

**The Vision of Purgatory, Part 3
Cary, Illustrated by Gustave Dore**

Translated By The Rev. H. F.

Dante Alighieri

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THE VISION
OF
HELL, PURGATORY, AND PARADISE
BY DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY
THE REV. H. F. CARY

PURGATORY

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Part 3

Cantos 11 - 18

CANTO XI

"O thou Almighty Father, who dost make
The heavens thy dwelling, not in bounds confin'd,
But that with love intenser there thou view'st
Thy primal effluence, hallow'd be thy name:
Join each created being to extol
Thy might, for worthy humblest thanks and praise
Is thy blest Spirit. May thy kingdom's peace
Come unto us; for we, unless it come,
With all our striving thither tend in vain.
As of their will the angels unto thee
Tender meet sacrifice, circling thy throne
With loud hosannas, so of theirs be done
By saintly men on earth. Grant us this day
Our daily manna, without which he roams
Through this rough desert retrograde, who most
Toils to advance his steps. As we to each
Pardon the evil done us, pardon thou
Benign, and of our merit take no count.
'Gainst the old adversary prove thou not
Our virtue easily subdu'd; but free
From his incitements and defeat his wiles.
This last petition, dearest Lord! is made
Not for ourselves, since that were needless now,
But for their sakes who after us remain."

Thus for themselves and us good speed imploring,
Those spirits went beneath a weight like that
We sometimes feel in dreams, all, sore beset,
But with unequal anguish, wearied all,
Round the first circuit, purging as they go,
The world's gross darkness off: In our behalf
If there vows still be offer'd, what can here
For them be vow'd and done by such, whose wills
Have root of goodness in them? Well beseems
That we should help them wash away the stains
They carried hence, that so made pure and light,
They may spring upward to the starry spheres.

"Ah! so may mercy-temper'd justice rid
Your burdens speedily, that ye have power
To stretch your wing, which e'en to your desire
Shall lift you, as ye show us on which hand
Toward the ladder leads the shortest way.
And if there be more passages than one,
Instruct us of that easiest to ascend;
For this man who comes with me, and bears yet
The charge of fleshly raiment Adam left him,
Despite his better will but slowly mounts."
From whom the answer came unto these words,

Which my guide spake, appear'd not; but 'twas said:

"Along the bank to rightward come with us,
And ye shall find a pass that mocks not toil
Of living man to climb: and were it not
That I am hinder'd by the rock, wherewith
This arrogant neck is tam'd, whence needs I stoop
My visage to the ground, him, who yet lives,
Whose name thou speak'st not him I fain would view.
To mark if e'er I knew himnd to crave
His pity for the fardel that I bear.
I was of Latiun, of a Tuscan horn
A mighty one: Aldobranlesco's name
My sire's, I know not if ye e'er have heard.
My old blood and forefathers' gallant deeds
Made me so haughty, that I clean forgot
The common mother, and to such excess,
Wax'd in my scorn of all men, that I fell,
Fell therefore; by what fate Sienna's sons,
Each child in Campagnatico, can tell.
I am Omberto; not me only pride
Hath injur'd, but my kindred all involv'd
In mischief with her. Here my lot ordains
Under this weight to groan, till I appease
God's angry justice, since I did it not
Amongst the living, here amongst the dead."

List'ning I bent my visage down: and one
(Not he who spake) twisted beneath the weight
That urg'd him, saw me, knew me straight, and call'd,
Holding his eyes With difficulty fix'd
Intent upon me, stooping as I went
Companion of their way. "O!" I exclaim'd,

"Art thou not Oderigi, art not thou
Agobbio's glory, glory of that art
Which they of Paris call the limmer's skill?"

"Brother!" said he, "with tints that gayer smile,
Bolognian Franco's pencil lines the leaves.
His all the honour now; mine borrow'd light.
In truth I had not been thus courteous to him,
The whilst I liv'd, through eagerness of zeal
For that pre-eminence my heart was bent on.
Here of such pride the forfeiture is paid.
Nor were I even here; if, able still
To sin, I had not turn'd me unto God.
O powers of man! how vain your glory, nipp'd
E'en in its height of verdure, if an age
Less bright succeed not! imbue thought
To lord it over painting's field; and now
The cry is Giotto's, and his name eclips'd.
Thus hath one Guido from the other snatch'd
The letter'd prize: and he perhaps is born,
Who shall drive either from their nest. The noise
Of worldly fame is but a blast of wind,
That blows from divers points, and shifts its name
Shifting the point it blows from. Shalt thou more
Live in the mouths of mankind, if thy flesh

Part shrivel'd from thee, than if thou hadst died,
 Before the coral and the pap were left,
 Or ere some thousand years have passed? and that
 Is, to eternity compar'd, a space,
 Briefer than is the twinkling of an eye
 To the heaven's slowest orb. He there who treads
 So leisurely before me, far and wide
 Through Tuscany resounded once; and now
 Is in Sienna scarce with whispers nam'd:
 There was he sov'reign, when destruction caught
 The madd'ning rage of Florence, in that day
 Proud as she now is loathsome. Your renown
 Is as the herb, whose hue doth come and go,
 And his might withers it, by whom it sprang
 Crude from the lap of earth." I thus to him:
 "True are thy sayings: to my heart they breathe
 The kindly spirit of meekness, and allay
 What tumours rankle there. But who is he
 Of whom thou spak'st but now?"--"This," he replied,
 "Is Provenzano. He is here, because
 He reach'd, with grasp presumptuous, at the sway
 Of all Sienna. Thus he still hath gone,
 Thus goeth never-resting, since he died.
 Such is th' acquittance render'd back of him,
 Who, beyond measure, dar'd on earth." I then:
 "If soul that to the verge of life delays
 Repentance, linger in that lower space,
 Nor hither mount, unless good prayers befriend,
 How chanc'd admittance was vouchsaf'd to him?"

