Figure 1: Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself within a forest dark...
Canto 1

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
Which in the very thought renews the fear.
So bitter is it, death is little more;
But of the good to treat, which there I found,
Speak will I of the other things I saw there.
I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
So full was I of slumber at the moment
In which I had abandoned the true way.
But after I had reached a mountain’s foot,
At that point where the valley terminated,
Which had with consternation pierced my heart,
Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders

1The action of the poem begins on Good Friday of the year 1300, at which time Dante, who was born in 1265, had reached the middle of the Scriptural threescore years and ten. It ends on the first Sunday after Easter, making in all ten days.
2The dark forest of human life, with its passions, vices, and perplexities of all kinds; politically the state of Florence with its fractions Guelf and Ghibelline.
3Bunyan, in his Pilgrim’s Progress, which is a kind of Divine Comedy in prose, says: “I beheld then that they all went on till they came to the foot of the hill Difficulty... But the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of the going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty... They went then till they came to the Delectable Mountains, which mountains belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken before.”
4Bunyan, Pilgrim’s Progress – “But now in this valley of Humiliation poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way before he spied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name is Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back or stand his ground. ...Now at the end of this valley was another, called the valley of the Shadow of Death; and Christian must needs go through it, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it.”
Vested already with that planet’s rays \(^5\)
Which leadeth others right by every road.

Then was the fear a little quieted
That in my heart’s lake had endured throughout \(^6\)
The night, which I had passed so piteously

And even as he, who, with distressful breath,
Forth issued from the sea upon the shore,
Turns to the water perilous and gazes;
So did my soul, that still was fleeing onward,
Turn itself back to re-behold the pass
Which never yet a living person left. \(^7\)

After my weary body I had rested,
The way resumed I on the desert slope,
So that the firm foot ever was the lower. \(^8\)

And lo! almost where the ascent began, \(^9\)
A panther light and swift exceedingly, \(^10\)
Which with a spotted skin was covered o’er!

And never moved she from before my face,
Nay, rather did impede so much my way,
That many times I to return had turned. \(^11\)

The time was the beginning of the morning,
And up the sun was mounting with those stars \(^12\)
That with him were, what time the Love Divine

\(^5\) The sun, with all its symbolical meanings. This is the morning of Good Friday. In the Ptolemaic system the sun was one of the planets.

\(^6\) The deep mountain tarn of his heart, dark with its own depth, and the shadows hanging over it.

\(^7\) Jeremiah ii. 6: “That led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.” In his note upon this passage Mr. Wright quotes Spenser’s lines, Faerie Queene, I. v. 31, – “there creature never passed That back returned without heavenly grace.”

\(^8\) Climbing the hillside slowly, so that he rests longest on the foot that is lowest.

\(^9\) Jeremiah v. 6: “Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, a wolf of the evening shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces.”

\(^10\) Wordly Pleasure; and politically Florence, with its factions of Bianchi and Neri.

\(^11\) Più volte volto. Dante delights in a play upon words as much as Shakespeare.

\(^12\) The stars of Aries. Some philosophers and fathers think the world was created in Spring.
Figure 2: And lo! almost where the ascent began, a panther light and swift exceedingly...

At first in motion set those beauteous things;  
So were to me occasion of good hope,  
The variegated skin of that wild beast,

The hour of time, and the delicious season;  
But not so much, that did not give me fear  
A lion’s aspect which appeared to me.  

He seemed as if against me he were coming  
With head uplifted, and with ravenous hunger,  
So that it seemed the air was afraid of him;  

And a she-wolf, that with all hungerings  
Seemed to be laden in her meagreness,  
And many folk has caused to live forlorn!

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13 Ambition; and politically the royal house of France.
14 Some editions read temesse, others tremesse.
15 Avarice; and politically the Court of Rome, or temporal power of the Popes.
She brought upon me so much heaviness,
With the affright that from her aspect came,
That I the hope relinquished of the height.

And as he is who willingly acquires,
And the time comes that causes him to lose,
Who weeps in all his thoughts and is despondent,

E’en such made me that beast withouten peace,
Which, coming on against me by degrees
Thrust me back thither where the sun is silent

While I was rushing downward to the lowland,
Before mine eyes did one present himself,
Who seemed from long-continued silence hoarse.

When I beheld him in the desert vast,
“Have pity on me,” unto him I cried,
“Whiche’er thou art, or shade or real man!”

He answered me: “Not man; man once I was,
And both my parents were of Lombardy,
And Mantuans by country both of them.

Sub Julio was I born, though it was late,
And lived at Rome under the good Augustus,
During the time of false and lying gods.

A poet was I, and I sang that just
Son of Anchises, who came forth from Troy,
After that Ilion the superb was burned

But thou, why goest thou back to such annoyance?
Why climb’st thou not the Mount Delectable
Which is the source and cause of every joy?”

Now, art thou that Virgilius and that fountain

16 Dante as a Ghibelline and Imperialist is in opposition to the Guelfs, Pope Boniface VIII., and the King of France, Philip the Fair, and is banished from Florence, out of the sunshine, and into “the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty.” Cato speaks of the “silent moon” in De Re Rustica, XXIV., Evehito luna silenti; and XL., Vites inseri luna silenti. Also Pliny, XVI. 39, has Silens luna; and Milton, in Samson Agonistes, “Silent as the moon.”

17 The long neglect of classic studies in Italy before Dante’s time.

18 Born under Julius Caesar, but too late to grow up to manhood during his Imperial reign. He flourished later under Augustus.

19 In this passage Dante but expresses the universal veneration felt for Virgil during the Middle Ages, and especially in Italy. Petrarch’s copy of Virgil is still preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan; and at the beginning of it he has recorded in a Latin note
Which spreads abroad so wide a river of speech?"
I made response to him with bashful forehead.

"O, of the other poets honour and light,
Avail me the long study and great love
That have impelled me to explore thy volume!

Thou art my master, and my author thou,
Thou art alone the one from whom I took
The beautiful style that has done honour to me. 20

Behold the beast, for which I have turned back;
Do thou protect me from her, famous Sage,
For she doth make my veins and pulses tremble."

Thee it behoves to take another road,"
Responded he, when he beheld me weeping,
"If from this savage place thou wouldst escape;
Because this beast, at which thou criest out,
Suffers not any one to pass her way,
But so doth harass him, that she destroys him;
And has a nature so malign and ruthless,
That never doth she glut her greedy will,
And after food is hungrier than before.

Many the animals with whom she weds,
And more they shall be still, until the Greyhound 21
Comes, who shall make her perish in her pain.

He shall not feed on either earth or pelf,

20Dante seems to have been already conscious of the fame which his Vita Nuova and Canzoni had given him.
21The greyhound is Can Grande della Scala, Lord of Verona, Imperial Vicar, Ghibelline, and friend of Dante. Verona is between Feltro in the Marca Trivigiana, and Montefeltro in Romagna. Boccacio, Decameron, I. 7, speaks of him as “one of the most notable and magnificent lords that had been known in Italy, since the Emperor Frederick the Second.” To him Dante dedicated the Paradiso. Some commentators think the Veltro is not Can Grande, but Ugguccione della Faggiola. See Troya, Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante.
But upon wisdom, and on love and virtue;  
‘Twixt Feltro and Feltro shall his nation be;  
Of that low Italy shall he be the saviour,  
On whose account the maid Camilla died,  
Euryalus, Turnus, Nisus, of their wounds;  
Through every city shall he hunt her down,  
Until he shall have driven her back to Hell,  
There from whence envy first did let her loose.  
Therefore I think and judge it for thy best  
Thou follow me, and I will be thy guide,  
And lead thee hence through the eternal place,  
Where thou shalt hear the desperate lamentations,  
Shalt see the ancient spirits disconsolate,  
Who cry out each one for the second death;  
And thou shalt see those who contented are  
Within the fire, because they hope to come,  
Whene’er it may be, to the blessed people;  
To whom, then, if thou warest to ascend,  
A soul shall be for that than I more worthy;  
With her at my departure I will leave thee;  
Because that Emperor, who reigns above,  
In that I was rebellious to his law,  
Wills that through me none come into his city.  
He governs everywhere and there he reigns;  
There is his city and his lofty throne;  
O happy he whom thereto he elects!”  
And I to him: “Poet, I thee entreat,  
By that same God whom thou didst never know,  
So that I may escape this woe and worse,  
Thou wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,  
That I may see the portal of Saint Peter;  
And those thou makest so disconsolate.”  
Then he moved on, and I behind him followed.

22The plains of Italy, in contradistinction to the mountains; the Humilemque Italiam of Virgil, Æneid, III. 522: “And now the stars being chased away, blushing Aurora appeared, when far off we espy the hills obscure, and lowly Italy.”  
23I give preference to the reading, Di quegli antichi spiriti dolenti.  
24Beatrice.
Figure 3: A lion’s aspect which appeared to me.
Figure 4: Then he moved on, and I behind him followed.
DAY was departing, and the embrowned air
Released the animals that are on earth \[25\]
From their fatigues; and I the only one
Made myself ready to sustain the war,
Both of the way and likewise of the woe,
Which memory that errs not shall retrace.

O Muses, O high genius, now assist me!
O memory, that didst write down what I saw,
Here thy nobility shall be manifest!

And I began: “Poet, who guidest me,
Regard my manhood, if it be sufficient.
Ere to the arduous pass thou dost confide me.

Thou sayest, that of Silvius the parent, \[26\]
While yet corruptible, unto the world
Immortal went, and was there bodily.

But if the adversary of all evil
Was courteous, thinking of the high effect
That issue would from him, and who, and what,

To men of intellect unmeet it seems not;
For he was of great Rome, and of her empire
In the empyreal heaven as father chosen;

The which and what, wishing to speak the truth,
Were stablished as the holy place, wherein
Sits the successor of the greatest Peter. \[27\]

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25 Dante, *Convito* III. 2, says: “Man is called by philosophers the divine animal.”
26 Æneas, founder of the Roman Empire. Virgil, *Æneid*, B. VI.
27 “That is,” says Boccaccio, *Comento*, “St. Peter the Apostle, called the greater on account of his papal dignity, and to distinguish him from many other holy men of the same name.”
Upon this journey, whence thou givest him vaunt,  
Things did he hear, which the occasion were  
Both of his victory and the papal mantle.

Thither went afterwards the Chosen Vessel,  
To bring back comfort thence unto that Faith,  
Which of salvation’s way is the beginning.

But I, why thither come, or who concedes it?  
I not Aenas am, I am not Paul,  
Nor I, nor others, think me worthy of it.

Therefore, if I resign myself to come,  
I fear the coming may be ill-advised;  
Thou’rt wise, and knowest better than I speak.”

And as he is, who unwills what he willed,  
And by new thoughts doth his intention change,  
So that from his design he quite withdraws,

Such I became, upon that dark hillside,  
Because, in thinking, I consumed the emprise,  
Which was so very prompt in the beginning.  

“If I have well thy language understood,”  
Replied that shade of the Magnanimous,  
“Thy soul attainted is with cowardice,  
Which many times a man encumbers so,  
It turns him back from honoured enterprise,  
As false sight doth a beast, when he is shy.

That thou mayst free thee from this apprehension,  
I’ll tell thee why I came, and what I heard  
At the first moment when I grieved for thee.

Among those was I who are in suspense,  
And a fair, saintly Lady called to me  
In such wise, I besought her to command me.

Her eyes where shining brighter than the Star;  

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28Shakespear, Macbeth, IV. i: “The flighty purpose never is o’ertook, Unless the deed go with it.”

29Suspended in Limbo; neither in pain nor in glory.

30Brighter than the star; than “that star which is brightest,” comments Boccaccio. Others say the Sun, and refer to Dante’s Canzone, beginning: “The star of beauty which doth measure time, The lady seems, who has enamored me, Placed in the heaven of Love.”
And she began to say, gentle and low,
With voice angelical, in her own language

"O spirit courteous of Mantua,
Of whom the fame still in the world endures,
And shall endure, long-lasting as the world;

A friend of mine, and not the friend of fortune,
Upon the desert slope is so impeded
Upon his way, that he has turned through terror,

And may, I fear, already be so lost,
That I too late have risen to his succour,
From that which I have heard of him in Heaven.

Bestir thee now, and with thy speech ornate,
And with what needful is for his release,
Assist him so, that I may be consoled.

Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go;
I come from there, where I would fain return;
Love moved me, which compelleth me to speak.

When I shall be in presence of my Lord,
Full often will I praise thee unto him."

Then paused she, and thereafter I began:

"O Lady of virtue, thou alone through whom
The human race exceedeth all contained

31Shakespeare, *King Lear*, V. 3: – “Her voice was ever soft, Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman.”

32This passage will recall Minerva transmitting the message of Juno to Achilles, *Iliad*, II.: “Go thou forthwith to the army of the Achæans, and hesitate not, but restrain each man with thy persuasive words, nor suffer them to drag to the sea their double-oared ships.”

33Beatrice Portinari, Dante’s first love, the inspiration of his song and in his mind the symbol of the Divine. He says of her in the *Vita Nuova*: – “This most gentle lady, of whom there has been discourse in what precedes, reached such favour among the people, that when she passed along the way persons ran to see her, which gave me wonderful delight. And when she was near any one, such modesty took possession of his heart, that he did not dare to raise his eyes or to return her salutation; and to this, should any one doubt it, many, as having experienced it, could bear witness for me. She, crowned and clothed with humility, took her way, displaying no pride in that which she saw and heard. Many, when she had passed said, ‘This is not a woman, rather is she one of the most beautiful angels of heaven.’ Others said, ‘She is a miracle. Blessed be the Lord who can perform such a marvel.’ I say, that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all beauties, that those who looked on her felt within themselves a pure and sweet delight, such as they could not tell in words.” – C.E. Norton, *The New Life*, 51, 52.
Within the heaven that has the lesser circles, 34
So grateful unto me is thy commandment,
To obey, if 'twere already done, were late;
No farther need'st thou ope to me thy wish.
But the cause tell me why thou dost not shun
The here descending down into this centre,
From the vast place thou burnest to return to.” 35

“Since thou wouldst fain so inwardly discern,
Briefly will I relate,” she answered me,
“Why I am not afraid to enter here.
Of those things only should one be afraid
Which have the power of doing others harm;
Of the rest, no; because they are not fearful.
God in his mercy such created me
That misery of yours attains me not,
Nor any flame assails me of this burning
A gentle Lady is in Heaven, who grieves 36
At this impediment, to which I send thee,
So that stern judgment there above is broken.
In her entreaty she besought Lucia, 37
And said, “Thy faithful one now stands in need
Of thee, and unto thee I recommend him.”

Lucia, foe of all that cruel is,
Hastened away, and came unto the place
Where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel. 38

“Beatrice” said she, “the true praise of God,
Why succourest thou not him, who loved thee so,
For thee he issued from the vulgar herd?
Dost thou not hear the pity of his plaint?
Dost thou not see the death that combats him
Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt?” 39

34The heaven of the moon, which contains or encircles the earth.
35The ampler circles of Paradise.
36Divine Mercy.
37St Lucia, emblem of enlightening Grace.
38Rachel, emblem of Divine Contemplation. See Par. XXXII. 9.
39Beside that flood, where ocean has no vaunt; “That is,” says Boccacio, Comento, “the sea cannot boast of being more impetuous or more dangerous than that.”
Never were persons in the world so swift
To work their weal and to escape their woe,
As I, after such words as these were uttered,
Came hither downward from my blessed seat,
Confiding in thy dignified discourse,
Which honours thee, and those who've listened to it.”

After she thus had spoken unto me,
Weeping, her shining eyes she turned away;
Whereby she made me swifter in my coming;
And unto thee I came, as she desired;
I have delivered thee from that wild beast,
Which barred the beautiful mountain’s short ascent.

What is it, then? Why, why dost thou delay?
Why is such baseness bedded in thy heart?
Daring and hardihood why hast thou not,
Seeing that three such Ladies benedight
Are caring for thee in the court of Heaven,
And so much good my speech doth promise thee?”

Even as the flowerets, by nocturnal chill,
Bowed down and closed, when the sun whitens them,
Uplift themselves all open on their stems;
Such I became with my exhausted strength,
And such good courage to my heart there coursed,
That I began, like an intrepid person:

“O she compassionate, who succoured me,
And courteous thou, who hast obeyed so soon
The words of truth which she addressed to thee!
Thou hast my heart so with desire disposed
To the adventure, with these words of thine,
That to my first intent I have returned.

Now go, for one sole will is in us both,
Thou Leader, and thou Lord, and Master thou.”
Thus said I to him; and when he had moved,
I entered on the deep and savage way.
Figure 5: Day was departing...
Figure 6: “Beatrice am I, who do bid thee go; ...”
Canto 3

Through me the way is to the city dolent; Through me the way is to eternal dole; Through me the way among the people lost.

Justice incited my sublime Creator; Created me divine Omnipotence, The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.

Before me there were no created things, Only eterne, and I eternal last. “All hope abandon, ye who enter in!”

These words in sombre colour I beheld Written upon the summit of a gate; Whence I: “Their sense is, Master, hard to me!”

And he to me, as one experienced: “Here all suspicion needs must be abandoned, All cowardice must needs be here extinct.

We to the place have come, where I have told thee Thou shalt behold the people dolorous Who have foregone the good of intellect.”

And after he had laid his hand on mine With joyful mien, whence I was comforted, He led me in among the secret things.

40 This canto begins with a repetition of sounds like the tolling of a funeral bell: dolente...dolore!

41 Aristotle says: “The good of the intellect is the highest beatitude”; and Dante in the Convito: “The True is the good of the intellect.” In other words, the knowledge of God is intellectual good. “It is a most just punishment,” says St. Augustine, “that man should lose that freedom which man could not use, yet had power to keep, if he would, and that he who had knowledge to do what was right, and did not do it, should be deprived of the knowledge of what was right; and that he who would not do righteously, when he had the power, should lose the power to do it when he had the will.”
There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.

Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,
Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
For ever in that air for ever black,
Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes.

And I, who had my head with horror bound,
Said: “Master, what is this which now I hear?
What folk is this, which seems by pain so vanquished?”

And he to me: “This miserable mode
Maintain the melancholy souls of those
Who lived withouten infamy or praise.
Commingled are they with that caitiff choir
Of Angels, who have not rebellious been,
Nor faithful were to God, but were for self.
The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair;
Nor them the nethermore abyss receives,
For glory none the damned would have from them.”

And I: “O Master, what so grievous is
To these, that maketh them lament so sore?”
He answered: “I will tell thee very briefly.
These have no longer any hope of death;
And this blind life of theirs is so debased,
They envious are of every other fate.
No fame of them the world permits to be;
Misericord and Justice both disdain them.
Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass.”

And I, who looked again, beheld a banner, 42
Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly,
That of all pause it seemed to me indignant;
And after it there came so long a train
Of people, that I ne’er would have believed
That ever Death so many had undone.
When some among them I had recognised.
I looked, and I beheld the shade of him
Who made through cowardice the great refusal. 43

Forthwith I comprehended, and was certain,
That this the sect was of the caitiff wretches
Hateful to God and to his enemies.
These miscreants, who never were alive,
Were naked, and were stung exceedingly
By gadflies and by hornets that were there.
These did their faces irrigate with blood,
Which, with their tears commingled, at their feet
By the disgusting worms was gathered up.

And when to gazing farther I betook me.
People I saw on a great river’s bank;
Whence said I: “Master, now vouchsafe to me,

42This restless flag is an emblem of the shifting and unstable minds of its followers.
43Generally supposed to be Pope Celestine V.
That I may know who these are, and what law
Makes them appear so ready to pass over,
As I discern athwart the dusky light.” 44

And he to me: “These things shall all be known
To thee, as soon as we our footsteps stay
Upon the dismal shore of Acheron.”

Then with mine eyes ashamed and downward cast,
Fearing my words might irksome be to him,
From speech refrained I till we reached the river.

And lo! towards us coming in a boat 45
An old man, hoary with the hair of eld,
Crying: “Woe unto you, ye souls depraved
Hope nevermore to look upon the heavens;
I come to lead you to the other shore,
To the eternal shades in heat and frost.

And thou, that yonder standest, living soul,
Withdraw thee from these people, who are dead! 46
But when he saw that I did not withdraw,

He said: “By other ways, by other ports
Thou to the shore shalt come, not here, for passage;

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44Spencer’s “misty dampe of misconceyving night.”
45Virgil, Æneid, VI., Davidson’s translation: – “A grim ferryman guards these floods and rivers, Charon, of frightful slovenliness; on whose chin a load of gray hair neglected lies; his eyes are flame: his vestments hang from his shoulders by a knot, with filth overgrown. Himself thrusts on the barge with a pole, and tends the sails, and wafts over the bodies in his iron-colored boat, now in years: but the god is of fresh and green old age. Hither the whole tribe in swarms come pouring to the banks, matrons and men, the souls of magnanimous heroes who had gone through life, boys and unmarried maids, and young men who had been stretched on the funeral pile before the eyes of their parents; as numerous as withered leaves fall in the woods with the first cold of autumn, or as numerous as birds flock to the land from deep ocean, when the chilling year drives them beyond sea, and sends them to sunny climes. They stood praying to cross the flood the first, and were stretching forth their hands with fond desire to gain the further bank: but the sullen boatman admits sometimes these, sometimes those; while others to a great distance removed, he debars from the banks.”

And Shakespeare, Richard III., I. 4:
“I passed, methought, the melancholy flood
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.”

46Virgil Æneid, VI.:
“This is the region of Ghosts, of sleep and drowsy
Night; to waft over the bodies of the living in my Stygian boat is not permitted.”
A lighter vessel needs must carry thee.”

And unto him the Guide: “Vex thee not, Charon; It is so willed there where is power to do That which is willed; and farther question not.”

Threat were quieted the fleecy cheeks Of him the ferryman of the livid fen, Who round about his eyes had wheels of flame.

But all those souls who weary were and naked Their colour changed and gnashed their teeth together, As soon as they had heard those cruel words.

God they blasphemed and their progenitors, The human race, the place, the time, the seed Of their engendering and of their birth!

Thereafter all together they drew back, Bitterly weeping, to the accursed shore, Which waiteth every man who fears not God. Charon the demon, with the eyes of glede, Beckoning to them, collects them all together, Beats with his oar whoever lags behind.

As in the autumn-time the leaves fall off, First one and then another, till the branch Unto the earth surrenders all its spoils;

In similar wise the evil seed of Adam Throw themselves from that margin one by one, At signals, as a bird unto its lure.

So they depart across the dusky wave, And ere upon the other side they land, Again on this side a new troop assembles.

“My son,” the courteous Master said to me,

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47 The souls that were to be saved assembled at the mouth of the Tiber, where they were received by the celestial pilot, or ferryman, who transported them to the shores of Purgatory, as described in Purg. II.

48 Dryden's Æneid, B. VI.: – “His eyes like hollow furnaces on fire.”

49 Mr. Ruskin, Modern Painters, III. 160, says: – “When Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron 'as dead leaves flutter from a bough,' he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that these are souls, and those are leaves: he makes no confusion of one with the other.”
“All those who perish in the wrath of God
Here meet together out of every land;
And ready are they to pass o’er the river,
Because celestial Justice spurs them on,
So that their fear is turned into desire.

This way there never passes a good soul;
And hence if Charon doth complain of thee,
Well mayst thou know now what his speech imports.”

This being finished, all the dusk champaign
Trembled so violently, that of that terror
The recollection bathes me still with sweat.

