

# **The Vision of Hell, Part 5, Translated By The Rev. H. F. Cary, Illustrated by Gustave Dore      The Inferno**

Dante Alighieri

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Translated By The Rev. H. F. Cary, Illustrated by Gustave Dore

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The Inferno

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THE VISION  
OF  
HELL, PURGATORY, AND PARADISE

BY  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

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

HELL

OR THE INFERNO

Part 5

Cantos 9 - 12

CANTO IX

THE hue, which coward dread on my pale cheeks  
Imprinted, when I saw my guide turn back,  
Chas'd that from his which newly they had worn,  
And inwardly restrain'd it. He, as one  
Who listens, stood attentive: for his eye  
Not far could lead him through the sable air,  
And the thick-gath'ring cloud. "It yet behooves  
We win this fight"--thus he began--"if not--  
Such aid to us is offer'd.--Oh, how long  
Me seems it, ere the promis'd help arrive!"

I noted, how the sequel of his words  
Clos'd their beginning; for the last he spake  
Agreed not with the first. But not the less  
My fear was at his saying; sith I drew  
To import worse perchance, than that he held,  
His mutilated speech. "Doth ever any  
Into this rueful concave's extreme depth  
Descend, out of the first degree, whose pain  
Is deprivation merely of sweet hope?"

Thus I inquiring. "Rarely," he replied,  
"It chances, that among us any makes  
This journey, which I wend. Erewhile 'tis true  
Once came I here beneath, conjur'd by fell  
Erictho, sorceress, who compell'd the shades  
Back to their bodies. No long space my flesh  
Was naked of me, when within these walls  
She made me enter, to draw forth a spirit  
From out of Judas' circle. Lowest place  
Is that of all, obscurest, and remov'd  
Farthest from heav'n's all-circling orb. The road  
Full well I know: thou therefore rest secure.  
That lake, the noisome stench exhaling, round  
The city' of grief encompasses, which now  
We may not enter without rage." Yet more  
He added: but I hold it not in mind,  
For that mine eye toward the lofty tower  
Had drawn me wholly, to its burning top.  
Where in an instant I beheld uprisen

At once three hellish furies stain'd with blood:  
In limb and motion feminine they seem'd;  
Around them greenest hydras twisting roll'd  
Their volumes; adders and cerastes crept  
Instead of hair, and their fierce temples bound.

He knowing well the miserable hags  
Who tend the queen of endless woe, thus spake:

"Mark thou each dire Erinnyes. To the left  
This is Megaera; on the right hand she,  
Who wails, Alecto; and Tisiphone  
I' th' midst." This said, in silence he remain'd  
Their breast they each one clawing tore; themselves  
Smote with their palms, and such shrill clamour rais'd,  
That to the bard I clung, suspicion-bound.  
"Hasten Medusa: so to adamant  
Him shall we change;" all looking down exclaim'd.  
"E'en when by Theseus' might assail'd, we took  
No ill revenge." "Turn thyself round, and keep  
Thy count'nance hid; for if the Gorgon dire  
Be shown, and thou shouldst view it, thy return  
Upwards would be for ever lost." This said,  
Himself my gentle master turn'd me round,  
Nor trusted he my hands, but with his own  
He also hid me. Ye of intellect  
Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd  
Under close texture of the mystic strain!

And now there came o'er the perturbed waves  
Loud-crashing, terrible, a sound that made  
Either shore tremble, as if of a wind  
Impetuous, from conflicting vapours sprung,  
That 'gainst some forest driving all its might,  
Plucks off the branches, beats them down and hurls  
Afar; then onward passing proudly sweeps  
Its whirlwind rage, while beasts and shepherds fly.

