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**READINGS**  
**ON THE**  
**PURGATORIO OF DANTE**





**READINGS**  
**ON THE**  
**PURGATORIO OF DANTE**  
**CHIEFLY BASED ON**  
**THE COMMENTARY OF BENVENUTO DA IMOLA**

**WITH TEXT AND LITERAL TRANSLATION**

**BY THE HONBLE**

**WILLIAM WARREN VERNON**

**M.A. OXON.; ACCADEMICO CORRISPONDENTE DELLA CRUSCA; CAVALIERE  
DE S. MAURIZIO E LASSARO IN ITALY; AND KNIGHT OF  
THE ROYAL ORDER OF ST. OLAF IN NORWAY**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE LATE  
DEAN CHURCH**

**IN TWO VOLUMES**

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# THE PURGATORIO.

## CANTO XVI.

**THE THIRD CORNICE (CONTINUED)—THE PUNISHMENT OF THE ANGRY—MARCO LOMBARDO—FREE WILL—THE CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD—DETERIORATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF LOMBARDY.**

THE latter part of the last Canto was devoted to the consideration of how to avoid the sin of Anger. The present Canto treats mainly of its expiation.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In Division I*, from ver. 1 to ver. 24, the penalty of the Angry is described.

*In Division II*, from ver. 25 to ver. 51, Dante converses with the spirit of Marco Lombardo, who during his lifetime had been exceedingly prone to Anger.

*In Division III*, from ver. 52 to ver. 114, Dante questions Marco about some remarks that had fallen from him on the general corruption of the World, and Marco replies to him.

*In Division IV*, from ver. 115 to ver. 145, Marco dilates on the deplorable decline of virtue in Lombardy.

*Division I.*—Dean Plumptre says: "The opening words of the Canto are deliberately chosen. To be conscious of Wrath is to be in Hell, with all its blackness of darkness, its bitterness and foulness. In the remedial methods which Dante depicts, we may find







Quant' esser può di nuvol tenebrata,  
 Non fece al viso mio sì grosso velo,\*  
 Come quel summo ch' ivi ci coperse,  
 Nè a sentir di così aspro pelo ;  
 Chè l' occhio stare aperto non sofferse :  
 Onde la Scorta mia saputa e fida †  
 Mi s' accostò, e l' omero m' offerse.

Gloom of Hell, and of a night bereft of every star beneath a barren sky, as much darkened with clouds as it can be, did not make to my eyes so dense a veil, as did that smoke which there enshrouded us, nor of so rough a texture to one's sense of feeling ; for it suffered not the eye to remain open ; whereat my experienced and faithful guide drew near to me, and offered me his shoulder.

Dante could no longer see Virgil. The man blinded by Anger is totally unable to discern Reason. But Virgil, allegorically representing Reason, was able calmly to

notte, l' è più oscura che quello che è alcuna luce." (Buti.) Casari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 286) explains the word well: "Quel poco cielo afforza l' immagine, mostrando miseria (*scarcity*) d' ogni filo di lume. Anche i Latini usarono come assai operativo questo *inops*, dicendo *inops aqua*, *inops animi* (scoraggiato) *inops consilii* (che non sa partito da prendere), etc." Scartazzini takes *pover* to refer to the limited amount of sky that one can see when looking up from a narrow valley.

\* *al grosso velo*: Benvenuto commends this simile, for he says that a veil is usually both light and transparent, so that a person wearing it can both see through it, breathe through it, and feel it of a soft texture to the skin ; whereas this smoke blinded the eyes, choked the breath, and irritated the skin. "And note, how clearly Dante has represented this, for, in truth, no sin is committed among the living, or is punished in Hell among the dead, which so much darkens the eyes of the intellect as Anger ; and therefore he has done well to depict the angry in Hell tearing and rending each other barbarously with their teeth."

† *saputa e fida*: Buti thinks Virgil here represents theoretic Reason, which is both experienced (*saputa*) in not allowing itself to be deceived, and faithful (*fida*) in never deceiving. Tommaséo observes that the word *saputa* is still used in the Neapolitan dialect, in a good sense.





Even as a blind man goes behind his guide in order not to go astray, or to knock against aught that may hurt or even kill him; so went I through that pungent and foul air, listening to my Leader, who merely said: "Take heed that thou dost not get parted from me."

Benvenuto points out that the angry man is worse off than the blind, for the latter only loses his bodily sight, while his mental perception is preserved to him and even rendered more sensitive, but the angry man loses the light of Reason. According to Livy, the Romans fought against the Samnites with such ferocity that their eyes literally seemed to blaze, and such was their fury that, after they had won the victory, they turned their swords against the horses.

Dante now describes the devout prayer of the shades of the Angry.

Io sentia voci, e ciascuna pareva  
 Pregar, per pace e per misericordia,  
 L' Agnel di Dio, che le peccata \* leva.  
 Pure Agnus Dei eran le loro esordia: †

---

\* *peccata* for *peccati*; Nannucci (*Teorica dei Nomi*, p. 327) says that as in the early days of the Italian language, there was some indecision as to the terminations to be adopted for nouns, the writers of that time tried giving to the plurals of nouns of masculine derivation the same termination in *i* that they had in Latin, and the termination in *a* to others that were derived from Latin neuter, and in the first instance they used to say *i servi*, *i discepoli*, *i regni*, *i fondamenta*, *gli edifici*, etc. But we find so few examples of the termination in *a*, that it is evident it very soon fell into complete disuse. Nannucci cites instances from early writers of *i regni* in Fra Guitone; *i fascia* in Bacciarone di Messer Baccone; *i peccata* from *Vita e Miracoli di S. Maria Maddalena*; *i demonia* from the Sermons of Fra Giordano; *i angeli* from Fra Guitone, etc.

† *le loro esordia*: Dante must have used the Latin neuter plural of *exordium* here. Compare Virgil, *Æn.* iv, 284:—  
 "quæ prima exordia sumat?"



**READINGS**  
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Onde il Maestro mio disse :—" Rispondi,  
E domanda se quinci si va sue."— 30

Ed io :—" O creatura,\* che ti mondi,  
Per tornar † hella a colui che ti fece,  
Maraviglia udirai se mi secondi."—

—" Io ti seguirò quanto mi lece,"—  
Rispose ;—" e se veder fummo non lascia, 35  
L'udir ci terrà giunti in quella vece."—

Whereupon my Master said to me: "Answer thou, and ask if it is in that direction that one ascends." And I: "O Being that art making thyself pure, so as to return beautiful to Him Who created thee, if thou wilt accompany me, thou shalt hear a marvellous thing." "I will follow thee," he answered, "for so far as it is permitted me; and if the smoke permits not our seeing, in its stead shall hearing keep us together."

In obedience to this invitation, tacitly expressed by Marco, Dante tells him he is alive, and, in so many words, begs him not to be astonished at his walking alive through Purgatory, as he has already passed alive through Hell. Benvenuto thinks his words are equivalent to saying: "In my toilsome journey through Hell I acquired the knowledge which I sought of my sins, and now I am going to get them purged away in Purgatory."

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signifying the first day of the month, is sometimes, as in this passage, used figuratively to signify a month. Compare Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* canto xxxiii, 27:—

"E ben gli disse L'anno e le calende."

\* *O creatura, che ti mondi*: Gioberti admires the appropriate and courteous *exordia* with which Dante prefaces his addresses to some of the spirits in Purgatory. Compare *Purg.* xiii, 85-87:—

"O gente sicura,

Incominciai, 'di veder l'alto lume

Che il disio vostro solo ha in sua cura,' " etc.

† *Per tornar*: Compare *Eccles.* xii, 7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Compare also ll. 88-90 of this Canto:—





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modern usage, do not hide from me who thou wast before thy death, but tell it me, and tell me also if I am on the right way to the pass (above); and let thy words be our escort."

Fratricelli explains line 42 to mean that the mode was totally different to the usual routine, which would require death to precede the possibility of ascending to Heaven, but Benvenuto, Lana and Buti all interpret the passage as meaning that, under the influence of the earlier Renaissance, it had gone completely out of fashion for poets to describe a vision in which they ascended up to Heaven. Besides Æneas and St. Paul, there were many records of a like pilgrimage in the visions of ancient monks and hermits, as for instance, St. Alberigo and St. Brandan.

Marco now names himself; but whether we are to understand his name to be Marco Lombardo, in the sense understood by Boccaccio, who calls him *Marco di Ca' dei Lombardi da Vinegia*, or whether simply as an Italian from Lombardy, it is not easy (says Lubin) to determine. There are different accounts about him. We may at once dismiss the idea of his being the navigator Marco Polo, who survived Dante, and died 1323. All seem to agree that he was a Venetian nobleman, a man of wit and learning, and a friend of Dante. *L' Ottimo* tells us that nearly all he gained, he spent in charity. Benvenuto that he was a man of a noble mind, but disdainful, and easily moved to anger. Buti that he was a Venetian, and his name was Marco Dacca; he was a very learned man, had many political virtues, and was very courteous, giving to poor noblemen all that he gained, and he gained much; for he was a courtier, and was much beloved for his virtue, and much was given



him by the nobility; and as he gave to those who were in need, so he lent to all who asked him. And when he was at the point of death, having much still owing to him, he made a will, and, among other bequests, this, that whoever owed him aught, should not be held to pay the debt, "Let whoever has," said he, "keep."\*

Having answered Dante's first question by telling him who he was, Marco then answers his second question as to the correctness of the way the Poets are pursuing, and then adds a petition on his account.

—" Lombardo fui, e fui chiamato Marco :

Del mondo seppi, † e quel valore amai

Al quale ha or ciascun disteso l' arco : ‡

Per montar su § dirittamente vai."—

Così rispose ; e soggiunse :— " Io ti prego

50

Che per me preghi, quando su sarai."—

" I was a Lombard (or, one of the Lombardi family) and was called Marco. I knew (the ways) of the world,

\* The following anecdote of Marco is related in the *Novellino* (Novella xxxviii): " Marco Lombardo fue uno nobile uomo di corte e molto savio. Fu a un Natale a una città dove si donavano molte robe, e non ebbe neuna. Trovò un altro uomo di corte, lo quale era nesciente persona appo Marco, e avea avute robe (*had received Christmas gifts*). Di questo nacque una hella sentenza; chè quello giullare (*buffoon*) disse a Marco: 'che è ciò, Marco, ch' i' ho avuto sette robe tu non niuna? E se' troppo (*far and away*) migliore uomo e più savio ch' io non sono.' E Marco rispose: 'non è altro, se non che tu trovasti più di tuoi ch' io di miei' (*it only means, that you found more persons of your stamp, i.e. fools, than I of mine, i.e. wise men*)."

† *Del mondo seppi*: Biagioli: " seppi i bei costumi, usi, e negozj del mondo."

‡ *disteso l' arco*: *Tendere l' arco*: means "to bend a bow," *distendere l' arco* is the contrary, namely "to unbend, to unstring a bow."

§ *Per montar su*: Notice the difference between the meanings of *su* in this line, which means up to the Fourth Cornice, and l. 51, where *quando su sarai* means when thou shalt have reached Paradise.



and I loved that virtue (from aiming) at which now-a-days has every one unstrung his bow: for mounting upwards thou art going rightly." Thus he answered; and added: "I beseech thee that when thou shalt be above (*i.e.* in Paradise), thou wilt pray for me."

*Division III.*—In the long and difficult passage which now follows, Dante, having heard Marco deploring the open hostility to virtue, and the general corruption that prevailed throughout all Italy, and remembering also the words of Guido del Duca on the same subject (Canto xiv), asks Marco why this is so. He prefaces his question by a propitiatory assurance that, when he reaches Heaven, he will do what Marco had asked him.

Ed io a lui:—"Per fede mi ti lego  
 Di far ciò che mi chiedi; ma io scoppio  
 Dentro a un dubbio, s'io non me ne spiego.\*  
 Prima era scempio,† ed ora è fatto doppio 55  
 Nella sentenza tua, che mi fa certo  
 Qui ed altrove, quello ov'io l'accoppio.

And I to him: "I pledge thee my faith to perform what thou askest me; but I am bursting with an inward doubt, if I do not free myself of it. It was at first a simple (doubt), and now it has become a double one, from thine (expression of) opinion, which

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\* *s'io non me ne spiego*: Buti explains this: "Creperci, s'io non l'aprisse; e però dice: *s'io non me ne spiego*, cioè s'io non me ne dichiaro, cioè s'io non me ne apro e spaccio, che sono implicito in esso." The *Voc. della Crusca*, s.v. *spiegare*, § 5, says: "E in signific. neutr. pass. *Liberarsi*," and quotes this passage in illustration.

† *Prima era scempio*, et seq.: Biagioli thinks the words should be taken in the following order: "il mio dubbio era scempio prima che tu mi parlassi, ora è fatto doppio nella (ovvero per la) sentenza tua, la quale, qui (nelle cose udite qui da te), ed altrove (in quelle udite altrove, nel precedente Canto), mi fa certo (mi dimostra esser un fatto certo) quello (l'udito altrove) ov'io l'accoppio (al quale lo unisco)." *Scempio* is derived from the Latin *simplex*, and the *Voc. della Crusca* says of it: "Contrario di doppio."



both here (in thy words) and elsewhere (in Guido's) has made that (doubt) into a certainty, when I couple the two together.

Dante shows here how greatly the reiteration by Marco of opinions previously expressed by Guido del Duca has influenced him to ask the question. The two opinions of Marco and Guido put together seem to harmonize, so as to strengthen in Dante's mind the doubt as to whence comes such great wickedness in men, whether from celestial influences or from innate corruption.

I follow Benvenuto in referring *quello* in l. 57 to *dubbio*; "*che mi fa certo quello, scilicet dubium; ita quod si primo credebam, nunc videor mihi certus.*"

Dante now tells Marco what is this doubt of his, and he repeats and confirms Marco's previously uttered lament, that virtue is so banished from the world.

Lo mondo è ben così tutto deserto  
 D' ogni virtute, come tu mi suone,\*  
 E di malizia gravido e coperto :† 60  
 Ma prego che m' additi ‡ la cagione,  
 Sì ch' io la veggia, e ch' io la mostri altrui;  
 Chè nel cielo uno, ed un quaggiù la pone.".

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\* *come tu mi suone*: Buti: "cioè, come tu, Marco, mi dici ne la tua sentenza." *Sonare* has various meanings, but nearly all are in the neuter sense. In the active sense, however, Dante uses it to signify "to proclaim, celebrate." See *Purg.* xi, 109-111:—

"Colui, che del cammin sì poco piglia  
 Dinanzi a me, Toscana sonò tutta,  
 Ed ora a pena in Siena sen pispiglia."

And *Inf.* iii, 229:—

\* *Ben puoi saper omai che il suo dir suona.*"

† *gravido*: Benvenuto observes that wickedness grows much in the same way that tares spread quickly all over a field, and choke the good wheat. Compare *Job* xv, 35: "They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit." And *John* v, 19: "The whole world lieth in wickedness."

‡ *m' additi*: Biagioli says: "*propriamente additare è mostrare, accompagnando l'atto col cenno del dito; puossidi spogliare d*



The world is in truth, as utterly devoid of all virtue, as thou tellest me, and is pregnant with all wickedness and overspread by it: but I beg of thee to point out to me the cause, in order that I may discern it, and explain it to others; for one places it in heaven (*i.e.* the planets), and another places it down here (*i.e.* on earth)."

This last clause means that sin comes to Man by his free will. This latter (says Benvenuto) is the healthy opinion, the true one to be cultivated by all, whereas, to ascribe the wickedness of men to planetary influences is altogether erroneous.\*

Marco answers Dante's question at considerable length, but he begins by uttering a deep sigh, as though he would say (thinks Benvenuto): "O what a wrong and mischievous opinion this is of ascribing the wickedness of the world to the influence of heavenly bodies."

Alto sospir, che duolo strinse in—"hui," †—

Mise fuor prima, e poi cominciò:—"Frate, 65

Lo mondo è cieco, e tu vien ben da lui.

questo accidente; ma gli resta pur non so che forza di più del semplice *Mostrare*." *Additare* is the regular idiomatic word for "to point out," in Tuscany. "Would you point out to me *la Madonna della Seggiola*" = "Mi vorrebbe additare la Madonna della Seggiola."

\* On this erroneous belief, see Ozanam, *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*, Paris, 1839, p. 135: "Une opinion commune et trompeuse attribue tous nos actes à des astres, comme si le ciel entraînait tous les êtres dans une direction nécessaire. Le ciel exerce sans doute une sorte d'initiative sur la plupart des mouvements de notre sensibilité; mais cette initiative peut rencontrer en nous une résistance qui, laborieuse d'abord, devient invincible après avoir fidèlement combattu. Une puissance plus grande, celle de Dieu, agit sur nous sans nous contraindre. En nous il a créé cette partie meilleure de nous-mêmes, qui n'est point soumise aux influences du ciel. Il nous a départi la volonté libre: et ce don, le plus excellent, le plus digne de sa bonté, le plus précieux à ses regards, toutes les créatures intelligentes, et elles seules, l'ont reçu."

† *hui*: The *Voc. della Crusca* has: *Hui* Quella voce, che si manda fuori per qualche dolore. Lat. *heu*. Greek  $\phi\epsilon\upsilon$ . Buti



A deep sigh which grief forced into (the cry) "Ah me!" he first heaved forth, and then began: "Brother, the world is blind, and thou in truth comest from it.

Benvenuto says, in proof of the world being blind, that many who are reputed great sages, were in that blind ignorance, that they took everything as coming from necessity, not perceiving that things foreseen by God can be altered by the exercise of the Free Will that He has given to man. In like manner Cicero, in wishing to avoid one error, fell into another, for he denied Providence, for which St. Augustine censures him severely in his book, *De Civitate Dei*.

Benvenuto also comments on the words *e tu vien ben da lui*, by supposing Marco to say: "And thou evidently comest from this world of blindness, for thou admittest that this doubt is so great in thy mind that thou art nearly bursting with it."

Marco next explains what is this doubt of the blind.

Voi che vivete, ogni cagion recate \*  
 Per suso al ciel, così come se tutto  
 Movease seco di necessitate. †

comments upon it: "Duolo strinse in lui, imperocchè non cospet di mettere fuori tutto il sospiro, ma finitte in questa voce lui, che è interiectio dolentis, cioè voce che significa dolore." The modern Italian form is *ohimè!* Compare Ovid, *Metam.* x, 215, 216:—

"Ipse suos gemitus foliis inscribit: et AIAI  
 Flos habet inscriptum."

*A. I. Tasso, Ger. Liber. xii, st. 96:—*

"Alfin sgorgando un lagrimoso rivo,  
 In un languido oimè proruppe."

\* *recate* . . . *al ciel*: In Homer, *Odys.* i, 32-34, Jove is made to say:—

"Ὁ πόποι, οἷον δὴ νῦ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιώωνται·  
 Τῆς ἡμεῶν γὰρ φασὶ κακ' ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ  
 Σφῆσιν ἀτυσταλίῃσιν ἵπερ μόνον ἀλγέ ἔχουσιν."

† *necessitate*: We find in Boëthius, *Consol. Philos.* v, pros. ii:—  
 in hac haerentium sibi serie causarum, estne ulla nostri



Ye who are living, assign every cause up to the heavens only, as though they of necessity moved all things with themselves.

Benvenuto states that Seneca used often to quote a saying of the ancient Stoic philosopher Cleanthes: *Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt*, which is the exact opposite of the erroneous views which Marco censures, for Cleanthes shows that some future things are necessary, from having their predeterminate causes, as for instance that man must die, that the Sun must rise to-morrow; while other things may depend on some contingency which may or may not take place. And Benvenuto goes on to show the opinion of Plotinus and

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arbitrii libertas, an ipsos quoque humanorum motus animorum fatalis catena constringit? Est inquit. Neque enim fuerit ulla rationalis natura quin eidem libertas adsit arbitrii. Nam quod ratione uti naturaliter potest, id habet iudicium quo quodque discernat per se: igitur fugienda optandave dignoscit. Quod vero quis optandum iudicat esse, petit; refugit vero quod existimat esse fugiendum. Quare quibus inest ratio, ipsis etiam inest volendi nolendique libertas. Sed hanc non in omnibus æquam esse constituo. Nam supernis divinisque substantiis et perspicax iudicium, et incorrupta voluntas, et efficax optatorum præsto est potestas. Humanas vero animas liberiores quidem esse necesse est cum se in mentis divinæ speculatione conservant: minus vero cum dilabuntur ad corpora, minusque etiam, cum terrenis artibus colligantur. Extrema vero est servitus, cum vitiis deditæ, rationis propriæ possessione ceciderint. Nam ubi oculos a summæ luce veritatis ad inferiora, et tenebrosa dejecerint, mox inscitæ nube caligant, perniciosis turbantur affectibus; quibus accedendo, consentiendoque, quam invexere sibi, adjuvat servitutem, et sunt quodam modo propria libertate captiva. Quæ tamen ille, ab æterno cuncta prospiciens, Providentiæ cernit intuitus, et suis quæque meritis prædestinata disponit (ut de Sole ait Homerus, *Iliad*, Γ).” Compare also Milton, *Par. Lost*, ii, 557-561:—

“Others apart sat on a hill retir’d,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reason’d high  
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”





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destructive to the world would follow from this, as Boëthius shows in his fifth book.♦

Marco now begins to explain away Dante's doubts, first, by showing how things come by heavenly influence or the contrary.

Lo cielo i vostri movimenti inizia,†  
 Non dico tutti: ma, posto ch' io il dica,  
 Lume v' è dato a bene ed a malizia,

75

\* The passage referred to in Boëthius is in lib. v, pros. iii: "At nos illud demonstrare nitamur, quoque modo sese habest ordo causarum, necessarium esse eventum præscitarum rerum, etiam si præscientia futuris rebus eveniendi necessitatem non videatur inferre. Etenim si quispiam sedeat, opinionem quæ cum sedere conjectat, veram esse necesse est: at e converso rursus si de quopiam vero sit opinio, quoniam sedet, eum sedere necesse est. In utroque igitur necessitas inest: in hoc quidem sedendi, at vero in altero veritatis. Sed non idcirco quisque sedet, quoniam vera est opinio: sed hæc potius vera est, quoniam quempiam sedere præcessit. Ita cum causa veritatis ex altera parte procedat, inest tamen comunis in utraque necessitas. Similia de Providentia, futurisque rebus ratiocinari oportet. Nam etiam si idcirco, quoniam futura sunt, providentur; non vero ideo quoniam providentur, eveniunt: nihilominus tamen a Deo vel ventura provideri, vel provisum evenire necesse est: quod ad perimendam arbitrii libertatem solum satis est." See also *Par.* xvii, 37-42:—

"La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno  
 Della vostra materia non si stende,  
 Tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno.  
 Necessità però quindi non prende,  
 Se non come dal viso in che si specchia,  
 Nave che per corrente giù discende."

† *Lo cielo i vostri movimenti inizia*: According to the astrological belief in the Middle Ages, everything on earth is subject to the influence of the planets. See *Par.* xiii, 61-66. Every one of the heavens is endowed with a particular power, which kindles the first appetites in us. Dante does not deny the action of the planets, but only the necessity of obeying their influence. Man is endowed with free will, by means of which he can curb his desires or direct them to what is good. (Scartazzini.) Compare St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. xcv, art. 5: "Unde corpora cœlestia



E libero voler, che, se fatica  
 Nelle prime battaglie col ciel dura,\*  
 Poi vince tutto, se ben si nutrica.

The heavens *do* give the first impulse to your movements, I do not say all: but, even supposing that I did say it, light has been given you (to discern) between right and wrong, and Free Will, which, even though it combats against fatigue, in the end gains a complete victory, if only it nourishes itself well.

The first impulses of Man are bodily; as walking, sitting, etc.; but the movements of the mind were not supposed to fall under planetary influences, such as would be, to understand, to will, etc. Man's good fight is by resistance to the sins to which he is most easily predisposed, and for this combat he must give to his Free Will the nutriment of Wisdom, Love, and Virtue.

Scartazzini observes that, if we recapitulate what Marco explains from I. 67, we obtain the following points, as believed by Dante.

I. Men seek to excuse their evil actions by attributing the cause to planetary influences, as though they were driven by necessity.

non possunt esse per se causa operationum liberi arbitrii; possunt tamen ad hoc dispositivè inclinare, in quantum imprimunt in corpus humanum, et per consequens in vires sensitivas, quæ sunt actus corporalium organorum, quæ inclinant ad humanos actus."

*Infatica . . . dura*: Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*) says that *durare* is only used by Dante in this one passage in the sense of "to resist." In that sense it is used by Berni, *Orl. Innam.* canto ix, st. lxxxii:—

"Ma benchè Brighiador la via divora,  
 Pur con Baiardo non la può durare."

See also Boccaccio (*Decam.*) in the *Proemium* to the first Novel (*Giorn. i, Nov. i*): "Senza niuno fallo nè potremmo noi, che viviamo maccolati in esse e che siamo parte d' esse, durare nè ripararci, se special grazia di Dio forza e avvedimento non ci prestasse."



2. Such a doctrine destroys Free Will, and accuses of injustice that God, Who rewards good and punishes evil.

3. It is true that the planetary influences instil into Man his first inclinations, though not all, for some take their origin in the evil habits that have been contracted.

4. If Man will only make use of the light of Reason and Revelation, as also of his Free Will, he can and ought to be able to resist planetary influences, or natural inclinations to evil.

5. This resistance is at the first exceedingly hard and laborious; yet

6. Man can succeed in completely overcoming the planetary influences if only his Free Will gets properly nourished (*ben si nutrica*) with the food of wisdom and of grace.

Marco next shows that if men are subject to planetary influences, they are, in their freedom, subject to the greater might of God, to that better nature, which, through baptism or otherwise, they may claim as His gift to them. Dante solves the problem that has vexed the souls of men in all ages, and leaves them with the gift of freedom, and therefore the burden of responsibility. Throughout he follows St. Thomas Aquinas, as the latter had followed St. Augustine.

A maggior forza ed a miglior natura

Liberi soggiacete, e quella cria

80

La mente in voi, che il ciel non ha in sua cura.\*

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\* *il ciel non ha in sua cura*: According to Longfellow, Ptolemy is supposed to have said: "The wise man shall control the stars." And a Turkish proverb says:—



Though free, ye are subject to a mightier force, and to a better nature (God's own), and that creates in you your mind, which the heavens have not under their control.

Marco having condemned the first part of the distinction as false—namely, that all things must happen of necessity—concludes that the second part must be true, and that the wickedness of the world lies in the generation now living in the world, and not in the planets.

Però se il mondo presente disvia,  
In voi \* è la cagione, in voi si cheggia,

“ Wit and a strong will are superior to fate.”

Beveasto remarks that it is too absurd to suppose that Man is under the influence of the planets, when one may more reasonably suppose that the planets were created on account of Man. He relates, in confirmation of this, a story which he considers a very merry one. Not long before there flourished in the city of Padua one Pietro de Abano, a distinguished philosopher, astrologer and physician, who at one time held this pernicious doctrine. One day, being very angry with his servant who had come home late, he wanted to beat him, but the servant, who was very intelligent, said with ready wit: “My Master and Lord, I confess that I have done wrong; but pray condescend to hear one word from me, before thou givest me my well-deserved punishment. I have often heard thee say that all things arise from necessity; how then could I come home more quickly?”—Pietro, more angry than ever, exclaimed, while brandishing his stick: “And it is necessary, thou good-for-nothing servant, that I should give thee a good beating for thine insolence.” The servant, nothing daunted, laying his hand upon his dagger, said: “A certainly, insensate Master, it is necessary for me to bury this in thine entrails.” Fear impeded Pietro's wrath, and he always remained with me, as thou wilt; and I promise thee that I will never again hold or teach those doctrines.”

\* *In voi*; This means, in defects for which the free will of the present generation is responsible.



Ed io te ne sarò or vera spia.\*

Hence, if the present generation goes astray, in yourselves is the cause, in yourselves must it be sought, and I will now be to thee a true expounder of the same.

Scartazzini (in his *Edizione Minore*) gives a very lucid *résumé* of this passage. Marco has said, that men themselves are in fault if the present generation of them wanders from the right path. The human soul issues full of innocence out of the hands of its Maker, and instinctively turns to what seems to it most sanctifying and beautiful. As soon as it has begun to taste worldly goods it runs after them, deluding itself that it will find in them the highest good, unless some trustworthy guide directs it to the Sublimest Excellence, or unless some curb be found to restrain it from running after deceptive joys. But at the present day the laws have become inoperative, because the Chief Pastor of the Church continues to show a bad example, and mixes up spiritual with temporal matters. This pernicious government of the world is the cause of corruption that Dante seeks to investigate, and not any influence of the planets, or even the wickedness of the human race.

The point insisted on is the usurpation by the Pope of functions that rightly belong to the Emperor, but have been by him neglected.

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\* *spia*: The *Voc. della Crusca* (§ 1) explains this as "Chiunque riferisce; Latin *delator, narrator*." Praticelli says that, in ancient use, the word had not the same invidious sense that it has now. Scartazzini interprets, "verace indicatore, esploratore." Compare Shakespeare, *King Lear*, act v, sc. 3:—

"And take upon's the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies."



Esce di mano a Lui,<sup>†</sup> che la vagheggia † 85  
 Prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla,  
 Che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,  
 L' anima semplicetta, che sa nulla, ‡

† *Esce di mano a Lui . . . L' anima semplicetta, et seq.:* Gioberti, in his commentary on this passage, considers this is one of the most divine touches in the *Divina Commedia*. The picture is highly dramatic, without any mythology, and only replete with true poetry, and philosophic meaning. The style is as natural, graceful, and beautiful as it well can be. It seems as though the innocence and beauty of the soul described by Dante is also imparted to his descriptive powers. How ever did that fierce and terrible Dante, so unapproachable in his power to terrify or to move to tears, acquire such a marvellous grace of forms and conceptions? Here we have a new affinity between Dante and Shakespeare: between Dante's horrors and beauties on the one hand, and the contrasts such as Shakespeare creates between Ariel and Caliban in *The Tempest*. Both Poets have a marvellous kindred power of representing with an unrivalled hand the most opposite subjects, and of creating their master-pieces from the most striking contrasts. . . . Those of Dante have assuredly a resemblance to those of Shakespeare, who, in the sublime, the pathetic, the facetious, the terrible, the grotesque, the horrible, the loveable, the graceful, the comic, and in the satirical, is always sublime.

‡ *vagheggia*: Of this verb the *Voc. della Crusca* says that it either means, as in this passage, which is quoted, "Stare a rimisar fissamente con diletto e con attenzione l' amata, Lat. *intento amorem inspicere*;" or, "Fare all' amore = to court, to make love to." I have preferred the former meaning of the word, though both are adopted by different translators. In the sense of "contemplates," compare *Par. viii, 11, 12*:—

"Pigliavano il vocabol della stella  
 Che il sol vagheggia or da coppa or da ciglio."

And *Par. x, 10, 11*:—

"E il comincia a vagheggiar nell' arte  
 Di quel maestro."

‡ *che sa nulla*: According to Fraticelli, Dante, in stating that the newly-created soul knows nothing, shows that he followed the doctrine of the Peripatetics, who said that the human soul, when it is first created by God, is made apt to learn everything, but does not thereby have any knowledge or innate ideas. And this, says Fraticelli, is the most probable and general opinion. The Platonists thought the contrary, holding that the soul, from the instant of its creation, has in itself the germs of knowledge,



Salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore,  
Volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla.\*

90

Di picciol bene in pria sente sapore ;  
Quivi s' inganna, e dietro ad esso corre,  
Se guida o fren non torce suo amore.

Forth from the hand of Him, Who contemplates it with delight ere it even exists, like to a little maid that cries and laughs in her childish sport, issues the soul, so simple that it knows nothing, save that, set in motion by a blithe Creator, it eagerly turns to that which gives it pleasure. Of trifling good at first it tastes the savour ; herein it deceives itself (mistaking

which in time are developed and brought out by instruction or study. Dante also followed the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars. 1, qu. lxxxiv), which is too long however to quote here.

\* *Volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla*: The new soul turns instinctively to all that appears to charm it. It has not yet acquired ideas. Compare with this the beautiful passage in *Conv.* iv, 12, ll. 138-176: "Il sommo desiderio di ciascuna cosa, e prima dalla Natura dato, è lo ritornare al suo Principio. E perocchè Iddio è Principio delle nostre anime e Fattore di quelle simili a sè, siccom' è scritto: 'Facciamo l' uomo ad imagine e simiglianza nostra'; essa anima massimamente desidera tornare a quello. E siccome peregrino che va per una via per la quale non fu, che ogni casa che da lungi vede, crede che sia l' albergo, e non trovando ciò essere, dirizza la credenza all' altra, e così di casa in casa tanto che all' albergo viene; così l' anima nostra, incontanente che nel nuovo e mai non fatto cammino di questa vita entra, dirizza gli occhi al termine del suo Sommo Bene, e però qualunque cosa vede, che paia avere in sè alcun bene, crede che sia esso. E perchè la sua conoscenza prima è imperfetta, per non essere sperta nè dottrinata, piccioli beni le paiono grandi; e però da quelli comincia prima a desiderare. Onde vedemo li parvoli desiderare massimamente un pomo; e poi più oltre procedendo, desiderare uno uccellino; e poi più oltre, desiderare bello vestimento; e poi il cavallo, e poi una donna: e poi le ricchezze non grandi, poi grandi, e poi grandissime. E questo incontra perchè in nlla di queste cose trova quello che va cercando, e credelo trovare più oltre. Per che vedere si puote che l' uno desiderabile sta dinanzi all' altro agli occhi della nostra anima per modo quasi piramidale, chè 'l minimo li copre prima tutti, ed è quasi punta dell' ultimo desiderabile, ch' è Dio, quasi base di tutti."





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Hence it became necessary to establish laws as a restraining bit, it became necessary to have a Monarch, who should discern at least the towers of the true city.

Marco, having declared that laws are necessary to direct men to what is good, next upbraids the rulers who administer the laws in word only, but not in deed; the consequence of which is general depravity. In the lines that follow Benvenuto notices the extraordinary power that Marco exhibits of saying biting things (*Dicit ergo Marcus qui consueverat in vita bene scire mordere*).

Le leggi son, ma chi pon mano ad esse?  
 Nullo; perocchè il pastor che precede  
 Ruminar\* può, ma non ha l'unghie fesse.

The laws exist, but who sets a hand to them (*i.e.* who sees to their observance)? No one; because the shepherd who takes precedence (in Pontifical dignity), can chew the cud, but does not divide the hoof.

Benvenuto contends that Dante means the modern Shepherd, the Pope, chewing the cud in the sense of having the law of God constantly on his lips, and fully discussing it. In truth Boniface VIII had a thorough knowledge of the laws and the Holy Scrip-

always held that the imperial power should never overstep the limits of the supreme direction of the universal monarchy.

\* *Ruminar*: "Dieu défendit aux Hébreux de se nourrir d'aucun animal qui ne ruminât, et n'eût les ongles fendus (*Lev. xi*). Selon les interprètes de l'Écriture, *le ruminer*, dans le sens mystique, signifie la sagesse, et *les ongles fendus*, l'action. Appliquant cette image à la doctrine développée par lui dans son livre *De Monarchia*, Dante dit que le Pasteur qui précède, le Pape, dont la fonction est la plus noble, peut *ruminer*, c'est-à-dire préparer l'aliment spirituel pour le corps de la République chrétienne, mais qu'il n'a pas *les ongles fendus*, ou le pouvoir temporel, lequel appartient à l'Empereur." (Lamennais.)



tures, and wrote treatises on canonical law, but did not divide the temporal power from the spiritual, but rather confounded the two.

Marco then proceeds, from the above premises, to infer the conclusion which he had been gradually developing, viz. : that the wickedness of the Shepherd is the principal cause of the perversion of the world.

The Papacy becomes a temporal and worldly power, seeking after worldly good, and clergy and laity alike follow its example.

Per che la gente, che sua guida vede 100

Pure a quel ben \* ferire ond' ell' è ghiotta,

Di quel si pasce, e più oltre non chiede.

Ben puoi veder † che la mala condotta

È la cagion che il mondo ha fatto reo,

E non natura che in voi sia corrotta. 105

On this account the people, who see their guide aiming only at those (temporal) goods for which they are eager, feed (in their turn) on the same, and ask for nothing further. Well canst thou perceive that evil governance is the cause that has made the world guilty, and not that nature is corrupt in you.

What Marco would say is : " From what I have set forth, you can now recognise that the cause of the world being so empty of virtue, and so charged with vice,

\* *quel ben* : This means earthly possessions. In some old French satirical verses the following lines (quoted by Longfellow) occur :—

" Au temps passé du siècle d'or,  
Crosse de bois, évêque d'or ;  
Maintenant changent les lois,  
Crosse d'or, évêque de bois."

† *Ben puoi veder* : Compare Isaiah lvi, 11 : " They are shepherds that cannot understand : they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." And Jer. i, 6 : " My people hath been lost sheep : their shepherds have caused them to go away, they have turned them away on the mountains."



cannot be attributed either to the influence of the planets or to the corruption of human nature, but to the evil guidance, and bad government of the world."

Marco now gives a kind of retrospect of the early Empire, of which Dante also speaks (*Convito*, iv, 6) as a golden age. Perhaps the period of the Antonines is meant, when the Emperor ruled righteously in temporal things, and the successor of St. Peter exercised an independent authority over the Church in spiritual things. But the endowment of the Church of Rome by Constantine had spoiled everything.

Soleva Roma, che il buon mondo feo,\*

Due Soli † aver, che l' una e l' altra strada

\* *Roma, che il buon mondo feo*: Compare *Conv.* iv, 5, ll. 16-32: "Volendo la smisurabile Bontà divina l' umana creatura a sè riconformare, che per lo peccato della prevaricazione del primo uomo da Dio era partita e disformata, eletto fu in quell' altissimo e congiuntissimo Concistoro divino della Trinità, che l' Figliuolo di Dio in terra discendesse a fare questa concordia. E perocchè nella sua venuta nel mondo, non solamente il Cielo, ma la Terra conveniva essere in ottima disposizione; e la ottima disposizione della Terra sia quand' ella è Monarchia, cioè tutta ha uno Principe, come detto è di sopra; ordinato fu per lo divino Provvedimento quello popolo e quella città che ciò dovea compiere, cioè la gloriosa Roma."

† *Due Soli*, etc.: This, which is the leading theory (says *Philalethes*) in Dante's political system, he brings out very forcibly in the following passage in the *De Monarchia*, iii, 16, ll. 14-82: "Ad hujus autem intelligentiam sciendum quod homo solus in entibus tenet medium corruptibilium et incorruptibilium; propter quod recte a philosophis adsimilatur horizonti, qui est medium duorum hemisphaeriorum. Nam homo, si consideretur secundum utramque partem essentialem, scilicet animam et corpus: corruptibilis est, si consideretur tantum secundum unam, scilicet animam, incorruptibilis est. Propter quod bene Philosophus inquit de ipsa, prout incorruptibilis est, in secundo de Anima, quum dixit: 'Et solum hoc contingit separari, tanquam perpetuum, a corruptibili.' Si ergo homo medium quoddam est corruptibilium, et incorruptibilium, quum omne medium sapiat naturam extremorum: necesse est hominem sapere utramque naturam. Et quum omnis natura ad ultimum quendam finem ordinetur, consequitur ut hominis



Facean vedere,\* e del mondo e di Deo.

Rome, which made the world good (*i.e.* reformed it) was used to have two Suns, that pointed out the one and the other way, the (Emperor) that of the world, and (the Pope) that of God.

Marco then goes on to show that it is the cupidity and ambition of the Shepherd that has destroyed this har-

*duplex finis existat, ut sicut inter omnia entia solus incorruptibilitatem et corruptibilitatem participat; sic solus inter omnia entia in deo ultima ordinetur: quorum alterum sit finis ejus, prout corruptibilis est; alterum vero, prout corruptibilis. Duos igitur fines Providentia illa enarrabilis homini proposuit intendendos; beatitudinem scilicet hujus vite, quæ in operatione propriæ virtutis consistit, et per terrestrem Paradisum figuratur; et beatitudinem vite æternæ, quæ consistit in fruitione divini aspectus ad quam propria virtus ascendere non potest, nisi lumine divino adiuta, quæ per Paradisum cœlestem intelligi datur. Ad has quidem beatitudines, velut ad diversas conclusiones, per diversa media venire oportet. Nam ad primam per philosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur, secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando. Ad secundam vero per documenta spiritualia, quæ humanam rationem transcendunt, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes theologicas operando, Fidem, Spem scilicet et Caritatem. Has igitur conclusiones et media (sicut ostensa sint nobis hæc ab humana ratione, quæ per philosophos tota nobis innotuit; hæc a Spiritu Sancto, qui per Prophetas et Hagiographos, qui per co-æternum sibi Dei Filium Jesum Christum, et per ejus discipulos, supernaturalem veritatem ac nobis necessariam revelavit) humana cupiditas postergaret, nisi homines tanquam equi, sua bestialitate vagantes, in campo et freno composescerentur in via. Propter quod opus fuit homini duplici directivo, secundum duplicem finem: scilicet summo Pontifici, qui secundum revelata humanum genus perduceret ad vitam æternam: et Imperatori, qui secundum philosophica documenta genus humanum ad temporalem felicitatem dirigeret."*

\* *L'una e l'altra strada Facean vedere*: The two powers worked hand in hand for the public weal, and Benvenuto says this was the case when Constantine was Emperor and Sylvester Pope; when Justinian was Emperor and Agapitus Pope; when Charlemagne was Emperor and Adrian Pope. On this Gioberti remarks in his commentary: "What a mind must Dante have had, to rise up as he does to ideas that were in later times developed by Bossuet, in an age when a contrary opinion prevailed everywhere!"



mony, for one person cannot well administer two offices so dissimilar.

L' un l' altro ha spento ; ed è giunta la spada  
 Col pastorale, e l' un con l' altro insieme 110  
 Per viva forza mal convien che vada ;  
 Perocchè, giunti, l' un l' altro non teme.  
 Se non mi credi, pon mente alla spiga,  
 Ch' ogni erba si conosce per lo seme.

The one has quenched the other; and the sword is joined to the crozier, and the two together must of necessity go ill; for when joined, the one no longer fears the other. If thou dost not believe me, consider the full grown ear of corn, for every plant is known by its seed.

The last line is from St. Luke vi, 44. Marco means that, if Dante wants to know the cause of the world going astray, he will find it in the confusion of the two powers, and let him look at the bad habits that are the fruit of a disordered civil government. From the strife between the Pope and the Emperor Frederick II, Lombardy, the flower of Italy, was nearly annihilated.

*Division IV.*—In confirmation of what he has said before, Marco now goes on to describe the great change that has come over Lombardy, which, in consequence of the above-mentioned strife between Pope and Emperor, has lost all its advantages, both spiritual and temporal. The Pope was Gregory the Ninth, the Emperor was Frederick the Second.\*

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\*The dissension and war between these two potentates is related in stately diction by Dean Milman (*History of Latin Christianity*, London, 1855, 6 vols. 8vo, book x, ch. iii, vol. iv, pp. 312-321). The whole of this passage, too long to quote here, should be studied. Dean Plumptre remarks that, "Dante's retro-



In sul paese ch' Adice e Po riva  
 Solea valore e cortesia trovarsi,  
 Prima che Federico avesse briga:  
 Or può sicuramente indi passarsi  
 Per qualunque lasciasse per vergogna  
 Di ragionar coi buoni, o d' appressarsi.

115

120

In that land which the Adige and the Po water, valour and courtesy were wont to be found, before that Frederick had his conflict. Now it can be traversed in security by any one, who from sense of shame, would abstain from speaking with good men or (even) approaching them.

Meaning, that whoever would feel ashamed, because himself bad, to converse with good and courteous folk, can safely go through Lombardy from end to end, for now he will not find any good men left there. Benvenuto relates several anecdotes illustrating Marco's pungent and ready wit, and says that, having applied to the people of Lombardy a general rule of unworthiness, he next, by way of a sop to their feelings, makes a special exception: for he observes that in these two provinces there do still survive three worthy men, who retain some of the old-fashioned virtue and courtesy.

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spect of the history of the previous century is an induction, proving his position. Lombardy, Romagna, and the Marca Trevigiana, described after Dante's manner (*Purg.* xiv, 92; *Inf.* xviii, 61), by their rivers, had, in the good old days of the emperors, from Barbarossa onwards, presented bright examples of a chivalrous life. All had been ruined by the long conflict of Frederick II with Honorius III, Gregory IX, and Innocent IV, and in that long conflict, each party, the Popes pre-eminently, had usurped an authority which belonged to the other." At the present time no few men of virtue and respectability are left there, that a shamed man, blushing for his own guilt, and wishing to avoid any communication with virtuous persons, could pass through the whole country without fear of encountering one.



Ben v' èn \* tre vecchi ancora, in cui rampogna  
 L' antica età la nuova, e par lor tardo  
 Che Dio a miglior vita li ripogna ; †  
 Corrado da Palazzo, ‡ e il buon Gherardo, §  
 E Guido da Castel, || che me' si noma  
 Francescamente il semplice Lombardo.

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\* *v' èn* : See Nannucci (*Analisi Critica*, p. 444): "*Eno, en, enno*. Dalle terze singolari nascendo con la giunta di un *No* le terze plurali, come abbiamo notato a *seno*, n. 37, così dalla terza singolare è si ha secondo la regola la terza plurale *eno*, e per iscorcio *en*." Compare Lapo Gianni (in Nannucci's *Manuale della Letteratura della Lingua Italiana*, vol. i, p. 250):—

"E vederai, meraviglia sovrana,  
 Com' en formate angeliche bellezze."

And *Par.* xv, 76-78:—

"Perocchè il Sol, che v' allumò ed arse  
 Col caldo e con la luce, èn sì iguali,  
 Che tutte simiglianze sono scarse."

Nannucci adds: "*Eno* è dunque voce originale e regolare, e non usata per la rima, come suppongono gl' interpreti delle vecchie carte. Quindi si fece *anno*, come *danno*, *stanno*, *fanno*, *vanno*, *dano*, *stano*, *fano*, *vano*, etc." My old friend Nannucci always fiercely opposed the idea, which he treated with the greatest contempt, that Dante could possibly require to alter a word for the sake of rhyme.

† *a miglior vita li ripogna* : "scilicet, vitæ futuræ, quasi dicat : mors videtur eis tarda. Et loquitur hyperbolice. Vel dic, quod optant reponi [i.e. to be called away] ad meliorem vitam, idest virtuosiore, quam sit vita modernorum." (Benvenuto.)

‡ *Corrado da Palazzo* : Benvenuto relates : "Corrado da Palazzo was a noble of the State of Brescia, of whose bravery I have heard, that when he once bore the standard of his country in battle, though his hands had been cut off, he hugged the standard with his stumps until he died." He was Captain of the people at Florence in 1279. The English reader will remember Widdrington in the Ballad of Chevy Chace.

§ *Gherardo*, of the noble house of Camino, was a soldier and lord of Treviso, a principality always held by his family. He was kind, humane, courteous, liberal, and a friend of good men, and surnamed *the good*.

|| *Guido da Castello* was of the family of the Roberti of Reggio, of which there were three branches, namely, the Roberti di Tripoli, the Roberti di Furno, and the Roberti da Castello. He flourished at Reggio in the time of Dante, when that State was in great prosperity, and was governed liberally. He was a prudent





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Let it be remembered that he never sought to substitute any other religion in her place, and would have placed in Hell, among the Heretics in the fiery tombs of the city of Dis, any one who should have attempted to do so, but he was an uncompromising foe to her temporal power, which excited the ambition of the clerical hierarchy; and of her worldly possessions, which, by stimulating the cupidity of the priesthood, destroyed their purity of mind, and unfitted them for their sacred office.

He goes on to confirm Marco's words by the authority of Holy Scripture; but he has noticed with some curiosity, that while Marco has given to Conrad and Guido their family names, he has, in the case of Gherardo, only spoken of him by his Christian name. He asks who he is.

—“O Marco mio,”—diss' io,—“bene argomenti; 130  
 Ed or discerno perchè da retaggio \*  
 Li figli di Levì furono esenti:  
 Ma qual Gherardo è quel che tu per saggio  
 Di' ch' è rimasto della gente spenta,  
 In rimproverio del secol selvaggio?”— 135

“O my Marco,” said I, “thou reasonest well; and now I perceive why the sons of Levi were debarred from inheriting: but what Gherardo is it who thou sayest has remained an ensample of an extinct generation, as a reproof to this savage age?”

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\* *da retaggio*, or, *dal retaggio*: see *Numbers* xviii, 20, and *Joshua* xiii, 14. Dante can now comprehend, on account of the evil arising from churchmen being invested with temporal power, why God had forbidden the Levites to have an inheritance like the other tribes, and left them to depend for all except their dwellings on the tithes and offerings of the people. The Christian priesthood ought to have followed their example. See *Purg.* xix, 115; *Mon.* iii, 10.



Marco answers Dante's question, but Benvenuto owns that he feels a doubt as to Marco's meaning, when he declares that he does not know Gherardo by any other surname, for the family name of the Da Camino was famous, not only in Lombardy but throughout all Italy. And especially was Marco intimate with the family and the former head of it, Riccardo, father of Gherardo.\* Benvenuto thinks that this apparent want of knowledge was feigned for a double reason:— (1) that he (Dante) might mention Gherardo's extreme goodness, for he understood that Gherardo ought to be more celebrated for his goodness than from the distinction of the noble family of Da Camino; and (2) that he might have an opportunity of censuring the memory of Gherardo's daughter Gaja, who was unfortunately but too well known as *mulier vere gaia et sana; et Tarvisina tota amorosa*; and as though Marco would say: "Neither do his noble blood, or his private virtues, render him so celebrated as does the unfortunate notoriety of his daughter."

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\* Benvenuto relates how Marco on one occasion, having been taken prisoner, and an immense ransom demanded for his liberation, sent a messenger to Riccardo da Camino, Lord of Treviso, begging him not to let him die in prison. Riccardo, feeling real pity for the straits in which his friend found himself, wrote at once to several great princes in Lombardy, at whose courts Marco had been a frequent and welcome guest, in order that they might confer with him as to the best means of effecting his liberation. Marco was very indignant on hearing this, and sent off another messenger to inform Riccardo da Camino that he would rather die in captivity than become a slave so often, and to so many people (*servus tot et tantorum*). Riccardo, struck with shame, and cursing his own meanness, at once, by himself, paid the ransom in full, and set Marco at liberty. Marco could hardly, therefore, have spoken literally when he said: "Per altro soprannome io nol conosco." He must have said it in a figurative  
KAC



points out to them the pure light into which they are about to pass, whereas he himself must still remain in the black smoke.

—“O tuo parlar m'inganna o e' mi tenta.”—

Rispose a me ;—“chè, parlandomi Tosco,  
Par che del buon Gherardo nulla senta.

Per altro soprannome io nol conosco,

S' io nol togliessi da sua figlia Gaia.

140

Dio sia con voi, chè più non vegno vosco.

Vedi l' albòr \* che per lo fummo raia, †

Già biancheggiare, e me convien partirmi,

(L' Angelo è ivi), prima ch' io gli appaia.”—

Così tornò, e più non volle udirmi.

145

“Either thy words deceive me,” he answered me, “or they are meant to prove me (*i.e.* to see if I know more about him), for, addressing me (as thou dost) in Tuscan, it would seem as though thou hast no knowledge of the good Gherardo. I know him by no other name added, unless I were to take it from his daughter Gaia. May God be with you, for I bear you company no farther. Behold the effulgence that

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\* *l' albòr*: Scartazzini aptly points out that we are not to translate this, as so many have done, the whitening of the dawn, or the Sun's rays penetrating through the smoke. It is the radiance of the Angel of Peace who is near at hand, and his shining brightness is seen through the darkness, not so the rays of the Sun. The words *L' Angelo è ivi* are the explanation of the cause. Dante describes the more excessive brilliancy of this radiance, when, in the next Canto, the Poets approach the Angel. See *Purg.* xvii, 44, 45:—

“un lume il volto mi percosse,

Maggiore assai che quel ch' è in nostr' uso.”

† *raia* for *raggia*: Compare *Par.* xv, 55-57:—

“Tu credi che a me tuo pensier mei

Da quel ch' è primo, così come raia

Dall' un, se si conosce, il cinque e il sei.”

And *Par.* xxix, 136:—

“La prima luce che tutta la raia.”



radiates through the smoke is already whitening, and I must needs away—the Angel is there—before I be seen by him.” So he turned back, and would not hear me more.

Marco has to turn back into the smoke before the appearance of the Angel. He can only present himself before him when his penance shall have been completed. Compare this departure of Marco from the Poets in this passage with that of Brunetto Latini (*Inf.* xv, 115-118).

**END OF CANTO XVI.**



## CANTO XVII.

THE THIRD CORNICE—ANGER (CONCLUDED)—EXIT FROM THE SMOKE—EXAMPLES OF THE PUNISHMENT OF ANGER—THE ANGEL OF PEACE—ASCENT TO THE FOURTH CORNICE—THE SECOND NIGHT IN PURGATORY—LOVE, ACCORDING TO VIRGIL, THE ROOT OF ALL SIN AS WELL AS OF ALL VIRTUE.

IN the last Canto Dante defined the purgation of Anger in general. He now speaks of the remedial measures for curbing fierce anger, and treats of *Accidia*, a word for which there is no good modern English equivalent. Perhaps "spiritual sloth" best expresses its meaning, but as we have the authority of Chaucer for "*Accidie*," we can use that word.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into three parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 39, Dante points out what is the best curb to Anger.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 40 to ver. 75, he relates how the Angel of Peace purified him from the sin of Anger, and showed him the way up to the Fourth Cornice, in which *Accidie* is chastened.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 76 to ver. 139, before speaking of *Accidie*, Dante proceeds, with consummate skill, to enquire into the source and origin of it, and of the other capital sins.

*Division I.*—Before teaching how to put checks upon Anger, Dante relates that, when he was issuing from



the smoky cloud which enveloped the Angry, the setting Sun appeared. He seems to say: "Shall I tell you, in language that you can understand, how I issued from that pitchy smoke, and came forth into the luminous air? Imagine, at some time or other, when crossing the Alps or Apennines, a cloud has covered you, so that you could see nothing, and then, after a while, as the cloud gets rarified by the Sun, you begin to recover the sight of things around, but only in the feeble and imperfect way that a mole is supposed to do."

"It is well here to remember," says Benvenuto, "that although there are divers Alps in different parts of the world, yet our Poet is probably speaking of the Apennine Alps, and of that part of them which lies between Bologna and Florence, where he had met with such an experience as he describes." Benvenuto adds that he himself remembered this passage, when a cloud enveloped him in the same way on the Apennines.

Ricorditi, lettore, se mai nell' alpe \*

Ti colse nebbia,† per la qual vedessi

\* *nell' alpe*: The *Voc. della Crusca*, on the word *alpe*, says: "Montagna altissima; propriamente quella che fascia l' Italia da Tramontana (to the North)"; and § 3, "qualsivoglia montagna nte." It must be remembered that *alpe* here is in the Landino specifically reminds us that *nell' alpe* does not necessarily mean "on the Alps": "Alpi propriamente sono i monti che dividono Italia de la Francia. Ma da questi tutti gli alti monti in lingua toscana (ma non in latino) sono detti alpi."

† *Ti colse nebbia*: Compare Homer (*Iliad*, iii, 10-15, Lord Derby's translation):—

"As when the south wind o'er the mountain tops  
Spreads a thick veil of mist, the shepherd's bane,  
And friendly to the nightly thief alone,  
That a stone's throw the range of vision bounds;  
So rose the dust-cloud, as in serried ranks  
With rapid step they mov'd across the plain."



Non altrimenti che per pelle talpe ; \*  
 Come, quando i vapori umidi e spessi  
 A diradar † cominciansi, la spera  
 Del sol debilmente entra per essi ;  
 E fia la tua imagine leggiera ‡  
 In giugnere a veder com' io rividi  
 Lo sole in pria, che già nel corcare era.  
 Sì, § pareggiando i miei co' passi fidi 10  
 Del mio Maestro, uscii fuor di tal nube  
 Ai raggi, morti già nei bassi lidi.

Recall to mind, Reader, if ever on some lofty mountain a mist has overtaken thee, through which thou couldst not see otherwise than does the mole through

\* *talpe* : Benvenuto requests his readers to " Take note that the mole appearing to see is shown in two ways. *First*, because it has eyes, and Nature creates nothing in vain ; and *secondly*, because we know that the mole dies as soon as it beholds the light ; so it is made to see feebly, because a beneficent and foreseeing Nature has given it this membrane over its eyes, that they may not be injured, seeing that it lives entirely underground." And he adds that the angry man in the heat of passion is very like a mole. It is somewhat remarkable that, in the Italian language, there is no well-recognised word signifying a rat, as distinguished from a mouse. The more usual way is to say *sorcio* for mouse, and *topo* for rat, but as a matter of fact both words, as well as the old Italian *ratto*, all mean mouse. At Florence, where moles are not so often seen, it is the popular practice to speak of rats as *talpi*. There was once an amusing dispute on this subject between my two friends, the late Sir James Lacaita and Count Ugo Balzani. They agreed to refer it to the porter at the entrance to the *Accademia della Crusca*, and asked him what were those animals that ran about in the cellars, particularizing the size of an ordinary rat. " Ma Lor Signori intendono *talpi*," was the answer.

† *diradar* : This verb in the neuter signification, according to the *Voc. della Crusca*, has the force of *divenir rado*, to get thinner. Compare *Purg.* i, 121-123 :—

" Quando noi fummo dove la rugiada  
 Pugna col sole, e per essere in parte  
 Dove adrezza, poco si dirada " ; etc.

‡ *leggiera* : prompt, easy : " La tua imaginazione aiutata da questa similitudine sarà pronta a comprendere." (Venturi.)

§ *Sì* in this sentence means : " In this manner, i.e. in this faint, declining sun-light."





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Tal volta sì di fuor, ch' uom non s' accorge,  
 Perchè d' intorno suonin mille tube, 15  
 Chi move te, se il senso non ti porge ?  
 Moveti lume, che nel ciel s' informa  
 Per sè, o per voler che giù lo scorge. \*

O Imagination, thou that dost at times abstract us outside ourselves so (completely), that a man perceives it not, even though a thousand trumpets are braying around him, who is it that moves thee, if the senses place not before thee (an object of contemplation)? [Dante then answers his own question.] The light (of the intellect) which is formed in heaven, sets thee in motion, either spontaneously, or by the will (of God) which guides it downward.

could not get any better opportunity of seeing it, he leant his breast against an apothecary's counter and read the whole book through with such attention (steadfastly keeping his eyes fixed upon it from the sixth hour until vesper time), that he was not aware of anything passing around him, although a bridal procession was passing close by, with shouts, songs and music. And when people asked him how he could manage to go on reading without noticing so distinguished a festival, with its agreeable sight of so many of the ladies of Siena, and the beautiful music of so many instruments, he answered that he had not perceived that anything was going on; and after that people had marvelled greatly at that, they were struck with a second wonder even greater, when they remembered that Dante was an especial admirer of love sonnets, such as were being sung close to him."

\* *scorge*: The primary meaning of *scorgere* (*Voc. della Crusca*) is "Vedere, Discernere." But under § 1, we find: "*Scorgere, per Guidare, Mostrare il cammino, Far la scorta.*" Compare *Inf.* viii, 92, 93:—

"tu qui rimarrai  
 Che gli hai scorta sì buia contrada."

And *Purg.* xxi, 20, 21:—

"Se voi siete ombre che Dio su non degni,  
 Chi v' ha per la sua scala tanto scorte."

And Petrarch, Part ii, *Son.* xlviii:—

"Così sua vita subito trascorse  
 Quella che già co' begli occhi mi scorse,  
 Ed or convien che col pensier la segua."

And Part ii, *Canzone* viii, st. 10:—

"Scorgimi al miglior guado;  
 E prendi in grado i cangiati desiri."



Or, according to Benvenuto: "By the Divine will, which transmits the light itself to man without the intermediation of the heavens; as though he would say: Such powers of imagination are set in motion by light from heaven formed spontaneously or transmitted from God."

Dante now demonstrates by three examples, how, in a kind of mystic imagination, he fancied he saw three effects of anger, one bad, another worse, and the third worst of all.

Dell' empiezza \* di lei, che mutò forma  
 Nell' uccel che a cantar più si diletta, 20  
 Nell' imagine mia apparve l' orma: †  
 E qui fu la mia mente sì ristretta ‡  
 Dentro da sè, che di fuor non venia  
 Cosa che fosse allor da lei ricetta.

Of the cruelty of her (Philomela), who changed her form into (that of) the bird that most delights in singing (the nightingale), there appeared the outline in my imagination. And hereupon was my mind so shut up within itself, that whatever thing was received by it, did not come from without.

\* *Empiezza*: Scartazzini says *empiezza* means cruelty, and quotes the following words from Jacopo della Lana: "Empiezza è una specie pestifera d' iracundia." He adds that it is all the worse when perpetrated of malice aforethought. Compare *Inf.* x, 83, 84, where Farinata degli Uberti asks Dante why the Florentines persecute his family with such persistent malice, in which passage *empio* is used in the sense of "cruel."

"Dimmi perchè quel popolo è sì empio  
 Incontro a' miei in ciascuna sua legge."

† *Orma*: "Questa imagine *orma dell' empiezza di Filomela* (Progne) dipinta nella fantasia invece di dire *l' orma di Filomela* (Progne) *empia*, è tutta poetica, e ci fa imaginare l' imagine di Dante e Filomela (Progne) in atto tale, che l' empietà si conosce nella sua fisionomia." (Gioberti.)

‡ *mente sì ristretta*: Compare *Purg.* iii, 12, 13:—

"La mente mia, che prima era ristretta,  
 Lo intento rallargò."



Commentators have differed considerably as to which of the two sisters, after the cruel vengeance of one or the other of them upon Tereus, is here meant; Procne, whom Jupiter changed into a swallow, or Philomela who became a nightingale.

Dante now turns his thoughts to a second instance of Anger that is worse than that just alluded to; because it is one which shows how there are times when a man can be so inflamed with anger, on account of a slight injury done him by one, that he will set his mind to work the destruction of a large number of innocent persons.

Haman, because Mordecai omitted to do homage to him, compassed the death of the whole of the Jews that were in Persia.

Poi piovve \* dentro all' alta fantasia † 25  
 Un crocifisso ‡ dispettoso e fiero  
 Nella sua vista, e cotal si moria.  
 Intorno ad esso era il grande Assuero,  
 Ester sua sposa e il giusto Mardocheo,  
 Che fu al dire ed al far così intero.§ 30

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\* *piovve*: As rain descends from heaven, so did these visions come down from on high, and enter into Dante's conceptions. *Piovere* is frequently used by Dante in the sense of something coming down from heaven, whether some attribute of God, or, as in *Inf.* viii, 83, the rebellious Angels, turned into Demons, after having been expelled from Heaven.

† *alta fantasia*: Compare *Par.* xxxiii, 142:—

“All' alta fantasia qui mancò possa.”

Scartazzini observes that Dante calls his phantasy elevated, because it was detached from the senses, and from everything earthly, and soared up to Heaven.

‡ *crocifisso*: According to the English version Haman was hanged; the *Vulgate* has: *suspensus . . . in patibulo*. It is probable that he was empaled.

§ *il giusto Mardocheo, Che fu . . . così intero*: Notwithstanding Dante's panegyric of Mordecai, I prefer Bishop Wordsworth's



Then there descended into my elevated phantasy one crucified (Haman), contemptuous and haughty in his look, and with that demeanour (*cotal*) was he dying. Around him were the great Ahasuerus, Esther his consort, and the righteous Mordecai, who was of such integrity both in word and deed.

We now come to the third example, that of a self-destroyer from Wrath. Benvenuto considers this is an example of a sin of the worst kind. The story is that of Amata, wife of King Latinus; she hanged herself in anger and despair because she thought Turnus had been slain, to whom her daughter Lavinia was betrothed.

E come questa imagine rompeo  
 Sè per sè stessa, a guisa d' una bulla \*  
 Cui manca l' acqua sotto qual si feo ;  
 Surse in mia visione una fanciulla, †  
 Piangendo forte, e diceva :—“ O regina, 35  
 Perchè per ira hai voluto esser nulla ?  
 Anciss t' hai per non perder Lavinia ;  
 Or m' hai perduta ; io son essa che lutto,  
 Madre, alla tua pria ch' all' altrui ruina.”—

And as this image broke up of itself, after the manner of a bubble, when the water under which it was

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view (*Holy Bible*; by Wordsworth, 1872), which is that there is no single person in the Book of Esther of any very lofty elevated character, or of a devout mind. The Bishop says that the Book of Esther must be read in connection with those of Ezra and Nehemiah. The devout Jews had all departed to undergo privations and persecutions while rebuilding Jerusalem. Those who sought their own ease and comfort stayed in Persia, and among these were Mordecai and Esther.

\* *Bulla*: for *bolla*. Compare Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act i, scene 3:—

“ The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
 And these are of them.”

† *Fanciulla*: The death of Queen Amata is related in Virgil's *Æneid*, vii, 595-607, but space forbids my quoting it in full.



formed fails it; there uprose in my vision a young maiden weeping bitterly, and saying: "O Queen, why through wrath hast thou chosen to be naught? Thou hast slain thyself so as not to lose (me) Lavinia; now thou hast lost me. I am the one, Mother, that mourns thy destruction, before that of another."

By *altrui*, Lavinia means Turnus, who had not yet been slain by Æneas, as Amata thought was the case. It was not until after Amata's death that Æneas slew Turnus.\*

Benvenuto says Virgil adapted this story from one in Homer's *Odyssey*, where Anticlea appears to her son Ulysses in Hades, and tells him that she had hung herself, thinking that she had lost him. In his Epistle to the Emperor Henry VII, Dante refers to this episode as a warning against yielding to selfish passions, instead of accepting apparent evil for the sake of a greater good.

*Division II.*—Dante now describes the appearance of an Angel, whom we shall find to be the Angel of

\* Scartazzini points out that, after having beheld three visions of sweet gentleness (*Purg.* xv, 85-114), Dante sees by way of contrast as many visions of dire wrath. Perez (*I Sette Cerchi*, p. 164) has the following: "Filomela uccide: Amano è ucciso: Amata si uccide. Filomela uccide per gustare ne' suoi pensieri la dolcezza della vendetta, e perde la facoltà de' pensieri, la ragione; Amano, volendo perdere altrui, perde sè stesso; Amata si uccide per non perder Lavinia, e la perde per sempre: sforzi sempre infelici dell' ira. Di Filomela fan vendetta i Celesti: di Amano fan vendetta gli uomini: di Amata fa vendetta ella stessa: tre vendette che sovente s' uniscono insieme. Così il volto di due regie donne, orribilmente dall' ira trasformato, mette in orrore al sesso gentile una passione che cancella dalle sembianze umane ogni traccia di bellezza; e l' ira di un regio ministro che cade nei lacci tesi ad altrui, ira politica e religiosa insieme, ammonisce tutti coloro che della patria e della religione fanno instrumento d' ire e vendette superbe."



Peace, who purifies him from the sin of Anger, and directs him to the stairway leading up to the next Cornice.

Before proceeding to speak of other matters, Dante relates how he was suddenly roused from his ecstatic trance, and he compares his own case to that of a man fast asleep in his room, on whose face the full rays of the Sun strike through the window, and cause him to awake with a great start of fear; so now did the brilliancy of the Angel awake Dante from his vision, and strike him with awe.

Come si frange il sonno, ove di butto \* 40  
 Nuova luce percote il viso chiuso,  
 Che fratto guizza pria che moia tutto; †  
 Così l'immaginar mio cadde giuso,  
 Tosto ch' un lume il volto mi percosse, ‡  
 Maggiore assai che quel ch' è in nostr' uso. 45

\* *di butto* : Compare *Inf.* xxiv, 104, 105 :—

“ La polver si raccolse per sè stessa,  
 E in quel medesimo ritornò di butto.”

† *guizza pria che moia tutto* : On this Lombardi says: “ siccome il peccato, tratto fuor d' acqua, guizza prima di morire, così per catararsi appella *guizzare* quello sforzo che l' interrotto sonno fa di rimettersi, prima che del tutto svanisca.” Biagioli remarks that in *Par.* xxvi, 70-75, one can extract the reason of what is said in the passage we are discussing :—

“ E come a lume acuto si dissonna  
 Per lo spirito visivo che ricorre  
 Allo splendor che va di gonna in gonna,  
 E lo svegliato ciò che vede abborre,  
 Si neccia è la sua subita vigilia,  
 Fin che l' estimativa nol soccorre ;” etc.

*l' estimativa* there means the faculty of judgment.

‡ *un lume il volto mi percosse, et seq.* : We learn from Canto xvi, 146, that the sudden light which blazed into Dante's eyes was from the radiant form of the Angel. Compare *Purg.* viii, 36 :—

“ Come virtù che al troppo si confonda.”

And Milton (*Par. Lost*, iii, 380) :—

“ Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear.”

And (*Par. Lost*, i, 595) :—



As sleep is broken, when on a sudden a new light strikes upon the closed eyes, and broken, struggles ere it wholly fades away; so did my illusion vanish (*lit.* fall down), so soon as there smote upon my face a light far exceeding the one to which we are accustomed (*i.e.* the Sun).

The radiance of the Angel is so dazzling, that although Dante eagerly longs to know whose is the voice he hears inviting him to approach, his mortal eye is powerless before it, as on earth it would be to gaze on the Sun.

Io mi volgea per vedere ov' io fosse,  
 Quand' una voce \* disse :—" Qui si monta :"—  
 Che da ogni altro intento mi rimosse ;  
 E fece la mia voglia tanto pronta  
 Di riguardar chi era che parlava, 50  
 Che mai non posa, se non si raffronta. †  
 Ma come al sol, che nostra vista grava,  
 E per soperchio sua figura vela,  
 Così la mia virtù quivi mancava.

---

"The excess of glory obscured."

And Moore in the *National Air* beginning, "Say, what shall be our sport to-day?"

"That, like the lark which sunward springs,  
 'Twas giddy with too much light."

\* *una voce*: "A Dante, che colla rapita immaginazione sta ancor fiso ne' miserabili fatti dell'ira, ferisce negli occhi una luce improvvisa; e mentre vinto e smarrito vien chiedendo a sè stesso dov'egli sia, alla luce s'aggiunge una voce, che invitandolo dolcemente a salire, gli fuga dall'anima ogni truce visione. È la luce e la voce dell'Angelo della Pace. Luce, che con sua vivezza può ben confondere e opprimere gli occhi di colui che esce appena dal fumo dell'ira; ma che presto, congiunta con una voce che pone sicurezza nel profondo dell'anima, schiara e afforza l'uomo nelle pacifiche vie ove prosperano i passi de' mansueti." (Perez, p. 167.)

† *Che mai non posa, se non si raffronta*: Many of the old Commentators attach a deeper signification to these words, especially Lana who interprets: "That voice sounded to me of such sweetness, that my mind will never more rest until I am able to hear it again face to face, that is, when this first life is ended."





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Sì fa con noi, come l' uom si fa sego ; \*  
 Che quale aspetta prego, e l' uopo vede,  
 Malignamente già si mette al nego. †

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“This is a divine spirit, who unasked is directing us into the way to go up, and who conceals himself in his own light. He so deals with us, as a man does for himself; for whoever awaits the petition, and sees the need, is already setting himself evilly to deny it.

As though Virgil would say: “Just as man supplies his own needs without any one else asking him, so now does the Angel come spontaneously to us, and forestalls our petitions.” And in this passage Benvenuto considers that Virgil censures (*arguit*) a common error of men, who, seeing their neighbour have need, although they wish to help him, yet expect and desire to be asked.

Virgil tells Dante that he ought to show his appreciation of the Angel's courtesy by at once moving forward.

Ora accordiamo a tanto invito il piede :  
 Procacciam di salir pria che s' abbui,  
 Chè poi non si poria, se il dì nun riede.”—

Now let us make our feet accord unto so gracious an invitation; let us endeavour to ascend before it gets dark, for after, it would not be possible, until the day returns.”

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\* *sego* for *seco*. In all old Italian the interchange of *g* and *c* is frequent, e.g. : *preco* for *prego*; *laco* for *lago*; *draco* for *drago*; *figo* for *fico*; *siguro* for *sicuro*; *Gostanza* for *Costanza*; and in *Conv.* i, 8, l. 33: “li Tegni di Galieno,” which Fraticelli's note says is “antica corruzione di Tecni, da τέχνη, Arte, titolo dato da Galeno ad un suo libro dell' arte medica.” The word occurs in the Apocryphal *Canzone*, wrongly attributed to Dante, beginning *Giovene donna*, at st. 6:—

“Vattene, mia canzon, ch' io te ne prego,  
 Fra le person che volontier t' intenda,  
 E sì t' arresta di ragionar sego.”

† *al nego*: See note above on “senza prego.”



Virgil is anxious that they should reach the top before the darkness arrests their steps, so that they should not have to sleep upon the stairway, as in fact (*Canto xvii*, 70) they have to do on the following night.

The ascent to the Fourth Cornice is described.

Così disse il mio Duca, ed io con lui  
 Volgemmo i nostri passi ad una scala; 65  
 E tosto eh' io al primo grado fui,  
 Senti' mi presso quasi un mover d' ala,  
 E ventarmi nel viso, e dir:—“*Beati*  
*Pacifici*, che son senza ira mala.” †—

Thus spoke my Leader, and I with him turned our steps towards a stairway; and as soon as I was on the first step, I felt close by me as it were the movement of a wing, and a fanning on my face, and (I heard) said: “*Blessed are the Peacemakers*, who are free from sinful anger.”

Benvenuto wishes us to remark that Dante has used the expression *ira mala* intentionally, for some anger can be righteous, and without sin, though Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations*, and Seneca in his book on *Anger*, have sought to demonstrate at length, that all anger is sinful and detestable.

Dante now describes at what time of day they entered on the stairway, on which Dr. Moore (*Time-References*, p. 100) observes: “As they ascend to the Fourth Cornice, where *Accidia*, or Sloth, is punished,

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\* *Iræ mæle*: Scartazzini contends that all wrath is not sinful, for in Holy Scripture the wrath of God, which cannot be unrighteous, is repeatedly spoken of. Compare *Ephes.* iv, 26: “Be ye angry, and sin not.” St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>a</sup>, qu. clviii, art. 1) quotes from St. Chrysostom: “Qui sine causa irascitur, reus erit; qui vero cum causa, non crit reus; nam si ira non fuerit, nec doctrina proficit, nec iudicia stat, nec crimina compescuntur.” And St. Thomas Aquinas adds: “Ergo irasci non semper est malum.”



twilight has come on, the last light in the sky is rapidly fading, and the stars are beginning to appear here and there."

Già eran sopra noi tanto levati 70  
 Gli ultimi raggi \* che la notte segue,  
 Che le stelle apparivan da più lati.

Already were the last rays, upon which the night follows, so high above us, that the stars were shining forth on every side (*lit.* in many places).

At this point Dante begins to feel symptoms of fatigue, and laments that his strength is failing. The reason for this sudden weakness is the approach of night, which, according to the laws of Purgatory, impedes their further progress. (*Purg.* vii, 43-60.)

—“ O virtù † mia, perchè sì ti dilegue ? ”—  
 Fra me stesso dicea, chè mi sentiva  
 La possa delle gambe posta in tregue. 75

“ O my strength, why art thou thus melting away ? ”  
 I kept saying within myself, for I began to feel that the power of my legs had ceased for awhile (*lit.* had been placed in truce).

*Division III.*—In this Division is investigated the origin of Spiritual Sloth (*Accidie*), and also of the other sins chastised in Purgatory, not only those that have

\* *Gli ultimi raggi*: Tommaséo quotes the following remarks of the astronomer Antonelli: “ *Ultimi*—Delicatissima l'osservazione, e comprova quanto profondo scrutatore dei fenomeni naturali fosse il nostro Poeta. Quando infatti ci troviamo sopra notevoli alture, e il sole, occultato al nostro occhio nonchè ai bassi piani, indora soltanto, e leggermente, le più elevate cime delle montagne, ad aria limpida e pura cominciano a vedersi in più punti del cielo le stelle di prima grandezza, alle quali non fa grave ostacolo quel candido velo, che dalla luce crepuscolare ancora rimane.”

† *virtù*: Tommaséo interprets this “ *virtù* del piede, i.e. walking powers.” Scartazzini: “ forza di muoversi.”



been already purged in the three first Cornices, viz. Pride, Envy and Anger, but also those in the three remaining Cornices, viz. Avarice, Gluttony and Self-Indulgence.

Dante first describes the spot where they passed the night. It was at the summit of the stairs, and on the boundary of the Fourth Cornice.

Benvenuto greatly admires the comparison Dante now makes: "As a ship is attached to the shore, where it can remain for a time before it succeeds in getting into the port, in which it can lie in perfect security, so here, the genius of Dante, which, in the opening words of the *Purgatorio*, he has likened to a bark, had fortified and fixed itself on the summit of the stairs for the night. This had already taken place in another spot on the previous evening,\* and will happen again on the following evening,† until he finally reaches the presence of God, in whom, as in a tranquil harbour, his mind, after its long voyage, may repose in peace."

Noi eravam dove più non saliva  
 La scala su, ed eravamo affissi,  
 Pur come nave ch' alla spiaggia arriva :  
 Ed io attesi un poco s' io udissi  
 Alcuna cosa nel nuovo girone ; †

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\* " \* Colla, ' disse quell' ombra, ' n ' anderemo,  
 Dove la costa face di sè grembo,  
 E quivi il nuovo giorno attenderemo."

*Purg.* vii, 67-69.

† " E pria che in tutte le sue parti immense  
 Posse orizzonte fatto d' un aspetto,  
 E notte avesse tutte sue dispense,  
 Ciascun di noi d' un grado fece letto ;  
 Chè la natura del monte ci affranse  
 La possa di salir più che il diletto."

*Purg.* xxvii, 70-75.

† *Alcuna cosa nel nuovo girone* : We may remember that Dante had heard sounds immediately on entering each of the two pre-



Poi mi volsi al Maestro mio, e dissi :  
 —“ Dolce mio Padre, di', quale offensione  
 Si purga qui nel giro dove semo ?  
 Se i piè si stanno, non stea tuo sermone.”

We were (now) where the stairway ascended no further (*i.e.* at its summit), and were motionless, even as a ship when it reaches the shore: and a while I gave heed if I might hear anything in the new circle; then I turned me to my Master and said: “My beloved Father, tell me what offence is purged in this Cornice where we are? Even though our feet tarry, let not thy speech be stayed.”

Dante recollects that, during their enforced delay on the previous night, Sordello had turned the time to good account by pointing out to him the shades of the departed great in the flowery valley, and he is anxious now to discuss with Virgil some matter profitable for what lies before him.

Benvenuto remarks that our poet, with great art, proceeds to make a useful and necessary investigation, in which he gives a clear distinction of the whole of Purgatory through all its Cornices; just as we read, in *Inf.* xi, that he does of all the circles of Hell.

Virgil answers him:—

Ed egli a me:—“ L' amor del benc,\* scemo

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ceding Cornices. In the second he heard the voice of the Angel crying aloud, *Vinum non habent*, see Canto xiii, 25-30. In the third, he heard the spirits praying for peace and mercy (see Canto xvi, 16-18). In this new Cornice no sound falls upon his ears.

\* *L' amor del bene, scemo Di suo dover*: Cesari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 311) says: “Da queste parole apparisce quivi esser punita l' Accidia. . . . Qui Dante monta in cattedra, e mette mano ad una lezione di etica.” St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. lxiii, art. 2) defines *Accidia* thus: “*Accidia verò est quædam tristitia quæ homo redditur tardus ad spirituales actus propter corporalem laborem, quæ dæmonibus non competit.*” And (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. xxxv, art. 1), “*Acedia ita deprimit*



Di suo dover, quiritta si ristora ;  
Qui si ribatte il mal tardato remo : \*

And he to me : " The (mere) love of what is good, when lacking its proper duty (of activity in seeking after it) is atoned for in this very spot ; here is plied again the ill-belated oar.

We have in the above lines Dante's definition of *Accidia*. †

*animam hominis, ut nihil ei agere libeat ; sicuti ea quæ sunt acida, etiam frigida sunt. Et ideo acedia importat quoddam tedium operandi."*

\* *si ribatte il mal tardato remo* : Biagioli says that Dante has taken this figure from the cru treatment that the unhappy galley-slaves experienced in his time. They were chained five to an oar, and were mercilessly beaten if unable to row fast enough. If the vessel got sunk or burnt, they were deliberately left to perish. In Massimo d'Azeglio's novel, *Niccolò de' Lapi*, cap. 14, is an account of a naval action of Andrea Doria, a terrible picture of this is given. Cesari (*Bellezza*, vol. ii, p. 311) : " Or il Poeta vuol accennare questa lentezza e nausea del ben operare, coll' immagine de' vogatori (rowers) ; i quali se il cottimo volga in là gli occhi, allentano il vogare e si pigliano alquanto di sosta."

† *Accidia* : See this word in the *New English Dictionary* . . . edited by James A. H. Murray, Oxford, 1884. " *Accidia*. *Obs. Forms*: *acci-de, accyde ; acci-die, accy-dye, accidye, accydye*. (O. Fr. *acci-de, aci-de*, O. Norm. Fr. *acci-die, aci-die* ; ad. med. L. *acidia*, corrupt. Of late Lat. *acidia*, a Gr. *ἀκidia*, heedlessness, torpor (in Cicero, *Att.* xii, 45) noun of state from *ἀ*, not, and *ἐφορ*, care, *ἐφορᾶν*, I care, *lit.* non-caring state. *Acedia* became a favourite ecclesiastical word, applied primarily to the mental prostration of recluses, induced by fasting, and other physical causes ; afterwards the proper term for the 4th cardinal sin, sloth, sluggishness. (See Chaucer, *Persones Tale*, 603). Its Greek origin being forgotten, the word was variously 'derived' from *acidum*, sour (see *Caesarius* quoted in Du Cange and Roquefort '*Acide*' : *Ennui, tristesse, dégoût* : d' *acidum*), and from *accidere* to come upon one as an *accident* or *access*, whence the Med. Lat. corruption, *acidia*, and O. Fr. and Eng. *acci-de, aci-die*. The latter is Norman, the former Parisian ; the later Eng. accentuation was *a-cidia*. With the restoration of Greek learning, the Latin became again *acedia*, whence a rare ACEDY



Benvenuto says that *accidia* is a defective love of the highest good, which we ought to seek for ardently. It is therefore a kind of negligence, a tepid, lukewarm condition, and, as it were, a contempt for acquiring

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in 17th century." Sloth, torpor. Among a number of illustrations given in the *New Eng. Dict.*, I select two.

"Under accidie, þet ich cleopede slouhþe."

(*Ancren Riwle*, A.D. 1230.)

"A man that hath accydye or slouthe hath sorowe and angre the whyle that he knoweth that an other man doth wel." (Caxton, *Ordre of Chyualry*, 81, A.D. 1484.) Chaucer thus describes *Accidie* in *The Persones Tale* under the head of *De Accidia*: "After the sin of wrath, now wol I speke of the sinne of accidie, or slouth: for envie blindeth the herte of a man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie maketh him bevy, thoughtful and wrawe (*peevish*). Envie and ire maken bitternesse in herte, which bitternesse is mother of accidie, and benimeth him the love of alle goodnesse; than is accidie the anguish of a troubled herte. And Seint Augustine sayth: It is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a damnable sinne, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist, in as moche as it benimeth the service that men shulde do to Crist with all diligence. He doth all thing with annoye, and with wrawnesse, slakenesse, and excusation, with idleness and unlust. For which the book sayth: Accursed be he that doth the service of God negligently. Than is accidie enemy to every estate of man. . . . Now certes this foul sin of accidie is eke a ful gret cnemie to the livelode of the body; for it ne hath no purveance agenst temporel necessitee; for it forsleutheth, forsluggeth, and destroieth all goods temporel by recchelessnesse." Dean Paget (*Life of Discipline, Introductory Essay*, pp. 21, 22) says of the above passage: "Such are the main points in Chaucer's wonderful delineation of the subtle, complex sin of accidie. In strength of drawing, in grasp of purpose, in moral earnestness, in vivid and disquieting penetration, it seems to the present writer more remarkable and suggestive than any other treatment of the subject which he has found; or equalled only by the significance of that brief passage, where the everlasting misery of those who wilfully and to the end have yielded themselves to this sin is told by Dante in the *Inferno*." There would seem to be a distinct difference between the penitent *accidiosi* in Purgatory, whose fault is a defective love of the highest good; and the Fifth Circle of Hell, who represent the sullen or sulky type of Anger (*πικροί*).





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lows, we can gather the whole form and condition (*qualitas*) of Purgatory, and not only is the matter that has already been discussed become clearly laid open before us, when we have taken in these three distinctions, but also that of which we are going to treat as we go on.

Virgil enters on his subject by laying down a general principle necessary for comprehending these distinctions.

Benvenuto says that, to understand the text better, it is perhaps well to explain that there are two kinds of Love,\* the higher and the lower. The higher, which can never be the cause of sin, seeks the good, and the divine light. But the lower, on account of Free Will, can be the cause of sin. As for instance, when one loves a thing which ought not to be loved, but which seems good to oneself, such as the ruin of a neighbour's prosperity. Or, when one loves a thing worthy of being loved, but loves it inordinately. Or, when one loves a thing worthy of our highest love, but in a careless slothful way, as in the case of *Accidie*, which is punished in this Cornice.

\* *two kinds of Love* : Ozanam (*Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*, pp. 130, 131) seems to speak of three: "Dans l'ordre moral, les premiers faits qui se rencontrent sont encore du nombre de ceux où l'âme se montre passive; c'est pourquoi on les nomme excellement Passions. Il serait long de les énumérer. Mais toutes se ramènent à des dispositions antérieures qu'on appelle appétits. Il y a trois sortes d'appétits. Le premier naturel, qui n'a point conscience de soi, et qui est la tendance irrésistible de tous les êtres physiques à la satisfaction de leurs besoins; le second sensitif, qui a son mobile externe dans les choses sensibles, et qui est concupiscible ou irascible tour à tour; le troisième intellectuel, dont l'objet n'est appréciable qu'à la pensée. Ces appétits eux mêmes peuvent se réduire à un seul principe commun, l'amour. . . . L'homme est doué d'un



Nè creator, nè creatura mai,"—

Cominciò ei,—“figliuol, fu senza amore,  
O naturale, o d' animo; \* e tu il sai.

Lo natural è sempre senza errore ;

Ma l' altro puote errar per malo obbietto,

O per poco, o per troppo di vigore. †

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Neither Creator nor creature" — he began—"was ever without Love, either natural or spiritual; and thou knowest it. The natural (*i.e.* instinct left to itself) is always free from error; but the other (the spiritual) can err through (having) a bad object (as its aim), or from defect or from excess of fervency (*lit.* vigour).

Virgil next shows when love errs, and when it does not.

Mentre ch' egli è ne' primi ‡ ben diretto,

B ne' secondi sè stesso misura,

Esser non può cagion di mal diletto ;

amour qui lui est propre pour les choses honnêtes et parfaites, ou plutôt, comme sa nature tient à la fois de la simplicité et de l'immensité de la nature divine, l'homme réunit en lui tous ces genres d'amour."

\* *O naturale, o d' animo*: Natural love is innate instinct. *Amor d' animo* is man's Free Will.

† *L' altro puote errar . . . vigore*: We are here shown three ways in which Free Will can err; (1) *per malo obbietto*, *i.e.* by deliberately choosing the evil:—

(a) by seeking one's own predominance and the abasement of one's neighbour (*Pride*);

(b) anxiously dreading to be oneself abased when one sees one's neighbour's advancement (*Envy*);

(c) strongly resenting and seeking revenge for every little injury (*Anger*).

(a) Loving the eternal good insufficiently, and showing oneself lukewarm in attaining unto it (*per poco vigore*, *i.e.* *Accidie*).

(b) Loving a perishable good unduly (*per troppo vigore*).

(a) Undue longing after riches, or the abuse of them (*Avarice and Prodigality*);

(b) ill-regulated love of food (*Gluttony*);

(c) unbridled concupiscence of the flesh (*Sensuality*).

‡ *nei primi*: Cristoforo Landino, in a note on this passage, says that there are two kinds of love or desire; the first (*nei primi*) is natural, which is naturally implanted in all creatures, through



As long as it is directed towards the chiefest excellencies (*i.e.* towards God and virtue), and in the secondary ones keeps itself within moderation, it cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure;

How love may be sinful.

Ma quando al mal si torce, o con più cura 100  
 O con men che non dee \* corre nel bene,  
 Contra il fattore adopra sua fattura.

But when it is perverted to evil, or pursues the good with more zeal or with less than it ought, then the creature is working against its Creator.

Benvenuto says this animal love can turn itself to work evil against one's neighbour through Pride, Envy, or Anger; it can be too solicitous after temporal goods, through Avarice, Gluttony, or Sensuality; and it can pursue the highest good with less zeal than it ought through Accidie, or Sloth.

And Virgil draws the following conclusion:—

Quinci comprender puoi † ch' esser conviene  
 Amor sementa in voi d' ogni virtute,  
 E d' ogni operazion che merta pene. 105

Hence thou mayest understand that love must be the seed within yourselves of every virtue, as well as of every action that merits punishment.

which they seek after that good with which they find their self-preservation; the other love (*nei secondi*) is animal, that is, of the mind, and this proceeds from the will, in which there is power of election and free-will.

\* *men che non dee*: The love we owe to God is given in *St. Mark* xii, 30: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

† *Quinci comprender puoi*, etc. Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. xx, art. 1): "Primus motus voluntatis et cujuslibet appetitivæ virtutis est amor." And again (qu. lx, in princ.): "Omnis actus appetitivæ virtutis ex amore seu dilectione derivatur."



And thus, Benvenuto remarks, we have it that Love is the root and origin of every action, whether meritorious or the reverse, when it is turned aside to evil, or runs after what is good with greater or less solicitude than it ought.

Virgil next proceeds to demonstrate what sins arise from love of what is bad, and yet which may seem to be good. He first shows that such Love is always towards another, and not to oneself, for Love always takes care of the person in whom it is set; and every one desires his own welfare.

Or perchè mai non può \* dalla salute  
Amor del suo soggetto † volger viso,  
Dall' odio proprio son le cose tute :

Now inasmuch as love can never avert its sight from the welfare of its own subject (*i.e.* the object loved), all things (susceptible of love) are secure against their own hatred.

One never wishes harm to oneself, unless under the mistaken impression that one is doing oneself good when doing oneself harm; as, for instance, the unhappy suicide does not deliberately imagine that what he is doing is for his harm, but erroneously fancies it is for his good; to escape from disgrace, debts, or the burden of grief.

Virgil next draws another important conclusion, namely, that no one can hate God.

\* non può: See in illustration of this passage, one in St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. xxix, art. 4, *Utrum quis possit habere odio seipsum*). The passage is too long to quote here.

† soggetto: Scartazzini explains that *soggetto* is a scholastic term, and in its most restricted sense signifies "person." Here Dante takes it to mean the being in whom this love resides.



E perchè intender non si può diviso,\*

E per sè stante, alcuno esser dal primo, 110

Da quello odiare ogni affetto è deciso.†

And since no being can be thought to exist severed from the First (Being), and standing of itself (*i.e.* independently), every affection is removed (*lit.* cut off) from hating That One.

From the above intricate and difficult passages, we may affirm that Dante claims to have proved that, however ill-regulated Man's affections may be, there is no intention in him to hate or do harm to himself. He also shows that Man's hatred is never against God. And thence he draws the conclusion, that Man's hatred must be against his fellow men.

Resta,‡ se dividendo bene estimo,

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\* *intender non si può diviso . . . dal primo* : Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. xxxiv, art. 1) : "Odium est quidam motus appetitivæ potentia, quæ non movetur nisi ab aliquo apprehenso. Deus autem dupliciter ab homine apprehendi potest : uno modo secundum seipsum, puta cum per essentiam videtur ; alio modo per effectus suos, cum scilicet invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur. Deus autem per essentiam suam est ipsa bonitas, quam nullus habere odio potest, quia de ratione boni est ut ametur ; et ideo impossibile est quod aliquis videns Deum per essentiam, eum odio habeat. Sed effectus ejus aliqui sunt qui nullo modo possunt esse contrarii voluntati humanæ ; quia esse vivere et intelligere est et appetibile et amabile omnibus ; quæ sunt quidam effectus Dei. Unde etiam secundum quod Deus apprehenditur ut auctor horum effectuum, non potest odio haberi. Sunt autem quidam effectus Dei qui repugnant inordinatæ voluntati sicut inflictio pœnæ, et etiam cohibitio peccatorum per legem divinam : quæ repugnant voluntati depravatæ per peccatum ; et quantum ad considerationem talium effectuum, ab aliquibus Deus odio haberi potest, in quantum scilicet apprehenditur peccatorum prohibitor, et pœnarum inflictor."

† *deciso* Here used in the sense of the Latin *decidere*, to cut off, to remove. Giov. Villani (lib. x, cap. 226) also uses it in the same sense : "Non si conveniva a Papa di muovere le quistioni sospette contra la fede cattolica, ma chi le movesse decidere e estirpare."

‡ *Resta* : Scartazzini says this is a scholastic term equivalent to the Latin *relinquitur*. If a man can neither desire his own ill,



Che il mal che s' ama è del prossimo, ed esso  
Amor nasce in tre modi \* in vostro limo.

It follows then—if in my division I rightly estimate  
—that the evil which is loved is that of one's neigh-  
bour, and that self-same love takes its birth in your  
clay in three ways.

Here Virgil, in beginning to speak of the three worst  
sins, touches on the first, which is Pride. The Proud  
man, because he desires his own exaltation, wishes to  
see his neighbour abased.

È chi per esser suo vicin soppresso 115  
Spera eccellenza, e sol per questo brama  
Ch' e' sia di sua grandezza in hasso messo.†

There are who by the abasement of their neighbour  
hope themselves to excel, and for this reason only  
crave to see him cast down from his greatness.

Benvenuto says that this *affection of Pride* is really and  
truly evil; for it seeks one's neighbour's overthrow and  
ruin. He quotes the following extract from Pliny:

not that of the First Being, and cannot either hate himself or his  
Creator, it follows, as a natural sequence, that the evil which he  
does love can only be that of his neighbour, and this love of one's  
neighbour's hurt may have a triple origin.

\* *in tre modi*: Tommaso well defines the three ways: "Non  
si può dunque voler male ad altri che al prossimo; e questo o per  
superbia abbassando altrui a fine d'innalzare sè; o per invidia, attrist-  
andosi dell' altrui potere e onore, per tema di perdere quant' altri  
se acquista, o per ira di male fatto o temuto. Questi tre abusi  
dell' amore purgansi ne' giri di sotto, perchè più gravi. Ora resta  
dell' amore inordinato o per tiepidezza, e dicesi accidia; o per  
troppo ardore, e può spingersi a volere oro, cibo, piaceri. Avarizia,  
come più rea, sta sotto a gola; gola sotto a lussuria, che è men  
bontano alla cima."

† *È chi e' sia . . . in basso messo*: Compare St. Thomas  
Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. clxii, art. 3): "Superbia  
dicitur esse amor proprio excellentie, in quantum ex amore causatur  
inordinata presumptio alios superandi; quod proprie pertinet ad  
superbiam."



“What should a wretched man be proud of? Does he not know that he is a receptacle of squalor, a home of sorrows, a possession belonging to death?” Benvenuto adds: “Nothing is so odious to God as Pride. Verily, while some other sins have their excuse, even though undeservedly, Pride has none; no more has its own daughter Envy, which follows close in the footsteps of its mother. Therefore the proud mannikin has much in him of the nature of a monster.”

Virgil next touches upon the second kind of the love of evil, from which springs Envy. The envious man, because he dreads that his neighbour's prosperity may be the cause of his own not being so great, is grieved at the other's happiness. So he goes on to say:—

È chi \* podere, grazia, onore e fama  
Teme di perder perch' altri sormonti,  
Onde s' attrista sì che il contrario ama;

120

There are who fear to lose power, favour, honour and renown should others mount above them, and so much do they take it to heart, that they desire the opposite.

---

\* *È chi podere . . . Teme di perder*, et seq. : Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. xxxvi, art. 1): “Invidia est tristitia de alienis bonis. . . . Objectum tristitiæ est malum proprium. Contingit autem id quod est alienum honum, apprehendi ut malum proprium; et secundum hoc de hono alieno potest esse tristitia. Sed hoc contingit dupliciter: . . . Alio modo honum alterius æstimatur ut malum proprium, in quantum est diminutivum propriæ gloriæ vel excellentiæ; et hoc modo de hono alterius tristatur invidia; et idè præcipuè de illis bonis homines invident in quibus est gloria, et in quibus homines amant honorari et in opinione esse.” Compare also *Conv.* i, 11, ll. 117-125: “Lo invidioso poi argomenta, non biasimando di non sapere dire colui che dice, ma biasima quello che è materia della sua opera, per tórre (dispregiando l' opera da quella parte) a lui che dice onore e fama; siccome colui che biasima il ferro d'una spada, non per biasimo dare al ferro, ma a tutta l' opera del maestro.”





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And there are who appear to feel such resentment for an injury, that they become greedy for vengeance ; and such must needs contrive harm to others.

Benvenuto enlarges on this : “ And note, that although this disease of Anger destroys and tortures others, yet it often does so to its possessor : hence, though Homer has said that Anger is sweeter than honey, yet nothing seems more bitter. The Roman Senator Cælius, a most violent-tempered man, once, being in a great rage with a friend of his, who always acquiesced in everything he said, exclaimed : ‘ Do for goodness’ sake say something contrary, that we may be two persons.’ Thus it is that we make every little word into a capital offence ; nor is there any stumbling block so great to us as our pride. But the noblest form of revenge is to spare ; and therefore the greatest of orators once said in praise of one of the noblest of leaders, that he never forgot anything except a personal injury. And Adrian, when he was made Emperor, said to one whom he held to be his deadliest enemy : ‘ Thou hast escaped.’ That was in truth a noble, magnificent, and imperial speech.”

Virgil sums up his discourse on these three kinds of ill-directed Love by adding :—

Questo triforme amor quaggiù disotto  
 Si piange ; or vo' che tu dell' altro intende,      125  
 Che corre al ben con ordine corrotto.

This threefold Love is wept for down below there (in the first three Cornices). Now I wish thee to understand about the other (kind of love), which runs after good in an ill-regulated manner.

Virgil, wishing to distinguish the love of good, and to show what sins are committed against it, invites Dante's attention to that Love he described in verse 95, *che puote errar per malo obbietto, o per poco, o per troppo di vigore.*



And then, wishing to show how spiritual sloth arises, he first lays down a general principle necessarily applicable to it.

Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende,\*  
 Nel qual si queti l' animo, e disira:  
 Perchè di giugner lui ciascun contende.  
 Se lento amore † in lui veder vi tira,  
 O a lui acquistar, questa cornice,  
 Dopo giusto pentir, ve ne martira.

130

Every one, in a confused sort of way, has a conception of a good wherein his mind may rest, and longs for it: every one therefore strives to attain unto it. If sluggish Love (alone) attracts you to see that good, or to obtain it, this (Fourth) Cornice, after due penitence, torments you for it.

Only on condition of a genuine repentance before death,

\* *apprende*: Gioberti says that this word "ha qui a parer mio un significato complesso, che mal si potrebbe altrimenti esprimere. Sembra quella come confusa cognizione mista ad amore che abbiamo del sommo bene; e il sollecito afferrar che facciamo co' nostri sforzi questa idea." Compare Boëthius, *Consol. Philos.* iii, proa. ii: "Omnis mortalium cura, quam multiplicium studiorum labor exercet, diverso quidem calle procedit, sed ad unum tamen beatitudinis finem nititur pervenire. Id autem est bonum, quo quis adepto nihil ulterius desiderare queat. Quod quidem est omnium summum bonarum, cunctaque intra se bona continens. . . . Hunc . . . diverso tramite mortales omnes conantur adipisci. Est enim mentibus hominum veri boni naturaliter inserta cupiditas: sed ad falsa devius error abducit . . . Sed ad hominum studium revertor: quorum animus, et si caligante memoria, tamen bonum summum repetit; sed, velut ebrius, domum quo tramite revertatur, ignorat."

† *lento amore*: "Tale concetto dell' Accidia ci porge S. Tommaso (*Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>a</sup>, qu. xxxv, art. 2): col quale s' accorda il Poeta, che venuto al quarto cerchio, dopo aver ragionato di Dio, siccome di Bene supremo che acqueta ogni desiderio dell' intelligente creatura, soggiunge [here are quoted ll. 130-132 of the text] le parole *veder* e *acquistar* (che) segnano ottimamente il doppio termine gaudioso della carità, la contemplazione e l'opera, e insieme la doppia cagione onde immalinconisce e s' attedia l' accidioso." (Perez, p. 176-177).



could the soul come to Purgatory at all; failing this, it would have to go among the Lost in Hell.

Virgil describes another good from which spring three other sins.

Altro ben è che non fa l' uom felice ;  
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Biagioli says that Dante means to speak of all earthly possessions, which men strive after, according to the different dispositions of their minds, as the good beyond which there is nothing to be desired. Therefore one man toils after riches, another after honours, another after great power, another after reputation. But this

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In closing the discourse Virgil explains to Dante that he purposely leaves the exact description of this Love of temporal good somewhat indefinite, in order that Dante may work it out for himself by personal experience.

L' amor ch' ad esso troppo s' abbandona,  
 Di sopra noi si piange per tre cerchi;  
 Ma come tripartito si ragiona,  
 Tacciolo, acciocchè tu per te ne cerchi." \*—

139

The Love that yields itself too much to this is wept for in three Cornices above us; but in what way it is spoken of as tripartite, I say nothing thereof, in order that thou mayest investigate it for thyself."

The disquisition that we have laboured through, as well as some forty lines in the next Canto, are a true specimen of the scholastic philosophy prevalent in the time of Dante.

What is known as the Scholastic Philosophy may be considered to have flourished from Scotus Erigena in the IXth century to William of Occam at the end of the XIVth century. Its chief activity ranged from the XIth century onward, and it reached the climax of development with Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus towards the end of the XIIIth and beginning of the XIVth centuries. The term *doctor scholasticus*

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END OF CANTO xvii.



## CANTO XVIII.

**THE FOURTH CORNICE—ACCIDIE—THE NATURE OF LOVE—  
LOVE AND FREE WILL—SPIRITS OF THE SLOTHFUL  
RUNNING IN HASTE, AS THE PENALTY FOR ACCIDIE—  
THE ABBOT OF SAN ZENO—THE SCALIGERI—DANTE  
FALLS ASLEEP.**

**IN the last Canto Dante showed how all sins have their origin in some kind of Love. In this Canto he describes the purgation of Accidie or Spiritual Sloth, which comes from some remissness in Love for the only True Good.**

**Benvenuto divides the Canto into five parts.**

***In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 39, Virgil, at Dante's request, continues his profound disquisition, and gives a definition of Love.**

***In the Second Division*, from ver. 40 to ver. 75, Virgil clears up a doubt which has arisen in Dante's mind in consequence of the definition.**

***In the Third Division*, from ver. 76 to ver. 105, the penalty of the Slothful is described, after that Dante has given an indication as to the time of day.**

***In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 106 to ver. 129, Dante relates his conversation with the Abbot of St. Zeno at Verona.**

***In the Fifth Division*, from ver. 130 to ver. 145, Virgil, by way of teaching Dante how Accidie is to be avoided, shows him some of its unfortunate effects.**



*Division I.*—Dante's mental questionings have been partly quieted, partly aroused. What is that Love, the right or wrong direction of which is the cause, on the one hand of all holiness, on the other of all evil? He still has some doubts on the subject, and leaves it to be inferred that he has reasoned within himself as to whether enough has been said on what the Scholiasts termed the "Matter of Love," and has come to the conclusion that there has not. He adds that Virgil restores his confidence by telling him, in words which he does not quote, that he need not be afraid to speak out the doubts that he feels.

Posto avea fine al suo ragionamento  
 L' alto Dottore, ed attento guardava  
 Nella mia vista\* s' io pareva contento :  
 Ed io, cui nuova sete ancor frugava,  
 Di fuor taceva, e dentro dicea :—" Forse            5  
 Lo troppo domandar, ch' io fo, gli grava." †  
 Ma quel padre verace, che s' accorse ‡  
 Del timido voler che non s' apriva,  
 Parlando, di parlare ardir mi porse.

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\* *Nella mia vista* : Scartazzini prefers interpreting this, "into my eyes," and quotes *Conv.* iii, 8, ll. 77-90: "L' Anima . . . dimostrasi negli occhi tanto manifesta, che conoscer si può la sua presente passione, chi bene la mira. Onde conciossiacosachè sei passioni siano proprie dell' Anima umana . . . di nulla di queste puote l' Anima essere passionata, che alla finestra degli occhi non vegna la sembianza, se per grande virtù non si chiude."

† *gli grava* : Compare *Inf.* iii, 79-81 :—

"Allor con gli occhi vergognosi e bassi,  
 Temendo no 'l mio dir gli fusse grave,  
 Infino al fiume di parlar mi trassi."

‡ *s' accorse Del timido voler* : Virgil had read Dante's thoughts as in *Inf.* xxiii, 25-30; as in *Purg.* xv, 127-129; and as in *Par.* xvii, 7-12, where, during Dante's interview with his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida, Beatrice observing in Dante's face a wish to ask further questions, and his hesitation to do so, encourages him to speak out :—





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Bevenuto reminds us that we read in the last Canto that neither Creator nor created thing was ever without some kind of Love, and that therefore the soul is naturally inclined towards everything that, at first sight, seems pleasing to it, as soon as it is awakened, and set in motion from the delectation born within it; (Bevenuto reads *piacer innato*, instead of *piacere innato*). Just as when you see a beautiful woman, her form enters through the windows of your eyes into the chamber of your mind, and moves it to love her, although she is absent and the mind will never behold her.

Virgil explains this:—

*Vostra apprensiva da esser verace \**

Tragge intenzione,† e dentro a voi la spiega,

Si che l' animo ad essa volger face.

\* *Da esser verace*: The faculty of apprehending, perceiving, and comprehending, is set in motion by the reality of external things round us, and this develops in us the wish to show it worthy of Love. Mr. Butler extracts from Mansel's notes to Aldrich: "Apprehension or conception consists in the power which the mind has of forming an image of attributes. Images so formed are first intentions (*species intelligibiles*) as when we regard the individual Socrates as man, white, etc. Second intentions are obtained by abstracting the relations of first intentions to one another, as humanity, whiteness, etc. First intentions are predicable, second not."

† *Intenzione*: The scholastic philosophers called images, or likenesses of things, by the names of "*species*" or "*intentiones*." See Melini, *Lexicon quo Veterum Theologorum locutiones explicantur*, Colonia, 1855, p. 77: "3. *Species tam expressa, quam impressa dicitur esse intentionalis quia per eam potentia attendit, sive intendit in objectum.*" Compare Varchi, *L' Hercolano*, Venice, 1579, pp. 23, 24: "Il parlare, o vero favellare humano esteriore non è altro, che manifestare ad alcuno i concetti dell' animo, mediante le parole. . . . Ho detto i concetti dell' animo, perchè il fine di chi favella è principalmente mostrare di fuori quello, che egli ha racchiuso dentro nell' animo, o vero mente; cioè sotto fantasia, perchè nella virtù fantastica si riserbano le immagini, o vero similitudini delle cose, le quali i Filosofi chiamano



E se, rivolto,\* in vèr di lei si piega,

25

Quel piegare è amor, quello è natura

Che per piacer di nuovo in voi si lega.†

Your apprehensive faculty draws an image from something really existing, and displays it within you, so

hora *spezic*, hora *intenzioni*, e noi le diciamo propriamente *concelli*, e tal volta *pensieri*, o vero *intendimenti*, e bene spesso con altri nomi." A great number of Commentators including the *Voc. della Crusca*, Scartazzini, Camerini, Poletto, Andreoli, Tommaséo and others, give this reference wrongly, simply writing "Varchi, Ercol. 29."

\**E se, rivolto*, et seq.: See Ozanam, *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*, p. 132: "Aussitôt qu'un objet se présente capable de plaire, il nous réveille par une sensation de plaisir. La faculté qu'on nomme appréhension entre en exercice, elle perçoit le rapport de l'objet avec nos besoins, elle le développe jusqu'à faire que l'âme se retourne vers lui et s'y incline: cette inclination est l'amour, et le plaisir nouveau dont cette modification est accompagnée, nous la rend chère et en même temps durable. Puis l'âme ébranlée entre en mouvement, ce mouvement spirituel est le désir, ce désir ne trouve de repos que dans la jouissance, c'est-à-dire dans la possession de l'objet aimé." Gioberti in his commentary remarks on these words: "Questa è un'analisi rigorosa che dà un saggio della eccellenza di Dante in filosofia. Togline l'invoglio poetico, e alcuni accessori peripatetici, e sarà degno della scienza odierna." Biagioli says that the following words of the *Convivio* (iii, 2, ll. 18-23), admirably explain this passage: "Amore, veramente pigliando e sottilmente considerando, non è altro che unimento spirituale dell'anima e della cosa amata; nel quale unimento di propria sua natura l'anima corre tosto o tardi, secondochè è libera o impedita." And ll. 56-67: "E perocchè il suo essere dipende da Dio, e per quello si conserva, naturalmente disia e vuole a Dio essere unita per lo suo essere fortificare. E perocchè nelle bontadi della Natura la ragione si mostra Divina, viene che naturalmente l'anima umana con quelle per via spirituale si unisce tanto più tosto e più forte, quanto quelle più appaiono perfette. Lo quale apparimento è fatto, secondochè la conoscenza dell'anima è chiara o impedita. E questo unire è quello che noi dicemo Amore." Therefore, Biagioli adds, as it is natural to the soul to desire to unite itself to God, as a support to its existence, so, by like motive, it is natural for it to unite itself to the goodnesses of nature, which is a radiance of the Chief Good.