The land of tears gave forth a blast of wind,
And fulminated a vermilion light,
Which overmastered in me every sense,
And as a man whom sleep hath seized I fell.
Figure 9: And lo! towards us coming in a boat, an old man, hoary with the hair of eld.
BROKE the deep lethargy within my head
A heavy thunder, so that I upstarteed,
Like to a person who by force is wakened;

And round about I moved my rested eyes,
Uprisen erect, and steadfastly I gazed,
To recognise the place wherein I was.

True is it, that upon the verge I found me
Of the abysmal valley dolorous,
That gathers thunder of infinite ululations.

Obscure, profound it was, and nebulous,
So that by fixing on its depths my sight
Nothing whatever I discerned therein.

“Let us descend now into the blind world,”
Began the Poet, pallid utterly;
“I will be first, and thou shalt second be.”

And I, who of his colour was aware,
Said: “How shall I come, if thou art afraid,
Who’rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?”

And he to me: “The anguish of the people
Who are below here in my face depicts
That pity which for terror thou hast taken.

Let us go on, for the long way impels us.”
Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter
The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss.

There, as it seemed to me from listening,

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50 Dante is borne across the river Acheron in his sleep, he does not tell us how, and awakes on the brink of “the dolorous valley of the abyss.” He now enters the First Circle of the Inferno; the Limbo of the Unbaptized, the border land, as the name denotes.
Were lamentations none, but only sighs,
That tremble made the everlasting air.

And this arose from sorrow without torment, 51
Which the crowds had, that many were and great
Of infants and of women and of men.

To me the Master good: “Thou dost not ask
What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are?
Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther,

That they sinned not; and if they merit had,
’Tis not enough, because they had not baptism
Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;

And if they were before Christianity,
In the right manner they adored not God;
And among such as these am I myself

For such defects, and not for other guilt,
Lost are we and are only so far punished,
That without hope we live on in desire.”

Great grief seized on my heart when this I heard,
Because some people of much worthiness
I knew, who in that Limbo were suspended.

“Tell me, my Master, tell me, thou my Lord,”
Began I, with desire of being certain
Of that Faith which o’ercometh every error,

“Came any one by his own merit hence,
Or by another’s, who was blessed thereafter?”
And he, who understood my covert speech,

Replied: “I was a novice in this state,
When I saw hither come a Mighty One, 52
With sign of victory incoronate.

Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,
And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient
Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,

51 Mental, not physical pain; what the French theologians call “la peine du dam”, the privation of the sight of God.
52 The descent of Christ into Limbo. Neither here nor elsewhere in the Inferno does Dante mention the name of Christ.
Figure 10: "For such defects, and not for other guilt, lost are we and are only so far punished, that without hope we live on in desire."

Israel with his father and his children,
And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,
And others many, and he made them blessed;
And thou must know, that earlier than these
Never were any human spirits saved."

We ceased not to advance because he spake,
But still were passing onward through the forest
The forest, say I, of thick-crowded ghosts.

Not very far as yet our way had gone
This side the summit, when I saw a fire
That overcame a hemisphere of darkness.

We were a little distant from it still,
But not so far that I in part discerned not
That honourable people held that place.  

53The reader will not fail to observe how Dante makes the word “honor”, in its various
“O thou who honourest every art and science, 
Who may these be, which such great honour have, 
That from the fashion of the rest it parts them?”

And he to me: “The honourable name, 
That sounds of them above there in thy life, 
Wins grace in Heaven, that so advances them.”

In the mean time a voice was heard by me: 
“All honour be to the pre-eminent Poet; 
His shade returns again, that was departed.”

After the voice had ceased and quiet was, 
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us; 
Semblance had they nor sorrowful nor glad.

To say to me began my gracious Master: 
“Him with that falchion in his hand behold, 
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.

That one is Homer, Poet sovereign; 
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist; 
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.

Because to each of these with me applies 
The name that solitary voice proclaimed, 
They do me honour, and in that do well.”

Thus I beheld assemble the fair school 
Of that lord of the song pre-eminent, 
Who o’er the others like an eagle soars.

When they together had discoursed somewhat, 
They turned to me with signs of salutation, 
And on beholding this, my Master smiled;

And more of honour still, much more, they did me, 
In that they made me one of their own band 
So that the sixth was I, ’mid so much wit.

Thus we went on as far as to the light, 
Things saying ’tis becoming to keep silent,

forms, ring and reverberate through these lines, – “orrevol, onori, orranza, onrata, onorata”!

54Dante puts the sword into the hand of Homer as a symbol of his warlike epic, which is a Song of the Sword.

55Upon this line Boccaccio, Comento, says: – “A proper thing it is to honor every man, but especially those who are of one and the same profession, as these were with Virgil.”

56Another assertion of Dante’s consciousness of his own power as a poet.
As was the saying of them where I was.

We came unto a noble castle’s foot, 57
Seven times encompassed with lofty walls,
Defended round by a fair rivulet;

This we passed over even as firm ground;
Through portals seven I entered with these sages
We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.

People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance;
They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.

Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
Into an opening luminous and lofty,
So that they all of them were visible.

There opposite, upon the green enamel,
Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
Whom to have seen I feel myself exalted.

I saw Electra with companions many,
‘Mongst whom I knew both Hector and Aenas,
Caesar in armour with gerfalcon eyes;

I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
On the other side, and saw the King Latinus,
Who with Lavinia his daughter sat;

I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia, 58
And saw alone, apart, the Saladin. 59

When I had lifted up my brows a little,
The Master I beheld of those who know,
Sit with his philosophic family.

All gaze upon him, and all do him honour.
There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,

57 This is the Noble Castle of human wit and learning, encircled with its seven scholastic walls, the Trivium – Logic, Grammar, Rhetoric – and the Quadrivium – Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry, Music. The fair rivulet is Eloquence, which Dante does not seem to consider a very profound matter, as he and Virgil pass over it as if it were dry ground.

58 In the Convito, IV. 28, Dante makes Marcia, Cato’s wife, a symbol of the noble soul: “Per la quale Marzias intend la nobile anima.”

59 The Saladin of the Crusades. See Gibbon, Chap. LIX. Dante also makes mention of him, as worthy of affectionate remembrance, in the Convito, IV. 2.
Who nearer him before the others stand;
Democritus, who puts the world on chance,
Diogenes, Anaxagoros, and Thales,
Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus;
Of qualities I saw the good collector,
Hight Dioscorides; and Orpheus saw I,
Tully and Livy, and moral Seneca,
Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna, \(^{60}\)
Averroes, who the great Comment made. \(^{61}\)
I cannot all of them portray in full,
Because so drives me onward the long theme,
That many times the word comes short of fact.
The sixfold company in two divides;
Another way my sapient Guide conducts me
Forth from the quiet to the air that trembles;
And to a place I come where nothing shines.

\(^{60}\)Avicenna, an Arabian physician of Ispahan in the eleventh century. Born 980, died 1036.

\(^{61}\)Averroes, an Arabian scholar of the twelfth century, who translated the works of Aristotle, and wrote a commentary upon them. He was born in Cordova in 1149, and died in Morocco, about 1200. He was the head of the Western School of philosophy, as Avicenna was of the Eastern.
Figure 11: After the voice had ceased and quiet was, Four mighty shades I saw approaching us.
Canto 28

WHO ever could, e’en with untrammelled words,\(^{333}\)
Tell of the blood and of the wounds in full
Which now I saw, by many times narrating?

Each tongue would for a certainty fall short
By reason of our speech and memory,
That have small room to comprehend so much

If were again assembled all the people
Which formerly upon the fateful land
Of Puglia were lamenting for their blood \(^ {334}\)

Shed by the Romans and the lingering war \(^ {335}\)
That of the rings made such illustrious spoils, \(^ {336}\)
As Livy has recorded, who errs not,

With those who felt the agony of blows
By making counterstand to Robert Guiscard, \(^ {337}\)
And all the rest, whose bones are gathered still

At Ceperano, where a renegade \(^ {338}\)

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\(^{333}\)The Ninth Bolgia, in which are punished the Schismatics, and “where is paid the fee by those who sowing discord win their burden”; a burden difficult to describe even with untrammelled words, or in plain prose, free from the fetters of rhyme.

\(^{334}\)Apulia, or La Puglia, is in the southeastern part of Italy, “between the spur and the heel of the boot.”

\(^{335}\)The people slain in the conquest of Apulia by the Romans.

\(^{336}\)Hannibal’s famous battle at Cannae, in the second Punic war. According to Livy, XXII. 49, “The number of the slain is computed at forty thousand foot, and two thousand seven hundred horse.”

\(^{337}\)Robert Guiscard, the renowned Norman conqueror of southern Italy. Dante places him in the Fifth Heaven of Paradise, in the planet Mars.

\(^{338}\)The battle of Ceperano, near Monte Cassino, was fought in 1265, between Charles of Anjou and Manfred, king of Apulia and Sicily. The Apulians, seeing the battle going against them, deserted their king and passed over to the enemy.
Was each Apulian, and at Tagliacozzo,\(^\text{339}\) Where without arms the old Alardo conquered,
And one his limb transpierced, and one lopped off,
Should show, it would be nothing to compare
With the disgusting mode of the ninth Bolgia.

A cask by losing centre-piece or cant
Was never shattered so, as I saw one
Rent from the chin to where one breaketh wind.

Between his legs were hanging down his entrails;
His heart was visible, and the dismal sack
That maketh excrement of what is eaten.

While I was all absorbed in seeing him,
He looked at me, and opened with his hands
His bosom, saying: “See now how I rend me;
How mutilated, see, is Mahomet;
In front of me doth Ali weeping go,
Cleft in the face from forelock unto chin;

And all the others whom thou here beholdest,
Disseminators of scandal and of schism
While living were, and therefore are cleft thus.

A devil is behind here, who doth cleave us
Thus cruelly, unto the falchion’s edge
Putting again each one of all this ream,

When we have gone around the doleful road;
By reason that our wounds are closed again
Ere any one in front of him repass.

But who art thou, that musest on the crag,
Perchance to postpone going to the pain
That is adjudged upon thine accusations?"

\(^{339}\)The battle of Tagliacozzo in Abruzzo was fought in 1268, between Charles of Anjou and Curradino or Conradin, nephew of Manfred. Charles gained the victory by the strategy of Count Alardo di Valleri, who, “weaponless himself, made arms ridiculous.” This valiant but wary crusader persuaded the king to keep a third of his forces in reserve; and when the soldiers of Curradino, thinking they had won the day, were scattered over the field in pursuit of plunder, Charles fell upon them, and routed them. Alardo is mentioned in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. LVII., as “celebrated for his wonderful prowess even among the chief nobles, and no less esteemed for his singular virtues than for his courage.”
“Nor death hath reached him yet, nor guilt doth bring him,”
My Master made reply, “to be tormented;
But to procure him full experience,
Me, who am dead, behoves it to conduct him
Down here through Hell, from circle unto circle;
And this is true as that I speak to thee.”

More than a hundred were there when they heard him,
Who in the moat stood still to look at me,
Through wonderment oblivious of their torture.

“Now say to Fra Dolcino, then, to arm him, 340
Thou, who perhaps wilt shortly see the sun,
If soon he wish not here to follow me,
So with provisions, that no stress of snow
May give the victory to the Novarese, 341
Which otherwise to gain would not be easy.”

After one foot to go away he lifted,
This word did Mahomet say unto me,
Then to depart upon the ground he stretched it.

Another one, who had his throat pierced through,
And nose cut off close underneath the brows,
And had no longer but a single ear,

Staying to look in wonder with the others,
Before the others did his gullet open,
Which outwardly was red in every part,

And said: “O thou, whom guilt doth not condemn,
And whom I once saw up in Latian land,
Unless too great similitude deceive me,

Call to remembrance Pier da Medicina, 342

340Fra Dolcino was one of the early social and religious reformers in the North of Italy. His sect bore the name of “Apostles,” and its chief, if not only, heresy was a desire to bring back the Church to the simplicity of the apostolic times. In 1305 he withdrew with his followers to the mountains overlooking the Val Sesia in Piedmont, where he was pursued and besieged by the Church party, and, after various fortunes of victory and defeat, being reduced by “stress of snow” and famine, was taken prisoner; together with his companion, the beautiful Margaret of Trent. Both were burned at Vercelli on the 1st of June, 1307.

341Val Sesia, among whose mountains Fra Dolcino was taken prisoner, is in the diocese of Novara.

342A Bolognese, who stirred up dissensions among the citizens.
If e’er thou see again the lovely plain\textsuperscript{343}
That from Vercelli slopes to Marcabo,

And make it known to the best two of Fano,\textsuperscript{344}
To Messer Guido and Angiolello likewise,
That if foreseeing here be not in vain,

Cast over from their vessel shall they be,
And drowned near unto the Cattolica,
By the betrayal of a tyrant fell.

Between the isles of Cyprus and Majorca
Neptune ne’er yet beheld so great a crime
Neither of pirates nor Argolic people.

\textsuperscript{343}The plain of Lombardy sloping down two hundred miles and more, from Vercelli in Piedmont to Marcabo, a village near Ravenna.

\textsuperscript{344}Guido del Cassero and Angiolello da Cagnano, two honorable citizens of Fano, going to Rimini by invitation of Malatestino, were by his order thrown into the sea and drowned, as here prophesied or narrated, near the village of Cattolica on the Adriatic.
That traitor, who sees only with one eye, \(^{345}\)  
And holds the land, which some one here with me \(^{346}\)  
Would fain be fasting from the vision of,  
Will make them come unto a parley with him;  
Then will do so, that to Focara’s wind \(^{347}\)  
They will not stand in need of vow or prayer.”
And I to him: “Show to me and declare,  
If thou wouldst have me bear up news of thee,  
Who is this person of the bitter vision.”
Then did he lay his hand upon the jaw  
Of one of his companions, and his mouth  
Oped, crying: “This is he, and he speaks not.  
This one, being banished, every doubt submerged  
In Caesar by affirming the forarmed  
Always with detriment allowed delay.”
O how bewildered unto me appeared,  
With tongue asunder in his windpipe slit,  
Curio, who in speaking was so bold!
And one, who both his hands dissevered had,  
The stumps uplifting through the murky air,  
So that the blood made horrible his face, \(^{348}\)  
Cried out: “Thou shalt remember Mosca also, \(^{349}\)  
Who said, alas! ‘A thing done has an end!’  
Which was an ill seed for the Tuscan people  
“And death unto thy race,” thereto I added;  
Whence he, accumulating woe on woe,  
Departed, like a person sad and crazed.
But I remained to look upon the crowd;  
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,

\(^{345}\) Malatestino had lost one eye.  
\(^{346}\) Rimini.  
\(^{347}\) Focara is a headland near Catolica, famous for dangerous winds, to be preserved from which mariners offered up vows and prayers. These men will not need to do it; they will not reach that cape.  
\(^{348}\) Curio, the banished Tribune, who, fleeing to Caesar’s camp on the Rubicon, urged him to advance upon Rome.  
\(^{349}\) Mosca degl’Uberti, or dei Lamberti, who, by advising the murder of Buondelmonte, gave rise to the parties of Guelf and Ghibelline, which so long divided Florence. See note in Canto X.
Without some further proof, even to recount,
If it were not that conscience reassures me,
That good companion which emboldens man
Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure.

I truly saw, and still I seem to see it,
A trunk without a head walk in like manner
As walked the others of the mournful herd.
And by the hair it held the head dissevered,
Hung from the hand in fashion of a lantern,
And that upon us gazed and said: “O me!”

It of itself made to itself a lamp,
And they were two in one, and one in two;
How that can be, He knows who so ordains it.

When it was come close to the bridge’s foot,
It lifted high its arm with all the head,
To bring more closely unto us its words,

Which were: “Behold now the sore penalty,
Thou, who dost breathing go the dead beholding;
Behold if any be as great as this.

And so that thou may carry news of me,
Know that Bertram de Born am I, the same 350
Who gave to the Young King the evil comfort. 351

I made the father and the son rebellious;

350 Bertrand de Born, the turbulent Troubadour of the last half of the twelfth century, was alike skilful with his pen and his sword, and passed his life in alternately singing and fighting, and in stirring up dissension and strife among his neighbors.

351 A vast majority of manuscripts and printed editions read in this line, Re Giovanni, King John, instead of Re Giovane, the Young King. Even Boccaccio’s copy, which he wrote out with his own had for Petrarcha, has Re Giovanni. Out of seventy-nine Codici examined by Barlow, he says, Study of the Divina Commedia, p. 153, “Only five were found with the correct reading – re giovane... The reading re giovane is not found in any of the early editions, nor is it noticed by any of the early commentators.” See also Ginguen, Hist. Litt. de l’Italie, II, 486, where the subject is elaborately discussed, and the note of Biagioli, who takes the opposite side of the question.

Henry II. of England had four sons, all of whom were more or less rebellious against him. They were, Henry, surnamed Curt-Mantle, and called by the Troubadours and novelists of his time “The Young King,” because he was crowned during his father’s life; Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Count of Guienne and Poitou; Geoffroy, Duke of Brittany; and John Lackland. Henry was the only one of these who bore the title of king at the time in question.
Achitophel not more with Absalom
And David did with his accursed goadings.
Because I parted persons so united,
Parted do I now bear my brain, alas!
From its beginning, which is in this trunk.
Thus is observed in me the counterpoise.”
Figure 52: How mutilated, see, is Mahomet...
Figure 53: And by the hair it held the head dissoevered...
Canto 29

The many people and the divers wounds 352
These eyes of mine had so inebriated,
That they were wishful to stand still and weep;

But said Virgilius: “What dost thou still gaze at?
Why is thy sight still riveted down there
Among the mournful, mutilated shades?

Thou hast not done so at the other Bolge;
Consider, if to count them thou believest,
That two-and-twenty miles the valley winds,

And now the moon is underneath our feet;
Henceforth the time allotted us is brief,
And more is to be seen than what thou seest.”

“If thou hadst,” I made answer thereupon
“Attended to the cause for which I looked,
Perhaps a longer stay thou wouldst have pardoned.”

Meanwhile my Guide departed, and behind him
I went, already making my reply,
And superadding: “In that cavern where
I held mine eyes with such attention fixed,
I think a spirit of my blood laments
The sin which down below there costs so much”

Then said the Master: “Be no longer broken
Thy thought from this time forward upon him;
Attend elsewhere, and there let him remain;

For him I saw below the little bridge,
Pointing at thee, and threatening with his finger

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352 The Tenth and last “cloister of Malebolge,” where “Justice infallible punishes forgers,” and falsifiers of all kinds. This Canto is devoted to the alchemists.
Fiercely, and heard him called Geri del Bello. So wholly at that time wast thou impeded
By him who formerly held Altaforte, Thou didst not look that way; so he departed.”

“O my Conductor, his own violent death,
Which is not yet avenged for him,” I said,
“By any who is sharer in the shame,
Made him disdainful; whence he went away,
As I imagine, without speaking to me,
And thereby made me pity him the more.”

Thus did we speak as far as the first place
Upon the crag, which the next valley shows
Down to the bottom, if there were more light.

When we were now right over the last cloister
Of Malebolge, so that its lay-brothers
Could manifest themselves unto our sight,

Divers lamentings pierced me through and through,
Which with compassion had their arrows barbed,
Whereat mine ears I covered with my hands.

What pain would be, if from the hospitals
Of Valdichiana, ’twixt July and September,
And of Maremma and Sardinia
All the diseases in one moat were gathered,

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353 Geri del Bello was a disreputable member of the Alighieri family, and was murdered
by one of the Sacchetti. His death was afterwards avenged by his brother, who in turn
slew one of the Sacchetti at the door of his house.

354 Bertrand de Born.

355 Like the ghost of Ajax in the Odyssey, XI. “He answered me not at all, but went to
Erebus amongst the other souls of the dead.”

356 Dante seems to share the feeling of the Italian vendetta, which required retaliation
from some member of the injured family. “Among the Italians of this age,” says Napier,
Florentine Hist., I. Ch. VII., “and for centuries after, private offence was never forgotten
until revenged, and generally involved a succession of mutual injuries; vengeance was
not only considered lawful and just, but a positive duty, dishonorable to omit; and, as
may be learned from ancient private journals, it was sometimes allowed to sleep for five-
and-thirty years, and then suddenly struck a victim who perhaps had not yet seen the
light when the original injury was inflicted.”

357 The Val di Chiana, near Arezzo, was in Dante’s time marshy and pestilent. Now,
by the effect of drainage, it is one of the most beautiful and fruitful of the Tuscan valleys.
The Maremma was and is notoriously unhealthy; see note in Canto XIII., and Sardinia
would seem to have shared its ill repute.
Such was it here, and such a stench came from it
As from putrescent limbs is wont to issue.
We had descended on the furthest bank
From the long crag, upon the left hand still,
And then more vivid was my power of sight
Down tow’rds the bottom, where the ministress
Of the high Lord, Justice infallible,
Punishes forgers, which she here records. 358
I do not think a sadder sight to see
Was in Aegina the whole people sick, 359
(When was the air so full of pestilence,
The animals, down to the little worm,
All fell, and afterwards the ancient people,
According as the poets have affirmed,
Were from the seed of ants restored again,) Than was it to behold through that dark valley
The spirits languishing in divers heaps.
This on the belly, that upon the back
One of the other lay, and others crawling
Shifted themselves along the dismal road.
We step by step went onward without speech,
Gazing upon and listening to the sick
Who had not strength enough to lift their bodies.
I saw two sitting leaned against each other,
As leans in heating platter against platter,
From head to foot bespotted o’er with scabs;
And never saw I plied a currycomb
By stable-boy for whom his master waits,
Or him who keeps awake unwillingly,
As every one was plying fast the bite
Of nails upon himself, for the great rage
Of itching which no other succour had.
And the nails downward with them dragged the scab,
In fashion as a knife the scales of bream,
Or any other fish that has them largest.

358 Forgers or falsifiers in a general sense.
359 The plague of Aegina is described by Ovid, *Metamorph.* VII.
“O thou, that with thy fingers dost dismail thee,”
Began my Leader unto one of them,
“And makest of them pincers now and then,
Tell me if any Latian is with those\footnote{Latian, or Italian; any one of the Latin race.}
Who are herein; so may thy nails suffice thee
To all eternity unto this work.”

“Latians are we, whom thou so wasted seest,
Both of us here,” one weeping made reply;
“But who art thou, that questionest about us?”

And said the Guide: “One am I who descends
Down with this living man from cliff to cliff,
And I intend to show Hell unto him.”

Then broken was their mutual support,
And trembling each one turned himself to me,
With others who had heard him by rebound.

Wholly to me did the good Master gather,
Saying: “Say unto them whate’er thou wishest.”
And I began, since he would have it so:

“So may your memory not steal away
In the first world from out the minds of men,
But so may it survive ‘neath many suns,
Say to me who ye are, and of what people;
Let not your foul and loathsome punishment
Make you afraid to show yourselves to me.”

“I of Arezzo was,” one made reply, 361
“And Albert of Siena had me burned;
But what I died for does not bring me here.
’Tis true I said to him, speaking in jest,
That I could rise by flight into the air,
And he who had conceit, but little wit,
Would have me show to him the art; and only
Because no Daedalus I made him, made me 362
Be burned by one who held him as his son.

But unto the last Bolgia of the ten,
For alchemy, which in the world I practised,
Minos, who cannot err, has me condemned.”

And to the Poet said I: “Now was ever
So vain a people as the Sienese? 363
Not for a certainty the French by far.”