Mine eyes he loos'd, and spake: "And now direct  
Thy visual nerve along that ancient foam,  
There, thickest where the smoke ascends." As frogs  
Before their foe the serpent, through the wave  
Ply swiftly all, till at the ground each one  
Lies on a heap; more than a thousand spirits  
Destroy'd, so saw I fleeing before one  
Who pass'd with unwet feet the Stygian sound.  
He, from his face removing the gross air,  
Off his left hand forth stretch'd, and seem'd alone  
By that annoyance wearied. I perceiv'd  
That he was sent from heav'n, and to my guide  
Turn'd me, who signal made that I should stand  
Quiet, and bend to him. Ah me! how full  
Of noble anger seem'd he! To the gate  
He came, and with his wand touch'd it, whereat  
Open without impediment it flew.

"Outcasts of heav'n! O abject race and scorn'd!"  
Began he on the horrid grunsel standing,  
"Whence doth this wild excess of insolence

Lodge in you? wherefore kick you 'gainst that will  
Ne'er frustrate of its end, and which so oft  
Hath laid on you enforcement of your pangs?  
What profits at the fays to but the horn?  
Your Cerberus, if ye remember, hence  
Bears still, peel'd of their hair, his throat and maw."

This said, he turn'd back o'er the filthy way,  
And syllable to us spake none, but wore  
The semblance of a man by other care  
Beset, and keenly press'd, than thought of him  
Who in his presence stands. Then we our steps  
Toward that territory mov'd, secure  
After the hallow'd words. We unoppos'd  
There enter'd; and my mind eager to learn  
What state a fortress like to that might hold,  
I soon as enter'd throw mine eye around,  
And see on every part wide-stretching space  
Replete with bitter pain and torment ill.

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles,  
Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's gulf,  
That closes Italy and laves her bounds,  
The place is all thick spread with sepulchres;  
So was it here, save what in horror here  
Excell'd: for 'midst the graves were scattered flames,  
Wherewith intensely all throughout they burn'd,  
That iron for no craft there hotter needs.

Their lids all hung suspended, and beneath  
From them forth issu'd lamentable moans,  
Such as the sad and tortur'd well might raise.

I thus: "Master! say who are these, interr'd  
Within these vaults, of whom distinct we hear  
The dolorous sighs?" He answer thus return'd:

"The arch-heretics are here, accompanied  
By every sect their followers; and much more,  
Than thou believest, tombs are freighted: like  
With like is buried; and the monuments  
Are different in degrees of heat." This said,  
He to the right hand turning, on we pass'd  
Betwixt the afflicted and the ramparts high.

## CANTO X

NOW by a secret pathway we proceed,  
Between the walls, that hem the region round,  
And the tormented souls: my master first,  
I close behind his steps. "Virtue supreme!"  
I thus began; "who through these ample orbs  
In circuit lead'st me, even as thou will'st,  
Speak thou, and satisfy my wish. May those,  
Who lie within these sepulchres, be seen?  
Already all the lids are rais'd, and none

O'er them keeps watch." He thus in answer spake  
"They shall be closed all, what-time they here  
From Josaphat return'd shall come, and bring  
Their bodies, which above they now have left.  
The cemetery on this part obtain  
With Epicurus all his followers,  
Who with the body make the spirit die.  
Here therefore satisfaction shall be soon  
Both to the question ask'd, and to the wish,  
Which thou conceal'st in silence." I replied:  
"I keep not, guide belov'd! from thee my heart  
Secreted, but to shun vain length of words,  
A lesson erewhile taught me by thyself."

"O Tuscan! thou who through the city of fire  
Alive art passing, so discreet of speech!  
Here please thee stay awhile. Thy utterance  
Declares the place of thy nativity  
To be that noble land, with which perchance  
I too severely dealt." Sudden that sound  
Forth issu'd from a vault, whereat in fear  
I somewhat closer to my leader's side  
Approaching, he thus spake: "What dost thou? Turn.  
Lo, Farinata, there! who hath himself  
Uplifted: from his girdle upwards all  
Expos'd behold him." On his face was mine  
Already fix'd; his breast and forehead there  
Erecting, seem'd as in high scorn he held  
E'en hell. Between the sepulchres to him  
My guide thrust me with fearless hands and prompt,  
This warning added: "See thy words be clear!"