"When at his glory's topmost height," said he,
 "Respect of dignity all cast aside,
 Freely He fix'd him on Sienna's plain,
 A suitor to redeem his suffer'ing friend,
 Who languish'd in the prison-house of Charles,
 Nor for his sake refus'd through every vein
 To tremble. More I will not say; and dark,
 I know, my words are, but thy neighbours soon
 Shall help thee to a comment on the text.
 This is the work, that from these limits freed him."

CANTO XII

With equal pace as oxen in the yoke,
 I with that laden spirit journey'd on
 Long as the mild instructor suffer'd me;
 But when he bade me quit him, and proceed
 (For "here," said he, "behooves with sail and oars
 Each man, as best he may, push on his bark"),
 Upright, as one dispos'd for speed, I rais'd
 My body, still in thought submissive bow'd.

I now my leader's track not loth pursued;
 And each had shown how light we far'd along
 When thus he warn'd me: "Bend thine eyesight down:
 For thou to ease the way shall find it good

To ruminat the bed beneath thy feet."

As in memorial of the buried, drawn
Upon earth-level tombs, the sculptur'd form
Of what was once, appears (at sight whereof
Tears often stream forth by remembrance wak'd,
Whose sacred stings the piteous only feel),
So saw I there, but with more curious skill
Of portraiture o'erwrought, whate'er of space
From forth the mountain stretches. On one part
Him I beheld, above all creatures erst
Created noblest, light'ning fall from heaven:
On th' other side with bolt celestial pierc'd
Briareus: cumb'ring earth he lay through dint
Of mortal ice-stroke. The Thymbraean god
With Mars, I saw, and Pallas, round their sire,
Arm'd still, and gazing on the giant's limbs
Strewn o'er th' ethereal field. Nimrod I saw:
At foot of the stupendous work he stood,
As if bewilder'd, looking on the crowd
Leagued in his proud attempt on Sennaar's plain.

O Niobe! in what a trance of woe
Thee I beheld, upon that highway drawn,
Sev'n sons on either side thee slain! Saul!
How ghastly didst thou look! on thine own sword
Expiring in Gilboa, from that hour
Ne'er visited with rain from heav'n or dew!

O fond Arachne! thee I also saw
Half spider now in anguish crawling up
Th' unfinish'd web thou weaved'st to thy bane!

O Rehoboam! here thy shape doth seem
Louring no more defiance! but fear-smote
With none to chase him in his chariot whirl'd.

Was shown beside upon the solid floor
How dear Alcmaeon forc'd his mother rate
That ornament in evil hour receiv'd:
How in the temple on Sennacherib fell
His sons, and how a corpse they left him there.
Was shown the scath and cruel mangling made
By Tomyris on Cyrus, when she cried:
"Blood thou didst thirst for, take thy fill of blood!"
Was shown how routed in the battle fled
Th' Assyrians, Holofernes slain, and e'en
The relics of the carnage. Troy I mark'd
In ashes and in caverns. Oh! how fall'n,
How abject, Ilion, was thy semblance there!

What master of the pencil or the style
Had trac'd the shades and lines, that might have made
The subtlest workman wonder? Dead the dead,
The living seem'd alive; with clearer view
His eye beheld not who beheld the truth,
Than mine what I did tread on, while I went
Low bending. Now swell out; and with stiff necks
Pass on, ye sons of Eve! veil not your looks,

Lest they descry the evil of your path!

I noted not (so busied was my thought)
How much we now had circled of the mount,
And of his course yet more the sun had spent,
When he, who with still wakeful caution went,
Admonish'd: "Raise thou up thy head: for know
Time is not now for slow suspense. Behold
That way an angel hasting towards us! Lo!
Where duly the sixth handmaid doth return
From service on the day. Wear thou in look
And gesture seemly grace of reverent awe,
That gladly he may forward us aloft.
Consider that this day ne'er dawns again."

Time's loss he had so often warn'd me 'gainst,
I could not miss the scope at which he aim'd.

The goodly shape approach'd us, snowy white
In vesture, and with visage casting streams
Of tremulous lustre like the matin star.
His arms he open'd, then his wings; and spake:
"Onward: the steps, behold! are near; and now
Th' ascent is without difficulty gain'd."

A scanty few are they, who when they hear
Such tidings, hasten. O ye race of men
Though born to soar, why suffer ye a wind
So slight to baffle ye? He led us on
Where the rock parted; here against my front
Did beat his wings, then promis'd I should fare
In safety on my way. As to ascend
That steep, upon whose brow the chapel stands
(O'er Rubaconte, looking lordly down
On the well-guided city,) up the right
Th' impetuous rise is broken by the steps
Carv'd in that old and simple age, when still
The registry and label rested safe;
Thus is th' acclivity reliev'd, which here
Precipitous from the other circuit falls:
But on each hand the tall cliff presses close.

As ent'ring there we turn'd, voices, in strain
Ineffable, sang: "Blessed are the poor
In spirit." Ah how far unlike to these
The straits of hell; here songs to usher us,
There shrieks of woe! We climb the holy stairs:
And lighter to myself by far I seem'd
Than on the plain before, whence thus I spake:
"Say, master, of what heavy thing have I
Been lighten'd, that scarce aught the sense of toil
Affects me journeying?" He in few replied:
"When sin's broad characters, that yet remain
Upon thy temples, though well nigh effac'd,
Shall be, as one is, all clean razed out,
Then shall thy feet by heartiness of will
Be so o'ercome, they not alone shall feel
No sense of labour, but delight much more
Shall wait them urg'd along their upward way."

Then like to one, upon whose head is plac'd
Somewhat he deems not of but from the becks
Of others as they pass him by; his hand
Lends therefore help to' assure him, searches, finds,
And well performs such office as the eye
Wants power to execute: so stretching forth
The fingers of my right hand, did I find
Six only of the letters, which his sword
Who bare the keys had trac'd upon my brow.
The leader, as he mark'd mine action, smil'd.

CANTO XIII

We reach'd the summit of the scale, and stood
Upon the second buttress of that mount
Which healeth him who climbs. A cornice there,
Like to the former, girdles round the hill;
Save that its arch with sweep less ample bends.

