee or ever thou art dead.

43-45 I was the root of that malignant plant
Which overshadows all the Christian world,
So that good fruit is seldom gathered from it;

46-48 But if Douay and Ghent, and Lille and Bruges
Had Power, soon vengeance would be taken on it;
And this I pray of Him who judges all.

49-51 Hugh Capet was I called upon the earth;
From me were born the Louises and Philips,
By whom in later days has France been governed.

52-54 I was the son of a Parisian butcher,
What time the ancient kings had perished all,
Excepting one, contrite in cloth of gray.

55-57 I found me grasping in my hands the rein
Of the realm's government, and so great power
Of new acquest, and so with friends abounding,

58-60 That to the widowed diadem promoted
The head of mine own offspring was, from whom
The consecrated bones of these began.

61-63 So long as the great dowry of Provence
Out of my blood took not the sense of shame,
'Twas little worth, but still it did no harm.

64-66 Then it began with falsehood and with force
Its rapine; and thereafter, for amends,
Took Ponthieu, Normandy, and Gascony.

67-69 Charles came to Italy, and for amends
A victim made of Conradin, and then
Thrust Thomas back to heaven, for amends.

70-72 A time I see, not very distant now,
Which draweth forth another Charles from France,
The better to make known both him and his.

73-75 Unarmed he goes, and only with the lance
That Judas jousted with; and that he thrusts
So that he makes the paunch of Florence burst.

76-78 He thence not land, but sin and infamy,
Shall gain, so much more grievous to himself
As the more light such damage he accounts.

79-81 The other, now gone forth, ta'en in his ship,
See I his daughter sell, and chaffer for her
As corsairs do with other female slaves.

82-84 What more, O Avarice, canst thou do to us,
Since thou my blood so to thyself hast drawn,
It careth not for its own proper flesh?

85-87 That less may seem the future ill and past,
I see the flower-de-luce Alagna enter,
And Christ in his own Vicar captive made.

88-90 I see him yet another time derided;
I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
And between living thieves I see him slain.

91-93 I see the modern Pilate so relentless,
This does not sate him, but without decretal
He to the temple bears his sordid sails!

94-96 When, O my Lord! shall I be joyful made
By looking on the vengeance which, concealed,
Makes sweet thine anger in thy secrecy?

97-99 What I was saying of that only bride
Of the Holy Ghost, and which occasioned thee
To turn towards me for some commentary,

100-102 So long has been ordained to all our prayers
As the day lasts; but when the night comes on,
Contrary sound we take instead thereof.

103-105 At that time we repeat Pygmalion,
Of whom a traitor, thief, and parricide
Made his insatiable desire of gold;

106-108 And the misery of avaricious Midas,
That followed his inordinate demand,
At which forevermore one needs but laugh.

109-111 The foolish Achan each one then records,
And how he stole the spoils; so that the wrath
Of Joshua still appears to sting him here.

112-114 Then we accuse Sapphira with her husband,
We laud the hoof-beats Heliodorus had,
And the whole mount in infamy encircles

115-117 Polymnestor who murdered Polydorus.
Here finally is cried: 'O Crassus, tell us,
For thou dost know, what is the taste of gold?'

118-120 Sometimes we speak, one loud, another low,
According to desire of speech, that spurs us
To greater now and now to lesser pace.

121-123 But in the good that here by day is talked of,
Erewhile alone I was not; yet near by
No other person lifted up his voice."

124-126 From him already we departed were,
And made endeavour to o'ercome the road
As much as was permitted to our power,

127-129 When I perceived, like something that is falling,
The mountain tremble, whence a chill seized on me,
As seizes him who to his death is going.

130-132 Certes so violently shook not Delos,
Before Latona made her nest therein
To give birth to the two eyes of the heaven.

133-135 Then upon all sides there began a cry,
Such that the Master drew himself towards me,
Saying, “Fear not, while I am guiding thee.”

136-138 “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” all
Were saying, from what near I comprehended,
Where it was possible to hear the cry.

139-141 We paused immovable and in suspense,
Even as the shepherds who first heard that song,
Until the trembling ceased, and it was finished.

142-144 Then we resumed again our holy path,
Watching the shades that lay upon the ground,
Already turned to their accustomed plaint.

145-147 No ignorance ever with so great a strife
Had rendered me importunate to know,
If erreth not in this my memory,

148-150 As meditating then I seemed to have;
Nor out of haste to question did I dare,
Nor of myself I there could aught perceive;

151 So I went onward timorous and thoughtful.

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CANTO XXI

✦

1-3 The natural thirst, that ne'er is satisfied
Excepting with the water for whose grace
The woman of Samaria besought,

4-6 Put me in travail, and haste goaded me
Along the encumbered path behind my Leader
And I was pitying that righteous vengeance;

7-9 And lo! in the same manner as Luke writeth
That Christ appeared to two upon the way
From the sepulchral cave already risen,

10-12 A shade appeared to us, and came behind us,
Down gazing on the prostrate multitude,
Nor were we ware of it, until it spake,

13-15 Saying, "My brothers, may God give you peace!"
We turned us suddenly, and Virgilius rendered
To him the countersign thereto conforming.

16-18 Thereon began he: "In the blessed council,
Thee may the court veracious place in peace,
That me doth banish in eternal exile!"

19-21 "How," said he, and the while we went with speed,
"If ye are shades whom God deigns not on high,
Who up his stairs so far has guided you?"

22-24 And said my Teacher: “If thou note the marks
Which this one bears, and which the Angel traces
Well shalt thou see he with the good must reign.

25-27 But because she who spinneth day and night
For him had not yet drawn the distaff off,
Which Clotho lays for each one and compacts,

28-30 His soul, which is thy sister and my own,
In coming upwards could not come alone,
By reason that it sees not in our fashion.

31-33 Whence I was drawn from out the ample throat
Of Hell to be his guide, and I shall guide him
As far on as my school has power to lead.

34-36 But tell us, if thou knowest, why such a shudder
Erewhile the mountain gave, and why together
All seemed to cry, as far as its moist feet?”

37-39 In asking he so hit the very eye
Of my desire, that merely with the hope
My thirst became the less unsatisfied.

40-42 “Naught is there,” he began, “that without order
May the religion of the mountain feel,
Nor aught that may be foreign to its custom.

43-45 Free is it here from every permutation;
What from itself heaven in itself receiveth
Can be of this the cause, and naught beside;

46-48 Because that neither rain, nor hail, nor snow,
Nor dew, nor hoar-frost any higher falls
Than the short, little stairway of three steps.

49-51 Dense clouds do not appear, nor rarefied,
Nor coruscation, nor the daughter of Thaumas,
That often upon earth her region shifts;

52-54 No arid vapour any farther rises
Than to the top of the three steps I spake of,
Whereon the Vicar of Peter has his feet.

55-57 Lower down perchance it trembles less or more,
But, for the wind that in the earth is hidden
I know not how, up here it never trembled.

58-60 It trembles here, whenever any soul
Feels itself pure, so that it soars, or moves
To mount aloft, and such a cry attends it.

61-63 Of purity the will alone gives proof,
Which, being wholly free to change its convent,
Takes by surprise the soul, and helps it fly.

64-66 First it wills well; but the desire permits not,
Which divine justice with the self-same will
There was to sin, upon the torment sets.

67-69 And I, who have been lying in this pain
Five hundred years and more, but just now felt
A free volition for a better seat.

70-72 Therefore thou heardst the earthquake, and the pious
Spirits along the mountain rendering praise
Unto the Lord, that soon he speed them upwards."

73-75 So said he to him; and since we enjoy
As much in drinking as the thirst is great,
I could not say how much it did me good.

76-78 And the wise Leader: "Now I see the net
That snares you here, and how ye are set free,
Why the earth quakes, and wherefore ye rejoice.

79-81 Now who thou wast be pleased that I may know;
And why so many centuries thou hast here
Been lying, let me gather from thy words."

82-84 "In days when the good Titus, with the aid
Of the supremest King, avenged the wounds
Whence issued forth the blood by Judas sold,

85-87 Under the name that most endures and honours,
Was I on earth," that spirit made reply,
"Greatly renowned, but not with faith as yet.

88-90 My vocal spirit was so sweet, that Rome
Me, a Thoulousian, drew unto herself,
Where I deserved to deck my brows with myrtle.

91-93 Statius the people name me still on earth;
I sang of Thebes, and then of great Achilles;
But on the way fell with my second burden.

94-96 The seeds unto my ardour were the sparks
Of that celestial flame which heated me,
Whereby more than a thousand have been fired;

97-99 Of the Aeneid speak I, which to me
A mother was, and was my nurse in song;
Without this weighed I not a drachma's weight.

100-102 And to have lived upon the earth what time
Virgilius lived, I would accept one sun
More than I must ere issuing from my ban."

103-105 These words towards me made Virgilius turn
With looks that in their silence said, "Be silent!"
But yet the power that wills cannot do all things;

106-108 For tears and laughter are such pursuivants
Unto the passion from which each springs forth,
In the most truthful least the will they follow.

109-111 I only smiled, as one who gives the wink;
Whereat the shade was silent, and it gazed
Into mine eyes, where most expression dwells;

112-114 And, "As thou well mayst consummate a labour
So great," it said, "why did thy face just now
Display to me the lightning of a smile?"

115-117 Now am I caught on this side and on that;
One keeps me silent, one to speak conjures me,
Wherefore I sigh, and I am understood.

118-120 “Speak,” said my Master, “and be not afraid
Of speaking, but speak out, and say to him
What he demands with such solicitude.”

121-123 Whence I: “Thou peradventure marvellest,
O antique spirit, at the smile I gave;
But I will have more wonder seize upon thee.

124-126 This one, who guides on high these eyes of mine,
Is that Virgilius, from whom thou didst learn
To sing aloud of men and of the Gods.

127-129 If other cause thou to my smile imputedst,
Abandon it as false, and trust it was
Those words which thou hast spoken concerning him.”

130-132 Already he was stooping to embrace
My Teacher’s feet; but he said to him: “Brother,
Do not; for shade thou art, and shade beholdest.”

133-135 And he uprising: “Now canst thou the sum
Of love which warms me to thee comprehend,
When this our vanity I disremember,

136 Treating a shadow as substantial thing.”

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CANTO XXII

✦

1-3 Already was the Angel left behind us,
The Angel who to the sixth round had turned us,
Having erased one mark from off my face;

4-6 And those who have in justice their desire
Had said to us, “Beati,” in their voices,
With “sitio,” and without more ended it.