He, soon as there I stood at the tomb's foot,  
Ey'd me a space, then in disdainful mood  
Address'd me: "Say, what ancestors were thine?"

I, willing to obey him, straight reveal'd  
The whole, nor kept back aught: whence he, his brow  
Somewhat uplifting, cried: "Fiercely were they  
Adverse to me, my party, and the blood  
From whence I sprang: twice therefore I abroad  
Scatter'd them." "Though driv'n out, yet they each time  
From all parts," answer'd I, "return'd; an art  
Which yours have shown, they are not skill'd to learn."

Then, peering forth from the unclosed jaw,  
Rose from his side a shade, high as the chin,  
Leaning, methought, upon its knees uprais'd.  
It look'd around, as eager to explore  
If there were other with me; but perceiving  
That fond imagination quench'd, with tears  
Thus spake: "If thou through this blind prison go'st.  
Led by thy lofty genius and profound,  
Where is my son? and wherefore not with thee?"

I straight replied: "Not of myself I come,  
By him, who there expects me, through this clime  
Conducted, whom perchance Guido thy son  
Had in contempt." Already had his words

And mode of punishment read me his name,  
Whence I so fully answer'd. He at once  
Exclaim'd, up starting, "How! said'st thou he HAD?  
No longer lives he? Strikes not on his eye  
The blessed daylight?" Then of some delay  
I made ere my reply aware, down fell  
Supine, not after forth appear'd he more.

Meanwhile the other, great of soul, near whom  
I yet was station'd, chang'd not count'nance stern,  
Nor mov'd the neck, nor bent his ribbed side.  
"And if," continuing the first discourse,  
"They in this art," he cried, "small skill have shown,  
That doth torment me more e'en than this bed.  
But not yet fifty times shall be relum'd  
Her aspect, who reigns here Queen of this realm,  
Ere thou shalt know the full weight of that art.  
So to the pleasant world mayst thou return,  
As thou shalt tell me, why in all their laws,  
Against my kin this people is so fell?"

"The slaughter and great havoc," I replied,  
"That colour'd Arbia's flood with crimson stain--  
To these impute, that in our hallow'd dome  
Such orisons ascend." Sighing he shook  
The head, then thus resum'd: "In that affray  
I stood not singly, nor without just cause  
Assuredly should with the rest have stirr'd;  
But singly there I stood, when by consent  
Of all, Florence had to the ground been raz'd,  
The one who openly forbad the deed."

"So may thy lineage find at last repose,"  
I thus adjur'd him, "as thou solve this knot,  
Which now involves my mind. If right I hear,  
Ye seem to view beforehand, that which time  
Leads with him, of the present uninform'd."

"We view, as one who hath an evil sight,"  
He answer'd, "plainly, objects far remote:  
So much of his large spendour yet imparts  
The' Almighty Ruler; but when they approach  
Or actually exist, our intellect  
Then wholly fails, nor of your human state  
Except what others bring us know we aught.  
Hence therefore mayst thou understand, that all  
Our knowledge in that instant shall expire,  
When on futurity the portals close."

Then conscious of my fault, and by remorse  
Smitten, I added thus: "Now shalt thou say  
To him there fallen, that his offspring still  
Is to the living join'd; and bid him know,  
That if from answer silent I abstain'd,  
'Twas that my thought was occupied intent  
Upon that error, which thy help hath solv'd."

But now my master summoning me back  
I heard, and with more eager haste besought

The spirit to inform me, who with him  
Partook his lot. He answer thus return'd:

"More than a thousand with me here are laid  
Within is Frederick, second of that name,  
And the Lord Cardinal, and of the rest  
I speak not." He, this said, from sight withdrew.  
But I my steps towards the ancient bard  
Reverting, ruminated on the words  
Betokening me such ill. Onward he mov'd,  
And thus in going question'd: "Whence the' amaze  
That holds thy senses wrapt?" I satisfied  
The' inquiry, and the sage enjoin'd me straight:  
"Let thy safe memory store what thou hast heard  
To thee importing harm; and note thou this,"  
With his rais'd finger bidding me take heed,

"When thou shalt stand before her gracious beam,  
Whose bright eye all surveys, she of thy life  
The future tenour will to thee unfold."