Shadow nor image there is seen; all smooth
The rampart and the path, reflecting nought
But the rock's sullen hue. "If here we wait
For some to question," said the bard, "I fear
Our choice may haply meet too long delay."

Then fixedly upon the sun his eyes
He fastn'd, made his right the central point
From whence to move, and turn'd the left aside.
"O pleasant light, my confidence and hope,
Conduct us thou," he cried, "on this new way,
Where now I venture, leading to the bourn
We seek. The universal world to thee
Owes warmth and lustre. If no other cause
Forbid, thy beams should ever be our guide."

Far, as is measur'd for a mile on earth,
In brief space had we journey'd; such prompt will
Impell'd; and towards us flying, now were heard
Spirits invisible, who courteously
Unto love's table bade the welcome guest.
The voice, that firstlew by, call'd forth aloud,
"They have no wine;" so on behind us past,
Those sounds reiterating, nor yet lost
In the faint distance, when another came
Crying, "I am Orestes," and alike
Wing'd its fleet way. "Oh father!" I exclaim'd,
"What tongues are these?" and as I question'd, lo!
A third exclaiming, "Love ye those have wrong'd you."

"This circuit," said my teacher, "knots the scourge
For envy, and the cords are therefore drawn
By charity's correcting hand. The curb
Is of a harsher sound, as thou shalt hear
(If I deem rightly), ere thou reach the pass,
Where pardon sets them free. But fix thine eyes

Intently through the air, and thou shalt see
A multitude before thee seated, each
Along the shelving grot." Then more than erst
I op'd my eyes, before me view'd, and saw
Shadows with garments dark as was the rock;
And when we pass'd a little forth, I heard
A crying, "Blessed Mary! pray for us,
Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host!"

I do not think there walks on earth this day
Man so remorseless, that he hath not yearn'd
With pity at the sight that next I saw.
Mine eyes a load of sorrow teemed, when now
I stood so near them, that their semblances
Came clearly to my view. Of sackcloth vile
Their cov'ring seem'd; and on his shoulder one
Did stay another, leaning, and all lean'd
Against the cliff. E'en thus the blind and poor,
Near the confessionals, to crave an alms,
Stand, each his head upon his fellow's sunk,

So most to stir compassion, not by sound
Of words alone, but that, which moves not less,
The sight of mis'ry. And as never beam
Of noonday visiteth the eyeless man,
E'en so was heav'n a niggard unto these
Of his fair light; for, through the orbs of all,
A thread of wire, impiercing, knits them up,
As for the taming of a haggard hawk.

It were a wrong, methought, to pass and look
On others, yet myself the while unseen.
To my sage counsel therefore did I turn.
He knew the meaning of the mute appeal,
Nor waited for my questioning, but said:
"Speak; and be brief, be subtle in thy words."

On that part of the cornice, whence no rim
Engarlands its steep fall, did Virgil come;
On the' other side me were the spirits, their cheeks
Bathing devout with penitential tears,
That through the dread impalement forc'd a way.

I turn'd me to them, and "O shades!" said I,

"Assur'd that to your eyes unveil'd shall shine
The lofty light, sole object of your wish,
So may heaven's grace clear whatsoe'er of foam
Floats turbid on the conscience, that thenceforth
The stream of mind roll limpid from its source,
As ye declare (for so shall ye impart
A boon I dearly prize) if any soul
Of Latium dwell among ye; and perchance
That soul may profit, if I learn so much."

"My brother, we are each one citizens
Of one true city. Any thou wouldst say,
Who lived a stranger in Italia's land."

So heard I answering, as appeal'd, a voice
That onward came some space from whence I stood.

A spirit I noted, in whose look was mark'd
Expectance. Ask ye how? The chin was rais'd
As in one reft of sight. "Spirit," said I,
"Who for thy rise are tutoring (if thou be
That which didst answer to me,) or by place
Or name, disclose thyself, that I may know thee."

"I was," it answer'd, "of Sienna: here
I cleanse away with these the evil life,
Soliciting with tears that He, who is,
Vouchsafe him to us. Though Sapia nam'd
In sapience I excell'd not, gladder far
Of others' hurt, than of the good befell me.
That thou mayst own I now deceive thee not,
Hear, if my folly were not as I speak it.
When now my years slop'd waning down the arch,
It so bechanc'd, my fellow citizens
Near Colle met their enemies in the field,
And I pray'd God to grant what He had will'd.
There were they vanquish'd, and betook themselves
Unto the bitter passages of flight.
I mark'd the hunt, and waxing out of bounds
In gladness, lifted up my shameless brow,
And like the merlin cheated by a gleam,
Cried, "It is over. Heav'n! fear thee not."
Upon my verge of life I wish'd for peace
With God; nor repentance had supplied
What I did lack of duty, were it not
The hermit Piero, touch'd with charity,
In his devout orisons thought on me.
"But who art thou that question'st of our state,
Who go'st to my belief, with lids unclos'd,
And breathest in thy talk?"--"Mine eyes," said I,
"May yet be here ta'en from me; but not long;
For they have not offended grievously
With envious glances. But the woe beneath
Urges my soul with more exceeding dread.
That nether load already weighs me down."

She thus: "Who then amongst us here aloft
Hath brought thee, if thou weenest to return?"

"He," answer'd I, "who standeth mute beside me.
I live: of me ask therefore, chosen spirit,
If thou desire I yonder yet should move
For thee my mortal feet."--"Oh!" she replied,
"This is so strange a thing, it is great sign
That God doth love thee. Therefore with thy prayer
Sometime assist me: and by that I crave,
Which most thou covetest, that if thy feet
E'er tread on Tuscan soil, thou save my fame
Amongst my kindred. Them shalt thou behold
With that vain multitude, who set their hope
On Telamone's haven, there to fail
Confounded, more shall when the fancied stream
They sought of Dian call'd: but they who lead

Their navies, more than ruin'd hopes shall mourn."

CANTO XIV

"Say who is he around our mountain winds,
Or ever death has prun'd his wing for flight,
That opes his eyes and covers them at will?"