7-9 And I, more light than through the other passes,
Went onward so, that without any labour
I followed upward the swift-footed spirits;

10-12 When thus Virgilius began: “The love
Kindled by virtue aye another kindles,
Provided outwardly its flame appear.

13-15 Hence from the hour that Juvenal descended
Among us into the infernal Limbo,
Who made apparent to me thy affection,

16-18 My kindliness towards thee was as great
As ever bound one to an unseen person,
So that these stairs will now seem short to me.

19-21 But tell me, and forgive me as a friend,
If too great confidence let loose the rein,
And as a friend now hold discourse with me;

22-24 How was it possible within thy breast
For avarice to find place, 'mid so much wisdom
As thou wast filled with by thy diligence?"

25-27 These words excited Statius at first
Somewhat to laughter; afterward he answered:
"Each word of thine is love's dear sign to me.

28-30 Verily oftentimes do things appear
Which give fallacious matter to our doubts,
Instead of the true causes which are hidden!

31-33 Thy question shows me thy belief to be
That I was niggard in the other life,
It may be from the circle where I was;

34-36 Therefore know thou, that avarice was removed
Too far from me; and this extravagance
Thousands of lunar periods have punished.

37-39 And were it not that I my thoughts uplifted,
When I the passage heard where thou exclaimest,
As if indignant, unto human nature,

40-42 'To what impellest thou not, O cursed hunger
Of gold, the appetite of mortal men?'
Revolving I should feel the dismal joustings.

43-45 Then I perceived the hands could spread too wide
Their wings in spending, and repented me
As well of that as of my other sins;

46-48 How many with shorn hair shall rise again
Because of ignorance, which from this sin
Cuts off repentance living and in death!

49-51 And know that the transgression which rebuts
By direct opposition any sin
Together with it here its verdure dries.

52-54 Therefore if I have been among that folk
Which mourns its avarice, to purify me,
For its opposite has this befallen me."

55-57 "Now when thou sangest the relentless weapons
Of the twofold affliction of Jocasta,"
The singer of the Songs Bucolic said,

58-60 "From that which Clio there with thee preludes,
It does not seem that yet had made thee faithful
That faith without which no good works suffice.

61-63 If this be so, what candles or what sun
Scattered thy darkness so that thou didst trim
Thy sails behind the Fisherman thereafter?"

64-66 And he to him: "Thou first directedst me
Towards Parnassus, in its grots to drink,
And first concerning God didst me enlighten.

67-69 Thou didst as he who walketh in the night,
Who bears his light behind, which helps him not,
But wary makes the persons after him,

70-72 When thou didst say: ‘The age renews itself,
Justice returns, and man’s primeval time,
And a new progeny descends from heaven.’

73-75 Through thee I Poet was, through thee a Christian;
But that thou better see what I design,
To colour it will I extend my hand.

76-78 Already was the world in every part
Pregnant with the true creed, disseminated
By messengers of the eternal kingdom;

79-81 And thy assertion, spoken of above,
With the new preachers was in unison;
Whence I to visit them the custom took.

82-84 Then they became so holy in my sight,
That, when Domitian persecuted them,
Not without tears of mine were their laments;

85-87 And all the while that I on earth remained,
Them I befriended, and their upright customs
Made me disparage all the other sects.

88-90 And ere I led the Greeks unto the rivers
Of Thebes, in poetry, I was baptized,
But out of fear was covertly a Christian,

91-93 For a long time professing paganism;
And this lukewarmness caused me the fourth circle
To circuit round more than four centuries.

94-96 Thou, therefore, who hast raised the covering
That hid from me whatever good I speak of,
While in ascending we have time to spare,

97-99 Tell me, in what place is our friend Terentius,
Caecilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou knowest;
Tell me if they are damned, and in what alley."

100-102 "These, Persius and myself, and others many,"
Replied my Leader, "with that Grecian are
Whom more than all the rest the Muses suckled,

103-105 In the first circle of the prison blind;
Ofttimes we of the mountain hold discourse
Which has our nurses ever with itself.

106-108 Euripides is with us, Antiphon,
Simonides, Agatho, and many other
Greeks who of old their brows with laurel decked.

109-111 There some of thine own people may be seen,
Antigone, Deiphile and Argia,
And there Ismene mournful as of old.

112-114 There she is seen who pointed out Langia;
There is Tiresias' daughter, and there Thetis,
And there Deidamia with her sisters."

115-117 Silent already were the poets both,
Attent once more in looking round about,
From the ascent and from the walls released;

118-120 And four handmaidens of the day already
Were left behind, and at the pole the fifth
Was pointing upward still its burning horn,

121-123 What time my Guide: "I think that tow'rds the edge
Our dexter shoulders it behoves us turn,
Circling the mount as we are wont to do."

124-126 Thus in that region custom was our ensign;
And we resumed our way with less suspicion
For the assenting of that worthy soul

127-129 They in advance went on, and I alone
Behind them, and I listened to their speech,
Which gave me lessons in the art of song.

130-132 But soon their sweet discourses interrupted
A tree which midway in the road we found,
With apples sweet and grateful to the smell.

133-135 And even as a fir-tree tapers upward
From bough to bough, so downwardly did that;
I think in order that no one might climb it.

136-138 On that side where our pathway was enclosed
Fell from the lofty rock a limpid water,
And spread itself abroad upon the leaves.

139-141 The Poets twain unto the tree drew near,
And from among the foliage a voice
Cried: "Of this food ye shall have scarcity."

142-144 Then said: “More thoughtful Mary was of making
The marriage feast complete and honourable,
Than of her mouth which now for you responds;

145-147 And for their drink the ancient Roman women
With water were content; and Daniel
Disparaged food, and understanding won.

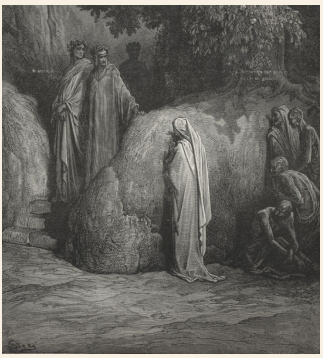
148-150 The primal age was beautiful as gold;
Acorns it made with hunger savorous,
And nectar every rivulet with thirst.

151-153 Honey and locusts were the aliments
That fed the Baptist in the wilderness;
Whence he is glorious, and so magnified

154 As by the Evangel is revealed to you.”

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CANTO XXIII



1-3 The while among the verdant leaves mine eyes
I riveted, as he is wont to do
Who wastes his life pursuing little birds,

4-6 My more than Father said unto me: “Son,
Come now; because the time that is ordained us
More usefully should be apportioned out.”

7-9 I turned my face and no less soon my steps
Unto the Sages, who were speaking so
They made the going of no cost to me;

10-12 And lo! were heard a song and a lament,
“Labia mea, Domine,” in fashion
Such that delight and dolence it brought forth.

13-15 "O my sweet Father, what is this I hear?"
Began I; and he answered: "Shades that go
Perhaps the knot unloosing of their debt."

16-18 In the same way that thoughtful pilgrims do,
Who, unknown people on the road o'ertaking,
Turn themselves round to them, and do not stop,

19-21 Even thus, behind us with a swifter motion
Coming and passing onward, gazed upon us
A crowd of spirits silent and devout.

22-24 Each in his eyes was dark and cavernous,
Pallid in face, and so emaciate
That from the bones the skin did shape itself.

25-27 I do not think that so to merest rind
Could Erisichthon have been withered up
By famine, when most fear he had of it.

28-30 Thinking within myself I said: "Behold,
This is the folk who lost Jerusalem,
When Mary made a prey of her own son."

31-33 Their sockets were like rings without the gems;
Whoever in the face of men reads 'omo'
Might well in these have recognised the 'm.'

34-36 Who would believe the odour of an apple,
Begetting longing, could consume them so,
And that of water, without knowing how?

37-39 I still was wondering what so famished them,
For the occasion not yet manifest
Of their emaciation and sad squalor;

40-42 And lo! from out the hollow of his head
His eyes a shade turned on me, and looked keenly;
Then cried aloud: “What grace to me is this?”

43-45 Never should I have known him by his look;
But in his voice was evident to me
That which his aspect had suppressed within it.

46-48 This spark within me wholly re-enkindled
My recognition of his altered face,
And I recalled the features of Forese.

49-51 “Ah, do not look at this dry leprosy,”
Entreated he, “which doth my skin discolour,
Nor at default of flesh that I may have;

52-54 But tell me truth of thee, and who are those
Two souls, that yonder make for thee an escort;
Do not delay in speaking unto me.”

55-57 “That face of thine, which dead I once bewept,
Gives me for weeping now no lesser grief,”
I answered him, “beholding it so changed!

58-60 But tell me, for God’s sake, what thus denudes you?
Make me not speak while I am marvelling,
For ill speaks he who’s full of other longings.”

61-63 And he to me: “From the eternal council
Falls power into the water and the tree
Behind us left, whereby I grow so thin.

64-66 All of this people who lamenting sing,
For following beyond measure appetite
In hunger and thirst are here re-sanctified.

67-69 Desire to eat and drink enkindles in us
The scent that issues from the apple-tree,
And from the spray that sprinkles o’er the verdure;

70-72 And not a single time alone, this ground
Encompassing, is refreshed our pain,—
I say our pain, and ought to say our solace,—

73-75 For the same wish doth lead us to the tree
Which led the Christ rejoicing to say ‘Eli,’
When with his veins he liberated us.”

76-78 And I to him: “Forese, from that day
When for a better life thou changedst worlds,
Up to this time five years have not rolled round.

79-81 If sooner were the power exhausted in thee
Of sinning more, than thee the hour surprised
Of that good sorrow which to God reweds us,

82-84 How hast thou come up hitherward already?
I thought to find thee down there underneath,
Where time for time doth restitution make.”

85-87 And he to me: "Thus speedily has led me
To drink of the sweet wormwood of these torments,
My Nella with her overflowing tears;

88-90 She with her prayers devout and with her sighs
Has drawn me from the coast where one where one awaits,
And from the other circles set me free.

91-93 So much more dear and pleasing is to God
My little widow, whom so much I loved,
As in good works she is the more alone;

94-96 For the Barbagia of Sardinia
By far more modest in its women is
Than the Barbagia I have left her in.

97-99 O brother sweet, what wilt thou have me say?
A future time is in my sight already,
To which this hour will not be very old,

100-102 When from the pulpit shall be interdicted
To the unblushing womankind of Florence
To go about displaying breast and paps.

