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DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

CONSISTING OF THE INFERNO-PURGATORIO & PARADISO
A VERSION IN THE NINE-LINE METRE OF SPENSER

BY

GEORGE MUSGRAVE

M.A. ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE OXFORD & BARRISTER-AT-LAW

THE INFERNO OR HELL



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Dante Societ.

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FLORENT, AND LONDON.

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TO MY
FATHER AND MOTHER.

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH the writer of this translation intends his work primarily for the many, he is not without hope that it may secure the sanction of scholars. His aim has been to convey a vivid impression: to make his version simple and readable; to maintain a sensitive fidelity to the spirit of the original, while avoiding all false literality or adherence to the mere letter.

The measure of the Italian—the *terza rima*—has been discarded as too alien to the genius of the English tongue. Even in original poetry (with the notable exception of certain lyrics, Mr. William Morris' *Defence of Guinevere*, and some fragments of Shelley) the *terza rima*, down from the time of Surrey, who first attempted to naturalise it, has never proved acceptable to our English taste.

The form here ventured on—the Spenserian Stanza—is the nearest equivalent we possess; and, apart from its other merits, it is believed that it will give some echo of the ring and the beautifully interlinked rhyme-sounds of Dante's own metre. It must be its own justification, or

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no statement, however elaborate, of the reasons which induced the translator to adopt it, can ever justify it. Only this much may be said: since we have no characteristic English measure wherein the lines run *in threes*, there should be no antecedent prejudice against an attempt to apply the most characteristic of all our metres—the *nine-line* Spenserian Stanza—to the rendering of a poem whose verses run in triplets, and, in a surprising number of instances, in *triplets of triplets*.

The writer trusts before long to complete his task, and publish the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in the same form. The scope and meaning of the Divine Comedy; its bearing upon life and thought, can be fully understood only when it is read as a whole. The Inferno is but one part of a great trilogy, and necessarily gives a limited idea of

“ the Rhyme

“ Of him, whom, from the lowest depths of Hell,
“ Thro’ every paradise and thro’ all glory,
“ Love led supreme; and who return’d to tell
“ The world of hate and care the wondrous story
“ How all things are transfigured except Love.”

NARRATIVE TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CANTO I.

The night before Good Friday, A.D., 1300, Dante, then thirty-five years of age, finds himself astray in a Dark Wood. He wanders all night lost; until, on the verge of the dread Valley, he reaches at dawn the foot of a Mountain touched with the rays of the rising Sun. He attempts its lonely ascent, but is hindered successively by Three Beasts, a Leopard, a Lion, and a She-Wolf. Turning back, he is met, in a dark vista of the wood, by Virgil, who proposes to conduct him out of the "Wilderness" by Another Way, and afterwards leave him with a "Worthier Spirit" (Beatrice), to lead him higher. Dante resolves to follow Virgil.

CANTO II.

By this time the day is far spent. It is now the evening of Good Friday. Dante, doubtful of his powers for so great an Enterprise, wavers at the outset, recalling how only Æneas and Paul had accomplished such. Virgil cheers him, and relates how he has been sent to Dante's succourance by Beatrice. Dante then casts off fear, and the Poets proceed.

CANTO III.

Following in Virgil's steps, Dante arrives at the Gate of Hell, and is discouraged again by the Inscription over its Entry. Virgil leads him in, when immediately sounds of lamentation smite upon their ears, and Dante weeps. These cries are arising from the many

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who have lived their lives indifferent alike to Good and Evil, and who are therefore fit for neither Heaven nor Hell. The Poets pass them by. They arrive at the first river of Hell, Acheron, over which Charon refuses them passage. The rumbling of an Earthquake is then heard, whereat Dante loses all consciousness, and falls as one "whom sleep overpowers."

CANTO IV.

When Dante awakes from his trance, he is already on the further shore of Acheron, upon the edge of the Great Gulf of Hell. From thence, still following Virgil, he descends into the First Circle —Limbo—where are the souls of those who never sinned. These, because they lacked Baptism, are excluded from Paradise, and spend Eternity in sighing. Journeying on, they behold a dome-like expanse of light, cut from the darkness, wherein dwell in tranquillity the great souls of the Past. Here Dante and Virgil are met by the Shades of Four Mighty Poets, who welcome Virgil back and receive Dante among their number. They show to Dante the Great Spirits of Antiquity, who are apart within a stately Castle's walls; and thereafter the Two Poets proceed upon their journey.

CANTO V.

From the quiet of Limbo they descend into the Second Circle, where they encounter at the entrance Minos, Judge of Hell. He bids Dante beware. Here are the Carnal Sinners, who are ceaselessly swept along the dark air by resistless storms of wind. Among these he sees Francesca and Paolo, and on hearing the story of their love, falls down, swooning for very pity.

CANTO VI.

On sense reviving, Dante finds that he is now within the Third Circle. Here are discovered the Gluttons, lying in mud, under a perpetual downpour of hail, snow, and foul water, and further tormented by the Dog-fiend Cerberus. Ciacco (the Hog), a Florentine, raises himself as they pass, and foretells the coming strife of political

parties in Florence. From him, plodding through the mire, the Poets, discoursing upon Futurity, cross towards the next Circle.

CANTO VII.

On arriving at the brink of the next Circle—the Fourth—the Poets alight upon Plutus, the ancient God of Riches; after passing whom, they descend a flight of steps, to where the Avaricious and the Prodigal are suffering the same punishment. This Circle is divided into two semicircles, on one of which are the Avaricious, and on the other the Prodigals. Both are rolling heavy weights. These weights, as the sinners meet on their eternal “dance,” they clash together with mutual revilements; then turn round and roll their burdens back, till they meet again on the further side of the Circle. All are unrecognisable, though from their tonsured heads many of the Avaricious appear to be Priests. Virgil discourses upon Fortune, and the fleetingness of earthly possessions; till, reaching a gorge, they descend thereby into the next Circle. Down this Gorge runs a boiling river, which below stagnates in a marsh called Styx. In the waters of this Marsh are seen the Wrathful in everlasting conflict with each other: *under* it are hidden the Sullen.

CANTO VIII.

Curving along the shore of Styx, (which forms the Fifth Circle,) the Poets come at length to a Tower, which flashes a flame-signal to another Tower across the water. In answer to it, Phlegyas, the ferryman, crosses with his boat to carry them over. Midway, a mud-daubed Spirit, whom Dante recognises as Filippo Argenti, passionately accosts them, and lays hands upon the boat, but is thrust back. The fire-red mosques of the City of Dis soon after loom in sight. Landing before the City's Gates, a host of Fallen Angels, to whom Virgil appeals, deny them admittance.

CANTO IX.

Pale and alarmed at Virgil's rebuff, Dante is re-assured by hear-

ing that his Guide had travelled the road before. Suddenly, as they stand without the Gates, the three Furies rise up above its battlements and threaten Dante with the sight of Medusa. A Celestial Messenger now appears to them, puts the Demons to flight, and open straightway the City Gates. The Poets enter, and behold, on either hand, the whole next Circle—the Sixth—full of fiery sepulchres.—This Sixth Circle is on the same level as the Fifth. Here are punished the heretics in tombs of varying heat: among whom is Epicurus, for denying the immortality of the soul. The sins hitherto enumerated have been those of Incontinence: henceforth they are the graver sins of Brutishness and Malice.

CANTO X.

In this Circle of the Heretics, (the first of the “grave citizens” of the city of Dis,) are suffering punishment, confined in the same fiery tomb, Farinata, the great Ghibelline chief, and old Cavalcante, the father of Guido Cavalcanti, Dante’s friend. Dante holds converse with both. Farinata predicts the Poet’s banishment from Florence, and explains to him how the souls in Hell have knowledge of the Future, but are in darkness as to the Present.

CANTO XI.

Having crossed this “Brutish” Circle of the Heretics, the two Poets arrive at the edge of what appears to be a great landslip. By reason of the foul exhalations steamed upward from the Abyss, they take refuge behind the monument of Pope Anastasius, and here Virgil describes to Dante the Divisions of Hell, and the classification of Sins therein.

CANTO XII.

From this point the Sins of “Malice Aforethought” meet with “justice.” Six of the Nine “impious” Circles of Hell have now been traversed. The Poets are about to enter the Seventh. This is the Circle of the Violent, itself approached by a long slope of violently shattered rocks, and guarded by the Minotaur. It is

divided into *Three Belts*, the first of which is a River of Blood, wherein are steeped eternally all who have done violence to others, such as Tyrants, Robbers, Manslaughterers, Highwaymen, and Plunderers generally. Descending the loose stones down to the River bank, the Poets are challenged by armed Centaurs. Virgil appeases them, and prevails upon Chiron, their chief, to permit Nessus to carry Dante across the Blood. Nessus gives them guidance and, as they proceed, names the Sinners, variously immersed. After fording the River with Dante, Nessus returns alone.

CANTO XIII.

The *Second Belt* is now immediately entered upon. It is a dolesome Forest, wherein are those guilty of two kinds of violence—the Suicides, to themselves; the Squanderers, to their possessions. The former are imprisoned in knotted trees, whose foliage is ceaselessly fed upon Harpies; the latter hunted and torn by savage hounds. Among the Suicides is Pier delle Vigne, the Chancellor of the Emperor, Frederick II., whose pathetic story moves Dante to much pity. Among the Squanderers is an unnamed Florentine, who had also hanged himself from his own roof.

CANTO XIV.

Advancing through the gloomy Forest, the Two Poets reach the outer edge of the *Third Belt*, wherefrom they see a Plain of Scorching Sand, down upon which flakes of fire are eternally drifting. Here suffer retribution all who have wrought violence against God, against Nature, and against Art. The giant Capaneus is among the first-named, blaspheming, but still unsubdued by his torments. Ere long the Poets reach a Crimson Brook that gushes from the forest, and steams across the Sandy Plain. This causes Virgil to explain the origin of the four rivers of Hell.

CANTO XV.

Crossing the sand by one of the stone-built Banks of this Brook, and protected by its steam from the falling flames, the Poets proceed,

till, meeting a troop of Spirits, Dante is recognised by one of them, who proves to be his old tutor, Brunetto Latini. With him, turning a little backward, Dante recalls the past, while Brunetto inveighs against Fiesole, and makes a prophecy concerning his former pupil's future.

CANTO XVI.

Soon after leaving Brunetto, Dante hears the far-off sound of falling water. They are approaching the great Precipice down which the Crimson Brook plunges into the next Circle. After meeting, and speaking with certain other Florentines, they reach the brink of the Precipice. Here, at Virgil's bidding, Dante ungirds from his waist a cord, which is hurled by Virgil into the Abyss; whereupon up swims the monstrous figure of Fraud.

CANTO XVII.

The monster Geryon (type of fraud) is now described. Dante and his Master then descend from the stone bank of the Brook to where Geryon has landed on the rim of the Abyss. While Virgil addresses the monster, Dante, on the very edge of the void, describes the Third species of sinners in this Belt, the Usurers. None are recognisable, but each wears, hung round his neck, the armorial bearings of his family. Dante soon returns to his Guide, and both, seated on Geryon's back, are conveyed, with slow, wheeling flight, down the vast descent into the Eighth Circle.

CANTO XVIII.

The Eighth Circle is called Malebolge (*i.e.*, Evil Pits). It is a great Shelving Place, steeply graded down to a Central Well, and is divided into Ten concentric rings or Fosses, in each of which a different class of *fraudulent* sinners is tormented. Across these ten Pits, from various points in the outer circumference, run spans of rockage, radial to the Central Well, and forming lines of roads and bridges, whereover the Poets travel. The whole Place is made of steel-grey rock. Turning leftward (as usual) the Poets go along the outer side of the *First* Pit, in which are the Pandars and Seducers, all

naked, and lashed by horned Demons. On leaving these, they cross the dividing Bank to the *Second Pit*, wherein, immersed in filth, are the Flatterers.

CANTO XIX.