"I know not who he is, but know thus much
He comes not singly. Do thou ask of him,
For thou art nearer to him, and take heed
Accost him gently, so that he may speak."

Thus on the right two Spirits bending each
Toward the other, talk'd of me, then both
Addressing me, their faces backward lean'd,
And thus the one began: "O soul, who yet
Pent in the body, tendest towards the sky!
For charity, we pray thee' comfort us,
Recounting whence thou com'st, and who thou art:
For thou dost make us at the favour shown thee
Marvel, as at a thing that ne'er hath been."

"There stretches through the midst of Tuscany,"
I straight began: "a brooklet, whose well-head
Springs up in Falterona, with his race
Not satisfied, when he some hundred miles
Hath measur'd. From his banks bring, I this frame.
To tell you who I am were words misspent:
For yet my name scarce sounds on rumour's lip."

"If well I do incorp'rate with my thought
The meaning of thy speech," said he, who first
Addrest me, "thou dost speak of Arno's wave."

To whom the other: "Why hath he conceal'd
The title of that river, as a man
Doth of some horrible thing?" The spirit, who
Thereof was question'd, did acquit him thus:
"I know not: but 'tis fitting well the name
Should perish of that vale; for from the source
Where teems so plenteously the Alpine steep
Maim'd of Pelorus, (that doth scarcely pass
Beyond that limit,) even to the point
Whereunto ocean is restor'd, what heaven
Drains from th' exhaustless store for all earth's streams,
Throughout the space is virtue worried down,
As 'twere a snake, by all, for mortal foe,
Or through disastrous influence on the place,
Or else distortion of misguided wills,
That custom goads to evil: whence in those,
The dwellers in that miserable vale,
Nature is so transform'd, it seems as they
Had shar'd of Circe's feeding. 'Midst brute swine,
Worthier of acorns than of other food
Created for man's use, he shapeth first

His obscure way; then, sloping onward, finds
Curs, snarlers more in spite than power, from whom
He turns with scorn aside: still journeying down,
By how much more the curst and luckless foss
Swells out to largeness, e'en so much it finds
Dogs turning into wolves. Descending still
Through yet more hollow eddies, next he meets
A race of foxes, so replete with craft,
They do not fear that skill can master it.
Nor will I cease because my words are heard
By other ears than thine. It shall be well
For this man, if he keep in memory
What from no erring Spirit I reveal.
Lo! behold thy grandson, that becomes
A hunter of those wolves, upon the shore
Of the fierce stream, and cows them all with dread:
Their flesh yet living sets he up to sale,
Then like an aged beast to slaughter dooms.
Many of life he reaves, himself of worth
And goodly estimation. Smear'd with gore
Mark how he issues from the rueful wood,
Leaving such havoc, that in thousand years
It spreads not to prime lustihood again."

As one, who tidings hears of woe to come,
Changes his looks perturb'd, from whate'er part
The peril grasp him, so beheld I change
That spirit, who had turn'd to listen, struck
With sadness, soon as he had caught the word.

His visage and the other's speech did raise
Desire in me to know the names of both,
whereof with meek entreaty I inquir'd.

The shade, who late addrest me, thus resum'd:
"Thy wish imports that I vouchsafe to do
For thy sake what thou wilt not do for mine.
But since God's will is that so largely shine
His grace in thee, I will be liberal too.
Guido of Duca know then that I am.
Envy so parch'd my blood, that had I seen
A fellow man made joyous, thou hadst mark'd
A livid paleness overspread my cheek.
Such harvest reap I of the seed I sow'd.
O man, why place thy heart where there doth need
Exclusion of participants in good?
This is Rinieri's spirit, this the boast
And honour of the house of Calboli,
Where of his worth no heritage remains.
Nor his the only blood, that hath been stript
(twixt Po, the mount, the Reno, and the shore,)
Of all that truth or fancy asks for bliss;
But in those limits such a growth has sprung
Of rank and venom'd roots, as long would mock
Slow culture's toil. Where is good Liziohere
Manardi, Traversalo, and Carpigna?
O bastard slips of old Romagna's line!
When in Bologna the low artisan,
And in Faenza yon Bernardin sprouts,

A gentle cyon from ignoble stem.
Wonder not, Tuscan, if thou see me weep,
When I recall to mind those once lov'd names,
Guido of Prata, and of Azzo him
That dwelt with you; Tignoso and his troop,
With Traversaro's house and Anastagio's,
(Each race disherited) and beside these,
The ladies and the knights, the toils and ease,
That witch'd us into love and courtesy;
Where now such malice reigns in recreant hearts.
O Brettinoro! wherefore tarriest still,
Since forth of thee thy family hath gone,
And many, hating evil, join'd their steps?
Well doeth he, that bids his lineage cease,
Bagnacavallo; Castracaro ill,
And Conio worse, who care to propagate
A race of Counties from such blood as theirs.
Well shall ye also do, Pagani, then
When from amongst you tries your demon child.
Not so, howe'er, that henceforth there remain
True proof of what ye were. O Hugolin!
Thou sprung of Fantolini's line! thy name
Is safe, since none is look'd for after thee
To cloud its lustre, warping from thy stock.
But, Tuscan, go thy ways; for now I take
Far more delight in weeping than in words.
Such pity for your sakes hath wrung my heart."

We knew those gentle spirits at parting heard
Our steps. Their silence therefore of our way
Assur'd us. Soon as we had quitted them,
Advancing onward, lo! a voice that seem'd
Like vollied light'ning, when it rives the air,
Met us, and shouted, "Whosoever finds
Will slay me," then fled from us, as the bolt
Lanc'd sudden from a downward-rushing cloud.
When it had giv'n short truce unto our hearing,
Behold the other with a crash as loud
As the quick-following thunder: "Mark in me
Aglauros turn'd to rock." I at the sound
Retreating drew more closely to my guide.