Forthwith he to the left hand turn'd his feet:  
We left the wall, and tow'rds the middle space  
Went by a path, that to a valley strikes;  
Which e'en thus high exhal'd its noisome steam.

## CANTO XI

UPON the utmost verge of a high bank,  
By craggy rocks environ'd round, we came,  
Where woes beneath more cruel yet were stow'd:  
And here to shun the horrible excess  
Of fetid exhalation, upward cast  
From the profound abyss, behind the lid  
Of a great monument we stood retir'd,

Whereon this scroll I mark'd: "I have in charge  
Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus drew  
From the right path.--Ere our descent behooves  
We make delay, that somewhat first the sense,  
To the dire breath accustom'd, afterward  
Regard it not." My master thus; to whom  
Answering I spake: "Some compensation find  
That the time past not wholly lost." He then:  
"Lo! how my thoughts e'en to thy wishes tend!  
My son! within these rocks," he thus began,  
"Are three close circles in gradation plac'd,  
As these which now thou leav'st. Each one is full  
Of spirits accurs'd; but that the sight alone  
Hereafter may suffice thee, listen how  
And for what cause in durance they abide.

"Of all malicious act abhorr'd in heaven,  
The end is injury; and all such end  
Either by force or fraud works other's woe  
But fraud, because of man peculiar evil,

To God is more displeasing; and beneath  
The fraudulent are therefore doom'd to' endure  
Severer pang. The violent occupy  
All the first circle; and because to force  
Three persons are obnoxious, in three rounds  
Each within other separate is it fram'd.  
To God, his neighbour, and himself, by man  
Force may be offer'd; to himself I say  
And his possessions, as thou soon shalt hear  
At full. Death, violent death, and painful wounds  
Upon his neighbour he inflicts; and wastes  
By devastation, pillage, and the flames,  
His substance. Slayers, and each one that smites  
In malice, plund'ers, and all robbers, hence  
The torment undergo of the first round  
In different herds. Man can do violence  
To himself and his own blessings: and for this  
He in the second round must aye deplore  
With unavailing penitence his crime,  
Whoe'er deprives himself of life and light,  
In reckless lavishment his talent wastes,  
And sorrows there where he should dwell in joy.  
To God may force be offer'd, in the heart  
Denying and blaspheming his high power,  
And nature with her kindly law contemning.  
And thence the inmost round marks with its seal  
Sodom and Cahors, and all such as speak  
Contemptuously' of the Godhead in their hearts.

"Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a sting,  
May be by man employ'd on one, whose trust  
He wins, or on another who withholds  
Strict confidence. Seems as the latter way  
Broke but the bond of love which Nature makes.  
Whence in the second circle have their nest  
Dissimulation, witchcraft, flatteries,  
Theft, falsehood, simony, all who seduce  
To lust, or set their honesty at pawn,  
With such vile scum as these. The other way  
Forgets both Nature's general love, and that  
Which thereto added afterwards gives birth  
To special faith. Whence in the lesser circle,  
Point of the universe, dread seat of Dis,  
The traitor is eternally consum'd."

I thus: "Instructor, clearly thy discourse  
Proceeds, distinguishing the hideous chasm  
And its inhabitants with skill exact.  
But tell me this: they of the dull, fat pool,  
Whom the rain beats, or whom the tempest drives,  
Or who with tongues so fierce conflicting meet,  
Wherefore within the city fire-illum'd  
Are not these punish'd, if God's wrath be on them?  
And if it be not, wherefore in such guise  
Are they condemned?" He answer thus return'd:  
"Wherefore in dotage wanders thus thy mind,  
Not so accusom'd? or what other thoughts  
Possess it? Dwell not in thy memory  
The words, wherein thy ethic page describes

Three dispositions adverse to Heav'n's will,  
Incont'nence, malice, and mad brutishness,  
And how incontinence the least offends  
God, and least guilt incurs? If well thou note  
This judgment, and remember who they are,  
Without these walls to vain repentance doom'd,  
Thou shalt discern why they apart are plac'd  
From these fell spirits, and less wreakful pours  
Justice divine on them its vengeance down."