†*si lega*: is binding itself anew within you; or, is striking a fresh root.



that it makes the mind turn to it. And if thus turned, it (the mind) inclines towards this (image), that inclination is Love; it is Nature, which by pleasure is bound in you with a new tie.

Benvenuto reminds us that there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses, and that did not enter into the soul by sight or hearing. Love therefore is shown to be the inclination of the soul towards a thing that is in itself agreeable, and which the external senses have offered to it.

And now Virgil, having given the definition of Love, shows by a comparison its power and efficacy.

Poi come il foco movesi in altura,  
 Per la sua forma \* ch' è nata a salire  
 Là † dove più in sua materia dura ;  
 Così l' animo preso entra in disire,  
 Ch' è moto spiritale, e mai non posa  
 Più che la cosa amata il fa gioire.

30

Then even as fire moves upwards, by virtue of its form which is made for rising to where it dwells more in its element; so does the captive soul enter into a

\* *Per la sua forma*: This Scartazzini explains: "Per la sua natura essenziale." He adds that in the scholastic phraseology *forma* is that which gives the entity of everything, that, owing to which, things are just precisely what they are. The *forma* of fire, therefore, is its essence, that which makes it to be fire.

† *Là*: That is to say, the sphere of the Moon which the ancients thought was the sphere of fire:—

"Tutta la sfera varcano del fuoco."

Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xxxiv, st. 70.

The ancients did not know that the air, by its specific gravity, drives fire upwards, and thought it was made to rise naturally.

Dante says, in *Conv.* iii, 3, ll. 5-13: "Onde è da sapere che ~~cualcuna~~ *cualcuna* cosa . . . ha il suo speciale amore. E però il fuoco [ascende] alla circonferenza di sopra, lungo il cielo della luna, e però sempre sale a quello." Compare Tasso, *Ger. Liber.* vii,

el. 79:—

"S' alza volando alle celesti sperie,  
 Come va fuoco al ciel per sua natura."



could the soul come to Purgatory at all; failing this, it would have to go among the Lost in Hell.

Virgil describes another good from which spring three other sins.

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Non è felicità, non è la buona  
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END OF CANTO xvii.





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 Temendo no 'l mio dir gli fusse grave,  
 Infino al hume di parlar mi trassi."

‡ *s' accorse Del timido voler* : Virgil had read Dante's thoughts as in *Inf.* xxiii, 25-30; as in *Purg.* xv, 127-129; and as in *Par.* xvii, 7-12, where, during Dante's interview with his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida, Beatrice observing in Dante's face a wish to ask further questions, and his hesitation to do so, encourages him to speak out :—



The exalted Teacher had put an end to his discourse, and was looking attentively into my face, (to see) if I appeared satisfied: and I, whom a fresh thirst was already goading on, was outwardly silent, and within was saying: "Perchance the too much questioning I make is giving him annoyance." But that true Father, who comprehended the timid wish that did not show itself, by speaking, emboldened me to speak.

He must have spoken words like those of Beatrice (*Par.* xvii, 7-12. See note.) Dante with renewed confidence proceeds to unburden himself of his doubts, but, before doing so, he breaks out into an exclamation of affection and gratitude to Virgil. Benvenuto says that he does him honour by a cumulative process. First he speaks of him as *alto Dottore*, then *padre verace*, and now calls him *Maestra*.

Dante explains to Virgil that he had been telling him what Love did, and in what it was the cause either of good or of evil, but he says: Thou hast not yet told me, to begin with, what Love is!

Ond' io:—"Maestro,<sup>o</sup> il mio veder s' avviva 10  
 Sì nel tuo lume, ch' io discerno chiaro  
 Quanto la tua ragion porti o descriva:  
 Però ti prego, dolce Padre caro,  
 Che mi dimostri amore, a cui riduci  
 Ogni buono operare e il suo contrario." † 15

"Per che mia donna: 'Manda fuor la vampa  
 Dal tuo disio,' mi disse, 'sì ch' ella esca  
 Segnata bene della interna stampa;  
 Non perchè nostra conoscenza cresca  
 Per tuo parlare, ma perchè t' ausi  
 A dir la sete, sì che l' uom ti mesca.'"

<sup>o</sup> *Maestro*: See *Readings on the Inferno*, vol. ii, p. 424, footnote †  
 † *contrario*: See *Teorica dei Nomi*, pp.  
 100-101. "Del trattamento dei nomi terminati in ario, erio," etc., in



ceive them, or when we put into action the special power given to us, and so by them we have no special merit or demerit.

Però, là onde vegna lo intelletto 55  
 Delle prime notizie, uomo non sape,\*  
 Nè de' primi appetibili † l' affetto,  
 Che sono in voi, sì come studio ‡ in ape  
 Di far lo mèle; e questa prima voglia  
 Merto di lode o di biasmo non cape.§ 60

\* *sape*, for *sa*, is the natural third singular, present tense of *sapere*. It is frequently used by the Poets. (Nannucci, *Analisi Critica*, p. 662.)

† *Nè de' primi appetibili*: Gioberti in his commentary writes: "Noi ignoriamo donde ne vengano 1° *le prime notizie dell' intelletto*, . . . cioè i principii della nostra ragione, e le regole fondamentali dell' intelligenza; 2° *l' affetto de' primi appetibili*, cioè quelle primitive inclinazioni, quegli appetiti primigenii da cui null' uomo va esente; come l' amor del vero, della felicità, del bello, del bene, la curiosità, la simpatia, e tutti i movimenti, gli affetti estetici, e morali, che formano la parte affettiva dell' anima, come *le prime notizie dell' intelletto*, gli assiomi, le forme logiche, etc., ne costituiscono la parte intellettuale. Donde ne venga tutto ciò è da noi ignorato."

‡ *studio in ape Di far lo mèle*: In *Georg.* iv, in the first five lines, Virgil speaks of this instinct of the bees:—

"Protinus aëri mellis cœlestia dona  
 Exequar. Hanc etiam, Maecenas, aspice partem.  
 Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum,  
 Magnanimosque duces, totiusque ordine gentis  
 Mores, et studia, et populos, et prælia dicam."

§ *Merto di lode o di biasmo non cape*: Gioberti goes on to say: "Questa facoltà primitiva e queste disposizioni sono fuori del libero arbitrio, e sgorgano dal seno della nostra natura senza opera della nostra volontà; onde non producono *merto di lode, o di biasmo*, cioè non sono imputabili. Acciocchè poi a questa voglia non libera, ma naturale, cioè a questo complesso di naturali attitudini e tendenze, vengano dietro e si accompagnino (*sì raccoglie*) quegli appetiti, que' desii, che come liberi ponno essere buoni, o rei, la Natura ha posto nell' Uomo una Virtù consigliatrice che dee *tener la soglia* dell' assenso, e del dissenso, cioè regolarli; la qual Virtù è la Ragione; innata nel senso detto di sopra, poichè ella fa parte di quelle *prime notizie*, la cui origine s' ignora, ma di cui certo si sa che non hanno nascimento dai sensi. Perciò, posto per una parte il libero arbitrio,



And so, man knows not whence comes his understanding of the primal conceptions, nor the bent of the first appetites, which are in you, just as there is in the bee the instinct to make honey; and this primal desire is not in itself capable of praise or censure.

The next three lines are exceedingly obscure, and have given rise to much controversy. I follow the interpretation of Lombardi, ridiculed by Biagioli in his usual ungracious vein, but supported by Gioberti, Scartazzini, Trissino, Tommaséo, *Philalthes*, Witte, and Blanc.

Or, perchè a questa ogni altra si raccoglie,  
Innata v' è la virtù \* che consiglia,  
E dell' assenso de' tener la soglia.

Now in order that to this (first will) every other may be gathered (*i.e.* harmonized), there is innate in you the faculty which counsels (*i.e.* Reason), and ought to hold the threshold of assent.

Virgil goes on to explain that Reason is the regulating principle from which come our merits and demerits.

Quest' è il principio, † là onde si piglia  
Ragion di meritare in voi, secondo  
Che buoni e rei amori accoglie e viglia. ‡

65

e per l' altra la ragione consigliatrice, si è capace d' imputazione; e gli amori che liberamente s' accolgono sono imputabili, perchè v' ha in noi lume per conoscere la bontà, o la malizia, e libertà per accettarli, o rigettarli."

\* *virtù*: Scartazzini says that *virtù* must be understood here "facoltà."

† *Quest' è il principio*: "Judicium medium est apprehensionis et appetitus; nam primo res apprehenditur, deinde apprehensa bona vel mala judicatur, et ultimo judicans prosequitur sive legit." (*De Monarchia*, i, cap. xii, ll. 17-21.) See also *Conv.* iv, 9.

‡ *viglia*: See Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*): "*vigliare*, propriamente vale il grano dopo battuto (ora, *vagliare*). In *Purg.* xviii, 66, significa scegliere, distinguere." Benvenuto writes: "verbum rusticorum purgantium frumentum in area."



This is the source from which emanate the grounds of your deserts, according as they gather in or winnow out good and bad loves.

Aristotle and Plato, as well as other philosophers, the wisest of men, by their investigations, arrived at the discernment of the real nature of things. They recognized the Freedom of the Will, and hence gave to the world those moral doctrines, by which men are to exercise government over their own selves.

Color che ragionando \* andaro al fondo,  
S' accorser d' esta innata libertate,  
Però moralità † lasciaro al mondo.

Onde pognam ‡ che di necessitate

70

Surga ogni amor che dentro a voi s' accende,  
Di ritenerlo è in voi la potestate.

They who in argument went to the root of the matter, took note of this innate freedom, and therefore bequeathed moral philosophy to the world. Let us assume then that every Love which is kindled in you

\* *Color che ragionando, etc.* The philosophers, who by their investigations, attained the hidden truths of nature.

† By *moralità* understand moral philosophy or Ethics, which would have been of no avail without the principle of freedom of the will. Benvenuto says the philosophers placed a check on liberty to prevent its declining to evil.

‡ *Onde pognam che di necessitate Surga ogni amor che dentro a voi s' accende*: Gioberti thus concludes his very important discussion of the whole passage: "Pogniamo pure, che la vostra apprensiva ricevendo l' imagine di un obietto esterno si senta necessariamente mossa dalle sue naturali inclinazioni ad amore o avversione verso di esso: sin qui non vi ha certo nulla di libero, e che pertanto possa essere imputato. Ma siccome voi avete lume di ragione per disaminare le qualità morali degli oggetti a cui vi sentite inclinato, od avverso; siccome voi avete libertà di far questa disamina, e, fattala, di assentire, o di dissentire ai moti primi della natura: si fa luogo a imputazione rispetto a questo vostro assenso, o dissenso; e ne nasce perciò una serie di amori buoni, o rei, ma liberi sempre, perchè dall' esercizio accompagnati del vostro libero arbitrio, i quali pertanto sono degni di lode o di biasimo, e meritevoli di premio, o di castigo."



arises of necessity, yet in you there exists the power to restrain it.

“Now mark here, reader,” says Benvenuto, “that if this reasoning be well considered, it ought to convince every one. For what medical man would agree that it is no use curing a sick person? But that *would* be true, if everything happened by necessity. What astrologer would be willing for his art to be condemned, when he maintains that one can avert coming misfortunes, if they be foretold by his lore? What judge would not be indignant, were he told that he punishes evildoers unjustly? What merchant would not say that negligence is very prejudicial to trade? What wise man does not prove that much wisdom (*multa concilia*) is necessary for the world? What husbandman does not know that agriculture is profitable for fertilising crops? But all men try to make excuse, throwing the responsibility for all their vices and sins upon Heaven, upon destiny, upon fortune, saying like the philosopher, Cleantes:—

‘*Volentem fata ducunt, nolentem trahunt.*’”

In conclusion, Virgil refers Dante to theology, and says briefly that he himself by his human knowledge or science cannot rise to any more elevated interpretation of the question, for he can only judge of cause by effect; but Beatrice understands that the noble virtue, the most excellent that there is in Man, is Free Will, for by it we deserve either eternal life, or everlasting punishment.

La nobile virtù \* Beatrice intende †

---

\* *La nobile virtù*: Scartazzini says that Dante takes *virtù* in the sense of the Latin *vis*, power, faculty of the soul, and uses the word when speaking of Reason, Free Will, the faculty of perception, etc.

† *intende*: Another way, adopted by Gioberti, of translating



Per lo libero arbitrio, e però guarda  
 Che l' abbi a mente, s' a parlar ten prende." \* 75

This noble faculty, Beatrice (Theology) understands as Free Will, and therefore look that thou bear it in mind, should she take to speaking to thee of it."

*Division III.*—Dante now describes the penance of the Slothful, but, before doing so, he defines the exact position and appearance of the Moon.

La luna, quasi a mezza notte tarda,†  
 Facea le stelle a noi parer più rade,  
 Fatta com' un secchione ‡ che tutto arda ;

this sentence is, "Beatrice, Theology, calls Free Will *la nobile virtù*," and Scartazzini quotes this as an alternative translation, but none of the commentaries or translations seems to take the slightest heed of *Per*. It appears to me that *intende per lo libero arbitrio* is best translated "understands as Free Will." *Intende* can have the force of "calls, proclaims, styles."

\* *s' a parlar ten prende*: Beatrice is to speak of Free Will to Dante in *Par. v*, 19-24:—

"Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza  
 Fesse creando, ed alla sua bontate  
 Più conformato, e quel ch' ei più apprezza,  
 Fu della volontà la libertate,  
 Di che le creature intelligenti,  
 E tutte e sole furo e son dotate."

And in *Par. i*, 109 *et seq.*, Beatrice tells Dante that the order God has given to Nature causes in us the first impulses.

† *La luna, quasi a mezza notte tarda*: "ciò tardata ad alzarsi fin quasi alla mezzanotte; e ciò per esser questa la quinta notte del misterioso viaggio, incominciato a luna piena. La luna che dopo il suo pieno tarda ogni sera quasi un'ora a levarsi, dovea questa quinta volta sorgere circa cinque ore dopo caduto il sole, cioè (essendo equinozio) appunto poco innanzi alla mezzanotte." (Andreoli.)

‡ *Fatta com' un secchione*: Costa interprets this: "Dice come un secchione, perchè la luna essendo calante mostrava una delle sue parti rotonde e l' altra scema, come un secchione di rame che ha il fondo a guisa di un emisferio, e ha scema la parte superiore." The explanation of the *Ottimo* is similar: "Qui mostra l' ora che era, quando lo sopradetto ragionamento si facea; e dice, ch' era circa a mezza notte in quello emisferio; e perchè aveva passato l' opposizione del Sole, era scema dalla parte occidentale; e pareva





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must refer to the actual hour of Moon-rise, which would certainly be, according to the principle we have been advocating, about 10 p.m., or perhaps 10.30., since the Moon is already well up, and producing a sensible effect in quenching the lesser stars. . . . Philalethes says the Moon rose *Etwa um 10 Uhr*, also *schon ziemlich gegen Mitternacht*. . . . I do not think it at all certain that Dante intends to speak of the hour of Moon-rise at all. . . . The effect here indicated of the quenching of the lesser stars by the light of the gibbous or pitcher-shaped moon (*secchione*) as it is graphically described, would be much more striking if it were some little time above the horizon than if it were just rising. I think it probable the whole passage is only a poetical and slightly elaborate way of saying the *hour* was approaching midnight, described, as usual, by some striking visible aspect of the fact. It is not half so elaborate or artificial a way of describing a simple fact or phenomenon as many other passages that might be cited. It is surely quite a natural (poetical) description of such an hour (it being allowed that the Moon was up, as a fact) to translate: 'And now the Moon, as it were, towards midnight late, shaped like a pitcher all afire, was making the stars appear to us more rare.'"

On line 79, Dr. Moore (*op. cit.* p. 104) adds: "The words which follow in ver. 79, describe evidently the backing of the Moon through the signs from west to east (as in *Par.* ix, 85, *contra il sole*, and again, in *Par.* vi, 2, the removal by Constantine of the seat of Empire from Rome to Constantinople is described as *contra il corso del ciel*). This causes the daily retardation to which we have so often referred, and more particularly he says she was in that path of the Zodiac which is



illuminated by the Sun, when the people of Rome see him setting between Sardinia and Corsica. This is stated by Mr. Butler, no doubt correctly, to be towards the end of November, when the Sun sets west by south. If so, the Sun would then be in Sagittarius, and that is precisely where the Moon's Right Ascension would bring her on this night, as is pointed out by Della Valle. Dante's indication of the Sun's position here, as seen from Rome, is curious. These islands being invisible from Rome, the Sun can only be said to be seen setting between them, from a knowledge of their position on the map, compared with the observed direction of the Sun. (Compare statement of Moon setting beneath Seville, in *Inf.* xx, 126.) In this sense only can it be true that (as some of the old Commentators say) Dante observed this himself when at Rome; and in this sense it is very likely indeed to have been true, since he was actually at Rome at the moment of the disastrous entry of Charles of Valois into Florence on November 1st, 1301, and for some time afterwards, i.e. at the very time of year here described."

Benvenuto thinks this happened in the middle of October about midnight, and when the Sun was in Scorpio.

Dante is now feeling relieved from the burden of debts which was oppressing him. The *genius loci* seems to have somewhat affected him with Accidie, and he is about to give himself a little ease and repose, when he is suddenly roused by a band of penitents, who to purge themselves from Sloth are running so rapidly, that they have already gone completely round the Cornice and are coming up behind the Poets.



E quell' ombra gentil, per cui si noma  
 Pietola \* più che villa Mantovana,  
 Del mio carcar deposto avea la soma ;  
 Perch' io, che la ragione aperta e piana 85  
 Sopra le mie questioni avea ricolta,  
 Stava com' uom che sonnolento vana.  
 Ma questa sonnolenza mi fu tolta  
 Subitamente da gente, † che dopo  
 Le nostre spalle a noi era già vòlta. 90

\* *Pictola* : This is a small village not very far from Mantua, of which the ancient name was Andes, and where tradition had it that Virgil was born. "Je suis allé voir le très douteux berceau de Virgile, Pietola, parce que Dante l'a nommé dans ses vers ; mais c'était affaire de conscience, voilà tout. Pour être sensible à l'effet des lieux illustres, je veux autre chose que leur nom. La moindre trace d'un grand homme m'émeut, mais encore faut-il que cette trace existe ; je ne saurais m'enthousiasmer en présence d'un village parfaitement semblable à un autre, parceque certains antiquaires affirment que dans ce village est né Virgile. L'aspect du pays m'intéresse, car je le retrouve dans la poésie des *Bucoliques*, mais je n'y retrouve pas les rues et les maisons modernes de Pietola. A Pietola rien ne parle de Virgile qu'une hypothèse scientifique, et il m'est impossible de m'attendrir sur une hypothèse." Ampère (*Voyage Dantesque*, p. 319). Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*, pp. 391, 392), after approving the reading adopted above, gives the numerous variants, the principal of which are, *Pictola più che nulla* ; *Pietosa più che nulla* ; *Cortese più che nulla* ; but he says nearly all the old Commentators adopt and explain *Pictola*, without any allusion to any other reading.

† *gente* : On the penalty of the Slothful see Perez (*I Sette Cerchi*, pp. 180, 181) : "Un correre senza posa è tormento e insieme dolcezza a coloro che in questa vita furono accidiosi. Posciachè tanti giorni han perduto, ristando in disamor neghittoso, e peccarono contro quel precetto divino, che dice *vigilate*, ora, per redimere il tempo, non ristanno nemmeno nella notte : e nella notte il Poeta li vede sollecciti sì, che ci ricordano il servo evangelico, che precinto i lombi e con in mano l' accesa facella, move incontro al padrone, o le saggie vergini che colle lampade ardenti si fanno incontro allo Sposo. Non corrono divisi e soli, ma raccolti e stretti in grande schiera : certamente per accendersi viemmeglio con santa emulazione, e per ammonirci che mezzo validissimo a snighittirsi è il tenersi in compagnia co' buoni e ferventi. Corrono sempre in giro, sempre attorno al monte ; onde il correre non sembra aver mai per loco un principio o un termine ;





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Lungo di sè di notte furia e calca,  
 Pur che i Teban di Bacco avesser uopo ;  
 Cotal per quel giron suo passo falca,\*

\* *suo passo falca* : The meaning of this I take to be, the movement of one who directs his way in the form of a semicircle, like the sweeping *horizontal* action that a reaper gives to a sickle, or a mower to a scythe. For this interpretation I have the authority of Landino, Buti, Cesari, Scartazzini, Camerini, Blanc, Fraticelli, Giuliani and Poletto. Some, among others Benvenuto and Lombardi, simply interpret it in the sense of "to advance;" others take it to express the sickle-shape into which a horse bends his fore-leg. But the legitimate use of a sickle is horizontal, not perpendicular, and Dante is speaking of the spirits of the Slothful running at speed round the Cornice, and possibly, in their rapid course, bending their bodies inwards towards the mountain. Landino says: "*suo passo falca*; suo passo piega. Imperocché non uscivan del girone: ma girando intorno, del continuo piegavano e torceano il cammino. *Falcare* significa *piegare*: dictione derivata dalla falce: la quale è piegata e curva."—Buti: *falca*, cioè piega."—Cesari: "*Falcare* è piegare a modo di falce; ed è preso da cavalli, che a correre si ammaestrano in un torno (*are lunged in a circle*); come mostra Dante nella parola sotto, *cavalca*, che compie essa metafora. Correndo dunque il cavallo isforzatamente a tondo, come sasso di frombola, per ritirare lo slancio, della forza centrifuga che gli dà il correre sì forte in circolo, ed egli tiene il corpo piegato verso il centro, sicchè sta fuor di bilico: e questo è forse propriamente falcare il passo."—Scartazzini and Camerini quote the above extracts, and approve of them.—Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*): "dirigere il suo cammino procedendo in forma di semicerchio, piegando."—Fraticelli is very precise: "*Falcare il passo*, significa *menare a tondo o in giro il passo*, tolta la similitudine dalla falce, ch' è fatta a semicerchio, e che, adoperandosi, egualmente a semicerchio si volge."—Poletto: "*Falcare*, dal sost. *falx*, fa chiara l' idea d' un movimento circolare, giusta che era quel girone."—Poletto adds that this interpretation is greatly supported by the use of *cerchiare* by Dante in *Purg.* xiv, 1:—

"Chi è costui che il nostro monte cerchia?"

Among manuscript comments of Giuliani, in books left by him to Mgr. Poletto, the latter notices: "*Falca, cerchia*, come si muove la falce (*Purg.* xiv, 1),"—and again: "*Falciare, Purg.* xviii, 94. E' mi faceva falciare la via (pigliar la via con le gambe avvolte, a guisa d' uom cui sonno o vino piega): 'Guarda come falcia l' intesi dire da un montagnolo pistoiese rispetto a un suo compaesano, che *piegliava la via* come falce il grano; la *cerchiava*, portato com' era in qua e in là dalla forza del vino. In Cortona usano la stessa voce, salvochè in luogo di *falciare* dicono *felciare*, mutando al solito la *a* in *e*."



Per quel ch' io vidi, di color venendo  
Cui buon volere e giusto amor cavalca.

95

And as of old Ismenus and Asopus saw the rush and thronging at night along their banks, in the event of the Thebans being in need of Bacchus, so did these along that cornice curve their steps running round and round it so far as (in the gloaming), I could see of those advancing, who by good will and righteous Love are ridden.

Benvenuto draws a moral from this simile. He says if the Thebans were in the habit of arising at night to chant the praises of the heathen Bacchus, who was the god of wine and triumph, how much more ought not Christians to arise and hasten to sing the praises of the One true God.

Having described the tumultuous rush of the spirits, Dante now speaks of the loud cries they are uttering. Two of them run on before the rest, proclaiming examples of zeal and energy,\* and the main body, as they follow, re-echo the shout, with all the impetuosity of a battle-cry.

---

\* vv. 100-105. The examples are, as usual, drawn both from sacred and profane history. As before, the first reference is to an incident in the life of the Blessed Virgin. *St. Luke* i, 39: "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste." The facts about Cæsar are related by Lucan (*Pharsalia*, books iii and iv). Cæsar who was on his way to subdue Iberia, now Lerida in Spain, besieged Marseilles, leaving there a part of his army under Brutus to complete the work. Benvenuto says: No example could be more appropriate, for no man ~~is~~ was ever a greater enemy to sloth than Julius Cæsar—not only for his wonderful endurance, but also for the incredible rapidity of his marches. Dean Plumptre thinks that, in ver. 105, Dante seems to teach the scholastic doctrine of "Grace of Congruity;" i.e. that the efforts of men to do good are effective in making them meet to receive grace for doing it. The doctrine is condemned by the Church of England in Article xiii, which teaches us to recognise God's grace even in those efforts.



Tosto fur sopra noi, perchè correndo  
 Si movea tutta quella turba magna ;  
 E due dinanzi gridavan piangendo :  
 —“ Maria corse con fretta alla montagna ;” — 100  
 E,—“ Cesare, per soggiogare Ilerda,  
 Punse Marsilia, e poi corse in Ispagna.”—  
 —“ Ratto, ratto, che il tempo non si perda  
 Per poco amor,”—gridavan gli altri appresso ;  
 —“ Chè studio di ben far grazia rinverda.”— 105

Soon were they upon us, for the whole of that great multitude were moving up at a run ; and two in front cried out, weeping : “ Mary ran in haste unto the hill-country ” ; and “ Cæsar to subdue Ilerda, darted his sting into Marseilles, and then hastened into Spain.” “ Haste, haste ! so as not to waste time through lack of Love,” cried out all those (that came) after ; “ that zeal of doing right may cause grace to bud again.”

*Division IV.*—Virgil begs the new comers to point out the opening of the stairway to the next Cornice, and one of the spirits complies.

—“ O gente, in cui fervore acuto adesso  
 Ricompie forse negligenza e indugio,  
 Da voi per tepidezza in ben far messo,  
 Questi che vive (e certo io non vi bugio) \*  
 Vuole andar su, purchè il sol ne riluca ; 110  
 Però ne dite ov' è presso il pertugio.”—  
 Parole furon queste del mio Duca :  
 Ed un di quegli spirti disse :—“ Vieni  
 Diretro a noi, e troverai la buca.  
 Noi siam di voglia a moverci sì pieni, 115

---

\* *non vi bugio* : Virgil assures the spirits that Dante really is alive. *Bugiare* is a word used in early Italian, and is equivalent to *mentire*. It survives in *bugia*, “ a lie.”





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After these few words of apology for his haste, the spirit continues:—

Io fui Abate in san Zeno \* a Verona,  
Sotto lo imperio del buon † Barbarossa,  
Di cui dolente ‡ ancor Milan ragiona.

120

I was Abbot of San Zeno at Verona, when the good Barbarossa was Emperor, of whom Milan still speaks with sorrow.

This speaker, of a life blameless except for Accidie, which he is purifying in this Cornice, was formerly

for he remarks how often one sees people, when engaged in honest useful business, stop on their way to gossip so that they may please men. That hard-working man, Cato the Censor, remarked that an account must be rendered to God for all our hours of ease, not only of our actions during that time, but even of our words; and in another place Cato wrote: Human life resembles a sword, or piece of iron; which if it be but little used, is consumed by rust; but, if constantly used, it becomes more bright and shining.

\* *san Zeno*: Zeno was the eighth bishop of Verona, in A.D. 165, during the papacy of Dionysius. He was a man of deep sanctity, learning, and eloquence. "Three churches are named after San Zeno at Verona: one on the hill, another by the Adige, but this is only a small oratory or chapel, and I think (says Benvenuto), that it is this San Zeno of which St. Gregory writes in the *Dialogues*, that on one occasion the Adige had inundated Verona, but did not enter the windows of the Church of San Zeno. The third church is about a javelin cast from the river, and there is no fairer church that I have seen in all Verona. And it is to this church in particular that Dante alludes, because it has monks; besides which this Abbot who is now speaking, was Abbot there."

† *buon*: Scartazzini strongly condemns the modern commentators, among whom is Gioberti, who contend that Dante called the Emperor *good* in an ironical sense. He remarks that all the early Commentators understood it in its literal sense, and Venturi was the first to suggest the contrary. Benvenuto says: Dante calls Frederick good, because he was brave, virtuous, energetic, a most successful general, and of a very handsome person, and called Barbarossa from the colour of his beard.

‡ *dolente*: During the sack of Milan 82,000 persons were scattered abroad, and the ruins remained deserted for five years.



Abbot of the Monastery of San Zeno at Verona, and had ruled it admirably. His name remains unknown.

Benvenuto remarks: "For the better understanding of the text, one must know that this spirit says that he lived in the time of the Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa of Suabia), who reigned 37 years. Frederick was at first a friend of the Church, but later on had a quarrel with Pope Alexander III, who excommunicated him. About that time he had many wars in Italy with the Lombard allies of the Pope. He conquered them all, destroyed Spoleto and Tortona, *Ledis transmiserit*; he built Crema, and Cremona was given up to him; he assaulted and took Milan in 1163, pulled down its walls, burnt it, ploughed it up, and sowed the site with salt. He slaughtered the Romans horribly. Pope Alexander, fearing his power, took refuge at Venice, where he was received with great reverence. By his favour the Milanese rebuilt their city in 1168.

"The leader of the Venetian fleet in a naval action, took prisoner Henry, the Emperor's son, and brought him to Venice. Frederick Barbarossa, seeing his fortune was deserting him, and that Pope Alexander was being strengthened by the support of Louis VII, King of France, Henry II of England, and William, the excellent King of Sicily, and the allied Venetians and Lombards, asked for peace and pardon by ambassadors, and came to Venice and fell on his knees before the Pope. Pope Alexander placed his foot on the Emperor's neck, saying: 'Thou shalt go upon the serpent and basilisk, and tread the lion and dragon under thy feet.' The Emperor said, 'I kneel to Peter; not to you.' And the Pope answered, 'I am the Vicar of Peter.' Frederick



went afterwards to the Holy Land on a crusade in 1190, and was drowned while bathing in a river near Antioch."

The spirit of the Abbot now complains of the present Abbot Giuseppe, a bastard son of Alberto della Scala, who being deformed, and of less honourable origin than his half-brothers Bartolommeo, Alboino, and the famous Can Grande, ought to have been disqualified for so great a distinction as Abbot of San Zeno. His character moreover ought to have been an insuperable bar to his appointment, but his father Alberto, in his old age, forced him upon the unwilling inmates of the monastery.

E tale ha già l' un piè dentro la fossa,\*  
 Che tosto piangerà quel monastero,  
 E tristo fia d' averne avuto possa ;  
 Perchè suo figlio, mal del corpo intero,†  
 E della mente peggio, e che mal nacque, 125  
 Ha posto in loco di suo pastor vero."—

And there is one (Alberto della Scala) who already has got one foot in the grave, who soon shall weep for that Monastery, and will lament that he ever held the sway over it ; because, in place of its true Pastor,

\* *tale ha già l' un piè dentro la fossa.* Dante supposes the scene to be taking place in 1300, when Alberto della Scala was already an aged man ; but when Dante really wrote the *Purgatorio*, he knew that Alberto had died in September, 1301 ; and this pronouncement of the Abbot is therefore a simulated prophecy.

† *mal del corpo intero* : Cary translates : "Of body ill compact, and worse in mind," which renders the sense better than most of the translations, including my own previous ones. A Tuscan friend has pointed this out to me. Understand : "male intero del corpo, e peggio (intero) della mente." "Complete" is, I think, a more literal rendering than "compact." The probable reason why the Italian Commentators give so little interpretation of the passage is that "*mal intero del corpo*" is, to an Italian, a perfectly plain expression. *Mal* is an adverb contracted from *male*. The adjective *malo* could not properly be so shortened. The Roman Church has always followed the rule of the Jewish Church (*Leviticus* xxi, 17-21), that no deformed person might enter the priesthood.





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v, 746-761), and so forfeited their share in the inheritance of Italy. They chose safety rather than glory, and that was the evidence of the sin of Accidie. Benvenuto begs us to admire how gracefully Dante makes Virgil now introduce two spirits who are both showing their detestation of Accidie.

E quei che m' era ad ogni uopo soccorso

130

Disse :—" Volgiti in qua, vedine due

Venire, dando all' accidia di morso."—

And he who was my succour in every need, said :  
" Turn thee hither, behold two of them coming,  
uttering reproaches against (*lit.* biting at) Accidie."

Benvenuto thinks Dante shows great skill in representing the two first spirits singing the praises of the energetic, such as the Virgin Mary and Julius Cæsar, while the two now arriving, walk, on the other hand, singing the bad examples offered by the Slothful.

Dante next describes the song of the new arrivals, and tells us how they first sang of an instance of the disastrous effect of Sloth on the children of Israel, and then of another from pagan history.

Diretro a tutti dicean :—" Prima fue

Morta la gente \* a cui il mar s' aperse,

Che vedesse Jordan le crede sue ;"—

135

---

\* *fue Morta* : It will be remembered that of the whole race of the children of Israel who crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, Joshua and Caleb were the only two who lived to enter into the Promised Land. See *Numb.* xiv, 26-32 : " And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me ? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you : Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness ; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save



E,—“ Quella \* che l' affanno non sofferse  
Fino alla fine col figliuol d' Anchise,  
Sè stessa a vita senza gloria offerse.”—

Coming behind all (the others) they said, (the one):  
“That nation for whom the sea was opened were all  
dead before the Jordan saw their heirs.” And (the  
other spirit said): “They who could not endure the  
toil unto the end with the son of Anchises gave them-  
selves up to a life without glory.”

The glory would have been to share in founding the  
mighty Roman Empire, instead of remaining in Sicily  
in inglorious ease.

Dante now brings to a conclusion what he has to  
say about Accidie, and with it this noble Canto, by  
preparing for what has to be described in the Canto  
that follows, which contains his account of a wonder-  
ful dream.

Poi quando fôr da noi tanto divise  
Quell' ombre, che veder più non potersi,                   140  
Nuovo pensiero dentro a me si mise,

---

Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. . . .  
But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.”  
\* *Quella* (gente): This episode relates an effect of disgraceful  
Sloth among the Trojans who followed Æneas. When in Sicily  
he was celebrating funeral games by the tomb of his father  
Anchises, certain persons, both old men, young men and women,  
weaned out by their long voyage and hard toils, burnt Æneas's  
ships, so that they might not have to leave Sicily and confront  
new dangers. Æneas constituted them as a colony, and left  
the whole unwarlike crowd in contempt. See Virg. *Æn.* v, 604  
& 109. Of these two examples Perez writes: “In esse vien  
ritratto quel subito abbandonarsi degli accidiosi a misere voglie,  
e uidersi a piangere e querelarsi, tutti insieme raccolti a danno  
comune: quel loro bugiardo anteporre qualunque fatica e male  
del passato al faticoso e temuto presente; quell' aggrandir senza  
termine i pericoli che li aspettano, porgendo sempre più avido  
molto a chi più sformata o più spaventosa ne fa la pittura; la  
conoscente codardigia onde recansi a noja gli stessi beneficj, e  
tragono a vile ogni alta speranza e promessa: e infine le più  
splendide imprese per opera loro ritardate, scemate o rattristate  
da vaste ruine.” (*I Sette Cerchi*, pp. 190-191).



Del qual più altri nacquero e diversi ; \*  
 E tanto d' uno in altro vaneggiai,  
 Che gli occhi per vaghezza † ricopersi,  
 E il pensiero in sogno trasmutai. ‡

145

Then when those spirits had passed so far away from us, that we could no longer see them, a new thought arose within me, from which (in turn) were born other thoughts, many and varying ; and so much from one to the other did I ramble on, that I closed my eyes in a reverie, and transformed my meditation into a dream.

\* *pensiero* . . . *Del qual più altri nacquero*: Compare Virg. *Æn.* iv, 285, 286:—

“Atque animam nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,  
 In partesque rapit varias, perque omnia versat.”

The same lines occur in viii, 20, 21. Compare also *Inf.* xxiii, 10.

† *vaghezza*: Cesari thinks this expresses a desire on the part of Dante to go to sleep.

‡ At the conclusion of the Canto, Perez (p. 192-3) makes the following reflections: “Perchè in mezzo al correre di questi penitenti, non s'ode preghiera? Anzi, perchè questo è il solo cerchio, a cui non udiamo assegnata preghiera speciale? Forse l'interdetta dolcezza dell'alzare a Dio anche colle labbra la preghiera è acerba ricordanza e pena per anime, che un giorno al pregare furono troppo restie, e che or debbono intendere meglio che mai, come la preghiera è il più sublime tra i privilegi degli uomini, quello che loro permette d'avvicinarsi e parlare a Dio. Forse il continuo raccoglimento nell'orazione mentale, e il pianto misto con essa, tien luogo d'orazione vocale per gente, che dee rammentarsi e piangere le noie e i divagamenti del pregare antico. Fors'anche l'acerbo poeta, che in questo cerchio non nomina altro personaggio, fuorchè un uomo il quale più che altri avrebbe dovuto intendere ad orazione, vuole avvisarci che eziandio il lungo salmeggiare è accidia, se il corpo ne trae allettamenti al suo agio, e l'anima è lontana dai pensieri di Dio: onde poi gli accenti, indivoti e l'agiato sedere è forza scontare col silenzio della pia meditazione e col disagio del correre senza riposo. Se si noti che gli accidiosi dell'Inferno, nell'imo della stigia palude, barbugliano, ma non possono dire parola intera (*Inf.* vii, 125, 126); a che il già accidioso Belacqua nell'Antipurgatorio è tosto riconosciuto da Dante alle corte parole (*Purg.* iv, 121) si potrebbe sospettare che la fina ironia di que due passi scoppiasse, quasi a insaputa Poeta, anco nell'impor sileuzio agli accidiosi che ci stanno dinnanzi.”





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## CANTO XIX.

THE FOURTH CORNICE OF ACCIDIE (CONCLUDED)—DANTE'S DREAM OF THE SIREN—THE ANGEL OF THE LOVE OF GOD—ASCENT OF THE FIFTH CORNICE—THE PENALTY OF THE AVARICIOUS AND PRODIGAL—POPE ADRIAN V—ALAGIA,

WE left Dante, at the close of the last Canto, falling into a deep sleep. In the opening lines of this Canto, we find him asleep and still in the Fourth Cornice.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 33, Dante relates his dream.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 34 to ver. 69, he describes the appearance of an Angel, who points out the way to him, purifies him from the sin of Accidie, and ushers the two Poets through the entrance by which they ascend to the Fifth Cornice.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 70 to ver. 126, Dante speaks of the penalty of the Avaricious; and his interview with the spirit of the virtuous Pope Adrian V.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 127 to ver. 145, the spirit of the Pope clears up a doubt in Dante's mind, and convinces him that temporal dignity ends with this life.

*Division I.*—Dante is about to relate his dream, but, before doing so, he is careful to point out that it took place an hour before dawn, thereby implying that it would come true. (See *Purg.* ix, 13 *et seq.*; and *Inf.* xxvi, 7).



Nell' ora \* che non può il calor diurno  
 Intepidar più il freddo della luna,  
 Vinto da terra o talor da Saturno; †  
 Quando i geomanti lor maggior fortuna  
 Veggiono in oriente, innanzi all' alba,  
 Surger per via che poco le sta bruna; 5

At the hour, when the heat of the day, vanquished by the earth, and sometimes by Saturn, can no longer warm the coldness of the moon;—when the geomancers see, before dawn, their Fortuna Major rise in the East, by a path which will not long remain dark for it (the Fortuna Major, so that it may be visible).

---

\* *Nell' ora*, etc.: Dr. Moore (*Time References*, p. 105), observes: "In this passage we have the hour before dawn on Tuesday, April 12th, described by two indications [or, as Benvenuto says: *duplifier* = doubly]. 1. It was the coldest hour of the twenty-four. 2. The later stars of Aquarius and the foremost ones of Pices were on the horizon. This, perhaps, we may be allowed to take for granted is the meaning of the *maggior fortuna* of the *visarda*, ver. 4. It was a peculiar arrangement of dots, corresponding to one that can be formed out of certain stars on the confines of these two constellations. These were now in the east before the dawn." Compare Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida*, li, 1415:—

"And when the cock, commune astrologer,  
 Gan on his brest to beate and after crowe,  
 And Lucifer, the daies messenger,  
 Gan to rise and out his beames throwe,  
 And estward rose, to him that could it know  
 Fortuna Major."

† *Talor da Saturno*: It was a popular belief that, when the planet Saturn was on the meridian, greater cold was felt on earth. This was originated in the fact that the planet in question was the one furthest off from the Sun. Compare Virgil, *Georg.* i, 335, 336:—

"Hinc metena, coeli menses et sidera serva;  
 Frigida Saturni sese quo stella receptet."

Sartorius says that the ancients fell into this error from being ignorant of the radiation of heat. Brunetto Latini (*Li Tresor*, part III, cap. cxi) has: "Quar Saturnus, qui est le souverains des signes, est le plus froid et le plus cruel (cruel and malignant) et de froide nature, qui par tous les xii signes en i an et xiii jours."



Benvenuto says, that *geomantia* is called *astrologia minor*, and it is said to be a common refuge for astrologers, and ought never to be entirely despised, as it has some of its principles in astrology. But he adds: "They may say what they will, I do not believe at all in geomancy, any more than I believe in astrology." He adds that geomancers use many figures made of dots, but one especially, which they call *Fortuna Major*, which was taken from six stars happening to be seen in an exactly identical position to the six dots, as in the annexed figure:—

Benvenuto remarks that these stars are said to be at the end of the Constellation Aquarius and at the beginning of Pisces. Also that the Indians and Saracens used to go to the sea-shore at sunrise, to mark their dots, either odd or even, on the sand.

Dante, having stated what time it was, now proceeds to relate a dream within a dream. Benvenuto thinks that by it, he wishes to foreshadow the subject he is going to treat of; for, as he has already discussed the first four deadly sins, which are sins of the mind, *viz.*, Pride, Envy, Anger and Sloth, so now, being about to discuss the three remaining, *viz.*, Avarice, Gluttony and Sensuality, which are of the body, and sins that are ever seeking pleasures, he pictures them to be represented by the Siren. The vision seems in part a reproduction of *Prov. vii, 10-12*; the distorted eyes, the bent form, the crippled hands, the extreme pallor, corresponding to the physiognomic signs of those evil passions.





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straight, and her pallid cheeks to assume that warm colour, which Love desires.

Benvenuto says that *the stammering tongue* means Avarice, which never speaks openly and clearly but deceitfully; it means Gluttony, because drunkenness makes a man speak thick, and Sensuality, because it makes him a liar and a flatterer. *The squinting eye* denotes Avarice, because the miser is blind from the craving of acquisitiveness and of hoarding; it denotes both Gluttony and Sensuality, because over indulgence destroys the eyes both bodily and mentally. *She is lame*, because in those three sins man never walks in the right paths. *She is maimed*, because the Miser never uses his hands to give, and the Gluttonous and the Sensual never work, but are idle and slothful. All three, the Miser, the Glutton, and the Voluptuary, have pallid faces.

And now Dante describes the soft seductive strains that issued from the mouth of her, who had assumed beauty which was a mockery and deceit.

Poi ch' ell' avea il parlar cosi \* disciolto,  
Cominciava a cantar sì che con pena  
Da lei avrei mio intento † rivolto.  
—"Io son,"—cantava,—"io son dolce Sirena, ‡

\* *così*: This refers to ll. 12, 13:—

"Così lo sguardo mio le faces scorta  
La lingua," *et seq.*

† *mio intento*: Compare *Purg.* iii, 12, 13:—

"La mente mia, che prima era ristretta,  
Lo intento rallargò, sì come vaga."

‡ *dolce Sirena*: Scartazzini observes that also in ancient mythology the Sirens were symbols of the attractiveness of worldly pleasures. Pope unconsciously reproduced Dante, when he wrote, in his *Essay on Man*, ii, 219:—



20

Che i marinari in mezzo mar dismago ;  
 Tanto son di piacere a sentir piena.  
 Io volai Ulisse \* del suo cammin vago  
 Al canto mio ; e qual meco si ausa  
 Rado sen parte, al tutto l' appago."—

And so soon as she had thus got her speech unloosed, she began to sing so (sweetly), that it would have been hard indeed for me to have turned my attention from her. "I am," she sang, "the sweet Siren, who bewitch the mariners in mid-ocean, so full am I of pleasantness to hear. I turned Ulysses from his wandering path to my song, and whoso companies with me rarely departs from me, so wholly do I satisfy him."

Another lady is now seen by Dante in his dream, who puts to shame the Siren, the symbol of pleasure. Commentators differ very considerably as to what this new character typifies, and Scartazzini does not agree with those, among whom is Ozanam, who think she is a symbol of Wisdom, or that she is Lucia (a symbol of Truth), or of the Church ; but he thinks with the older Commentators that she represents Reason, Temperance, Philosophy, or Intellectual Virtue.

She addresses Virgil in a tone of indignant remonstrance for allowing Dante, their joint pupil, to gaze on the deceitful pleasures of the world.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
 As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;  
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

\* *Ulysses*: Benvenuto notices Dante's mistake in representing Ulysses as having been fascinated by the Siren, for he remarks (correctly) that, in the *Odyssey*, Homer tells us that Ulysses resisted the Sirens and filled his ears with wax so as not to hear their song. He thinks Dante must have meant Circe, who detained Ulysses for one year, or Calypso, who kept him a prisoner several years.



Ancor non era sua bocca richiusa, 25

Quando una donna \* apparve santa e presta  
Lunghesso me † per far colei confusa.

— “O Virgilio, o Virgilio, chi è questa ?” —

Fieramente diceva ; ed ei venia ‡  
Con gli occhi fitti pure in quella onesta. 30

L' altra prendeva, § e dinanzi l' spria  
Fendendo i drappi, e mostravami il ventre ;  
Quel mi svegliò col puzzo || che n' uscia.

Not yet was her mouth closed again, (*i.e.* while she still was singing) when quick at my side there appeared a saintly lady to put her to confusion. “O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?” she sternly exclaimed ;

\* *donna* : Benvenuto points out that whereas Dante had called the Siren *femmina*, a female (l. 7), he styles this one *donna*, a far more honourable term. Benvenuto's words are: “Bene vocat istam dominam, ubi illam vocaverat famulam, quia ratio debet dominari, et passio famulari.”

† *Lunghesso me* : “By my side.” Compare *Vita Nuova*, § xxxv : “In quel giorno . . . io mi sedea in parte, nella quale ricordandomi di lei, disegnava un angelo sopra certe tavolette : e mentre io 'l disegnavo, volsi gli occhi, e vidi lungo me uomini a' quali si convenia far onore.”

‡ *Ei venia* : On this see Benvenuto: “et sic vide quod oculus Dantis in carne positus respiciebat tantum cum delectatione illam primum lubricam, sed oculus Virgilio sine carne respiciebat istam secundam cum veneratione: illa enim videbatur pulchra et amabilis, ista vero rigida, sed venerabilis.”

§ *L' altra prendeva* : Scartazzini agrees with the majority of the Commentators, *e.g.* the *Ottimo*, Benvenuto, Buti, Daniello Venturi, Biagioli, Witte, Ozanam and others, in thinking that the saintly lady seized the stammering one ; but some, among whom are Landino, Vellutello, Cesari, Brunone Bianchi, and *Philalthes*, think it was Virgil who laid hold on the Siren.

|| *puzzo* : On this Gioberti has: “Nota lo schifo che ingenera l' ultimo verso. Dante non era poeta molle, che volesse risparmiare ai lettori il disgusto quando è necessario a ritrarre la verità dell' obbietto, e tanto più quando conferisce allo scopo morale. Questa donna, dal cui ventre aperto usciva così gran puzzo è colei che tutto 'l mondo appuzza (*Inf.* xvii), cioè la frode, l' inganno, la bugia.” Gioberti is very full of admiration for the life and vivacity of these three lines.





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Io volsi \* gli occhi al buon Maestro:—"Almen tre  
 Voci t' ho messe,"—dices:—"surgi e vieni, 35  
 Troviam la porta † per la qual tu entre."—  
 Su mi levai, e tutti eran già pieni  
 Dell' alto dì i giron del sacro monte,  
 Ed andavam col sol nuovo alle reni. ‡  
 Seguendo lui, portava la mia fronte 40  
 Come colui che l' ha di pensier carca,  
 Che fa di sè un mezzo arco di ponte ;

I turned my eyes to the good Master: "At least three calls have I given thee," he said; "arise and come on, let us find the opening through which thou mayest enter." I arose, and already were all the Cornices of the holy mountain filled with the broad daylight, and we were walking (towards the West) with the newborn Sun at our backs. Following him, I carried my head as one who is overwhelmed with thought, and who (by stooping) makes of himself a half arch of a bridge.

\* *Io volsi*, et seq.: Dr. Moore, speaking of the multiplicity of variants in this passage, writes: "The readings in these two lines are recorded on account of the extraordinary variations in the MSS., but I do not see how to determine what may have been the original reading. Nor can the exact reading of the old Commentators be determined in any case but those of Benvenuto and Buti, as noted above." (*Textual Criticism*, pp. 393, 394.)

† *la porta*: Some read *l' aperta*; others *l' aperto*.

‡ *sol nuovo alle reni*: "In lines 37-39 it was now full daylight, with the Sun on their backs, so that they were still journeying towards the West, when they enter the fifth Cornice, where Avarice and Prodigality are punished. Observe here the admirable fitness with which Dante times his progress so that the time spent in the Cornice where Accidia, or Spiritual Sloth, is punished is exactly coincident with the hours of the night—'the night when no man can work.' He enters it as darkness comes on (as we read in xvii, 70-80), and leaves it next morning, as soon as he awakes with the *nuovo sol* (xix, 38), being mildly chided by Virgil for the length of his slumbers (xix, 34). I might perhaps, mention here that it will be found that in each of the other Cornices he spends from three to five hours." Dr. Moore (*Time References*, p. 106).



In two lives of Dante it is mentioned that he stooped. Boccaccio (*Vita di Dante*, in Boccaccio's commentary, vol. i, p. 37) says: *Andò alquanto curveto*; and Filippo Villani (*Vita Dantis*, ap. Scartazzini): "*Is dum annis maturisset, curvatis aliquantulum renibus incedebat, incessu leni gravi, mansuetudine aspectu.*"

Dante is deep in meditation, thinking about his wonderful dream, when the Angel addresses him; and we are to infer that he shows himself to Dante, though that fact is not actually stated; only his broad white swan-like wings being mentioned. Perez (op. cit. p. 195) thinks the Angel did not show himself at all, except by his wings, but l. 54 speaks of him as flying slightly above the heads of the Poets as they scale the ascent to the Cornice above.\* Dante is always very precise, and while it might be contended that, by the wings alone being mentioned, nothing more was seen of the Angel, it might equally be maintained that, where an Angel's radiance is too powerful for the human eye to face, Dante is careful to mention the circumstance, as in *Purg.* xv, 14, where he expressly states that he had to make a sunshade of his hands. The Angel first calls the Poets to the opening of the doorway; he next seemingly guides them with his wings into it; he then fans Dante, and with a wing-like stroke erases the fourth P. from his brow; and finally he dismisses him with the benediction, "Blessed are they that mourn."

Quand' io udi':—"Venite, qui si varca,"—  
Parlare in modo soave e benigno,

\* That idea of the Angel however is not in accordance with the one of the two disputed interpretations of l. 54, which I have adopted.



Qual non si sente in questa mortal marca.\* 45  
 Con l' ali aperte che parean di cigno,  
 Volseci in su colui che sì parlonne,  
 Tra' due pareti † del duro macigno.  
 Mosse le penne poi e ventilonne,  
 Qui lugent affermando esser beati, ‡ 50  
 Ch' avran di consolar l' anime donne. §

\* *marca*, march, is used in the same sense as it is in *Marca Trevigiana*, the region or district of Treviso. The word is found in the Gothic *Marca*, a border country (see Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. "mark"), and also in the Icelandic *Mark* (border-land), which Vigfusson (*Icelandic Dictionary*) says is a word common to all Teutonic languages, and the original sense is "outline, border."

† *Tra' due pareti*: Buti comments: "cioè tra du' pareti del monte ch' era di pietra macigna, u' era scala da montare in suso. Questi du' pareti di pietra dura significano due costanzie e fermesse, che dè avere chi monta a purgarsi del peccato de la avarizia; cioè prima lo lato ritto duro a resistere, che l' avversità non lo rompa, e così si purgherà del peccato de la avarizia."

‡ *Qui lugent . . . esser beati*: Perez (*op. cit.* p. 194) says that these tears are not the useless and cowardly tears which, mixed with blood, were shed by the caitiff throng in the vestibule of Hell, and gathered up under their feet by foul reptiles. "Questo è pianto onestamente operoso, che, misto ai solerti passi e alle accese meditazioni, col penitente fervore adempie l' antico difetto di carità. E tal pianto benedice l' Angelo guardiano del cerchio."

§ *donne*: The *Voc. della Crusca*, s.v. "donna," § 9, has "Donna e madonna, vale Padrona assoluta." The *Vocabolario* quotes the following from Lippi's *Malmantile*, cant. x, st. 65, which exactly explains the use of the word here:—

"Il Re di questo Regno, giunto a morte,  
 La mia cugina qui, che fu sua donna  
 (Non avendo figliuoli o altri in corte  
 Propinqui più) lasciò donna e madonna."

I translate the above: "The King of this realm, being at the point of death—having no children or other near relations surviving at his court—left my cousin, who was his wife, absolute proprietress (*donna e madonna*) here of everything." Here we have *donna* in the double sense, of (a) the wife; (b) the proprietress. Andreoli has: "*donne, proprietarie* (Lat. *dominae*.)" Brunone Bianchi is very clear: "affermando essere beati coloro che non essendo accidiosi, piangono le colpe loro; imperciocchè avranno l' anime loro *donne di consolar*, cioè posseditrici di consolazione." Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*) says the sentence is exceedingly hard to ex-





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Lo Rege eterno con le rote magne.\*—

“What aileth thee that thou gazest only on the earth?” my Guide began to say to me, when we had both ascended a little way above the Angel. And I: “With such misgiving makes me to go a new vision, which so bends me to it, that I cannot dissever me from the thought of it.” “Hast thou seen,” said he, “that ancient sorceress, who alone has to be wept for (in the three Cornices) above us? Hast thou seen how man is delivered from her? Let that suffice thee, and strike the earth with thy heels (*i.e.* quicken thy steps) and turn thine eyes upward to the lure which the Eternal King whirleth with vast revolutions.”

Virgil notices Dante's eyes bent upon the ground. The Almighty is compared to a falconer; and Virgil bids Dante look up to the falconer's lure, meaning that Man must use this world's goods, such as wealth, food, luxuries, only so far as are necessary to sustain life, and treat them as things to be trodden under foot, as little and vile, but let his mental contemplation be towards heaven, eternal and immortal. Then Dante shows, by a noble comparison, how eagerly he proceeded to follow Virgil's advice, and Benvenuto notices how appropriate the comparison is. As the hawk, which is by its nature light, flies up on high in a spirited manner by a number of great wheels, so did our Poet fly, by the wings of his mind wheeling round and round the Cornices of the high mountain. And as the falcon first looks down at its feet, so is

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\* *rote magne*: Compare *Purg.* viii, 16-18:—

“E l' altre poi dolcemente e devote  
Seguitar lei per tutto l' inno intero  
Avendo gli occhi alle superne rote.”

Ciampi thinks that, comparing *rote* in the present passage with *Purg.* xiv, 148 (see above), one finds the same idea expressed in both. We may understand *rote* here as “The Heavens.”









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he turns his back on heaven and worships the world; he keeps his hands and feet bound, for he gives to no one, nor goes to any one's assistance, and is the most miserable of men. He is just like some animals who will sacrifice, of their own accord, some part of their body to save their lives—the fox, for instance, has been known to bite off its own foot when caught in a trap. So does the Avaricious man expose his soul to manifest death, for the sake of acquiring or protecting a small modicum of money.

Com' io nel quinto giro fui dischiuso,\* 70  
 Vidi gente per esso che piangea,†  
 Giacendo a terra tutta volta in giuso.‡  
*Adhaesit pavimento anima mea,§*  
 Senti' dir lor con sì alti sospiri  
 Che la parola appena s' intendea. 75

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\* *nel quinto giro fui dischiuso*: lit. became un-shut into the fifth circle. Dante had been, during his ascent of the stairway, shut in between the wall of rock on either side.

† *gente . . . che piangea*: These are the spirits of the Avaricious or Miserly. In *Purg.* xxii, 49 *et seq.* we shall find Statius explicitly telling Dante that he is among the Prodigals, and that both are punished on this Cornice, for their respective misuses of money.

‡ *tutta volta in giuso*: Dean Plumptre observes: "As in *Inf.* vii, 25, 26, the Misers and Prodigals are grouped together as exhibiting different aspects of the same evil. On earth their looks, like those of Milton's Mammon (*Par. Lost*, i, 681) have been ever "downward bent," and their penance is to lie prostrate on the earth, uttering the words of *Psalm* cxix, 25. These words form part of the service of Prime in the Roman Breviary, and it was at this hour that Dante heard them in Purgatory. . . . We may also call to mind the concluding words of the verse which begins: "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken Thou me according to Thy word." Dean Plumptre also notices the courteousness of the address to the spirits in v. 76: "Such should be the tone of every soul seeking its own purification, towards others who are under a like discipline for like sins."

§ *Adhaesit pavimento anima mea*: "È stata aderente al pavimento l'anima mia! Così incomincia quel prego, che dicendo tosto di poi, *Ravvivami secondo la tua parola*, pone in bel raffronto le ricchezze



As soon as I came forth into the fifth Circle, I saw people upon it that were weeping as they lay upon the ground altogether turned (face) downwards. *Ad-hoc sit pavimento anima mea*, I heard them say with such deep sighs, that one could hardly distinguish the words.

Virgil now addresses the spirits, asking them to point out the way, and one of them at once replies. This spirit is evidently in doubt as to whether the Poets are to suffer at all in this Circle, or whether they have come into Purgatory by some special grace of God. Dante, anxious for further information, by one of those rapid interchanges of signs so common in Italy, asks and obtains Virgil's permission to converse with this new spirit.

—“O eletti di Dio,<sup>\*</sup> li cui soffriri †  
E giustizia e speranza fan men duri,  
Drizzate noi verso gli alti saliri.”—

—“Se voi venite dal giacer sicuri,  
E volete trovar la via più tosto,

80

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della terra e quelle del cielo; la morte e la vita dell' anima, la ragione del basso metallo e la luce del Verbo divino. *L' aderire dell' anima* esprime acconciamente la sede del peccato, che è nell' affetto, e non già nella ricchezza; e insieme accenna la quasi materiale tenacità di quell' affetto. *Pavimento* parmi ivi parola ancor più bella che *terra*, se si riguardi alla sua origine nel verbo *parire*, o *calpestare*: chè veramente cosa degna d' essere calpestata d' esser adesso a que' contriti il tesoro ove posero il cuore.” (Perez, *Op. cit.* p. 213.)

\* *O eletti di Dio*, et seq.: Gioberti notices that every time Dante addresses the spirits in Purgatory, he does so in words that are full of courtesy and kindness, always with a thought of what may best give them consolation in their trial.

† *Sufriri* and *saliri* (L. 78): There were many in Dante's time, now obsolete, such as *amari*, *abbracciari*, *parire*. We find them frequently in Boccaccio. These are *plur.* substantives formed from the infinitives of the verba. Compare *Com.* iv, canz. iii. *Le dolci rime d' amor*. *Str.* iv, ll. 14, 15:—

—“Per che a intelletti sani  
È manifesto i lor diri esser vani.”









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Dante has been carried by Virgil to the place where the wicked Pope Nicholas Orsini is being punished, and stands over him like a friar confessing an assassin going to be buried alive.\* We have here one of those curious and felicitous contrasts of which Dante is so fond. In *Inf.* xix we read the story of a wicked Pope. In *Purg.* xix is told the story of a good Pope. The speaker is Ottobuoni Fieschi, who was elected Pope as Adrian V, July 12, 1276. He died at Viterbo on the 3rd of August the same year. Sestri and Chiavari (in the text Chiaveri) are two towns of the Eastern Riviera, which were subject to Genoa. The river is the Lavagna, whence the Fieschi family took their title. Adrian died before his admission to the priesthood, and was therefore neither consecrated nor crowned as Pope. He had been sent by Innocent IV, in 1268, as a legate, to reconcile Henry III, King of England, and his barons, and to reform abuses in the Church. Adrian was, Benvenuto tells us, a nephew of Innocent IV, and when his friends and relations came to congratulate him on his election, he is reported to have said: "It was better for you to have a live Cardinal than a dead Pope." He only sat on the throne of St. Peter one month and eight days. Benvenuto gives the date as 1273. Pope Adrian's speech is one of the fine passages in the *Purgatorio*. He begins by notifying to Dante that his second question, as to the mode of their punishment, will be answered later, but meanwhile he tells him what had been his dignity,

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\* Compare *Inf.* xix, 49, 50:—

"Io stava come il frate che confessa  
Lo perfido assassin," etc.

So, too, here has Dante to stoop to converse with this Pope. In *Inf.* xix, Nicholas tells him (ver. 69):—

"Sappi eh' io fui vestito del gran manto."



and what the place of his birth, how long he occupied the Papal Throne, and the hardship he found it.

Ed egli a me :—“ Perchè i nostri diretri  
Rivolga il cielo a sè, saprai : ma prima,  
*Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.\**”

Intra Siestri e Chiaveri si adima 100

Una fiumana bella, e del suo nome  
Lo titol del mio sangue fa sua cima. †

Un mese e poco più ‡ prova' io come

Pesa il gran manto a chi dal fango il guarda,  
Che piuma sembran tutte l' altre some. 105

And he to me : “ Why Heaven makes us turn our backs to it, thou shalt learn : but first know that I was the successor of Peter. Between Sestri and Chiavari

\* *successor Petri*: Of Adrian V the *Falso Boccaccio* relates : “ Costui tutto il tempo di sua vita non avea atteso ad altro che a razzare pecunia e avere, per giungere a quel punto d' essere papa, posto che poco il godesse : e veggendosi papa e nella maggior signoria che si possa avere, si riconobbe e parvegli essere entrato nel maggior lacciato [ret] del mondo, e così de' essere avere a governare e avere cura dell' anime di tutta la cristianità ; e ricognosciutosi sè medesimo ispregiò l' avarizia e tutti gli altri visii.”

† *fa sua cima* : On this Buti says : “ cioè fa sua altezza : impoè che infine a quel grado d' altezza montonno, che prima erano chiamati quelli dal Piesco ; poi furono chiamati conti di Lavagna.” *Costui* (*Bolizza*, vol. ii, p. 349) : “ Ed egli ere Adriano Papa V Fusch, de' Conti di Lavagno : e questo è ciò, che dice Dante al suo suo proprio ; che il titolo della sua casa fa sua cima del nome di quel fiume ; cioè piglia il titolo da quel fiume, ne fa suo cognome o arme. Ma perocchè questo *far sua cima* mi suona un tal che d' onore (something after the fashion of an honourable distinction) ; verrà forse dire, che da Lavagno fu la sua famiglia nobilitata dalla contea.”

‡ *Un mese e poco più, et seq.* : “ E appresso lui a di dodici di luglio fu chiamato Papa messere Ottobuono cardinale dal Fiesco della città di Genova, il quale non vivette che trentanove di nel papato, e fu chiamato papa Adriano quinto.” (*Giov. Villani*, Lib. vi, cap. 90.) Compare *Purg.* xvi, 127-129 :—

“ La Chiesa di Roma,  
Per confondersi in sè due reggimenti,  
Cade nel fango, e sè brutta e la soma.”



there rushes down a fair river, and from its name (Lavagna) the title of my race takes its proudest distinction. For one month and a little more I experienced how heavily the great' mantle weighs on him who keeps it out of the mire (*i.e.* wears it with dignity), so much so that all other burdens seem but feathers.

Pope Adrian now goes on to show when and why he recognised the error of his ways.

La mia conversione, omè! fu tarda; \*  
 Ma come fatto fui Roman Pastore,  
 Cosl scopersi la vita bugiarda. †  
 Vidi che lì non si quetava il core, ‡  
 Nè più salir poteasi § in quella vita ;

110

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\* *conversione . . . tarda* : Scartazzini thinks Adrian must have delayed his conversion until after his election as Pope, and we know that he was old when so elected, and only lived 38 days afterwards. He should rightly therefore be still in Ante-Purgatory. Was he rescued therefrom by righteous prayers, or was his penitence so saintly as to wipe off the years that he should have tarried in Ante-Purgatory?

† *la vita bugiarda* : Gioberti says "perchè promettitrice di cose che non attende." Compare *Conv.* iv, 12, ll. 39-50: "Promettono le false traditrici, se ben si guarda, di torre ogni sete e ogni mancanza, e apportar saziamento e bastanza. E questo fanno nel principio a ciascuno uomo, questa promessa in certa quantità di loro accrescimento affermando; e poichè quivi sono adunate, in loco di saziamento e di refrigerio, danno e recano sete di casso febricante e intollerabile: e in loco di bastanza, recano nuovo termine, cioè maggior quantità a desiderio." Compare also *Purg.* xxx, 131, 132.

‡ *non si quetava il core* : "poichè interminabili gli umani desiderii, a contentare i quali solo basta una beatitudine infinita, e una vita immortale." (Gioberti.)

§ *Nè più salir poteasi* : Benvenuto considers this is very good reasoning, for what sovereign has such dignity and power as the Pope? Others have to rule over mortal affairs; but he over spiritual matters. Others get their pre-eminence from man; but he from the earthly wisdom of God. Others have power over earthly matters; he has the freedom of eternal ones, and indeed, as they say, he is the ruler over both the living and the dead. Therefore there neither is, nor can be anything greater in the whole Christian world, although now-a-days that great office does not seem to be highly esteemed.





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and intrigued for by churchmen; and laymen, in consequence, hold the office in less respect from the election not being merely the result, as it used formerly to be, of the free choice of holy minded men, who had prayed to God to direct their selection without any thought of personal ambition for themselves.

Adrian answers Dante's other question as to why he and other spirits are lying in that posture.

Quei ch' avarizia fa,\* qui si dichiara

115

In purgazion dell' anime converse, †

\* *Quel ch' avarizia fa, et seq.*: Perez (*op. cit.* p. 197) prefaces this passage very happily: "Un lagrimevole e duro cammino è quello di Dante nel quinto cerchio. Poichè tutto lo spazio è coperto di gente, che, stesa boccone (*lying on their faces*), non lascia a' piedi del Poeta se non picciola via accosto alla roccia. Uno di loro annunzia con vive parole la pena, che essi pagano per antiche avarizie . . . Avarizia, che, secondo l' Aquinate, è immoderato desiderio di que' beni il cui prezzo può misurarsi con moneta, ne' sacri libri è detta idolatria; e costoro espiano l' antica idolatria prostrati alla terra, donde si trae l' oro e l' argento. Somigliano nel tormento ai simoniaci della prima Cantica. Quelli, sepolti col capo in terra e quasi propagginati, chiamavano a mente il detto di Cristo: *Mortuus est dives, et sepultus est in inferno* (*Luc. xvi, 22, Vulg.*). Questi costretti ad affisar sempre il luogo ove mal tesoreggiarono, chiamano a mente l' altro di Cristo: *Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi arugo et tinea demolitur; et ubi fures effodiunt, et furantur. Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in coelo.* (*St. Matt. vi, 19, Vulg.*). Rammentano anche gli avari e i prodighi del 4° cerchio infernale. Là le ricchezze mutavansi in pesi faticosissimi, che i peccatori dovevano co' loro petti voltare e sospingere in eterno. Qui elle sono pesi invisibili, che aggravati sopra il dorso de' penitenti, non li lasciano muovere finchè non abbiano soddisfatto a ogni debito di giustizia."

† *converse*: There seems to be much doubt among the Commentators as to whether this refers to the position of the penitents lying turned over on their faces, or to their state of conversion from impenitence to true contrition. Cesari thinks the former, but is not certain which of the two interpretations is the right one. "È da ordinare così il costrutto; 'Nella purgazion qui dell' anime così riversate, si dichiara quello che fa l' avarizia: se già *converse* non valesse, *convertite a Dio.*' (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 350.)



E nulla pena il monte ha più amara.\*  
 Si come l' occhio nostro non s' aderse †  
 In alto, fiaso alle cose terrene,  
 Così giustizia qui a terra il merse. 120  
 Come avarizia spense a ciascun bene  
 Lo nostro amore, onde operar perdèsi, ‡  
 Così giustizia qui stretti § ne tiene  
 Ne' piedi e nelle man legati || e presi ;

\* *nella pena il monte ha più amara* : The best interpretation of this will be found in Perez (*op. cit.* p. 201): "Ogni vero penitente, se pena, è inclinato a credere il proprio fallo più grave di ogni fallo altrui; e però se gli fosse imposta tal pena che gli porgesse una continua ricordanza di quello, egli dovrebbe giudicar sì fatta pena più amara di ogni altra. La pena poi del quinto cerchio sembra più delle altre accomodata a dar di continuo all' anima le atroci punture della memoria: poichè mentre negli altri cerchi il doloroso andare o sedere rappresenta più o meno gli atti della virtù contraria al vizio antico, qui invece il doloroso aderire alla terra col dosso rivolto al cielo rende immagine dello stesso antico vizio nella sua parte più rea e sconosciuta. Ma lasciata per questa ragione, all' altero e libero petto di Dante poteva pur pena più amara di tutte quella che più sembra all' uomo togliere di sua dignità, e legatolo quasi vile mancipio, diniegarli la dignità de' propri atti. Forse per tal ragione a chi peccò di superbia e di avarizia, vizi capitalissimi e radice degli altri, egli assegna a espiazione un atteggiamento tutto servile: la gente del primo cerchio oppressa da gran pesi; la gente del quinto gravata di dure catene."

† *adarse* : *Adargere* is from *ad-origere*.

‡ *onde operar perdèsi* : Scartazzini says this must not be translated: "All our work was lost, was in vain," but "All our power, our faculty for good works was lost."

§ *stretti* : Scartazzini advocates the joining of *stretti* with *legati*, as I have adopted. He thinks *stretti* is used adverbially for *strettamente*.

|| *Ne' piedi e nelle man legati* : Compare St. Matt. xxii, 13: "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And Perez: "I lacci poi, che hanno avvinti e mani e piedi al duro terreno; i lacci, a cui nella Bibbia son paragonate le insidie delle ricchezze, bene esprimono i lacci onde l' avaro annoda sè e altrui nell' acquistarle, le cure che lo stringono nel custodirle, la passione da cui non può stricarsi quand' egli deve e pur non vorrebbe lasciarle. Meritamente stanno associate le mani, che nel sacro eloquio raffigurano le opere, e che



E quanto fia piacer del giusto Sire, \*  
Tanto staremo immobili † e distesi."—

125

What is the effect of Avarice, is here made manifest in the purgation of the converted souls, and the mountain has no more bitter penalty. As our eyes, fixed on earthly things, were not lifted up on high, even so has justice sunk them to the ground in this place. Even as Avarice extinguished our love for all things good, whereby our faculty for good works was lost, so justice here doth hold us in restraint, fast bound and fettered by the hands and feet; and for so long as it be the will of the Righteous Lord, so long shall we remain motionless and stretched out."

*Division IV.*—Dante now solves a point which has always been a doubtful one to him, namely, whether temporal dignity ceases with temporal death. He pictures himself as having knelt down with the intention of doing homage to the Pope's high office and was probably about to say, thinks Benvenuto: "Holy Father, I entreat Your Holiness, to excuse my natural ignorance, for I was not aware of your being Pope."

Benvenuto wishes us to take note that to no living person among Christians is any greater reverence paid than to the Pope, even though he may be the vilest and

così a lungo furono chiuse, cost raro s' allargarono. Meritamente allacciati i piedi, che figurano gli affetti e quasi i passi con cui l' anima cammina: i piedi, che l' avaro non move mai a' bisogni de' fratelli non diparte mai dalla guardia de' male amati tesori. Siffatti vincoli sono convenienti simboli del modo con cui gl' ingiusti possessori a sè avvincolano i beni esterni." (*I Sette Cerchi*, p. 199-200.)

\* *quanto fia piacer del giusto Sire*: It would seem from this line that these spirits are in ignorance of how long they will have to lie on the ground.

† *immobili*: "L' immobilità poi e l' irrigidimento di tutta la persona ci fa riconoscere la condizione dell' anima avara, a sè e agli altri arida e dispietata: quel suo indurare, e quasi non più muoversi umano." (*Perez*, p. 201.)





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—“Qual cagion,”—disse,—“in giù così ti torse?”— 130

Ed io a lui:—“Per vostra dignitate  
Mia coscienza dritto mi rimorse.”\*—

—“Drizza le gambe, lèvati su, frate,”—

Rispose:—“non errar, conservo † sono  
Teco e con gli altri ad una potestate. 135

I had fallen on my knees, and was about to speak; but as I began, only by listening he became aware of my act of reverence. “What cause,” said he, “has thus bent thee downward?” And I to him: “Because of your rank my conscience rightly gave me compunction (for standing).” “Straighten thy legs, my brother, rise up,” he answered: “Err not, I am a fellow servant with thee and others to one Power.

Adrian had learnt the lesson of *Acts* x, 26; *Rev.* xix, 10, xxii, 9.

Another token of humility is that, instead of using the usual formula of a Pope, who addresses others as

\* *Mia coscienza dritto mi rimorse*: I follow Lombardi and Witte in reading *dritto* and in interpreting it “rightly,” “justly.” Some, among whom is Biagioli, read *mia coscienza dritta*. This would in Dante’s mouth ill befit the state of humility to which he has been schooling himself since entering into Purgatory.

† *conservo sono Teco*: Benvenuto says: “These words are taken out of the xviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Apocalypse* (xix<sup>th</sup> in A.V.) where, when St. John had cast himself at the feet of the Angel, it was said to him: ‘See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.’ And notice how Adrian brings forward an excellent example from a most excellent book of Holy Scripture; for, if it be lawful to make a comparison of such a nature, Dante, a man of a highly speculative nature, can be compared to St. John, who was of a most contemplative nature, for both Dante and St. John, although in different manners, while in rapt ecstasy of the mind, saw wonderful and various imageries. As then St. John had knelt at the feet of the Angel, so did Dante kneel at the feet of the great High Priest; and as the Angel did not accept this honour, calling himself the fellow-servant of St. John, and of all them that had the testimony of Jesus, so did Pope Adrian now, calling himself the fellow-servant of Dante, and all other Christian men.”



"my son," he speaks to Dante as a brother. Adrian confirms his words by adding testimony from Holy Scripture.

Se mai quel santo evangelico suono  
Che dice *Neque nubent* \* intendesti,  
Ben puoi veder perch' io così ragiono.

If ever thou hast rightly understood those words from the Holy Gospel, which say *Neque nubent* (they neither marry) well wilt thou be able to perceive why I speak thus.

Adrian now dismisses Dante with a hint that their further conversation would interrupt the godly sorrow with which he is expiating the sin of Avarice. But he has not up to now answered Dante's third question, as to whether he wishes Dante to get intercessions offered up for him on earth. He tells him that, of all his kinsfolk on earth, the only one left is his niece Madonna Alagia, the wife of Moroëllo Malaspina, Marchese di Giovagallo. He says that she is as yet a virtuous woman, but that he is not without fears lest the notorious immorality of the Fieschi family may eventually corrupt her.

Vattene omai ; † non vo' che più t' arresti,  
Chè la tua stanza mio pianger disagia,

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\* *Neque nubent* : " For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (St. Matt. xxii, 30.) Dante uses these words in an allegorical sense, to show that earthly distinctions do not exist in the spiritual world.

† *Vattene omai* : Compare Marco Lombardo's farewell words, *Inf. xv. 124-126* :—

"Ma via Tosco, omai, ch' or mi diletta  
Troppo di pianger più che di parlare,  
S' m' ha nostra ragion la mente stretta."



Col qual maturo \* ciò che tu dicesti.  
 Nepote ho io di là ch' ha nome Alagia, †  
 Buona de sè, pur che la nostra casa  
 Non faccia lei per esempio malvagia ; ‡  
 E questa sola di là m' è rimasa."—

141

Now go thy way; for I will not have thee tarry longer, because thy stay here impedes my weeping, with which I bring to perfection that which thou hast said (*i.e.* my repentance). Yonder on earth I have a niece who is named Alagia, good in herself, if indeed our house do not by its evil example make her wicked; and she alone is left to me yonder (in the world)."

\* *maturo*: See l. 91, in which Dante had said to Pope Adrian:—

Spirto, in cui pianger matura  
 Quel senza il quale a Dio tornar non puossi."

† *Alagia*: As we read in the supplemental note at the end of *Purg.* viii, there is not always absolute certainty as to the identity of the various Marquises of Malaspina, but Alagia would seem to have been the wife of Moroëllo, Marchese di Giovagallo, and to have borne him three children, Manfredi Luchino, and Fiesca. She was the daughter of Niccolò di Tedisio di Ugone de' Fieschi, and Benvenuto says of her "Multum complacuit Danti." The *Anon. Fiorent.* writes of her "Ebbe nome la gran donna di gran valore et di gran bontà; et l'Auttoire, che stette più tempo in Lunigiana con questo Moroello de' Malespini, conobbe questa donna, et vidde che continuamente faceva gran limosine, et faceva dire messe et oratione divotamente per questo suo zio."

‡ *per esempio malvagia*: "Malvagi chiama poi i Fieschi, per bocca d' uno di loro, e tra tutti, non fa eccezione che per una donna di questa casa, la quale fu moglie d' un Malaspina memore gratitudine dell' ospite, più forse che giudizio severo di storico: o, se anche giudizio imparziale certo menzioni studiosamente cercata per ricordi personaji cari al Poeta." Bartoli (*Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. vi, part ii, p. 134).





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scribes a wonderful phenomenon that took place, namely the shaking of the Mountain of Purgatory, and a simultaneous outburst of all the spirits into a song of *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*.

*Division I.*—The Canto opens with a short continuation of the closing scene of the last Canto. Dante begins by saying that, although he was obliged to yield to the command of Adrian to pass on, yet he did so unsatisfied, as there were many things he would have liked to ask him, but could not. He therefore, in Virgil's company, continues his progress round the Cornice, but the Poets have to do so by stepping between the rocky cliff-wall and the recumbent spirits who are lying so close to the edge of the precipice, that they cannot get near it.

Contra miglior voler voler mal pugna ; \*

Onde contra il piacer mio, per piacerli, †

Trassi dell' acqua non sazia la spugna. ‡

\* *Contra miglior voler voler mal pugna*: The will of Dante, which prompted him to stay and seek further information, was unable to resist the more powerful will of Pope Adrian, who wished to return to his penance, and therefore gave Dante an order to leave him, which was too decisive to be disobeyed. Not only was Adrian's the stronger will, but it was a better will than Dante's, inasmuch as Adrian's desire was a holy one, in wishing to fulfil God's ordinances as completely as lay in his power.

† *il piacer mio, per piacerli*: In *Readings on the Inferno*, 2nd ed. vol. i, p. 456, in the footnote, I have quoted this among a number of similar passages, which in Blanc's opinion lead one to the conclusion that Dante somewhat relished such-like play of words as *voler . . . voler*, and *piacer mio per piacerli*.

‡ *Trassi . . . la spugna*: Dante describes his unsatisfied desire for information as resembling a sponge which, taken out of the water too soon, is not fully saturated. Compare xxi, 1:—

"La sete natural che mai non sazia," et seq.

Dante also compares information incompletely recounted, to



Moosimi; e il Duca mio si mosse per li  
 Lochi spediti \* pur lungo la roccia, 5  
 Come si va per muro † stretto ‡ ai merli;  
 Chè la gente, che fonde a goccia a goccia  
 Per gli occhi il mal che tutto il mondo occúpa,§  
 Dall' altra parte in fuor troppo s' approccia.||

Against a will that is better the will strives in vain; therefore to please him (Pope Adrian), against my own pleasure I withdrew from the water my sponge (*i.e.* my desire for information) not filled. I moved on; and my Leader moved on over the spaces left vacant along the cliff-side, as on a wall one walks close up to the battlements: because those people (the spirits), who drop by drop pour forth through their eyes the ill which pervades all the world (*i.e.* Avarice or Cupidity), approach too near to the outer edge on the side (of the Cornice).

Benvenuto observes that Avarice carries its own punishment with it, costing a vast amount of toil and tears.

the shuttle of a loom that has not been drawn right up to the head. See *Par.* iii, 94-96:—

“Coel fec’ io con atto e con parola,  
 Per apprender da lei qual fu la tela  
 Onde non trasse infino a co’ la spola.”

\* *Lochi spediti*: *Spediti* here is equivalent to *non impediti, liberi*, and Tommaséo explains the words: “dove non erano anime di purgati distese a terra.”

† *Stretto*: By this is to be understood the wall of a mediocrity, on the top of which a footway ran, so that one could walk close up to the battlements.

‡ *Stretto*: Not an adjective with the signification of “narrow,” but an adverb, meaning “close up to.”

§ *il mal che tutto il mondo occúpa*: In *Inf.* vi, 74-75, Dante mentions Avarice, the sin alluded to here, in company with Envy, enkindling all hearts in Florence:—

“Superbia, invidia ed avarizia sono  
 Le tre faville che hanno i cori accesi.”

|| *Approccia*: for *s’ approssima*. Tommaséo sees an allegory of the avaricious spirits lying so near the edge of the precipice, illustrating that their profitless life brings them very close to long destruction.



So unhappy is the covetous man, that whatever he fails to get hold of, he esteems a great calamity.

Dante now sternly inveighs against Avarice, which he likens to a she-wolf, and implores the aid of Heaven against so ferocious a wild beast, and again, as in *Inf.* i, 99-101, invokes the advent of that mysterious personage who is to put her to flight.

Maledetta sie tu, antica \* lupa, 10  
 Che più che tutte l' altre bestie hai preda, †  
 Per la tua fame senza fine cupa ‡  
 O ciel, nel cui girar § par che si creda  
 Le condizion di quaggiù trasmutarsi,  
 Quando verrà per cui questa disceda ? 15

\* *antica*: The lusting after illusive benefits seduced our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Avarice and Cupidity therefore are as old as the world itself, or at all events as old as Man.

† *più che tutte . . . hai preda*: St. Paul (1 Tim. vi, 10) says that the love of money is the root of all evil. Compare St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>de</sup>, qu. lv, art. 8: "Præcipuè autem inter alias virtutes morales usus rationis reetæ apparet in justitiâ, quæ est in appetitu rationali. Et ided usus rationis indebitus etiam maximè apparet in vitiis oppositis justitiæ; opponitur autem ipsi maximè avaritia. Et ided prædicta vitia maximè ex avaritiâ oriuntur."

‡ *cupa*: *Cupo* is more generally known as signifying "dark," but the word is quite as much used as meaning "deep, bottomless, boundless," and therefore "dark because deep." Compare *Par.* iii, 122-123, where Piccarda de' Donati is described as fading from Dante's view, as something heavy sinking in deep water:—

"e cantando vanio

Come per acqua cupa cosa grave."

Compare also Tasso, *Ger. Liber.* x, st. 2:—

"Della sua cupa fame anco non sazio."

*Cupa* there means "insatiable."

§ *O ciel, nel cui girar*, et seq.: Compare *Purg.* xvi, 67 et seq., and *Conv.* ii, 14, ll. 27-36: "quanto alla prima perfezione, cioè della generazione sustanziale, tutti li filosofi concordano che i cieli sono cagione; avvegnachè diversamente questo pongano; quali dai motori . . . quali da esse stelle . . . e quali da virtù celestiale, che è nel calore naturale del seme."





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same. The Wolf in this Cornice is cursed by Dante for being the cause of the torments of the Avaricious, and therefore the Wolf is Avarice, and consequently the Wolf, in *Inf.* i, is also certainly a figure of Avarice.

As Dante picks his way among these prostrate spirits, who are lamenting and weeping aloud in their godly penitence, he hears one of them\* adducing examples of voluntary poverty and liberality, which are the virtues most opposed to Avarice.

Noi andavam con passi lenti e scarsi,  
 Ed io attento all' ombre ch' io sentia  
 Pietosamente piangere e lagnarsi :  
 E per ventura udi' : †—“ Dolce Maria ” :—  
 Dinanzi a noi chiamar così nel pianto,

20

---

\* The spirit that speaks is not that of King Hugh Capet, but that of his father, Hugh Capet, Duke of France and Count of Paris, better known as Hugh the Great. But, as will be seen at different points further on, Dante evidently shifts his allusions from one to the other in a way that is very confusing. Pasquier, in his *Recherches de la France*, p. 452, describes him as both valiant and prudent, and says that, although he was never king, yet was he a maker and unmaker of kings. He died in 956. His name is said to have been more accurately Huon Chapet, some say, because when at school he was always pulling off other little boys' caps. Ducange, *Gloss.* under *Capetus*, repeats this story from an old chronicle, but ascribes the name, with more probability, to the hood or cowl which Hugh was in the habit of wearing.

† *per ventura udi'* : “ Non imagini o voci recate da fuori, insegnano la meditazione a queste anime ; ma proteste e chiuse in sè, come le vedemmo, propongono a sè medesime i tipi da meditare, e nella meditazione cotanto s' infiammano, che già veggono e odono i personaggi meditati, e con essi parlando, benedicono durante il giorno in dolci parole a' buoni e nella notte maledicono a' rei. Così coll' aurora si vien rinfrescando l' amoroso sentimento della virtù, e col sorgere dell' ombre cresce l' orrore al vizio : nella luce del giorno contemplasi il bene, e s' ascende nelle liete speranze ; tra il bujo della notte l' anima è sopraffatta dall' aspetto del male, e si chiude più addentro nel dolore.” (Perez, *I Sette Cerchi*, p. 202.)



Come fa donna che in partorir sia ; \*  
 E seguitar :—“ Povera fosti tanto,  
 Quanto veder si può per quell' ospizio, †  
 Ove sponesti il tuo portato santo.”—

With slow and measured steps we went along, and I attentive to the shades that I could hear weeping piteously and lamenting: and by chance I heard: “O blessed Mary,” ‡ cried out in front of us amidst the wailing, even as a woman does who is in labour; and, in continuance: “How poor thou wast can well be seen by that (lowly) hostelry, where thou didst lay down thy sacred burden.”

And for fear, says Benvenuto, that anyone might say: Ah! but it is not everyone who could endure the inconveniences of poverty like the Virgin Mary, Dante brings forward another example of sober poverty in a virtuous heathen, Fabricius Caius Luscinus, whose whole life was a protest against greed of gain. When he was censor he had banished P. Cornelius Rufinus for his luxury and prodigality. He refused the gifts offered him by the Samnites, and the bribes of Pyrrhus,

\* *Come fa donna che in partorir sia*: Venturi (*Similitudini Dante, Simil. 304, p. 176*) exclaims upon the beauty and grace of this simile; for in the spirits of the Avaricious the bitterness of their grief is compensated by the sacred joy of a blessing that is yet afar off; even as it is with a woman in her first heart, from the chaste thought of becoming a mother. Compare St. John xvi, 21.

† *quell' ospizio*: The stable at Bethlehem where the Blessed Virgin laid our Lord in a manger.

‡ Perez (p. 203) observes that the first words of benediction are addressed to Mary, blessed, though of low estate, in the humble place of refuge in which she gives birth to Jesus. And this spirit who piteously sighs, as he lies face downwards on the ground, and who calls upon Kings and Queens to fall down in reverence before the lowly cot where the Queen of Angels offers to Man the newly born King of the Universe, this spirit was one of the rich and mighty upon earth, Hugh Capet, of France, the progenitor of one of the most illustrious royal houses in the world.



and died so poor that he had to be buried at the public expense, and the Romans were obliged to give a dowry to his daughters. Virgil (*Æneid*, vi, 844), calls him "powerful in poverty." Dante extols him in the *Convivio*, iv, 5.

Seguentemente intesi :—" O buon Fabbrizio,\* 25  
 Con povertà volesti anzi virtute,  
 Che gran ricchezza posseder con vizio."—

Thereafter heard I: " O good Fabricius, thou didst choose virtue with poverty, rather than to possess great wealth with wickedness."

Dante probably had reason to hope that he might with this spirit enter into a profitable conversation which would not be so abruptly broken off as the last one had been with Adrian. Hugh Capet at once proceeds to tell Dante a story of the noble liberality of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia, whose body is entombed at Bari. Of him Benvenuto observes: " Here the Poet brings forward an example of noble generosity in a few short clear words; how the holy Nicholas, having lost his parents, wished to spend his money on

\* *Fabbrizio*: Compare *Conv.* iv, 5, ll. 107-110: " E chi dirà che fosse senza divina spirazione, Fabrizio infinita quasi moltitudine d' oro rifiutare, per non volere abbandonare sua patria? " And *De Mon.* ii, 5, l. 90: " Nonne Fabricius altum nobis dedit exemplum avaritiæ resistendi, quum pauper existens, pro fide qua Reipublicæ tenebatur auri grande pondus oblatum derisit, ac derisum, verba sibi convenientia fundens, despexit et refutavit? Huius etiam memoriam confirmavit Poeta noster in sexto (Virg. *Æn.* vi, 844-5), cum caneret ' parvoque potentem Fabricium.' " And Petrarch, *Trionfo della Fama*, cap. i, terz. 19:—

" Un Curio ed un Fabrizio, assai più belli  
 Con la lor povertà, che Mida o Crasso  
 Con l' oro, ond' a virtù furon ribelli."

I note that in the *Divina Commedia* Dante spells *Fabbrizio* with two b's, and in the *Convivio* with only one; but this may be only the mistake of a copyist.





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These words were so pleasing to me that I moved a little farther on, to get knowledge of that spirit, from whom they seemed to come. He went on to speak of the liberality that Nicholas showed to the three damsels, so as to guide their young life to honour.

*Division II.*—Dante, finding that all the other spirits on this Cornice are silent, and that that of Hugh Capet alone has spoken, asks him who he is, who brings back to Dante's recollection these beautiful instances from sacred and profane history of voluntary poverty and open-handed liberality. Dante offers, as a return for such information to speak a good word for his reputation, and enlist the intercessions of his surviving descendants.

—“ O anima che tanto ben favelle,\*

Dimmi chi fosti,”—dissi,—“ e perchè sola

35

In queste degne lode rinnovelle ?

Non fia senza mercè la tua parola,

S' io ritorno † a compier lo cammin corto

Di quella vita che al termine vola.”—

quod, cum ejus civis egens tres filias nobiles in matrimonio collocare non posset, earumque pudicitiam prostituere cogitaret, re cognita, Nicolaus noctu per fenestram tantum pecuniæ in ejus domum injecit, quantum unius doti satis esset : quod cum iterum et tertio fecisset, tres illae virgines honestis viris in matrimonium datae sunt.” See also St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* pars. ii, 2<sup>a</sup>, qu. 107, art 3.

\* *tanto ben favelle* : Fraticelli (1864), followed by Tommaseo (1869), and Scartazzini (1875), is of opinion that *ben* must be taken here as a substantive, not as an adverb, and begs one to compare ll. 121-124 of this Canto:—

“ Però al ben che il dì ci si ragiona,

Dianzi non er' io sol ; mai qui da presso

Non alzava la voce altra persona.”

In the *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *bene*, (subst.) § 17: “ Della Parola. Parlare e tacere il bene—Predicarlo, Annunziarlo *O anima, che tanto ben favelle*, cioè, tanti beni della povertà generosa rammenti. Più bello farlo Sostantivo che Avverbio.”

† *S' io ritorno* : Others, among whom is Witte, read *S' io ritornoi*.



"O soul," said I, "who relatest so much that is excellent (*i.e.* such holy examples) tell me who thou wast, and why thou art the only one to renew these well deserved praises (*i.e.* of Mary, of Fabricius, and of St. Nicholas)? Without requital thy speech (if thou repliest) shall not remain, if I return to finish the short journey of that life, which is speeding on to the end."

Hugh Capet replies, and tells Dante that, if he enlightens him about what Dante wants to know, he does so for the sake of a human being so marvellously favoured by God while yet alive. He declines Dante's proffered good offices. It would hardly seem indeed that he could stand in need of them, for he had died in 956, nearly 350 years before, and his purgation must have been, at the time of Dante's meeting him, nearly at its completion. Before telling Dante his name, Hugh Capet confesses that he is the founder of a race of kings so degenerate, that they are a disgrace to Christendom.

Ed egli :—“ Io 'l ti dirò, non per conforto \* 40  
 Ch' io attenda di là, ma perchè tanta  
 Grazia in te luce prima che sii morto.  
 Io fui radice della mala pianta, †  
 Che la terra cristiana tutta aduggia ‡  
 Sì che buon frutto rado se ne schianta. 45

\* *conforto*: Before meaning "consolation," *conforto* has the sense "Alleggiamento del dolore cagionato da infermità, o da disgrazie." (*Ono Diz.*) Ozanam translates it here "soulagement," and I therefore take it in the sense of actual relief to Hugh from torment, rather than mental consolation.

† *mala pianta*: Tommaséo says that in Dante's time the Capetians held sway in France, Spain and Naples; the Guelph family in Modena, in Brunswick, and elsewhere.

‡ *Che la terra cristiana tutta aduggia*: On this, and the preceding line, Gioberti writes: "Non si potrebbe dipinger più acerbamente la dinastia de' Borboni. Quanto Dante adorava l' Imperatore, tanto conveniva che odiasse il Re di Francia. Nota come già a



And he: "I will tell thee, not for any relief that I can expect from yonder world (through my descendants), but because so large a measure of (divine) grace shines forth in thee before that thou art dead. I was the root of that malignant tree (the Capetian dynasty), which casts its (evil) shadow over the whole Christian world, so that good fruit is seldom gathered from it.

"And yet," says Benvenuto, "there were some illustrious kings of that line, such as St. Louis, and Charles of Anjou, his brother, and this family down to the present time (Benvenuto wrote about 1375) is most powerful *in our west*, where there are such men as the King of France, [Charles V, the Wise, 1364-80]; the King of Navarre [probably Charles the Bad]; the King of Hungary, [Louis the Great, 1370]; the Queen of Apulia [probably daughter of the Emperor Charles IV]."

Hugh goes on to prove what he has said about the degeneracy of his descendants, by alluding to the reigning King, Philip the Fair. Dante makes Hugh speak of Philip's expulsion from Flanders as an unlikely impossibility, whereas it was already historically an accomplished fact, or at all events the series of events had commenced in 1297, which culminated in the battle of Courtrai on 25th March, 1302.

Milman (*Latin Christianity*, xi, ch. 8, p. 176), says:

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quei tempi la Francia esercitasse un certo dominio, e una certa prepotenza su tutta Europa; il che Dante indica dicendo che la Francia è una mala pianta che aduggia tutta la cristiana terra, e impedendole il beneficio del Sole, fa che rado se ne schianti buon frutto. Il Petrarca pensava su questo tutto l'opposto di Dante; e benchè inveisse contro tutte le armi straniere, non disse però la francese, ma la tedesca rabbia. Nota però che se Dante è acerbo alla dinastia dei Re di Francia, non lo però è al popolo francese. Quel poeta della virtù che dicca tutto il mondo essergli patria potea condannare per le male sue geste una peculiare famiglia anche di monarchi, ma non un'intera nazione."





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philosophie de l'histoire. Au XXe chant du *Purgatoire*, c'est le tour de la France; et il importe de connaître ce que le poète pensa des destinées de notre pays; ce qu'était la France hors de chez elle, dans l'opinion de ses voisins, de ses ennemis, de ceux qu'elle avait vaincus."

Ma, se Doagio,\* Lilla, Guanto, e Bruggia  
Potesser, tosto ne saria vendetta;  
Ed io la cheggio a lui che tutto giuggia.†

But, if Douai, Lille, Ghent, and Bruges had the power, there would soon be vengeance for it, and I implore it from Him who judges all things.

Hugh now names himself, and at the same time alludes

\* *Ma, se Doagio, Lilla, Guanto, e Bruggia, et seq.* On this *terzina*, Ozanam writes: "Guerres de Flandre. Philippe le Bel contre Guy de Dampierre. Le roi gagne une partie des communes. Bataille de Furnes, Philippe vainqueur réunit la Flandre à la couronne, la traite en pays conquis. Trente chefs de métiers dans la prison de Bruges. Pierre König, consul des tisserands, et Jean Beide, consul des bouchers, délivrés de leur prison, entrent dans Bruges, soulèvent le peuple, toute la Flandre est en armes. Bataille de Courtray, 11 Juillet, 1302. Les Français y perdent six mille cavaliers, le connétable et la fleur de la noblesse de France. En 1304 revanche de Mous-en-Puelle; paix avec les Flamands. Ils abandonnent à Philippe Lille et Douai. Il semble que Dante ait écrit ce chant entre 1302 et 1304. Mais l'allusion aux Templiers nous renvoi à 1307." See also the *Ottimo* on this passage.

† *giuggia*: Gioberti observes that this is "un francesismo *posto in bocca a un francese.*" Nannucci (*Analisi Critica*, 147-8) quotes from the Provençal poem on Boëthius:—

"El Capitoli lendema (*l'indomani*) al dia clar,  
Lai o solien las autras leis jutjar."

And Nannucci adds that from *jutjar* is derived the *giuggiare* of certain Italian writers. He quotes two passages from Fra Guittone where the word occurs:—

"Non poria meo fallor giuggiarsi bene;"

and

"Ahi lasso or foss' io in corte,  
Ove uomo giuggiasse  
Chi ver d' amor fallasse in pena forte."



to the number of his descendants whose names were either Philip or Louis.

Chiamato fui di là Ugo Ciapetta :

Di me son nati i Filippi e i Luigi,

Per cui novellamente Francia è retta.

Figlio fu' io d' un beccaio di Parigi.

50

I was called Hugh Capet yonder (on earth); of me are born the Philips and the Louises by whom in recent times France has been ruled. I was the son of a butcher of Paris.

For two centuries and a half, that is from 1060 to 1316, there was either a Louis or a Philip on the throne of France.\* Hugh Capet was the son of Hugh the Great, Duke of France, Burgundy, and Aquitaine, and Count of Paris and of Orleans, but legends were ever busy to make him out something different from what he really was. Ozanam divides these legends into three classes.

(A) *Religious legend.* This made Hugh descend from St Arnoul, and relates how St. Valéry appeared to him and enjoined him to restore to religion the monastery

\* The succession was as follows:—

Hugh Capet, Duke of France,	died 956.
Hugh Capet, King of France,	died 996.
Robert II,	died 1031.
Henry I,	died 1060.
Philip I,	died 1108.
Louis VI (the Fat),	died 1137.
Louis VII (the Young),	died 1180.
Philip II, Augustus, (the Conqueror),	died 1223.
Louis VIII (the Lion),	died 1226.
Louis IX (Saint Louis),	died 1270.
Philip III (the Bold),	died 1285.
Philip IV (the Fair),	died 1314.
Louis X (the Quarrelsome),	died 1316.
Philip V (the Long),	died 1322.



of St. Valéry, which had been desecrated, and promised him, in requital, that by his intercessions and prayers he would get Hugh made King of France, and that his heirs should reign down to the seventh generation.

(B) *Royal legend.* According to this fable, Hugh was lineally descended from Charlemagne. This legend prevailed down to the time of Louis XI, and in 1478, when the action at law of that monarch against the Archduchess of Austria was pleaded before the Pope, the ambassadors of Louis XI gave assurance that it was their King's great boast and glory that he was the true, legitimate and undoubted successor of Charlemagne, and it was replied to them that the fact could not be denied.

(C) *Popular legend.*\* This was the popular fallacy

\* Ozanam quotes from "*Le Chanson de Geste Hugues de Capet MS. du quinzième siècle. (Arsenal. Le fond très ancien, dernier remaniment au treizième siècle).*" This poem was first printed by the Marquis de la Grange, Paris, 1864.

"Ce fu Huez Capetz, c' on appelle bouchier,  
 Ce fut voirs mais moult pou'en savoit du métier  
 . . . ly peres Huon que je vous dis  
 Sire fu d'une ville qui ot non Bougenis;  
 Sages fu et soutis, et si estoit toudis  
 A Paris a le court du fort rois Louis . . .  
 Or ama par amour ly chevalier nouris  
 Une gente pucelle qui ot non Béatrix,  
 Tante estoit belle et douce; car si en fu surpris  
 Li nobles chevalier qui son cuer y ot mis  
 Qui le fist demander a donc par ses amis  
 Au père la pucelle qui d'avoir fu garnis;  
 Bouchier fu li plus riche de trestout le pais."

The chronicle represents Hugh at sixteen years old having dissipated his fortune, and coming to Paris to ask assistance from his uncle Simon le Boucher.

"' Biaux niez,' dist ly bourgeois, ' nous vous responderon  
 Je n' ai fil ne fille de men generasion . . .  
 Ou demeurez chécns sy vous aprendron





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Trovaimi stretto nelle mani il freno

55

Del governo del regno, e tanta possa

Di nuovo acquisto, e sì d' amici pieno,

Charles of Lorraine walked about in the grey dress of a subject, having been stripped of his royal purple. But as I have pointed out in my *Readings on the Inferno*, 2nd ed., vol ii, p. 396, footnote, *maltra*, in the weighty opinion of Nannucci, means by itself *farsi* *jak*, and Dante here distinctly makes Hugh refer to *one* survivor of the dynasty who was a monk. Now, Charles of Lorraine, whom we have just mentioned, never did become a monk. According to *Quana*, at the assembly at Senlis, he was very severely reproved by Adalbéron, Archbishop of Rheims, for generally lacking kingly qualities, for his servility to a foreign sovereign, and lastly for being married a woman who was not of royal blood: The Archbishop said: "Nous n'ignorons pas que Charles a ses défauts qui soutiennent qu'il doit arriver au trône du chef de sa parenté. Mais s'il faut examiner ce point, le trône ne s'acquiesce point par droit héréditaire, et l'on ne doit élever à la royauté que celui qui se distingue non-seulement par la noblesse d'origine, mais par la sagesse de l'esprit, celui que l'honneur accompagne, que la magnanimité rend inébranlable. . . . Quelle dignité pouvons-nous conférer à Charles que l'honneur ne gouverne pas, que l'orgueil énerve, qui s'est dégradé au point de mériter point horreur de servir un roi étranger et de se mésallier avec une femme de l'ordre des vassaux. Comment le puissant duc (Hugh Capet) souffrirait-il qu'une femme issue du sang de ses ennemis devint reine et dominât sur lui? Comment courberait-il la tête devant celle dont les pères et même les supérieurs se courbaient le genou devant lui et posent les mains sous ses pieds. . . . Si vous voulez le malheur de la république, créez Charles souverain; si vous la voulez prospère, couronnez Hugues, l'illustre et . . . . Donnez-vous donc ce chef illustre par ses actions, par sa sagesse, par les forces dont il dispose. Vous trouverez en lui un défenseur, non-seulement de la chose publique, mais des intérêts privés. Par sa bienveillance vous aurez en lui un père. Qui en est recourut à lui et n'y trouva point protection? Qui, demandant du secours des siens, ne leur a point été rendu par lui?" Philobates has little doubt that Dante has confused the king of the Carlovingians with the last of the Merovingians. Childeric III was the last of these latter, and he really did become a monk after his deposition in 752. So that although the *uno* of whom Dante speaks here is historically Charles of Lorraine, it is not easy to determine whether Dante intended to speak of him or of some other prince. The *Ottimo* thinks this unnamed king to be Rudolph, who became a monk, and afterwards Archbishop of Rheims. Bevenuto gives no name, but says "only a monk



Ch' alla corona vedova promossa  
 La testa di mio figlio \* fu, dal quale  
 Cominciâr di costor le sacrate ossa.†

When the ancient kings (the Carlovingian dynasty) had all passed away, save one, who had taken orders in grey vestments, I found fast in my hands the reins of the government of the kingdom, and so great a power from my new possessions, and such an array of friends, that the head of my son was promoted to the widowed (*i.e.* vacant) crown, and from him the consecrated bones (*i.e.* the anointed line of the Capets), took their descent.

Hugh now goes on to tell Dante of the evil deeds wrought by his descendants through Avarice. He begins by speaking of their first avaricious annexation. All the ancient Commentators (according to Ozanam

in poor coarse garments." Buti states the same. Daniello thinks it was "some Franciscan, perhaps St. Louis!" forgetting that St. Louis did not see the light for some two centuries afterwards—nor did the Order of St. Francis exist then. Biagioli decides that it must be either Charles the Simple, who died a prisoner in the Castle of Péronne in 922; or Louis d'Outre-Mer, who was carried to England by Hugh the Great in 936. The Man in cloth of grey says Longfellow, remains as great a mystery as the man in the Iron Mask.

\* *la testa di mio figlio*: Philalèthes feels sure that Dante has shifted about his allusions from Hugh Capet the father to Hugh the son, without any very accurate discrimination. It is evidently Hugh the son who is speaking, as the preceding lines show, but Scartazzini points out that Dante cannot have been very well versed in the genealogies of those times. It is known that Hugh Capet (the son) had his son, Robert I, crowned in the year after his own election. Ozanam asserts this: "Selon la chronique de Saint Martial de Limoges, Hugues refusa de porter le diadème. Mais, voulant assurer la succession au trône, il veut faire couronner son fils Robert."

† *le sacrate ossa*: Supposing *mio figlio*, then, to be Robert I son of King Hugh Capet, these lines would mean that with him commenced the line of Capetian kings, whose bones, Scartazzini says, mean their persons, which were consecrated with holy Unction by the Archbishop in the Cathedral of Rheims at their coronation, and hence the term *le sacrate ossa*.





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Lì\* cominciò con forza e con menzogna  
 La sua rapina ; e poscia, per ammenda,  
 Pontì e Normandia prese e Guascogna.†  
 Carlo † venne in Italia, e, per ammenda,

The reproach, the dishonour, of Hugh Capet's supposed low of  
 This latter signification will be found in the *Gran Dizionario*,  
*vergogna, par. 4*: "*Biasimo grande, Vituperio*," in which  
 it is used occasionally by Boccaccio and Petrarch. But  
 Tommaséo, the author also of the *Dizionario*, points out, Hugh  
 self had married a sister of the Emperor Otho I, and before the  
 of St. Louis, who was the first to seize Provence, there had  
 eight kings all allied to the first houses of Europe. All th  
 considered, the interpretation (a), which I follow, is much t  
 preferred.

\* *Lì* is here not an adverb of place, but of time. See  
*Gran Dizionario, s.v. lì, adverb, § 3*: "*Lì trovasi anche*  
*avverbio, riferente tempo, cagione, o altra cosa detta inn*  
*usandosi invece di pronome, come di altre simili part*  
*avverbiali si costuma.*" Compare *Par. xiv, 128-129*:—

Che infino a lì non fu alcuna cosa  
 Che mi legasse con sì dolci vinci."

† *Pontì e Normandia prese e Guascogna*: Normandy had  
 taken from King John in 1202; Gascony, Guienne and Pont  
 had been formally ceded by Edward I to Philip the Fair in  
 with a secret understanding, afterwards repudiated, that  
 cession was only a formal one. Guienne was recovered in

‡ *Carlo . . . Vittima fe' di Corradino*: Conradin, son of  
 Emperor Conrad IV, when only 16 years old, was captured  
 his defeat at the battle of Tagliacozzo, and imprisoned in  
 Castel dell' Uovo at Naples. By order of Charles of Anjou  
 was afterwards beheaded in the public square of Naples in  
 He was the last of the Hohenstaufens, and in him that  
 illustrious line became extinct. A graphic account of his end  
 be read in Milman, *Lat. Christ. xi, 3*. Benvenuto says that  
 Charles's best friends and counsellors repudiated the act.  
 not this Charles receive unpunished Guy de Montfort, who  
 slain a kinsman of the King of England, even "in the bosom  
 God"? (i.e. in sanctuary. See *Inf. xii*). Did he not condemn  
 perpetual imprisonment Henry, brother of the King of Spain  
 own kinsman, for some sum of money that he would not pa  
 him? Benvenuto adds that a just Judge inflicted heavy adve  
 on Charles before his death, for, just when he seemed at  
 zenith of his success in arms, he saw the rebellion in Sicily  
 the captivity of his son, whom his victorious adversary Pedro  
 Aragon might well have slain, to revenge Conradin, had he ch  
 to so abuse his victory, 1284. And Charles died of grief, w  
 his son was still in prison.



Vittima fe' di Corradino ; e poi  
Ripinse al ciel Tommaso,\* per ammenda.

So long as the great dowry of Provence had not deprived my race of the sense of shame, it was not good for much, but at least it did no harm. Then began its rapine both by violence and fraud: and afterwards, for amends, took Ponthieu, and Normandy and Gascony. Charles came into Italy, and, for amends made a victim of Conradin; and then again, for amends, drove Thomas (Aquinas) back to Heaven.

Three Charleses are mentioned in this Canto: 1. Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, who had Conradin beheaded, and possibly poisoned Thomas Aquinas; 2. Charles of Valois, surnamed *Sans Terre*, brother of Philippe le Bel, who used the *lancia con la qual giostrò Ginda*; 3. Charles II, surnamed *le Boiteux*, of Naples and Apulia, son of Charles of Anjou, and father of Dante's friend Charles Martel, the titular King of Hungary mentioned in *Par.* viii. This Charles II was taken prisoner in a naval action off Naples, in 1284, by Ruggieri di Lauria, Admiral of Pedro of Aragon. He was imprisoned four years, and was not restored to his throne till 1288, three years after his father Charles

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\* *Ripinse al ciel Tommaso*: Dean Plumptre remarks that the story of St. Thomas Aquinas having been poisoned by order of Charles of Anjou, 1274, has fallen into such discredit, that it is not even mentioned in the current biographies of the great Dominican Doctor. In Dante's time, however, it was currently believed throughout Italy, and is mentioned by Villani, and by all the early Commentators. Thomas had lived some years at Naples, and had been much respected by the King, at all events outwardly. On his departure to attend Gregory X at a Council at Lyons, the King asked him what he should report of him. "I shall tell the truth," was the answer. This alarmed Charles, and it is said that he commissioned a physician to follow and poison him at the Cistercian Monastery of Fossa Nuova, near Terracina,



of Anjou had died. It was he who accepted a large bribe to give his daughter in marriage to Azzo d' Este.