103-105 What savages were e'er, what Saracens,
Who stood in need, to make them covered go,
Of spiritual or other discipline?

106-108 But if the shameless women were assured
Of what swift Heaven prepares for them, already
Wide open would they have their mouths to howl;

109-111 For if my foresight here deceive me not,
They shall be sad ere he has bearded cheeks
Who now is hushed to sleep with lullaby.

112-114 O brother, now no longer hide thee from me;
See that not only I, but all these people
Are gazing there, where thou dost veil the sun."

115-117 Whence I to him: "If thou bring back to mind
What thou with me hast been and I with thee,
The present memory will be grievous still.

118-120 Out of that life he turned me back who goes
In front of me, two days agone when round
The sister of him yonder showed herself,"

121-123 And to the sun I pointed. "Through the deep
Night of the truly dead has this one led me,
With this true flesh, that follows after him.

124-126 Thence his encouragements have led me up,
Ascending and still circling round the mount
That you doth straighten, whom the world made crooked.

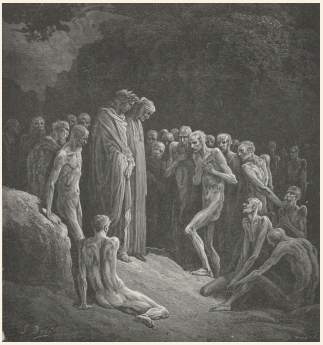
127-129 He says that he will bear me company,
Till I shall be where Beatrice will be;
There it behoves me to remain without him.

130-132 This is Virgilius, who thus says to me,"
And him I pointed at; "the other is
That shade for whom just now shook every slope

133 Your realm, that from itself discharges him.”

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CANTO XXIV



1-3 Nor speech the going, nor the going that
Slackened; but talking we went bravely on,
Even as a vessel urged by a good wind.

4-6 And shadows, that appeared things doubly dead,
From out the sepulchres of their eyes betrayed
Wonder at me, aware that I was living.

7-9 And I, continuing my colloquy,
Said: "Peradventure he goes up more slowly
Than he would do, for other people's sake.

10-12 But tell me, if thou knowest, where is Piccarda;
Tell me if any one of note I see
Among this folk that gazes at me so."

13-15 "My sister, who, 'twixt beautiful and good,
I know not which was more, triumphs rejoicing
Already in her crown on high Olympus."

16-18 So said he first, and then: "'Tis not forbidden
To name each other here, so milked away
Is our resemblance by our dieting.

19-21 This," pointing with his finger, "is Buonagiunta,
Buonagiunta, of Lucca; and that face
Beyond him there, more peaked than the others,

22-24 Has held the holy Church within his arms;
From Tours was he, and purges by his fasting
Bolsena's eels and the Vernaccia wine."

25-27 He named me many others one by one;
And all contented seemed at being named,
So that for this I saw not one dark look.

28-30 I saw for hunger bite the empty air
Ubaldin dalla Pila, and Boniface,
Who with his crook had pastured many people.

31-33 I saw Messer Marchese, who had leisure
Once at Forli for drinking with less dryness,
And he was one who ne'er felt satisfied.

34-36 But as he does who scans, and then doth prize
One more than others, did I him of Lucca,
Who seemed to take most cognizance of me.

37-39 He murmured, and I know not what Gentucca
From that place heard I, where he felt the wound
Of justice, that doth macerate them so.

40-42 "O soul," I said, "that seemest so desirous
To speak with me, do so that I may hear thee,
And with thy speech appease thyself and me."

43-45 "A maid is born, and wears not yet the veil,"
Began he, "who to thee shall pleasant make
My city, howsoever men may blame it.

46-48 Thou shalt go on thy way with this prevision;
If by my murmuring thou hast been deceived,
True things hereafter will declare it to thee.

49-51 But say if him I here behold, who forth
Evoked the new-invented rhymes, beginning,
'Ladies, that have intelligence of love?'"

52-54 And I to him: "One am I, who, whenever
Love doth inspire me, note, and in that measure
Which he within me dictates, singing go."

55-57 "O brother, now I see," he said, "the knot
Which me, the Notary, and Guittone held
Short of the sweet new style that now I hear.

58-60 I do perceive full clearly how your pens
Go closely following after him who dictates,
Which with our own forsooth came not to pass;

61-63 And he who sets himself to go beyond,
No difference sees from one style to another;"
And as if satisfied, he held his peace.

64-66 Even as the birds, that winter tow'rds the Nile,
Sometimes into a phalanx form themselves,
Then fly in greater haste, and go in file;

67-69 In such wise all the people who were there,
Turning their faces, hurried on their steps,
Both by their leanness and their wishes light.

70-72 And as a man, who weary is with trotting,
Lets his companions onward go, and walks,
Until he vents the panting of his chest;

73-75 So did Forese let the holy flock
Pass by, and came with me behind it, saying,
"When will it be that I again shall see thee?"

76-78 "How long," I answered, "I may live, I know not;
Yet my return will not so speedy be,
But I shall sooner in desire arrive;

79-81 Because the place where I was set to live
From day to day of good is more depleted,
And unto dismal ruin seems ordained."

82-84 "Now go," he said, "for him most guilty of it
At a beast's tail behold I dragged along
Towards the valley where is no repentance.

85-87 Faster at every step the beast is going,
Increasing evermore until it smites him,
And leaves the body vilely mutilated.

88-90 Not long those wheels shall turn," and he uplifted
His eyes to heaven, "ere shall be clear to thee
That which my speech no farther can declare.

91-93 Now stay behind; because the time so precious
Is in this kingdom, that I lose too much
By coming onward thus abreast with thee."

94-96 As sometimes issues forth upon a gallop
A cavalier from out a troop that ride,
And seeks the honour of the first encounter,

97-99 So he with greater strides departed from us;
And on the road remained I with those two,
Who were such mighty marshals of the world.

100-102 And when before us he had gone so far
Mine eyes became to him such pursuivants
As was my understanding to his words,

103-105 Appeared to me with laden and living boughs
Another apple-tree, and not far distant,
From having but just then turned thitherward.

106-108 People I saw beneath it lift their hands,
And cry I know not what towards the leaves,
Like little children eager and deluded,

109-111 Who pray, and he they pray to doth not answer,
But, to make very keen their appetite,
Holds their desire aloft, and hides it not.

112-114 Then they departed as if undeceived;
And now we came unto the mighty tree
Which prayers and tears so manifold refuses.

115-117 "Pass farther onward without drawing near;
The tree of which Eve ate is higher up,
And out of that one has this tree been raised."

118-120 Thus said I know not who among the branches;
Whereat Virgilius, Statius, and myself
Went crowding forward on the side that rises.

121-123 "Be mindful," said he, "of the accursed ones
Formed of the cloud-rack, who inebriate
Combated Theseus with their double breasts;

124-126 And of the Jews who showed them soft in drinking,
Whence Gideon would not have them for companions
When he tow'rds Midian the hills descended."

127-129 Thus, closely pressed to one of the two borders,
On passed we, hearing sins of gluttony,
Followed forsooth by miserable gains;

130-132 Then set at large upon the lonely road,
A thousand steps and more we onward went,
In contemplation, each without a word.

133-135 “What go ye thinking thus, ye three alone?”
Said suddenly a voice, whereat I started
As terrified and timid beasts are wont.

136-138 I raised my head to see who this might be,
And never in a furnace was there seen
Metals or glass so lucent and so red

139-141 As one I saw who said: “If it may please you
To mount aloft, here it behoves you turn;
This way goes he who goeth after peace.”

142-144 His aspect had bereft me of my sight,
So that I turned me back unto my Teachers,
Like one who goeth as his hearing guides him.

145-147 And as, the harbinger of early dawn,
The air of May doth move and breathe out fragrance,
Impregnate all with herbage and with flowers,

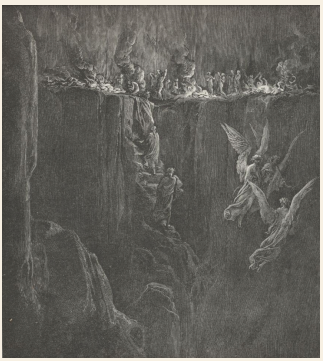
148-150 So did I feel a breeze strike in the midst
My front, and felt the moving of the plumes
That breathed around an odour of ambrosia;

151-153 And heard it said: “Blessed are they whom grace
So much illumines, that the love of taste
Excites not in their breasts too great desire,

154 Hungering at all times so far as is just.”

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CANTO XXV



1-3 Now was it the ascent no hindrance brooked,
Because the sun had his meridian circle
To Taurus left, and night to Scorpio;

4-6 Wherefore as doth a man who tarries not,
But goes his way, whate'er to him appear,
If of necessity the sting transfix him,

7-9 In this wise did we enter through the gap,
Taking the stairway, one before the other,
Which by its narrowness divides the climbers.

10-12 And as the little stork that lifts its wing
With a desire to fly, and does not venture
To leave the nest, and lets it downward droop,

13-15 Even such was I, with the desire of asking
Kindled and quenched, unto the motion coming
He makes who doth address himself to speak.

16-18 Not for our pace, though rapid it might be,
My father sweet forbore, but said: “Let fly
The bow of speech thou to the barb hast drawn.”

19-21 With confidence I opened then my mouth,
And I began: “How can one meagre grow
There where the need of nutriment applies not?”

22-24 “If thou wouldst call to mind how Meleager
Was wasted by the wasting of a brand,
This would not,” said he, “be to thee so sour;

25-27 And wouldst thou think how at each tremulous motion
Trembles within a mirror your own image;
That which seems hard would mellow seem to thee.

28-30 But that thou mayst content thee in thy wish
Lo Statius here; and him I call and pray
He now will be the healer of thy wounds.”

31-33 “If I unfold to him the eternal vengeance,”
Responded Statius, “where thou present art,
Be my excuse that I can naught deny thee.”

34-36 Then he began: “Son, if these words of mine
Thy mind doth contemplate and doth receive,
They’ll be thy light unto the How thou sayest.

37-39 The perfect blood, which never is drunk up
Into the thirsty veins, and which remaineth
Like food that from the table thou removest,

40-42 Takes in the heart for all the human members
Virtue informative, as being that
Which to be changed to them goes through the veins

43-45 Again digest, descends it where 'tis better
Silent to be than say; and then drops thence
Upon another's blood in natural vase.