"O Sun! who healest all imperfect sight,  
Thou so content'st me, when thou solv'st my doubt,  
That ignorance not less than knowledge charms.  
Yet somewhat turn thee back," I in these words  
Continu'd, "where thou saidst, that usury  
Offends celestial Goodness; and this knot  
Perplex'd unravel." He thus made reply:  
"Philosophy, to an attentive ear,  
Clearly points out, not in one part alone,  
How imitative nature takes her course  
From the celestial mind and from its art:  
And where her laws the Stagyrite unfolds,  
Not many leaves scann'd o'er, observing well  
Thou shalt discover, that your art on her  
Obsequious follows, as the learner treads  
In his instructor's step, so that your art  
Deserves the name of second in descent  
From God. These two, if thou recall to mind  
Creation's holy book, from the beginning  
Were the right source of life and excellence  
To human kind. But in another path  
The usurer walks; and Nature in herself  
And in her follower thus he sets at nought,  
Placing elsewhere his hope. But follow now  
My steps on forward journey bent; for now  
The Pisces play with undulating glance  
Along the' horizon, and the Wain lies all  
O'er the north-west; and onward there a space  
Is our steep passage down the rocky height."

## CANTO XII

THE place where to descend the precipice  
We came, was rough as Alp, and on its verge  
Such object lay, as every eye would shun.

As is that ruin, which Adice's stream  
On this side Trento struck, should'ring the wave,  
Or loos'd by earthquake or for lack of prop;  
For from the mountain's summit, whence it mov'd  
To the low level, so the headlong rock  
Is shiver'd, that some passage it might give  
To him who from above would pass; e'en such  
Into the chasm was that descent: and there  
At point of the disparted ridge lay stretch'd  
The infamy of Crete, detested brood

Of the feign'd heifer: and at sight of us  
It gnaw'd itself, as one with rage distract.

To him my guide exclaim'd: "Perchance thou deem'st  
The King of Athens here, who, in the world  
Above, thy death contriv'd. Monster! avaunt!  
He comes not tutor'd by thy sister's art,  
But to behold your torments is he come."

Like to a bull, that with impetuous spring  
Darts, at the moment when the fatal blow  
Hath struck him, but unable to proceed  
Plunges on either side; so saw I plunge  
The Minotaur; whereat the sage exclaim'd:  
"Run to the passage! while he storms, 't is well  
That thou descend." Thus down our road we took  
Through those dilapidated crags, that oft  
Mov'd underneath my feet, to weight like theirs  
Unus'd. I pond'ring went, and thus he spake:

"Perhaps thy thoughts are of this ruin'd steep,  
Guarded by the brute violence, which I  
Have vanquish'd now. Know then, that when I erst  
Hither descended to the nether hell,  
This rock was not yet fallen. But past doubt  
(If well I mark) not long ere He arrived,  
Who carried off from Dis the mighty spoil  
Of the highest circle, then through all its bounds  
Such trembling seiz'd the deep concave and foul,  
I thought the universe was thrill'd with love,  
Whereby, there are who deem, the world hath oft  
Been into chaos turn'd: and in that point,  
Here, and elsewhere, that old rock toppled down.  
But fix thine eyes beneath: the river of blood  
Approaches, in the which all those are steep'd,  
Who have by violence injur'd." O blind lust!  
O foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on  
In the brief life, and in the eternal then  
Thus miserably o'erwhelm us. I beheld  
An ample foss, that in a bow was bent,  
As circling all the plain; for so my guide  
Had told. Between it and the rampart's base  
On trail ran Centaurs, with keen arrows arm'd,  
As to the chase they on the earth were wont.

