

The Vision of Paradise, Part 1. Translated By The Rev. H. F. Cary, Illustrated by Gustave Dore

Dante Alighieri

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THE VISION

OF

HELL, PURGATORY, AND PARADISE

BY DANTE ALIGHIERI

TRANSLATED BY

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

PARADISE

Part 1

LIST OF CANTOS

Canto 1
Canto 2
Canto 3
Canto 4
Canto 5
Canto 6
Canto 7
Canto 8
Canto 9
Canto 10
Canto 11
Canto 12
Canto 13
Canto 14
Canto 15
Canto 16
Canto 17
Canto 18
Canto 19
Canto 20
Canto 21
Canto 22
Canto 23
Canto 24
Canto 25
Canto 26
Canto 27
Canto 28
Canto 29
Canto 30
Canto 31
Canto 32
Canto 33

CANTO I

His glory, by whose might all things are mov'd,
Pierces the universe, and in one part
Sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less. In heav'n,
That largeliest of his light partakes, was I,
Witness of things, which to relate again
Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence;
For that, so near approaching its desire
Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd,
That memory cannot follow. Nathless all,
That in my thoughts I of that sacred realm
Could store, shall now be matter of my song.

Benign Apollo! this last labour aid,
And make me such a vessel of thy worth,

As thy own laurel claims of me below'd.
Thus far hath one of steep Parnassus' brows
Suffic'd me; henceforth there is need of both
For my remaining enterprise Do thou
Enter into my bosom, and there breathe
So, as when Marsyas by thy hand was dragg'd
Forth from his limbs unsheath'd. O power divine!
If thou to me of shine impart so much,
That of that happy realm the shadow'd form
Trac'd in my thoughts I may set forth to view,
Thou shalt behold me of thy favour'd tree
Come to the foot, and crown myself with leaves;
For to that honour thou, and my high theme
Will fit me. If but seldom, mighty Sire!
To grace his triumph gathers thence a wreath
Caesar or bard (more shame for human wills
Deprav'd) joy to the Delphic god must spring
From the Pierian foliage, when one breast
Is with such thirst inspir'd. From a small spark
Great flame hath risen: after me perchance
Others with better voice may pray, and gain
From the Cirrhaean city answer kind.

Through diver passages, the world's bright lamp
Rises to mortals, but through that which joins
Four circles with the threefold cross, in best
Course, and in happiest constellation set
He comes, and to the worldly wax best gives
Its temper and impression. Morning there,
Here eve was by almost such passage made;
And whiteness had o'erspread that hemisphere,
Blackness the other part; when to the left
I saw Beatrice turn'd, and on the sun
Gazing, as never eagle fix'd his ken.
As from the first a second beam is wont
To issue, and reflected upwards rise,
E'en as a pilgrim bent on his return,
So of her act, that through the eyesight pass'd
Into my fancy, mine was form'd; and straight,
Beyond our mortal wont, I fix'd mine eyes
Upon the sun. Much is allowed us there,
That here exceeds our pow'r; thanks to the place
Made for the dwelling of the human kind

I suffer'd it not long, and yet so long
That I beheld it bick'ring sparks around,
As iron that comes boiling from the fire.
And suddenly upon the day appear'd
A day new-ris'n, as he, who hath the power,
Had with another sun bedeck'd the sky.

Her eyes fast fix'd on the eternal wheels,
Beatrice stood unmov'd; and I with ken
Fix'd upon her, from upward gaze remov'd
At her aspect, such inwardly became
As Glaucus, when he tasted of the herb,
That made him peer among the ocean gods;
Words may not tell of that transhuman change:
And therefore let the example serve, though weak,

For those whom grace hath better proof in store

If I were only what thou didst create,
Then newly, Love! by whom the heav'n is rul'd,
Thou know'st, who by thy light didst bear me up.
Whenas the wheel which thou dost ever guide,
Desired Spirit! with its harmony
Temper'd of thee and measur'd, charm'd mine ear,
Then seem'd to me so much of heav'n to blaze
With the sun's flame, that rain or flood ne'er made
A lake so broad. The newness of the sound,
And that great light, inflam'd me with desire,
Keener than e'er was felt, to know their cause.

Whence she who saw me, clearly as myself,
To calm my troubled mind, before I ask'd,
Open'd her lips, and gracious thus began:
"With false imagination thou thyself
Mak'st dull, so that thou seest not the thing,
Which thou hadst seen, had that been shaken off.
Thou art not on the earth as thou believ'st;
For light'ning scap'd from its own proper place
Ne'er ran, as thou hast hither now return'd."

Although divested of my first-rais'd doubt,
By those brief words, accompanied with smiles,
Yet in new doubt was I entangled more,
And said: "Already satisfied, I rest
From admiration deep, but now admire
How I above those lighter bodies rise."

Whence, after utt'rance of a piteous sigh,
She tow'rds me bent her eyes, with such a look,
As on her frenzied child a mother casts;
Then thus began: "Among themselves all things
Have order; and from hence the form, which makes
The universe resemble God. In this
The higher creatures see the printed steps
Of that eternal worth, which is the end
Whither the line is drawn. All natures lean,
In this their order, diversely, some more,
Some less approaching to their primal source.
Thus they to different havens are mov'd on
Through the vast sea of being, and each one
With instinct giv'n, that bears it in its course;
This to the lunar sphere directs the fire,
This prompts the hearts of mortal animals,
This the brute earth together knits, and binds.
Nor only creatures, void of intellect,
Are aim'd at by this bow; but even those,
That have intelligence and love, are pierc'd.
That Providence, who so well orders all,
With her own light makes ever calm the heaven,
In which the substance, that hath greatest speed,
Is turn'd: and thither now, as to our seat
Predestin'd, we are carried by the force
Of that strong cord, that never looses dart,
But at fair aim and glad. Yet is it true,
That as oftentimes but ill accords the form

To the design of art, through sluggishness
Of unreplying matter, so this course
Is sometimes quitted by the creature, who
Hath power, directed thus, to bend elsewhere;
As from a cloud the fire is seen to fall,
From its original impulse warp'd, to earth,
By vicious fondness. Thou no more admire
Thy soaring, (if I rightly deem,) than lapse
Of torrent downwards from a mountain's height.
There would in thee for wonder be more cause,
If, free of hind'rance, thou hadst fix'd thyself
Below, like fire unmoving on the earth."

So said, she turn'd toward the heav'n her face.

CANTO II

All ye, who in small bark have following sail'd,
Eager to listen, on the advent'rous track
Of my proud keel, that singing cuts its way,
Backward return with speed, and your own shores
Revisit, nor put out to open sea,
Where losing me, perchance ye may remain
Bewilder'd in deep maze. The way I pass
Ne'er yet was run: Minerva breathes the gale,
Apollo guides me, and another Nine
To my rapt sight the arctic beams reveal.
Ye other few, who have outstretch'd the neck.
Timely for food of angels, on which here
They live, yet never know satiety,
Through the deep brine ye fearless may put out
Your vessel, marking, well the furrow broad
Before you in the wave, that on both sides
Equal returns. Those, glorious, who pass'd o'er
To Colchos, wonder'd not as ye will do,
When they saw Jason following the plough.

The increate perpetual thirst, that draws
Toward the realm of God's own form, bore us
Swift almost as the heaven ye behold.

Beatrice upward gaz'd, and I on her,
And in such space as on the notch a dart
Is plac'd, then loosen'd flies, I saw myself
Arriv'd, where wond'rous thing engag'd my sight.
Whence she, to whom no work of mine was hid,
Turning to me, with aspect glad as fair,
Bespake me: "Gratefully direct thy mind
To God, through whom to this first star we come."

Me seem'd as if a cloud had cover'd us,
Translucent, solid, firm, and polish'd bright,
Like adamant, which the sun's beam had smit
Within itself the ever-during pearl
Receiv'd us, as the wave a ray of light
Receives, and rests unbroken. If I then

Was of corporeal frame, and it transcend
Our weaker thought, how one dimension thus
Another could endure, which needs must be
If body enter body, how much more
Must the desire inflame us to behold
That essence, which discovers by what means
God and our nature join'd! There will be seen
That which we hold through faith, not shown by proof,
But in itself intelligibly plain,
E'en as the truth that man at first believes.

I answered: "Lady! I with thoughts devout,
Such as I best can frame, give thanks to Him,
Who hath remov'd me from the mortal world.
But tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth
Give rise to talk of Cain in fabling quaint?"

She somewhat smil'd, then spake: "If mortals err
In their opinion, when the key of sense
Unlocks not, surely wonder's weapon keen
Ought not to pierce thee; since thou find'st, the wings
Of reason to pursue the senses' flight
Are short. But what thy own thought is, declare."

Then I: "What various here above appears,
Is caus'd, I deem, by bodies dense or rare."