Whereat the other leper, who had heard me,
Replied unto my speech: “Taking out Stricca, 364

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361 The speaker is a certain Griffolino, an alchemist of Arezzo, who practised upon the credulity of Albert, a natural son of the Bishop of Siena. For this he was burned; but was “condemned to the last Bolgia of the ten for alchemy.”

362 The inventor of the Cretan labyrinth. Ovid, *Metamorph.* VIII.: “Great Daedalus of Athens was the man who made the draught, and formed the wondrous plan.” Not being able to find his way out of the labyrinth, he made wings for himself and his son Icarus, and escaped by flight.

363 Speaking of the people of Siena, Forsyth, *Italy,* 532, says: “Vain, flighty, fanciful, they want the judgment and penetration of their Florentine neighbors; who, nationally severe, call a nail without a head *chiodo Sanese.*”

364 The persons here mentioned gain a kind of immortality from Dante’s verse. The Stricca, or Baldastricca, was a lawyer of Siena; and Niccolò dei Salimbeni, or Bonsignori, introduced the fashion of stuffing pheasants with cloves, or, as Benvenuto says, of roasting them at a fire of cloves. Though Dante mentions them apart, they seem, like the two others named afterwards, to have been members of the *Brigata Spendereccia,* or Prodigal
Who knew the art of moderate expenses,
And Niccolò, who the luxurious use
Of cloves discovered earliest of all
Within that garden where such seed takes root;
And taking out the band, among whom squandered
Caccia d’Ascian his vineyards and vast woods,
And where his wit the Abbagliato proffered!
But, that thou know who thus doth second thee
Against the Sienese, make sharp thine eye
Tow’rds me, so that my face well answer thee,
And thou shalt see I am Capocchio’s shade, 365
Who metals falsified by alchemy;
Thou must remember, if I well descry thee,
How I a skilful ape of nature was.”

Club, of Siena, whose extravagances are recorded by Benvenuto da Imola. This club consisted of “twelve very rich young gentlemen, who took it into their heads to do things that would make a great part of the world wonder.” Accordingly each contributed eighteen thousand golden florins to a common fund, amounting in all to two hundred and sixteen thousand florins. They built a palace, in which each member had a splendid chamber, and they gave sumptuous dinners and suppers; ending their banquets sometimes by throwing all the dishes, table-ornaments, and knives of gold and silver out of the window. “This silly institution,” continues Benvenuto, “lasted only ten months, the treasury being exhausted, and the wretched members became the fable and laughing-stock of all the world.” In honor of this club, Folgore da San Geminiano, a clever poet of the day (1260), wrote a series of twelve convivial sonnets, one for each month of the year, with Dedication and Conclusion.

365“This Capocchio,” says the Ottimo, “was a very subtle alchemist; and because he was burned for practising alchemy in Siena, he exhibits his hatred to the Sienese, and gives us to understand that the author knew him.”
Figure 55: All the diseases in one moat were gathered...
Figure 56: “Why is thy sight still riveted down there among the mournful, mutilated shades?”
Canto 30

'T was at the time when Juno was enraged,
For Semele, against the Theban blood,
As she already more than once had shown,
So reft of reason Arthamas became,
That, seeing his own wife with children twain
Walking encumbered upon either hand,
He cried: "Spread out the nets, that I may take
The lioness and her whelps upon the passage;"
And then extended his unpitying claws,
Seizing the first, who had the name Learchus,
And whirled him round, and dashed him on a rock;
And she, with the other burthen, drowned herself;
And at the time when fortune downward hurled
The Trojan’s arrogance, that all things dared,
So that the king was with his kingdom crushed,
Hecuba sad, disconsolate, and captive,
When lifeless she beheld Polyxena,
And of her Polydorus on the shore
Of ocean was the dolorous one aware,
Out of her senses like a dog she barked,
So much the anguish had her mind distorted;
But not of Thebes the furies nor the Trojan
Were ever seen in any one so cruel
In goading beasts, and much more human members,
As I beheld two shadows pale and naked,

366 In this Canto the same Bolgia is continued, with different kinds of Falsifiers.
367 Athamas, king of Thebes and husband of Ino, daughter of Cadmus.
368 Hecuba, wife of Priam of Troy, and mother of Polyxena and Polydorus.
Who, biting, in the manner ran along
That a boar does, when from the sty turned loose.
One to Capocchio came, and by the nape
Seized with its teeth his neck, so that in dragging
It made his belly grate the solid bottom.
And the Aretine, who trembling had remained, 369
Said to me: “That mad sprite is Gianni Schicchi,
And raving goes thus harrying other people.”

“O,” said I to him, “so may not the other
Set teeth on thee, let it not weary thee
To tell us who it is, ere it dart hence.”

And he to me: “That is the ancient ghost
Of the nefarious Myrrha, who became
Beyond all rightful love her father’s lover.

She came to sin with him after this manner,

369 Griffolino d’Arezzo, mentioned in Canto XXIX.
By counterfeiting of another’s form;
As he who goeth yonder undertook, 370
That he might gain the lady of the herd,
To counterfeit in himself Buoso Donati,
Making a will and giving it due form.”

And after the two maniacs had passed
On whom I held mine eye, I turned it back
To look upon the other evil-born.

I saw one made in fashion of a lute,
If he had only had the groin cut off
Just at the point at which a man is forked.

The heavy dropsy, that so disproportions
The limbs with humours, which it ill concocts,
That the face corresponds not to the belly,
Compelled him so to hold his lips apart
As does the hectic, who because of thirst
One tow’rds the chin, the other upward turns.

“O ye, who without any torment are,
And why I know not, in the world of woe,”
He said to us, “behold, and be attentive
Unto the misery of Master Adam;
I had while living much of what I wished,
And now, alas! a drop of water crave.

The rivulets, that from the verdant hills

370 The same “mad sprite,” Gianni Schicchi, mentioned above. “Buoso Donati of Florence,” says Benvenuto, “although a nobleman and of an illustrious house, was nevertheless like other noblemen of his time, and by means of thefts had greatly increased his patrimony. When the hour of death drew near, the sting of conscience caused him to make a will in which he gave fat legacies to many people; whereupon his son Simon, (the Ottimo says his nephew,) thinking himself enormously aggrieved, suborned Vanni Schicchi dei Cavalcanti, who got into Buoso’s bed, and made a will in opposition to the other. Gianni much resembled Buoso.” In this will Gianni Schicchi did not forget himself, while making Simon heir; for, according to the Ottimo, he put this clause into it: “To Gianni Schicchi I bequeath my mare.” This was the “lady of the herd,” and Benvenuto adds, “none more beautiful was to be found in Tuscany; and it was valued at a thousand florins.”

371 Messer Adamo, a false-coiner of Brescia, who at the instigation of the Counts Guido, Alessandro, and Aghinolfo of Romena, counterfeited the golden florin of Florence, which bore on one side a lily, and on the other the figure of John the Baptist.
Of Cassentin descend down into Arno, 372
Making their channels to be cold and moist,

Ever before me stand, and not in vain;
For far more doth their image dry me up
Than the disease which strips my face of flesh.

The rigid justice that chastises me
Draweth occasion from the place in which
I sinned, to put the more my sighs in flight.

There is Romena, where I counterfeited
The currency imprinted with the Baptist,
For which I left my body burned above.

But if I here could see the tristful soul
Of Guido, or Alessandro, or their brother,
For Branda’s fount I would Dot give the sight.

One is within already, if the raving
Shades that are going round about speak truth;
But what avails it me, whose limbs are tied?

If I were only still so light, that in
A hundred years I could advance one inch,
I had already started on the way,

Seeking him out among this squalid folk,
Although the circuit be eleven miles, 373
And be not less than half a mile across.

For them am I in such a family;
They did induce me into coining florins,
Which had three carats of impurity.”

And I to him: “Who are the two poor wretches
That smoke like unto a wet hand in winter,
Lying there close upon thy right-hand confines?”

372 The upper valley of the Arno is in the province of Cassentino.
Quoting these three lines, Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 246, says: “In these untranslatable verses, there is a feeling of humid freshness, which almost makes one shudder. I owe it to truth to say, that the Cassentine was a great deal less fresh and less verdant in reality than in the poetry of Dante, and that in the midst of the aridity which surrounded me, this poetry, by its very perfection, made one feel something of the punishment of Master Adam.”

373 This line and line II of Canto XXIX. are cited by Gabrielle Rossetti in confirmation of his theory of the “Principal Allegory of the Inferno,” that the city of Dis is Rome.
“I found them here,” replied he, “when I rained
Into this chasm, and since they have not turned,
Nor do I think they will for evermore.

One the false woman is who accused Joseph, \textsuperscript{374}
The other the false Sinon, Greek of Troy; \textsuperscript{375}
From acute fever they send forth such reek.”

And one of them, who felt himself annoyed
At being, peradventure, named so darkly,
Smote with the fist upon his hardened paunch.

It gave a sound, as if it were a drum; \textsuperscript{376}
And Master Adam smote him in the face,
With arm that did not seem to be less hard,

Saying to him: “Although be taken from me
All motion, for my limbs that heavy are,
I have an arm unfettered for such need.”

Whereat he answer made: “When thou didst go
Unto the fire, thou hadst it not so ready:
But hadst it so and more when thou wast coining.”

The dropsical: “Thou sayest true in that;
But thou wast not so true a witness there,
Where thou wast questioned of the truth at Troy.”

“If I spake false, thou falsifiedst the coin,”
Said Sinon; “and for one fault I am here,
And thou for more than any other demon.”

“Remember, perjurer, about the horse,”
He made reply who had the swollen belly,
“And rueful be it thee the whole world knows it.”

“Rueful to thee the thirst be wherewith cracks
Thy tongue,” the Greek said, “and the putrid water
That hedges so thy paunch before thine eyes.”

Then the false-coiner: “So is gaping wide
Thy mouth for speaking evil, as ’tis wont;

\textsuperscript{374}Potiphar’s wife.

\textsuperscript{375}Virgil’s “perjured Sinon,” the Greek who persuaded the Trojans to accept the wooden horse, telling them it was meant to protect the city, in lieu of the statue of Pallas, stolen by Diomed and Ulysses.

\textsuperscript{376}The disease of \textit{tympanites} is so called “because the abdomen is distended with wind, and sounds like a drum when struck.”
Because if I have thirst, and humour stuff me
Thou hast the burning and the head that aches,
And to lick up the mirror of Narcissus
Thou wouldst not want words many to invite thee."

In listening to them was I wholly fixed,
When said the Master to me: “Now just look,
For little wants it that I quarrel with thee.”

When him I heard in anger speak to me,
I turned me round towards him with such shame
That still it eddies through my memory.

And as he is who dreams of his own harm,
Who dreaming wishes it may be a dream,
So that he craves what is, as if it were not;

Such I became, not having power to speak,
For to excuse myself I wished, and still
Excused myself, and did not think I did it.

“Less shame doth wash away a greater fault,”
The Master said, “than this of thine has been;
Therefore thyself disburden of all sadness,

And make account that I am aye beside thee,
If e’er it come to pass that fortune bring thee
Where there are people in a like dispute;
For a base wish it is to wish to hear it.”

\footnote{377 Ovid, *Metamorph.* III.: – “A fountain in a darksome wood, nor stained with falling leaves nor rising mud.”}
Figure 58: “That is the ancient ghost of the nefarious Myrrha...”
Canto 31

ONE and the selfsame tongue first wounded me, 378
So that it tinged the one cheek and the other,
And then held out to me the medicine;

Thus do I hear that once Achilles’ spear,
His and his father’s, used to be the cause
First of a sad and then a gracious boon.

We turned our backs upon the wretched valley,
Upon the bank that girds it round about,
Going across it without any speech.

There it was less than night, and less than day,
So that my sight went little in advance;
But I could hear the blare of a loud horn,
So loud it would have made each thunder faint,
Which, counter to it following its way,
Mine eyes directed wholly to one place.

After the dolorous discomfite 379
When Charlemagne the holy emprise lost,
So terribly Orlando sounded not.

Short while my head turned thitherward I held
When many lofty towers I seemed to see,
Whereat I: “Master, say, what town is this?”

And he to me: “Because thou peerest forth
Athwart the darkness at too great a distance,
It happens that thou errest in thy fancy.

---

378 This Canto describes the Plain of the Giants, between Malebolge and the mouth of the Infernal Pit.
379 The battle of Roncesvalles, “When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell by Fontarabia.”
Well shalt thou see, if thou arrivest there,
How much the sense deceives itself by distance;
Therefore a little faster spur thee on."

Then tenderly he took me by the hand,
And said: "Before we farther have advanced,
That the reality may seem to thee
Less strange, know that these are not towers, but giants,
And they are in the well, around the bank,
From navel downward, one and all of them."

As, when the fog is vanishing away,
Little by little doth the sight refigure
Whate’er the mist that crowds the air conceals,
So, piercing through the dense and darksome air,
More and more near approaching tow’rd the verge,
My error fled, and fear came over me;

Because as on its circular parapets
Montereggione crowns itself with towers,
E’en thus the margin which surrounds the well
With one half of their bodies turreted
The horrible giants, whom Jove menaces
E’en now from out the heavens when he thunders.

And I of one already saw the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and great part of the belly,
And down along his sides both of the arms.

Certainly Nature, when she left the making
Of animals like these, did well indeed,
By taking such executors from Mars;

And if of elephants and whales she doth not
Repent her, whosoever looketh subtly
More just and more discreet will hold her for it;

For where the argument of intellect
Is added unto evil will and power,
No rampart can the people make against it.

---

380 Montereggione is a picturesque old castle on an eminence near Siena. Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 251, remarks: "This fortress, as the commentators say, was furnished with towers all round about, and had none in the centre. In its present state it is still very faithfully described by the verse, ‘Montereggion de torri si corona.’"
His face appeared to me as long and large  
As is at Rome the pine-cone of Saint Peter’s,  
And in proportion were the other bones;

So that the margin, which an apron was  
Down from the middle, showed so much of him  
Above it, that to reach up to his hair

Three Frieslanders in vain had vaunted them;  
For I beheld thirty great palms of him  
Down from the place where man his mantle buckles.

“Raphael mai amech izabi almi,”  
Began to clamour the ferocious mouth,  
To which were not befitting sweeter psalms.

And unto him my Guide: “Soul idiotic,  
Keep to thy horn, and vent thyself with that,  
When wrath or other passion touches thee.

Search round thy neck, and thou wilt find the belt  
Which keeps it fastened, O bewildered soul  
And see it, where it bars thy mighty breast.”

Then said to me: “He doth himself accuse;  
This one is Nimrod, by whose evil thought  
One language in the world is not still used.

Here let us leave him and not speak in vain;  
For even such to him is every language  
As his to others, which to none is known.”

Therefore a longer journey did we make,  
Turned to the left, and a crossbow-shot oft  
We found another far more fierce and large.

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381 This pine-cone of bronze, which is now in the gardens of the Vatican, was found in the mausoleum of Hadrian, and is supposed to have crowned its summit.  
Ampère, *Voyage Dantesque*, 277, remarks: “Here Dante takes as a point of comparison an object of determinate size; the *pigna* is eleven feet high, the giant then must be seventy (21 meters); it performs, in the description, the office of those figures which are placed near monuments to render it easier for the eye to measure their height.”

382 “The gaping monotony of this jargon”, says Leigh Hunt, “full of the vowel a, is admirably suited to the mouth of the vast half-stupid speaker. It is like a babble of the gigantic infancy of the world.”

383 Nimrod, the “mighty hunter before the Lord”, who built the tower of Babel, which, according to the Italian popular tradition, was so high that whoever mounted to the top of it could hear the angels sing.
Figure 59: “This proud one wished to make experiment of his own power...”

In binding him, who might the master be
I cannot say; but he had pinioned close
Behind the right arm, and in front the other,

With chains, that held him so begirt about
From the neck down, that on the part uncovered
It wound itself as far as the fifth gyre go.

“This proud one wished to make experiment
Of his own power against the Supreme Jove,"
My Leader said, “whence he has such a guerdon.

Ephialtes is his name; he showed great prowess.
What time the giants terrified the gods;
The arms he wielded never more he moves.”

And I to him: “If possible, I should wish
That of the measureless Briareus

The giant with a hundred hands. Aeneid, X.: “Aegaeon, who, they say, had a hundred
These eyes of mine might have experience.”

Whence he replied: “Thou shalt behold Antaeus
Close by here, who can speak and is unbound, 385
Who at the bottom of all crime shall place us.

Much farther yon is he whom thou wouldst see,
And he is bound, and fashioned like to this one,
Save that he seems in aspect more ferocious.”

There never was an earthquake of such might
That it could shake a tower so violently,
As Ephialtes suddenly shook himself.

Then was I more afraid of death than ever,
For nothing more was needful than the fear,
If I had not beheld the manacles.

Then we proceeded farther in advance,
And to Antaeus came, who, full five ells
Without the head, forth issued from the cavern.

“O thou, who in the valley fortunate, 386
Which Scipio the heir of glory made,
When Hannibal turned back with all his hosts,

Once brought’st a thousand lions for thy prey,
And who, hadst thou been at the mighty war
Among thy brothers, some it seems still think

The sons of Earth the victory would have gained:
Place us below, nor be disdainful of it,
There where the cold doth lock Cocytus up.

Make us not go to Tityus nor Typhoeus; 387

arms and a hundred hands, and flashed fire from fifty mouths and breasts; when against
the thunder-bolts of Jove he on so many equal bucklers clashed; unsheathed so many
swords.” He is supposed to have been a famous pirate, and the fable of the hundred
hands arose from the hundred sailors that manned his ship.

385 The giant Antaeus is here unbound, because he had not been at “the mighty war”
against the gods.

386 The valley of the Bagrada, one of whose branches flows by Zama, the scene of Scipo’s
great victory over Hannibal, by which he gained his greatest renown and his title of
Africanus. Among the neighboring hills, according to Lucan, Pharsalia, IV., the giant
Antaeus had his cave.

387 Aeneid, VI.: “Here too you might have seen Tityus, the foster-child of all-bearing
earth, whose body is extended over nine whole acres; and a huge vulture, with her
hooked beak, pecking at his immortal liver.” Also Odyssey, XI., in similar words.
This one can give of that which here is longed for;
Therefore stoop down, and do not curl thy lip.

Still in the world can he restore thy fame;
Because he lives, and still expects long life,
If to itself Grace call him not untimely.”

So said the Master; and in haste the other
His hands extended and took up my Guide, –
Hands whose great pressure Hercules once felt.

Virgilius, when he felt himself embraced,
Said unto me: “Draw nigh, that I may take thee;”
Then of himself and me one bundle made.

As seems the Carisenda, to behold
Beneath the leaning side, when goes a cloud
Above it so that opposite it hangs;

Such did Antaeus seem to me, who stood
Watching to see him stoop, and then it was
I could have wished to go some other way.

But lightly in the abyss, which swallows up
Judas with Lucifer, he put us down;
Nor thus bowed downward made he there delay,
But, as a mast does in a ship, uprose.

Typhoeus was a giant with a hundred heads, like a dragon’s, who made war upon the gods as soon as he was born. He was the father of Geryon and Cerberus.

One of the leaning towers of Bologna.
Figure 60: “This one is Nimrod, by whose evil thought one language in the world is not still used.”
Figure 61: But lightly in the abyss, which swallows up Judas with Lucifer, he put us down; ...
Canto 32

If I had rhymes both rough and stridulous,
As were appropriate to the dismal hole
Down upon which thrust all the other rocks,

I would press out the juice of my conception
More fully; but because I have them not,
Not without fear I bring myself to speak;

For 'tis no enterprise to take in jest,
To sketch the bottom of all the universe,
Nor for a tongue that cries Mamma and Babbo.

But may those Ladies help this verse of mine,
Who helped Amphion in enclosing Thebes,
That from the fact the word be not diverse.

O rabble ill-begotten above all,
Who're in the place to speak of which is hard,
’Twere better ye had here been sheep or goats!

When we were down within the darksome well,
Beneath the giant’s feet, but lower far,
And I was scanning still the lofty wall,

Heard it said to me: “Look how thou steppest,
Take heed thou do not trample with thy feet
The heads of the tired, miserable brothers!”

---

389 In this Canto begins the Ninth and last Circle of the Inferno, where Traitors are punished. “Hence in the smallest circle, at the point of all the Universe, where Dis is seated, whoe’er betrays forever is consumed.”
390 The word thrust is here used in its architectural sense, as the thrust of a bridge against its abutments, and the like.
391 Still using the babble of childhood.
392 The Muses; the poetic tradition being that Amphion built the walls of Thebes by the sound of his lyre; and the prosaic interpretation, that he did it by his persuasive eloquence.
Whereat I turned me round, and saw before me
And underfoot a lake, that from the frost
The semblance had of glass, and not of water.

So thick a veil ne’er made upon its current
In winter-time Danube in Austria,
Nor there beneath the frigid sky the Don,

As there was here; so that if Tambernich 393
Had fallen upon it, or Pietrapana,
E’en at the edge ’twould not have given a creak.

And as to croak the frog doth place himself
With muzzle out of water, – when is dreaming
Of gleaning oftentimes the peasant-girl, –

Livid, as far down as where shame appears,
Were the disconsolate shades within the ice,
Setting their teeth unto the note of storks.

Each one his countenance held downward bent:
From mouth the cold, from eyes the doeful heart
Among them witness of itself procures.

When round about me somewhat I had looked,
I downward turned me, and saw two so close,
The hair upon their heads together mingled.

“Ye who so strain your breasts together, tell me,”
I said.”who are you; “and they bent their necks,
And when to me their faces they had lifted,

Their eyes, which first were only moist within,
Gushed o’er the eyelids, and the frost congealed
The tears between, and locked them up again.

Clamp never bound together wood with wood
So strongly; whereat they, like two he-goats,
Butted together, so much wrath o’ercame them.

And one, who had by reason of the cold
Lost both his ears, still with his visage downward,
Said: ”Why dost thou so mirror thyself in us?

If thou desire to know who these two are, 394

393 Tambernich is a mountain of Scavonia, and Pietrapana another near Lucca.
394 These two “miserable brothers” are Alessandro and Napoleone, sons of Alberto degli Alberti, lord of Falterona in the valley of the Bisenzio. After their father’s death they
Figure 62: Were the disconsolate shades within the ice...

The valley whence Bisenzio descends
Belonged to them and to their father Albert.
They from one body came, and all Caina 395
Thou shalt search through, and shalt not find a shade
More worthy to be fixed in gelatine;
Not he in whom were broken breast and shadow
At one and the same blow by Arthur’s hand; 396
Focaccia not; not he who me encumbers 397
So with his head I see no farther forward,
And bore the name of Sassol Mascheroni; 398

quarrelled, and one treacherously slew the other.
395Caina is the first of the four divisions of this Circle, and takes its name from the first fratricide.
396Sir Mordred, son of King Arthur.
397Focaccia was one of the Cancellieri Bianchi, of Pistoia, and was engaged in the affair of cutting off the hand of his half-brother. See note in Canto VI. He is said also to have killed his uncle.
398Sassol Mascheroni, according to Benvenuto, was one of the Toschi family of Florence.
Well knowest thou who he was, if thou art Tuscan.
And that thou put me not to further speech, 
Know that I Camicion de’ Pazzi was, 399
And wait Carlino to exonerate me.”

Then I beheld a thousand faces, made
Purple with cold; whence o’er me comes a shudder,
And evermore will come, at frozen ponds.