Having spoken of Charles of Anjou, Hugh Capet goes on to speak of the second Charles. This is Charles of Valois (*Sans Terre*), who was summoned into Italy by Boniface VIII, in 1301, on pretence of being a pacificator, to settle the disorders of Florence. Dante's opposition to his intervention led to his own banishment, as well as that of the other *Bianchi*.

Tempo vegg' io,\* non molto dopo ancoi,† 70  
 Che tragge un altro Carlo ‡ fuor di Francia,  
 Per far conoscer § meglio e sè e i suoi.  
 Senz' arme || n' esce solo, e con la lancia  
 Con la qual giostrò Giuda; e quella punta  
 Sì, ch' a Fiorenza fa scoppiar la pancia. 75

\* *Tempo vegg' io*: Scartazzini remarks that Dante, according to his usual custom, is here as it were prophetically describing events that had occurred subsequent to A.D. 1300 as though they were yet to take place.

† *ancoi* or *anchoi*, akin to *Hoc* or *Hâc die*. The *Gran Dizionario* says that this form is still found in the Trentino and in Venetia in the cognate form *ancuo*. But the *Dizionario* lays stress on *ancoi* meaning rather "in the present time, nowadays," than "on this very day." It is used once again in the *D. C.* Compare *Purg.* xiii, 52, 53:—

"Non credo che per terra vada ancoi  
 Uomo sì duro."

‡ *tragge un altro Carlo*: "tragge è qui azione del tempo; Carlo ne è l' accusativo, non il nominativo." (Gioberti.) *Traggere* is one of the several forms of *trurre*. See Nannucci, *Analisi Critica*, pp. 719-724.

§ *Per far conoscer*: Buti on this: "imperò che per le sue viziate opere fece cognoscere sè vizioso e quelli de la casa sua, mellio che non avea fatto l' altro Carlo suo zio, conte di Provenza e re di Puglia e di Sicilia."

|| *Senz' arme* is *senza esercito*. "Nel detto anno 1301 del mese di Settembre, giunse nella città d' Alagna in Campagna, ov' era Bonifazio colla sua corte, messer Carlo conte di Valos e fratello del re di Francia con più conti e baroni, e da cinquecento cavalieri franceschi in sua compagnia." (*Giov. Villani*, viii, 49.)





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Charles (I) of Anjou, whom he succeeded. The previously mentioned Charles de Valois was his brother-in-law, having married his sister, Charles of Anjou's daughter.

L' altro,\* che già uscì preso di nave,  
 Veggio vender sua figlia, e patteggiarne, 80  
 Come fanno i corsar dell' altre schiave.

\* *L' altro* : Ozanam (*Le Purgatoire de Dante*, pp. 328-330) says that this passage is "*Vengeance du poète.*" He adds: "Toutes les colères de Dante contre la France n'attestent que mieux sa grandeur. La France succédait à l'Empire dans la mission de gardienne de la chrétienté . . . Nous savons maintenant pourquoi Dante poursuit d'un ressentiment si implacable la race de Hugues Capet et ce royaume de France dont l'ombre malfaisante menaçait, disait-il, de couvrir tout l'univers. Nous avons vu comment la France succédait à l'Empire dans la tutelle de la chrétienté. Cette grande pensée de Charlemagne ou plutôt de Léon III, cette inspiration hardie de relever l'empire romain, de le régénérer par l'esprit catholique et d'en confier la garde à l'épée des Germains, ce dessein, poursuivi pendant 450 ans, périsait par la faute des empereurs d'Allemagne, par la querelle des investitures, par le schisme de Frédéric Barberousse, par l'apostasie de Frédéric II, devenu l'ennemi public du christianisme. La décadence de l'Empire était complète. Rodolphe de Habsbourg réduit à raccommoder son pourpoint gris; Albert d'Autriche en guerre avec les pâtres de la Suisse; les équipages de Charles IV arrêtés par les bouchers de Worms; Wenceslas déposé pour avoir manqué de protéger la paix de l'Eglise, diminué l'Empire, donné des blancs-seings et fait coucher des chiens dans sa chambre. Pendant ce temps là, grandeur croissante de la France. Le nom de Saint Louis couvrait la faiblesse de ses descendants. Dans sa maison était venus se réunir les couronnes de Navarre, de Sicile, de Hongrie. Des princes d'origine française régnaient en Chypre et en Portugal, et le souvenir de l'Empire latin de Constantinople n'était pas effacé. La France, qui avait pris la défense du saint-siège et la conduite des croisades, semblait donc appelée à cette monarchie universelle, idéal de tous les publicistes contemporains. Les craintes du poète n'avaient donc rien de chimerique. Et comment n'eut-il pas poussé le cri du patriotisme irrité quand il voyait commencer l'exécution de ces desseins? Comment n'eut-il pas été blessé dans toutes ses convictions politiques, lui l'auteur du traité de *Monarchia*, où il s'efforçait d'établir la perpétuité de la monarchie universelle chez les empereurs d'Allemagne, en voyant



We must remember that at that time the whole coast of Italy was subject to the depredations of Saracen corsairs, who used to seize maidens and sell them for slaves in the East. Benvenuto tells us, that in 1284, while Charles of Anjou had gone into Provence, to collect troops to revenge the massacre of the French at the Sicilian Vespers, he had particularly charged his son Charles, who is mentioned in the above lines (79-81), not on any account to be drawn into any action by sea or by land during his absence. Ruggieri d' Oria, a most distinguished naval commander of Pedro, King of Aragon, knowing this, came with a great fleet to Naples, and even entered the port, shooting missiles into the city, and urging Charles the younger to come out. Ruggieri well knew that Charles of Anjou was already off Pisa with a great fleet on his way back from Provence.

---

Charles de Valois, sénateur de Rome, marié à l'héritière de l'empire de Constantinople, porter la main sur la Toscane, sur cette cité vierge de Florence qui avait fermé ses portes aux empereurs ? ~~Est-ce~~ comment ne pas excuser la colère de l'exilé ? Mais la colère est mauvaise conseillère ; elle aveugla Dante à ce point, que ce ~~peut~~ des vivants et des morts, cet historien de tous les siècles, ne ~~semble~~ pas s'être aperçu de saint Louis. Il connaît les affaires du monde, il n'oublie ni les khans des Tartares, ni les princes d'Angleterre, ni les querelles des plus petits seigneurs de Lombardie et de Romagne. Il ne peut ignorer le nom de saint Louis, qui ~~ne~~ d'être mis sur ~~les autels~~ ; mais il ne comprend pas, il ne veut ~~pas~~ comprendre la destinée héroïque d'un prince qui porta si haut la monarchie française ; mémorable exemple de l'injustice des passions politiques. Deux grandes âmes traversent le même siècle sans se connaître, pour nous apprendre à croire à la vertu, et à la gloire dans d'autres rangs que les nôtres, et, sans désertir notre



Charles the younger fell into the trap, and embarked with all his chief officers and engaged d' Oria. Like the King of Syria, in battle with Ahab, who said to his chief captains, "Fight neither with great nor small, but only with the King of Israel," so did d' Oria order his captains that their chief duty was to capture young Charles and only to attack that galley which bore the royal standard. The result satisfied his expectations. The youth was captured with nine long ships, and with all his great officers of state, who were utterly useless in a naval action. He was taken to Messina. Two hundred of his nobles were slain with the sword to requite the death of Conradin, but young Charles was reserved with a few of his companions, and Benvenuto says he would certainly have been slain, had not Queen Constance (wife of King Pedro, and daughter of Manfred, who alludes to her, Canto iii, 115), ordered his life to be spared. The following day his father, Charles of Anjou, touched at Gaeta, and hearing the disastrous news, broke out into a great explosion of wrath against his son and said: "I wish he had died, rather than disobey my distinct orders." After four years' imprisonment, during which Charles the Elder had died, the younger Charles made peace with Pedro, and was restored to his kingdom in 1288. It was then that he gave his beautiful daughter Beatrice in marriage to Azzo, Marquis of Este, either for 30,000 or 100,000 florins, according to two different authorities, Azzo being much older than Beatrice, and of evil reputation.

Hugh cannot here repress an exclamation of indignation and reprobation of the conduct of so unworthy a descendant.

O avarizia, che puoi tu più farne,

Poscia'ch' hai lo mio sangue a te sì tratto,





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E tra vivi ladroni esser anciso. †

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\* *tra vivi ladroni esser anciso*: Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*, pp. 395-397) in disposing summarily of the variant *nuovi ladroni* says of it: "For in the case of the *ladroni* here intended, viz. Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna, the parallel with 'the thieves' so far fails, that though branded by Dante as *ladroni*, and though assisting at this 'crucifying afresh' of Christ in the person of His Vicar, yet they were not themselves sufferers, they were not put to death or injured in any way like the thieves to whom they are compared. This distinction is pointedly brought out by *vivi*, and so this epithet gives a fresh character to the scene . . . *vivi* would represent to us Boniface as it were crucified between Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna, who were standing on either side of him mocking and insulting him, yet still *vivi*." Dr. Moore adds that, though it does not bear on this reading, he cannot help mentioning the interesting points of resemblance between this whole passage and the prayer to the Virgin composed by Boniface VIII. This is given by Nannucci in his *Manuale della Letteratura*, vol. i, p. 421. The resemblance can scarcely be accidental, and it is most curious that Dante should have thus imitated a composition of his bitter enemy. It should be noted however that this occurs in the one passage in which he speaks of him with sympathy. Nannucci states that these verses were discovered by Girolamo Amati in an ancient MS. in the Vatican Library, wherein it is said that, in the fifteenth century, they could be seen in the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori Le Mura, with the following curious inscription: *Santo Bonifazio papa ottavo fece la infrascritta orazione, e concesse a chi la dicessi liberazione di morte subitanea*. A few of the verses are subjoined here:—

"Stava la Vergin sotto della cruce:  
 Vede a patir Jesu, la vera luce,  
 Madre del re di tutto l' universo.  
 Vede a il capo che stava inchinato,  
 E tutto il corpo ch' era tormentato  
 Per riscattar questo mondo perverso.  
 Vede lo figlio, che guarda e dice:  
 Oh! donna afflitta, amara ed infelice  
 Ecco il tuo figlio: e Joan le mostrava.  
 Vede l' aceto, ch' era col fiel misto,  
 Dato a bere al dolce Jesu Cristo,  
 E un gran coltello il cor le trapassava.  
 Vede lo figlio tutto passionato  
 Dicer colla Scrittura: è consumato:  
 Fiume di pianto dagli occhi diasserra:  
 E Cristo pate e muor tra le flagella."

Dr. Moore invites especial comparison between *Veggio*, four times repeated in Dante, and *Vede* and *Vede*, similarly recurring at



Veggio il nuovo Pilato \* sì crudele,  
 Che ciò nol sazia, ma, senza decreto,  
 Porta nel tempio le cupide vele. †

In order that the evil deeds (of my descendants) whether future or past may appear less atrocious, (I will tell thee that) I see the Fleur-de-lys enter into Alagna, and Christ Himself taken captive in the person of His Vicar (Boniface VIII). I see Him mocked a second time; I see renewed the vinegar and the gall, and Himself slain (once more) between living thieves. I see the modern Pilate (Philip IV) so relentless, that even this does not sate him, but without any legal authority he pushes on his covetous sails into the Temple.

In the following interesting passage, Ozanam (*Purgatoire*, pp. 330-332) discusses the relative demerits of Pope Boniface and the King of France:—

the beginning of four lines in Boniface's poem. Notice also the *ante* and the *fiel* or *sole* in both. He also thinks that the comparison of the sufferings of the Pope with those of our Lord may have been suggested by the Pope himself, who we are told by Milman (*et. c.*) awaited the arrival of his persecutors, sitting with calm dignity on his throne, and refusing to fly, saying: "If I am betrayed like Christ, I am ready to die like Christ."

\* *nuovo Pilato*: Dante applies this epithet to Philip the Fair, who delivered up Boniface VIII into the hands of his mortal enemies the Colonna, even as Pontius Pilate delivered up Our Lord to the Jews. In *Inf.* xix, 85-87, Dante styles Bertrand de Got, who purchased the Papacy by Simony, *Nuovo Jason*.

"Nuovo Jason sarà, di cui si legge  
 Ne' Maccabei: e come a quel fu molle  
 Suo re, così fia a lui chi Francia regge."

† *Bertrand de Got*, as Pope Clement V, was the subservient tool of Philip the Fair in his wicked deeds, among which was the unjustifiable destruction of the Knights Templars.

† *ante decreto, Porta nel tempio le cupide vele*: In 1314, Philip suppressed the Order of the Templars on a number of trumped-up charges. He seized on their Preceptories, their property and their persons, and, after putting them to the most inhuman tortures, obtained from Pope Clement V a reluctant assent to these illegal proceedings. Dante especially censures in these lines the absence of a fair trial, and the real motive of Philip's zeal against the Templars, which was his covetousness of their possessions.



“ Sur Boniface, qui avait fait trembler les rois, les évêques, les religieux et le peuple, fondirent tout coup la crainte et le tremblement, pour apprendre aux prélats à ne point dominer avec orgueil, mais à rendre le modèle de leur troupeau et à se faire moins craindre qu'aimer.

“ Mais que penser de Philippe le Bel, ce prince faiseur de monnayeur, entouré de légistes, ne travaillant qu'à accréditer la maxime de Pierre du Bois : ‘ Que la souveraine liberté du roi consiste à ne reconnaître aucun supérieur, mais à se faire obéir sans crainte d'aucune censure humaine, ’ qui fabrique une fausse bulle ; longtemps d'avance négocie clandestinement avec Colonna !

“ Dante fut trop sévère pour la mémoire de Boniface et au XIX<sup>e</sup> chant de *l'Enfer*, il lui marque sa place parmi les Simoniaques, mais non parmi les hérétiques ni les impies. Dante est l'ennemi politique de Boniface ; il croit lui devoir son exil, l'asservissement de sa patrie ; il l'accuse de fraude, de simonie, d'usurpation ; il se serait même, au XXVII<sup>e</sup> chant du *Paradis*, révoqué en doute la légitimité de ce pape. Mais en présence du crime d'Anagni, son âme catholique s'émeut ; il ne voit plus que le Christ captif en la personne de son vicaire. Il fait preuve une fois de plus de cette orthodoxie qu'on a vainement contestée. Ce grand homme crut ce que nous croyons ; il ne pensa pas qu'il y eût deux révolutions, une extérieure et chargée de fables pour les peuples, les femmes, les enfants, les petits, l'autre toute rationnelle pour le petit nombre des savants et des philosophes. Il ne pensa point se venger sur la papauté du tort que le gouvernement temporel d'un pays lui avait fait, ni s'en prendre au christianisme des fautes de





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Cornice, seems to care to renew these well deserved praises. That, we may remember, was the recalling to notice certain instances of voluntary poverty and great liberality.

Cid ch' io dicea di quell' unica sposa  
 Dello Spirito Santo, e che ti fece  
 Verso me volger per alcuna chiosa,  
 Tanto è risposta \* a tutte nostre prece,  
 Quanto il dì dura ; ma, quand' e' s' annotta,  
 Contrario suon t' prendemo in quella vece.

100

As to what I said of that one only Bride of the Holy Ghost (the Blessed Virgin), and which occasioned thee to turn to me for some explanation, that is the response to all our prayers for so long as the day lasts ; but, when night comes on, we take up the contrary sound instead of that.

The meaning of this is : These examples of virtuous persons, conspicuous for their voluntary poverty and liberality, as long as the day lasts, follow all our prayers, as though they were the natural answer to them ; but, when the night comes on, then we proclaim instead the evil examples of those who were friends of Avarice and Cupidity, and their just punishments. Liberality makes men to shine, Avarice makes them obscure.

Hugh next runs rapidly over several examples of the hateful sins of avaricious and covetous persons. First he mentions Pygmalion, the brother of Dido, who, through blind greed of gold, murdered her husband, Sichaeus, King of Tyre, and drove his sister an exile to Carthage.

---

\* *risposta* : Others read *disposto*.

† *Contrario suon* : Compare *Purg.* xiii, 40-42 :—

“ Lo fren vuol esser del contrario suono ;  
 Credo che l' udirai, per mio avviso,  
 Prima che giunghi al passo del perdono.”



Noi ripetiam Pigmalion \* allotta,†

Cui traditore e ladro e patricida ‡

Fece la voglia sua dell' oro ghiotta ;

105

Then we recall to mind Pygmalion, whom his insatiable lust for gold made a traitor and a thief and a parricide.

He was a *traitor* because, when bound to Sichæus by an oath of faith, he killed him unawares while sacrificing at the altar of Hercules, in whose temple he was priest. A *thief*, because he took his brother-in-law's gold ; and a *parricide*, because Sichæus was not only his brother-in-law, but also his kinsman. Parricide, Benvenuto tells us, is commonly used as a term for the murderer of any kinsman.

The next example of Avarice is that of Midas, King of Lydia, whose father Gordius tied the famous Gordian knot. Midas was supposed to have obtained from Bacchus the faculty that everything he touched should become gold, but, the result of this being that he found himself on the point of dying of hunger and thirst, he besought deliverance from so perilous a privilege. Benvenuto says that, by this allegorical tale, the poets wished it to be understood that the Miser, while rolling

\* *Pigmalion* : This story is told in Virgil, *Æn.* i, 340-352.

† *allotta* : Another form of *allora*. The meaning of it here is in connection with *quando s' annotta* in l. 101, where Hugh told Dante that after nightfall the spirits take up a different strain (*contrario senso*) to what they have been singing before. Then, says he, (*allotta*) we begin to sing about Pygmalion, Midas, Achan, Ananias and Sapphira, Heliodorus, Polymnestor, and Crassus.

‡ *Patricida* : " Et quia cognatum occidit, vocatur parricida : nam sic punitur lege Pompeja de parricida, sicut occidens patrem suum." (Pietro di Dante.) The *Anon. Fior.* thinks Pygmalion was a parricide because Sichæus was the High Priest of the Temple of Jupiter, and thereby a father to Pygmalion in a spiritual



in riches and gold, lives in the greatest penury even deprived of the common necessaries of life.

E la miseria dell' avaro Mida,\*  
Che segul alla sua domanda ingorda,  
Per la qual sempre convien che si rida.

And the misery of the greedy Midas, that follow after his covetous request, at which one always ne must laugh.

Dante next turns to sacred history, of which he Hugh give three instances; following closely on come two more from profane history.

Del folle Acán † ciascun poi si ricorda,  
Come furò le spoglie, sì che l' ira  
Di Josuè qui par ch' ancor lo morda.  
Indi accusiam col marito Safira : ‡  
Lodiamo i calci ch' ebbe Eliodoro : §  
Ed in infamia tutto il monte gira  
Polinestòr ch' ancise Polidoro.||

---

\* *Mida* : The Story of Midas will be found in Ovid, *Met.* 85-179.

† *Acán* : See *Joshua* vii, 1-26.

‡ *Safira* : See *Acts* v, 1-11. Scartazzini says that Anan Sapphira do not so much symbolize an avarice that is rapacious, as a fraudulent, lying, and hypocritical avarice seeks to disguise itself in the garb of liberality.

§ *Eliodoro* : This refers to the miraculous horse that appeared in the temple of Jerusalem, when Heliodorus, the treasurer of King Seleucus, went there to remove the treasure. We find it in 11 *Maccabees* iii, 25 : "For there appeared unto the horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had a complete harness of gold." This subject is one of the ornaments of Raphael's Stanze in the Vatican.

|| *Polinestòr ch' ancise Polidoro* : Polydorus, the youngest of Priam, King of Troy, being too young to take part in the defence of Troy, was placed under the care of his father's steward Polymnestor, King of Thrace. The latter murdered him for the sake of the treasure which he had brought with him. See





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Ora a maggiore, ed ora a minor passo : 120  
 Però al ben che il dì ci si ragiona,  
 Dianzi non er' io sol ; ma qui da presso  
 Non alzava la voce altra persona."—

Sometimes one speaks loud, and another low, according as our affection impels us to speak, now in a higher, and now in a softer strain ; therefore (in singing) the examples of good of which we discourse during the day, I was not alone just now, but (it chanced) that no other person was uplifting his voice near by here."

Benvenuto remarks that, if Hugh Capet was a Miser or Covetous as regards money during his life-time, he certainly cannot be accused of want of liberality in his words, judging from the extent of his speech.

*Division IV.*—Dante now describes a wonderful phenomenon. Just when he and Virgil have recommenced their journey, which, owing to the path being encumbered with the prostrate forms of the spirits, is necessarily slow, and somewhat toilsome, the whole mountain suddenly quakes, and the entire region, from all quarters, re-echoes with a simultaneous outburst of *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. This, we shall learn in the next Canto (xxi, 70), was occasioned by Statius having completed his term in Purgatory.

Noi cravam \* partiti già da esso,

---

Scartazzini so reads it in his Leipzig commentary (1875), but in his Milan commentary (1893) he has *ch' a dir*, and he observes that we are clearly told in *Purg.* xix, 124, that the spirits on this cornice are quite unable to move, being

"Ne' piedi e nelle man legati e presi ;"

and *cadir, cheadir, chadir*, in the MSS. must be understood to refer, not to moving, but to speaking.

\* *Noi cravam* : Compare *Inf.* xxxii, 224 :—

"Noi cravam partiti già da ello."



B brigavam \* di soperchiar la strada † 125  
 Tanto, quanto al poter, n' era permesso ;  
 Quand' io senti', come cosa che cada,  
 Tremar lo monte ; ‡ onde mi prese un gielo,  
 Qual prender suol colui che a morte vada.  
 Certo non si scotea sì forte Delo, 130  
 Pria che Latona in lei facesse il nido,  
 A partorir li due occhi del cielo. §

We had already departed from him (Hugh Capet), and were striving to get over the ground as much as was permitted to our power, when I felt the mountain tremble, like a thing that is tottering to its fall; whereupon a chill seized upon me as that which seizes upon him who is going to his death. Assuredly, Delos did not quake so violently, before

---

\* *brigavam*: In the *Gran. Diz.* and in the *Voc. della Crusca*, *briga* is said to be equivalent to *Cercare*, also *figliarsi briga*, *far brigata*, *far opera*, *procurare*, *ingegnarsi*. In the *Poeti del Primo Secolo*, 2 vols. 8vo, Florence, 1816, vol. ii, p. 339, Guido Cavalcanti has the following:—

"Tu m' hai sì piena di dolor la mente,  
 Che l' anima si briga di partire."

† *soperchiar la strada*: Costa interprets this: "*di avanzarci nel cammino*." Brunone Bianchi: "*vuol dire, percorrerla, giungerne a capo* (get to the end of it)." The great dictionaries say that *soperchiar* is, properly speaking, more used to express going up hill, but Andreoli very happily observes: "*Ma quando vi sieno altre difficoltà che quella del salire, può dirsi egualmente; e qui i due Poeti dovevan procedere rasente la roccia, ed attenti a non pestare (tramp upon) le ombre distese in terra.*"

‡ *Tremar lo monte*: Compare the earthquake mentioned in *Inf.* *l. 130, 131*:—

"Finito questo, la buia campagna  
 Tremò," etc.

And the earthquake experienced by Æneas on entering the Infernal Regions (*Virg. Æn.* vi. 255-257):—

"Ecce autem, primi sub lumina solis et ortus,  
 Sub pedibus mugire solum, et juga cœpta moveri  
 Silvarum, visaeque canes ululare per umbram."

§ *due occhi del cielo*: This beautiful expression is probably borrowed by Dante from Ovid, who (*Metam.* iv, 228) calls the Sun *laeti oculus*. Gioberti speaks of the line in enthusiastic praise and admiration, but prefers to think that Dante invented it over



that Latona made her nest therein to give birth to the twin-eyes of Heaven (Apollo and Diana, the Sun and Moon).

The Island of Delos, in the Archipelago or Ægean Sea, was thrown up by an earthquake, by order of Jupiter, in order to receive Latona, one of his wives, when she gave birth to Apollo and Diana. Other accounts say it was left floating about after the separation of land and sea, and Jupiter made it stand still. Herodotus and Thucydides both mention its constant earthquakes.

Dante now describes a loud cry that followed the earthquake. It was the jubilant shout of the spirits in Purgatory at the liberation of Statius.

Poi cominciò da tutte parti \* un grido  
 Tal che il Maestro invér di me si feo,  
 Dicendo :—“ Non dubbiar, † mentr' io ti guido.”—135  
*Gloria in excelsis, tutti, Deo*  
 Dicean, per quel ch' io da vicin compresi,  
 Onde intender lo grido si poteo.  
 Noi stavamo immobili e sospesi,  
 Come i pastor che prima udìr quel canto, 140  
 Fin che il tremar cessò, ed ei compièsi. ‡

\* *da tutte parti*: It must be understood that, on the completion of a soul's purgation, an exulting congratulatory shout, giving the glory however to God, arose, not only from the Cornice in which that spirit was, but from all the Cornices in Purgatory.

† *Non dubbiar*: *Dubbiare* or *dubitare* has the secondary distinct meaning of “to fear.” See *Gran. Diz.*, s. v. *dubbiare*, par. 2: “Nel senso aff. di *Temere* o *Dottare*.” Compare *Par.* xxvi, t:—

“Mentr' io dubbiava per lo viso spento,  
 Della fulgida fiamma che lo spense.”

Which Norton very properly translates: “While I was apprehensive,” etc.

‡ *compièsi*: Compare *Purg.* xiv, 76:—

“Perchè lo spirto, che di pria parlòmi.”

And *Purg.* xix, 121, 122:—





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Tornate già \* in sull' usato pianto. †  
 Nulla ignoranza mai con tanta guerra ‡ 145  
 Mi fe' desideroso di sapere,  
 Se la memoria mia in ciò non erra,  
 Quanto pare' mi allor pensando avere :  
 Nè per la fretta domandarn' er' oso, §  
 Nè per me Il potea cosa vedere : 150  
 Cosl m' andava timido e pensoso.

We then resumed again our holy path : watching the shades that lay upon the ground, (who had) already returned to their customary wailing. Never,

and general conception of the poem is in no sort of way inspired by such unworthy sentiments. Were it otherwise Dante would make himself out a wretched hypocrite, and would feign to be writing in the cause of virtue when in reality writing in the cause of a passion diametrically the contrary, and would not be the Poet of Rectitude [*Cantore della Rettitudine*]. Therefore he rightly terms his poetic journey "a holy path."

\* *Tornate già* : Some read this *Tornate già*, in allusion to the posture of the spirits lying on their faces, supposing them to have all raised themselves for the purpose of singing the *Gloria in Excelsis*, but had prostrated themselves again when their song was at an end.

† *usato pianto* : Compare *Inf.* xvi, 19, 20, where Guido Guerra and his two companions, having paused for an instant in their lamentations to address Dante, take up the refrain again :—

" Ricominciâr, come noi ristemmo, ei  
 L' antico verso."

‡ *con tanta guerra* : " Qui Dante manifesta come l' ignoranza fesse guerra al suo spirito desideroso di saper tutto; marchio (the true sign) di un ingegno sommamente nato alla Scienza." (Gioberti.) Compare *Purg.* xxi, 1 :—

" La sete natural (di sapere) che mai non sazia," etc.

Compare also *Wisdom* xiv, 22 : " They erred in the knowledge of God; but whereas they lived in the great war of ignorance, those so great plagues called they peace." The *Gran Dizionario* quotes the present passage, s. v. *guerra*, § 43, and interprets the word " Per Ansietà, Desiderio impaziente."

§ *er' oso* : This is probably a Latinism from *ausus sum*. We find it used in a similar way by Petrarch, *Trionfo della Fama*, cap. iii, terz. 27 :—

" Vid' Ippia, il vecchierel che già fu oso  
 Dir : ' I' so tutto.' "



if my memory is not at fault about this, did my ignorance (on any matter) with such keen anxiety make me desirous of knowing it, as I seemed then to have (about this matter) when I thought it over. Nor did I dare to ask, on account of our haste, nor of myself could I perceive anything there, so I pursued my way timorous and thoughtful.

Perez (*I Sette Cerchi*, pp. 211, 212) remarks that the attentive reader of Dante must certainly have noticed that the examples of vice, against which the penitents inveigh so fiercely, abound most in the first Cornice and in this one. In the other Cornices not more than two or three are given, whereas in the First Cornice we have twelve, and in this one seven instances of the sin to be avoided. In these seven examples of bestial Concupiscence, it would be easy to distinguish the seven daughters of Avarice which St. Thomas Aquinas assigns to her.\* To these Scartazzini adds: "Treachery in Pygmalion; who treacherously murders his uncle and his brother-in-law; Restlessness (*Inqui-*

\* *Fiis avaritiæ dicuntur vitia quæ ex ipsa oriuntur, et præci-  
pue secundum appetitum finis. Quia verò avaritia est superfluous  
habendi divitias, in duobus excedit: primò enim superabun-  
dat in retinendo, et ex hac parte oritur ex avaritia obduratio  
misericordiam, quia scilicet cor ejus misericordiã non  
conferat, et de divitiis subveniat miseris. Secundò ad avaritiam  
tinet superabundare in accipiendo; et secundum hoc avaritia  
est considerari dupliciter: uno modo secundum quòd est in  
dolo; et sic ex avaritiã oritur inquietudo, in quantum ingerit  
solicitudinem et curas superfluas; avarus enim non im-  
pedit facundia, et dicit *Beales. v. 9*. Alio modo potest considerari  
in effectu, et sic in acquirendo aliena utitur quandoque quidem vi,  
quod pertinet ad violentias; quandoque autem dolo, qui quidem si  
est in verbo, falsitas erit: quantum ad simplex verbum, *perjurium*,  
quod est confirmatio juramenti: si autem dolus committatur in  
re, sic quantum ad res erit *fraus*; quantum autem ad per-  
sonam est *proditio* ut patet de Juda, qui ex avaritiã prodidit  
Christum." (St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* ii, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. cxviii,  
27. 4)*



*tudo*) in Midas, who gets literal experience that the Covetous man does not ever get satiated with gold and silver; *Fraud*, in Achan, who fraudulently appropriates to his own use a part of the booty of Jericho; *Perjury*, in Ananias and Sapphira, who 'lied unto the Holy Ghost'; *Trickery (Fallacia)*, in Heliodorus, who went to rob the treasures in the Temple at Jerusalem 'under colour of visiting the cities of Celosyria and Phenice'; *Inhumanity (Obduratio contra misericordiam)* in Polymnestor, who from rapacity becomes the assassin of an innocent youth, the only surviving son of a broken-hearted mother; and finally *Violence* in Crassus, whose avarice forced him into a battle in spite of adverse auguries and menacing portents from the gods. All this is a fresh proof of the profundity of Dante's knowledge and learning."

END OF CANTO XX.





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all the information he sought, as to the cause of the earthquake, and the outburst of song from the whole of the spirits in Purgatory. He begins by showing that his thirst for knowledge was only capable of being quenched by that water of Life, of which our Lord told the Samaritan woman beside Jacob's Well.\*

La sete natural † che mai non sazia,  
 Se non con l' acqua onde la femminetta ‡  
 Sammaritana domandò la grazia,  
 Mi travagliava, § e pungeami la fretta  
 Per la impacciata via retro al mio Duca  
 E condoleami alla giusta vendetta.

---

\* *St. John* iv, 14, 15: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Compare *Par.* xxx, 73, 74:—

"Ma di quest' acqua convien che tu bei,  
 Prima che tanta sete in te si sazii."

† *La sete natural*: Compare *Conv.* i, 1: "Siccome dice il Filosofo nel principio della Prima Filosofia: 'tutti gli uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere.' La ragione di che puote essere, che ciascuna cosa, da provvidenza di propria natura impinta, è inclinabile alla sua perfezione; onde, acciocchè la scienza è l' ultima perfezione della nostra anima, nella quale sta la nostra ultima felicità, tutti naturalmente al suo desiderio siamo soggetti."

‡ *femminella* means more than *femmina*. See Tommaséo (*Dizionario dei Sinonimi*, Milan, 7th edition, p. 342. Sin. 1413). "Il Manzoni, di femmina povera, ma venerabile e per la povertà e per la pietà, ben dice *femminetta*. *Femminuccia* ha sempre senso di spregio, etc."

§ *Mi travagliava*: Compare *St. Thomas Aquinas, Summ. Theol.* pars i, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. iii, art. 8: "Homo non est perfectè beatus quamdiu restat ei aliquid desiderandum et quærendum . . . In tantum procedit perfectio intellectus, in quantum cognoscit essentiam alicujus rei. Si ergo intellectus aliquis cognoscat essentiam alicujus effectus, per quam non possit cognosci essentia causæ, ut scilicet sciatur de causa quid est, non dicitur intellectus attingere ad causam simpliciter: quamvis per effectum cognoscere possit de causa an sit. Et idè remanet naturaliter homini desiderium, cum cognoscit effectum, et scit eum habere causam, ut etiam sciat de causa quid est: et illud desi-



The natural thirst (for knowledge) that never can be quenched, save with that water of which the lowly Samaritan woman besought the free gift, was tormenting me, and our haste urged me along behind my Leader over the pathway encumbered (with the prostrate forms of the Avaricious), and I was grieving, in sympathy, for their just punishment.

Benvenuto observes that in truth the penalty of these shades was a very bitter one, deprived as they were of the greatest benefits; of light, for they could only see the earth, and of freedom in all their limbs. And Dante had three causes of trouble, first, his eager desire for knowledge; secondly, the pace at which they were walking; and, thirdly, compassion for the sufferers.

Dante now describes the sudden appearance of Statius. Benvenuto says: "Many wonder that the most Christian Dante should have placed Statius, who was not a Christian, in Purgatory, and do not see the reason for it; but I declare, to begin with, that Dante might imagine, from many signs, that Statius was a Christian. For if Virgil, who lived before Christ, had some foreknowledge of Him, from the songs of the Sybil, as Augustine testifies, how much more might not Statius

---

*Admiratio est admirationis, et causat inquisitionem, puta si aliquis  
 aspectus eclipsam solis considerat quod ex aliqua causa  
 procedit, de qua, quia nescit quid sit, admiratur, et admirando  
 inquit; nec ista inquisitio quiescit, quousque perveniat ad  
 cognoscendam essentiam cause. Si igitur intellectus humanus  
 cognoscit essentiam alicujus effectus creati non cognoscat de  
 causa nisi an est, nondum perfectio ejus attingit simpliciter ad  
 causam primam, sed remanet ei adhuc naturale desiderium  
 cognoscendi causam; unde nondum est perfecte beatus. Ad per-  
 fectionem igitur beatitudinem requiritur quod intellectus pertingat  
 ad ipsam essentiam primae cause. Et sic perfectionem suam  
 habebit per unionem ad Deum sicut ad objectum, in quo solo  
 beatitudo humana consistit."*



have had, who saw the Christians ever increasing, although he had seen them nearly exterminated by cruel and unheard of persecutions, even before the time that Titus dealt as he did with the Jews; and, besides this, he had seen so many miracles performed by the martyrs whom Domitian, the brother of Titus, so cruelly persecuted, when the Christian name was continually waxing. . . . Statius was most high-minded and moral in his writings; but to whether or no he was a Christian I do not attach much importance, for Dante has probably with much ingenuity pretended that he was, because many subjects have to be treated by him, as we see in the xxvth Canto and in other passages, which could only be treated by a Christian. But our Poet rather introduces him here, because it is known that he lived in the greatest poverty and want; which one would not think would happen to a man of such distinction in the city (Naples) in which he taught rhetoric, unless he had fallen into the fault of great extravagance."

Ed ecco, sì come ne scrive Luca \*

Che Cristo apparve ai due ch' erano in via,

Già surto fuor della sepulcral buca,

Ci apparve un' ombra, e retro a noi venia

10

Da piè † guardando la turba che giace ;

\* *si come ne scrive Luca* : See *St. Luke* xxiv, 13-15 : "And, behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."

† *Du piè* and *dappiede* : These forms are used adverbially (says the *Voc. della Crusca*), and mean "at the bottom, down, below." "I Ghibellini facendo tagliare dappiè la detta torre, sì la fecero puntellare (*The Ghibellines having had the said tower cut away at the bottom, so got it supported with props*)." (*Giov. Villani, lib. vi, cap. 33.*)





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Poi cominciò :—“ Nel beato concilio\*  
 Ti ponga in pace la verace corte,†  
 Che mi rilega nell' eterno esilio.—” ‡

He then began : “ May the tribunal of truth, which relegates me into eternal banishment (from Heaven) establish thee in peace within the Assembly of the Blessed.”

“ See,” says Benvenuto, “ how Virgil enlists the good will of Statius, by wishing for him what he (Virgil) can never hope to obtain for himself.” Virgil was probably about to ask Statius the reason of the earthquake followed by the song of praise, but Statius is so greatly astonished at Virgil's intelligence, which he professes himself wholly unable to understand, that he interrupts Virgil with an exclamation of wonder.

—“ Come,”—diss' egli, e parte andavam forte,§

\* *beato concilio* : Compare *Psalm* i, 5 : “ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

† *la verace corte* : Gioberti explains *verace* here, as accentuating the fact that the Courts of the world are as it were theatres. Perhaps Dante's meaning is to indicate by the epithet *verace* that Truth's only dwelling-place is in the Courts of Heaven, where falsehood, fraud, dissimulation, deception, and every species of falsity are unknown, whereas they congregate in the Courts on earth.

‡ *eterno esilio* : Virgil was in the eternal banishment of *Limbo* among those “ only so far afflicted, that without hope they live in desire ” (*Inf.* iv, 42). Compare *Inf.* xxiii, 125, 126, where it is said of Caiaphas :—

“ Colui ch' era disteso in croce  
 Tanto vilmente nell' eterno esilio.”

And Horace, *Carm.* ii, iii, 27-28 :—

“ Sors exitura, et nos in æternum  
 Exilium impositura cymbæ.”

§ *parte andavam forte* is the reading of all the best Commentators. Some read “ e perchè andate forte ? ” But Benvenuto, expressly points out that *parte*, as used here, is not a noun, but an adverb, and has the sense of “ meanwhile ” (*interim*). “ Interim ibamus velociter, nec tardabamus illis loquentibus, ita quod hic *parte* non



—“Se voi siete ombre che Dio su non degni,\* 20  
Chi v' ha per la sua scala tanto scorte? ”—†

“How!” said he—and meanwhile we were stepping quickly onwards—“If ye are shades whom God accepts not on high, who has escorted you so far up His staircase?”

Virgil resumes his explanation, calling the attention of Statius to the three P's still remaining unobliterated on Dante's brow (out of the seven traced upon it by the sword of the Angel Warder), as a sure sign that Dante is of the elect destined in God's own time for Paradise. He then goes on to answer a doubt unspoken, but none the less felt, in the mind of Statius, who might, after Virgil's explanation, understand the presence of Dante in Purgatory while still alive, but is wholly unable to account for Virgil being there, who is not alive.

E il Dottor mio :—“Se tu riguardi i segni †

denotat portionem, nec est nomen, imo adverbium, et tantum valet quantum in isto medio, et est vulgare florentinum [is used in the popular speech at Florence].”

\* *che Dio su non degni*: The primary meaning of *degnare* is as a neuter verb “to condescend.” But in the *Voc. della Crusca* (§ 3) we find it also used in the active sense: “*Degnare uno per amico . . . vale Accettarlo per tale; e dicesi di persona superiore ad inferiore.*” The *Vocabolario* quotes the following illustration from Annibal Caro (*Lettere*, 3 vols., 8vo, Padua, Comino, 1755, vol. i, letter or page 99): “*Promettili che, degnandomi per amico, le risponderò con ogni sorte d'offizio.*”

† *scorte* is the past participle of the verb *scorgere*, to be an escort to any one, and it is in the feminine plural to agree with *ombre*, understood.

‡ *i segni*: Compare *Purg.* ix, 112-114 :—

“Sette P nella fronte mi descrisse  
Col puntón della spada, e: ‘Fa che lavi,  
Quando sei dentro, queste piaghe,’ disse.”



Che questi porta e che l' angel profila,\*  
 Ben vedrai che coi buon convien ch' ei regni.†  
 Ma perchè lei che di e notte fila 25  
 Non gli avea tratta ancora la conocchia,‡  
 Che Cloto impone a ciascuno e compila,§  
 L' anima sua, ch' è tua e mia sirocchia,||  
 Venendo su, non potea venir sola ; ¶  
 Perocch' al nostro modo non adocchia.\*\* 30

\* *profilata*: The *Voc. della Crusca* says that, though the usual meaning of *profilare* is "to draw in profile," it is used by Dante in this one passage simply to signify "to delineate, trace."

† *regni*: Compare *St. Matt.* xxv. 34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And *2 Tim.* ii, 12: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." Gioberti remarks that in this line Dante is paying honour to himself.

‡ *conocchia*: Tommaséo (*Dizionario dei Sinonimi*, p. 47, Sin. 247) defines the difference between *Rocca* "arnese noto con cui le donne filano" (the distaff), and *Conocchia* "la materia (lino, stoppa, canapa, i.e. flax, tow, or hemp) avvolta sopra per filarla."

§ *compila*: Two operations (according to Lombardi) take place in putting the wool on the distaff: the first is to lay on a great mass of it, twisting the distaff round until it becomes attached; this operation Dante terms *imporre*; the second is to run the palm of the hand over the wool to unite and compress it; this he calls *compilare*, aptly rendered by more than one translator "pac together."

|| *sirocchia* for *sorella*. Scartazzini says Dante's soul is said to be sister to those of Statius and Virgil, because all three souls had issued from the hand of the same Creator. Compare *Purg.* xvi, 85, 86, where Dante says of *l'anima semplicetta*:—

"Esce di mano a Lui, che la vagheggia  
 Prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla."

*Sirocchia* is also used in *Purg.* iv, 110, 111:

"Colui che mostra sè più negligente  
 Che se pigrizia fosse sua sirocchia."

¶ *sola*: "la umana civiltà, che a uno fine è ordinata, e vita felice; alla quale nullo per sè è sufficiente a venire l'aiuto d'alcuno." (*Conv.* iv, 4, ll. 4-6).

\*\* *al nostro modo non adocchia*: Dante's soul, as Virgil, Statius, does not see as do souls that have been set free from the body. These discern the truth instantaneously, but Dante's soul, not being yet liberated from corporeal bonds, is unable to do so.





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*Division II.*—In the extremely difficult passage that now follows Dante relates how Virgil, of his own initiative, asked Statius for an explanation of the cause of the earthquake and the outburst of song, and how the mere fact of Virgil asking the question, quieted Dante's mind, as he could now form a hope of knowing what he wanted.

Ma dinne, se tu sai, perchè tai crolli  
 Die' dianzi il monte, e perchè tutti ad una  
 Parver \* gridare infino ai suoi piè molli? " †  
 Sì mi die' domandando per la cruna ‡  
 Del mio disio, che pur con la speranza  
 Si fece la mia sete men digiuna.

35

But tell us, if thou knowest, why the mountain gave such shocks just now, and why down to its moist base, all (the spirits upon it) seemed with one voice to send forth a shout." In asking this question he so threaded the needle's eye of my desire, that merely with the hope my thirst became less burning.

Statius replies that the earthquake cannot be ascribed to any natural causes, but only to the Will of God.

\* *Parver gridare*: Dante and Virgil seem to have had an intuitive idea that the jubilant shout of *Gloria in Excelsis* was a unanimous outburst on the part of every spirit throughout the whole mountain. They could not know it positively; Virgil says it *seemed* as if all had done so.

† *piè molli* are (says Benvenuto) the roots of the mountain where the rushes grow in the soft mud. See *Purg.* i, 102, where Cato informs the Poets that no other plant than the humble reed could stand the shocks of the surf.

‡ *cruna* is properly the eye of a needle. Blanc (*Vocab. Dantesco*) interprets this passage: "toccò propriamente e desiderava." Others read: "cuna del mio disio;" *cuna* a cradle, and Benvenuto, who adopts this reading, speaks as the desire of a child in the cradle for its food. *Cruna* much the more satisfactory reading.



Quei cominciò :—“Cosa non è che senza  
Ordine senza la religione \* 40

Della montagna, o che sia fuor d' usanza.

Libero è qui da ogni alterazione :

Di quel che il ciel da sè in sè riceve

Esserci puote, e non d' altro, cagione : 45

He began : “There is nothing without due order which can be suffered by the Holy Congregation (*religione*) of the mountain, nor which is contrary to custom. This place is free from every permutation ; what Heaven receives into itself from itself can be the cause (of these phenomena) and naught else.

Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*, p. 401) writes : “On the difficulties of interpretation of lines 43-45, Scartazzini's exhaustive note should be consulted.” I give a nearly *verbatim* translation of it :—

“Let us interpret it by the context. Virgil has asked Statius the reason of the earthquake and of the universal song that had occurred shortly before. Statius tells the two wayfarers that what they heard was neither extraordinary, nor contrary to the regulations of the mountain (ll. 40-42). He goes on to say that the mountain, from its entrance-gate up to its summit is free from all those alterations to which the earth inhabited by Man is subject, and that therefore the cause of the marvels

---

*Religione* : Benvenuto explains that *religio* is the same thing towards God, as *reverentia* towards parents or elder persons. He interprets the passage : “Nothing here in Purgatory happens by chance, or fortuitously (*senza ordine*), but yet what does happen, does not occur from natural causes, as is the course in the world.” But I take *religione* in the same sense as in *Par. xi*, where *religione* is used to signify the monastic Order (of S. Francis) :—

“Ma regalmente sua dura intenzione  
Ad Innocenzio aperse, e da lui ebbe  
Primo sigillo a sua religione.”



that occur upon it (the mountain), cannot be from other than what Heaven receives into itself from itself (ll. 43-45). This *terzina* already contains *in nuce* the answer to Virgil's question. But Statius develops two conceptions that are expressed in it more fully. First he explains to him why the mountain is free from every permutation (46-57); next, what is the nature of the only possible cause of the wonderful phenomena that take place upon it (58-60, 61-66); and, lastly, how this cause had just occurred (67-69), whence he draws the conclusion that for that very reason the two wayfarers heard the earthquake and the chant. Lines 43-45 are therefore, so to speak, *the theme* of all that Statius goes on to explain in the lines that follow. And as ll. 46-57 unfold the idea of verse 42, so do ll. 58-69 unfold the idea of ll. 43-44. Now, if the mountain quakes when a soul rises to ascend to Heaven, the cause of this quaking is that Heaven receives that soul into itself (*il cielo riceve essa anima in sè*). But the soul originally issued from the hand of God whose throne is in Heaven, and therefore when it ascends to Heaven it returns to God: ("*siccome a quello porto, ond' ella si partio quando venne a entrare nel mare di questa vita.*"—*Conv.* iv, 28). When, therefore, a soul ascends to Heaven, that Heaven does not receive a being alien to itself, but one that takes its origin in Heaven; *riceve dunque in sè quel che è da sè*. Statius means then that nothing of what happens up there can be caused by anything which Heaven may receive from elsewhere (as is the case lower down, where the sky receives the vapours that rise from earth and cause its permutations), but only from what it receives into itself from itself, as in fact is the case with that soul





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nor flashes of lightning, nor the daughter of Thaumias (*i.e.*, Iris the rainbow), who yonder (on earth) often changes her place. No dry vapour (*i.e.*, wind) ascends any higher than the summit of the three steps I mentioned, on which the (Angel) Vicar of St. Peter sets his feet. It may perchance tremble, more or less, lower down (*i.e.*, below the top step of the Gate of Purgatory); but by reason of the wind that is hidden in the earth,—how, I know not,—it never quaked up here.

Statius is here touching upon the natural causes of winds and earthquakes, “for wind (says Benvenuto) is a dry and impalpable vapour raised by the Sun. An earthquake takes place, when the wind enters into the bowels of the earth, and being imprisoned cannot come forth: it therefore causes a violent disturbance in the earth and makes it tremble.” Aristotle (continues Benvenuto) asserts that from humid vapours are derived rain, snow, hail, dew, and boar-frost; from dry vapour, if it be light is produced wind; but if it be strong, then the earthquake.

Statius finally assigns the real spiritual and moral cause of the recent earthquake.

Tremaci quando alcuna anima monda  
 Sentesi, sì che surga \* o che si mova  
 Per salir su; e tal grido seconda.

It trembles here (above the three steps) when any soul feels itself so purified that it rises, or moves to ascend up above; and this cry accompanies it.

---

\* *surga* . . . *Per salir su*: Scartazzini notices that some of the Commentators have understood *surga* to refer to the passing of soul up to the Cornice immediately above the one it has left. With this he rightly disagrees, for in that case, he says, there must have been an earthquake every time Dante completed a fresh ascent. Dante was not a spirit in Purgatory.



As soon as any one of the spirits within the gate of Purgatory proper has completed its purgation, or, if it is not wholly purified, moves so far on its ascent that it reaches the Cornice where it can undergo the next part of its purification, immediately the mountain quakes down to its lowest base, and all the spirits throughout Purgatory break out simultaneously into a song of *Gloria in Excelsis*.

But in case Virgil should ask, "In what manner, or by what token canst thou become aware of the fact that a spirit has completed its term of purgation?" Statius anticipates the question by saying:—

Della mondizia sol voler fa \* prova,  
Che, tutta libera a mutar convento,†  
L' alma sorprende, e di voler le giova.

Of its purification the will alone gives proof, which (higher will) takes by surprise the soul, wholly free (as it is) to change its abode (*lit.* convent), and (now) to have that will avails it.

The volition, which is suddenly generated in the soul

\* *sol voler fa*: "This passage exhibits the curious phenomenon of the loss of the true reading '*sol voler fa prova*' in all but a small minority of MSS., though it is preserved and rightly explained by all the old Commentators, who notice the passage, without exception (*viz.* Lana, Ottimo, Anon. Fior., Benvenuto, Buti, Landino, Vellutello and Daniello), nor do they so much as mention any variation in the text. Notwithstanding this, the feeble and almost meaningless reading '*Della mondizia solversi fa prova*' is found in the large majority of MSS. This is perhaps to be explained by the fact that the clue to the right understanding of the true reading '*sol voler fa prova*' was one easily lost, and depending on a knowledge of Aristotelian, and still more of the scholastic, teaching, which the copyists could not generally command." Dr. Moore *Textual Criticism*, pp. 401, 402).

† *Tutta libera a mutar convento*: Others read *tutto libero*, meaning *libero*. But (Scartazzini asks) which is it that changes its place, the will or the soul? Unquestionably the soul. On this Gioberti enthusiastically exclaims: "Bella, vera, e sublime cosa!"



to rise up and ascend to Heaven, is the sole proof of its complete purification. The soul is gladdened at having such a will, which, as Scartazzini observes, is not sterile but effective.

Benvenuto remarks that Statius keeps on anticipating possible questions or objections of Virgil. He now seems to say: "But thou wilt ask if the soul does not always desire to escape from punishment?" And he answers that, however desirous the soul is to ascend forthwith to Heaven, yet God instils into it the will to continue in penance, so as to satisfy Divine justice.

Prima vuol ben ; ma non lascia il talento,\*

Che divina giustizia contra voglia,

Come fu al peccar, pone al tormento.

65

---

\* *talento*. The modern meaning of "talent" is comparatively recent. By Dante it is more often used to express a right impulse or desire, i.e. *la volontà relativa* or *condizionata* of the Scholiasts. Compare *Inf.* x, 55 :—

"D' intorno mi guardò come talento

Avesse di veder s' altri era meco."

But contrast *Inf.* v, 38 :—

"I peccator carnali,

Che la ragion sommettono al talento."

Scartazzini says that the following passage from St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* p. iii, *Suppl. Append.* qu. ii, art. 2) elucidates better than any commentary what is Dante's idea of there being an absolute and conditional will: "Aliquid dicitur voluntarium dupliciter. Uno modo voluntate absolutâ; et sic nulla poena est voluntaria, quia ex hoc est ratio poenae quod voluntati contrariatur. Alio modo dicitur aliquid voluntarium voluntate conditionatâ; sicut ustio est voluntaria propter sanitatem consequendam. Et sic aliqua poena potest esse voluntaria dupliciter. Uno modo quia per poenam affligitur bonum acquirimus; et sic ipsa voluntas assumit poenam aliquam, ut patet in satisfactione: vel etiam quia ille libenter eam accipit, et non vellet eam non esse, sicut accidit in martyrio. Alio modo quia quamvis per poenam nullum bonum nobis accrescat, tamen sine poena ad bonum perventum non possumus, sicut patet de morte naturali; et tunc voluntas non assumit poenam, et vellet ab ea liberari: sed eam supportat, et quantum ad hoc voluntaria dicitur." Dr Moore (*Textual Criticism*, p. 403) remarks that the above passage quoted in Scartazzini's





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that the mere wish to pass upwards is a proof that the soul's purgation is completed) if unqualified by a consideration of the technical teaching out of which it sprung. There is an opposition between *voglia* and *talento*—the key to the whole passage—which is excellently explained by Jacopo della Lana . . . So again Buti: 'come la volontà rispettiva (*i.e. talento*) fu contra la volontà assoluta a fare lo peccato (chè la volontà assoluta non può volere lo peccato e lo male, se non ingannata sotto specie di bene); così è contra a volere lo bene, se prima non è sodisfatto a la giustizia.' In other words:—In *this* life *volontà*, were it not for *talento*, would choose τὰγαθόν, but it allows itself to be misled by *talento* into choosing τὸ φαινόμενον ἄγαθόν, 'ἦν δὲ, εἰ οὐτως ἔτυχε, κακόν' (*Eth.* III, iv, 2).

"Accordingly *hereafter*, in retribution for this, the *volontà* has again to submit itself to the *talento*, which now chooses pain and punishment (ll. 65, 66), and until the 'uttermost farthing' is paid, the *volontà* is compelled to follow the *talento* in choosing this purgation, instead of *il sommo Bene* (τὰγαθόν).<sup>\*</sup> When all is paid, then the *volontà* is at once set free to aspire again to its natural object, the *talento* now no longer opposing it and the feeling that this is so, is proof that the purgation is complete: '*Della mondizia sol voler fa prova.*'"<sup>†</sup>

---

\* Thus we read of the spirits in the Seventh Cornice:—

"Poi verso me, quanto potevan farsi,  
Certi si feron, sempre con riguardo  
Di non uscir dove non fossero arsi."

(*Purg.* xxvi,

† Dr Moore (*Text. Crit.* p. 403) says that we might then apply the language of Virgil in *Purg.* xxvii, 140-141:—

"Liberò, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,  
È fallo fora non fare a suo senno."



And now Statius, citing his own case as an example in confirmation of what he has said, tells Virgil that the earthquake and the chant were on account of him.

Ed io che son giaciuto a questa doglia \*  
 Cinquecento anni e più, † pur mo ‡ sentii  
 Libera volontà di miglior soglia.§  
 Però sentisti il tremoto, e li pii  
 Spiriti per lo monte render lode  
 A quel Signor, che tosto su gl' invii."—||

70

And I, who for five hundred years and more have lain in this misery, have but now felt in me the free will for a better sphere. On that account didst thou feel the earthquake, and (hear) the devout spirits all

\* *doglia* for *pena*, meaning the penalty of the Avaricious in the Fifth Cornice.

† *Cinquecento anni e più*: Statius had been undergoing penance in the Cornice of the Avaricious, but for Prodigality, not for Avarice, as we shall read in the next Canto, where we shall also find (xiii, 92) that before passing his 500 years in the cornice of Avarice, he had had to pass 400 in the Cornice of Sloth, 900 years in all. Statius died 96 A.D. Dante supposes his vision to take place in 1300. Counting 500 years in the Cornice of Avarice, 400 years in the Cornice of Sloth, 96 the year A.D. that Statius died, 996, which, deducted from 1300, leaves 304 years unaccounted for, and these he may be supposed to have passed in *Ante-Purgatory*.

‡ *per mo*. Compare *Inf.* x, 21:—

"E tu m' hai non pur mo a ciò disposto."

And *Inf.* xvii, 20:—

"E che parlavi mo Lombardo."

*doglia* is the name given to the different degrees or spheres of Purgatory, as *Cornice* is for those of Purgatory, and *Girone* or *Cerchio* for those in Hell. Compare *Par.* iii, 82:—

"Sì che, come noi sem di soglia in soglia

Per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace."

‡ *che tosto su gl' invii*: Some take *che* for *acciocchè*, with the sense "the spirits rendered praise . . . in order that He may speedily send them up to Heaven." But I adopt the interpretation of Buti, Ceccani, Fr. Bianchi, Praticelli, and Scartazzini, viz., that *che gli invii* is a prayer of Statius to God that He will soon give the same — *che* to all the spirits in Purgatory, who have united in offering praises to Him for the liberation of Statius himself.



over the mount render praise to that Lord, Who soon  
may He speed them up (to Heaven)!"

Dante's unceasing desire to know the causes of such wonders, is completely satisfied by these words of Statius.

Così ne disse ; e però ch' ei si gode \*

Tanto del ber quant' è grande la sete,

Non saprei dir quant' ei mi fece prode.†

75

Thus he spake to us ; and since one enjoys drinking  
in proportion as one's thirst is great, so could I hardly  
describe how much he did me good.

Benvenuto says : " Note that a drink is agreeable, not  
so much from the quality of the wine, as from the dis-  
position of the drinker ; as for example, when Xerxes,  
the mighty Persian king, had been ignominiously de-  
feated, and was timidly flying, he saw, by the side of  
the way, some muddy dirty water, and immediatel  
stooped down and began to drink greedily ; on his  
soldiers expostulating with him for doing so, he said he  
had never in his life drunk better, for he had never, till  
then, known what thirst was."

*Division III.*—Virgil now asks Statius who he was  
in life ; but, before doing so, he tells him that his

\* *ci si gode* : Gioberti notices these words as significant of  
intense Dante's desire for further information had been. Or  
read : *Così gli disse ; e perchè si gode.*

† *mi fece prode* : *prode* means profit, advantage.  
Compare *Purg.* xv, 41, 42 :—

"io pensai, andando,

Prode acquirar nelle parole sue."

Compare also *Par.* vii, 25-27 :—

"Per non soffrire alla virtù che vuole

Freno a suo prode, quell' uom che non nacque,

Dannando sè, dannò tutta sua prole."

Compare also *Conv.* i, 6, ll. 24, 25 : "dico in genere, che cotelli  
sono quasi bestie, alle quali la ragione fa poco prode."





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here, and at what you all rejoice together. Now may it please thee that I should know who thou wast, and let it also be contained in thy words to me, why thou hast lain here for so many ages."

Statius begins by answering Virgil's first question as to who he was, and he does so much in the same fashion as Virgil in the first Canto of the *Inferno* had replied to a similar question from Dante. Virgil answered Dante "*Nacqui sub Julio,*" and only ten lines lower down is the name of Virgil mentioned by Dante. Here the same order is followed. Statius first says that he lived in the reign of Titus, and discloses his name just ten lines after.

—“ Nel tempo che il buon Tito \* con l' aiuto  
 Del sommo Rege vendicò le fora,  
 Ond' uscì il sangue per Giuda venduto,  
 Col nome che più dura e più onora  
 Era io di là,”—rispose quello spirto,  
 —“ Famoso assai, ma non con fede ancora.  
 Tanto fu dolce mio vocale spirto,†

\* *il buon Tito* : The siege and destruction of Jerusalem under the Emperor Titus, took place in A.D. 70. Statius was born at Naples, according to one account, in 65, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, and had already become famous as a poet before the accession of Titus. His works are the *Sylva*, or miscellaneous poems; the *Thebaid*, an epic in twelve books; and the *Achilleid*, of which he speaks in l. 92 as being unfinished at the time of his death. He also wrote a tragedy, *Agave*, which is lost.

† *Tanto fu dolce mio vocale spirto* : Compare Juvenal, *Sat. vii*, 82-87 :—

“ Curritur ad vocem jucundam, et carmen amice  
 Thebaidos, lætam fecit cum Statius urbem,  
 Promisitque diem : tanta dulcedine captos  
 Afficit ille animos, tantaque libidine vulgi  
 Auditur : sed, cum fregit subsellia versu,  
 Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendat Agaven.”

Dante seems to have ranked Statius as a poet next to Virgil. The epics of Statius were extremely popular in the middle ages.



Che, Tolosano,\* a sè mi trasse Roma,  
 Dove mertai le tempie ornar di mirto.† 90  
 Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma:  
 Cantai di Tebe, e poi del grande Achille,  
 Ma caddi in via con la seconda soma.

"At the time when the good Titus," replied that spirit, "with the aid of the Most High King, took vengeance for the wounds from which gushed forth the blood sold by Judas (*i.e.*, when God, by the hand of Titus, avenged upon Jerusalem the murder of Jesus Christ), was I (in the world) yonder, famous indeed for the name which lasts longest and honours most (namely, a poet's), but not as yet, with faith (*i.e.*, Christianity). So sweet was my genius in song, that Rome drew me, (though) a native of Toulouse, within her walls, and there I was thought worthy to have my brows decked with myrtle. Yonder (in the world) people still call me Statius: I sang of Thebes

In a recent article in the *Edinburgh Review* (April 1895) entitled *The Classical Studies of Dante*, pp. 303-307, evidently written by a *Dantist* of the first rank, and which merits the most careful study, the reviewer writes: "Dante's treatment of Statius constitutes one of the most singular problems or anomalies of the *Divina Commedia*. We are surprised at his enthusiastic, and, as it appears to us, somewhat extravagant admiration of a poet whose prolix and often inflated style is the very antipodes of his own. We have already seen that, on one occasion, he has substituted the name of Statius for that of Horace, when selecting the Latin poets as models of style, though in other respects repeating the well-known list in *Inf.* iv. This and other indications convince us that the name of Statius would have certainly been the next to be admitted to the charmed circle of *la bella scuola*, were its limits to be enlarged."

\* *Tolosano*. Dante has evidently confused Statius the poet, who was born at Naples, with Statius the rhetorician, of Toulouse. Statius himself speaks of Naples as his birthplace, but he does so in the *Sylva*, one of his books which was not discovered until after Dante's death.

† *mertai le tempie ornar di mirto*: On this Scartazzini observes that history is not known to have recorded the fact of Statius being crowned as a poet; nor indeed does the present passage state it; but only that his muse merited such recognition.



and then of the great Achilles; but I sank down by the way under the second burden.

This means that he died before he had completed the *Achilleid*, the second of his works. Benvenuto relates that Statius, seeing the great disagreement that existed between the two brothers Titus and Domitian, took as his subject for their instruction the history of the two brothers Eteocles and Polynices the rival kings of Thebes.

Benvenuto sees two interpretations in the six lines that follow, according to the first of which Statius, unaware of who is standing by him, would show that Virgil was the model from whom he became a poet: or secondly, that he became a Christian from reading Virgil's poems. We will adopt the former, which is preferred by Benvenuto, as we have no evidence whatever that either Virgil or Statius had any pretence to be Christians.

Statius concludes by showing the immensity of his love for Virgil.

Al mio ardor fur seme \* le faville,  
Che mi scaldâr, della divina fiamma,  
Onde sono allumati più di mille; †

95

\* *seme*: At the conclusion of the *Thebaid* (811-817) Statius shows in what honour he held the *Æneid*. Addressing his own poem, he says:—

"O mihi bisse nos multum vigilata per annos  
Thebai? . . .  
Vive, precor: nec tu divinam *Æneida* tenta,  
Sed longe sequere, et vestigia semper adora."

† *allumati più di mille*: "The countless multitude," for which, so often in the *Divina Commedia più di mille* stands as the equivalent, means the great host of poets of whom Dante himself was one. In *Inf.* i, 82-85, he alludes to the celestial fire poetry being  
ple of Virgil.  
kindle

e amore.

Tu se' lo mio maestro e il mio autore."





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✓ he was not undeservedly called Virgil's ape (*simia Virgilii*).

*Division IV.*—We must now picture to ourselves the scene that ensues, in which the rapid interchange of signs between Dante and Virgil, and the way in which these are observed by Statius, is related by Dante in a most spirited manner. The whole incident is so thoroughly Italian, that one might, on reading it, fancy oneself in the Via Calzaioli at Florence, or the Mercatello at Naples. The last words of Statius have convinced Virgil that Statius has not the slightest idea that the subject of his encomium is standing by his side. Virgil turns quickly round, and by a rapid contraction of his eyes (*con viso*) imposes silence on Dante, who cannot all the same restrain a smile on his features. This Statius is quick to detect, and after a look of silent wonder, he asks for an explanation.

Dante remarks that it is only the most sincere and ingenuous people who are unable to disguise their emotions. If they feel a desire to laugh, the laugh shows itself on their countenance, and the same with weeping. It is only the deceitful man who feigns a smile while rage is in his heart. It is only the hypocrite who can simulate grief for some misfortune which he is secretly rejoicing.

Dante then shows exactly how this difficulty of concealing his thoughts happened to him, for, though he uttered not a word, he spoke by his expression, and Statius detected his thought.

Volser Virgilio a me queste parole

Con viso che tacendo disse :—“Taci :”—\*

---

\* *Taci* : Gioberti, commenting on this at length, says that he thinks that by this word Virgil not only wished to impede Dante



Ma non può tutto la virtù che vuole ; \* 105  
 Chè riso e pianto son tanto seguaci †  
 Alla passion da che ciascun si spicca, ‡  
 Che men seguon voler nei più veraci.

from uttering a word, but even from making a sign; for he knew by his own sagacity how quickly the smallest sign might awaken the suspicions of Statius, who he was anxious should remain in ignorance of his being that identical Virgil upon whom Statius had been passing such high encomiums. In describing this modesty on the part of Virgil, Dante himself is in reality pronouncing even higher praises upon him, showing him to have had the ornament of that humility, of which history records him to have been possessed; and moreover in making Statius of his own *proprio-motu* pass these encomiums upon Virgil, while quite unaware that he was standing at his side.

\* *non può tutto la virtù che vuole*: Benvenuto considers this a very difficult passage: "Et ad declarandam istam literam fortem et primo notandum, quod appetitus, alius est intellectivus, alius sensitivus: et sensitivus, alius est irascibilis, alius concupiscibilis: et sic gaudium, quod ostenditur per risum procedit ab appetitu concupiscibili; et planctus qui movetur per injuriam procedit ab irascibili: et ambo isti appetitus sunt de potentia sensitiva, et uterque sequitur alterum. Et appetitus intellectivus qui est voluntas, et per quem regulatur appetitus sensitivus, non semper est potens supra sensitivum, quia non semper irascibile, et concupiscibile obediunt rationi, sive rationali voluntati, quæ est suum fundamentum in intellectu."

† *riso e pianto . . . seguaci Alla passion, etc.*: Andreoli explains this as meaning that laughter and weeping do not act in obedience to the will, but follow directly after that particular modification of the mind from which each of them respectively proceeds, namely laughter follows upon joy, and weeping upon sorrow. Philalæthes observes that St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars. i, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. xvii, art. 9) also assumes that the movements of the body are not all governed by the will, nor in the next place all those which belong to the vegetable spheres. Each movement moreover does not proceed from the sensual or carnal instances, nor does its origin always begin through the will; but more frequently the limbs follow in the first instance that natural inclination which is dictated to them by the sensitive body.

‡ *spicca*: Laughter takes its origin in joy or merriment, and weeping takes its origin in grief or sorrow. In the *Gran Dizionario*, "spiccarsi da un luogo o di una persona, vale Lasciarlo, Partirne, Staccarsene." Compare *Inf.* xxx, 35, 36:—



Io pur sorrisi, come l' uom ch' ammicca; \*

Perchè l' ombra si tacque, e riguardommi †

Negli occhi, ove il sembiante più si ficca. ‡

These words made Virgil turn round to me with a look which silently said: "Be silent!" but our

"non ti sia fatica

A dir chi è, pria che di qui si spicchi."

Buti explains the use of *spiccarsi* in the present passage as *la passion da che, cioè da la quale, ciascun si spicca*; cioè, *atti di sopra nominata, si spicca*; cioè, *procede sì, come cagione.*"

\* *ammicca*. Blanc (*Vocabolario Dantesco*) derives the word from the Latin *Micare*, to make a sign with the eyes. Other editions derive it from the Latin *nictare, adnictare*. Tommaséo (*Dizionario Sinonimi*, p. 969, Sin. 3137) says: "*Ammiccare, sebbene significativamente l' occhio, comprende un po' l' atto di tutta l' accennare . . . Si accenna e con gli occhi e col capo e con le mani. Si accennare senza ammiccare, ma non vice versa.*"

† *e riguardommi*: The editions of Mantua, Foligno, and Naples read "e" (or "et") before *riguardommi*, which has a much better sense.

‡ *gli occhi, ove il sembiante più si ficca*: In *Conv.* iii, 8, 11 Dante lays down that the eyes are the window of the soul through which all the passions can be observed, and says that it happened to some to put out their own eyes in order that their shame from within should not be seen without: "E nella faccia, massimamente in due luoghi adopera l' Anima, cioè occhè in quelli due luoghi quasi tutte e tre le nature dell' Anima hanno giurisdizione, cioè negli occhi e nella bocca), quasi massimamente adorna, e quivi pone l' intento tutto a far l' uomo puote. E in questi due luoghi dico io, che appariscono i piaceri, dicendo: *Negli occhi e nel suo dolce riso*. Li quali due luoghi per bella similitudine si possono appellare balconi. La Donna che nell' edificio del corpo abita, cioè l' Anima, per quivi, avvegnachè quasi velata, spesse volte si dimostra. Ma dimostrasi negli occhi tanto manifesta, che conoscer si può la presente passione, chi ben la mira . . . Onde alcuno già dimostrasi nella bocca, quasi siccome colore dopo vetro. E è *ridere*, se non una corruscazione della dilettazione dell' Anima, cioè un lume apparente di fuori secondo che sta dentro." For further illustration, Tommaséo in his commentary quotes the following words of the Jesuit Padre Segneri, the author of the celebrated *Quaresimale* or series of Lenten sermons, preached in Florence in 1679: "L' occhio, visibile ritratto dell' anima, è visibile."





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And, "So mayest thou bring to a happy conclusion," said he, "all thy arduous enterprise, why did thy face just now display to me a flash of merriment?"

Dante is perplexed by the contradictory injunctions of his two companions.

Or son io d' una parte e d' altra preso ; 11  
 L' una mi fa tacer, l' altra scongiura  
 Ch' io dica : ond' io sospiro, e sono inteso  
 Dal mio Maestro, \* e :—"Non aver paura,"—  
 Mi disse,—"di parlar ; ma parla, e digli  
 Quel ch' ei domanda con cotanta cura."— 12

and Scartazzini says that Petrarch and Tasso often used it in that way. Compare Petrarch, part ii, *Son.* xxiv:—

"Le cresse chiome d' or puro lucente  
 E 'l lampeggiar dell' angelico riso," etc.

And *Trionf. Morte*, cap. ii, *terz.* 29:—

"Appena ebb' io queste parole ditte,  
 Ch' i' vidi lampeggiar quel dolce riso," etc.

And Tasso, *Ger. Liber.* iii, *st.* 22:—

"Lampeggiar gli occhi e folgorar gli sguardi  
 Dolci nell' ira."

And Boccaccio (*Decam. Giorn.* ii, *Nov.* ii): "Rinaldo queste parole udendo, e il lampeggiar degli occhi della donna veggendo," etc.

And *Decam. Giorn.* iii, *Nov.* v: "Ma pur lei riguardando nel viso e veggendo alcun lampeggiare d' occhi di lei verso di alcuna volta . . . alcuna buona speranza prese." These quotations are one of

the numberless instances of the truth of the words of the writer of the article in the *Edinburgh Review* cited above, in a footnote at p. 293: "The *Trionfi* of Petrarch, the . . . works of Boccaccio, . . . of Ariosto, etc., abound in fragments of Dante embedded in the language like fossils." Buti's words on the passage we are discussing are very lucid: "*Un lampeggiar di riso* ; cioè uno aprimento di risa : imperò che Dante fece come fa lo lampo, che prima apre l' aire quando esce fuori, e possa (poscia) chiude, e così fece Dante ; prima aperse li occhi a ridere mosso da passione, avendo allegrezza che tanto bene volesse Stazio al suo maestro Virgilio e possa chiuse per obedire Virgilio che l' avea ammonito ch' tacesse."

\* *e sono inteso Dal mio Maestro* : I much regret that the discrepancy of reading in this passage is not among those treated and discussed by Dr. Moore in his *Textual Criticism*, but I follow him (in his new edition of Dante's Works), Witte, and Scartazzini in reading as above. This is the reading (says Scartazzini



Now am I caught both on the one side and the other; the one (side i.e., Virgil) bids me be silent, the other (Statius) entreats me to speak: on which I heave a sigh, and am understood by my Master, and said he to me: "Fear not to speak, but say on, and tell him that which he asks with so much anxiety."

Buti thinks Virgil had stopped Dante speaking before, so as not to interrupt what Statius was saying; but when he saw Statius look perplexed, he thought it would be kinder to tell him what it was about which they were making signs.

Fortified by Virgil's permission, Dante gives to Statius the information asked.

Ond' io:—"Forse che tu ti maravigli,  
Antico spirito, \* del rider ch' io fei;  
Ma più d' ammirazion vo' che ti pigli. †

adopted by all the best Codices, and by the following Commentators: Anon. Fior.; Benvenuto; Buti; Landino; Vellutello; Camerini, etc. But by far the larger number of Commentators follow the variant adopted by the Vatican and Caetani MSS., *e sono* *etc.* "Di," *il mio Maestro, "e non aver paura," mi disse.* If (says Scartazzini) numbers were always right, the question would be already decided. But mere plurality, in cases like these, is not of the slightest importance, all the less so, that they that have eyes to see must have remarked hundreds and hundreds of times that Commentators by no means unfrequently follow each other. *E ciò che fa la prima, e l'altre fanno* (Purg. iii, 82). Besides the tautology of "Di—non aver paura—parla—digli," ~~but~~ ~~the~~ ~~lines~~ repeated would be insufferable. Scartazzini thinks ~~that~~, as it is, three times is rather more than sufficient.

\* *Antico spirito.* Benvenuto remarks that Statius may well be called *antico*, since he wrote poems more than a thousand years before the scene here described is supposed to occur.

† *più d' ammirazion vo' che ti pigli.* This almost reminds one of Mark Anthony, who first shows the mob Cæsar's mantle stabbed all over, and then, suddenly plucking it aside, shows them the dead body.

\* *Kind souls, what weep you, when you but behold*

*Our Cæsar's vesture wounded! Look you here,*

*How is his body marred, as you see, by traitors."*

—Shakespeare (*Julius Cæsar*, act iii, sc. ii).



Questi, che guida in alto \* gli occhi miei,  
 È quel Virgilio dal qual tu togliesti 125  
 Forza a cantar † degli uomini e de' Dei. ‡  
 Se cagione altra al mio rider credesti,  
 Lasciala per non vera esser, e credi  
 Quelle parole che di lui dicesti."—

Whereupon I: "Perchance thou marvellest, spirit of days gone by, at the smile I gave; but I will that greater wonderment seize upon thee. This one, who is guiding my eyes up towards heaven, is that Virgil from whom thou didst gain strength to sing of men and of the gods. And if thou didst believe in any other cause for my smiling, abandon it as not being true, and believe those words (rather) that thou didst speak of him."

Cesari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 387) points out the poetic art with which Dante describes what took place upon the sudden disclosure of Virgil's identity. Doubtless Statius broke forth into warm exclamations of devout reverence, at the unexpected realization of his longed-for hopes; but Dante has supplied the place of these demonstrations of affection by merely recording that Statius at once

\* Scartazzini contends that *in alto* means as far as the summit of the mountain, beyond which Virgil, representing Reason, would have no power to go, and not as Benvenuto interprets it, as meaning to Heaven. I agree, however, with Benvenuto.

† *Forza a cantar*: This is the reading adopted by Dr. Moore, Witte, Scartazzini, Panfani, Brunone Bianchi, Gioberti, Andreoli, Blanc, and others; following the Sta. Croce, Caetani MSS., and eleven others mentioned by Dr. Barlow. Some, including Buti, read *Forse* or *Forsi*; but by far the larger number read *Forza a cantar*, including Benvenuto and Landino. As Scartazzini points out, Dante is merely re-echoing the sentiments expressed by Statius at l. 94. Statius never said that Virgil taught him to sing *courageously*, nor *in a loud tone*, nor *loftily*; he merely has said that he took from the *Æneid* poetic fire, and style in his verse, as is fully expressed by the reading *Forza a cantar*.

‡ In the *Thebaid*, Statius introduces both gods and men as performing feats of arms, and therein imitated Virgil, who in his turn had imitated Homer.





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Trattando l' ombre come cosa salda." \*

Already was he stooping to embrace my Teacher's feet; but he (Virgil) said to him: "Brother, do it not, for thou art a shade, and a shade thou seest!" And he (Statius) rising: "Now canst thou comprehend the sum of the love which warms me to thee, when I can forget our emptiness, treating shades as substantial matter."

There is a certain inconsistency in the way that Dante has dealt with the three episodes of the interviews of himself and Virgil with (1) Casella in *Purg.* ii; (2) Sordello in Cantos vi and vii; and (3) with Statius in this Canto.

In *Purg.* ii, Dante, a living man, tries in vain to embrace Casella, who, as a spirit, is impalpable to his touch.

✓ In *Purg.* vi and vii, Virgil and Sordello, both impalpable spirits, embrace each other without any difficulty. And now in the present passage we find Statius

\* *Trattando l' ombre come cosa salda*: On these last verses (130-136) there is a very interesting retractation by Gioberti in 1823 of opinions that he had previously expressed unfavourable to Dante's being a true Christian. Speaking of Christianity he had said: "Dante vedeva il Cristianesimo, e la sua Scienza, con occhio umano, . . . senza sentirne la vera natura, cosa concessa solo al vero Cristiano, qual pur troppo non era Dante." This is followed by a noble recantation: "Mi ritratto, 1823.—Dante in tutto il suo poema è pieno di vera e profonda religione. Ebbe difetti ma li temperò; e non crederemo mai che del suo divino poema far volesse un teatro di scortesi e vili vendette, o di orgoglio. Non ne conosce che la corteccia [*the outer bark of Dante*] chi l'accusa di sconoscere il Cristianesimo e di trattarlo con mano profana." Poletto alludes to this, advising his readers to notice how a man in maturer age and after more profound study, may modify his judgment, and he urges them to take example from great genius like Gioberti, who, finding his opinions so modified had the greatness of mind to make a declaration of them, for fear that by not doing so he might have done injury to his neighbour's good name.



seeking to embrace Virgil's feet, and on being reminded by him that they are both impalpable spirits, acquiesces in the reproof as being deserved by his forgetfulness.

This interview between Virgil and Statius is one of the passages quoted by the late Dean Church in that beautiful contribution to English literature, his *Essay on Dante*, as illustrative of the great Poet's descriptive power: "Nor is he less observant of the more delicate phenomena of mind, in its inward workings, and its connection with the body. The play of features, the involuntary gestures and attitudes of the passions, the power of eye over eye, of hand upon hand, the charm of voice and expression, of musical sounds even when not understood—feelings, sensations, and states of mind which have a name, and others, equally numerous and equally common, which have none—these, often so fugitive, so shifting, so baffling and intangible, are expressed with a directness, a simplicity, a sense of truth at once broad and refined, which seized at once on the congenial mind of his countrymen, and pointed out to them the road which they have followed in art, unapproached as yet by any competitors." (*Dante and Other Essays*, Macmillan, London, 1888, pp. 171, 172.)

END OF CANTO XXI.



## CANTO XXII.

ASCENT TO THE SIXTH CORNICE—STATIUS RELATES HIS SIN OF PRODIGALITY—AND HIS CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY—VIRGIL'S REPLY TO HIS ENQUIRY AS TO MANY ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGES WHO ARE IN *LIMBO*.

THE SIXTH CORNICE—GLUTTONY—THE GLUTTONOUS—THEIR CHASTISEMENT—THE MYSTIC TREE—EXAMPLES OF TEMPERANCE.

At the beginning of the last Canto, Benvenuto stated that in it would be discussed the purgation of Prodigality in connection with the purgation of Avarice, but as a matter of fact Prodigality was not mentioned at all until the present Canto. Here again, in his opening words, Benvenuto repeats the statement, saying: "As in the preceding chapter, our poet treated of the vice of Prodigality in the person of Statius, so now in this chapter xxii, he concludes the subject of Prodigality in the same personage, and enters upon the subject of Gluttony, which is punished in the sixth Cornice."

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 54, Dante relates how he found that his purgation from Avarice had already taken place, and how he learns that it was for Prodigality and not for Avarice that Statius had to suffer.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 55 to ver. 93, Statius





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Con *sitiunt*,\* senz' altro, ciò fornìro.

differently, and to allow the travellers to depart unnoticed by him. Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*) says at page 405: "the right reading *n' avea* (unless I am mistaken) is not found in any of the earlier Commentators, yet it has considerable support among the MSS., being found in about half those examined . . . Still on fuller and wider consideration, both of context and parallel passages, *avea* will, I think, prove to be decidedly more appropriate."

\**sitiunt*: Dr. Moore (*ut supra*) remarks that the reading *sitiunt* is almost entirely devoid of MS. authority, only about six instances being known to him, one of which is in one of the Vernon MSS. On the other hand the reading *sitio* was found in about 170 MSS. He observes: "Now no one can doubt the unity of plan and method, not only throughout the whole poem, but also in each of its three great divisions, and this unity of plan is nowhere more marked than in the circumstances of Dante's passage from one *Cornice* to another of the *Purgatorio*. In every case the Angel in charge of the *Cornice* removes one of the seven P's that have been impressed on his forehead, leaving him lighter for his upward journey. In every case also, putting out of sight for the moment the present passage, *i.e.* in six cases out of seven, this act is accompanied by the recitation of one of the Beatitudes from *St. Matt.* ch. v." These six cases are *Purg.* xii, 110; xv, 38; xvii, 68; xix, 50; xxiv, 151; and xxvii, 8. The analogy therefore requires that in the case of the Fifth *Cornice* also the Angel should dismiss the Poets with a Beatitude. The words of the full text of the Beatitude (in *St. Matt.* v. 6) are: "Beati qui esuriunt et *sitiunt* (not *sitio*) *justitiam*," etc. Dr. Moore (p. 407) continues: "We may then, I think, take it for granted, (1) that the quotation is certainly a Beatitude; and (2) that it is *probably* spoken by the Angel guarding the ascent: and consequently we should certainly read *sitiunt*, and most probably also *avea* . . . The reference (p. 409) to the Beatitude is here obscured by the somewhat awkward way in which the words *Detto n' avea* break into the quotation; also by the inversion of order which makes *Beati* come last instead of, as usual, first; also by the free and altered form in which the quotation is made, and the mixture of Italian and Latin in it; and finally by its fragmentary character. On this last point a few words may be added in conclusion. In order to supply the required number of appropriate Beatitudes for the several *Cornici*, this one had to be divided, and a separation introduced between 'hungering' and 'thirsting' after righteousness. The former is reserved for the Sixth *Cornice*, where it affords a natural contrast to the sin of Gluttony, while the latter offers an equally natural antithesis here in the Fifth *Cornice* to the sin of



informs Virgil, in answer to a question, that it was from Virgil's writings that he had learnt the Christian Faith.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 94 to ver. 114, Statius asks Virgil what has become of certain illustrious writers of antiquity.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 115 to ver. 154, the Poets reach the Sixth Cornice, and the purgation of the sin of Gluttony is described.

*Division I.*—It would seem that, between the conclusion of the last and the commencement of the present Canto, Dante had passed before the Angel of the Fifth Cornice, who had erased another P from his brow, so that two only now remain upon it, the P of Gluttony, and the P of Sensuality, which will be erased in the Sixth and Seventh Cornices above.

The three poets, Dante, Virgil, and Statius, appear to have already entered upon the stairway leading up to the Sixth Cornice. Dante tells us that they have left the Angel behind them at the foot of the steps.

Già era l' Angel retro a noi rimasto,  
 L' Angel che n' avea vòlto al sesto giro,  
 Avendomi dal viso un colpo raso :  
 E quei ch' hanno a giustizia lor disiro  
 Detto n' avea \* *Beati*, e le sue voci

5

---

\* *Beati*: Scartazzini says that this is one of the passages that have been terribly tortured, first by the amanuenses, and then by the Commentators. The variations in the reading are many, but the most common alternative reading is *n' avean*, which would imply that it was not the Angel, but the spirits of the Fifth Cornice, who pronounced the words, "Beati quei ch' hanno a giustizia lor disiro." But such an interpretation would simply destroy the beautiful symmetry of the poem. While everywhere else it is the Angel guarding the exit who, when dismissing the *poor souls*, chants the appropriate Beatitude, according to the *sin of man*, the Angel in this Cornice would be made to act



this Scartazzini observes that these last words imply that as there are seven Angels, into whose mouths Dante wishes to put a Beatitude, he finds himself obliged to leave out from this text the words, "Blessed are they that hunger," "*Beati qui esuriunt*," which comes in very appropriately in the next Cornice, where Gluttony is chastised.

Dante having been disburdened of five out of the seven mortal sins, of which the emblems, the seven P's, had been traced on his brow, describes how relieved he feels.

Ed io, più lieve \* che per l' altre foci,  
M' andava sì, che senza alcun labore †  
Seguiva in su gli spiriti veloci :

\* *più lieve*: Compare *Purg.* iv, 88, where Virgil, in answer to Dante's inquiries as to the ascent, replies:—

“Questa montagna è tale,  
Che sempre al cominciar di sotto è grave,  
E quanto uom più va su, e men fa male,”

and *Purg.* xii, 112, where Dante compares the Cornices of Purgatory to those of the Circles of Hell.

“Ahi! quanto son diverse quelle foci  
Dalle infernali; chè quivi per canti  
S' entra, e laggiù per lamenti feroci.”

† *labore*: A primitive word from the Latin, used instead of *lavoro*, and has the signification of fatigue. Dante makes use of it in *Conv.* ii, 16, ll. 39, 40: “se non teme labore di studio e lite di dubitazioni.” Compare also *Par.* xxiii, 5, 6:—

“E per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca,  
In che i gravi labor gli sono aggrati.”

It was much used by the early Italian writers. Compare Brunetto Latini, *Tesoretto*, cap. iv (quoted in Nannucci's *Teorica de' Nomi*, p. 108; and by the *Gran Dizionario*):—

“Ma tutto mio labore,  
Quanto che io l' allumi,  
Convien che si consumi;”

and *Tesoretto*, cap. vii:—

“Volse tutto labore  
Finir nello migliore.”

Compare also Pannuccio dal Bagno (*Poeti del Primo Secolo*, 2 vols. 8vo, Firenze, 1816, vol. i, p. 387):—





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Nel limbo dello inferno \* Juvenale , †  
 Che la tua affezion mi fe' palese, 15  
 Mia benvoglienza ‡ inverso te fu quale  
 Più strinse mai di non vista persona, §  
 Sì ch' or mi parran corte queste scale.

When Virgil began : " Love, kindled by virtue, has always enkindled another (i.e., a reciprocal love),

\* *limbo dello inferno* : Compare St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* pars iii, suppl. qu. lxxix, art. 5 : " Limbus vel est idem quod infernus, vel est pars inferni . . . Si ergo considerentur limbus patrum et infernus secundum locorum qualitatem prædictam, sic non est dubium quòd distinguuntur, tum quia in inferno est pœna sensibilis, quæ non erat in limbo patrum ; tum etiam quia in inferno est pœna æterna ; sed in limbo patrum detinebantur sancti temporali-ter tantum. Sed si considerentur quantum ad situm loci, sic probabile est quòd idem locus, vel quasi continuus, sit infernus et limbus ; ita tamen quòd quædam superior pars inferni, limbus patrum dicatur."

† *Juvenale* : Many read *Giovenale*. Gioberti observes that Dante would seem to place Statius before Lucan ; since he makes Virgil say that he loves Statius more than any other poet, besides giving to Statius and not to Lucan the honour of this beautiful episode. Scartazzini remarks that Dante would name Juvenal, both because he was an admirer of the *Thebaid*, and also a contemporary of Statius ; but the truth is that, although Dante was acquainted with Juvenal's writings, he does not seem to wish to bestow upon him either praise or censure.

‡ *benvoglienza*, a word which can be spelt in seven different ways, is, says the *Gran Dizionario* : " più e men dell' affetto, e più manifesta ; e sempre è men dell' amore." " The *Dizionario* quotes the following from the *Filosofia Morale* of Francesco Maria Zanotti, the celebrated Bolognese philosopher, 1695-1777 : " La benevolenza non è amicizia, ma è principio di amicizia," cf. also Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xxxvi, st. 27 :—

" è l' un fiamma e furore,  
 L' altro benivolenza più ch' amore."

§ *non vista persona* : Compare Cicero, *De Amicitia*, cap. viii, 28, from which Dante may have taken the ideas expressed in the present passage : " Nihil est enim amabilius virtute ; nihil, quod magis alliciat ad diligendum : quippe quum, propter virtutem et probitatem, eos etiam, quos nunquam vidimus, quodam modo diligamus." And Petrarch, *Trionfo dell' Amore*, cap. ii, terz. 8 :—

• " Ma tua fama real per tutto aggiunge,  
 E tal che mai non ti vedrà nè vide,  
 Con bel nodo d' amor teco congiunge."



provided only that its flame appear outwardly. Wherefore, from the hour that juvenal, who made me acquainted with thy affection (for me), descended into the *Limbo* of Hell, my good will towards thee has been such as never bound me before to an unseen person, so that now these stairs will appear short to me.

Virgil does not appear to mean that he had hitherto found the ascent toilsome, but only wishes to express his regret that he will not be able to go beyond the summit of the stairway of the last *Cornice*, and will consequently have so short a time to pass in the company of Statius.

Benvenuto says that Virgil, having addressed the above graceful words to Statius by way of prelude, now asks him how it is possible that he can have been guilty of the sin of Avarice.

Ma dimmi, e come amico mi perdona  
 Se troppa sicurtà m' allarga il freno, \* 20  
 E come amico omai meco ragiona:  
 Come potè † trovar dentro al tuo seno

---

\* *m' allarga il freno*: Petrarch uses the words in the same figurative sense in *Canzone i* (in some editions iv), st. 6:—

“Alle lagrime triste allargai 'l freno,  
 E lasciaile cader come a lor parve.”

† *Come potè*, etc.: Scartazzini thinks that Virgil's mistake was very natural. The Poets had heard from Adrian V that in the *Fifth Cornice* was punished the sin of Avarice, *Purg.* xix, 115. Moreover, Statius, in *Purg.* xxi, 67, has told them that he had lain in that *Cornice* for five centuries. Nothing had been said about Prodigality being punished there, and Virgil consequently took it for granted that Avarice had been one of the sins of Statius. Alfieri in his marginal notes, quoted by Biagioli, says that Dante's aim in these words was to show how utterly impossible it was that Avarice, the most ignoble of all vices, could ever abide in any noble soul, much less in that of a distinguished writer (*letterato* *vero*).



Loco avarizia, tra cotanto senno \*  
Di quanto, per tua cura, † fosti pieno ? ”

But tell me—and as a friend forgive me if too great freedom loosens my rein (of speech), and henceforth converse with me as a friend—how could Avarice find a place within thy breast, amid wisdom so great as thou wast filled with by thy diligence ? ”

Stattius cannot forbear from smiling at this misapprehension on the part of Virgil, just as Dante had previously laughed at that of Stattius.

Queste parole Stazio mover fenno 25  
Un poco a riso ‡ pria ; poscia rispose :  
—“ Ogni tuo dir d' amor m' è caro cenno.

These words made Stattius smile a little at first ; then he answered : “ Every saying of thine is to me a cherished token of love.

Stattius says this because Virgil had asked him for pardon, if he used too much freedom in speaking about his supposed sin of Avarice.

Benvenuto observes that, after this preliminary remark, Stattius commences his speech, and does so in a style which one cannot sufficiently admire, both from its artistic merit, worthy of so great an orator, and also as being quite after Virgil's manner. He says it often happens that things which are perfectly true are not believed, from ignorance of causes. It seems incredible that, under a clear sky and on a tranquil sea, a ship

\* *tra cotanto senno* : Compare *Inf.* iv, 102 :—

“ Si ch' io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.”

† *per tua cura* : “ Senno non solo naturale, ma coltivato da studii onesti.” (Tommaséo.) “ Perchè il senno e la scienza non vengono da sè, ma si acquistano per indefesso studio.” (Brunone Bianchi.)

‡ *mover fenno Un poco a riso* : Compare *Purg.* iv, 121, 122 :—

“ Gli atti suoi pigri, e le corte parole

Mosson le labbra mie un poco a riso.”





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Esser ch' io fossi avaro in l' altra vita,  
 Forse per quella cerchia dov' io era.  
 Or sappi ch' avarizia fu partita  
 Troppo da me, e questa dismisura  
 Migliaia di lunari \* hanno punita.

35

Ofttimes indeed things appear, which afford false matter for doubt, because their real causes are hidden. Thy question convinces me that it is thy belief, perchance from that Cornice where I was, that I was avaricious in the other life. Know then that Avarice was too far removed from me, and this excess (*i.e.* Prodigality) thousands of months have chastised.

Buti remarks that, instead of hoarding the things he ought to have given away or reserved, he gave away both the things he ought to have given away, and also the things he ought to have reserved.

Statius now goes on to relate that it was a passage in Virgil's writings that had wrought an amendment in him, and then, having quoted the words of Virgil, tells him how reflection on those weighty lines influenced his life, for he then began to understand that both Misers and Prodigals have a sinful thirst for gold, though with the intent of using it in opposite ways; and that they often seek it by sinful fraud, or violence.

---

\* *Migliaia di lunari* : Statius died A.D. 96, which, deducted from A.D. 1300, leaves 1204 years, of which, as we noticed before, he had spent 500 in the Cornice of Avarice; 400 in the Cornice of Sloth; and 304 in Ante-Purgatory. Total, 1204 years = 14,448 calendar months. *Lunare* is, says the *Gran Dizionario*, a substantive, *il tempo del corso della luna*. Buti commenting on the present passage writes: "Lunare si chiama una innovazione di Luna, che si fa in ventette (27) di e ore nove, cioè che la Luna compie di girare tutto 'l zodiaco." Compare Giov. Villani, *Cronica*, xi, cap. ii: "E nel cominciamento e grande parte di quello lunare dinanzi al diluvio furono grandi piogge in Firenze e in molte parti, e questo fu segno del futuro diluvio." Notwithstanding Buti's assertion, the true period of the "*lunation*" is about 29½ days.



E se non fosse ch' io drizzai \* mia cura, †  
 Quando' io intesi ‡ là dove tu esclame, §  
 Crucciato quasi all' umana natura :  
 ' Per che ¶ non reggi tu, o sacra fame

40

\* *drizzai*: Both *drizzare* and *dirizzare* can signify, as here, to make straight (*raggiustare, correggere, indirizzare*) to amend. In the present passage it means *feci dritta mia cura*, I made straight, amended, my zeal, which before had been crooked, i.e. misdirected. Compare *Purg.* xxiii, 125, 126:—

"Salendo e rigirando la montagna  
 Che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti."

(i.e. which makes straight you whom the world has made crooked).

† *mia cura*: Buti interprets *cura*, "i miei pensieri"; Fraticelli, "mio contegno" (this I have adopted); *Philalethes* and Witte "Bestreben"; Lubin "inclinazione"; and Lacaita (personally, who agrees with Fraticelli, told me): "rectified my conduct."

‡ *intesi*: *intendere* has a vast number of significations—the principal of these are "to hear" and "to understand." Both these are used by the different Commentators, Witte translates *ich las*, but I can find no authority for that as a literal translation. Tommaso (*Dizionario dei Sinon.* p. 247, Sin. 1101) writes: *Intendere riguarda, più specialmente, il significato delle parole,*" and at p. 1072, Sin. 3380: "*Intendere, veramente del senso della parola udita. . . . Si può udire un discorso senza intenderlo; si può udire senza voler intendere, perchè taluni disprezzano come non intelligibile tutto quello che non piace loro.*"

§ *dove tu esclame*: There is a graceful courtesy in Statius quoting a passage from Virgil's own writings, and telling him the influence it had upon his life. It reminds one of Casella the musician, mentioned in the second Canto, who, when asked by Dante to comfort his soul with song, after the bodily and mental prostration he felt from his passage through Hell, commenced singing one of Dante's sonnets set to music of his own.

¶ *Per che*: Some read *perchè* and translate: "Why dost thou not regulate and confine within due bounds the appetite of mortals?" Others, a *che*: translating: "To what pitch dost thou not drive?" Some take *sacra* in a good sense, as though the words meant: "Why dost not thou, O holy hunger of gold, restrain the desire of mortals?" Scartazzini says that it is clear, before everything else, that Dante intends here either to translate or to imitate the well-known verses of Virgil (*Æn.* iii, 56):—

"Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,  
 Auri sacra fames?"

This is evidently the opinion too of Benvenuto, who translates it:—

"O execrabilis cupiditas auri."



Dell' oro, l' appetito dei mortali ?  
 Voltando sentirei le giostre grame.\*

Scartazzini says that, of four different ways of interpreting the passage, he prefers the following: "Per che distorte vie, per che malvagità, non conduci e guidi tu, o esecranda fame dell' oro, l' appetito degli uomini?" (*Through what crooked ways and through what wickedness, dost thou not conduct, etc.*) He also cites a number of Commentators who say that rightly to understand how Virgil's severe censure of the hunger of gold serves to condemn Prodigality (for both the Miser and the Prodigal have the sinful love of money), the following passage from Aristotle (*Ethics*, book iv, ch. 1, R. W. Browne's translation) may be quoted: "But the majority of prodigals, as has been stated, also receive from improper sources, and are in this respect illiberal (in the Italian version ἀνελεύθεροι is translated, guilty of the sin of Avarice). Now they become fond of receiving because they wish to spend, and are not able to do it easily, for their means soon fail them; they are therefore compelled to get supplies from some other quarter, and at the same time, owing to their not caring for the honourable, they receive without scruple from any person they can; for they are anxious to give, and the how or the whence they get the money matters not to them." Biagioli has the following note: "*Sacra*, esecrabile. *Fame*, per desiderio smoderato." *Fame* is used by Petrarch, part ii, *Canz.* iv, st. 8: *Quella per ch' io ho di morir tal fame*. Every one can see that this is the Virgilian *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis Auri sacra fames?* "When (adds Biagioli) I read for the first time this *perché*, written thus as one entire word, I confess that I did not succeed in understanding the construction of it, although the sentiment of it can be so clearly seen. . . . I returned to my house and commenced the analysis, separating the preposition *per* from the adjective *che*, knowing that, in whatever aspect it presents itself, *che* is nothing but an adjective, and therefore connected with a noun either expressed or understood, and I quickly found that I could fill the void, by writing: 'per che (*per quali*) scelleraggini non reggi, etc. (*through what crimes dost thou not conduct, etc.*),' and in this way the construction becomes quite simple."

\* *giostre grame*: This of course refers to the collisions between the Misers and Prodigals, as they encounter one another in their ceaseless course backwards and forwards each in their own half of the Fourth Circle of Hell. Compare the words in that passage (*Inf.* vii, 31-35):—

"Così tornavan per lo cerchio tetro,  
 Da ogni mano all' opposto punto,  
 Gridandosi anche loro ontoso metro:  
 Poi si volgea ciascun, quando era giunto  
 Per lo suo mezzo cerchio all' altra giostra."





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Per ignoranza,\* che di questa pecca  
 Toglie il penter vivendo, e negli estremi †  
 E sappi che la colpa, che rimbecca ‡  
 Per dritta opposizione alcun peccato,

50

\* *ignoranza*: Scartazzini explains that there are two kinds of ignorance: the one sinful, and the other not. Ignorance is sinful which could be overcome by exercising and perfecting reason. See St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* p. i, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. lxxvi, art. 2): "Quicumque negligit habere vel facere id quod tenetur habere vel facere, peccat peccato omissionis. Unde propter negligentiam ignorantia eorum quæ aliquis scire tenetur est peccatum; non autem imputatur homini ad negligentiam si nesciat ea quæ scire non potest. Unde horum ignorantia invincibilis dicitur, quia studio superari non potest. Et propter hoc talis ignorantia, cum non sit voluntaria, eo quod non est in potestate nostrâ eam repellere, non est peccatum. Ex quo patet quod nulla ignorantia invincibilis est peccatum; ignorantia autem vincibilis est peccatum si sit eorum quæ aliquis scire tenetur, non autem si sit eorum quæ quis scire non tenetur."

† *negli estremi*: Benvenuto has a fanciful interpretation for *estremi* "... the extremes, for such are Avarice and Prodigality".

‡ *rimbecca*: Blane (*Vocabolario Dantesco*) says that *rimbeccare* is a word of uncertain origin, and that Dante uses it in the sense of being directly opposed to anything. It properly signifies to strike the ball backwards and forwards from one player to another. The word is used in Corsica as the title of a kind of song to excite the backward when unwilling to carry on a *vendetta*. It would seem to correspond with the English word "return," and the French "riposter," terms familiar in the tennis-courts of London and Paris. The *Gran Dizionario* gives the following quotation from the Florentine translation by Varchi, of Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, Florence, 1554, 4to, in which allusion is made to the ancient game of *Pallone*, the original parent of the game of Tennis: "se aremo a far con uno che sia buono giuocatore ed esercitato, noi manderemo la palla più sicuramente; perchè in qualunque modo gli venga, saprà rimbeccarla agevolmente e con destrezza." And in the sense of repartee or retort, compare Varchi, *L' Hercolano, Dialogo nel quale si ragiona generalmente della lingue, ed in particolare della Toscana, e della Fiorentina*, Venice, 1580, 4to, p. 48: "Se alcuno ha detto alcuna cosa, o vera, o falsa, che ella sia, e un' altro per piaggiarlo, e fare, ch' ella si creda gliele fa buona, cioè l' approva, affermando così essere, come colui dice, e tal volta accreascendola, sono in uso questi verbi, *rifiorire, ribadire, rimattersela, o rimandarcela l' un l' altro, rimbeccarsela, o rimpolpettarsela.*"



Con esso insieme qui suo verde secca.\*  
 Però, s' io son tra quella gente stato  
 Che piange l' avarizia, per purgarmi,  
 Per lo contrario suo m' è incontrato."—

How many shall rise again with shorn hair, through ignorance, which cuts off repentance for this sin, (both) in life, and at the extreme hour! And know that the fault which sets itself in direct opposition to any sin, here (in Purgatory) together with it dries up its verdure. Wherefore, if I have for my purgation been among that multitude who bewail their avarice, it has happened to me by reason of its contrary."

The first of the two faults undergoes the same purgation, and is punished in the same place in Purgatory, as the fault which is the direct opposite to it. Benvenuto says of *la colpa che rimbecca* "id est, adversatur et occurrit a becco a becco," and of *qui secca suo verde*, "id est luit poenam æqualem" . . . "And mark here, reader," he adds, "that our poet rightly assigns the same penalty to both those sins, for, although Avarice is always the most detested of the two, yet in real truth Prodigality is a damnable pest, and hostile to the public weal. For the Prodigal, who spends more than nature requires, and more than fortune supplies, soon replaces plenty with emptiness, sweet with bitter, light with darkness, praise with derision, much with nothing. The prodigal soon renders himself contemptible in the eyes of those, by whom, but shortly

---

\* *suo verde secca*: This is taken from the figure of a plant that is withered up, consumed. On this Gioberti writes: "*suo verde*, cioè il troppo suo rigoglio (*over exuberance*), finchè torni la cosa alla sua giusta misura." Compare *Ezekiel* xx, 47: "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree."



before, he was held in respect. . . . O how many worthy and great men has this sin cast down into rage and despair!"

In the Article in the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1895 (referred to in the last Canto) on *The Classical Studies of Dante*, the reviewer writes at p. 304: "Virgil is made to express his surprise that one so wise as Statius could have been stained with so sordid a vice (and it is to be observed that Dante had a very special contempt for the vice of Avarice). Statius explains that his was the contrary vice, viz. that of Prodigality, . . . and that in Purgatory, as in Hell, the excess and defect are punished together as connected forms of vice, on strict Aristotelian principles. Statius then declares that he was indebted to Virgil for his recovery from his vice, as well as for the more important boon of his conversion to Christianity, which comes later. In particular his conversion was effected by Virgil's well-known lines (see above, p. 225); the form, however, in which these words are quoted by Statius is very difficult to explain. . . . We are not aware of the existence of any such tradition as to the character and habits of Statius. It appears to be a pure invention on the part of Dante, as much so as the alleged conversion to Christianity. The object in both cases seems to be to connect the benefits received with the influence of Virgil, and with some definite passage that could be quoted from his works. What makes this particular invention more singular is that it is somewhat inconsistent with the picture of Statius's condition presented by Juvenal in *Sat.* vii, 82-87, which Dante appears to have been acquainted with, though we cannot point out the indications of this here. For *Prodigality* implies





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Ed egli a lui:—"Tu prima m' inviasti  
Verso Parnaso a ber nelle sue grotte,  
E poi appresso Dio m' alluminasti.†  
Facesti come quei che va di notte,‡

65

into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."

\* *grotte*: I follow Camerini in taking *grotte* as "banks, slopes," and not as "caves, grottoes." He says: "*Grotte*, qui pure per *ripe*, come *Inf.* xxi, 110, e *Purg.* xiii. 45." And Landino says that "nele sue *ripe* crono le fonti pargasee (*Pegasee*) consacrate ale muse." The *Gran Dizionario* specially quotes the present passage, and says *grotta* must be taken to signify "*Rialto di terra, Argine, Ripa*." Trissino also accentuates this signification of *grotte*.

† *E poi appresso Dio m' alluminasti*: Gioberti exclaims: "Non potea Dante far un più grande elogio a Virgilio. (1) fa che da lui Stazio riceva l'educazione poetica, e l'idea de' suoi poemi (*xxi*, 94, et *seq.*); (2) la buona dottrina che lo converte alla virtù (*xxii*, 37, et *seq.*); (3) il lampo stesso che lo conduce alla fede (v. 64, et *seq.*); onde fa di Virgilio non solo un maestro in poesia, e in morale, ma eziandio di religione, e di religione cristiana. Ricavasi da ciò pertanto come Virgilio fosse riputato da Dante un poeta religioso, e mezzo cristiano."

‡ *quei che va di notte*: An allusion to the attendant who at night walks in front of his master, carrying a lantern behind him, so that, giving light, he himself remains in the dark. A passage nearly identical is found in a sonnet of Messer Polo da Reggio in Lombardy who flourished about 1230 (*Poeti del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, Florence, 1816, 2 vols. 8vo, vol. i, p. 129):—

"Si como quel, che porta la lumera  
La notte, quando passa per la via,  
Alluma assai più gente della spera,  
Che se medesimo, che l' ha in balla."

Compare also Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act 1, sc. 1:—

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves."

So, according to Dante, Virgil walking in the darkness of ignorance, but bearing the light of wisdom, gave to Statius, who came after him, the knowledge of the true faith. The Edinburgh Reviewer says that the *duro giudisio* by which Virgil, though able to save others, is not able to save himself, is a touching and exquisite metaphor. Gioberti after asking himself the question, why this should be, says that by this example Dante wishes to demonstrate a profound theological truth. "Dio non guarda per salvare ai morti della natura: nella sua elezione il suo ordine di giudicare



Che porta il lume retro, e sè non giova,  
 Ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte,  
 Quando dicesti: 'Secol si rinnova;\*'  
 Torna giustizia, e primo tempo umano,  
 E progenie discende dal ciel nuova.'

70

And he to him: "Thou first didst shew me the way to Parnassus, to drink (of the waters) on its slopes, and then didst illumine me (in drawing) near to God. Thou didst like him who walks by night and carries the light behind him, and profits not himself, but makes wise the persons behind him, when thou saidst: 'The world is born again: Justice is returning, and man's primeval time, and a new progeny descends from heaven.'

Comparetti (*Virgilio nel medio evo*, Livorno, 1871, vol. i, p. 128, etc.) says that this prophecy of the Cumæan Sybil is applied by Virgil, who was a courtier, to the birth of the son of Asinius Pollio, but that Dante sees in the words an announcement of the birth of the Redeemer. Nor was Dante the first so to understand it. The presentiment that breathes through the whole

---

è imperscrutabile: ei si serve per far l' eletto bene spesso delle opere e dei detti del riprovato."

\* *Secol si rinnova*, et seq. The passage referred to is contained in the words put into the mouth of the Sibyl, Virgil's *Bucolics*, *Eecl.* iv, 5-7:—

"Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.  
 Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;  
 Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto."

It will be seen that Dante translates it almost literally. I have rendered *secol si rinnova* (and I see Mr. Shadwell does the same), "the world is born again." The *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *secolo*, § 8 has: "Vale anche il Mondo e le Cose mondane." It also quotes the following from Giov. Villani, lib. v. cap. xvi, where is related the seizure of Constance of Sicily, while a nun, and her enforced marriage to the Emperor Henry V: (*Par.* iii, 109-120): "Costanza serocchia che fu del re Guiglielmo . . . la quale era monaca a Palermo . . . la fece (il detto papa Clemente) uscire del munistero, e dispensò in lei ch' ella potesse essere al secolo e usare matrimonio."





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existence among the heathen of prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, also cites the Fourth *Eclogue*, and curiously enough takes up verses 13 and 14, which he refers to the remission of sins, through the merits of the Saviour. (August. *Epist.* 137, *ad Volus.* ch. 12; *Epist.* 258, ch. 5; *De Civ. Dei*, lib. x, ch. 27.) In vain did St. Jerome inveigh against such ideas, ridiculing those who could believe that Virgil could be a Christian without a Christ. (Hieron. *Epist.* 53, *ad Paulin.* ch. 7). Christian theologians continued to interpret the famous *Eclogue* in their own way, and even those who did not believe that Virgil had himself understood his own words in the sense which they attribute to them, still maintained that, though personally unconscious of the fact, he offered a testimony and an argument for the true faith.