She then resum'd: "Thou certainly wilt see
In falsehood thy belief o'erwhelm'd, if well
Thou listen to the arguments, which I
Shall bring to face it. The eighth sphere displays
Numberless lights, the which in kind and size
May be remark'd of different aspects;
If rare or dense of that were cause alone,
One single virtue then would be in all,
Alike distributed, or more, or less.
Different virtues needs must be the fruits
Of formal principles, and these, save one,
Will by thy reasoning be destroy'd. Beside,
If rarity were of that dusk the cause,
Which thou inquirest, either in some part
That planet must throughout be void, nor fed
With its own matter; or, as bodies share
Their fat and leanness, in like manner this
Must in its volume change the leaves. The first,
If it were true, had through the sun's eclipse
Been manifested, by transparency
Of light, as through aught rare beside effus'd.
But this is not. Therefore remains to see
The other cause: and if the other fall,
Erroneous so must prove what seem'd to thee.
If not from side to side this rarity
Pass through, there needs must be a limit, whence
Its contrary no further lets it pass.
And hence the beam, that from without proceeds,
Must be pour'd back, as colour comes, through glass
Reflected, which behind it lead conceals.
Now wilt thou say, that there of murkier hue

Than in the other part the ray is shown,
By being thence refracted farther back.
From this perplexity will free thee soon
Experience, if thereof thou trial make,
The fountain whence your arts derive their streame.
Three mirrors shalt thou take, and two remove
From thee alike, and more remote the third.
Betwixt the former pair, shall meet thine eyes;
Then turn'd toward them, cause behind thy back
A light to stand, that on the three shall shine,
And thus reflected come to thee from all.
Though that beheld most distant do not stretch
A space so ample, yet in brightness thou
Will own it equaling the rest. But now,
As under snow the ground, if the warm ray
Smites it, remains dismantled of the hue
And cold, that cover'd it before, so thee,
Dismantled in thy mind, I will inform
With light so lively, that the tremulous beam
Shall quiver where it falls. Within the heaven,
Where peace divine inhabits, circles round
A body, in whose virtue dies the being
Of all that it contains. The following heaven,
That hath so many lights, this being divides,
Through different essences, from it distinct,
And yet contain'd within it. The other orbs
Their separate distinctions variously
Dispose, for their own seed and produce apt.
Thus do these organs of the world proceed,
As thou beholdest now, from step to step,
Their influences from above deriving,
And thence transmitting downwards. Mark me well,
How through this passage to the truth I ford,
The truth thou lov'st, that thou henceforth alone,
May'st know to keep the shallows, safe, untold.

"The virtue and motion of the sacred orbs,
As mallet by the workman's hand, must needs
By blessed movers be inspir'd. This heaven,
Made beauteous by so many luminaries,
From the deep spirit, that moves its circling sphere,
Its image takes an impress as a seal:
And as the soul, that dwells within your dust,
Through members different, yet together form'd,
In different pow'rs resolves itself; e'en so
The intellectual efficacy unfolds
Its goodness multiplied throughout the stars;
On its own unity revolving still.
Different virtue compact different
Makes with the precious body it enlivens,
With which it knits, as life in you is knit.
From its original nature full of joy,
The virtue mingled through the body shines,
As joy through pupil of the living eye.
From hence proceeds, that which from light to light
Seems different, and not from dense or rare.
This is the formal cause, that generates
Proportion'd to its power, the dusk or clear."

CANTO III

That sun, which erst with love my bosom warm'd
Had of fair truth unveil'd the sweet aspect,
By proof of right, and of the false reproof;
And I, to own myself convinc'd and free
Of doubt, as much as needed, rais'd my head
Erect for speech. But soon a sight appear'd,
Which, so intent to mark it, held me fix'd,
That of confession I no longer thought.

As through translucent and smooth glass, or wave
Clear and unmov'd, and flowing not so deep
As that its bed is dark, the shape returns
So faint of our impictur'd lineaments,
That on white forehead set a pearl as strong
Comes to the eye: such saw I many a face,
All stretch'd to speak, from whence I straight conceiv'd
Delusion opposite to that, which rais'd
Between the man and fountain, amorous flame.

Sudden, as I perceiv'd them, deeming these
Reflected semblances to see of whom
They were, I turn'd mine eyes, and nothing saw;
Then turn'd them back, directed on the light
Of my sweet guide, who smiling shot forth beams
From her celestial eyes. "Wonder not thou,"
She cry'd, "at this my smiling, when I see
Thy childish judgment; since not yet on truth
It rests the foot, but, as it still is wont,
Makes thee fall back in unsound vacancy.
True substances are these, which thou behold'st,
Hither through failure of their vow exil'd.
But speak thou with them; listen, and believe,
That the true light, which fills them with desire,
Permits not from its beams their feet to stray."

Straight to the shadow which for converse seem'd
Most earnest, I addressed me, and began,
As one by over-eagerness perplex'd:
"O spirit, born for joy! who in the rays
Of life eternal, of that sweetness know'st
The flavour, which, not tasted, passes far
All apprehension, me it well would please,
If thou wouldst tell me of thy name, and this
Your station here." Whence she, with kindness prompt,
And eyes glist'ning with smiles: "Our charity,
To any wish by justice introduc'd,
Bars not the door, no more than she above,
Who would have all her court be like herself.
I was a virgin sister in the earth;
And if thy mind observe me well, this form,
With such addition grac'd of loveliness,
Will not conceal me long, but thou wilt know
Piccarda, in the tardiest sphere thus plac'd,
Here 'mid these other blessed also blest.

Our hearts, whose high affections burn alone
With pleasure, from the Holy Spirit conceiv'd,
Admitted to his order dwell in joy.
And this condition, which appears so low,
Is for this cause assign'd us, that our vows
Were in some part neglected and made void."

Whence I to her replied: "Something divine
Beams in your countenance, wond'rous fair,
From former knowledge quite transmuting you.
Therefore to recollect was I so slow.
But what thou sayst hath to my memory
Given now such aid, that to retrace your forms
Is easier. Yet inform me, ye, who here
Are happy, long ye for a higher place
More to behold, and more in love to dwell?"

She with those other spirits gently smil'd,
Then answer'd with such gladness, that she seem'd
With love's first flame to glow: "Brother! our will
Is in composure settled by the power
Of charity, who makes us will alone
What we possess, and nought beyond desire;
If we should wish to be exalted more,
Then must our wishes jar with the high will
Of him, who sets us here, which in these orbs
Thou wilt confess not possible, if here
To be in charity must needs befall,
And if her nature well thou contemplate.
Rather it is inherent in this state
Of blessedness, to keep ourselves within
The divine will, by which our wills with his
Are one. So that as we from step to step
Are plac'd throughout this kingdom, pleases all,
E'en as our King, who in us plants his will;
And in his will is our tranquillity;
It is the mighty ocean, whither tends
Whatever it creates and nature makes."

Then saw I clearly how each spot in heav'n
Is Paradise, though with like gracious dew
The supreme virtue show'r not over all.

But as it chanced, if one sort of food
Hath satiated, and of another still
The appetite remains, that this is ask'd,
And thanks for that return'd; e'en so did I
In word and motion, bent from her to learn
What web it was, through which she had not drawn
The shuttle to its point. She thus began:
"Exalted worth and perfectness of life
The Lady higher up enshrine in heaven,
By whose pure laws upon your nether earth
The robe and veil they wear, to that intent,
That e'en till death they may keep watch or sleep
With their great bridegroom, who accepts each vow,
Which to his gracious pleasure love conforms.
from the world, to follow her, when young
Escap'd; and, in her vesture mantling me,

Made promise of the way her sect enjoins.
Thereafter men, for ill than good more apt,
Forth snatch'd me from the pleasant cloister's pale.
God knows how after that my life was fram'd.
This other splendid shape, which thou beholdest
At my right side, burning with all the light
Of this our orb, what of myself I tell
May to herself apply. From her, like me
A sister, with like violence were torn
The saintly folds, that shaded her fair brows.
E'en when she to the world again was brought
In spite of her own will and better wont,
Yet not for that the bosom's inward veil
Did she renounce. This is the luminary
Of mighty Constance, who from that loud blast,
Which blew the second over Suabia's realm,
That power produc'd, which was the third and last."

She ceas'd from further talk, and then began
"Ave Maria" singing, and with that song
Vanish'd, as heavy substance through deep wave.

Mine eye, that far as it was capable,
Pursued her, when in dimness she was lost,
Turn'd to the mark where greater want impell'd,
And bent on Beatrice all its gaze.
But she as light'ning beam'd upon my looks:
So that the sight sustain'd it not at first.
Whence I to question her became less prompt.

CANTO IV

Between two kinds of food, both equally
Remote and tempting, first a man might die
Of hunger, ere he one could freely choose.
E'en so would stand a lamb between the maw
Of two fierce wolves, in dread of both alike:
E'en so between two deer a dog would stand,
Wherefore, if I was silent, fault nor praise
I to myself impute, by equal doubts
Held in suspense, since of necessity
It happen'd. Silent was I, yet desire
Was painted in my looks; and thus I spake
My wish more earnestly than language could.

As Daniel, when the haughty king he freed
From ire, that spurr'd him on to deeds unjust
And violent; so look'd Beatrice then.

"Well I discern," she thus her words address'd,
"How contrary desires each way constrain thee,
So that thy anxious thought is in itself
Bound up and stifled, nor breathes freely forth.
Thou arguest; if the good intent remain;
What reason that another's violence

Should stint the measure of my fair desert?

"Cause too thou findest for doubt, in that it seems,
That spirits to the stars, as Plato deem'd,
Return. These are the questions which thy will
Urge equally; and therefore I the first
Of that will treat which hath the more of gall.
Of seraphim he who is most ensky'd,
Moses and Samuel, and either John,
Choose which thou wilt, nor even Mary's self,
Have not in any other heav'n their seats,
Than have those spirits which so late thou saw'st;
Nor more or fewer years exist; but all
Make the first circle beauteous, diversely
Partaking of sweet life, as more or less
Afflation of eternal bliss pervades them.
Here were they shown thee, not that fate assigns
This for their sphere, but for a sign to thee
Of that celestial furthest from the height.
Thus needs, that ye may apprehend, we speak:
Since from things sensible alone ye learn
That, which digested rightly after turns
To intellectual. For no other cause
The scripture, condescending graciously
To your perception, hands and feet to God
Attributes, nor so means: and holy church
Doth represent with human countenance
Gabriel, and Michael, and him who made
Tobias whole. Unlike what here thou seest,
The judgment of Timaeus, who affirms
Each soul restor'd to its particular star,
Believing it to have been taken thence,
When nature gave it to inform her mold:
Since to appearance his intention is
E'en what his words declare: or else to shun
Derision, haply thus he hath disguis'd
His true opinion. If his meaning be,
That to the influencing of these orbs revert
The honour and the blame in human acts,
Perchance he doth not wholly miss the truth.
This principle, not understood aright,
Erewhile perverted well nigh all the world;
So that it fell to fabled names of Jove,
And Mercury, and Mars. That other doubt,
Which moves thee, is less harmful; for it brings
No peril of removing thee from me.