Now in mute stillness rested all the air:
And thus he spake: "There was the galling bit.
But your old enemy so baits his hook,
He drags you eager to him. Hence nor curb
Avails you, nor reclaiming call. Heav'n calls
And round about you wheeling courts your gaze
With everlasting beauties. Yet your eye
Turns with fond doting still upon the earth.
Therefore He smites you who discerneth all."

CANTO XV

As much as 'twixt the third hour's close and dawn,
Appeareth of heav'n's sphere, that ever whirls

As restless as an infant in his play,
So much appear'd remaining to the sun
Of his slope journey towards the western goal.

Evening was there, and here the noon of night;
and full upon our forehead smote the beams.
For round the mountain, circling, so our path
Had led us, that toward the sun-set now
Direct we journey'd: when I felt a weight
Of more exceeding splendour, than before,
Press on my front. The cause unknown, amaze
Possess'd me, and both hands against my brow
Lifting, I interpos'd them, as a screen,
That of its gorgeous superflux of light
Clipp'd the diminish'd orb. As when the ray,
Striking On water or the surface clear
Of mirror, leaps unto the opposite part,
Ascending at a glance, e'en as it fell,
(And so much differs from the stone, that falls
Through equal space, as practice skill hath shown);
Thus with refracted light before me seemed
The ground there smitten; whence in sudden haste
My sight recoil'd. "What is this, sire below'd!
'Gainst which I strive to shield the sight in vain?"
Cried I, "and which towards us moving seems?"

"Marvel not, if the family of heav'n,"
He answer'd, "yet with dazzling radiance dim
Thy sense it is a messenger who comes,
Inviting man's ascent. Such sights ere long,
Not grievous, shall impart to thee delight,
As thy perception is by nature wrought
Up to their pitch." The blessed angel, soon
As we had reach'd him, hail'd us with glad voice:
"Here enter on a ladder far less steep
Than ye have yet encounter'd." We forthwith
Ascending, heard behind us chanted sweet,
"Blessed the merciful," and "happy thou!
That conquer'st." Lonely each, my guide and I
Pursued our upward way; and as we went,
Some profit from his words I hop'd to win,
And thus of him inquiring, fram'd my speech:

"What meant Romagna's spirit, when he spake
Of bliss exclusive with no partner shar'd?"

He straight replied: "No wonder, since he knows,
What sorrow waits on his own worst defect,
If he chide others, that they less may mourn.
Because ye point your wishes at a mark,
Where, by communion of possessors, part
Is lessen'd, envy bloweth up the sighs of men.
No fear of that might touch ye, if the love
Of higher sphere exalted your desire.
For there, by how much more they call it ours,
So much propriety of each in good
Increases more, and heighten'd charity
Wraps that fair cloister in a brighter flame."

"Now lack I satisfaction more," said I,
"Than if thou hadst been silent at the first,
And doubt more gathers on my lab'ring thought.
How can it chance, that good distributed,
The many, that possess it, makes more rich,
Than if 't were shar'd by few?" He answering thus:
"Thy mind, reverting still to things of earth,
Strikes darkness from true light. The highest good
Unlimited, ineffable, doth so speed
To love, as beam to lucid body darts,
Giving as much of ardour as it finds.
The sempiternal effluence streams abroad
Spreading, wherever charity extends.
So that the more aspirants to that bliss
Are multiplied, more good is there to love,
And more is lov'd; as mirrors, that reflect,
Each unto other, propagated light.
If these my words avail not to allay
Thy thirsting, Beatrice thou shalt see,
Who of this want, and of all else thou hast,
Shall rid thee to the full. Provide but thou
That from thy temples may be soon eras'd,
E'en as the two already, those five scars,
That when they pain thee worst, then kindest heal,"

"Thou," I had said, "content'st me," when I saw
The other round was gain'd, and wond'ring eyes
Did keep me mute. There suddenly I seem'd
By an ecstatic vision wrapt away;
And in a temple saw, methought, a crowd
Of many persons; and at th' entrance stood
A dame, whose sweet demeanour did express
A mother's love, who said, "Child! why hast thou
Dealt with us thus? Behold thy sire and I
Sorrowing have sought thee;" and so held her peace,
And straight the vision fled. A female next
Appear'd before me, down whose visage cours'd
Those waters, that grief forces out from one
By deep resentment stung, who seem'd to say:
"If thou, Pisistratus, be lord indeed
Over this city, nam'd with such debate
Of adverse gods, and whence each science sparkles,
Avenge thee of those arms, whose bold embrace
Hath clasp'd our daughter; "and to fuel, meseem'd,
Benign and meek, with visage undisturb'd,
Her sovran spake: "How shall we those requite,
Who wish us evil, if we thus condemn
The man that loves us?" After that I saw
A multitude, in fury burning, slay
With stones a stripling youth, and shout amain
"Destroy, destroy:" and him I saw, who bow'd
Heavy with death unto the ground, yet made
His eyes, unfolded upward, gates to heav'n,

Praying forgiveness of th' Almighty Sire,
Amidst that cruel conflict, on his foes,
With looks, that With compassion to their aim.

Soon as my spirit, from her airy flight

Returning, sought again the things, whose truth
Depends not on her shaping, I observ'd
How she had rov'd to no unreal scenes

Meanwhile the leader, who might see I mov'd,
As one, who struggles to shake off his sleep,
Exclaim'd: "What ails thee, that thou canst not hold
Thy footing firm, but more than half a league
Hast travel'd with clos'd eyes and tott'ring gait,
Like to a man by wine or sleep o'ercharg'd?"

"Beloved father! so thou deign," said I,
"To listen, I will tell thee what appear'd
Before me, when so fail'd my sinking steps."

He thus: "Not if thy Countenance were mask'd
With hundred vizards, could a thought of thine
How small soe'er, elude me. What thou saw'st
Was shown, that freely thou mightst ope thy heart
To the waters of peace, that flow diffus'd
From their eternal fountain. I not ask'd,
What ails theeor such cause as he doth, who
Looks only with that eye which sees no more,
When spiritless the body lies; but ask'd,
To give fresh vigour to thy foot. Such goads
The slow and loit'ring need; that they be found
Not wanting, when their hour of watch returns."