Afterwards from the Bridge of the *Third Pit* they see below the Simoniacs, who are buried head downwards in round holes, with flames flickering on the upturned soles of their feet. Dante observes one writhing in greater pain than the rest, with redder flames on his soles: and, wishing to learn his name, is carried down to him by Virgil. He proves to be Pope Nicholas III. (1277-81), who mistakes Dante for a later Pope, Boniface VIII. (1294-1303), and prophesies that Boniface will soon succeed him in this Pit of Simony, followed by Clement V. (1305-14). After inveighing against the Simony of the Church, Dante is carried in Virgil's arms to the arch over the *Fourth Pit*.

CANTO XX.

In the *Fourth Pit* are Sorcerers, Augurs, Witches, and Diviners, who having endeavoured to pry into the future, are now condemned, with faces twisted round, to walk for ever backwards. Among them are described Amphiarœus, Tiresias, Michael Scot, and the sorceress Manto. The last-mentioned gives Virgil occasion to speak of the origin of his native city of Mantua.

CANTO XXI.

Ascending to the top of the Bridge over the *Fifth Pit*, the Poets find all below "marvellously dark." It is filled with boiling Pitch, beneath which are sunk the Swindlers, Embezzlers, and abusers of Public Offices, and Justice. Over them Demons hover, armed with hooks, ready to seize any that rise above the surface. Suddenly a Demon is seen running up the Bridge, with a Senator of Lucca on his shoulders, whom he hurls into the Pitch below. Other Demons, hitherto hidden beneath the Bridge, now appear and threaten Virgil; but ultimately Terror-tail, their chief, provides the Poets with an escort of ten, though he maliciously misdirects them,

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CANTO XXII.

Escorted thus by the ten Demons, Virgil and Dante proceed alongside the same Pit. In the boiling Pitch below, the sinners rising to the surface are trying to obtain relief from the heat. As the Demons appear in sight, all dive under, excepting one, who is hooked by Scarahound, and dragged ashore. Virgil questions him, and learns that he is the Embezling Steward of the King of Navarre. Afterwards, by a clever device, he escapes again into the Pitch. Thereupon two of the Demons, enraged, close with each other, and in their wrangle, fall into the scalding flood. Meanwhile, the Poets take the opportunity to make good their escape.

CANTO XXIII.

The Demons forthwith pursue, and so swiftly, that Virgil has barely time to seize Dante in his arms and glide down the sloping bank that leads into the *Sixth* Pit. There they find the Hypocrites, whose doom it is to pace continually round the Trench, under the crushing weight of cloaks made of lead, with a fair outside of gilding. Two Jovial Friars are among them, Catalano and Loderingo of Bologna, with one of whom Dante converses. Lying across the pathway, crucified and trampled on by the rest, is Caiaphas, with Annas and the others of "that Evil Council." From Friar Catalano they learn that all the rock bridges over the *Sixth* Pit are broken, but that an exit may be gained by scaling the heaped-up ruins of one of them.

CANTO XXIV.

Helped and hoisted up by his Master, Dante, with much difficulty, makes his way out of the *Sixth* Pit, and mounts to the Bridge above the *Seventh*. From here they see that it is thronged with monstrous and hideous Serpents. It is in this place that punishment is inflicted upon Thieves, as distinguished from Robbers, who are in the Circle of the Violent. Making a partial descent into this Pit, down certain jutting stones, they observe among the naked and terror-stricken shades Vanni Fucci, the thief who had committed sacrilege in the famous Church of St. James', in Pistoia, and who, to chagrin Dante, foretells the disasters that will lead to the Poet's exile.

CANTO XXV.

Vanni Fucci, uttering blasphemies, is seized by Serpents, and, flying, is pursued by Cacus, in the form of a Dragon-riden Centaur. Dante next meets five of his fellow-citizens from Florence —three in human shape, and two changed into reptiles. Here wondrous transformations are undergone by the sinners: Cianfa Donati, as a snake, fusing with Agnello Brunelleschi; and Guercio Cavalcanti, as a lizard-like reptile, interchanging forms with Buoso Donati. The fifth of these noble Thieves, Puccio de' Galigai, alone remains untransmuted. Afterwards Dante, in bitter irony, upbraids his native city.

CANTO XXVI.

From these dreadful horrors, the Two Poets at length depart, (reascending by the stone-juts,) and come to the middle of the Bridge over the *Eighth* Pit, wherein are requited the Fraudulent Counsellors. Each of these Transgressors lies concealed within a single flame, except Diomede and Ulysses, who together expiate the stratagem of the Wooden Horse, and their other evil counsels, in a flame that is double-pointed. Ulysses, speaking through the quivering flame, relates the manner of his death.

CANTO XXVII.

Dante then sees and holds converse with another flame-wrapped spirit, the great Ghibelline warrior, Count Guido da Montefeltro, who enquires eagerly about the political condition of Romagna. After being informed by Dante, he in return tells how, when Pope Boniface VIII. was "crusading" against the Colonna family at Rome, he had given him the fraudulent counsel for which he is now suffering punishment.

CANTO XXVIII.

The Poets thereafter pass on, clambering up to the summit of the *Ninth* Bridge. The Pit beneath discloses the Schismatics and Sowers of Discord, who are all variously gashed and horribly mutilated. Here is Mahomet, the "great sectary"; Ali, his disciple and son-in-law, who himself was a seceder from

Mahomet's following; Pier da Medicina, the calumnious sower of strife among the cities of Romagna, and others. Lastly comes, carrying his head in his hand, Bertrand de Born, who divided father and son, making "The Young King," Prince Henry of England, rebel against his father, Henry II.

CANTO XXIX.

Leaving behind the miseries of this *Ninth* horrible Pit, Virgil tells Dante, as they journey on, how he had seen below Geri del Bello, pointing at, and threatening him with vehement gestures. Dante replies that it is his own Kinsman, whose death by violence remains still unavenged.

Once more up-mounting, they reach the summit of the *Tenth* Bridge, which spans the last Pit of Malebolge. To their ears arise shrieks of woe from wretches so stricken with loathsome diseases, that not all the lazар-houses of the most malarious regions of Italy could equal its horrors. Here lie the Falsifiers of every sort. Two Alchymists, Griffolino of Arezzo and Capoccio of Siena, are addressed by Dante, and tell their different stories.

CANTO XXX.

In this *Tenth* Pit of Fraud the offenders seem to be distinguished into three classes,—Falsifiers in things, deeds, and words. All are disguised, as it were, under various forms of disease. Two are mentioned, Gianni Schicchi and Myrrha, who are rabid maniacs, and rend the rest. Potiphar's wife and Sinon, the lying Greek at Troy, are fever-stricken; while Master Adam (of Brescia) a false coiner, is distorted with dropsy, and parched with thirst. Sinon and Master Adam, having fallen out, come to blows and mutual revilements, at which Dante stops to listen, and is sharply rebuked by Virgil.

CANTO XXXI.

Quitting Malebolge, with its Ten various Pits of Fraud against Society *generally*, the Poets cross the bank that hems in this Eighth Circle, and pass on to the Deep Central Well. This Well is the Ninth and last Circle. Below, at its base, eternal vengeance is

wreaked upon all such as have acted fraudfully toward those who have given them *special* trust—in other words, the Traitors.

High in the dark air, the blast of a shrill-sounding bugle is suddenly heard, and Dante discerns in the distance what appear to him huge towers. These, Virgil informs him, are Giants, standing at intervals waist-deep in the Well. The first they see is Nimrod, of Babel. Then comes the rebellious Titan, Ephialtes, bound with five-fold chain; then Briareüs, the immeasurable, with Typhon, Tityus, and Antæus. The last-named giant uplifts the Poets, and places them down at the bottom of the Well.

CANTO XXXII.

The Poets are now in the lowest and darkest Circle of Hell, and Dante laments his lack of language to describe "the Miserable Hole." It is called Cocytus, and is all one solid Lake of Ice, with a slight slope to the Centre, where is the "Seat of Dis." Here in Four concentric Rings, Caïna, Antenôra, Ptolomea, and Judecca, all Traitors, "are consumed eternally."

In the *First* of the four Rings (Caïna) are the Traitors to Kindred, among whom are Two Brothers, so close that their hair is frozen together, and near them is a member of the Pazzi family of Florence, who betrays the names of other such traitors. In the *Second* (Antenôra) are punished Traitors to their Country or Party, who, neck-deep in the biting ice, with bowed heads, shiver and chatter their teeth like storks. With them is Bocca, the Standard-bearer at the battle of Mont' Aperti, through whose treachery the Florentines lost the day. A little beyond, on the dividing line between Antenôra and Ptolomea, the Poets find Two frozen together in a single hole, one of whom is savagely devouring the head of the other.

CANTO XXXIII.

The devourer proves to be Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi, the other, Archbishop Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, both of Pisa.

The former, who was of a Ghibelline family, had deserted his own party to join the Guelfs. In 1284, having expelled the Ghibellines from Pisa, he maintained himself there for some years supreme in

power. Afterwards, finding a rival in his own grandson, Nino, he united with the Archbishop, then chief of the Pisan Ghibellines. The alliance lasted not long; for Ruggieri, turning upon Ugolino, caused him and four of his offspring to be flung into Prison, and there starved to death.

Ugolino recounts to Dante the manner of his murder, after which the Poets pass over to the *Third Ring* (Ptolomæa). Here, with intenser agonies, under the ice, "showing but their faces," are Caitiffs of an even baser type, namely, the Betrayers of Friends.

Besides containing the souls of such as are already dead, this Ring has the special privilege of receiving the souls of traitors still living. For no sooner does a man betray the sacred trust of friendship, than a devil at once usurps his body, while his soul falls straight to Hell.

Here Dante encounters the "foredoomed soul" of Friar Alberic, "the most accurst spirit" of Romagna, who betrays to him the presence of Branca Doria of Genoa, whose body also still walks the earth.

CANTO XXXIV.

Judecca is the *last Ring* of the Ninth Circle—the lowest depth of Hell. Here, wholly embedded in Ice and showing through in every contortion of attitude, are the worst type of Traitors—those to Benefactors—in undescribed severities of cold and torment.

In the midst of all is Satan himself, fixed everlasting in ice at the Centre of the Universe. His monstrous and horrible proportions are described, and how from the flapping of his wings, arise the bitter winds that create the ice in which he is for ever condemned to suffer. In his three mouths, he is torturing the three arch-traitors (to the Empire and the Church) Brutus and Cassius and Judas Iscariot.

By the "Hell-Emperor" himself, passing the Centre of the Earth, the Poets depart at length from the depths of all Evil. Then along a "hidden way," Virgil still first and Dante second, at last they issue forth to see once more the Stars.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE AGE OF DANTE.

(With special reference to the Inferno.)

A.D.

1212.—Frederick II., elected Emperor. Crowned 1220. Canto X. 119; XIII. 59; XXIII. 66.

1215.—Murder of Buondelmonte at Florence. Canto VI. 80; XXVIII. 106.

1245.—Tyranny of Eccelino da Romano, who dies 1259. Canto XII. 110.

1246.—Conspiracy against, and suicide of, Pier delle Vigne. Canto XIII. 72.

1248.—Frederick II. expels the Guelfs from Florence.

1251.—Guelfs return to Florence (1st time). Canto X. 50.

1260.—September.—Battle of Mont' Aperti, near Siena, in which the Guelf Florentines are defeated by the Ghibellines under Farinata. Canto X. 85. Guelfs again driven from Florence.

1265.—May.—DANTE born at Florence.
The Battle of Benevento, where Manfred, king of Sicily and Naples, is defeated and slain by Charles of Anjou. Canto XXVIII. 13.
The Guelfs return to Florence (2nd time). Canto X. 50.
Guido Novello of Polenta obtains the sovereignty of Ravenna. Canto XXVII. 41.

1266.—Two of the Frati Godenti (Jovial Friars), of Bologna, chosen as Podestas or Chief Magistrates of Florence. Canto XXIII. 104.
Gianni del Soldanier, after the defeat of Manfred, deserts the Florentine Ghibellines to head the populace. He exiles Farinata (degli Uberti). Canto XXXII. 118.