"That, to the eye of man, our justice seems
Unjust, is argument for faith, and not
For heretic declension. To the end
This truth may stand more clearly in your view,
I will content thee even to thy wish

"If violence be, when that which suffers, nought
Consents to that which forceth, not for this
These spirits stood exculpate. For the will,
That will not, still survives unquench'd, and doth
As nature doth in fire, tho' violence
Wrest it a thousand times; for, if it yield

Or more or less, so far it follows force.
And thus did these, whom they had power to seek
The hallow'd place again. In them, had will
Been perfect, such as once upon the bars
Held Laurence firm, or wrought in Scaevola
To his own hand remorseless, to the path,
Whence they were drawn, their steps had hasten'd back,
When liberty return'd: but in too few
Resolve so steadfast dwells. And by these words
If duly weigh'd, that argument is void,
Which oft might have perplex'd thee still. But now
Another question thwarts thee, which to solve
Might try thy patience without better aid.
I have, no doubt, instill'd into thy mind,
That blessed spirit may not lie; since near
The source of primal truth it dwells for aye:
And thou might'st after of Piccarda learn
That Constance held affection to the veil;
So that she seems to contradict me here.
Not seldom, brother, it hath chanc'd for men
To do what they had gladly left undone,
Yet to shun peril they have done amiss:
E'en as Alcmaeon, at his father's suit
Slew his own mother, so made pitiless
Not to lose pity. On this point bethink thee,
That force and will are blended in such wise
As not to make the' offence excusable.
Absolute will agrees not to the wrong,
That inasmuch as there is fear of woe
From non-compliance, it agrees. Of will
Thus absolute Piccarda spake, and I
Of th' other; so that both have truly said."

Such was the flow of that pure rill, that well'd
From forth the fountain of all truth; and such
The rest, that to my wond'ring thoughts I found.

"O thou of primal love the prime delight!
Goddess!" I straight reply'd, "whose lively words
Still shed new heat and vigour through my soul!
Affection fails me to requite thy grace
With equal sum of gratitude: be his
To recompense, who sees and can reward thee.
Well I discern, that by that truth alone
Enlighten'd, beyond which no truth may roam,
Our mind can satisfy her thirst to know:
Therein she resteth, e'en as in his lair
The wild beast, soon as she hath reach'd that bound,
And she hath power to reach it; else desire
Were given to no end. And thence doth doubt
Spring, like a shoot, around the stock of truth;
And it is nature which from height to height
On to the summit prompts us. This invites,
This doth assure me, lady, rev'rently
To ask thee of other truth, that yet
Is dark to me. I fain would know, if man
By other works well done may so supply
The failure of his vows, that in your scale
They lack not weight." I spake; and on me straight

Beatrice look'd with eyes that shot forth sparks
Of love celestial in such copious stream,
That, virtue sinking in me overpower'd,
I turn'd, and downward bent confus'd my sight.

CANTO V

"If beyond earthly wont, the flame of love
Illume me, so that I o'ercome thy power
Of vision, marvel not: but learn the cause
In that perfection of the sight, which soon
As apprehending, hasteneth on to reach
The good it apprehends. I well discern,
How in thine intellect already shines
The light eternal, which to view alone
Ne'er fails to kindle love; and if aught else
Your love seduces, 't is but that it shows
Some ill-mark'd vestige of that primal beam.

"This would'st thou know, if failure of the vow
By other service may be so supplied,
As from self-question to assure the soul."

Thus she her words, not heedless of my wish,
Began; and thus, as one who breaks not off
Discourse, continued in her saintly strain.
"Supreme of gifts, which God creating gave
Of his free bounty, sign most evident
Of goodness, and in his account most priz'd,
Was liberty of will, the boon wherewith
All intellectual creatures, and them sole
He hath endow'd. Hence now thou mayst infer
Of what high worth the vow, which so is fram'd
That when man offers, God well-pleas'd accepts;
For in the compact between God and him,
This treasure, such as I describe it to thee,
He makes the victim, and of his own act.
What compensation therefore may he find?
If that, whereof thou hast oblation made,
By using well thou think'st to consecrate,
Thou would'st of theft do charitable deed.
Thus I resolve thee of the greater point.

"But forasmuch as holy church, herein
Dispensing, seems to contradict the truth
I have discover'd to thee, yet behooves
Thou rest a little longer at the board,
Ere the crude aliment, which thou hast taken,
Digested fitly to nutrition turn.
Open thy mind to what I now unfold,
And give it inward keeping. Knowledge comes
Of learning well retain'd, unfruitful else.

"This sacrifice in essence of two things
Consisteth; one is that, whereof 't is made,
The covenant the other. For the last,

It ne'er is cancell'd if not kept: and hence
I spake erewhile so strictly of its force.
For this it was enjoin'd the Israelites,
Though leave were giv'n them, as thou know'st, to change
The offering, still to offer. Th' other part,
The matter and the substance of the vow,
May well be such, to that without offence
It may for other substance be exchang'd.
But at his own discretion none may shift
The burden on his shoulders, unreleas'd
By either key, the yellow and the white.
Nor deem of any change, as less than vain,
If the last bond be not within the new
Included, as the quatre in the six.
No satisfaction therefore can be paid
For what so precious in the balance weighs,
That all in counterpoise must kick the beam.
Take then no vow at random: ta'en, with faith
Preserve it; yet not bent, as Jephthah once,
Blindly to execute a rash resolve,
Whom better it had suited to exclaim,
'I have done ill,' than to redeem his pledge
By doing worse or, not unlike to him
In folly, that great leader of the Greeks:
Whence, on the alter, Iphigenia mourn'd
Her virgin beauty, and hath since made mourn
Both wise and simple, even all, who hear
Of so fell sacrifice. Be ye more staid,
O Christians, not, like feather, by each wind
Removable: nor think to cleanse ourselves
In every water. Either testament,
The old and new, is yours: and for your guide
The shepherd of the church let this suffice
To save you. When by evil lust entic'd,
Remember ye be men, not senseless beasts;
Nor let the Jew, who dwelleth in your streets,
Hold you in mock'ry. Be not, as the lamb,
That, fickle wanton, leaves its mother's milk,
To dally with itself in idle play."

Such were the words that Beatrice spake:
These ended, to that region, where the world
Is liveliest, full of fond desire she turn'd.

Though mainly prompt new question to propose,
Her silence and chang'd look did keep me dumb.
And as the arrow, ere the cord is still,
Leapeth unto its mark; so on we sped
Into the second realm. There I beheld
The dame, so joyous enter, that the orb
Grew brighter at her smiles; and, if the star
Were mov'd to gladness, what then was my cheer,
Whom nature hath made apt for every change!

As in a quiet and clear lake the fish,
If aught approach them from without, do draw
Towards it, deeming it their food; so drew
Full more than thousand splendours towards us,
And in each one was heard: "Lo! one arriv'd

To multiply our loves!" and as each came
The shadow, streaming forth effulgence new,
Witness'd augmented joy. Here, reader! think,
If thou didst miss the sequel of my tale,
To know the rest how sorely thou wouldst crave;
And thou shalt see what vehement desire
Possess'd me, as soon as these had met my view,
To know their state. "O born in happy hour!
Thou to whom grace vouchsafes, or ere thy close
Of fleshly warfare, to behold the thrones
Of that eternal triumph, know to us
The light communicated, which through heaven
Expatiates without bound. Therefore, if aught
Thou of our beams wouldst borrow for thine aid,
Spare not; and of our radiance take thy fill."

Thus of those piteous spirits one bespake me;
And Beatrice next: "Say on; and trust
As unto gods!"--"How in the light supreme
Thou harbour'st, and from thence the virtue bring'st,
That, sparkling in thine eyes, denotes thy joy,
I mark; but, who thou art, am still to seek;
Or wherefore, worthy spirit! for thy lot
This sphere assign'd, that oft from mortal ken
Is veil'd by others' beams." I said, and turn'd
Toward the lustre, that with greeting, kind
Erewhile had hail'd me. Forthwith brighter far
Than erst, it wax'd: and, as himself the sun
Hides through excess of light, when his warm gaze
Hath on the mantle of thick vapours prey'd;
Within its proper ray the saintly shape
Was, through increase of gladness, thus conceal'd;
And, shrouded so in splendour answer'd me,
E'en as the tenour of my song declares.

CANTO VI

"After that Constantine the eagle turn'd
Against the motions of the heav'n, that roll'd
Consenting with its course, when he of yore,
Lavinia's spouse, was leader of the flight,
A hundred years twice told and more, his seat
At Europe's extreme point, the bird of Jove
Held, near the mountains, whence he issued first.
There, under shadow of his sacred plumes
Swaying the world, till through successive hands
To mine he came devolv'd. Caesar I was,
And am Justinian; destin'd by the will
Of that prime love, whose influence I feel,
From vain excess to clear th' encumber'd laws.
Or ere that work engag'd me, I did hold
Christ's nature merely human, with such faith
Contented. But the blessed Agapete,
Who was chief shepherd, he with warning voice
To the true faith recall'd me. I believ'd
His words: and what he taught, now plainly see,

As thou in every contradiction seest
The true and false oppos'd. Soon as my feet
Were to the church reclaim'd, to my great task,
By inspiration of God's grace impell'd,
I gave me wholly, and consign'd mine arms
To Belisarius, with whom heaven's right hand
Was link'd in such conjointment, 't was a sign
That I should rest. To thy first question thus
I shape mine answer, which were ended here,
But that its tendency doth prompt perforce
To some addition; that thou well, mayst mark
What reason on each side they have to plead,
By whom that holiest banner is withstood,
Both who pretend its power and who oppose.