46-48 There one together with the other mingles,
One to be passive meant, the other active
By reason of the perfect place it springs from;

49-51 And being conjoined, begins to operate,
Coagulating first, then vivifying
What for its matter it had made consistent.

52-54 The active virtue, being made a soul
As of a plant, (in so far different,
This on the way is, that arrived already,)

55-57 Then works so much, that now it moves and feels
Like a sea-fungus, and then undertakes
To organize the powers whose seed it is.

58-60 Now, Son, dilates and now distends itself
The virtue from the generator's heart,
Where nature is intent on all the members.

61-63 But how from animal it man becomes
Thou dost not see as yet; this is a point
Which made a wiser man than thou once err

64-66 So far, that in his doctrine separate
He made the soul from possible intellect,
For he no organ saw by this assumed.

67-69 Open thy breast unto the truth that's coming,
And know that, just as soon as in the foetus
The articulation of the brain is perfect,

70-72 The primal Motor turns to it well pleased
At so great art of nature, and inspires
A spirit new with virtue all replete,

73-75 Which what it finds there active doth attract
Into its substance, and becomes one soul,
Which lives, and feels, and on itself revolves.

76-78 And that thou less may wonder at my word,
Behold the sun's heat, which becometh wine,
Joined to the juice that from the vine distils.

79-81 Whenever Lachesis has no more thread,
It separates from the flesh, and virtually
Bears with itself the human and divine;

82-84 The other faculties are voiceless all;
The memory, the intelligence, and the will
In action far more vigorous than before.

85-87 Without a pause it falleth of itself
In marvellous way on one shore or the other;
There of its roads it first is cognizant.

88-90 Soon as the place there circumscribeth it,
The virtue informative rays round about,
As, and as much as, in the living members.

91-93 And even as the air, when full of rain,
By alien rays that are therein reflected,
With divers colours shows itself adorned,

94-96 So there the neighbouring air doth shape itself
Into that form which doth impress upon it
Virtually the soul that has stood still.

97-99 And then in manner of the little flame,
Which followeth the fire where'er it shifts,
After the spirit followeth its new form.

100-102 Since afterwards it takes from this its semblance,
It is called shade; and thence it organizes
Thereafter every sense, even to the sight.

103-105 Thence is it that we speak, and thence we laugh;
Thence is it that we form the tears and sighs,
That on the mountain thou mayhap hast heard.

106-108 According as impress us our desires
And other affections, so the shade is shaped,
And this is cause of what thou wonderest at."

109-111 And now unto the last of all the circles
Had we arrived, and to the right hand turned,
And were attentive to another care.

112-114 There the embankment shoots forth flames of fire,
And upward doth the cornice breathe a blast
That drives them back, and from itself sequesters.

115-117 Hence we must needs go on the open side,
And one by one; and I did fear the fire
On this side, and on that the falling down.

118-120 My Leader said: "Along this place one ought
To keep upon the eyes a tightened rein,
Seeing that one so easily might err."

121-123 "Summae Deus clementiae," in the bosom
Of the great burning chanted then I heard,
Which made me no less eager to turn round;

124-126 And spirits saw I walking through the flame;
Wherefore I looked, to my own steps and theirs
Apportioning my sight from time to time.

127-129 After the close which to that hymn is made,
Aloud they shouted, "Virum non cognosco;"
Then recommenced the hymn with voices low.

130-132 This also ended, cried they: "To the wood
Diana ran, and drove forth Helice
Therefrom, who had of Venus felt the poison."

133-135 Then to their song returned they; then the wives
They shouted, and the husbands who were chaste.
As virtue and the marriage vow imposes.

136-138 And I believe that them this mode suffices,
For all the time the fire is burning them;
With such care is it needful, and such food,

139 That the last wound of all should be closed up.

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CANTO XXVI

✦

1-3 While on the brink thus one before the other
We went upon our way, oft the good Master
Said: "Take thou heed! suffice it that I warn thee."

4-6 On the right shoulder smote me now the sun,
That, raying out, already the whole west
Changed from its azure aspect into white.

7-9 And with my shadow did I make the flame
Appear more red; and even to such a sign
Shades saw I many, as they went, give heed.

10-12 This was the cause that gave them a beginning
To speak of me; and to themselves began they
To say: "That seems not a factitious body!"

13-15 Then towards me, as far as they could come,
Came certain of them, always with regard
Not to step forth where they would not be burned.

16-18 "O thou who goest, not from being slower
But reverent perhaps, behind the others,
Answer me, who in thirst and fire am burning.

19-21 Nor to me only is thine answer needful;
For all of these have greater thirst for it
Than for cold water Ethiop or Indian.

22-24 Tell us how is it that thou makest thyself
A wall unto the sun, as if thou hadst not
Entered as yet into the net of death."

25-27 Thus one of them addressed me, and I straight
Should have revealed myself, were I not bent
On other novelty that then appeared.

28-30 For through the middle of the burning road
There came a people face to face with these,
Which held me in suspense with gazing at them.

31-33 There see I hastening upon either side
Each of the shades, and kissing one another
Without a pause, content with brief salute.

34-36 Thus in the middle of their brown battalions
Muzzle to muzzle one ant meets another
Perchance to spy their journey or their fortune.

37-39 No sooner is the friendly greeting ended,
Or ever the first footstep passes onward,
Each one endeavours to outcry the other;

40-42 The new-come people: "Sodom and Gomorrah!"
The rest: "Into the cow Pasiphae enters,
So that the bull unto her lust may run!"

43-45 Then as the cranes, that to Riphaean mountains
Might fly in part, and part towards the sands,
These of the frost, those of the sun avoidant,

46-48 One folk is going, and the other coming,
And weeping they return to their first songs,
And to the cry that most befitteth them;

49-51 And close to me approached, even as before,
The very same who had entreated me,
Attent to listen in their countenance.

52-54 I, who their inclination twice had seen,
Began: "O souls secure in the possession,
Whene'er it may be, of a state of peace,

55-57 Neither unripe nor ripened have remained
My members upon earth, but here are with me
With their own blood and their articulations.

58-60 I go up here to be no longer blind;
A Lady is above, who wins this grace,
Whereby the mortal through your world I bring.

61-63 But as your greatest longing satisfied
May soon become, so that the Heaven may house you
Which full of love is, and most amply spreads,

64-66 Tell me, that I again in books may write it,
Who are you, and what is that multitude
Which goes upon its way behind your backs?"

67-69 Not otherwise with wonder is bewildered
The mountaineer, and staring round is dumb,
When rough and rustic to the town he goes,

70-72 Than every shade became in its appearance;
But when they of their stupor were disburdened,
Which in high hearts is quickly quieted,

73-75 "Blessed be thou, who of our border-lands,"
He recommenced who first had questioned us,
"Experience freightest for a better life.

76-78 The folk that comes not with us have offended
In that for which once Caesar, triumphing,
Heard himself called in contumely, 'Queen.'

79-81 Therefore they separate, exclaiming, 'Sodom!'
Themselves reproving, even as thou hast heard,
And add unto their burning by their shame.

82-84 Our own transgression was hermaphrodite;
But because we observed not human law,
Following like unto beasts our appetite,

85-87 In our opprobrium by us is read,
When we part company, the name of her
Who bestialized herself in bestial wood.

88-90 Now knowest thou our acts, and what our crime was;
Wouldst thou perchance by name know who we are,
There is not time to tell, nor could I do it.

91-93 Thy wish to know me shall in sooth be granted;
I'm Guido Guinicelli, and now purge me,
Having repented ere the hour extreme."

94-96 The same that in the sadness of Lycurgus
Two sons became, their mother re-beholding,
Such I became, but rise not to such height,

97-99 The moment I heard name himself the father
Of me and of my betters, who had ever
Practised the sweet and gracious rhymes of love;

100-102 And without speech and hearing thoughtfully
For a long time I went, beholding him,
Nor for the fire did I approach him nearer.

103-105 When I was fed with looking, utterly
Myself I offered ready for his service,
With affirmation that compels belief.

106-108 And he to me: "Thou leavest footprints such
In me, from what I hear, and so distinct,
Lethe cannot efface them, nor make dim.

109-111 But if thy words just now the truth have sworn,
Tell me what is the cause why thou displayest
In word and look that dear thou holdest me?"

112-114 And I to him: "Those dulcet lays of yours
Which, long as shall endure our modern fashion,
Shall make for ever dear their very ink!"

115-117 "O brother," said he, "he whom I point out,"
And here he pointed at a spirit in front,
"Was of the mother tongue a better smith.

118-120 Verses of love and proses of romance,
He mastered all; and let the idiots talk,
Who think the Lemosin surpasses him.

121-123 To clamour more than truth they turn their faces,
And in this way establish their opinion,
Ere art or reason has by them been heard.

124-126 Thus many ancients with Guittone did,
From cry to cry still giving him applause,
Until the truth has conquered with most persons.

127-129 Now, if thou hast such ample privilege
'Tis granted thee to go unto the cloister
Wherein is Christ the abbot of the college,

130-132 To him repeat for me a Paternoster,
So far as needful to us of this world,
Where power of sinning is no longer ours."

133-135 Then, to give place perchance to one behind,
Whom he had near, he vanished in the fire
As fish in water going to the bottom.

136-138 I moved a little tow'rds him pointed out,
And said that to his name my own desire
An honourable place was making ready.

139-141 He of his own free will began to say:
'Tan m' abellis vostre cortes deman,
Que jeu nom' puesc ni vueill a vos cobrire;

142-144 Jeu sui Arnaut, que plor e vai chantan;
Consiros vei la passada folor,
E vei jauzen lo jorn qu' esper denan.

145-147 Ara vus prec per aquella valor,
Que vus condus al som de la scalina,
Sovenga vus a temprar ma dolor.'

148 Then hid him in the fire that purifies them.

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CANTO XXVII



1-3 As when he vibrates forth his earliest rays,
In regions where his Maker shed his blood,
(The Ebro falling under lofty Libra,

4-6 And waters in the Ganges burnt with noon,)
So stood the Sun; hence was the day departing,
When the glad Angel of God appeared to us.

7-9 Outside the flame he stood upon the verge,
And chanted forth, "Beati mundo corde,"
In voice by far more living than our own.

10-12 Then: "No one farther goes, souls sanctified,
If first the fire bite not; within it enter,
And be not deaf unto the song beyond."

13-15 When we were close beside him thus he said;
Wherefore e'en such became I, when I heard him,
As he is who is put into the grave.

16-18 Upon my clasped hands I straightened me,
Scanning the fire, and vividly recalling
The human bodies I had once seen burned.