And while we were advancing tow’rds the middle, 
Where everything of weight unites together, 
And I was shivering in the eternal shade,

Whether ’twere will, or destiny, or chance, 
I know not; but in walking ’mong the heads 
I struck my foot hard in the face of one.

Weeping he growled: “Why dost thou trample me? 
Unless thou comest to increase the vengeance 
of Montaperti, why dost thou molest me?” 400

And I: “My Master, now wait here for me, 
That I through him may issue from a doubt; 
Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish.”

The Leader stopped; and to that one I said 
Who was blaspheming vehemently still:
“Who art thou, that thus reprehendest others?”

“Now who art thou, that goest through Antenora 401
Smiting,” replied he, “other people’s cheeks, 
So that, if thou were living, ’twere too much?”

---

399 Camicion de’ Pazzi of Valdarno, who murdered his kinsman Ubertino. But his crime will seem small and excusable when compared with that of another kinsman, Carlino de’ Pazzi, who treacherously surrendered the castle of Piano in Valdarno, wherein many Florentine exiles were taken and put to death.

400 The speaker is Bocca degli Abati, whose treason caused the defeat of the Guelfs at the famous battle of Montaperti in 1260. See note in Canto X. “Messer Bocca degli Abati, the traitor,” says Malispini, Storia, Ch. 171, “with his sword in hand, smote and cut off the hand of Messer Jacopo de’ Pazzi of Florence, who bore the standard of the cavalry of the Commune of Florence. And the knights and the people, seeing the standard down, and the treachery, were put to rout.”

401 The second division of the Circle, called Antenora, from Antenor, the Trojan prince, who betrayed his country by keeping up a secret correspondence with the Greeks. Virgil, Aeneid, I. 242, makes him founder of Padua.
“Living I am, and dear to thee it may be,”
Was my response, “if thou demandest fame,
That ‘mid the other notes thy name I place.”

And he to me: “For the reverse I long;
Take thyself hence, and give me no more trouble;
For ill thou knowest to flatter in this hollow.”

Then by the scalp behind I seized upon him,
And said: “It must needs be thou name thyself,
Or not a hair remain upon thee here.”

Whence he to me: “Though thou strip off my hair,
I will not tell thee who I am, nor show thee,
If on my head a thousand times thou fall.”

I had his hair in hand already twisted,
And more than one shock of it had pulled out,
He barking, with his eyes held firmly down,

When cried another: “What doth ail thee, Bocca?
Is’t not enough to clatter with thy jaws,  
But thou must bark? what devil touches thee?"

"Now," said I, "I care not to have thee speak,  
Accursed traitor; for unto thy shame  
I will report of thee veracious news."

"Begone," replied he, "and tell what thou wilt,  
But be not silent, if thou issue hence,  
Of him who had just now his tongue so prompt;  
He weepeth here the silver of the French;  
'I saw,' thus canst thou phrase it, 'him of Duera  
There where the sinners stand out in the cold.'"

If thou shouldst questioned be who else was there,  
Thou hast beside thee him of Beccaria,  
Of whom the gorget Florence slit asunder;  
Gianni del Soldanier, I think, may be  
Yonder with Ganellon, and Tebaldello  
Who oped Faenza when the people slep  
Already we had gone away from him,  
When I beheld two frozen in one hole,  
So that one head a hood was to the other;  
And even as bread through hunger is devoured,  
The uppermost on the other set his teeth,  
There where the brain is to the nape united.  
Not in another fashion Tydeus gnawed  
The temples of Menalippus in disdain,  
Than that one did the skull and the other things.

402 Buoso da Duera of Cremona, being bribed, suffered the French cavalry under Guido da Monforte to pass through Lombardy on their way to Apulia, without opposing them as he had been commanded.
403 There is a double meaning in the Italian expression *sta fresco*, which is well rendered by the vulgarism, *left out in the cold*, so familiar in American politics.
404 Beccaria of Pavia, Abbot of Vallombrosa, and Papal Legate at Florence, where he was beheaded in 1258 for plotting against the Guelfs.
405 Gianni de' Soldanieri, of Florence, a Ghibelline, who betrayed his party.
406 The traitor Ganellon, or Ganalon, who betrayed the Christian cause at Roncesvalles, persuading Charlemagne not to go to the assistance of Orlando. See note in Canto XXXI. Tebaldello de' Manfredi treacherously opened the gates of Faenza to the French in the night.
407 Tydeus, son of the king of Calydon, slew Menalippus at the siege of Thebes and was himself mortally wounded.
“O thou, who showest by such bestial sign
Thy hatred against him whom thou art eating,
Tell me the wherefore,” said I, “with this compact,
That if thou rightfully of him complain,
In knowing who ye are, and his transgression,
I in the world above repay thee for it,
If that wherewith I speak be not dried up.”
Canto 33

His mouth uplifted from his grim repast, 408
That sinner, wiping it upon the hair
Of the same head that he behind had wasted

Then he began: “Thou wilt that I renew
The desperate grief, which wrings my heart already
To think of only, ere I speak of it;

But if my words be seed that may bear fruit
Of infamy to the traitor whom I gnaw,
Speaking and weeping shalt thou see together.

I know not who thou art, nor by what mode
Thou hast come down here; but a Florentine
Thou seemest to me truly, when I hear thee.

Thou hast to know I was Count Ugolino, 409

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408 In this Canto the subject of the preceding is continued.
409 Count Ugolino della Gherardesca was Podestà of Pisa. “Raised to the highest offices of the republic for ten years,” says Napier, Florentine History, I. 318, “he would soon have become absolute, had not his own nephew, Nino Visconte, Judge of Gallura, contested this supremacy and forced himself into conjoint and equal authority; this could not continue, and a sort of compromise was for the moment effected, by which Visconte retired to the absolute government of Sardinia. But Ugolino, still dissatisfied, sent his son to disturb the island; a deadly feud was the consequence, Guelph against Guelph, while the latent spirit of Ghibellinism, which filled the breasts of the citizens and was encouraged by priest and friar, felt its advantage; the Archbishop Ruggieri Rubaldino was its real head, but he worked with hidden caution as the apparent friend of either chieftain. In 1287, after some sharp contests, both of them abdicated, for the sake, as it was alleged, of public tranquillity; but, soon perceiving their error, again united, and, scouring the streets with all their followers, forcibly re-established their authority. Ruggieri seemed to assent quietly to this new outrage, even looked without emotion on the bloody corpse of his favorite nephew, who had been stabbed by Ugolino; and so deep was his dissimulation, that he not only refused to believe the murdered body to be his kinsman’s, but zealously assisted the Count to establish himself alone in the government, and accomplish Visconte’s ruin.”
And this one was Ruggieri the Archbishop;  
Now I will tell thee why I am such a neighbour.  

That, by effect of his malicious thoughts  
Trust ing in him I was made prisoner,  
And after put to death, I need not say;  

But ne’ertheless what thou canst not have heard,  
That is to say, how cruel was my death,  
Hear shalt thou, and shalt know if he has wronged me.  

A narrow perforation in the mew,  
Which bears because of me the title of Famine,  
And in which others still must be locked up,  

Had shown me through its opening many moons  
Already, when I dreamed the evil dream  
Which of the future rent for me the veil.  

This one appeared to me as lord and master,  
Hunting the wolf and whelps upon the mountain  
For which the Pisans cannot Lucca see.  

With sleuth-hounds gaunt, and eager, and well trained,  
Gualandi with Sismondi and Lanfianchi  
He had sent out before him to the front.  

After brief course seemed unto me forespent  
The father and the sons, and with sharp tushes  
It seemed to me I saw their flanks ripped open.  

When I before the morrow was awake,  
Moaning amid their sleep I heard my sons  
Who with me were, and asking after bread.  

Cruel indeed art thou, if yet thou grieve not,  
Thinking of what my heart foreboded me,  
And weep’st thou not, what art thou wont to weep at?  

They were awake now, and the hour drew nigh  
At which our food used to be brought to us,  

---

410 “The remains of this tower,” says Napier, Florentine History, I. 319, note, “still exist in the Piazza de’ Cavalieri, on the right of the archway as the spectator looks toward the clock.” According to Buti it was called the Mew, “because the eagles of the Commune were kept there to moult.”  
411 Monte San Giuliano, between Pisa and Lucca.  
412 The hounds are the Pisan mob; the hunters, the Pisan noblemen here mentioned; the wolf and whelps, Ugolino and his sons.
And through his dream was each one apprehensive;
And I heard locking up the under door\(^{413}\)
Of the horrible tower; whereat without a word
I gazed into the faces of my sons.

I wept not, I within so turned to stone;
They wept; and darling little Anselm mine
Said: ‘Thou dost gaze so, father, what doth ail thee?’

Still not a tear I shed, nor answer made
All of that day, nor yet the night thereafter,
Until another sun rose on the world.

As now a little glimmer made its way
Into the dolorous prison, and I saw
Upon four faces my own very aspect,

Both of my hands in agony I bit,
And, thinking that I did it from desire
Of eating, on a sudden they uprose,

And said they: ‘Father, much less pain ‘twill give us
If thou do eat of us; thyself didst clothe us
With this poor flesh, and do thou strip it off.’

I calmed me then, not to make them more sad.
That day we all were silent, and the next.
Ah! obdurate earth, wherefore didst thou not open
When we had come unto the fourth day, Gaddo
Threw himself down outstretched before my feet,
Saying, ‘My father, why dost thou not help me?’

And there he died; and, as thou seest me,
I saw the three fall, one by one, between
The fifth day and the sixth; whence I betook me,

Already blind, to groping over each,
And three days called them after they were dead;
Then hunger did what sorrow could not do.”

\(^{413}\)It is a question whether in this line *chiavar* is to be rendered *nailed up* or *locked*. Villani and Benvenuto say the tower was locked, and the keys thrown into the Arno; and I believe most of the commentators interpret the line in this way. But the locking of a prison door, which must have been a daily occurrence, could hardly have caused the dismay here portrayed, unless it can be shown that the lower door of the tower was usually left unlocked.
When he had said this, with his eyes distorted,
The wretched skull resumed he with his teeth,
Which, as a dog’s, upon the bone were strong.
Ah! Pisa, thou opprobrium of the people
Of the fair land there where the Si doth sound,
Since slow to punish thee thy neighbours are,
Let the Capraia and Gorgona move,
And make a hedge across the mouth of Arno

414 Italy; it being an old custom to call countries by the affirmative particle of the language.
415 Capraia and Gorgona are two islands opposite the mouth of the Arno. Ampère, *Voyage Dantésque*, 217, remarks: “This imagination may appear grotesque and forced if one looks at the map, for the isle of Gorgona is at some distance from the mouth of the Arno, and I had always thought so, until the day when, having ascended the tower of Pisa, I was struck with the aspect which the Gorgona presented from that point. It seemed to shut up the Arno. I then understood how Dante might naturally have had this idea, which had seemed strange to me, and his imagination was justified in my eyes. He had not seen the Gorgona from the Leaning Tower, which did not exist in his time, but from some one of the numerous towers which protected the ramparts of Pisa. This fact
That every person in thee it may drown!
For if Count Ugolino had the fame
Of having in thy castles thee betrayed,
Thou shouldst not on such cross have put his sons.  
Guiltless of any crime, thou modern Thebes!
Their youth made Uguccione and Brigata,

alone would be sufficient to show what an excellent interpretation of a poet travelling is.”

416 Napier, Florentine History, I. 313: “He without hesitation surrendered Santa Maria a Monte Fucechio, Santa Croce, and Monte Calvole to Florence; exiled the most zealous Ghibellines from Pisa, and reduced it to a purely Guelphic republic; he was accused of treachery, and certainly his own objects were admirably forwarded by the continued captivity of so many of his countrymen, by the banishment of the adverse fraction, and by the friendship and support of Florence.”

417 Thebes was renowned for its misfortunes and grim tragedies, from the days of the sowing of the dragon’s teeth by Cadmus, down to the destruction of the city by Alexander, who commanded it to be utterly demolished, excepting only the house in which the poet Pindar was born. Moreover, the tradition runs that Pisa was founded by Pelops, son of King Tantalus of Thebes, although it derived its name from “the Olympic Pisa on the banks of the Alpheus.”
And the other two my song doth name above!

We passed still farther onward, where the ice
Another people ruggedly ens swathes,
Not downward turned, but all of them reversed.

Weeping itself there does not let them weep,
And grief that finds a barrier in the eyes
Turns itself inward to increase the anguish;

Because the earliest tears a cluster form,
And, in the manner of a crystal visor,
Fill all the cup beneath the eyebrow full.

And notwithstanding that, as in a callus,
Because of cold all sensibility
Its station had abandoned in my face,

Still it appeared to me I felt some wind;
Whence I: “My Master, who sets this in motion?”
Is not below here every vapour quenched?”

Whence he to me: “Full soon shalt thou be where
Thine eye shall answer make to thee of this,
Seeing the cause which raineth down the blast.”

And one of the wretches of the frozen crust
Cried out to us: “O souls so merciless
That the last post is given unto you,
Lift from mine eyes the rigid veils, that I
May vent the sorrow which impregns my heart
A little, e’er the weeping recongeal.”

Whence I to him: “If thou wouldst have me help thee
Say who thou wast; and if I free thee not,
May I go to the bottom of the ice.”

Then he replied: “I am Friar Alberigo; 419
He am I of the fruit of the bad garden,
Who here a date am getting for my fig.”

“O,” said I to him, “now art thou, too, dead?”
And he to me: “How may my body fare
Up in the world, no knowledge I possess.
Such an advantage has this Ptolomaea,” 421

418[JN] – In those times, people used to believe that wind is caused by swamp vapours, thus this seemingly strange remark.

419Friar Alberigo, of the family of the Manfredi, Lords of Faenza, was one of the Frati Gaudenti, or Jovial Friars, mentioned in Canto XXIII. The account which the Ottimo gives of his treason is as follows: “Having made peace with certain hostile fellow-citizens, he betrayed them in this wise. One evening he invited them to supper, and had armed retainers in the chambers round the supper-room. It was in summer-time, and he gave orders to his servants that, when after the meats he should order the fruit, the chambers should be opened, and the armed men should come forth and should murder all the guests. And so it was done. And he did the like the year before at Castello delle Mura at Pistoia. These are the fruits of the Garden of Treason, of which he speaks.” Benvenuto says that his guests were his brother Manfred and his (Manfred’s) son. Other commentators say they were certain members of the Order of Frati Gaudenti. In 1300, the date of the poem, Alberigo was still living.

420A Rowland for an Oliver.

421This division of Cocytus, the Lake of Lamentation, is called Ptolomaea from Ptolomeus, 1 Maccabees xvi. 11, where “the captain of Jericho inviteth Simon and two of his sons into his castle, and there treacherously murdereth them”; for “when simon and his sons had drunk largely, Ptolomee and his men rose up, and took their weapons, and came upon Simon into the banqueting-place, and slew him, and his two sons, and certain of his servants.”
That oftentimes the soul descendeth here
Sooner than Atropos in motion sets it. 422

And, that thou mayest more willingly remove
From off my countenance these glassy tears,
Know that as soon as any soul betrays
As I have done, his body by a demon
Is taken from him, who thereafter rules it,
Until his time has wholly been revolved.

Itself down rushes into such a cistern;
And still perchance above appears the body
Of yonder shade, that winters here behind me.

This thou shouldst know, if thou hast just come down;
It is Ser Branca d’ Oria, and many years 423
Have passed away since he was thus locked up.”

“I think,” said I to him, “thou dost deceive me;
For Branca d’ Oria is not dead as yet,
And eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and puts on clothes.”

“In moat above,” said he, “of Malebranche,
There where is boiling the tenacious pitch,
As yet had Michel Zanche not arrived,
When this one left a devil in his stead
In his own body and one near of kin,
Who made together with him the betrayal.

But hitherward stretch out thy hand forthwith,
Open mine eyes;” – and open them I did not,
And to be rude to him was courtesy.

Ah, Genoese! ye men at variance 424
With every virtue, full of every vice
Wherefore are ye not scattered from the world

---

422 Of the three Fates, Clotho held the distaff, Lachesis spun the thread, and Atropos cut it.
423 Ser Branco d’Oria was a Genoese, and a member of the celebrated Doria family of that city. Nevertheless he murdered at table his father-in-law, Michel Zanche, who is mentioned Canto XXII.
424 This vituperation of the Genoese reminds one of the bitter Tuscan proverb against them: “Sea without fish; mountains without trees; men without faith; and women without shame.”

Or perhaps from Ptolemy, who murdered Pompey after the battle of Pharsalia.
For with the vilest spirit of Romagna\textsuperscript{425}
I found of you one such, who for his deeds
In soul already in Cocytus bathes,
And still above in body seems alive!

\textsuperscript{425}Friar Alberigo.
Canto 34

"VEXILLA Regis prodeunt Inferni 426
Towards us; therefore look in front of thee,"
My Master said, "if thou discernest him."

As, when there breathes a heavy fog, or when
Our hemisphere is darkening into night,
Appears far off a mill the wind is turning,

Methought that such a building then I saw;
And, for the wind, I drew myself behind
My Guide, because there was no other shelter.

Now was I, and with fear in verse I put it,
There where the shades were wholly covered up,
And glimmered through like unto straws in glass.

Some prone are lying, others stand erect,
This with the head, and that one with the soles;
Another, bow-like, face to feet inverts.

When in advance so far we had proceeded,
That it my Master pleased to show to me
The creature who once had the beauteous semblance,

He from before me moved and made me stop,
Saying: "Behold Dis, and behold the place
Where thou with fortitude must arm thyself"

How frozen I became and powerless then,
Ask it not, Reader, for I write it not,
Because all language would be insufficient.

426 The fourth and last division of the Ninth Circle, the Judecca, – "the smallest circle, at the point of all the Universe, where Dis is seated.”
The first line, "The banners of the king of Hell come forth,” is a parody of the first line of a Latin hymn of the sixth century, sung in the churches during Passion week, and written by Fortunatus, an Italian by birth, but who died Bishop of Poitiers in 600.
I did not die, and I alive remained not;
Think for thyself now, hast thou aught of wit,
What I became, being of both deprived.

The Emperor of the kingdom dolorous
From his mid-breast forth issued from the ice,
And better with a giant I compare

Than do the giants with those arms of his;
Consider now how great must be that whole,
Which unto such a part conforms itself.

Were he as fair once, as he now is foul,
And lifted up his brow against his Maker,
Well may proceed from him all tribulation.

O, what a marvel it appeared to me,
When I beheld three faces on his head! 427

427The Ottimo and Benvenuto both interpret the three faces as symbolizing Ignorance,
The one in front, and that vermilion was;
Two were the others, that were joined with this
Above the middle part of either shoulder,
And they were joined together at the crest;
And the right-hand one seemed 'twixt white and yellow
The left was such to look upon as those
Who come from where the Nile falls valley-ward. 428

Underneath each came forth two mighty wings,
Such as befitting were so great a bird;
Sails of the sea I never saw so large.

No feathers had they, but as of a bat
Their fashion was; and he was waving them,
So that three winds proceeded forth therefrom.

Thereby Cocytus wholly was congealed.
With six eyes did he weep, and down three chins
Trickled the tear-drops and the bloody drivel.

At every mouth he with his teeth was crunching
A sinner, in the manner of a brake,
So that he three of them tormented thus.

To him in front the biting was as naught
Unto the clawing, for sometimes the spine
Utterly stripped of all the skin remained.

“That soul up there which has the greatest pain,”
The Master said, “is Judas Iscariot;
With head inside, he plies his legs without.

Of the two others, who head downward are,
The one who hangs from the black jowl is Brutus;
See how he writhes himself, and speaks no word.

And the other, who so stalwart seems, is Cassius.
But night is reascending, and 'tis time 429
That we depart, for we have seen the whole.”

As seemed him good, I clasped him round the neck,
And he the vantage seized of time and place,

Hatred, and Impotence. Others interpret them as signifying the three quarters of the then
known world, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

428 Aethiopia; the region about the Cataracts of the Nile.
429 The evening of Holy Saturday.
And when the wings were opened wide apart,
He laid fast hold upon the shaggy sides;
From fell to fell descended downward then
Between the thick hair and the frozen crust.

When we were come to where the thigh revolves
Exactly on the thickness of the haunch,
The Guide, with labour and with hard-drawn breath.

Turned round his head where he had had his legs,
And grappled to the hair, as one who mounts,
So that to Hell I thought we were returning.

"Keep fast thy hold, for by such stairs as these,"
The Master said, panting as one fatigued,
"Must we perforce depart from so much evil."

Then through the opening of a rock he issued,
And down upon the margin seated me;
Then tow’rds me he outstretched his wary step.

I lifted up mine eyes and thought to see
Lucifer in the same way I had left him;
And I beheld him upward hold his legs.

And if I then became disquieted,
Let stolid people think who do not see
What the point is beyond which I had passed.

"Rise up," the Master said, "upon thy feet;
The way is long, and difficult the road,
And now the sun to middle-tierce returns." 430

It was not any palace corridor
There where we were, but dungeon natural,
With floor uneven and unease of light.

"Ere from the abyss I tear myself away,
My Master," said I when I had arisen?
"To draw me from an error speak a little;
Where is the ice? and how is this one fixed

---

430 The canonical day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into four equal parts, called in Italian Terza, Sesta, Nona, and Vespro, and varying in length with the change of season.

"These hours," says Dante, Convito, III. 6, "are short or long ... according as day and night increase or diminish." Terza was the first division after sunrise; and at the equinox would be from six till nine. Consequently mezza terza, or middle tierce, would be half past seven.
Thus upside down? and how in such short time
From eve to morn has the sun made his transit?"

And he to me: “Thou still imaginest
Thou art beyond the centre, where I grasped
The hair of the fell worm, who mines the world.

That side thou wast, so long as I descended;
When round I turned me, thou didst pass the point
To which things heavy draw from every side,
And now beneath the hemisphere art come
Opposite that which overhangs the vast
Dry-land, and ‘neath whose cope was put to death 431

The Man who without sin was born and lived.
Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere
Which makes the other face of the Judecca
Here it is morn when it is evening there;
And he who with his hair a stairway made us
Still fixed remaineth as he was before.

Upon this side he fell down out of heaven;
And all the land, that whilom here emerged,
For fear of him made of the sea a veil,
And came to our hemisphere; and peradventure
To flee from him, what on this side appears 432
Left the place vacant here, and back recoiled”

A place there is below, from Beelzebub
As far receding as the tomb extends,
Which not by sight is known, but by the sound
Of a small rivulet, that there descendeth 433
Through chasm within the stone, which it has gnawed
With course that winds about and slightly falls.