"Beginning from that hour, when Pallas died
To give it rule, behold the valorous deeds
Have made it worthy reverence. Not unknown
To thee, how for three hundred years and more
It dwelt in Alba, up to those fell lists
Where for its sake were met the rival three;
Nor aught unknown to thee, which it achiev'd
Down to the Sabines' wrong to Lucrece' woe,
With its sev'n kings conqu'ring the nation round;
Nor all it wrought, by Roman worthies home
'Gainst Brennus and th' Epirot prince, and hosts
Of single chiefs, or states in league combin'd
Of social warfare; hence Torquatus stern,
And Quintius nam'd of his neglected locks,
The Decii, and the Fabii hence acquir'd
Their fame, which I with duteous zeal embalm.
By it the pride of Arab hordes was quell'd,
When they led on by Hannibal o'erpass'd
The Alpine rocks, whence glide thy currents, Po!
Beneath its guidance, in their prime of days
Scipio and Pompey triumph'd; and that hill,
Under whose summit thou didst see the light,
Rued its stern bearing. After, near the hour,
When heav'n was minded that o'er all the world
His own deep calm should brood, to Caesar's hand
Did Rome consign it; and what then it wrought
From Var unto the Rhine, saw Isere's flood,
Saw Loire and Seine, and every vale, that fills
The torrent Rhone. What after that it wrought,
When from Ravenna it came forth, and leap'd
The Rubicon, was of so bold a flight,
That tongue nor pen may follow it. Tow'rds Spain
It wheel'd its bands, then tow'rd Dyrrachium smote,
And on Pharsalia with so fierce a plunge,
E'en the warm Nile was conscious to the pang;
Its native shores Antandros, and the streams
Of Simois revisited, and there
Where Hector lies; then ill for Ptolemy
His pennons shook again; lightning thence fell
On Juba; and the next upon your west,
At sound of the Pompeian trump, return'd.

"What following and in its next bearer's gripe
It wrought, is now by Cassius and Brutus

Bark'd off in hell, and by Perugia's sons
And Modena's was mourn'd. Hence weepeth still
Sad Cleopatra, who, pursued by it,
Took from the adder black and sudden death.
With him it ran e'en to the Red Sea coast;
With him compos'd the world to such a peace,
That of his temple Janus barr'd the door.

"But all the mighty standard yet had wrought,
And was appointed to perform thereafter,
Throughout the mortal kingdom which it sway'd,
Falls in appearance dwindled and obscur'd,
If one with steady eye and perfect thought
On the third Caesar look; for to his hands,
The living Justice, in whose breath I move,
Committed glory, e'en into his hands,
To execute the vengeance of its wrath.

"Hear now and wonder at what next I tell.
After with Titus it was sent to wreak
Vengeance for vengeance of the ancient sin,
And, when the Lombard tooth, with fangs impure,
Did gore the bosom of the holy church,
Under its wings victorious, Charlemagne
Sped to her rescue. Judge then for thyself
Of those, whom I erewhile accus'd to thee,
What they are, and how grievous their offending,

Who are the cause of all your ills. The one
Against the universal ensign rears
The yellow lilies, and with partial aim
That to himself the other arrogates:
So that 't is hard to see which more offends.
Be yours, ye Ghibellines, to veil your arts
Beneath another standard: ill is this
Follow'd of him, who severs it and justice:
And let not with his Guelphs the new-crown'd Charles
Assail it, but those talons hold in dread,
Which from a lion of more lofty port
Have rent the easing. Many a time ere now
The sons have for the sire's transgression wail'd;
Nor let him trust the fond belief, that heav'n
Will truck its armour for his liliated shield.

"This little star is furnish'd with good spirits,
Whose mortal lives were busied to that end,
That honour and renown might wait on them:
And, when desires thus err in their intention,
True love must needs ascend with slacker beam.
But it is part of our delight, to measure
Our wages with the merit; and admire
The close proportion. Hence doth heav'nly justice
Temper so evenly affection in us,
It ne'er can warp to any wrongfulness.
Of diverse voices is sweet music made:
So in our life the different degrees
Render sweet harmony among these wheels.

"Within the pearl, that now encloseth us,

Shines Romeo's light, whose goodly deed and fair
Met ill acceptance. But the Provençals,
That were his foes, have little cause for mirth.
Ill shapes that man his course, who makes his wrong
Of other's worth. Four daughters were there born
To Raymond Berenger, and every one
Became a queen; and this for him did Romeo,
Though of mean state and from a foreign land.
Yet envious tongues incited him to ask
A reckoning of that just one, who return'd
Twelve fold to him for ten. Aged and poor
He parted thence: and if the world did know
The heart he had, begging his life by morsels,
'T would deem the praise, it yields him, scantily dealt."

CANTO VII

"Hosanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth
Superillustrans claritate tua
Felices ignes horum malahoth!"
Thus chanting saw I turn that substance bright
With fourfold lustre to its orb again,
Revolving; and the rest unto their dance
With it mov'd also; and like swiftest sparks,
In sudden distance from my sight were veil'd.

Me doubt possess'd, and "Speak," it whisper'd me,
"Speak, speak unto thy lady, that she quench
Thy thirst with drops of sweetness." Yet blank awe,
Which lords it o'er me, even at the sound
Of Beatrice's name, did bow me down
As one in slumber held. Not long that mood
Beatrice suffer'd: she, with such a smile,
As might have made one blest amid the flames,
Beaming upon me, thus her words began:
"Thou in thy thought art pond'ring (as I deem),
And what I deem is truth how just revenge
Could be with justice punish'd: from which doubt
I soon will free thee; so thou mark my words;
For they of weighty matter shall possess thee.

"That man, who was unborn, himself condemn'd,
And, in himself, all, who since him have liv'd,
His offspring: whence, below, the human kind
Lay sick in grievous error many an age;
Until it pleas'd the Word of God to come
Amongst them down, to his own person joining
The nature, from its Maker far estrang'd,
By the mere act of his eternal love.
Contemplate here the wonder I unfold.
The nature with its Maker thus conjoin'd,
Created first was blameless, pure and good;
But through itself alone was driven forth
From Paradise, because it had eschew'd
The way of truth and life, to evil turn'd.
Ne'er then was penalty so just as that

Inflicted by the cross, if thou regard
The nature in assumption doom'd: ne'er wrong
So great, in reference to him, who took
Such nature on him, and endur'd the doom.
God therefore and the Jews one sentence pleased:
So different effects flow'd from one act,
And heav'n was open'd, though the earth did quake.
Count it not hard henceforth, when thou dost hear
That a just vengeance was by righteous court
Justly reveng'd. But yet I see thy mind
By thought on thought arising sore perplex'd,
And with how vehement desire it asks
Solution of the maze. What I have heard,
Is plain, thou sayst: but wherefore God this way
For our redemption chose, eludes my search.

"Brother! no eye of man not perfected,
Nor fully ripen'd in the flame of love,
May fathom this decree. It is a mark,
In sooth, much aim'd at, and but little kenn'd:
And I will therefore show thee why such way
Was worthiest. The celestial love, that spume
All envying in its bounty, in itself
With such effulgence blazeth, as sends forth
All beauteous things eternal. What distils
Immediate thence, no end of being knows,
Bearing its seal immutably impress'd.
Whatever thence immediate falls, is free,
Free wholly, uncontrollable by power
Of each thing new: by such conformity
More grateful to its author, whose bright beams,
Though all partake their shining, yet in those
Are liveliest, which resemble him the most.
These tokens of pre-eminence on man
Largely bestow'd, if any of them fail,
He needs must forfeit his nobility,
No longer stainless. Sin alone is that,
Which doth disfranchise him, and make unlike
To the chief good; for that its light in him
Is darken'd. And to dignity thus lost
Is no return; unless, where guilt makes void,
He for ill pleasure pay with equal pain.
Your nature, which entirely in its seed
Trangress'd, from these distinctions fell, no less
Than from its state in Paradise; nor means
Found of recovery (search all methods out
As strickly as thou may) save one of these,
The only fords were left through which to wade,
Either that God had of his courtesy
Releas'd him merely, or else man himself
For his own folly by himself aton'd.

"Fix now thine eye, intently as thou canst,
On th' everlasting counsel, and explore,
Instructed by my words, the dread abyss.

"Man in himself had ever lack'd the means
Of satisfaction, for he could not stoop
Obeying, in humility so low,

As high he, disobeying, thought to soar:
And for this reason he had vainly tried
Out of his own sufficiency to pay
The rigid satisfaction. Then behooved
That God should by his own ways lead him back
Unto the life, from whence he fell, restor'd:
By both his ways, I mean, or one alone.
But since the deed is ever priz'd the more,
The more the doer's good intent appears,
Goodness celestial, whose broad signature
Is on the universe, of all its ways
To raise ye up, was fain to leave out none,
Nor aught so vast or so magnificent,
Either for him who gave or who receiv'd
Between the last night and the primal day,
Was or can be. For God more bounty show'd.
Giving himself to make man capable
Of his return to life, than had the terms
Been mere and unconditional release.
And for his justice, every method else
Were all too scant, had not the Son of God
Humbled himself to put on mortal flesh.

"Now, to fulfil each wish of thine, remains
I somewhat further to thy view unfold.
That thou mayst see as clearly as myself.

"I see, thou sayst, the air, the fire I see,
The earth and water, and all things of them
Compounded, to corruption turn, and soon
Dissolve. Yet these were also things create,
Because, if what were told me, had been true
They from corruption had been therefore free.