19-21 Towards me turned themselves my good Conductors,
And unto me Virgilius said: "My son,
Here may indeed be torment, but not death.

22-24 Remember thee, remember! and if I
On Geryon have safely guided thee,
What shall I do now I am nearer God?

25-27 Believe for certain, shouldst thou stand a full
Millennium in the bosom of this flame,
It could not make thee bald a single hair.

28-30 And if perchance thou think that I deceive thee,
Draw near to it, and put it to the proof
With thine own hands upon thy garment's hem.

31-33 Now lay aside, now lay aside all fear,
Turn hitherward, and onward come securely;"
And I still motionless, and 'gainst my conscience!

34-36 Seeing me stand still motionless and stubborn,
Somewhat disturbed he said: "Now look thou, Son,
'Twixt Beatrice and thee there is this wall."

37-39 As at the name of Thisbe oped his lids
The dying Pyramus, and gazed upon her,
What time the mulberry became vermilion,

40-42 Even thus, my obduracy being softened,
I turned to my wise Guide, hearing the name
That in my memory evermore is welling.

43-45 Whereat he wagged his head, and said: "How now?
Shall we stay on this side?" then smiled as one
Does at a child who's vanquished by an apple.

46-48 Then into the fire in front of me he entered,
Beseeching Statius to come after me,
Who a long way before divided us.

49-51 When I was in it, into molten glass
I would have cast me to refresh myself,
So without measure was the burning there!

52-54 And my sweet Father, to encourage me,
Discoursing still of Beatrice went on,
Saying: "Her eyes I seem to see already!"

55-57 A voice, that on the other side was singing,
Directed us, and we, attent alone
On that, came forth where the ascent began.

58-60 "Venite, benedicti Patris mei,"
Sounded within a splendour, which was there
Such it o'ercame me, and I could not look.

61-63 “The sun departs,” it added, “and night cometh;
Tarry ye not, but onward urge your steps,
So long as yet the west becomes not dark.”

64-66 Straight forward through the rock the path ascended
In such a way that I cut off the rays
Before me of the sun, that now was low.

67-69 And of few stairs we yet had made assay,
Ere by the vanished shadow the sun’s setting
Behind us we perceived, I and my Sages.

70-72 And ere in all its parts immeasurable
The horizon of one aspect had become,
And Night her boundless dispensation held,

73-75 Each of us of a stair had made his bed;
Because the nature of the mount took from us
The power of climbing, more than the delight.

76-78 Even as in ruminating passive grow
The goats, who have been swift and venturesome
Upon the mountain-tops ere they were fed,

79-81 Hushed in the shadow, while the sun is hot,
Watched by the herdsman, who upon his staff
Is leaning, and in leaning tendeth them;

82-84 And as the shepherd, lodging out of doors,
Passes the night beside his quiet flock,
Watching that no wild beast may scatter it,

85-87 Such at that hour were we, all three of us,
I like the goat, and like the herdsmen they,
Begirt on this side and on that by rocks.

88-90 Little could there be seen of things without;
But through that little I beheld the stars
More luminous and larger than their wont.

91-93 Thus ruminating, and beholding these,
Sleep seized upon me,—sleep, that oftentimes
Before a deed is done has tidings of it.

94-96 It was the hour, I think, when from the East
First on the mountain Citherea beamed,
Who with the fire of love seems always burning;

97-99 Youthful and beautiful in dreams methought
I saw a lady walking in a meadow,
Gathering flowers; and singing she was saying:

100-102 "Know whosoever may my name demand
That I am Leah, and go moving round
My beauteous hands to make myself a garland.

103-105 To please me at the mirror, here I deck me,
But never does my sister Rachel leave
Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day long.

106-108 To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she,
As I am to adorn me with my hands;
Her, seeing, and me, doing satisfies."

109-111 And now before the antelucan splendours
That unto pilgrims the more grateful rise,
As, home-returning, less remote they lodge,

112-114 The darkness fled away on every side,
And slumber with it; whereupon I rose,
Seeing already the great Masters risen.

115-117 "That apple sweet, which through so many branches
The care of mortals goeth in pursuit of,
To-day shall put in peace thy hungerings."

118-120 Speaking to me, Virgilius of such words
As these made use; and never were there guerdons
That could in pleasantness compare with these.

121-123 Such longing upon longing came upon me
To be above, that at each step thereafter
For flight I felt in me the pinions growing.

124-126 When underneath us was the stairway all
Run o'er, and we were on the highest step,
Virgilius fastened upon me his eyes,

127-129 And said: "The temporal fire and the eternal,
Son, thou hast seen, and to a place art come
Where of myself no farther I discern.

130-132 By intellect and art I here have brought thee;
Take thine own pleasure for thy guide henceforth;
Beyond the steep ways and the narrow art thou.

133-135 Behold the sun, that shines upon thy forehead;
Behold the grass, the flowerets, and the shrubs
Which of itself alone this land produces.

136-138 Until rejoicing come the beauteous eyes
Which weeping caused me to come unto thee,
Thou canst sit down, and thou canst walk among them.

139-141 Expect no more or word or sign from me;
Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,
And error were it not to do its bidding;

142 Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre!"

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CANTO XXVIII



1-3 Eager already to search in and round
The heavenly forest, dense and living-green,
Which tempered to the eyes the new-born day,

4-6 Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Taking the level country slowly, slowly
Over the soil that everywhere breathes fragrance.

7-9 A softly-breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, upon the forehead smote me
No heavier blow than of a gentle wind,

10-12 Whereat the branches, lightly tremulous,
Did all of them bow downward toward that side
Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain;

13-15 Yet not from their upright direction swayed,
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should leave the practice of each art of theirs;

16-18 But with full ravishment the hours of prime,
Singing, received they in the midst of leaves,
That ever bore a burden to their rhymes,

19-21 Such as from branch to branch goes gathering on
Through the pine forest on the shore of Chiassi,
When Eolus unlooses the Sirocco.

22-24 Already my slow steps had carried me
Into the ancient wood so far, that I
Could not perceive where I had entered it.

25-27 And lo! my further course a stream cut off,
Which tow'rd the left hand with its little waves
Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.

28-30 All waters that on earth most limpid are
Would seem to have within themselves some mixture
Compared with that which nothing doth conceal,

31-33 Although it moves on with a brown, brown current
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.

34-36 With feet I stayed, and with mine eyes I passed
Beyond the rivulet, to look upon
The great variety of the fresh may.

37-39 And there appeared to me (even as appears
Suddenly something that doth turn aside
Through very wonder every other thought)

40-42 A lady all alone, who went along
Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
With which her pathway was all painted over.

43-45 "Ah, beauteous lady, who in rays of love
Dost warm thyself, if I may trust to looks,
Which the heart's witnesses are wont to be,

46-48 May the desire come unto thee to draw
Near to this river's bank," I said to her,
"So much that I might hear what thou art singing.

49-51 Thou makest me remember where and what
Proserpina that moment was when lost
Her mother her, and she herself the Spring."

52-54 As turns herself, with feet together pressed
And to the ground, a lady who is dancing,
And hardly puts one foot before the other,

55-57 On the vermilion and the yellow flowerets
She turned towards me, not in other wise
Than maiden who her modest eyes casts down;

58-60 And my entreaties made to be content,
So near approaching, that the dulcet sound
Came unto me together with its meaning

61-63 As soon as she was where the grasses are.
Bathed by the waters of the beauteous river,
To lift her eyes she granted me the boon.

64-66 I do not think there shone so great a light
Under the lids of Venus, when transfixed
By her own son, beyond his usual custom!

67-69 Erect upon the other bank she smiled,
Bearing full many colours in her hands,
Which that high land produces without seed.

70-72 Apart three paces did the river make us;
But Hellespont, where Xerxes passed across,
(A curb still to all human arrogance,)

73-75 More hatred from Leander did not suffer
For rolling between Sestos and Abydos,
Than that from me, because it oped not then.

76-78 "Ye are new-comers; and because I smile,"
Began she, "peradventure, in this place
Elect to human nature for its nest,

79-81 Some apprehension keeps you marvelling;
But the psalm 'Delectasti' giveth light
Which has the power to uncloud your intellect.

82-84 And thou who foremost art, and didst entreat me,
Speak, if thou wouldst hear more; for I came ready
To all thy questionings, as far as needful."

85-87 “The water,” said I, “and the forest’s sound,
Are combating within me my new faith
In something which I heard opposed to this.”

88-90 Whence she: “I will relate how from its cause
Proceedeth that which maketh thee to wonder,
And purge away the cloud that smites upon thee.

91-93 The Good Supreme, sole in itself delighting,
Created man good, and this goodly place
Gave him as hansel of eternal peace.

94-96 By his default short while he sojourned here;
By his default to weeping and to toil
He changed his innocent laughter and sweet play.

97-99 That the disturbance which below is made
By exhalations of the land and water,
(Which far as may be follow after heat,)

100-102 Might not upon mankind wage any war,
This mount ascended tow’rds the heaven so high,
And is exempt, from there where it is locked.

103-105 Now since the universal atmosphere
Turns in a circuit with the primal motion
Unless the circle is broken on some side,

106-108 Upon this height, that all is disengaged
In living ether, doth this motion strike
And make the forest sound, for it is dense;

109-111 And so much power the stricken plant possesses
That with its virtue it impregns the air,
And this, revolving, scatters it around;

112-114 And yonder earth, according as 'tis worthy
In self or in its clime, conceives and bears
Of divers qualities the divers trees;

115-117 It should not seem a marvel then on earth,
This being heard, whenever any plant
Without seed manifest there taketh root.

118-120 And thou must know, this holy table-land
In which thou art is full of every seed,
And fruit has in it never gathered there.

121-123 The water which thou seest springs not from vein
Restored by vapour that the cold condenses,
Like to a stream that gains or loses breath;

124-126 But issues from a fountain safe and certain,
Which by the will of God as much regains
As it discharges, open on two sides.

127-129 Upon this side with virtue it descends,
Which takes away all memory of sin;
On that, of every good deed done restores it.

130-132 Here Lethe, as upon the other side
Eunoe, it is called; and worketh not
If first on either side it be not tasted.

133-135 This every other savour doth transcend;
And notwithstanding slaked so far may be
Thy thirst, that I reveal to thee no more,

136-138 I'll give thee a corollary still in grace,
Nor think my speech will be to thee less dear
If it spread out beyond my promise to thee.

139-141 Those who in ancient times have feigned in song
The Age of Gold and its felicity,
Dreamed of this place perhaps upon Parnassus.