The Guide and I into that hidden road
Now entered, to return to the bright world;
And without care of having any rest

---

431 Jerusalem.
432 The Mountain of Purgatory, rising out of the sea at a point directly opposite Jerusalem, upon the other side of the globe. It is an island in the South Pacific Ocean.
433 This brooklet is Lethe, whose source is on the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory, flowing down to mingle with Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon, and form Cocytus. See Canto XIV.
We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear;
Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars. 434

434It will be observed that each of the three divisions of the Divine Comedy ends with
the word “Stars,” suggesting and symbolizing endless aspiration. At the end of the In-
ferno Dante “rebeholds the stars”; at the end of the Purgatorio he is “ready to ascend to
the stars”; at the end of the Paradiso he feels the power of “that Love which moves the
sun and other stars.” He is now looking upon the morning stars of Easter Sunday.
Figure 69: To return to the bright world...
Figure 70: Rebehold the stars.
Divine Comedy - Paradiso
Dante Alighieri

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
English Translation and Notes

Paul Gustave Doré
Illustrations

Josef Nygrin
PDF Preparation and Typesetting
Canto 1

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

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

Because in drawing near to its desire

---

1Dante’s theory of the universe is the old one, which made the earth a stationary central point, around which all the heavenly bodies revolved. Speaking of the order of the Ten Heavens, Dante says, Convito, II. 4: “The first is that where the Moon is; the second is that where Mercury is; the third is that where Venus is; the fourth is that where the Sun is; the fifth is that where Mars is; the sixth is that where Jupiter is; the seventh is that where Saturn is; the eighth is that of the Stars; the ninth is not visible, save by the motion mentioned above, and is called by many the Crystalline—that is, diaphanous, or wholly transparent. Beyond all these, indeed, the Catholics place the Empyrean Heaven; that is to say, the Heaven of flame, or luminous; and this they suppose to be immovable, from having within itself, in every part, that which its matter demands. And this is the cause why the Primum Mobile has a very swift motion; from the fervent longing which each part of that ninth heaven has to be conjoined with that Divinest Heaven, the Heaven of Rest, which is next to it, it revolves therein with so great desire, that its velocity is almost incomprehensible; and quiet and peaceful is the place of that supreme Deity, who alone doth perfectly see himself.”
These Ten Heavens are the heavens of the Paradiso; nine of them revolving about the earth as a central point, and the motionless Empyrean encircling and containing all. It must be observed, however, that the lower spheres in which the spirits appear, are not assigned them as their places or dwellings. They show themselves in these different places only to indicate to Dante the different degrees of glory which they enjoy, and to show that while on earth they were under the influence of the planets in which they here appear.
The threefold main division of the Paradiso, indicated by a longer prelude, or by a natural pause in the action of the poem, is: –
1. From Canto I. to Canto X.
2. From Canto X. to Canto XXIII.
3. From Canto XXIII. to the end.
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.
Truly whatever of the holy realm
I had the power to treasure in my mind
Shall now become the subject of my song.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A little spark is followed by great flame;
Perchance with better voices after me
Shall prayer be made that Cyrrha may respond! 2

To mortal men by passages diverse
Uprises the world’s lamp; but by that one
Which circles four uniteth with three crosses, 3

With better course and with a better star
Conjoined it issues, and the mundane wax 4

---

2 A town at the foot of Parnassus, dedicated to Apollo, and here used for Apollo.
3 That point of the horizon where the sun rises at the equinox; and where the Equator, the Zodiac, and the equinoctial Colure meet, and form each a cross with the Horizon.
4 The world is as wax, which the sun softens and stamps with his seal.
Tempers and stamps more after its own fashion.  
Almost that passage had made morning there  
And evening here, and there was wholly white  
That hemisphere, and black the other part,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

5“This word *almost,*” says Buti, “gives us to understand that it was not the exact moment when the sun enters Aries.”

6Glaucus, changed to a sea-god by eating of the salt-meadow grass.

“As Glaucus,” says Buti, “was changed from a fisherman to a sea-god by tasting of the grass that had that power, so the human soul, tasting of things divine, becomes divine.”
If I was merely what of me thou newly
Createdst, Love who governest the heaven,
Thou knowest, who didst lift me with thy light!

When now the wheel, which thou dost make eternal
Desiring thee, made me attentive to it
By harmony thou dost modulate and measure,
Then seemed to me so much of heaven enkindled
By the sun’s flame, that neither rain nor river
E’er made a lake so widely spread abroad.
The newness of the sound and the great light
Kindled in me a longing for their cause,
Never before with such acuteness felt;
Whence she, who saw me as I saw myself,
To quiet in me my perturbed mind,
Opened her mouth, ere I did mine to ask,
And she began: “Thou makest thyself so dull
With false imagining, that thou seest not
What thou wouldst see if thou hadst shaken it
Thou art not upon earth, as thou believest;
But lightning, fleeing its appropriate site,
Ne’er ran as thou, who thitherward returnest.”

If of my former doubt I was divested
By these brief little words more smiled than spoken,
I in a new one was the more ensnared;
And said: “Already did I rest content
From great amazement; but am now amazed
In what way I transcend these bodies light.”

---

7 Whether I were spirit only. One of the questions which exercised the minds of the Fathers and the Schoolmen was, whether the soul were created before the body or after it. Origen, following Plato, supposes all souls to have been created at once, and to await their bodies. Thomas Aquinas combs this opinion, Sum. Theol., I. Quaest. CXVIII. 3, and maintains, that “creation and infusion are simultaneous in regard to the soul.” This seems also to be Dante’s belief.

8 It is a doctrine of Plato that the heavens are always in motion, seeking the Soul of the World, which has no determinate place; but is everywhere diffused.

9 The music of the spheres.

10 The region of fire. Brunetto Latini, Tresor, Ch. CVIII. “After the zone of the air is placed the fourth element. This is an orb of fire without any moisture, which extends as far as the moon, and surrounds this atmosphere in which we are. And know that above the fire is first the moon, and the other stars, which are all of the nature of fire.”
Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh,
Her eyes directed tow’rds me with that look
A mother casts on a delirious child;

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

Here do the higher creatures see the footprints
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end
Whereeto is made the law already mentioned.

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

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

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

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

The Providence that regulates all this
Makes with its light the heaven forever quiet,
Wherein that turns which has the greatest haste. 11

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

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

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

(In the same wise as one may see the fire
Fall from a cloud.) if the first impetus

11The Empyrean, within which the Primum Mobile revolves “with so great desire that its velocity is almost incomprehensible.”
Earthward is wrested by some false delight.
Thou shouldst not wonder more, if well I judge,
At thine ascent, than at a rivulet
From some high mount descending to the lowland.
Marvel it would be in thee, if deprived
Of hindrance, thou wert seated down below,
As if on earth the living fire were quiet.”

Thereat she heavenward turned again her face.

\[\text{Convito, I11. 2: “The human soul, ennobled by the highest power, at is by reason,}
\text{partakes of the divine nature in the manner of an eternal Intelligence; because the soul}
\text{is so ennobled by that sovereign power, and denuded of matter; that the divine light}
\text{shines in it as in an angel; and therefore man has been called by the philosophers a divine}
\text{animal.”}\]
Canto 2

OYE, who in some pretty little boat, 13
Eager to listen, have been following
Behind my ship, that singing sails along,

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

The sea I sail has never yet been passed;
Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo, 14
And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.

Ye other few who have the neck uplifted
Betimes to th’ bread of Angels upon which 15

13 The Heaven of the Moon, in which are seen the spirits of those who, having taken monastic vows, were forced to violate them. In Dante’s symbolism this heaven represents the first science of the Trivium. Convito, II. 14: “I say that the heaven of the Moon resembles Grammar; because it may be compared therewith; for if the Moon be well observed, two things are seen peculiar to it, which are not seen in the other stars. One is the shadow in it, which is nothing but the rarity of its body, in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate and be reflected as in the other parts. The other is the variation of its brightness, which now shines on one side, and now upon the other, according as the sun looks upon it. And Grammar has these two properties; since, on account of its infinity, the rays of reason do not terminate in it in any special part of its words; and it shines now on this side, and now on that, inasmuch as certain words, certain declinations, certain constructions, are in use which once were not, and many once were which will be again.” For the influences of the Moon, see Canto III. Note 30.

14 In the other parts of the poem “one summit of Parnassus” has sufficed; but in this Minerva, Apollo, and the nine Muses come to his aid, as wind, helmsman, and compass. 15 The bread of the Angels is Knowledge or Science, which Dante calls the “ultimate perfection.” Convito, I. 1: “Everything, impelled by the providence of its own nature, inclines towards its own perfection; whence, inasmuch as knowledge is the ultimate perfection of our soul, wherein consists our ultimate felicity, we are all naturally subject to its desire. ... O blessed those few who sit at the table where the bread of the Angels is
One liveth here and grows not sated by it,
Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea
Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you
Upon the water that grows smooth again.

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

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

Upward gazed Beatrice, and I at her;
And in such space perchance as strikes a bolt
And flies, and from the notch unlocks itself,
Arrived I saw me where a wondrous thing
Drew to itself my sight; and therefore she
From whom no care of mine could be concealed,
Towards me turning, blithe as beautiful,
Said unto me: “Fix gratefully thy mind
On God, who unto the first star has brought us.”

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

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

eaten.”

16 The Argonauts, when they saw their leader Jason ploughing with the wild bulls of Aeetes, and sowing the land with serpents’ teeth.

17 This is generally interpreted as referring to the natural aspiration of the soul for higher things; characterized in Purgatorio XXI. 1, as “The natural thirst that ne’er is satisfied,
Excepting with the water for whose grace
The woman of Samaria besought.”
But Venturi says that it means the “being borne onward by the motion of the Primum Mobile, and swept round so as to find himself directly beneath the moon.”

18 As if looking back upon his journey through the air, Dante thus rapidly describes it an inverse order, the arrival, the ascent, the departure; the striking of the shaft, the flight, the discharge from the bow-string. Here again we are reminded of the arrow of Pandarus, Iliad, IV. 120.
If I was body, (and we here conceive not
How one dimension tolerates another,
Which needs must be if body enter body,)
More the desire should be enkindled in us
That essence to behold, wherein is seen
How God and our own nature were united.
There will be seen what we receive by faith,
Not demonstrated, but self-evident
In guise of the first truth that man believes.
I made reply: “Madonna, as devoutly
As most I can do I give thanks to Him
Who has removed me from the mortal world.
But tell me what the dusky spots may be
Upon this body, which below on earth
Make people tell that fabulous tale of Cain?”
Somewhat she smiled; and then, “If the opinion
Of mortals be erroneous,” she said,
“Where’er the key of sense doth not unlock,
Certes, the shafts of wonder should not pierce thee
Now, forasmuch as, following the senses,
Thou seest that the reason has short wings.
But tell me what thou think’st of it thyself.”
And I: “What seems to us up here diverse,
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense.”
And she: “Right truly shalt thou see immersed
In error thy belief, if well thou hearest
The argument that I shall make against it.
Lights many the eighth sphere displays to you
Which in their quality and quantity
May noted be of aspects different.
If this were caused by rare and dense alone,
One only virtue would there be in all

\[19\] Cain with his bush of thorns.
\[20\] The spots in the Moon, which Dante thought were caused by rarity of density of the substance of the planet. Convito, II. 14: “The shadow in it, which is nothing but the rarity of its body, in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate and be reflected, as in the other parts.”
\[21\] The Heaven of the Fixed Stars.
Or more or less diffused, or equally.

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

Besides, if rarity were of this dimness

The cause thou askest, either through and through
This planet thus attenuate were of matter,

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

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

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

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

And thence the foreign radiance is reflected,
Even as a colour cometh back from glass,
The which behind itself concealeth lead.  23

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

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

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

Turned towards these, cause that behind thy back
Be placed a light, illumining the three mirrors

---

22 Either the diaphanous parts must run through the body of the Moon, or the rarity and density must be in layers one above the other.

23 As in a mirror, which Dante elsewhere – Inferno XXIII 25 – calls impiombato vetro – leaded glass.
And coming back to thee by all reflected.
Though in its quantity be not so ample
The image most remote, there shalt thou see
How it perforce is equally resplendent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--

24 The subject of the snow is what lies under it; “the mountain that remains naked,” says Buti. Others give a scholastic interpretation to the word, defining it “the cause of accident,” the cause of colour and cold.

25 Shall tremble like a star. “When a man looks at the stars,” says Buti, “he sees their effulgence tremble, and this is because their splendour scintillates as fire does, and moves to and fro like the flame of the fire.” The brighter they burn, the more they tremble.

26 The Primum Mobile, revolving in the Empyrean, and giving motion to all the heavens beneath it.

27 The Heaven of the Fixed Stars. Greek Epigrams, III. 62: – “If I were heaven, with all the eyes of heaven would I look down on thee.”
The heaven, which lights so manifold make fair,
From the Intelligence profound, which turns it. 28
The image takes, and makes of it a seal.

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

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

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

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

From this proceeds whate’er from light to light
Appeareth different, not from dense and rare:
This is the formal principle that produces, 29
According to its goodness, dark and bright.”

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29 The principle which gives being to all created things.
That Sun, which erst with love my bosom warmed, 30
Of beauteous truth had unto me discovered,
By proving and reproving, the sweet aspect.

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

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

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

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

Such saw I many faces prompt to speak,

30 The Heaven of the Moon continued. Of the influence of this planet, Buti, quoting the astrologer Albumasar, says: "The Moon is cold, moist, and phlegmatic, sometimes warm, and gives lightness, aptitude in all things, desire of joy, of beauty, and of praise, beginning of all works, knowledge of the rich and noble, prosperity in life, acquisition of things desired, devotion in faith, superior sciences, multitude of thoughts, necromancy, acuteness of mind in things, geometry, knowledge of lands and waters and of their measure and number, weakness of the sentiments, noble women, marriages, pregnancies, nursings, embassies, falsehoods, accusations; the being lord among lords, servant among servants, and conformity with every man of like nature, oblivion thereof, timid, of simple heart, flattering, honourable towards men, useful to them, not betraying secrets, a multitude of infirmities and the care of healing bodies, cutting hair, liberality of food, chastity. These are the significations (influences) of the Moon upon the things it finds, the blame and honour of which, according to the astrologers, belong to the planet; but the wise man follows the good influences, and leaves the bad; though all are good and necessary to the life of the universe."
So that I ran in error opposite
To that which kindled love ’twixt man and fountain. 31

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grateful ’twill be to me, if thou content me 32
Both with thy name and with your destiny.”
Whereat she promptly and with laughing eyes:

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

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

---

31 Narcissus mistook his shadow for a substance; Dante, falling into the opposite error, mistakes these substances for shadows.
32 Your destiny; that is, of yourself and the others with you.
But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda, 33
Who, stationed here among these other blessed,
Myself am blessed in the slowest sphere.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nay, ‘tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will divine,

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33 Piccarda was a sister of Forese and Corso Donati, and of Gemma, Dante’s wife. She was a nun of Santa Clara, and was dragged by violence from the cloister by her brother Corso Donati, who married her to Rosselin della Tosa. As she herself says: “God knows what afterward my life became.” It was such that she did not live long. For this crime the “excellent Baron,” according to the Ottimo, had to do penance in his shirt.
Whereby our very wishes are made one;
So that, as we are station above station
Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing,
As to the King, who makes his will our will.
And his will is our peace; this is the sea
To which is moving onward whatsoever
It doth create, and all that nature makes.”

Then it was clear to me how everywhere
In heaven is Paradise, although the grace
Of good supreme there rain not in one measure
But as it comes to pass, if one food sates,
And for another still remains the longing,
We ask for this, and that decline with thanks,
E’en thus did I; with gesture and with word,
To learn from her what was the web wherein
She did not ply the shuttle to the end.

“A perfect life and merit high in-heaven
A lady o’er us,” said she, “by whose rule
Down in your world they vest and veil themselves,
That until death they may both watch and sleep
Beside that Spouse who every vow accepts
Which charity conformeth to his pleasure.

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

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

This other splendour, which to thee reveals
Itself on my right side, and is enkindled
With all the illumination of our sphere,
What of myself I say applies to her;
A nun was she, and likewise from her head
Was ta’en the shadow of the sacred wimple.
But when she too was to the world returned
Against her wishes and against good usage,
Of the heart’s veil she never was divested.
Of great Costanza this is the effulgence, 34
Who from the second wind of Suabia
Brought forth the third and latest puissance.”

Thus unto me she spake, and then began
“Ave Maria” singing, and in singing
Vanished, as through deep water something heavy.

My sight, that followed her as long a time
As it was possible, when it had lost her
Turned round unto the mark of more desire,
And wholly unto Beatrice reverted;
But she such lightnings flashed into mine eyes,
That at the first my sight endured it not;
And this in questioning more backward made me.

34Constance, daughter of Roger of Sicily. She was a nun at Palermo, but was taken
from the convent and married to the Emperor Henry V., son of Barabarossa and father of
Frederic II. Of these “winds of Suabia,” or Emperors of the house of Suabia, Barbarossa
was the first, Henry V. the second, and Frederic II. the third, and, as Dante calls him in
the Convito, IV. 3, “the last of the Roman Emperors,” meaning the last of the Suabian line.
Figure 1: “But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda...”
Canto 4

Between two viands, equally removed\(^{35}\)
And tempting, a free man would die of hunger\(^{36}\)
Ere either he could bring unto his teeth.

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

Hence, if I held my peace, myself I blame not,
Impelled in equal measure by my doubts,
Since it must be so, nor do I commend. \(^{37}\)

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

Beatrice did as Daniel had done\(^{38}\)
Relieving Nebuchadnezzar from the wrath
Which rendered him unjustly merciless,
And said: “Well see I how attracteth thee
One and the other wish, so that thy care
Binds itself so that forth it does not breathe.

Thou arguest, if good will be permanent,

\(^{35}\)The Heaven of the Moon continued.
\(^{36}\)Montaigne says: “If any one should place us between the bottle and the bacon (entre la bouteille et le jambon), with an equal appetite for food and drink, there would doubtless be no remedy but to die of thirst and hunger.”
\(^{37}\)“A similitude,” says Venturi, “of great poetic beauty, but of little philosophic soundness.”
\(^{38}\)When he recalled and interpreted the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 11. 10: “The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth: and there is none other that can show it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”
The violence of others, for what reason
Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?

Again for doubting furnish thee occasion
Souls seeming to return unto the stars,
According to the sentiment of Plato. 39

These are the questions which upon thy wish
Are thrusting equally; and therefore first 40
Will I treat that which hath the most of gall.

He of the Seraphim most absorbed in God, 41
Moses, and Samuel, and whichever John
Thou mayst select, I say, and even Mary,

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

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

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

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

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

And Holy Church under an aspect human
Gabriel and Michael represent to you,

39Plato, Timaeus, Davis’s Tr., says: – “And after having thus framed the universe, he allotted to it souls equal in number to the stars, inserting each in each. ... And he declared also, that after living well for the time appointed to him, each one should once more return to the habitation of his associate star, and spend a blessed and suitable existence.”

40The word “thrust,” pontano, is here used in its architectural sense, as in Inferno XXXII.

3. There it is literal, here figurative.

41Che piú s’india – that most in-God’s himself. As in Canto IX. 81, Si io m’intuassi come tu t’immii – “if I could in-thee myself as thou dost in-me thyself”; and other expressions of a similar kind.

42The dogma of the Peripatetics, that nothing is in Intellect which was not first in Sense.
And him who made Tobias whole again. 43

That which Timaeus argues of the soul 44
Doth not resemble that which here is seen,
Because it seems that as he speaks he thinks. 45

He says the soul unto its star returns,
Believing it to have been severed thence
Whenever nature gave it as a form 46

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

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

This principle ill understood once warped
The whole world nearly, till it went astray
Invoking Jove and Mercury and Mars. 47

The other doubt which doth disquiet thee 48
Less venom has, for its malevolence
Could never lead thee otherwhere from me.

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

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

43 Raphael, “the affable archangel,” of whom Milton says, Par. Lost V. 220: – “Raphael, the sociable spirit, that deigned to travel with Tobias, and secured his marriage with the seven-times-wedded maid.” Dante says cause in the son are called in this line Tobia, because in the Vulgate both father and Tobias.

44 Plato’s Dialogue, entitled Timaeus, the name of the philosopher of Locri.

45 Plato means it literally, and the Scriptures figuratively.

46 When it was infused into the body, or the body became informed with it.

47 Joachim di Flora, Dante’s “Calabrian Abbot Joachim,” the mystic of the twelfth century, says in his Exposition of the Apocalypse: “The deceived Gentiles believed that the planets to which they gave the names of Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Mars, the Moon, and the Sun, were gods.”

48 Stated in line 20: –
“The violence of others, for what reason
Doth it decrease the measure of my merit?”
If it be violence when he who suffers
Co-operates not with him who uses force,
These souls were not on that account excused;
For will is never quenched unless it will,
But operates as nature doth in fire
If violence a thousand times distort it.
Hence, if it yieldeth more or less, it seconds
The force; and these have done so, having power
Of turning back unto the holy place.
If their will had been perfect, like to that
Which Lawrence fast upon his gridiron held,
And Mutius made severe to his own hand,
It would have urged them back along the road
Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were free;
But such a solid will is all too rare.
And by these words, if thou hast gathered them
As thou shouldst do, the argument is refuted
That would have still annoyed thee many times.
But now another passage runs accross
Before thine eyes, and such that by thyself
Thou couldst not thread it ere thou wouldst be weary.
I have for certain put into thy mind
That soul beatified could never lie.
For it is near the primal Truth,
And then thou from Piccarda might’st have heard
Costanza kept affection for the veil,
So that she seemeth here to contradict me.
Many times, brother, has it come to pass,
That, to escape from peril, with reluctance
That has been done it was not right to do,
E’en as Alcaemon (who, being by his father 49
Thereto entreated, his own mother slew)
Not to lose pity pitiless became.
At this point I desire thee to remember
That force with will commingles, and they cause

49 Alcmaeon, who slew his mother Eriphyle to avenge his father Amphiarus the soothsayer.
That the offences cannot be excused.
Will absolute consenteth not to evil;
But in so far consenteth as it fears,
If it refrain, to fall into more harm

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

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

“O love of the first lover, O divine,” 50
Said I forthwith, “whose speech inundates me
And warms me so, it more and more revives me,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Beatrice gazed upon me with her eyes 51

50 Beatrice, beloved of God; “that blessed Beatrice, who lives in heaven with the angels and on earth with my Soul.”

51 It must not be forgotten, that Beatrice is the symbol of Divine Wisdom. Dante says, Convito, III. 15: “In her countenance appear things which display some of the pleasures of Paradise;” and notes particularly “the eyes and smile.” He then adds: “And here it
Full of the sparks of love, and so divine,
That, overcome my power, I turned my back
And almost lost myself with eyes downcast.

should be known that the eyes of Wisdom are its demonstrations, by which the truth is most clearly seen; and its smile the persuasions, in which is displayed the interior light of Wisdom under a veil; and in these two things is felt the exceeding pleasure of beatitude, which is the chief good in Paradise. This pleasure cannot exist in anything here below, except in beholding these eyes and this smile."
Canto 5

"If in the heat of love I flame upon thee \(^{52}\)
Beyond the measure that on earth is seen,
So that the valour of thine eyes I vanquish,
Marvel thou not thereat; for this proceeds
From perfect sight, which as it apprehends
To the good apprehended moves its feet.
Well I perceive how is already shining
Into thine intellect the eternal light,
That only seen enkindles always love;
And if some other thing your love seduce,
'Tis nothing but a vestige of the same,
Ill understood, which there is shining through.
Thou fain would'st know if with another service
For broken vow can such return be made
As to secure the soul from further claim."

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

"The greatest gift that in his largess God

\(^{52}\)The Heaven of Mercury, where are seen the spirits of those who for the love of fame achieved great deeds. Of its symbolism Dante says, *Convito*, II. 14: "The Heaven of Mercury may be compared to Dialectics, on account of two properties – for Mercury is the smallest star of heaven, since the quantity of its diameter is not more than two thousand and thirty-two miles, according to the estimate of Alfergano who declares it to be one twenty-eighth part of the diameter of the Earth, which is six thousand and fifty-two miles. The other property is, that it is more veiled by the rays of the Sun than any other star. And these two properties are in Dialectics – for Dialectics are less in body than any Science since in them is perfectly compiled and bounded as much doctrine as is found in ancient and modern Art; and it is more veiled than any Science, inasmuch as it proceeds by more sophistic and probable arguments than any other."
Creating made, and unto his own goodness
Nearest conformed, and that which he doth prize
Most highly, is the freedom of the will,
Wherewith the creatures of intelligence
Both all and only were and are endowed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The other, which is known to thee as matter,\(^{53}\)
May well indeed be such that one errs not
If it for other matter be exchanged.