The pretended irresistibility of that argument also gave rise to ecclesiastical legends of conversions due to the verses of the Fourth *Eclogue*, that of Statius, and that of three heathens Secundianus, Marcellianus, and Verianus, who, being suddenly enlightened by Virgil's lines, from being persecutors of Christians became martyrs for Christ. Pope Innocent III quotes the lines in confirmation of the Christian faith in a Christmas sermon (*Serm.* ii, *in fest. Nativ. Dom.*), and they were understood in the Christian sense during the middle ages and afterwards. We may conclude then that Dante is here following the exegesis of a tradition generally accepted in his time, that made Virgil a prophet of Christ.

Benvenuto, without going so far as to deny that the lines refer to the birth of Jesus Christ, is far more inclined to think that they allude to that of Augustus Cæsar.



Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano ;  
 Ma perchè veggi mei \* ciò ch' io disegno, †  
 A colorare stenderò la mano.

75

Through thee was I poet, through thee a Christian ;  
 but that thou mayest better discern what I am sketch-  
 ing out, I will put forth my hand to fill in the colours.

Statius means that he will explain in detail what he has merely shadowed forth in outline. This he proceeds to do, and relates how he became acquainted with the early Christians, his sympathy for them in their persecutions, the help he gave them, his conversion to Christianity, and his weakness in not daring to confess it.

Già era il mondo tutto e quanto pregno  
 Della vera credenza, seminata  
 Per li messaggi dell' eterno regno ;  
 E la parola tua sopra toccata  
 Sì consonava ai nuovi predicanti,  
 Ond' io a visitarli presi usata. ‡  
 Vennermi poi parendo tanto santi,  
 Che, quando Domizian li persegnette, §

80

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\* *mei*: "Mei si disse eziandio in vece di *meglio* per abbreviamento degli antichi, siccome lo disse Buonagiunta: 'Perchè la gente mei me lo credesse:' e Messer Cino: 'Dunque sarebbe mei ch' i' fossi morto.'" (*Gran Dizionario.*)

† *disegno . . . colorare*: Gioberti interprets *disegno* as the *abbozzo* or *bozza*, and *a colorare*, *a colorar l' abbozzato disegno*. Blanc (*Vocabolario Dantesco*) says that *colorare* is here used in the figurative sense, and thus signifies: "to explain anything in detail." Francesco Bianchi explains: "Il disegno adombra la cosa e li colori l' avvivano."

‡ *usata* for *usanza*: Scartazzini notices that the past participles were anciently used as nouns; *il destinato* for *il destino*; *la disposta* for *la disposizione*; *il cogitato* for *la cogitazione*.

§ *quando Domizian li persegnette*: The persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Domitian took place in A.D. 95, and continued until his death in the following year. Statius himself died about the same time.



Senza mio lagrimar non fur lor pianti.  
 E mentre che di là per me si stette, 85  
 Io li sovvenni, e lor dritti costumi  
 Per dispregiare a me tutte altre sette;  
 E pria ch' io conducessi i Greci ai fiumi \*  
 Di Tebe poetando, ebb' io battesimo;  
 Ma per paura chiuso † cristian fu' mi, 90  
 Lungamente mostrando paganesmo;  
 E questa tepidezza il quarto cerchio ‡  
 Cerchiar mi fe' più ch' al quarto centesimo.

Already was the whole world teeming with the true belief, sown by the messengers of the eternal Kingdom (*i.e.* the Apostles); and thy words touched upon (by me) above were so much in harmony with the new preachers, that I adopted the practice of visiting them. After that, they began to seem so holy to me, that when Domitian persecuted them, their lamentations were not unaccompanied by my tears. And so long as I remained in yonder world, I gave them assistance, and their upright ways made me despise all other sects; and ere I had led the Greeks as far

\* *conducessi . . . ai fiumi*: There are twelve books in the *Thebaid*. In the ninth book Statius describes how the Greeks, under Adrastus, their king, came to the assistance of Polynices, and how they reached the Ismenus and Asopus, rivers of the Thebais. Statius is thus made to say that he was baptized before he had completed his poem, and his lukewarmness would be shown by there being no profession of his faith, or praise of the Christian religion, in his three last books.

† For *chiuso* in the sense of "hidden," compare *Inf.* xvi, 134, 135:—

"l' ancora ch' aggrappa  
 O scoglio od altro che nel mare è chiuso."

And *Inf.* xxv, 147, 148:—

"Non potèr quei fuggirsi tanto chiusi,  
 Ch' io non scorgessi ben Puccio Sciancato."

‡ *quarto cerchio*: In the Fourth Cornice of Purgatory Sloth is chastised. Compare *Purg.* xvii, 85-87:—

"L' amor del bene, scemo  
 Di suo dover, quiritta si ristora;  
 Qui si ribatte il mal tardato remo."





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tells him about many other writers, Greek as well as Latin, but reverently assigns the first place to Homer.

Tu dunque, che levato hai il coperchio \*  
 Che m'ascondeva quanto bene io dico, 95  
 Mentre che del salire avem soperchio, †  
 Dimmi dov'è Terenzio ‡ nostro antico,  
 Cecilio, § Plauto e Varro, || se lo sai :

\* *coperchio* : This must be taken in connection with ll. 61, 62 :—

“qual sole o quai candeale

Ti stenebraron sì,” etc. Compare 2 Cor. iii, 15, 16 :—

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”

† *Mentre che del salire avem soperchio* : The poet Alfieri, in his marginal notes, quoted by Biagioli, paraphrases this “*mentre che ci sopravanzava il tempo per salire.*”

‡ *Terenzio* : The readings vary between “*Terenzio nostro antico*” and “*nostro amico.*” The reading “*antico,*” is much to be preferred, for “*nostro*” distinctly implies friendship. See Dr. Moore's *Textual Criticism*, pages 410-413, on this passage.

§ *Cecilio* : Statius Cæcilius was a comic poet, and dramatist, a contemporary and friend of Terence, who is said to have submitted his own compositions to the criticism of Cæcilius, as to a man of superior judgment. He died A.D. 168.

|| *Varro* : Scartazzini observes that, in the history of Roman literature, two poets of this name are recorded. The most renowned was Marcus Terentius Varro Reatinus, born at Reate, B.C. 116. He filled various public offices with great credit. During the civil wars he at first followed Pompey, but promptly abandoned him to go to Rome with Julius Cæsar, who intended employing him to collect the public library which he wished to form at Rome. After Cæsar's death he was included in the proscription of the Triumvirs, but concealed himself until he was taken under the protection of Augustus. He passed the remainder of his life in studies, and died at the age of 89, B.C. 27. He was the friend of Cicero, who (*Brut.* xv, 60) styled him *Diligentissimus investigator antiquitatis*. Seneca (*Consol. ad Helv.* ch. 8) calls him “the most learned of the Romans.” Quintilian, x, l. 95, “*Vir Romanorum eruditissimus.*” Lactantius (*Inst.* i, ch. 6) styles him the most learned man among the Latins and Greeks. Far less distinguished was the other Varro, Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus, born at Atace in Gallia Narbonensis, B.C. 82. There has been much controversy as to which of the two Dante is speaking of here. Witte was the first to suggest that the



Dimmi se son dannati, ed in qual vico."<sup>\*</sup>—  
 —“Costoro, e Persio, ed io, ed altri assai,”— 100  
 Rispose il Duca mio,—“Siam con quel Greco  
 Che le Muse lattar † più ch' altro mai,  
 Nel primo cinghio del carcere cieco.‡

reading ought to be *Vario*, and that the person spoken of is *Lucius Varius*, a dramatic poet, friend of both *Virgil* and *Horace*. But *Scartazzini* concludes a long and very close argument by saying that, as both *Varros* were poets, either can well be mentioned by *Dante* with the others he names in this passage. And when one remembers that all the old MSS. and all the old editions read *Varro* or *Varo*, not *Vario*, and that *M. Terentius Varro*, as being much the more renowned, would have been so much the better known to *Dante* than *Varius*, one must come to the resolution of rejecting the ingenious conjecture, and admit with the many that *Dante* intended to speak of *Varro*, though it is not impossible that he may have made the two *Varros* into one person. *Dr. Moore* (*Text. Crit.* p. 411) thinks that it is not without bearing on the readings *antico v. amico*, and *Varro v. Vario* to observe that *Dante* has apparently been guided in the selection of these names,—*Terence*, *Cæcilius*, *Plautus*, and *Varro* (*al. Vario*)—by the recollection of one (or perhaps both) of two passages in *Horace*. These are:—

“*Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi;  
 Vincere Cæcilius gravitate, Terentius arte.*”  
 (2 *Epist.* I, 58, 59.)

And “*Cæcilio Plautoque dahit Romanus ademptum  
 Virgilio Varioque?*” (*Ars Poetica*, 54, 55.)

*Varius* is mentioned twice again by *Horace* in conjunction with *Virgil*, viz. 2 *Epist.* I, 247, and *Sat.* I, vi, 55, besides—which is curious in reference to the controversy noticed above—a passage in *Sat.* I, x, 44-46, where *Varius*, *Virgil*, and *Varro* (*Atacius*) all occur together.

♦ *vico*: This word in Italy means either “a street,” or “a village,” or “a small town.” Instances of all three will be found in the *Gran Dizionario*.

† *lattar*: Compare *Par.* xxiii, 55-57:—

“Se mo sonasser tutte quelle lingue  
 Che *Polinnia* con te suore fero  
 Del latte lor dolcissimo più pingue,” etc.

‡ *carcere cieco*: Compare *Inf.* x, 58-9, where *Cavalcante Cavalcanti* uses the same expression, when asking *Dante* for news about his son *Guido*, *Dante*'s great friend:—



Spesse fiata ragioniam del monte  
Che sempre ha le nutrici nostre seco.

105

Thou then, who didst lift the veil which was hiding from me that good which I now proclaim (*i.e.* the knowledge of the Christian Faith), while in our ascent we have time to spare (*lit.* excess of ascent), pray tell me where is our ancient Terence, (where are) Cecilius, Plautus, and Varro, if thou knowest it; tell me if they are damned, and (if so) in what circle (*lit.* street). "They," replied my Leader, "and Persius, and I myself, and a great many others, are with that Greek (Homer), whom the Muses suckled more than they ever did another, in the first zone of the darksome prison (*i.e.* in *Limbo*, the first Circle of Hell). Oftentimes do we converse about that mountain (Parnassus), which is always the abode of (*lit.* has with itself) our nursing-mothers (the Muses).

Having named Homer as the patriarch of Greek poesy Virgil now proceeds to mention certain other Greek poets.

Euripide v' è nosco, ed Antifonte,\*

"Se per questo cieco  
Carcere vai per altezza d'ingegno,  
Mio figlio ov' è, e perchè non è teco?"

Compare also 1 *St. Peter* iii, 19: "by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

\**Antifonte*: Antiphon, also a tragic poet, lived first at Athens and afterwards at Syracuse at the court of the tyrant Dionysius, who had him put to death for being too frank in his speech (see *Arist. Rhet.* ii). Aristotle praises him as a poet, and Plutarch speaks particularly of him as one of the best tragic writers. The reading *Antifonte* is adopted by all the best Codices, the first four editions, and many of the best Commentators, including Benvenuto, Buti, Lana, Pietro di Dante, Witte, etc.; but others read *Anacreonte*, the lyric poet. Scartazzini points out the improbability of Dante, a grave, serious poet, making mention of one who was all softness and effeminacy, and placing him among the greatest representatives of dramatic, epic, and lyric poetry. Especially does this argument gain force when one notices that Dante here neither mentions Catullus nor Propertius, nor Tibullus, nor Ovid, with whose names he would be far more





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late is laid, and the contradiction disappears. Scartazzini adds: "I do not say that one *must*, but only that one *might* understand it so."

**Division IV.**—Benvenuto says that the Fourth and concluding Division of this noble Canto is not less curious and copious than the other three. In it the Poets are made to reach the Sixth Cornice, in which Gluttony is punished.

Dante begins by describing how he and the two shades of Virgil and Statius had emerged from the stairway, and were now in the Sixth Cornice. He then, according to his custom, tells his readers what the time was. By Virgil's advice they turn as usual to the right.

Tacevansi ambo e due già li poeti, 115  
 Di nuovo attenti a riguardare intorno,  
 Liberi dal salire e dai pareti ;  
 E già le quattro ancelle eran del giorno \*  
 Rimase addietro, e la quinta era al temo, †  
 Drizzando pure in su l' ardente corno ; 120

\* *le quattro ancelle . . . del giorno* : Tommaséo in his Commentary quotes Antonelli on this passage: "Arrived at the summit of the stairway which led into the Sixth Cornice, we are informed what the time was, which would be one hour before noon. Dante had already, in Canto xii, made us understand that the handmaidens of the day were the hours, and allowing the hypothesis to be correct that the Sun rose at 6.30, if four of the handmaidens had remained behind, and the fifth was at the pole, directing her blazing point upwards (that is, not yet having reached the half of her course) . . . it follows that four and a half hours since sunrise were nearly accomplished, and therefore it was not far from being eleven o'clock." Compare *Purg.* xii, 80, 81, where noon is described in similar language:—

" vedi che torna  
 Dal servizio del dì l' ancella sesta."

† *la quinta era al temo . . . ardente corno* : The fifth was approaching the extreme point of the pole of the chariot of the Sun, and its point is termed *ardente* (says Antonelli) because the fifth hour is the one nearest to mid-day



Quando il mio Duca :—“ Io credo ch' allo estremo \*  
 Le destre spalle volger ci convegna,  
 Girando il monte come far solemo.”—  
 Cost l' usanza fu li nostra insegna,  
 E prendemmo la via con men sospetto  
 Per l' assentir di quell' anima degna. †

125

Both the Poets had now become silent, their attention awakened anew to look around, being freed from the ascent and from the walls; and by this time four of the handmaidens (hours) of the day were left behind, and the fifth was at the pole (of the car), still directing upwards its blazing point; when my Leader: “ I think we shall have to turn our right shoulders to the outer edge, encircling the mountain as we are wont to do.” Thus was custom there our guide, and we took the way with less doubt, through (having) the assent of that noble soul (Stattius).

Buti observes that up to this point Dante has demonstrated how Man by penitence may be purged from the five spiritual sins of (1) Pride; (2) Envy; (3) Accidie; (4) Anger; (5) Avarice, and for this, Reason (*i.e.* Virgil) has sufficed, which taught him how such vices can be purged from the soul. But now that he has got to show how the two sins of the flesh, namely Gluttony and Sensuality, have to be purged, he has represented Stattius

---

\* *allo estremo Le destre spalle volger*: By turning their right shoulders to the outer edge of the mountain, they would of course turn to the right. In this *Cornice* they do so without asking their way, as they have done previously. Probably they had taken the directions given to them in Canto xix, 81: “ *Le vostre destre sien sempre di furi,*” as general directions for their guidance in each successive *Cornice*, and not necessarily only applying to that Fifth *Cornice*. It is hardly needful to remind the reader that in Hell, as they entered each Circle, they had always turned to the left.

† *quell' anima degna*: Stattius, having been liberated from further penance in Purgatory, was duly qualified to ascend to Heaven, and might therefore be supposed to have the guidance of divine inspiration in his way upwards.





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prevented by the formation of the tree from ascending to the object of their desire, which is placed beyond their reach.

Ma tosto ruppe le dolci ragioni 130

Un arbor che trovammo in mezza strada,  
Con pomi \* ad odorar soavi e buoni.

E come abete in alto si digrada

Di ramo in ramo, così quello in giuso,  
Cred' io perchè persona su non vada.† 135

Dal lato onde il cammin nostro era chiuso,  
Cadea dell' alta roccia un liquor chiaro,  
E si spandeva per le foglie suso.

But soon was the pleasant converse interrupted by a tree that we encountered mid-way in the path, with fruit sweet and grateful to the smell. And as a fir-tree tapers upwards from branch to branch, so that (tree tapered) downwards, in order, I suppose, that

\* *pomi*: The primary meaning, as in Latin *pomum*, of *pomo* or *poma* is the fruit of any tree, round fruit for choice. It never means "apple" in Tuscany, except in such a sense as "*pomo della discordia*," the apple of discord, and "*pomo d' Adamo*," "Adam's apple" in anatomy. Tommaséo (*Dixionario dei Sinonimi*, p. 469, Sin. 1800) says: "*Poma*, poeticamente, le frutte, ma quel d' albero, e alquanto grosse. Non per esempio le fragole, nè le more (*mulberries*). In altri dialetti le mele (*apples*) chiamansi pomi." The proper word for "apple" is *mela*, as in Latin *malum*, and for an "apple-tree," *melo*. (Cf. *Readings on the Inferno*, 1906, vol. i, p. 94, note.)

† *su non vada*: Lubin is amused at the idea of the branches being too weak to support the weight of spirits. Benvenuto explains the tree in a natural way, namely that the foliage was abundant at the top, but that the branches diminished in the lower parts so as to offer no opportunity of access. But many of the old Commentators actually believed that the tree was upside down with its roots in the air; and the commentaries of Landino and Vellutello as well as the illustrations of Botticelli contain engravings so representing it. Even so intelligent a Commentator as Perez falls into the same error, and moreover represents the water, after falling upon the tree, as *re-ascending upwards*! The illustration by Doré shows an ordinary forest tree, of which the upper branches spread out widely, but are fewer as the tree tapers downwards.



no one might climb up it. From the side, on which our path was closed, a limpid water fell from the high cliff, and was distributed over the foliage above.

As the three Poets have turned to their right, they have the margin of the *Cornice* on their right hand, and the cliff from which the water plashes down would be on their left hand.

We shall find that later on (*Purg.* xxiv, 100 *et seq.*), the Poets encounter another tree, precisely similar to this one, and learn that it is an off-shoot from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that God planted in the Garden of Paradise. Scartazzini says that we may therefore conclude that this first tree, before which they have now been brought to a standstill, must be an off-shoot of the Tree of Life that was in the same sacred spot.\* Perez thinks the two water-falls on the trees, were the rivers Eunoe and Lethe.†

A voice is now heard from the inside of the foliage of the tree, forbidding the spirits of the Gluttonous to eat of the fruit, and then citing examples of the blessings of abstinence. The first example is as usual an episode in the life of the Blessed Virgin, when she intervened in the marriage feast of Cana, not for her own gratification, but from a kind thought for others.

\* "Pinge l' autore che nel sesto cerchio, nel quale si purga la colpa della gola, siano du' arbori; l' uno presso a l' entrata del girone, e l' altro presso alla salita dell' altro girone." (Buti.)

† "Due alberi carichi de' più belli e soavi e odorosi frutti, e folti della più vivace verdura, fan di sè mostra allettevole, l' uno presso all' entrata, l' altro presso all' uscita del cerchio. Son due rami levati da quell' albero della scienza del bene e del male, che è posto sulla cima del monte, nel Paradiso terrestre [Perez translates to the above quotation from Buti], e dal cui frutto la più immoderata de' nostri parenti beve e trasfuse ne' posteri suoi volenti. Hanno le radici verso il cielo, la cima verso la terra (see note on l. 135); i rami vengono sempre allargandosi e



Li due poeti all' arbor s' appressaro ;  
 Ed una voce \* per entro le fronde 140  
 Gridò :—" Di questo cibo avrete caro." †—  
 Poi disse :—" Più pensava Maria ‡ onde  
 Fosser le nozze orrevoli § ed intere,  
 Ch' alla sua bocca, ch' or per voi risponde.

The two Poets drew near to the tree, and a voice from within the branches cried out: "Of this food ye shall have want." Then it said: "Mary thought more how to make the marriage festivities honourable and complete than of her own mouth, which now responds for you.

Dante is of course expressing the opinions of the Roman Church, and, by the words *sua bocca, ch' or per voi risponde* means that out of the mouth of the Blessed Virgin

ingrossandosi ad alto, sì che persona non li potrebbe salire. E sopra il primo (che potremo dire il rampollo [*offshoot*] della scienza del bene) vien giù dal monte, e spandesi per le foglie, e *ritorna in suso* (?) l' acqua d' un chiarissimo rivo, certamente del rivo Eunoè. E sopra il secondo (che potremo chiamare il rampollo della scienza del male) piove pur dalla roccia, e infondesi per le fronde, e *risale in alto* (?) l' acqua d' altro rivo freschissimo, che sembra dover essere Letè." (Perez, *i Sette Cerchi*, pp. 218, 219.)

\* *una voce*: Buti comments: "Questa voce finge che sia la voce dell' angiolo posto a guardia del detto albero, lo quale finge che stia tra le frondi." Scartazzini reminds us that this tree is not there for the three Poets, but for the spirits undergoing purgation for Gluttony, and to these latter is the voice addressed.

† *caro*: This is another form of *carestia*, "famine." It here means "total privation." Brunone Bianchi explains, "*avrete caro, avrete carestia, ne sarete privati in pena della golosità di che siete puniti in questo cerchio.*"

‡ *pensava Maria*, etc.: Compare *Purg.* xiii, 28-30: —

"La prima voce che passò volando,  
*Vinum non habent*, altamente disse,  
 E retro a noi l' andò reiterando."

§ *orrevoli* for *onorevoli*. The same form occurs (in some editions) in *Inf.* iv, 72:—

"*orrevol gente possedea quel loco.*"

But I follow Dr. Moore's new text as well as Witte, and read *onrevol* in *Inf.* iv, 72.





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And the Roman dames of old time for their drink were satisfied with water, and Daniel despised food, and acquired wisdom.

Benvenuto says: "Would that the Roman ladies nowadays were satisfied with one kind of wine!" Daniel was an example of rigorous abstinence in the midst of the luxuries of the Chaldees.

The voice then alludes to the Golden Age which the ancients believed to have been while Saturn reigned over Crete; when men lived soberly, without war, and without any artificially prepared food. And with this the Canto concludes.

Lo secol primo \* quant' oro fu bello ;  
Fe' saporose con fame le ghiande, †

of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." . . . v. 11: "Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 'Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days: and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.'" . . . v. 17: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." . . . v. 20: "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the King enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

\* *Lo secol primo*: Compare *Purg.* xxviii, 139-144:—

"Quelli che anticamente poetaro  
L' età dell' oro e suo stato felice,  
Forse in Parnaso esto loco sognaro.  
Qui fu innocente l' umana radice;  
Qui primavera è sempre, ed ogni frutto;  
Nettare è questo di che ciascun dice."

And Ovid, *Met.* i, 89-91:—

"Aurea prima sata est ætas, quæ, vindice nullo,  
Sponte sua, sine lege, fidem rectumque colebat."

† *Fe' saporose con fame le ghiande, E nettare, et seq.*: Ovid, *Met.* i, 101-106:—

"Ipsa quoque immunis, rastroque intacta, nec ullis  
Saucia vomeribus, per se dabat omnia tellus:  
Contentique cibus, nullo cogente, creatis,



E nèttare con sete ogni ruscello.  
 Mele \* e locuste furon le vivande,  
 Che nutriro il Batista nel deserto ;  
 Perch' egli è glorioso, e tanto grande  
 Quanto per l' Evangelio v' è aperto."—

150

The primal age was beautiful as gold ; it seasoned its acorns with hunger, and (made) every stream into nectar with thirst. Honey and locusts were the nourishment that fed the Baptist in the wilderness ; for which reason he is so glorious and great, as is by the gospel revealed unto you."

It should be remembered that St. John the Baptist is the patron saint of Florence. †

Arbuteos foetus, montanaque fraga legebant,  
 Cornaque, et in duris hærentia mora rubetis,  
 Et quæ deciderant patula Jovis arbore glandes."

And Boethius, *Philosoph. Consol.* ii, Metr. v :—

"Felix nimium prior ætas,  
 Contenta fidelibus arvis,  
 Nec inertis perdita luxu,  
 Facili quæ sera solebat  
 Jejuniaolvere glande.  
 Nec Bacchica munera norant  
 Liquido confundere melle  
 Nec lucida vellera Serum  
 Tyrio miscere veneno."

\* *Melo* (or *miele*) in this line is a masculine noun signifying "honey," and not to be confounded with *mela*, the feminine plural of *mela*, "an apple."

† Compare *Inf.* xiii, 143, 144 :—

"Io fui della città che nel Batista  
 Mutò 'l primo padrone."

END OF CANTO XXII.



## CANTO XXIII.

THE SIXTH CORNICE (CONTINUED)—THE PURGATION OF GLUTTONY—EMACIATED APPEARANCE OF THE GLUTTONOUS—FORESE DONATI—NELLA DONATI—DENUNCIATION OF THE WOMEN OF FLORENCE.

THERE is no break or change of scene at the opening of this Canto. At the end of the last, we left Dante, Virgil and Statius standing in wonder before the mysterious tree, with the luscious fruit on its branches, hanging far out of reach; and high up on their left hand the refreshing sight and sound of a fall of water dripping over its topmost leaves. They had also heard the voice, probably of an unseen Angel, speaking from the foliage, and informing the spirits of the Gluttonous that their penance was to be total deprivation of the fruit and the water, and that they should meditate upon certain instances of commendable abstinence.

In this Canto their punishment is described more in detail.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 36, Dante relates the gaunt appearance of the spirits of the Gluttonous, whose penance it is to endure the pangs of starvation.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 37 to ver. 75, he introduces the spirit of Forese Donati, well known in life





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Lo più che padre mi dicea :—“ Figliuole,\*  
 Vienne oramai, ch'è il tempo che c'è imposto 5  
 Più utilmente compartir si vuole.”—  
 Io volsi il viso, e il passo non men tosto,  
 Appresso ai savi, che parlavan sìe †  
 Che l'andar mi facean di nullo costo.  
 Ed ecco piangere e cantar s' udìe: 10

celatore . . . perde sua vita, andando di rieto alli ucellini ; che perde lo tempo che in più utile cosa si vorrebbe spendere ; che non è utile a nulla la vita dell' ucellatore se non a la gola ; e però meritevilmente la riprende qui.” (Buti.) Compare Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, act ii, sc. 7):—

“ But whate'er you are  
 That in this desert inaccessible,  
 Under the shade of the melancholy boughs,  
 Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time.”

\* *Figliuole* : The *Gran Dizionario*, § 3, says that some writers have, from *figliuolo*, formed the vocative singular *figliuole*, and cites the present passage in illustration. The *Dizionario* adds that from the Latin *Domine* has come the familiar exclamation *Diamine!* Both the *Dizionario* and the *Voc. della Crusca* quote the following from the *Trattato* i (Nannucci says *Tr. ii*) of *Albertano Giudice da Brescia*, Firenze, 1610, 4to :—

“ Non cessare, figliuole, d' udire insegnamento : ”

and again :—

“ Figliuole, dalla juventute tua ricevi la dottrina.”

And this, from the translation published at Milan, 1829, in 8vo, of the MS. work *Trattato del Giuoco degli Scacchi* di Fra Jacopo da Cessole: “ Aspettati, figliuole ; più sono i punti di questi dadi, che tu non credi.” These three instances in prose sufficiently disprove Blanc's assertion that Dante altered the word *figliuolo* to suit his rhyme—a statement which cannot be contradicted too often. Nannucci (*Teorica dei Nomi*, p. 152) cites all the above quotations, and adds “ *Figliuole*, dal vocat. *filiole*, dimin. di *filie*, desinenza primitiva. Così Liv. Andron. in *Odyss.* ‘ Pater noster, Saturni filie.’ ” Scartazzini cites an instance “ Mando al suo figliuole,” *et seq.*, to show that the form is not necessarily only the vocative case.

† *sìe* : for *costi*. Lombardi (in reference to *parlavan sìe*) quotes from the fragments of Publius Syrus the following saying: “ Comes facundus in via pro vehiculo est.” Daniello says that Dante bent his steps in the wake of “ i savi Poeti, i quali parlavan sì bene, e di sì belle cose, che seguendoli, non sentiva fatica di caminare.”



*Labia mea Domine,\* per modo  
Tal che diletto e doglia parturie.†*

—“O dolce Padre, che è quel ch' i' odo?”—

Comincia' io ; ed egli :—“Ombre che vanno,  
Forse di lor dover solvendo il nodo.”‡—

15

While I was straining my eyes through the green foliage, as one is wont to do that wastes his life after a little bird, my more than father (Virgil) said to me: “My Son, come on now, for the time that is ordained to us must be more usefully portioned out.” I turned my eyes, and not less quickly my steps towards the Sages, who were holding such converse as made it of no cost to me to proceed. And lo! both in lamentation and in song was heard: “*Labia mea Domine,*” chanted in such fashion as gave birth both to delight and to grief. “O beloved Father,” I began, “what is that which I hear?” And he: “Shades, perchance, who pass, while unloosing the bond of their debt.”

This means, that they are performing the due expiation of their sins, tormented by the pangs of hunger and thirst. The above passage, and especially the word *perde*, denotes censure, and shows the severe character of Dante's mind, to which fowling was a waste of time.

---

\* *Labia mea*: From the *Miserere*, Psalm li, 15: “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.” This Psalm forms part of the service of *Lauds* for Tuesdays, and it is on Easter Tuesday that the present scene is supposed to be taking place. The words in the *Vulgate* are “Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem Tuam.”

† *Tal che diletto . . . parturie*: Compare *Purg.* viii, 13-15:—

“Te lacis ante sì devotamente  
Le uscì di bocca, e con sì dolci note,  
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.”

‡ *Solvendo il nodo*: Andreoli on this: “Sciogliendosi dal debito loro, soddisfacendo per il loro peccato alla divina giustizia.”  
*Purg.* xvi, 22-24:—

“Quai sono spirti, Maestro, ch' i' odo ?  
Dis' io. Ed egli a me: ‘Tu vero apprendi,  
Ed d' iracundia van solvendo il nodo.’”



The spirits of the Gluttonous now come into view, overtaking the Poets from behind and passing beyond them, and Benvenuto points out that their actions and demeanour exactly correspond with those of the pilgrims in his own time, who, if they passed other pilgrims whom they did not know, would just glance back at them, but would not interrupt their meditations by addressing them.

Sì come i peregrin pensosi \* fanno,  
 Giugnendo per cammin gente non nota,  
 Che si volgono ad essa e non ristanno ;  
 Così dietro a noi, più tosto mota,  
 Venendo e trapassando, ci ammirava  
 D' anime turba tacita † e devota. 20

---

\* *i peregrin pensosi*: Scartazzini says their thoughts would be upon the goal of their pilgrimage. "Per la forza della astinenza . . . sono pensosi. Il digiuno rende l' animo attento alle sue cure, e la satollezza dà sopore alli membri." (*Ottimo*.) "Non a caso i penitenti qui ci offrono atteggiamento diverso da quello degli impenitenti golosi dell' Inferno: poichè dove quelli, a rappresentare il loro eterno vizio, sedevano tra puzzo e lordura di acqua, neve e grandine, questi, a espiare il prolungato sedere alle mense antiche, e la tardità delle membra e dell' ingegno, di cui sovente quel sedere è cagione, camminano di continuo, onde son rassomigliati a solleciti e pur meditabondi pellegrini. Nè a caso in questi pellegrini il Poeta nota il divoto portamento e l' austerità del silenzio, che non cessa nemmeno quando s' incontrano in uomo vivo: chè silenzio e gravità d' atti è bella soddisfazione a un vizio, onde procede tanta abbondanza di parole e d' atti vani, e tanto scemasi di decoro al passo e a tutta la persona." (*Peres, Sette Cerchi*, pp. 220, 221.) Compare also *Rom. xiii, 13*: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness." These pilgrims appear to be closely following St. Paul's precept.

† *tacita*: Vellutello, but no Commentator before him, observes that this word implies a contradiction of l. 10, in which it says that the spirits were lamenting and singing. Lombardi justly points out that Dante never said that they wept and sang unceasingly, but only when in their circuit they approached the mysterious trees. The Poets had, it is true, already passed the first tree, not so far however but what they could hear the utterances of the spirits near it.





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letters in the human face, it would be easy to do so here, for the nose and cheek-bones were conspicuously prominent in those unfortunate penitents. Dante however only speaks of "*Omo*," and not "*Homo Dei*."

If, as Brother Berthold states, his M was made "with three strokes," it was probably the mediæval (|), of which there are frequent examples in old documents.\* This mediæval (|) gives the shape of the human face better than the Roman M can do.

Negli occhi † era ciascuna oscura e cava,  
 Pallida nella faccia, e tanto scema,  
 Che dall' ossa la pelle s' informava.  
 Non credo che così a buccia estrema ‡  
 Eresitone § fosse fatto secco  
 Per digiunar, quando più n' ebbe tema.

25

\* I am most grateful to my friend Mr. D. R. Fearon, C.B., for having favoured me with this as well as many other suggestions for this Third Edition.

† *Negli occhi*: The poet Alfieri in one of his marginal references (quoted by Biagioli) writes: "Sfido Michelagnolo, non che quanti ci vivono, e pittori e poeti, a ritrar sì vero e forte." Compare Ovid, *Metam.* viii, 803-808:—

"Hirtus erat crinis; cava lumina; pallor in ore;  
 Labra incana situ; scabri rubigine dentes;  
 Dura cutis, per quam spectari viscera possent;  
 Ossa sub incurvis extabant arida lumbis;  
 Ventris erat pro ventre locus; pendere putares  
 Pectus, et a spinæ tantummodo crate teneri.  
 Auxerat articulos macies, genuumque rigebat  
 Orbis, et immodico prodibant tubere tali."

‡ *a buccia estrema*: Compare Virg. *Æn.* iii, 590-592:—

"Cum subito e silvis, macie confecta suprema,  
 Ignoti nova forma viri, miserandaque cultu,  
 Procedit, supplexque manus ad litora tendit."

§ *Eresitone*: Erisichthon, son of Triops, a Thessalian, out of derision of Ceres, cut down a grove sacred to her. The enraged goddess punished him by perpetual hunger, and he at last devoured his own limbs. The story is related by Ovid (*Metam.* viii, 740-880).



Io dicea fra me stesso pensando :—“ Ecco  
 La gente che perdè Jerusalemme,  
 Quando Maria nel figlio die' di becco.”\*— 30  
 Parean l' occhiaie anella senza gemme.†  
 Chi nel viso degli uomini legge *omo*,  
 Ben avria quivi conosciuto l' emme.

Each was dark and cavernous in the eyes, pallid in the face, and so emaciated, that the skin took the outline from the bones. I do not believe that Erisichthon could have been withered up through starvation to such an extremity of mere skin, at the time when he had the most fear of it (*i.e.* of starvation). Thinking within myself I said: “Behold the people who lost Jerusalem, when Marian thrust her beak into her own son.” The orbits appeared like rings without their gems. Those who in the face of men can read *o m o*, might readily here have distinguished the *m*.

Dante concludes his description of the Gluttonous in general by expressing his inability to understand from what this extraordinary emaciation proceeded, for he cannot imagine that it could be caused by the tree.

---

\* *Maria nel figlio die' di becco*: Josephus (*De Bello Jud.* lib. vi, cap. 3), in his account of the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, relates how a noble lady, Mariam or Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, maddened with hunger, killed her own little son and cooked and ate half of his body. Gioberti, agreeing with Venturi, thinks the expression *die' di becco* beautiful and happy, inasmuch as it likens this miserable mother to a bird of prey.

† *anella senza gemme*: Compare Petrarch (part ii, *Son.* lxvi):—

“Pianger l' aer e la terra e 'l mar dovrebbe  
 L' uman legnaggio, che, senz' ella, è quasi  
 Senza fior prato, o senza gemma anello.”

And Shakespeare (*King Lear*, act v, scene iii):—

“and in this habit

Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
 Their precious stones new lost.”

And Chaucer (*Troilus and Criseyde*, book v, st. 79):—

“O ring, fro which the ruby is out-falle,  
 O cause of woe, that cause hast been of lisse!” [*comfort.*]



Chi crederebbe che l' odor d' un pomo \*  
 Sì governasse, generando brama, 35  
 E quel d' un' acqua, non sapendo como ? †

Who could believe that the perfume of a fruit, and that of a spring, could have such influence, begetting craving, if he did not know how ?

*Division II.*—Dante now introduces the spirit of Forese de' Donati, kinsman ‡ of his wife Gemma, and

\* *l' odor d' un pomo . . . E quel d' un' acqua* : Compare Job xiv, 9 : " Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." Biagioli notices the expression "the perfume of a water," and says we have a poetical proof in the *Fiera* of Michelangelo Buonarotti the younger (*Giorn.* v, act. iv, sc. ii) that water can throw out a perfume :—

" Voglio inferir, ch' io dir non risaprei  
 Quanto mi sia quel gentiluom sembrato  
 Felice nel goder degli orti suoi,  
 Suoi semplicisti, suoi boschetti e prati,  
 E del verde dell' erbe e delle frondi  
 Perpetue, e de' fior che successivi  
 Vi ridon per le fervide o gelate,  
 Non men che per le tiepide stagioni  
 Dar vita al guardo, e confortar gli spirti  
 Nella soavità d' odori, e d' acque  
 Sorgenti e mormoranti."

Biagioli, as usual, omits to give the reference, by no means easy to verify.

† *como*, derived from the Latin *quomodo*, like *mo*, from *modo*. Nannucci (*Teorica dei Nomi, Prefaz.* pp. xix, xx, and footnote (1)) says it was of very frequent use amongst old Italian writers, and is "voce primitiva e regolare." Nannucci gives the two following illustrations of its use by prose writers: Guittone (*Lettere* i, 2), "Alquanto dimosterrò voi como," and (*Lett.* 3), "E como dicono i Sapianti."

‡ Some have maintained that Gemma was a sister of Forese, Corso, and Piccarda de' Donati, but Professor Isidoro Del Lungo, in his appendix to the *Commento di Dino Compagni (Dino Compagni e la sua Cronica, Florence, 1879, 4 vols., 8vo)*, vol. ii, p. 540, specifically denies this. "Non cognato però, come lo chiama il Tommaséo, era a Dante il Donati: la Gemma Donati era figlia di Manetto; Corso, Forese, Piccarda, di Simone." And in vol. i, p. 168, after speaking of the feuds of the Cerchi with the Donati, Prof. Del Lungo adds: "Ci troviamo Manetto de' Por-





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Ed ecco del profondo della testa \*

40

Volve a me gli occhi un' ombra, e guardò fiso,

Poi gridò forte:—"Qual grazia m' è questa?"†—

I was still in wonderment at what could thus a-hunger them, through the as yet unrevealed cause of their leanness and their desquamation; and lo! from the innermost cavities (*i.e.* eye-sockets) of his head a shade turned his eyes upon me, and looked (at me) attentively; after which he cried out loudly: "What grace to me is this?"

Dante looks at the gaunt attenuated figure, whose features convey no recognition to his mind, but, as Isaac fancied he could identify Jacob by his voice, so does Dante identify the well-remembered sound of his old friend's speech.

Mai non l' avrei riconosciuto al viso ;

Ma nella voce sua mi fu palese

Ciò che l' aspetto in sè avea conquiso.‡

45

tenete le polpa, al cane date l' osso, date le squame, date le scaglie, date gli avanzi più vili. Ora così appunto alcuni trattano Iddio, lo trattan da cane. Gli voglion dare sempre il peggio." This is the only passage in the *Divina Commedia* in which the word occurs. The Commentators generally render it *pelle inaridita*. The *Gran Dizionario* says that the more usual form is *squamma*, and rarely *squamo*.

\* *profondo della testa*: In verse 22 we read that:—

"Negli occhi era ciascuna oscura e cava,"

and now, when he speaks of one of the shades moving his eyes from the innermost cavities of his head, he paints with terrible emphasis the hollowness of the eyes.

† *Qual grazia m' è questa?* Compare *Purg.* vii, 19:—

"Qual merito o qual grazia mi ti mostra?"

And *Purg.* viii, 65, 66:—

"Su, Corrado,

Vieni a veder che Dio per grazia volse."

‡ *conquiso*: In translating this word "obliterated" I take my stand upon Blanc's interpretation which is the best I have found. "*Conquiso*, particip. di *conquidere*. Sebbene i vocabolari italiani diano a questo verbo il signif. di *vessare*, *affliggere*, *abbattere*, *annichilare*, io nondimeno son d' opinione che abbia l' istesso valore del francese *conquis*, usurpato in signif.



Questa favilla \* tutta mi raccese  
 Mia conoscenza alla cambiata labbia, †  
 E ravvisai la faccia di Forese. ‡

più esteso; poic è la conquista trae seco per lo più distruzione e ruina. Sarebbe adunque quasi sinonimo di: *conquistare* o *vincere*. Il solo luogo della D. C. dove *conquiso* si trovi, cioè *Purg.* xxiii, 45. 'Ma nella voce sua mi fu palese Ciò che l'aspetto in sé avea *conquiso*,' significa: 'Io lo riconobbi alla voce: avendo il suo aspetto, il suo volto attuale, totalmente distrutto, invaso, i sembianti che portava durante le sua vita.'" The *Gran Dizionario* quotes Castelvetro, *Giunta al ragg. di Bembo*. lib. i: "Conquiso è voce italiana ed è intera latina, cioè *Conciscus* [ruined]. Nè [neither] significa 'Quello che fu conquistato.'" Scartazzini in his more recent Milan Commentary thinks that although some interpret *conquiso* as "conquered, subdued," and some "destroyed, wrecked, annihilated," the two interpretations come to the same thing, as Blanc remarks above. The broader sense of conquest is to bring ruin in its train.

\* *favilla*: Others read *favella*, "the voice," but Dante has just said *voce* in verse 44: and *favilla* means that the voice acted like a spark.

† *labbia*: *Faccia, aspetto* (*Gran Dizionario*). See *Inf.* xix, 122, footnote, in *Readings on the Inferno*, and illustrations therein given. Compare Guido Cavalcanti (in *Rime di Diversi Autori Toscani*, Vinegia, 1532), p. 68:—

"Veder mi par della sua labbia uscire  
 Una sì bella Donna, che la mente  
 Comrender non la può."

And Poliziano, *La Giostra*, lib. i, st. 24:—

"E quale è uom di sì sicura labbia,  
 Che fuggir possa il mio tenace vischio?"

And Lapo Gianni, Canzone beginning *Angelica figura nuovamente* (in *Scrittori del Primo Secolo*, Firenze, 1816, vol. ii, p. 113):—

"Onde mia labbia sì mortificata  
 Divenne allora ohimè! che io non parca."

‡ *Forese*: This person, as we showed at p. 262 was brother of Piccarda (*Par.* iii), and Corso de' Donati, the powerful chief of the faction of the Neri. Of him the *Falso Boccaccio* says, p. 436: "Forese de' Donati, fratello di Messer Corso Donati involto in questo vizio, e fu costui delicato uomo e piacevagli ogni buono cibo e fu grande amico di Dante; poi per parte [i.e. by civil discord] diventarono nimici cioè che Dante era di parte Bianca e Forese di parte Nera." Ozanam (*Purgatoire de Dante*, p. 384) alluding to the fact of Forese and his holy-minded sister being kinsfolk of Dante's wife, observes: "Dante parle peu de sa famille.



Never should I have recognized him by his face ; but in his voice was made manifest to me that, which his aspect had obliterated within itself. This spark re-kindled in me all my (former) knowledge of the altered countenance, and I recognized the features of Forese.

Benvenuto, pointing out that Dante never would have known by the face that he was looking at Forese, observes that a prolonged indulgence in gluttony so changes a man's appearance, that Domitian, who had been a beautiful youth, grew ugly, bald, and fat, and in a letter told a friend that nothing was more delightful, nor more short lived than beauty.

Forese begs Dante not to heed the wreck of his face, but to tell him who he is, and who are his companions.

—“ Deh non contendere \* all' asciutta scabbia

Parcourez la Divine Comédie. Béatrix la remplit de ses rayons ; mais jamais le poète ne nous entretient ni de Gemma Donati sa femme, ni de ses fils, qui cependant semblent n'avoir pas été indignes de leur glorieux père, puisque deux d'entre eux, Pierre et Jacques, devinrent ses commentateurs. C'est donc avec un plaisir inattendu qu'on trouve dans un coin du Purgatoire une scène d'intérieur, un souvenir des premiers jours, où Dante, nouvel époux, trouvait dans la maison de sa femme de fraternelles affections, avant que la guerre civile fut venue détruire ce fragile bonheur.”

\* *contendere* : I confess to feeling very undecided which of two interpretations of this verb to adopt. Scartazzini thinks there are only two, and neither of them present the slightest difficulty —either (a) to explain *contendere* as *attendere* in the sense of *formente, badare tendere l' attenzione*. He would translate the passage : “Heed not the disfigurement of my features,” etc. ; or (b) to take *contendere* in the sense of “to deny, to refuse.” In his Leipzig Commentary (1875) Scartazzini, while thinking both these interpretations good, slightly inclines to the latter. but in his Milan Commentary (1890) his view seems to have undergone a change to the former of the two interpretations, which makes *contendere* = “non fermare l' attenzione.” There do not seem to be wanting examples of the word being used in that sense. Both the *Voc. della Crusca*, and the *Gran Dizionario*





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Ma dimmi il ver di te, e chi son quelle  
 Due anime che là ti fanno scorta :  
 Non rimaner che tu non mi favelle."

"Ah," entreated he, "do not give heed to this dry leprosy that discolours my skin, nor to the want of flesh that I may have; but tell me the truth about thyself, and who are those two spirits yonder who bear thee company. Do not delay in speaking to me."

As we shall see by Dante's reply he had been looking fixedly at Forese's altered countenance, hardly being able to recognise the once familiar features, and Benvenuto remarks it is as though he would say: I am full of the desire to make thee speak thyself to gratify my curiosity, but am really not capable of answering thy questions rationally at this moment.

—"La faccia tua, ch' io lagrimai già morta, 55  
 Mi dà di pianger mo non minor doglia,"—<sup>\*</sup>  
 Rispos' io lui,—"veggendola sì torta.†

—but tell me the truth about thyself," etc. Witte translates: "Versage nicht dem dürren Aussatz . . . Deine Antwort."

\* *Mi dà di pianger mo non minor doglia*: This reading is the one adopted by Witte and by Dr. Moore (*Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, Oxford, 1894). There is a very important variant which occurs in the Vatican MS., in one of the Chigi, as well as in other MSS., *Mi dà di pianger mo minor la doglia*, which would quite alter the sense of the passage. Lana does not give this latter reading, but interprets the words as if he did so: "I wept for thee in the first life when thou didst die, but now I do not grieve for thee thus, for I see thee not among the lost, but on the way to reach life eternal." The reading *mo minor doglia* is also found in a Riccardi MS., in the *Falso Boccaccio*, and in the early Mantua edition, and comes to the same signification. Scartazzini would prefer the reading *mo minor la doglia*, as according better with *Purg.* iv, 123, *et seq.*, where Dante tells Belacqua that he no longer feels any uneasy misgivings about his salvation; only against this, Scartazzini says, the context *veggendola sì torta* speaks too clearly in favour of the usual reading, the one I have adopted.

† *veggendola sì torta*: In Hell (*Inf.* xv) Dante gave way to unbounded grief at seeing his old instructor Brunetto Latini among the lost, and with a face that was scorched (*colto*) nearly



Però mi di', per Dio, che sì vi sfoglia;\*  
 Non mi far dir mentr' io mi maraviglio,  
 Chè mal può dir † chi è pien d' altra voglia."— 60

"Thy face," I answered him, "which once I wept for when dead, makes me now weep with no less a grief, seeing it so disfigured. Tell me therefore, in the name of God, what so denudes you; do not make me speak while I am marvelling, for ill can he speak who is full of other longing."

Forese concisely answers Dante's question as to his emaciation, and adds that all the other spirits are undergoing a similar punishment. Their hunger and thirst are caused by the sight and the smell of the water and of the fruit, which, as the *Ottimo* remarks, sharpened their desire, and this desire dried up their limbs.

---

beyond recognition. But there is a great difference in the condition of a soul supposed to be in Hell, from one in Purgatory. It is the contrast between eternal damnation and sure and certain hope of salvation. Brunetto's countenance would remain scorched to all eternity, but Forese's case is quite different. When Dante wept over his dead friend he knew not what was to be his future destiny. But now, seeing him in Purgatory, he has full assurance that his sufferings are but for a while, and therefore tells him that his altered features (*faccia torta*) give him less cause for bitter weeping than when he mourned for him at his death. Benvenuto interprets *torta*, "tantum transmutatam ab illa."

\**vi sfoglia*: We must compare this expression with *buccia estrema* in l. 25. The literal meaning of *buccia* is the rind or skin of any plant. The literal meaning of *sfogliare* is to strip off the leaves, hence to "denude." As a plant is covered with leaves and thus beautified, so are the bones covered with flesh and with a healthy colour. Compare *Purg.* xxiv, 38, 39, where Dante is speaking of another Gluttonous spirit undergoing the same punishment, which he describes by the verb *piluccare*, i.e. to pluck the grapes from off a vine, and with the allegorical sense of gradually consuming the body:—

"là ov' ei sentia la piaga  
 Della giustizia che sì li pilucca."

†*Non mi far dir . . . Chè mal può dir*: Tommasèo remarks that this reiteration of *dir* is, because quite artless, by no means displeasing.



Ed egli a me:—"Dell' eterno consiglio  
 Cade virtù nell' acqua, e nella pianta  
 Rimasa retro,\* ond' io al m' assottiglio.†  
 Tutta esta gente che piangendo canta,‡  
 Per seguitar la gola oltra misura,§  
 In fame e in sete qui si rifà santa.||  
 Di bere e di mangiar n' accende cura  
 L' odor ch' esce del pomo,¶ e dello sprazzo\*\*  
 Che si distende su per la verdura.

65

\* *pianta Rimasa retro*: We are to infer that the Poets had already left the Tree some distance behind them.

† *m' assottiglio*: Others read *mí sottiglio*, but the difference is wholly unimportant.

‡ *piangendo canta*: We may conclude that the spirits only wept and sang as they drew near one or other of the trees.

§ *Per seguitar la gola oltra misura*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol. pars ii, 2<sup>de</sup>, qu. cxlviii, art. 1*): "Gula non nominat [Gregorius] quemlibet appetitum edendi et bibendi, sed inordinatum. Dicitur autem appetitus inordinatus ex eo quòd recedit ab ordine rationis, in quo bonum virtutis moralis consistit."

|| *si rifà santa*: Dante elsewhere speaks of spirits going to become beautiful. Compare *Purg. ii, 75*:—

"Quasi obbliando d' ire a farsi belle."

And *Purg. xvi, 31*:—

"O creatura che ti mondi,

Per tornar bella a colui che ti fece . . ."

¶ *pomo*: Dante uses *pomo* as a symbol of the highest good. In *Inf. xvi, 61*, he says to the three Florentines: "Lascio lo fele, e vo per dolci pomi." And, as Virgil is taking leave of Dante at the entrance into the Terrestrial Paradise (*Purg. xxvii, 115-117*), he says to him:—

"Quel dolce pome, che per tanti rami  
 Cercando va la cura dei mortali,  
 Oggi porrà in pace le tue fami."

And in *Purg. xxxii, 73-74*, Christ Himself is spoken of as

il "melo [the apple-tree],

Che del suo pomo [fruit] gli Angeli fa ghiotti."

On the smell of the water, see *Job xiv, 9*:—"Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant."

\*\* *sprazzo* or *sprazza*: This the *Gran Dizionario* explains to be "the distribution of any liquid matter in very minute quantities," in English "spray." It is only used this once in the





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E non pure una volta, questo spazzo \* 70  
 Girando, si rinfresca nostra pena ;  
 Io dico pena, e dovrei dir sollazzo ; †  
 Chè quella voglia all' arbore ci mena,  
 Che menò Cristo lieto a dire : ' Eìl, ' ‡  
 Quando ne liberò con la sua vena."— 75

And not once only, as we circle round this path, is our penalty renewed ; I say penalty, and I ought to say solace. For that same Will leads us to the tree,

\* *spazzo*: The proper meaning of *spazzo* is the surface of the ground, and ultimately "floor." Compare *Inf.* xiv, 13-15:—

"Lo spazzo era un' arena arida e spessa,  
 Non d' altra foggia fatta che colei,  
 Che fu da' piè di Caton già soppressa."

We find it in the sense of "floor," in the *Viaggi in Terra Santa* di Lionardo Frescobaldi e d' altri del Secolo xiv, Florence, 1862. (My own copy was given to me by a much lamented friend, the late Marchese Dino de' Frescobaldi, a descendant of the author.) See p. 25, where the palace of Alexandria is described: "Era bene insino al terzo dalla sala pieno lo spazzo di bellissimi drappi e tappeti." In Borghini, *Studi*, ed. Gigli, Florence, 1855, pp. 247-8, the author utters his indignation against the Commentators who attempt to see in *spazzo* merely an alteration from *spazio* for the sake of the rhyme, and he adds that "this accursed rhyme is the salvation of ignoramuses." *Spazio* = intervallum. *Spazzo* = solum. From *spazzo d' una sala* is derived *spazzare* to sweep, and *girar quello spazzo* is precisely the same as *girar quella via* or *girar quello smalto*, i.e. either "path" or "beaten floor." The quotation above, from *Inf.* xiv, shows that the word was not used for the rhyme's sake, as it is not at the end of a line.

† *sollazzo*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars iii, Supplem. Append. qu. ii, art. 2): "Videtur quòd illa pœna sit voluntaria, quia illi qui sunt in purgatorio, rectum habent cor. Sed hæc est rectitudo cordis, ut quis voluntatem suam divinæ voluntati conformet, ut Augustinus dicit, conc. i, in psal. 32 a princ. Ergo cùm Deus velit eos puniri, ipsi illam pœnam voluntariè sustinent. Præterea, omnis sapiens vult illud sine quo non potest pervenire ad finem intentum. Sed illi qui sunt in purgatorio, sciunt se non posse pervenire ad gloriam, nisi priùs puniantur. Ergo volunt puniri." And *Rom.* v, 3: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also."

‡ *Eìl*: Compare *St. Matt.* xxvii, 46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"



as led Christ rejoicing to say 'Eli,' when He ransomed us with His blood (*lit. vein*)."

Benvenuto says that the truth of this may be seen in the purgatory of the heart (*in purgatorio morali*), because the man who wishes to purge himself from the sin of Gluttony will abstain from toothsome food and from luscious wines, although it will seem to him an exceedingly hard struggle to forgo his accustomed dainties. And note that penitential expiation is in a man's lifetime more voluntary, because it is his own will that imposes it; but the expiation of Purgatory is by the will to endure, because the spirits there accept their penance voluntarily, and, while performing it earnestly, aspire to reach their heavenly country, and, to attain that, entreat the help of the intercessions of others.

*Division III.*—Dante had been told by Belacqua (*Purg.* iv, 130) that the souls of those who delayed their repentance till death, had to remain in the *Anti-Purgatorio* for a term equal in duration to the length of their lives on earth, and as Dante knew that his friend Forese had only died five years before, and probably knew also that he had delayed his repentance until the very end of his life, he is surprised to find him already in one of the Cornices of Purgatory proper.

He evidently knew that Forese had made some sort of repentance, or else he would not have expected to find him even in the *Anti-Purgatorio*, but in Hell with Ciaccio and the other Gluttons.

Bd io a lui:—"Forese da quel dì  
Nel qual mutasti mondo a miglior vita,"

---

\* *miglior vita*: Lombardi remarks that they who are lost change the world for a worse life.



Cinqu' anni \* non son vòliti † infino a qui.  
 Se prima ‡ fu la possa in te finita  
 Di peccar più, che sorvenisse l' ora 80  
 Del buon dolor § ch' a Dio ne rimarita,||  
 Come se' tu quassù venuto? ¶ Ancora  
 Io ti credea trovar laggiù di sotto,  
 Dove tempo per tempo si ristora."—

\* *Cinqu' anni*, etc. Benvenuto says that, according to the text, Forese must have died in 1296 ("quasi dicat: tu mortuus es jam quasi quinque annis elapsis, scilicet in millesimo ducentesimo nonagesimo sexto: hoc præsupposito, *come se' tu venuto ancor di qua*, ad verum purgatorium," etc.).

† *vòliti*: Compare Petrarch, part i, Son. 40 (in some editions 48):—

"Or volge, Signor mio, l' undecim' anno  
 Ch' i' fui sommesso al dispietato giogo."

‡ *Se prima . . . Di peccar*, et seq.: The *Ottimo Comento*, which professes to have been written by a contemporary of Dante, refers to this passage, possibly not without foundation of fact: "E queste cose sa bene l' Autore per la *conversione* (meant for *conversazione*) continova, ch' elli aveva col detto Forese; ed esso Autore fu quegli che, per amore che aveva in lui e familiaritade, lo indusse alla confessione: e' confessossi a Dio anzi l' ultimo fine." See also *Convivio* iv, 88.

§ *buon dolor*: Compare 2 Cor. vii, 10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

|| *a Dio ne rimarita*: Compare *Par.* xii, 61-63, where the espousals of St. Dominic were said to have been celebrated at his baptism:—

"Poichè le sponsalizie fur compiute  
 Al sacro fonte intra lui e la fede,  
 U' si dotâr di mutua salute;" etc.

The man that falls into sin is, as it were, divorced from God. We find in many passages of the Old Testament (e.g. *Ezek.* xxiii, 37; *Hosea* ii, 2) the idolatry of Israel called its adultery. Therefore, in like manner, the repentant sinner is said to be re-wedded to God.

¶ *Come se' tu quassù venuto?*: Some read *di qua* instead of *quassù*. Differences have arisen among modern Commentators as to whether the note of interrogation should be placed after *venuto* or *ancora*, the next word, but neither MSS. nor early editions can decide that point, for, as Scartazzini observes, orthographical signs were not invented until a later date. By far the larger number of editions place the note of interrogation after *ancora*.





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La Nella \* mia col pianger suo diretto.  
 Con suoi preghi devoti e con sospiri  
 Tratto m' ha della costa † ove s' aspetta,  
 E liberato m' ha degli altri giri.

90

Whereupon he to me: "It is my Nella with her overflowing tears, who has brought me thus speedily to drink the sweet wormwood of these torments. By her

"*Insanientis dum sapientiæ  
 Consultus erro.*"

Also Horace, *Epist.* 1, xi, 28:—

"*Strenua nos exercet inertia.*"

And Catullus, *Carm.* lxxiv, 81-83:—

"*Ipsc suum Theseus pro caris corpus Athenis  
 Projicere optavit potius, quam talia Cretam  
 Funera Cecropiæ ne—funera portarentur.*"

Also Milton, *Paradise Regained*, iii, 310:—

"He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless  
 The city gates outpour'd."

\* *La Nella* is the Florentine contraction of Giovanna, Giovanella. It is a custom at Florence among the lower classes to attach the definite article to the names of women—*La Nella*, *L' Assunta*, *La Carla*, *La Concetta*, *La Nina*.

† *costa* in this passage means the lower slopes of the mountain, below and outside of the Gate of Purgatory or the *Anti-Purgatorio*. The primary meaning of *costa* is a gradual ascent (*salita poco repente*). Throughout Dante's poem it is used to express "hill-side," and sometimes the hill, or mountain itself. Compare *Inf.* xii, 61, 62, where Nessus addresses the Poets on seeing them descending the precipitous side of the cliff:—

"A qual martiro

Venite voi che scendete la costa?"

And the *Gran Dizionario* quotes from Varchi, *Giucoco di Pittagora*, a MS. in the Magliabecchiana Library at Florence, where an exact definition of *costa* is given: "La via che va da Firenze a S. Miniato, si chiama costa, ovvero erta [*steep*]; e la medesima via da S. Miniato a Firenze si chiama china, ovvero scesa." From "steep ascent" the word was used to describe a "steep ascent from the sea," as in Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. ii, Nov. 4: where one of the most beautiful regions in the world is thus described: "Credesi che la marina da Reggio a Gaeta sia quasi la più dilettevole parte d' Italia: nella quale assai presso a Salerno è una costa sopra il mare riguardante, la quale gli abitanti chiamano la costa d' Amalfi." The meaning "coast, sea-shore," only comes ultimately from the above primary significations.



devout prayers and by her sighs, she has withdrawn me from the hill-side where one tarries (*i.e.* the *Anti-Purgatorio*), and has set me free from the other circles (*i.e.* the Cornices of Pride, Envy, etc.).

The better to accentuate the virtues of his excellent wife, the only righteous woman in a wicked city, Forese now draws an unpleasing picture of the dress and demeanour of the women of Florence, comparing that city to the district of *Barbagia*, in the island of Sardinia, where the women had an evil reputation, both for their immodest attire, and for their licentious morals.

Tant' è a Dio più cara e più diletta  
 La vedovella \* mia, che tanto amai,  
 Quanto in bene operare è più soletta ; †  
 Chè la *Barbagia* ‡ di Sardigna assai  
 Nelle femmine sue è più pudica  
 Che la *Barbagia* dov' io la lasciai. 95

---

\* *vedovella* : This is the diminutive of *vedova*, used (says the *Gran Dizionario*) sometimes in the sense of compassion, as here, but at other times as an expression of censure, to denote a widow who does not bear herself with due decorum in her widowhood. Dante uses it in the first of these two senses in the episode of Trajan and the widow, *Purg.* x, 76, 78:—

“ Io dico di Traiano imperatore ;  
 Ed una vedovella gli era al freno,  
 Di lagrime atteggiata e di dolore.”

† *soletta* : Diminutive of *sola*, and here is evidently used with a certain tenderness to express the solitude of a beloved and modest woman. Some have tried to make out that Dante, by saying that *Nella* was *soletta* in *bene operare* just before attacking the women of Florence, meant to cast a reproach on his own wife Gemma. But, as Scartazzini remarks, it is not at all certain that Gemma was not already dead at the time these lines were written.

‡ *Barbagia* was a mountainous region of Sardinia, and took its name from the ancient Barbaricini, celebrated in the history of the island for their idolatry and independent ways. It lies in the heart of the principal chain of mountains. The Barbaricini



So much the dearer and more precious in the sight of God is my poor widow, whom I loved so tenderly, in proportion as she is the more solitary in good conduct. For the Barbagia of Sardinia is far more modest in its women than the Barbagia where I left her.

Forese means that Florence was a second Barbagia. He then tells Dante that he foresees a day of retribution on the Florentine women, when laws will have to be made to check the immodesty of their dress.

O dolce frate, che vuoi tu ch' io dica ?

Tempo futuro m' è già nel cospetto,

Cui non sarà quest' ora molto antica,\*

Nel qual sarà in pergamo † interdetto

100

are said to have been landed in Sardinia by the Vandals, and forthwith they took possession of the neighbouring mountains, and lived by robbery and plunder. St. Gregory (*Ep.* iv, 23) says of them: *omnes ut insensata animalia vivunt*. The *Codice Cassinese* says that in the Barbagia *mulieres vadunt seminude*. Pietro di Dante makes them worse: *ubi vadunt nudæ mulieres*. The *Codice Caetani*, quoted by Camerini: "In insula Sardinia est montana alta, quæ dicitur La Barbagia; et quando Januenses [*the Genoese*] retraxerunt dictam insulam de manibus Infidelium, nunquam potuerunt retrahere dictam montanam, in qua habitat gens barbara et sine civilitate, et fœminæ suæ vadunt indutæ subtili *pirgolato*, ita quod omnia membra ostendunt inhoneste; nam est ibi magnus calor." Benvenuto confirms this statement: "Nam pro calore et prava consuetudine vadunt indutæ panno lineo albo, excollatæ ita, ut ostendant pectus et ubera." It is said that, even at the present day, the costume of these women is somewhat scanty; although their conduct is without reproach.

\* *quest' ora . . . antica*: Compare *Par.* xvii, 118-120:—

"E s' io al vero son timido amico,

Temo di perder viver tra coloro

Che questo tempo chiameranno antico."

† *pergamo*, a pulpit, is not to be confused, as some Commentators have done, with *pergamena*, parchment. *Pulpito* is a desk, not pulpit. The words in *pergamo interdetto* may either mean the sermons that were preached against the gross immodesty of the women's dress, or better perhaps, the episcopal decrees, and canonical penalties which were proclaimed from the pulpit against such disgraceful habits. It is evident from verses 103-5 that Dante uses *interdello* in the latter sense. Sacchetti (*Novelle*, 115, 178) speaks at length on this subject.





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pulpit it shall be interdicted to the unblushing dames of Florence to go about displaying the bosom with the paps. What women of Barbary, what Saracen (women) were there ever, for whom either spiritual or other discipline was needed to enforce their going about (decently) covered?

Dante now puts into the mouth of Forese a prediction of the disasters that actually took place in Florence between 1300 and 1316.

Ma se le svergognate fosser certe  
 Di quel che il ciel veloce loro ammanna,\*  
 Già per urlare avrian le bocche aperte.  
 Chè se l' antiveder qui non m' inganna,  
 Prima fien triste che le guance impeli  
 Colui che mo si consola con nanna.†

110

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\* *quel che il ciel veloce loro ammanna*: Dante here alludes in the form of a prophecy to all the calamities that befell Florence immediately after the entry of Charles de Valois in November, 1302. (G. Villani, lib. viii, c. 49); and in the following year the massacres of which Fulcieri da Calboli was the author (G. Villani, lib. viii, c. 59). See also Canto xiv, 58-66, and my note thereon. In this same year a great famine took place; in the following year the city was excommunicated by Cardinal da Prato (G. Villani, lib. viii, c. 69), and the Ponte alla Carraja fell, causing the death of a vast number of persons *con grande pianto e dolore a tutta la cittade* (c. 70). Villani says over and over again that these misfortunes were sent as a punishment for the wickedness of the citizens. Compare this with *Inf.* xxvi, 7-12, where Dante, wishing to predict these same facts as events that would shortly take place after the year 1300 (though when he wrote the *Inferno* they were past occurrences), pictures himself as having dreamt them towards dawn, when dreams were popularly supposed to come true. See *Readings on the Inferno*, vol. ii, pp. 328-333. The primary meaning of *ammannare* is "to bind, or prepare, a sheaf of corn," and hence simply "to prepare." It is derived from *manna* a sheaf (Lat. *manipulus*). Cf. *Purg.* xxix, 49, 50:—

"La virtù ch' a ragion discorso ammanna,  
 Siccom' elli eran candelabri apprese."

† *nanna*: *La Ninna Nanna* is the song with which nurses in Italy send children to sleep. Compare Michelangelo Buonarotti *il Giovane*, *La Fiera*, Giorn. iv, act 1, sc. vi;—



But if the shameless creatures only knew for certain that which swift Heaven has in store for them, they would already have their mouths wide-open to howl. For, if my fore-sight here does not deceive me, they will become sad before that he who is now being hushed with lullabies (*i.e.* the infant) shall have put forth beard upon his cheeks.

“Note here, reader,” says Benvenuto, “that I have heard some say rashly, that this prognostication is a discredit to Dante (*vituperium poetæ*) since such a long time had elapsed without those things taking place, which he seems to foretell as happening in so brief a space of time. To which I reply, that the author speaks here of things that are past and accomplished facts, and not merely of events about to take place. But he appears to prophesy, because he looks at the supposed time of his vision, which was in MCCC, as has already been so often said. For great misfortunes did follow after that date, such as intestine discords, civil wars, and the expulsion of the factions, which things took place in the second and third year following; and in the fourth year the *Bianchi* and *Neri* came again to arms against each other. And while the fury of war was raging, a fire broke out, whether kindled by accident, or, as many have said, the intentional work of a certain priest, *Neri degli Abati*, who first set it going in his own house: and in a short time the greater part of the city was burned, more than two thousand houses being de-

---

“Ed or n' andrete, dormiglione, a nanna.”

Lana comments: “He wishes here to mark the time that will elapse before such vengeance can take place; and says that before the male child that is still in the cradle, and who is hushed to sleep with the *Ninna Nanna*, shall have put forth a beard, this vengeance will have come to pass—*i.e.*, within the space of 20 years.”



stroyed, with a damage beyond all estimation. Nor did they meanwhile cease from strife, but all the time great pillage went on. And in the fifteenth year (1315) they (the Florentines) suffered a terrible slaughter at Monte Catini at the hands of Ugucione della Faggiuola."

*Division IV.*—After uttering his denunciation of the women of Florence, and predicting the woes that will shortly befall them, Forese entreats Dante to say who he is, as the whole band of penitents, of whom Forese is the spokesman, are lost in astonishment at seeing that Dante's body casts a shadow.

Deh, frate, or \* fa che più non mi ti celi :  
 Vedi che non pur io, ma questa gente  
 Tutta rimira là dove il sol veli." †

And now, my brother, I pray thee no longer to hide thyself from me; see that not only I, but all this

\* *or* : In l. 58 *et seq.*, Dante had begged Forese to tell him the reason of the terrible alteration of his features. So now Forese, in so many words, says to Dante: "Now that I have given you the information you seek, do you, in your turn, tell us what we are so anxious to know, who are you who have a shadow here?"

† *dove il sol veli* : Compare *Purg.* iii, 88-93:—

"Come color dinanzi vider rotta  
 La luce in terra dal mio destro canto,  
 Sì che l' ombra era da me alla grotta,  
 Restaro, e trasser sè in retro alquanto,  
 E tutti gli altri che venieno appresso,  
 Non sapendo il perchè, fenno altrettanto."

In Tommaséo's Commentary, there are the following observations by the astronomer Antonelli: "Se quando i Poeti pervennero su questo sesto girone era già presso le undici ore, adesso doveva essere passato il mezzodì, come argomentasi dal principio del Canto seguente. E se proseguendo essi nel solito modo il cammino, fossero stati tra la tramontana e il ponente della montagna, come a suo luogo vedremo doversi ammettere, allora la velatura del sole, cioè l' ombra del nostro Poets, sarebbe caduta verso la ripa del monte, nella direzione che è tra la spalla sinistra e la faccia."





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Di quella vita mi volse costui  
 Che mi va innanzi, l' altr' ier,\* quando tonda †  
 Vi si mostrò la suora ‡ di colui 120  
 (E il sol mostrai). Costui per la profonda  
 Notte menato m' ha da' veri morti,§  
 Con questa vera carne || che il seconda. ¶  
 Indi m' han tratto su li suoi conforti,

un-Christian conduct towards each other, could hardly fail to suggest the most painful reflections to them. This unseemly literary contest, in which each of the two former friends sought to wound the feelings of the other, must have attained a certain amount of publicity at Florence, and would have amounted pretty nearly to a scandal. They now may be supposed to be confessing to each other their mutual transgressions, and Dante would explain to Forese that he owes it to the influence of Virgil that he has been turned from his formerly thoughtless life into the paths of penitence that are to lead him to Heaven.

\* *l' altro ieri* is, properly speaking, "the day before yesterday"; but all the Commentators interpret it here, "the other day," "a few days ago." *L' altr' ieri* può dire tempo più remoto che ier l' altro, il qual significa *Due giorni indietro*." (*Gran Dizionario*, s. v. "Jeraltro".)

† *tonda* : Compare *Inf.* xx, 127 : "E già iernotte fu la luna tonda." Antonelli (in Tommaséo's Commentary) referring both to *l' altro ieri* and *la luna tonda* makes the following remarks: "Stando al solito supposto del plenilunio ecclesiastico della Pasqua del 1300, al Purgatorio avrebbero visto la luna tonda nella notte dal 6 al 7 aprile, e di presente ivi correva il dì 12 : dunque *l' altro ieri* significa cinque o sei giorni fa, cioè misura di tempo indeterminato ; ma poco remoto."

‡ *suora* : The Sun (Apollo) and the Moon (Diana or Luna) were thought to be the children of Jupiter and Latona. Compare *Pur.* xxix, 1 :—

"Quando ambo e due i figli di Latona."

§ *veri morti* : Compare *Inf.* i, 115-117 :—

"le disperate strida

Di quegli antichi spiriti dolenti,

Che la seconda morte ciascun grida."

|| *vera carne* : Compare *Purg.* ii, 109, when Dante, on asking Casella to sing, says to him :—

"Di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto

L'anima mia, che con la sua persona

Venendo qui è affannata tanto."

¶ *che il seconda* : Compare *Inf.* iv, 15 :—

"Io sarò primo, e tui sarai secondo."



Salendo e rigirando la montagna  
Che drizza \* voi che il mondo fece torti.

125

Whereupon I to him: "If thou recall to mind what thou wast in my company, and what I was in thine, the present remembrance of it will even yet be grievous to us. From that life he who goes in front of me turned me but the other day, when the sister (the Moon) of him yonder—and I pointed to the Sun—showed herself to you at the full. He has led me through the profound darkness of the really dead, with this real flesh (*i.e.* my body) which is following him. Thence (from Hell) have his encouragements drawn me upwards, ascending and encircling this mountain which straightens (*i.e.* purifies) you whom the world made crooked.

Dante then speaks of the better hope he has to look to, and in conclusion tells Forese who are his two guides, in answer to his question:—"Who are those two spirits that bear thee company?" (ll. 52, 53).

Tanto dice di farmi sua compagna,†  
Ch' io sarò là dove fia Beatrice ;  
Quivi convien che senza lui rimagna.

\* *drizza* : Compare *Purg.* x, 1-3 :—

"dentro al soglio della porta  
Che il malo amor dell' anime disusa,  
Perchè fa parer dritta la via torta."

† *di farmi sua compagna* : It was of common usage among the early writers to leave out the *i* of *compagnia*, as here. Compare *Inf.* xxvi, 100-102 :—

"Ma misi me per l' alto mare aperto  
Sol con un legno e con quella compagna  
Picciola," etc.

And Poliziano (*La Giostra*, lib. i, st. 29) :

"Spargesi tutta la bella compagna,  
Altri alle reti, altri alla via più stretta,  
Chi serba in coppia i can, chi gli scompagna ;  
Chi già 'l suo ammette, chi 'l richiama e alletta."

And Giov. Villani (lib. xii, cap. ix) : "Quasi tutti i soldati ch'erano co' Pisani . . . e più di duemila pedoni di masnade ghibellini, si partirono da Pisa, e feciono una compagna con alcuno



Virgilio è questi che così mi dice 130  
 (E addita' lo), e quest' altro è quell' ombra \*  
 Per cui scosse dianzi ogni pendice  
 Lo vostro regno che da sè lo sgombra."—

So far he says he will afford me his company, until I shall be there (at the summit of the mount) where Beatrice will be; there shall I have to be left without him. This one here who tells me so, is Virgil—and I pointed to him—And this other (Statius) is that shade for whom your kingdom (Purgatory) which is discharging him from itself, just now shook all its slopes."

This refers to the concluding lines of Canto xx.

---

piccolo soldo." Scartazzini (*Milan Edition*) remarks that one might also take *compagna* as the feminine of *compagno*, as agreeing with *anima*, or *ombra* understood.

\* *quell' ombra*: Dante does not name Statius, and Scartazzini says it is difficult to see why; but Tommasèo thinks that the name of Statius would not have been of the slightest importance in the eyes of Forese.

END OF CANTO XXIII.





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*In the Third Division*, from ver. 70 to ver. 99, Dante resumes his conversation with Forese, and hears from him a prediction of the tragic end of Corso Donati, Forese's own brother, and the principal cause of the evils then existing at Florence. Forese then quits Dante and returns to his penance.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 100 to ver. 129, the poets encounter a second tree. A description follows, of the checks that are used against Gluttony.

*In the Fifth Division*, from ver. 130 to ver. 154, an Angel appears, who purifies Dante from the sin of Gluttony, and points out to him the ascent to the Seventh Cornice.

*Division I.*—Benvenuto says that some people, when in conversation out walking, are in the habit of stopping their companion every time they speak; and other persons, from the haste at which they are walking, either shorten their talk or omit parts of it. Such however is not the case with Dante and Forese, whose rapid progress Dante compares to that of a ship in full sail. Benvenuto draws attention to the appropriateness of the comparison, for the ship of Dante and Forese is holding its course towards a good haven of rest, with a sure confidence in its two skilful pilots, Virgil and Statius, who are walking on before.

Nè il dir l' andar, nè l' andar lui \* più lento

---

\* *Nè il dir l' andar, nè l' andar lui*, et seq.: It will be noticed however, in l. 91, that Forese *did* after all find Dante's speed too slow, and apologises for leaving him behind. Dante estimates the rate of their progress by what is given to Man's powers. The spirits not being burdened with *quel d' Adamo* (*Purg.* ix, 10) can naturally move much more rapidly. It may be remembered that



Facea, ma ragionando andavam forte,  
 Sì come nave pinta da buon vento.  
 E l' ombre, che parean cose rimorte,\*  
 Per le fosse degli occhi † ammirazione  
 Traean di me, di mio vivere accorte.

5

Neither did our speech make our going, nor did our going make it (our speech) more slow, but as we talked we walked apace, even as a ship impelled by a fair wind. And the shades, that seemed things twice-dead, drew in through their cavernous eyes astonishment at me, perceiving I had life.

The spirits would know Dante to be alive, both from seeing his shadow, and from his unstarved appearance.

The last Canto broke off in the middle of the sentence in which Dante was telling Forese who Statius was.

the fact of Dante being a bad walker was noticed in the note on *Purg.* xi, 43-45, where Virgil says of him:—

“Chè questi che vien meco, per l' incarco  
 Della carne d' Adamo, ond' ei si veste,  
 Al montar su, contra sua voglia, è parco.”

Compare Ariosto (*Orl. Fur.* xxxi, st. 34):—

“Non, per andar, di ragionar lasciando,  
 Non, di seguir, per ragionar, lor via.”

*lui* refers to *il dir*, and Cesari (p. 427) remarks that “anche in cosa inanimata si adopera bene il pronome *egli*, come dicon gli esempi.” I have often noticed this use of *egli* and *lui* at Florence. A Florentine friend and I were much amused one day by hearing an old man selling what we might colloquially here describe as “Zadkiel's Almanacks,” in the old Market Place at Florence. His cry was “Ecco il Baccelli Lunario, *egli è lui* (*Here is Zadkiel's Almanack, it is he himself, or it is the real article*).”

\* *rimorte*: This *terzina* reminds one of that in *Purg.* ii, 67-69, where Dante speaks of the band in which was Casella:—

“L' anime che si fur di me accorte,  
 Per lo spirare, ch' io era ancora vivo,  
 Maravigliando diventaro smorte.”

Scartazzini says that, by *rimorte*, Dante wishes to express something from which all form or comeliness has utterly vanished; the most extreme pallor and extenuation, even as one whose countenance is not only corpse-like, but doubly corpse-like.

† *fosse degli occhi*: I have translated the words as though they were *per gli occhi incavati*.



The whole sentence, when completed, would have run thus: "And this other is that shade for whom your kingdom, which is discharging him from itself, just now shook all its slopes. He walks on perchance more slowly upwards than he would, for the sake of some one else." But the Canto broke off before the last clause, which Dante proceeds to utter now, and at the same time asks Forese if he can give him any information about Piccarda, who was sister to Forese, and a cousin of Dante's wife Gemma. Dante's interview with Piccarda in Heaven is described in *Par.* iii, one of the most beautiful Cantos in the *Divina Commedia*. He also asks Forese if there are any personages of distinction doing penance in his company.

Ed io, continuando il mio sermone,  
 Dissi:—"Ella sen va su forse più tarda  
 Che non farebbe, per l' altrui cagione.\*  
 Ma dimmi, se tu 'l sai, ov' è Piccarda; †  
 Dimmi s' io veggio da notar persona  
 Tra questa gente che sì mi riguarda."

10

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\* *per l' altrui cagione*: Scartazzini thinks this was solely for the purpose of talking with Virgil; but Benvenuto explains it to be for the sake both of Virgil and Dante, adding, that otherwise Statius would already have soared up to Heaven, "and thus see," observes Benvenuto, "how a real friend will for a while postpone his own comfort for a friend, as says the philosopher in the ixth book of the Ethics, and it is as though he (Dante) would say tacitly: 'I must hasten away from thee, lest we retard Statius who is going to Heaven, therefore tell me, I beseech thee, where is thy sister?'"

† *Piccarda* was the daughter of Simone de' Donati, and sister to Corso and Forese. She took the vows of the order of St. Clare, but was forcibly abducted from the cloister against her will, by order of Messer Corso her brother, and married to Rosellino della Tosa. She tells the tale herself in *Par.* iii, 97-108:—

"Perfetta vita ed alto merto inciela  
 Donna più su,' mi disse, 'alla cui norma  
 Nel vostro mondo giù si veste e vela,





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Nostra sembianza via per la dieta.\*

“My sister, who betwixt beautiful and good I know not which was most, already rejoices triumphant at her crown on lofty Olympus (*i.e.* in Heaven).” So said he first, and then: “Here it is not forbidden to name every one, since our countenances are so emaciated (*lit.* milked dry) by our abstinence.

Forese means that, as the whole of the spirits present are equally miserable in appearance, there can be nothing invidious in naming any one specially, and the more so, that otherwise, any recognition by a stranger would be impossible. Dante had named Piccarda, and Forese had in his answer said “my sister”; now lest Dante should think that he wished to reprove him, he hastens to reassure him, and names several of his fellow penitents, and as these included a poet, a pope, a great noble, an archbishop, and a reigning prince, we may take it for granted that the selection would satisfy even Dante, who rarely, if ever, notices any one of the middle or lower classes.†

\* *la dieta*: “Il mangiar poco e cose leggiere, o anche nulla.” (*Gran Dizionario.*) See Giusti, *Proverbi Toscani*, Firenze, 1853, p. 283:—

“Acqua, dieta, e serviziale  
Guarisce d’ogni male.”

The *Gran Dizionario* quotes the following from the Sonnets of Bernardo Bellincioni, Milan, 1493, 4to [Son. 254] to show that *dieta* may mean deprivation of what anything ought to have, or that it is empty:—

“Ma perchè la borsa mia fa dieta.”

† In *Inf.* xx, 103-105, Dante expresses this opinion to Virgil in precise terms:—

“Ma dimmi della gente che procede,  
Se tu ne vedi alcun degno di nota;  
Chè solo a ciò la mia mente rifiede.”

In that same Canto Dante afterwards names one Asdente, a cobbler, but Bartoli thinks that Dante only mentions Asdente for the sake of grouping him and an astrologer of the highest order together as two diviners, and thereby bringing the pre-



Questi (e mostrò col dito) è Bonagiunta, \*

Bonagiunta da Lucca ; e quella faccia †

20

tentious astrologer into ridicule. In *Par.* xvii, 133-142, this contempt for ordinary personages is strongly inculcated upon him by his ancestor Cacciaguada, who bids Dante ignore them altogether, and only write about illustrious personages, whether good or bad :—

“Questo tuo grido farà come vento,  
 Che le più alte cime più percote ;  
 E ciò non fa d' onor poco argomento.  
 Però ti son mostrate in queste rote,  
 Nel monte, e nella valla dolorosa,  
 Pur l' anime che son di fama note ;  
 Chè l' animo di quel ch' ode non posa,  
 Nè ferma fede per esemplo ch' haia  
 La sua radice incognita e nascosa,  
 Nè per altro argomento che non paia.”

\* *Bonagiunta* was the son of Riccomo di Bonagiunta Orbicchiani degli Overardi of Lucca. According to Scartazzini he died shortly after the year 1296, in the December of which year he was alive. Lana says he was a reciter of rhymes, and very corrupt in the vice of Gluttony. Nannucci (*Manuale della Letteratura del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, vol. i, p. 139) begs his readers to note that Bonagiunta's reputed friendship with Dante, and their interchange of sonnets, is well worthy of credence when asserted by Jacopo della Lana, who was already a writer of some celebrity at the time of Dante's death, and might quite well have been acquainted with them both. Benvenuto remarks : “*fuit maximus magister gulositatum*,” . . . and further on : “he was an honourable man, of the city of Lucca, a splendid orator in his mother tongue, with much facility in the matter of rhymes, but of greater facility in that of wines.” Dante however held Bonagiunta in low esteem as a poet, and in *De Vulg. Elog.* i, xiii, includes him among certain other Tuscan writers of the time whose language was by no means pure, being the mere local dialect of their several native cities. See also the article by Carlo Minutoli, *Gentucca e gli altri Lucchesi nominati nella Divina Commedia* (in *Dante e il suo Secolo*, Florence, 1865), in which Bonagiunta is mentioned at pp. 222, 224.

† *quella faccia* : The idea of the intensity of the emaciation is impressed on us by Dante saying “that face beyond him” instead of “that spirit beyond him.” He wishes his readers to understand, that the sight of those cavernous eyes and hollow cheeks so seized upon the attention of the beholder, that for the time he would be unable to see anything but the faces. The spirit in question is that of Pope Martin IV, a Frenchman, by name Simon



Di là da lui, più che l' altre trapunta, \*  
 Ebbe la santa Chiesa in le sue braccia :  
 Dal Torso † fu, e purga per digiuno  
 L' anguille di Bolsena ‡ e la vernaccia."§—

This one here—and he pointed with his finger—is Bonagiunta, Bonagiunta of Lucca ; and beyond him (he with) that face more emaciated than the others, once held the Holy Church in his embrace : from

de Brion of Tours, who succeeded Nicholas III in 1281. G. Villani (lib. vii, ch. 58) says of him : " Di vile nazione, ma molto fu magnanimo e di gran cuore ne' fatti della Chiesa, ma per sè proprio per suoi parenti nulla cupidigia ebbe : e quando il fratello il venne a vedere papa, incontanente il rimandò in Francia con piccoli doni e colle spese, dicendo, ch' e' beni erano della Chiesa e non suoi." He was a strong partisan of Charles of Anjou, and an enemy of the Ghibellines. He retired to Orvieto, where the rich wines of Orvieto and Montefiascone, combined with the eels here mentioned, may have given him the surfeit from which he is said to have died. The *Postillatore Cassinese* states that, owing to his predilection for eels, the following verses are said to have been written on his tomb :—

" Gaudent anguillae, quia mortuus hic jacet ille  
 Qui quasi morte reas excoriabat eas."

\* *trapunta*, for *trapuntata*, lit. " worked in embroidery," but here " extenuated." " Le inuguaglianze dell' arida pelle rendono immagine di trapunto. (Tommasèo.)

† *Torso* : The city of Tours.

‡ *Bolsena Lake Bolsena* is near Viterbo, and said to abound in fish. It is in a most fertile district, but has an evil reputation for *malaria*.

§ *vernaccia* : A species of white wine, both rich and sweet. It was said to have been produced from a thick skinned grape that imparted a sweet rough flavour to the wine, which Benvenuto says is excellent, and comes from the mountains near Genoa. He adds that he considers it to have been of special utility to that High Priest (meaning Martin IV) to have drunk of the wine in which eels had been slain ; for whoever drinks of wine so prepared straightway takes a disgust to all wine, as Albertus Magnus says. Benvenuto himself saw the experiment succeed with a great bishop. Chaucer mentions the wine in the Merchant's Tale :—

" He drinketh ipocras, clarree, and vernage  
 Of spyces hote, t' encresen his corage."

Compare also Pulci (*Morg. Magg.* Canto xxv, st. 219); Boccaccio. (*Decam.* Giorn. x, Nov. ii); and Redi (*Bacco in Toscana*, ll. 511-518).





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I saw through hunger using their teeth on emptiness  
 Ubaldino dalla Pila, and Boniface who with his crozier  
 pastured vast herds (of courtiers and retainers).

Benvenuto's explanation is that Dante describes Boniface by one of the chief insignia of his great dignity. The Archbishop of Ravenna is a great shepherd, who has under him many suffragan bishops from Rimini as far as Parma: and he says *col rocco*, for while the other shepherds (bishops) have the crooked pastoral staff he (the archbishop) has the whole staff straight and round at the top like a castle at chess (*ad modum calculi sive*

territory; he was nephew of Pope Innocent IV. He was appointed Archbishop by Gregory X at the time of the Council of Lyons in 1274. Honorius IV sent him as Nunzio to the Court of Philippe le Hardi, and afterwards to Philippe le Bel. On p. 120 of a very beautiful work, *L' Ultimo Rifugio di Dante*, Milan, 1891, Corrado Ricci records that Boniface held the Archbishopric for fully 20 years (1274-1294). That he was far more of a political agitator than a gentle pastor of souls is shown by the assistance he lent to the Ferrarese exiles against Obizzo d' Este, but no one except Dante records his gluttony. His wealth must have been enormous, and his purchases of castles and possessions, which he afterwards bestowed or sold to the clergy of Ravenna, were well-known. Corrado Ricci further explains the double meaning of the word *pasturò*, as ambiguously implying that Boniface used his pastoral staff, or in other words his episcopal or archi-episcopal office, to maintain a great host of attendants whom he enriched by his largesses. "Quando Dante scrive *Che pasturò col rocco molte genti*, dobbiamo interpretare che col pastorale, ossia nella sua posizione d' arcivescovo o di pastore mistico mantenne intorno a sè molte genti e visse lautamente e ben diversamente dai primi martiri e ben lontano da quella parsimonia e stato semplice ed austero imposto agli uomini che predicano sempre il sacrificio. Allora da quel verso emerge tutto un fine sarcasmo che aumenta il valore. Il verbo *pasturare* presenta in questo caso due tagli [*a double edge*] e con l' ambiguità determina epigramma fra il *pasturare* il gregge cristiano con la parola evangelica e la pietà, e il *pasturare* o sfamare [*fill the bellies of*] il gregge dei cortigiani che gli si addensavano intorno." Pietro di Dante writes: "Item de Archiepiscopo Bonifatio Ravennate . . . qui cum rocco, idest cum dignitate dicti Archiepiscopatus, super cujus pastorali in summitate est forma unius rocchi, saepe convivatus est."



*rocchi*). This word has been the cause of much disagreement. Some have tried to make out that *rocco* means a belfry, others a rochet, but Scartazzini asks: "How can an Archbishop rule with a part of his dress?" Scartazzini adds: "It is derived, like *roque* in Spanish and Portuguese, and *roc*, Provençal and French (and *rook*, English), from the Persian *rokh*, and means neither more nor less than the castle in the game of chess. Now the ancient Commentators have told us, that the crozier of the Archbishop of Ravenna has on the top a piece shaped like a castle at chess. *Col rocco* therefore signifies 'with his crozier,' and all the other interpretations are but dreams."

The above is of course the right interpretation of *rocco*, and I have only used the term "pastoral staff" in the footnote by way of giving more effect to the play on the words which Corrado Ricci accentuates.

Dante passes from Ravenna to Forli, where, says Benvenuto, there are stouter drinkers and better wines!

Vidi messer Marchese,\* ch' ebbe spazio  
Già di bere a Forli con men secchezza,  
E sì † fu tal che non si sentì sazio.

---

\* *messer Marchese*: Commentators seem to differ as to whether *Marchese* was the name or the title of this personage. I incline to the latter view, as Pietro di Dante writes: "Item de Domino Marchesio de Rigogliosis de Forlivio." Benvenuto's account of him states that he was of the family of the Argugliosi of Forli, *et pater dominæ Lactæ, quæ fuit mater domini Bernardini de Polenta, qui fuit dominus Ravennatum*. He is said one day to have asked his secretary what was talked of him in the city. The secretary answered trembling: "My Lord, over the whole territory nothing else is said of you, than that you do nothing but drink;" to which the Marchese replied laughing: "And why do they not also say that it is because I am always thirsty?"

† *si* is here equivalent to *nondimeno*, "nevertheless."



I saw my Lord Marquess who of old had leisure for drinking at Forlì with less thirst, and nevertheless he was one who never felt sated.

Benvenuto here inveighs with great severity against the vice of drunkenness. He says that the human race are the only animals who drink for drinking's sake, when they are not athirst; that the drunkenness never ceases in any part of the world, and what is worse, men devise incitements to thirst for drinking's sake; with the deplorable results that all Man's nobler qualities become vitiated.

*Division II.*—Dante relates how he felt a strong inclination to converse with Bonagiunta, whom Forese had pointed out to him (ll. 19, 20). He notices that not only is Bonagiunta paying particular attention to him, but he overhears him muttering the word *Gen-tucca*, and Bonagiunta, upon being appealed to by Dante for an explanation of this mysterious utterance, predicts to Dante that, before a long time shall have elapsed, he will have reason to feel some interest in Lucca.

Dante first compares himself to one who, on entering into an assembly, looks about him, and then selects what person to approach first.

Ma come fa chi guarda, e poi s' apprezza \*

Più d' un che d' altro, fe' io a quel da Lucca, 35

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\* *e poi s' apprezza*: This is the reading adopted by Dr. Moore in his new Oxford text. It is so read in the Poligno, in the Jesi, and in the Naples editions, as well as in the *Codice Cassinese*. Witte reads *si prezza*—Scartazzini reads *e poi fa prezza*, the reading in the Aldine, the La Crusca, and other texts. The Vatican MS. and the Mantua edition read *e non s' apprezza*. *Prezza* is merely another form of *prezzo* = esteem, appreciation, account.





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Buti says: "Dante formed an attachment to a gentle lady called Madonna Gentucca, of Rossimpelo, on account of her great virtue and modesty, and not from any other love." Fraticelli says it was "A lady of Lucca with whom Dante is supposed to have fallen in love, when in 1314 he went to stay with his friend Ugucione della Faggiuola." Benvenuto and the *Ottimo* interpret the passage differently, the former making *gentucca* a common noun, and meaning *gens obscura*, low people. The *Ottimo* understands Bonagiunta to have muttered, "non so che Gentucca (or *gentuccia*)" including "non so che" as part of his speech, and the *Ottimo* sees therein an allusion to the *Bianchi*, and "Femmina è nata, cioè la Parte Bianca."

Scartazzini explains it categorically. Dante heard Bonagiunta mutter something, and the only word he caught was *Gentucca*. He thereupon begs him to speak clearly so that he can understand him. Bonagiunta does so, telling him that a certain lady is already born who will make him find Lucca pleasant, though he had before uttered great abuse against it. The inference then is, that Bonagiunta's statement about the woman of Lucca is to explain what he had muttered, when Dante had only heard *Gentucca*. If so, *Gentucca* is the name of the woman. Some Commentators contend, however, that it never was a woman's name. But Troya (*Veltro di Dante*, p. 142) tells us that, at that time, there really was living at Lucca a lady called *Gentucca*, wife of Bernardo Morla degli Antelminelli Allucinghi. Carlo Minutoli (*Dante e il suo secolo*,\* p. 228) says that it is proved by in-

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\* No student of this Canto should omit to read the article in question (*Gentucca e gli altri Lucchesi nominati nella Divina Com-*



contestable documents that, at the same time, there was living in Lucca another lady of gentle blood also called *Gentucca*, much younger than the other one, to whom she was related. This last *Gentucca* was the wife of Buonaccorso di Lazzaro di Fondora, surnamed after the fashion of those times *Coscio* or *Cosciorino*. Scartazzini then says: "Let it be sufficient for us to establish the following points: 1, *Gentucca* for *gentuccia*, *gente bassa*, is not to be found in the works of any writer. 2, It is proved by documents that, in the time of Dante, there were living in Lucca two women, not of low birth, of the name of *Gentucca*. 3, If *Gentucca* was a proper name among the people of Lucca, then the assertion of some Commentators, that the Lucchesi used the word *gentucca* to mean *gente bassa*, is most improbable. And therefore we may conclude that *Gentucca* is the name of a woman, who gained the affection of Dante when he was at Lucca in 1314." Scartazzini lays great stress on having purposely said *affection* and not *love*, for he is convinced that Dante's love for *Gentucca* was in no sense sinful, but a love that was platonic, pure, holy, and removed from even a thought that was not chaste and modest.

Dante now accosts Bonagiunta, and a conversation ensues between them, in which some have thought

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*media*) in *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 203-231. At the end of his article the writer says: "Ad ogni modo in Lucca ebbe requie la vita travagliata dell' esule. Lucca fra le belle donne ricordate da Giov. Villani contemporaneo, n' ebbe una degna sopra le altre d' attirare li sguardi di Dante. La quale con la pietà che è solo del cuor della donna quietò la tempesta di quell' anima bersagliata da crudeltà di fortuna, travolta nelle cieche ire di parte. E fu ispiratrice de' mirabili versi, onde il cantor de' tre regni rese eterno nei posterì il nome della lucchese *Gentucca*." [The passage referred to is in Villani, lib. ix, cap. 306, where special mention is made of *le belle donne di Lucca*.]



that Bonagiunta wished to administer a side thrust at Dante, who had asserted that every man in Lucca was a fraudulent trafficker in public office,\* but Scartazzini says that in the year 1300, in which Dante pretends that his interview with Bonagiunta took place, he could not have put into the mouth of the latter words referring to the twenty-first Canto of the *Inferno*, for no one believes that that Canto had then been written. Buti thinks it is simply a censure spoken generally of the evil habits and words of the Lucchesi.

Dante leaves one to suppose that Bonagiunta desired to speak with him to defend Lucca, his native place, from the bad repute in which Dante held it. Dante now says to him in so many words: "It may content thee to mutter through thy teeth, but I pray thee to content me also by speaking distinctly."

—"O anima," diss' io, "—che par sì vaga † 40  
 Di parlar meco, fa sì ch' io t' intenda,  
 E te e me col tuo parlare appaga."—

—"Femmina è nata, e non porta ancor benda,"—‡  
 Cominciò ei,—"che ti farà piacere  
 La mia città, come ch' uom la riprenda.§ 45

\* See *Inf.* xxi, 38:—

"Ecco un degli anziani di Santa Zita:  
 Mettetel sotto, ch' io torno per anche  
 A quella terra ch' i' n' ho ben fornita:  
 Ognun v' è barattier, fuor che Bonturo:  
 Del no, per li denar, vi si fa ita."

† *sì vaga Di parlar meco*: Compare *Par.* iii, 34, 35:—

"Ed io all' ombra, che pareva più vaga  
 Di ragionar, drizza' mi, e cominciai."

‡ *non porta ancor benda*: The *Gran Dizionario*, explaining this very passage, says: "Da quanto dicono gli spositori, al tempo dell' Allighieri, le maritate e le vedove portavano il capo bendato, non così le giovani da marito."

§ *riprenda*: On this Buti comments: "Questo dice: imperò che li Lucchesi sono ripresi (*censured*) di loro costumi e del loro





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Ma di' s' io veggio qui colui che fuore \*

Trasse le nuove rime, † cominciando:

50

*Donne, ch' avete intelletto ‡ d' Amore.*—

Ed io a lui :—“ Io mi son un § che, quando

\* *fuore* : It is necessary to give the full force of this word, which implies that the true poet draws his inspiration from his innermost heart. I follow Longfellow in translating “evoked.” Some however interpret it “trasse fuore in pubblico.”

† *le nuove rime* : Dante was the first to write sonnets in which, instead of the conventional love of which other poets had sung, he elevated love as one of the most noble, pure, and lofty feelings of the soul. With *nuove rime* compare Horace, *Carm.* III, i, 2-4:

“Carmina non prius

Audita Musarum sacerdos

Virginibus puerisque canto.”

‡ *intelletto d' Amore* : The line quoted here is the first verse of a Canzone in the *Vita Nuova*, § xix, Canz. i. Dante evidently considered this to be one of his best Canzoni, for he not only quotes it here, but again in his *De Vulg. Eloq.* lib. ii, cap. 12. Prof. A. D'Ancona, in his edition of the *Vita Nuova* (Pisa, 1884), p. 135, gives a good explanation of this difficult line: “Che intendete che cosa è Amore, adoperando la parola *intelletto* nel modo speciale alla lingua antica; O, come oggi più materialmente direbbersi, che avete *senso d' amore*.” Prof. D'Ancona mentions the interesting fact that the great poet Giosuè Carducci [whose recent death the whole civilized world joins Italy in deploring], found this Canzone *Donne, ch' avete intelletto d' Amore* incompletely transcribed in a memorandum book of the Notary Pietro Allegranza of Bologna, of the year 1292, and wrote as follows: “La trascrizione del notaio bolognese non offre tali particolarità di lezione da essere poste a confronto cogli altri testi, ma . . . certo piace di avere una prova che la Canzone di Dante fosse così presto e bene conosciuta in Bologna, di dove venne al poeta fiorentino l' esempio di certi lirici ardimenti: di quello, per esempio, della seconda stanza, ove Dio e tutto l'empireo, sono messi in movimento e in rappresentanza quasi drammatica a maggiore onore della donna e dell' amor suo; come prima il Guinicelli avea fatto, quando della purità e necessità dell' amore si appellava, nell' ultima stanza della celebre Canzone *Al cor gentil*, con uno dei movimenti più lirici di tutta la poesia italiana, al giudizio di Dio dopo la morte.” (Carducci, *Intorno ad alcune rime dei sec. xiii. e xiv*, etc., Imola, Galeati, 1876, p. 18).

§ *Io mi son un*, et seq. : Cesari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 433) explains this well: “Amore è la scintilla, e 'l solo maestro della poesia. Ama forte checchè tu voglia: l' amore scuote l' ingegno, il riscalda, trova i migliori concetti, gli amplifica, aggrandisce et



Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel modo  
 Che ditta dentro, vo significando."—\*  
 —"O frate, issa † veggio,"—disse,—"il nodo  
 Che il Notaro, ‡ e Guittone, § e me ritenne  
 Di qua dal dolce stil nuovo ch' i' odo.

55

adorna: ascolta lui, nota bene, e secondo che detta, secondo scrivi. Questo è il poeta. Chi lavora di solo ingegno senza quel fuoco, scrive languido, secco, stentato; e mostra l'arte, non la natura." Compare also the excellent disquisition upon this passage in Tommaséo's commentary in the digression at the end of the canto, where he says that in these few lines there is a whole treatise on poetic art.

\* *vo significando*: Compare Balaam's answer to Balak (*Numb.* xxii, 38): "And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth that shall I speak." Also Chaucer, *Complaint of the Blacke Knight*, 194.

"But even like as doth a skrivenere,  
 That can no more tell what that he shall write,  
 But as his master beside dothe endite."

† *issa* stands for *adesso*, and is contracted from the Latin *in ipsa hora*. Compare *Inf.* xxiii, 7:—

"Che più non si pareggia mo ed issa."

And *Inf.* xxvii, 20-21:—

"Che parlavi mo Lombardo

Dicendo: *Issa ten va, più non t' adizzo.*"

‡ *il Notaro*: This is Jacopo da Lentino, known as *il Notajo*. He is said to have been a Sicilian poet. Although Dante seems here to censure his school, as antiquated, he did not the less give him the credit of being one of the most elegant poets of his time, and in *De Vulg. Elog.* lib. i, ch. 12, quotes a sonnet by Jacopo beginning: "*Madonna dir vi voglio.*" He flourished about the year 1250. Nannucci (*Manuale*, vol. i, p. 106) says that Trissino and Bembo considered him one of the best rhymers of the early times; Lorenzo de' Medici pronounced him grave and sententious, but devoid of the smallest flower of grace. Nannucci thinks however that there are signs in his poetry of a transition into the *dolce stil nuovo*.

§ *Guittone*: Fra Guittone d' Arezzo was the first to bring the Italian sonnet into the perfect form that it has since preserved, and he left behind him the earliest specimens of Italian letter writing. He was born about 1250 of a noble family at Santa Pirmina near Arezzo. He was generally known as Fra Guittone, as he was one of the religious military Order of Frati Gaudenti mentioned in *Inf.* xxiii. He was an accomplished



Io veggio ben come le vostre penne \*  
 Diretro al dittator sen vanno strette,  
 Che delle nostre certo non avvenne. 60  
 E qual più a guardar oltre † si mette,  
 Non vede più dall' uno all' altro stilo ;"—‡  
 E quasi contentato si tacette.

linguist, being learned in Latin, Provençal, Spanish and French. From these languages he took many words which he introduced into his writings. He was even more renowned for his prose than for his poetical compositions. He died at Florence in 1294, an unjust verdict in a court of law having despoiled him of his property and driven him into voluntary exile.

\* *le vostre penne*: Bonagiunta means the pens of the more modern sonneteers, such as Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoja, and others, compared with whose style he felt that of himself and his contemporaries to be indeed cold.

† *più a guardar oltre*: Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*, pp. 413-416) observes that there is a very great amount of variations in the reading of this line. Passing over small changes in the order of the words, the principal point is to determine the verb to be selected. The following are all found: (1) *guardare* and (2) *riguardare* (see below); (3) *guatare*, only found in one of the Brera MSS., Milan; (4) *gradire* (see below); (5) *gridare*, only found in 8 out of 200 MSS. examined; (6) *gloriarre*, only found in Bodleian MS. "A." Dr. Moore distinctly prefers *guardare* or *riguardare*. "The former has much larger MS. support, and suits the rhythm of the line much better—if such an argument be admissible." The MS. authorities are too long to quote here. See Dr. Moore, *l. c.* p. 413. For the reading *a riguardar oltre*, there is the MS. authority of the Santa Croce, Berlin, Caetani, and Cassinese and other *Codices*, and the early editions of Foligno, Jesi, and Naples, of the Commentaries of Lana, Buti, Landino, Vellutello, Brunone Bianchi, and Witte. For the reading *a gradire* there is the MS. authority of the Vatican and Vienna *Codices*, the printed editions of Mantua, Aldine, Crusca, and others, and of the Commentators *Anonimo Fiorentino*, Daniello, Venturi, Lombardi, Costa, Camerini, and others. Benvenuto reads *a guardare*.

‡ *dall' uno all' altro stilo*: Biagioli explains this "dal naturale al ricercato." Some think it means "there is no comparison between the styles of the early and of the modern school of poetry." I prefer Scartazzini's explanation, namely, "there is no comparison between a conventional, imitated style, and a spontaneous style dictated by the heart."





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Così tutta la gente che lì era,  
 Volgendo il viso, raffrettò suo passo,  
 E per magrezza e per voler leggiera.\*

Even as the birds that winter along the Nile will at one time form themselves into a flock, then will fly more in haste and go in file; so did all the multitude that were there, turning their faces round, hurry on their steps, made light both by leanness and by (their own) good will.

*Division III.*—The conversation with Forese is now resumed, which Dante's interview with Bonagiunta had interrupted. Forese, who had been running at speed for a long time before he met Dante, is tired, and does not go on with the other shades. Benvenuto thinks he may have been out of breath with much talking. Forese, walking at a slower pace, asks his old friend if they are ever to meet again. Dante replies that the sooner the time comes for him to die and pass into Purgatory the better he will be pleased, foreseeing, as he does, the terrible calamities that are hanging over Florence. Possibly, too, he means that his desire to quit the world of vexation and sorrow is even in advance of the mandate of God for his departure.†

E come l' uom che di trottare ‡ è lasso

70

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\* *E per magrezza e per voler leggiera*: Luigi Venturi (*Similitudini Dantesche*, p. 263, sim. 435) points out that the multitude of spirits were "agile per la magrezza, onde son puntiti i golosi, e per il desiderio che hanno di purgarsi dalla colpa."

† "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." (*Psalm* lv, 6.)

‡ *trottare*: Cesari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 435) says that *trottare* is used equally for a man, on foot or on horseback, as for the motion of animals. Compare Boccaccio (*Decam.* Giorn. ii. Nov. ii: "Rinaldo rimaso in camiscia e scalzo, essendo il freddo grande, e nevicando tuttavia forte . . . sospinto dalla freddura, trotando si dirizzò verso Castel Guglielmo," etc.



Lascia andar li compagni, e sì passeggia \*  
 Fin che si sfoghi l' affollar del casso ; †  
 Sì lasciò trapassar la santa greggia  
 Forese, e retro meco sen veniva,  
 Dicendo :—“ Quando fia ch' io ti riveggia ? ”— 75  
 —“ Non so, ”—rispos' io lui,—“ quant' io mi viva ; ‡  
 Ma già non fia 'l tornar § mio tanto tosto,

\* *e sì passeggia* : It is curious how many Commentators and Translators read *si passeggia*. This would not only involve a reflective verb *passeggiarsi* which does not exist, but would also deprive the sentence of the force of *sì = così*. Scartazzini points this out, and Andreoli comments: “ *e sì passeggia, e così lasciatili andare passeggia. Il Bianchi, col Biagioli ed altri, legge si passeggia : ma bene avverte il Betti che passeggiarsi è maniera stranissima e senza esempio in tutte le buone scritture.* ”

† *l' affollar del casso* : *affollare* is derived from the Latin *follis* a pair of bellows ; and the verb refers to the act of drawing in, and expelling the air from the lungs. *Casso* comes from the Latin *capsus* a receptacle, and here has the sense of the chest, *thorax*. See in Scartazzini's later Commentary (Milan, 1893) an interesting quotation from Caverni (*Voci e Modi nella Div. Com. dell' uso popolare toscano*, Florence, 1877), in which the author shows that recent discoveries in Physiology have determined the precise similarity between the mechanism of respiration in an animal, and the mechanism of a pair of bellows.

‡ *quant' io mi viva* : Compare this with Virgil's statement to Antæus about the probable duration of Dante's life, *Inf.* xxxi, 127-129 :—

“ Ancor ti può nel mondo render fama ;  
 Ch' ei vive, e lunga vita ancor aspetta,  
 Se innanzi tempo grazia a sè nol chiama.”

§ *Ma già non fia 'l tornar, etc.* : Cesari paraphrases this: “ Al desiderio mio, sarà sempre tardi il mio venir qua, per quantunque egli sia tosto.” He goes on to say that were a poet of modern times to show so much true faith, and love of a future life, he would be laughed at for being full of hypocritical cant. Nevertheless the authority of a Dante, if all other arguments were wanting, might well put to the blush our petty would-be sages (*saputelli*) and drawing-room poets (*poetini delle dame*), who on their side would perchance blush if they had to say “ Thy Kingdom come.” Compare Dante's words to Casella, *Purg.* ii, 91, 92 :—

“ Casella mio, per tornare altra volta  
 Là dove son, fo io questo viaggio.”

And *Vita Nuova*, § xxxii, canz. iii, st. 4 :—



Ch' io non sia col voler prima alla riva.  
 Perocchè il loco, u' fui a viver posto,  
 Di giorno in giorno più di ben si spolpa,\*  
 Ed a trista ruina par disposto."—

80

And as a man who is spent with running allows his companions to pass onward, and thereby walks at leisure, until the panting of his chest is allayed; so did Forese allow that holy throng to pass on, and came behind with me, saying: "When will it be that I shall see thee again?" "I know not," I answered him, "how long I may live; but still my return will not be so speedy but what I shall with my heart reach the shore (of Purgatory) still sooner. Because the place where I was set to live (*i.e.* Florence) becomes day by day more denuded of good, and seems predestined to dismal ruin."