"The angels, O my brother! and this clime
Wherein thou art, impassible and pure,
I call created, as indeed they are
In their whole being. But the elements,
Which thou hast nam'd, and what of them is made,
Are by created virtue' inform'd: create
Their substance, and create the' informing virtue
In these bright stars, that round them circling move
The soul of every brute and of each plant,
The ray and motion of the sacred lights,
With complex potency attract and turn.
But this our life the' eternal good inspires
Immediate, and enamours of itself;
So that our wishes rest for ever here.

"And hence thou mayst by inference conclude
Our resurrection certain, if thy mind
Consider how the human flesh was fram'd,
When both our parents at the first were made."

The world was in its day of peril dark
Wont to believe the dotage of fond love
From the fair Cyprian deity, who rolls
In her third epicycle, shed on men
By stream of potent radiance: therefore they
Of elder time, in their old error blind,
Not her alone with sacrifice ador'd
And invocation, but like honours paid
To Cupid and Dione, deem'd of them
Her mother, and her son, him whom they feign'd
To sit in Dido's bosom: and from her,
Whom I have sung preluding, borrow'd they
The appellation of that star, which views,
Now obvious and now averse, the sun.

I was not ware that I was wafted up
Into its orb; but the new loveliness
That grac'd my lady, gave me ample proof
That we had entered there. And as in flame
A sparkle is distinct, or voice in voice
Discern'd, when one its even tenour keeps,
The other comes and goes; so in that light
I other luminaries saw, that cours'd
In circling motion, rapid more or less,
As their eternal phases each impels.

Never was blast from vapour charged with cold,
Whether invisible to eye or no,
Descended with such speed, it had not seem'd
To linger in dull tardiness, compar'd
To those celestial lights, that tow'rds us came,
Leaving the circuit of their joyous ring,
Conducted by the lofty seraphim.
And after them, who in the van appear'd,
Such an hosanna sounded, as hath left
Desire, ne'er since extinct in me, to hear
Renew'd the strain. Then parting from the rest
One near us drew, and sole began: "We all
Are ready at thy pleasure, well dispos'd
To do thee gentle service. We are they,
To whom thou in the world erewhile didst Sing
'O ye! whose intellectual ministry
Moves the third heaven!' and in one orb we roll,
One motion, one impulse, with those who rule
Princedom in heaven; yet are of love so full,
That to please thee 't will be as sweet to rest."

After mine eyes had with meek reverence
Sought the celestial guide, and were by her
Assur'd, they turn'd again unto the light
Who had so largely promis'd, and with voice
That bare the lively pressure of my zeal,
"Tell who ye are," I cried. Forthwith it grew
In size and splendour, through augmented joy;
And thus it answer'd: "A short date below
The world possess'd me. Had the time been more,
Much evil, that will come, had never chanc'd.
My gladness hides thee from me, which doth shine
Around, and shroud me, as an animal

In its own silk unswath'd. Thou lov'dst me well,
And had'st good cause; for had my sojourning
Been longer on the earth, the love I bare thee
Had put forth more than blossoms. The left bank,
That Rhone, when he hath mix'd with Sorga, laves.

"In me its lord expected, and that horn
Of fair Ausonia, with its boroughs old,
Bari, and Croton, and Gaeta pil'd,
From where the Trento disembogues his waves,
With Verde mingled, to the salt sea-flood.
Already on my temples beam'd the crown,
Which gave me sov'reignty over the land
By Danube wash'd, whenas he strays beyond
The limits of his German shores. The realm,
Where, on the gulf by stormy Eurus lash'd,
Betwixt Pelorus and Pachynian heights,
The beautiful Trinacria lies in gloom
(Not through Typhaeus, but the vap'ry cloud
Bituminous upsteam'd), THAT too did look
To have its scepter wielded by a race
Of monarchs, sprung through me from Charles and Rodolph;
had not ill lording which doth spirit up
The people ever, in Palermo rais'd
The shout of 'death,' re-echo'd loud and long.
Had but my brother's foresight kenn'd as much,
He had been warier that the greedy want
Of Catalonia might not work his bale.
And truly need there is, that he forecast,
Or other for him, lest more freight be laid
On his already over-laden bark.
Nature in him, from bounty fall'n to thrift,
Would ask the guard of braver arms, than such
As only care to have their coffers fill'd."

"My liege, it doth enhance the joy thy words
Infuse into me, mighty as it is,
To think my gladness manifest to thee,
As to myself, who own it, when thou lookst
Into the source and limit of all good,
There, where thou markest that which thou dost speak,
Thence priz'd of me the more. Glad thou hast made me.
Now make intelligent, clearing the doubt
Thy speech hath raised in me; for much I muse,
How bitter can spring up, when sweet is sown."

I thus inquiring; he forthwith replied:
"If I have power to show one truth, soon that
Shall face thee, which thy questioning declares
Behind thee now conceal'd. The Good, that guides
And blessed makes this realm, which thou dost mount,
Ordains its providence to be the virtue
In these great bodies: nor th' all perfect Mind
Upholds their nature merely, but in them
Their energy to save: for nought, that lies
Within the range of that unerring bow,
But is as level with the destin'd aim,
As ever mark to arrow's point oppos'd.
Were it not thus, these heavens, thou dost visit,

Would their effect so work, it would not be
Art, but destruction; and this may not chance,
If th' intellectual powers, that move these stars,
Fail not, or who, first faulty made them fail.
Wilt thou this truth more clearly evidenc'd?"

To whom I thus: "It is enough: no fear,
I see, lest nature in her part should tire."

He straight rejoin'd: "Say, were it worse for man,
If he liv'd not in fellowship on earth?"

"Yea," answer'd I; "nor here a reason needs."

"And may that be, if different estates
Grow not of different duties in your life?
Consult your teacher, and he tells you 'no.'"

Thus did he come, deducing to this point,
And then concluded: "For this cause behooves,
The roots, from whence your operations come,
Must differ. Therefore one is Solon born;
Another, Xerxes; and Melchisidec
A third; and he a fourth, whose airy voyage
Cost him his son. In her circuitous course,
Nature, that is the seal to mortal wax,
Doth well her art, but no distinctions owns
'Twixt one or other household. Hence befalls
That Esau is so wide of Jacob: hence
Quirinus of so base a father springs,
He dates from Mars his lineage. Were it not
That providence celestial overrul'd,
Nature, in generation, must the path
Trac'd by the generator, still pursue
Unswervingly. Thus place I in thy sight
That, which was late behind thee. But, in sign
Of more affection for thee, 't is my will
Thou wear this corollary. Nature ever
Finding discordant fortune, like all seed
Out of its proper climate, thrives but ill.
And were the world below content to mark
And work on the foundation nature lays,
It would not lack supply of excellence.
But ye perversely to religion strain
Him, who was born to gird on him the sword,
And of the fluent phrasemen make your king;
Therefore your steps have wander'd from the paths."

CANTO IX

After solution of my doubt, thy Charles,
O fair Clemenza, of the treachery spake
That must befall his seed: but, "Tell it not,"
Said he, "and let the destin'd years come round."
Nor may I tell thee more, save that the meed
Of sorrow well-deserv'd shall quit your wrongs.

And now the visage of that saintly light
Was to the sun, that fills it, turn'd again,
As to the good, whose plenitude of bliss
Sufficeth all. O ye misguided souls!
Infatuate, who from such a good estrange
Your hearts, and bend your gaze on vanity,
Alas for you!--And lo! toward me, next,
Another of those splendent forms approach'd,
That, by its outward bright'ning, testified
The will it had to pleasure me. The eyes
Of Beatrice, resting, as before,
Firmly upon me, manifested forth
Approval of my wish. "And O," I cried,
"Blest spirit! quickly be my will perform'd;
And prove thou to me, that my inmost thoughts
I can reflect on thee." Thereat the light,
That yet was new to me, from the recess,
Where it before was singing, thus began,
As one who joys in kindness: "In that part
Of the deprav'd Italian land, which lies
Between Rialto, and the fountain-springs
Of Brenta and of Piava, there doth rise,
But to no lofty eminence, a hill,
From whence erewhile a firebrand did descend,
That sorely sheet the region. From one root
I and it sprang; my name on earth Cunizza:
And here I glitter, for that by its light
This star o'ercame me. Yet I naught repine,
Nor grudge myself the cause of this my lot,
Which haply vulgar hearts can scarce conceive.

"This jewel, that is next me in our heaven,
Lustrous and costly, great renown hath left,
And not to perish, ere these hundred years
Five times absolve their round. Consider thou,
If to excel be worthy man's endeavour,
When such life may attend the first. Yet they
Care not for this, the crowd that now are girt
By Adice and Tagliamento, still
Impenitent, tho' scourg'd. The hour is near,
When for their stubbornness at Padua's marsh
The water shall be chang'd, that laves Vicena
And where Cagnano meets with Sile, one
Lords it, and bears his head aloft, for whom
The web is now a-warping. Feltro too
Shall sorrow for its godless shepherd's fault,
Of so deep stain, that never, for the like,
Was Malta's bar unclos'd. Too large should be
The skillet, that would hold Ferrara's blood,
And wearied he, who ounce by ounce would weight it,
The which this priest, in show of party-zeal,
Courteous will give; nor will the gift ill suit
The country's custom. We descry above,
Mirrors, ye call them thrones, from which to us
Reflected shine the judgments of our God:
Whence these our sayings we avouch for good."

She ended, and appear'd on other thoughts

Intent, re-ent'ring on the wheel she late
Had left. That other joyance meanwhile wax'd
A thing to marvel at, in splendour glowing,
Like choicest ruby stricken by the sun,
For, in that upper clime, effulgence comes
Of gladness, as here laughter: and below,
As the mind saddens, murkier grows the shade.