\(^{53}\)That which is sacrificed, or of which an offering is made.
But let none shift the burden on his shoulder
At his arbitration, without the turning
Both of the white and of the yellow key; 54
And every permutation deem as foolish,
If in the substitute the thing relinquished,
As the four is in six, be not contained. 55
Therefore whatever thing has so great weight
In value that it drags down every balance,
Cannot be satisfied with other spending.
Let mortals never take a vow in jest;
Be faithful and not blind in doing that,
As Jephthah was in his first offering, 56
Whom more beseemed to say, ‘I have done wrong,
Than to do worse by keeping; and as foolish
Thou the great leader of the Greeks wilt find, 57
Whence wept Iphigenia her fair face,
And made for her both wise and simple weep,
Who heard such kind of worship spoken of.’
Christians, be ye more serious in your movements;
Be ye not like a feather at each wind,
And think not every water washes you.
Ye have the Old and the New Testament,
And the Pastor of the Church who guideth you
Let this suffice you unto your salvation.
If evil appetite cry aught else to you,
Be ye as men, and not as silly sheep, 58
So that the Jew among you may not mock you.

54 Without the permission of Holy Church, symbolized by the two keys; the silver key of Knowledge, and the golden key of Authority.
55 The thing substituted must be greater than the thing relinquished.
56 Judges XI. 30: “And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, I will offer it up for a burnt-offering. ... And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child: besides her he had neither son nor daughter.”
57 Agamemnon.
58 Dante, Convito, I. 11: “These should be called sheep, and not men; for if one sheep should throw itself down a precipice of a thousand feet, all the others would follow, and
Be ye not as the lamb that doth abandon
Its mother’s milk, and frolicsome and simple
Combats at its own pleasure with itself.”

Thus Beatrice to me even as I write it;
Then all desireful turned herself again
To that part where the world is most alive. 59

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

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

My Lady there so joyful I beheld,
As into the brightness of that heaven she entered, 60
More luminous the planet grew;

And if the star itself was changed and smiled, 61
What became I, who by my nature am
Exceeding mutable in every guise!

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

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

And as each one was coming unto us,
Full of beatitude the shade was seen,
By the effulgence clear that issued from it. 62

Think, Reader, if what here is just beginning
No farther should proceed, how thou wouldst have

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59 Towards the Sun, where the heaven is brightest.
60 The Heaven of Mercury.
61 Brunetto Latini, Tresor, I., Ch. 3, says, the planet Mercury “is easily moved according to the goodness or malice of the planets to which it is joined.” Dante here represents himself as being of a peculiarly mercurial temperament.
62 The joy of spirits in Paradise is shown by greater brightness.
An agonizing need of knowing more;  
And of thyself thou’lt see how I from these  
Was in desire of hearing their conditions,  
As they unto mine eyes were manifest.

“O thou well-born, unto whom Grace concedes  
To see the thrones of the eternal triumph,  
Or ever yet the warfare be abandoned,  
With light that through the whole of heaven is spread  
Kindled are we, and hence if thou desirest  
To know of us, at thine own pleasure sate thee.”

Thus by some one among those holy spirits 63  
Was spoken, and by Beatrice: “Speak, speak  
Securely, and believe them even as Gods.”

“Well I perceive how thou dost nest thyself  
In thine own light, and drawest it from thine eyes,  
Because they coruscate when thou dost smile,  
But know not who thou art, nor why thou hast,  
Spirit august, thy station in the sphere  
That veils itself to men in alien rays.” 64

This said I in direction of the light  
Which first had spoken to me; whence it became  
By far more lucent than it was before.  
Even as the sun, that doth conceal himself  
By too much light, when heat has worn away  
The tempering influence of the vapours dense,  
By greater rapture thus concealed itself  
In its own radiance the figure saintly,  
And thus close, close enfolded answered me  
In fashion as the following Canto sings.

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63 The spirit of Justinian.

64 Mercury is the planet nearest the Sun, and being thus “veiled with alien rays,” is only visible to the naked eye at the time of its greatest elongation, and then but for a few minutes. Dante, Convito, II. 14, says, that Mercury “is more veiled by the rays of the Sun than any other star.” And yet it will be observed that in his planetary system he places Venus between Mercury and the Sun.
Figure 2: So I beheld more than a thousand splendours...
Canto 27

"**GLORY** be to the Father, to the Son, 624
And Holy Ghost!" all Paradise began,
So that the melody inebriate made me.

What I beheld seemed unto me a smile
Of the universe; for my inebriation
Found entrance through the hearing and the sight.

O joy! O gladness inexpressible!
O perfect life of love and peacefulness!
O riches without hankering secure! 625

624 The Heaven of the Fixed Stars continued. The anger of St. Peter; and the ascent to the Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven. Dante, *Convito*, II. 15, makes this Crystalline Heaven the symbol of Moral Philosophy. He says: "The Crystalline Heaven, which has previously been called the Primum Mobile, has a very manifest resemblance to Moral Philosophy; for Moral Philosophy, as Thomas says in treating of the second book of the Ethics, directs us to the other sciences. For, as the Philosopher says in the fifth of the Ethics, legal justice directs us to learn the sciences, and orders them to be learned and mastered, so that they may not be abandoned; so this heaven directs with its movement the daily revolutions of all the others, by which daily they all receive here below the virtue of all their parts. For if its revolution did not thus direct, little of their virtues would reach here below, and little of their sight. Hence, supposing it were possible for this ninth heaven to stand still, the third part of heaven would not be seen in each part of the earth; and Saturn would be hidden from each part of the earth fourteen years and a half; and Jupiter, six years; and Mars, almost a year; and the Sun, one hundred and eighty-two days and fourteen hours (I say days, that is, so much time as so many days would measure); and Venus and Mercury would conceal and show themselves nearly as the Sun; and the Moon would be hidden from all people for the space of fourteen days and a half. Truly there would be here below no production, nor life of animals, nor plants; there would be night, nor day, nor week, nor month, nor year; but the whole universe would be deranged, and the movement of the stars in vain. And not otherwise, were Moral Philosophy to cease, the other sciences would be for a time concealed, and there would be no production, nor life of felicity, and in vain would be the writings or discoveries of antiquity. Wherefore it is very manifest that this heaven bears a resemblance to Moral Philosophy.

625 Without desire for more.
Before mine eyes were standing the four torches 626
Enkindled, and the one that first had come
Began to make itself more luminous;
And even such in semblance it became
As Jupiter would become, if he and Mars 627
Were birds, and they should interchange their feathers.
That Providence, which here distributeth
Season and service, in the blessed choir
Had silence upon every side imposed.
When I heard say: “If I my colour change,
Marvel not at it; for while I am speaking
Thou shalt behold all these their colour change.
He who usurps upon the earth my place, 628
My place, my place, which vacant has become
Before the presence of the Son of God,
Has of my cemetery made a sewer 629
Of blood and stench, whereby the Perverse One,
Who fell from here, below there is appeased!”
With the same colour which, through sun adverse,
Painteth the clouds at evening or at morn,
Beheld I then the whole of heaven suffused.
And as a modest woman, who abides
Sure of herself, and at another’s failing,
From listening only, timorous becomes,
Even thus did Beatrice change countenance;
And I believe in heaven was such eclipse,
When suffered the supreme Omnipotence; 630
Thereafterward proceeded forth his words
With voice so much transmuted from itself,
The very countenance was not more changed.
“The spouse of Christ has never nurtured been

626 St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and Adam.
627 If the white planet Jupiter should become as red as Mars.
628 Pope Boniface VIII., who won his way to the Popedom by intrigue. See Inferno XIX. note to line 53.
629 The Vatican hill, to which the body of St. Peter was transferred from the catacombs.
630 Luke XXIII. 44: “And there was darkness over all the earth And the sun was darkened.”
On blood of mine, of Linus and of Cletus, 631
To be made use of in acquest of gold;

But in acquest of this delightful life
Sixtus and Pius, Urban and Calixtus, 632
After much lamentation, shed their blood.

Our purpose was not, that on the right hand
Of our successors should in part be seated 633
The Christian folk, in part upon the other;

Nor that the keys which were to me confided
Should e’er become the escutcheon on a banner, 634
That should wage war on those who are baptized; 635

Nor I be made the figure of a seal
To privileges venal and mendacious, 636
Whereat I often redden and flash with fire.

In garb of shepherds the rapacious wolves 637
Are seen from here above o’er all the pastures!
O wrath of God, why dost thou slumber still? 638

To drink our blood the Caorsines and Gascons 639
Are making ready. O thou good beginning,
Unto how vile an end must thou needs fall!

But the high Providence, that with Scipio 640

631 Linus was the immediate successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome, and Cletus of Linus. They were both martyrs of the first age of the Church.
632 Sixtus and Pius were Popes and martyrs of the second age of the Church; Calixtus and Urban, of the third.
633 On the right hand of the Pope the favoured Guelphs, and on the left the persecuted Ghibellines.
634 The Papal banner, on which are the keys of St. Peter.
635 The wars against the Ghibellines in general, and particularly that waged against the Colonna family, ending in the destruction of Palestrina. See Inferno XXVII. line 85.
636 The sale of indulgences, stamped with the Papal seal, bearing the head of St. Peter.
637 Matthew VII. 15: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
638 Psalm XLIV. 23: “Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?”
639 Clement V. of Gascony, made Pope in 1305, and John XXII. of Cahors in France, in 1316. Buti makes the allusion more general: “They of Cahors and Gascony are preparing to drink the blood of the martyrs, because they were preparing to be Popes, Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, and prelates in the Church of God, that is built with the blood of the martyrs.”
640 Dante alludes elsewhere to this intervention of Providence to save the Roman Empire by the hand of Scipio. Convito, IV. 5, he says: “Is not the hand of God visible, when in the
At Rome the glory of the world defended,
Will speedily bring aid, as I conceive;
And thou, my son, who by thy mortal weight
Shalt down return again, open thy mouth;
What I conceal not, do not thou conceal."

As with its frozen vapours downward falls
In flakes our atmosphere, what time the horn
Of the celestial Goat doth touch the sun,
Upward in such array saw I the ether
Become, and flaked with the triumphant vapours,
Which there together with us had remained.

My sight was following up their semblances,
And followed till the medium, by excess
The passing farther onward took from it;
Whereat the Lady, who beheld me freed
From gazing upward, said to me: “Cast down
Thy sight, and see how far thou art turned round.”

Since the first time that I had downward looked,
I saw that I had moved through the whole arc
Which the first climate makes from midst to end;
So that I saw the mad track of Ulysses

war with Hannibal, having lost so many citizens, that thee bushels of rings were carried to Africa, the Romans would have abandoned the land, if that blessed youth Scipio had not undertaken the expedition to Africa, to secure its freedom?"

Boccaccio, Ninfale d’Ameto, describing a battle between two flocks of swans, says the spectators “saw the air full of feathers, as when the nurse of Jove [Amalthaea, the Goat] holds Apollo, the white snow is seen to fall in flakes.”

When the sun is in Capricorn; that is, from the middle of December to the middle of January.

The spirits described in Canto XXII. 131, as “The triumphant throng That comes rejoicing through this rounded ether,” and had remained behind when Christ and the Virgin Mary ascended.

Till his sight could follow them no more, on account of the exceeding vastness of the space between.

Canto XXII. 133.

The first climate is the torrid zone, the first from the equator. From midst to end, is from the meridian to the horizon. Dante had been, then, six hours in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars.

Being now in the meridian of the Straits of Gibraltar, Dante sees to the westward of Cadiz the sea Ulysses sailed, when he turned his stern unto morning and made his oars wings for his mad flight, as described in Inferno XXVI.
Past Gades, and this side, well nigh the shore\textsuperscript{648}
Whereon became Europa a sweet burden.\textsuperscript{649}

And of this threshing-floor the site to me\textsuperscript{650}
Were more unveiled, but the sun was proceeding
Under my feet, a sign and more removed.\textsuperscript{651}

My mind enamoured, which is dallying\textsuperscript{652}
At all times with my Lady, to bring back
To her mine eyes was more than ever ardent.

And if or Art or Nature has made bait
To catch the eyes and so possess the mind,
In human flesh or in its portraiture,

All joined together would appear as nought
To the divine delight which shone upon me
When to her smiling face I turned me round.

The virtue that her look endowed me with
From the fair nest of Leda tore me forth,\textsuperscript{653}
And up into the swiftest heaven impelled me.

Its parts exceeding full of life and lofty
Are all so uniform, I cannot say
Which Beatrice selected for my place.

But she, who was aware of my desire,\textsuperscript{654}
Began, the while she smiled so joyously
That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice:

"The nature of that motion, which keeps quiet
The centre and all the rest about it moves,
From hence begins as from its starting point."

\textsuperscript{648}Eastward he almost sees the Phoenician coast; almost, and not quite, because, say the commentators, it was already night there.
\textsuperscript{649}Europa, daughter of King Agenor, borne to the island of Crete on the back of Jupiter, who had taken the shape of a bull.
\textsuperscript{650}See Canto XXII. note to line 151.
\textsuperscript{651}The sun was in Aries, two signs in advance of Gemini, in which Dante was.
\textsuperscript{652}\textit{Donnea} again. See Canto XXIV. note to line 118.
\textsuperscript{653}The Gemini, or Twins, are Castor and Pollux, the sons of Leda, and as Jupiter, their father, came to her in the shape of a swan, this sign of the zodiac is called the nest of Leda. Dante now mounts up from the Heaven of the fixed stars to the Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven.
\textsuperscript{654}Dante’s desire to know in what part of this heaven he was.
And in this heaven there is no other Where, Than in the Mind Divine, wherein is kindled The love that turns it, and the power it rains.

Within a circle light and love embrace it, Even as this doth the others, and that precinct He who encircles it alone controls.

Its motion is not by another meted, But all the others measured are by this, As ten is by the half and by the fifth.

And in what manner time in such a pot May have its roots, and in the rest its leaves, Now unto thee can manifest be made.

O Covetousness, that mortals dost ingulf Beneath thee so, that no one hath the power Of drawing back his eyes from out thy waves!

Full fairly blossoms in mankind the will; But the uninterrupted rain converts Into abortive wildings the true plums.

Fidelity and innocence are found Only in children; afterwards they both Take flight or e’er the cheeks with down are covered.

One, while he prattles still, observes the fasts, Who, when his tongue is loosed, forthwith devours Whatever food under whatever moon;

Another, while he prattles, loves and listens Unto his mother, who when speech is perfect Forthwith desires to see her in her grave.

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655 All the other heavens have their Regents or Intelligences. See Canto II. note to line 131. But the Primum Mobile has the Divine Mind alone.

656 By that precinct Dante means the Empyrean, which embraces the Primum Mobile, as that does all the other heavens below it. Mrs. Jameson, Sacred and Legendary Art, I. 139, remarks: “The legend which supposes St. John reserved alive has not been generally received in the Church, and as a subject of painting it is very uncommon. It occurs in the Menologium Græcum, where the grave into which St. John descends is, according to the legend, fossa in crucis figuram – in the form of a cross. In a series of the deaths of the Apostles, St. John is ascending from the grave; for, according to the Greek legend, St. John died without pain or change, and immediately rose again in bodily form, and ascended into heaven to rejoin Christ and the Virgin.”

657 The half of ten is five, and the fifth is two. The product of these, when multiplied together, is ten.
Even thus is swarthy made the skin so white
In its first aspect of the daughter fair 658
Of him who brings the morn, and leaves the night.

Thou, that it may not be a marvel to thee,
Think that on earth there is no one who governs; 659
Whence goes astray the human family.

Ere January be unwintered wholly
By the centesimal on earth neglected, 660
Shall these supernal circles roar so loud
The tempest that has been so long awaited 661
Shall whirl the poops about where are the prows;
So that the fleet shall run its course direct,
And the true fruit shall follow on the flower.”

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658 Aurora, daughter of Hyperion, or the Sun.
659 Or, perhaps, to steer, and “Over the high seas to keep The barque of Peter to its proper bearings.”
660 This neglected centesimal was the omission of some inconsiderable fraction or centesimal part, in the computation of the year according to the Julian calendar, which was corrected in the Gregorian, some two centuries and a half after Dante’s death. By this error, in long lapse of time, the months would cease to correspond to the seasons, and January be no longer a winter, but a spring month.
Sir John Herschel, *Treatise on Astronomy*, Ch. XIII., says: “The Julian rule made every fourth year, without exception, a bissextile. This is, in fact, an over-correction; it supposes the length of the tropical year to be 365 1/4 d., which is too great, and thereby induces an error of 7 days in 900 years, as will easily appear on trial. Accordingly, so early as the year 1414, it began to be perceived that the equinoxes were gradually creeping away from the 21st of March and September, where they ought to have always fallen had the Julian year been exact, and happening (as it appeared) too early. The necessity of a fresh and effectual reform in the calendar was from that time continually urged, and at length admitted. The change (which took place under the Popedom of Gregory XIII.) consisted in the omission of ten nominal days after the 4th of October, 1582, (so that the next day was called the 15th and not the 5th), and the promulgation of the rule explained for future regulation.”

It will appear from the verse of Dante, that this error and its consequences had been noticed a century earlier than the year mentioned by Herschel. Dante speaks ironically; naming a very long period, and meaning a very short one.

661 Dante here refers either to the reforms he expected from the Emperor Henry VII., or to those he as confidently looked for from Can Grande della Scala, the Veltro, or greyhound, of *Inferno* I. line 101, who was to slay the she-wolf, and make her “perish in her pain,” and whom he so warmly eulogize in Canto XVII. of the *Paradiso*. Alas for the vanity of human wishes! Patient Italy has waited more than five centuries for the fulfilment of this prophecy, but at length she has touched the bones of her prophet, and “is revived and stands upon her feet.”
Figure 15: The heavenly host singing “Gloria In Excelsis Deo”.
After the truth against the present life Of miserable mortals was unfolded By her who doth imparadise my mind, As in a looking-glass a taper's flame He sees who from behind is lighted by it, Before he has it in his sight or thought, And turns him round to see if so the glass Tell him the truth, and sees that it accords Therewith as doth a music with its metre, In similar wise my memory recollecteth That I did, looking into those fair eyes, Of which Love made the springes to ensnare me. And as I turned me round, and mine were touched By that which is apparent in that volume, Whenever on its gyre we gaze intent, A point beheld I, that was raying out Light so acute, the sight which it enkindles Must close perforce before such great acuteness. And whatsoever star seems smallest here Would seem to be a moon, if placed beside it. As one star with another star is placed. Perhaps at such a distance as appears A halo cincturing the light that paints it, When densest is the vapour that sustains it, Thus distant round the point a circle of fire

662 The Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, continued.
663 That Crystalline Heaven, which Dante calls a volume, or scroll, as in Canto XXIII. line 112: “The regal mantle of the volumes all.”
664 The light of God, represented as a single point, to indicate its unity and indivisibility.
So swiftly whirled, that it would have surpassed
Whatever motion soonest girds the world;

And this was by another circumcinct,
That by a third, the third then by a fourth,
By a fifth the fourth, and then by a sixth the fifth;

The seventh followed thereupon in width
So ample now, that Juno’s messenger \(^{665}\)
Entire would be too narrow to contain it.

Even so the eighth and ninth; and every one \(^{666}\)
More slowly moved, according as it was
In number distant farther from the first.

And that one had its flame most crystalline
From which less distant was the stainless spark,
I think because more with its truth imbued.

My Lady, who in my anxiety
Beheld me much perplexed, said: “From that point
Dependent is the heaven and nature all.

Behold that circle most conjoined to it,
And know thou, that its motion is so swift
Through burning love whereby it is spurred on.”

And I to her: “If the world were arranged
In the order which I see in yonder wheels,
What’s set before me would have satisfied me;

But in the world of sense we can perceive
That evermore the circles are diviner
As they are from the centre more remote

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\(^{665}\) Iris, or the rainbow.

\(^{666}\) These nine circles of fire are the nine Orders of Angels in the three Celestial Hierarchies. Dante, *Convito*, II. 16, says that the holy Church divides the Angels into “three Hierarchies, that is to say, three holy or divine Principalities; and each Hierarchy has three Orders; so that the Church believes and affirms nine Orders of spiritual beings. The first is that of the Angels; the second, that of the Archangels; the third, that of the Thrones. And these three Orders form the first Hierarchy; not first in reference to rank nor creation (for the others are more noble, and all were created together), but first in reference to our ascent to their height. Then follow the Dominions; next the Virtues; then the Principalities; and these form the second Hierarchy. Above these are the Powers, and the Cherubim, and above all are the Seraphim; and these form the third Hierarchy.” It will be observed that this arrangement of the several Orders does not agree with that followed in the poem.
Wherefore if my desire is to be ended
In this miraculous and angelic temple,
That has for confines only love and light,
To hear behoves me still how the example 667
And the exemplar go not in one fashion,
Since for myself in vain I contemplate it."

“If thine own fingers unto such a knot
Be insufficient, it is no great wonder,
So hard hath it become for want of trying.” 668

My Lady thus; then said she: “Do thou take
What I shall tell thee, if thou wouldst be sated,
And exercise on that thy subtlety.
The circles corporal are wide and narrow 669
According to the more or less of virtue
Which is distributed through all their parts.
The greater goodness works the greater weal,
The greater weal the greater body holds,
If perfect equally are all its parts.
Therefore this one which sweeps along with it 670
The universe sublime, doth correspond
Unto the circle which most loves and knows.
On which account, if thou unto the virtue
Apply thy measure, not to the appearance
Of substances that unto thee seem round,
Thou wilt behold a marvellous agreement,

667 Barlow, *Study of the Div. Com.*, p. 533, remarks: “Within a circle of ineffable joy, circumscribed only by light and love, a point of intense brightness so dazzled the eyes of Dante that he could not sustain the sight of it. Around this vivid centre, from which the heavens and all nature depend, nine concentric circles of the Celestial Hierarchy revolved with a velocity inversely proportioned to their distance from it, the nearer circles moving more rapidly, the remoter ones less. The poet at first is surprised at this, it being the reverse of the relative movement, from the same source of propulsion, of the heavens themselves around the earth as their centre. But the infallible Beatrice assures him that this difference arises, in fact, from the same cause, proximity to the Divine presence, which in the celestial spheres is greater the farther they are from the centre, but in the circles of angels, on the contrary, it is greater the nearer they are to it.

668 Because the subject has not been investigated and discussed.

669 The nine heavens are here called corporal circles, as we call the stars the heavenly bodies. Latimer says: “A corporal heaven, ... where the stars are.”

670 The Primum Mobile, in which Dante and Beatrice now are.
Of more to greater, and of less to smaller, \(^{671}\)
in every heaven, with its Intelligence."