142-144 Here was the human race in innocence;
Here evermore was Spring, and every fruit;
This is the nectar of which each one speaks."

145-147 Then backward did I turn me wholly round
Unto my Poets, and saw that with a smile
They had been listening to these closing words;

148 Then to the beautiful lady turned mine eyes.

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CANTO XXIX



1-3 Singing like unto an enamoured lady
She, with the ending of her words, continued:
“Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata.”

4-6 And even as Nymphs, that wandered all alone
Among the sylvan shadows, sedulous
One to avoid and one to see the sun,

7-9 She then against the stream moved onward, going
Along the bank, and I abreast of her,
Her little steps with little steps attending.

10-12 Between her steps and mine were not a hundred,
When equally the margins gave a turn,
In such a way, that to the East I faced.

13-15 Nor even thus our way continued far
Before the lady wholly turned herself
Unto me, saying, “Brother, look and listen!”

16-18 And lo! a sudden lustre ran across
On every side athwart the spacious forest,
Such that it made me doubt if it were lightning.

19-21 But since the lightning ceases as it comes,
And that continuing brightened more and more,
Within my thought I said, “What thing is this?”

22-24 And a delicious melody there ran
Along the luminous air, whence holy zeal
Made me rebuke the hardihood of Eve;

25-27 For there where earth and heaven obedient were,
The woman only, and but just created,
Could not endure to stay ’neath any veil;

28-30 Underneath which had she devoutly stayed,
I sooner should have tasted those delights
Ineffable, and for a longer time.

31-33 While ’mid such manifold first-fruits I walked
Of the eternal pleasure all enrapt,
And still solicitous of more delights,

34-36 In front of us like an enkindled fire
Became the air beneath the verdant boughs,
And the sweet sound as singing now was heard.

37-39 O Virgins sacrosanct! if ever hunger,
Vigils, or cold for you I have endured,
The occasion spurs me their reward to claim!

40-42 Now Helicon must needs pour forth for me,
And with her choir Urania must assist me,
To put in verse things difficult to think.

43-45 A little farther on, seven trees of gold
In semblance the long space still intervening
Between ourselves and them did counterfeit;

46-48 But when I had approached so near to them
The common object, which the sense deceives,
Lost not by distance any of its marks,

49-51 The faculty that lends discourse to reason
Did apprehend that they were candlesticks,
And in the voices of the song "Hosanna!"

52-54 Above them flamed the harness beautiful,
Far brighter than the moon in the serene
Of midnight, at the middle of her month.

55-57 I turned me round, with admiration filled,
To good Virgilius, and he answered me
With visage no less full of wonderment.

58-60 Then back I turned my face to those high things,
Which moved themselves towards us so sedately,
They had been distanced by new-wedded brides.

61-63 The lady chid me: “Why dost thou burn only
So with affection for the living lights,
And dost not look at what comes after them?”

64-66 Then saw I people, as behind their leaders,
Coming behind them, garmented in white,
And such a whiteness never was on earth.

67-69 The water on my left flank was resplendent,
And back to me reflected my left side,
E’en as a mirror, if I looked therein.

70-72 When I upon my margin had such post
That nothing but the stream divided us,
Better to see I gave my steps repose;

73-75 And I beheld the flamelets onward go,
Leaving behind themselves the air depicted,
And they of trailing pennons had the semblance,

76-78 So that it overhead remained distinct
With sevenfold lists, all of them of the colours
Whence the sun’s bow is made, and Delia’s girdle.

79-81 These standards to the rearward longer were
Than was my sight; and, as it seemed to me,
Ten paces were the outermost apart.

82-84 Under so fair a heaven as I describe
The four and twenty Elders, two by two,
Came on incoronate with flower-de-luce.

85-87 They all of them were singing: “Blessed thou
Among the daughters of Adam art, and blessed
For evermore shall be thy loveliness.”

88-90 After the flowers and other tender grasses
In front of me upon the other margin
Were disencumbered of that race elect,

91-93 Even as in heaven star followeth after star,
There came close after them four animals,
Incoronate each one with verdant leaf.

94-96 Plumed with six wings was every one of them,
The plumage full of eyes; the eyes of Argus
If they were living would be such as these.

97-99 Reader! to trace their forms no more I waste
My rhymes; for other spendings press me so,
That I in this cannot be prodigal.

100-102 But read Ezekiel, who depicteth them
As he beheld them from the region cold
Coming with cloud, with whirlwind, and with fire;

103-105 And such as thou shalt find them in his pages,
Such were they here; saving that in their plumage
John is with me, and differeth from him.

106-108 The interval between these four contained
A chariot triumphal on two wheels,
Which by a Griffin’s neck came drawn along;

109-111 And upward he extended both his wings
Between the middle list and three and three,
So that he injured none by cleaving it.

112-114 So high they rose that they were lost to sight;
His limbs were gold, so far as he was bird,
And white the others with vermilion mingled.

115-117 Not only Rome with no such splendid car
E'er gladdened Africanus, or Augustus,
But poor to it that of the Sun would be,—

118-120 That of the Sun, which swerving was burnt up
At the importunate orison of Earth,
When Jove was so mysteriously just.

121-123 Three maidens at the right wheel in a circle
Came onward dancing; one so very red
That in the fire she hardly had been noted.

124-126 The second was as if her flesh and bones
Had all been fashioned out of emerald;
The third appeared as snow but newly fallen.

127-129 And now they seemed conducted by the white,
Now by the red, and from the song of her
The others took their step, or slow or swift.

130-132 Upon the left hand four made holiday
Vested in purple, following the measure
Of one of them with three eyes m her head.

133-135 In rear of all the group here treated of
Two old men I beheld, unlike in habit,
But like in gait, each dignified and grave.

136-138 One showed himself as one of the disciples
Of that supreme Hippocrates, whom nature
Made for the animals she holds most dear;

139-141 Contrary care the other manifested,
With sword so shining and so sharp, it caused
Terror to me on this side of the river.

142-144 Thereafter four I saw of humble aspect,
And behind all an aged man alone
Walking in sleep with countenance acute.

145-147 And like the foremost company these seven
Were habited; yet of the flower-de-luce
No garland round about the head they wore,

148-150 But of the rose, and other flowers vermilion;
At little distance would the sight have sworn
That all were in a flame above their brows.

151-153 And when the car was opposite to me
Thunder was heard; and all that folk august
Seemed to have further progress interdicted,

154 There with the vanward ensigns standing still.

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CANTO XXX



1-3 When the Septentrion of the highest heaven
(Which never either setting knew or rising,
Nor veil of other cloud than that of sin,

4-6 And which made every one therein aware
Of his own duty, as the lower makes
Whoever turns the helm to come to port)

7-9 Motionless halted, the veracious people,
That came at first between it and the Griffin,
Turned themselves to the car, as to their peace.

10-12 And one of them, as if by Heaven commissioned,
Singing, "Veni, sponsa, de Libano"
Shouted three times, and all the others after.

13-15 Even as the Blessed at the final summons
Shall rise up quickened each one from his cavern,
Uplifting light the reinvested flesh,

16-18 So upon that celestial chariot
A hundred rose ‘ad vocem tanti senis,’
Ministers and messengers of life eternal.

19-21 They all were saying, “Benedictus qui venis,”
And, scattering flowers above and round about,
“Manibus o date lilia plenis.”

22-24 Ere now have I beheld, as day began,
The eastern hemisphere all tinged with rose,
And the other heaven with fair serene adorned;

25-27 And the sun’s face, uprising, overshadowed
So that by tempering influence of vapours
For a long interval the eye sustained it;

28-30 Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers
Which from those hands angelical ascended,
And downward fell again inside and out,

31-33 Over her snow-white veil with olive cinct
Appeared a lady under a green mantle,
Vested in colour of the living flame.

34-36 And my own spirit, that already now
So long a time had been, that in her presence
Trembling with awe it had not stood abashed,

37-39 Without more knowledge having by mine eyes,
Through occult virtue that from her proceeded
Of ancient love the mighty influence felt.

40-42 As soon as on my vision smote the power
Sublime, that had already pierced me through
Ere from my boyhood I had yet come forth,

43-45 To the left hand I turned with that reliance
With which the little child runs to his mother,
When he has fear, or when he is afflicted,

46-48 To say unto Virgilius: "Not a drachm
Of blood remains in me, that does not tremble;
I know the traces of the ancient flame."

49-51 But us Virgilius of himself deprived
Had left, Virgilius, sweetest of all fathers,
Virgilius, to whom I for safety gave me:

52-54 Nor whatsoever lost the ancient mother
Availed my cheeks now purified from dew,
That weeping they should not again be darkened.

55-57 "Dante, because Virgilius has departed
Do not weep yet, do not weep yet awhile;
For by another sword thou need'st must weep."

58-60 E'en as an admiral, who on poop and prow
Comes to behold the people that are working
In other ships, and cheers them to well-doing,

61-63 Upon the left hand border of the car,
When at the sound I turned of my own name,
Which of necessity is here recorded,

64-66 I saw the Lady, who erewhile appeared
Veiled underneath the angelic festival,
Direct her eyes to me across the river.

67-69 Although the veil, that from her head descended,
Encircled with the foliage of Minerva,
Did not permit her to appear distinctly,

70-72 In attitude still royally majestic
Continued she, like unto one who speaks,
And keeps his warmest utterance in reserve:

73-75 "Look at me well; in sooth I'm Beatrice!
How didst thou deign to come unto the Mountain?
Didst thou not know that man is happy here?"

76-78 Mine eyes fell downward into the clear fountain,
But, seeing myself therein, I sought the grass,
So great a shame did weigh my forehead down.

79-81 As to the son the mother seems superb,
So she appeared to me; for somewhat bitter
Tasteth the savour of severe compassion.

82-84 Silent became she, and the Angels sang
Suddenly, "In te, Domine, speravi:"
But beyond 'pedes meos' did not pass.

85-87 Even as the snow among the living rafters
Upon the back of Italy congeals,
Blown on and drifted by Sclavonian winds,

88-90 And then, dissolving, trickles through itself
Whene'er the land that loses shadow breathes,
So that it seems a fire that melts a taper;

91-93 E'en thus was I without a tear or sigh,
Before the song of those who sing for ever
After the music of the eternal spheres.

94-96 But when I heard in their sweet melodies
Compassion for me, more than had they said,
"O wherefore, lady, dost thou thus upbraid him?"

97-99 The ice, that was about my heart congealed,
To air and water changed, and in my anguish
Through mouth and eyes came gushing from my breast.