So on we journey'd through the evening sky
Gazing intent, far onward, as our eyes
With level view could stretch against the bright
Vespertine ray: and lo! by slow degrees
Gath'ring, a fog made tow'rds us, dark as night.
There was no room for 'scaping; and that mist
Bereft us, both of sight and the pure air.

CANTO XVI

Hell's dunnest gloom, or night unlustrous, dark,
Of every planes 'reft, and pall'd in clouds,
Did never spread before the sight a veil
In thickness like that fog, nor to the sense
So palpable and gross. Ent'ring its shade,
Mine eye endured not with unclosed lids;
Which marking, near me drew the faithful guide,
Offering me his shoulder for a stay.

As the blind man behind his leader walks,
Lest he should err, or stumble unawares
On what might harm him, or perhaps destroy,
I journey'd through that bitter air and foul,
Still list'ning to my escort's warning voice,
"Look that from me thou part not." Straight I heard
Voices, and each one seem'd to pray for peace,
And for compassion, to the Lamb of God
That taketh sins away. Their prelude still

Was "Agnus Dei," and through all the choir,
One voice, one measure ran, that perfect seem'd
The concord of their song. "Are these I hear
Spirits, O master?" I exclaim'd; and he:
"Thou aim'st aright: these loose the bonds of wrath."

"Now who art thou, that through our smoke dost cleave?
And speak'st of us, as thou thyself e'en yet
Dividest time by calends?" So one voice
Bespoke me; whence my master said: "Reply;
And ask, if upward hence the passage lead."

"O being! who dost make thee pure, to stand
Beautiful once more in thy Maker's sight!
Along with me: and thou shalt hear and wonder."
Thus I, whereto the spirit answering spake:

"Long as 't is lawful for me, shall my steps
Follow on thine; and since the cloudy smoke
Forbids the seeing, hearing in its stead
Shall keep us join'd." I then forthwith began
"Yet in my mortal swathing, I ascend
To higher regions, and am hither come
Through the fearful agony of hell.
And, if so largely God hath doled his grace,
That, clean beside all modern precedent,
He wills me to behold his kingly state,
From me conceal not who thou wast, ere death
Had loos'd thee; but instruct me: and instruct
If rightly to the pass I tend; thy words
The way directing as a safe escort."

"I was of Lombardy, and Marco call'd:
Not in experienc'd of the world, that worth
I still affected, from which all have turn'd
The nerveless bow aside. Thy course tends right
Unto the summit:" and, replying thus,
He added, "I beseech thee pray for me,
When thou shalt come aloft." And I to him:
"Accept my faith for pledge I will perform
What thou requirest. Yet one doubt remains,
That wrings me sorely, if I solve it not,
Singly before it urg'd me, doubled now
By thine opinion, when I couple that
With one elsewhere declar'd, each strength'ning other.
The world indeed is even so forlorn
Of all good as thou speak'st it and so swarms
With every evil. Yet, beseech thee, point
The cause out to me, that myself may see,
And unto others show it: for in heaven
One places it, and one on earth below."

Then heaving forth a deep and audible sigh,
"Brother!" he thus began, "the world is blind;
And thou in truth com'st from it. Ye, who live,
Do so each cause refer to heav'n above,
E'en as its motion of necessity
Drew with it all that moves. If this were so,
Free choice in you were none; nor justice would

There should be joy for virtue, woe for ill.
Your movements have their primal bent from heaven;
Not all; yet said I all; what then ensues?
Light have ye still to follow evil or good,
And of the will free power, which, if it stand
Firm and unwearied in Heav'n's first assay,
Conquers at last, so it be cherish'd well,
Triumphant over all. To mightier force,
To better nature subject, ye abide
Free, not constrain'd by that, which forms in you
The reasoning mind uninfluenc'd of the stars.
If then the present race of mankind err,
Seek in yourselves the cause, and find it there.
Herein thou shalt confess me no false spy.

"Forth from his plastic hand, who charm'd beholds
Her image ere she yet exist, the soul
Comes like a babe, that wantons sportively
Weeping and laughing in its wayward moods,
As artless and as ignorant of aught,
Save that her Maker being one who dwells
With gladness ever, willingly she turns
To whate'er yields her joy. Of some slight good
The flavour soon she tastes; and, snar'd by that,
With fondness she pursues it, if no guide
Recall, no rein direct her wand'ring course.
Hence it behov'd, the law should be a curb;
A sovereign hence behov'd, whose piercing view
Might mark at least the fortress and main tower
Of the true city. Laws indeed there are:
But who is he observes them? None; not he,
Who goes before, the shepherd of the flock,
Who chews the cud but doth not cleave the hoof.
Therefore the multitude, who see their guide
Strike at the very good they covet most,
Feed there and look no further. Thus the cause
Is not corrupted nature in yourselves,
But ill-conducting, that hath turn'd the world
To evil. Rome, that turn'd it unto good,
Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams
Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.
One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword
Is grafted on the crook; and so conjoin'd
Each must perforce decline to worse, unaw'd
By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark
The blade: each herb is judg'd of by its seed.
That land, through which Adice and the Po
Their waters roll, was once the residence
Of courtesy and velour, ere the day,
That frown'd on Frederick; now secure may pass
Those limits, whosoe'er hath left, for shame,
To talk with good men, or come near their haunts.
Three aged ones are still found there, in whom
The old time chides the new: these deem it long
Ere God restore them to a better world:
The good Gherardo, of Palazzo he
Conrad, and Guido of Castello, nam'd
In Gallic phrase more fitly the plain Lombard.
On this at last conclude. The church of Rome,

Mixing two governments that ill assort,
Hath miss'd her footing, fall'n into the mire,
And there herself and burden much defil'd."

"O Marco!" I replied, shine arguments
Convince me: and the cause I now discern
Why of the heritage no portion came
To Levi's offspring. But resolve me this
Who that Gherardo is, that as thou sayst
Is left a sample of the perish'd race,
And for rebuke to this untoward age?"