Even as remaineth splendid and serene
The hemisphere of air, when Boreas \(^{672}\)
is blowing from that cheek where he is mildest,
Because is purified and resolved the rack
That erst disturbed it, till the welkin laughs
With all the beauties of its pageantry;
Thus did I likewise, after that my Lady
Had me provided with her clear response,
And like a star in heaven the truth was seen.
And soon as to a stop her words had come,
Not otherwise does iron scintillate
When molten, than those circles scintillated. \(^{673}\)
Their coruscation all the sparks repeated,
And they so many were, their number makes
More millions than the doubling of the chess. \(^{674}\)
I heard them sing hosanna choir by choir
To the fixed point which holds them at the \(Uibi\), \(^{675}\)

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\(^{671}\)The nearer God the circle is, so much greater virtue it possesses. Hence the outermost of the heavens, revolving round the earth, corresponds to the innermost of the Orders of Angels revolving round God, and is controlled by it as its Regent or Intelligence. To make this more intelligible I will repeat here the three Triads of Angels, and the heavens of which they are severally the intelligences, as already given in Canto II. note to line 131: The Seraphim – Primum Mobile, The Cherubim – The Fixed Stars, The Thrones – Saturn, The Dominions – Jupiter, The Virtues – Mars, The Powers – The Sun, The Principalities – Venus, The Archangels – Mercury, The Angels – The Moon.

\(^{672}\)Aeneid, XII. 365, Davidson’s Tr.: “As when the blast of Thracian Boreas roars on the Aegean Sea, and to the shore pursues the waves, wherever the winds exert their incumbent force, the clouds fly through the air.”
Each of the four winds blow three different blasts; either directly in front, or from the right cheek, or the left. According to Boccaccio, the northeast wind in Italy is milder than the northwest.

\(^{673}\)Dante uses this comparison before, Canto I. 60: “But I beheld it sparkle round about Like iron that comes molten from the fire.”

\(^{674}\)The inventor of the game of chess brought it to a Persian king, who was so delighted with it, that he offered him in return whatever reward he might ask. The inventor said he wished only a grain of wheat, doubled as many times as there were squares on the chessboard; that is, one grain for the first square, two for the second, four for the third, and so on to sixty-four. This the king readily granted, but when the amount was reckoned up, he had not wheat enough in his whole kingdom to pay it.

\(^{675}\)Their appointed place or whereabout.
And ever will, where they have ever been.

And she, who saw the dubious meditations
Within my mind, “The primal circles,” said,
“Have shown thee Seraphim and Cherubim.”

Thus rapidly they follow their own bonds,
To be as like the point as most they can,
And can as far as they are high in vision.

Those other Loves, that round about them go,
Thrones of the countenance divine are called.

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676 Thomas Aquinas, the Doctor Angelicus of the Schools, treats the subject of Angels at great length in the first volume of his Summa Theologica, from Quæst. L. to LXIV., and from Quæst. CVI. to CXIV. he constantly quotes Dionysius, sometimes giving his exact words, but oftener amplifying and interpreting his meaning. In Quæst. CVIII. he discusses the names of the Angels, and of the Seraphim and Cherubim speaks as follows:--

“The name of Seraphim is not given from love alone, but from excess of love, which the name of heat or burning implies. Hence Dionysius (Cap. VII. Coel. Hier., a princ.) interprets the name Seraphim according to the properties of fire, in which is excess of heat. In fire, however, we may consider three things. First, a certain motion which is upward, and which is continuous: by which is signified, that they are unchangingly moving towards God. Secondly, its active power, which is heat; ... and by this is signified the influence of this kind of Angels, which they exercise powerfully on those beneath them, exciting them to a sublime fervour, and thoroughly purifying them by burning. Thirdly, in fire its brightness must be considered; and this signifies that such angels have within themselves an inextinguishable light, and that they perfectly illuminate others.”

“In the same way the name of Cherubim is given from a certain excess of knowledge; hence it is interpreted plenitudo scientiae which Dionysius (Cap. VII. Coel. Hier., a princ.) explains in four ways: first, as perfect vision of God; secondly, full reception of divine light; thirdly, that in God himself they contemplate the order of the things emanating from God; fourthly, that, being themselves full of this kind of knowledge, they copiously pour it out upon others.”

677 The love of God, which holds them fast to this central point as with a band. Job XXXVIII. 31: “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleides, or loose the bands of Orion?”

678 Canto IX. 61: “Above us there are mirrors, Thrones you call them, From which shines out on us God Judicant.”

Of the Thrones, Thomas Aquinas, Sum. Theol., CVIII. 5, says: “The Order of Thrones excels the inferior Orders in this, that it has the power of perceiving immediately in God the reasons of the Divine operations ... Dionysius (Cap. VII. Coel. Hier.) explains the name of Thrones from their resemblance to material chairs, in which four things are to be considered. First, in reference to position, because chairs are raised above the ground; and thus these Angels, which are called Thrones, are raised so far that they can perceive immediately in God the reasons of things. Secondly, in material chairs firmness must be considered, because one sits firmly in them; but this is e converso, for the Angels themselves are made firm by God. Thirdly, because the chair receives the sitter, and he can be carried in it; and thus the Angels receive God in themselves, and in a certain sense carry
Because they terminate the primal Triad.

And thou shouldst know that they all have delight
As much as their own vision penetrates
The Truth, in which all intellect finds rest.

From this it may be seen how blessedness
Is founded in the faculty which sees, 679
And not in that which loves, and follows next;

And of this seeing merit is the measure,
Which is brought forth by grace, and by good will; 680
Thus on from grade to grade doth it proceed.

The second Triad, which is germinating
In such wise in this sempiternal spring, 681
That no nocturnal Aries despoils,

Perpetually hosanna warbles forth
With threefold melody, that sounds in three
Orders of joy, with which it is intrined.

The three Divine are in this hierarchy,
First the Dominions, and the Virtues next; 682

him to their inferiors. Fourthly, from their shape, because the chair is open on one side, to receive the sitter; and thus these Angels, by their promptitude, are open to receive God and to serve him.”

679Dante, Convito, I. 1, says: “Knowledge is the ultimate perfection of our soul, in which consists our ultimate felicity.” It was one of the great questions of the Schools, whether the beatitude of the soul consisted in knowing or in loving. Thomas Aquinas maintains the former part of this proposition, and Duns Scotus the latter.

680By the grace of God, and the Co-operation of the good will of the recipient.

681The perpetual spring of Paradise, which knows no falling autumnal leaves, no season in which Aries is a nocturnal sign.

682Thomas Aquinas, Sum. Theol., I. Quæst. CVIII. 6, says: “And thus Dionysius (Cap. VII. Coel. Hier.), from the names of the Orders inferring the properties thereof, placed in the first Hierarchy those Orders whose names were given them in reference to God, namely, the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; but in the middle Hierarchy he placed those whose names designate a certain common government or disposition, that is, the Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; and in the third Order he placed those whose names designate the execution of the work, namely, the Principalities, Angels, and Archangels. But to the rule of government three things belong, the first of which is the distinction of the things to be done, which is the province of the Dominions; the second is to provide the faculty of fulfilling, which belongs to the Virtues; but the third is to arrange in what way the things prescribed, or defined, can be fulfilled, so that some one may execute them, and this belongs to the Powers. But the execution of the angelic ministry consists in announcing things divine. In the execution, however, of any act, there are some who begin the act, and lead the others, as in singing the precentors, and in battle those who lead and direct
And the third order is that of the Powers.

Then in the dances twain penultimate
The Principalities and Archangels wheel;
The last is wholly of angelic sports.

These orders upward all of them are gazing,
And downward so prevail, that unto God
They all attracted are and all attract.

And Dionysius with so great desire 683
To contemplate these Orders set himself,
He named them and distinguished them as I do.

But Gregory afterwards dissented from him; 684
Wherefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes
Within this heaven, he at himself did smile.

And if so much of secret truth a mortal
Proffered on earth, I would not have thee marvel,
For he who saw it here revealed it to him, 685
With much more of the truth about these circles.”

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683 The Athenian convert of St. Paul. Acts XVII. 34: “Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed; among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite.” Dante places him among the theologians in the Heaven of the Sun. To Dionysius was attributed a work, called The Celestial Hierarchy, which the great storehouse of all that relates the nature and operations of Angels. Venturi calls him “the false Areo-agite;” and Dalbaeus, De Script. Dion. Areop., says that this work was not known till the sixth century. The Legenda Aurea confounds St. Dionysius the Areopagite with St. Denis, Bishop of Paris in the third century, and patron saint of France. It says he was called the Areopagite from the quarter where he lived; that he was surnamed Theosoph – the Wise in God; that he was converted, not by the preaching of St. Paul, but by a miracle the saint wrought in restoring a blind man to sight; and that “the woman named Damaris,” who was converted with him, was his wife.

684 St. Gregory differed from St. Dionysius in the arrangement of the Orders, placing the Principalities in the second triad, and the Virtues in the third.

685 St. Paul, who, 2 Corinthians XII. 4, “was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”
Figure 16: They so many were, their number makes more millions than the doubling of the chess.
At what time both the children of Latona, \(^{686}\)
Surmounted by the Ram and by the Scales, \(^{687}\)
Together make a zone of the horizon, \(^{688}\)
As long as from the time the zenith holds them
In equipoise, till from that girdle both
Changing their hemisphere disturb the balance,
So long, her face depicted with a smile,
Did Beatrice keep silence while she gazed
Fixedly at the point which had o’ercome me. \(^{689}\)
Then she began: “I say, and I ask not
What thou dost wish to hear, for I have seen it \(^{690}\)
Where centres every When and every *Ubi*. \(^{691}\)
Not to acquire some good unto himself,
Which is impossible, but that his splendour \(^{692}\)
In its resplendency may say, ‘*Subsisto,*’
In his eternity outside of time, \(^{693}\)

\(^{686}\)The Primum Mobile, or Crystalline Heaven, continued. The children of Latona are Apollo and Diana – the Sun and Moon.

\(^{687}\)When the Sun is in Aries and the Moon in Libra, and when the Sun is setting and the full Moon rising, so that they are both on the horizon at the same time.

\(^{688}\)So long as they remained thus equipoised, as if in the opposite scales of an invisible balance suspended from the zenith.

\(^{689}\)God, whom Dante could not look upon, even as reflected in the eyes of Beatrice.

\(^{690}\)What Dante wishes to know is, where, when, and how the Angels were created.

\(^{691}\)Every When and every Where.

\(^{692}\)Dante, *Convito*, III. 114, defines splendour as “reflected light.” Here it means the creation; the reflected light of God.

*Job* XXXVIII. 7: “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” And again, 35: “Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?”

\(^{693}\)Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I. Quæst. LXI. 3: “The angelic nature was made before
Outside all other limits, as it pleased him,
Into new Loves the Eternal Love unfolded. 694

Nor as if torpid did he lie before;
For neither after nor before proceeded
The going forth of God upon these waters. 695

Matter and Form unmingled and conjoined 696
Came into being that had no defect,
E’en as three arrows from a three-stringed bow.

And as in glass, in amber, or in crystal
A sunbeam flashes so, that from its coming
To its full being is no interval,

So from its Lord did the triform effect
Ray forth into its being all together,
Without discrimination of beginning.

Order was con-created and constructed
In substances, and summit of the world
Were those wherein the pure act was produced. 697

Pure potentiality held the lowest part; 698
Midway bound potentiality with act 699
Such bond that it shall never be unbound. 700

Jerome has written unto you of angels 701

694In the creation of the Angels. Some editions read nine Amori – the nine Loves, or nine choirs of Angels.
695Genesis I. 2: “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”
696Pure Matter, or the elements; pure Form, or the Angels; and the two conjoined, the human race. Form, in the language of the Schools, and as defined by Thomas Aquinas, is the principle “by which we first think, whether it be called intellect, or intellectual soul.”
697The Angels. Thomas Aquinas, Sum. Theol., I. Quæst. L. 2, says “Form is act. Therefore whatever is form alone, is pure act.”
698Pure matter, which is passive and only possesses potentiality, or power of assuming various forms when united with mind. “It is called potentiality,” comments Buti, “because it can receive many forms; and the forms are called act, because they change, and act by changing matter into various forms.”
699The union of the soul and body in man, who occupies the intermediate place between Angels and pure matter.
700This bond, though suspended by death, will be resumed again at the resurrection, and remain for ever.
701St. Jerome, the greatest of the Latin Fathers of the Church, and author of the translation of the Scriptures known as the Vulgate, was born of wealthy parents in Dalmatia, in 342. He studied at Rome under the grammarian Donatus, and became a lawyer in that
Created a long lapse of centuries
Or ever yet the other world was made;

But written is this truth in many places 702
By writers of the Holy Ghost, and thou 703
Shalt see it, if thou lookest well thereat.

And even reason seeth it somewhat,
For it would not concede that for so long
Could be the motors without their perfection. 704

Now dost thou know both where and when these Loves
Created were, and how; so that extinct
In thy desire already are three fires.

Nor could one reach, in counting, unto twenty
So swiftly, as a portion of these angels
Disturbed the subject of your elements. 705

The rest remained, and they began this art
Which thou discernest, with so great delight
That never from their circling do they cease.

The occasion of the fall was the accursed
Presumption of that One, whom thou hast seen 706
By all the burden of the world constrained.

---

The pride of Lucifer, who lies at the centre of the earth, towards which all things gravitate, and “Down upon which thrust all the other rocks.”
Those whom thou here beholdest modest were
To recognise themselves as of that goodness
Which made them apt for so much understanding;

On which account their vision was exalted
By the enlightening grace and their own merit,
So that they have a full and steadfast will.

I would not have thee doubt, but certain be,
'Tis meritorious to receive this grace, \(^{707}\)
According as the affection opens to it.

Now round about in this consistory
Much mayst thou contemplate, if these my words
Be gathered up, without all further aid.

But since upon the earth, throughout your schools,
They teach that such is the angelic nature
That it doth hear, and recollect, and will,

More will I say, that thou mayst see unmixed
The truth that is confounded there below,
Equivocating in such like prelections.

These substances, since in God’s countenance
They jocund were, turned not away their sight
From that wherefrom not anything is hidden;
Hence they have not their vision intercepted
By object new, and hence they do not need
To recollect, through interrupted thought.

So that below, not sleeping, people dream,
Believing they speak truth, and not believing;
And in the last is greater sin and shame.

Below you do not journey by one path
Philosophising; so transporteth you
Love of appearance and the thought thereof.

And even this above here is endured
With less disdain, than when is set aside
The Holy Writ, or when it is distorted.

They think not there how much of blood it costs
To sow it in the world, and how he pleases

\(^{707}\) The merit consists in being willing to receive this grace.
Who in humility keeps close to it.

Each striveth for appearance, and doth make
His own inventions; and these treated are
By preachers, and the Evangel holds its peace.

One sayeth that the moon did backward turn,
In the Passion of Christ, and interpose herself
So that the sunlight reached not down below;

And lies; for of its own accord the light
Hid itself; whence to Spaniards and to Indians,
As to the Jews, did such eclipse respond.

Florence has not so many Lapi and Bindi 708
As fables such as these, that every year
Are shouted from the pulpit back and forth,

In such wise that the lambs, who do not know,
Come back from pasture fed upon the wind,
And not to see the harm doth not excuse them.

Christ did not to his first disciples say,
‘Go forth, and to the world preach idle tales,’
But unto them a true foundation gave;

And this so loudly sounded from their lips,
That, in the warfare to enkindle Faith,
They made of the Evangel shields and lances.

Now men go forth with jests and drolleries
To preach, and if but well the people laugh,
The hood puffs out, and nothing more is asked.

But in the cowl there nestles such a bird, 709
That, if the common people were to see it,
They would perceive what pardons they confide in,

For which so great on earth has grown the folly,
That, without proof of any testimony,
To each indulgence they would flock together.

708 Lapo is the abbreviation of Jacopo, and Bindi of Aldobrandi, both familiar names in
Florence.

709 The Devil, who is often represented in early Christian art under the shape of a coal-
black bird.
By this Saint Anthony his pig doth fatten, 710
And many others, who are worse than pigs,
Paying in money without mark of coinage. 711

But since we have digressed abundantly,
Turn back thine eyes forthwith to the right path,
So that the way be shortened with the time.

This nature doth so multiply itself 712
In numbers, that there never yet was speech
Nor mortal fancy that can go so far.

And if thou notest that which is revealed
By Daniel, thou wilt see that in his thousands 713
Number determinate is kept concealed.

The primal light, that all irradiates it, 714
By modes as many is received therein,
As are the splendours wherewith it is mated. 715

Hence, inasmuch as on the act conceptive
The affection followeth, of love the sweetness 716
Therein diversely fervid is or tepid.

The height behold now and the amplitude
Of the eternal power, since it hath made
Itself so many mirrors, where 'tis broken,
One in itself remaining as before.”

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710 In early paintings the swine is the symbol of St. Anthony, as the cherub of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, and the eagle of St. John. There is an old tradition that St. Anthony was once swineherd. This is quite a mistake. The hog was the representative of the demon of sensuality and gluttony, which Anthony is supposed to have vanquished by the exercises of piety and by divine aid. The ancient custom of placing in all his effigies a black pig at his feet, or under his feet, gave rise to the superstition that this unclean animal was especially dedicated to him, and under his protection. The monks of the Order of St. Anthony kept herds of consecrated pigs, which were allowed to feed at the public charge, and which it was a profanation to steal or kill: hence the proverb about the fatness of a 'Tantony pig.’

711 Giving false indulgences, without the true stamp upon them, in return for the alms received.

712 The nature of the Angels.

713 Daniel VII. 10: “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.”

714 That irradiates this angelic nature.

715 The splendours are the reflected lights, or the Angels.

716 The fervour of the Angels is proportioned to their capacity of receiving the divine light.
Canto 30

Perchance six thousand miles remote from us
Is glowing the sixth hour, and now this world
Inclines its shadow almost to a level,
When the mid-heaven begins to make itself
So deep to us, that here and there a star
Ceases to shine so far down as this depth,
And as advances bright exceedingly
The handmaid of the sun, the heaven is closed
Light after light to the most beautiful;
Not otherwise the Triumph, which for ever
Plays round about the point that vanquished me,
Seeming enclosed by what itself encloses,
Little by little from my vision faded;
Whereat to turn mine eyes on Beatrice
My seeing nothing and my love constrained me.

If what has hitherto been said of her
Were all concluded in a single praise,
Scant would it be to serve the present turn.
Not only does the beauty I beheld
Transcend ourselves, but truly I believe
Its Maker only may enjoy it all.

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717 The ascent to the Empyrean, the tenth and last Heaven. Of this Heaven, Dante, Convito, II. 4, says: “This is the sovereign edifice of the world, in which the whole world is included, and outside of which nothing is. And it is not in space, but was formed solely in the primal Mind, which the Greeks call Protonope. This is that magnificence of which the Psalmist spake, when he says to God, ‘Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.’ ”

718 The sixth hour is noon, and when noon is some six thousand miles away from us, the dawn is approaching, the shadow of the earth lies almost on a plane with it, and gradually the stars disappear.

719 The nine circles of Angels, described in Canto XXVIII.
Vanquished do I confess me by this passage
More than by problem of his theme was ever
O'ercome the comic or the tragic poet;

For as the sun the sight that trembles most,
Even so the memory of that sweet smile
My mind depriveth of its very self.

From the first day that I beheld her face
In this life, to the moment of this look,
The sequence of my song has ne'er been severed;

But now perforce this sequence must desist
From following her beauty with my verse,
As every artist at his uttermost.

Such as I leave her to a greater fame
Than any of my trumpet, which is bringing
Its arduous matter to a final close,

With voice and gesture of a perfect leader
She recommenced: “We from the greatest body
Have issued to the heaven that is pure light;

Light intellectual replete with love,
Love of true good replete with ecstasy,
Ecstasy that transcendeth every sweetness.

Here shalt thou see the one host and the other
Of Paradise, and one in the same aspects
Which at the final judgment thou shalt see.”

720 From the Crystalline Heaven to the Empyrean. Dante, Convito, II. 15, makes the Empyrean the symbol of Theology – the Divine Science: “The Empyrean Heaven, by its peace, resembles the Divine Science, which is full of all peace; and which suffers no strife of opinions or sophistical arguments, because of the exceeding certitude of its subject, which is God. And of this he says to his disciples, ‘My peace I give unto you; my peace I leave you;’ giving and leaving them his doctrine, which is this science of which I speak. Of this Solomon says: ‘There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; my dove, my undefiled, is but one.’ All sciences he calls queens and paramours and virgins; and this he calls a dove, because it is without blemish of strife; and this he calls perfect, because it makes us perfectly to see the truth in which our soul has rest.”

721 Philippians IV. 7: “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”

722 The Angels and the souls of the saints.

723 The Angels will be seen in the same aspect after the last judgment as before; but the souls of the saints will wear “the twofold garments,” spoken of in Canto XXV. 92, the spiritual body, and the glorified earthly body.
Even as a sudden lightning that disperses
The visual spirits, so that it deprives
The eye of impress from the strongest objects,
Thus round about me flashed a living light,
And left me swathed around with such a veil
Of its effulgence, that I nothing saw.

"Ever the Love which quieteth this heaven
Welcomes into itself with such salute,
To make the candle ready for its flame."

No sooner had within me these brief words
An entrance found, than I perceived myself
To be uplifted over my own power,
And I with vision new rekindled me,
Such that no light whatever is so pure
But that mine eyes were fortified against it.

And light I saw in fashion of a river
Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt two banks
Depicted with an admirable Spring.
Out of this river issued living sparks,
And on all sides sank down into the flowers,
Like unto rubies that are set in gold;
And then, as if inebriate with the odours,
They plunged again into the wondrous torrent,
And as one entered issued forth another.

"The high desire, that now inflames and moves thee
To have intelligence of what thou seest,
Pleaseth me all the more, the more it swells.
But of this water it behoves thee drink
Before so great a thirst in thee be slaked."
Thus said to me the sunshine of mine eyes;
And added: "The river and the topazes
Going in and out, and the laughing of the herbage,

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724 Daniel VII. 10: "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him." And Revelation XXII. 1: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

725 The sparks are Angels, and the flowers the souls of the blessed.

726 For the mystic virtues of the ruby, see Canto IX. note to line 69.
Are of their truth foreshadowing prefices;
Not that these things are difficult in themselves,
But the deficiency is on thy side,
For yet thou hast not vision so exalted.”

There is no babe that leaps so suddenly
With face towards the milk, if he awake
Much later than his usual custom is,
As I did, that I might make better mirrors
Still of mine eyes, down stooping to the wave
Which flows that we therein be better made.
And even as the penthouse of mine eyelids
Drank of it, it forthwith appeared to me
Out of its length to be transformed to round.
Then as a folk who have been under masks
Seem other than before, if they divest
The semblance not their own they disappeared in,
Thus into greater pomp were changed for me
The flowerets and the sparks, so that I saw
Both of the Courts of Heaven made manifest.
O splendour of God! by means of which I saw
The lofty triumph of the realm veracious,
Give me the power to say how it I saw!

There is a light above, which visible
Makes the Creator unto every creature,
Who only in beholding Him has peace,
And it expands itself in circular form
To such extent, that its circumference
Would be too large a girdle for the sun.
The semblance of it is all made of rays
Reflected from the top of Primal Motion,
Which takes therefrom vitality and power.
And as a hill in water at its base
Mirrors itself, as if to see its beauty
When affluent most in verdure and in flowers,
So, ranged aloft all round about the light,
Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand
All who above there have from us returned.
And if the lowest row collect within it
So great a light, how vast the amplitude
Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves!

My vision in the vastness and the height
Lost not itself, but comprehended all
The quantity and quality of that gladness.

There near and far nor add nor take away;
For there where God immediately doth govern,
The natural law in naught is relevant.