"God seeth all: and in him is thy sight,"
Said I, "blest Spirit! Therefore will of his
Cannot to thee be dark. Why then delays
Thy voice to satisfy my wish untold,
That voice which joins the inexpressive song,
Pastime of heav'n, the which those ardours sing,
That cowl them with six shadowing wings outspread?
I would not wait thy asking, wert thou known
To me, as thoroughly I to thee am known."

He forthwith answ'ring, thus his words began:
"The valley' of waters, widest next to that
Which doth the earth engarland, shapes its course,
Between discordant shores, against the sun
Inward so far, it makes meridian there,
Where was before th' horizon. Of that vale
Dwelt I upon the shore, 'twixt Ebro's stream
And Macra's, that divides with passage brief
Genoa bounds from Tuscan. East and west
Are nearly one to Begga and my land,
Whose haven erst was with its own blood warm.
Who knew my name were wont to call me Folco:
And I did bear impression of this heav'n,
That now bears mine: for not with fiercer flame
Glow'd Belus' daughter, injuring alike
Sichaeus and Creusa, than did I,
Long as it suited the unripen'd down
That fledg'd my cheek: nor she of Rhodope,
That was beguiled of Demophoon;
Nor Jove's son, when the charms of Iole
Were shrin'd within his heart. And yet there hides
No sorrowful repentance here, but mirth,
Not for the fault (that doth not come to mind),
But for the virtue, whose o'erruling sway
And providence have wrought thus quaintly. Here
The skill is look'd into, that fashioneth
With such effectual working, and the good
Discern'd, accruing to this upper world
From that below. But fully to content
Thy wishes, all that in this sphere have birth,
Demands my further parle. Inquire thou wouldst,
Who of this light is denizen, that here
Beside me sparkles, as the sun-beam doth
On the clear wave. Know then, the soul of Rahab
Is in that gladsome harbour, to our tribe
United, and the foremost rank assign'd.
He to that heav'n, at which the shadow ends
Of your sublunar world, was taken up,
First, in Christ's triumph, of all souls redeem'd:
For well behoov'd, that, in some part of heav'n,
She should remain a trophy, to declare

The mighty contest won with either palm;
For that she favour'd first the high exploit
Of Joshua on the holy land, whereof
The Pope reck's little now. Thy city, plant
Of him, that on his Maker turn'd the back,
And of whose envying so much woe hath sprung,
Engenders and expands the cursed flower,
That hath made wander both the sheep and lambs,
Turning the shepherd to a wolf. For this,
The gospel and great teachers laid aside,
The decretals, as their stuff margins show,
Are the sole study. Pope and Cardinals,
Intent on these, ne'er journey but in thought
To Nazareth, where Gabriel op'd his wings.
Yet it may chance, ere long, the Vatican,
And other most selected parts of Rome,
That were the grave of Peter's soldiery,
Shall be deliver'd from the adult'rous bond."

CANTO X

Looking into his first-born with the love,
Which breathes from both eternal, the first Might
Ineffable, whence eye or mind
Can roam, hath in such order all dispos'd,
As none may see and fail to enjoy. Raise, then,
O reader! to the lofty wheels, with me,
Thy ken directed to the point, whereat
One motion strikes on th' other. There begin
Thy wonder of the mighty Architect,
Who loves his work so inwardly, his eye
Doth ever watch it. See, how thence oblique
Brancheth the circle, where the planets roll
To pour their wished influence on the world;
Whose path not bending thus, in heav'n above
Much virtue would be lost, and here on earth,
All power well nigh extinct: or, from direct
Were its departure distant more or less,
I' th' universal order, great defect
Must, both in heav'n and here beneath, ensue.

Now rest thee, reader! on thy bench, and muse
Anticipative of the feast to come;
So shall delight make thee not feel thy toil.
Lo! I have set before thee, for thyself
Feed now: the matter I indite, henceforth
Demands entire my thought. Join'd with the part,
Which late we told of, the great minister
Of nature, that upon the world imprints
The virtue of the heaven, and doles out
Time for us with his beam, went circling on
Along the spires, where each hour sooner comes;
And I was with him, weetless of ascent,
As one, who till arriv'd, weets not his coming.

For Beatrice, she who passeth on

So suddenly from good to better, time
Counts not the act, oh then how great must needs
Have been her brightness! What she was i' th' sun
(Where I had enter'd), not through change of hue,
But light transparent--did I summon up
Genius, art, practice--I might not so speak,
It should be e'er imagin'd: yet believ'd
It may be, and the sight be justly crav'd.
And if our fantasy fail of such height,
What marvel, since no eye above the sun
Hath ever travel'd? Such are they dwell here,
Fourth family of the Omnipotent Sire,
Who of his spirit and of his offspring shows;
And holds them still enraptur'd with the view.
And thus to me Beatrice: "Thank, oh thank,
The Sun of angels, him, who by his grace
To this perceptible hath lifted thee."

Never was heart in such devotion bound,
And with complacency so absolute
Dispos'd to render up itself to God,
As mine was at those words: and so entire
The love for Him, that held me, it eclips'd
Beatrice in oblivion. Naught displeas'd
Was she, but smil'd thereat so joyously,
That of her laughing eyes the radiance brake
And scatter'd my collected mind abroad.

Then saw I a bright band, in liveliness
Surpassing, who themselves did make the crown,
And us their centre: yet more sweet in voice,
Than in their visage beaming. Cinctur'd thus,
Sometime Latona's daughter we behold,
When the impregnate air retains the thread,
That weaves her zone. In the celestial court,
Whence I return, are many jewels found,
So dear and beautiful, they cannot brook
Transporting from that realm: and of these lights
Such was the song. Who doth not prune his wing
To soar up thither, let him look from thence
For tidings from the dumb. When, singing thus,
Those burning suns that circled round us thrice,
As nearest stars around the fixed pole,
Then seem'd they like to ladies, from the dance
Not ceasing, but suspense, in silent pause,
List'ning, till they have caught the strain anew:
Suspended so they stood: and, from within,
Thus heard I one, who spake: "Since with its beam
The grace, whence true love lighteth first his flame,
That after doth increase by loving, shines
So multiplied in thee, it leads thee up
Along this ladder, down whose hallow'd steps
None e'er descend, and mount them not again,
Who from his phial should refuse thee wine
To slake thy thirst, no less constrained were,
Than water flowing not unto the sea.
Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that bloom
In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds
This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for heav'n."

I then was of the lambs, that Dominic
Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way,
Where well they thrive, not sworn with vanity.
He, nearest on my right hand, brother was,
And master to me: Albert of Cologne
Is this: and of Aquinum, Thomas I.
If thou of all the rest wouldst be assur'd,
Let thine eye, waiting on the words I speak,
In circuit journey round the blessed wreath.
That next resplendence issues from the smile
Of Gratian, who to either forum lent
Such help, as favour wins in Paradise.
The other, nearest, who adorns our quire,
Was Peter, he that with the widow gave
To holy church his treasure. The fifth light,
Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired,
That all your world craves tidings of its doom:
Within, there is the lofty light, endow'd
With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,
That with a ken of such wide amplitude
No second hath arisen. Next behold
That taper's radiance, to whose view was shown,
Clearliest, the nature and the ministry
Angelical, while yet in flesh it dwelt.
In the other little light serenely smiles
That pleader for the Christian temples, he
Who did provide Augustin of his lore.
Now, if thy mind's eye pass from light to light,
Upon my praises following, of the eighth
Thy thirst is next. The saintly soul, that shows
The world's deceitfulness, to all who hear him,
Is, with the sight of all the good, that is,
Blest there. The limbs, whence it was driven, lie
Down in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom
And exile came it here. Lo! further on,
Where flames the arduous Spirit of Isidore,
Of Bede, and Richard, more than man, erewhile,
In deep discernment. Lastly this, from whom
Thy look on me reverteth, was the beam
Of one, whose spirit, on high musings bent,
Rebuk'd the ling'ring tardiness of death.
It is the eternal light of Sigebert,
Who 'scap'd not envy, when of truth he argued,
Reading in the straw-litter'd street." Forthwith,
As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God
To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
Each part of other fitly drawn and urg'd,
Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,
Affection springs in well-disposed breast;
Thus saw I move the glorious wheel, thus heard
Voice answ'ring voice, so musical and soft,
It can be known but where day endless shines.

CANTO XI

O fond anxiety of mortal men!

How vain and inconclusive arguments
Are those, which make thee beat thy wings below
For statues one, and one for aphorisms
Was hunting; this the priesthood follow'd, that
By force or sophistry aspir'd to rule;
To rob another, and another sought
By civil business wealth; one moiling lay
Tangled in net of sensual delight,
And one to witless indolence resign'd;
What time from all these empty things escap'd,
With Beatrice, I thus gloriously
Was rais'd aloft, and made the guest of heav'n.

They of the circle to that point, each one.
Where erst it was, had turn'd; and steady glow'd,
As candle in his socket. Then within
The lustre, that erewhile bespake me, smiling
With merer gladness, heard I thus begin:

"E'en as his beam illumines me, so I look
Into the eternal light, and clearly mark
Thy thoughts, from whence they rise. Thou art in doubt,
And wouldst, that I should bolt my words afresh
In such plain open phrase, as may be smooth
To thy perception, where I told thee late
That 'well they thrive;' and that 'no second such
Hath risen,' which no small distinction needs.

"The providence, that governeth the world,
In depth of counsel by created ken
Unfathomable, to the end that she,
Who with loud cries was 'spous'd in precious blood,
Might keep her footing towards her well-belov'd,
Safe in herself and constant unto him,
Hath two ordain'd, who should on either hand
In chief escort her: one seraphic all
In fervency; for wisdom upon earth,
The other splendour of cherubic light.
I but of one will tell: he tells of both,
Who one commendeth which of them so'er
Be taken: for their deeds were to one end.