By way of consoling Dante, Forese now tells him that the swift retribution of God will soon fall on him who is the chief cause of this evil at Florence, meaning his own brother Corso de' Donati. Benvenuto says that it must be understood that Corso, a soldier tried in arms, in skill and in bravery, had been restored to power in Florence, as chief of the *Neri*, by Charles de

"Dannomi angoscia li sospiri forte,  
 Quando il pensiero nella mente grave  
 Mi reca quella che m' ha il cor diviso:  
 E spesse fiate pensando alla morte,  
 Me ne viene un desio tanto soave,  
 Che mi tramuta lo color nel viso."

\* *si spolpa*: Buti "*Spolpare* è levar la polpa, e però si piglia qui *spolpare* per privare." *Polpa* "flesh" is used by Dante several times in connection with *ossa* "bones." Cf. *Purg.* xxxii, 123:—

"Quanto sofferson l' ossa senza polpe."

And *Inf.* xxvii, 73, 74:—

"Mentre ch' io forma fui d' ossa e di polpe,  
 Che la madre mi diè," etc.

And *Canzoniere*, canz. xx, st. 5:—

"Ma questo fuoco m' have  
 Già consumato sì l' ossa e la polpa," etc.





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lasted most of the day, and was so fierce that, notwithstanding all the power of the people, if the reinforcements expected from Ugucione and other friends in the district had arrived in time, the people of Florence would have had enough to do that day." But the succours did not arrive, and Corso was obliged to take to flight. "Messer Corso, departing quite alone, was overtaken and captured, near Rovezzano, by certain Catalonian troopers, and as they led him to Florence, when they drew near to San Salvi . . . Messer Corso, for fear of falling into the hands of his enemies, and being put to death by the people, suffering terribly as he was from gout in his hands and feet, let himself fall from his horse. The Catalonians seeing him on the ground, one of them thrust his lance through his throat, wounding him mortally and left him for dead : the monks of the said monastery carried him into the Abbey, and some say that before dying he gave himself up to them in penitence, while others maintain that they found him dead, and the next day he was buried at San Salvi, with little honour and small attendance, as people were afraid of getting into bad odour with the authorities."

Scartazzini says that it is impossible to deny credence to the account of Villani, who, on the 15th September, when this occurred, was actually in Florence, and was to a certain extent an eye-witness of these events. Dante, on the other hand, was far away in exile, one does not know for certain where, and would receive the intelligence at second or third hand. Scartazzini, somewhat fancifully, imagines that the account of the simple fall of Corso from his horse, as related by Villani, may have been magnified little by



little into his having been dragged by the stirrup, and that Dante must have written, though in perfect good faith, yet from erroneous information.

Forese's prophetic utterance reveals to Dante the violent death of Corso, whose soul, he tells Dante, will have to go straight to Hell, whence there is no redemption. He professes to see the horse dragging him to the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

—“Or va,”—diss' ei,—“chè quei che più n' ha colpa \*

Vegg' io a coda d' una bestia tratto

In vèr la valle,† ove mai non si scolpa.

La bestia ad ogni passo va più ratto,

85

Crescendo sempre fin ch' ella il percuote,

E lascia il corpo vilmente disfatto.‡

Non hanno molto a volger quelle rote §

—E drizzò gli occhi al ciel,—che ti fia chiaro

Ciò che il mio dir più dichiarar non puote.

90

\* *quei che più n' ha colpa*: Benvenuto gives the following double interpretation: “*Vegg' io quel che più n' ha colpa, scilicet, fratrem meum, tratto a coda d' una bestia, scilicet ab equo, deinde a dæmone, invèr la valle, primo Arnalem (i.e. of the Arno), deinde infernalem.*” Buti says that *bestia* must be understood in a double sense, literal and allegorical, *bestia* meaning the devil; but Scartazzini takes *bestia* in the literal sense as the horse.

† *In vèr la valle*: This is the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or Hell. See *Inf.* iv, 7-8:—

“in su la proda mi trovai

Della valle d' abisso dolorosa.”

And *Par.* xvii, 137:—

“Nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa.”

And *Par.* xx, 106, 107:—

“u' non si riede

Giammai a buon voler.”

‡ *disfatto*: Compare *Inf.* vi, 40-42, where Ciaccio says:—

“O tu, che se' per questo inferno tratto,

. . . riconoscimi, se sai:

Tu fosti, prima ch' io disfatto, fatto.”

§ *quelle rote*: Compare *Purg.* xxx, 109-111:—

“Non pur per opra delle rote magne,

Che drizzan ciascun seme ad alcun fine,

Secondo che le stelle son compagne.”



"Now go," said he, "for I can see him who is most to blame for it all, dragged at the tail of a beast towards that valley, where nevermore can sins be forgiven. The animal at every bound goes faster, increasing his speed until it smites him, and leaves his corpse hideously disfigured. Yon spheres have not much to revolve—and he raised his eyes to heaven—before that will be quite clear to thee which my speech may not further explain.

Forese means that many years will not elapse from 1300, the date of their supposed interview, and 1308, when Corso did actually die. He then explains that he can no longer accommodate his pace to that of Dante, but must resume his penance of rapid running, which the conversation has interrupted.

Tu ti rimani omai, chè il tempo è caro \*  
 In questo regno sì, ch' io perdo troppo  
 Venendo teco sì a paro a paro." †—

Now do thou stay behind, for the time is so precious in this realm that I lose too much in thus going side by side with thee."

Forese's departure is described by a simile, which Venturi (*Similitudini Dantesche*, pp. 209, 210) says is particularly well chosen, and adapted to those times, in which the use of arms was a natural means of defence, although unfortunately but too often a provocative of civil discords.

\* *il tempo è caro*: See Buti on this: "Nessuna cosa è più cara che 'l tempo a quelli che sono in purgatorio, o in stato di penitenza: imperò che quanto più tosto si compie la penitenza, tanto più tosto si va a godere."

† *a paro a paro*: Compare Petrarch, *Trionf. Amor.* cap. iii. terz. 9:—

"Una giovene greca a paro a paro  
 Coi nobili poeti già cantando."





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us with longer strides (than ours); and I was left in the path with only those two (Virgil and Statius), who were such mighty marshals of the world.

Benvenuto thinks that Dante has been very happy in the dignity he has given to these great Poets in styling them the world's marshals; since Virgil was unsurpassed in his description of the natural history of horses, and the wars of men; and Statius in writing the wars of the Greeks; and both were deeply versed in the habits of men generally, the changing fortunes of kingdoms, and the geographical positions of the places they described.

*Division IV.*—Dante encounters a second tree, beneath whose overspreading branches the Gluttonous have to suffer even more acute pangs of hunger and thirst. Forese had quitted the three Poets, leaving Dante in deep thought as he ponders over Forese's recent words, and the events they predict. It must be remembered that the Poets are walking in a circle round the Cornice; so that, as they round the base of the cliff, they find the new tree quite close to them.

E quando innanzi a noi entrato fue,\* 100  
 Che gli occhi miei si fèro a lui seguaci,  
 Come la mente alle parole sue,  
 Parverm' i rami gravidi e vivaci  
 D' un altro pomo, e non molto lontani,

---

\* *innanzi . . . entrato fue*: *Entrare innanzi* is the same as *passar oltre*, and is used in that sense by Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. v, Nov. 7: "Ma Pietro, che giovane era, e la fanciulla similmente avanzavano nello andare la madre di lei e l' altre compagne assai, forse non meno da amor sospinti, che da paura di tempo: ed essendo già tanto entrati innanzi (i.e. *passed on so far in front of*) alla donna e agli altri, che appena si vedevano," etc.



Per esser \* pure allora vólto in làci.†

105

And when he had passed so far on in front of us, that my eyes had to go in pursuit of him, as did my mind of his words, there appeared to me the laden and luxuriant boughs of another fruit tree, and not very far off, because I had only just then turned (the corner) right upon it.

Benvenuto says that the shades of the Gluttonous are punished between these two trees, but this second one seems to give more torment than the first. This may perhaps have been that the first tree tormented them as to the quantity, and the second as to the quality of the food and the water that tempted their appetites (*forte quia prima punit in quanto, secunda in quali*); or else, because the one punished the eaters, and the other the drinkers, who, being the greatest sinners, have the greater torment, as will now be seen.

The suffering spirits under the tree are compared to children begging for fruit to be given them, which some friendly hand exhibits and laughingly withholds. The Poets would approach the tree, but a mysterious voice within the branches warns them away.

Vidi gente sott' esso alzar le mani,  
E gridar, non so che, verso le fronde,

\* *Per esser*, et seq. : Lombardi tries to show that there were several trees, encountered from time to time by the penitents in the very middle of the path, but Scartazzini very justly points out that *only two* trees are mentioned, and the Poets meet with the first as they enter into the Cornice and the second as they are about to depart from it.

† *làci* : An antiquated form of *là*, like *lici* for *li*, *Inf.* xiv, 84 ; *Purg.* vii, 66 ; and *quici* for *qui*, *Purg.* vii, 64. We find *laci* used in the Italian Bible, see 2 *Kings* vi, 14 : "Therefore sent he thither *laci* horses, and chariots, and a great host."



Quasi bramosi fantolini \* e vani, †  
 Che pregano, e il pregato non risponde ;  
 Ma per fare esser ben la voglia acuta, 110  
 Tien alto lor disio e nol nasconde.  
 Poi si partì sì come ricreduta ; ‡  
 E noi venimmo al grande arbore adesso, §  
 Che tanti preghi e lagrime rifiuta.  
 —“ Trapassate oltre || senza farvi presso ; 115

\* *fantolini* : Compare *Purg.* xxx, 43, 44 :—

“ Volsimi alla sinistra col rispitto  
 Col quale il fantolin corre alla mamma.”

And *Par.* xxx, 82, 83 :—

“ Non è fantin che sì subito rua  
 Col volto verso il latte.”

† *vani* : On this Cesari comments : “ *vani* : comprende gran sentimento questa parola, come a dire, che invano levan le braccia, e piangono a qualcheduno, che mostra loro cosa da essi desiderata ; ovvero *delusi* (disappointed) o *vaneggianti*, il che torna al medesimo.”

‡ *ricreduta* : “ *Ricredere* ripete *credere*,” and means : “ Credere diversamente di prima, da un’ opinione che ora repudiamo”. (*Dizionario Petrocchi*).

§ *adesso* : “ Immediately, straightway,” from the Latin *ad ipsum, scilicet tempus*. Scartazzini remarks that some, being ignorant of the true force of this word among old writers, altered it into *ad esso*. But *Rosa Morauo* (*Div. Com.*, Venez. 1757, vol. iii, Append. p. 34), shows this to be a false reading, and remarks that, were it to be adopted, the word *esso* would be used twice as a rhyme, and adds that the same words cannot be repeated in rhyme when bearing the same sense, except in cases like that in *Purg.* xx, 65, where the repetition, three times over, of the sentence *per ammenda* gives much greater force and fiery eloquence to the irony. The *Gran Dizionario* says there are several instances in the early writers of *adesso* in the sense of *incontanente*, i.e. immediately. Dante da Majano so uses it. See *Poeti del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, Florence, 1816, vol. ii, p. 476 :—

“ Poi quel pensiero obblo, e pauroso  
 Divegno adesso, e taccio ’l meo volere.”

And again at p. 483, the same poet writes :—

“ Che ogn’ altra gioja adesso n’ obbliai.”

Nannucci says that *adesso*, which he spells *adesso*, in this passage of Dante da Majano is : “ Subito ; provenzale *ades* nel senso stesso.” (*Nannucci, Manuale Lett. Lingua Ital.* vol. i, p. 314, footnote .

|| *Trapassate oltre* : Scartazzini points out that, out of each of the two trees, a voice is heard inculcating temperance. The two





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their desire, and conceals it not. Then they departed as though disappointed; and we straightway came up to the mighty tree, which sets at naught so many prayers and tears. "Pass ye on farther, without drawing near; the tree that was eaten of by Eve is higher up (*i.e.* in the Terrestrial Paradise), and this plant was reared from it." Thus spoke, I know not who, among the branches; whereupon Virgil and Statius and I, drawing close together, went on further along the cliff-side that rises abrupt.

The three Poets passed to the left of the tree, on that side of the way where was the perpendicular side of the mountain. The voice continues to tell of further instances of Gluttony, first giving an example of the evil effects of immoderate drinking, then introducing a story from Jewish History of the men who drank immoderately of water, as a lesson that moderation is to be practised even in those things that are not of themselves hurtful.

This concludes the description of the punishment of the Gluttonous.

—"Ricordivi,"—dicea—"dei maledetti \*  
 Nei nuvoli formati, che satolli  
 Teseo combattèr coi doppi petti;  
 E degli Ebrei ch' al ber si mostrâr molli,

---

\* *dei maledetti Nei nuvoli formati*: The Centaurs are said to have been the progeny of Ixion and the cloud Nephele, to whom Jupiter had given the appearance of Juno, beloved by Ixion. They were half men and half horses, for which reason Dante speaks of their double breasts. Being invited by their neighbours, the Lapithæ, to the nuptials of Pirithous and Hippodamia, and becoming drunk, they attempted to carry off the bride, and the other women. They were opposed by Theseus and the Lapithæ, who defeated them and slew a great number of them. The battle is described by Ovid (*Met.* xii, 210-535); Virg. *Georg.* ii, 455 *et seq.*; Hor. *Carm.* i, xviii, 7.



Per che non gli ebbe Gedeon \* compagni, 125  
Quando ver Madian discese i colli."—

Sì, accostati all' un de' due vivagni,†  
Passammo, udendo colpe della gola,  
Seguite già da miseri guadagni.

"Bethink you," said (the voice), "of those accursed cloud-begotten beings (the Centaurs), who, when over-gorged, fought against Theseus with their double breasts. And (bethink you) of those Hebrews who showed themselves over-indulgent in drinking, for which reason Gideon had them not for companions, when he went down the hills towards Midian." Thus closely skirting one of the two margins (the inner one), we passed on, hearing of the faults of Gluttony, (which were) followed erewhile by woeful guerdons (*i.e.* fearful retribution).

Benvenuto remarks how many there are who will commit thefts and robberies to indulge their appe-

\* *non gli ebbe Gedeon*: Others read *no' i volle Gedeon*, but this reading is rejected by all the best Commentators. Dr. Moore reads *Per che non v' ebbe*. This is the reading of the first four Editions, and others, but I feel myself unable to follow it, because I see no way of translating it but "wherefore Gideon had no companions in that place," which, as is pointed out by Scartazzini, makes Dante say what is not in accordance with the Biblical account. See *Judges* vii, 5, 6: "So he brought the people down unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water."

† *vivagni*: Compare *Inf.* xiv, 121-123, where *vivagno* is used, as here, to signify the margin on which the Poets are walking:—

"Se il presente rigagno  
Si deriva così dal nostro mondo,  
Perchè ci appar pure a questo vivagno?"

And again in *Inf.* xxiii, 49, in the same way. In *Par.* ix, 133-135, *vivagni* signifies the margins of the books of the laws:—

"Per questo l' Evangelio e i Dottor magni  
Son derelitti, e solo ai Decretali  
Si studia sì che pare ai lor vivagni."



tites, yea, will change their friendships like a dog who will change his name for a crust of bread.

*Division V.*—In this concluding portion of the Canto, Dante relates how an Angel purified him from the sin of Gluttony.

The three Poets are walking on side by side, but apart from each other, meditating in silence.

Poi rallargati \* per la strada sola, 130  
Ben mille passi e più ci portaro † oltre,  
Contemplando ciascun senza parola.

Then spreading out along the lonely road, a good thousand paces and more had carried us forward, each in contemplation, without a word.

\* *rallargati*: Cesari explains this: "Erano venuti fra la costa e l'albero ristretti insieme: passato l'albero, si spartirono al largo della via sola, cioè *disoccupata*." Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*) says of this word, that it is only used as a participle in this one passage in the *Divina Commedia*, and it means: "One who finds himself at large on a road not restrained by any obstacle." Benvenuto explains the full force of the word by showing that, before, they had been obliged to walk close along the edge of the cliff, but, now that they had left the tree behind them, they could again walk freely in the middle of the Cornice. Fraticelli says that *rallargati* means that Dante, Virgil and Statius were no longer *ristretti insieme*, but were walking apart from each other.

† *ci portaro*: Some read *ci portammo*, but although *portarsi* for *andare* may have been used in more recent times, it was certainly not in use (says Scartazzini) among the writers of the *trecento*. In favour of *ci portaro*, compare Virg. *Bucol. Ecl. ix, 1*:—

"Quo te, Moeri, pedes? an, quo via ducit in urbem?"

And Horace, *Carm. III, xi, 49*:—

"I, pedes quo te rapiunt et auræ  
Dum favet nox et Venus."

We have the same use by Dante in *Purg. xxviii, 22*:—

"Già m'avean trasportato i lenti passi  
Dentro alla selva antica."

Scartazzini says, moreover, that all the early *Codices* read *ci portaro*.





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Drizzai la testa per veder chi fossi ; \*  
 E giammai non si videro in fornace  
 Vetri o metalli sì lucenti e rossi, †  
 Com' io vidi un che dicea :—" S' a voi piace  
 Montare in su, qui si convien dar volta ; 140  
 Quinci si va ‡ chi vuol andar per pace."—  
 L' aspetto suo m' avea la vista tolta :  
 Perch' io mi volsi retro § a' miei dottori,  
 Com' uom che va secondo ch' egli ascolta.

"What go ye three alone thus thinking about?" said a voice suddenly; whereat I started, as do frightened and timid beasts. I raised my head to see who it might be; and never in a furnace were there seen glass or metals so glittering and red, as one I saw,

\* *fossi* : In early times the third person singular of the imperfect subjunctive which ends in *e* ended in *i*. Comp. *Inf.* iv, 64 :—

"Non lasciavam l' andar perch' ei dicessi."

And ix, 60 :—

"Che con le sue ancor non mi chiudessi."

And *Vita di Cola di Rienzo*, cap xxxvii: "Vestiva panni come *fussi* un asinino tirando." Therefore Scartazzini maintains that it is not a poetical licence taken by Dante to suit the rhyme, but a regular termination of the time, now obsolete.

† *metalli sì lucenti e rossi* : Compare *Exek.* i, 7: "And they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass." And *Daniel* x, 6: "His eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass." (In the *Vulgate* "*æris candentis*.")

‡ *si va* : This is an Italian idiom. "*Quinci si va* = this is the way," as in *Inf.* iii, 1: "Per me *si va* = through me is the way."

§ *mi volsi retro a' miei dottori* : This does not mean, as some translate it, "I turned back to my Teachers." *Retro* and *Dietro* are always followed by *a*, and *retro a' miei dottori* means "behind" or "in the wake of" my Teachers. This passage is in close analogy with *Inf.* xxxiv, 7-10, where Dante in the nethermost Hell first catches sight of a colossal windmill in the hazy gloom, which he afterwards discovers to be the upper part of Lucifer's body, but being unable to face the icy blast that is blowing in his face he gets for shelter behind Virgil :—

"Veder mi parve un tal 'dificio allotta :

Poi per lo vento mi ristrinsi retro

Al Duca mio ; chè non gli era altra grotta."



who said: "If it be your pleasure to mount upward, it is here that ye must turn aside; this is the way for those who would go in quest of peace." His aspect had bereft me of my sight: wherefore I got round into the wake of my Teachers, like one who goes according as he hears (*i.e.* like a blind man who guides himself by sound).

Dante now describes his purification by the Angel.

E quale, annunziatrice degli albori,\* 145  
 L'aura † di maggio movesi ed olezza:  
 Tutta impregnata dall'erba e dai fiori;  
 Tal mi sentii un vento dar per mezza  
 La fronte, e ben senti' mover la piuma,  
 Che se' sentir d'ambrosia ‡ l'orezza. 150  
 E senti' dir:—"Beati cui alluma  
 Tanto di grazia, che l'amor del gusto  
 Nel petto lor troppo disir non fuma,  
 Esuriendo § sempre quanto è giusto."—

And as the breeze of May, a herald of the dawn,  
 moves and breathes forth fragrance: all impregnate

\* *annunziatrice degli albori*: This reminds one of Dante's awaking at the approach of dawn, after passing his last night in Virgil's company on the stairway leading from the Seventh Cornice to the Terrestrial Paradise. See *Purg.* xxvii, 109-113. The *Anonimo Fiorentino* interprets the passage we are discussing as follows: "Vuol dire che, innanzi che si lievi l'alba, comincia a trarre uno venticello, che si chiama aura, et questa aura, cioè questo venticello, che si lieva da' fiori et dall'erbe odorifere, rende odore et soavità."

† *aura*: Compare Tasso, *Ger. Liber.* iii, st. 1:—

"Già l'aura messagera erasi desta  
 A nunziar che se ne vien l'aurora."

‡ *ambrosia*: Dante's notions of ambrosia were derived from Virgil. See *Georg.* iv, 415:—

"Hæc ait et liquidum ambrosiæ diffundit odorem."

And *Æn.* i, 403:—

"Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem  
 Spiravere."

§ *Esuriendo*: Compare Tasso, *Ger. Liber.* vii, st. 4:—

"Cibo non prende già; chè de' suoi mali  
 Solo si pasce, e sol di pianto ha sete."



with the herbage and the flowers; so did I feel a wind on the middle of my forehead, and I distinctly felt the movement of the pinions that made me perceive the odour of ambrosia. And I heard (the Angel) say :  
 " Blessed are they whom so large a measure of grace doth illumine that the love of taste doth not excite (*lit.* cause to smoke) in their breast too great a desire, hungering at all times (only) so far as is just."

On the above passage Perez (*I Sette Cerchi*, p. 237) says that in the description of the Angel that presides over the fasting of the spirits who proceed in prayer round and round this Cornice, he is much struck with the similes of the glowing furnace and of the sweet and fresh breezes of May. The two similes might, at first sight, appear to be at discord with one another, but when one thinks them over more closely, one's thoughts recur to that Angel who watched over the fasts of the young Hebrew captives in Babylon, and made their innocent countenances appear fairer and fatter in flesh than all their companions who ate sumptuously of the king's meat—an Angel of such beneficence and power, that when they were cast into the burning fiery furnace, he was able to waft away the flames and impart to them a sweet savour from Heaven, as they walked unharmed in the fire, singing praises to God. Like unto him in very truth is this Angel whose countenance glows as a furnace, and whose wing wafts ambrosial fragrance in the air: the Angel who may well be termed the Angel of Abstinence, as is evidenced by the words he speaks to Dante: *Blessed are they who hunger after righteousness, and not after earthly food.*

END OF CANTO XXIV.





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In the Fourth Division, from ver. 109 to ver. 139, Dante enters upon the subject of Sensuality, and describes its punishment in the Seventh Cornice.

*Division I.*—When the Canto opens, the three Poets are still in the Sixth Cornice, but are standing at the entrance to the new stairway, just where Dante had felt the Angel's wing erase the last *P* but one from his brow.

Dante first specifies the hour, to show that they have no time to lose.

Ora era onde il salir non volea storpio,\*  
Chè il sole avea lo cerchio di merigge †  
Lasciato al Tauro e la notte allo Scorpio. ‡

\* *storpio* and *stroppio* mean literally, "impediment, hindrance, contrariety." In this sense we find the word in Petrarch, part iv, *Son.* 7:—

"S' Amore o Morte non dà qualche stroppio  
Alla tela novella ch' ora ordisco," etc.

The *Gran Dizionario* quotes in illustration from Giov. Villani, iii, cap. 1: "I Fiesolani e loro seguaci . . . davano quanto *storpio* poteano alla riedificazione di Firenze." But in my own copy of Villani, instead of *storpio*, the reading is *sturbo*, which a note explains is the same as *disturbo*.

† *cerchio di merigge*: Compare *Purg.* xxxiii, 103-104:—

"E più corrusco, e con più lenti passi,  
Teneva il sole il cerchio di merigge."

And *Purg.* ii, 1:—

"Già era il sole all' orizzonte giunto,  
Lo cui meridian cerchio coperchia  
Jerusalem col suo più alto punto:  
E la notte che opposita a lui cerchia,  
Uscia di Gange fuor colle bilance,  
Che le caggion di man quando soperchia."

‡ *Scorpio*: "Le soleil est dans le Bélier et le Taureau est au méridien, c'est que tout le signe du Bélier en est sorti. Or le zodiaque mettant vingt-quatre heures à passer par le méridien, chaque signe y met deux heures, c'est-à-dire qu'il était deux heures après midi. De même la nuit devait être dans le signe de la Balance, et la Balance ayant quitté le point opposé du méridien, devait avoir laissé la place au Scorpion." (Ozanam, *Purgatoire*, p. 417.)



It was the hour in which the ascent brooked no delay, for the Sun had abandoned the meridian circle to Taurus, and Night (had abandoned it) to Scorpio.

Dr. Moore (*Time References*, p. 107), says: "This is one of the passages on which I think some superfluous astronomical ingenuity has been expended, the point being whether we are to make allowance for the retrocession of the Equinox and the error in the Calendar, and so take the Sun's true astronomical position, or whether we are to be guided by the ordinary popular notion that the Sun is in Aries for a month from March 21st onwards. The difference of the result is absolutely immaterial, as it is only a question between about 12.30 and 2 p.m., either hour here being quite arbitrary and fictitious. Here again I think it is more probable that Dante adopts the sense in which ordinary people would be most likely to understand his words, just as we popularly refer to the indications of the compass as it stands, without allowing for the magnetic variation, though we are quite aware that in England it amounts to a no less serious difference than about 23 degrees. If this be the way to interpret the passage, the Sun being now rather backward in Aries, the time when Taurus is on the meridian of Noon, and the opposite sign of Scorpio on that of midnight, as here described, would be generally understood to be about 2 p.m., though, as each constellation covers many degrees of space, the indication is only an approximate one." \*

We may therefore proceed on the assumption that in

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\* See in Tommasèo's Commentary the disquisition on this point by Antonelli. Also Della Valle, *Il Senso Geografico-Astronomico*, p. 71 *et seq.*



Purgatory it was about 2 p.m., and in Europe about 2 a.m.

Dante now describes their progress by an appropriate simile.

Per che, come fa l' uom che non s' affigge,\*  
 Ma vassi alla via sua, checchè gli appaia,  
 Se di bisogno stimolo il trafigge ;  
 Così entrammo noi per la callaia, †  
 Uno innanzi altro, ‡ prendendo la scala  
 Che per artezza i salitor dispaia.

Wherefore, as does the man who, whatever may appear to him, will not stop, but goes forward on his way, if the goad of necessity spurs him on; so did we enter through the gap, one before the other taking the stairway, which by its narrowness unpairs the climbers (*i.e.* obliges them to walk in single file).

Benvenuto remarks that Virgil was walking first, Statius second, and Dante third, and now, by a very intelligible comparison, Dante shows what an intense desire there was in his mind to put a certain question to his leaders, but that he lacked the courage to begin speaking. He is burning to know how it is possible

\* *s' affigge* : *si ferma*. Compare *Purg.* xxx, 7 :—  
 “Fermo si affisse.”

And xxxiii, 106-7 :—

“Quando s' affisser, sì come s' affigge  
 Chi va dinanzi a gente per iscorta.”

See also *Inf.* xii, 115 :—

“Poco più oltre il Centauro s' affisse.”

† *callaia* : Blanc says that *cullaja* is the opening in a hedge. “*Callaja*, via di campagna, o con cancello, o aperto, o turato con pruni [*stopped up with brambles*].”—*Gran Dizionario*. Compare *Inf.* x, 1 :—

“Ora sen va per un secreto calle.”

See the footnote on *calle* in my *Readings on the Inferno*, vol. i, p. 331.

‡ *Uno innanzi altro* : These words are repeated in the first line of the next Canto.





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may be compared to storks building their nests on the lofty roofs of houses,\* and Dante, as a younger poet, may well be likened to the fledgeling. And as the fledgeling stork desires to spread its wings before the fitting time, but, feeling itself powerless to fly, lets them droop again, so did Dante, after walking for a mile in silence, feel keenly desirous of moving his tongue to propound a question on a very elevated subject; but, doubting whether he ought to ask before the fitting season, he repressed his desire until he had obtained the leave of his elders.

He does not have to wait long, for, just as Beatrice on a subsequent occasion (see *Par.* xvii, 7-12) saw through his thirst for information, and ordered him to send forth the flame of his desire, so here does Virgil intuitively divine what is in his mind, and commands him to speak it out, which Dante does in the plainest language.

Non lasciò, per l' andar che fosse ratto,

Lo dolce Padre mio, ma disse :—“ Scocca

L' arco del dir che infino al ferro † hai tratto.”—

Allor sicuramente aprii la bocca,

E cominciai :—“ Come si può far magro ‡

20

Là dove l' uopo di nutrir non tocca ? ”—

\* Does not this seem as though Benvenuto credited Dante with some knowledge of northern Europe ?

† *infino al ferro* : Speech flies as lightly and irrevocably as an arrow, and penetrates into the depth of the heart.

‡ *Come si può far magro*, etc. : “ Nous abordons un de ces passages où, sous la couronne du poëte, le philosophe se découvre ; où Dante aime à traiter une de ces questions qui agitaient l'école et divisaient les docteurs. Dans le supplice des gourmands il montre comment les âmes peuvent souffrir de la faim, et quelle est la condition de l'âme après la mort, le rapport du corps et de l'âme, en un mot, tout le mystère de la destinée humaine ; non la psychologie seulement, mais l'anthropologie.” (Ozanam, *Purgatoire*, p. 416.)



Not, though our pace was speedy, did my gentle Father forbear (from speaking), but said: "Let loose thy bow of speech which thou hast drawn up to the barb." Then I opened my mouth, with confidence, and began: "How can one grow lean there where the need of nourishment applies not?"

Benvenuto observes that it was high time that Dante put this question, for all that had been said in Hell and Purgatory of such wonderful varieties of punishment, would seem to be worth nothing, unless it were in some way made clear that the soul, when separated from the body, could by natural means be affected by hunger, thirst, or any other liability to suffering.

Virgil, in answer to Dante, tries to give him some sort of idea of the subject in question, by an example taken from mythology, and with a natural simile; he then turns to Statius, and begs him to solve the problem fully, and so satisfy Dante's craving for explanation.

—"Sc t' ammentassi come Meleagro \*"

---

\**Meleagro*: Meleager was said to have been the son of Æneus, king of Calydon, and Althæa. At his birth the Fates predicted: Clotho, that he would be brave; Lachesis, that he would be strong; and Atropos that his life would last as long as a log, thrown upon the fire at the moment of his birth, remained unconsumed. As soon as the Fates had departed, Althæa snatched the brand from the fire, and preserved it carefully. (See Ovid, *Met.* viii, 260-546.) Meleager distinguished himself in the Argonautic expedition, and afterwards slew the wild boar of Calydon; but a dispute having arisen between himself and his two uncles, Plexippus and Toxeus, Althæa's brothers, for the possession of it, he slew them both. Althæa, enraged at the slaughter of her brothers, threw the fatal log on the fire, and Meleager perished as it consumed. Benvenuto says that Althæa is put figuratively for every mother who bears a child, at whose birth the planets, according to the astrologers, at once prescribe the allotted period of his life. The firebrand is a figure for the natural caloric of the body, and, as long as it lasts, life endures. Benvenuto adds that many persons had often asked him what possible connection there was



Si consumò al consumar d' un stizzo,\*  
 Non fora,†"—disse,—“ questo a te sì agro: ‡  
 E se pensassi come al vostro guizzo

between the history of Meleager, and the proposition we are considering; and that he had always replied that no history could be more to the purpose; for, as Meleager gradually wasted away according to the wasting of the firebrand, so here did the spirits in the Sixth Cornice become lean in proportion to the amount of perfume from the fruit-tree, and the water trickling over its branches. And, as Meleager was consumed from an extrinsic cause, that is, the influence of the planets, so here do the spirits become emaciated from an extrinsic cause, namely, by the will of God. Some however have argued that the death of Meleager was brought about by magic art; and this would be much to the purpose, for then he argues *a minori*, as Augustine rightly does in his book *De Civitate Dei*, where he says, that if necromancers are able to imprison the spirit in an aerial body, how much more can the Power of God confine the soul in corporeal fire. “And mark,” continues Benvenuto, “that this comparison seems to be very much to the point; for, as an image without substance moves in a mirror which has substance, so the unsubstantial soul is tormented in substantial air; and, as the reflection comes from without, so suffering or power of feeling comes into the soul from without.”

\* *stizzo*: Compare *Inf.* xiii, 40-42:—

“Come d' un stizzo verde, che arso sia  
 Dall' un de' capi, che dall' altro geme,  
 E cigola per vento che va via.”

† *fora*: for *sarebbe*, compare *Purg.* vi, 90:—

“Senz' esso fora la vergogna meno.”

And *Par.* iii, 73-75:—

“Se disiasimo esser più superne,  
 Foran discordi li nostri disiri  
 Dal voler di colui che qui ne cerne.”

Nannucci (*Anal. Crit.* p. 475, § 14 of the chapter *Dell' imperfetto dell' Ottativo*): “I Latini in vece di *essem, esses, esset, essent, dissero forem, fores, foret, forent* (da *fuere* o *furem*, etc. dall' antico *fu*). Quindi noi, *io fore, tu fore*, etc., per *io sarei, tu saresti*, etc. . . . Poscia si terminarono in *a*, *io fora, tu fora, egli fora, coloro forano*, per uniformità di cadenza con *saria, sariano*.” Nannucci goes on to say that the examples of this use are numberless, and that there is hardly a single writer of the *primo secolo della lingua*, with whom this termination in *a* is not found.

‡ *agro*: “Sì agro, cioè sì malagevole, che tu non vedessi come sia possibile.” (Buti.) The *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *agro*, § 8, interprets *agro* in this very passage as *malagevole, difficile*.





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and held that souls were created from Eternity, and descended from the planets into mortal bodies, and after death returned to their planets; but that, as such ideas were repugnant to Christianity, Dante makes Virgil call upon Statius, who was a Christian poet, and who touches on these subjects in accordance with philosophy and faith. Besides, Statius is at this time qualified for Paradise, having completed his purgation, and may be supposed to know more of these matters than Virgil, who will soon have to return to *Limbo*.

*Division II.*—Statius begins by assuring Virgil, in so many words, that he is so much in the habit of taking every word of his as a precept, that he must perforce do whatever Virgil asks him. He then turns to Dante, and, with much kindness of manner, tells him that he will clear away his doubts, if Dante will yield him his attention.

—“Se la veduta eterna \* gli dislego,” †—

Rispose Stazio,—“là dove tu sie,

Discolpi me non potert' io far nego.” ‡—

---

\* *veduta eterna*: Trissino paraphrases this: “Se gli spiego ciò che si vede in questi luoghi eterni—è dato l' aggiunto di eterna alla veduta eziandio del Purgatorio, perocchè esente esso pure dalle vicende del tempo, ed appartenente in tutto all' eterna vita—” etc. The meaning of *veduta eterna* is “the unseen things of God.” It is not only the mystery of generation that Statius is going to explain, but mystery of mysteries, a special modification of generation, to suit the impalpable forms of the spirits in the regions of the dead. *Veduta* is the reading of the large majority of MSS., but *vendetta* is not an uncommon reading, and, if adopted, the passage would signify: “If I unfold to him the penalty imposed by the Eternal God on the souls that are being purged.”

† *dislego*: Scartazzini says this word corresponds to the Latin *explicare*.

‡ *nego*: According to the *Gran Dizionario* this is a substantive = *negamento, negazione, il negare*, like the Latin *negantia*, used by Cicero. Compare *Inf.* xxvi, 65-67:—



Poi cominciò:—"Se le parole mie,  
Figlio, \* la mente tua guarda e riceve, †  
Lume ti fieno al come che tu die. ‡

35

"If I reveal to him these secrets of Eternity," replied Statius, "here where thou art present, let my exculpation be that I cannot say thee nay." Then he began: "My Son, if thy mind will consider as well as receive my words, they will be a light to thee for the *How* that thou sayest.

That is to say: "My words will fully explain thy difficulty, and answer thy question: 'How can one grow lean there where the need of nourishment applies not?'"

Statius now proceeds to develop the theory of generation and the formation of the body with the vegetative and sensitive soul. And the words, which Dante here puts into his mouth, may be found also in the *Convivio*, iv, 21. §

"Maestro, assai ten prego  
E riprego, che il prego vaglia mille,  
Che non mi facci dell' attender nego."

And *Purg.* xvii, 59-60:—

"Che quale aspetta prego, e l' uopo vede,  
Malignamente già si mette al nego."

\* *Figlio*: Benvenuto remarks that Statius would say: "O Son, who hast two fathers here present, Virgil and myself."

† *guarda e riceve*: Compare *Prov.* ii, 1-5: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee . . . then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God."

‡ *die* for *dici*, from which when the *c* was omitted was obtained *dii*. Nannucci (*Anal. Crit.* p. 570, § 15) says that by the termination in *e*, which was formerly given to the second person singular of the indicative present, the word *dii* was altered in *die*. He gives several illustrations of this from early writers.

§ It will be well before studying the speech of Statius, to read the whole of chapter 21 of *Conv.* iv, and compare Dante's own words there with what he says here. Varchi (*Lezioni sul Dante*, Firenze, 1841, *Lex.* t) admires the dissertation in



Sangue perfetto,\* che mai non si beve  
 Dall' assetate vene, e si rimane †  
 Quasi alimento che di mensa leve,  
 Prende nel core a tutte membra umane  
 Virtute informativa, come quello ‡  
 Ch' a farsi quelle per le vene vane.

40

this Canto so much, that he says it is sufficient to prove Dante to have been a physician, philosopher and theologian of the highest order: "I not only confess, but I swear, that as many times as I have read it, which day and night are more than a thousand, my wonder and astonishment have always increased, seeming every time to find therein new beauties and new instruction, and consequently new difficulties." The subject is also discussed by St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* i, qu. c. xix, art. 2, *De propagatione hominis quantum ad corpus*), but Scartazzini says that above all the treatise of Aristotle (*De Gen. Animal.* lib. i, ch. 19) should be studied. See also the appendix of Tommaséo at the end of his Commentary on this Canto.

\* *Sangue perfetto*: "Statius incipiendo dicit, quod in nobis quidam sanguis perfectus creatur qui non spargitur nec bibitur a venis, ut alius sanguis rubeus, sed, ut vinum non bibitum et cibus non comestus a corde elevatur de mensa, idest de stomacho, sive epate. Qui perfectus sanguis est albus propter majorem decoctionem, quem sanguinem, idest sperma, natura providit propter generationem primo; secundum propter ejus humidum ad resistendum calori naturali nostro. Quod sperma spiritualem quandam virtutem informativam capit ad nostram humanum effigiem in corde agentis, ut mens fabri ad cultellum ante ejus confectionem et formam" (Pietro di Dante.)

† *e si rimane*: Varchi (*op. cit.* p. 39) writes: "When the veins have sucked up a sufficient quantity of nourishment to restore the waste of the body, they do not suck up any more, just as a modest and temperate man, after eating what is necessary, leaves the remainder of his food, and therefore the expression *e si rimane quasi alimento*, that is, remains over and above just like food. . . ." (and p. 42): "Dante soggiunse quelle parole, il sentimento delle quali pare a me che sia: come il sangue, il quale non è diventato sperma, ha virtù dal cuore di diventar tutte le membra, come si vede nel nutrimento; perchè l' ossa convertono il sangue in ossa, le vene in vene, la carne in carne, e di tutti gli altri nel medesimo modo; così poichè è diventato sperma, ha virtù di fare tutti i membri, operando in virtù dell' anima."

‡ *come quello*: The meaning is not "like that." *Come quello* is a regular Italian idiom signifying "being such that," or





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Sopr' altrui sangue in natural vasello.\* 45  
 Ivi s' accoglie l' uno e l' altro insieme,  
 L' un disposto a patire e l' altro a fare,†  
 Per lo perfetto loco onde si preme; ‡  
 E giunto lui § comincia ad operare,  
 Coagulando prima, e poi avviva 50  
 Ciò che per sua materia fe' constare.||

Digested yet again (*i.e.* still more purified), it descends to those vessels whereof it is more seemly to be silent than to speak (*ad vasa seminalia*); and from these it

\* *natural vasello*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars iii, qu. xxxii, art. 4: "Fœmina ad conceptionem prolis materiam ministrat, ex qua naturaliter corpus prolis formatur." And *Summ. Theol.* pars iii, qu. xxxiii, art. 1: "Ad formationem corporis . . . requirebatur motus localis quo sanguines . . . ad locum generationi congruum pervenirent."

† *L' un disposto a patire e l' altro a fare*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars iii, qu. xxxii, art. 4: "In generatione distinguitur operatio agentis et patientis. Unde relinquitur quòd tota virtus activa sit ex parte maris, passio autem ex parte fœminæ."

‡ *si preme*: The blood of the male, disposed to give form to the human members, issues as if expressed from the heart. Benvenuto thinks it is from the heart, though some, he says, contend that it is from the brain.

§ *giunto lui*: Scartazzini has no doubt of *lui* meaning *a lui*, and having this signification: the blood of the male being conjoined to (mingled with) the blood of the female, etc.

|| *fe' constare*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars iii, qu. xxxiii, art. 1: "Formatio corporis fit per potentiam generativam, non ejus qui generatur, sed ipsius generantis ex semine, in quo operatur vis formativa ab anima patris derivata." And pars iii, qu. xxxii, art. 4: "Potentia generativa in fœmina est imperfecta respectu potentia generativæ quæ est in mare. Et ideo sicut in artibus ars inferior disponit materiam, ars autem superior inducit formam, ita etiam virtus generativa fœminæ præparat materiam, virtus autem activa maris format materiam præparatam." Benvenuto says of *fe' constare*: "id est, remanere per sua materia, scilicet sanguinem menstruum, quod fecit consistere ibi pro sua materia, in quam imprimit suam formam: et bene dicit; nam communiter non fluit sanguis hic a muliere post impregnationem; unde habent istud commune signum conceptionis: et non vult aliud dicere nisi quod generatur anima vegetativa in foetu qualis est in arboribus."



afterwards trickles upon another's blood in the natural vessel (*i.e.* in the matrix). Therein the one and the other meet together, the one (the blood of the female) disposed to be passive, and the other (that of the male) to be active, by reason of the perfection of the locality (the heart) from which it flowed; and (the male blood) being conjoined to it (the female blood) begins its operation (of forming the embryo), first by coagulation (*i.e.* turning the blood into flesh), and then gives life to that which it had made to take consistence as substance necessary for its operation.

After speaking of the generation of the vegetative soul, Statius touches upon the generation of the sensitive soul, both of which are evolved out of the potentiality of substance, and is not brought in from without, as is the rational soul, about which he speaks farther on. He concludes this portion of his dissertation by emphasizing the assertion that the vivifying power for the formation of the members of the embryo springs from the heart of the male parent.

*Anima fatta la virtute attiva,\**

---

*virtute attiva*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars 1, qu. cxviii, art. 1: "Quia generans est simile generato, necesse est quòd naturaliter tam anima sensitiva, quàm aliæ hujusmodi formæ producantur in esse ab aliquibus corporalibus agentibus, transmutantibus materiam de potentia in actum per aliquam virtutem corpoream quæ est in eis. . . . Ex anima generantis derivatur quædam virtus activa ad ipsum semen animalis, vel plantæ. . . . In animalibus perfectis, quæ generantur ex coitu, virtus activa est in semine maris; materia autem foetus est illud, quod ministratur a femina: in qua quidem materia statim à principio est anima vegetabilis, non quidem secundùm actum secundum, sed secundùm actum primum, sicut anima sensitiva est in dormientibus; cùm autem incipit attrahere alimentum, tunc jam actu operatur. Hujusmodi igitur materia transmutatur à virtute quæ est in semine maris, quousque perducatur in actum animæ sensitivæ. . . . Postquam autem per virtutem principii activi quod erat in semine, producta est anima sensitiva in generato quantùm ad aliquam partem principalem, tunc



Qual d' una pianta,\* in tanto differente,  
 Che quest' è in via e quella è già a riva.  
 Tanto opra poi che già si move e sente,†  
 Come fungo marino ; ed indi imprende  
 Ad organar le posse ond' è semente.  
 Or si spiega, figliuolo, or si distende

55

jam illa anima sensitiva prolis incipit operari ad complementum proprii corporis per modum nutritionis et augmenti."

\* *Qual d' una pianta*: Scartazzini says that it is needless to point out that Dante in this passage conforms to the doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas, and that it will be well to refer to what St. Thomas says on the succession of the souls—the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual, in the formation of man. See *l. c.* pars i, qu. cxviii, art. 2: "Anima præexistit in embryone, à principio quidem nutritiva, postmodum autem sensitiva, et tandem intellectiva. Dicunt ergo quidam, quòd supra animam vegetabilem quæ primò inerat, supervenit alia anima, quæ est sensitiva: supra illam iterum alia, quæ est intellectiva. Et sic sunt in homine tres animæ quarum una est in potentia ad aliam, quod supra improbatum est [compare *Purg.* iv. 1 et seq.]. Et ideo alii dicunt quòd illa eadem anima, quæ primò fuit vegetativa tantùm, postmodum per actionem virtutis quæ est in semine, perducitur ad hoc ut ipsa eadem fiat sensitiva, et tandem ad hoc ut ipsa eadem fiat intellectiva, non quidem per virtutem activam seminis, sed per virtutem superioris agentis, scilicet Dei deforis illustrantis. . . . Sed hoc stare non potest. . . . Et ideo dicendum est quòd cùm generatio unius semper sit corruptio alterius, necesse est dicere, quòd tam in homine, quàm in animalibus aliis, quando perfectior forma advenit, fit corruptio prioris; ita tamen quòd sequens forma habet quidquid habebat prima, et adhuc amplius: et sic per multas generationes et corruptiones pervenitur ad ultimam formam substantialem tam in homine quàm in aliis animalibus. Et hoc ad sensum apparet in animalibus ex putrefactione generatis. Sic igitur dicendum est, quòd anima intellectiva creatur à Deo in fine generationis humanæ, quæ simul est et sensitiva et nutritiva, corruptis formis præexistentibus."

† *si move e sente, Come fungo marino*: Spontaneous movement and feeling are essential characteristics of animal life, to which Statius says the fœtus arrives. "Cette vie, végétale d'abord, mais progressive, se développe par son propre exercice; elle fait passer l'organisme de l'état de plante à celui de zoophyte, pour parvenir ensuite à la complète animalité." Ozanam (*Dante et la Philos. Cathol.* p. 119).





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into it a divine afflatus, and this attracts to it the principle of activity, with which it in its turn is brought in contact, when it unites with the embryo, and thus becomes a living soul, by the three acts of plant life, animal life, and rational life.

Ma come d' animal \* divenga fante,†  
Non vedi tu ancor : quest' è tal punto

\* *animal*, i.e. the human *fœtus* before God has endowed it with a rational soul. Compare *Conv.* iv, 7, ll. 138-151: "Chè siccome dice il Filosofo, nel secondo dell' *Anima*, le potenze dell' anima stanno sopra sè, come la figura dello quadrangolo sta sopra lo triangolo, e lo pentagono sta sopra lo quadrangolo; cost la sensitiva sta sopra la vegetativa, e la intellettiva sta sopra la sensitiva. Dunque, come levando l' ultimo canto del pentagono, rimane quadrangolo e non più pentagono; così levando l' ultima potenza dell' anima, cioè la ragione, non rimane più uomo, ma cosa con anima sensitiva solamente, cioè *animale bruto*." The simile is taken from Aristotle, *De Anima*, ii, 3:—

"οὐ γὰρ ἄμα γίγεται ζῶον καὶ ἄνθρωπος."

† *fante*, according to Gioberti, is "uomo, animal che parla, distintivo dell' uomo, come spiega Ugo Foscolo." Tommasèo (one of the authors of the *Gran Dizionario*) derives it from the Latin *fari*, "parlare e ragionare." Hence (says Cesari, *Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 452) is derived *infante*, "one that cannot talk." He then adds, "Or il parlare è proprietà di sola ragione, da che il parlare umano reca in modo astratto e generale le idee de' particolari; la qual operazione non può farsi, se non da animal ragionevole: di che veggiamo le bestie, eziandio domestiche, che udirono milioni di volte l' uomo a parlare, non impresero mai suo linguaggio." In *Conv.* iii, 7, ll. 100-120, Dante says as much: "È da sapere, che solamente l' Uomo intra gli animali parla, e ha reggimenti e atti che si dicono razionali, perocchè egli solo in sè ha ragione, *et seq.*" Compare also *De Vulg. Eloq.* i, 3 and 4: "Cum igitur homo non naturae instinctu sed ratione moveatur . . . oportuit genus humanum ad communicandum inter se conceptiones suas aliquod rationale signum et sensuale habere . . . hoc signum et ipsum subjectum nobile de quo loquimur: natura *sensuale* quidem, in quantum sonus est; *rationale* vero, in quantum aliquid significare videtur ad placitum. Soli homini datum fuit ut loqueretur, ut ex præmissis manifestum est." Lombardi sums up these ideas: "Essendo il parlare una manifestazione dell' interno ragionare, può anche per questo riguardo prendersi il parlare per la stessa ragione, e dirsi *fante* invece di ragionevole."



Che più savio di te \* fe' già errante ;  
 Si che, per sua dottrina, fe' disgiunto  
 Dall' anima il possibile intelletto, †  
 Perchè da lui non vide organo assunto.

65

But, how from animal it becomes rational (*lit.* endowed with speech) thou canst not yet discern, for this is the point that has already made one (Averroës) more learned than thou to err so that

---

\* *più savio di te*: This is generally considered to refer to Averroës, who is represented by Dante in this passage as regarding the *Intellectus Possibilis* as one and indivisible, and a perfectly distinct entity from the soul. It was the *Intellectus Agens*, or active intellect, which Averroës so regarded. Averroës in his Commentary on Aristotle (*De Anima*, iii, 4, 5) lays down two intellectual principles (says Scartazzini, Ed<sup>o</sup> 1896), the one passive, the other active. The *Intellectus Agens* is impersonal, eternal, and distinct from the individual, who nevertheless participates in it. The passive intellect is transitory and dependent upon the active. This latter is consequently only conjoined to the individual as regards form, but as regards essence is separated from him, and is one and indivisible for all men. The distinctive character of the *Intellectus Possibilis*, the only immortal one of the two, being thus destroyed, it would follow that after death there would only be left to the souls the unity of the intellect, and eternal rewards and punishments could not take place. Scartazzini adds that this theory of Averroës was mostly fiercely opposed by St. Thomas Aquinas in several passages. See also Dr. Moore, *Studies in Dante*, Oxford, 1896, pp. 114, 115.

† *possibile intelletto*: "Nullus intellectus intelligit, nisi intellectus possibilis, quia agens non intelligit." (Duns Scotus, in iv, dist. xlv, qu. 1.) Daniello's definition of it is lucid: "Chiamasi questo intelletto *possibile*, per esser in potenza d' infondersi in tutte le nature diverse de gli huomeni, et operar in essi la virtù sua." Compare also St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* p. i, qu. lxxix, art. 10: "Quandoque enim ponunt quatuor intellectus, scilicet intellectum agentem, possibilem, et in habitu, et adeptum; quorum quatuor intellectus agens et possibilis sunt diversæ potentiæ, sicut et in omnibus est alia potentia activa et alia passiva; alia verò tria distinguuntur secundùm tres status intellectûs possibilis; qui quandoque est in potentia tantùm, et sic dicitur possibilis; quandoque autem in actu primo, qui est scientia et sic dicitur intellectus in habitu; quandoque autem in actu secundo qui est considerare, et sic dicitur intellectus in actu, sive intellectus adeptus."



in his teaching he separated the potential intellect from the soul, because he could see no organ appropriated by it (*i.e.* the possible intellect).

Averroës did not see in the human body any organ specially assigned to the intellect, as are the ears for hearing, the eyes for seeing, and so on with the other senses.

Ozanam (*Le Purgatoire de Dante*, page 418), writes: "Averroës en commentant Aristote s'efforce d'établir que l'intellect qu'Aristote appelle possible est une substance séparée du corps quant à l'être, et qui lui est unie quant à la forme, et de plus que l'intellect possible est unique pour tous. Or, étant détruite la diversité d'intellect possible qui est seul immortel, il s'ensuit qu'après la mort il ne reste rien des âmes humaines que l'unité de l'intellect, et ainsi on supprime les peines et les récompenses. Albert le Grand ajoute que, distinguant l'âme sensible de l'âme intellectuelle, les péripatéticiens font naître la première du sang du père: mais l'âme intellectuelle, ils la conçoivent séparée et rayonnant sur l'âme sensible come le soleil sur le milieu transparent, et de même que si l'on ôte les objets illuminés, il ne reste que la lumière du soleil, de même, les hommes périssant, il ne reste qu'une seule intelligence perpétuelle et impérissable." Compare also Renan, *Averroës et l'Averroïsme*, Paris, 1861, p. 122.

In the language of the Schools, the potential intellect is the faculty which receives impressions through the senses, and forms from them pictures or phantasmata in the mind. The active intellect draws from these pictures various ideas, notions and conclusions. The two represent the Understanding and the Reason.





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Che ciò che trova attivo quivi tira  
 In sua sustanzia, e fassi un' alma sola,\*  
 Che vive e sente, e sè in sè rigira.†

75

la quale Dante chiama *spirito nuovo*, perchè non è di quella specie spirito che truova nel corpo; ma è cosa nuova; ed ha perfezione di virtù, avendo la ragione e lo intelletto."

\**sola*: Cesari cannot restrain his admiration for this passage: "Magnifica particolarizzazione, e potentemente dipinta! L'anima trae a sè quelle due vite, e quasi in sè assorbendole, ne torna un' anima che ha vita, senso, e libertà." Compare St. Thomas Aquinas on this (*Summ. Theol.* pars. i, qu. lxxvi, art. 3): "Sic ergo dicendum quòd eadem numero est anima in homine, sensitiva et intellectiva et nutritiva. . . . Priùs embrio habet animam quæ est sensitiva tantùm: quâ ablatâ, advenit perfectior anima, quæ est simul sensitiva et intellectiva." See also *Purg.* iv, 5, 6:—

"E questo è contra quello error, che crede  
 Che un' anima sopr' altra in noi s' accenda."

† *sè in sè rigira*: Cesari goes on from his comment on the preceding line: "Questo credo essere, quel *sè in sè rigira*: che padroneggia sè medesima per virtù propria, con piena signoria e coscienza de' suoi atti, onde in sè medesima si ripiega, e da' propri concetti ne trae degli altri, e si rifà sopra i medesimi, e ritorna in sè medesima, giudicando ed approvando l' opera sua." Compare Boëthius (*Phil. Cons.* lib. iii, *Poes.* ix, 15 *et seq.*):—

"Quæ (anima) cum secta duos motum glomeravit in orbem,  
 In semet reditura meat mentemque profundam  
 Circuit et simili convertit imagine cælum."

Scartazzini says that, although Boëthius is here speaking of the universal soul—the soul of the world, yet the expression *in semet reditura meat* might equally apply to the human and rational soul, inasmuch as the latter has, according to the Platonists, a double conversion to intellectual matters and to sensitive matters, *i.e.* that it resolves itself into two circles, one the external and greater, formed of the intelligible powers of the soul, the other internal and lesser, and contrary to the first, formed from the knowledge that the senses infuse into it, by means of which the soul revolves to the things of the world. And, because this movement forms a double circle of conversion, therefore the soul returns into itself; it being the property of the circle to revolve upon itself, or as Aristotle (*Phys.* book viii) says, to unite both beginning and end. The *Gran Dizionario* interprets the passage *sè in sè rigira* as being equivalent to *riflettersi*, and expressing the same idea as a passage in Plato (of which reference is omitted). "*αὐτὴ ἀνακυκλωμένη πρὸς αὐτήν.*" Daniello's and the *Ottimo's* comments on the whole of the above



Open thy breast to the truth which comes next, and know that, as soon as the articulation of the brain is perfected in the embryo, the primal Mover turns to it, rejoicing at such a masterpiece of Nature, and breathes into it a new-born spirit replete with virtue, which absorbs into its own substance whatever it finds active in it (the embryo), and forms itself into one single soul, which lives, and feels, and turns itself back upon itself.

The new-born rational soul draws in the vegetative and sensitive souls, and identifies them with its own substance and with itself, and then forms one single soul having three powers, the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual.

Benvenuto remarks on *sè in sè rigira*, that perhaps the meaning is that the movement of Reason proceeds from the Creator, to the created thing; and thence from the created thing to the Creator as it were in a circle (*circulariter*); but the meaning of *sè in sè rigira* is probably simpler, namely, "is self-conscious." Plants live, animals feel, but only man is self-conscious.

By a choice simile, Statius shows the purity of the new-born soul.

E perchè meno ammiri la parola,\*

Guarda il calor † del sol che si fa vino,

Giunto all' umor che dalla vite cola.

eighteen lines are especially valuable; and Pietro di Dante's on the whole speech of Statius should be studied.

\* *la parola*: Statius is here referring to what he stated before, namely, that the new-born spirit breathed into the fœtus by God attracts to itself whatever in it is of an active nature, and forms one single soul which is gifted with vigour, feeling and intelligence.

† *calor*: On this, Venturi (*Simil. Dant.*, pp. 9, 10, *simil.* 14) remarks: "Come il calor del sole (dice Stazio al Poeta, parlando della generazione del corpo umano) unito all' umor acqueo della vite lo trasmuta in vino, così lo spirito creato da Dio,



And that thou mayest the less wonder at my speech, look at the heat of the Sun, which gets turned into wine when combined with the juice that distils from the vine.

Benvenuto remarks upon the beauty and appropriateness of this comparison; for, as the Sun by its heat makes the wine, whose results are either the best or the worst, and to such an extent that some compare the nature of wine to the power of the gods, in like manner the Sun Eternal, in His beneficence, creates the rational soul, whose deeds will be either the best or the worst. So that the nature of the soul is almost divine, for it is as the result of the eternal light, and is indeed, as Themistius says, nearly all things.

Statius, having established the production of the rational soul, now explains its mode of existence after the death of the body, and how it is that aërial bodies

e spirato nell' anima sensitiva, la trasmuta in anima intellettuale. Mirabile è la proprietà di questa similitudine, qualunque ne sia il valore scientifico. Il germe di siffatta immagine trovasi in più poeti greci: e anco Cicerone disse dell' uva (*De Senect.* xv, 53): 'quæ et succo terræ et calore solis augescens, primo est peracerba gustatu, deinde maturata dulcescit.' Sappiamo poi dal Magalotti che il gran Galileo pensò essere il vino un composto di umore e di luce (*Lett. Scient.* v). Onde il Redi nel suo *Ditirambico, Bacco in Toscana*, v. 15-18:—

'Si bel sangue è un raggio acceso  
Di quel Sol, che in ciel vedete;  
E rimase avvinto e preso  
Di più grappoli alla rete.' "

Antonelli (in Tommaséo's Commentary) writes: "Il filosofo qui contempla il sole sotto l' aspetto botanico, in quanto cioè influisce grandemente alla vita delle piante, alla produzione de' fiori, alla maturazione de' frutti; e dice cosa mirabilissima, perchè profondamente vera." After referring to the saying of Galileo cited above, Antonelli remarks: "Il Nostro [i. e. Dante] ha colto con diretta parola l' elemento che è maggiormente efficace. Diresti, il Galilei qui essere il Poeta, Dante lo scienziato."





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Memoria, \* intelligenza e volontade,  
In atto molto più che prima acute.

The other (corporeal) faculties are all of them mute (*i.e.*, inoperative); memory, intelligence and will (being spiritual faculties) are more acute in action than before.

Benvenuto says that, just as a sailor is not necessarily destroyed by the destruction or wearing out of his ship, so the soul, liberated from the body, has its own powers, and, although it may not use them mechanically, it still retains its intellectual powers even in greater perfection than before.

Statius next tells Dante that the soul, immediately after the death of the body, in obedience to divine impulse, instinctively wings its way to the bank of

the preceding *terzina* that the soul, after death, being parted from the body, retains in its potentiality all the faculties, both the spiritual ones imparted by God, and the corporeal ones it assumed when it became united to the body. He now explains that the soul not only brings into operation the above-named spiritual faculties, but is able to turn them to greater account than before; for, being inorganic, they can be better exercised without the impediment of the body. The soul still retains its faculties of sight, hearing, etc., but does so like a dumb man, who cannot make use of his gift of speech from lacking the organ.

\* *Memoria*, et seq.: Compare St. August. (*De Trinit.* lib. x, cap. 18): "Hæc igitur tria, memoria, intelligentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitæ, sed una vita: non tres mentes, sed una mens: consequenter utique nec tres substantiæ sed una substantia." And St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* p. i, qu. lxxvii, art. 8): "Omnes potentiæ animæ comparantur ad animam solam sicut ad principium. Sed quædam potentiæ comparantur ad animam solam sicut ad subjectum, ut intellectus et voluntas; et hujusmodi potentiæ necesse est quòd maneant in anima, corpore destructo. Quædam verò potentiæ sunt in conjunctio sicut in subjecto, sicut omnes potentiæ sensitivæ partis et nutritivæ. Destructo autem subjecto, non potest accidens remanere. Unde corrupto conjuncto, non manent hujusmodi potentiæ actu, sed virtute tantum manent in anima sicut in principio vel radice."



Acheron, if doomed to Hell, or to the bank of the Tiber, if to be transported to Purgatory; and not until it reaches one of these shores does it know on which of the two roads it will have to travel; but, on its arrival at its appointed shore, it is at once turned to its allotted punishment.

Senz' arrestarsi, per sè stessa cade \* 85  
 Mirabilmente all' una delle rive;  
 Quivi conosce prima le sue strade. †  
 Tosto che loco li ‡ la circonscrive,  
 La virtù formativa raggia intorno,  
 Così e quanto nelle membra vive; 90

---

\* *Senz' arrestarsi . . . cade . . . all' una delle rive*: Compare *Purg.* ii, 100-105:—

“Ond' io che era ora alla marina volto,  
 Dove l' acqua di Tevero s' insala,  
 Benignamente fui da lui ricolto.  
 A quelle foce, ha egli or dritta l' ala:  
 Perocchè sempre quivi si ricoglie,  
 Qual verso d' Acheronte non si cala.”

In *St. Luke* xvi, 22-23, we read: “the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

† *Quivi conosce prima le sue strade*: Scartazzini points out that no one seems to have noticed that Dante here contradicts what he has said elsewhere, that a Devil took possession of the soul of Guido da Montefeltro as soon as ever it was loosed from the body (*Inf.* xxvii, 112 *et seq.*), and an Angel of that of Buonconte da Montefeltro, likewise at the instant of his death (*Purg.* v, 104, *et seq.*), in both cases there being a contest between the messenger of Heaven and the messenger of Hell. So both of these souls knew their allotted paths before falling upon one of the two shores.

‡ *li*: Dante means that the soul puts on an aërial body as soon as ever it has lighted on one of the shores. Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars. iii, Suppl. qu. lxxix, art. 1: “*Quamvis substantiæ spirituales secundum esse suum a corpore non dependant, corporalia tamen a Deo mediantibus spiritualibus gubernantur, ut dicit Augustinus . . . et Gregorius . . . et ideo est quædam convenientia spiritualium substantiarum ad corporales substantias per congruentiam quamdam, ut scilicet dignioribus substantiis digniora corpora adaptentur. . . . Quamvis autem*



Without a stop, in wondrous fashion it drops spontaneously upon one of the (two) shores; there first it learns its destined road. So soon as the place (whether Purgatory or Hell) there circumscribes it, the formative virtue beams around it, in the same shape and with the same measurement as (beamed) in the living members.

Scartazzini refers *così* to the form and features, and *quanto* to the measurement; so that Dante would mean that the soul, shedding forth its active power into the air, forms itself into a body, identical in form and features, and in the measurement or size of the human body that it animated in the world.

Statius next shows the new disposition which the soul acquires.

E come l' aer, quand' è ben piorno,\*

animabus post mortem non assignentur aliqua corpora, quorum sint formae, vel determinati motores, determinatur tamen eis quaedam corporalia loca per congruentiam quamdam secundum gradum dignitatis eorum, in quibus sint quasi in loco, eo modo quo incorporalia esse possunt in loco . . . Incorporalia non sunt in loco modo aliquo nobis noto, et consueto, secundum quod dicimus corpora proprie in loco esse; sunt tamen in loco modo substantiis spiritualibus convenienti, qui nobis plenè manifestus esse non potest."

\* *piorno* = *piovorno*, which is equivalent to "carico di pioggia." Buti explains the text as "pregno d'acqua." The poet Carducci has the words "per lo ciel piovorno." Compare *Ezek.* i, 28: "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain." And Virgil (*Æn.* v. 88, 89), speaking of the colours of a serpent:—

"ceu nubibus arcus

Mille jacet varios adverso sole colores."

And Petrarch, part i, *Son.* xciv:—

"Nè dopo pioggia vidi 'l celeste arco

Per l' aere in color tanto variarsi," etc.

And Tasso (*Ger. Liber.* ix, 62), speaking of Michael the Archangel:—

"Tale il Sol nelle nubi ha per costume

Spiegar dopo la pioggia i bei colori."

And Ovid (*Metam.* vi, 63-67):—





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Che segue il foco là 'vunque si muta,  
 Segue allo spirto sua forma novella.  
 Perocchè quindi ha poscia sua paruta,\* 100  
 È chiamata ombra, e quindi organa † poi  
 Ciascun sentire infino alla veduta.

And then like unto a little flame which follows the fire whithersoever it shifts, so does its new shape accompany the spirit. And since it afterwards from this (its new shape) has its property of being visible, it is called a shade: and from this again it shapes the organs of each of the senses, even the sight.

Benvenuto says that some persons will have it that the passions and feelings of the body do not remain in the soul after its separation from the body, but rather something else that resembles them, like as a mechanic, who lacks both tools and materials, still has their shapes and forms before him. For, since the soul is naturally the perfection of the body, there remain in it, and in its powers of action, habits and passions which follow the movements of the body, just as in the mind of the sailor there remain the thoughts and imaginations of his ship, after he has been separated from it.

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la qual forma (egli dice) segue lo spirito, come la fiammella il fuoco—Similitudine tanto scolpita, quanto semplice" (Venturi, p. 51, *simil.* 79).

\*[aver] *paruta* is interpreted in the *Gran Dizionario*, *per acquistare visibile aspetto*. The soul becomes visible by means of its aërial body (says Scartazzini); which body therefore is, as it were, the shadow of the soul (*l'ombra dell'anima*). Compare *Purg.* xxix, 142 :—

"Poi vidi quattro in umile paruta."

And *Purg.* xxvi, 70 :—

"Che ciascun' ombra fece in sua paruta."

In both these latter examples, *paruta* means "aspect, appearance," whereas in the passage we are discussing it means "the power of becoming visible."

† *organa* = *provvede di organi*.



And now at last Statius brings his long discourse to a conclusion by establishing his principal proposition, namely, that by these arguments the soul is shown to be able to suffer in the different ways, as though it had been seated in a body.

Quindi parliamo,\* e quindi ridiam noi,  
 Quindi facciam le lagrime e i sospiri  
 Che per lo monte aver sentiti puoi. 105  
 Secondo che ci affiggono † i disiri  
 E gli altri affetti, l' ombra si figura ;  
 E questa è la cagion di che tu ammiri."—

By means of this (aërial body) we speak, and by this laugh, by this we produce the tears and the sighs which thou mayest have heard all over the Mountain. According as the desires and the other passions make an impression upon us, so does the spirit take its shape ; and this is the cause of what thou wonderest."

This is the reason why the soul, when separated from the body, can endure suffering, about which Dante was enquiring from Virgil, before he asked Statius to explain it.

*Division IV.*—While holding their profound conversation, the three Poets have been ascending the staircase from the Sixth Cornice to the one above, and, as Statius uttered the concluding words of his long discourse, they seem to have stepped on to the Seventh

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\* *Quindi parliamo*: Dante has evidently in these lines closely followed Virgil, whose own ideas on the subject are very clearly expressed in *Æn.* vi, 723 *et seq.*

† *ci affiggono*: The *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *affiggere*, § 13, specially notes that in this passage alone the word is equivalent to *impressionare*, *modificare*, i.e. give an impress to, regulate. But under § 11, a number of other passages are quoted from the *Divina Commedia* where *affiggersi* has the sense of *Fermarsi*, *posarsi*, such as *Inf.* xii, 115; *Purg.* xi, 135; *Purg.* xiii, 33; *Purg.* xxv, 4; *Purg.* xxxiii, 106; and *Par.* xxv, 26.



Cornice, the last one of all in Purgatory, wherein the sins of Sensuality, or Incontinence, are being purged.

A short explanation of what follows may not be out of place. As in the other Cornices, so in this one, the pathway, from about 12 to 15 feet broad, runs right round the mountain with the high rocky cliff (*la ripa*) above, and the edge of the precipice below. The spirits who are being punished for Sensuality stand against the rock, from which issue flames to torment them, but a wind, blowing from the contrary direction, that is, from the edge of the precipice, blows back the flames, and keeps them against the rock, so that a narrow pathway remains between the edge of the flames and the edge of the precipice, and on this alone can the Poets walk without being burned.

E già venuto all' ultima tortura \*

S' era per noi, † e volto alla man destra, ‡ 110

Ed eravamo attenti ad altra cura. §

\* *tortura*: This word is interpreted by Jacopo della Lana, Anonimo Fiorentino, Benvenuto, Postill. Cass., Daniello, and others of the older Commentators in the sense of "turning" (*torcimento*), and that interpretation has been adopted by the *Accademici della Crusca*; but a great number of Commentators have preferred to attach to it the sense of "torture." Scartazzini, however, points out that *tortura* in the sense of "torment" did not enter into the Italian language till much later. In *Conv.* tr. iv, c. 7, ll. 73-76, Dante writes: "Il cammino, che altri senza scorta ha saputo tenere, questo scôrto erra, e *torisce* per li pruni e per le ruine."

† *per noi*: The expression *venuto s' era per noi* is the rendering of the Latin *ventum erat ad* = we have come to; compare Virg. *Æn.* vi, 45: "Ventum erat ad limen." And *Georg.* iii, 98: "Ad praelia ventum est."

‡ *alla man destra*: As usual they turned to the right on entering a new Cornice. Compare *Purg.* xix, 80-81:—

"Se volete trovar la via più tosto,  
Le vostre destre sien sempre di furi."

§ *altra cura*: They had been in deep speculation as to how spirits can grow thin, but now they will have to turn to the more





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distinctly that the fire is on one side and the unprotected edge of the precipice on the other.

Onde ir ne convenia dal lato schiuso 115  
 Ad uno ad uno, ed io temeva il foco  
 Quinci, e quindi \* temea cadere in giuso.

For which reason we were obliged to walk one by one on the open side, and I was in fear of the fire on the left hand, and of falling headlong down on the right.

Virgil now warns Dante not to turn aside his eyes either to the right or left, but to look well to his footing. Benvenuto thinks this means allegorically, that the eyes ought to be curbed, for otherwise one may easily fall into the sin of Concupiscence.

Lo Duca mio dicea :—" Per questo loco  
 Si vuol tenere agli occhi stretto il freno, †  
 Perocch' errar potrebbesi per poco."— 120

My Leader said : " Along this place one will have to keep a tight rein on the eyes, for a very little might cause us to go astray."

Dante now relates how they hear the spirits of the Sensual chanting a hymn in praise of Chastity, just as in the other Cornices they have heard the voices of the penitents singing the praise of the virtue opposed to the particular sin they are purging. He then directs his attention to the penitents, whom up till now he has not remarked.

\* *Quinci, e quindi* : When the Poets emerged from the stairway into the Seventh and last Cornice, they turned as usual to the right hand. They have therefore the fire on their left hand (*quinci*), and the precipice on their right (*quindi*).

† *agli occhi stretto il freno* : Compare Propertius (II, xv, 16) :—  
 " Oculi sunt in amore duces,"  
 and Psalm cxix, 37 : " Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity ;  
 and quicken thou me in thy way."



*Summæ Deus clementiæ*\* nel seno

Al grande ardore allora udii cantando,  
Che di volger mi fe' caler non meno : †

E vidi spirti per la fiamma andando ;

Perch' io guardava loro, ed a' miei passi,

125

Compartendo la vista a quando a quando.

*Summæ Deus clementiæ* I then heard being sung in the bosom of that great burning, which made me anxious to turn (to see who was singing) no less (anxiously than to mind my footing). And I saw spirits going through the flame ; whereupon I looked at them and at my footsteps, sharing my attention from time to time between them.

Dante next tells how he heard the spirits crying aloud the words of the Blessed Virgin to the Archangel Gabriel, " I know not a man " (*St. Luke* i, 34). As we have

\* *Summæ Deus clementiæ* : The opening words of the hymn that the spirits in the flames were singing. There is only one hymn in the *Breviarium Romanum* that begins with these words, and that is the service of Lauds on the Festival of our Lady of the Seven Sorrows ; but the words of that hymn have nothing to do with the sins purged in the Seventh Cornice. The principal Commentators explain, however, that Dante was quoting from the hymn sung at the service of Matins on Saturday, which we are told was in Dante's time somewhat differently worded, and was remodelled at a later period. It commences as follows :—

" *Summæ Parens clementiæ,  
Mundi regis qui machinam,  
Unius et substantiæ,  
Trinusque personis Deus :  
Nostros pius cum canticis  
Pletus benigne suscipe.*"

† *di volger mi fe' caler non meno*, etc. : Cesari remarks how naturally the whole action is described ! Dante heard the sweet pathetic chant, and would turn at once, or would wish to do so, to see from whom the voices came, but the excessive caution he had need of, to take heed to his footsteps, compelled him to divide his attention, casting alternate glances, first in one direction, then in the other. Benvenuto explains it as though Dante would say : " I had at first turned my eyes to look after my footing, as Virgil had enjoined me, but now I turned them with no less care towards the fire, when I heard the sacred chant."



seen in the other Cornices, so we find here first an example from the life of the Virgin contrasted with the sin being purged: the next example is that of Helice.

The spirits are recording examples of the virtue of chastity, the opposite to sins of lust.

Appresso il fine ch' a quell' inno fassi,  
Gridavano alto : \* *Virum non cognosco* ;  
Indi ricominciavan l' inno bassi.

Finitolo, anco gridavano : — " Al bosco 130  
Si tenne Diana, ed Elice † caccionne  
Che di Venere avea sentito il toscò. " —

After the conclusion that is made to that hymn, they cried aloud : *Virum non cognosco* ; then they recommenced the hymn in low tones. When that was done, they cried out anew : " Diana abode in the wood, and drove from it Helice, who had felt the poison of Venus."

Benvenuto says that Diana, the moon, whose influence was thought to be favourable to maidenhood, is supposed to go forth with her virgin nymphs to the chase for the purpose of destroying wild beasts, that is, to promote the

\* *Gridavano alto* : The examples that are cited seem to have been always proclaimed in a loud voice. The prayers are always uttered softly.

† *Elice* : Helice, sometimes called Callisto, was supposed to have been the daughter of Lycaon, King of Arcadia. She was one of the attendant Nymphs of Diana, who dismissed her on account of an amour with Jupiter, and Juno turned her into a bear. Her son, Arcas, was given by Jupiter to Maia to be brought up. When Arcas was on the point of killing his mother during the chase, mother and son were placed by Jupiter among the stars, as the Great and Little Bear. (See Ovid, *Metam.* ii, 401-530, but more especially in ll. 453-465). In *Par.* xxxi, 31-33, Dante speaks of the Constellation of the Great Bear by the name of Helice :—

" Se i Barbari, venendo da tal plaga  
Che ciascun giorno d' Elice si copra,  
Rotante col suo figlio ond' ell' è vaga," etc.





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**END**



## CANTO XXVI.

THE SEVENTH CORNICE—SENSUALITY (CONTINUED)—THE PENITENTS IN TWO BANDS THAT MOVE IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS—EXAMPLES OF SENSUALITY—GUIDO GUINIZELLI (OR GUINICELLI)\*—ARNAUD DANIEL.

THIS Canto is so altogether exceptional as regards the subjects treated in it, that I think it desirable to abstain from the close explanation that I have endeavoured to give elsewhere.

In the concluding portion of the last Canto, the penance of those who had yielded to the sins of Sensuality was described. In this Canto Dante continues the subject.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into three parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 51, Dante describes his encountering two bands of penitents moving in opposite directions, and the question that is put to him by the shade of Guido Guinicelli.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 52 to ver. 102, he answers Guido's question, tells the spirits who he is, and desires those in both bands to tell him their names. Upon Guido Guinicelli naming himself, Dante addresses him with affectionate devotion as the father

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\* As this poet is far better known by the latter of these modes of spelling his name, I shall adopt this instead of the former, except when copying the text.



of those who, like himself, have woven the sweet rhymes of love.

In the *Third Division*, from ver. 103 to ver. 146, Guido modestly disavows his own pre-eminence, and yields the palm to Arnaut Daniel, a Provençal poet and troubadour.

*Division I.*—The three Poets are stepping cautiously along in single file in the very narrow space that is vacant between the edge of the Cornice and the flames under the cliff-wall in which the spirits are moving along. We shall learn from ll. 16 and 17 that Dante is walking behind Virgil and Statius. The flames are on their left hand and the precipice on their right. Virgil again warns Dante to beware how he walks.

Mentre che sì per l' orlo, uno innanzi altro,  
Ce n' andavamo, e spesso il buon Maestro  
Diceva:—"Guarda; giovi ch' io ti scaltro."—\*

While we thus were going along the edge (of the Cornice), one before the other, the good Master kept saying: "Take heed; let it avail that I warn thee."

Benvenuto thinks that Virgil was allegorically warning Dante against the danger of falling into the sin of Sensuality.

\* *ti scaltro*: "ti fo cauto a scansare e il precipizio e la fiamma." See the *Gran Dizionario*, which interprets *scaltrire* and *scaltrare*, "di rizzo e inesperto fare altrui astuto e sagace." Compare Petrarch, part i, *Canz.* x, st. 2:—

"L' un a me noce, e l' altro  
Altrui, ch' io non lo scaltro."

Varchi (*Ercolano*, Vinctia, 1580, p. 46) defines the word: "Dicesi ancora . . . con voce più gentile, e usata da' compositori nobili, *scaltrire*, onde viene *scaltro*, e *scaltrito*, cioè accorto, e sagace." Blanc (*Voc. Dant.*) says the word is derived from the Latin *callere*, to instruct, to draw attention to anything.





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Che già raggiando tutto l' occidente 5  
 Mutava in bianco aspetto di cilestro ; \*  
 Ed io facea con l' ombra più rovente  
 Parer la fiamma ; e pure a tanto indizio †  
 Vid' io molt' ombre andando poner mente.  
 Questa fu la cagion che diede inizio 10  
 Loro a parlar di me ; e cominciarsi

tanto aveva girato da quel punto il Poeta, e gli restavano quindi poco più che ventisei gradi di giro per giungere al vero punto di ponente della montagna." "Some of my readers (says Dr. Moore, *Time References*, p. 109) may remember that these few lines are quoted by Mr. Ruskin (*Mod. Painters*, ii, p. 159), as probably the finest description in literature of intense heat. He maintains that in these few very simple, and in some sense common-place, touches, Dante with no help from smoke or cinders has produced a more vivid effect than Milton has secured in ten lines of elaborate description and varied imagery. Dante's few words suggest, as Ruskin says, '*lambent annihilation.*' I wish I had space to illustrate further this splendid and unequalled power in Dante, of piercing at once to the very heart of things, and revealing, as it were, a whole world of scenery, or of emotion, or of passion at a flash, and as often as not by a flash of silence, that is more eloquent than any words."

\* *cilestro* is, according to the *Gran Dizionario*, the "*color chiaro del cielo puro*," whereas *azzurro* is said to be "*colore alquanto più pieno del cilestro, e che anche si dice Turchino* ;" so that we may take *cilestro* to be a paler blue than azure. The two colours are defined by Boccaccio, in the opening words of the *Giornata ix*, of the *Decameron* : "La luce, il cui splendore a notte fugge, aveva già l' ottavo cielo d' azzurrino in color cilestro mutato tutto." The *Anonimo Fiorentino* comments : "il Sole facea la plaga occidentale tutta bianca, imperò che di suo colore è l' aere cilestro : e quando il Sole è senza nuvole, sì lo biancheggia per la luce de' suoi razzi (*i.e.* raggi)."

† *pure a tanto indizio* : Scartazzini points out that Dante's shadow, falling on the flame, is far less visible than when noticed by the spirits on other occasions. Dante does not even say that *l' ombra si vedeva*, but that it *facea . . . più rovente parer la fiamma*. The *indizio* therefore was exceedingly small to the spirits enveloped in the flames, but Dante evidently wishes to emphasize their quick observation, for he says that merely (*pure*) at that small indication they detected the probable contiguity of a living being.



A dir:—"Colui non par corpo fittizio."—\*  
 Poi verso me,† quanto potevan farsi,  
 Certi si feron, sempre con riguardo  
 Di non uscir dove non fossero arsi.

15

Striking me on the right shoulder was the Sun, who, darting forth his rays, was already changing the whole West from its azure hue into white; and with my shadow I was making the flame appear more ruddy; and merely to that indication (of my being alive), I perceived many of the shades, as they passed, giving heed. This was the occasion that gave them an opening to speak about me; and they began to say one to another: "That man does not seem a fictitious body (like ours)." Then certain of them came towards me, as near as they could, always giving heed not to come out where they could not be burned.

They would not for one single instant interrupt their penance. It must be noticed that, in Purgatory, the spirits not only submit willingly to the chastisement imposed upon them, but they actually love it. In *Purg.* xi, 73, Oderisi begs Dante to walk stooping beside him; in xiv, 124, Guido del Duca prays him to depart, as he is more desirous of weeping than of talking; in xvi, 142, Marco Lombardo will not listen any more to him for fear of leaving the pitchy smoke; in

---

\* *fittizio* (according to the *Gran Dizionario*) is that which is not what it seems. The bodies of the spirits in Purgatory and Hell were aërial bodies, and not what they seemed, as may be seen in *Purg.* ii, 79, where Dante, after failing to embrace the impalpable form of Casella, exclaims:—

"OO ombre vane, fuor che nell' aspetto!"

*Colui non par corpo fittizio*, means then, "Colui (Dante) ha corpo di vera carne, non composto, finto, d'aria, come i nostri."

† *verso me* . . . *Certi si feron*: Compare *Purg.* ii, 67-75; where the newly-arrived spirits in the *Anti-Purgatorio* flock round Dante when they notice his respiration. *Farsi avanti* is a well-known Tuscan idiom, meaning to step forward. *Farsi verso uno*: to approach any one. Compare *Purg.* viii, 52:—

"Vér me si fece, ed io vér lui mi fei:"



xviii, 115, the penitents entreat him not to ascribe it to any discourtesy if they leave him, but only to their wish to move on ; in xix, 139, Pope Adrian bids him pass on, and not retard his penitent weeping ; in xxiv, 91, Forese parts from him, giving as a reason that, in that kingdom, the time is too precious ; and here the penitents take heed to keep within the flames.

One of the spirits now addresses Dante. We shall learn from v. 92 \* that the speaker is Guido Guinicelli, of whom Benvenuto relates that he was a knight of a very illustrious family of Bologna, banished for their imperialist sympathies by a civil sedition. Benvenuto expresses his regret to think of how many men, like Guido, virtuous in other ways, have been marred by a disposition to licentiousness. Guido now invites Dante's attention, telling him that he and all his companions in suffering are burning and thirsting with eagerness to know the reason of the shadow cast by Dante on the flames which are tormenting him.

—“ O tu che vai, non per esser più tardo, †  
 Ma forse reverente, agli altri dopo,  
 Rispondi a me che in sete ed in foco ardo : ‡

\* “ Son Guido Guinizelli, e già mi purgo  
 Per ben dolermi prima ch' all' estremo.”

† *non per esser più tardo* : The Commentators mostly point out that Dante had been getting lighter and lighter as each successive burden of sin, symbolized by the several P's, had been removed by the successive Angels of the Cornices. He has now but one to be erased on leaving the present Cornice, and his movements consequently are but little less speedy than those of the other two Poets, to whom out of deference he yields the precedence.

‡ *in sete ed in foco ardo* : Daniello seems to give the best interpretation of this passage. He writes: “ *Ardo in fuoco, ov' io purgo il peccato della carne, e ardo in sete, cioè in desiderio ardentissimo d' intendere chi tu sei,*” etc. The explanation is





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Già manifesto,\* s' io non fossi atteso †  
 Ad altra novità ch' apparse allora ;  
 Chè per lo mezzo del cammino acceso  
 Venia gente col viso incontro a questa,  
 La qual mi fece a rimirar sospeso. 30  
 Lì veggio d' ogni parte farsi presta  
 Ciascun' ombra, e baciarsi una con una,  
 Senza restar, contente a breve festa. ‡

Thus spoke one of them to me, and I should have straightway made myself known, had I not turned my attention to another new sight, which then appeared ; for in the middle of the fiery path there came a crowd of people with their faces turned the opposite way to those who had made me stop to gaze at them in wonder. There (where they met) I saw all the shades advance in haste and kiss one another without stopping, content with a brief greeting.

Dante compares this encounter of the two companies of spirits to that of two troops of ants.

\* *io mi fora Già manifesto* : i.e. "mi sarei già manifestato." *Manifesto* is a syncope for *manifestato*, which Nannucci (*Anal. Crit.* p. 403, vi) says was very frequent, e.g. *tronco* for *troncato* ; *mozzo* for *mozzato*, etc.

† *fossi atteso* : Scartazzini says that the early writers used generally to employ the auxiliary verb *essere* with the verb *attendere*, in preference to *avere*. Compare Giov. Villani, vii, cap. 7 : "Lo re Manfredi veggendo apparire l' oste del re Carlo, avuto suo consiglio, prese partito del combattere . . . ma in ciò prese mal partito, che se fosse atteso [for se avesse atteso, i.e. *aspettato*] uno o due giorni, lo re Carlo e sua oste erano morti e presi senza colpo di spada," etc.

‡ *festa* : Among the many significations of *festa* given in the *Gran Dizionario*, we find in § 32 : "Di liete accoglienze reciproche, e quindi in forma di riflessivo." Compare Fortiguerra, *Il Riciardetto*, xvi, st. 31 :—

"E si abbracciano insieme e si fan festa,  
 E la tardanza solo è lor molesta."

And Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. i, Nov. ii : "Al quale, come Giannotto seppe che venuto se n' era, niuna cosa meno sperando che del suo farsi cristiano, se ne venne, e gran festa insieme si fecero." And Giorn. iv, Nov. i : "dove trovato Guiscardo, insieme maravigliosa festa si fecero."



Così per entro loro schiera bruna \*

S' ammusà l' una con l' altra formica,

35

Forse ad espiar † lor via e lor fortuna.

Thus in the midst of their dusky phalanx will one ant meet another head to head, perchance to get (mutual) information of their road, and of their fortune.

The ants give each other information, as to the path to be pursued, and as to the good or bad fortune they have had in finding food.

At this point Dante notices that the spirits, after exchanging greetings that are merely friendly, innocent, and devoid of any unworthy feelings, vie with one another in simultaneous denunciation of Incontinence in its blackest forms. With one heart and

\* *schiera bruna*: This passage was probably suggested to Dante from parallel ones in Virgil and Ovid. Compare Virg. *Æn.* iv, 402-405:—

“Ac, veluti ingentem formicæ farris acervum  
Cum populant, hiemis memores, tectoque reponunt;  
It nigrum campis agmen, prædamque per herbas  
Convectant calle angusto.”

And Ovid, *Metam.* vii, 624-626:—

“Hic nos frugilegas aspeximus agmine longo  
Grande onus exiguo formicas ore gerentes,  
Rugosoque suum servantes cortice callem.”

† *espiar*: Others read *spiar*. See *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *spiar*. “To search, to investigate, to explore.” Varchi (*L' Hercolano*, ed. 1588, pp. 58, 59) defines the word thus: “*Origliare* è, quando due o più ritirati in alcun luogo favellano di segreto, stare di nascoso all' uscio, e porgere l' orecchie per sentire quello dicono: il verbo generale è *spiar*, verbo non meno infame, che *origliare*, sebbene si piglia alcuna volta in buona parte [as in the text], dove *far la spia* si piglia sempre in cattiva, il che si dice volgarmente essere referendario.” Compare also Petrarch, part i, *Canz.* xv, st. 6:—

“Tu sai in me il tutto, Amor; s' ella ne spia,  
Dinne quel che dir dei.”

Blanc says that *spiar* is akin to the German *spähen*, “to investigate.” Compare also *Psalm* cxxxix, 2 (*Prayer Book Version*): “And spiest out all my ways.”



voice they loudly shout out different examples of this sin in its hideous varieties.

Tosto che parton l' accoglienza amica,  
 Prima che il primo passo li trascorra,  
 Sopragridar \* ciascuna s' affatica ;  
 La nuova gente :—" Soddoma e Gomorra ;"—† 40  
 E l' altra :—" Nella vacca entra Pasife, ‡  
 Perchè il torello a sua lussuria corra."—

As soon as they terminate their friendly greeting, before even the first footstep passes away from that spot, each (spirit) strives to out-cry the other; the newcomers (explain): "Sodom and Gomorrah"; and the others: "Into the cow enters Pasiphaë, in order that the bull may run to her lust."

It is well to explain here that the spirits that shouted *Sodom and Gomorrah* were those that arrived last, and at whom Dante had stopped to gaze in wonder. We are to infer that their crime had been the same detestable one as that of Brunetto Latini and his companions, described in *Inf.* xv and xvi. As this band went off to the left, we are to infer that they had been the more guilty of the two. The company whose cry was the monstrous episode of *Pasiphaë*, are

\* *Sopragridar*, of which Tommasèo remarks: "Voce potentissima, nella forma di quelle de' Salmi: *supergaudeant* (Psalm xxxiv, 19), *supersperavi* (Psalm cxviii, 43)" (*Vulgate*).

† *Soddoma e Gomorra*: "Due nomi, che umiliano l' umano orgoglio, ricordando come un popolo intero, giovani e vecchi, può scender sì basso, e in appetiti peggio che brutali così sformatamente corrompersi, da trovare argomento a sole voglie nefande la stessa bellezza degli Angeli. Due nomi, che atteriscono colla memoria del fuoco prodigioso, che a punire il fuoco d' infami libidini distrugge fertilissima terra e le toglie perfino la virtù di fruttificare, simboleggiando la sterilità infelice di quel vizio, a cui il poeta bene assegna nell' Inferno la landa sterile come libica arena, e le larghe falde di fuoco pioventi di neve in alpe senza vento" (Perez, *I Sette Cerchi*, pp. 251, 252).

‡ *Pasife*: See Virg. *Bucol. Ecl.* vi, 45-55.





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Volasser parte, e parte invèr l' arene,  
 Queste del giel, quelle del sole schife; 45  
 L' una gente sen va, l' altra sen viene,  
 E tornan lagrimando ai primi canti,\*  
 Ed al gridar che più lor si conviene; †  
 E raccostarsi a me, come davanti,  
 Essi medesmi che m' avean pregato, 50  
 Attenti ad ascoltar nei lor sembianti.

Then like cranes, which should fly part to the Rhiphæan mountains, and part towards the sands (of Libya), the latter shunning the ice, the former the Sun; so one crowd (of spirits) goes, the other comes, and weeping they return to their first songs, and to the cry which suits them best; and those same who had lately entreated me (to speak) pressed close up to me, as before (the others arrived they had been doing), showing in their countenances great attention to listen.

Their chant was *Summæ Deus clementiæ*, their cry was one of the examples of chastity which best conveyed the lesson of the contrary to their special sin. Benvenuto says that it is more honourable to chant and cry out the names of the All Merciful God and the Virgin Mary, than to cry out Sodom and Gomorrah and the like.

*Division II.*—Dante now, in answer to the question put to him, admits that he is a living man, and gets from the spirits information as to themselves, and as to

\* *primi canti*: Compare *Inf.* xvi, 19-20:—

“ Ricominciâr, come noi ristemmo, ei  
 L' antico verso.”

In *La Giostra*, lib. i, st. 60, Poliziano expresses the same idea:—

“ E l' usignuol sotto le amate fronde  
 Cantando ripetea l' antico pianto.”

† *gridar che più lor si conviene*: This, thinks Scartazzini, refers to the examples of chastity quoted in the last Canto (ll. 128-135), of which each company selected the one that best contrasted with their own particular form of Incontinence.



the other band that have gone off the other way. He begins by telling them that he had neither died when young nor when old, but that his body is present as well as his soul. Benvenuto explains this to mean that Dante is not only alive, but of middle age.

And now because, with the petition the spirits had made to Dante, they had at the same time assured him that they did not think that it was from any slothful lack of zeal that he was walking last of the three poets, he therefore, who, as Benvenuto points out, sought not praise, but purgation of his sins, answers humbly, confessing his negligence and ignorance.

Io, che due volte avea visto lor grato,\*  
 Incominciai:—"O anime sicure  
 D'aver, quando che sia, di pace stato,  
 Non son rimase acerbe nè mature 55  
 Le membra mie di là, ma son qui meco †

---

\* *lor grato*, i.e. *lor gradimento*, *lor piacere*. *Grato* here is a substantive, much used by the early poets. Let one instance suffice. Compare Dante da Majano, in *Poeti del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, Firenze, 1816, 2 vols. 8vo, vol. ii, p. 450:—

"E non son meritato  
 Già d'alcun bene, che di gio' sentisse  
 Da quella, in cui s'affisse  
 Lo meo volere, e 'l grato."

Mr. Haselfoot remarks on *due volte* in this line, that this is the second time the shades had come as close up to Dante as they could without leaving the fire (ll. 13-15), in their anxiety to know how he could be alive. He has therefore twice seen that they would be pleased with the information.

† *Le membra mie . . . son qui meco*: Aristotle taught that Man was the body unformed by the soul. Plato held Man to be the soul alone disjoined from the body. Dante here follows the doctrine of his master, St. Thomas Aquinas, that Man is neither the body alone, nor the soul alone, but the two together. See *Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. lxxv, art. 4: "Nam ad naturam speciei pertinet id quòd significat definitio. Definitio autem in rebus naturalibus non significat formam tantùm, sed formam et materiam. Unde materia est pars speciei in rebus naturalibus, non quidem materia signata, quæ est principium individuationis, sed materia



Col sangue suo e con le sue giunture.  
 Quinci su vo per non esser più cieco:  
 Donna è di sopra che n' acquista grazia,\*  
 Per che il mortal pel vostro mondo reco. 60

I, who had twice perceived what they desired, began:  
 "O souls, secure of attaining a state of peace, whenever it may be, (know that) my limbs have not remained on yon earth either unripe or ripened (*i.e.* either in childhood or old age), but are here with me, with their blood and with their joints. Up this mountain am I going so as to be no longer blind (to God's grace): up above (in Heaven) there is a Lady (the Blessed Virgin) who wins grace for us, in virtue of which (grace) I bear the mortal part of me through your world.

Dante, having now satisfied the eager curiosity of the Spirits as to his being a living man, asks them to reveal to him their own names, as well as those of the spirits in the other company.

Ma se la vostra maggior voglia sazia  
 Tosto divenga, sì che il ciel † v' alberghi,  
 Ch' è pien d' amore e più ampio si spazia,

communis . . . Sicut enim de ratione hujus hominis est quòd sit ex anima, et carnibus, et ossibus; oportet enim de substantiâ speciei esse quidquid est communiter de substantiâ omnium individuorum sub specie contentorum."

\* *Donna è di sopra che n' acquista grazia*: Some Commentators pass over this passage, others take it for granted that Beatrice is the lady meant, but Scartazzini contends very reasonably that it refers to the lady in Heaven, *i.e.* the Blessed Virgin, who sent Lucia to Virgil; see *Inf.* ii, 94-96:—

"Donna è gentil nel ciel, che si compiange  
 Di questo impedimento ov' io ti mando,  
 Sì che duro giudizio lassù frange."

He lays great stress on *n' acquista grazia*, who wins grace for us men, and says that, even conceding that it was Beatrice who won grace for Dante, no one can make out that Dante would mean that she acquires grace for all men.

† *il ciel . . . Ch' è . . . più ampio si spazia*: *i.e.* the Empyrean. Compare *Inf.* ii, 82-84, where Virgil asks Beatrice how she has brought herself to quit the Empyrean to visit him in *Limbo*:—





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how the spirits, when they heard of his being alive, were struck dumb with astonishment.

Non altrimenti stupido si turba \*

Lo montanaro, e rimirando ammuta,

Quando rozzo e salvatico s' inurba, †

Che ciascun' ombra fece in sua paruta ;

70

Ma poichè furon di stupore scarche.

Lo qual negli alti cor tosto s' attuta, ‡

\* *stupido si turba* *Lo montanaro*: Venturi (*Simil. Dant.* p. 171, *sim.* 297) contrasts this scene with the preceding simile (*Purg.* viii, 61), where Sordello and Nino dei Visconti start back, on hearing that Dante is alive in Purgatory. Theirs is but the natural wonder of intelligent minds, whereas the rustic from the hills is all agape and tongue-tied in the bewilderment of stupefaction. Compare Dante's *Epistle* (v) *for all and for each of the Kings of Italy*, etc., § 7: "Nec tantum ut assurgatis exhortor, sed ut illius obstupescatis aspectum." In *Conv.* iv, 25, ll. 48-60, Dante defines this condition of the mind: "Lo *Stupore* è uno stordimento d' animo, per grandi o maravigliose cose vedere, o udire o per alcun modo sentire; che in quanto paiono grandi, fanno *reverente* a sè quello che le sente; in quanto paiono mirabili, fanno *voglioso di sapere* di quelle quello che le sente. E però gli antichi regi nelle loro magioni faceano magnifici lavori d' oro e di pietre e d' artificio, acciocchè quelli che le vedessero, divenissero *stupidi*, e però *reverenti* e domandatori delle condizioni onorevoli del rege."

† *s' inurba*: Buti interprets *inurbarsi* as coming into town *for the first time* (*s' inurba*, cioè mette sè *prima* nella città). We find this word used by Pulci, *Morgante Maggiore*, xxv, st. 299:—

"Egli era il dì dinanzi un lupo entrato  
Nella città per mezzo della turba,  
E fu per male augurio interpretato,  
Chè non senza cagion lupo s' inurba."

‡ *s' attuta*: This word, which is of frequent use, is derived from the Latin *tulari*, "to ward off, to seek to avert," etc. Varchi (*L' Hercolano*, Venice, 1580, p. 79) thus defines it: "*Attutare*, quando è della prima coniugazione, non viene da *tuto*, nè significa *assicurare* come hanno scritto Alcuni, ma è propriissimo, e bellissimo verbo, il cui significato non può sprimersi con un verbo solo, perchè è quello che i latini dicono *or sedere*, *or cumprimere*, *or reboundere*, e tal volta *estinguere*, e usollo il Boccaccio—se ben mi ricordo—non solo nella novella di Alibech due volte, ma ancora nell' ottava della *Teseide* dicendo:—

'Onde attutata s' era veramente

La polvere, e il fumo,' etc.,

e Dante, la cui proprietà è maravigliosa, disse nel 26 del *Pur-*



—“ Beato te, che delle nostre marche,”—

Ricominciò colei che pria m' inchiese,

—“ Per morir meglio \* esperienza imbarche I †

75

*gatorio,*” etc. Compare also Dino Compagni, *Cronica*, lib. iii (Firenze, 1879), vol. ii, p. 327: “E Ugucione della Faggiuola co' Magalotti e con molti nobili seminorno tanta discordia in Arezzo, che come nimici stavano i potenti Ghibellini; ma pure poi s' attutorno.” And Tasso, *Ger. Liber. xx*, st. 121:—

“ Qui pon fine alle morti; e in lui quel caldo  
Disdegno marzial par che s' attuti,”

and Giov. Villani, xii, cap. 21: “E in questo modo s' attutò l' arrabbiato e furioso popolo disposti a rubare e a malfare.”

\* *morir meglio*: I am here following Dr. Moore in his edition of Dante (*Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, Oxford, 1894) in reading *Per morir meglio*, instead of *viver* which, Dr. Moore (in 1888) wrote to me, was the reading of the vast majority of modern editions and Commentaries, and the one he personally preferred *then*, though he mentioned that he had at that time found *morir* in forty-one Codices against *viver* in seven. In his *Textual Criticism*, pp. 422, 423, Dr. Moore had said that on critical grounds, apart from MS. evidence, *viver* appeared to him preferable, partly on the ground urged by Scartazzini, that it suits better than *morir* the sense of l. 58 just above, *su vo per non esser più cieco*. Both *ben morir* and *morir meglio* are accurate Italian phrases, the former the more common of the two. *Morir* has a sort of *prima facie* suitability in the mouths of the spirits in Purgatory, which may have led to its substitution, if such be the case. The only old Commentators who notice the passage are divided. Benvenuto, reading *viver*, adds: “*Nec dubito quod poeta melius vixit, et melius mortuus est, per compilationem hujus operis*” [Nor do I doubt that the poet did live a better life, and qualified himself for a better death by the compilation of this work]. So that Benvenuto may have known both readings, and, while preferring the one, may have made his remarks deal with both. Landino and Vellutello explain *morir meglio* as naturally meaning “in maggior grazia di Dio.” Buti rather curiously thus: “*che non seresti morto se non avessi veduto l' esperienza della nostra purgazione,*” which (Dr. Moore thinks) looks as if he understood *morir* in a spiritual sense as “dead to sin.” Of twenty-four editions examined by Dr. Moore previous to 1889, no less than twenty-two had *viver*, and only two (viz. Witte and Camerini) had *morir*. *Per contra* the first four editions all have *morir*. Of the MSS. which he has now (1895) examined (Dr. Moore tells me), seventy-seven have *morir* and only fourteen have *viver*. It is a difficult question to decide positively either way, and in each case the large majority of MSS. may, perhaps, be allowed to turn the scale. Possibly *Purg. viii*, 60, might be quoted in support of *morir*.

† *imbarche* for *imbarchi*. See Nannucci, *Analisi Critica*, p. 58 (viii), where it is clearly shown that this was a regular form of the



Not otherwise is the mountaineer stupidly bewildered, and is speechless as he stares about him. when rough and rustic he enters a town, than each Shade became in its appearance; but when they had put off the burden of that amazement, which in elevated minds is quickly subdued, "Happy thou," began again he who had questioned me before, "who the better to die art lading (*i.e.* gathering in a store of) experience of our borders!

Guido Guinicelli now gives Dante the information he asked for respecting both bands of spirits, and with much plainness of speech tells him about the sin of the company that have parted from them.

La gente, che non vien con noi, offese  
 Di ciò per che già Cesar,\* trionfando  
 'Regina' contra sè chiamar s' intese;  
 Però si parton 'Soddoma' gridando,  
 Rimproverando a sè, com' hai udito, 80  
 Ed aiutan l' arsura vergognando.

Those people who come not with us, were guilty of that, on account of which in former days (Julius) Cæsar, at one of his triumphs, heard himself called 'Regina' as an insult; that is why they depart (from us) crying 'Sodom,' in self-vituperation, as thou hast heard, and by (the glow of) their shame they assist the burning.

Guido then speaks of the special sin of the band in which he himself is.

Nostro peccato fu ermafrodito; †

persons of the verb in Dante's time. *Io imbarche, tu imbarche, egli imbarche*, and distinctly not, as some maintain, an alteration to suit the rhyme.

\* Cesar, etc.: This refers to an episode related by Suetonius.

† *peccato . . . ermafrodito*: I do not, as I said, wish to closely discuss Dante's meaning as to this strange epithet. The whole question is most exhaustively treated by Scartazzini in his Leipzig commentary (1875). Whatever Dante intended to signify





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Our sin was hermaphrodite (*i.e.* we were guilty of perfectly unbridled depravity); but because we did not observe the human law, following our appetites like brute beasts, (therefore) to our own shame, when we part asunder, we pronounce the name of her (*Pasiphaë*) who made herself bestial inside the beast of wicker-work.

Guido now names himself, but excuses himself for not naming any one else.

Or sai nostri atti, e di che fummo rei :

Se forse a nome vuoi saper chi semo,

Tempo non è da dire,\* e non saprei.

Farotti ben di me volere scemo ;

90

Son Guido Guinizelli,† e già mi purgo

Per ben dolermi prima ch' all' estremo."—

\* *Tempo non è da dire*: We may remember that at the beginning of this Canto (ll. 4-6) the Sun was getting low in the West, and, when once it set, we know that all action would cease in Purgatory.

† *Guido Guinizelli*: Better known as Guinicelli. Of him Nannucci (*Manuale della Letteratura del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, vol. i, pp. 31, 32) says that he was the father of Italian literature, and was the most important of the poets who, before the time of Dante, wrote in the *lingua volgare*. The information concerning his life is extremely scanty and obscure; and we know little more of him than that he came from a very illustrious family in Bologna, named *dei Principi*, who were adherents of the Imperial Party. Tiraboschi thinks he must have been the son of Guinicello de' Principi, who is recorded (Ghirardacci, *Storia di Bologna*) to have executed a legal document in 1249. He married a lady of the name of Beatrice, descended from the highly illustrious family *della Fratta*, a member of which was at one time Bishop of Bologna. The year 1274 was one of great misfortune to the Guinicelli family, as in that year the Lambertazzi party, to which they belonged, were banished from Bologna. It is not known to what part of Italy Guido betook himself, but he did not long survive his exile, and died in the flower of his age in 1276. Benvenuto says of Guido: "Fuit iste (ipse) Guido vir prudens, eloquens inveniens egregie pulcra dicta materna; sicut autem erat ardentis ingenii et linguæ, ita ardentis luxuriæ, quales multi inveniuntur sæpe." In *Conv.* iv, 20, Dante calls him *quel nobile Guido Guinizelli*; in the *De Vulg. Eloquentia*, i, 15, *Maximus Guido*; and Nannucci says that



Now thou knowest our deeds, and of what we were guilty: if perchance thou desirest to know by name who we are, there is no time to tell thee now, nor should I know (them all). As regards myself I will indeed satisfy thy wish (*lit.* will make thee devoid of desiring); I am Guido Guinicelli, and am already (admitted to begin) purging myself, because I deeply repented before my last hour."

This last line means that, although Guido had only been dead 24 years, his repentance previous to his death had been sufficient to ensure his salvation, and to entitle him to such an early admittance into Purgatory, instead of being relegated, like Manfred, Belacqua, and Buonconte, to a long period of suspense upon the dreary slopes of the base of the mountain in Ante-Purgatory.

Dante's delight on finding that the speaker was Guido Guinicelli is so great, that he compares it to that of the twin brothers, Thoas and Eunius, on recognizing their mother Hypsipyle.

Quali nella tristizia di Licurgo \*

---

Guido was by no means unworthy of these encomiums, for he raised himself above all the other poets of his time, and of him Lorenzo di Medici spoke as *di filosofia ornatissimo, grave e sentenzioso, lucido, soave, ed ornato . . . e certamente fu il primo, da cui la bella forma del nostro idioma fu dolcemente colorita, quale appena da quel grosso Aretino (i.e. Guittone d' Arezzo) era stata adombrata*. For although Guido's poetry was of nothing but love, as was the custom of his times, he did not compose his songs like many foolish poetasters, but that which he wrote contained lofty and moral opinions after the fashion of the Platonists.

\* *tristizia di Licurgo*: Andreoli explains the sense of the word in this passage as equivalent to *imperversamento*, i.e. fury, rage. The word evidently implies a combination of grief and rage, grief at the loss of the son, and rage against the wife to whom the son's death was imputed. The *Gran Dizionario* (§ 1) says of the passage: "Parla de' figli d' Isifle, che corsero a liberarla nell' atto che Licurgo, re di Nemea, angosciato di sdegno, la voleva far morire." Lycurgus, King of Nemea, had intrusted his son to the care of



Si fèr due figli a riveder la madre, 95  
 Tal mi fec' io, ma non a tanto insurgo,\*  
 Quand' i' odo nomar sè stesso il padre †

Hypsipyle a former queen of Lemnos, who had been sold to him as a slave by some pirates. The child died of the bite of a serpent, and Lycurgus ordered her to be put to death. As she was being led to execution she was recognized by her twin sons, whom she had borne to Jason, but from whom she had long been parted. These rushed forward and prevailed on Lycurgus to spare her life. See Statius, *Thebaid*, v. 720 *et seq.*, where the scene is beautifully described, and would seem to have made a great impression on Dante, for before this he speaks of Hypsipyle (*Purg.* xxii, 112) as  
 “quella che mostrò Langia.”

And in *Inf.* xviii, 83-96, the whole episode is related of her betrayal and subsequent abandonment by Jason, for which he is being punished in the first *Bolgia* of the Eighth Circle.

\**non a tanto insurgo*: Landino on this: “Non mi inalzo e distendo a tanto quanto si distesono i figlioli d' Isipyle. Imperocchè essi corsono ad abbracciar la madre. Ma io non andai ad abbracciar Guido: perchè era nel fuoco.” Daniello comments in very similar language.

†*padre*: On this Tommasèo observes that Dante in the same way often styles Virgil *padre*, and that here he implies that Guido was his father in style, but not in language, and, by the excessive praise that Dante bestows upon the Provençal Arnaud, we see the proof that he puts the Provençal poets before the Italian ones, though he by no means puts the Provençal idiom before his own native idiom, as we may read in *Conv.* i, 10, ll. 74-80: “Mossimi ancora per *difendere* lui (*il volgare*) da molti suoi accusatori, li quali dispregiano esso e commendano gli altri, massimamente quello di lingua d' *Oco* (the Provençal language), dicendo ch' è più bello e migliore quello che questo; partendosi in ciò dalla verità.” Scartazzini points out that, here and there, Dante distinctly has imitated Guido, as may be seen by comparing Guido's *Canzone*, beginning *Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore*, with Dante's *Canzone* iii (in *Conv.* iv), *Le dolci rime d' amor, ch' io solta*. Dante's celebrated line, *Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s' apprende*, is also taken from Guido's *Canzone* mentioned above, in which there is (st. ii) the line *Poco d' amore in gentil core s' apprende*. With *il padre mio*, compare *Inf.* xv, 82, 83:—

“Chè in la mente m' è fitta, ed or mi accora  
 La cara e buona imagine paterna.”