1267.—The Uberti excluded from the General Amnesty. Canto X. 83.

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1268.—Charles of Anjou defeats and puts to death Conradino (nephew of Manfred), and becomes king of Naples after the battle of Tagliacozzo. Canto XXVIII. 16.

1272.—Guy de Montfort assassinates, in the Cathedral of Viterbo Henry, son of Richard of Cornwall (King of the Romans), and nephew of Henry III. of England. Canto XII. 119.

1273.—Endeavours made to reconcile the Guelfs and Ghibellines in Florence, which fail, and the city is placed under an interdict.

1274. May 1.—Dante first sees Beatrice, daughter of Folco Portinari.

1275.—Michael Zanchè treacherously murdered by his son-in-law, Branca Doria. Canto XXXIII. 137.

Adam of Brescia burned alive for falsecoining. Canto XXX. 75.

1277.—Nicholas III. (Orsini) becomes Pope. Dies 1280. Canto XIX. 71.

1282.—The French defeated by the people of Forlì, under Count Guido da Montefeltro. Canto XXVII. 41.

Tribaldello de' Manfredi betrays the city of Faenza. Canto XXXII. 119.

The Sicilian Vespers.

1284.—August 6th. Genoese defeat Pisans in the great naval battle of Meloria, Count Ugolino having, it is said, played the Pisans false.

1285.—Ugolino, Captain-General of Pisa.

1286.—Death of Charles of Anjou.

1288.—Count Ugolino de' Gherardeschi starved to death at Pisa. Canto XXXIII. 14.

The Tragedy of Francesca da Rimini occurred the same year.

1289.—Dante at the battle of Campaldino, where the Florentines defeat the people of Arezzo, June 11. Canto XXII.

1290.—Death of Beatrice.

Dante serves in the war waged by the Florentines upon the Pisans, and is present at the surrender of Caprona. Canto XXI. 92.

Michael Scot dies. Canto XX. 115.

1291.—Dante marries Gemma de' Donati. By this marriage he had three sons and two daughters (Beatrice and Imperia).

A.D.

Can Grande della Scala is born, March 9th. Canto I. 88. [?] The renegade Christians assist the Saracens to recover Acre. Canto XXVII. 84.

1294.—Celestine V. abdicates the papal chair, and Boniface VIII. becomes Pope. Canto XXVII. 105. Dante writes his "Vita Nuova."

1295.—Dante's tutor, Brunetto Latini, dies. Canto XV. 28.

1300.—This is the year in which Dante, being then thirty-five years of age, feigns to have seen the Vision of the Divine Comedy. This year he is also elected a Chief Magistrate or Prior of Florence: and continues in office from June 15th to August 15th. Feud of the Neri and Bianchi (*Blacks and Whites*) introduced into Florence from Pistoia. Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's friend, dies in exile. Canto X. 59.

1301.—Charles of Valois enters Italy. The *White* party expels the *Black* from Pistoia. Canto XXIV. 142.

1302.—January 27.—During his absence on an embassy at Rome Dante is mulcted by his fellow-citizens in the sum of 8,000 lire, and condemned to two years' exile. March 10.—Dante is sentenced by the Florentines, if taken, to be burned alive. Carmino de' Pazzi betrays the castle of Piano di Trevigne in Valdarno, where many of the *Whites* had taken refuge, to the Florentine *Blacks*. Canto XXXII. 67.

1303.—Pope Boniface VIII. dies. Canto XIX. 55. The other exiles of the *White* party appoint Dante one of a council of twelve, under Alessandro da Romena.

1304.—Dante joins with the exiles in an unsuccessful attack on the city of Florence. Dante goes to live at Bologna. May.—The bridge over the Arno breaks down during a representation of the infernal torments exhibited on that river. Canto XXVI. 9.

1305.—Clement V. becomes Pope. Dies 1814. Canto XIX. 86.

A.D.

1306.—Dante at Padua.

1307.—Fra Dolcino, the religious reformer and enthusiast, is burned alive at Novara. Canto XXVIII. 53.

1308.—Dante, in exile, visits about this time various parts of Italy.
He is at Paris a second time: and, according to one of the early commentators, Giovanni da Serravalle (*fl. 1417*), Bishop of Fermo, visits Oxford.

Henry VII., of Luxemburg, elected Emperor.

1311.—Henry VII. receives the iron crown at Milan. Dante at Milan and in the Casentino. Publishes the “*De Monarchia*.”

1312.—Henry VII. crowned Emperor at the Lateran.

1313.—Henry VII., by whom Dante had hoped to be restored to Florence, dies.

Dante takes refuge at Ravenna, with Guido Novello da Polenta.

1314.—Dante with Uguzzione at Lucca.

1316.—The exiles from Florence offered humiliating terms of recall.

1317.—Dante at Verona with Can Grande.

1321.—September 14.—Dante dies at Ravenna, at the age of 56.

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PLAN OF THE DIVISIONS OF HELL.

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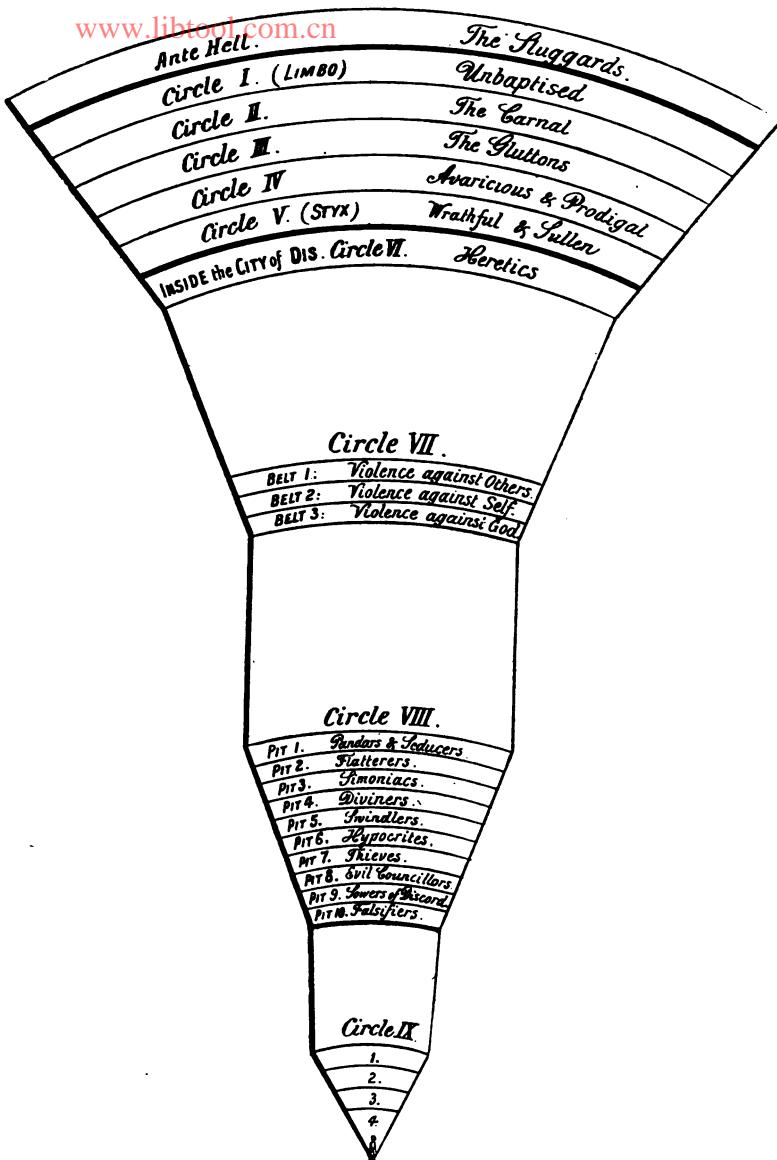


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TABLE OF THE CUSTODIANS
OF THE
NINE CIRCLES, AND THEIR SYMBOLIC
SIGNIFICANCE.

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II.	MINOS, THE JUDGE OF HELL . .	THE ACCUSING CONSCIENCE
III.	CERBERUS, THE DOG-FIEND . .	WANT OF SELF-RESTRAINT
IV.	PLUTUS, THE GOD OF RICHES . .	GREED
V.	PHLEGyas	WRATH
VI.	THE FURIES (WITH MEDUSA) . .	UNREASON
VII.	THE MINOTAUR	BRUTE-FORCE
VIII.	THE MONSTER GERYON	FRAUD
IX.	THE GIANTS	REVOLT

C A N T O I.

A MIDDLE of the Journey of our Life

I found me wandering in a DARK WOOD,
For the Right Way was lost. Ah, bitter strife
To tell how savage 'twas, and rough, and rude,
For all my fears are even now renew'd
But only thinking on't—scarce bitterer
Were death to me! Howbeit, to show the Good,
I lighted on therein, I will declare
All of the Other Things that I had sight of There.

Yet, how I entered it, I scarce can say,

So full was I of drowsihead, alas,
When from the True Path first I fell away!
But, on the verge of the dread Valley, as
Heartsore I wildered on, it came to pass
I neared a MOUNTAIN's foot: when, to its height
Lifting mine eyes, I saw its shoulder was
Vested already in That Planet's light,
Which leadeth all mankind on every road aright.

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Then in the fountains of my heart at last 3

Calm'd somewhat was the terror that I bore
All through that night, so miserably pass'd.

And as a man, escaped from sea to shore,
All breathless and forspent with toiling sore,
Turns to the perilous deep—and stares his fill :
Even so my soul, though fleeing evermore,
Turned to look back upon that scene of ill,
Which ne'er left mortal wight alive, nor ever will.

My weary body then a little resting, 4

Once more I gat me on, with upward feet
The firmer always lower. But, while breasting
Thus the first Lonely Slope, I chanced to meet
A LEOPARD, light and most exceeding fleet,
All cover'd with hair of speckled grain ;
Nor did she ever from my sight retreat :
Nay, rather, so beset the way I'd ta'en,
That I was many times turned to return again.

'Twas now the Morning's prime ; and high above 5

Uprose the Sun with the same starry band
That went with him when first Divinest Love
Moved thro' the heavens the wonders of His hand :
So that the Hour of Day and Season bland

Gave me good hope against the Beast that here
 Rang'd with the garish hide: when, hard-at-hand,
 Sudden, I saw, to wake afresh my fear,
 A LION, in the path, against me drawing near.

Right on he came, and lookt so threatening grim 6
 With head upreared and rabid hungriness,
 The very air seemed terrified at him!
 Last came a lean SHE-WOLF, that seem'd less
 In want of food, than full of greediness,
 The Scourge of Hapless Thousands! From her sight
 She glared such terror that a heaviness
 Weighed down my soul; till, overborne with fright,
 I now gave up all hope to win the Wished-for Height.

And as a man, who fain would wealth uplay, 7
 Saddens and frets when all his rich increase
 In one disastrous hour is swept away:
 So griev'd I as that Monster, never at peace,
 Came fronting me, and lower by degrees
 Back drove me thither where was husht the Sun:
 Till, in my down-career, lo! mid the trees,
 Through a long silent vista, sudden ONE
 Rose dim before me, like an Apparition.

Seeing such Presence in that Waste, I 'gan 8

Loud cry : " *O miserere!*—pity me,

" Whate'er thou art, spectre or living man ! "

" I am no living man, tho' once," quoth he,

" The frame of man I wore. Of Lombardy

" Were both my parents ; Mantua their home.

" *Sub Julio* was I born, tho' late 'twould be,

" And under Good Augustus lived whilome

" In the old days of false and lying gods at Rome.

" A Poet I, and sang the pious son 9

" Of old Anchises who escaped from Troy

" After the burning of proud Ilion.

" But thou, why turn'st thou back to such annoy ?

" Why flee'st thou from the Source and Seat of Joy ?

" Why climb'st thou not The Hill Delectable ? "

Then answered I, bowing with meek employ

Of words : " What ! Art thou VIRGIL ? Thou, that Well

" Whence such a mighty stream of eloquence doth swell ?