100-102 She, on the right-hand border of the car
Still firmly standing, to those holy beings
Thus her discourse directed afterwards:

103-105 "Ye keep your watch in the eternal day,
So that nor night nor sleep can steal from you
One step the ages make upon their path;

106-108 Therefore my answer is with greater care,
That he may hear me who is weeping yonder,
So that the sin and dole be of one measure.

109-111 Not only by the work of those great wheels,
That destine every seed unto some end,
According as the stars are in conjunction,

112-114 But by the largess of celestial graces,
Which have such lofty vapours for their rain
That near to them our sight approaches not,

115-117 Such had this man become in his new life
Potentially, that every righteous habit
Would have made admirable proof in him;

118-120 But so much more malignant and more savage
Becomes the land untilled and with bad seed,
The more good earthly vigour it possesses.

121-123 Some time did I sustain him with my look;
Revealing unto him my youthful eyes,
I led him with me turned in the right way.

124-126 As soon as ever of my second age
I was upon the threshold and changed life,
Himself from me he took and gave to others.

127-129 When from the flesh to spirit I ascended,
And beauty and virtue were in me increased,
I was to him less dear and less delightful;

130-132 And into ways untrue he turned his steps,
Pursuing the false images of good,
That never any promises fulfil;

133-135 Nor prayer for inspiration me availed,
By means of which in dreams and otherwise
I called him back, so little did he heed them.

136-138 So low he fell, that all appliances
For his salvation were already short,
Save showing him the people of perdition.

139-141 For this I visited the gates of death,
And unto him, who so far up has led him,
My intercessions were with weeping borne.

142-144 God's lofty fiat would be violated,
If Lethe should be passed, and if such viands
Should tasted be, withouten any scot

145 Of penitence, that gushes forth in tears."

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CANTO XXXI



1-3 "O thou who art beyond the sacred river,"
Turning to me the point of her discourse,
That edgewise even had seemed to me so keen,

4-6 She recommenced, continuing without pause,
"Say, say if this be true; to such a charge,
Thy own confession needs must be conjoined."

7-9 My faculties were in so great confusion,
That the voice moved, but sooner was extinct
Than by its organs it was set at large.

10-12 Awhile she waited; then she said: "What thinkest?
Answer me; for the mournful memories
In thee not yet are by the waters injured."

13-15 Confusion and dismay together mingled
Forced such a Yes! from out my mouth, that sight
Was needful to the understanding of it.

16-18 Even as a cross-bow breaks, when 'tis discharged
Too tensely drawn the bowstring and the bow,
And with less force the arrow hits the mark,

19-21 So I gave way beneath that heavy burden,
Outpouring in a torrent tears and sighs,
And the voice flagged upon its passage forth.

22-24 Whence she to me: "In those desires of mine
Which led thee to the loving of that good,
Beyond which there is nothing to aspire to,

25-27 What trenches lying traverse or what chains
Didst thou discover, that of passing onward
Thou shouldst have thus despoiled thee of the hope?

28-30 And what allurements or what vantages
Upon the forehead of the others showed,
That thou shouldst turn thy footsteps unto them?"

31-33 After the heaving of a bitter sigh,
Hardly had I the voice to make response,
And with fatigue my lips did fashion it.

34-36 Weeping I said: "The things that present were
With their false pleasure turned aside my steps,
Soon as your countenance concealed itself."

37-39 And she: “Shouldst thou be silent, or deny
What thou confessest, not less manifest
Would be thy fault, by such a Judge ’tis known.

40-42 But when from one’s own cheeks comes bursting forth
The accusal of the sin, in our tribunal
Against the edge the wheel doth turn itself.

43-45 But still, that thou mayst feel a greater shame
For thy transgression, and another time
Hearing the Sirens thou mayst be more strong,

46-48 Cast down the seed of weeping and attend;
So shalt thou hear, how in an opposite way
My buried flesh should have directed thee.

49-51 Never to thee presented art or nature
Pleasure so great as the fair limbs wherein
I was enclosed, which scattered are in earth.

52-54 And if the highest pleasure thus did fail thee
By reason of my death, what mortal thing
Should then have drawn thee into its desire?

55-57 Thou oughtest verily at the first shaft
Of things fallacious to have risen up
To follow me, who was no longer such.

58-60 Thou oughtest not to have stooped thy pinions downward
To wait for further blows, or little girl,
Or other vanity of such brief use.

61-63 The callow birdlet waits for two or three,
But to the eyes of those already fledged,
In vain the net is spread or shaft is shot."

64-66 Even as children silent in their shame
Stand listening with their eyes upon the ground,
And conscious of their fault, and penitent;

67-69 So was I standing; and she said: "If thou
In hearing sufferest pain, lift up thy beard
And thou shalt feel a greater pain in seeing."

70-72 With less resistance is a robust holm
Uprooted, either by a native wind
Or else by that from regions of Iarbas,

73-75 Than I upraised at her command my chin;
And when she by the beard the face demanded,
Well I perceived the venom of her meaning.

76-78 And as my countenance was lifted up,
Mine eye perceived those creatures beautiful
Had rested from the strewing of the flowers;

79-81 And, still but little reassured, mine eyes
Saw Beatrice turned round towards the monster,
That is one person only in two natures.

82-84 Beneath her veil, beyond the margent green,
She seemed to me far more her ancient self
To excel, than others here, when she was here.

85-87 So pricked me then the thorn of penitence,
That of all other things the one which turned me
Most to its love became the most my foe.

88-90 Such self-conviction stung me at the heart
O'erpowered I fell, and what I then became
She knoweth who had furnished me the cause.

91-93 Then, when the heart restored my outward sense,
The lady I had found alone, above me
I saw, and she was saying, "Hold me, hold me."

94-96 Up to my throat she in the stream had drawn me,
And, dragging me behind her, she was moving
Upon the water lightly as a shuttle.

97-99 When I was near unto the blessed shore,
"Asperges me," I heard so sweetly sung,
Remember it I cannot, much less write it.

100-102 The beautiful lady opened wide her arms,
Embraced my head, and plunged me underneath,
Where I was forced to swallow of the water.

103-105 Then forth she drew me, and all dripping brought
Into the dance of the four beautiful,
And each one with her arm did cover me.

106-108 'We here are Nymphs, and in the Heaven are stars;
Ere Beatrice descended to the world,
We as her handmaids were appointed her.

109-111 We'll lead thee to her eyes; but for the pleasant
Light that within them is, shall sharpen thine
The three beyond, who more profoundly look.'

112-114 Thus singing they began; and afterwards
Unto the Griffin's breast they led me with them,
Where Beatrice was standing, turned towards us.

115-117 "See that thou dost not spare thine eyes," they said;
"Before the emeralds have we stationed thee,
Whence Love aforetime drew for thee his weapons."

118-120 A thousand longings, hotter than the flame,
Fastened mine eyes upon those eyes relucent,
That still upon the Griffin steadfast stayed.

121-123 As in a glass the sun, not otherwise
Within them was the twofold monster shining,
Now with the one, now with the other nature.

124-126 Think, Reader, if within myself I marvelled,
When I beheld the thing itself stand still,
And in its image it transformed itself.

127-129 While with amazement filled and jubilant,
My soul was tasting of the food, that while
It satisfies us makes us hunger for it,

130-132 Themselves revealing of the highest rank
In bearing, did the other three advance,
Singing to their angelic saraband.

133-135 “Turn, Beatrice, O turn thy holy eyes,”
Such was their song, “unto thy faithful one,
Who has to see thee ta’en so many steps.

136-138 In grace do us the grace that thou unveil
Thy face to him, so that he may discern
The second beauty which thou dost conceal.”

139-141 O splendour of the living light eternal!
Who underneath the shadow of Parnassus
Has grown so pale, or drunk so at its cistern,

142-144 He would not seem to have his mind encumbered
Striving to paint thee as thou didst appear,
Where the harmonious heaven o’ershadowed thee,

145 When in the open air thou didst unveil?

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CANTO XXXII



1-3 So steadfast and attentive were mine eyes
In satisfying their decennial thirst,
That all my other senses were extinct,

4-6 And upon this side and on that they had
Walls of indifference, so the holy smile
Drew them unto itself with the old net

7-9 When forcibly my sight was turned away
Towards my left hand by those goddesses,
Because I heard from them a "Too intently!"

10-12 And that condition of the sight which is
In eyes but lately smitten by the sun
Bereft me of my vision some short while;

13-15 But to the less when sight re-shaped itself,
I say the less in reference to the greater
Splendour from which perforce I had withdrawn,

16-18 I saw upon its right wing wheeled about
The glorious host returning with the sun
And with the sevenfold flames upon their faces.

19-21 As underneath its shields, to save itself,
A squadron turns, and with its banner wheels,
Before the whole thereof can change its front,

22-24 That soldiery of the celestial kingdom
Which marched in the advance had wholly passed us
Before the chariot had turned its pole.

25-27 Then to the wheels the maidens turned themselves,
And the Griffin moved his burden benedight,
But so that not a feather of him fluttered.

28-30 The lady fair who drew me through the ford
Followed with Statius and myself the wheel
Which made its orbit with the lesser arc.

31-33 So passing through the lofty forest, vacant
By fault of her who in the serpent trusted,
Angelic music made our steps keep time.

34-36 Perchance as great a space had in three flights
An arrow loosened from the string o'erpassed,
As we had moved when Beatrice descended.

37-39 I heard them murmur altogether, "Adam!"
Then circled they about a tree despoiled
Of blooms and other leafage on each bough.

40-42 Its tresses, which so much the more dilate
As higher they ascend, had been by Indians
Among their forests marvelled at for height.

43-45 "Blessed art thou, O Griffin, who dost not
Pluck with thy beak these branches sweet to taste,
Since appetite by this was turned to evil."

46-48 After this fashion round the tree robust
The others shouted; and the twofold creature:
"Thus is preserved the seed of all the just."

49-51 And turning to the pole which he had dragged,
He drew it close beneath the widowed bough,
And what was of it unto it left bound.

52-54 In the same manner as our trees (when downward
Falls the great light, with that together mingled
Which after the celestial Lasca shines)

55-57 Begin to swell, and then renew themselves,
Each one with its own colour, ere the Sun
Harness his steeds beneath another star:

58-60 Less than of rose and more than violet
A hue disclosing, was renewed the tree
That had erewhile its boughs so desolate.

61-63 I never heard, nor here below is sung,
The hymn which afterward that people sang,
Nor did I bear the melody throughout.