These words were addressed to Brunetto Latini, Dante's former master in science, as Guido Guinicelli was in poetry. Curiously enough both are undergoing chastisement for the same offence.





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time) by addressing him with *voi* (you) instead of the customary *tu*.<sup>\*</sup> He invokes God to witness his promise that he will speak up for Guido's good name, and will have prayers offered up for him. Guido, in reply, offers Dante his earnest thanks for the service he has done him in promising to perpetuate his memory, adding that, as long as Dante's books are renowned, so will be Guido's. He further asks him the reason for his great affection for him.

Poichè di riguardar pasciuto fui,  
 Tutto m' offerisi pronto al suo servizio,  
 Con l' affermar † che fa credere altrui. 105

Ed egli a me:—"Tu lasci tal vestigio,  
 Per quel ch' i' odo, in me e tanto chiaro,  
 Che Lete ‡ nol può tor, nè farlo bigio.

Ma se le tue parole or ver giuraro,  
 Dimmi che è cagion per che dimostri 110  
 Nel dire e nel guardare avermi caro?"—

As soon as I had fed enough on gazing (upon him), I offered myself as wholly ready for his service, with that affirmation (a solemn vow) which makes others believe. And he to me: "From what I hear, thou leavest in me such and so evident a sign of thy

\* On this subject see *Readings on the Inferno*, 2nd ed., vol. i, pp. 365, 366, as to *voi* being a style of address which in Dante's time denoted respect, and being used by him to only three shades in Hell, namely, Farinata degli Uberti, Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, and Brunetto Latini. In *Purg.* xix, 94 *et seq.*, we find Dante addressing the shade of Pope Adrian V with *tu*, and on learning that he had been Pope (l. 131), at once changing to *voi*. That custom was, however, only in Dante's time. Respect in Italy is at the present day denoted by using the third person, with *Ella* or *Lei*, excepting when addressing Royalty, when "Vostra Maestà" is the form used. This, however, is followed by the third person singular.

† *l' affermar*: Line 109 shows distinctly that this means an oath and nothing else.

‡ We shall see in *Purg.* xxxi, 91-104, that souls, before passing from Purgatory into Paradise, are immersed in Lethe.



affection (for me) as Lethe (*i.e.* oblivion) can neither efface nor make obscure. But if thy words swore truly just now, tell me what is the reason that makes thee show in thy speech and in thy looks that thou holdest me dear?"

Dante's answer shows that his admiration for Guido was due far more to his great literary attainments as a poet, than for any personal regard for the man.

Ed io a lui:—"Li dolci detti vostri  
Che, quanto durerà l'uso moderno,\*  
Faranno cari † ancora i loro inchiostri."—

And I to him: "Those sweet ditties of yours, which as long as the modern use (of writing poetry in the vulgar tongue) shall endure, will even make dear to me their very ink."

It will be well here to digress somewhat, and discuss the two personages whose names are next brought upon the scene. These are Arnaut Daniel, and Giraud de Borneil, two poets of the school of Provence, of great celebrity in their time. Arnaud, Arnauld, or Arnaut

\* *l'uso moderno*: Scartazzini draws attention to a parallel passage in the *Vita Nuova*, § 25: "A cotal cosa dichiarare, secondo ch'è buono al presente, prima è da intendere, che anticamente non erano dicitori d'Amore in lingua volgare, anzi erano dicitori d'Amore certi poeti in lingua latina. . . . E non è molto numero d'anni passato, che apparirono prima questi poeti volgari; chè dire per rima in volgare tanto è quanto dire per versi in latino, secondo alcuna proporzione. E segno che sia picciol tempo è, che, se volemo cercare in lingua d'Oro e in lingua di Sì, noi non troviamo cose dette anzi lo presente tempo per centocinquanta anni."

† *Faranno cari*, etc.: Contrast this with *Purg.* xi, 97-99, where Dante makes Oderisi d'Agobbio say that, although Guido Cavalcanti and Guido Guinicelli had hitherto taken all the glory of the language, yet there was one already born who perchance would soon drive them from their pre-eminence, probably meaning himself. Scartazzini thinks that, in the present passage, Dante is wishing somewhat to modify the above words.



Daniel, was one of the most noted troubadours of the 12th century, and is reported to have flourished between 1180 and 1200. Very little is recorded of him by the earlier Commentators, but Petrarch speaks of him as having been one of the foremost poets of that time. He lived in Provence in the time of Raymond Berenger (*the Good*) Count of Provence, and is said to have died about 1189. From *The Troubadours, a History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages*, by Francis Hucffer, London, 1878, pp. 44-51, I extract the following: "It is well known that the works of the Troubadours were at an early period read and admired in the neighbouring country of Italy, and that the poets in the *lingua volgare* recognized in them at once their models and allies in the struggle against the predominance of Latin scholarship. Students of the *Divina Commedia*, or of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, are aware of the prominent position assigned to the Provençal singers among the poets of the world, and they may also remember that of the Troubadours themselves none is mentioned with higher praise than Arnaut Daniel. Petrarch<sup>o</sup> speaks of him as the *Gran maestro d' amore*, and Dante, in his philological and metrical treatise *De Vulgari Eloquio*, declares himself indebted to Arnaut for the structure of several of his stanzas. The *Sestina*, for instance, a poem of six verses, in which the final words of the first stanza appear in inverted order in all the others, is an invention of this troubadour adopted by Dante and Petrarch. . . . But





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hand, that Arnaut Daniel—if he really be the author referred to—must have been a mighty mover of the heart to gain such a tribute from the lips of Francesca da Rimini.” After describing Arnaut as delighting in “*motz obscurs*” (*dark words*) and “*rims cars*” (*dear or scarce rhymes*), and equally far-fetched similes, the author adds: “His intentional obscurity and his mannerism were largely imitated, but no less frequently attacked and travestied by contemporary poets and satirists. Petrarch’s allusions to his ‘novel speech’ (*dir novo*), and Dante’s expression ‘smith of his mother tongue,’ evidently allude to Arnaut’s peculiarities of style. We can also quite imagine how the great Florentine could admire a dark shade of melancholy, a bold originality of thought, and a hankering after scholastic depth, but too nearly akin to his own mental attitude.”

Gérault, Girault, Guiraut, or Giraud de Borneil, or Bornelh, “a celebrated troubadour of the spring-time of Provençal literature,” flourished between 1175 and about 1220, and attained such repute, that among his contemporaries he was spoken of as the master of the Troubadours. He was born in the Limousin, at a village near Excideul, not far from Périgueux, but a considerable distance from Limoges, and Scartazzini thinks his being styled by Dante *quel di Lemosi*, refers to the Province of *Limousin* rather than to the city of Limoges. Dante speaks of him (*De Vulg. Eloq.* ii, cap. 2) as “the poet of righteousness,” but, although Dante puts him on a lower scale than Arnaut Daniel, the very comparison would rather show that, in the opinion of the public, the question was an open one, and Scartazzini observes that there would be few at the present day who would agree with Dante’s judgment in this matter, for



there can be little doubt that, as a poet, Girault de Borneil was greater than Arnaut Daniel. Girault is said to have left eighty-two poetical compositions of genuine authenticity.

We will now return to our subject, recollecting that Dante has just been telling Guido Guinicelli that his love and affection for him are wholly due to the enthusiastic admiration he feels for Guido's sweet lays.

Like Oderisi d' Agobbio (see *Purg.* xi, 82-84) Guido at once gives greater honour to another, and pointing out the shade of Arnaut Daniel, goes on to say that, although some fools attempt to set Girault de Borneil on a higher pinnacle of fame than Arnaut, it is only from the acclamations of the vulgar, that there could be any question of comparing Girault de Borneil to Arnaut Daniel.

— “O frate,”—disse,—“questi ch' io ti scerno  
 Col dito,”—ed additò un spirto innanzi,  
 — “Fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno.\*  
 Versi d' amore † e prose di romanzi ‡

---

\* *parlar materno*: Arnaut's mother tongue was of course Provençal, and Dante shows this by making Guido Guinicelli compare him to Girault de Borneil, another Provençal poet, for, although born in the Limousin, he was of the school of Provence. “E veramente a tempo del Guinicelli l' arte del dire in prosa ed in verso era assai più oltre in Provenza che in Italia; e solo con Dante cominciò ad essere altramente” (Andreoli).

† *Versi d' amore*: It is probable that, as “the poet of love,” Arnaut would be of higher merit, in the estimation of Dante, than “the poet of righteousness,” as he styled Girault de Borneil.

‡ *prose di romanzi*: “There can indeed be no doubt that, in addition to his (Arnaut's) fame as a lyrical singer or troubadour proper, his equal excellence as a narrative poet is here referred to, the word *prose* being used, not in our modern sense, but for the rhymed couplets of the epic in contradistinction to the elaborate stanzas or *versi* of the love-song” (*The Troubadours*, p. 46). See also a letter by Mr. Paget Toynbee in *The Academy*, April 13th, 1889.



Soperchiò tutti, e lascia dir gli stolti  
 Che quel di Lemosi credon ch' avanzi.

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A voce più ch' al ver drizzan li volti,  
 E così ferman sua opinione  
 Prima ch' arte o ragion per lor s' ascolti.

"O my brother," said he, "this one that I point out to thee with my finger," and he pointed to a spirit in front, "was a better artificer of his mother-tongue (than I of mine). In verses of love and in tales of romance he surpassed all; and let the fools talk on who think that he of Limousin excels him. They give heed to rumour rather than to truth, and thus they fix their opinions before they listen to art or reason.

Benvenuto remarks on the above: "And note well here the most true opinion of our Poet, who so justly satirises the insane vulgar herd. For in every profession we have seen it occur that many men make false and vain assertions: and when examined by persons of experience, as to whether they be acquainted with such an art, or if they really have any opinion at all on the subject about which they speak so positively, they do not know what else to say than, 'Everybody says so;' and thus they make use of the judgment of the ignorant multitude as their shield."

Dante next proceeds to speak of the early Italian poet, Fra Guittone d' Arezzo, who in former days had had a great popular reputation, and quotes him as an instance of misplaced praise. What he says in effect is that, just as public opinion in Provence was fallacious in the matter of Giraud de Borneil, so did public opinion at Florence go astray about Fra Guittone d' Arezzo, until, through the opinions of experts, the real truth was arrived at. Guittone expressed beautiful thoughts, but his style was not happy.





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And now Guido Guinicelli, after gratefully declining to avail himself of Dante's offer to re-habilitate his fame, and after begging that Dante will merely utter a short prayer on his behalf, draws back, and disappears in the flames.

Or se tu hai sì ampio privilegio,  
 Che licito ti sia l' andare al chiostro\*  
 Nel quale è Cristo abate del collegio,  
 Pagli per me un dir di un paternostro, 130  
 Quanto bisogna a noi di questo mondo,  
 Dove poter peccar non è più nostro."—†  
 Poi forse per dar loco altrui, secondo ‡  
 Che presso avea, disparve per lo foco,  
 Come per l' acqua § pesce andando al fondo. 135

\* *chiostro*: "Cioè a la chiusura lieta de' beati; cioè in paradiso lo quale è chiusura de' beati, come lo chiostro è de' religiosi chiusura consolatoria e refrigeratoria, *Nel quale, cioè chiostro, è Cristo abate del collegio*, imperò che come l' abate è padre e signore dei monaci; così Cristo via maggiormente è padre e signore de' beati" (Buti). Scartazzini remarks that, in the early days of the Italian language, *abate* was a title of the highest dignity, being frequently used for *padre* or *duce*, and was assumed by princes, Hugh Capet taking the title of *Abate di Parigi*.

† *Dove poter peccar non è più nostro*: The penitents in Purgatory are no longer liable to fall into sin. We may remember in Canto xi, 23, the shades of the proud are described as not omitting from the Lord's Prayer the sentence about leading into temptation, but explaining that they use it for the sake of those who remain behind them in the world.

‡ *per dar loco altrui, secondo Che presso avea*: I have here departed from Dr. Moore's text to follow Scartazzini, who quotes Fanfani in putting a comma after *altrui*, and interpreting the passage as I have translated it. Dr. Moore puts no comma into the sentence. The more general punctuation is to put the comma after *secondo*, and to interpret: "forse per dare il secondo luogo, i.e. il luogo dopo lui, *altrui*, cioè all' altro (Arnaldo Daniello) che avea presso di sé." To this interpretation of *altrui* Fanfani very decidedly objects.

§ *Come per l' acqua, etc.*: Compare the disappearance into the mist of Piccarda de' Donati, *Par.* iii, 121:—

"Così parlammi, e poi cominciò: *Ave Maria*, cantando; e cantando vanò,  
 Come per acqua cupa cosa grave."



Now if thou hast such ample privilege, that it is granted to thee to enter into that Cloister (*i.e.* Paradise), in which Christ is the Abbot of the College, repeat to Him a *Paternoster* on my behalf, in so far as is needful for us in this world (of spirits) where power to sin is no longer ours." Then perchance to give place to some one else, whoever might be nearest to him, he vanished through the flames, like a fish going to the bottom through the water.

Dante's attention has naturally been attracted by Guido's enthusiastic praise of Arnaut, and, when Guido is out of sight, he draws as near as the flames will permit of his doing, and begs Arnaut to reveal his identity, about which Guido had left him in the dark.

Io mi feci al mostrato innanzi un poco,  
E dissi ch' al suo nome il mio disire  
Apparecchiava grazioso loco.

I advanced a little towards him who had been pointed out, and said that my desire was preparing an honourable place for his name.

That is to say: "I told him that my desire to know him was so great, that I should receive his name with especial affection."

Arnaut replies in the Provençal tongue, tells Dante who he is, speaks with much contrition of his past life, and with bright hope of the joys of the life to come, and concludes, before vanishing in his turn, with a prayer to Dante, that he will in due time (by which he probably means when the time shall have come for repeating a *Paternoster* for Guido Guinicelli) remember him in his pious intercessions.

Ei cominciò liberamente a dire :

*Tan m' abelis \* vostre cortes deman,*

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---

\* *Tan m' abelis* : Compare *Inf.* xix, 37 : " Tanto m' è bel, quanto a te piace," and see my note on this passage in *Readings on the*



Qu' ieu no-m püesc, ni-m vueil a vos cobrir  
 Jeu sui Arnaut, que plor, e vai cantan,

*Inferno*, vol. ii, p. 79. On this and other similar passages where the word is introduced, compare Benedetto Varchi (*L' Hercolano*, Venice, 1580, pp. 51, 52): [Question] "Come direste voi nella vostra lingua quello, che Terenzio disse nella latina . . . *munus nostrum ornato verbis*? [Answer] Abbellisci il dono, o il presente nostro colle parole: Ma Dante, che volle dirlo altramente, formò un verbo da sè d' un nome agghiettivo, e d' una preposizione latina, e disse:—

'Mal dare, e mal tener lo mondo pulcro  
 Ha tolto loro, e posti a questa zuffa:  
 Quale ella sia, parole non ci appulcro.'

—(*Inf.* vii, 58-60.)

[Question] Dite il vero, piacevi egli, o parvi bello cotesto verbo *appulcro*? . . . Voi pigliate qui *abbellisce* in significazione attiva, cioè per far bello, e di sopra quando allegaste que' versi di Dante (p. 30):—

'Opera naturale è ch' uom favella;  
 Ma così o così, natura lascia  
 Poi fare a voi secondo che v' abbella.'

—(*Par.* xxvi, 130-132)

pare che sia posta in significazione neutra, cioè per piacere, e per parer bello. [Answer] Voi dite vero, ma quello è della quarta coniugazione, o vero maniera de' verbi, e questo è della prima; quello si pone assolutamente, cioè senza alcuna particella innanzi, e questo ha sempre davanti *se*, *i mi*, *o ti*, *o gli*, secondo le persone che favellano, o delle quali si favella. Questo è il modo di dire Toscano, come mostra Dante stesso, inducendo nella fine del XXVI Canto del Purgatorio Arnaldo Daniello a dire Provenzalmente:—

'Tan m' abelis votre cortois deman.'  
 e gli altri versi, che seguitano, benchè per mio avviso siano scritti scoretamente: Dicesi eziandio, come il Boccaccio nell' *Ameto*:—

'De' quai la terza via più s' abbelliva.'"

I cannot refrain from quoting Mr. Carey's note on Arnaut's words: "Arnaut is here made to speak in his own tongue, the Provençal. According to Dante (*De Vulg. Eloq.* i, cap. 8), the Provençal was one language with the Spanish. What he says on this subject is so curious, that the reader will not be displeased if I give an abstract of it. Dante first makes three great divisions of the European languages. 'One of these extends from the mouth of the Danube, or the lake of Mæotis, to the western limits of England, and is bounded by the limits of the French and Italians, and by the ocean. One idiom obtained over the whole of this space: but was afterwards subdivided into the Sclavonian, Hungarian,





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*E vei ianzen la ioi \* qu' esper, denan.  
 Ara vos prec per aquella valor,  
 Que vos guida al som de l' escalina †  
 Sovenha vos a temps de ma dolor.  
 Poi s' ascose nel foco che gli affina.*

145

He readily thus began to speak: "Your courteous request pleases me so much, that I neither can nor will hide myself from you. I am Arnaut, who weep and go singing, sorrowfully I contemplate my past folly, and joyfully I see the bliss I hope for in the future. Now I entreat you by that Power, which guides you to the summit of the stairway, be mindful in due time of my sufferings." He then hid himself in the fire that is refining them.

Ozanam who gives almost identically the same text as that in Dr. Moore's edition, of the above Provençal lines, translates them as follows: "Tant me plaît votre courtoise demande, que je ne puis ni ne veux me cacher à vous. Je suis Arnaud qui pleure et vais chantant; je vois avec chagrin ma folie passée. Mais je vois joyeux devant moi la joie que j'espère. Or, je vous prie par cette vertu qui vous guide au sommet de l'escalier, souvenez-vous en temps utile de ma douleur."

---

"E visto aggio di core  
 Irato e consiroso  
 Venir gajo e giojoso  
 In gio' poggiare, e 'n tutta beninanza."

\* *la ioi*: Diez reads *lo jorn*, "the day."

† *guida al som de l' escalina*: As will be seen on the next page, Raynouard reads: *Guida al som sens freich e sens calina*, i.e. "who guides you to the summit without cold and without heat." But, as Scartazzini points out, in all the mountain of Purgatory there is no mention of Cold occurring as a penance, or in any other way; and no one can pretend that the Power (*aquella valor*) guided the Poets up to the summit without heat (*sens calina*), seeing that the very next phenomenon they were to encounter in that very Cornice was, that they should themselves have to pass through the scorching heat of the flames.



Nearly every edition gives a different version of these lines. Scartazzini, in his Leipzig commentary, pp. 546-548, quotes eight different renderings, besides that of Diez, which he adopts.

Raynouard was of opinion that the text should be as follows :—

“ Tan m'abellis vostre cortes deman,  
 Ch' ieu non me puese ni m voil a vos cobrire ;  
 Jeu sui Arnautz, che plor e vai cantan ;  
 Consiros, vei la passada follor,  
 E vei jauzen lo joi qu' esper denan ;  
 Aras vos prec, per aquella valor  
 Que us guida al som sens freich e sens calina,  
 Sovegna vos atenprar ma dolor.”

“ Il n'est pas un des nombreux manuscrits de la *Divina Commedia*, pas une des éditions multipliées qui en ont été données, qui ne présente dans les vers que Dante prête au troubadour Arnaud Daniel, un texte défiguré et devenu, de copie en copie, presque inintelligible. Cependant j'ai pensé qu'il n'était pas impossible de rétablir le texte de ces vers, en comparant avec soin, dans les manuscrits de Dante que possèdent les dépôts publics de Paris, toutes les variantes qu'ils pouvaient fournir, et en les choisissant d'après les règles grammaticales et les notions lexicographiques de la langue des troubadours. Mon espoir n'a point été trompé, et sans aucun secours conjectural, sans aucun déplacement ni changement de mots, je suis parvenu, par le simple choix des variantes, à retrouver le texte primitif, tel qu'il a dû être produit par Dante ” (Raynouard, *Lexique Roman*, Paris, 1830, 8vo, tom. i, p. xlii).

END OF CANTO XXVI.



## CANTO XXVII.

THE SEVENTH CORNICE—SENSUALITY (CONCLUDED)—THE ANGEL OF PURITY—THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE FLAMES—ASCENT OF THE LAST STAIRWAY—ARRIVAL IN THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE—VIRGIL'S FAREWELL.

FROM the ninth Canto, until the close of the scene last described, Dante has been describing Purgatory proper, divided into seven Cornices, in which the seven capital sins are purged in different ways. From now to the end of the *Cantica*, we shall have the description of the *Post Purgatorio*, wherein is situated the Paradise of Delights, figurative of the Church Militant.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 45. Dante describes the appearance of an Angel, who purges him from Sensuality, the seventh and last sin; and invites him, with the assistance of Virgil, to pass through the fire into the Terrestrial Paradise.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 46 to ver. 87, he tells of his passage through the fire.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 88 to ver. 108, he relates how night came upon the Poets; how they slept on the stairway; and Dante's dream.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 109 to ver. 142, is contained Virgil's farewell exhortation to Dante.





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Si stava il sole ; onde il giorno sen giva,  
Quando l' Angel di Dio \* lieto ci apparse.

As when he darts forth his first quivering rays on the spot where his Maker shed His blood, while Ebro is sinking beneath the lofty Libra, and the waters of the Ganges are being scorched by the noonday heat, so stood the Sun ; and therefore the day was departing, when God's Angel, full of gladness, appeared to us.

In the words of the Beatitude (*St. Matt. v, 8*), especially appropriate to the occasion, the Angel pronounces an Absolution, not alas! for Virgil, but for Dante and Statius alone. These two Poets, having now been purged from the seven mortal sins, have qualified themselves to ascend to the Terrestrial Paradise, where they will have a vision of Christ, and thence ascend still higher.

statement false and nonsensical, since it practically would describe sunrise, *i.e.* the light burning forth *di nuovo*, as taking place at the Ganges at the same time as at Jerusalem (see ll. 1 and 2), which is manifestly absurd. The corrupt readings here (as is often the case) have a large majority of MSS. on their side, in somewhat the following proportions . . . *nona* in 65, *Nova* in 77, *novo* in 64 MSS. With the true reading *nona*, the interpretation proceeds quite simply as before. It was sunrise in Jerusalem, consequently midnight in Spain ; (note how *Libra* is used here exactly as in *Purg. ii, 5*, to indicate the middle point of night while the Sun is in Aries at the vernal Equinox). It was therefore noon at the Ganges, and consequently (*onde*, as Dante concludes in l. 5) it was sunset, or the day was departing, in *Purgatory*."

\* *l' Angel di Dio* : On this Cornice alone there are two Angels, one on each side of the flame ; this one is the usual guardian of the Cornice—the Angel of Purity. Scartazzini thinks the other must be the Angel Warder of the Terrestrial Paradise. See Pietro di Dante on this passage : "In principio noctis quando ut plurimum committitur et incalescit vitium et crimen luxuriosi ignis, fingit se mitti et duci ab Angelo, id est ab iudicio conscientiae, et a Virgilio, id est ab iudicio rationis, eodem tempore in flammam et incendium conscientiae et reprehensionis talis vitii."



The Angel now invites them to pass on, but says that they must first go through the flames.

Puor della fiamma stava in sulla riva,\*

E cantava: *Beati mundo corde,*

In voce assai più che la nostra viva.†

Poscia:—"Più non si va, se pria non morde,‡

10

Anime sante, il foco: entrate in esso,

Ed al cantar di là non siate sorde,"—

Ci disse, come noi gli fummo presso:

Perch' io divenni tal, quando lo intesi,

Quale è colui che nella fossa è messo.§

15

\* *in sulla riva*: Of the three lines in this *terzina*, Perez (*op. cit.* p. 257, *et seq.*) observes that l. 7 indicates the completeness of the Purity, which no hostile flame can injure, and its secure habitation in spots that are inaccessible to the wicked. Line 8, while alluding to the Beatitude: "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,*" also alludes to the abode in which Purity is generated. Line 9 is full of love and eloquence. Some have described the voice as the best part of human life, and certainly the perfection of human life is shown in the purity of the voice.

† *voce assai più che la nostra viva*: We are to understand that the voice of the Angel of Purity was clear, distinct, harmonious, and musical. Perez remarks that we have here a direct contrast with the stammering woman in *Purg.* xix, 7, who is the type of Concupiscence:—

"Mi venne in sogno una femmina balba."

We may notice too that, in ll. 43-45 of that Canto, the Purity of the voice of the Angel of the Love of God is instinctively contrasted with that of the *femmina balba*:—

"Quand' io udi': 'Venite, qui si varca,'

Parlare in modo soave e benigno,

Qual non si sente in questa mortal marca.'

Perez adds that the difference in the types of voice noted by Dante in his poem would offer food for the most interesting observations. Dante had an exquisitely fine ear, and one of the most touching features in his reminiscences of the friends he meets with is their voice. Let it suffice to remember what he relates about Casella in *Purg.* ii, 85, 86, and 112-114; and about Forese, xxiii, 43-45.

‡ *se pria non morde . . . il foco*: Scartazzini quotes the following: "*Si per cordis munditiam libidinis flamma non extinguitur, incassum quælibet virtutes oriuntur*" (Greg. Magn. *Moralium*, lib. xxi, cap. 12).

§ *Quale è colui che nella fossa è messo*: Some have tried to explain this simply to mean that Dante became as pale as is a



Outside the flame on the extreme edge (of the Cornice) was he standing, and chanted: *Beati mundo corde* (Blessed are they of a pure heart), in a voice far more melodious than ours. Then: "No one can advance farther, O sanctified souls, if first the fire afflict not: enter into it, and be not deaf to the chant beyond it," said he to us, as he drew nigh unto him: whereat I became, when I heard it, as one who is placed in the execution-pit.

Dante is paralysed with fear: and all the terrible scenes he has witnessed, of sufferers executed at the stake, recur to his mind with horror.

In su, le man commesse, mi protesi,\*  
Guardando il foco, e immaginando forte  
Umani corpi già veduti accesi.

With interclasped hands I stretched myself upward, looking at the fire, and vividly recalling human bodies that in past times I had seen burning (at the stake).

---

corpse when placed in the grave, but Scartazzini feels certain that Dante is describing himself as a living man, in the fear of immediate death by the form of execution called in those days *propagginare*, which consisted of planting the condemned assassin head downwards like a vine in a hole dug in the earth, and then choking him to death by filling up the hole. See *Inf.* xix, 49-51. On which see the comment of the *Ottimo*, who says this mode of punishment was more particularly applied to treacherous assassins. The old decrees of Florence say: *Assassinus plantetur capite deorsum, ita quod morietur*. See *Readings on the Inferno*, vol. ii, p. 82.

\* *In su, le man commesse, mi protesi*: I find the Tuscan Commentators, such as Praticelli, Casini, Torraca and others, favour the interpretation which I now substitute for that in my previous editions. Praticelli says: "Mi distesi colla persona, commettendo insieme le mani, o inserendo le dita dell' una in quelle dell' altra, e rivoltandone le palme all' ingiù, in atto d' uomo che sta perplesso." Torraca condemns the interpretation which I used before, observing: "La costruzione; *mi protesi in su le man commesse* non darebbe un' imagine ben chiara, esatta, di ciò che Dante fece."





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Non ti potrebbe far d' un capel calvo.\*  
 E se tu credi forse ch' io t' inganni,  
 Fatti vèr lei, e fatti far credenza †  
 Con le tue mani al lembo de' tuoi panni. 30  
 Pon giù omai, pon giù ogni temenza,  
 Volgiti in qua, e vieni oltre sicuro."—  
 Ed io pur fermo, e contro a coscienza. ‡

My kind Conductors turned towards me, and Virgil said to me: "My Son, here there may be torment, but not death. Bethink thee, bethink thee . . . lo if I was able to guide thee safely upon the very (back of) Geryon, what will I not do now when so much nearer to God? Believe for certain that, wert thou even to remain within the bosom of this flame for

which he extricated him in Hell. See *Inf.* xvii, 83-88, where Dante's terror at the sight of Geryon is vividly depicted:—

"Qual è colui, ch' ha sì presso il riprezzo  
 Della quartana, ch' ha già l' unghie smorte,  
 E trema tutto pur guardando il rezzo,  
 Tal divenn' io."

Tommaséo paraphrases Virgil's words thus: "Se ti salvai dalla Frode, pessimo de' mostri, che conduceva all' infernale malizia, e per l' aria nuotando; come non ora?"

\* *capel calvo*: Compare *St. Luke* xxi, 18: "But there shall not an hair of your head perish."

† *fatti far credenza*: See *Voc. della Crusca*, s.v. *credenza*, § 27: "Saggio, prova, Lat. *experimentum*." Brunone Bianchi says that *far la credenza* was an expression used in former days about one who tasted the victuals at the table of a prince, to insure their not being poisoned. Compare *Morgante Maggiore*, xvi, st. 24:—

"E sempre di sua man servi 'l marchese  
 Massime Antea, con molta riverenzia,  
 Di coppa, di coltello, e di credenzia."

And *Ibid.* xix, st. 129:—

"E d' ogni cosa, che 'n tavola viene,  
 Sempre faceva la credenza, e 'l saggio."

Buti comments thus upon the text: "Credenza, cioè esperienza la quale fa crederc." *Credenza* is now the word for a "sideboard."

‡ *contro a coscienza*: Scartazzini thinks Dante is here alluding to the difficulties a man encounters in overcoming the attacks of Concupiscence before he can apply himself to correct it, and mortify it by worthy deeds. "Per abstinentiam carnis vitia sunt extinguenda" (*St. Greg. Mor.* lib. xx, 41).



full a thousand years, it could not make thee bald of a single hair. And if perchance thou thinkest that I am deceiving thee, step forward towards it, and make the experiment with thine own hands upon the hem of thy garments. Lay aside, from this moment, lay aside all fear, turn this way, and come onward in all security." Yet still I stood motionless in spite of conscience (which admonished me to obey).

His conscience was telling him to perform what his unerring Leader (*verace guida*) prescribed for him.

Virgil now, with knowledge of the soft side of Dante's nature, has recourse to an artifice to get round him and urge him forward.

Quando mi vide star pur fermo e duro,\*

Turbato un poco, disse:—"Or vedi, figlio,

Tra Beatrice e te è questo muro."—

35

When he saw me still stand fast and stubborn, somewhat troubled he said: "Now look, my Son, between Beatrice and thee is this wall."

Virgil's reasoning, which concludes with the sort of persuasive banter that a parent or a nurse uses to a reluctant child, is successful in overcoming Dante's fears.

Come al nome di Tisbe † aperse il ciglio

Piramo in sulla morte, e riguardolla,

\* *duro*: Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars iii, suppl. qu. i, art. 1): "Ille qui in suo sensu perseverat, rigidus, et *durus* per similitudinem vocatur; sicut *durum* in materialibus dicitur quòd non cedit tactui; unde et frangi dicitur aliquis quando a suo sensu divellitur."

† *Tisbe*: This alludes to the well-known story of Pyramus and Thisbe, two lovers in Babylon, whose tragic death at the foot of the mulberry tree, which up to that time had borne white fruit, caused it thereafter for evermore to bear purple fruit. See Ovid, *Met.* iv, 145-46:—

"Ad nomen Thisbes oculos jam morte gravatos

Pyramus erexit, visaque recondidit illa."

Benvenuto sees close analogy between the loves of Pyramus and Thisbe, and those of Dante and Beatrice.



Allor che il gelso diventò vermiglio ; \*  
 Così, la mia durezza fatta solla, † 40  
 Mi volsi al savio Duca, udendo il nome  
 Che nella mente sempre mi rampolla. ‡  
 Ond' ei crollò la fronte, § e disse :—“ Come ?  
 Volemci star di qua ? ”—indi sorrise,  
 Come al fanciul si fa ch' è vinto al pome. || 45

As, at the name of Thisbe, Pyramus when at the point of death, opened his eyes and looked upon her, at the time when the mulberry was changed into purple ; so did I, all my stubbornness being softened, turn to my sage Conductor, when I heard the name (of Beatrice) which is ever surging up in my mind. Whereupon he shook his head, and said : “ Well ! are we going to remain on this side ? ” Then he

\* *il gelso diventò vermiglio* : This is described by Ovid, *Metam.* iv, 55-166. Thisbe, before killing herself, utters a prayer which is answered by the gods (ll. 164, 165) :—

“ Vota tamen tetigere deos, tetigere parentes :

Nam color in pomo est, ubi permaturuit, ater.”

† *solla*, the same as *cedevole* (yielding) ; or *arrendevole* (flexible, supple). Compare *Inf.* xvi, 28 : *Esto loco sollo*, this yielding sandy spot. And *Purg.* v, 18 :—

“ Perchè la foga l' un dell' altro insolla.”

‡ *rampolla* : Compare *Purg.* v, 16, 17 :—

“ Chè sempre l' uomo in cui pensier rampolla

Sopra pensier, da sè dilunga il segno.”

Buti interprets the passage in the text : “ Sempre ne la mente mia si rinnova ; però che quanto più l' odo ricordare, tanto maggiore desiderio di lei mi cresce.” And Andreoli : “ Mette nuovi rampolli di amorosi ed alti pensieri.”

§ *crollò la fronte* : The Vatican MS. reads here, *crollò la testa*, but the Sta. Croce, Caetani, Cassinese, and the *First Four Editions* read *fronte*.

|| *pome* : As we have before noticed, *pome* or *pomo* means any fruit growing on a tree, not necessarily an apple, as some translate it. The proper word for apple is *mela*. On the passage in the text Landino writes : “ Spesso interviene che il fanciullo ricusa di venire *ad ubbidire* per fuggir fatica ; ma se gli è mostro [if he be shown] o mela, o pera od altro pome [fruit], va ed ubbidisce.” N.B.—The Landino of 1481 reads “ *ad ubhidire* ; ” that of 1484 reads “ *ad*.”





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He then entered into the fire in front of me, begging Statius, who for a long way before that had been between us (*lit.* divided us), to come on behind. As soon as I was in it (the fire), I would willingly have cast myself into molten glass to cool me, so immeasurable was the burning there. My beloved Father (Virgil), to encourage me, spoke of nothing but Beatrice as we walked along, saying: "Already methinks I see her eyes."

As Beatrice represents Theology, the observation may remind one of the supplication in the Book of Common Prayer, that "in all our sufferings here upon earth, we may steadfastly look up to Heaven." Virgil, symbol of human science, tacitly acknowledges the insufficiency of earthly means to comfort and sustain Man in times of great sorrow and suffering.

The Poets are now so enveloped in flames, that they cannot see their way, but an angelic song guides their steps.

The Angel had enjoined them in ver. 12, *al cantar di là non siate sorde*, meaning that, when in the fire, they were to listen to the chant on the far side of it. The voice is, as we shall gather from vv. 58-63, that of another Angel, who is doubtless the Guardian of the

insegnare a considerarlo e contemplarlo." In Canto xxxi, 109, the four Maidens who represent the Cardinal Virtues say to Dante:—

"Menrenti agli occhi suoi."

In *Conv.* ii, c. 16, ll. 27, 28, Dante writes: "Gli occhi di questa donna sono le sue *dimostrazioni*, le quali dritte negli occhi dello intelletto, innamorano l'anima." On the power of the eyes of Beatrice, see *Par.* xv, 34-36:—

" . . . dentro agli occhi suoi ardeva un riso  
Tal, ch' io pensai co' miei toccar lo fondo  
Della mia grazia e del mio Paradiso."



Terrestrial Paradise. Unlike the two with flaming swords placed there by God to drive away whoever should approach, this one, the Angel of Purity, invites the pure in heart to enter, addressing himself to the Poets.

Guidavaci \* una voce che cantava 55

Di là; e noi, attenti pure a lei,  
Venimmo fuor là dove si montava.

Venite, † *benedicti patris mei,*

Sonò dentro ad un lume che lì era, ‡

Tal che mi vinse, e guardar nol potei. 60

— "Lo sol sen va," — soggiunse, — "e vien la sera ;

Non v' arrestate, ma studiate il passo,

Mentre che l' occidente nons' annera." —

\* *Guidavaci*: Cesari (p. 488) compares this distant chant, guiding the penitents through the flames, to boats on the Lago di Garda, which, during the fogs that are prevalent there, have bells on their prows, to help them to avoid collisions. Scartazzini observes that, whereas in the other Cornices it had always been an Angel who effaced one of the seven P's from Dante's brow, in this Cornice there is no such mention, and we are left to infer that the last P, signifying the sin of Lust, is burnt out while he is in the fire. This is commented on by Pietro di Dante: "Et nota auctorem in hoc vitio fuisse multum implicitum, ut nunc ostendit de incendio quod habuit in dicta flamma in reminiscencia conscientia." In none of the Cornices of Purgatory, and not even in Hell, has Dante had to suffer so much as in this Cornice of the Lustful. In *Purg.* xiii, 133-38, he says that he fears he will have *after death* to do penance among the Proud and Envious, but he now finds that for a few moments he has to suffer the torments of the lustful even before his death.

† *Venite*: Scartazzini points out that, as the Angel Warder at the entrance of Purgatory takes the functions of St. Peter, so does the Angel at the exit from Purgatory take the functions of Jesus Christ, pronouncing the great sentence that will be repeated on the Day of Judgment.

‡ *un lume che lì era*: The light was the radiant form of the Angel, far exceeding in brightness those whom Dante had previously seen. As the Poets issued from the flames, they were just opposite the stairway leading up to the Terrestrial Paradise, and the Angel stood at the foot of the staircase.



A voice that was singing on the far side (of the fire) guided us on; and we, giving our attention to it alone, issued forth where the ascent began. *Come, ye blessed of My Father,\** sounded from the interior of a light that was there, so (brilliant) that it overcame me, and I could not gaze upon it. "The Sun is sinking fast," added (the voice), "and the night cometh; † tarry not, but press on your steps, before that the West shall become darkened by night."

We know from Canto vii, 52, that, as soon as the night falls in Purgatory, all progress is arrested. And therefore the Angel advises their not delaying on the very threshold of the Terrestrial Paradise, as though he would say, "Life is short, Death is at hand."

Benvenuto draws attention to the fact that, up to this point, the road had been winding round the circuit of the mount; but here, as in the *Anti-Purgatorio*, it diverges and ascends through a hollow way straight up to the summit. This path Dante now describes. Benvenuto thinks he wishes, by an allegory, to speak of the path of virtue.

Hardly have the three Poets commenced the ascent of the stairway, when the Sun sets, and as by the law of Purgatory further progress is not permitted at night, they lie down upon the steps of the staircase and Dante falls into a deep sleep.

Dritta salia la via per entro il sasso,  
Verso tal parte, ch' io toglieva i raggi

65

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\* See *St. Matt.* xxv, 34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

† This reminds one of *St. John* ix, 4: "The night cometh, when no man can work."





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La possa del salir più che il diletto.\*

75

The passage ascended straight up through the rock, in such direction, that before me I impeded the rays of the Sun, which was already low. And but of few steps had we essayed the proof, when both I and my Sages, by reason of the disappearance of my shadow, perceived that the Sun had set behind us. And ere the horizon in all its boundless expanse had assumed one unvaried hue (of gloom), and ere night had diffused its darkness equally all over it (*lit.* had made all its distributions), each of us made a bed of a stair; forasmuch as the nature of the mountain had taken away from us the power of ascending even more than the desire (to do so).

Benvenuto says that Dante probably means that he gave himself up to nocturnal meditation with Statius, a poet of moral science, and with Virgil, a poet of natural science.

Quali si fanno ruminando manse †

Le capre, state rapide e proterve

Sopra le cime, avanti che sien pranse,

\* *il diletto*: Giuliani is quoted by Scartazzini as saying, that Virgil had to enter the fire of purification to render himself worthy of passing the threshold of the Terrestrial Paradise; and Statius because he would naturally do so before ascending to God. Dante had to go through that trial and torment as though to mortify the spirit of the flesh as a holocaust to God. Scartazzini thinks that Virgil and Statius had to pass through the flames for the simple reason that there was no other way to ascend. They lay themselves down on a step to obey the law of the holy mountain, which cannot be ascended by night. They do not sleep, not being subject to the imperfections of the flesh, but, like the shepherds, watch all night, while Dante alone, from having the flesh of Adam (*quel d' Adamo*) was overcome by sleep.

† *ruminando manse Le capre*: Boccaccio, in his *Vita di Dante*, relates that Dante wrote two very beautiful Eclogues, in answer to some verses sent to him by his friend Maestro Giovanni del Virgilio, a distinguished poet of Bologna who himself wrote an epitaph on Dante after his death. In the second of these Eclogues of Dante (ll. 7-15) there is a passage resembling this one of the goats.



Tacite all' ombra, mentre che il sol ferve,  
 Guardate dal pastor che in sulla verga 80  
 Poggiato s' è, e lor poggiato serve : \*  
 E quale il mandrian † che fuori alberga,  
 Lungo il peculio ‡ suo queto pernotta,  
 Guardando perchè fiera non lo sperga ;  
 Tali eravamo tutti e tre allotta, 85  
 Io come capra, ed ei come pastori,  
 Fasciati quinci e quindi d' alta grotta. §

Even as the goats become quiet while ruminating, which had been agile and impetuous upon the mountain tops before they took their meal, resting hushed in the shade, as long as the sun is hot, watched by their shepherd who leans upon his staff, and thus leaning watches them; and as the herdsman that lives in the open, watches by night beside his resting flock, keeping guard that no wild beast scatter it; even so at that hour were we all three, I like a goat, and they like shepherds, hedged in on either side by lofty rock.

Benvenuto explains that while ascending the winding road, like those striving after virtue, they might have

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\* *lor poggiato serve* : Others read "*e lor di posa serve*," "and resting while they rest causes them to rest also," but the former reading has an overwhelming weight of MS. authority. Benvenuto says: Like as the goats ascend the high hill tops, and gather the most succulent branches, shrubs and leaves, and when satiated, are led by the shepherd to ruminate in the shade, so Dante's spirit soars to more lofty themes, to feed on more elevated thoughts, which he can think out and discuss with his guides, at a time well fitted for the contemplation of the new and sublime matter of which he will now have to treat.

† *mandriano* is a herdsman rather than a shepherd (*pastore*), and has charge rather of large cattle than of sheep.

‡ *peculio* is said to be a mixed flock of sheep and goats. Compare Virgil (*Georg.* iv, 433-436) :—

"Ipse velut stabuli custos in montibus olim,  
 Vesper ubi e pastu vitulos ad tecta reducit,  
 Auditisque lupos acuunt balatibus agni,  
 Considit scopulo medius, numerumque recenset."

§ *d' alta grotta* : Some read *dalla grotta*.



slipped over the edge of the Cornice, but, having once arrived at an abode of bliss, there is no more falling away.

*Division III.*—Dante now relates how he fell into a deep sleep and had a dream, which Benvenuto calls *nobile somnium*. He indicates the hour at which he fell asleep.

Poco potea parer li del di fuori ;  
 Ma per quel poco vedev' io le stelle,  
 Di lor solere e più chiare e maggiori.\* 90  
 Sì ruminando, e sì mirando in quelle,  
 Mi prese il sonno ; il sonno che sovente,  
 Anzi che il fatto sia sa le novelle.†

(Of the sky) outside but little could be seen ; but in that little I beheld the stars more brilliant and larger than their wont. Thus musing, and thus gazing

\* *le stelle . . . più chiare e maggiori* : Antonelli says that the increased brilliancy of the stars would be due to the intensely pure and rarefied air of that elevated region ; and, as regards their appearing larger, it is probable that Dante wished to convey to his readers that he had reached such an altitude, as to be appreciably nearer to the starry sphere, so that the stars would actually seem larger. Benvenuto confirms this conception : “ *Stellæ videbantur clariores sibi et majores solito, quia erat vicinior cœlo et in loco puro a nubibus : distantia enim loci facit stellas videri minimas, quæ sunt in se maximæ.* ”

† *il sonno che sovente, Anzi che il fatto sia sa le novelle* : Dreams prophetic of things really about to happen were supposed to be those dreamt in the morning before waking. Compare *Inf.* xxvi, 7:—

“ Ma se presso al mattin del ver si sogna.”

And *Purg.* ix, 13:—

“ Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai  
 La rondinella presso alla mattina,  
 Forse a memoria de' suoi primi guai,  
 E che la mente nostra peregrina  
 Più dalla carne, e men da pensier presa,  
 Alle sue vision quasi è divina ;  
 In sogno mi pareva,” etc.





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Per piacermi allo specchio qui m' adorno ;  
 Ma mia suora Rachel mai non si smaga  
 Dal suo miraglio,\* e siede tutto giorno. 105  
 Ell' è de' suoi begli occhi veder vaga,  
 Com' io dell' adornarmi con le mani ;  
 Lei lo vedere, e me l' oprare appaga."—

About the hour, I think, when Venus, who ever seems to burn with the fire of love, first beamed upon the mountain (of Purgatory) from the East, methought I saw in a dream a young and beauteous Lady walking over a plain, culling flowers, and in her song she was saying: "Let whoever may demand my name know that I am Leah, and I go moving about my fair hands, to make for myself a garland. To please me at the mirror (*i.e.* God) I here adorn myself, but my sister Rachel never departs from her looking-glass, and sits at it all day. She is as eager to gaze at her lovely eyes, as I to adorn myself with my hands; contemplation is her delight, and work is mine."

Scartazzini says that, to understand better the difficulties in the lines from 94 to 108, it will be well to consult passages from St. Thomas Aquinas.

In *Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. clxxix, art. 1: "Quia quidam homines precipuè intendunt contemplatione veritatis, quidam verò intendunt principaliter exterioribus actionibus, inde est quòd vita hominis convenienter dividitur per activam et contemplativam." Again, *Ibid.* art. 2: "Istæ duæ vitæ significantur per duas uxores

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\* *miraglio*: Several important texts, including the Vatican and the Berlin MSS., read *ammiraglio*, which is never used in the sense of "mirror" in the Italian language. On the other hand Fra Guittone (*Lett.* 13) does use *miraglio* in that sense: "Carissimi, del mondo miragli siete voi tutti nel mondo magni, a cui s' affaitan tutti i minori vostri." *Miraglio* is the reading of the Santa Croce, Cactani, Cassinese, and Vienna MSS. Also of the *First Four Editions*, Witte, Benvenuto, Cesari, Tommaséo, Scartazzini, and others.



Jacob: activa quidem per Liam, contemplativa verò per Rachelem; et per duas mulieres quæ Dominum hospitio receperunt: contemplativa quidem per Mariam, activa verò per Martham . . . Divisio ista datur de vita humana; quæ quidem attenditur secundùm intellectum. Intellectus autem dividitur per activum et contemplativum, quia finis intellectivæ cognitionis vel est ipsa cognitio veritatis, quod pertinet ad intellectum contemplativum; vel est aliqua exterior actio, quod pertinet ad intellectum practicum sive activum." Again, *Ibid.* qu. clxxxii, art. 2: "Deum diligere secundùm se est magis meritorium quàm diligere proximum . . . Vita autem contemplativa directè et immediatè pertinet ad dilectionem Dei; vita autem activa directius ordinatur ad dilectionem proximi. Et ideò ex suo genere contemplativa vita est majoris meriti quàm activa." In *Conv.* ii, cap. 5, ll. 80-85, Dante, in accordance with the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, contends that the contemplative life is the one which most resembles God, and is more loved by Him. The Terrestrial Paradise, into which Dante is just entering, is a figure of the happiness of this contemplative life; the Celestial Paradise symbolizes the blessedness of Life Eternal. At the entrance of the Terrestrial Paradise, Dante in a dream sees Leah, who represents the perfection of the active life that must follow after expiation of sins, and is but a step to the contemplative life, a link between Purgatory and Heaven, between politics and religion, between Virgil and Beatrice. Leah speaks to Dante of her sister Rachel, who forecasts to him the sight of Beatrice, the two latter both symbolizing the contemplative life.

Dante's dream therefore is intended to show him the double life of Man when purified, and at the same



time shows him by anticipation what he will see when in *Paradise*. His vision is a foreshadowing of Matelda and Beatrice in the *Terrestrial Paradise*. In the *Old Testament* Leah is the symbol of the *Active Life*, and Rachel of the *Contemplative*: as Martha and Mary are in the *New Testament*, and Matelda and Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*.

Ruskin (*Mod. Painters*, iii, p. 222) says: "This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain; but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe: Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *Her Own Labour*. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *Her Own Image*. These are the types of the *Unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of Man*. But Beatrice and Matelda are the same powers, *Glorified*. And how are they *Glorified*? Leah took delight in her own *Labour*; but Matelda, in *operibus manuum Tuarum—in God's Labour*: Rachel, in the sight of her own face; Beatrice in the sight of *God's face*." [These italics are Ruskin's own.]

*Division IV.*—In this concluding portion of the *Canto*, we learn how Dante awakes from his dream, how Virgil in noble language takes leave of him, giving him much comfort and wholesome advice.

The dawn of the fourth day in *Purgatory*, Wednesday, April 13th, 1300, is beautifully described.

E già, per gli splendori antelucani,

Che tanto ai peregrin surgon più grati

110

Quanto tornando albergan men lontani,\*

---

\* *men lontani* or *più lontani*: Of these two much disputed readings the one most commonly adopted is *men lontani*, which





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—“ Quel dolce pome,\* che per tanti rami 115  
 Cercando va la cura dei mortali,  
 Oggi porrà in pace le tue fami.”—  
 Virgilio inverso me queste cotali  
 Parole usò, e mai non furo strenne †  
 Che fosser di piacere a queste eguali. 120  
 Tanto voler sopra voler mi venne  
 Dell' esser su, ch' ad ogni passo poi

\* *dolce pome* : Compare *Inf.* xvi, 61, 63:—

“ Lascio lo fele, e vo per dolci pomi  
 Promessi a me per lo verace Duca.”

And *Deut.* xxxiii, 14: “And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon.” And *Rev.* xviii, 14: “And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee.” Scartazzini thinks that Dante drew not only his opinions, but also much of the words of the present passage from one in Boëthius (*Philos. Consol.* iii, pr. ii): “Omnis mortalium cura, quam multiplicium studiorum labor exercet, diverso quidem calle procedit, sed ad unum tamen beatitudinis finem nititur pervenire. Id autem est bonum, quo quis adepto nihil ulterius desiderare queat. Quod quidem est omnium summum bonorum, cunctaque intra se bona continens: cui si quid abforet, summum esse non posset; quoniam relinqueretur extrinsecus quod posset optari. Liquet igitur, beatitudinem esse statum bonorum omnium congregatione perfectum. Hunc, uti diximus, diverso tramite mortales omnes conantur adipisci. Est enim mentibus hominum veri boni naturaliter inserta cupiditas: sed ad falsa devius error abducit. Quorum quidem alii summum esse bonum nihilo indigere credentes, ut divitiis affluent, elaborant: alii vero bonum, quod sit dignissimum veneratione, judicantes, adeptis honoribus, reverendi civibus suis esse nituntur. Sunt qui summum bonum in summa potentia esse constituent: hi vel regnare ipsi volunt, vel regnantibus adhærere conantur. Plurimi vero boni fructum gaudio lætitiæque metiuntur: hi felicissimum putant voluptate diffuere. . . . Sed summum bonum beatitudinem esse definimus. Quare beatum esse judicat statum quem præ ceteris quisque desiderat.”

† *strenne* : *Strenna* is derived from the Latin *strenna*, a gratuity. The French word is *étrennes* (plur.) and both mean a present given on a special day such as a Christmas, a New Year's, or an Easter present. The *Postillatore Cassinese* explains the passage: “*Strenne* qui primum donum quod datur in Kalendarum dicuntur, ut in decretis habetur.” And Pietro di Dante: “dicitur strenna mancia, quæ datur in principio Kalendarum.”



Al volo mi sentia crescer le penne.\*

“That sweet fruit (*i.e.* The Supreme Good), which the anxious care of mortals goes in quest of upon so many branches, will this day appease thy hungerings.” Such words did Virgil use to me, and never were there guerdons that were for pleasure equal to these. Within me longing so grew upon longing to be above, that at every step thereafter I felt my wings growing stronger for flight.

We now reach the time when Virgil, knowing that Dante is about to enter into the presence of Beatrice, Divine Science, and that the companionship of himself, Human Science, will no longer be necessary, addresses his last farewell to Dante, in noble and touching words. We may infer that these are spoken on the very threshold of the Terrestrial Paradise, and although we see Virgil continue to be Dante's silent companion over the Debatable Land, yet as soon as Beatrice appears he vanishes for ever.†

Implying that purer eyes than his are required to guide Dante through the Terrestrial Paradise, Virgil

\* *crescer le penne*: From the intensity of his joy, Dante felt so light that he could almost fly. See *Par.* xv, 71-72:—

“ . . . ed arrisemi [or arrosemi] un cenno  
Che fece crescer l' ali al voler mio.”

And lines 79-81:—

“Ma voglia ed argomento nei mortali,  
Per la cagion ch' a voi è manifesta,  
Diversamente son pennuti in ali.”

† Benvenuto thinks that Virgil vanished after concluding his address, but that is manifestly an error, for Virgil is twice spoken of afterwards. See *Purg.* xxviii, 145-47:—

“Io mi volsi dietro allora tutto  
A' miei Poeti, e vidi che con riso  
Udito avevan l' ultimo costrutto.”

And again *Purg.* xxix, 55-57:—

“Io mi rivolsi d' ammirazion pieno  
Al buon Virgilio, ed esso mi rispose  
Con vista carica di stupor non meno.”



sadly points out the way to his beloved pupil, telling him he must henceforth consider himself emancipated from human teachers and governors, and, until he passes under the tutelage of Beatrice, he must walk on under the sole guidance of his own free will.

Come la scala tutta sotto noi

Fu corsa, e fummo in su 'l grado superno, 125

In me ficcò Virgilio gli occhi suoi,

E disse:—" Il temporal foco e l' eterno

Veduto hai, figlio, e sei venuto in parte

Dov' io per me più oltre non discerno.\*

Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte ; † 130

Lo tuo piacere ‡ omai prendi per duce :

\* *non discerno* : Compare *Purg.* xviii, 48:—

" Ed egli a me : ' Quanto ragion qui vede

Dirti poss' io ; da indi in là t' aspetta

Pure a Beatrice ; ch' opera è di fede.' "

† *con ingegno e con arte* : Martini (*La Div. Com. dichiarata secondo i principii della filosofia*, Torino, 1840) explains this well: " L'ingegno è naturale : ma si può perfezionare colla cultura. Perciò suol dividersi in *nativo* ed *acquisito*. Non è mai interamente acquisito ; ma con tal nome s' intende il nativo perfezionato con l' esercizio. Virgilio per *ingegno* intende il nativo, e per *arte* l' *acquisito*." Scartazzini, who quotes the above, understands the words to mean : " I have brought thee thus far, making use of the gifts that have been vouchsafed me by Nature, as well as of the arts which I have studied."

‡ *Lo tuo piacere* : Comparing this passage with *Ecclus.* xv, 14 (*Vulg.*), " Deus ab initio constituit hominem, et reliquit illum in manu consilii sui," Scartazzini explains that *piacere* sometimes signifies *arbitrio*, and at others *proprio consilio*. When Virgil tells Dante that, from that time forth, he is to take his pleasure (*piacere*) for his guide, he certainly does not in the least mean that Dante is to act without prudence, but that he considers Dante capable of guiding himself. Therefore *piacere* is to be taken here rather with the signification of *consiglio* than of *arbitrio*, and Scartazzini interprets the words, " Let your own good sense guide you." But *piacere* must not be taken in the sense of *volere*, for the will is not here looked upon as a leader, but as a follower after wisdom. The Commentators mostly have it that Dante was now completely purified, and therefore could follow his own





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Liberò,\* dritto † e sano è tuo arbitrio, 140  
 E fallo fòra non fare a suo senno :  
 Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio."—‡

When the stairway was all run over beneath us, and we were on the topmost step, Virgil fastened his eyes upon me, and said: "My Son, thou hast seen the temporal fire (of Purgatory), and the eternal (fire of Hell), and art come to a place where of myself I can see no further. I have led thee thus far with discernment and with skill; henceforth take for thy guide thine own good sense: thou art (now) beyond the steep paths, beyond the narrow ones. Behold there the Sun which is shining on thy brow; behold the soft grass, the flowers, and the shrubs, which in this region (the Terrestrial Paradise) the soil spontaneously brings forth. Until in joy come to thee those beauteous eyes (of Beatrice), which when they

\* *Liberò*: Dante writes in the *De Monarchia*, lib. i, c. 12, ll. 5-26: "Primum principium nostræ libertatis est libertas arbitrii, quam multi habent in ore, in intellectu vero pauci. Veniunt namque usque ad hoc, ut dicant liberum arbitrium esse, liberum de voluntate iudicium. Et verum dicunt . . . . Si iudicium moveat omnino appetitum, et nullo modo præveniatur ab eo, liberum est; si vero ab appetitu, quocumque modo præveniente, iudicium moveatur, liberum esse non potest."

† *dritto*: Dante would be in perfect uprightness by keeping himself in conformity with "*Giustizia, la quale ordina noi ad amare ed operare dirittura in tutte le cose*" (*Conv.* iv, cap. 17, ll. 62-64).

‡ *corono e mitrio*: Scartazzini explains this: "I place on thy head the mitred crown of the Emperors." In early times it was usual to place on the head of the Emperor, first the mitre, and upon the mitre the Imperial crown. The ecclesiastical mitre is quite out of the question here, for two reasons. In the first place Virgil would have no power to confer it; and secondly, Dante was not to become from this moment bishop and pastor to himself, but was to be under the direction of his spiritual guide, Beatrice. Scartazzini sums up Virgil's last words thus: "I pronounce thee to be Emperor of thyself, that is, director of thine own reason in the practice of moral and intellectual virtues: thou needest no longer a rider to bestride thee to direct thy will, to hold thee in check with bit and bridle, and to turn thy steps into the direct road."



wept made me come to thy succour, thou mayest sit down (on the grass), and mayest walk among them (the flowers and shrubs). Expect no further speech or sign from me. Thy will is released, upright, and sound, and thou wouldst err greatly not to act upon its judgment; wherefore I crown and mitre thee (as sovereign) over thyself."

Dean Plumptre says: "The most natural interpretation is, that Dante now takes his place among those who are kings and priests unto God (1 *Pet.* ii, 9; *Rev.* i, 6; *Rev.* v, 10). Difficulties have been raised on the ground that the mitre was used in the Roman ritual for the coronation of an emperor. Otho is described as both *coronatus et mitratus*, and hence Scartazzini urges that both words refer to civil and not to ecclesiastical functions. On the other hand this may be traversed by the fact that the word *corona* was used as an equivalent to *mitra*, so that both the words might refer to the Episcopate."

Benvenuto does not seem to attach any ecclesiastical sense to the words, but translates: "Facio te super te regem et dominum."

END OF CANTO XXVII.



## CANTO XXVIII.

THE EARTHLY PARADISE—THE RIVER LETHE—MATELDA—  
THE WIND AND THE WATER IN THE TERRESTRIAL  
PARADISE.

IN the last Canto Dante described how he and his companions had at length reached the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory, where they find the Terrestrial Paradise, of which the present Canto is a description.

Benvenuto divides it into four principal parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 33, Dante describes the freshness and luxuriance of the herbage and trees; the wind, the water, and the birds.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 34 to ver. 84, he speaks of meeting a beautiful lady.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 85 to ver. 120, Dante puts a question to the beautiful lady as to the reason of water and wind existing in a region placed higher than the Gate of Purgatory, and she answers him respecting the wind.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 121 to ver. 148, the beautiful lady completes her answer to Dante's question, by explaining to him whence comes the water which irrigates this holy spot.

Benvenuto adds that the whole of this Canto is figurative and allegorical. Were we not to look at it





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*Purgatorio* proper. Landino calls the Terrestrial Paradise the *Post-Purgatorio*. It was situated, according to Dante, above the uppermost Cornice or Circle of Purgatory proper; and no spirit could enter therein until purged of all its sins.

Dante paints the Paradise of Delights in the most glowing colours.\*

We must remember that it is now the early morning of Wednesday in Easter week; the seventh and last day of Dante's journey. We know, from l. 133 of the last Canto, that the Sun has risen, and is shining full in Dante's face.

Vago già di cercar dentro e dintorno  
 La divina foresta spessa e viva,  
 Ch' agli occhi temperava il nuovo giorno,†  
 Senza più aspettar lasciai la riva,‡  
 Prendendo la campagna § lento lento||

5

\* Among the best known descriptions of ideal landscapes may be mentioned the following: Homer, *Odyssey*, v, description of the visit of Mercury to the Island of Calypso. Sophocles, *Œdipus Coloneus*, descriptions of the wood of Colonos. Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, xviii, Garden of Armida. Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, vi, x, 6, Mount Acidale. Milton, *Par. Lost*, iv, 214-270, The Terrestrial Paradise.

† *il nuovo giorno*: We are to understand *giorno* to mean the blazing light of the full-risen Sun.

‡ *la riva*: Dante and his guides have just surmounted the last step of the stairway, and are standing on the edge of the plateau or table land at the summit. Dante now quits this edge, and walks across the table land. Scartazzini explains *riva*, "l' estremità di quel piano."

§ *Prendendo la campagna*: Compare *Inf.* vii, 17:—

"Pigliando più della dolente ripa."

And *Inf.* xii, 28, 29:—

"Così prendemmo via giù per lo scarco  
 Di quelle pietre."

And *Purg.* i, 107, 108:—

"Lo sol vi mostrerà, che surge omai,  
 Prender lo monte a più lieve salita."

|| *lento lento*: "Fra quelle delizie non poteva aver voglia di correre" (Cesari). Benvenuto says of *lento lento* that Dante was



Su per lo suol che d' ogni parte oliva.\*

Already eager to explore within and around the heavenly forest, which, luxuriant and evergreen, made the new-born day tempered to my eyes, without waiting longer I left the mountain's edge, very slowly roaming across the plain, over the soil that on every side breathed fragrance.

Dante's delight in this beautiful region is such, that he cannot hurry over any part of it. He describes the soft wind wafted through the forest.

Benvenuto says that the moral Dante wishes us to deduce from the passage that now follows is that, however much Man, in a state of virtue, may find light winds, *i.e.* slight troubles, come upon him, yet they do not hinder him from performing his allotted duties any more than, in the Terrestrial Paradise, they crush or overthrow the trees that are in it. Although the branches bend where the wind strikes upon them, yet he tells us that the little birds are not prevented from resting upon them, and filling the wood with their songs.

entering upon a sacred and, to him, unknown country with fear and trembling; and he also wished to show the difficulty of the new and lofty matter upon which he was entering.

\* *oliva* (equivalent to the Latin *olebat*) is the 3rd singular imperfect tense of *olire*. We find the word twice used by Boccaccio. See *Decam.* Giorn. ii, Nov. 5: "Nella sua camera se n' entrò, la quale di rose, di fiori, d' aranci, e d' altri odori tutta oliva." See also, *Decam.* Giorn. iii, p. 4: "Mescolato insieme con quello (odore) di molte altre cose, che per lo giardino olivano." In *Purg.* xxvii, ll. 134, 135, Virgil points out to Dante the soft grass, the flowers, and the shrubs from which we are to suppose this universal fragrance is exhaled:—

"Vedi l' erbeta, i fiori e gli arbuscelli,  
Che qui la terra sol da sè produce."

Contrast the enchanting surroundings, and the aromatic perfume of the soil as related here, with the ghastly description of the City of Dis, and its fetid atmosphere. (See *Inf.* x, 133-136.)



Un' aura dolce,\* senza mutamentot  
 Avere in sè, mi feria per la fronte  
 Non di più colpo che soave vento;  
 Per cui le fronde, tremolando pronte, 10  
 Tutte e quante piegavano alla parte  
 U' la prim' ombra gitta il santo monte :  
 Non però dal lor esser dritto sparte  
 Tanto che gli augelletti per le cime  
 Lasciasser d' operare ogni lor arte ; 15  
 Ma con piena letizia l' ôre prime,†  
 Cantando, ricevièno intra le foglie,  
 Che tenevan bordone § alle sue rime,

\* *Un' aura dolce*: This was the light breeze of early morning blowing from the East.

† *senza mutamento Avere in sè*: On this passage Dr. Moore writes to me: "Winds on earth involve a disturbance of the atmosphere in itself. This movement follows altogether the equable and calm movement of the *Primum Mobile*, without any disturbance of the particles of the air as in earthly winds. It only becomes perceptible when some obstacle intervenes, such as Dante's forehead (l. 8), or the thick wood (ll. 107, 108)."

‡ *l' ôre prime*: Scartazzini censures those Commentators who have interpreted *ôre* here as "hours," whereas he agrees with others who hold that the word stands for *aure*. He quotes from Petrarch, part i, *Son.* cxxiv (in some editions 143):—

"Parmi d' udir la, udendo i rami, e l' ôre  
 E le frondi, e gli augei lagnarsi," etc.

Benvenuto says that by the birds Dante here means to express wise and virtuous men, who soar to the summits of the virtues, and sing the praises of God with joy.

§ *tenevan bordone*. One sense of *bordone* is a cord of a violin, a lute, or other stringed instrument: and *tener bordone* signifies to keep up an accompaniment. *Tener bordone a chicchessia* (*Gran Dizionario*, § 6) means to keep pace with any one in conversation, anecdote or witticisms. In the *Etymological Dictionary of the Romance Languages chiefly from the German of F. Diez*, by T. C. Donkin, London, 1864, two distinct significations of *bordone* are given: (1) from the Ital. Span. Prov. *bordon*, and the French *bourdon* a pilgrim's staff, and (2) from the French *bourdon* a humbler-bec; and *bourdonner* to hum; and the English *burden of a song*; and "if it be true that this word meant originally a long trumpet or organ-pipe, it may be the same as the preceding *bordone* from the resemblance to a staff."





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A soft breeze that had no permutation in itself smote me on the brow with no heavier stroke than that of a gentle zephyr; by which the boughs, in tremulous accord, were one and all bent down towards that quarter (the West) whereon the holy mountain (of Purgatory) casts its first shadow. Not however so much diverted from their upright position that the little birds upon their tops had to cease from exercising their skill; but singing with uncontrolled exultation they received the first breezes of the day amid the leaves which kept up an accompaniment to their minstrelsy, such as from branch to branch is taken up through the pine wood on the shore of Chiassi, when Æolus lets forth the Scirocco.

Giovanni Villani (lib. ix, cap. 136) relates that, when Dante died in July (more modern research says in September), 1321, he had just returned from an embassy to Venice sent by the Lords of Polenta; and although there is no documentary evidence of this embassy, there is abundant testimony that during that summer Ravenna was at war against the allied States of Venice and Forlì, to avert which war the embassy had probably been sent. These documents are quoted by C. Ricci (*op. cit.*, pp. 145-154), who shows that, from July to October, the whole country between Venice and Ravenna was extremely insalubrious. He also quotes a statement of Filippo Villani that the Venetians

---

redolent with aromatic fragrance; nor can any violent winds penetrate through the thick foliage. He then adds: "E quando lo scirocco spira, di tra levante e mezzogiorno, tutte le fronde del pineto ravennate, posto sull' orlo dell' Adriatico, si piegano ad occidente mormorando con dolcezza e con una specie di ritmo e di fremito uguale e costante che è proprio de' pini, per la loro forma quasi piana al di sopra e per la qualità della chioma a steli rigidi ed acuti. Così gli uccelli non impauriti da stormire improvviso, nè da troppo ondeggiamento dei tronchi schietti [*upright*] e forti, cantano per le cime senza interruzione come raccolti in dilettevole convegno o in viva gara di voci e canti."



refused to allow Dante a return passage to Ravenna by sea, and that he must have consequently travelled back by Chioggia, by the Delta of the Po, by the Monastery of Pomposa, afterwards abandoned by the Benedictines in consequence of its pestilential climate, then by Codigoro, and by the lagoons of Comacchio. From there to Ravenna, if Dante travelled that way, he must certainly have crossed the *Pineta* in the last few miles of his journey, and C. Ricci concludes: "Rivide, al fine, Dante *la divina foresta spessa e viva*; ma invano susurravano ancora le acque scorrenti al mare, invano gli uccelli usavano lor arte, sulle cime, all' uguale e dolce mormorio delle fronde! La febbre ardeva già nelle vene del poeta, che pochi giorni dopo, tra i figli e gli amici più cari, esalava il faticato spirito!"

Dante now penetrates further into the recesses of the forest, and describes the waters that irrigated the Terrestrial Paradise.

Già m'avean trasportato i lenti passi  
 Dentro alla selva antica \* tanto, ch' io  
 Non potea rivedere ond' io m' entrassi: †  
 Ed ecco il più andar mi tolse un rio, 25  
 Che invèr sinistra con sue picciole onde  
 Piegava l' erba ‡ che in sua riva uscìo.

---

\* *selva antica*: The Garden of Paradise is one of the oldest things in Man's history, seeing that our first parents were placed there. Dante has taken the expression from Virgil—see *Æn.* vi, 179:—

"Itur in antiquam silvam, stabula alta ferarum."

† *ond' io m' entrassi*: Compare *Inf.* xv, 13-15:—

"Già eravam dalla selva rimossi  
 Tanto, ch' io non avrei visto dov' era,  
 Perch' io indietro rivolto mi fossi."

‡ *Piegava l' erba*: Compare Virgil, *Georg.* iv, 18, 19:—

"At liquidi fontes et stagna virentia musco  
 Adsint, et tenuis fugiens per gramina, rivus."



By this time had my steps, (though) leisurely, carried me so far on into that primeval forest that I could no longer see back to where I had entered it: when lo, a stream checked my further progress, which towards the left hand with its gentle ripples bent the herbage that sprouted up on its bank.

This is the river of Lethe, which is supposed to gird the Terrestrial Paradise on the one side, while the river Eunoe girds it on the other, just as the Garden of Eden was bounded by the Tigris and Euphrates. Lethe is the water of Oblivion, to indicate that the soul, which desires to attain to a state of innocence, must forget and cast behind it all those sins and failings that it has either committed or known, in order to attain singleness of mind, and to remove every incentive to sin. The waters of Oblivion flow towards the left, because they carry away the memory of evil, which is always figured as on the left hand. The sheep on the right, the goats on the left. Eunoe (from *εὖνοος*, favourable), is the contrast to Lethe, and brings back the memory of all the good that the soul has effected or known, that it may have good knowledge of all virtue.

Dante describes the purity of the water.

Tutte l' acque che son di qua più monde,  
 Parrieno avere in sè mistura \* alcuna,  
 Verso di quella che nulla nasconde ;  
 Avvegna che si mova bruna bruna †

30

\* *mistura*: This means "sediment, impurity." Compare Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. vi, Nov. x: "Ed era questo laghetto non più profondo, che sia una statura d' uomo infino al petto lunga; e senza avere in sè mistura alcuna, chiarissimo il suo fondo mostrava essere d' una minutissima ghiaia la qual tutta, chi altro non avesse avuto a fare, avrebbe, volendo, potuto annoverare." That is, the water was so pellucid, that one could have counted the little pebbles upon the gravelly bottom. I have before noticed how frequently Boccaccio has taken passages in the *Decameron* from the *Divina Commedia*.

† *Bruna bruna*: It cannot be too often repeated that the literal





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All the waters that are the most limpid here (in the world) would seem to have in themselves some impurity compared with this which (from its transparency) hides nothing in itself; although it rolls along black and darksome beneath that sempiternal shade, that never suffers a ray of Sun or Moon to penetrate it.

On this Benvenuto observes that such was the density of the foliage, that neither the light of the Sun nor Moon could pierce through the interlacing branches of the trees.

*Division II.*—Dante next describes how they met a beautiful Lady by the side of the stream, who is gathering flowers and singing.

Benvenuto wishes us to mark that Dante now beholds in reality the same lady whom, in the last Canto, he fancied he saw in a dream, in the same dress, and employed in the same occupation. Benvenuto thinks she is figured as being here to warn the purified souls that they cannot ascend to Heaven, without having passed through the hosts of the Church Militant, or without the preliminary two-fold washing

share the opinion of Buti and some other Commentators, that there is a deep allegory concealed in the above six lines. He thinks that Dante, in describing the holy forest, had in his mind some of the passages in Scripture that describe the New Jerusalem. See *Rev. xxi, 23*: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Tasso has a passage in the *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Canto xv, st. 56) which is almost copied from the one here:—

"Ma tutta insieme poi tra verdi sponde  
In profondo canal l'acqua s'aduna;  
E sotto l'ombra di perpetue fronde  
Mormorando sen va gelida e bruna;  
Ma trasparente sì che non asconde  
Dell'imo letto suo vaghezza alcuna:  
E sopra le sue rive alta si estolle  
L'erbetta, e vi fa seggio fresco e molle."



in the waters of Lethe and Eunoe. We see Matelda thus engaged, just as, at the entrance of the *Anti-Purgatorio*, we saw Cato preparing the souls by a similar preliminary washing of the face to ascend the mountain of Purgatory.

Coi piè ristetti e con gli occhi passai  
 Di là dal fumicello, per mirare 35  
 La gran variazion dei freschi mai :\*  
 E là m' apparve,† sì com' egli appare  
 Subitamente cosa che disvia  
 Per meraviglia tutt' altro pensare,  
 Una Donna soletta,† che si già 40

\* *freschi mai*: *Maio* properly signifies a branch, covered with leaves, which peasants plant on the 1st of May before the houses of their sweethearts, hanging upon it cakes, fruit, etc. It is thus described by Allegri (*Prose e Rime*, 160):—

“ E voglio  
 Dinanzi all' uscio un dl ficcarti il majo,  
 Il qual di berricuocoli e ciambelle,  
 Di melarance dolci e confortini  
 Farò gremito, e d' altre cose belle.”

But Scartazzini thinks that here *Majo* simply means any branch of a tree loaded with blossoms. In the Ræto-Romance dialect, spoken in the Grisons, *maig* signifies a bunch of flowers. See Donkin's *Etymological Dictionary of the Romance Languages*.

† *E là m' apparve . . . Donna soletta*: It is only in *Purg.* xxxiii, 119, that we learn that *Matelda* is the name of this beautiful lady. What *Matelda* she was, has given rise to a very great difference of opinion. Who, or what was it that suggested to Dante to use the name of *Matelda* for his personification of spiritual activity?

Pietro di Dante, Benvenuto, and all the old Commentators are unanimous in thinking the personage to be *Matelda of Canossa*, the “Great Countess” of Tuscany, daughter of Duke Boniface III, the friend and ally of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand), who endowed the Holy See with the great bulk of her vast possessions. Dante's first notion seems to have been to use the name of *Leah*; but though that sufficed for his dream, it did not fulfil his requirements for the person who was to introduce him to *Beatrice* and the Procession of the Church Militant, and afterwards to pass him through the river of oblivion of sin. These qualifications Dante found in the “Great Countess.” Her name must still have resounded in Tuscany, when Dante was writing, as the impersona-



Cantando ed iscegliendo fior da fiore,

tion of *ideal* beauty of body and soul combined with pious activity. It may have been from her name that he took his history, but of course Dante's *Matelda* was not the Matilda of history in the same way that the Cato of the *Anti-Purgatorio* was the Cato of history.

Of modern Commentators the majority hold the above opinion, but there is a strong and learned minority opposed to it. Fraticelli thinks it highly improbable that Dante, a Ghibelline poet, would have so much extolled a woman who was an ally of the Popes, and always warring against the Empire. Prof. Francesco d' Ovidio, in his new and important work *Il Purgatorio e il suo Preludio*, Milano, 1906, p. 573, asks how could Dante represent as a beautiful young maiden of modest demeanour, a fiery and imperious old woman of seventy, who had been twice married? In a pamphlet (*Matelda svelata*, Roma, 1900) Prof. Michele Scherillo contends that the personage referred to is Matilda, daughter of the Emperor Henry I. Both Lubin (*Studi*, pp. 314-353), and Dr. Döllinger, strongly advocate the claims of the Benedictine Nun, Mechtildis von Hackeborn, who left some writings of a mystical character; but it has now been conclusively proved that she did not die until ten years after the assumed date of Dante's vision.

There can be no doubt that Dante is now supposed to see the verification of his dream, though the person is different. In the dream it was Leah, now it is Matelda. It is like Dante's dream related in *Purg.* ix, 19, *et seq.*, when the Eagle was seen in the dream instead of Lucia. Dante has been dreaming of Leah and Rachel; when he awakes he finds neither of them, but in their stead Matelda, and afterwards Beatrice. Dr. Moore (*Studies in Dante*, iii, pp. 210-216) discusses the question in a most exhaustive way. While himself holding strongly to the generally received explanation that by Matelda is meant the "Great Countess" of Tuscany, he remarks that the subject is one of the thorniest problems in the *Divina Commedia*. Matelda's office appears to be that of Guardian of the Earthly Paradise, much in the same way as the idealized Cato is the Guardian of the lower slopes of the Mountain in Ante-Purgatory. She is perhaps the only permanent inhabitant of the *Post-Purgatorio*, as was Cato of the *Anti-Purgatorio*. She seems to represent the active life in its highest aspect. The old-world distinction between the Active and Contemplative Lives occurs frequently in the works of Dante. It is generally held that by three pairs of symbols Dante figures this antithesis: Leah and Rachel in the Old Testament (*Purg.* xxvii, 97-108); Martha and Mary in the New Testament (*Conv.* iv, xvii, l. 94, *et seq.*); Matelda and Beatrice in the *Divina Commedia*. Leah and Matelda are both introduced as gathering flowers; Rachel and Beatrice are twice described





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to be brought nearer to the works of virtue that are represented by Matelda.

—“ Deh, bella Donna, ch' ai raggi d' amore  
 Ti scaldi, s' io vo' credere ai sembianti,\*  
 Che soglion esser testimon del core, 45  
 Vegnati in voglia di trarreti avanti,”—  
 Diss' io a lei,—“ verso questa riviera,  
 Tanto ch' io possa intender che tu canti.  
 Tu mi fai rimembrar, dove e qual era  
 Proserpina nel tempo che perdette 50  
 La madre lei, ed ella primavera.”—†

\* *sembianti*: Blanc says the word *sembiante* means features, and especially so here, because in the plural. Compare *Inf.* xxiii, 145-6:—

“ Appresso il Duca a gran passi sen gi,  
 Turbato un poco d' ira nel sembiante.”

Scartazzini says of *sembianti*, that the principal features are the eyes and the smile, and quotes Dante's own words in the *Canzone* (at the opening of *Convivio* iii) that begins, “ Amor che nella mente mi ragiona.” *Str.* iv:—

“ Cose appariscon nello suo aspetto,  
 Che mostran de' piacer del Paradiso;  
 Dico negli occhi e nel suo dolce riso;  
 Che le vi reca Amor com' a suo loco.”

Compare too *Vita Nuova*, § 15, sonnet viii, 32:—

“ Lo viso mostra lo color del core.”

Compare also *Conv.* iii, 8, ll. 71-90: “ E in questi due luoghi dico io, che appariscono questi piaceri, dicendo: ‘ Negli occhi e nel suo dolce riso.’ Li quali due luoghi per bella similitudine si possono appellare balconi della Donna che nello edificio del corpo abita, cioè l' Anima, perocchè quivi, avvegnachè quasi velata, spesse volte si dimostra. Dimostrasi negli occhi tanto manifesta, che conoscer si può la sua presente passione, chi bene là mira. Onde conciossiacosachè sei passioni siano proprie dell' Anima umana, delle quali fa menzione il Filosofo nella sua *Rettorica* cioè *grazia, zelo, misericordia, invidia, amore e vergogna*, di nulla di queste puote l' Anima essere passionata, che alla finestra degli occhi non vegna la sembianza, se per grande virtù dentro non si chiude.”

† *primavera*: Both Moore and Scartazzini feel strongly that *primavera* here means the flowers of Spring that Proserpine had been gathering when seized by Pluto, and Scartazzini adds that the following quotation from Ovid, *Metam.* v, 396-399, excludes every doubt on the subject:—



“ Ah beautiful Lady, who art basking in the rays of love, if I may trust to thy features, which are wont to be the witnesses of the heart, let the will come to thee,” said I to her, “ to draw so far forward towards this stream, that I may hear what thou art singing. Thou makest me remember where and what was Proserpine, at the time her mother lost her, and she (Proserpine, lost) the flowers of spring.”

Dante means that Matelda looked as did Proserpine, when Pluto first saw her gathering flowers in Sicily, at the time Ceres, her mother, lost her, and Proserpine lost the bright world, and the joy of the spring flowers.

Benvenuto considers that Dante wished to express to Matelda: “ Thou seemest to me like a goddess, beautiful and modest as Diana the goddess of chastity.” Diana was called Luna on earth, and Hecate or Proserpine in Hell; Diana being properly her name in Olympus.

In beautiful language Dante now describes how

“ Dea territa mæsto

Et matrem et comites, sed matrem sæpius, ore  
Clamat; et, ut summa vestem laniarat ab ora,  
Collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis.”

Compare also Virg. *Bucol. Ecl.* ix, 40, 41:—

“ Hic ver purpureum: varios hic flumina circum  
Pundit humus flores.”

Dante uses the word again to signify “flowers” in *Par.* xxx, 61-63:—

“ E vidi lume in forma di riviera  
Fulvido di fulgore, intra due rive  
Dipinte di mirabil primavera.”

The following is Buti's interpretation of the passage in the text: “ *Primavera* . . . , cioè lo prato, e la verdura, nella quale ella era a cogliere fiori.” And to this comment the *Gran Dizionario* (§ 3) adds:—

“ E i fiori che a lei, rapita, caddero di grembo.”

Scartazzini notices that in Tuscany the flower which is one of the first to show in spring, a kind of daisy, is called *primavera*.



Matelda complies with his request by turning towards him, and drawing near enough for the words of her song to reach him across the stream.

Come si volge, con le piante strette  
 A terra ed intra sè, donna che balli,  
 E piede innanzi piede a pena mette,  
 Volsesi in sui vermigli ed in sui gialli \* 55  
 Fioretti verso me, non altrimenti  
 Che vergine che gli occhi onesti avvalli : †

---

\* *vermigli . . . gialli*: See Buti on this: "Dice l' autore che li fiori erano *vermilli e gialli* per dare ad intendere che li esempi virtuosi, in su quali tegnano le loro affezioni le persone virtuose che sono date a le virtù attive, sono esempi che procedono da carità, infiammanti d' amore di Dio e del prossimo; e però finge che siano *vermilli*: e sono tutti puri e splendienti come è l' oro e però finge che siano *gialli*." In the *Libro della Grazia Speciale*, alluded to above, and quoted by Lubin (*op. cit.* p. 335), the following mystic vision of Mechtildis von Hackeborn is related, which bears a curious analogy to Dante's description of Matelda among the flowers in the Earthly Paradise: "In un' altra visione la Beata Vergine le apparve vestita d' un abito color di zafferano [*saffron coloured*], su cui vi erano rose rosse, e nelle stesse vi erano intessute con arte maravigliosa rose d' oro. Il color *giallo*, significa la di lei umiltà, colla quale ella si sottopose a tutte le creature: le rose *rosse* la costanza della di lei pazienza, la quale ella mite e paziente tenne in ogni cosa: le rose d' oro l' amore, con cui ella faceva tutte le cose, e le terminava nell' amor di Dio."

† *avvalli*: The primary meaning of *avvallare* is "Fare ire a valle, cioè a basso. Spingere o Mandare in giù" (*Gran Dizionario*). Hence we get the signification of "to lower, to bend down" (*v. a.*). Compare *Purg.* xiii, 61-63: where blind beggars are described lying crouched at the doors of churches, each bending down his head so as to rest it on his neighbour's shoulder:—

"Così li ciechi, a cui la roba falla,  
 Stanno ai perdoni a chieder lor bisogna,  
 E l' uno il capo sopra l' altro avvalla."

In *Conv.* iv, 25, ll. 70-88, Dante in describing Modesty, refers to a passage in Statius (*Theb.* ii, 230-232), where the two maiden daughters of Adrastus, when brought into the presence of two strangers, modestly cast down their eyes:—

"Ibant insignes vultuque habituque verendo,  
 Candida purpureum fusæ super ore ruborem  
 Dejectæque genas."





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Non credo che splendesse tanto lume  
 Sotto le ciglia a Venere trafitta \*  
 Dal figlio, fuor di tutto suo costume.  
 Ella ridea dall' altra riva dritta,  
 Traendo † più color ‡ con le sue mani,  
 Che l' alta terra senza seme gitta. §

65

So soon as she had reached the first spot where the grass is bathed by the waters of the fair stream, she did me the grace to raise her eyes. I do not believe that so bright a radiance shone beneath the eye-lids of Venus when transfixed by her own son (in a way) quite contrary to his wont (*i.e.* accidentally). Upon the right bank opposite smiling she stood, gathering with her hands yet more flowers of many hues which that elevated region produces without sowing.

Benvenuto says that this was the highest place in the world. Dante now relates that his desire of passing across the stream to join the unknown Lady was so great, that, although the rill was only three paces wide, he took as great a dislike to it as Leander did to the Hellespont, which separated him from his beloved Hero.

---

\* *Venere trafitta Dal figlio*: The meaning of this simile is that Reason and Intellect are brighter in Matelda, emblem of the Active Life, and whose eyes are full of Divine Love, than in the eyes of Venus, who was the type of pleasure in the things of this world. The fable here alluded to is taken from Ovid (*Metam.* x, 525-528).

† *Traendo*, *i.e.* gathering yet more flowers than she had already gathered. A few read *trattando*, Buti among others. This would have the sense of twisting or plaiting the flowers.

‡ *color* for *colori*: used here to mean flowers. Compare Propertius, *lib.* i, *Eleg.* ii, 9:—

“ Adspice quos submittat humus formosa colores.”

§ *senza seme gitta*: Compare Ovid, *Metam.* i, 107-108:—

“ Ver erat æternum, placidique tepentibus auris  
 Mulcebant Zephyri natos sine semine flores.”



Tre passi \* ci faceva il fiume lontani ; 70  
 Ma Ellesponto, dove passò Xerse, †  
 Ancora freno a tutti orgogli umani,  
 Più odio da Leandro non sofferse,  
 Per mareggiare ‡ intra Sesto ed Abido,  
 Che quel § da me, perchè allor non s' aperse. || 75

\* *Tre passi*: These three paces, which separate Dante from Matelda, remind one of the three steps at the threshold of Purgatory (see *Purg.* ix, 94, *et seq.*). Dante will surmount these three obstacles by three acts of penitence, namely, Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction. Scartazzini thinks that between the top of the stairway and Lethe is the Ante-Terrestrial Paradise, which Virgil may enter, but may not go beyond. The Terrestrial Paradise on the side of the earth is bounded by Lethe, which takes away from the soul every memory that is only earthly, and unfitted for the Kingdom of Heaven; on the side of Paradise the Terrestrial Paradise is bounded by Eunoe, which restores to the soul the memory of any good deeds that it wrought which may have made for it treasures in Heaven.

† *Xerse*: Compare *De Monarchia* ii, 9. ll. 49-60: "Post hoc vero Xerxes Darii filius et rex in Persis cum tanta gentium multitudine mundum invasit, cum tanta potentia, ut transitum maris Asiam ab Europa dirimentis, Inter Seston et Abydon, ponte superaverit. Cujus operis admirabilis Lucanus in secundo Pharsaliæ memor fuit. Canit enim ibi sic:—

'Talis fama canit tumidum super æquora Xerxem  
 Construxisse vias;  
 et tandem miserabiliter ab incepto repulsus, ad bravium pervenire non potuit."

‡ *mareggiare*: This word means more than "because its waters flow," as I translated the passage in my first edition. It essentially refers to a boisterous tempestuous sea. Scartazzini renders the passage: "Per l' ondeggiare impetuoso delle sue acque." It must not be forgotten that the current in the Dardanelles is exceedingly strong.

§ *quel* means the river Lethe.

|| *s' aperse*: This refers to the two miracles wrought for the Children of Israel, first, of the parting of the waters of the Red Sea, and secondly, of those of the River Jordan. Compare *Purg.* xviii, 133-135:—

"Prima fue  
 Morta la gente a cui il mar s' aperse,  
 Che vedesse Jordan le crede sue."



The stream kept us three paces apart; but the Hellespont, at the spot where—even now (remembered as) a curb to all human pride—Xerxes crossed it, did not endure more hatred from Leander, because its waves roll tempestuously between Sestos and Abydos, than this (little stream endured) by me, because it did not then and there cleave asunder.

Benvenuto says that Dante compares himself to Leander, Matelda to Hero, and the little stream to the Hellespont. Leander hates the sea, Dante hates the rill.

Up to this time Matelda has not spoken, but she now addresses herself to Dante and his companions. It is evident from her words that the three Poets had in their faces exhibited wonder that she should be smiling playfully in so sacred a spot.

“—Voi siete nuovi,\* e forse perch' io rido,”—  
 Cominciò ella,—“in questo loco eletto  
 All' umana natura per suo nido,  
 Maravigliando † tienvi alcun sospetto ;  
 Ma luce rende il salmo *Delectasti*, ‡  
 Che puote disnebbiar vostro intelletto.

80

“Ye are new comers,” she began, “and perchance some doubts may keep you marvelling why I should smile in this place set apart for the cradle (*lit.* nest)

\* *nuovi*: Compare *Inf.* iv, 52, where Virgil says:—  
 “Io era nuovo in questo stato,” etc.

† *Maravigliando*: Benvenuto's paraphrase of this passage is useful: “*Voi, scilicet, tres poetæ, siete nuovi, et novitas rei parit admirationem, quasi dicat: vos estis ignari hujus rei, e forse alcun sospetto tienvi maravigliando, quia creditis quod sim philocapta [i.e. love-stricken], ut tu dicebas paulo ante mihi, perch' io rido, cum risus non videatur laudabilis in muliere perfecta etiam in loco perfecto.*”

‡ *Delectasti*: “For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands” (*Psalms* xcii, 4).





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—“ L' acqua,”—diss' io,—“ e il suon della foresta, 85  
 Impugna dentro a me novella fede  
 Di cosa, ch' io udi' contraria a questa.”—

“The water,” said I, “and the murmuring of the forest, militate against a recent belief (implanted) within me (by the words of Statius) about something that I heard contrary to this.”

Matelda promises to solve Dante's doubts, and explains to him that the winds up there are due to different causes from those which prevail on earth and originate in the rapid gyrations of the heavens, which cause certain movements in the air that resemble winds.

Ond' ella:—“ Io dicerò come procede  
 Per sua cagion ciò ch' ammirar ti face,  
 E purgherò \* la nebbia che ti fiede. 90  
 Lo sommo Ben,† che solo esso a sè piace,  
 Fece l' uom buono,‡ e a bene, e questo loco  
 Diede per arra § a lui d' eterna pace.

---

\* *purgherò la nebbia, et seq.* : Compare several sentences in *De Mon.* ii, 1, ll. 36-41: “Verum . . . ut sol æstivus qui disjectis nebulis matutinis oriens luculentus irradiat . . . lucem correctionis effundere mavult, ad dirumpendum vincula ignorantiae,” etc. And further on, ll. 52-58: “Nam per hoc . . . non solum ab oculis Regum et Principum . . . ignorantiae nebula cluetur.” Compare also *Inf.* vii, 70, 71:—

“O creature sciocche,  
 Quanta ignoranza è quella che vi offende!”

† *Lo sommo Ben* : “Deus est summum bonum simpliciter, et non solum in aliquo genere vel ordine rerum. . . . Oportet cum bonum sit in Deo, sicut in prima causa omnium non univoca, quod sit in eo excellentissimo modo; et propter hoc dicitur summum bonum” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. vi, art. 2).

‡ *Fece l' uom buono* : “Iddio, che è sommo bene, fece Adamo buono, siccome buono artefice; e fecelo a buono fine, cioè a fine di dargli luogo glorioso ed eterno: e questo Paradiso terreno li diede per arra del pagamento, ch' egli intendea di fare del Paradiso celestiale” (*L' Ottimo Commento*).

§ *arra* : Scartazzini says that God had destined the Terrestrial Paradise as the earnest-money and pledge of the blessedness of



Per sua diffalta qui dimorò poco ;\*

Per sua diffalta in pianto ed in sffanno

95

Cambiò onesto riso e dolce gioco.

Whereupon she : " I will declare unto thee how from its own cause proceeds that (effect, namely, the wind and the water), which makes thee to wonder, and I will clear away the mist which strikes upon thee. The Supreme Good (*i.e.* God), Who takes pleasure in Himself alone, created Man good, and (predestined him) for good, and bestowed on him this place as an earnest of eternal peace. Through his default Man made but a short sojourn here ; through his default he exchanged innocent joys and gentle pastimes for lamentation and sorrow.

Benvenuto remarks that our first parents had quiet rest without toil, safety without fear, peace without war, health without fatigue, freedom without slavery,

Heaven, for the fruition of which he created Man. Compare *Inf.* xv, 94 : " Non è nuova agli orecchi miei tale arra," on which Buti commenting, says : " Tal arra, cioè tal patto : arra è la caparra, che è fermezza del patto fatto." The French word is *arrhes* (plural). Zambaldi (*Vocabolario Etimologico Italiano*, Città di Castello, 1889, p. 71, E.) says that *arra* = *urrha*, abbreviated from *arrhabón*, a Phœnician word that had passed first into Greek and then into Latin, is the sum which the buyer pays in advance to the seller, and which he loses if he does not fulfil the contract. This sum in modern Italian is called *caparra*, which seems a hybrid compound of the phrase *cape arrham*.

\**qui dimorò poco* : According to Buti, the theologians supposed Adam and Eve to have only remained in a state of innocence for five hours, and in Paradise itself only for seven hours. It was thought that God placed Adam in Paradise at the third hour, and gave him his commandments, and presented the animals to him, for Adam to give them names ; He then caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and formed Eve out of his rib, the serpent then came and tempted Eve, and after the ninth hour they ate of the forbidden fruit, and were driven out of Paradise. See *Par.* xxvi, 139, where Adam says :—

" Nel monte, che si leva più dall' onda,  
Fu' io con vita pura e disonesta  
Dalla prim' ora a quella che seconda,  
Come il sol muta quadra, l' ora sesta."



and, more than all, life without death; but the more happy they were before their fall, the more unhappy were they after it.

Matelda next shows how God, in order that the newly created Man might enjoy in peace the good that had been prepared for him, gave him an abode which had an immunity from all permutation.

Perchè il turbar,\* che sotto da sè fanno †  
 L' esalazion dell' acqua e della terra,  
 Che quanto posson retro al calor vanno,  
 All' uomo non facesse alcuna guerra, 100  
 Questo monte salio verso 'l ciel tanto;  
 E libero n' è d' indi ove si serra.

In order that the disturbance which the exhalations of the water and of the earth occasion down below it—which, so far as they are able, ascend after the heat—should not bring any annoyance to Man, this mountain was made to rise to so great an elevation towards heaven; and is (consequently) free from these (disturbing influences) from above that spot where it is locked in.

---

\* *turbar*: “ Il turbamento che nelle basse regioni della terra avviene per le meteore acquose e ventose, attribuiscesi ottimamente dal Poeta all' esalazione dell' acqua e della terra, cioè all' evaporazione; la quale ben dice che, quanto può, va dietro al calore, cioè, dal calore dipende, giusta leggi opportune. Acciocchè, poi, quel turbamento non molestasse l' uomo, che doveva, innocente, essere felice anche su questa terra, suppone il Poeta che l' abitazione ai nostri progenitori destinata salisse così grandemente verso il cielo, tanto da non vi esser possibili quei turbamenti ” (Antonelli in *Tommaso's Commentary*).

† *sotto da sè fanno*: “ idest, infra altitudinem istius montis, quia ab introitu veri purgatorii supra non fiunt ” (Benvenuto). “ sotto a questo monte ” (Andreoli). “ Affinchè il turbamento, che sotto di sè appiè del monte, è prodotto dalle esalazioni dell' acqua e della terra, ” etc. (Praticelli). “ *Sotto da sè*; la particella *sè* si riferisce a questo monte, del verso 101; e dice *da sè* . . . perchè il punto che si determina coll' espressione *indi ove si serra* (il luogo della porta del purgatorio) è il termine onde partir dee il pensiero di quello che s' esprime ” (Biagioli).





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In questa altezza, che tutta è disciolta \*  
 Nell' aer vivo, tal moto percote,  
 E fa sonar la selva perch' è folta ;

Now seeing that the whole atmosphere revolves in a circuit together with the first sphere that revolves (*i.e.* the *Primum Mobile*), so long as its gyration meets with no interruption at any point, on this elevated spot, which is wholly disengaged in the pure air, this movement strikes, and makes the forest, because it is thick-set, give forth a sound.

She means that this elevated plateau, on which the forest is situated, is open and not locked in by other mountains, and the wind that exists here is nothing else than a movement of the air.

Matelda next shows Dante how fruits are generated in the Terrestrial Paradise. All the trees there have in their branches a superabundance of seed, and as the Divine Forest is smitten by the peculiar wind described above, the air is impregnated with these seminal properties, and being whirled in a circular course round the earth, it is carried round to those parts that

---

Ptolemaic system, according to which the ninth sphere, or the *Primum Mobile*, revolves with the greatest velocity round the earth in twenty-four hours, and communicates its motion to the eight other lower spheres contained within it.

\* *che tutta è disciolta Nell' aer vivo*: "Già si è detto che dalla porta in su il monte si dischiude nella region pura dell' aere, che dice *aere vivo* per essere d' ogni terrestre vapore scarico [*unburdened*]" (Biagioli). Witte reads here *che in tutto è disciolta* instead of *che tutta è disciolta*. Antonelli (*ap.* Tommasèo) says that Dante uses the expression *vivo* to signify that the air was absolutely pure, and consequently cut off from every exhalation of the region below the Gate of Purgatory. The reason Dante assigns to the sound given forth by the forest merits consideration, as showing that the Poet was acquainted with the reflection and concentration of sounds through the medium of trees; effects that are produced by trees according as they are more or less densely packed together, and according as by such dense packing they form, as it were, walls from which sound is reflected and reverberates. If Dante was an expert in Optics, he was not far behind in Acoustics.



are inhabited by the human race, and there deposits in the different climates the seeds appropriate to them, and plants and trees grow, of which mankind never sowed the seed. If men only knew these phenomena, they need not wonder when they see the growth of new plants, with the seed of which they are unacquainted. The whole of the Terrestrial Paradise is filled with seed of every kind, and gives forth such fruits and flowers as have not their parallel in the Hemisphere inhabited by Man.

E la percossa pianta \* tanto puote,  
 Che della sua virtute l' aria impregna, 110  
 E quella poi girando intorno scote:  
 E l' altra terra, † secondo ch' è degna  
 Per sè e per suo ciel, concepe e figlia ‡  
 Di diverse virtù diverse legna.

---

\* *pianta*: Benvenuto thinks that by *pianta* is meant the forest. Tommaséo says: "*Pianta*, Singolare per plurale." I have translated it "every tree."

† *l' altra terra*: Some Commentators explain this "the rest of the earth," others "the other terrestrial hemisphere," namely, that inhabited by Man. Whichever interpretation be preferred, the meaning is the same, namely, that the germinative properties of the Terrestrial Paradise are whirled round by the fictitious wind to those parts of the earth inhabited by Man, and, being scattered on the soil there, spontaneously take root. A few unimportant *Codices* follow the Santa Croce in reading *l' alta terra*, which would make Matelda continue to speak of the Terrestrial Paradise. But the reading *l' altra* is so nearly universal, that the other is not worthy of mention.

‡ *figlia*: *Figliare* properly signifies "to bring forth" as applied to human generation, but the *Gran Dizionario* says it is sometimes applied to vegetative generation, and besides the present passage quotes from Tasso, *Le Sette Giornate del Mondo creato*, Firenze, 1724, 3:—

"L' arido seno indi s' impingua  
 Della terra, che poi concepe e figlia  
 Tante sì varie e sì leggiadre forme  
 Di piante, d' animai, di fiori e d' erbe."

On the present text Buti comments: "*Figlia*, cioè produce fuori lo frutto, come figliuolo."



Benvenuto says that the Nature constantly ; for pregnate the surrounding some winds can convey country fit to conceive suddenly shoots forth, and carry the seed of the tree just as we may find at trees growing in the forest, or garden.

Benvenuto remarks that when they marvel if they know the and therefore Dante need not know that the movement of of the trees.

Non parrebbe di là poi r  
Udito questo, quando  
Senza seme palese  
E saper dèi che la camp

---

\* *Senza seme palese* : "Noi veg  
[take root] in luoghi dove -





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Che ristori vapor che giel converta,\*  
 Come fiume ch' acquista e perde lena;†  
 Ma esce di fontana salda e certa,  
 Che tanto dal voler di Dio riprende,  
 Quant' ella versa da due parti aperta.

125

The water which thou seest wells not up from a spring that is restored by vapour which the frost condenses, like a river that now gains, now loses its vigour; but gushes forth from a source both sure and unfailing, which receives back again, by the will of God, as much as it pours away when divided into two streams.

Matelda then describes how the two diverging streams, Lethe and Eunoe, have different names, and different operations, which tend however to one and the same end.

Da questa parte con virtù discende,  
 Che toglie altrui memoria del peccato;  
 Dall' altra, d' ogni ben fatto la rende.  
 Quinci Letè,‡ così dall' altro lato

130

artificiosa . . . gittava tanta acqua e sì alta verso il cielo . . . che di meno avria macinato un mulino."

\* *Che ristori vapor che giel converta*: Compare *Purg.* xiv, 31-35:—

“dal principio suo (dov' è sì pregno  
 L' alpestro monte, ond' è tronco Peloro,  
 Che in pochi lochi passa oltra quel segno)  
 Infìn là 've si rende per ristoro

Di quel che il ciel della marina asciuga," etc.

Scartazzini says that Dante is alluding to the fact expressed by him in *Purg.* v, 109-111, that water is generated by cold:—

“Ben sai come nell' aere si raccoglie  
 Quell' umido vapor che in acqua ricde,  
 Tosto che sale dove il freddo il coglie.”

† *fiume ch' acquista e perde lena*: “*Lena*, § 4, È detto di fiume per metafora, Dante, *Purg.* xxviii, 123, cioè, secondo che è gonfio o povero d' acque” (*Gran Dizionario*).

‡ *Quinci Letè*: On the Western side of the Divine Forest, on which side Dante had entered it, was *Lethe*, the River of Oblivion, which in ancient mythology was supposed to flow through the



Eūnoè si chiama, e non adopra,  
 Se quinci e quindi pria non è gustato.  
 A tutt' altri sapori esto\* è di sopra ;

On this side (the left) it descends with power to take away from one the memory of sin ; on the other (the right side) it restores that of every good deed. Here on this side Lethe, so, upon the other side it is called Eunoë, and it is not operative (*i.e.* does not produce its beneficial effect), if it be not tasted first on this side and then on that. The savour of this water (of Eunoë) surpasses all others.

Observe, says Benvenuto, that two things are necessary to the man who aims at happiness ; in the first place, forgetfulness of what is evil, so that it may no longer come into his mind to sin : and secondly, remembrance of what is good, which will not allow him to sin any more.

It is not only necessary to forget past sins and abstain from present ones, but also is it necessary to work active good.

Both Benvenuto and Buti begin a new paragraph here in the middle of the *terzina*, and Buti says it is a digression. Benvenuto remarks that Matelda now adds

Infernal Regions, but, according to Dante, gushed forth from the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory, flowed through the Terrestrial Paradise, and thence, falling to the foot of the mountain, disappeared through the cavity from whence Dante and Virgil emerged into the Southern Hemisphere—see *Inf.* xxxiv, 130 ; and *Purg.* i, 40. Through this cavity it entered the subterranean watercourse, and flowed down to the centre of the Earth. The word *Lethe* was derived from the Greek, and signifies the oblivion of Evil, which must precede the knowledge or remembrance of Good, which is implied by the river Eunoë.

\* *esto* : This refers to the savour of the water of Eunoë. Compare *Purg.* xxxiii, 138, where Dante describes his delight on drinking of it :—

“ Lo dolce ber che mai non m' avria sazio.”



a most powerful conclusion to show the happiness of this enchanting region. And to catch Dante's attention she promises him that this conclusion is spoken by her as a special mark of favour to himself.

Ed avvegna ch' assai possa esser sazia  
 La sete tua,\* perch' io più non ti scopra, 135  
 Darotti un corollario † ancor per grazia,  
 Nè credo che il mio dir ti sia men caro,  
 Se oltre promission ‡ teco si spazia.

And although it may be that thy thirst (for knowledge) is sufficiently slaked without my making further revelations to thee, I will in addition give thee a corollary in token of favour, nor do I think that my speech will be less prized by thee, if it extends beyond my promise to thee.

In ll. 83, 84, Matelda, addressing herself specially to Dante, told him that she had come ready to answer every one of his questions, so far as was sufficient for him. She has done so, and she now tells him that, to clinch and confirm what she has said in answer to his questions, will volunteer a further explanation, about which he has not asked her.

In explaining her corollary, she remarks how the

\* *La sete tua* : Compare *Purg.* xxi, t :—

“ *La sete natural che mai non sazia,*” etc.

† *corollario* : Compare Boëthius, *Phil. Consol.* lib. iii, *Pros.* x. “ *Super hæc, inquit, igitur, veluti geometræ solent, demonstratis propositis, aliquid inferre, quæ πρόπαρα ipsi vocant, ita ego quoque tibi veluti corollarium dabo. . . . Et pulchrum, inquam, hoc, atque pretiosum, sive πρόπαρα, sive corollarium vocari mavis.*” Benvenuto says that a *corollario* is the final conclusion, which is given after others as the conclusion of conclusions. The word is derived from *corolla*, a little crown, which, in disputations, was given to the victor.

‡ *oltre promission* : Matelda had only promised Dante to explain to him the origin of the wind and the water in the Terrestrial Paradise.





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*poetaron dell' età dell' oro*, and he looks round to see what impression the last words have made upon them.

Io mi volsi dietro allora tutto

145

A' miei Poeti, e vidi che con riso \*

Udito avevan l' ultimo costrutto :

Poi alla bella Donna tornai il viso.

I turned me then right round towards my Poets, and noted that they had heard the concluding words with a smile: then to the beautiful Lady I turned back my eyes.

This is not the last time that Dante is to see Virgil's face. He looks upon it once more. See Canto xxix, l. 55 *et seq.*

---

\* *con riso Udito avevan*: Virgil and Statius had heard with gratification, and smiled their approval of these last words of Matelda: "l' ultimo costrutto, l' ultima conclusione, e l' ultime parole, che furono che quelli che anticamente poetaro, sognato l' aureo secolo, il quale veramente era stato in cima il monte del Purgatorio

END OF CANTO XXVIII.



## CANTO XXIX.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE (CONTINUED)—THE MYSTIC PROCESSION—THE CHURCH MILITANT.

IN the last Canto Dante described the beauties of the Terrestrial Paradise, which Matelda pointed out to him. He now tells how a Mystic Procession passes before him, which we find is figurative of the whole of the books of the Old and New Testament.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 30, Dante relates how Matelda moved on along the banks of the river Lethe, bidding him follow her, and how she drew his attention to a great light that suddenly shone in the forest.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 31 to ver. 60, he describes the Seven Golden Candlesticks, the standards of the approaching Church Militant.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 61 to ver. 105, he describes the Glorious Army of the Church Militant with its Leaders.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 106 to ver. 154, he tells us of the Triumphal Chariot, of the Gryphon who drew it, and of those that accompanied it.

*Division I.*—Matelda, having given Dante the explanation he sought, as to the causes of the wind



and the water in this sacred region, recommences her singing. In l. 80 of the last Canto we read that she was singing the *Psalm Delectasti*, and broke off to listen to Dante's doubts. She now resumes with another psalm.

Cantando come donna innamorata,\*  
 Continuò col fin di sue parole: †  
*Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata.* ‡

---

\* *donna innamorata*: Scartazzini says that Dante, in the description of his meeting with Matelda, has imitated a *Ballata* of his friend Guido Cavalcanti addressed to a shepherdess:—

“In un boschetto trovai pastorella  
 Più che la stella bella al mio parere.  
 Capegli avea biondetti, e ricciutelli,  
 E gli occhi pien d'amor, cera rosata:  
 Con sua verghetta pasturava agnelli;  
 E scalza, e di rugiada era bagnata:  
 Cantava come fosse innamorata,  
 Era adornata di tutto piacere.”

See *Rime Antiche*, Venezia, 1532, p. 70; or *Poeti del Primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, Firenze, 1816, vol. ii, pp. 283, 284.

† *col fin di sue parole*: Tommasèo interprets this: “Appena finite le sue parole,” and Daniello explains that the last words of Matelda had been:—

“Nèttare è questo di che ciascun dice.”

Dante had thereupon turned round, and had seen Virgil and Statius smiling approval, but Matelda went on at once with her singing without any intermission. One may perhaps be reminded of a contrast between Matelda here, at the end of her speech, devoutly pronouncing a blessing, and the passage at the beginning of *Inf.* xxv, where the robber Vanni Fucci concludes his speech with a hideous blasphemy. Dante is quite as wonderful in his contrasts as in his similes.

‡ *Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata*: The full text of this in the *Vulgate* is: *Beati quorum remissæ sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata*. This is verse 1 of the Penitential Psalm xxxi, which is one of the Psalms for Matins in the Roman Breviary. In the Authorized Version (Psalm xxxii), “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” It may well follow on to *Delectasti* (which is in verse 5 of Psalm xci in the *Vulgate*), as rightly indicating the joy of which the latter Psalm is the utterance: “Quia delectasti me, Domine, in factura tua; et in operibus manuum tuarum exultabo.”





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Su per la riva, ed io pari di lei,  
Picciol passo con picciol seguitando.