" O, of the poets all, thou Light and Glory ! 10

" Now, in my need, let it avail me,—now,

" That I have learned and loved thy Volume's story.

" Thou art my Master and my Author ! Thou

" Alone my style with beauty didst endow,

“ Whence men delight to honour me ! But see,
“ See how you Beast besetteth me, and how
“ Trembling in pulse and veins I’m turned to flee :
“ ’Gainst her, O famèd Sage, give help, give help to me.”

Then burst my tears. But, when he markt their flow, 11
“ Needs must thou take ANOTHER WAY,” he said,
“ If from this savage Wilderness thou’dst go.
“ For yonder Beast, that filleth thee with dread,
“ Suffers no traveller her path to tread,
“ But foils and baulks him’ ever, till at last
“ Outright she kills him,—so disnaturèd
“ Is she in lust, her greed so quenchless vast,
“ That after feast she’s still hungrier than after fast.

“ With many monsters she miscoupleth, 12
“ And, in foul spousals, many more will have,
“ Till comes THE HOUND who’ll end her deeds in death !
“ He will not covet lands, nor lucre crave :
“ But, wise and gentle, generous and brave,
“ And born between two Feltros, He shall guide
“ The hopes of this poor Italy, and yet save
“ The low-laid land for which Camilla died,
“ With Turnus, Eúryalus, and Nisus, side by side.

“ Then harrying her from every city, He 13
“ Will back again hunt her to HELL, from thence
“ By Envy first let loose!—But, as for thee,
“ Fain would I have thee, for thy good, commence
“ *To follow me*, and I will guide thee hence
“ Down to that Everlasting Place Beneath
“ Where PERISHED SOULS ARE SUFFERING, and from whence
“ Comes the sad wail, as each with anguished breath,
“ For ever lost to hope, cries for The Second Death.

“ Next thou shalt see those who IN FIRE do rest 14
“ NOT UNCONTENTED, since they hope some day,
“ Whene'er it be, to join the happier Blest.
“ Then, if to reach THESE LAST thou would'st assay,
“ With ONE I'll leave thee, when I go away,
“ A Spirit worthier far to guide than I:
“ For, as I lived a rebel to His sway,
“ The Emperor, Who Governeth On High,
“ Doth all approach by me unto His Courts deny.

“ For HE the whole world rules, but there HE reigns: 15
“ There is His City, there His Lofty Throne:
“ O, blest is His Elect who there attains!”

Then I: "Poet, I adjure thee by That One,
" Yea, ev'n by Him Whom thou hast never known,
" So I escape this ill, or worse in wait,
" Now thro' those Suffering Souls lead Thou me on,
" That I may look upon Saint Peter's Gate!"
Then moved he on, and I followed behind him straight.

CANTO II.

DAY was departing now, and the grey air
 Was ushering unto rest from weariness
 All living things of Earth. I only there
 Girt me for The Great Strife—a strife no less
 With pity than the Journey's perilousness,
 Which Memory shall retrace unerringly.
 Help, Muses! Help me, my High Genius!
 O Mind! thou record of the seeing eye,
 Now let the true worth show that stamps nobility!

“Poet,” I began, “O Thou who guid’st me now,
 “Look to my worth, if it have competence
 “For such a Quest as this. Thou tellest how
 “Æneas, while corruptible, went hence
 “To the Immortals, and in bodily sense
 “Walked with them. But, if Goodness did direct
 “His way, knowing both Who and What should thence
 “Ensue, and all its after high effect,
 “No unmeet thing it seems to men of intellect.

“ For he, the truth to tell, was fore-decreed, 3

“ In Empyrean Heaven, FATHER of ROME

“ And of the ROMAN EMPIRE, which indeed

“ Were both establisht that they might become

“ The HOLY REALM and SPIRITUAL HOME

“ Of who succeeds Great Peter. So, withal

“ That journey taught him the events wherefrom,

“ In doubly glorious process, should befall

“ The Imperial Sceptre and The Robe Pontifical.”

“ So, later, voyaged to the World Immortal 4

“ God's chosen vessel, Paul; to bring away

“ Confirmance for that Faith which is the portal

“ Unto Salvation. Shall then I go? Nay:

“ I am not Paul, nor yet Aeneas! They

“ Were worthy; I in the rate of all am weak!

“ So, if I go, I fear my going may

“ Prove, peradventure, but a witless freak:

“ Howbeit, Thou'rt wise and know'st better than I can speak.”

Even as a man, sole-standing on the brink 5

Of a great enterprise, irresolute—who

Doth will and unwill, think and then unthink,

Till, with fresh thoughts and hesitations new,

He quits the business he was bent to do:

So, as I stood upon that coast of night
 Pondering the thing that I had set me to,
 With o'er-much thinking I consumèd quite
 The purpose that had once so eager been and bright.

Then answered me the Shade of that Magnanimous: 6

“ If right thy meaning I have comprehended
 “ Thy soul is smitten with that pusillanimous
 “ And phantom fear, which all too oft hath tended
 “ To turn mankind from their achievements splendid,
 “ Even as a fancied foe will often scare
 “ The wild-beast from his prey. But here be ended
 “ Thy doubts forever, for I will now declare
 “ What things myself have heard, and why I hither fare.

“ When first for thee pity my bosom stirr'd

7

“ I was with Those who in the Quiet Air
 “ Of *LIMBO* are suspense; and there I heard
 “ A *Lady* call to me, so blest, so fair,
 “ I only longed to do her bidding there.
 “ Her eyes shone brighter than the Star of Day;
 “ Gentle her voice, and, O, its accents were
 “ So sweet in her own tongue, it seemèd they
 “ Were Angels' music. Thus She unto me did say:

“‘O kindly Shade of Mantua! Thou, whose fame’ 8

“‘Lives yet on Earth, and, living, will advance’

“‘With Time’s advance, unquenchably the same:’

“‘My Chosen Friend, who is no Friend of Chance,’

“‘Climbing the Lone Ascent such hinderance’

“‘Hath met, that backward he is turned thro’ fear:’

“‘And much I dread lest to his succourance’

“‘Too late I am arisen; that he too near’

“‘Destruction may have come, from what in Heaven I hear.’

“‘So speed, and, with thy suasive oratory,’ 9

“‘And whatsoever else may suit his case,’

“‘Help him, and so let me have comfort. I’

“‘Am *Beatrice* who send thee! From a Place’

“‘I come, whither I’d fain my way retrace.’

“‘*Love* moved me, and I speak only for *Love*!’

“‘When I return before my Lord of Grace,’

“‘I oft will speak to Him thy praise above!’

“She paused; then let I first my lips to utterance move:

“‘O Lady! sole in worth—worth which alone’ 10

“‘Makes man excel all else within the Sphere’

“‘That gyreth round the earth with smallest zone’—

“‘Need of no more! Thy hest is to me so dear’

“‘That were it done already ’twould appear’

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“ ‘ Done but too tardily. Yet, tell me why ’
 “ ‘ Unawed thou ventur’st to This Centre here,’
 “ ‘ Descending from that Amplitude on high ’
 “ ‘ Whereunto, as thou say’st, thou burnest back to fly ? ’

“ ‘ If to such inner knowledge thou wouldest win,’ 11
 “ ‘ I’ll tell thee briefly,’ she responded calm,
 “ ‘ Why unappalled I here can enter in.’
 “ ‘ Only those things should ever cause alarm ’
 “ ‘ Which have the power to work upon us harm ; ’
 “ ‘ But where no harm is, none need ever quail : ’
 “ ‘ Now me God’s grace so fashions that a charm ’
 “ ‘ Makes me not feel your misery and bale,’
 “ ‘ Nor can the flames of Hell mine essence aught assail.’

“ ‘ There is A Gentle Lady in High Heaven ’ 12
 “ ‘ Who sorrows so for this impediment ’
 “ ‘ I send thee to, that power to her is given ’
 “ ‘ To bend strict Justice. She, of Her mercy, sent ’
 “ ‘ And called Lucia, saying, with kind intent,’
 “ ‘ Now hath thy faithful servant need of thee,’
 “ ‘ And I to thee commend him. All content ’
 “ ‘ Lucia, foe of every cruelty,’
 “ ‘ Immediately arose, and straightway came to me ; ’

“‘ And forthwith found me seated by the side ’ 13

“‘ Of Rachel of old days, upon the throne ’

“‘ Which there is mine. O, Beatrice, she cried,’

“‘ True praise of God, why leav’st thou thus alone,’

“‘ Unfriended, him who was so much thine own ’

“‘ Love lifted him above the meaner host?’

“‘ Deaf art thou to the misery of his moan?’

“‘ Blind to the death he combats on the coast ’

“‘ Of that Dark Stream whereof the sea can nothing boast?’

“‘ Never, upon the Earth, did any one ’ 14

“‘ To pleasure, or from pain, so quickly speed ’

“‘ As I, after these words were uttered. Down ’

“‘ Straight from my Heavenly Seat did I proceed ’

“‘ Into this Place Beneath, trusting indeed ’

“‘ But to thine honest words, twice honourable,’

“‘ To thee who wrote, and unto them who read.’—

“Thus having ceast her piteous tale to tell

“Heavenward she turned, and tears down from her bright
eyes fell.

“So was I moved I hasted, at Her will, 15

“To serve and save thee from the Beast waylaying

“Thy progress up The Hill Delectable.

“What is it, then? Why, why art thou delaying?

“Why still is cowardice thy heart o’erswaying?

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“ Why canst thou not be fearless and be free
 “ When three such Blessèd Ladies have been praying
 “ Thus in the Courts of Heaven, in care for thee,
 “ And hope of so much good my words give guarantee ? ”

As little flowers on a black night of cold 16

Bend down and wilt, but, when the Dayspring glows,
 Rise on their stems, and every bell unfold ;
 Even so my courage, drooping to its close,
 Sunned by his words, now once again arose,
 Till, like a man set free, I thus did say :
 “ O, Soul Compassionate, who to my woes
 “ Deignèd'st such timely succour to convey,
 “ And Thou, most kindly, who wert no less prompt to obey ;

“ Ye, with your gentle words of trust and truth, 17

“ Have so disposed and warmed my heart toward
 “ This Journey's enterprise, that now, in sooth,
 “ Won by *Thy* eloquence, I have restor'd
 “ My first intent. So on : and one accord
 “ Henceforward be avoucht atwixt us twain :
 “ *Thou* art my Guide, my Master, and my Lord ! ”
 Thus as I spake, forward he moved again,
 And so I entered on my Pilgrimage of Pain.

CANTO III.

Through Me ye pass into the City of Woe: 1
Through Me ye pass to Endless Misery;
Through Me ye pass Where the Lost Spirits go.
In Justice my High Maker founded me.
Almighty Power, Supremest Sapiency
And Love Primeval built me: nought Before,
Saving the Things that Everlasting be,
Was Made, and I endure for Evermore.
All Hope abandon Ye who Enter at this Door.

Seeing these words, of darkest charactry, 2
Graved o'er an Entry-Gate: "Master," I cried,
"This is a hard saying!" Whereupon he,
Quick to perceive my faltering, replied:
"Henceforth let all Distrust be laid aside,
All Cowardice be dead; for recollect
"We now are entering on that region wide
"Where, as I told thee, thou shouldst see the wreckt
"And wretched folk who've lost The Good of the Intellect."

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Then, with a cheerly look to hearten me,

3

He took my hand in his, and led me in
 Straight to Hell's Secrecies. When suddenly
 Sighs, sobs, and shrieks, with such a dreadful din
 Up-echoed through the Starless Air within,
 At first I wept. Rising from myriad bands,
 Horrible jargons, jibberings shrill and thin,
 Yells in the angry tongues of many lands,
 With cries of utter grief, and clap of desperate hands;

All made a hubbub which incessant whirl'd

4

Round thro' that Air whose tint can never know
 One season's change—ay, even as sand is swirl'd
 When storm-winds sweep the desert. Then, with brow
 All horror-bound, I askt: "My Master, how
 "Is this? And who are These that so exclaim
 "As tho' o'ercome with trouble?"—"They who now
 "Raise such a coil are the Sluggard Souls whose shame
 "Is that they lived their lives with neither praise nor blame.