"Either thy words," said he, "deceive; or else
Are meant to try me; that thou, speaking Tuscan,
Appear'st not to have heard of good Gherado;
The sole addition that, by which I know him;
Unless I borrow'd from his daughter Gaia
Another name to grace him. God be with you.
I bear you company no more. Behold
The dawn with white ray glimm'ring through the mist.
I must away--the angel comes--ere he
Appear." He said, and would not hear me more.

CANTO XVII

Call to remembrance, reader, if thou e'er
Hast, on a mountain top, been ta'en by cloud,
Through which thou saw'st no better, than the mole
Doth through opacous membrane; then, whene'er
The wat'ry vapours dense began to melt
Into thin air, how faintly the sun's sphere
Seem'd wading through them; so thy nimble thought
May image, how at first I re-beheld
The sun, that bedward now his couch o'erhung.

Thus with my leader's feet still equaling pace
From forth that cloud I came, when now expir'd
The parting beams from off the nether shores.

O quick and forgetive power! that sometimes dost
So rob us of ourselves, we take no mark
Though round about us thousand trumpets clang!
What moves thee, if the senses stir not? Light
Kindled in heav'n, spontaneous, self-inform'd,
Or likelier gliding down with swift illapse
By will divine. Portray'd before me came
The traces of her dire impiety,
Whose form was chang'd into the bird, that most
Delights itself in song: and here my mind
Was inwardly so wrapt, it gave no place
To aught that ask'd admittance from without.

Next shower'd into my fantasy a shape
As of one crucified, whose visage spake
Fell rancour, malice deep, wherein he died;
And round him Ahasuerus the great king,

Esther his bride, and Mordecai the just,
Blameless in word and deed. As of itself
That unsubstantial coinage of the brain
Burst, like a bubble, Which the water fails
That fed it; in my vision straight uprose
A damsel weeping loud, and cried, "O queen!
O mother! wherefore has intemperate ire
Driv'n thee to loath thy being? Not to lose
Lavinia, desp'rate thou hast slain thyself.
Now hast thou lost me. I am she, whose tears
Mourn, ere I fall, a mother's timeless end."

E'en as a sleep breaks off, if suddenly
New radiance strike upon the closed lids,
The broken slumber quivering ere it dies;
Thus from before me sunk that imagery
Vanishing, soon as on my face there struck
The light, outshining far our earthly beam.
As round I turn'd me to survey what place
I had arriv'd at, "Here ye mount," exclaim'd
A voice, that other purpose left me none,
Save will so eager to behold who spake,
I could not choose but gaze. As 'fore the sun,
That weighs our vision down, and veils his form
In light transcendent, thus my virtue fail'd
Unequal. "This is Spirit from above,
Who marshals us our upward way, unsought;
And in his own light shrouds him. As a man
Doth for himself, so now is done for us.
For whoso waits imploring, yet sees need
Of his prompt aidance, sets himself prepar'd
For blunt denial, ere the suit be made.
Refuse we not to lend a ready foot
At such inviting: haste we to ascend,
Before it darken: for we may not then,
Till morn again return." So spake my guide;
And to one ladder both address'd our steps;
And the first stair approaching, I perceiv'd
Near me as 'twere the waving of a wing,
That fann'd my face and whisper'd: "Blessed they
The peacemakers: they know not evil wrath."

Now to such height above our heads were rais'd
The last beams, follow'd close by hooded night,
That many a star on all sides through the gloom
Shone out. "Why partest from me, O my strength?"
So with myself I commun'd; for I felt
My o'ertol'd sinews slacken. We had reach'd
The summit, and were fix'd like to a bark
Arriv'd at land. And waiting a short space,
If aught should meet mine ear in that new round,
Then to my guide I turn'd, and said: "Lov'd sire!
Declare what guilt is on this circle purg'd.
If our feet rest, no need thy speech should pause."

He thus to me: "The love of good, whate'er
Wanted of just proportion, here fulfils.
Here plies afresh the oar, that loiter'd ill.
But that thou mayst yet clearer understand,

Give ear unto my words, and thou shalt cull
Some fruit may please thee well, from this delay.

"Creator, nor created being, ne'er,
My son," he thus began, "was without love,
Or natural, or the free spirit's growth.
Thou hast not that to learn. The natural still
Is without error; but the other swerves,
If on ill object bent, or through excess
Of vigour, or defect. While e'er it seeks
The primal blessings, or with measure due
Th' inferior, no delight, that flows from it,
Partakes of ill. But let it warp to evil,
Or with more ardour than behooves, or less.
Pursue the good, the thing created then
Works 'gainst its Maker. Hence thou must infer
That love is germin of each virtue in ye,
And of each act no less, that merits pain.
Now since it may not be, but love intend
The welfare mainly of the thing it loves,
All from self-hatred are secure; and since
No being can be thought t' exist apart
And independent of the first, a bar
Of equal force restrains from hating that.

"Grant the distinction just; and it remains
The' evil must be another's, which is lov'd.
Three ways such love is gender'd in your clay.
There is who hopes (his neighbour's worth deprest,)
Preeminence himself, and coverts hence
For his own greatness that another fall.
There is who so much fears the loss of power,
Fame, favour, glory (should his fellow mount
Above him), and so sickens at the thought,
He loves their opposite: and there is he,
Whom wrong or insult seems to gall and shame
That he doth thirst for vengeance, and such needs
Must doat on other's evil. Here beneath
This threefold love is mourn'd. Of th' other sort
Be now instructed, that which follows good
But with disorder'd and irregular course.

"All indistinctly apprehend a bliss
On which the soul may rest, the hearts of all
Yearn after it, and to that wished bourn
All therefore strive to tend. If ye behold
Or seek it with a love remiss and lax,
This cornice after just repenting lays
Its penal torment on ye. Other good
There is, where man finds not his happiness:
It is not true fruition, not that blest
Essence, of every good the branch and root.
The love too lavishly bestow'd on this,
Along three circles over us, is mourn'd.
Account of that division tripartite
Expect not, fitter for thine own research."