"Between Tupino, and the wave, that falls
From blest Ubaldo's chosen hill, there hangs
Rich slope of mountain high, whence heat and cold
Are wafted through Perugia's eastern gate:
And Norcera with Gualdo, in its rear
Mourn for their heavy yoke. Upon that side,
Where it doth break its steepness most, arose
A sun upon the world, as duly this
From Ganges doth: therefore let none, who speak
Of that place, say Ascesi; for its name
Were lamely so deliver'd; but the East,
To call things rightly, be it henceforth styl'd.
He was not yet much distant from his rising,
When his good influence 'gan to bless the earth.
A dame to whom none openeth pleasure's gate
More than to death, was, 'gainst his father's will,
His stripling choice: and he did make her his,

Before the Spiritual court, by nuptial bonds,
And in his father's sight: from day to day,
Then lov'd her more devoutly. She, bereav'd
Of her first husband, slighted and obscure,
Thousand and hundred years and more, remain'd
Without a single suitor, till he came.
Nor aught avail'd, that, with Amyclas, she
Was found unmov'd at rumour of his voice,
Who shook the world: nor aught her constant boldness
Whereby with Christ she mounted on the cross,
When Mary stay'd beneath. But not to deal
Thus closely with thee longer, take at large
The rovers' titles--Poverty and Francis.
Their concord and glad looks, wonder and love,
And sweet regard gave birth to holy thoughts,
So much, that venerable Bernard first
Did bare his feet, and, in pursuit of peace
So heavenly, ran, yet deem'd his footing slow.
O hidden riches! O prolific good!
Egidius bares him next, and next Sylvester,
And follow both the bridegroom; so the bride
Can please them. Thenceforth goes he on his way,
The father and the master, with his spouse,
And with that family, whom now the cord
Girt humbly: nor did abjectness of heart
Weigh down his eyelids, for that he was son
Of Pietro Bernardone, and by men
In wond'rous sort despis'd. But royally
His hard intention he to Innocent
Set forth, and from him first receiv'd the seal
On his religion. Then, when numerous flock'd
The tribe of lowly ones, that trac'd HIS steps,
Whose marvellous life deservedly were sung
In heights empyreal, through Honorius' hand
A second crown, to deck their Guardian's virtues,
Was by the eternal Spirit inwreath'd: and when
He had, through thirst of martyrdom, stood up
In the proud Soldan's presence, and there preach'd
Christ and his followers; but found the race
Unripen'd for conversion: back once more
He hasted (not to intermit his toil),
And reap'd Ausonian lands. On the hard rock,
'Twixt Arno and the Tyber, he from Christ
Took the last Signet, which his limbs two years
Did carry. Then the season come, that he,
Who to such good had destin'd him, was pleas'd
T' advance him to the meed, which he had earn'd
By his self-humbling, to his brotherhood,
As their just heritage, he gave in charge
His dearest lady, and enjoin'd their love
And faith to her: and, from her bosom, will'd
His goodly spirit should move forth, returning
To its appointed kingdom, nor would have
His body laid upon another bier.

"Think now of one, who were a fit colleague,
To keep the bark of Peter in deep sea
Helm'd to right point; and such our Patriarch was.
Therefore who follow him, as he enjoins,

Thou mayst be certain, take good lading in.
But hunger of new viands tempts his flock,
So that they needs into strange pastures wide
Must spread them: and the more remote from him
The stragglers wander, so much mole they come
Home to the sheep-fold, destitute of milk.
There are of them, in truth, who fear their harm,
And to the shepherd cleave; but these so few,
A little stuff may furnish out their cloaks.

"Now, if my words be clear, if thou have ta'en
Good heed, if that, which I have told, recall
To mind, thy wish may be in part fulfill'd:
For thou wilt see the point from whence they split,
Nor miss of the reproof, which that implies,
'That well they thrive not sworn with vanity.'"

CANTO XII

Soon as its final word the blessed flame
Had rais'd for utterance, straight the holy mill
Began to wheel, nor yet had once revolv'd,
Or ere another, circling, compass'd it,
Motion to motion, song to song, conjoining,
Song, that as much our muses doth excel,
Our Sirens with their tuneful pipes, as ray
Of primal splendour doth its faint reflex.

As when, if Juno bid her handmaid forth,
Two arches parallel, and trick'd alike,
Span the thin cloud, the outer taking birth
From that within (in manner of that voice
Whom love did melt away, as sun the mist),
And they who gaze, presageful call to mind
The compact, made with Noah, of the world
No more to be o'erflow'd; about us thus
Of sempiternal roses, bending, wreath'd
Those garlands twain, and to the innermost
E'en thus th' external answered. When the footing,
And other great festivity, of song,
And radiance, light with light accordant, each
Jocund and blythe, had at their pleasure still'd
(E'en as the eyes by quick volition mov'd,
Are shut and rais'd together), from the heart
Of one amongst the new lights mov'd a voice,
That made me seem like needle to the star,
In turning to its whereabouts, and thus
Began: "The love, that makes me beautiful,
Prompts me to tell of th' other guide, for whom
Such good of mine is spoken. Where one is,
The other worthily should also be;
That as their warfare was alike, alike
Should be their glory. Slow, and full of doubt,
And with thin ranks, after its banner mov'd
The army of Christ (which it so clearly cost
To reappoint), when its imperial Head,

Who reigneth ever, for the drooping host
Did make provision, thorough grace alone,
And not through its deserving. As thou heard'st,
Two champions to the succour of his spouse
He sent, who by their deeds and words might join
Again his scatter'd people. In that clime,
Where springs the pleasant west-wind to unfold
The fresh leaves, with which Europe sees herself
New-garmented; nor from those billows far,
Beyond whose chiding, after weary course,
The sun doth sometimes hide him, safe abides
The happy Callaroga, under guard
Of the great shield, wherein the lion lies
Subjected and supreme. And there was born
The loving million of the Christian faith,
The hollow'd wrestler, gentle to his own,
And to his enemies terrible. So replete
His soul with lively virtue, that when first
Created, even in the mother's womb,
It prophesied. When, at the sacred font,
The spousals were complete 'twixt faith and him,
Where pledge of mutual safety was exchang'd,
The dame, who was his surety, in her sleep
Beheld the wondrous fruit, that was from him
And from his heirs to issue. And that such
He might be construed, as indeed he was,
She was inspir'd to name him of his owner,
Whose he was wholly, and so call'd him Dominic.
And I speak of him, as the labourer,
Whom Christ in his own garden chose to be
His help-mate. Messenger he seem'd, and friend
Fast-knit to Christ; and the first love he show'd,
Was after the first counsel that Christ gave.
Many a time his nurse, at entering found
That he had ris'n in silence, and was prostrate,
As who should say, "My errand was for this."
O happy father! Felix rightly nam'd!
O favour'd mother! rightly nam'd Joanna!
If that do mean, as men interpret it.
Not for the world's sake, for which now they pore
Upon Ostiense and Taddeo's page,
But for the real manna, soon he grew
Mighty in learning, and did set himself
To go about the vineyard, that soon turns
To wan and wither'd, if not tended well:
And from the see (whose bounty to the just
And needy is gone by, not through its fault,
But his who fills it basely, he besought,
No dispensation for commuted wrong,
Nor the first vacant fortune, nor the tenth),
That to God's paupers rightly appertain,
But, 'gainst an erring and degenerate world,
Licence to fight, in favour of that seed,
From which the twice twelve cions gird thee round.
Then, with sage doctrine and good will to help,
Forth on his great apostleship he far'd,
Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein;
And, dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,
Smote fiercest, where resistance was most stout.

Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd,
Over the garden Catholic to lead
Their living waters, and have fed its plants.

"If such one wheel of that two-yoked car,
Wherein the holy church defended her,
And rode triumphant through the civil broil.
Thou canst not doubt its fellow's excellence,
Which Thomas, ere my coming, hath declar'd
So courteously unto thee. But the track,
Which its smooth fellies made, is now deserted:
That mouldy mother is where late were lees.
His family, that wont to trace his path,
Turn backward, and invert their steps; erelong
To rue the gathering in of their ill crop,
When the rejected tares in vain shall ask
Admittance to the barn. I question not
But he, who search'd our volume, leaf by leaf,
Might still find page with this inscription on't,
'I am as I was wont.' Yet such were not
From Acquasparta nor Casale, whence
Of those, who come to meddle with the text,
One stretches and another cramps its rule.
Bonaventura's life in me behold,
From Bagnororegio, one, who in discharge
Of my great offices still laid aside
All sinister aim. Illuminato here,
And Agostino join me: two they were,
Among the first of those barefooted meek ones,
Who sought God's friendship in the cord: with them
Hugues of Saint Victor, Pietro Mangiadore,
And he of Spain in his twelve volumes shining,
Nathan the prophet, Metropolitan
Chrysostom, and Anselmo, and, who deign'd
To put his hand to the first art, Donatus.
Raban is here: and at my side there shines
Calabria's abbot, Joachim, endow'd
With soul prophetic. The bright courtesy
Of friar Thomas, and his goodly lore,
Have mov'd me to the blazon of a peer
So worthy, and with me have mov'd this throng."

CANTO XIII

Let him, who would conceive what now I saw,
Imagine (and retain the image firm,
As mountain rock, the whilst he hears me speak),
Of stars fifteen, from midst the ethereal host
Selected, that, with lively ray serene,
O'ercome the massiest air: thereto imagine
The wain, that, in the bosom of our sky,
Spins ever on its axle night and day,
With the bright summit of that horn which swells
Due from the pole, round which the first wheel rolls,
T' have rang'd themselves in fashion of two signs
In heav'n, such as Ariadne made,

When death's chill seized her; and that one of them
Did compass in the other's beam; and both
In such sort whirl around, that each should tend
With opposite motion and, conceiving thus,
Of that true constellation, and the dance
Twofold, that circled me, he shall attain
As 't were the shadow; for things there as much
Surpass our usage, as the swiftest heav'n
Is swifter than the Chiana. There was sung
No Bacchus, and no Io Paeon, but
Three Persons in the Godhead, and in one
Substance that nature and the human join'd.