"And mixt with them are all those dastard elves,

5

"That band of Angels Base, who neither were

"For God, nor 'gainst, but only for Themselves.

"Outcast from Heav'n—Heav'n else had been less fair,

"Hell would not have them in its depths, lest there

Hell iii. 42-60.] *NAMELESS FOR EVER.* [Under Hell's Cope.

“ The very Damned might glory over them.”

“ But, Master, what is the special pang they bear
“ That makes them so outcry,” I questioned him,
“ These Miserables whom Heaven and Hell alike con-
temn ? ”—

“ Most brief I'll tell thee. They of death's dear rest
“ Have never hope; but here unweariably 6
“ Must wear existence out *unmanifest* :
“ A lot so blank, so abject, that they see
“ With envy every other destiny.
“ Record of them upon the Earth is none.
“ Justice and Mercy scorn them equally,
“ Nameless for ever in oblivion ;—
“ But spare to speak of them : look only, and pass on ! ”

But when again I lookt, lo ! in their van 7
I saw a little whirling weather-flag,
That scorned all rest, so giddily it ran.
Whilst after it such numbers seemed to drag,
I ne'er had credited that Death could brag
To have undone so many. When I had
Recognised some of them, as I did lag
Sudden, I singled out and knew *his* Shade
Who, like a coward, the Great Renunciation made.

Then did I understand and realise

8

This was that set of drones, that useless hive,
Hateful to God, and to God's enemies !

Lout-lives ! But they, who never *were* alive,
Now all stark-naked on for ever drive
By hornets stung and wasps. These, swarming thick
Over their faces, forth the blood-drops rive,
Which, mixt with tears, down to their feet fall quick,
And there—kin they to worms—foul worms the filth uplick.

Then, travelling my gaze, I lookt afar

9

And saw Another People on the shore
Of a Great River. "Master, say, who are
"That folk, and what impells them evermore
"So eagerly to pass yon River o'er,
"As th' faint light dimly shews them ?" Thereupon,
He made me suchlike answer : "This and more
"Thou wilt, I ween, learn of thyself anon,
Soon as we touch the shore of joyless Acheron."

So, fearing such oft questions had offended

10

My Gentle Guide, with eyes abasht and low,
In mute companionship with him I wended
On till we reacht the River-bank. When lo !
I saw a little boat to uswards row

Bearing an Old, Old Man, all grizzled-white
With ancient hair, who, as he came, cried : “ Woe,
“ Woe, Wicked Spirits ! Henceforth, in direst plight,
“ Hope nevermore to see again Heaven’s blessed light.

“ Ye, to yond coast of never-ending Night, 11
“ To Fire and Ice, I come to ferry o’er.
“ But *thou*”—to me he cried—“ thou Living wight,
“ Get thee agone from these that are no more,
“ Souls, souls for ever dead ! ” Then he forbore.
But when he saw I stood there still unquailing :
“ By other Ferries thou shalt come to shore ;
“ By other Ways—not these—shall be thy sailing !
“ Bide thou a Lighter Bark, for mine is unavailing ! ”

“ Vex thee not, *CHARON*,” my Guide said in a word, 12
“ Thus it is Willed where Will and Power are One :
“ So further question not ! ” The Steersman heard
Upon his livid pool : and thereupon
His eyes roll’d fire—like flaming wheels they shone—
But he was silenced, and his shagg’d cheeks fell.
Meanwhile the Spirits, all naked and fordone,
Shivering changed hue, and gnash’t their teeth as well,
Soon as they heard his cruel words inexorable.

Hell iii. 103-123.] *CHARON'S FREIGHT.* [Acheron.
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Then, cursing God, their parents, and their kin, 13
The human race, the seed from whence they grew,
The hour and place they were begotten in,
They altogether, loudly sobbing, drew
Unto that evil strand, the destined due
Of all who fear not God. From the doomed shoal
The Demon *CHARON* then selects his crew,
Beckoning them down with eyes of burning coal,
With his oar, as they checked, smiting each laggard Soul.

As withered leaves in Autumn lightly fall 14
Each after other, till the tree looks down
Shredless on her own vesture ; even so all
That blighted seed of Adam, one by one,
Fluttered down passively, thus beckoned on,
Like birds to their decoy. Then from that shore
They cross the dingy wave : yet ere upon
The further side they land, fresh levies pour
Down to the nearer bank, and press for passage o'er.

“ My Son,” now said the Master courteously, 15
“ Here flock from every clime those Spirits who
“ Under the wrath of the Almighty die.

“ Yea ! and as if to anticipate their woe
“ They even yearn to cross the Stream ; for so
“ God’s justice goads them, that their very fear
“ Is turned into desire. Howbeit, know
“ That never any Good Soul passes here :
“ Wherefore, if *CHARON* railed, his meaning is full clear.”

Scarce had he ended, ere the whole dark plain 16
Trembled so violently, with rumbling sound,
Even now cold shuddering drops bathe me again
At mere remembering it. From underground
The Land of Lamentation then unbound
A rush of mighty whirlwinds terrible,
With the red glare of lightnings, flasht around:
Whereat I lost all sense, and, ‘neath the spell
Of an o’er-mastering sleep, down I unconscious fell.

CANTO IV.

SUDDEN, a peal of loud-resounding thunder
Crashed on my trancèd sleep ; so, in surprise,
I started up, as a slumberer, dazed with wonder,
Wakes at a shock. And then, my rested eyes
Casting around, as I erect did rise,
I gazed with fixèd ken the place to know
Wherein I found myself: and, true it is,
'Twas on the brink of the Wailful Gulf below,
Up-thundering in one roll the myriad cries of woe.

Obscure, unfathomable, and nebulous, 2
Nothing therein could I discern, altho'
I strained to pierce its depths. "And now let us,"
All pale, the Poet said, "descend below
"Into the Lightless World. I First will go,
"And Second thou." Whom answering, I said,
(Marking his colour which had changèd so,)
"Nay, how shall I speed, when e'en *Thou* art fray'd,
"Who'rt still, at every doubt, my comforter to aid ? "

And he: "The Shades afflicted *here-beneath*

3

"Whiten my face with pity, which as fear

"Thine own faintheartedness interpreteth.

"But come! The way is long, and time doth wear!"

So we both entered the *FIRST CIRCLE* there

That rimmed the Abyss around. But thence no seething

Came unto us, so far as I could hear,

Of any plaint—only the quiet breathing

Of sighs, that made the air tremble with their upwreathing;

The which, of inner grief,—not torture-pain,—

4

Incessant rose from numbers manifold

Of Infants, Men, and Women. Whence again

Spake the kind Master: "These, thine eyes behold,

"Thou ask'st not of! Yet would I have thee told

"Their circumstance, ere further thou proceed.

"Know then, they never sinned, nor young nor old;

"And yet this merit wrought for them no meed,

"Since Baptism they all lackt, the doorway of your Creed.

"An if they lived ere Christianity,

5

"Not theirs it was God rightly to adore,

"And such as They are, such am also I.

"For this defect—not guilt—for evermore

"We all are lost, yet suffer nought more sore

Hell iv.] “*HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.*” [Circle i.
42-63.] The Unbaptised.

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“Than without hope to languish with desire.”

When this I heard, grief cut me to the core;
For well I wist that many a worthy sire
In *LIMBO* here suspense, existence must out-tire.

So I, thro’ a wish to hold conviction faster

6

Touching that Faith which fights all error down,
“O tell me,” said, “tell me, my Lord and Master,
“Hence did there ever issue any one
“Or by ~~Another’s~~ merits, or his own,
“Who afterward was Blest?” Then answered he,
Piercing my covert speech: “I had not gone
“Long to their state ere I a ~~Power~~ did see
“Coming amongst us crowned, with the Sign of Victory.

“And He forth from us THE FIRST PARENT’s Shade, 7

“ABEL, his son, and Noë also drew;
“Lawgiving MOSES, who so well obey’d;
“The Patriarch ABRAM, and King DAVID too;
“And, with his SIRE and CHILDREN, ISRAEL who
“For RACHEL served so long. These unto Bliss
“Did He exalt, with Others not a few.
“Albeit know, that, afore them or this,
“No soul of humankind was ever saved, I wis.”

Meantime, as thus he spake, on did we fare, 8
 Down thro' the wood continuing to roam,
 The wood, I mean, of clustered Spirits there :
 But from the summit far we had not come
 When lo ! I spied a Hemispheric Dome,
 Won from the darkness round, whose inner space
 A Light of radiant splendour did illume ;
 Nor was it so remote but I could trace
 What Honourable Folk had tenance of the place.

“ Thou, who all Art and Knowledge honourest, 9
 “ Say, why have *these* such honour : wherefore claim
 “ They to be thus sequestered from the rest ? ”
 And he to me : “ Because their honoured name
 Up in thy World still echoeth with fame,
 Heav’n, of its grace, this preference awards.”
 With that I heard a voice of loud proclaim :
 ‘ *All honour to the loftiest of Bards,*
 ‘ *His Shade which left us late now turneth hitherwards.*’

Scarce had the voice grown hush, when forth to us 10
 FOUR SHADES, of feature neither grave nor gay,
 I now beheld advancing ; wherefore thus
 The Gentle Master unto me did say :

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“Mark him, with sword in hand, who leads the way,
“Coming before the Three, their Sire as 't were—
“The same is HOMER, Bard of sovran sway!
“HORACE the Satirist doth next appear;
“With OVID following third, while LUCAN comes arear.

“And as the *name* they voiced in unison

11

“Alike to them and me is apposite,
“They do me honour, and full well have done.”
Thus I beheld the goodly School unite
Of him, the Lord of Loftiest Song, whose flight
Soars like an eagle's far above the rest.

Then, after commune brief, they turn'd forthright
With salutation unto me addrest;
Whereat a well-pleased smile my Master's face exprest.

Yea, to the height they honoured me; for thence

12

They made me of their number, so that I
Stood as a Sixth mid such intelligence.

So t'wards the Light we strode in colloquy,
Discoursing matters better now passed by
As then 'twas well to speak of. Further yet
Unto a Noble Castle we drew nigh,
Mid Seven Lofty Walls most stately set,
Round which, for more defence, ran a Fair Rivulet.

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This, as firm ground, we crost. Then with those Shadows,

Seven gates I past, and in a little space 13

Stood in the green of never-fading meadows;

Where, with the port of high-commanding grace,

And slow grave eyes, stept a Majestic Race,

Whose words were few, but all of sweetest sound.

Then we, apart retiring, sought a place

That lay in light, a low and open mound

Which o'er the Tranquil Place gave prospect far around.

And there, to me, full on the enamell'd green, 14

Were shown such Mighty Spirits as I grew

Greater within me only to have seen!

I saw ELECTRA; of her retinue

Were HECTOR and ÆNEAS—both I knew—

With CÆSAR fully-armed and falcon-eyed.

PENTHESILEA and CAMILLA too

With King LATINUS also I espied,

Who with LAVINIA sate, but on the other side.

And BRUTUS next, who wrought the Tarquin's fall; 15

LUCRECE, CORNELIA, JULIA, MARCIA;—lo,

And SALADIN alone, apart from all.

Lifting my lids for loftier vision now

THE MASTER I beheld of THOSE WHO KNOW,

Hell iv.
132-151.]

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

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Circle i.
The Unbaptised.

In session with his Philosophic Band
Who all turned t'wards him, bending homage low ;
But Socrates and Plato, nigh at hand,
Chief before all the rest, seemed nearer him stand.

Next, chance-attributing DEMOCRITUS ;

16

THALES, ANAXAGORAS, DIogenes ;
ZENO, EMPEDOCLES, HERACLITUS,
And the good herbalist DIOSCORIDES,
With SENECA, the moralist. All these
With ORPHEUS, LIVY and CICERO did I see,
And metric EUCLID too ; HIPPOCRATES,
GALEN and AVICENNA ; PTOLEMY,
And AVERROIS who made the fam'd Great Commentary.