CANTO XVIII

The teacher ended, and his high discourse
Concluding, earnest in my looks inquir'd
If I appear'd content; and I, whom still
Unsated thirst to hear him urg'd, was mute,
Mute outwardly, yet inwardly I said:
"Perchance my too much questioning offends"
But he, true father, mark'd the secret wish
By diffidence restrain'd, and speaking, gave
Me boldness thus to speak: 'Master, my Sight
Gathers so lively virtue from thy beams,
That all, thy words convey, distinct is seen.
Wherefore I pray thee, father, whom this heart
Holds dearest! thou wouldst deign by proof t' unfold
That love, from which as from their source thou bring'st
All good deeds and their opposite.'" He then:
"To what I now disclose be thy clear ken
Directed, and thou plainly shalt behold
How much those blind have err'd, who make themselves
The guides of men. The soul, created apt
To love, moves versatile which way soe'er
Aught pleasing prompts her, soon as she is wak'd
By pleasure into act. Of substance true
Your apprehension forms its counterfeit,
And in you the ideal shape presenting
Attracts the soul's regard. If she, thus drawn,
incline toward it, love is that inclining,
And a new nature knit by pleasure in ye.
Then as the fire points up, and mounting seeks
His birth-place and his lasting seat, e'en thus
Enters the captive soul into desire,
Which is a spiritual motion, that ne'er rests
Before enjoyment of the thing it loves.
Enough to show thee, how the truth from those
Is hidden, who aver all love a thing
Praise-worthy in itself: although perhaps
Its substance seem still good. Yet if the wax
Be good, it follows not th' impression must."
"What love is," I return'd, "thy words, O guide!
And my own docile mind, reveal. Yet thence
New doubts have sprung. For from without if love
Be offer'd to us, and the spirit knows
No other footing, tend she right or wrong,
Is no desert of hers." He answering thus:
"What reason here discovers I have power
To show thee: that which lies beyond, expect
From Beatrice, faith not reason's task.
Spirit, substantial form, with matter join'd
Not in confusion mix'd, hath in itself
Specific virtue of that union born,
Which is not felt except it work, nor prov'd
But through effect, as vegetable life
By the green leaf. From whence his intellect
Deduced its primal notices of things,
Man therefore knows not, or his appetites
Their first affections; such in you, as zeal
In bees to gather honey; at the first,

Volition, meriting nor blame nor praise.
But o'er each lower faculty supreme,
That as she list are summon'd to her bar,
Ye have that virtue in you, whose just voice
Uttereth counsel, and whose word should keep
The threshold of assent. Here is the source,
Whence cause of merit in you is deriv'd,
E'en as the affections good or ill she takes,
Or severs, winnow'd as the chaff. Those men
Who reas'ning went to depth profoundest, mark'd
That innate freedom, and were thence induc'd
To leave their moral teaching to the world.
Grant then, that from necessity arise
All love that glows within you; to dismiss
Or harbour it, the pow'r is in yourselves.
Remember, Beatrice, in her style,
Denominates free choice by eminence
The noble virtue, if in talk with thee
She touch upon that theme." The moon, well nigh
To midnight hour belated, made the stars
Appear to wink and fade; and her broad disk
Seem'd like a crag on fire, as up the vault
That course she journey'd, which the sun then warms,
When they of Rome behold him at his set.
Betwixt Sardinia and the Corsic isle.
And now the weight, that hung upon my thought,
Was lighten'd by the aid of that clear spirit,
Who raiseth Andes above Mantua's name.
I therefore, when my questions had obtain'd
Solution plain and ample, stood as one
Musing in dreary slumber; but not long
Slumber'd; for suddenly a multitude,

The steep already turning, from behind,
Rush'd on. With fury and like random rout,
As echoing on their shores at midnight heard
Ismenus and Asopus, for his Thebes
If Bacchus' help were needed; so came these
Tumultuous, curving each his rapid step,
By eagerness impell'd of holy love.

Soon they o'ertook us; with such swiftness mov'd
The mighty crowd. Two spirits at their head
Cried weeping; "Blessed Mary sought with haste
The hilly region. Caesar to subdue
Ilerda, darted in Marseilles his sting,
And flew to Spain."--"Oh tarry not: away;"
The others shouted; "let not time be lost
Through slackness of affection. Hearty zeal
To serve reanimates celestial grace."

"O ye, in whom intenser fervency
Haply supplies, where lukewarm erst ye fail'd,
Slow or neglectful, to absolve your part
Of good and virtuous, this man, who yet lives,
(Credit my tale, though strange) desires t' ascend,
So morning rise to light us. Therefore say
Which hand leads nearest to the rifted rock?"

So spake my guide, to whom a shade return'd:
"Come after us, and thou shalt find the cleft.
We may not linger: such resistless will
Speeds our unwearied course. Vouchsafe us then
Thy pardon, if our duty seem to thee
Discourteous rudeness. In Verona I
Was abbot of San Zeno, when the hand
Of Barbarossa grasp'd Imperial sway,
That name, ne'er utter'd without tears in Milan.
And there is he, hath one foot in his grave,
Who for that monastery ere long shall weep,
Ruing his power misus'd: for that his son,
Of body ill compact, and worse in mind,
And born in evil, he hath set in place
Of its true pastor." Whether more he spake,
Or here was mute, I know not: he had sped
E'en now so far beyond us. Yet thus much
I heard, and in rememb'rance treasur'd it.

He then, who never fail'd me at my need,
Cried, "Hither turn. Lo! two with sharp remorse
Chiding their sin!" In rear of all the troop
These shouted: "First they died, to whom the sea
Open'd, or ever Jordan saw his heirs:
And they, who with Aeneas to the end
Endur'd not suffering, for their portion chose
Life without glory." Soon as they had fled
Past reach of sight, new thought within me rose
By others follow'd fast, and each unlike
Its fellow: till led on from thought to thought,
And pleasur'd with the fleeting train, mine eye
Was clos'd, and meditation chang'd to dream.

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