And like the nymphs, that were wont to roam in solitude through the sylvan shades, some desirous of seeing, others of avoiding the Sun, so did she then move on counter to the stream, going up along the bank, and I (moved) evenly with her, following her short paces with paces equally short.

Benvenuto remarks that the Poets, by the Nymphs or water-goddesses, wished to portray the various wonderful powers of God over the waters, shown in so many ways; according to many authors, they figuratively represent wise and good men, being thus a fair type of Matelda and Dante advancing with slow and dignified steps up the course of the stream, under the shadow of the lofty trees.

Dante next tells how the rill took a sudden bend, so that he finds himself facing the East.

Non eran cento *tra i i suo' passi e i miei,* 10  
Quando le ripe igualmente dièr volta,  
Per modo ch' a levante mi rendei.\*

---

\* *a levante mi rendei*: In a note in Tommaséo's Commentary Antonelli observes, that Dante, when he reached the top of the stairway, had the East facing him. Being *vago di cercar dentro e dintorno*, it is natural to suppose that, as he penetrated into the depths of the holy forest, he should turn in different directions. He walked upstream along the bank of the Lethe, which flowed from its source towards the West, but with many bends; the part up which he had last been walking had a bend towards the North, and Dante had been therefore facing the South. Now a sudden turn to the left brings him back to face the East, and Antonelli adds: "Nuovo modo d' indicare geometricamente la variazione d' orientamento d' un viaggiatore, e l' andamento d' un corso d' acqua, che deve irrigare una superficie circolare, senza uscire da essa, imponendosi evidentemente da tal condizione un numero conveniente di svolte e di piegature nel canale, e un assorbimento d' acqua per la nutrizione delle piante in ugual misura di quella che viene somministrata dalla sorgente, giacchè qui non si ammette la evaporazione." That Dante was facing



Nè ancor fu così nostra via molta,

Quando la Donna tutta a me si torse,\*

Dicendo:—"Prate mio, guarda, ed ascolta."— 15

Not yet a hundred paces were there between hers and mine (*i.e.* we had not walked fifty each), when both the banks took an equal bend, in such wise, that I again faced the East. Nor even thus had our way continued far, when the Lady turned completely round towards me, saying: "My brother, look and listen."

Benvenuto explains this to mean that they had not yet walked far beyond the bend the river had taken.

Dante now begins to describe the Church Militant, and points out that theologians always distinguish between the Church Militant, which is ever fighting against the Church's enemies, and the Church Triumphant, which rejoices in Heaven over the victories obtained. Of the latter Dante will shortly give a description in the *Paradiso*, but he will first duly give an account in this passage of the Church Militant. He now relates how he saw a great light approaching him, and at first imagined it might be a flash of lightning, until he perceived it was not followed by thunder.

Ed ecco un lustro † subito trascorse

the East when he reached the top of the stairway, we know from Canto xxvii, 133, where Virgil says to him:—

"Vedi là il sol che in fronte ti riluce!"

\* *tutta a me si torse*: Nearly all the best authorities read *la donna tutta a me si torse*. Some read *Quando la donna mia a me si torse*; but this does not seem nearly so good a reading as the first, as Dante has never elsewhere called Matelda "*la donna mia*," but "*la donna*," or "*la bella donna*." "*La donna mia*" could only refer to Beatrice, just as in *Inf.* v, 123: "*Ciò sa il tuo dottore*" refers to Virgil and not to Boëthius.

† *lustro*: Compare *Par.* xiv, 67-68:—

"Ed ecco intorno di chiarezza pari

Na<sub>8</sub>ce<sub>7</sub>e un lustro sopra quel che v' era."

Scartazzini and Tommaséo suggest that Dante must have had



Da tutte parti per la gran foresta,  
 Tal che di balenar mi mise in forse.\*  
 Ma perchè il balenar, come vien, resta,†  
 E quel durando più e più splendeva, 20  
 Nel mio pensar dicea:—"Che cosa è questa?" ‡—

And behold a bright lustre ran suddenly through the vast forest on every side, so brilliant that it set me to doubt of lightning. But since the lightning disappears as soon as it has come, and this kept getting more and more brilliant, in my thought I said: "What thing is this?"

Benvenuto thinks Dante would hardly dare to ask Matelda what it was he saw, and that he is obliged to confine himself to inward cogitation.

The light proceeds from the seven candlesticks carried at the head of the procession. A soft sweet

in his mind, when he wrote these passages, Virgil's lines in *Æn.* ix, 110, 111:—

"Hic primum nova lux oculis offulsit, et ingens  
 Visus ab Aurora cœlum transcurrere nimbus."

And Dante again has been imitated by two authors: Pazio degh Uberti, *Dittamondo*, lib. i, cap. ii, terz. 19:—

"Agli occhi un lume subito m' apparve,  
 Qual par balen, che vien per l' aere acceso."

And Prezzi, *Quadrivregio*, lib. i, cap. v, terz. 6:—

"Giuno per dimostrar, ch' ella l' udisse,  
 Mandò un lustro, e sin' a lor discese,  
 Come balen, che subito venisse."

\* *mi mise in forse*: Compare *Inf.* viii, 109, 110:—

"Così sen va, e quivi m' abbandona  
 Lo dolce padre, ed io rimango in forse."

And *Par.* xii, 40, 41:—

"Quando lo imperador che sempre regna,  
 Provvide alla milizia ch' era in forse."

† *resta*: Although the primary meaning of *restare* is "to remain," and secondarily "to cease," I find in the *Gran Dizionario*, § 7, that, in this particular passage, it has the sense of "to disappear [*sparire*];" and "to take itself off [*dileguarsi*]."

‡ *Che cosa è questa?* Compare *Par.* xx, 82, 83:—

"Ma della bocca: 'Che cose son queste?'  
 Mi pinse con la forza del suo peso."





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Femmina sola,\* e pur testè formata,  
 Non sofferse di star sotto alcun velo ;  
 Sotto il qual, se devota fosse stata,  
 Avrei quelle ineffabili delizie  
 Sentite prima, e più lunga fiata.†

30

And a sweet melody was borne along through the illumined air, whereat a righteous indignation made me upbraid the temerity of Eve, who in that place where Earth and Heaven were obedient (to the Divine Will), she, a woman, alone, and but newly formed, could not endure to remain under any veil (*i.e.* in ignorance); under which, if she had submissively remained, I should sooner have tasted those ineffable delights, and (I should have) much longer enjoyed them.

*Division II.*—Dante now describes the approach of the seven golden candlesticks, the standards of the Church Militant, and supposed to typify the Sevenfold Holy Spirit, or, according to others, the Seven Sacraments of the Roman Church.

Mentr' io m' andava tra tante primizie ‡  
 Dell' eterno piacer, tutto sospeso,

gessit: unde peccavit et in Deum et in proximum. Tertio, in hoc quòd peccatum viri diminutum est ex hoc quòd in peccatum consensit amicabili quòdam benevolentia, quà plerumque fit ut offendatur Deus, ne homo ex amico fiat inimicus, quod cum facere non debuisset divinæ sententiæ justus exitus indicavit, ut Augustinus dicit (*Super Gen. ad. litt. lib. xi, cap. ult. à med.*). Et sic patet quòd peccatum mulieris fuit gravius quàm peccatum viri."

\* *Femmina sola*: Andreoli explains this by saying that, being alone, the only woman, she could not have the excuse of having been tempted by emulation, or the desire to excel over other women.

† *più lunga fiata*: Others read *poi lunga fiata*. If Eve had not sinned, Dante would have tasted these delights from his birth onwards; for the Terrestrial Paradise would have remained the abode of the human race.

‡ *tante primizie*: The Terrestrial Paradise is a foretaste of the Celestial. The blessedness of this life is a first-fruit of the



E disioso \* ancora a più letizie,  
 Dinanzi a noi, tal quale un foco acceso  
 Ci si fe' l' aer, † sotto i verdi rami, 35  
 E il dolce suon per canto era già inteso : ‡

Whilst amid such wonderful first-fruits of the Bliss of Eternity I was walking along, all enrapt, and eager for still greater joys, in front of us under the green boughs we saw the whole atmosphere glow just like an enkindled fire, and the sweet sound could now be distinguished as a chant.

Dante, before entering upon this new and lofty theme, invokes the favour and aid of the Muses. He has always studied to do them honour; and feels entitled now to ask their help.

O sacrosante Vergini, se fami, §  
 Freddi, o vigilie mai per voi sofferesi,  
 Cagion mi sprona ch' io mercè ne chiami.

blessedness of Life Eternal. I prefer to take *tante* in the sense of "so great," "so wonderful," which after all is its primary signification; rather than as "so many" as it is interpreted by several Commentators and Translators.

\* *disioso*: Dante had heard frequently from Virgil that, as soon as he reached the top of the mountain, he should behold Beatrice (see *Purg.* vi, 46, et seq.). Therefore his suspense may be understood, expecting, as he does, to see her appear at any moment.

† *Ci si fe' l' aer*: lit. "The air made itself to us" (*ci*) i.e. "we perceived the air," etc.

‡ *il dolce suon per canto era già inteso*: "Vult dicere quod propter propinquitatem apparuit illam melodiam esse cantantium. Et nota quod bene assimilat istum splendorem igni, quia veniebat a Spiritu sancto, qui ubique figuratur in igne" (Benvenuto).

"Veni creator spiritus,  
 Mentis tuorum visita,  
 Imple superna gratia  
 Quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
 Altissimi Donum Dei,  
 Fons vivus, ignis, caritas  
 Et spiritalis unctio"; etc.

(*Hymnus in die Pentecostes.*)

§ *se fami*, etc.: In Filippo Villani's *Vita Dantis* the following passage occurs: "Tanto pernoscendæ poesis amore flagravit, ut dies noctesque nil aliud cogitaret." In *Convivio*, tr. iii, c. 1, ll.



Or convien ch' Elicona \* per me versi, 40  
 Ed Urania † m' aiuti col suo coro,  
 Porti cose a pensar mettere in versi.

O most holy Virgins, if for you I have ever endured hunger, cold, or vigils, the occasion spurs me on to claim my reward for them from you. Now must Helicon pour forth (its waters) for me, and Urania with her choir aid me to put into verse things hard to think out.

In the next fifteen lines, from v. 43 to v. 57, Dante explains what it was that caused the light to shine forth so brilliantly, and what were the voices that he heard singing. ‡

16-20, Dante writes himself, "O quante notti furono, che gli occhi dell' altre persone chiusi dormendo si posavano, che li miei nel l' abitacolo del mio amore fisamente miravano." See also Boccaccio (*Vita di Dante*): "Non curando nè caldo, nè freddo, nè vigilie, nè digiuni, nè niuno altro corporale disagio, con assiduo studio divenne a conoscere della divina essenza e delle altre separate intelligenze quello che per umano ingegno qui se ne può comprendere."

\* *Elicona*: Helicon, a mountain, or rather a mountain range, in Bœotia, was celebrated in ancient Greece as the abode of the Muses, who were hence called Heliconiades. On its slopes were the famous fountains of Aganippe and Hippocrene, whose waters were supposed to give poetic inspiration. Dante names Helicon here almost as if it were a fountain, but he must be understood as entreating Helicon, the mountain, to be liberal to him of the fountains that take their source in it. Compare the line of Virgil *Æn.* vii, 641; and repeated in *Æn.* x, 163:—

"Pandite nunc Helicon, deæ, cantusque movete."

Compare also the invocation to the Muses with that at the beginning of the *Purgatorio*, i, 7, 8, and *Inf.* ii, 7.

† *Urania*, the Muse of Astronomy or things celestial, is represented as crowned with stars and robed in azure. Compare Milton, *Par. Lost*, vii, 1.

‡ Scartazzini explains that Dante's vision of the Mystic Procession in the Terrestrial Paradise may be divided into two principal parts. *The first* (xxix-xxx, 33) shows how the Church as a divine institution, or the ideal of the Church, comes to meet the penitent sinner who is earnestly seeking salvation, and does so as the depository of divine mysteries and means of grace. *In the second part* (from xxxii, 16, to xxxiii, 12) Dante beholds in the





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Non perdea per distanza alcun suo atto ;  
 La virtù ch' a ragion discorso ammannà,\*  
 Siccom' elli eran candelabri apprese,  
 E nelle voci del cantare *Osanna*.

50

A little further on, the wide tract of the middle space which yet intervened between us and them gave a false illusion of there being seven golden trees; but when I had drawn so near to them that the common object which by distance deceives the sense of vision no longer lost each individual detail; the (apprehensive) faculty, which prepares for Reason its materials of judgment, began to apprehend that they (really) were candlesticks, and in the words of the chant (it distinguished) the word *Hosannah*.

è quel tanto che differenti cose a' sensi sottoposte possono aver di comune: *obbietto particolare* sono le sensibili qualità proprie di ciascuna cosa. Nel caso di Dante l' *obbietto* (o vuoi dirlo *sensibile*) comune era ciò che di comune hanno, veduti a una certa distanza, un albero ed un candelabro; *obbietto particolare* erano le specifiche qualità del candelabro, ch' egli scolasticamente denomina *atti*. Dice adunque in sostanza, che quella similitudine che da lontano aveva ingannata la sua vista, da vicino cessò" (Andreoli). See also Cesari, *Bellezze*, vol. ii, p. 525. And *Convivio*, iv, 8, ll. 43-58. See also St. Thom. Aquin. *Summ. Theol.* pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. vii, art. 1: "Actus autem habent speciem ex objecto." And pars i, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. xviii, art. 2: "Actio habet speciem ex objecto, sicut et motus ex termino." And pars ii, 2<sup>dæ</sup>, qu. iv, art. 1: "Considerandum est quòd cum habitus cognoscantur per actus, et actus per objecta." Scartazzini defines *atto* "particolare qualità."

\* *discorso ammannà*: The *Gran Dizionario*, § 11, interprets this: "Uso prudente della ragione." And § 10: "Discorso è dunque il passaggio che fa la mente di pensiero in pensiero colla naturale agilità dello spirito, ma altro dall' intuizione dell' intelletto, la quale è atto più semplice." St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. xiv, art. 7) thus defines the term: "cognoscere effectum per causam est scientiæ discurrentis . . . discursus est procedentis de noto ad ignotum." And in pars i, qu. lviii, art. 3: "Sic igitur et inferiores intellectus, scilicet hominum . . . si . . . statim in ipsa cognitione principii noti inspicerent quasi *notas* omnes conclusiones consequentes, in eis discursus locum non haberet." *ammanna*: This verb literally signifies to gather up straw or hay into bundles (*manne*), and thence it comes to mean "to prepare."



Dante had at first, before getting near enough to the objects advancing to meet him, been deceived by that delusive similitude of things one to another when seen indistinctly from afar. Here it was a certain resemblance between a tree with branches and a candlestick with branches. The seven candlesticks were very large, and appeared like small trees.

Dante next relates in what manner he recognised that the light proceeded from the seven candlesticks.

Di sopra fiammeggiava il bello arnese \*  
Più chiaro assai che luna † per sereno  
Di mezza notte nel suo mezzo mese.

\* *arnese*: Scartazzini calls special attention to *arnese* being in the singular, as showing that the seven lamps were on one candlestick, and says it shows that, without doubt, Dante wished his readers to understand that the seven candlesticks symbolize a sevenfold unity, which also demonstrates the accuracy of his (Scartazzini's) interpretation. Carena (*Prontuario, o Vocabolario Metodico d' Arti e Mestieri*, Torino, 1853. pt. ii, p. 8), says of *arnese* that "nel linguaggio delle arti, è tutto ciò di che uom può servirsi in opera di mano, e che non sia propriamente [*in particular*] nè Macchina nè Strumento, nè Ordigno [*mechanical appliance*]. Il Mestone [*wooden spoon*]; il Ramajuolo per iscodellare la Minestra; il Randello per istringer la soma, e simili, sono arnesi. Nel linguaggio comune Arnese è parola di estesissima significazione, che applicasi collettivamente alle suppellettili di casa, alle masserizie di campagna, ad attrezzi di guerra . . . ed è frequentemente parola di compenso . . . per indicare qualche minuto oggetto, il cui vero e proprio nome o si ignori, o non soccorra subito alla mente," in the same way as we might use "thing"; "concern"; "gear"; "equipment"; "apparatus."

† *Più chiaro . . . che luna, et seq.*: "In due versi raccoglie le circostanze generali del massimo lume di luna *Per sereno*, cioè limpidezza d' aria, senza nuvoli, nemmeno sottili e trasparenti: *di mezza notte*, quando sono più remoti gli albori mattutini e serali del sole, e quindi la notte più cupa dà più risalto al chiaror della luna; *nel suo mezzo mese*, cioè nel punto che questo astro raggiunge la opposizione col sole, incominciando il mese lunare della congiunzione o luna nuova: che è quanto dire mentre la luna è perfettamente nella fase che *piena* appelliamo" (Antonelli, in *Tommaséo's Commentary*).









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Sì nell' aspetto \* delle vive luci,  
 E ciò che vien dietro a lor non guardi ?"—  
 Genti † vid' io allor, com' a lor duci,  
 Venire appresso, vestite di bianco ; 65  
 E tal candor di qua giammai non fuci.

The Lady reproved me : " Wherefore dost thou only take pleasure in gazing at those living lights, and regardest not that which comes behind them ? " Then I saw people coming on behind (the candlesticks), as though after their leaders, arrayed in white ; and such whiteness never existed (*fuci for ci fu*) on our earth (*di qua*).

The white vesture is a symbol of their faith : such faith as has never been found since.

He next describes, as a sight of increasing perfection, the purity of the water, when struck by the light of the candlesticks.

L' acqua splendeva dal sinistro fianco,  
 E rendea ‡ a me la mia sinistra costa,  
 S' io riguardava in lei, come specchio anco.

Militant. Beatrice herself makes a similar reproof to Dante in *Par. xxiii, 70-72* :—

" Perchè la faccia mia sì t' innamora,  
 Che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino  
 Che sotto i raggi di CRISTO s' infiora ? "

\* *aspetto* : This is the reading of the *S. Croce*, *Cassinese*, and other MSS., as also of Benvenuto, and the early editions of Poligno, and the *Nidobeatina*. The more common reading is "perchè pur ardi Sì nell' affetto delle vive luci," etc.

† *Genti . . . vestite di bianco* : These were the four-and-twenty Elders. " And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats : and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment " (*Rev. iv, 4*). " These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb " (*Rev. vii, 14*).

‡ *rendea* : " La gente vestita di bianco, venendo per la destra ripa del rio, dovea far risplendere l' acqua dalla sinistra del medesimo, ch' era quella su cui seguitava a camminare il Poeta ; il quale, procedendo in direzione contraria a coloro che scendevano, esponeva al riflesso dell' acqua il suo lato sinistro. In



The water was glittering upon my left hand, and when I looked into it, it reflected back to me my left side, even as in a mirror.

As Dante was going to the right, his left side was of course nearest to the rill. This was the side of his heart, and Buti thinks that the allegorical sense would show that Lethe is the emblem of the purity and innocence that causes oblivion of sin, and makes the heart known to one's self-perception, if we seek to see ourselves as we are.

He places himself so that he can the better contemplate the vision, and, as he stops, the candlesticks pass on beyond him.

Quand' io dalla mia riva ebbi tal posta, 70  
 Che solo il fiume mi faceva distante,  
 Per veder meglio ai passi diedi sosta,\*  
 E vidi le fiammelle andar davante,  
 Lasciando retro a sè l' aer dipinto,  
 E di tratti pennelli † avean sembante ; 75

---

quanto poi dice che erasi resa l' imagine di questo lato, se avesse riguardato nell' acqua che pareva uno specchio, viene a significarci che la lucente superficie era tranquilla, cioè l' acqua ivi era stagnante, e ch' egli era proprio sulla sponda del fiume: altrimenti, non avrebbe potuto vedere quella parte del suo corpo riflessa " (Antonelli, in *Tommaséo's Commentary*).

\* *diedi sosta* : Compare *Purg.* xix, 93 :—

" Sosta un poco per me tua maggior cura."

† *E di tratti pennelli*, etc. : Compare *Virg. Georg.* i, 365-367, from which this passage in the text may have been imitated :—

" Sæpe etiam stellas, vento impendente, videbis

Præcipites cælo labi, noctisque per umbram

Flammarum longos a tergo albescere tractus."

And Dante himself has been imitated by Tasso, in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, viii, st. 32 :—

" Allor vegg' io che dalla bella face,

Anzi dal Sol notturno un raggio scende,

Che dritto là, dove il gran corpo giace,

Quasi aureo tratto di pennel si stende."

Great difference of opinion exists as to the proper signification



Sì che li sopra \* rimanea distinto †  
Di sette liste, ‡ tutte in quei colori,

of *pennelli*, and even as to the reading; some few contending that the word should be *pannelli* or *panelli* (i.e. torches made of inflammable linen, Latin, *paniculi*). Others again, while reading *pennelli*, interpret it as "*pen-noncelles, pennona, flaga*," and in the dialogue that runs through Cesari's *Bellezas*, vol. ii, p. 529, one of the party is made to advocate this interpretation, for the purpose of being confuted by the other, who in reply says: "Quanto a me . . . io non mi partirei da' veri pennelli [*i.e. painter's brushes*]. . . dico che notando accuratamente ogni ragion del parlare di Dante, si vuole stare ai veri pennelli. Dante dice d'aver veduto le sette fiammelle andare avanti, *Lasciando dietro a sè l'aere dipinto*. Qui son due cose; un muoversi di ciascuna fiammella, e 'l lasciar dietro a sè una striscia di colore. Ora questo atto egli lo pareggia ad un altro, che è tutto desso: ma quale sarà? la banderuola [*pennon*] fitta nella freccia, e dal vento distesa? non puno: che in questa non veggo l'atto del muoversi avanti, nè il colore lasciatosi dietro . . . nel *pennello* veggo il dipingere che dice Dante; nel *tratti* il muoversi; essendo poi *tratti*, lasciano la tela per lo lungo dipinta del proprio colore: sicchè in tutta la natura non era forse altro esempio, che più fosse desso, di questo." Andreoli uses very similar words: "Cosicchè le dette fiammelle avean sembianza di altrettanti pennelli che, tratti per l'azzurro dell'aere, lo listassero di sette pennellate de' colori dell'iride [*prismatic colours*], come appresso dirà. Il *dipinto* che precede, e i colori che seguono, non mi pare che lascino sul proprio significato de' *pennelli* alcuno de' dubbi posti in campo dagli interpreti." I follow the interpretation given above by Cesari and Andreoli, which is also that of Scartazzini.

\* *Sì che li sopra*: Some read *Sicchè di sopra*, and others *Sì ch'egli sopra*.

† *distinto*: "marked," "indicated." In the *Gran Dizionario*, s.v. *distinto*, § 4, I find: "segnatamente della varietà di colori." Compare *Par.* xviii, 95, 96:—

"Sì che Giove  
Pareva argento li d'oro distinto."

And *Par.* xxxi, 130-132:—

"Ed a quel mezzo con le penne sparte  
Vidi più di mille Angeli festanti,  
Ciascun distinto e di fulgore e d'arte."

‡ *sette liste*: The seven long streaks of light, which stream behind the seven golden candlesticks, are, as we take the latter to be the Sevenfold Spirit of God, undoubtedly the effects of that Holy Spirit, His Sevenfold Gift to Man of the Virtues





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Ventiquattro seniori,\* a due a due,  
Coronati venian di fiordaliso.†

Tutti cantavan:—"Benedetta tue‡

85

Nelle figlie d' Adamo, e benedette  
Sieno in eterno le bellezze tue."—

Under a sky so beautiful as I describe, there came four-and-twenty Elders, two and two, crowned with *fleurs-de-lys*. All were chanting: "Blessed art thou among the daughters of Adam, and blessed for evermore be thy loveliness."

Having now described the books of the Old Testament in the persons of the four-and-twenty Elders. Dante passes on to the four Evangelists.

*mirabiles*). But in the *Gran Dizionario* (s.v. *divisare*, § 5) we find: "Per *Descrivere ordinatamente, Mostrare*," and the present passage is quoted. The word is frequently used in this sense by Boccaccio. Compare *Decam. Giorn. ii, Nov. 8*: "Mentre che la fortuna in questa guisa, che divisata è, il Conte d'Anguersa et i figliuoli menava, avvenne, che," etc. And *Giorn. vi, Nov. 10*: "Ma perchè vi vo io tutti i paesi cerchi da me divisando?" And *Giorn. viii, Nov. ix*: "Io non vi potrei mai divisare, chenti, e quanti sieno i dolci suoni d' infiniti instrumenti, e i canti pieni di melodia, che vi s' odone." And *Rime Antiche Incert. 121*:—

"Da bella donna più ch' io non diviso,  
Són io partito innamorato tanto."

\* *Ventiquattro seniori*: "And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold" (*Rev. iv, 4*).

† *Coronati . . . di fiordaliso*: Tommasèo considers that the four-and-twenty Elders are crowned with lilies to signify the purity of Holy Writ, and Scartazzini adds to this that, in all probability, it signified their faith in the coming Messiah.

‡ *Benedetta tue*, et seq.: The words of the salutation of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary (*Luke i, 28*): "Blessed art thou among women." Scartazzini is doubtful whether the person saluted here is Beatrice or the Virgin Mary. If however one considers that in the following Canto (xxx, 11) Beatrice is hailed in the words "*Veni sponsa de Libano*," and (xxx, 19), "*Benedictus qui venis*," and if one considers that it is Beatrice, and not Mary, who will shortly appear and will sit upon the Car of the Church, one may believe that Beatrice is the person referred to here. It should also be remembered that in the *Vita*



Poscia che i fiori e l' altre fresche erbette,  
 A rimpetto di me dall' altra sponda,  
 Libere \* fur da quelle genti elette, 90  
 Sì come luce luce in ciel seconda, †  
 Vennero appresso lor quattro animali, ‡  
 Coronato ciascun di verde fronda.

After that the flowers and other tender herbage, in front of me on the other bank, had been left clear by that hand of the Elect, even as in the heavens star rises after star, so there followed after them (the Elders) four Living Beings, each crowned with verdant foliage.

Dante then describes how they were fashioned.

Ognuno era pennuto di sei ali,  
 Le penne piene d' occhi ; e gli occhi d' Argo, 95  
 Se fosser vivi, sarebber cotali.

---

*Nuova*, § 43, Dante distinctly states that he will say of Beatrice what no poet ever said of his lady before.

\* *Libere*: As the four-and-twenty Elders passed away onwards, they left the flowery meadow on the right bank of the stream unoccupied for an instant.

† *luce luce in ciel seconda*: Tommasèo quotes Antonelli here: "A dipingere l' ordine, la maestà del movimento, la bellezza e la giocondità dei personaggi che passavano dinanzi al Poeta, in piccola distanza sull' altra riva, non si poteva scegliere imagine più conveniente di quella del passaggio degli astri ad un cerchio celeste, cui sia rivolto lo sguardo d' esperto osservatore."

‡ *quattro animali*: The four Living Beings are generally interpreted as the Four Evangelists, of whom the four mysterious animals in Ezekiel are regarded as symbols. To *St. Matthew* was given the human semblance, because he begins his Gospel with the human generation of Our Lord, or possibly because *St. Matthew* seems to emphasize the human nature of the Saviour more than the divine. *St. Mark* is thought to be the Lion because he sets forth the royal dignity of the Anointed Christ, though one Commentator attributes it to the fact that *St. Mark* begins his Gospel with roaring (!) "the voice of One crying in the wilderness." *St. Luke* is the Ox, because he has more especially insisted on the priesthood of Christ, and the Ox is the emblem of sacrifice. *St. John* is the Eagle, the symbol of the highest inspiration, because he soared upwards to the contemplation of the divine nature of the Saviour.





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Come li vide dalla fredda parte \*  
 Venir con vento, con nube e con igne ;  
 E quali i troverai † nelle sue carte,  
 Tali eran quivi, salvo ch' alle penne  
 Giovanni è meco, ‡ e da lui si diparte.

105

To describe their forms, Reader, no more of my verses do I waste, for a different expenditure (*i.e.* subject) so much engrosses me, that in this I am not able to be diffuse. But read Ezekiel, who depicts them as he saw them come from the cold quarter, with wind, with cloud, and with fire ; and such as thou shalt find them in his pages, such were they here, save that in the matter of wings John's account tallies with mine (*lit.* John is with me), and differs from him.

In St. John's description the Four Beasts have each six wings, whereas Ezekiel only saw four wings.

*Division IV.*—In the concluding portion of the Canto, Dante describes the Triumphal Chariot with the Leader of the Church Militant.

He relates how he saw a chariot on two wheels, by which he means to express the Church (or, according to some, the Pontifical Court), resting on the Old and New Testaments, and drawn by a fabulous animal, called a Gryphon, commonly understood to be symbolical of our Lord Jesus Christ ; its two-fold nature, half lion, half eagle, representing His two-fold nature, God and Man.

---

\* *dalla fredda parte* : Compare Virg. *Georg.* i, 370-371 :—

“ Ut Boreæ de parte trucidis cum fulminat, et cum Eurique Zephyrique tonat domus,” etc.

† *quali i troverai* : This is the reading adopted by Witte, and by Dr. Moore, and is that of the *Sta. Croce* ; the *Caetani* ; the *Cassinese* and other *Codices*. It is also found in the *Foligno*, *Mantua* and *Naples* editions. Others read *E quai li troverai*.

‡ *Giovanni è meco* : “ And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within ” (*Revelation of St. John*, iv, 8).



Lo spazio dentro a lor quattro contenne  
 Un carro, in su due rote, trionfale,\*  
 Ch' al collo d' un grifon † tirato venne.  
 E esso tendea in su l' una e l' altr' ale ‡  
 Tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste,  
 Sì ch' a nulla fendendo facea male.

110

The space (intervening) between those four (Living Beings) contained a triumphal chariot on two wheels, which by the neck of a Gryphon came drawn along. And he extended both his wings aloft between the

\* *Un carro . . . trionfale*: The Triumphal Chariot is the Church Universal. Scartazzini points out that Dante, in his other works, speaks of the Chariot as the Church Universal, and not the Papal seat. In *De Monarch.* lib. iii, c. 3, Dante writes: "Dicit Ecclesia, loquens ad Sponsum: Trahe me post te!" The Gryphon draws the chariot behind him; therefore he is the bridegroom and the chariot is the Church. In *Conv.* ii, ch. 6, Dante expressly says that "the Bride" of the Canticles is the Church. But Scartazzini thinks that the following passage is quite decisive, from the letter Dante wrote to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii, ll. 42-52) a short time before he wrote the *Purgatorio*: "Vos equidem, Ecclesie militantis veluti primi prepositi pili, per manifestam orbitam Crucifixi currum Sponsae regere negligentes, non aliter quam falsus auriga Phaeton exorbitastis, et, quorum, sequentem gregem per saltus peregrinationis, hujus illustrare intererat, ipsum una vobiscum ad precipitium traduxistis. Nec ad imitandum recenseo vobis exempla, quum dorsa, non vultus, ad Sponsae vehiculum habeatis." That the two wheels have an allegorical signification is proved by the passage in Canto xxxii, 131-139, but, what they symbolize exactly, has been much disputed by the Commentators. (See note to line 121.)

† *grifon*: There is no lack of description in classical and mediæval literature of the Gryphon or Griffin, and it is also a common figure in Heraldry. It was supposed to be a quadruped, part eagle and part lion. It had the head, neck, beak and wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion. See Ælian, *De Animalium Natura*, iv, 27. It is twice mentioned in Herodotus (iii, 116; and iv, 13, 27) as dwelling in the Rhipæan mountains, between the Hyperboreans and the one-eyed Arimaspians, and guarding the gold which these latter had attempted to steal.

‡ *l' una e l' altr' ale*: Note that *ale* is here in the singular. *Ale* singular, *ali* plural; or *ala* singular, *ale* plural.



central (band of light) and the three and three bands, so that he did harm to no one of them by cleaving it.

The Gryphon was moving behind the lamps, but his wings rising straight up, crossed the slanting bands of light, not touching any, because they rose between the middle band and the three bands on either side.

Dante then speaks of the twofold nature of Christ in one body.

Tanto salivan, che non eran viste ;  
Le membra d' oro \* avea, quanto era uccello,  
E bianche l' altre di vermiglio miste.

So high did they (the wings) reach, that they were lost to sight ; his members were of gold so far as he was bird, and the rest were white mixed with scarlet.

The wings of gold indicate His incorruptibility, the white mingled with red, the purity of His human nature glowing with the blood of the Passion.

The splendour of the chariot is extolled.

Non che Roma † di carro così bello

115

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\* *Le membra d' oro*: The colours are suggested in *Song of Solomon*, v, 10-11: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven."

† *Roma . . . Rallegrasse Africano*: There seems to be much difference of opinion as to the construction of this sentence. Nearly all the modern Commentators take *Africano* to be the nominative case, and *Roma* the accusative in the sense that "Africanus never gladdened Rome with so sumptuous a car," etc. But I have followed Benvenuto and Buti in taking the sentence in the order in which it is written. Biagioli is in agreement with Benvenuto and Buti: "La costruzione sincera del *non che Roma*, etc., si è: *non solo s' ha a dire che Roma non rallegrasse Africano o vero Augusto con trionfo di carro così bello, ma quel del sole*," etc. There is a passage somewhat similar to this one in Tasso, *Gerus. Liber. viii*, st. 44:—

"Nè dar l' antico Campidoglio esempio  
D' alcun può mai sì glorioso alloro."

Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal,





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Venian danzando ; l' una tanto rossa \*  
 Ch' a pena fòra dentro al foco nota :  
 L' altr' era come se le carni e l' ossa  
 Fossero state di smeraldo fatte ;  
 La terza pareva neve testè mossa :  
 Ed or parevan dalla bianca tratte,  
 Or dalla rossa, e dal canto di questa  
 L' altre togliean l' andare e tarde e ratte.

125

Three ladies came onward dancing in a circle at the right wheel (of the chariot); one so ruddy that scarce would she have been distinguished in the very midst of the fire; the second was as if her flesh and bones had been fashioned out of emerald; the third appeared as new driven snow: and at one moment they seemed to be led by the one in white, and at another by the one in red, and to the melody of this one (leading), the other two timed their movement quick or slow.

It must be either Love or Faith that leads; Hope can only follow.

Dante next describes the four maidens who represent four Cardinal or Moral virtues.

---

Tommasèo, Brunone Bianchi, Fraticelli, Andreoli, Trissino, Camerini, and many others. Lana, Benvenuto, and the *Anonimo Fiorentino*, take them to mean the active and the contemplative life. In *Par.* xii, 106-111, Dante speaks of St. Dominic and St. Francis as the two wheels of the chariot:—

“Se tal fu l' una rota della biga,  
 In che la Santa Chiesa si difese,  
 E vinse in campo la sua civil briga,  
 Ben ti dovrebbe assai esser palese  
 L' eccellenza dell' altra, di cui Tomma  
 Dinanzi al mio venir fu sì cortese.”

\* *l' una tanto rossa*, et seq. : The red denotes Charity, as typifying burning Love; the emerald green is Hope; and the snow-white is Faith.

“Hope ever fresh and green,  
 Faith ever pure, like newly-fallen snow.”

In *La Fiera* of Buonarrotti the Younger, in the Introduction to *Giornata Terza* (p. 330 of Le Monnier's edition, 1860), *Commercio* is made to say to *Fede*:—



Dalla sinistra quattro \* facean festa,  
 In porpora vestite, † dietro al modo  
 D' una di lor, ch' avea tre occhi in testa.

130

On the left side (*i.e.* on that of the Old Testament) there were four in blood-red vestments that made jubilee (*i.e.* Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance), following the measure of one of them who had three eyes in her head.

Prudence is represented with three eyes, as looking at the past, the present and the future, and is therefore represented as leading the group. One cannot have any virtue (says Benvenuto) without prudence, but one may easily have prudence without the other three virtues.

---

" Fatti adorna  
 Delle tue bianche vesti: comparisci  
 Astersa di ogni macchia."

And Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* Canto xxi, st. 1:—

" Nè dagli antiqui par che si dipinga  
 La santa Fè vestita in altro modo,  
 Che d' un vel bianco che la copra tutta:  
 Ch' un sol punto, un sol neo la può far brutta."

\* *quattro*: "Quatuor a sinistra, idest circa paginam veteris Testamenti, sunt quatuor virtutes cardinales, Justitia, Fortitudo, Temperantia, et Prudentia. Et quia, ut ait Seneca de formula honestatis: *si prudens est animus tuus tribus temporibus dispensetur: presentia ordina, et futura praevide, et Præterita recordare*; et alibi: *Judico prudentem, prius et nunc postque videntem*; ideo ipsam prudentiam nunc fingit auctor cum tribus oculis" (Pietro di Dante).

† *In porpora vestite*: "illæ dico, vestite in porpora, qua olim induebantur principes" (Benvenuto). "The rich crimson of regal robes" (Plumptre). "Porpora, simbolo d' amore e di dignità" (Tommaséo). Scartazzini is positive that the word *purple* means "*color rosso, emblema della carità.*" And he says that to the question, why they were clothed with the garb of Charity, the answer must be found in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, 2<sup>da</sup>, qu. lxxv, art. 2). Compare also: "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (*Col.* iii, 14). "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (*1 Peter*, iv, 8). Unless they are garbed in Charity, the other virtues are useless.



Dante then describes two old men, whom nearly all the Commentators agree in taking for St. Luke and St. Paul, the former as representing the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and the latter the books of his Epistles. This seems the more certain, since all the other personages in this procession represent, not men, but the different books of the Old and New Testaments. Benvenuto thinks the former is St. Peter, but Lana, Buti, Fraticelli, *Philalethes*, Lulin, Longfellow, Pollock, and Lamennais all agree that the former is intended to represent St. Luke.

One of these, St. Luke, is dressed as a physician; the other, St. Paul, has a sword in his hand.

Appresso tutto il pertrattato\* nodo,†  
 Vidi due vecchi in abito dispari,  
 Ma pari in atto, ed onesto e sodo.‡

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\* *pertrattato*: Andreoli says that *pertrattare* (from the Latin *pertractare*) is *trattare distesamente*. Compare *Inf.* xi, 79-81:—

“Non ti rimembra di quelle parole,  
 Colle quai la tua Etica pertratts  
 Le tre disposizion che il ciel non vuole.”

† *nodo*: The *Gran Dizionario*, among the many significations of *nodo* says, in reference to this passage, that Dante “*nodo chiama l' unione di tutte quelle vedute cose.*” It is in one of its meanings a military term, § 26: “Un piccolo numero di soldati raccolti e serrati insieme, Drappello.” N.B. *Drappello* never means a flag, but a file of men (see p. 439 note). In illustration of this, see Macchiavelli (*Il Segretario Fiorentino*), *Arte della Guerra*, Milan, 1805, 10 vols. 8vo, vol. x, lib. ii, p. 72: “Nè alcuno si maravigli, che un nodo di fanti sostenga ogni impeto de' cavalli, perche il cavallo è animale sensato, e conosce i pericoli, e mal volentieri vi entra . . . talchè si è visto per le antiche e moderne esperienze un nodo di fanti essere sicurissimo, anzi insuperabile dai cavalli.”

‡ *ed onesto e sodo*: This is the reading of the best MSS., as also of Benvenuto, Witte, Moore and Scartazzini. The more common reading is *ed onestato e sodo*. This reading is approved of by the *Gran Dizionario*, though it can only cite one very obscure use of *onestato*. A considerable number of editions read *ognuno onesto e sodo*.





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tent, with a sword so glittering and sharp, that even on this hither side of the river, it caused me fear.

St. Luke, as a physician, had the thought of saving men's lives; St. Paul, as a champion of Christ, holds the sword aloft to express his warfare in the cause of Christ.

St. Luke and St. Paul were followed by four of a humble aspect, and after them came an aged Solitary (St. John). The four of humble aspect are supposed figuratively to represent the Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude.

Poi vidi quattro in umile paruta,\*  
E dietro da tutti un veglio solo  
Venir dormendo,† con la faccia arguta.‡

\* *quattro in umile paruta*: Benvenuto thinks the four are St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Gregory; and that the aged Solitary is Bernard.

† *Venir dormendo*: On this Lubin comments thus: "L' autore dell' Apocalissi, il rapito di Patmos, San Giovanni Evangelista . . . veniva dormendo, cioè in *estasi*, e però con faccia, non smorta, com' è quella di chi dorme, ma *arguta* di chi, tenendo gli occhi del corpo chiusi a tutte le cose terrene, ha fissi quelli della mente nelle cose celesti." Compare *Solomon's Song*, v, 2: "I sleep, but my heart waketh."

‡ *arguta*: Tommasèo, after quoting the expression *argutias vultus* from Pliny, says: "Forse la estenuatezza che vien dal digiuno rende la faccia più spirituale e quindi ingenuosa." The *Gran Dizionario* speaks of the *veglia colla faccia arguta*, "che nella faccia esprime i concetti ispirati che gli si rivelano." Buti comments: "*Arguto*, cioè sottile; imperocchè quello libro (*l' Apocalisse*) è di grande sottigliezza ad intendere." Virgil (*Georg.* iii, 79, 80) says of the horse:—

"Illi ardua cervix,

Argutumque caput, brevis alvus, obesaque terga."

"Questa voce *argutus* trovo da' latini usato per acuto, sottile, spiccato, vibrato. Il dà Virgilio al capo del cavallo, raccolto e vivace; e Cicerone alla mano, che scocca le dita con gesto animato. Queste nozioni debbono fornire l' idea della faccia di San Giovanni, che rapito in sonno estatico, mostra penetrazione ed acume di altissimo conoscimento" (Cesari).



I then saw four of humble aspect, and in the rear of all an aged man alone, walking in a trance (but) with visage keen.

By this is meant the personification of St. John, as representing the Apocalypse. He appears to be in a vision, as if he were in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind him the great voice as of a trumpet. Or perhaps the allusion may be to the belief of the early Christians that St. John did not die, but tarries in sleep till his Lord's re-appearance. St. John survived all his contemporaries, and lived on into a generation which had not known them, and it is said that it was to supply this new generation with additional information concerning the incidents of our Lord's life and ministry on earth, that St. John wrote his Gospel. It is therefore a beautiful and most appropriate idea of Dante to depict him as an old man, of very great age, walking all alone, the sole survivor of the brethren whom he had known in his youth.

Dante next points out wherein their attire was identical with that of the patriarchs who passed first, and wherein it was different.

E questi sette col primaio stuolo

Erano abituati; ma di gigli

Dintorno al capo non facevan brolo,\*

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\* *brolo*: "idest ghirlandam" (Benvenuto). Compare Poliziano, *Stanze*, lib. i, st. 68:—

"Ma fatta Amor la sua bella vendetta,  
Mossesi lieto pel negro aère a volo;  
E ginne al regno di sua madre in fretta  
Ov' è de' picciol suo' fratei lo stuolo;  
Al regno ove ogni Grazia si diletta,  
Ove Beltà di fiori al crin fa brolo."

The *Gran Dizionario* derives *brolo* from the Greek περιβόλιον, an enclosure, and quotes from Muratori, *Scol. Gioven.*: "Locus arboribus pomiferus consitus et muro aut sepe circumseptus";



Anzi di rose e d' altri fior vermigli :

Giurato avria poco lontano aspetto,\*

and from the *Attavanta, Villa di Antonfrancesco Doni, Florence, 1857, 38*: "Alla po a principale ne risponde un' altra che nel brolo ir conduce." Though the Commentators differ as to whether Dante in this passage intended to signify a garland, or a garden, the *Gran Dizionario* distinctly prefers the former. *Brolo* is the Lombard for a garden in which there is verdure. In the Romagnole dialect there occurs the word *Broi*, a nursery ground; and as the Romagnoles habitually clip their terminations, we must suppose it to be an abbreviation. In Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary (*Vocabula in Jure Anglicano municipalis occurrentia*), one finds *Bruilletus*, a small coppice or wood. Ducange (*Glossarium mediæ et infimæ Latinitatis*, ed. L. Favre, Niort, 1883, s.v. *Brolium*, § 1) interprets: "Nemus, silva, aut saltus in quo ferarum venatio exercetur; maxime vero silva muris aut sepibus cincta." He quotes from *Charta Ludovici Junioris anni 1158*: "Dum in manu regia Episcopatus fuerit, Brolium nec vendere, nec donare, nec aliquo modo diminuere poterimus." Upon which the editor of Ducange remarks: "Ubi Brolium sumendum videtur pro excelsa silva quam de haute futaye appellamus, non autem tonsili et cædua, Bois taillis." Dr. Moore calls *Brolo* a most curious and difficult word, and believes it to signify "a thicket," so that the idea is not so much that of a brilliant garden-like look of the flowers, but rather that of a thicket or bush of them, referring to their quantity. There are two places called Broill near Chichester, named respectively in the old charters *Bruillum Regis* and *Bruillum Depe-marsh*. From the same root perhaps are, Brailsford in Derbyshire, and Brill near Oxford. The celebrated Castel di Brolio near Siena, the residence of the Barons Ricasoli, probably owes its name to a similar derivation. In Donkin's *Etymological Dictionary of the Romance Languages*, I find "*Brogljo, bruolo, Ital.* (Dante *brolo* a crown); Prov. *bruelh*; French *brevil*; Portug. *brulha*; Prov. *bruelha*; Old French *bruelle*; Old Spanish *brollar*; Prov. and Portug. *brothar*; French *brouiller*, to sprout, break out, rebel, raise a disturbance; Ital. *brogljo* [and *imbroglio*]; English *broil*. Probably from the Celtic; Welsh *brog*, a swelling, whence *brog-il* in Old German. From *brouiller* comes *brouillon*, a disturber, a make-bate, also a sketch, a rough copy." Hence also we get the Italian *imbroglione*, one who deceives by jumbling up the facts, a mischief-maker, whether intentionally or the reverse.

\* *aspetto*: "erano coronati di rose e di altri fiori vermigli di sì acceso colore, che un *aspetto*, cioè una vista, uno spettatore un po' lontano (non così vicino come Dante) avrebbe giurato che i sette personaggi avessero fuoco intorno alla fronte" (Andreoli).





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And when the chariot was opposite to me, a clap of thunder was heard; and all that noble throng appeared to have their further progress forbidden, halting on that spot at the same moment as the leading standards (*i.e.* the candlesticks).

Benvenuto thinks that Dante would show that God had done him the wondrous favour of letting him see these things for himself, so that he might in turn describe them to others.

---

the four Living Beings, while the three Theological Virtues on the right hand side, and the four Cardinal Virtues on the left, represent the arms of the Cross to the right and left respectively. The head of the Cross is made up by the *sette col primo stuolo abituati*.

END OF CANTO XXIX.



## CANTO XXX.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE (CONTINUED)—APPEARANCE OF BEATRICE—DISAPPEARANCE OF VIRGIL—DANTE SEVERELY CENSURED BY BEATRICE.

WHEREAS, in the last Canto, Dante gave a figurative description of the Militant Church of God, so, in the present one, he introduces Beatrice, who represents Divine Theology, and who teaches and instructs both Churches, in order that she may, by first showing Dante the Church Militant, prepare his mind for gazing, later on, upon the Church Triumphant.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 21, Dante relates how the army of the Church Militant came to a halt.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 22 to ver. 57, the appearance of Beatrice, her attire and demeanour, are minutely described, while Virgil is found to have disappeared.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 58 to ver. 99, Dante relates how Beatrice reproves him for not having remained faithful to her after her death, and he describes the effect upon himself of her censure.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 100 to ver. 145, she begins by praising his early life of promise, and goes



rising, nor other clouding than the veil of sin, and which was making each person there (in the Terrestrial Paradise) acquainted with his duty, even as the lower one (*i.e.* the Septentrion of the Great Bear) does for him who turns the helm to come into port, —came to a halt, that truthful band (the four-and-twenty Elders) the first who had come between the Gryphon and it (the Septentrion of candlesticks), turned to the chariot, as it were to their peace. And one of them, as though sent from Heaven, cried out three times in song, *Veni, sponsa, de Libano*, and all the others after him.

The word Septentrion in its literal sense means the seven-fold group of stars which form the Constellation of the Great Bear. The Septentrion of the Highest Heaven means the seven golden candlesticks, which perform the same office for Christians as the Constellation does for mariners. The Septentrion here implies the Sevenfold Holy Spirit, which, with Its sevenfold benefits, is ever ready, as It has ever been, to receive all who make themselves worthy.

Dante now describes the holy festival that took place round the chariot. Having related the manner in which (the so-called) Solomon and the other Elders had sung the praises of the Church, he now introduces a multitude of the Heavenly Host, singing the praises of the Bridegroom, and he says that these Angels suddenly rose from the chariot, just as the Blessed will rise from their sepulchres at the sound of the last trump.

Quali i beati al novissimo bando \*

---

\* *bando*: The *Gran Dizionario* quotes this passage and explains it: "*Novissimo bando*, il Giudizio annunziato dalle angeliche trombe." Compare *Par.* xxvi, 44, 45:—

"L' alto preconio, che grida l' arcano  
Di qui laggiù sopra ogni altro bando."





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"L' alto preconio, che grida l' arcano  
Di qui laggiù sopra ogni altro bando."



Surgeran presti ognun di sua caverna,  
 La rivestita voce \* alleluando, 15  
 Cotali, in sulla divina basterna,†  
 Si levâr cento, *ad vocem tanti senis*,‡  
 Ministri e messaggier § di vita eterna.

And *Par.* xxx, 34, 35:—

“Cotal, qual io la lascio a maggior bando  
 Che quel della mia tuba.”

The *Gran Dizionario* says that the primary signification of *bando* is *Annunzio pubblico d' autorità*. Blanc (*Vocab. Dant.*) gives to *bando* (akin to the German *Bann*, and *ban* in English) two meanings:—(1) The extension of the jurisdiction of the district (hence “*abbandonare*”), whence comes also, “exile from the district,” [*uscir di bando* (*Purg.* xxi, 102) means to return from exile,] and (2) the publication, the edict, proclamation; and here *il novissimo bando* is the summons to the Universal Judgment.

\* *rivestita voce*: Compare St. Paul, *11 Cor.* v, 2: “Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven.” Benvenuto puts it very well: “*Resumptis organis corporalibus*”; the body in which the voice once resided is again restored to it. The voice reclothed with its body. Compare *Inf.* xiii, 103-104, where poor Pier delle Vigne tells Dante what will be the ultimate fate of himself and his companions in doom:—

“Come l' altre verrem per nostre spoglie,  
 Ma non però ch' alcuna sen rinvesta.”

Others read *La rivestita carne alleviando*, making light and active (*levia*), through immortality, the bodies which they have again assumed; but the reading *alleluando* is much to be preferred. There has, however, been much controversy about the two readings.

† *basterna*: Benvenuto says that *basterna* is a vehicle for travelling, so called from *vesterna*, because it was spread over with soft garments, and drawn by two beasts, being used for carrying noble ladies. He thinks the metaphor appropriate, for the chariot here is drawn by an animal of a twofold nature and in it a most noble lady, Beatrice, is carried.

‡ *ad vocem tanti senis*: Some modern Commentators say that Dante wrote these words in Latin for the sake of the rhyme, a supposition I am wholly disinclined to admit. I feel sure that he was quoting some line known to him.

§ *Ministri e messaggier*: Compare *Hebrews*, i, 7: “And of the angels he sayeth, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,” and in v. 14: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Scartazzini imagines that the Angels were in the chariot, but only sprang into view at the call of Solomon,



As the Blessed at the last trump shall quickly rise up each from his sepulchre, singing Hallelujah with their re-assumed bodily voice, so *ad vocem tanti senis* (at the voice of so great an Elder) there rose up upon the heavenly litter a hundred ministers and messengers of life eternal.

It may be taken for granted that Dante meant Angels, for in line 82 he says: *Ella si tacque, e gli Angeli cantaro*, etc., clearly showing that he was speaking of the Angels having been previously introduced as having appeared. Otherwise he would not have said *Gli Angeli*.

The song, which was now taken up by the Heavenly Choir, is from the words of the Canticle for Palm Sunday, and, as the Angels scattered flowers over and around the chariot, they also sang one of the most beautiful lines of Virgil's *Æneid*.

just as the chariots and horses of fire, which surrounded the town of Dothan, were invisible to mortal eyes, until Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened to behold them (11 Kings, vi, 17). The idea of presenting Beatrice to his readers in the midst of a cloud of Angels would seem to have been a fixed one in Dante's mind before ever he composed the *Divina Commedia*. Compare *Vita Nuova*, § xxiii, ll. 49-63, where in a vision he imagines he sees a multitude of Angels, and then Beatrice lying dead: "Io imaginava di guardare verso il cielo, e pareami veder moltitudine di angeli, i quali tornassero in suso ed avessero dinanzi loro una nubiletta bianchissima: e pareami che questi angeli cantassero gloriosamente . . . e fu sì forte la errante fantasia, che mi mostrò questa donna morta." And in the *Canzone* (ii) in the same section we read, ll. 185-188:—

"E vedea (che parean pioggia di manna),  
Gli angeli che tornavan suso in cielo,  
Ed una nuvoletta avean davanti,  
Dopo la qual cantavan tutti: *Osannah*."

And in *Canzone xvii*, st. 4, ll. 55-60:—

"Questa, in cui Dio mise grazia tanta.  
Morte, deh! non tardar mercè, se l'hai;  
Chè mi par già veder lo cielo aprire,  
E gli angeli di Dio quaggiù venire,  
Per volerne portar l'anima santa  
Di questa, in cui onor lassù si canta."





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*Division II.*—In a simile drawn from the rising of the Sun, and which Venturi (*Similitudini Dantesche*, p. 5, *sim.* 5) thinks one of the most beautiful in the poem, alike for its true colouring and for the sweetness of the verses, Dante relates how Beatrice makes her first appearance in the Terrestrial Paradise. We shall see that she is arrayed in white, green and red, the same colours as the three Theological virtues.\*

Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno

---

Romans who were to descend from his stock, among whom was the young Marcellus. When Virgil read out aloud before the Emperor the magnificent lines which compose this passage, Augustus could not restrain his tears; Octavia, the mother of Marcellus, swooned away at the words *Tu Marcellus eris*, but afterwards presented Virgil with ten sesterces for every line in praise of her son, the whole equivalent to £2,000 sterling.

\* These colours were those of Dante's attire in the fresco portrait of him by Giotto in the chapel of the *Bargello* at Florence. When that portrait was discovered in 1841, the Government of the Grand Duke, horrified to find Dante represented in a costume which contained the forbidden colours adopted by the party of United Italy [now the national colours of the Kingdom], employed an obscure artist to paint them out. He exceeded his instructions, and, after turning Dante's attire into a dark red colour, he painted in the eye which a nail in the wall had destroyed, and painted it out of drawing, so that the portrait now represents Dante with a squinting eye. The frontispiece to the first volume of this work is from the drawing made for my father by Baron Seymour Kirkup, preserved in the family collection at Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire, immediately after the discovery of the original fresco by Giotto. A spirited popular song well describes the colours of the Italian flag:—

“Giovanottin della pupilla nera,  
Dimmi qual è il color di tua bandiera?—  
—Se a una rosa vermiglia e un gelsomino  
Una foglia d' allor metti vicino,  
I tre colori avrai più cari e belli  
Di che noi ci conosciam fratelli;  
I tre colori avrai che fremer fanno  
Chi ognor s' ostina ad essere tiranno.”—etc.



La parte oriental tutta rosata,\*  
 E l' altro ciel † di bel sereno adorno,  
 E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,  
 Si che per temperanza di vapori ‡  
 L' occhio la sostenea lunga fiata ;

25

I have ere now seen at break of day the Eastern region all rosy, and the rest of the sky decked in tranquil loveliness, and the face of the sun rising shaded, so that, from the tempering of mists, the eye could endure it for a long while.

\* *rosata* : Compare Ovid, *Metam.* vi, 47, 48 :—

“ Ut solet aer

Purpureus fieri, cum primum Aurora movetur.”

And Petrarch, *Rime in Morte di Laura*, Son. xxiii :—

“ Quand' io veggio dal ciel scender l' Aurora  
 Con la fronte di rose, e co' crin d' oro.”

And Tasso (*Ger. Lib. viii*, st. 1) nearly copies Petrarch :—

“ E l' alba uscia della magion celeste  
 Con la fronte di rose, e co' piè d' oro.”

And Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.*, xliii, st. 54 :—

“ . . . . e già il color cilestro  
 Si vedea in Oriente venir manco ;  
 Chè, votando di fior tutto il canestro,  
 L' Aurora vi faceva vermiglio e bianco.”

And Boëthius, *Philos. Consol.* ii, metr. 8 :—

“ Quod Phœbus roseum diem  
 Curru provehit aureo.”

“ Dalla circostanza meteorologica, per la quale vediamo non di rado esser sereno tutto il cielo, fuor che a ponente o a levante, ove uno strato poco denso di vapori s' infiamma ai raggi solari, prende una tinta rosata, e fa velo al grand' astro diurno per modo, da permetterci di rimirarlo senza offesa ; leva il Poeta l' imagine di una delle più soavi e felici pitture, ch' egli abbia saputo ideare, e che noi possiamo ammirare ” (Antonelli, in *Tommaséo's Commentary*).

. † *l' altro ciel* = *il rimanente del ciel*, or *le altre parti del ciel*, is the interpretation agreed on by most of the Commentators.

‡ *temperanza di vapori* : Compare *Par.* v, 133-135 :—

“ Sì come il sol, che si cela egli stessi  
 Per troppa luce, come il caldo ha rose  
 Le temperanze dei vapori spessi.”

“ Volendo l' Autore introdurre Beatrice, mostra che ella sia velata d' una nuvoletta, la quale ha virtute temperativa, acciò che l' occhio, cioè l' intelletto umano, possa, mediante la mistica e figurativa Scrittura, soffrire li raggi e la chiaritade della divina Scrittura ” (*Ottimo*).



Benvenuto too remarks on the appropriateness of this simile: for Beatrice is as the Sun that illumines the chariot, and just as the human eye cannot bear the rays of the Sun, except through the medium of vapours, so the human intellect cannot contemplate the glory of Beatrice, except through the rain of flowers falling over the chariot.

Così dentro una nuvola di fiori,\*  
 Che dalle mani angeliche saliva,†  
 E ricadea in giù dentro e di fuori,  
 Sopra candido vel ‡ cinta d' oliva

30

---

\* *nuvola di fiori*: Compare the beautiful lines in Petrarch, part i, *Canzone xi*, st. 4:—

“Da' be' rami scendea  
 (Dolce nella memoria)  
 Una pioggia di fior sopra 'l suo grembo;  
 Ed ella si sedea  
 Umile in tanta gloria,  
 Coverta già dell' amoroso nembo.  
 Qual fior cadea sul lembo,  
 Qual su le trecce bionde,  
 Ch' oro forbito e perle  
 Eran quel dì a vederle;  
 Qual si posava in terra, e qual su l' onde;  
 Qual con un vago errore  
 Girando, pareva dir: qui regna Amore.”

† *Che dalle mani angeliche saliva*: Poletto points out in his Commentary, that from the moment of Beatrice's appearance, and during the whole of her long speech to Dante, the Angels continued unceasingly to shower the flowers upon her and upon the chariot. Compare *Purg.* xxxi, 77, 78:—

“Posarsi quelle prime creature  
 Da loro aspersion l' occhio comprese.”

‡ *candido vel*: Beatrice appears to Dante veiled, as he is not as yet sufficiently purified and reconciled to her to be thought worthy to look upon her face. Compare *Vita Nuova*, § xxiii, ll. 62-65: “È fu sì forte la errante fantasia, che mi mostrò questa donna morta; e pareami che donne le coprissero la testa con un bianco velo.” Compare also Milton, *Par. Lost*, ix, 424-425:—

“Eve separate he spies,  
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood.”

And Thomson, *Invocation to Spring*, 4:—

“veiled in a shower  
 Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.”





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E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto \*

Tempo era stato che alla sua presenza †

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Non era di stupor tremando ‡ affranto,

hood of both, and that his glorification of the Beatrice of the poem is his apotheosis of the real Beatrice of his tender youth. Benvenuto is most precise, and be it remembered that his Commentary was written but fifty years after Dante's death: "Sed ad pleniorē cognitionem eorum, quæ dicuntur hic et in capitulo sequenti de ista Beatrice, volo te scire quod cum quidam Fulcus Portinarius, honorabilis civis Florentiæ de more faceret celebre convivium kalendis maii, convocatis vicinis cum dominabus eorum, Dantes tunc puerulus novem annorum secutus patrem suum Aldigherium, qui erat unus de numero convivarum, vidit a casu inter alias puellas puellulam filiam præfati Pulci, cui nomen erat Beatrix, ætatis octo annorum, miræ pulchritudinis, sed majoris honestatis; quæ subito intravit cor ejus, ita quod numquam postea recessit ab eo donec illa vixit, sive ex conformitate complexionis et morum, sive ex singulari influenza cœli. Et cum ætate continuo multiplicatæ sunt amorosæ flammæ; ex quo Dantes totus deditus illi quocumque iret pergebat credens in oculis ejus videre summam felicitatem, per quam lacrymas, vigiliis et infinitas tulit pœnas; tamen hic amor honestissimus semper fuit, ut numquam apparuit signum libidinosi actus in amante vel amata. Hoc autem fuit certissimum prognosticum et augurium futuri amoris, quem habiturus erat ad magnam Beatricem sacram, ad quam erat pronus a natura. Ex his potes videre, quod poeta aliqua dicit historice, aliqua allegorice de Beatrice sua."

\* *cotanto Tempo*: We know from *Purg.* xxxii, 1, 2, that it was ten years since Dante's eyes had last rested on Beatrice's face:—

"... eran gli occhi miei fissi ad attenti

A disbramarsi la decenne sete."

† *che alla sua presenza*: Others read the whole line *Tempo era stato con la sua presenza*, on which Cesari contemptuously observes: "dalla qual lezione uscì un guazzabuglio [*confused jumble*] di concetti falsi e storti, che fu una miseria." It is however the reading adopted by Pietro di Dante and by the *Falso Boccaccio*.

‡ *tremando*: In more than one passage of the *Vita Nuova* Dante relates how the sight of Beatrice caused him to tremble: see § ii, ll. 19-25: "In quel punto dico veracemente che lo spirito della vita, lo quale dimora nella segretissima camera del core, cominciò a tremare sì fortemente, che apparia ne' menomi polsi orribilmente: *Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi.*" And § ii, ll. 9-13, and 15-17: "E quando ella fosse alquanto propinqua al salutare, uno spirito d' Amore, distruggendo



Senza degli occhi aver più conoscenza,  
 Per occulta virtù che da lei mosse,  
 D' antico amor sentì la gran potenza.\*

And my spirit, which now for so long a time had not been (as formerly) crushed trembling down with awe at her presence, without having any further knowledge (of her) by my eyes, through some occult virtue that emanated from her, felt the mighty influence of ancient love.

Dante now says that, finding himself in sore perplexity, his first impulse prompted him to turn to Virgil, as he had been wont to do during the whole of his passage through Hell and Purgatory.

Tosto che nella vista mi percosse † 40  
 L' alta virtù, che già m' avea trafitto  
 Prima ch' io fuor di puerizia fosse,  
 Volsimi alla sinistra col rispitto ‡  
 Col quale il fantolin corre alla mamma,  
 Quando ha paura o quando egli è affitto, 45

tutti gli altri spiriti sensitivi, pingea fuori i deboletti spiriti del viso . . . E chi avesse voluto conoscere Amore, far lo potea mirando lo tremore degli occhi miei." And § 24, ll. 2-5: "Avvenne un dì, che sedendo io pensoso in alcuna parte, ed io mi sentii cominciare un tremito nel core, così come s' io fossi stato presente a questa donna."

\* *sentì la gran potenza* : In the *Canzoniere*, *Canz.* xiv, st. 1, Dante says:—

"Io sento sì d' Amor la gran possanza,  
 Ch' io non posso durare  
 Lungamente a soffrire."

The last words (§ xlii) of the *Vita Nuova*, show that it was Beatrice's influence that made Dante write the *Divina Commedia*.

† *nella vista mi percosse l' alta virtù* : Some difficulty has been felt in explaining how a vivid impression, a sublime influence, could strike upon Dante's vision. What did strike upon it was the figure, in outline, of Beatrice; but he mentions *la virtù*, because his thought is centred now, not upon her outward aspect, but upon her personality—the power, the nobility, the perfection which he acknowledged in her—and by which he was made into the man he was now and would be hereafter.

‡ *rispitto* : Scartazzini thinks with the *Ottimo*.



Per dicere a Virgilio:—" Men che dramma \*  
Di sangue m' è rimaso che non tremi ;  
Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma."—

Soon as smote upon my vision that sublime influence, which had already transfixed me before I was out of my boyhood, I turned me to the left with the confidence with which a little child runs to its mother, when it is in fear, or when in distress, to say to Virgil: "There is not so much as a drop of blood left in me that does not tremble; I recognise the symptoms of the ancient flame."

Dante's hopes of aid and counsel from Virgil are disappointed; he turns round, but his father in poetry has vanished from his sight for ever. Overflowing with affection Dante repeats in three consecutive lines the name of Virgil, and then, notwithstanding the bliss of that sacred spot, he cannot restrain his tears.

the best is to understand that Dante turned to his left hand to get comfort and help from Virgil. He thinks *rispetto* is derived from the Provençal word *respicit*, which means trust, confidence, hope; Nannucci gives that interpretation (*Voci e locuzioni italiane derivate dalla lingua provenzale*). We may note here that the very last words, which Dante addresses to Virgil in the poem, are words of Virgil's own in *Æn.* iv, 23, where Dido says to Anna: "Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ." One may notice some inconsistency in Beatrice visiting the gates of death to induce Virgil to go and succour Dante, and then, in the Terrestrial Paradise, Virgil vanishing on Beatrice's appearance without their exchanging a word.

\* *dramma*: Compare Petrarch, part i, *Canz.* x, st. i:—

"Ardendo lei che come un ghiaccio stassi,  
E non lassa in me dramma  
Che non sia foco e fiamma."

And *Dittamondo*, lib. i, Canto xix, terz. 28:—

"Al qual fanciul fu vista una gran fiamma  
Sopra la testa, stando nella cuna;  
Arder pareva, nè consumarsi dramma."

In these two passages, as well as the one in the text, the *Gran Dizionario* interprets *dramma*, "minima particella."





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Non pianger anco, non pianger ancora ;  
Chè pianger ti convien per altra spada."—

“Dante, weep thou not yet because Virgil is gone, weep not just yet, for thou wilt have to weep for another wound (*lit.* sword).”

He will have to weep for the faults of which Beatrice is about to remind him, namely, for having forgotten her and the higher life she set before him, and given himself to the leadership of baser persons; through which, in spite of her attempts to rescue him by means of dreams and otherwise, he fell so low, that there was no other resource left but to show him the lost souls in Hell.

*Division III.*—Scartazzini (*Ediz. Min.*) observes that from the beginning of Dante's mystic journey up to the present moment, he had been buoyed up by the thought of seeing Beatrice. Each of the seven P's has been effaced in turn from his brow, and Virgil has told him that his judgment and will are to be free, upright, and sound. He may well, therefore, have been taken aback by this wholly unexpected greeting.

He sees Beatrice, who, on her first appearance, was only to be imperfectly discerned amid the clouds of flowers that fell upon her from the ministering Angels, standing on the left hand border of the chariot, *i.e.* on the side of the Old Testament. She

to prove that the words *Da te*, in *Par.* xxvi, 104, ought to be *Dante*, but Scartazzini feels that their arguments have not much weight, inasmuch as in verses 62-63 of the present Canto Dante says:—

“ . . . mi volsi al suon del nome mio,  
Che di necessità qui si registra; ”

showing the exceptional circumstance under which he mentions his name, and modestly apologizing for doing so.



looks steadily at him, as he is standing on the Purgatory side of Lethe. Dante shows great ingenuity in the modest way he introduces his own name, making Beatrice only utter it for the purpose of disparagement. His description of her demeanour is fully in keeping with the dignity of the subject.

Quasi ammiraglio,\* che in poppa ed in prora  
 Viene a veder la gente che ministra †  
 Per gli altri legni, ‡ ed a ben far la incuora, 60  
 In sulla sponda § del carro sinistra,  
 Quando mi volsi al suon del nome mio,  
 Che di necessità || qui si registra,  
 Vidi la Donna, che pria m' apparío

\* *Quasi ammiraglio* : Compare *Convivio* iv, 4, ll. 50-59 : " Siccome vedemo in una nave, che diversi uffici e diversi fini di quella a uno solo fine sono ordinati, cioè a prendere lo desiderato porto per salutevole via : dove, siccome ciascuno ufficiale ordina la propria operazione nel proprio fine, così è uno che tutti questi fini considera, e ordina quelli nell' ultimo di tutti : e questi è il nocchiere, alla cui voce tutti ubbidire deono. . . . "

† *ministra* : Virgil (*Æn.* vi, 302) says of Charon :—

" Ipse ratem conto subigit, velisque ministrat. "

‡ *Per gli altri legni* : Buti points out that the admiral's inspection is naturally required in *the other* ships of his fleet, though not so much so in his own ship. Some read *alti*, an insipid, colourless reading, wholly lacking in vigour.

§ *sponda* : Venturi (*Simil. Dant.* pp. 214-215, sim. 359) says that this word is equally applicable to the idea of a chariot or of a ship. Scartazzini remarks that on this left side [*sponda . . . sinistra*] of the car whereon Beatrice was standing, was also Dante and the four fair damsels who typified the four Cardinal virtues. •

|| *necessità* : " Convenne che la donna il chiamasse per nome, per due cagioni : l' una, perche certa fosse la persona, intra tante, alla quale dirizzava il suo sermone ; l' altra, perochè come più addolcisce nello umano pa a e il nomare la persona per lo proprio nome, in ciò che più d'affezione si mostra ; così più pugne il repressivo, quando la persona ripresa dalla riprendente è nomata [*i.e. when the person rebuked is named by the rebuker*] " (*Ottimo*). In *Conv.* i, ii, ll. 8-17, Dante is very explicit about an author not naming himself : " Parlare alcuno di sè medesimo pare non licito . . . Non si concede per li rettorici alcuno di sè medesimo senza necessaria cagione parlare. "



Velata sotto l' angelica festa,\* 65  
 Drizzar gli occhi vèr me di qua dal rio.  
 Tutto che il vel che le scendea di testa,  
 Cerchiato dalla fronde di Minerva,  
 Non la lasciasse parer manifesta ;  
 Regalmente nell' atto ancor proterva † 70  
 Continuò, come colui che dice,  
 E il più caldo parlar dietro serva : ‡  
 — " Guardaci ben : ben sem, § ben sem Beatrice :

\* *Velata sotto l' angelica festa* : Trissino amplifies this : "velata dalla nube di fiori dalle angeliche mani formata," etc. *Festa* has the sense of *accoglienza*, reception, greeting, welcome. Compare *Purg.* vi, 79-81 :—

"Quell' anima gentil fu così presta,  
 Sol per lo dolce suon della sua terra,  
 Di fare al cittadin suo quivi festa."

See also *Purg.* xxvi, 33 : and especially *Par.* xv, 83, 84 :—

". . . e però non ringrazio  
 Se non col core, alla paterna festa."

† *Regalmente nell' atto . . . proterva* : Andreoli thinks *proterva* must be taken in the sense of *imperiosa*, *altera*. Cesari says that the line is a priceless gem, "che maestà aggiunge quel *realmente* ! e quel *proterva* (l) vince ogni dire. Essa non si lasciava veder manifesta : ma di sotto all' ombra del velo, apparia bene l' altera maestà e 'l minaccioso atto del suo sembiante." Brunone Bianchi, Biagioli, Tommasèo, and Scartazzini, quote the following from *Conv.* iii, 15, ll. 203-210, but Scartazzini says that, although the passage is marvellously similar to the one in the text, the *donna gentile* of the *Convivio* must on no account be identified with Beatrice as some Commentators have tried to show : "È da sapere che dal principio essa filosofia pareva a me, quanto dalla parte del suo corpo (cioè Sapienza), fiera, chè non mi ridea, in quanto le sue persuasioni ancora non intendea ; e disdegnosa, chè non mi volgea gli occhi, cioè ch' io non potea vedere le sue dimostrazioni. E di tutto questo il difetto era dal mio lato."

‡ *E il più caldo parlar dietro serva* : Compare Dante's own words in *Conv.* ii, 9, ll. 9-13 : Sempre quello che massimamente dire intende lo dicitore, si dee riservare di dietro ; perocchè quello che ultimamente si dice, più rimane nell' animo dell' uditore."

§ *Guardaci ben : ben sem*, etc. This reading, giving the royal plural, has overwhelming MS. authority, but Dr. Moore (*Textual Criticism*, pp. 431, 432), observes that it is only fair to draw attention to the fact that all the old Commentators who notice the passage explicitly (i.e. Benvenuto, Buti, Landino, Vellutello, and Daniello) have *guardami* and *son*, which is the reading almost





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Virgil has disappeared, do not weep any longer, or at all events not just at present, but thou wilt soon have to weep to some purpose for a very different kind of wound. Look well at me, look, I *am*, yes, I *am* Beatrice! How camest thou to deign to ascend this mountain? Didst thou not know that here alone Man is truly happy?"

Dante then relates the shame that he felt at her reproof.

Gli occhi mi cadder giù nel chiaro fonte ;  
Ma veggendomi in esso, i \* trassi all' erba,  
Tanta vergogna mi gravò la fronte.

Così la madre † al figlio par superba,  
Com' ella parve a me ; per che d' amaro 80  
Sente il sapor ‡ della pietate acerba.§

My eyes fell down to the limpid stream ; but seeing myself in it, I withdrew them to the grass, such great shame did weigh upon my brow. So to her son the

\* *i* (for *li*) *trassi all' erba* : *i* means *essi*, i.e. *gli occhi*. Dante uses *i* for *li* several times. Compare *Inf.* vii, 53:—

“ La sconoscente vita che i fe' sozzi.”

And *Inf.* v, 77, 78:—

“ e tu allor li prega

Per quell' amor che i mena ; e quei verranno.”

And *Par.* xii, 26, 27:—

Pur come gli occhi ch' al piacer che i move  
Convienne insieme chiudere e levarsi.”

† *madre* : Compare *Par.* i, 100-102, where Dante again likens Beatrice to a mother:—

“ Ond' ella, appresso d' un pio sospiro,  
Gli occhi drizzò vèr me con quel semblante  
Che madre fa sopra figliuol deliro.”

And *Par.* xxii, 4, 5:—

“ E quella, come madre che soccorre  
Subito al figlio pallido ed anelo.”

‡ *Sente il sapor* ; Others read *sentì 'l sapor*.

§ *acerba* : “ La pietà che castiga sa sempre d' amaro [always has a bitter taste] al castigato. *Acerba* si riferisce qui alla cosa, cioè alla pietà raffigurata come cibo ; *amaro* si riferisce alla sensazione. Fra *acerba* ed *amaro* vi ha la differenza che passa tra *sapore* e *gusto* ” (Scartazzini).



mother appears haughty, as she appeared to me, because the savour of stern pity has a bitter taste.

Dante has some reason to think that Beatrice loved him, seeing that she was making so great an effort to save his soul, as to be his guide, and, with that belief in his mind, her displeasure cuts him to the quick. The Angels, gentle Ministers of comfort to the mourning sinner, suddenly burst out into song.

Ella si tacque, e gli Angeli cantaro  
Di subito: *In te, Domine, \* speravi*;  
Ma oltre *pedes meos* non passaro.

She held her peace, and straightway the Angels sang: "*In te, Domine, speravi*"; but beyond (the words) "*pedes meos*" they did not go.

Their gentle intercessions so touch Dante's heart, that he bursts into tears. He compares the breaking out of his pent up feelings to the melting of the snow and ice on the Apennines under the influence of the hot winds from the South. Venturi (*Simil.* 114) remarks that the conception is tender, but the simile is long, and not expressed with Dante's accustomed terseness.

Si come neve † tra le vive travi ‡

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\* *In te, Domine, etc.*: The words are taken from *Psalm xxxi, 1, et seq.*: "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed." They sang the first eight verses of this *Psalm*, in order that Dante should not despair, but ceased at the words in v. 8: "Thou hast set my feet in a large room."

† *come neve*: Compare *Vita Nuova*, § xviii, ll. 41-45: "Allora queste donne cominciaro a parlare tra loro; e siccome talor vedemo cader l'acqua mischiata di bella neve, cosi mi pareva vedere le loro parole uscire mischiate di sospiri."

‡ *vive travi*: Compare *Virgil, Æn. vi, 181-182*:—

"Fraxineæque trabes cuneis et fissile robur  
Scinditur."

And *Ovid, Metam. viii, 329*:—

"Silva frequens trabibus, quam nulla ceciderat ætas,"

The expression is of frequent occurrence in *Ovid*. *Poletto re.*



Per lo dosso d' Italia \* si congela,  
 Soffiata e stretta dagli venti schiavi, †  
 Poi liquefatta in sè stessa trapela,  
 Pur che la terra che perde ombra spiri,  
 Sì che par foco fonder la candela : ‡  
 Così fui senza lagrime e sospiri §

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marks that *travi* are properly dead trees; and the epithet *vive* shows them to be alive and still growing.

\* *Per lo dosso d' Italia*: Compare Dante, *De Vulg. Eloq.* i, 14, ll. 1-4: "Transeuntes nunc humeros Apennini frondiferos, lævam Italiam cunctam venemur, ceu solemus, orientaliter ineuntes." The Apennines are, as it were, the spine of Italy. "On the summit grew those magnificent pines, which gave the district of Massa the epithet of *Trabaria*, from the beams which were carried thence for the palaces of Rome, and which are noticed by Dante as

‘The living rafters  
 Upon the back of Italy.’”

(Dennistown, *Memoir of the Duke of Urbino*, i, 4.)

† *venti schiavi*: "I venti schiavi che stringono la neve tra i rami degli alberi, sono quelli che oggi si direbbero grecali, chiamati in antico boreali; perciocchè la Schiavonia è fra levante e tramontana rispetto alla nostra penisola. I venti poi dai quali viene liquefatta la neve, spirano da mezzodì e da ostro, indicato dal Poeta per la terra che perde ombra, proprietà delle regioni tropicali, o della zona torrida, ove due volte all' anno a mezzogiorno il sole tocca lo zenit di ciascun punto; e quindi l' ombra di un corpo opaco, in situazione verticale, cade alla sua base, onde non comparisce da alcun lato" (Antonelli, quoted by Tommasèo). Benvenuto compares the Mountain of Purgatory to the beautiful Apennines; the trees of the Apennines to Dante born among the Apennines; the snow to the purified soul. The fierce North Wind, the *Bora*, is compared to Beatrice, harsh, but penetrating the heart for Dante's good. The hot South Wind, which brings rain, is compared to the song of the Angels which melts Dante's heart into tears.

‡ *par foco fonder la candela*: Compare Ovid, *Metam.* iii, 487-489:—

“. . . ut intabescere flavæ  
 Igne levi ceræ, matutinæve pruinæ  
 Sole tepente solent.”

And Psalm lxxviii, 2: "As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God." And *Micah* i, 4.

§ *senza lagrime e sospiri*: Compare *Vita Nuova*, § ix, ll. 1-11: "Appresso la morte di questa donna alquanti dì . . . l' andare mi dispiacea sì, che quasi li sospiri non poteano disfogare l' angoscia che il core sentia."





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and water (*i.e.* sighs and tears), and with anguish issued from my breast, through my mouth and through my eyes.

*Division IV.*—Beatrice now addresses herself to the Angels, and after greatly commending Dante's early life of promise, she speaks in terms of severe reprobation of his fall from it, and points out the necessity that had arisen for her interposition.

Ella, pur ferma in sulla detta coscia \* 100  
 Del carro stando, alle sustanzie pie †  
 Vorse le sue parole cosi poscia :  
 — “ Voi vigilate nell' eterno die, ‡

\* *in sulla detta coscia* : We have here a very important difference of reading, about which the principal authorities are pretty equally divided, viz. :—

“ Ella, pur ferma in su la *delta* coscia  
 Del carro,” etc.,  
 which reading I take here ; or

“ Ella, pur ferma in su la *destra* coscia  
 Del carro,” etc.,

which Benvenuto adopts ; and which would imply that Beatrice had changed her position, and passed over to the right, or New Testament side of the car. The word *pur* speaks in favour of the former reading. Beatrice was *still* standing on the aforementioned side of the car.

† *sustanzie pie* : Scartazzini says that *pie* has a very distinct double sense, meaning both devout, *i.e.* holy, and compassionate. Compare *Conv.* ii, 5, ll. 5-8 : “ Li movitori di quello (*terzo cielo*) sono Sustanze separate da materia, cioè Intelligenze, le quali la volgare gente chiama Angeli.” Compare St. Thomas Aquinas, *SUMM. THEOL.* pars i, qu. 1, art. 5 : “ Cùm angelus sit ipsa forma subsistens, impossibile est quòd ejus substantia sit corruptibilis.” And qu. lvi, art. 1 : “ Angelus est quædam forma subsistens, et per hoc intelligibilis in actu. Unde sequitur quòd per suam formam, quæ est sua substantia, seipsum intelliget.”

‡ *nell' eterno die* : The Angels are unceasingly engaged in the contemplation of God, the Eternal Day or Light, and Beatrice, reminding them of this fact, tells them that neither night nor sleep can deprive them of the knowledge of a single point in the revolutions of time, *i.e.* of any event that happens. Therefore, as they know everything, her answer is not addressed to them, but to Dante. Compare St. Thomas Aquinas (*SUMM. THEOL.* pars i,



Sì che notte nè sonno a voi non fura  
 Passo, che faccia il secol \* per sue vie ; 105  
 Onde la mia risposta è con più cura  
 Che m' intenda colui che di là piagne,  
 Perchè sia colpa e duol d' una misura. †

She, still standing motionless on the afore-mentioned side of the chariot, thereafter (at the conclusion of the chant) addressed her words to those holy and compassionate Beings (the Angels) thus: "Ye watch in the eternal day, so that neither night nor sleep robs you of a single step which the world can make along its ways; wherefore my reply is (given) with the more special aim (*cura*) that he who is weeping yonder over the stream may understand me, so that his fault and his contrition may be of equal measure.

Having thus made it clear that Dante's penitence must be proportioned to his errors, Beatrice points out all the influences which had contributed (says Plumptre) to endow Dante with the promise and potency of good. These influences were *partly* those of the heavens, which were believed to dispose every human being to a predestined end, according to the concomitance of the constellation under which that human being was born; *and partly* Dante's own natural endowments which were to be considered due to the influence of Divine Grace.

qu. lvii, art. 1): "Sicut Deus per suam essentiam materialia cognoscit, ita Angeli ea cognoscunt per hoc quod sunt in eis per suas intelligibiles species."

\* *il secol*: Daniello explains that Dante here takes "il secolo per il tempo, il quale altro non è che ombra dell' eternità: e perchè le cose mondane soggiaccion al tempo, prendesi ancora il secolo per il mondo e il mondo per gli huomini in esso contenuti." Compare Petrarch, part iv, Son. 3:—

"I' era amico a queste vostre Dive,  
 Le qua' vilmente il secolo abbandona."

† *d' una misura*: Compare, Par. vii, 82-84:—

"Ed in sua dignità mai non riviene,  
 Se non riempie dove colpa vota,  
 Contra mal diletta con giuste pene."



Non pur per opra delle rote magne,\*  
 Che drizzan ciascun seme ad alcun fine, 110  
 Secondo che le stelle son compagne ;  
 Ma per larghezza di grazie divine,  
 Che sì alti vapori † hanno a lor piova,  
 Che nostre viste là non van vicine,  
 Questi fu tal nella sua vita nuova ‡ 115  
 Virtualmente, § ch' ogni abito destro  
 Patto averebbe in lui mirabil prova.

\* *per opra delle rote magne* : Compare *Pur.* xxii, 112-114 :

“ O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno  
 Di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco  
 Tutto, qual che si sia, lo mio ingegno.”

And *Vita Nuova*, § 30, ll. 15-20 : “conciossiacosachè, secondo Tolomeo e secondo la Cristiana verità, nove siano li cieli che si muovono, e secondo comune opinione astrologa li detti cieli adoperino quaggiù secondo la loro abitudine insieme.” And Petrarch, part i, *Canzone* ii, st. 7, on the auspicious birth of Laura :—

“ Benigne stelle che compagne fêrsi  
 Al fortunato fianco,  
 Quando 'l bel parto giù nel mondo scorse.”

† *sì alti vapori*, etc. : The Grace of God in its descent upon Man has powers so efficacious and so great, that the eye of the human intellect is not only unable to reach them, but not even to approach them near enough to know and comprehend them. Compare *Par.* xx, 118-120 :—

“ . . . per grazia che da sì profonda  
 Fontana stilla, che mai creatura  
 Non pinse l' occhio infino alla prim' onda.”

‡ *vita nuova* : The interpretation that finds most favour among the Tuscan Commentators is “nella sua novella, giovanile,-età.” Some see it in Dante's life regenerated by his love for Beatrice ; while others take it literally as the title of his book, *La Vita Nuova*, and translate the line : “this man, at the time that he was writing the *Vita Nuova*,” etc.

§ *Virtualmente* : This is a Scholastic expression signifying “potentially,” or of “such a natural disposition.” See *Conv.* iv, 21, too long to quote here. Compare also Cicero, *Tusc. Disput.* iii, cap. 1 : “Quod si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri et perspicere, eademque optima duce cursum vitæ conficere possemus : haud erat sane, quod quisquam rationem ac doctrinam requireret. . . . Sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum ; quæ si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret.” Buti interprets the three lines, 115-117, thus.





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But all the more does the ground become unprofitable and rank (when sown) with bad seed or (when) untilled, in proportion as it has (soil of) good strong fertility.

This scene between Dante and Beatrice has given rise to much discussion and much difference of opinion, as to what were the sins for which Beatrice rebukes Dante, requiring him to repent and to confess. Witte, Scartazzini, and other Commentators, both ancient and modern, contend that Dante is not being rebuked for any profligate habit, but only for worldliness and for philosophical aberrations, rash speculation, and disloyalty to the Catholic Faith.

Against this view may be set the passage in *Inferno* xvi, 108, where Dante states that at one time he sought to take captive the Leopard (Lust) by means of the Franciscan cord; the account in *Purg.* xxiii, 115, of his interview with Forese (see note on p. 293 of 2nd edition); and the words addressed by Lucia to Beatrice in *Inf.* ii, 107; all of which, as well as other passages in the *Divina Commedia*, such as *Purg.* xxxi, 59, seem rather to favour the view that Beatrice is here rebuking Dante for some one or more of the Seven Deadly Sins.

The words *tanto giù cadde* in l. 136, and those in ll. 127-130, seem also more suitable to moral than to intellectual failings; and the extreme shame displayed by Dante when forced to confess the truth of Beatrice's accusations, as well as the text of his confession in *Purg.* xxxi, 34-36, point rather to the same conclusion.

It must not be forgotten that the whole object of Virgil's mission was to deliver Dante from three Wild Beasts, that is to say, three of the Seven Deadly Sins,



and to bring him back to Beatrice. And it would seem to be somewhat inconsequent, therefore, to assume that, when he reached her presence, he had nothing to confess except worldly ambition or unorthodox speculations.

Benvenuto hesitates between these two views. For example, on ll. 125, 126, he says: "*mutai vita quinnupsi, diessi altrui scilicet aliis mulieribus.*" But on l. 131 he says: "*seguendo false imagini di ben scilicet honores, dignitates, magistratus, vel scientias mundanas.*"

Beatrice now speaks both historically and allegorically of their early acquaintance.

Alcun tempo \* il sostenni col mio volto ;  
Mostrando gli occhi giovinetti † a lui,  
Meco il menava in dritta parte ‡ volto.

\* *Alcun tempo*, etc.: "Cioè in puerizia, dove l'autore non cercava circa le sue cognizioni ragione alcuna, e a lui soddisfacea *quia sic est*" (Lana). By *alcun tempo* we are to understand that sixteen years had elapsed from the time that Dante had first met Beatrice, until the time that she died.

† *Mostrando gli occhi giovinetti*: "Era . . . Beatrice . . . assai leggiadretta secondo la sua fanciullezza, e ne' suoi atti gentilesca, e piacevole molto, con costumi e con parole assai più gravi e modeste che 'l suo piccolo tempo non richiedeva" (Boccaccio, *Vita di Dante*). In the *Canzone* beginning *Voi ch' intendendo*, etc., which is *Canzone i* of the *Convivio*, at the beginning of *Tr. ii*, Dante says, ll. 24, 25:—

"Chi veder vuol la salute,  
Faccia che gli occhi d' esta Donna miri."

And in *Canzone ii* of *Conv. iii*, beginning *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*, ll. 63-65:—

"Sua beltà piove fiammelle di fuoco,  
Animate d' un spirito gentile,  
Ch' è creatore d' ogni pensier buono."

‡ *dritta parte*: Poletto (*Dizionario Dantesco*, vol. viii, *Appendice ii*) feels sure no one can doubt that this *Dritta parte* is the same as the *diritta via* of *Inf. i*, line 3:—

"Che la diritta via era smarrita."

And line 12:—



Sì tosto come in sulla soglia fui  
 Di mia seconda etade,\* e mutai vita,  
 Questi si tolse a me, e diessi altrui.

125

For some time I sustained him with my countenance ; showing him my youthful eyes, I led him with me bound on the right way. So soon as I was on the threshold of my second age (*i.e.* about twenty-five years old), and changed life (earthly for heavenly), he abandoned me, and gave himself to others.

Benvenuto takes this passage in its literal sense, implying that, when Beatrice married, Dante forgot her and thought of others, and eventually, at the solicitation of his friends, took a wife, but he adds that many explain it allegorically, that *gli occhi giovinetti* would represent the first elements of Theology, that *si tolse a me e diessi altrui* would be that he took to other and secular sciences, and that, when Beatrice died, the wife whom he afterwards married made him enter into public, municipal, and diplomatic affairs. Scartazzini follows Witte (see p. 546) in thinking that *altrui*, taken in its literal sense, refers to *la donna gentile* mentioned in the *Vita Nuova*, 30-39, and, allegorically, the philosophic speculation to which he gave himself up, after abandoning his faith ; but that, whoever *la donna gentile* may have been, she was in no way unworthy, either morally or socially, of the pure affection and holy love of a great mind like that of Dante.

“ Che la verace via abbandonai.”

We may contrast this with ll. 130, 131, of the present Canto :—

“ E volse i passi suoi per via non vera,  
 Imagini di ben seguendo false.”

\* *seconda etade* : In the *Convivio*, Tr. iv, c. 24, Dante divides human life into four ages, the first age ending at twenty-five years ; so he rightly speaks of Beatrice as just about to enter upon her second age when she died, which she did in 1290, at the age of twenty-four years and three months.





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When I was risen up from flesh to spirit, and beauty and virtue had increased in me, I was less dear to him and less pleasing; and he turned his steps into a path that was untrue, following after deceptive semblances of good, which to no promise give its due fulfilment.

After thus censuring Dante for entering into the paths of error, *i.e.* into Deadly Sin (see *Inf.* ii, 107), Beatrice points out his obstinate persistence in them, which, but for her further interposition, had well-nigh resulted in the ruin of his soul.

Nè impetrare ispirazion \* mi valse,  
 Con le quali ed in sogno ed altrimenti  
 Lo rivocai; † sì poco a lui ne calse. 135

Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti  
 Alla salute sua eran già corti, ‡  
 Fuor che mostrargli le perdute genti. §  
 Per questo visitai l'uscio dei morti,  
 Ed a colui che l'ha quassù condotto, 140

\* *impetrare ispirazion*: Qui vuole l'autore mostrare che essendo in sì perverso stato, visioni alcune li avvenisse per corregger sua selvaggia via" (Lana). "E questo si puote esponere in due modi: o che in sogno Beatrice, donna di mortale ad immortale secolo trapassata, l'ammonisse, come ha detto di sopra, capitolo vigesimosettimo di questo Canto; o vero, che la affezione, ch'elli avea allo studio di teologia, ed in sogno ed altrimenti li mostrasse: sì come detto è delle passioni, che inducono sogno, capitolo predetto" (*Ottimo*).

† *lo rivocai*: "Lo richiamai dalla torta strada del vitio alla dritta della virtù" (Daniello). Lubin sums up the whole passage thus: "La Beatrice fiorentina gli fu occasione di darsi alla virtù, e la Beatrice celeste d'insegnarli a mantinervisi e perfezionarsi."

‡ *corti*: The *Gran Dizionario* interprets *corto* in this passage: "Iscarso, non sufficiente." "Tutti argomenti . . . A la salute sua eran già corti, imperò che non bastavano, nè erano sufficienti."

§ *le perdute genti* and *l'uscio dei morti*: Compare the words above the Gate of Hell (*Inf.* iii, 3):—

"Per me si va tra la perduta gente."

And *Inf.* viii, 84, 85:—

"Chi è costui, che senza morte

Va per lo regno della morta gente?"

In *Purg.* xxiii, 121-123, Dante says:—



Li preghi miei piangendo \* furon pôrti.

Nor did it avail me to obtain inspirations (through the grace of God), with which both in dreams and otherwise, I called him back; so little recked he. So low did he fall, that all means for his salvation had already proved insufficient, except showing him the people of perdition (*i.e.* the lost in Hell). For this purpose I visited the gateway of the dead, and to him (Virgil) who has guided him up hither, my prayers with weeping were addressed.

The whole of this episode is recounted in the Second Canto of the *Inferno*, and is often referred to in other passages.

Beatrice's concluding words are, in Benvenuto's opinion, an answer to the question of the Angels in l. 96, *Donna perchè sì lo stempre?* We shall see in the ensuing Canto, that she turns from the Angels, to whom hitherto she has been speaking, and addresses herself directly to Dante himself.

Alto fato † di Dio sarebbe rotto ‡

“. . . Costui per la profonda  
Notte menato m' ha da' veri morti,  
Con questa vera carne che il seconda.”

\* *piangendo*: Compare *Inf.* ii, 115-117:—

“Poscia che m' ebbe ragionato questo,  
Gli occhi lucenti lagrimando volse;  
Perchè mi fece del venir più presto.”

† *Alto fato*: Scartazzini says that *l' alto fato di Dio* is God's justice. Compare Boëthius, *Phil. Cons.* lib. iv, pr. 6: “Nanque Providentia est ipsa illa divina ratio in summo omnium principum constituta, quæ cuncta disponit: Fatum vero inhærens rebus mobilibus dispositio per quam Providentia suis quæque nectit ordinibus. Providentia namque cuncta pariter, quamvis diversa quamvis infinita, complectitur: Fatum vero singula digerit in motum, locis, formis, ac temporibus distributa: ut hæc temporalis ordinis explicatio, in divinæ mentis adunata prospectu Providentia sit, eadem vero adunatio digesta, atque explicata temporibus, Fatum vocetur.” And St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. cxvi, art. 2): “Causaliter Dei potestas, vel voluntas dici potest fatum.”

‡ *sarebbe rotto*: Compare *Inf.* ii, 96:—



Se Lete si passasse, e tal vivanda  
Fosse gustata senza alcuno scotto \*  
Di pentimento che lagrime spanda."

145

God's high decree would be transgressed, if Lethe should be passed and such food (*i.e.* its living waters) should be tasted without some scot of penitence which may pour forth tears."

"Sì che duro giudizio lassù frange."

And *Purg.* i, 46, where Cato asks:—

"Son le leggi d'abisso così rotte?"

\* *scotto*: (= *Angl. scot*) is properly the food one consumes in taverns, and also the reckoning that is paid for such food. The verb, *scottare* has the sense of burning oneself. See Petrocchi, *Nuovo Dizionario*: "Del dolore che si sente bruciandosi. *Questa minestra scotta*, 'This soup is scalding.'" To any one picking up a kettle one can say: "Bada che l'acqua bolle; non ti *scottare* le dita (*mind you do not burn your fingers*)."





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*Division I.*—We left Dante in the preceding Canto, after lamenting the departure of Virgil, being reproved by Beatrice for doing so, with the warning that he would soon have to weep for a more serious cause (*pianger ti convien per altra spada*, l. 57). In her reply to the Angels, beginning with the words "*Voi vigilate nell' eterno die*" (l. 103), she made good her words, though as yet only assailing Dante with the edge of her sword; but now in this Canto she begins to attack him with the point; that is, much more vigorously, making her words go home, forcing him fully and freely to avow his faults, and to confirm by his own admission the justice of her censure.\*

—“ O tu, che sei di là dal fiume sacro,”—

Volgendo suo parlare a me per punta,  
Che pur per taglio m' era paruto acro,  
Ricominciò, seguendo senza cunta,†

—“ Di', di',‡ se questo è vero; a tanta accusa

5

---

\*Tommasèo, in graceful language, sums up the opening scene of this Canto: “ L' amenità del Paradiso terrestre, la dolce vista di Matelda e di Beatrice, la fiorita [*the masses of flowers*] e i canti degli Angeli, non isvestono di immagini di guerra il pensiero e la dicitura del poeta, nel *parlare acro* volto a lui, il *taglio e la punta* (ll. 2, 3); che vede nella giustizia di Dio, commisurata alla misericordia, *rivolgersi contro il taglio la ruota* (l. 14). Il prorompere della sua angoscia è assomigliato ad *arco che si rompe* (l. 16), ad *asta che tocca con men foga il segno* (l. 18). Dagli occhi di Beatrice *Amore gli trasse le sue armi* (l. 117). Il *primo strale delle cose fallaci* (ll. 55, 56) doveva levare in alto il suo volo; perchè *dinanzi ai pennuti saettasi indarno* (ll. 62, 63). Gli ostacoli al bene sono *fosse e catene* che alla via s' *attraversano* (l. 25). Il pentimento poi è *ortica che lo punge* (l. 85); il pentimento lo *morde*. Egli scoppia sotto il *carco* (l. 19) della sua vergogna, e l' *accusa del suo peccato gli scoppia* (ll. 40, 41) di bocca.”

† *cunta*: “ Senza cunta, cioè senza dimoranza ” (Buti). From the Latin *cunctatio*, delay.

‡ *Di', di'*: This is conduplication expressing vehemence of speech. “ La Filosofia costringe Boezio [all through the first



Tua confession conviene esser congiunta."—

"O thou, that art on the far side of the sacred stream," turning to me the point of her discourse, which even edgeways had seemed to me so trenchant, she recommenced, continuing without a pause, "Say, say, if this be true. To so heavy a charge thine own confession must needs be conjoined."

She implies that thus alone will he be able to merit absolution.

Dante is suffocated with shame, and, for a moment is unable to utter a word. Beatrice thereupon follows up her attack.

Era la mia virtù \* tanto confusa,  
Che la voce † si mosse, e pria si spense ‡  
Che dagli organi suoi fosse dischiusa.

book of *Phil. Consol.*) a confessare i suoi falli. Bello vedere questi due sapienti infelici [*i.e.* Dante and Boëthius], che da dolore deducono cagione d'umiltà virtuosa e di lagrime sante' (Tommasèo).

\* *la mia virtù*: "Intendesi la potenza naturale di usare degli organi corporali" (Brunone Bianchi). Compare Petrarch part i, *Son.* ii:—

"Era la mia virtute al cor ristretta."

Compare also *Vita Nuova*, § 15, and the Sonnet following in which in their entirety are an illustration of this passage, though too long to quote in detail.

† *voce*: Biagioli compares this passage with Virg. *Æn.* ii, 774 "Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit," and considers the Virgilian line to be far inferior in beauty to that of Dante.

‡ *spense*: Compare *Par.* xxvi, 124:—

"La lingua ch' io parlai fu tutta spenta."

Tommasèo speaks with delight of the beauty of the picture in this scene, where Dante's haughty nature bows down in humility before the loveliness of Beatrice's innocence, while every word in the passage depicts him alike in mien, in gesture, in word as a helpless child that hardly dares to open its lips.



Poco sofferse,\* poi disse:—"Che pense? † 10  
 Rispondi a me; chè le memorie triste  
 In te non sono ancor dall' acqua offense." ‡—

My faculties were so confused, that my voice moved, and died away before it had been set free from its organs. She tarried awhile, then said: "On what thinkest thou? Reply to me; for thy bitter recollections have not as yet been effaced by the water (of Lethe)."

Dante admits his errors by a monosyllabic confession.

Confusione § e paura insieme miste  
 Mi pinsero un tal s' fuor della bocca,  
 Al quale intender fur mestier le viste. || 15

\* *sofferse*: Cesari smiles at certain Commentators who profess to give a roundabout explanation as to *sofferse* here meaning *Beatrice poco sofferse me così in silenzio* for he observes that *sofferire*, like *sostenere*, signifies of itself *aspettare*, *indugiare*. Compare Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. ix, Nov. 9; "Perciocchè una gran carovana di some sopra muli e sopra cavalli passavano, convenne lor sofferir di passar [*they had to wait to pass*] tanto che quelle passate fossero." Cesari gives an instance from the *Vita Santa Elisab.* 369 where *sostenere* is used in the same sense: "Lo suo santissimo corpo, anzi che si seppellisse, fu per divozione sostenuto quattro di (*i.e. kept back four days before it was buried*)."

† *Che pense?* Virgil roused Dante from his compassionate meditation on the sorrows of Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta with the same words. (See *Inf.* v, 111.)

‡ *offense*: According to the *Gran Dizionario*, *offensu* is an adjective, the same as *offesodam*. In this particular passage it is used figuratively "per morto, spento, tolto via. Allude alla virtù dell' acque di Lete, le quali nel suo Purgatorio hanno la virtù di spegnere in chi ne beve la memoria delle colpe commesse." Biagioli interprets it *scancellate*.

§ *Confusione*: The *Gran Dizionario* interprets the word in this passage (§ 9) as signifying *Shame*, and quotes the following passage from one of the celebrated *Prediche* of the Padre Paolo Segneri (preached about 1690): "Fu tanta la confusione ch' egli n' ebbe, che cadde infermo."

|| *Al quale intender fur mestier le viste*: On this line Cesari exclaims: "Sempre e mirabile questo Dante, nel notare le più minute particolarità; di che ne riesce la verità viva e visibile. Egli fu un 'sì' tanto morto, che non sentire, ma fu convenuto agli occhi indovinare dal moto delle labbra senza più."





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Di là dal qual non è a che \* si aspiri,  
 Quai fossi † attraversati o quai catene 25  
 Trovasti, per che del passare innanzi  
 Dovessiti così spogliar la spene? ‡  
 E quali agevolezze o quali avanzi §  
 Nella fronte degli altri si mostraro,

me;" and Benvenuto: "idest, inter desideria quæ habebas ad me in pueritia tua, quando me sequebaris." So again in line 54: *Dovea poi trarre te nel suo disio* = "should afterwards have attracted thee into loving it."

\* *a che*: In *Conv.* iv, c. 22, l. 196, Dante writes: "Dio è nostra beatitudine somma." See also Boët. *Phil. Cons.* lib. iii, pros. 10: "Deum rerum omnium principem bonum esse communis humanorum conceptio probat animorum; nam cum nihil Deo melius excogitari queat, id quo melius nihil est bonum esse quis dubitet? Ita vero bonum esse Deum ratio demonstrat, ut perfectum quoque in eo bonum esse convincat. Nam ni tale sit rerum omnium princeps esse non poterit: erit enim eo præstantius aliquid perfectum possidens bonum, quod hoc prius atque antiquius esse videatur: omnia namque perfecta minus integris priora esse claruerunt. Quare ne in infinitum ratio prodeat, confitendum est summum Deum summi perfectique boni esse plenissimum: sed perfectum bonum veram esse beatitudinem constituimus: veram igitur beatitudinem in summo Deo sitam esse necesse est."

† *Quai fossi*, etc.: Compare Petrarch, part iv, *Son.* 4:—

"E se tornando all' amorosa vita,  
 Per farvi al bel desio volger le spalle,  
 Trovaste per la via fossati o poggi;  
 Fu per mostrar quant' è spinosa calle,  
 E quanto alpestra e dura la salita,  
 Onde al vero valor conven ch' uom poggi."

‡ *spene* and *speme* are poetic forms of *speranza* in frequent use. Compare *Inf.* xi, 111:—

". . . poichè in altro pon la spene."

And Petrarch, part i, *Canzone* xvii, st. 3:—

"Or ti solleva a più beata spene."

And Petrarch, part ii, *Ballata* i:—

"Quando fioria  
 Mia spene e 'l guidardon d' ogni mia fede."

§ *avanzi*: See *Gran Dizionario*, s. v. *Avanzo*, § 4, where this passage is quoted: "Per *Acquisto*, *Guadagno*, nel proprio e nel figurativo." Compare Boccaccio, *Decam.* Giorn. x, Nov. 8: "Quali stati, qua' meriti, quali avanzi avrebbon fatto Gisippo non curar di perder i suoi parenti e quelli di Sofronia?"



Per che dovessi lor passeggiare anzi? " \*—

30

Whereupon she to me: " Amidst the love that I inspired thee, which was leading thee on to love that Supreme Good beyond which there is nothing to which Man can aspire, what trenches didst thou find traversing thy path, or what chains (impeding thy bark), that thou shouldst strip thyself of the hope of passing onward? And what allurements or what advantages were displayed upon the face of the others (*i.e.* temporal goods), that thou shouldst have walked (astray) towards them? "

Benvenuto remarks that Beatrice's argument here is most subtle and ingenious, and may be taken in the allegorical sense that, however difficult the study of holy things may be, as it requires faith in matters that cannot be known to our natural reason; yet, when the Supreme Good was the Instructor of Dante, leading him on to the knowledge of God, every fatigue in acquiring experience of holy things ought to have seemed easy to him. Although the secular sciences have the greatest charm outwardly, yet they are in substance vain and hurtful, because they tend to vain glory, and often lead to covetousness.

In the twelve lines that follow, we learn how Dante

---

\* *lor passeggiare anzi*: *Anzi* in the *Gran Dizionario*, § 2, is in this passage interpreted: "Per davanti, Alla presenza." The Commentators nearly all give different meanings to the word. Benvenuto has "sequi eas." Buti thinks it means to go to meet anyone; and I follow that interpretation: "dovessi passeggiando farti loro incontra." Landino is quite different in his view of it; thinking *passeggiare anzi* means "to walk before," as servants preceding their masters, and, therefore, the sentence would imply that Dante was in the service of the temporal pleasures spoken of. Daniello's idea is that *passeggiare anzi* means *vagheggiarli*, *i.e.* to court or woo them, or to look upon them with the eyes of a lover. "come si suol dire degli innamorati, i quali hanno in costume di passeggiare dinanzi la casa delle amate loro." Blanc (*Voc. Dante*) says: "dizione molto oscura."



replied to Beatrice's questions by a full confession of his weakness, how she commended him for his complete admission of his sin, and gave him hopes of forgiveness after he should have heard from her what his conduct ought to have been.

Dopo la tratta d' un sospiro amaro,  
A pena ebbi la voce che rispose,  
E le labbra a fatica la formarò.\*

Piangendo dissi:—"Le presenti cose  
Col falso lor piacer volser miei passi;  
Tosto † che il vostro viso ‡ si nascose."—

35

\* *la formarò* for *formarono*. Compare Virg. *Æn.* i, 370, 371:—  
"Quaerenti talibus ille

Suspirans, imoque trahens a pectore vocem."

† *Tosto*, etc. Scartazzini criticises those Commentators who seek to put an allegorical interpretation on Beatrice's words in ll. 22-30. He does not admit that Dante, who was twenty-five years old when Beatrice died, had, before that time, been so given up to the study of the Holy Scriptures, or of Theology, and that he abandoned it afterwards. Is not the *Divina Commedia* itself a convincing proof that he continued that study? The word *tosto* must not be taken literally. The "*donna gentile*" with whom Dante fell in love, in consequence becoming unfaithful to the memory of Beatrice, first appeared to him, he relates in the *Vita Nuova*, § xxxv (Norton's Translation), "on that day on which the year was complete since that lady (Beatrice) was made one of the denizens of life eternal." In § xxxvi of *Vita Nuova* he says: "I saw a gentle lady, young and very beautiful, who was looking at me from a window with a face full of compassion, so that all pity seemed assembled in her." See *Readings on the Inferno*, 2nd edition, vol. i, pp. 547, 548, footnote on *l'età . . . piena*.

‡ *il vostro viso*: This is the first occasion of Dante addressing Beatrice, and we may note that, whereas she had spoken to him with the familiar *tu*, he is careful to address her with the respectful *voi*, the only mode, in Dante's time, of addressing a superior. In modern Italian, *tu* is never used except between the most intimate friends, in the family life, or to inferiors. Respect, or simply consideration, is shown by addressing people in the third person with the *Ella* or *Lei*, called in Tuscany, *dare del Lei*. *Voi* in Tuscany is seldom used, except from masters to servants, but is in constant use in ordinary conversation in society in other parts of Italy, where the *Lei* is less frequent. On Dante's marked





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*Division II.*—Beatrice now, by way of proving to Dante that he has no valid excuse to offer for having strayed out of the right path, shows him the emptiness and folly of his transgressions, which, if excusable in an inexperienced stripling, are not so by any means in a man of mature age.

Tuttavia, perchè mo vergogna porte  
 Del tuo errore, e perchè altra volta  
 Udendo le Sirene sie più forte,  
 Pon giù il seme del piangere, ed ascolta ;  
 Sì udirai come in contraria parte  
 Mover doveati mia carne sepolta.

45

All the same, that thou mayest now feel shame for thy error, and that another time thou mayest be stronger if hearing the Sirens (*i.e.* the temptations of pleasure), lay aside the source of thy tears (*i.e.* shame and fear), and listen ; so wilt thou hear how my death (*lit.* my buried flesh) should have led thee in the contrary direction (to that of earthly pleasures).

Scartazzini explains that by the seed of weeping is meant the *grave carico* (line 19), *di confusione e paura insieme miste* (line 13). Beatrice wanted Dante's full attention to the words she was about to address to him. One who is oppressed by shame and fear is not in the best condition of mind to follow attentively the grave discourse of another.