Long were to paint the many there compact ;

17

My large theme presses, bidding me forbear ;
Thus it falls out that oftentimes the fact
Outstrips my faint expression. So from there
My Guide and I—(for to a single pair
The group is minisht which as Six assembled)—
Departed, wending thro' the Tranquil Air
Until once more we reacht the Air that Trembled,
Whence we past to where was nought that light resembled.

CANTO V.

FROM the *FIRST CIRCLE* I descended so
Down to the *SECOND*, which ingirds less space
But greater grief, goading to cries of woe.

There *MINOS*, Judge most horrible to face,
Stands scowling : there, upon the Entry-place,
He tries the crimes of whosoe'er transgresses,
Dealing his dooms as he his loins doth lace.
Ay ! and as each mis-gotten Spirit presses
Into his presence, all it instantly confesses ;

Then, when that Sin-Discriminator sees
What due in Hell is theirs, he coileth e'er
Round him his tail times many as degrees
Each must descend. 'Fore him vast throngs appear
And crush in turn for judgment—speak, and hear,
And then, convicted, down are headlong sped.

But *MINOS*, when he saw *me* entering here,
Relinquishing the practice of his dread
And mighty office, thus gave utterance and said :

“Be ware, be ware in whom thou wouldest confide, 3

“Thou who art entering Sorrow’s Hostelry,

“Nor let the Wide Way cheat thee!” Quick my Guide

Retorted thus: “Nay! why dost thou too cry?

“Stay not his destined going; for on High

“Thus it is Willed where Will and Power are One,

“So further question not!” Immediately

Jarred on my piercèd ears the shrilling tone

Of countless wailings loud, and lamentable moan.

For I had reacht a realm of all light mute,

4

Which roared, as roars the tempest-riven main
Lasht by antagonising whirlwinds. Through’t

A hellish never-resting hurricane

Snatching the Spirits, shrieking in their pain,

Scourges and sweeps them even to the extreme

Of the Great Void; where driv’n, the tortur’d train
Utter loud yells, and groans, and wildly scream,

Yea: even ’gainst God’s own virtue horribly blaspheme.

Well wist I then that to such torments dire

5

The Carnal Sinners are condemned, who stoop
To lust, and subject reason to desire.

And like as starlings on the wing will group
Then wheel away, a multitudinous troop,

Fitful and wild, in the cold winter weather;
Even so abruptly did those Spirits swoop
Under that blast of Hell, hither and thither,
Up, down, across, in packs, swirling along together.

Nor have they ever hope, thus hurtled on 6
Thro' storm and darkness, of one hour's cessation,
Or of one pang the less. But when, anon,
(Like cranes that form long lines of navigation,
Filling the skies with clamorous agitation,)
Once more they drifted past—marking a swarm
Trailed by the wind and uttering lamentation,
“Master,” I cried, “I prythee me inform
“Who are they passing now, lasht by the ebon storm ?”

“The First, of whom thou askest, lived,” he said, 7
“Empress of many tongues. She Ninus’s
“Mother and mistress was. The realms she sway’d
“The Soldan rules—her name SEMIRAMIS.
“So broke was she in lechery that in this
“She made her likings law, her guilty gust
“Seeking to sanction thus. And next her is
“The QUEEN who so betrayed Sichœus’ dust :
“Like CLEOPATRA there, she slew herself for lust.

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“ See HELEN next, for whom the years were fraught 8

“ With so much evil; great ACHILLES too

“ Whose final fight with Love himself was fought:

“ See PARIS.”—TRISTRAM then he pointed to

With countless other Shades as past they flew,

Telling their names. But when I heard him name

Among the Souls whom lawless passion slew,

So many a Knight of old and Courtly Dame,

Pity and wonderment wellnigh my mind o'ercame.

“ Poet,” I began, “ fain would I hold communion 9

“ And parle with yonder pair that seem so light

“ Upon the wind, and ever go in union.”

And he to me: “ Watch; and when i’ their flight

“ The tempest sways them nearer to our sight,

“ Then by that love which brought them to their doles,

“ Call them, and they will come to us.” Forthright

Rearing my voice, I cried, “ O, weary Souls,

“ Come ye and speak with us, if None your will controls.”

As when two doyes, unto their nested young

10

Called by a tender yearning, cleave the air

On firm spread wings borne willingly along;

So, down the cruel wind that linked pair

From Dido's band straight unto us did bear,
So strong my cry went suing to their ear.

“ O Living creature, kind and gracious-fair,
“ That com'st to us in this dark atmosphere,
“ To us who crimsoned Earth from such a sanguine bier;

“ If that the King of all the Universe 11

“ Were yet our friend, we'd pray Him for thy peace,
“ Since thou so pitiest our fate perverse.

“ Speak *thou*, and we will listen ; or, an it please,

“ Listen, and we will speak, ev'n now while cease,

“ (A special boon for *us*,) these blusterings rude.

“ The land where I was born sits by the seas,

“ Where Po descends with many a tribute flood

“ Down to the placid main, in quest of quietude.

“ Love, that in gentle hearts is soon aflame, 12

“ Fired *him* for my fair body's loveliness,

“ So reft from me, the World still tongues my shame.

“ Love, that *must* have the loved one's love to bless,

“ Fired me in turn with such a passionate press

“ For pleasing him, that, as thou seëst plain,

“ He leaves me not, even here, companionless.

“ Love led us to one death,—but the Hell of Cain

“ For him who quencht our life full surely doth remain.”

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Such words from them were borne across to us. 13

But, hearing how those Souls were anguisht yonder,
Downward I bowed my face, and held it thus

So long the Poet said: "On what dost ponder?"

I paused—and then, "Alack! I did but wonder,"

(Thus I began when him I answerèd,)

"What fond imaginations or still fonder

"Rapture of strong desire could e'er have led

"These to the dolorous pass!" Then unto them I said,

Turning high-sorrowful: "Thy sufferings move 14

"My pity ev'n to tears! But, tell me, O

"FRANCESCA, when and in what way did Love

"While ye, as yet, were only sighing low,

"Make ye to yield that ye should ever know

"Aught of your wavering wishes!"—"There is not,"

She answered—"There is not a greater woe

"Than the remembrance of a happier lot

"In days of misery, as well thy Guide doth wot.

"But since thou so petitionest to hear

15

"How first our love took root, I must assent

"As one who tells her tale with many a tear.

"One day we read, in dalliance innocent,

“ Of Lancelot, gript in Love’s strong tanglement.
“ All by ourselves we were, suspecting nought ;
“ Yet, reading, oftentimes our colour went,
“ And oft our wandering eyes each others’ sought :
“ But one sole point it was that our undoing wrought.”

“ For when we read of *that wish’d smile*, and how 16
“ So great a Lover gave ’t his hungering kiss,
“ Then he, whom nought can sever from me now,
“ Upon my mouth kissed me, quivering with bliss.
“ The book (and he who wrote it) was, I wis,
Our Galahad. No more that day we read ! ”
But all the while, as One was telling this,
Pity so workt—such tears the Other shed—
Down in a swoon I fell, as falls a body dead.

C A N T O V I.

SO thro' compassion for that Kindred Pair 1
I swooned away in grief. But when again
My sense of life returned, lo ! everywhere,
What way I moved, where'er mine eyes were lain
New sufferings and new sufferers in pain,
At every turning did I now behold.
For the *THIRD CIRCLE* I had reacht—of Rain,
Rain heavy-sousing, rain accurst and cold,
Pelting perpetual down, unchanged and uncontroll'd.

Huge hailstones, snow-sleet, and a downpour drench 2
Of waters foul teemed thro' the welkin dark,
Whence all the soil upreekt with noisome stench ;
While o'er the multitude, there weltering stark,
The monster *CERBERUS* never ceast to bark,
Strange cruel brute, with triple dog-like jaws.
Bloodshot his eyes: beard black, with many a mark
Of slabbered food, big belly, and hookt paws,
To maul the Spirits, whom he flays and piecemeal gnaws

Yelping like curs under the ruthless storm

3

The sotted wretches rolled, still with one side
Striving to screen the other. But the Great Worm
CERBERUS, soon as our adit he espied,
Quivering in every limb for anger, wide
Opened his fangful mouths, and at us gnasht.
Wherewith, making a hollow of his palms, my Guide
Took of the slush, and a great gobbet dasht
Down his rapacious gorge; whereon his crammed jaws
clash't.

And as a hungry hound, howling for meat,

4

Grows pacified, snatching his thrown repast,
Nor tuggeth more, now all intent to eat;
Even thus the squalid muzzles fall at last
Of Demon *CERBERUS*, whose thunderings blast
The jaded Spirits so, that gratefully
They would have deaf'd their ears. As on we past,
There lay they, soaken in the wet, whilst we
Trod on their seeming shapes, which were but vacancy.

Stretchèd along the ground they all were lying,

5

All, saving one, who lifted up his head
Even as we passed him, painfully outerying:
“O, Thou, who thro' this horrid Hell art led,

“Recall me, if thou canst ; for ere I fled
“Undone from life, thou hadst begun thy race.”
“ ‘Tis like enough thy sufferings,” I said,
“Thee from all recollection do erase,
“For until now, meseems, I never saw thy face.

“Yet tell me who thou art, thus all fordone
“In such a place, ‘neath punishment so ill :
“Greater there may be, more distressful none !”
Then he : “Thy City, that hath gorged her fill
“Of Envy—ay ! the sack doth overspill—
“Once owned me hers in days of Fairer Quiet.
“Ciacco ye Citizens did dub me still :
“For th’ wasteful vice of Gluttony and Riot
“Here now I suffer this eternal storm’s disquiet.

“Nor I alone, sad Soul, have this incurred ;
“For here the like award doth every sprite
“Reap for like sin.” Then spake he no more word.
Whence I rejoined : “Ciacco, thy piteous plight
“Nigh to the brink of tears doth me invite,
“So heavy ’tis. Yet tell me, an thou know,
“What shall befall the Burghers, *Black* and *White*,
“Of the Divided City ; and if so
“One righteous man be found where Discord breeds such woe ?”

Then answered he : " After contention long 8
" They'll come to blood ; and, ere the strife be done,
" The savage *Whites*, with cruel hate and wrong,
" Will drive the Others forth. Yet, ere the Sun
" Thrice thro' the signs his yearly race hath run,
" They too shall fall ; when, rising up again,
" The *Blacks*, (envigoured by the force of One
" Who trimmeth now,) as Victors will maintain
Proud fronts, and long press down the Crusht who'll chafe in vain.

" Two there are righteous, but unheard, unnamed ; 9
" For Envy, Pride, and Avarice, these three,
" Like sparks have every bosom so enflamed."
Here ceast his lachrymable prophecy.
But I once more : " Yet would I learn of thee,
" If speech thou'l deign, of FARINATA who,
" With TEGGHIAIO, lived so worthily :
" JACOPO RUSTICUCCI, — MOSCA too,
" ARRIGO, and the rest, who bent them good to do.

" How fare they ? I would know of them : O tell, 10
(" So strong an impulse urges me to learn,)
" If balm of Heaven be theirs, or gall of Hell ?"
" These," answered he, " mid blacker Spirits mourn.
" Crimes diverse sink them to a deeper bourn,

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“Where thou wilt see them, if so far thou reach.

“But oh! shouldst thou to the sweet World return,

“Put me in men’s remembrance, I beseech :

“More will I ne’er divulge, nor give thee further speech.”

Averting then his features, for a whit

11

He gazed on me askance, then, bowed his head,

And mid his lightless comrades sank with it.—

“Now nevermore he’ll rouse him from his bed

“Till sounds the Angel-Trump,” my Master said.

“Then, when the Power adverse to them shall come,

“Back to the dismal chambers of the dead

“They all will go, their flesh to reassume,

“And hear What in their ears for ever shall reboom.”

Thus plodded we, with slow steps heavily,

12

Thro’ the deep sludge of mingled Shades and rain,

Touching in talk upon Futurity.