At seeing us descend they each one stood;  
And issuing from the troop, three sped with bows  
And missile weapons chosen first; of whom  
One cried from far: "Say to what pain ye come  
Condemn'd, who down this steep have journied? Speak  
From whence ye stand, or else the bow I draw."

To whom my guide: "Our answer shall be made  
To Chiron, there, when nearer him we come.  
Ill was thy mind, thus ever quick and rash."

Then me he touch'd, and spake: "Nessus is this,  
Who for the fair Deianira died,  
And wrought himself revenge for his own fate.

He in the midst, that on his breast looks down,  
Is the great Chiron who Achilles nurs'd;  
That other Pholus, prone to wrath." Around  
The foss these go by thousands, aiming shafts  
At whatsoever spirit dares emerge  
From out the blood, more than his guilt allows.

We to those beasts, that rapid strode along,  
Drew near, when Chiron took an arrow forth,  
And with the notch push'd back his shaggy beard  
To the cheek-bone, then his great mouth to view  
Exposing, to his fellows thus exclaim'd:  
"Are ye aware, that he who comes behind  
Moves what he touches? The feet of the dead  
Are not so wont." My trusty guide, who now  
Stood near his breast, where the two natures join,  
Thus made reply: "He is indeed alive,  
And solitary so must needs by me  
Be shown the gloomy vale, thereto induc'd  
By strict necessity, not by delight.  
She left her joyful harpings in the sky,  
Who this new office to my care consign'd.  
He is no robber, no dark spirit I.  
But by that virtue, which empowers my step  
To treat so wild a path, grant us, I pray,  
One of thy band, whom we may trust secure,  
Who to the ford may lead us, and convey  
Across, him mounted on his back; for he  
Is not a spirit that may walk the air."

Then on his right breast turning, Chiron thus  
To Nessus spake: "Return, and be their guide.  
And if ye chance to cross another troop,  
Command them keep aloof." Onward we mov'd,  
The faithful escort by our side, along  
The border of the crimson-seething flood,  
Whence from those steep'd within loud shrieks arose.

Some there I mark'd, as high as to their brow  
Immers'd, of whom the mighty Centaur thus:  
"These are the souls of tyrants, who were given  
To blood and rapine. Here they wail aloud  
Their merciless wrongs. Here Alexander dwells,  
And Dionysius fell, who many a year  
Of woe wrought for fair Sicily. That brow  
Whereon the hair so jetty clust'ring hangs,  
Is Azzolino; that with flaxen locks  
Obizzo' of Este, in the world destroy'd  
By his foul step-son." To the bard rever'd  
I turned me round, and thus he spake; "Let him  
Be to thee now first leader, me but next  
To him in rank." Then farther on a space  
The Centaur paus'd, near some, who at the throat  
Were extant from the wave; and showing us  
A spirit by itself apart retir'd,  
Exclaim'd: "He in God's bosom smote the heart,  
Which yet is honour'd on the bank of Thames."

A race I next espied, who held the head,

And even all the bust above the stream.  
'Midst these I many a face remember'd well.  
Thus shallow more and more the blood became,  
So that at last it but imbru'd the feet;  
And there our passage lay athwart the foss.

"As ever on this side the boiling wave  
Thou seest diminishing," the Centaur said,  
"So on the other, be thou well assur'd,  
It lower still and lower sinks its bed,  
Till in that part it reuniting join,  
Where 't is the lot of tyranny to mourn.  
There Heav'n's stern justice lays chastising hand  
On Attila, who was the scourge of earth,  
On Sextus, and on Pyrrhus, and extracts  
Tears ever by the seething flood unlock'd  
From the Rinieri, of Corneto this,  
Pazzo the other nam'd, who fill'd the ways  
With violence and war." This said, he turn'd,  
And quitting us, alone repass'd the ford.

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