Into the yellow of the Rose Eternal
That spreads, and multiplies, and breathes an odour
Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun,

As one who silent is and fain would speak,
Me Beatrice drew on, and said: “Behold
Of the white stoles how vast the convent is!

Behold how vast the circuit of our city!
Behold our seats so filled to overflowing,
That here henceforward are few people wanting!

On that great throne whereon thine eyes are fixed
For the crown’s sake already placed upon it,
Before thou suppest at this wedding feast
Shall sit the soul (that is to be Augustus
On earth) of noble Henry, who shall come
To redress Italy ere she be ready.

Blind covetousness, that casts its spell upon you,
Has made you like unto the little child,
Who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse.

And in the sacred forum then shall be
A Prefect such, that openly or covert
On the same road he will not walk with him.

But long of God he will not be endured
In holy office; he shall be thrust down
Where Simon Magus is for his deserts,
And make him of Alagna lower go!”

Pope Boniface VIII., a native of Alagna, now Anagni. Dante has already his punishment prepared. He is to be thrust head downward into a narrow hole in the rock of Malebolge, and to be driven down still lower when Clement V. shall follow him.
Canto 31

IN fashion then as of a snow-white rose 728
Displayed itself to me the saintly host,
Whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride,

But the other host, that flying sees and sings
The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
And the goodness that created it so noble,

Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers
One moment, and the next returns again
To where its labour is to sweetness turned,

Sank into the great flower, that is adorned
With leaves so many, and thence reascended
To where its love abideth evermore.

Their faces had they all of living flame,
And wings of gold, and all the rest so white
No snow unto that limit doth attain.

From bench to bench, into the flower descending,
They carried something of the peace and ardour
Which by the fanning of their flanks they won.

Nor did the interposing 'twixt the flower
And what was o'er it of such plenitude
Of flying shapes impede the sight and splendour;

Because the light divine so penetrates
The universe, according to its merit,
That naught can be an obstacle against it.

This realm secure and full of gladsomeness,
Crowded with ancient people and with modern,
Unto one mark had all its look and love.

728The White Rose of Paradise.
O Trinal Light, that in a single star
Sparkling upon their sight so satisfies them,
Look down upon our tempest here below!

If the barbarians, coming from some region
That every day by Helice is covered, 729
Revolving with her son whom she delights in,
Beholding Rome and all her noble works, 730
Were wonder-struck, what time the Lateran 731
Above all mortal things was eminent,—

I who to the divine had from the human,
From time unto eternity, had come,
From Florence to a people just and sane,

With what amazement must I have been filled!
Truly between this and the joy, it was
My pleasure not to hear, and to be mute.

And as a pilgrim who delighteth him
In gazing round the temple of his vow,
And hopes some day to retell how it was,

So through the living light my way pursuing
Directed I mine eyes o’er all the ranks,
Now up, now down, and now all round about.

Faces I saw of charity persuasive,
Embellished by His light and their own smile,
And attitudes adorned with every grace.

The general form of Paradise already
My glance had comprehended as a whole,
In no part hitherto remaining fixed,

729 The nymph Callisto, or Helice, was changed by Jupiter into the constellation of the Great Bear, and her son into that of the Little Bear. See Purgatorio XXV., note to line 131.
730 Rome and her superb edifices, before the removal of the Papal See to Avignon.
731 Speaking of Petrarch’s visit to Rome, Mr. Norton, Travel and Study in Italy, p. 288, says: “The great church of St. John Lateran, ‘the mother and head of all the churches of the city and the world,’ – mater urbis et orbis, – had been almost destroyed by fire, with its adjoining palace, and the houses of the canons, on the Eve of St. John, in 1308. The palace and the canons’ houses were rebuilt not long after; but at the time of Petrarch’s latest visit to Rome, and for years afterward, the church was without a roof, and its walls were ruinous. The poet addressed three at least of the Popes at Avignon with urgent appeals that this disgrace should no longer be permitted, but the Popes gave no heed to his words; for the ruin of Roman churches, or of Rome itself, was a matter of little concern to these Transalpine prelates.”
And round I turned me with rekindled wish
My Lady to interrogate of things
Concerning which my mind was in suspense.

One thing I meant, another answered me;
I thought I should see Beatrice, and saw
An Old Man habited like the glorious people.

O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks
With joy benign, in attitude of pity
As to a tender father is becoming.

And “She, where is she?” instantly I said;
Whence he: “To put an end to thy desire,
Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.

And if thou lookest up to the third round
Of the first rank, again shalt thou behold her
Upon the throne her merits have assigned her.”

Without reply I lifted up mine eyes,
And saw her, as she made herself a crown
Reflecting from herself the eternal rays.

Not from that region which the highest thunders
Is any mortal eye so far removed,
In whatsoever sea it deepest sinks,

As there from Beatrice my sight; but this
Was nothing unto me; because her image
Descended not to me by medium blurred.

“O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong,
And who for my salvation didst endure
In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,

Of whatsoever things I have beheld,
As coming from thy power and from thy goodness
I recognise the virtue and the grace.

Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom,
By all those ways, by all the expedients,
Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.

Preserve towards me thy magnificence,
So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed,

732 From the highest regions of the air to the lowest depth of the sea.
Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."
Thus I implored; and she, so far away,
Smiled, as it seemed, and looked once more at me;
Then unto the eternal fountain turned.
And said the Old Man holy: “That thou mayst
Accomplish perfectly thy journeying,
Whereunto prayer and holy love have sent me,
Fly with thine eyes all round about this garden;
For seeing it will discipline thy sight
Farther to mount along the ray divine.
And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn
Wholly with love, will grant us every grace,
Because that I her faithful Bernard am.”
733
As he who peradventure from Croatia
Cometh to gaze at our Veronica, 734
Who through its ancient fame is never sated,
But says in thought, the while it is displayed,
“My Lord, Christ Jesus, God of very God,
Now was your semblance made like unto this?”
Even such was I while gazing at the living
Charity of the man, who in this world

733St. Bernard, the great Abbot of Clairvaux, the Doctor Mellifluus of the Church, and
preacher of the disastrous Second Crusade, was born of noble parents in the village of
Fontaine, near Dijon, in Burgundy, in the year 1190. After studying at Paris, at the age
of twenty he entered the Benedictine monastery of Citeaux; and when, five years later,
this monastery had become overcrowded with monks, he was sent out to found a new
one. Bernard led his followers to a wilderness, called the Valley of Wormwood, and there,
at his biding, arose the since renowned abbey of Clairvaux. They felled the trees, built
themselves huts, tilled and sowed the ground, and changed whole face of the country
round; that which had been a dismal solitude, the resort of wolves and robbers, became
a land of vines and corn, rich, populous, and prosperous. This incident forms the subject
of one Murillo’s most famous paintings, and suggestive of the saint’s intense devotion to
the Virgin, which Dante expresses in this line.
734The Veronica is the portrait of our Saviour impressed upon a veil or kerchief, pre-
served with great care in the church of the Santi Apostoli at Rome. Of the Veronica there
are four copies in existence, each claiming to be the original; one at Rome, another at
Paris, a third at Laon, and a fourth at Xaen in Andalusia. The traveller who has crossed
the Sierra Morena cannot easily forget the stone column, surmounted by an iron cross,
which marks the boundary between La Mancha and Andalusia, with the melancholy
stone face upon it, and the inscription, “El verdadero Retrato de La Santa Cara del Dios de
Xaen.”
By contemplation tasted of that peace.

“Thou son of grace, this jocund life,” began he,
“Will not be known to thee by keeping ever
Thine eyes below here on the lowest place;

But mark the circles to the most remote,
Until thou shalt behold enthroned the Queen
To whom this realm is subject and devoted.”

I lifted up mine eyes, and as at morn
The oriental part of the horizon
Surpasses that wherein the sun goes down,

Thus, as if going with mine eyes from vale
To mount, I saw a part in the remoteness
Surpass in splendour all the other front.

And even as there where we await the pole
That Phaeton drove badly, blazes more
The light, and is on either side diminished,

So likewise that pacific oriflamme
Gleamed brightest in the centre, and each side
In equal measure did the flame abate.

And at that centre, with their wings expanded,
More than a thousand jubilant Angels saw I,
Each differing in effulgence and in kind.

I saw there at their sports and at their songs
A beauty smiling, which the gladness was
Within the eyes of all the other saints;

And if I had in speaking as much wealth
As in imagining, I should not dare
To attempt the smallest part of its delight.

Bernard, as soon as he beheld mine eyes
Fixed and intent upon its fervid fervour,
His own with such affection turned to her
That it made mine more ardent to behold.

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735 The Virgin Mary, Regina Coeli.
736 The chariot of the sun.
Figure 17: In fashion then as of a snow-white rose displayed itself to me the saintly host...
Figure 18: “Thou shalt behold enthroned the Queen to whom this realm is subject and devoted.”
Paradiso

Canto 32

Absorbed in his delight, that contemplator 737
Assumed the willing office of a teacher,
And gave beginning to these holy words:

“The wound that Mary closed up and anointed,
She at her feet who is so beautiful, 738
She is the one who opened it and pierced it.

Within that order which the third seats make
Is seated Rachel, lower than the other, 739
With Beatrice, in manner as thou seest.

Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, and her who was
Ancestress of the Singer, who for dole 740
Of the misdeed said, ‘Miserere mei,’ 741

Canst thou behold from seat to seat descending
Down in gradation, as with each one’s name
I through the Rose go down from leaf to leaf.

And downward from the seventh row, even as
Above the same, succeed the Hebrew women,
Dividing all the tresses of the flower;

Because, according to the view which Faith
In Christ had taken, these are the partition
By which the sacred stairways are divided.

Upon this side, where perfect is the flower

737 St. Bernard, absorbed in contemplation of the Virgin.
738 Eve. St. Augustine, Serm. 18 De Sanctis, says: “Illā percussit, ista sanavit.”
739 Rachel is an emblem of Divine Contemplation. Inferno II. 101, Beatrice says: “And came unto the place where I was sitting with the ancient Rachel.”
740 Ruth the Moabitess, ancestress of King David.
741 “Have mercy upon me,” are the first words of Psalm II. – a Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him.
With each one of its petals, seated are
Those who believed in Christ who was to come. 742

Upon the other side, where intersected
With vacant spaces are the semicircles,
Are those who looked to Christ already come. 743

And as, upon this side, the glorious seat
Of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats
Below it, such a great division make,
So opposite doth that of the great John, 744
Who, ever holy, desert and martyrdom
Endured, and afterwards two years in Hell.

And under him thus to divide were chosen
Francis, and Benedict, and Augustine,
And down to us the rest from round to round.

Behold now the high providence divine;
For one and other aspect of the Faith
In equal measure shall this garden fill.

And know that downward from that rank which cleaves 745
Midway the sequence of the two divisions,
Not by their proper merit are they seated;
But by another’s under fixed conditions; 746
For these are spirits one and all assoiled
Before they any true election had.

Well canst thou recognise it in their faces,
And also in their voices puerile,
If thou regard them well and hearken to them.

Now doubtest thou, and doubting thou art silent;
But I will loosen for thee the strong bond

742 The saints of the Old Testament.
743 The saints of the New Testament.
744 John the Baptist, seated at the point of the mystic Rose, opposite to the Virgin Mary.
He died two years before Christ’s resurrection, and during these two years was in the Limbo of the Fathers.
745 The row of seats which divides the Rose horizontally, and crosses the two vertical lines of division, made by the seat of the Virgin Mary and those of the other Hebrew women on one side, and on the other the seats of John the Baptist and of the other saints of the New Testament beneath him.
746 That is to say, by the faith of their parents, by circumcision, and by baptism, as explained line 76 et seq.
In which thy subtile fancies hold thee fast.

Within the amplitude of this domain
No casual point can possibly find place,
No more than sadness can, or thirst, or hunger;

For by eternal law has been established
Whatever thou beholdest, so that closely
The ring is fitted to the finger here.

And therefore are these people, festinate,\textsuperscript{747}
Unto true life, not \textit{sine causa} here
More and less excellent among themselves.

The King, by means of whom this realm reposes
In so great love and in so great delight
That no will ventureth to ask for more,

In his own joyous aspect every mind
Creating, at his pleasure dowers with grace
Diversely; and let here the effect suffice.

And this is clearly and expressly noted
For you in Holy Scripture, in those twins\textsuperscript{748}
Who in their mother had their anger roused.

According to the colour of the hair,\textsuperscript{749}
Therefore, with such a grace the light supreme
Consenteth that they worthily be crowned.

Without, then, any merit of their deeds,
Stationed are they in different gradations,
Differing only in their first acuteness.\textsuperscript{750}

'Tis true that in the early centuries,\textsuperscript{751}
With innocence, to work out their salvation
Sufficient was the faith of parents only.

\textsuperscript{747} \textit{Festinata gente} – dying in infancy; and thus hurried into the life eternal.
\textsuperscript{748} Jacob and Esau. \textit{Genesis} XXV. 22: “And the children struggled together within her.”
And \textit{Romans} IX. 11: “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.”
\textsuperscript{749} Buti comments thus: “As it pleased God to give black hair to one, and to the other red, so it pleased him to give more grace to one than to the other.” And the \textit{Ottimo} says: “One was red, the other black; which colours denote the temperaments of men, and accordingly the inclination of their minds.”
\textsuperscript{750} The keenness of vision with which they are originally endowed.
\textsuperscript{751} From Adam to Abraham.
After the earlier ages were completed, 752
Behoved it that the males by circumcision
Unto their innocent wings should virtue add;
But after that the time of grace had come
Without the baptism absolute of Christ,
Such innocence below there was retained.
Look now into the face that unto Christ 753
Hath most resemblance; for its brightness only
Is able to prepare thee to see Christ.”

On her did I behold so great a gladness
Rain down, borne onward in the holy minds
Created through that altitude to fly,
That whatsoever I had seen before
Did not suspend me in such admiration,
Nor show me such similitude of God.
And the same Love that first descended there, 754
“Ave Maria, gratia plena,” singing,
In front of her his wings expanded wide.

Unto the canticle divine responded
From every part the court beatified,
So that each sight became serener for it. 755

“O holy father, who for me endurest
To be below here, leaving the sweet place
In which thou sittest by eternal lot,
Who is the Angel that with so much joy
Into the eyes is looking of our Queen,
Enamoured so that he seems made of fire?”

Thus I again recourse had to the teaching
Of that one who delighted him in Mary 756

752 From Abraham to Christ. Genesis XVII. 10: “This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”
753 The face of the Virgin Mary.
754 The Angel Gabriel. Luke I. 28: “And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”
755 The countenance of each saint became brighter.
756 The word in the original is abellieva, which Dante here uses in the sense of the Provençal, abellis, of Purgatorio XXVI. 140. He uses the word in the same sense in Convito, II. 7:
As doth the star of morning in the sun.  

And he to me: “Such gallantry and grace
As there can be in Angel and in soul,
All is in him; and thus we fain would have it;
Because he is the one who bore the palm
Down unto Mary, when the Son of God
To take our burden on himself decreed.

But now come onward with thine eyes, as I
Speaking shall go, and note the great patricians
Of this most just and merciful of empires.
Those two that sit above there most enrapture
As being very near unto Augusta,
Are as it were the two roots of this Rose.
He who upon the left is near her placed
The father is, by whose audacious taste
The human species so much bitter tastes.

Upon the right thou seest that ancient father
Of Holy Church, into whose keeping Christ
The keys committed of this lovely flower.
And he who all the evil days beheld,
Before his death, of her the beauteous bride
Who with the spear and with the nails was won,
Beside him sits, and by the other rests
That leader under whom on manna lived
The people ingrate, fickle, and stiff-necked.

Opposite Peter seest thou Anna seated.

“In all speech the speaker is chiefly bent on persuasion, that is, on pleasing the audience, all’ abbellire dell’ audienza, which is the source of all other persuasions.”

757 “The star of morning delighting in the sun,” is from Canto VIII. 12, where Dante speaks of Venus as “The star that woos, the sun, now following, now in front.”
758 The Virgin Mary, the Queen of this empire.
759 Adam.
760 St. Peter.
761 St. John, who lived till the evil days and persecutions of the Church, the bride of Christ, won by the crucifixion.
762 Moses.
763 Exodus XXXII. 9: “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.”
764 Anna, mother of the Virgin Mary.
So well content to look upon her daughter,
Her eyes she moves not while she sings *Hosanna*.

And opposite the eldest household father
Lucia sits, she who thy Lady moved 765
When to rush downward thou didst bend thy brows.

But since the moments of thy vision fly,
Here will we make full stop, as a good tailor
Who makes the gown according to his cloth,

And unto the first Love will turn our eyes,
That looking upon Him thou penetrate
As far as possible through his effulgence.

Truly, lest peradventure thou recede,
Moving thy wings believing to advance, 766
By prayer behoves it that grace be obtained;

Grace from that one who has the power to aid thee;
And thou shalt follow me with thy affection
That from my words thy heart turn not aside.”

And he began this holy orison.

---

765 Santa Lucia, virgin and martyr. Dante, *Inferno* II. 100, makes her, as the emblem of illuminating grace, intercede with Beatrice for his salvation.

766 Trusting only to thine own efforts.
Canto 33

"THOU Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,

Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make himself its creature.

Within thy womb rekindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.

Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountain-head of hope.

Lady, thou art so great, and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.

Not only thy benignity gives succour
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Foreruneth of its own accord the asking.

In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate’er of goodness is in any creature.

Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as here has seen
One after one the spiritual lives,

Supplicate thee through grace for so much power
That with his eyes he may uplift himself
Higher towards the uttermost salvation.

And I, who never burned for my own seeing
More than I do for his, all of my prayers
Proffer to thee, and pray they come not short,
That thou wouldst scatter from him every cloud
Of his mortality so with thy prayers,
That the Chief Pleasure be to him displayed.

Still farther do I pray thee, Queen, who canst
Whate’er thou wilt, that sound thou mayst preserve
After so great a vision his affections. 767

Let thy protection conquer human movements;
See Beatrice and all the blessed ones
My prayers to second clasp their hands to thee!”

The eyes beloved and revered of God,
Fastened upon the speaker, showed to us
How grateful unto her are prayers devout;

Then unto the Eternal Light they turned,
On which it is not credible could be
By any creature bent an eye so clear.

And I, who to the end of all desires
Was now approaching, even as I ought
The ardour of desire within me ended. 768

Bernard was beckoning unto me, and smiling,
That I should upward look; but I already
Was of my own accord such as he wished;

Because my sight, becoming purified,
Was entering more and more into the ray
Of the High Light which of itself is true.

From that time forward what I saw was greater
Than our discourse, that to such vision yields,
And yields the memory unto such excess.

Even as he is who seeth in a dream,
And after dreaming the imprinted passion
Remains, and to his mind the rest returns not,

Even such am I, for almost utterly

---

767 As St. Macarius said to his soul: “Having taken up thine abode in heaven, where thou hast God and his holy angels to converse with, see that thou descend not thence; regard not earthly things.”

768 Finished the ardour of desire in its accomplishment.
Ceases my vision, and distilleth yet
Within my heart the sweetness born of it;
Even thus the snow is in the sun unsealed,
Even thus upon the wind in the light leaves
Were the soothsayings of the Sibyl lost.

O Light Supreme, that dost so far uplift thee
From the conceits of mortals, to my mind
Of what thou didst appear re-lend a little,

And make my tongue of so great puissance,
That but a single sparkle of thy glory
It may bequeath unto the future people;
For by returning to my memory somewhat,
And by a little sounding in these verses,
More of thy victory shall be conceived!

I think the keenness of the living ray
Which I endured would have bewildered me,
If but my eyes had been averted from it;
And I remember that I was more bold
On this account to bear, so that I joined
My aspect with the Glory Infinite.

O grace abundant, by which I presumed
To fix my sight upon the Light Eternal,
So that the seeing I consumed therein!

I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up with love together in one volume,
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;
Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is one simple light.

The universal fashion of this knot

---

769 Luke IX. 62: “No man having put his hand to the pough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

770 Thomas Aquinas, Sum. Theol., I. Quæst. IV. 2: “If therefore God be the first efficient cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist pre-eminently in God.” And Buti: “In God are all things that are made, as in the First Cause, that foresees everything.”

771 Of all the commentaries which I have consulted, that of Buti alone sustains this rendering of the line. The rest interpret it, “What I say is but a simple or feeble glimmer of what I saw.”
Methinks I saw, since more abundantly
In saying this I feel that I rejoice.
   One moment is more lethargy to me,\textsuperscript{772}
   Than five and twenty centuries to the emprise
   That startled Neptune with the shade of Argo!
   My mind in this wise wholly in suspense,
   Steadfast, immovable, attentive gazed,
   And evermore with gazing grew enkindled.
   In presence of that light one such becomes,
   That to withdraw therefrom for other prospect
   It is impossible he e’er consent;
   Because the good, which object is of will,\textsuperscript{773}
   Is gathered all in this, and out of it
   That is defective which is perfect there.
   Shorter henceforward will my language fall
   Of what I yet remember, than an infant’s
   Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast.
   Not because more than one unmixed semblance
   Was in the living light on which I looked,
   For it is always what it was before;
   But through the sight, that fortified itself
   In me by looking, one appearance only
   To me was ever changing as I changed.\textsuperscript{774}
   Within the deep and luminous subsistence\textsuperscript{775}
   Of the High Light appeared to me three circles,\textsuperscript{776}

\textsuperscript{772}There are almost as many interpretations of this passage as there are commentators. The most intelligible is, that Dante forgot in a single moment more of the glory he had seen, than the world had forgotten in five-and-twenty centuries of the Argonautic expedition, when Neptune wondered at the shadow of the first ship that ever crossed the sea.

\textsuperscript{773}Aristotle, \textit{Ethics} I., 1, Gillies’s Tr.: “Since every art and every kind of knowledge, as well as all the actions and all the deliberations of men, constantly aim at something which they call good, good in general may be justly defined, that which all desire.”

\textsuperscript{774}In the same manner the reflection of the Griffin in Beatrice’s eyes, \textit{Purgatorio} XXXI. 124, is described as changing, while the object itself remained unchanged – “Think, Reader, if within myself I marvelled, when I beheld the thing itself stand stand still, and in its image it transformed itself.”

\textsuperscript{775}Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Sum. Theol.}, I. Quæst. XXIX. 2: “What exists by itself, and not in another, is called subsistence.”

\textsuperscript{776}The three Persons of the Trinity.
Of threefold colour and of one dimension,
   And by the second seemed the first reflected
   As Iris is by Iris, and the third
   Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed.

   O how all speech is feeble and falls short
   Of my conceit, and this to what I saw
   Is such, 'tis not enough to call it little!

   O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,
   Sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself
   And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!

   That circulation, which being thus conceived
   Appeared in thee as a reflected light,
   When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,

   Within itself, of its own very colour
   Seemed to me painted with our effigy,
   Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.

   As the geometrician, who endeavours
   To square the circle, and discovers not,
   By taking thought, the principle he wants,

   Even such was I at that new apparition;
   I wished to see how the image to the circle
   Conformed itself, and how it there finds place;

   But my own wings were not enough for this,
   Had it not been that then my mind there smote
   A flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.

   Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy:
   But now was turning my desire and will,
   Even as a wheel that equally is moved,

   The Love which moves the sun and the other stars.

---

777 The second circle, or second Person of the Trinity.
778 The human nature of Christ; the incarnation of the Word.
779 In this new light of God’s grace, the mystery of the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ is revealed to Dante.
780 1 John IV. 16: “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”