## The Vision of Hell, Part 9, Translated By The Rev. H. F. Cary, Illustrated by Gustave Dore The Inferno

Dante Alighieri

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THE VISION

OF

HELL, PURGATORY, AND PARADISE

ΒY

DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

THE REV. H. F. CARY, M.A.

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HELL

OR THE INFERNO

Part 9

Cantos 29 - 31

CANTO XXIX

SO were mine eyes inebriate with view Of the vast multitude, whom various wounds Disfigur'd, that they long'd to stay and weep.

But Virgil rous'd me: "What yet gazest on? Wherefore doth fasten yet thy sight below Among the maim'd and miserable shades? Thou hast not shewn in any chasm beside This weakness. Know, if thou wouldst number them That two and twenty miles the valley winds Its circuit, and already is the moon Beneath our feet: the time permitted now Is short, and more not seen remains to see."

"If thou," I straight replied, "hadst weigh'd the cause For which I look'd, thou hadst perchance excus'd The tarrying still." My leader part pursu'd His way, the while I follow'd, answering him, And adding thus: "Within that cave I deem, Whereon so fixedly I held my ken, There is a spirit dwells, one of my blood, Wailing the crime that costs him now so dear."

Then spake my master: "Let thy soul no more Afflict itself for him. Direct elsewhere Its thought, and leave him. At the bridge's foot I mark'd how he did point with menacing look At thee, and heard him by the others nam'd Geri of Bello. Thou so wholly then Wert busied with his spirit, who once rul'd The towers of Hautefort, that thou lookedst not That way, ere he was gone."--"O guide belov'd! His violent death yet unaveng'd," said I, "By any, who are partners in his shame, Made him contemptuous: therefore, as I think, He pass'd me speechless by; and doing so Hath made me more compassionate his fate."

So we discours'd to where the rock first show'd The other valley, had more light been there, E'en to the lowest depth. Soon as we came O'er the last cloister in the dismal rounds Of Malebolge, and the brotherhood Were to our view expos'd, then many a dart Of sore lament assail'd me, headed all With points of thrilling pity, that I clos'd Both ears against the volley with mine hands.

As were the torment, if each lazar-house Of Valdichiana, in the sultry time 'Twixt July and September, with the isle Sardinia and Maremma's pestilent fen, Had heap'd their maladies all in one foss Together; such was here the torment: dire The stench, as issuing steams from fester'd limbs.

We on the utmost shore of the long rock Descended still to leftward. Then my sight Was livelier to explore the depth, wherein The minister of the most mighty Lord, All-searching Justice, dooms to punishment The forgers noted on her dread record.

More rueful was it not methinks to see The nation in Aegina droop, what time Each living thing, e'en to the little worm, All fell, so full of malice was the air (And afterward, as bards of yore have told, The ancient people were restor'd anew From seed of emmets) than was here to see The spirits, that languish'd through the murky vale Up-pil'd on many a stack. Confus'd they lay, One o'er the belly, o'er the shoulders one Roll'd of another; sideling crawl'd a third Along the dismal pathway. Step by step We journey'd on, in silence looking round And list'ning those diseas'd, who strove in vain To lift their forms. Then two I mark'd, that sat Propp'd 'gainst each other, as two brazen pans Set to retain the heat. From head to foot, A tetter bark'd them round. Nor saw I e'er Groom currying so fast, for whom his lord Impatient waited, or himself perchance Tir'd with long watching, as of these each one Plied quickly his keen nails, through furiousness Of ne'er abated pruriency. The crust Came drawn from underneath in flakes, like scales Scrap'd from the bream or fish of broader mail.

"O thou, who with thy fingers rendest off Thy coat of proof," thus spake my guide to one, "And sometimes makest tearing pincers of them, Tell me if any born of Latian land Be among these within: so may thy nails Serve thee for everlasting to this toil."

"Both are of Latium," weeping he replied, "Whom tortur'd thus thou seest: but who art thou That hast inquir'd of us?" To whom my guide: "One that descend with this man, who yet lives, From rock to rock, and show him hell's abyss." Then started they asunder, and each turn'd Trembling toward us, with the rest, whose ear Those words redounding struck. To me my liege Address'd him: "Speak to them whate'er thou list."