Benvenuto says that by the Sirens are to be understood the liberal arts and sciences, and poetry. He adds that St. Jerome called finely written words the Devil's bait, and said that he was once himself ensnared by them, at a time when the Holy Scriptures seemed to be rough and uncultivated writing ; but that when he

---

la colpa non gli è più reputata ; presa la immagine dalla cote [*the whet-stone*], che si mangia il taglio del coltello da sè affilato, rodendo di costa " (Cesari).







Never did Nature or Art set before thee such a delight as the fair members (*i.e.* form) wherein I was enclosed, and they are now crumbled into dust. And if the chiefest delight thus failed thee through my death, what mortal thing should afterwards have attracted thee into loving it?

Benvenuto says that, as Beatrice seemed to Dante more beautiful than any other woman, so in an allegorical sense the science of Theology is the most beautiful of all sciences; and *le belle membra*, from this point of view, would mean all the Theological writings dispersed throughout the world. In the same way, *qual cosa mortale* may signify "what mortal science."

Beatrice continues her reproaches, telling Dante that, having been once deceived, he ought never to have been led astray a second time.

Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale \*

55

Delle cose fallaci, levar suso

Diretro a me che non era più tale.

---

delight; this delight failed thee at my death, and thou wert left in despair. Thou oughtest not then to have let thyself be allured by any other earthly love, so as not to be left in despair a second time.

\* *Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale*, etc. "Questo testo è chiaro. Dice Beatrice: poichè la mia carne e le belle membra, che tanto piacere ti rappresentarono, erano fallite (il quale fu *lo primo strale delle cose fallaci*, che più ti punse), tu non dovevi attendere, nè operare, sì che un altro te ne fosse saettato. E dice, che nè quella giovane, le quale elli nelle sue *Rime* chiamò pargoletta, nè quella Lisetta, nè quell' altra montanina, nè quella, nè quell' altra li dovevano gravare le penne delle ali in giù, tanto ch' elli fosse ferito da uno simile, o quasi simile, strale" (*Ottimo*). "*Pel primo strale*: cioè, pel p. mo colpo che ti dette la fortuna quando ti tolse il mio corpo" (*Landino*). Scartazzini thinks that *lo primo strale* certainly meant the death of Beatrice, and therefore she tells him that when thus wounded, and losing the *sommo piacere*, *i.e.* the contemplation of her beautiful form (*le belle membra*), he ought to have understood that all earthly joys are transitory and perishable, and consequently should have ceased to follow after them, for fear of being struck by a second shaft. He should have aspired alone to eternal and incorruptible joys.





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of such-like brief enjoyment. Only a fledgeling awaits two or three (shots); but before the eyes of the full plumaged birds the net is spread in vain or the arrow shot."

Dante is unable to utter a word in self-defence.

Quali i fanciulli \* vergognando muti,  
 Con gli occhi a terra, stannosi ascoltando, 65  
 E sè riconoscendo, e ripentuti, †  
 Tal mi stava io. Ed ella disse :—" Quando  
 Per udir sei dolente, alza la barba,  
 E prenderai più doglia riguardando." ‡—

Even as children silent in shame stand listening with their eyes upon the ground, both avowing their fault and repentant, so was I standing. And she said: "Since thou art distressed through hearing, raise up thy beard, and thou wilt feel more grief from looking."

Beatrice commands Dante to raise his *beard*, instead of his face, by way of reminding him that he is a full-

\* *fanciulli*: In the *Convivio* iv, 19, ll. 95-98, Dante uses very similar words: "Buono e ottimo segno di Nobiltà è nelli pargoli e imperfetti d' etade, quando, dopo il fallo, nel viso loro vergogna si dipigne, ch' è allora frutto di vera Nobiltà."

† *ripentuti*: Compare Guido da Montefeltro's description of his contrition for his sins, *Inf.* xxvii, 83: ". . . pentuto e confesso mi rendei." And *Conv.* iv, 25, ll. 43, 44: "A questa età è necessario d' essere penitente del fallo, sicchè non s' àusi a fallare."

‡ *riguardando*: "Mirabile fecondità dell' ingegno di Dante l come rincalza la sua materia del mostrare la sua confusione! Fino ad ora era stato sempre ad occhi bassi; et udendo le trafitture di Beatrice, ne avea avuto buona derrata. [This may either mean *had had a liberal share of them*, or, *had got off tolerably cheap*]; ora dee anche sguardar in viso il suo giudice: che vorrà essere? e quanta pena a dover levare il viso verso di lei!" (Cesari). On this passage Gioberti, whose Commentary has been almost silent since Canto xxiii, writes: "Che novità di concetto! L' ultimo verso di questa terzina torna inaspettato [takes us quite by surprise]: e dà l' esempio questa terzina di quella tragica e sublime ironia che si bene adoperarono il Shakespeare e l' Alfieri." Gioberti only makes one more comment in the *Purgatorio* after this, and only two or three in the whole of the *Paradiso*! Gioberti's Dante studies suffered from the time that he gave to politics.



grown man, and cannot plead the extenuating circumstances of youth, while she knows besides that to look her in the face will disconcert him still more.

Dante obeys, but relates that he could scarcely overcome his strong reluctance to looking Beatrice in the face while she was reproving him.

Con men di resistenza si dibarba  
 Robusto cerro, o vero al nostral vento,\*  
 O vero a quel della terra di Iarba,  
 Ch' io non levai al suo comando il mento;  
 E quando per la barba il viso chiese,  
 Ben conobbi il velen dell' argomento.†

With less resistance is a stout oak uprooted, either by a native (*i.e.* northern) gale, or by that from the

\* *nostral vento*, et seq. Il *vento nostrale* means the North wind, the *Tramontana*, which coming from Europe was called by the Italians *Nostrale*. The adjective is of common use, especially in Tuscany, to denote "of or belonging to the country." *Vino nostrale* "wine of the country"; *olio nostrale*, "oil of the country." Compare Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xliii, st. 108:—

"E quivi Adonio a comandare al cane  
 Incominciò, ed il cane a ubbidir lui;  
 E far danze nostral, farne d' estrane."

In *Inf.* xxii, 9, Dante calls things native and foreign "*costrali e . . . istrane*." In the same way that the North wind is called *nostrale* as blowing from Europe, so Dante characterises the South wind as being breathed from Africa, which he calls *la terra d' Iarba* after Iarbas or Hiarbas, King of Gath in Libya, from whom Dido bought the land for building Carthage.

† *velen dell' argomento*: On pp. 545, 546, I have fully discussed the question as to what sins it was that Beatrice was laying to Dante's charge, and I feel convinced that the *selva oscura* in which he was said to be wandering, was that of deadly sin. Dante's close relations with Forese, brother of Corso de' Donati, who was a man of pleasure, and the six sonnets exchanged between the two, certainly indicate a lapse from strict morality. In *Purg.* xxiii, 115, Dante says to Forese:

". . . Se ti riduci a mente  
 Qual fosti meco e quale io teco fui,  
 Ancor fia grave il memorar presente."



land of Iarbas (*i.e.* from the South-East), than I raised my chin at her command; and when by "beard" she asked for my face, well understood I the venom of her allusion.

*Division III.*—Dante now relates how, after his penitence and confession, he was washed in the river Lethe, and then conducted to the four Nymphs who represent the four Cardinal Virtues. But first he shows how the Angels gave him an opportunity of seeing Beatrice. He rivets his eyes upon her, and gets full proof of how superhuman is her beauty. She, however, does not apparently pay any further attention for the nonce to her faithless lover.

E como la mia faccia si distese,  
 Posarsi quelle prime creature \*  
 Da loro aspersion l' occhio comprese :  
 E le mie luci, ancor poco sicure,  
 Vider Beatrice vòlta in sulla fiera, 80  
 Ch' è sola una persona in due nature.  
 Sotto suo velo, ed oltre la riviera †

---

\* *prime creature*: See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summ. Theol.* pars i, qu. lxi, art. 3; where, with reference to the question *Utrum Angeli sint creati ante mundum corporeum*, St. Thomas replies: "Respondeo dicendum quòd circa hoc invenitur duplex sanctorum doctorum sententia. Illa tamen probabilior videtur, quòd angeli simul cum creatura corporea sunt creati." Alter quoting some words of St. Jerome, St. Thomas adds: "dicendum quòd Hieronymus loquitur secundum sententiam doctorum græcorum, qui omnes hoc concorditer sentiunt, quòd angeli sunt ante mundum corporeum creati."

† *oltre la riviera Vincer*: Scartazzini says that the reading with *vincer* in both lines makes the sense difficult, but the reading has the authority of all the older Codices. Witte has an excellent alternative reading, but unfortunately lacking good authority:—

"Sotto suo velo, ed oltre la riviera  
 Vincer pareami più sè stessa antica,  
 Che vincea l' altre qui, quand' ella c' era."

Bengel's famous canon of criticism *Proclivi lectioni præstat ardua* reminds us that the more difficult reading is to be preferred.





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Tanta riconoscenza \* il cor mi morse,  
 Ch' io caddi vinto, † e quale allora femmi,  
 Salsi colei che la cagion mi porse.

90

The nettle of remorse so stung me thereupon, that of all other things, whatever (in the past) had most turned me to its love, now became to me the most abhorred. So much self-conviction gnawed my heart, that I sank down overcome, and what I then became, she (Beatrice) knows, who furnished me with the cause (of my swoon by her severe reproofs).

When Dante recovers consciousness, he finds that his immersion in the waters of Lethe by Matelda has already commenced.

\* *riconoscenza*: Tommasèo (*Dizionario dei Sinonimi*, § 1327) says that the word in the sense of self-recognition is now obsolete, but the meaning is preserved in the expression *riconoscimento dei falli*. See *Gran Dizionario s.v. riconoscere*, § 19: "riconoscere un errore, un peccato, o simile, vale Confessarlo." Giov. Villani (viii, 92) when describing the persecution of the Templars by Philippe le Bel, uses *riconoscere* several times in that sense. "Il re Luis . . . gli fece tormentare . . . e non si trovava che niente volessono di ciò confessare nè riconoscere . . . Ammonendogli, che quale di loro volesse riconoscere l' errore e' peccati loro opposti potesse scampare; e in su questo martorio confortati [*encouraged*] da' loro parenti e amici che riconoscessono, niuno di loro il volle confessare."

† *caddi vinto*: Scartazzini draws attention to Dante falling down in a swoon, and says it is a symbol of dying to sin to rise again to grace. It is the second time that Dante has so fallen. The first occasion is told in *Inf.* v, 140-142, when, after witnessing the anguish of Francesca da Rimini, he says of himself:—

"Sì, che di pietade  
 Io venni men così com' io morisse;  
 E caddi, come corpo morto cade."

There he was, perhaps, not only struck with compassion, but also with compunction at the sight of the penalty for a sin of which he is himself not altogether innocent. Here in this Canto, Beatrice reproves him for these same faults, and her censure has the same effect on him as had the sufferings and tears of Francesca. We must take it for granted that, as soon as Dante fell down fainting on the bank of Lethe, Matelda crossed the river from the opposite bank, and drew him still unconscious into the water, and not until she had plunged him up to the chin did he recover his senses.



Poi quando il cor di fuor virtù rendemmi,\*  
 La Donna ch' io avea trovata sola,  
 Sopra me vidi, e dicea:—"Tiemmi † tiemmi."—  
 Tratto m' avea nel fiume infino a gola,  
 E tirandosi me dietro, sen giva  
 Sopr' esso ‡ l' acqua, lieve come spola.

95

Then when my heart restored to me my outward faculties, I saw standing over me the Lady whom I had found (wandering) alone, and (she) was saying: "Hold me fast, hold me fast." She had drawn me into the stream up to my throat, and dragging me after her, was speeding over the water as lightly as a shuttle.

Instead of *spola*, Benvenuto reads *scola*, which he says is a kind of long light vessel, suitable for naval war-

\* *quando il cor di fuor virtù rendemmi*: Compare *Purg.* xv, 115, 116:—

"Quando l' anima mia tornò di fuori  
 Alle cose, che son fuor di lei vere," etc.

And *Inf.* vi, 1:—

"Al tornar della mente, che si chiuse."

Scartazzini explains that, on Dante's feeling the sting of repentance, his heart restored to him *di fuori*, i.e. to his outward senses, those powers that had previously been all concentrated within him.

† *Tiemmi*: I had never till now heard of any other interpretation of this passage than the one I have adopted, namely, that Dante represents Matelda saying to Dante, "Hold me fast." But I see that Poletto, in his Commentary, contends that it must have been Dante, in terror at finding himself in the water up to the chin, who called to Matelda not to let him go. I offer no opinion upon the subject, but follow the usual translation. Anyhow, had it been Dante who was speaking, it would probably have been a more appropriate mode of expressing himself for him to say "*dissi*" = "I said," rather than "*dicea*" = "I (or she) was saying."

‡ *Sopr' esso*: Blanc says (*Vocab. Dant.*) that *esso* in this compound word is an indeclinable pronoun, and, when placed between the preposition and the noun, has no other function than that of making the phrase more precise, so that here *sopr' esso* would have the signification, *proprio sopra*, right over, right above. Compare *Purg.* xxiv, 98:—

"Ed io rimasi in via con esso i due."

And *Purg.* iv, 26, 27:—

"Montasi su Bismantova in cacume  
 Con esso i piè."



## ERRATUM.

### *Footnote on page 553.*

• Dr. L. C. Casartelli, R.C. Bishop of Salford, in a letter dated 4th December, 1907, writes to me: "Just a word on 'Asperges'. The priest *never* sprinkles the penitent with holy water after confession and before absolution. I daresay it is done in some Oriental rites, but never *now* in the Western Catholic Church. I say *now*, because possibly it may have been done in early ages. The 'Asperges' is now used (1) before High Mass, when the whole congregation is sprinkled; (2) on entering the sick-room, before the Sacraments are administered; (3) in certain other rites: at funerals, marriages, religious clothings, blessings, etc. etc."

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

† *non ch' io lo scriva*: Compare *Par.* xxiv, 23, 24:—

"Si volse con un canto tanto divo,  
Che la mia fantasia nol mi ridice."

And in *Vita Nuova*, § xxi, Sonnet xi:—

"Quel ch' ella par quand' un poco sorride,  
Non si può dicer, nè tener a mente."





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fare and for war. Buti and nearly all the old Commentators read *spola*.

While yet immersed in the water, Dante hears the soft cadences of a chant.

Quando fui presso alla beata riva,  
*Asperges me* \* sì dolcemente udissi,  
 Ch' io nol so rimembrar, non ch' io lo scriva.†

When I was near the blessed shore, I heard *Asperges me* so sweetly (sung), that I cannot recall it to mind, much less can I tell it in writing.

\**Asperges me*: The words are from Psalm li, 7, "Purge me with hyssop, etc.;" in the Vulgate, Psalm l, 9, "*Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.*" The words *Asperges me* are used in the Roman Church, when the priest sprinkles the penitent with holy water after confession, and before absolution. In *Inferno* xiv, 136-138, in answer to Dante's question as to where, ~~in the world of departed spirits is the~~

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 Non si può dicer, nè tener à mente."



The sweet notes of Casella's song were still sounding in Dante's inner being as he wrote his poem after returning to the world [*la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona*]; but the song of the Angels is too much for the human mind to retain.

He is now made to swallow the water of Lethe.

La bella Donna nelle braccia aprissi, 10  
 Abracciommi la testa, e mi sommerse,  
 Ove convenne ch'io l'acqua inghiottissi; \*  
 Indi mi tolse, e bagnato mi offerse  
 Dentro alla danza delle quattro belle,  
 E ciascuna del braccio † mi coperse. 10

The beautiful Lady opened her arms, embraced my head, and submerged me, where I had perforce to swallow the water; she then drew me forth, and presented me dripping within the dance of the four beautiful ones, and each of them covered me with her arm.

The four Cardinal Virtues, in the form of four maidens were dancing by the left wheel of the chariot. The above passage may be taken to mean that, when a man by sacerdotal confession and absolution has been removed from the act and guilt of sin, he is passed on into the company of the Cardinal Virtues, in order that he may behold the happiness of practising these virtues and may be the better prepared for the three higher virtues, the handmaidens of sacred Theology. And whe

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\* *inghiottissi*: Matelda had told Dante (*Purg.* xxviii, 130-134) that the water of the Terrestrial Paradise could not be operative of good effect unless it were tasted in both its branches after its bifurcation, namely Lethe for forgetfulness of evil, and Eunoe for knowledge of good.

† *ciascuna del braccio mi coperse*: "i.e. colla sua possanza e col suo aiuto. Imperocchè il braccio della giustizia difende dall'ira la giustizia; la prudenza dalla stoltizia; la fortezza dalla timidità; la temperanza dalla libidine" (Landino).



each of the four maidens covered Dante with her arms, it was, as it were, a promise that that particular virtue would, from that moment, protect him from the sin to which that virtue is opposed.

The four damsels now address Dante.

— “Noi siam qui ninfe, e nel ciel siamo stelle ;\*  
 Pria che Beatrice discendesse al mondo, †  
 Fummo ordinate a lei per sue ancelle.  
 Menrenti agli occhi suoi ; ma nel giocondo ‡  
 Lume ch' è dentro aguzzeranno § i tuoi  
 Le tre di là, || che miran più profondo.” —

110

“Here we are nymphs, and in Heaven we are stars ; before Beatrice had descended into the World we were ordained unto her for her handmaidens. We will lead thee before her eyes, but to behold the joyous light that is within (them), thy sight must be sharpened by the Three on the far side (of the chariot), who discern more deeply.”

Before Beatrice, who is Ecclesiastical Authority, descended into the world, which she only did after the In-

\* *nel ciel siamo stelle* : Scartazzini thinks it is evident from these words that the four Maidens made Dante to understand that they are “*le quattro chiare stelle,*” which guided Dante’s steps, as he tells in *Purg.* viii, 91, and whose rays illumined the face of Cato (*Purg.* i, 23).

† *Pria che Beatrice discendesse al mondo* : i.e. at her birth. Compare what Dante says of her in the *Vita Nuova*, § xxvi, *Son.* 15 :—

“E par che sia una cosa venuta  
 Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.”

‡ *giocondo Lume* : Compare *Virg. Æn.* vi, 363, 364 :—

“Quodd te per cœli jucundum lumen, et auras,  
 Per genitorem oro, per spem surgentis Iuli.”

§ *aguzzeranno* : Compare *Inf.* xv, 20, 21 :—

“E sì vèr noi aguzzavan le ciglia,  
 Come ’l vecchio sartor fa nella cruna.”

|| *Le tre di là* : In *Conv.* iii, 14, ll. 136-141, after speaking at length of the three Theological Virtues, Dante concludes by saying : “Per le quali tre virtù si sale a filosofare a quella Atene celestiale, dove gli Stoici e Peripatetici ed Epicurei, per l’ arte della Verità eterna, in un volere concordevolmente concorrono.”





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that she had turned to face the Gryphon. If therefore Dante was right in front of the chariot, Beatrice must have been turned to him also.

Così cantando \* cominciaro ; e poi

Al petto del grifon seco menarmi,

Ove Beatrice stava vòlta a noi.

Disser:—" Fa che le viste non risparmi ;

115

Posto t' avem dinanzi agli smeraldi,†

Ond' Amor già ti trasse le sue armi."—‡

\* *Così cantando* : This refers to the six foregoing lines, beginning *Noi siam qui ninfe*.

† *smeraldi* : Some early accounts say that Beatrice's eyes were of a greenish hue, like the colour of the sea. The *Ottimo* remarks that "Dante very happily introduces this precious stone, considering its properties, and considering that griffins watch over emeralds. The emerald is the prince of all green stones ; no gem or herb has greater greenness ; it reflects an image like a mirror ; increases wealth ; is useful in litigation and to orators ; is good for convulsions and epilepsy ; preserves and strengthens the sight ; restrains lust ; restores memory ; is powerful against phantoms and demons ; calms tempests ; staunches blood ; and is useful to soothsayers." Longfellow remarks that the beauty of green eyes, "*Ojuelos verdes*," is extolled by Spanish poets ; and is not left unsung by poets of other countries. Compare Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*, act iii, sc. v) :—

"Oh, he's a lovely gentleman !

Romeo's a dishclout to him : an eagle, madam,

Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye

As Paris hath."

In one of the Old French Mysteries (*Hist. Théat. Franç.* i, 176), Joseph describes the child Jesus as having

"Les yeux vers, la chaire blanche et tendre,  
Les cheveux blonds."

‡ *Ond' Amor . . . trasse le sue armi* : Compare *Vita Nuova* § xxi, Son. 11 :—

"Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore."

And *ibid.* § xix, *Cans.* t, ll. 70-73 :—

"Degli occhi suoi, come ch' ella gli muova,

Escono spirti d' amore infiammati,

Che fieron gli occhi a qual, che allor gli guati,

E passan sì che 'l cor ciascun ritrova."

And Dante, *Canzoniere*, Son. xxvii :—



Thus singing, they began ; and then led me with them to the breast (*i.e.* in front) of the Gryphon, where Beatrice was standing turned towards us. "See," said they, "that thou spare not thy gaze ; we have placed thee in front of the emeralds, whence in days gone by Love drew forth his darts against thee."

By emeralds Dante means either to express the brightness or the colour of Beatrice's eyes.

Dante at once obeys this command, and describes with a wonder which he entreats his readers to realise how in Beatrice's eyes (*i.e.* in Divine Theology, rather Ecclesiastical Authority) he saw reflected the Gryphon, by which he means Jesus Christ, at one moment displaying His human nature, at another His divine ; at one moment bearing a literal, at another an allegorical sense. Sometimes as the Lamb, and sometimes as the Lion.

Many Commentators think that Dante here wishes to show that Theology ought to contemplate Christ one time as God, and at another as Man, so as not to confound His two natures.

Mille disiri \* più che fiamma caldi  
Strinsermi gli occhi agli occhi rilucenti,  
Che pur † sopra il grifone stavan saldi.

"Dagli occhi della mia Donna si muove  
Un lume sì gentil, che dove appare  
Si vedon cose, ch' uom non può ritrare  
Per loro altezza e per loro esser nuove.  
E da' suoi raggi sopra 'l mio cor piove  
Tanta paura, che mi fa tremare."

\* *Mille disiri* : Compare *Conv.* iii, *Canzone* ii, ll. 34-36 :—

"E gli occhi di color, dov' ella luce,  
Ne mandan messi al cor pien di disiri,  
Che prendon aere e diventan sospiri."

† *pur* is here equivalent to *continuamente*. Compare *Psalms* 15 : "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord."



Come in lo specchio il sol,\* non altrimenti  
 La doppia fiera dentro vi raggiava,  
 Or con uni, or con altri reggimenti.†  
 Pensa, lettor, s' io mi maravigliava,  
 Quando vedea la cosa in sè star queta,  
 E nell' idolo suo si trasmutava.‡

125

A thousand desires more burning than fire riveted my eyes upon the translucent eyes (of Beatrice), that still remained fixed upon the Gryphon. As the Sun in a mirror, even so was that two-fold animal beaming (*i.e.* reflected) therein, now with the actions of one nature, now with those of the other. Think, Reader, if I marvelled within me, when I saw the thing stay motionless in itself, and yet in its image (reflected in Beatrice's eyes) undergoing transformations.

Dante now relates how the other three Damsels on the right hand side of the chariot came forward. We know that they represent the three Theological Virtues, and he describes them as giving evidence, by

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\* *Come in lo specchio il sol*: Venturi (*Similitudini Dantesche*, p. 90, sim. 142) notices that Dante has imitated this from Ovid, *Metam.* iv, 348, 349:—

“Non aliter, quam cum puro nitidissimus orbe  
 Opposita speculi referitur imagine Phœbus.”

Venturi thinks Dante may have taken this simile from the passage (which he also quotes in *Conv.* iii, 15, ll. 190-192) from *Wisdom*, vii, 26: “For she [Wisdom] is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.”

† *reggimenti*: “Dove la divina luce più espeditamente raggia, cioè nel parlare e negli atti, che reggimenti e portamenti sogliono essere chiamati” (*Conv.* iii, 7, ll. 97-100). “In speculatione Theologiæ cognoscuntur et representantur facta Christi, cum diversis actibus et factis” (Talice da Ricaldone). “Or con atti d'una natura, ora con atti d'un'altra: perchè Cristo, l'uomo-dio, nelle sue operazioni ora dimostrò natura umana, ora natura divina” (Casini).

‡ *nell' idolo suo si trasmutava*: On this passage, the *Gran Dizionario* observes: “L' imagine di Gesù Cristo, immota in sè, nella sapienza contemplante riceveva quelle varietà che porta l' umano ragionamento, detto però dagli antichi filosoficamente *Discorso*.” The *Gran Dizionario* then quotes the *Ottimo*: “L' idolo, cioè la figura che di lui si mostrava nelli occhi di Beatrice, avea ora una forma, cioè divina, ora un'altra, cioè umana.”





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While full of awe and delight my soul was feasting on that food (of Heaven), which though giving of itself abundantly, yet for itself creates a thirst; the other Three came forward showing themselves by their actions to be of a more exalted order, as they danced to their angelic roundelay.

The Three unite their voices in a song of intercession on behalf of Dante, beseeching Beatrice to reward his return to fidelity.

— “Volgi, Beatrice, volgi gli occhi santi,”—  
Era la lor canzone,\*—“ al tuo fedele †

Buti reads *garibo*, which he derives from *garbo*, “cioè, al loro angelico modo.” Scartazzini thinks the silence of the oldest expositors is a proof that, in their time, the word was not unknown. It is hardly possible that they would pass it over from not themselves understanding it. Cesari (*Bellezze*, vol. ii, pp. 574, 575), after giving what is probably the best interpretation, which I have adopted, mentions another given by the Arciprete Luigi Nardi, which is both ingenious and striking, according to which he thinks *tribo* stands for *trivio*, and *caribo* for *quadrivio*. I prefer the interpretation more generally received. Giacomo Pugliesi, better known as *Il Beato Jacopone* (who died in 1306) in one of his poems beginning with the words *Donna, per vostro amore*, st. 3, uses the word *cari'o* in the sense of a song which serves to regulate the measure of a dance (in *Scrittori del Primo Secolo*, Firenze, 1816, vol. i, p. 236):—

“Però a voi m' appresento  
A tal convento  
Isto caribo  
Ben dipristibo  
Delle maldicente,  
Bono talento,  
Lo stormento  
Vo sonando,  
E cantando, biondetta piacente.”

It must be remembered that Fra Jacopone's songs are of an earlier date than Dante's, although he died in Dante's lifetime, and was partly his contemporary.

\* *Era la lor canzone*: Others read *era la sua canzone*, with *sua* meaning *loro*, a practice, according to Scartazzini, which prevailed largely among the early writers.

† *al tuo fedele*: The Three call Dante Beatrice's faithful one, for as a Christian poet he had battled for the Faith as no other



Che per vederti ha mossi passi tanti.\*

133

Per grazia fa noi grazia che disvele

A lui la bocca tua, sì che discerna

La seconda bellezza † che tu cele."—

"Turn, Beatrice, turn thy holy eyes," was their song, "upon thy faithful one, who to behold thee has travelled so far (*lit.* has taken so many steps). Of thy grace grant us the grace to unveil to him thy mouth, so that he may discern the second beauty which thou hidest."

The Four had promised to conduct Dante to Beatrice's eyes (*Merrenti agli occhi suoi*). That was her first beauty. The Three beg her to unveil her mouth, to display her second beauty, and her sweet smile (*dolce riso*). See *Par.* xxx, 26.

We now gather from the context that Beatrice, moved by the entreaties of her handmaidens, displays to Dante's gaze her second beauty, which he declares himself unable to describe.

poet had done. Beatrice herself, in *Inf.* ii, 61, calls him her friend, though he was still lost in the paths of error: "L' amico mio."

Compare also *Inf.* ii, 98, 99:—

"Or ha bisogno il tuo fedele

Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando."

\* *ha mossi passi tanti*: Benvenuto points out that this is the fact both historically and allegorically, for when Dante turned to the task of ascending to the glory wherein Beatrice was, that is, to undertake this glorious poem, feeling that he had learned enough of philosophy and poetry, he travelled to Paris, poor, and as an exile; and there, with the greatest zeal and perseverance, studied and mastered theology. He then passed through Hell, next through the gradual ascent of the mountain of Purgatory, and now, at last, after *tanti passi*, he has found his long-lost Beatrice in the Paradise of Delights.

† *La seconda bellezza* of Beatrice was her mouth. Compare *Conv.* iii, 8, ll. 96, 97, and ll. 110-112: "L' anima . . . dimostrasi nella bocca, quasi siccome colore dopo vetro . . . Ah! mirabile riso della mia Donna, di cui io parlo, che mai non si sentia, e non nell' occhio."



O isplendor di viva luce eterna,\*

Chi pallido si fece sotto l' ombra

140

Sì di Parnaso, o bevve id sua cisterna,

Che non paresse aver la mente ingombra,

Tentando a render te qual tu paresti

Là dove armonizzando il ciel t' adombra,

Quando nell' aere aperto ti solvesti?

145

O (Beatrice) thou splendour of living light eternal, who is there that ever grew so pale beneath the shade of Parnassus, or drank at its fount, that would not seem to have his mind encumbered, were he to attempt to portray thee, such as thou didst appear when thou didst disclose thyself in the open day in that place (the Terrestrial Paradise) where Heaven in harmony (with that region of innocence), shadows thee forth?

Various have been the interpretations of this very difficult passage, observes Casini. By far the most general opinion is, that Dante is here (as in *Purg.* xxx, 93) indicating the Platonic theory of the harmonious sound produced by the heavens in their motion, and that the words in the passage signify: *là nel paradiso terrestre, dove le sfere risonando con la loro armonia ti circondavano*. But Antonelli justly observing that, in that case, Dante would have said *adombrava* instead of *adombra*, explains the passage in a different way, which I follow, as does Scartazzini in his newest edition (Milan, 1896). Antonelli thinks that *adombrare* must be taken as *simboleggiare, rappresentare*, and that *t' adombra* is to be paraphrased, *rende immagine di tue bellezze divine*. He thus interprets the passage: "O Splendour of living and Eternal Light, who, amongst those dearest to the Muses, would not appear to have

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\* *isplendor di viva luce eterna*: Compare *Wisdom* vii, 26: "For she is the brightness of everlasting light," etc.





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## CANTO XXXII.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE (CONTINUED)—THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE—ASCENT OF THE GRYPHON—TRANSFORMATION OF THE CHARIOT—THE GIANT AND THE HARLOT.

IN the last Canto Dante gave a description of the beauty of Beatrice. In this he relates how the procession of the Church Militant turned about and retraced its way; how he followed the chariot with Beatrice and her handmaidens; how an eagle struck the chariot, and divers other strange events.

Benvenuto divides the Canto into four parts.

*In the First Division*, from ver. 1 to ver. 33, Dante is warned not to look too fixedly at Beatrice. The procession returns through the forest, Dante and Statius following.

*In the Second Division*, from ver. 34 to ver. 60, they stop at the Tree of Knowledge, to which the Gryphon fastens the chariot.

*In the Third Division*, from ver. 61 to ver. 99, Dante falls asleep, and, on awaking, finds Beatrice, Matelda, and the seven handmaidens alone by the tree.

*In the Fourth Division*, from ver. 100 to ver. 160, Dante describes, in figurative language, the more notable persecutions which the Church Militant has suffered.



*Division I.*—At the conclusion of the last *Canzone* Dante had at length been accorded the privilege beholding Beatrice's countenance in its glorified state. He gazes upon it with such rapture that all other objects around him are forgotten. Now that he can see the beloved object, his other senses are in abeyance. His concentrated gaze is interrupted.

Tanto eran gli occhi miei fissi ed attenti  
 A disbramarsi la decenne sete,\*  
 Che gli altri sensi m' eran tutti spenti;  
 Ed essi quinci e quindi avean parete †  
 Di non caler, così lo santo riso  
 A sè traiali con l' antica rete; ‡

---

\* *la decenne sete*: Beatrice had died in 1290, ten years before 1300, the year in which the scene is supposed to take place, and therefore Dante's ten years' thirst means the longing that he had to behold her again. Tommaséo says that the *proemio* passage, as well as the opening words of *Purg.* vii, are imitated by Tasso, *Ger. Liber. vi*, st. 110:—

“Così costei, che dell' amor la sete,  
 Onde l' inferno core è sempre ardente,  
 Spegner nelle accoglienze oneste e liete  
 Credeva, e riposar la stanca mente.”

† *avean parete Di non caler*: Biagioli says this is a phrase Dante alone, and the construction is: “tanto erano gli occhi miei fissi ed attenti in lei, che il non calermi (il non curarmi) niuna altra cosa, mi faceva quinci e quindi come un muro, e mi rendea impossibile ogni altra veduta.” Buti considers this wall of indifference was the steadfastness of mind that made Dante continue firm in the resolute aim he had set before himself, so that he cared neither for the prosperity of the world signified by the right-hand side, nor for the adversity of the world as signified by the left. Compare Dante, *Canzoniere*, *Sest.* ii, st. 4 (p. 160 in Dr. Moore's text):—

“Dagli occhi suoi mi vien la dolce luce,  
 Che mi fa non caler d' ogni altra donna.”

‡ *l' antica rete*: By this Dante means the same as in *Purg.* i 41, 42:—

“L' alta virtù, che già m' avea trafitto  
 Prima ch' io fuor di puerizia fosse.”

Beatrice is again compared to the Sun in *Par.* iii, 1:—

“Quel sol, che pria d' amor mi scaldò il petto.”



Quando per forza mi fu vòlto il viso  
 Vèr la sinistra mia da quelle Dee,  
 Perch' io udia da loro un :—" Troppo fiso."—

So fixed and intent were my eyes on satisfying their ten years' thirst, that my other senses were altogether rendered null; and on every side they (*i.e.* my eyes) had a wall of indifference, so much did the saintly smile (of Beatrice) draw them to itself in its long-known toils; when my face was perforce diverted towards my left hand by those goddesses (*i.e.* the Three Divine Maidens), for I heard from them a sound of "Too fixedly (thou gazest)!"

In verse 116 of the previous Canto, we saw that Dante had been placed in front of the emerald eyes of Beatrice, who was still standing upon the mystic Chariot, and turned towards the Gryphon. Dante was therefore standing in front of the chariot, and had on *his* right hand the four nymphs dressed in purple (xxix, 130), *i.e.* the Cardinal Virtues, and on *his* left the three others (xxix, 121), *i.e.* the Theological Virtues. The latter are, therefore, the goddesses who speak to him the words: "*Troppo fiso.*" They invite him to look at other things that are passing around him, and notably they would seem to be drawing his attention to the procession of the Church Militant now about to retrace its steps. Benvenuto thinks that they wish to modify the admonition of the other four damsels, who (in xxxi, 115) told him "*Fa che le viste non risparmi.*"

Dante now explains how impossible it was for him at first to see anything at all, so soon as he withdrew his gaze from Beatrice's eyes, which had completely dazzled him; but, as soon as he had somewhat recovered his sight, he beholds the Chariot and the





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The right wheel of the Chariot (that of the New Testament) turns to the right. Up to this time, the procession had been marching towards the West, meeting Dante, who had been walking towards the East, as we gather from Cantos xxvii and xxviii. The Chariot now wheels about, and they all proceed together towards the East.

Benvenuto and Buti hold that *tornarsi* does not mean *volgersi*, but *tornare indietro*, return back again. Antonelli observes that if we reflect upon the facts narrated during this day, from the ascent of the stairway up to this point, we shall be led to the conclusion that it was now about ten o'clock in the morning. Therefore, the majestic procession, in wheeling upon its right flank, described a semi-circle from West to East, by the North, and thus the personages composing it were struck full in the face by the rays of the Sun, as they wended their way up the stream along its right bank. Lana remarks on what follows, and says that, as when hosts are about to change their camp, all await the standards, and do not march in a straight, but in a circular line, and in such wise that the shields shall always be on the outside, so this mystic host set itself in motion, behind its first standards, and the Chariot did not move until the whole of the procession had passed Dante.

Come sotto gli scudi \* per salvarsi

Volgesi schiera, e sè gira col segno,

20

---

\* *Come sotto gli scudi*: Compare Tasso (*Ger. Liber. xi, st. 33*):—  
 La gente Franca impetuosa e ratta  
 Allor quanto più puote affretta i passi:  
 E parte scudo a scudo insieme adatta,  
 E di quegli un coperchio al capo fassi."

Venturi (p. 210, sim. 354) says the simile is quite exact in all its parts, and corresponds to what Dante calls in l. 22, *milizia del*



Prima che possa tutta in sè mutarsi ;<sup>¶</sup>  
 Quella milizia † del celeste regno,  
 Che precedeva, tutta trapassone  
 Pria che piegasse il carro il primo legno.‡

As a troop of soldiers to protect itself wheels under (cover of) its shields, and moves round with the standard, before it can wholly change its front ; (so) the soldiery of the celestial kingdom, that formed the vanguard, had all of them passed beyond us before the front beam (i.e. the pole) had turned the chariot.

When the long line of Elders had passed by, the Gryphon also began to draw the Chariot after them. The calmness of his movements seem to indicate that the

*celeste regno.* A long column must wheel many times before the whole of it has changed its front. First the van with the standard; then the main body by degrees, and last of all the rear-guard. In like manner here, first the candlesticks go in front, then the band of the saints, and last of all the Chariot.

\* *in sè mutarsi* : Tommaséo interprets this *voltar diversione*. The *Falso Boccaccio* says that a troop changing front moves off by the right : "in sul braccio destro, sicchè gli scudi rimangono dal l' di fuori in difension delle loro persone." In *Par.* xii, 4, *Da* uses similar words in describing the gyrations of a blessed soul revolving upon its own axis :—

"E nel suo giro tutta non si volse," etc.

† *milizia* : Tommaséo remarks that *militi* in *Dante's* time meant a knight. We may see this in *Par.* xv, 139, 140, where *Cacciaguida* uses *milizia* to mean knighthood, when he relates how he was made a belted knight by the Emperor Conrad :—

"Poi seguitai lo imperador Corrado,  
 Ed ei

And in *Par.* xxx, 43, where the Angels and the Saints of Heaven are termed "l' una e l' altra milizia." In the Terrestrial Paradise the four-and-twenty Elders form the vanguard of the Chivalry of Heaven.

‡ *il primo legno* : There are two interpretations of this line : first that the pole bent the Chariot round to the right ; second that *legno* governs the construction, and must be understood that the chariot as if animated, turned its own pole. *Scartazzini* thinks that the first of these interpretations, as the more simple and natural, deserves the preference, and it is the one that I follow.



operations of Divine Power are set in motion by the sole exercise of the Divine Will. No other external means or instruments are necessary for Christ to guide His Church, than His Word alone, and His Holy Spirit.

Dante himself, with Matelda and Statius, close the procession. It may be noticed that, from the time that Statius enters the Terrestrial Paradise, he never utters a word, but becomes perfectly passive.

Indi alle rote si tornâr le donne,\* 25  
 E il grifon mosse il benedetto carico,  
 Sì che però nulla penna crollonne.  
 La bella donna che mi trasse al varco,  
 E Stazio † ed io seguitavam la rota  
 Che fe' l' orbita sua con minore arco. 30

Then did the Ladies return unto the wheels (*i.e.* the Four to the left wheel, and the Three to the right), and the Gryphon set his holy burden in motion, but in such wise (*i.e.* so smoothly) that not one of his feathers quivered. The fair Lady (Matelda), who had drawn me through the ford, and Statius, and I, were following the (right-hand) wheel which made its orbit with a lesser arc.

As the procession wheeled on its right hand, the left wheel had to make the longest turn, and the right wheel, consequently, a much shorter one.

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\* *le donne*: The four damsels had left their appointed post for the purpose of conducting Dante towards Beatrice's eyes (xxxii, 109); while the other three had come forward, *danzando al loro angelico carido*, to entreat Beatrice to display her features (xxxii, 132).

† *Stazio*: There is no means of conjecturing what part Statius is now made to serve in the great vision. As a soul purified from every sin he might have ascended direct up to Heaven, without waiting to behold the mysteries which are shown to Dante in order that they may be related to the living (xxxiii, *et seq.*). Dante certainly must have had some reasons for mentioning Statius up to the end of the *Purgatorio* (xxxiii, 134), but what the reasons were is not evident.





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ence and submission of the ecclesiastical to the civil authority, in accordance with St. Paul's injunction (*Rom. xiii, 1*), "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." And these two interpretations of the Tree, being symbolic both of Obedience and of the Empire, are not antagonistic to each other, because deference paid to Imperial authority is precisely homage rendered to Obedience.

The whole company murmur against Adam, through whose disobedience sin entered into the world, and by sin death (*Rom. v, 12*). This murmuring involves censure on any one, even a pope, who is guilty of disobedience. Brunone Bianchi (9th ed.) says that we have here a tacit comparison between the sin of Adam, who, having been placed in the Terrestrial Paradise, touched the tree forbidden by God, the Supreme Emperor, on the one hand; and on the other, we have the Pope, who, placed in Rome, and under the protection of the Imperial throne, withdraws himself from obedience to the Emperor, whose authority derives from God, and lays his hands upon the secular jurisdiction belonging to the Emperor, and that in direct opposition to the express commands of Christ.

Porse in tre voli \* tanto spazio prese

\* *tre voli*: Compare *Inf. xxxi, 83, 84*:—

"ed al trar d' un balestro

Trovammo l' altro assai più fiero e maggio."

And *Purg. iii, 67-69*:—

"Ancora era quel popol di lontano,

Dico dopo li nostri mille passi,

Quanto un buon gittator trarria con mano," etc.

And Ovid, *Metam. viii, 695, 696*:—

"Tantum aberant summo, quantum semel ire sagitta

Missa potest."

And Statius, *Theb. vi, 354*:—

"Quale quater jaculo spatium ter arundine vincas."



Disfrenata saetta, quanto cramo  
Rimossi, quando Beatrice scese.

Io sentii mormorare a tutti:—" Adamo!"—  
Poi cerchiaro una pianta \* dispogliata  
Di fiori e d' altra fronda in ciascun ramo.

Perchance an arrow loosened from the string had  
three flights traversed as great a space as we I  
moved onward, when Beatrice descended (from  
chariot). I heard murmured by all, " Adam!" T

\* *una pianta*: Scartazzini observes that, to explain and  
define accurately all the divergent opinions as to the allegorical  
meaning of *una pianta*, even a long dissertation would  
not suffice. First and foremost there is no doubt but that the tree  
in its literal sense is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil  
planted by God in the Garden of Eden or Terrestrial Paradise.  
In describing the tree the Poet had also under his eye the Tree  
(mentioned in *Daniel* iv, 20-22), that was great and  
whose height reached unto the heaven, and which King  
Nebuchadnezzar saw in "the visions of his head in his bed"  
(*Daniel* iv, 10). In many passages in Holy Scripture the tree is  
introduced as an emblem of power and royal majesty. As it  
stretches up above all other plants so the supreme power is  
elevated above its subjects, and just as a tree gives shade  
the supreme power protects its subjects. Many Commentators  
think that the tree of the Dantesque vision is a symbol of  
Obedience, but that is only part of the full sense. Two things  
stand out prominently in the great vision, namely, the Tree and  
the Chariot. The Chariot is the emblem of the Church. The  
Terrestrial Paradise is a figure of the happiness of this world.  
But in this life we can have no happiness without well-being  
(*bon essere*). And, to secure well-being in this world, a  
temporal monarchy is necessary, as Dante maintains in the  
*Monarchia*, i, ch. 5. If Empire be necessary to the well-being  
of the world, and if the Terrestrial Paradise be a figure of the  
world in a state of well-being where Man is happy (*Purg.*  
75), it follows of necessity that Dante, true to his system,  
was bound to introduce the symbol of the Empire into his  
vision with the others. The only symbol of the Empire admitted  
is the Mystic Tree. Besides this, it is not at all rare to find  
a tree, amongst the poets, used as a symbol of the Empire or  
a reigning house. Hence Dante could with reason take the  
Tree as the symbol either of the monarchy or of the Roman  
Empire. And in truth all that Dante says of the Tree fits  
very well with the Empire.



they encircled a tree that was despoiled of blossoms and other leafage on every bough.

Dante next describes the extraordinary height of the Tree, and we learn that, like the Tree on the Sixth Cornice (see *Purg.* xxii, 133-135), its foliage was abundant at the top, but that it diminished in the lower parts, so as to offer no opportunity of access. This passage (says Scartazzini) is intended above all things to symbolize the inviolability of the Empire, which, according to the Will of God, must not be touched. In *De Monarchia*, iii, ch. 10, ll. 39, 40, Dante says that it is not even lawful for the Emperor himself "*scindere imperium.*"

La coma sua,\* che tanto si dilata 40  
 Più quanto più è su, fôra dagl' Indi †  
 Nei boschi lor per altezza ‡ ammirata.

\* *coma sua*: This tree would seem to be similar in form to the one described on the Sixth Cornice (*Purg.* xxii, 130-135). Dante there explains the shape, saying of it:—

"Cred' io io perchè persona su non vada."

In *Purg.* xxxiii, 58, Beatrice says that whosoever robs or injures the Tree sins against God; and then, after mentioning the punishment of Adam, who ate of its fruit, she adds (v. 64):—

"Dorme lo ingegno tuo, se non estima  
 Per singular cagione essere eccelsa  
 Lei tanto, e si travolta nella cima."

The words *travolta nella cima* describe how that the tree was inverted on its summit to render it more difficult of access. *Coma* is a Latinism for *chioma*. Others read *chioma* [hair or foliage]; *cima*. The *Ottimo*, who reads *chioma* in the text, and *cima* in the notes, suggests *vetta*.

† *dagl' Indi*: Compare Virg. *Georg.* ii, 122-124:—

" . . . . . gerit India lucos,  
 Extremi sinus orbis, ubi aera vincere summum  
 Arboris haud ullæ jactu potuere sagittæ? "

‡ *per altezza*: Scartazzini says there is a complete parallelism between the two trees as described by Daniel (iv, 7-19), and this tree described by Dante. With Daniel the tree is an emblem of the Babylonian Empire, with Dante, of the Roman Empire.





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sweet to the taste, since by that taste (*quindi*) the belly is contorted with anguish (*i.e.* Man still suffers)." Thus around the mighty Tree cried the others (*i.e.* the Saints of the Church Militant); and the animal of twofold nature (replied): "Thus is preserved the seed of all righteousness."

These words, put into the mouth of the Gryphon, may be a paraphrase of those spoken by Christ to St. John the Baptist: "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," [in the *Vulgate* "justice"]. *St. Matt.* iii, 15.

The Gryphon now draws the Chariot up and binds it to the tree, which throws out fresh blossoms.

Evólto al tèmo ch' egli avea tirato,

Trasselo \* al piè della vedova frasca ; †

50

E quel di lei a lei lasciò legato.

And turning to the pole which he had drawn, he dragged it to the foot of the denuded Tree, and left bound to it (the Tree) that which was of it (*i.e.* the pole made of its wood).

Scartazzini thinks that by the pole is meant the Seat of the Church, and that, as the Gryphon drags the Chariot by the pole, so Christ guides His Church by means of the Sacred Seat. The tree then is, literally, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; allegorically, the Empire.

The Cross of Christ, derived from the Tree of Knowledge, is the origin of the Papal Seat. If the Cross is made from a branch of the Tree of Knowledge, and the

\**Trasselo*: "Come lo dimonio separò l'omo da l'obediènza di Dio facendoli mangiare del pomo di quella pianta vietatoli; così Cristo tirò l'omo a l'obediènza di Dio, ponendo l'umanità sua a morire per la verità" (Buti).

† *frasca*, is properly speaking "a bough"; but Tommaso says it must here be taken to mean the bare tree [*albero ignudo*].



Papal Seat originates in the Cross, it can well be said that the Papal Seat was formed from a branch of that Tree. Christ joins the Papal Seat, Roman in its origin, to the Roman Empire; and that not only in externals, shown by both Papacy and Empire having their centre abode at Rome; but also inwardly, in that, according to Dante, both Pope and Emperor ought to go hand in hand in guiding the human race to its two-fold object and end.

Dante now describes the marvellous change that came over the Tree after the Gryphon had bound to it the pole of the Chariot.

Come le nostre piante, quando casca  
Giù la gran luce mischiata con quella  
Che raggia retro alla celeste lasca,\*  
Turgide fansi,† e poi si rinnovella ‡

---

\* *lasca*, which properly means a roach or mullet, here signifies the Constellation of the Fish. Aries follows after Pisces, when the Sun is in Aries we are in spring. On this see Antonelli in Tommaséo's Commentary: "Nel moto apparente delle stelle celesti la costellazione dei Pesci precede l'Ariete. La gran luce pertanto, cioè la solare, si troverà mischiata con quella che raggia dall'Ariete, quando il sole apparirà in questa costellazione, e quando per noi sarà primavera, quando le piante si fanno turgide per il dilatarsi delle loro gemme, e poi ciascuna si riveste di foglie e di fiori, prima che il sole attacchi al Carro del dì i suoi corni sotto altra costellazione, cioè avanti di aver percorso tutta quella dell'Ariete e così prima che passi un mese di tempo."

† *Turgide fansi*: "Swell with sap." Compare Virg. *Bucol. Eclog.* vii, 48:—

"Jam læto turgent in palmite gemmæ."

And *Georg.* i, 315:—

"Frumenta in viridi stipula lactentia turgent."

‡ *si rinnovella Di suo colore ciascuna*: Compare *Petrarch, poem.* *Son.* viii (in some editions ix):—

"Quando 'l pianeta che distingue l' ore,  
Ad albergar col Tauro si ritorna,  
Cade virtù dall' infiammate corna  
Che veste il mondo di novel colore."



Di suo color ciascuna, pria che il sole  
 Giunga li suoi corsier sott' altra stella ;  
 Men che di rose,\* e più che di viòle  
 Colore aprendo, s' innovò la pianta,  
 Che prima avea le ramora † sì sole.

60

As the trees of our world, when (in Spring) the Sun's great light falls downwards mingled with that (of Aries) which beams behind the celestial Roach (*i.e.* which comes next after the constellation of Pisces), begin to swell, and then each is renewed in its own colour, before the Sun yokes his steeds beneath another constellation (Taurus), even so did the Tree, which before had its branches so bare, renew itself, disclosing a tint less (vivid) than that of roses, but more than that of violets.

\* *Men che di rose*, etc. : For a mixture of colours as described here we have an apt illustration in Virg. *Georg.* iv, 273-275 :—

“ Namque uno ingentem tollit de cœspite silvam,  
 Aureus ipse ; sed in foliis, quæ plurima circum  
 Funduntur, violæ sublucet purpura nigræ.”

Ruskin (*Mod. Painters*, vol. iii, 226) says : “ Some three arrowflights farther up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers of a colour ‘less than that of roses, but more than that of violets.’ It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant—that of the apple-blossom. Had he employed any simple colour phrase, as a ‘pale pink,’ or ‘violet pink,’ or any other such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue : he might perhaps, have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness ; but by taking the rose-leaf as the type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet grey, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable ; and rightly so felt, for, of all lovely things which grace the springtime in our fair temperate zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the *fairest*.”

† *le ramora* : This is an early form in the neuter plural that stands for *i rami* ; so we have *le campora* for *i campi* ; *le pratoru* for *i prati* ; *le borgora* for *i borghi*. These forms are now obsolete, but they are fully discussed by Nannucci in his *Teorica dei Nomi della Lingua Italiana*, pp. 359-362.





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Nè la nota sofferesi \* tuttaquanta.  
 S' io potessi ritrar come assonnaro  
 Gli occhi spietati, † udendo di Siringa, 65  
 Gli occhi a cui più vegghiar ‡ costò si caro ;  
 Come pittor che con esemplo pinga  
 Disegnerei com' io m' addormentai ; §  
 Ma qual vuol sia che l' assonnar ben finga.

I did not understand, nor here on earth can be sung, the hymn which that assembly then chanted, nor could I endure the whole melody throughout. If I could describe how the unrelenting eyes (of Argus) sank into slumber, on hearing tell of Syrinx, those eyes whose too much wakefulness cost them so dear; like an artist who paints from a model, I would portray how I fell asleep; but whoever wishes to do so, let him be one who can well depict slumber.

Dante here implies that he has not himself this power, and that he will therefore only describe what he saw when he awoke.

nel palagio, incontanente si rubellarono." Compare also Tibullus, lib. iv, *Carm.* 4, 25, 26.

\* *sofferesi*: Here Dante's ears are unable to endure the exquisite melody of Heaven. In *Pur.* i, 58, we learn that his eyes cannot endure the light:—

"Io nol sofferesi molto, nè si poco," etc.

† *Gli occhi spietati*: The hundred eyes of Argus. Juno, having cause to be jealous of Io, had placed her under the guardianship of Argus, whose hundred eyes watched without intermission. Jupiter, having ordered Mercury to carry off the young nymph, Mercury slew Argus, after lulling him to sleep by telling him the story of Syrinx, the nymph of Arcadia, who was changed into a reed. See Ovid, *Met.* i, 568-721.

‡ *a cui più vegghiar*: Others read *a cui pur vegghiar*. Others *vegliar*; *a cui vegghiar*; and some *a cui non vegghiar*.

§ *m' addormentai*: Scartazzini thinks that perhaps this falling asleep symbolizes that perfect peace and happiness which, according to Dante, reigns in the world, when the twofold authority of the Emperor and the Pope are united, and come up to the ideal state aspired to by Dante.



Però trascorro a quando mi svegliai,

E dico ch' un splendor \* mi squarciò il velo †  
Del sonno, ed un chiamar:— "Surgi, che fai!"

Therefore I pass on to when I awoke, and I say t  
a dazzling light rent aside the veil of my slumber, a  
(likewise) a crying out: "Arise, what doest thou?"

The dazzling light is the now distant glory of the  
Gryphon, the Elders, and the Angels re-ascend  
Heaven. It would seem to be Matelda who spoke  
words, and Dante finds her standing over him af  
sleep, even as she had hovered over him after his  
in Canto xxxi, 91-96. Up to this point (says Scart  
the great vision has presented to us a picture of the  
quillity, universal peace and happiness, that reigh  
the world during the first ages of Christianity.  
henceforward Dante will show us, as in a mirror  
from that time to this the seamless garment wa  
and torn by the talons of cupidity. He goes  
compare himself to the disciples at the Transfigu  
who on awaking found Our Lord alone, and his  
heavenly attendants vanished.

Dante asks Matelda what has become of Be  
and she tells him to look at the foot of the Tree,  
Beatrice is sitting on the roots with her atte  
handmaidens.

---

\* *splendor*: The description of the dazzling light has  
analogy to that of the Transfiguration. The three discip  
asleep (*St. Luke ix, 32*): "But Peter and they that were wi  
were heavy with sleep, and when they were awake they s  
glory and the two men that stood with Him." And in the c  
tion by *St. Matthew xvii, 7*, we find the resemblance to "Su  
fai?" "And Jesus came and touched them, and said: Ari  
be not afraid."

† *mi squarciò il velo Del sonno*: Compare *Inf. xxxiii, 26*:—  
"quand' io feci il mal sonno  
Che del futuro mi squarciò il velame."



Quale a veder dei fioretti del melo,\*  
 Che del suo pomo gli Angeli fa ghiotti,†  
 E perpetue nozze fa nel cielo, 75  
 Pietro e Giovanni e Jacopo condotti  
 E vinti ritornaro alla parola,  
 Dalla qual furon maggior sonni rotti,  
 E videro scemata loro scuola,‡  
 Così di Moisè come d' Elia, 80  
 Ed al Maestro suo cangiata stola ; §  
 Tal torna' io, e vidi quella pia  
 Sopra me starsi, che conducitrice  
 Fu de' miei passi lungo il fiume pria ;  
 E tutto in dubbio dissi :—" Ov' è Beatrice ?"— 85  
 Ond' ella :—" Vedi lei sotto la fronda ||

\* *melo* : Compare *Song of Solomon*, ii, 3 : "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." This passage is interpreted as referring to Christ, and Dante here calls the Transfiguration the blossoming of that tree. Casini says that, by *fioretti del melo*, is to be understood those glimpses of beatitude which the three Apostles enjoyed at the sight of the glorified body of Our Lord during His Transfiguration.

† *ghiotti* : lit. "greedy," but constantly used by Dante to express "eager to see." Compare *Purg.* viii, 85 :—

"Gli occhi miei ghiotti andavan pure al cielo."

And Poliziano, *Stanza*, lib. i, st. 41 :—

"E fatto ghiotto del suo dolce aspetto  
 Già mai gli occhi dagli occhi levar puolle."

‡ *scuola* is used for "company," because the disciples were in presence of their Divine Master. In *Inf.* iv, 94-96, Dante uses the word to describe the group of poets under the leadership of their sublime leader, Homer :—

"Così vidi adunar la bella scuola  
 Di quei [*i.e. quello*] signor dell' altissimo canto,  
 Che sopra gli altri com' aquila vola."

And in line 148 of the same Canto we have the word *si scema* used to express the separation of the group of poets, which corresponds to the present passage *scemata loro scuola*.

§ *cangiata stola* : This means that Our Lord's vesture, which had been changed when He was transfigured, was, when the vision was over, changed back again to His ordinary habit.

|| *sotto la fronda*, et seq. : Beatrice is sitting beneath the foliage and upon the roots of the mystic tree. We have seen





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Dante relates that he was so absorbed in his contemplation of Beatrice, that he did not notice whether Matelda said anything further.

E se più fu lo suo parlar diffuso  
 Non so, perocchè già negli occhi m' era  
 Quella ch' ad altro intender m' avea chiuso.  
 Sola sedeasi in sulla terra vera,  
 Come guardia lasciata lì del plaustro, 95  
 Che legar vidi alla biforme fiera.

And whether her (Matelda's) speech was further poured forth, I know not, for I had now before my eyes her (Beatrice) who had shut me to all other thoughts. She was sitting alone upon the bare earth, left there as guardian of the Chariot which I had seen bound (to the Tree) by the animal of two-fold nature.

Most of the Commentators take *la terra vera* to mean the soil of the Terrestrial Paradise, that pure soil, uncontaminated by original sin. Scartazzini argues that Beatrice was sitting on the roots of the Tree (ver. 86), which was supposed to signify, that spiritual authority has its seat in Rome, the root of the Empire. Here we find two things said of Beatrice. She is sitting alone, and sitting on *la terra vera*. *Vera* must be taken in the sense of *nuda*. Beatrice sits alone; she has no other court than the seven Virtues. She sits on *la terra vera*; she has no other throne than the bare earth, thereby imitating Him, who had not where to lay His head. Beatrice symbolizes the spiritual authority, the ideal Papacy of Dante's aspirations. The Bishops of the Primitive Church sat alone in the Imperial City, without any retinue of cardinals, courtiers, or servants. They were poor; the papal throne had not as yet been set up; the temporal wealth of the Church had not yet been amassed; they assembled their flocks in the Catacombs;



... successors of  
imagined by Dante.

Dante now describes  
maidens.

In cerchio le facev  
Le sette ninfe  
Che son sicuri

In a circle the seven  
selves an enclosure for  
hands that are secure  
which neither North n

The Virtues formed the  
first successors of St. Peter  
should be surrounded by

It may be inferred that  
Elders had departed, that  
had before that time been  
were taken in charge by  
Virtues. Allegorically it  
to the descent of the Holy  
Christ on the day of Pentecost  
longer to be separated from



of the procession. But, we repeat, the lamps had been moving in front of the four-and-twenty Elders, and it could only have been during Dante's slumber that the change could have taken place.

*Division IV.*—In the concluding division of the Canto, Dante gives a description, in figurative language, of the more notable of the tribulations through which the Church Militant would have to pass.

Beatrice again addresses Dante, admonishing him that his sojourn in the Terrestrial Paradise will be but short ; but that when, after his return to earth, his life ends, he shall be with her an inhabitant of the Kingdom of Heaven, where Christ, as Man, is a citizen, and where God reigns as Emperor. She exhorts him to watch the Chariot attentively, and for the good of Mankind, after his return there, to write what he has seen. She adds that the world is living ill, both socially and morally, because neither of the two leaders assigned to it by Heaven, the Pope and the Emperor, is performing his proper functions.

Dante relates how he at once obeyed Beatrice's injunction.

—“ Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano,\*  
E sarai meco senza fine cive

100

---

\* *silvano* : I think that *qui . . . silvano* means an inhabitant of this forest of the Terrestrial Paradise, and implies that when after death Dante's soul comes to Purgatory, its detention there will be brief before rejoining Beatrice in Paradise. Some contend that the sentence foretells Dante's early death, and that *qui* meant “on earth.” But the world is always spoken of by Dante as *di là*, and we actually have this very contrast given in line 105, *Ritornato di là*, “when thou art back in the world.” Casini thinks Beatrice's meaning is that the present condition of Dante is only transitory, but it is difficult to explain this extremely obscure passage very clearly.





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Poco di spessa nube, quando piove \* 110  
 Da quel confine che più va remoto,  
 Com' io vidi calar l' uccel di Giove  
 Per l' arbor giù, rompendo della scorza,  
 Non che dei fiori e delle foglie nuove ;  
 E feri il carro di tutta sua forza, 115  
 Ond' ei piegò, come nave in fortuna,  
 Vinta dall' onda, or da poggia † or da orza.

Never descended with so swift a motion fire from a dense cloud, when it is raining from that region (the Sphere of Fire) which is the most remote, as I beheld the bird of Jove swoop down through the Tree, rending off part of its bark, as well as of its flowers and of its young leaves ; and he smote the Chariot with all

---

ragione poi che questa circostanza nell' intendimento del Poeta par debba accrescere la volontà del fulmine, potrebb'essere questa, che quando piove dalle più remote regioni pluviali, e però vengono ivi a formarsi nuvole, queste si trovano nel massimo avvicinamento alla suppo a sfera del fuoco, la quale credevasi potesse influire su quelle, nel far loro concepire e concentrare maggior copia di calore ; il perchè il divampare di questo in luce e fuoco, e quindi il precipitare del fulmine, fosse in tal caso e più fragoroso e più violento, in ragione appunto di quel più grande concentramento per cui doveva prodursi quella che oggi diremmo straordinaria tensione. Tale interpretazione pare che possa confermarsi e illustrarsi dalla terzina 14 (ll. 40-42) del xxiii del Paradiso :—

' Come foco di nube si disserra,  
 Per dilatarsi sì che non vi cape,  
 E fuor di sua natura in giù s' atterra,'

ov' è da vedere accennato il concetto delle esplosioni, e il Poeta non poteva ignorare il ritrovato e le esperienze del celeberrimo Fra Ruggero Bacono intorno alla polvere pirica, o da schioppo, o da mine ; il quale insigne dottore precedette di mezzo secolo il nostro Allighieri" (Antonelli *ap.* Tommaséo).

\* *quando piove* : Scartazzini thinks that, in this passage, Dante most probably follows the teaching of Aristotle, who, in his second book of the *Meteors*, teaches that lightning is generated by fire being confined in the clouds, when the latter rise to the level of the sphere of fire.

† *poggia*, starboard ; *orza*, larboard or port. These words also signify "right" or "left," as in Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* xxvi, st. 76 :—

" Passò il ferro crudel l' omero bianco :  
 Piegò Aldigier ferito a poggia e ad orza."



his might, whereat it reeled like a ship in a tempest, driven by the waves, now to starboard, now to port.

The eagle not only smites the mystic Chariot, but likewise seriously damages the mystic Tree. The persecutions of the Emperors against the Christians not only injured the young Church, but the Empire itself, depriving it in part of that new life which it had acquired by its union with the Church; depriving it, moreover, of many of the most loyal and faithful, because the most virtuous and holy minded, of its subjects. The tribulation of the Church is that which it sustains from false prophets and heretical teachers, and these are symbolized here by a fox, hungry and lean, who leaps into the body of the Chariot.

Poscia vidi avventarsi nella cuna\*  
 Del trionfal veicolo una volpe,†  
 Che d' ogni pasto buon pareva digiuna.‡

\* *cuna*: The poetic and occasional form for *culla*, which is the word for "cradle" in general use all over Italy. It comes to mean "abode," "dwelling place," as in *Inf.* xiv, 101:—

"Rea la scelse già per cuna fida  
 Del suo figliuolo."

The *Gran Dizionario* says that, in the present passage, *cuna* signifies the middle of the Chariot, where one would sit, which is somewhat like a cradle. *Avventarsi nella cuna* means more than simply to leap into the car. The word implies an attack. The fox hurled itself head foremost into the car for the purpose of attacking the structure itself.

† *volpe*: "La volpe simboleggia, come già nella Bibbia, Perchè venne a perturbare la Chiesa dopo le persecuzioni imperiali e fu sradicata dalla parola dei dottori" (Casini). Compare *Ps.* lxxiii, 10: "They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a port for foxes." And *Lam.* v, 18: "Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." And *Ezek.* xiii, 4: "Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts."

‡ *d'ogni pasto buon . . . digiuna*: As heresies are founded upon vain doctrines, those who follow them are deprived of wholesome spiritual sustenance.



Ma riprendendo lei di laide colpe,\*  
La Donna mia la volse in tanta futa,†  
Quanto sofferson l' ossa senza polpe.

Then I saw dash into the body of the triumphal Car  
a fox that (from its leanness) appeared to be fasting  
from all wholesome food. But upbraiding it for its  
evil faults, my Lady put it to as swift a flight as its  
fleshless bones would allow.

Its extreme weakness did not admit of a very rapid  
flight.

Scartazzini observes that the fox leaped into the  
Chariot from without, and therefore signifies a heresy  
that did not take its origin within the body of the Church,  
but from the outside. He says that Dante, in this part  
of his vision, seems to follow a chronological order, and  
that, if in verse 124 there is an allusion to the gift of  
Constantine to the Church, it is evident that he here





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Then, by the same course whereby he had come before (*i.e.* through the Tree), I saw the eagle swoop down into the body of the Chariot, and leave it covered with his feathers. And there came a voice from Heaven, such as issues from a heart that is mourning, and thus it spoke: "O my little bark, how ill art thou laden!"

Nearly all the Commentators agree that Dante is here making allusion to the riches and luxuries bestowed on the Apostolic Seat by the Roman Emperors, and more especially to the "Donatio Constantini." Whereas the Church had come victorious out of all its previous tribulations and trials, this last was far more insidious and fatal, and the Church was put to the same temptation which Satan attempted with Jesus Christ, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the Earth and the glory of them. With Our Lord he failed, but with the Church he was successful. Gold, power, and earthly glory were objects of admiration on the part of the ministers and servants of the Living God.

Poi parve a me che la terra s' aprisse 130  
 Tr' ambo le rote, e vidi uscirne un drago,  
 Che per lo carro su la coda fisse:  
 E come vespa che ritragge l' ago,  
 A sè traendo la coda maligna,  
 Trasse del fondo, e gissen vago vago. 135

Then methought that the earth opened between the two wheels, and from it I saw issue forth a dragon, who thrust his tail upward through the Chariot; and like a wasp that draws back its sting, so did he, drawing back his envenomed tail, tear off a part of the bottom (of the Chariot), and went his way in malignant eagerness (to work further evil).

Some Commentators interpret *vago* as "rejoicing, exulting," but Scartazzini does not agree with them, and



thinks Dante nearly always uses the word to mean "eager" (see *Purg.* xxviii, 1, and many other passages). The dragon was far from going away satisfied, but like the wolf (*Inf.* i, 99) who *dopo il pasto ha più fame che prima* it departed as departs the devil, who having worked evil, is eager to work another worse one.

Now what is this dragon? The figure is most probably taken from *Rev.* xii, 3-4: "And behold a great dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to earth." In the dragon of the Apocalypse, Scartazzini says that modern Biblical exegesis sees figured the Roman Empire, antichristian, the enemy and persecutor of the Church. Its seven heads are the seven hills of Rome; the ten horns are the Roman Emperors from Augustus down to Nero: the tail that drags away the third part of the stars of Heaven figures the oppression and desolation of the Church. The dragon is "that old serpent, the Devil and Satan," as in the Apocalypse. The dragon issues from the earth, where the Gryphon, or Christ, descended from Heaven; consequently the dragon is the infernal antithesis to the celestial Gryphon. Up to the time of the appearance of the dragon, the body of the Chariot had escaped injury but from this point it begins to degenerate. The dragon in attacking it with his envenomed tail, typifies the Devil who instilled corruption into the Church, and despite all its virtues. And the dragon coming forth between the two wheels of the Chariot is thought to indicate that the demon of cupidity of worldly possessions and in the hearts of the clergy, the two wheels typifying two orders, the secular and the monastic clergy.



Casini, one of the most recent of modern Commentators, says that, as to the Dragon of the Dantesque vision, three interpretations hold the field: (1) that of Lana, accepted by Benvenuto, Buti, Landino, and many moderns, who think it symbolizes Mahomet, as the founder of the religion which withdrew so many people from the Christian faith; (2) that of *Pietro di Dante*, adopted by many moderns, which sees in it the Antichrist, or the concupiscence after temporal goods, which acted as the first incentive to the ruin of the Church; and (3) that formulated by Lombardi, followed by Scartazzini, which I have adopted. On these three interpretations Casini offers no opinion. Tommasèo thinks it means every schism that was first promoted and then aggravated, from the time that a part of the Imperial power fell into the hands of the Priesthood, and a part of the Ecclesiastical power was arrogated by the Princes. Serravalle takes it to be "*quarta persecutio Ecclesiæ quam fecit ille porcus Machomettus.*"

In the next six lines, Dante relates how the plumage of the eagle covered every part of the Chariot in an instant of time.

Quel che rimase, come di gramigna \*  
 Vivace terra, della piuma, offerta  
 Forse con intenzion sana e benigna,†

---

\* *come di gramigna*: "Pars vero que remansit, fuit venenata, quia pastores Ecclesie et viri Ecclesiastici, qui remanserunt, vestierunt se illas pennas, quas dimisit aquila, idest pompas dominandi, et divitias, et dederunt se vitiis mundanis, unde facti sunt pravi et mali" (Serravalle). *Gramigna* is the *triticum repens*, i.e. "couch-grass," or "dog-grass," and it is a common agricultural term in the Roman Campagna to "*purgare i campi gramignosi*," or "*combattere e vincere la gramigna.*"

† *sana e benigna*: This is the reading of all the early Commentators, and nearly all the MSS. The Aldine was the first





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Scartazzini thinks that the monster with the seven heads and ten horns in this passage is a symbol of the degeneracy of the Church, and more especially of the corruption of the Papal throne.\* Lana is of opinion that the seven heads imply the seven capital sins which entered into the Church as soon as it became possessed of worldly riches :—

Pride,	}	which, offending against God and	
Anger,			against one's neighbour, are two-
Avarice,			horned sins.
Envy,	}	which, only offending one's neighbour,	
Sensuality,			are one-horned sins.
Sloth,			
Gluttony,			

Most of the principal Commentators give this interpretation.

Dante, having now passed rapidly over the vicissitudes of the Church from the earliest epoch of its existence, proceeds to notice its condition in his own times. He carries on the allegory by relating how he beheld upon the Chariot, now transformed into a monster, a bold shameless woman, and beside her a giant, who appeared to guard her. But when she turned her eyes upon Dante, the giant scourged her, loosed the Chariot from the Tree to which the Gryphon had bound it, and dragged it and the woman so far into the forest that they were lost to Dante's sight.

---

\* Compare *Inf.* xix, 109-10 :—

“ Quella che con le sette teste nacque,  
E dalle dieci corna ebbe argomento.”

And *ibid.*, 115-17 :—

“ Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu madre,  
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote  
Che da te prese il primo ricco padre ! ”



Sicura quasi rocca \* in alto monte,  
 Seder sopr' esso una puttana sciolta †  
 M' apparve con le ciglia intorno pronte. ‡  
 E come perchè non gli fosse tolta,  
 Vidi di costa a lei dritto un gigante, §  
 E baciavansi insieme alcuna volta:  
 Ma perchè l' occhio cupido e vagante ||  
 A me rivolse, quel feroce drudo

\* *Sicura quasi rocca*: Casini observes that this simile indicates that the Church, however much corrupted, rested upon foundations. Compare *St. Matt. v, 14*: "A city that is on a hill cannot be hid." I am surprised to notice that translators have fallen into the error of rendering *rocca* as "Rock." *Rocca* is a citadel, a fortress, or the keep of a castle (Latin *Rock* is *roccia*, though in some rare and quite obscure instances *rocca* has been used for "rock." The Rook in chess is derived from *rocca*, which is the regular word for "citadel" in the best writers. Even Cary and Longfellow have not been making this slip, but Dugdale, Norton, Butler, and Hall have rendered it correctly.

† *sciolta* primarily means ungirdled, dishevelled; hence, licentious.

‡ *le ciglia intorno pronte*: See Cesari on this: "Ogni paguizzar qui la protervia dell' atto e del guardar meretricio: *ciglia intorno pronte*: scolpisce lo sbalestrar degli occhi attorno saettano." Compare *Ecclus. xxvi, 9*: "The whoop of a woman may be known in her haughty looks and eyelids."

§ *dritto un gigante*: i.e. a giant standing on his feet, in contrast to *sedere . . . una puttana sciolta* in l. 149. In my former edition I was criticised because in the episode of Belacqua (*Canto 104*) I had not translated *che si stavano all' ombra* "who were standing in the shade" in contrast to Belacqua sitting as I have since explained in a note on that passage, *stare* does not mean "to stand." "Dritto" does mean "standing on the feet."

|| *l' occhio cupido e vagante A me rivolse*: "quasi dicitur Bonifacius voluit respicere ad gentem italicam, dimissa propter quia nolebat amplius pati servitutem Philippi" (Benvenuto). This Lana remarks that, whenever the Popes did turn their backs towards Christian people, or, to continue the allegory, attempted to withdraw from their adultery, the above-mentioned kings, that is the kings of the House of France have scourged and put them to death, and bent them to their will. The simile (l. 157) implies the jealousy these kings felt lest any other nation but France should have influence in Italy.



La flagellò \* dal capo infin le piante.  
 Poi di sospetto pieno e d' ira crudo,  
 Disciolse il mostro, e trassel per la selva  
 Tanto, che sol di lei mi fece scudo †  
 Alla puttana ed alla nuova belva.

160

Secure as a citadel on some lofty hill, methought there sat upon it (*i.e.* the Chariot transformed into a monster) a dishevelled harlot with bold and eager looks. And, as if in order (to guard) that she should not be taken from him, I saw standing at her side a giant, and ever and anon they kissed each other. But because she turned on me her wanton and roving eye, that savage paramour scourged her from head to foot. Then, full of jealousy and fierce with rage, he unloosed the monster (from the Tree to which the Gryphon had bound the Chariot before its transformation), and dragged it off through the forest so far, that he made of that alone a shield for me against the harlot and the newly-formed beast.

The giant made of the forest an impediment to Dante seeing the strange group any longer.

Dante has here been giving, in allegorical language, a sketch of the events that happened in his own time, which Scartazzini considers to be perfectly clear. There are two personages: the harlot and the giant. The harlot, styled *fuja* in xxxiii, 44, is that harlot of *Rev.* xvii, 1-2, "that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication," and is also "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (*ib.* 18), evidently meaning Rome. In the allegory of this Canto there is a symmetrical arrangement, which makes each personage and component part

---

\* *La flagellò*: Tommasèo says that the woman with the wanton glance reminds one of *la lupa . . . di tutte brame . . . carica*, *Inf.* i, 49; and her roving eye of *la bestia senza pace*, *Inf.* i, 58.

† *mi fece scudo*: "quasi dicat, quia inter me et monstrum interposita est sylva" (Benvenuto).





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type of the Gryphon, who, as the symbol of Christ, is the Bridegroom.

In the Gospel History, *Pontius Pilate* is taken as an antitype of Christ. But in *Purg.* xx, 91, Dante calls *Philip le Bel* "il nuovo Pilato."

This argument speaks in favour of the common interpretation. The episode of the giant dragging the transformed Chariot through the forest out of sight, is an imaginary prophecy of Dante relating to the translation of the Apostolic Seat from Rome to Avignon in 1305, Dante supposing himself to be looking five years in advance of 1300, when the vision is supposed to have occurred.

*Pietro di Dante* observes: "Et hoc est quod dicit, scilicet, quomodo traxit eam secum per silvam, idest quod fecit ut Curia romana tracta est ultra montes in suo territorio de Roma."

END OF CANTO XXXII.



**C.**

**THE TERRESTRIAL PAR  
BEATRICE—THE F  
THE RIVER EUNO**

As in the last Cant  
length the persecutio  
relates how Beatrice  
over the indignities tl  
the Kings of France.

Benvenuto divides  
*In the First Divisi*  
relates the plaintive



*Division I.*—The seven Damsels break forth into a plaintive strain of psalmody, of which the responsive verses are sung alternately by the three Evangelical and by the four Cardinal Virtues. Beatrice listens with deep emotion.

*Deus, venerunt gentes,\** alternando  
 Or tre òr quattro,† dolce salmodia  
 Le donne incominciaro, e lagrimando :  
 E Beatrice sospirosa e pia  
 Quelle ascoltava sì fatta, che poco  
 Più alla croce si cambiò Maria.

*Deus, venerunt gentes.* This sweet psalmody the Ladies commenced singing in alternate choirs, now of three, now of four, weeping the while : and Beatrice listened to them with sighs of compassion, (and) with such an aspect (of woe), that Mary at the cross was but little more changed (in appearance).

Dante, in the above passage, uses the words of the Psalmist lamenting over the desolation of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, and applies them to the tribulations of the Church, which he described under an allegory in the last Canto. Beatrice had been standing on the Chariot of the Church, when the Gryphon, Jesus Christ, bound it to the Tree, *i.e.* the Empire. The scene has now entirely changed. The place of Beatrice, the representative of the *ideal* ecclesiastical authority, has been usurped by the shameless harlot that typifies *corrupted* ecclesiastical authority, and as such, is the antitype of

---

\* *Deus, venerunt gentes*, is the beginning of Psalm lxxviii, of the *Vulgate* : " O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance ; Thy holy temple have they defiled ; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps."

† *Or tre or quattro* : " Le tre donne diceano l' uno verso del Salmo, e le quattro diceano il seguente ; e così procedevano per lo Salmo " (*Ottimo*).





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Then she sent on all the seven before her, and, by a mere sign, motioned me and the Lady (Matelda), as also the sage who still remained (*i.e.* Statius) to follow her.

In this new procession, diminished in numbers, the same kind of order is observed as in the greater procession that had proceeded to the Tree. The candlesticks are borne aloft in the front by the seven Damsels.

Before they have walked ten paces further, Beatrice invites Dante to draw nearer to her, the better to hear her words. Dante obeys her commands, and she then encourages him to take heart and converse with her.

Così sen giva, e non credo che fosse

Lo decimo suo passo \* in terra posto,

Quando con gli occhi gli occhi mi percosse ;

E con tranquillo aspetto :—"Vien più tosto,"—

Mi disse,—"tanto che s'io parlo teco,

20

Ad ascoltarmi tu sie ben disposto."—

Sì com'io fui, com'io doveva, seco,

Dissemi :—"Frate, perchè non ti attenti

A domandarmi omai venendo meco? "—

Thus she (Beatrice) moved on, and I do not believe that her tenth step had been planted on the ground, when with her eyes she encountered my eyes; and with a tranquil mien: "Come on more quickly," said she to me, "so that if I speak to thee, thou mayest be ready to listen to me." So soon as I was, as in duty bound, by her side, she said to me: "Brother, why dost thou not venture to question me now that thou art walking with me?"

---

\* *decimo suo passo*: Tommasèo thinks that Dante speaks of these ten paces merely from love of mathematical exactness, but Scartazzini believes that, in this number, Dante has again concealed some allegory which we do not know how to unravel. These ten paces of Beatrice remind us of the ten paces' distance, by which the candlesticks were separated from the mystic procession, of which they were the standards.



Benvenuto thinks Beatrice is hinting that Dante will to ask her how long such offences shall remain punished. Dante feels encouraged to ask her what is in his heart, but does so with much timidity, expressing his assurance that she knows how much information is good for him to have. In reply, Beatrice exhorts to lay aside this timidity, and no longer to talk like in a trance.

Benvenuto remarks that, from this point up to the end of the *Paradiso*, we never again find that Dante loses consciousness, or dreams within his vision.

Come a color che troppo reverenti \*  
 Dinanzi a' suoi maggior parlando sono,  
 Che non traggon la voce viva ai denti,  
 Avvenne a me, che senza intero suono †  
 Incominciai:—"Madonna, mia bisogna  
 Voi conoscete, e ciò ch' ad essa è buono."—  
 Ed ella a me:—"Da tema e da vergogna  
 Voglio che tu omai ti disviluppe, ‡

\* *reverenti Dinanzi a' suoi maggior*, etc.: Compare the allusion of Telemachus to Mentor, when exhorted to pay a visit to Nestor, *Odyss.* iii, 27, Lord Carnarvon's Translation:—

"It ill beseemeth youth to question eld."

Compare also *Purg.* i, 51:—

"Riverenti mi fe' le gambe e il ciglio."

It has been well said that Dante must be commented on by his own words. We have in *Conv.* iv, cap. 8, ll. 1-9, Dante's definition of reverence, which we will take in his own words: "Lo più bello che dalla radice razionale consurga si è la *discussione* . . . . Un più belli e dolci frutti di questo ramo è la *reversanza* che del maggiore il minore." And (ll. 100, 101): "*Reversanza* non è che confessione di debita suggezione per manifesto segno."

† *senza intero suono*: Compare Ariosto, *Orland. Fur.* ii, 101:

"Spesso la voce, dal desio cacciata,  
 Viene a Rinaldo sin presso alla bocca  
 Per domandarlo; e quivi raffrenata  
 Da cortese modestia, fuor non scocca."

‡ *Da tema . . . ti disviluppe*: Compare *Inf.* iii, 14, where Virgil says to Dante:—



Sì che non parli più com' uom che sogna.\*

As befalls those who speak with such excessive reverence in the presence of their superiors, that they fail to force any distinct utterance through their teeth, so it befell me, for without any perfect sound I began: "My Lady, thou knowest my necessity, and that which is good for it." And she to me: "I will that henceforward thou disentangle thyself from timidity and shame, so that thou mayest no more speak like one who dreams.

*Division 11.*—Beatrice now foretells the swift retribution that is about to befall the persecutors of the Church from the hand of one who will set her free. She says that the eagle will, in its turn, have an heir, for before long a messenger of God will slay the harlot and her paramour the giant.

Sappi che il vaso † che il serpente ‡ ruppe,

"Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto;  
Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta."

And *Par.* xv, 67:—

"La voce tua sicura, balda e lieta  
Suoni la volontà, suoni il disio,  
A che la mia risposta è già decreta."

And *Par.* xvii, 7:—

"Manda fuor la vampa  
Del tuo disio, 'mi disse,' sì ch' ella esca  
Segnata bene della interna stampa."

\* *com' uom che sogna*: Compare Petrarch, *Rime*, p. i, son. 34 (in some editions 41):—

"Se parole fai,  
Sono imperfette, e quasi d' uom che sogna."

And Tasso, *Ger. Lib.* xiii, 30:—

"Gli ragiona in guisa d' uom che sogna."

† *vaso*: This properly means the hollow body of the Chariot = *la cuna del carro*, but is used here to signify the Chariot itself.

‡ *serpente*. In Canto xxxii, 130-35, we are told that it was *un drago* which transfixes and then destroys the body of the Car. Dante now calls the Dragon a serpent, as St. John did in *Rev.* xii, 9: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old ser-





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that when Charles of Anjou defeated and captured the youthful Conradin, son of the Emperor Conrad IV, with young Frederick of Austria, and the two Lancias, and had them beheaded at Naples, it was reported that Charles and his barons caused sops to be prepared, and they ate them over the dead bodies, saying that thenceforward there could be no vengeance carried out against them. Scartazzini states that, out of sixty-four Commentators whom he has quoted, forty-nine are agreed in referring this passage to the popular superstition of the times, and some mention it as actually occurring in their days.

Paulo Emiliani-Giudici (*Storia della Lett. Ital.*, vol. i, p. 215) observes that the present passage is one of the most sublime touches of the Dantesque pencil, a mode of speech mysterious to us, which, although it bears in our eyes the obscurity of the answer of an oracle, must have been perfectly clear and intelligible to Dante's contemporaries, while to the Anjous it must have contained a bitter sarcasm, deriding their superstitions, and threatening vengeance for their crimes. We have here one of the many buried treasures, with which the whole poem would glitter, were it to be illustrated by a commentary rigidly historical.

Beatrice now shows how vain is such fancied security on the part of *Philip le Bel*, because the outrage on the Church will be speedily avenged by a special emissary of God.

Non sarà tutto tempo senza creda \*

---

\* *senza creda* *L' aquila*, i.e. the vacant Imperial throne. The vision is supposed to have taken place in 1300, in which year the Imperial throne was not really vacant, but only so in Dante's eyes. In the *Convivio* he speaks of Frederick II as the last



L' aquila che lasciò le penne al carro,  
 Per che divenne mostro e poscia preda;  
 Ch' io veggio certamente, e però il narro,  
 A darne tempo già stelle propinque,  
 Sicure d' ogni intoppo e d' ogni sbarro;  
 Nel quale un cinquecento dieci e cinque,  
 Messo da Dio, anciderà la fuia  
 Con quel gigante che con lei delinque.

Not for all time shall be without an heir the eagle that left his plumage in the Car, whereby it became a monster and afterwards the prey (of the giant); I can assuredly discern—and therefore I tell you—stars even now close at hand, secure from any impediment or hindrance (*i.e.* no power can arrest such a conjunction of planets), that will give us a time in which A FIVE HUNDRED AND TEN AND FIVE, sent from God, shall slay the thievish woman (*i.e.* the plunderer of God's heritage), together with the giant who is her accomplice in guilt.

The above passage is one of the most obscure and disputed in the whole of the *Divina Commedia*.

In the first place, Dante has again imitated the mystic in the *Revelations* (xiii, 18): "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the letters for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six." This last is not to be a difficult enigma, as St. John was a Jew and his name written in Hebrew letters, the number 666 exactly

### NERON CAESAR.

But a new and most interesting solution of the enigma has been propounded by Dr. Moore in his essay

---

Emperor and King of the Romans. Dante evidently intended that, in a short time, an Emperor after his ideal would be Scartazzini thinks that the *Purgatorio* was written up to the death of Henry of Luxembourg in 1313, and therefore he cannot be the monarch on whom Dante's hopes.



D.X.V. Prophecy," in *Studies in Dante* (Third Series, pp. 253-81). Dr. Moore's solution is based upon the supposition that the number 515 is, like that in the Apocalypse, "the number of a man;" that the interpretation of it which confines it to the word "DUX" is an inadequate interpretation; that the deaths of the Harlot and the Giant (*i.e.* the first Avignon Pope, Clement V., and his patron, Philip the Fair), though they occurred in the year 1314, were not, in fact, attributable to the Emperor Lewis or to any other Deliverer; and that the enigma is, consequently, not one of Dante's retrospective, or *ex post facto*, prophecies, but expresses a genuine anticipation, which, like the Greyhound [*Veltro*] prophecy, was not eventually verified.

The substance of Dr. Moore's solution is embodied in the three following propositions, namely: *first*, that the Deliverer is the Emperor Henry VII; *secondly*, that his name, by a process familiar in the Middle Ages, will (except in the case of one letter of that name) actually give the number 515; and *thirdly*, that there is abundant reason for believing that the process was known to Dante.

As to the *First Proposition*, no one but an Emperor would have the power to overthrow the French domination over the Papacy. The Emperor in question must either have been Lewis of Bavaria, or Henry of Luxembourg, commonly known as Henry VII. But Lewis is entirely ignored in the rest of Dante's writings; whereas in many parts of these same writings Henry is treated with almost divine honours, and, in one remarkable passage (*Epist.* vii, 8), is exhorted to bestir himself and overthrow Goliath (*il Gigante*) with his sling and stone. In short, the presumption in favour of Henry





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**Ma tosto fien li fatti le Naiàde,\***

**Che solveranno questo enigma forte,**

50

**Senza danno di pecore o di biade.**

And peradventure my obscure utterance, like Themis and the Sphinx, will be less able to persuade thee, because it clouds the intellect after their fashion (of speaking ambiguously); but before long the facts (that will occur) will be the Laiades (*not* Naiades, but Laiades, *i.e.* Œdipus the son of Laius), which will solve this difficult enigma, without destruction of flocks or of harvests (such as was wrought by the Sphinx in the country round Thebes).

Beatrice exhorts Dante to relate what he had observed when he returns to the world, and especially not to omit

signifying *offuscare*, which is the sense given to the word by the *Accademia della Crusca*.

\* *Naiàde*: It will be observed that, whereas in the text the word *Naiàde* occurs, I have translated it as if it were *Laiàde*. It is a very curious episode in the *Divina Commedia*, and I take this opportunity of thanking my friend Dr. Moore, who forewarned me of the passage. The idea of Naiades, or Laiades was evidently suggested to Dante by these lines from Ovid, *Met.* vii, 759-61:—

“Carmina Laiades non intellecta priorum  
Solverat ingeniis; et precipitata jacebat,  
Immemor ambagum, vates obscura, suarum.”

In Dante's time a clerical error in all the MSS. of Ovid had substituted Naiades for Laiades. Heinsius was the first to discover the error. It seems quite clear that Dante had Œdipus Laiades and the Sphinx in his mind, for the line “Senza danno di pecore o di biade,” evidently comes from the lines in Ovid immediately following those quoted above:—

“Protinus Aoniis immittitur altera Thebis  
Pestis; et exitio multi pecorumque suaque  
Rurigenæ pavere feram.”

“Forthwith a second plague is sent to Thebes in Bœotia, and many rustics supplied food to the monster, by the destruction of their flocks, and of their own persons;” while the line

“precipitata jacebat

Immemor ambagum vates obscura suorum,”

meaning that the prophetess of obscure utterances forgot her riddles, and hurled herself down from a high cliff, can only refer to the Sphinx and not to the Naiades.



to mention the condition in which he saw the Tree in the Terrestrial Paradise.

Tu nota ; e sì come da me son pòrte,  
 Così queste parole segna ai vivi  
 Del viver ch' è un correre alla morte ;  
 Ed abbi a mente, quando tu le scrivi,  
 Di non celar qual hai vista la pianta,  
 Ch' è or due volte dirubata quivi.

Mark thou this ; and even as these words are uttered by me, so do thou teach them to those who are living that life which is a hastening unto death ; and be in mind, when thou writest them, not to conceal what plight thou hast seen the Tree, which had already in this place (the Terrestrial Paradise) been twice pillaged.

All the ancient Commentators agree that the first time the Tree was despoiled by Adam ; and the second time by the giant.

Scartazzini says that the passage in xxxii, 39, the tree being denuded of flowers and other foliage from every branch, and the murmuring of the name of God by the glorious company, denote the first spoliation of the Tree, beyond any possible dispute. Besides which, in line 40 of this Canto, Beatrice mentions what a long penalty befell Adam for having "bitten at" the Tree. The attacks either by the eagle, the wolf, or the dragon robbed the Tree, they only injured either it, or the Chariot. But the giant, by detaching the Chariot from the Tree, carrying it away from the Tree, of the wood of which it was formed, did rob the tree.

Beatrice draws a general conclusion by affirming that not only Adam, but every other violator of the law incurs the wrath of God.



Qualunque ruba \* quella o quella schianta,  
 Con bestemmia di fatto offende a Dio,  
 Che solo all' uso suo la credè santa.

60

Per morder quella, in pena † ed in disio  
 Cinquemili' anni e più ‡ l' anima prima  
 Bramò Colui che il morso in sè punio.

Whoever robs it (the Tree) or rends off its boughs,  
 with blasphemy of deed offends against God, Who  
 created it holy for His use alone. For tasting its  
 fruit, the first-born soul (Adam) in pain and in desire  
 for five thousand years and more had to long for the

\* *Qualunque ruba*: We remarked on ll. 49-51 of the last Canto, that the Chariot is the Church, the pole of it the Sacred Seat, and the Tree, in its allegorical signification, the Empire. The Tree is robbed by whomsoever deprives it of the Chariot, as did the giant: or when any of the goods or the rights which belong to the Empire are usurped, as is done by those, the clerical hierarchy, who ought to give themselves up to devotion and let Cæsar bestride the saddle (*Purg.* vi, 91-93):—

“Ahi gente, che dovresti esser devota,  
 E lasciar seder Cesare in la sella,  
 Se bene intendi ciò che Dio ti nota.”

The Tree is rent [*schiantato*] when any attack is made at the Imperial authority.

† *pena* refers to the years that Adam lived on earth; *disio* to the time he passed in *Limbo*, where the souls have this only torment, that they abide for ever longing and without hope. (See *Inf.* iv. 41-42.)

‡ *Cinquemili' anni e più*: In *Par.* xxvi, 118, Dante makes Adam say that he passed 4302 years in *Limbo*, and 930 years on Earth; for Adam's age see *Gen.* v, 5. According to Eusebius, Jesus Christ was born 5200 years after the creation of the world. The other chronologists differ greatly as to this date, but Dante has evidently followed that given by Eusebius. If Christ was born in the year 5200 from the Creation, and died in the thirty-third year of His age, the date of His descent into *Limbo* would be 5232, which is the exact date given by Dante. See *Par.* xxiv, 118-20:—

“Quindi, onde mosse tua Donna Virgilio,  
 Quattromila trecento e due volumi  
 Di Sol desiderai questo concilio.”

If to the figures 4302 we add the 930 years that Adam lived on Earth we obtain 5232, which is the date of Our Lord's death, according to the calculations of Eusebius.





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thoughts had not been as the (petrifying) waters of the Elsa round thy mind, and thy delight in them (had not stained thy mind) as *Pyramus* did the mulberry (with his blood), by so many circumstances alone thou wouldst, in the moral sense, have recognized the justice of God in the interdict upon the Tree.

Beatrice means that had not Dante's mind been so hardened with worldly cares, and stained with sinful pleasures, he would have seen the perfect justice of God in prohibiting access to the Tree. After all that had been shown to him in so many figures and allegories, he would assuredly have understood the moral signification of the justice of God in the precept given by Him to our first parents, almost as if it had borne the identical meaning of what was His Will as to the inviolability of the Empire.

Beatrice, in reproving Dante for the vain thoughts that cloud his intellect, is evidently speaking of his past life, and that his purification can only be complete and perfect after that he shall have tasted of the waters of Eunoë, which will render him, as we shall read in the concluding words of the *Purgatorio*, "renewed as are young trees with new foliage, pure, and disposed to mount up to the stars." He had been absolved and made free from sin, he had drunk forgetfulness of it in the waters of Lethe, but the consequences of his sin, a darkening of the mind, still remained. The waters of Lethe take away sin, while those of Eunoë waft away the darkness that, after sin, overclouds the soul.

Beatrice now tells Dante that she wishes him, at all events, to take back to the world what she has just said, and, as she sees his mind is too hardened and impenetrable for her words to be clearly engraved



in it, she desires that he should carry away a outline of the general sense of what she has said.

Ma perch' io veggio te nello intelletto  
 Fatto di pietra,\* ed, impietrato, tinto †  
 Sì che t' abbaglia il lume del mio detto,  
 Voglio anco, e se non scritto, almen dipinto,  
 Che il te ne porti dentro a te, per quello  
 Che si reca il bordon di palma cinto." ‡—

But because I see thee with thine intellect hardened into stone, and because of this hardening (I see thy intellect) so much darkened that the light of my discourse dazzles thee, it is furthermore my will, thou bear it (my discourse) away within thee, if written down, at least outlined (in thy memory the same reason that the pilgrim's staff is brought home entwined with palm leaves."

A conversation now ensues between Dante and Beatrice. First assuring her that her words are soundly impressed in his mind, he asks her why her discourse soars so far above the level of his intelligence. She tells him that it is in order that he may understand how little the learning, up till now

\* *Fatto di pietra*: Compare this with *Jer. v, 3*: "They have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." And *Ezek. xxxvi, 26*: "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

† *impietrato, tinto*: "Quasi dica, io veggio ciò, che io ho detto di sopra di te (cioè parlando dell' acqua d' Elsa e di Elsa) che t' ha impietrato, e la pietra è tinta di bruno, sicchè tu sei atto a ricevere la luce fulgida del mio mistico parlare." (*Ottimo*).

‡ *bordon di palma cinto*: Pilgrims carried their staves wrapped with palm leaves, a cockle shell in their hats, and wore a sash to show that they had been in the Holy Land. See the Ballad of "The Friar of Orders Grey."



lowed by him is of a character that can rise to the level of her lofty conceptions. "But," says Dante, "I do not remember that I ever was estranged from thee." "Naturally," replies Beatrice, "because only this day hast thou drunk oblivion in the waters of Lethe."

Ed io:—"Sì come cera da suggello,\*  
 Che la figura impressa non trasmuta, 80  
 Segnato è or da voi lo mio cervello.  
 Ma perchè tanto sopra mia veduta  
 Vostra parola disiata vola,  
 Che più la perde quanto più s' aiuta?"—  
 —"Perchè conoschi,"—disse,—"quella scuola 85  
 Ch' hai seguitata, e veggì sua dottrina  
 Come può seguitar la mia parola;  
 E veggì vostra via dalla divina  
 Distar cotanto, quanto si discorda  
 Da terra il ciel che più alto festina."— 90

And I: "Even as wax which does not change the figure stamped upon it by a seal, so is my brain (*i.e.* memory) now imprinted by you. But why is it that your longed-for words range so far above my ken, that the more it (my intellect) looks for aid, the more it loses it?" "(It is in order) that thou mayest know," said she, "that school which thou hast followed (*Philosophy*), and mayest see how (little) its teaching is able to follow my discourse; and that thou mayest see that the way of you (philosophers) is as widely removed from the way of God, as is distant from the Earth the Heaven that speeds round highest of all."

She means the *Primum Mobile*, the farthest off and the

---

\* *cera da suggello*: Compare *De Mon.* ii, 2, ll. 73-76: "Nam occulto existente sigillo, cera impressa de illo quamvis occulto tradit notitiam manifestam." And *Conv.* i, 8, ll. 91, 92: "l' utilità suggella la memoria dell' imagine del dono." And *Purg.* xviii, 38, 39:—

"Non ciascun segno  
 È buono, ancor che buona sia la cera."





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smile, "recollect how that on this very day thou hast drunk of Lethe; and if from the smoke a fire may be inferred, this forgetfulness of thine clearly proves fault in thy will (for being) intent elsewhere.

In the above words, Beatrice has applied to Dante's excuse in l. 93, *Nè honne coscienza che rimorda*. She now promises that thenceforward she will confirm him in good hope, will only speak to him in clear words, and will lay aside all enigmatical language.

Veramente oramai\* saranno nude 100  
 Le mie parole, quanto converrassi  
 Quelle scoprire alla tua vista rude." † —

Truly from this time forth, my words shall be undraped, so far as is befitting to lay them open to thy rude vision."

By drinking of Lethe, Dante has lost all memory of sin committed, but his mind is still in a state of confusion and his faculties dull and clouded. The water of Eunoe will clear up and illuminate his intellect.

*Division IV.*—In this concluding Division of the last Canto of the *Purgatorio*, Dante relates how he is led by Matelda to drink of the water of Eunoe, thereby acquiring the blessing of perfect virtue.

He begins by relating that it was mid-day.

\* *oramai*: Tommasèo observes that, in other places in this Canto (see ll. 24 and 32) we have *omai*, which, like *oramai*, means "henceforward." It may be an accidental series of repetitions, but is more likely to have been intentional on Dante's part.

† *vista rude*: Compare *Purg.* x, 121-23:—

"O superbi Cristian, miseri lassi,  
 Che, della vista della mente infermi,  
 Fidanza avete ne' ritrosi passi," etc.



E più corrusco, e con più lenti passi  
 Teneva il sole il cerchio di merigge  
 Che qua e là, come gli aspetti  
 Quando s' affisser, sì come s' affigge  
 Chi va dinanzi a gente per i passi  
 Se trova novitate a sue vesti  
 Le sette donne al fin d' un ombra

\* *cerchio di merigge*: On this passage wherein he alludes to two others, namely *Par.* xxvii, 85, which some Commentators take to be allusions to time, still subsequent to the present. "I do not consider, therefore, that the passage falls within the scope of our present time I admit (as I have already said) give us generally to understand that, within the limits and conditions of time, still to be found while on this earth was such that, when he had his ecstatic vision of Paradise, it would be the evening of Thursday, April 14th" (*Time*). With regard to *più lenti passi*, Biagioli observes that we seem to see the Sun move more slowly on account of the immensity of the distance of the higher spheres from the horizon; and for the same reason, when after sunrise, or just before sunset, we look upwards or downwards with increased rapidity. This was a favourite one with Dante we may find it in *Par.* xxiii, 10-12:—

"Così la Donna mia si stava eretta  
 Ed attenta, rivolta inver la parte  
 Sotto la quale il sol mostrava

† *vestigge* for *vestigie* is here equivalent to  
 ‡ *ombra smorta, . . . rami nigri . . .* from  
*Georg.* iii, 332-34:—

"Sicubi magna Jovis antiquo robore  
 Ingentes tendat ramos, aut sicubi  
 Illicibus crebris sacra nemus accipit  
 And Hor. *Carm.* iv., iv, 57-60:—

"Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus  
 Nigrae feraci frondis in Algido  
 Per damna, per caedas, ab ipso  
 Ducit opes animumque

And Poliziano, *Stanzas*, lib. i, st. 80:—

"Sovresso il verde colle alza supe  
 L' ombrosa chioma u' il sol mai r  
 E sotto vel di spessi rami serba  
 Fresca e gelata una fontana viva  
 On *ombra* Lana writes: "Per questa on



Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri  
Sopra suoi freddi rivi l' Alpe \* porta.

110

Both more resplendent, and with slower paces, the Sun was keeping along the meridian circle (*i.e.* it was noon), which (noon) takes place here (in our hemisphere) and yonder (in the other hemisphere) according to the aspects (of the heavenly bodies), when—even as one who walks in front of a company by way of escort, if he encounters anything new upon his way, comes to a halt—the seven ladies came to a stand-still at the edge of a pale shadow, of the same kind as the high mountains cast upon their icy torrents beneath their dark-green foliage and their gloomy branches.

The above allusion to the time of day is the last that occurs in the *Divina Commedia*, and is intended to refer to noon on Easter Wednesday, 13th April, 1300. Dr. Moore (*Time References*, p. 113) remarks that it is hardly necessary to add that Dante gives us no such marks of time in the *Paradiso*, since there he has passed from time to eternity (*Par.* xxxi, 36). Also there they have no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for there is no night there.

Dante now sees two rivers, which are Lethe and Eunoe, issuing from one source, and, remembering the rivers of Eden recorded in *Genesis*, thinks he sees Euphrates and Tigris.

sitade in che rimagnono le virtudi quando della Chiesa è fatto mal governo.”

\* *Alpe*: The word is used here as a general term for a high mountain. Benvenuto remarks that, though Dante had doubtless witnessed Nature, as here described, in many places on the Alps, he had especially done so on the Apennines near Florence, in the upper Val d' Arno. Here, between Fiesole and Arezzo, is a most fertile territory, through which Hannibal marched.





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my feet and a lantern unto my path" (*Ps.* cxix, 105). As she symbolizes the authority that is in possession of Divine Revelation, and who, according to the doctrines of that Revelation, ought to guide the human race to the highest felicity, Beatrice is really the light of the human race, she who walks before with the light of Revelation, with the lamp of the word of God in her hand, and gives light unto whoever follows it. Jesus Christ said: "I am the light of the World" (*St. John* viii, 12). So that the person called here *luce della gente umana* must be either Jesus Christ Himself, or His vicarious representative on earth. Now the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, according to the teaching of the Church to which Dante belonged, was the Pope. Therefore, in this passage, as in others, it is made clear that the Beatrice of the *Divina Commedia* symbolizes supreme Ecclesiastical Authority, which represents on Earth Him who is the light of the World.

Beatrice tells Dante to ask Matelda, who now for the first and only time is spoken of by name, to answer his question.

Per cotal prego detto mi fu :—" Prega  
Matelda \* che il ti dica ;"—e qui rispose,  
Come fa chi di colpa si dislega,†

120

---

\* *Matelda*: Scartazzini remarks that not only does Beatrice here refer Dante to Matelda to answer his questioning about the water that he sees, but we shall find her also in the *Paradiso*, referring him in the same way to the glorified souls of the great Doctors of the Church, instead of solving his doubts herself. The ecclesiastical authority (Beatrice) refers the faithful children of the Church to the Priesthood (symbolized by Matelda) and to the learned Fathers of the Church.

† *di colpa si dislega*: Matelda, on being commanded by Beatrice to explain certain matters to Dante, answers that she had already done so. "La colpa è nodo che avvince l'animo; e, come tale,



La bella Donna :—“ Questo, ed altre cose  
 Dette gli son per me ; e son sicura  
 Che l' acqua di Letè non gliel nascose.”—

To such entreaty reply was made to me : “ Entreat Matelda to tell it thee.” And hereupon, like one who clears himself from blame, the beauteous Lady replied (to Beatrice) : “ This, as well as other things have been told to him by me ; and I am certain that the water of Lethe has not hidden them from him.”

Matelda has not only given him the information desired (*Purg.* xxviii, 88-144) about the Terrestrial Paradise, but likewise about the wind of that elevated region, and the various conditions of it, and finally given him *un corollario ancor per grazia*. She felt quite assured that the waters of Lethe had not effaced from Dante's memory the information she had supplied about the wind and the water, because the only thing that they are capable of effacing is the recollection of past sins ; and as we read in Canto xxx, 142 *et* Lethe cannot be passed until the sins in question have been repented of and atoned for. All the information she had given him would remain in his memory.

Beatrice now tells Matelda that Dante's mind and memory have undergone a great strain, considering the various incidents of his vision, which may well account for his forgetting what he saw and heard when he entered into the Terrestrial Paradise. She accordingly directs Matelda to lead him to Eunoë.

E Beatrice :—“ Forse maggior cura,  
 Che spesse volte la memoria priva,  
 Fatta ha la mente sua negli occhi oscura.

lo slegarsene è più di sciogliersene. Vale lo stesso senso proprio, quanto nel figurato” (*Venturi, Similit. Dan.* p. sim. 265).



Ma vedi Eünoè che là deriva :  
 Menalo ad esso, e come tu sei usa,  
 La tramortita sua virtù ravniva."—

And Beatrice: "Perchance some more pressing care, which oftentimes takes away the memory, has darkened the eyes of his mind. But behold Eunoë which gushes forth yonder; lead him thereto, and, as thou art wont, revive again in him his fainting powers."

Scartazzini fancies that the words *come tu sei usa* allude to former friendship in life between Dante and Matelda, whom he takes to be some Florentine lady, a friend of Beatrice, and Dante's confidant about his love for her, and who is probably mentioned, though not by name, in the *Vita Nuova*. He thinks that, in her lifetime she must often have restored Dante's *virtù tramortita*.

Matelda hastens to perform Beatrice's behests, with every loving proof of good will.

Com' anima gentil \* che non fa scusa, 130  
 Ma fa sua voglia della voglia altrui,  
 Tosto ch' ell' è per segno fuor dischiusa ;  
 Così, poi che da essa preso fui,  
 La bella Donna mossesi, ed a Stazio  
 Donnescamente † disse :—" Vien con lui."— 135

Like unto a noble soul that makes no excuse, but makes the will of another its own, as soon as that (other will) has been manifested even by a sign; thus,

---

\* "*l' anima gentile è piena di virtù e così è piena di carità, e però imbasciata o richiesta a bisogno altrui non si scusa ; ma adopera quello che sa e può*" (Buti).

† *Donnescamente*: The *Gran Dizionario* interprets this: "After the manner of a lady (*Donna*) in the sense of *Domina*, combining a slight tinge of haughtiness with dignified courtesy. Let it be remembered that, in the Italian of Dante's time, *Donna* meant 'lady,' and the word 'woman' was expressed by *femmina*, which latter word is occasionally used by some of the great personages in the world of spirits who converse with Dante, somewhat as a term of contempt."





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Rifatto sì, come piante \* novelle  
 Rinnovellate † di novella fronda,  
 Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle. ‡

145

If, Reader, I had a greater space for writing, I would, in part at least, sing of that sweet draught which never would have satiated me; but inasmuch as all the sheets allotted to this second Canticle are now full, the curb of my art lets me go no further (*i.e.* I may no longer give the rein to art). From that most holy water I returned (to where Beatrice was awaiting me) renewed even as new trees with new foliage, purified, and made fit to mount up to the stars.

The thirty-three Cantos destined for this second *Cantica* have now been completed. In the division of his poem, Dante scrupulously observes the laws of symmetry. Each of the three *Cantiche* has thirty-three Cantos, inasmuch as the first Canto of the *Inferno* must be regarded as the Introduction or Preface to the whole poem. And in fact, in the *Inferno*, the Invocation to the Muses is not in the first Canto, as it is in the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, but in the second.

\* *come piante*: Compare Pindar, *Nemean Ode* viii, Antistr. iii (Moore's Translation):—

“Virtue exalted by the Muse,  
 As the tall pine refresh'd with dews  
 Lifts to the fostering heaven its branching head,  
 Among the just in glory thrives.”

† *Rifatto*, and *Rinnovellate*: Compare *Eph.* iv, 23: “And be ye renewed in the spirit of your minds.” And *Heb.* vi, 6: “To renew them again unto repentance.” Compare also *Virg. Æn.* xii, 788-90:—

“Olli sublimes, armis animisque relecti,  
 Hic gladio fidens, hic acer et arduus hasta,  
 Assistent contra certamine Martis anhelii.”

‡ *stelle*: Dante, after drinking the water of Eunoe, is so renewed and refreshed that he feels himself fit to ascend to Heaven. Compare *St. John* iv, 14: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”



Each of the three C  
“ Perhaps,” says Scart  
to his readers what is  
to what point ought to  
who does not ignore it  
pose and aim. With  
word of his *Poem*, D  
upwards, and exclaim  
To Heaven!’”

END OF



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