The song fulfill'd its measure; and to us
Those saintly lights attended, happier made
At each new minist'ring. Then silence brake,
Amid th' accordant sons of Deity,
That luminary, in which the wondrous life
Of the meek man of God was told to me;
And thus it spake: "One ear o' th' harvest thresh'd,
And its grain safely stor'd, sweet charity
Invites me with the other to like toil.

"Thou know'st, that in the bosom, whence the rib
Was ta'en to fashion that fair cheek, whose taste
All the world pays for, and in that, which pierc'd
By the keen lance, both after and before
Such satisfaction offer'd, as outweighs
Each evil in the scale, whate'er of light
To human nature is allow'd, must all
Have by his virtue been infus'd, who form'd
Both one and other: and thou thence admir'st
In that I told thee, of beatitudes
A second, there is none, to his enclos'd
In the fifth radiance. Open now thine eyes
To what I answer thee; and thou shalt see
Thy deeming and my saying meet in truth,
As centre in the round. That which dies not,
And that which can die, are but each the beam
Of that idea, which our Soverign Sire
Engendereth loving; for that lively light,
Which passeth from his brightness; not disjoin'd
From him, nor from his love triune with them,
Doth, through his bounty, congregate itself,
Mirror'd, as 't were in new existences,
Itself unalterable and ever one.

"Descending hence unto the lowest powers,
Its energy so sinks, at last it makes
But brief contingencies: for so I name
Things generated, which the heav'nly orbs
Moving, with seed or without seed, produce.
Their wax, and that which molds it, differ much:
And thence with lustre, more or less, it shows
Th' ideal stamp impress: so that one tree
According to his kind, hath better fruit,
And worse: and, at your birth, ye, mortal men,
Are in your talents various. Were the wax
Molded with nice exactness, and the heav'n

In its disposing influence supreme,
The lustre of the seal should be complete:
But nature renders it imperfect ever,
Resembling thus the artist in her work,
Whose faltering hand is faithless to his skill.
Howe'er, if love itself dispose, and mark
The primal virtue, kindling with bright view,
There all perfection is vouchsafed; and such
The clay was made, accomplish'd with each gift,
That life can teem with; such the burden fill'd
The virgin's bosom: so that I commend
Thy judgment, that the human nature ne'er
Was or can be, such as in them it was.

"Did I advance no further than this point,
'How then had he no peer?' thou might'st reply.
But, that what now appears not, may appear
Right plainly, ponder, who he was, and what
(When he was bidden 'Ask'), the motive sway'd
To his requesting. I have spoken thus,
That thou mayst see, he was a king, who ask'd
For wisdom, to the end he might be king
Sufficient: not the number to search out
Of the celestial movers; or to know,
If necessary with contingent e'er
Have made necessity; or whether that
Be granted, that first motion is; or if
Of the mid circle can, by art, be made
Triangle with each corner, blunt or sharp.

"Whence, noting that, which I have said, and this,
Thou kingly prudence and that ken mayst learn,
At which the dart of my intention aims.
And, marking clearly, that I told thee, 'Risen,'
Thou shalt discern it only hath respect
To kings, of whom are many, and the good
Are rare. With this distinction take my words;
And they may well consist with that which thou
Of the first human father dost believe,
And of our well-beloved. And let this
Henceforth be led unto thy feet, to make
Thee slow in motion, as a weary man,
Both to the 'yea' and to the 'nay' thou seest not.
For he among the fools is down full low,
Whose affirmation, or denial, is
Without distinction, in each case alike
Since it befalls, that in most instances
Current opinion leads to false: and then
Affection bends the judgment to her ply.

"Much more than vainly doth he loose from shore,
Since he returns not such as he set forth,
Who fishes for the truth and wanteth skill.
And open proofs of this unto the world
Have been afforded in Parmenides,
Melissus, Bryso, and the crowd beside,
Who journey'd on, and knew not whither: so did
Sabellius, Arius, and the other fools,
Who, like to scymitars, reflected back

The scripture-image, by distortion marr'd.

"Let not the people be too swift to judge,
As one who reckons on the blades in field,
Or ere the crop be ripe. For I have seen
The thorn frown rudely all the winter long
And after bear the rose upon its top;
And bark, that all the way across the sea
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last,
E'en in the haven's mouth seeing one steal,
Another brine, his offering to the priest,
Let not Dame Birtha and Sir Martin thence
Into heav'n's counsels deem that they can pry:
For one of these may rise, the other fall."

CANTO XIV

From centre to the circle, and so back
From circle to the centre, water moves
In the round chalice, even as the blow
Impels it, inwardly, or from without.
Such was the image glanc'd into my mind,
As the great spirit of Aquinum ceas'd;
And Beatrice after him her words
Resum'd alternate: "Need there is (tho' yet
He tells it to you not in words, nor e'en
In thought) that he should fathom to its depth
Another mystery. Tell him, if the light,
Wherewith your substance blooms, shall stay with you
Eternally, as now: and, if it doth,
How, when ye shall regain your visible forms,
The sight may without harm endure the change,
That also tell." As those, who in a ring
Tread the light measure, in their fitful mirth
Raise loud the voice, and spring with gladder bound;
Thus, at the hearing of that pious suit,
The saintly circles in their tourneying
And wond'rous note attested new delight.

Whoso laments, that we must doff this garb
Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live
Immortally above, he hath not seen
The sweet refreshing, of that heav'nly shower.

Him, who lives ever, and for ever reigns
In mystic union of the Three in One,
Unbounded, bounding all, each spirit thrice
Sang, with such melody, as but to hear
For highest merit were an ample meed.
And from the lesser orb the goodliest light,
With gentle voice and mild, such as perhaps
The angel's once to Mary, thus replied:
"Long as the joy of Paradise shall last,
Our love shall shine around that raiment, bright,
As fervent; fervent, as in vision blest;
And that as far in blessedness exceeding,

As it hath grave beyond its virtue great.
Our shape, regarmented with glorious weeds
Of saintly flesh, must, being thus entire,
Show yet more gracious. Therefore shall increase,
Whate'er of light, gratuitous, imparts
The Supreme Good; light, ministering aid,
The better disclose his glory: whence
The vision needs increasing, much increase
The fervour, which it kindles; and that too
The ray, that comes from it. But as the greed
Which gives out flame, yet it its whiteness shines
More lively than that, and so preserves
Its proper semblance; thus this circling sphere
Of splendour, shall to view less radiant seem,
Than shall our fleshly robe, which yonder earth
Now covers. Nor will such excess of light
O'erpower us, in corporeal organs made
Firm, and susceptible of all delight."

So ready and so cordial an "Amen,"
Followed from either choir, as plainly spoke
Desire of their dead bodies; yet perchance
Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they lov'd,
Ere they were made imperishable flame.

And lo! forthwith there rose up round about
A lustre over that already there,
Of equal clearness, like the brightening up
Of the horizon. As at an evening hour
Of twilight, new appearances through heav'n
Peer with faint glimmer, doubtfully descried;
So there new substances, methought began
To rise in view; and round the other twain
Enwheeling, sweep their ampler circuit wide.

O gentle glitter of eternal beam!
With what a such whiteness did it flow,
O'erpowering vision in me! But so fair,
So passing lovely, Beatrice show'd,
Mind cannot follow it, nor words express
Her infinite sweetness. Thence mine eyes regain'd
Power to look up, and I beheld myself,
Sole with my lady, to more lofty bliss
Translated: for the star, with warmer smile
Impurpled, well denoted our ascent.

With all the heart, and with that tongue which speaks
The same in all, an holocaust I made
To God, befitting the new grace vouchsaf'd.
And from my bosom had not yet upsteam'd
The fuming of that incense, when I knew
The rite accepted. With such mighty sheen
And mantling crimson, in two listed rays
The splendours shot before me, that I cried,
"God of Sabaoth! that does prank them thus!"

As leads the galaxy from pole to pole,
Distinguish'd into greater lights and less,

Its pathway, which the wisest fail to spell;
So thickly studded, in the depth of Mars,
Those rays describ'd the venerable sign,
That quadrants in the round conjoining frame.
Here memory mocks the toil of genius. Christ
Beam'd on that cross; and pattern fails me now.
But whoso takes his cross, and follows Christ
Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
When in the flecker'd dawning he shall spy
The glitterance of Christ. From horn to horn,
And 'tween the summit and the base did move
Lights, scintillating, as they met and pass'd.
Thus oft are seen, with ever-changeful glance,
Straight or athwart, now rapid and now slow,
The atomies of bodies, long or short,
To move along the sunbeam, whose slant line
Checkers the shadow, interpos'd by art
Against the noontide heat. And as the chime
Of minstrel music, dulcimer, and help
With many strings, a pleasant dining makes
To him, who heareth not distinct the note;
So from the lights, which there appear'd to me,
Gather'd along the cross a melody,
That, indistinctly heard, with ravishment
Possess'd me. Yet I mark'd it was a hymn
Of lofty praises; for there came to me
"Arise and conquer," as to one who hears
And comprehends not. Me such ecstasy
O'ercame, that never till that hour was thing
That held me in so sweet imprisonment.

Perhaps my saying over bold appears,
Accounting less the pleasure of those eyes,
Whereon to look fulfilleth all desire.
But he, who is aware those living seals
Of every beauty work with quicker force,
The higher they are ris'n; and that there
I had not turn'd me to them; he may well
Excuse me that, whereof in my excuse
I do accuse me, and may own my truth;
That holy pleasure here not yet reveal'd,
Which grows in transport as we mount aloof.

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