And I therewith began: "So may no time Filch your remembrance from the thoughts of men In th' upper world, but after many suns Survive it, as ye tell me, who ye are, And of what race ye come. Your punishment, Unseemly and disgustful in its kind, Deter you not from opening thus much to me."

"Arezzo was my dwelling," answer'd one, "And me Albero of Sienna brought To die by fire; but that, for which I died, Leads me not here. True is in sport I told him, That I had learn'd to wing my flight in air. And he admiring much, as he was void Of wisdom, will'd me to declare to him The secret of mine art: and only hence, Because I made him not a Daedalus, Prevail'd on one suppos'd his sire to burn me. But Minos to this chasm last of the ten, For that I practis'd alchemy on earth, Has doom'd me. Him no subterfuge eludes."

Then to the bard I spake: "Was ever race Light as Sienna's? Sure not France herself Can show a tribe so frivolous and vain."

The other leprous spirit heard my words, And thus return'd: "Be Stricca from this charge Exempted, he who knew so temp'rately To lay out fortune's gifts; and Niccolo Who first the spice's costly luxury Discover'd in that garden, where such seed Roots deepest in the soil: and be that troop Exempted, with whom Caccia of Asciano Lavish'd his vineyards and wide-spreading woods, And his rare wisdom Abbagliato show'd A spectacle for all. That thou mayst know Who seconds thee against the Siennese Thus gladly, bend this way thy sharpen'd sight, That well my face may answer to thy ken; So shalt thou see I am Capocchio's ghost, Who forg'd transmuted metals by the power Of alchemy; and if I scan thee right, Thus needs must well remember how I aped Creative nature by my subtle art."

#### CANTO XXX

WHAT time resentment burn'd in Juno's breast For Semele against the Theban blood, As more than once in dire mischance was rued,

Such fatal frenzy seiz'd on Athamas, That he his spouse beholding with a babe Laden on either arm, "Spread out," he cried, "The meshes, that I take the lioness And the young lions at the pass:" then forth Stretch'd he his merciless talons, grasping one, One helpless innocent, Learchus nam'd, Whom swinging down he dash'd upon a rock. And with her other burden self-destroy'd The hapless mother plung'd: and when the pride Of all-presuming Troy fell from its height, By fortune overwhelm'd, and the old king With his realm perish'd, then did Hecuba. A wretch forlorn and captive, when she saw Polyxena first slaughter'd, and her son, Her Polydorus, on the wild sea-beach Next met the mourner's view, then reft of sense Did she run barking even as a dog: Such mighty power had grief to wrench her soul. Bet ne'er the Furies or of Thebes or Troy With such fell cruelty were seen, their goads Infixing in the limbs of man or beast, As now two pale and naked ghost I saw That gnarling wildly scamper'd, like the swine Excluded from his stye. One reach'd Capocchio, And in the neck-joint sticking deep his fangs, Dragg'd him, that o'er the solid pavement rubb'd His belly stretch'd out prone. The other shape, He of Arezzo, there left trembling, spake; "That sprite of air is Schicchi; in like mood Of random mischief vent he still his spite."

To whom I answ'ring: "Oh! as thou dost hope, The other may not flesh its jaws on thee, Be patient to inform us, who it is, Ere it speed hence."--"That is the ancient soul Of wretched Myrrha," he replied, "who burn'd With most unholy flame for her own sire,

"And a false shape assuming, so perform'd The deed of sin; e'en as the other there, That onward passes, dar'd to counterfeit Donati's features, to feign'd testament The seal affixing, that himself might gain, For his own share, the lady of the herd."

When vanish'd the two furious shades, on whom Mine eye was held, I turn'd it back to view The other cursed spirits. One I saw In fashion like a lute, had but the groin Been sever'd, where it meets the forked part. Swoln dropsy, disproportioning the limbs With ill-converted moisture, that the paunch Suits not the visage, open'd wide his lips Gasping as in the hectic man for drought, One towards the chin, the other upward curl'd.