64-66 Had I the power to paint how fell asleep
Those eyes compassionless, of Syrinx hearing,
Those eyes to which more watching cost so dear,

67-69 Even as a painter who from model paints
I would portray how I was lulled asleep;
He may, who well can picture drowsihood.

70-72 Therefore I pass to what time I awoke,
And say a splendour rent from me the veil
Of slumber, and a calling: "Rise, what dost thou?"

73-75 As to behold the apple-tree in blossom
Which makes the Angels greedy for its fruit,
And keeps perpetual bridals in the Heaven,

76-78 Peter and John and James conducted were,
And, overcome, recovered at the word
By which still greater slumbers have been broken,

79-81 And saw their school diminished by the loss
Not only of Elias, but of Moses,
And the apparel of their Master changed;

82-84 So I revived, and saw that piteous one
Above me standing, who had been conductress
Aforetime of my steps beside the river,

85-87 And all in doubt I said, “Where’s Beatrice?”
And she: “Behold her seated underneath
The leafage new, upon the root of it.

88-90 Behold the company that circles her;
The rest behind the Griffin are ascending
With more melodious song, and more profound.”

91-93 And if her speech were more diffuse I know not,
Because already in my sight was she
Who from the hearing of aught else had shut me.

94-96 Alone she sat upon the very earth,
Left there as guardian of the chariot
Which I had seen the biform monster fasten.

97-99 Encircling her, a cloister made themselves
The seven Nymphs, with those lights in their hands
Which are secure from Aquilon and Auster.

100-102 “Short while shalt thou be here a forester,
And thou shalt be with me for evermore
A citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman.

103-105 Therefore, for that world’s good which liveth ill,
Fix on the car thine eyes, and what thou seest,
Having returned to earth, take heed thou write.”

106-108 Thus Beatrice; and I, who at the feet
Of her commandments all devoted was,
My mind and eyes directed where she willed.

109-111 Never descended with so swift a motion
Fire from a heavy cloud, when it is raining
From out the region which is most remote,

112-114 As I beheld the bird of Jove descend
Down through the tree, rending away the bark,
As well as blossoms and the foliage new,

115-117 And he with all his might the chariot smote,
Whereat it reeled, like vessel in a tempest
Tossed by the waves, now starboard and now larboard.

118-120 Thereafter saw I leap into the body
Of the triumphal vehicle a Fox,
That seemed unfed with any wholesome food.

121-123 But for his hideous sins upbraiding him,
My Lady put him to as swift a flight
As such a fleshless skeleton could bear.

124-126 Then by the way that it before had come,
Into the chariot's chest I saw the Eagle
Descend, and leave it feathered with his plumes.

127-129 And such as issues from a heart that mourns,
A voice from Heaven there issued, and it said:
"My little bark, how badly art thou freighted!"

130-132 Methought, then, that the earth did yawn between
Both wheels, and I saw rise from it a Dragon,
Who through the chariot upward fixed his tail,

133-135 And as a wasp that draweth back its sting,
Drawing unto himself his tail malign,
Drew out the floor, and went his way rejoicing.

136-138 That which remained behind, even as with grass
A fertile region, with the feathers, offered
Perhaps with pure intention and benign,

139-141 Reclothed itself, and with them were reclothed
The pole and both the wheels so speedily,
A sigh doth longer keep the lips apart.

142-144 Transfigured thus the holy edifice
Thrust forward heads upon the parts of it,
Three on the pole and one at either corner.

145-147 The first were horned like oxen; but the four
Had but a single horn upon the forehead;
A monster such had never yet been seen!

148-150 Firm as a rock upon a mountain high,
Seated upon it, there appeared to me
A shameless whore, with eyes swift glancing round,

151-153 And, as if not to have her taken from him,
Upright beside her I beheld a giant;
And ever and anon they kissed each other.

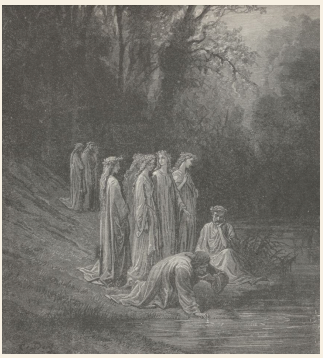
154-156 But because she her wanton, roving eye
Turned upon me, her angry paramour
Did scourge her from her head unto her feet.

157-159 Then full of jealousy, and fierce with wrath,
He loosed the monster, and across the forest
Dragged it so far, he made of that alone

160 A shield unto the whore and the strange beast.

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CANTO XXXIII



1-3 "Deus venerunt gentes," alternating
Now three, now four, melodious psalmody
The maidens in the midst of tears began;

4-6 And Beatrice, compassionate and sighing,
Listened to them with such a countenance,
That scarce more changed was Mary at the cross.

7-9 But when the other virgins place had given
For her to speak, uprisen to her feet
With colour as of fire, she made response:

10-12 "'Modicum, et non videbitis me;
Et iterum,' my sisters predilect,
'Modicum, et vos videbitis me.'"

13-15 Then all the seven in front of her she placed;
And after her, by beckoning only, moved
Me and the lady and the sage who stayed.

16-18 So she moved onward; and I do not think
That her tenth step was placed upon the ground,
When with her eyes upon mine eyes she smote,

19-21 And with a tranquil aspect, "Come more quickly,"
To me she said, "that, if I speak with thee,
To listen to me thou mayst be well placed."

22-24 As soon as I was with her as I should be,
She said to me: "Why, brother, dost thou not
Venture to question now, in coming with me?"

25-27 As unto those who are too reverential,
Speaking in presence of superiors,
Who drag no living utterance to their teeth,

28-30 It me befell, that without perfect sound
Began I: "My necessity, Madonna,
You know, and that which thereunto is good."

31-33 And she to me: "Of fear and bashfulness
Henceforward I will have thee strip thyself,
So that thou speak no more as one who dreams.

34-36 Know that the vessel which the serpent broke
Was, and is not; but let him who is guilty
Think that God's vengeance does not fear a sop.

37-39 Without an heir shall not for ever be
The Eagle that left his plumes upon the car,
Whence it became a monster, then a prey;

40-42 For verily I see, and hence narrate it,
The stars already near to bring the time,
From every hindrance safe, and every bar,

43-45 Within which a Five-hundred, Ten, and Five,
One sent from God, shall slay the thievish woman
And that same giant who is sinning with her.

46-48 And peradventure my dark utterance,
Like Themis and the Sphinx, may less persuade thee,
Since, in their mode, it clouds the intellect;

49-51 But soon the facts shall be the Naiades
Who shall this difficult enigma solve,
Without destruction of the flocks and harvests.

52-54 Note thou; and even as by me are uttered
These words, so teach them unto those who live
That life which is a running unto death;

55-57 And bear in mind, whene'er thou writest them,
Not to conceal what thou hast seen the plant,
That twice already has been pillaged here.

58-60 Whoever pillages or shatters it,
With blasphemy of deed offendeth God,
Who made it holy for his use alone.

61-63 For biting that, in pain and in desire
Five thousand years and more the first-born soul
Craved Him, who punished in himself the bite.

64-66 Thy genius slumbers, if it deem it not
For special reason so pre-eminent
In height, and so inverted in its summit.

67-69 And if thy vain imaginings had not been
Water of Elsa round about thy mind,
And Pyramus to the mulberry, their pleasure,

70-72 Thou by so many circumstances only
The justice of the interdict of God
Morally in the tree wouldst recognize.

73-75 But since I see thee in thine intellect
Converted into stone and stained with sin,
So that the light of my discourse doth daze thee,

76-78 I will too, if not written, at least painted,
Thou bear it back within thee, for the reason
That cinct with palm the pilgrim's staff is borne."

79-81 And I: "As by a signet is the wax
Which does not change the figure stamped upon it,
My brain is now imprinted by yourself.

82-84 But wherefore so beyond my power of sight
Soars your desirable discourse, that aye
The more I strive, so much the more I lose it?"

85-87 “That thou mayst recognize,” she said, “the school
Which thou hast followed, and mayst see how far
Its doctrine follows after my discourse,

88-90 And mayst behold your path from the divine
Distant as far as separated is
From earth the heaven that highest hastens on.”

91-93 Whence her I answered: “I do not remember
That ever I estranged myself from you,
Nor have I conscience of it that reproves me.”

94-96 “And if thou art not able to remember,”
Smiling she answered, “recollect thee now
That thou this very day hast drunk of Lethe;

97-99 And if from smoke a fire may be inferred,
Such an oblivion clearly demonstrates
Some error in thy will elsewhere intent.

100-102 Truly from this time forward shall my words
Be naked, so far as it is befitting
To lay them open unto thy rude gaze.”

103-105 And more coruscant and with slower steps
The sun was holding the meridian circle,
Which, with the point of view, shifts here and there

106-108 When halted (as he cometh to a halt,
Who goes before a squadron as its escort,
If something new he find upon his way)

109-111 The ladies seven at a dark shadow's edge,
Such as, beneath green leaves and branches black,
The Alp upon its frigid border wears.

112-114 In front of them the Tigris and Euphrates
Methought I saw forth issue from one fountain,
And slowly part, like friends, from one another.

115-117 "O light, O glory of the human race!
What stream is this which here unfolds itself
From out one source, and from itself withdraws?"

118-120 For such a prayer, 'twas said unto me, "Pray
Matilda that she tell thee;" and here answered,
As one does who doth free himself from blame,

121-123 The beautiful lady: "This and other things
Were told to him by me; and sure I am
The water of Lethe has not hid them from him."

124-126 And Beatrice: "Perhaps a greater care,
Which oftentimes our memory takes away,
Has made the vision of his mind obscure.

127-129 But Eunoe behold, that yonder rises;
Lead him to it, and, as thou art accustomed,
Revive again the half-dead virtue in him."

130-132 Like gentle soul, that maketh no excuse,
But makes its own will of another's will
As soon as by a sign it is disclosed,

133-135 Even so, when she had taken hold of me,
The beautiful lady moved, and unto Statius
Said, in her womanly manner, “Come with him.”

136-138 If, Reader, I possessed a longer space
For writing it, I yet would sing in part
Of the sweet draught that ne’er would satiate me;

139-141 But inasmuch as full are all the leaves
Made ready for this second canticle,
The curb of art no farther lets me go.

142-144 From the most holy water I returned
Regenerate, in the manner of new trees
That are renewed with a new foliage,

145 Pure and disposed to mount unto the stars.

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