“Master,” I questioned, “will their sum of pain

“Grow more or less, or just as now remain,

“After the Great Doom uttered ? ”—He to this :

“Get thee to thy Philosophy again,

“Which saith that as a thing more perfect is

“So all the more it feels both misery and bliss.

“Therefore, (albeit This People Maledight
“Nowise to true perfection ever may
“Advance,) when Soul and Body re-unite,
“As being then complete in nature, they
“Look for more pain, not less !” And thus the way
In circuit taking, onward did we go,
Debating more than now behoves to say ;
Till to a spot we came, whence down below
Were steps, and, on the first, *PLUTUS*, man’s deadliest foe .

C A N T O V I I .

“ *Papè Satàn, Papè Satàn, Alèppè* ”

1

’Gan *PLUTUS*, jabbering in his spleen ; whereon
He Who Knew All thus cheer’d me : “ Down this step he
“ Cannot prevent thy going. Therefore, on !
“ Whatever power he hath, power hath he none
“ ’Gainst *thee* : so fear thou nothing, but proceed.”
Then to that bloated lip The Gentle One
Turned him and cried : “ Peace, cursed Wolf, and feed
“ Thy rage upon thyself, Thou glutless Beast of Greed.

“ This Hell-ward Journey hath its sanction ; for

2

“ *Thus it is* ~~W~~ill’*ll* on High, whence Michael cast
“ The Proud Seducer forth with vengeance sore ! ”

Which said, as bellying sails before a blast
Drop in a heap all crush’d, if snaps the mast,
So fell the rabid Beast. Then on we went,
Stepping the Grievous Stairway ; and so pass’d
Into the *FOURTH* profound—down The Descent
Wherein the ills of all The Universe are pent.

Hell vii.] *COUNTER CURVES.* [Circle iv.
19-40.] www.libtool.com.cn Avaricious & Prodigal.

Justice of God—ah, God! who, who but Thou 3
Could hoard for us such torments? And O why
Do our own sins so squander us? For now,
As in Charybdis, clashing furiously
Wave charges wave, so here the company
Clasht, half to half opposed. In throngs untold
More than elsewhere, they came with hideous cry
(From counter curves) like dancers to behold;
While with main might of chest huge weights each
forward roll'd.

Clashing they met, and ever at the clash 4
Each, as he rolled his heavy burden back,
Shouted, 'Thou Clutch-All,' or 'Thou Scatter-Cash.'
Retracing then their Circle grimy-black,
Till, midway opposite, upon the track
They re-encountered with derisive strain,
There they afresh, like jousters for attack,
Wheel'd round, and then, with all their body's main,
Over their own Half-Circle pressed for the shock again.

Then I, of pity now wellnigh bereft, 5
Cried: "Master, who may these contenders be?
"And were the Shaven Crowns upon the left
"Once Priests?"—"In life these one and all," quoth he,

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“Lookt upon wealth with such obliquity

“That nougnt they spent in measure. *This*, (each time

“They reach the points where contrariety

“Of Vice disparts them,) with their tauntful rime

“Both parties make full clear, howling the other’s crime.

“Yea, those were Clergy with the tonsur’d head, 6

“Even Cardinals and Popes, in whom, God wot,

“Avarice attains her topmost ! ”—“Then,” I said,

“Mid such as these, my Master, should I not

“Recognize sundry smircht with this foul spot ? ”—

“Vain thought ! The undiscerning life that they

“So grossly led doth now for ever blot

“Them out of all discernment. And for aye

“Thus will they charge each other, till on the Last Great Day

“These from their tombs shall rise with clenched fist,

“And all of Those cropt to their very hair ! 7

“Ill-saving or ill-spending, they have miss’d

“The Brighter Land, and come to bicker there

“In feud I deck no fine words to declare.

“Ah ! Son, the gifts of Fortune, see how soon

“They pass away, and no man knoweth where :

“Now all the treasured gold beneath the moon,

“Can for these wearied Souls purchase nor rest nor boon.”

“Master,” quoth I, “resolve me yet thus much : 8

“This *FORTUNE* thou hast mentioned—what is She
“That hath the World’s good things so in her clutch?”

“O foolish mortals! how astray are ye

“Thro’ ignorance! But imbibe thou *this*,” said he.

“HE, Whose transcendent wisdom and Whose might

“The Spheres created, gave them Guides to be

“Equal Dispensers of His *heavenly* light,

“That every part may shine to every part aright.

“So, with a like intendment, to divide 9

“*Earth’s* glories evenly, did HE ordain

“One sole Distributress and general Guide,

“To shift, as serves occasion, riches vain

“From race to race, and ev’n from strain to strain

“Of kindred blood. And so it comes to pass,

“Beyond man’s cope or ken, that people wane

“Or rise to governance according as

“*Her* sentence is, unseen like a serpent in the grass.

“Man’s wisdom vainly vies with her; for She 10

“Foresees, foredooms, and follows her own drift,

“God, like the Rest, in her own empiry.

“Her changes take no truce, but ever shift;

“Necessity compels her to be swift,

“So press the many who her bounties claim.

“And this is She, bestowing gift on gift,

“Ye men so rack and wrong with cruel blame—

“Ay, and they most who most should magnify her name !

“But She is blest, and heedeth nought of this ; 11

“Glad mid the other Primal Powers, and tending

“Her own revolving wheel, secure in bliss !

“But to Worse Woes now let us down be wending,

“Nor tarry. All the stars that were ascending

“When first we moved, decline.”—To the inner bank

Then crost we, and arrivèd where, descending

A gorge, deep-scoop'd in the next Circle's flank,

A boiling Water-course, fretting its own way, sank.

Entering thereby, we followed the strange glen, 12

Companions of its gloomy waves more deep

In tinct than darkest purple. Howbeit, when

The Tristful Torrent down below doth leap,

There, at the grey foot of the cruel steep,

It makes a Marsh, called *STYX*. Whereo'er, as now

I stood at gaze, far as the eye could sweep

I saw a muddy people in the slough,

All naked and with looks of anger on their brow.

Hell vii.
112-130.]

THE SULLEN.

Circle v.
Wrathful & Sullen.

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And there they fought, and not with hands alone 13

But head, and bust, and feet—ay! and teeth too
Riving each other to the very bone.

The Gentle Master then : “ My Son, now view

“ The Souls of those whom Anger over-threw ;

“ And, know besides, there is another trouble

“ *Under* the water; for a Certain crew

“ Is sunken there, who, as their sighs redouble

“ Make, as thou see’st all round, the surface to up-bubble.

“ Stuck in the ooze they say : *Sullen we were* 14

“ *Once in the sweet air where the Sun makes glee,*

“ *And sluggish vapours then within us bare ;*

“ *Now in these bitter dregs Sullen are we !*

“ Powerless to vent it forth, this hymnody

“ They gurgle in their throats.”—With that, we past

On twixt the Bank and the Fen’s boundary,

Rounding a curve, until, with eyes still cast

On them who gulped its mud, we neared a *TOWER* at last.

CANTO VIII.

C
ONTINUING, I aver that long before 1

We reacht the Tall Tower's base, unto its height

Our eyes went upward, seeing that it bore

Two flaming cressets; while another Light,

Far in the distance, almost out of sight,

Flashed, as it were a countersign returning.

“What mean these beacons?”—I enquir'd forthright,
Turning toward The Deep Sea of All Learning,
“And yonder Answering Flame? And who hath set
them burning?”

Quoth he: “Already on the waves, I wot, 2

Thyself mayst see the thing they signify,

If reek o' the rotten fen conceal it not.”

Never did bowstring let an arrow fly

On its way thro' the air so rapidly,

As now I saw, over the watery shoal,

A little pinnace swift towards us hie,

Under a single Ferryman's control,

Who shouted, “So thou'rt come at last, thou sorry Soul!”

“ *PHLEGYAS!* ah, *PHLEGYAS!* thou criest now, 3

“ For once in vain,” quickly my Lord replied;

“ Thine are we only while we skiff the Slough!”

As one 'gainst whom some trickery is tried,

Notes it and stores it up high-mortified,

So in his smothered wrath was *PHLEGYAS*. Straight

Into his bark descended then my Guide

And made me enter after; but no freight

The vessel seemed to bear until it felt my weight.

Both then aboard, the antique prow moved on, 4

Furrowing the waters deeper than they

Were ever ploughed by others. But anon,

Whilst running over the Dead Waterway—

“ Who'rt thou that comest here before thy day? ”

Out-roared a mud-drencht Spirit afront of me.

Quoth I: “ Tho' come, think not I come to stay! ”

“ But who art thou so filth'd? ” When, fiercely, he :

“ I'm one who weeps as thou plainly enough mayst see.”

Then I: “ Weep on, damn'd Spirit! in grief and smart

“ Unmitigated evermore abide: 5

“ I know thee now, all muddied as thou art! ”

Hands then he stretcht to seize the vessel's side,

But the ware Master thrust him off, and cried:

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“Out on thee! Hence to the other dogs again!”

Then round my neck putting his arms, with pride

He kissed me on the brow, and said full fain:

“Blessèd be she that bare thee, soul of high disdain!

“Fierce, overbearing in his day, he hath

6

“To grace his memory not one deed of good—

“See how his very Shade darkens with wrath!

“And many else on Earth, in insolent mood,

“Still prince it much, who yet, like swine i’ th’ mud,

“Loathèd and execrated here shall wallow!”

“Master,” I then rejoined, “O that I could

“But see him, ere we dip to yonder hollow,

“Soused in this boiling swash, and of its rank broth
swallow!”

And he again delivered him: “Or ere

7

“We prow the shore, thou shalt be gratified;

“For meet it were to grant so just a prayer.”

Anon, the People of the Mire I spied

Set on him, and so trounce him in the tide

That still I praise and thank my God for it!

“At FILIPPO ARGENTI!” they all cried.

Then turned the brutal Florentine and bit

Himself for utter rage—of whom no more be writ.

Sounds then of anguish smiting on mine ear, 8

With eye-lids opened wide, full earnestly
I gazed a-head. "My Son, now draweth near
"THE CITY named of Dis," quoth he to me,
"With its gross citizens, a great company."

Quoth I: "Its mosques already I can tell
"Fire-red within the Hollow." Wherefore he:
"That glow, which burns in them so visible,
"Comes of eternal fire, lit in yon LOWER HELL."

So said, we shot within the deep-dug Ditch 9

That round that Home of Desolation bent,
Moating its grim up-towering ramparts, which
Seemed as of iron made. Circling we went,
Till, sudden, the pilot shouted vehement:
"Out with ye now! This is the Entrance dread!"
Then, at the Gate, I saw a rabblement
Of Spirits rained from Heaven, who scornful said:
"Who's this that seeks, ere death, the Nations of The Dead?"

But a signal the Sage Master made, that fain 10

He'd parle with them in private: wherefore they
Bating a little of their huge disdain
And barring up their fury, thus did say:
Come Thou, but let that Other hence away,

“ Who, thus presumptuous, violates our reign ;
“ Ay ! let him, if he can, his witless way
“ Refind alone,—but thou shalt here remain,
“ Who’st dared escort him through this dark and deep
domain ! ”

At words so devilish, Reader, list and learn

11

How my heart sank within me, terrified ;

For I believed I never should return.

“ O Thou, who more than seven times,” I cried,

“ Hast been my refuge sure—O dear-lov’d Guide

Who hast holpen me in every perilous case—

“ If that our further going be denied

“ Leave me not thus undone ; but from this place

“ Together let us both our speedy steps retrace.”

My Lord, who’d so far led me, answered thus :

12

“ No Power can now deprive us—never fear—

“ Of this our way : by Such ’tis given to us !

“ But here abide me, and with hopefuller cheer

“ Feed thy fatiguèd spirit, for I ne’er

“ Will in this Under World forsake thee.” Then

“ The kind sweet Father goes, leaving me there ;

“ And I in the balance of *Perhaps* remain,

“ Whilst ever *Yea* and *Nay* contend within my brain.