"O ye, who in this world of misery, Wherefore I know not, are exempt from pain,"

Thus he began, "attentively regard Adamo's woe. When living, full supply Ne'er lack'd me of what most I coveted: One drop of water now, alas! I crave. The rills, that glitter down the grassy slopes Of Casentino, making fresh and soft The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream, Stand ever in my view: and not in vain: For more the pictur'd semblance dries me up, Much more than the disease, which makes the flesh Desert these shrivel'd cheeks. So from the place, Where I transgress'd, stern justice urging me, Takes means to guicken more my lab'ring sighs. There is Romena, where I falsified The metal with the Baptist's form imprest, For which on earth I left my body burnt. But if I here might see the sorrowing soul Of Guido, Alessandro, or their brother, For Branda's limpid spring I would not change The welcome sight. One is e'en now within, If truly the mad spirits tell, that round Are wand'ring. But wherein besteads me that? My limbs are fetter'd. Were I but so light, That I each hundred years might move one inch, I had set forth already on this path, Seeking him out amidst the shapeless crew, Although eleven miles it wind, not more Than half of one across. They brought me down Among this tribe; induc'd by them I stamp'd The florens with three carats of alloy."

"Who are that abject pair," I next inquir'd, "That closely bounding thee upon thy right Lie smoking, like a band in winter steep'd In the chill stream?"---"When to this gulf I dropt," He answer'd, "here I found them; since that hour They have not turn'd, nor ever shall, I ween, Till time hath run his course. One is that dame The false accuser of the Hebrew youth: Sinon the other, that false Greek from Troy. Sharp fever drains the reeky moistness out, In such a cloud upsteam'd." When that he heard, One, gall'd perchance to be so darkly nam'd, With clench'd hand smote him on the braced paunch, That like a drum resounded: but forthwith Adamo smote him on the face, the blow Returning with his arm, that seem'd as hard.

"Though my o'erweighty limbs have ta'en from me The power to move," said he, "I have an arm At liberty for such employ." To whom Was answer'd: "When thou wentest to the fire, Thou hadst it not so ready at command, Then readier when it coin'd th' impostor gold."

And thus the dropsied: "Ay, now speak'st thou true. But there thou gav'st not such true testimony, When thou wast question'd of the truth, at Troy." "If I spake false, thou falsely stamp'dst the coin," Said Sinon; "I am here but for one fault, And thou for more than any imp beside."

"Remember," he replied, "O perjur'd one, The horse remember, that did teem with death, And all the world be witness to thy guilt."

"To thine," return'd the Greek, "witness the thirst Whence thy tongue cracks, witness the fluid mound, Rear'd by thy belly up before thine eyes, A mass corrupt." To whom the coiner thus: "Thy mouth gapes wide as ever to let pass Its evil saying. Me if thirst assails, Yet I am stuff'd with moisture. Thou art parch'd, Pains rack thy head, no urging would'st thou need To make thee lap Narcissus' mirror up."

I was all fix'd to listen, when my guide Admonish'd: "Now beware: a little more. And I do quarrel with thee." I perceiv'd How angrily he spake, and towards him turn'd With shame so poignant, as remember'd yet Confounds me. As a man that dreams of harm Befall'n him, dreaming wishes it a dream, And that which is, desires as if it were not, Such then was I, who wanting power to speak Wish'd to excuse myself, and all the while Excus'd me, though unweeting that I did.

"More grievous fault than thine has been, less shame," My master cried, "might expiate. Therefore cast All sorrow from thy soul; and if again Chance bring thee, where like conference is held, Think I am ever at thy side. To hear Such wrangling is a joy for vulgar minds."

#### CANTO XXXI

THE very tongue, whose keen reproof before Had wounded me, that either cheek was stain'd, Now minister'd my cure. So have I heard, Achilles and his father's javelin caus'd Pain first, and then the boon of health restor'd.

Turning our back upon the vale of woe, W cross'd th' encircled mound in silence. There Was twilight dim, that far long the gloom Mine eye advanc'd not: but I heard a horn Sounded aloud. The peal it blew had made The thunder feeble. Following its course The adverse way, my strained eyes were bent On that one spot. So terrible a blast Orlando blew not, when that dismal rout O'erthrew the host of Charlemagne, and quench'd His saintly warfare. Thitherward not long My head was rais'd, when many lofty towers Methought I spied. "Master," said I, "what land Is this?" He answer'd straight: "Too long a space Of intervening darkness has thine eye To traverse: thou hast therefore widely err'd In thy imagining. Thither arriv'd Thou well shalt see, how distance can delude The sense. A little therefore urge thee on."

Then tenderly he caught me by the hand; "Yet know," said he, "ere farther we advance, That it less strange may seem, these are not towers, But giants. In the pit they stand immers'd, Each from his navel downward, round the bank."

As when a fog disperseth gradually, Our vision traces what the mist involves Condens'd in air; so piercing through the gross And gloomy atmosphere, as more and more We near'd toward the brink, mine error fled, And fear came o'er me. As with circling round Of turrets, Montereggion crowns his walls, E'en thus the shore, encompassing th' abyss, Was turreted with giants, half their length Uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from heav'n Yet threatens, when his mutt'ring thunder rolls.

Of one already I descried the face, Shoulders, and breast, and of the belly huge Great part, and both arms down along his ribs.

All-teeming nature, when her plastic hand Left framing of these monsters, did display Past doubt her wisdom, taking from mad War Such slaves to do his bidding; and if she Repent her not of th' elephant and whale, Who ponders well confesses her therein Wiser and more discreet; for when brute force And evil will are back'd with subtlety. Resistance none avails. His visage seem'd In length and bulk, as doth the pine, that tops Saint Peter's Roman fane; and th' other bones Of like proportion, so that from above The bank, which girdled him below, such height Arose his stature, that three Friezelanders Had striv'n in vain to reach but to his hair. Full thirty ample palms was he expos'd Downward from whence a man his garments loops. "Raphel bai ameth sabi almi," So shouted his fierce lips, which sweeter hymns Became not; and my guide address'd him thus:

"O senseless spirit! let thy horn for thee Interpret: therewith vent thy rage, if rage Or other passion wring thee. Search thy neck, There shalt thou find the belt that binds it on. Wild spirit! Io, upon thy mighty breast Where hangs the baldrick!" Then to me he spake: "He doth accuse himself. Nimrod is this, Through whose ill counsel in the world no more One tongue prevails. But pass we on, nor waste Our words; for so each language is to him, As his to others, understood by none."

Then to the leftward turning sped we forth, And at a sling's throw found another shade Far fiercer and more huge. I cannot say What master hand had girt him; but he held Behind the right arm fetter'd, and before The other with a chain, that fasten'd him From the neck down, and five times round his form Apparent met the wreathed links. "This proud one Would of his strength against almighty Jove Make trial," said my guide; "whence he is thus Requited: Ephialtes him they call.

"Great was his prowess, when the giants brought Fear on the gods: those arms, which then he piled, Now moves he never." Forthwith I return'd: "Fain would I, if 't were possible, mine eyes Of Briareus immeasurable gain'd Experience next." He answer'd: "Thou shalt see Not far from hence Antaeus, who both speaks And is unfetter'd, who shall place us there Where guilt is at its depth. Far onward stands Whom thou wouldst fain behold, in chains, and made Like to this spirit, save that in his looks More fell he seems." By violent earthquake rock'd Ne'er shook a tow'r, so reeling to its base, As Ephialtes. More than ever then I dreaded death, nor than the terror more Had needed, if I had not seen the cords That held him fast. We, straightway journeying on, Came to Antaeus, who five ells complete Without the head, forth issued from the cave.

"O thou, who in the fortunate vale, that made Great Scipio heir of glory, when his sword Drove back the troop of Hannibal in flight, Who thence of old didst carry for thy spoil An hundred lions; and if thou hadst fought In the high conflict on thy brethren's side, Seems as men vet believ'd, that through thine arm The sons of earth had conquer'd, now vouchsafe To place us down beneath, where numbing cold Locks up Cocytus. Force not that we crave Or Tityus' help or Typhon's. Here is one Can give what in this realm ve covet. Stoop Therefore, nor scornfully distort thy lip. He in the upper world can yet bestow Renown on thee, for he doth live, and looks For life yet longer, if before the time Grace call him not unto herself." Thus spake The teacher. He in haste forth stretch'd his hands, And caught my guide. Alcides whilom felt That grapple straighten'd score. Soon as my guide Had felt it, he bespake me thus: "This way That I may clasp thee;" then so caught me up,

That we were both one burden. As appears The tower of Carisenda, from beneath Where it doth lean, if chance a passing cloud So sail across, that opposite it hangs, Such then Antaeus seem'd, as at mine ease I mark'd him stooping. I were fain at times T' have pass'd another way. Yet in th' abyss, That Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs, Lightly he plac'd us; nor there leaning stay'd, But rose as in a bark the stately mast.

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