I heard not what he said to them, nor long 13
 Tarried he with them ; for the fiendish rout,
Crushing together like a frantic throng,
 Flung themselves in, and shut, with hostile shout,
 The Gate upon My Master, left without.
So back he turned to me with footsteps slow,
 And eyes upon the ground. It seemed the flout
Had shorn his brows of spirit, for he sigh'd low :
“ Who hath denied to me The Habitude of Woe ? ”

Then louder unto me : “ Have thou no fear 14
 “ Tho' I be wroth ; for I will all subdue,
“ Spite the opposition that befronts us here !
 “ This insolence of theirs is nothing new :
 “ At a less secret Gate they shewed it too,
“ Unbarred for ever since. Twas o'er it thou
 “ The mortal legend saw'st ! But, passing thro'
“ The CIRCLES, unescorted, down Hell's brow
“ ONE cometh who will ope the City to us now ! ”

C A N T O I X.

THE hue which Fear limn'd outwardly on me, 1
 Seeing my Guide repuls'd, made him repress
 Sooner his new-risen flush. And, therewith, he
 Stopt, as a man who listens, motionless ;
 For far no eye could pierce the murkiness
 Misting the air and clouding all in gloom.
 "Conquer," he then began, " we will, unless...
 " Yet nay : how else with ~~Her~~ for sponsor, whom...
 " O how the time creeps slow until that Other come ! "

Right well I markt how he was fain to cloke 2
 What came at the beginning with the end,
 Words all at variance with the first he spoke.
 Yet I, no less, some ill did apprehend,
 As, to worse meaning than he might intend,
 I drew his broken speech. Whence I : " O, tell,
 " From the *FIRST GRADE* do Any e'er descend,
 " (Down to the bottom of this Doleful Shell,)
 " Of Them whose only pain is without hope to dwell ? "

So questioned I, and he responded thus : 3

“ Seldom it chances that the way I go

“ Is ever travelled o'er by one of us.

“ Yet, sooth it is, that I was once below

“ Before—witcht by the weird Erectho who

“ Was wont to summon Spirits back to clay.

“ For, scarce the flesh was bare of me, ere so

“ She made me pass yon Wall to bring away

“ A Spirit from the depth where Judas bides for aye.

“ That is the deepest depth, the most obscure, 4

“ And furthest from the Heaven that moveth all.

“ I know the way: so rest thyself secure !

“ This Stygian Fan, reeking with noisome pall,

“ Runs round about the *Dolorous CITY's* wall,

“ Where, without wrath, enters no living wight.”

And more he said—the which I not recall ;

For, wholly rapt, I now had turned my sight

Unto the Lofty Tower that flashed the Answering Light.

Where, sudden, in woman's shape and attitude, 5

Three Hellish *FURIES* I beheld, who crown'd

Its summit, all erect and smear'd with blood.

In lieu of hair Snakes and horn'd Aspics bound

Their heads, and o'er their horrid temples wound ;

Green Hydras form'd their girdles. Wherefore he,
Who recognised the Hell-hags that surround
The Queen of Everlasting Misery,
"See!" whispered in my ear, "The fell Erinnyes see!"

"That is *Megæra* on the left; and she 6

"*Alecto*, wildly wailing, there upon

"The right: the midmost is *Tisiphone*."

Whereat each claw'd her breasts, and dasht thereon

Her open palms, screeching with such shrill tone

That, for sheer dread, the Poet I did seek.

"Let come *Medusa*: so we'll make him stone!"

All leaning downwards, yelled with savage shriek:

"On Theseus, woe that we our vengeance did not wreak!"

"Quick, turn thee quick, and keep thine eyes shut tight,

"For, an the Gorgon show, and her thou view, 7

"Never again wilt thou behold the light."

Thus spake my Guide, and scarcely trusting to

Mine own act, turn'd me round himself, and threw

Over my hands his own for coverlid

To shroud mine eyes the closelier. O you

Of sound intelligence, observe, amid

These strange and veilèd rimes, what deeper sense lies hid!

Hark ! 'tis the rushing of a sound of dread 8
Sweeps the Fen Water, tremulously plashing
Twixt banks that heave as 'neath an Earthquake's tread.
So doth a wind, impetuously dashing
For zones of hotter air, uncheckt, go lashing
The rocking woods, a-roar beneath his blast,
Branches and leaves up-whirling and down-crashing,
With vanward dust-cloud proudly sweeping past,
Till beasts and shepherd boys all flee before him fast.

" Back on yon scum now let thy vision rest," 9

(Mine eyes releasing, thus the Master spake,)
" There where the rising reek is acridest."

As frogs before their enemy, the snake,
All helter-skelter thro' the water make,
On land to find escape or hiding-holes;
So at the ferry of the Stygian Lake
Saw I more than a thousand ruined Souls
Fly before one who passed with light unwetted soles.

Sweeping the gross air from him puissantly, 10

He oft times moved his left hand to and fro,
His only trouble this. Then, turning, I
Lookt to my Guide, who gave me sign that now

I should to *Him* in mute adorance bow,
As sent to us a MESSENGER from God.
O, what disdain was seated on his brow !
Straight to the unresisting Gate he trod,
And open wide it flew, toucht only by his rod.

“Ye Castaways of Heaven ! despicable crew ! ” 11
Began he, standing on the horrid sill,
“Whence nurtureth this insolence in you ?
“Why, thus persistent, spurn ye at that Will
“Which never fails its purpose to fulfil,
“Ay ! and full oft hath multiplied your woes !
“Against the Fates what boots your butting still ?
“Remember how your Cerberus still shows
“His gullet and his chin bared for the like oppose ! ”

This said, back turn'd he by the noisome road, 12
Nor gave to us one word : in lineament
Like one whom other thoughts more keenly goad
Than care for those at hand. · Made confident
Thus by his hallowed words, our steps we bent
On to The City, passing watch and ward,
Till, without further contest, in we went.
Then straightway I, desirous to regard
The kind of place it was such fortress-walls embarr'd,

Entered, and, gazing round, saw a Broad Tract 13

Which, stretching right and left, before me lay
With sorrow and most bitter torments packt.

For, as at Arles, where Rhone forslows his way,
Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's Bay
(Which shuts in Italy and her limits laves),
All up and down the Sepulchres display ;
So here, on either side, the whole land waves,
Only in bitterer sort, with undulating graves.

For tongues of fire did every vault environ, 14

Wherewith all so intensely were aglow,
Hotter no smith-craft ever fashioned iron.

Suspended hung their lids ; while from below
Surged ever up the painfullest sounds of woe,
Such as from saddest Souls might well be sent.

Then I : " Master, what are these People, who,
Down in these ark-like prison-houses pent,
" Send forth, in deep-drawn sighs, such dolorous
lament ? "

Then he to me this answer did direct : 15

" Here be the Arch-Heretics, in company
" With all their followers, of every sect.

“Their monuments are heavy-fraughted—ay,
“More than thou thinkest, thick therein they lie;
“Like with his like, to one hot burial cast,
“In heated tombs of apt variety!”
Then, veering to the *dexter* hand, we past
On twixt the torments and the City’s bulwarks vast.

C A N T O X.

SO by a small side path, twixt the huge boulders 1
 Of the City-wall and Them entombed in woe,
My Master went, with me behind his shoulders ;
 When I : "Thou top of Worth, that mak'st me go
 "In circuit thro' these Circles, even so (1)
 'As seemeth good to thee; now satisfy
 "This wish of mine and speak: yon Souls below
 "May they be seen within their Cemetery,
"Since every lid is up, and watcher none is nigh?"

"But fast they all will shut," he made reply
 "When each, returning from Jehosaphat,
"Brings back the body left by him on high.
 "Here EPICURUS—ev'n for holding that (2)
 "Soul dies with Body—in one burial-vat
"Burns with his Followers. But gratified
 "Thou verily shalt be: yea, both in what
 "Thou'st askt of me, and in the thing beside
Which, well I ween, from me in silence thou dost hide."

“ Nay, Good my Master,” I rejoined, “ if aught 3

“ My heart conceal’d ’twas only words to spare,

“ A thrift thyself ere now hast often taught.”—

2 — “ O Tuscan, traversing this fiery lair

“ Alive and uttering words so gentle-fair,

“ Please thee with me a little while to rest :

“ For sure thy tongue is native to the air

“ That breathes about that City Loveliest,

“ Which I in life, perhaps, too sorely did molest.”

Such was the voice that from a coffer rose 4

All on a sudden : whereupon thro’ fear

Unto my Master’s side I shrank more close.

But he : “ Nay, get thee back : what wouldest thou here ?

“ ’Tis FARINATA doth himself uprear

“ Far as his belted waist—behold ! behold ! ”

Meanwhile my eyes straight into his did peer

As slow he rose, with brow and bosom bold,

Seeming in high defiance Hell itself to hold !

With prompt unflinching hands my Master then

Right in among the tombstones thrusted me,

Saying, “ Be careful of thy words ! ” But when

I neared the foot of his entombment, he

Scanned me awhile ; then, half-disdainfully :

“ Who were thy genitors ? ” to me he cried.
And I, none loth to obey, most openly
Related all to him, nor aught would hide ;
Whereat, his lofty brows uplifting, he replied :

“ Adverse they ever were, most furiously, 6
“ To Me, and to my Party, and my Kin ;
“ But twice I scatter’d them ! ” Then answered I :
“ Tho’ twice driv’n out, yet twice they enter’d in ;
“ An Art *your* kith did never ev’n begin
“ Rightly to understand ! ” With that, A SHADE, 5
Visible only far as to the chin,
Peep’t up beside him, and scarce itself display’d ;
Methought ’twas on its knees, as if an old man pray’d.

All round it peer’d as with a hope intense 7
To see if, chance, *Another* came with me
But, when all quenchèd was its fond suspense,
Tears gathered to its eyes, whilst piteously
Its agèd voice implored : “ O, if it be
“ By genius thou this dungeon-clime dost tread,
“ Where is my Son ? Why is he not with thee ? ” —
And I : “ Not *so* I come, but hither led
“ By One your Guido had but scantily honourèd.”

Thus pregnantly I answered, as was meet; 8

For well its words and state retributive

Had read to me its name. With that, to its feet

(3) Upstarting, it exclaimed: "What! Not alive!

"Said'st thou he '*had*'? Then doth he not survive?

"Still falls not on his orbs Heaven's kindly light?"

But, when it wist none answer I could give

At once, but lingered my reply, forthright

Backward falling in grief, it vanisht out of sight.

A Meanwhile, that first Great Soul, 'fore whom I stood,

Changed not his look, nor head nor body turn'd, 9

But heedless towered immutable of mood.

"If—" went he on, to his former vein return'd—

"My kith that Art have never rightly learn'd,

"More than this blazing bier it racks my heart.

"Yet fifty times the face shall not have burn'd

"Of Her, the Regent of this Nether Part,

"Ere *thou* too shalt have felt the full weight of that Art.

"But, by thy hoped return, tell me the cause 10

"Why is That People so infuriated

"Against my kindred still in all their laws?"

"The Rout and Carnage terrible," I said,

"That coloured Arbia's stream so bloody-red,

“Have wrought for them such temple-oratory !”

Then answered he, and, sighing, shook his head :

“Ah ! *there* I was not single, nor would I
“E'er with the rest have moved without just warranty.

“But when they would have wip'd out Florence, *there*

“Sole stood I up in the face of all her foes, 11

“And single-handed I defended her !”—

“So may thy seed for that yet find repose !

“Albeit,” I besought, “this knot unclose

“That now involves my mind. How is't that here

“Ye Souls in Hell have vision that foregoes

“Into the Future—if aright I hear—

“Yet see in different sort the Present that is near ?”

“Like men,” quoth he, “looking from aged brows, 12

“Only to things *remote* our eyes attain ;

(“So much of light the Lord of Light allows :)

“But while they're *passing* or *approaching*, then

“Our vision's power is wholly void and vain ;

“Thus of your human Present naught we know

“Saving what others bring us. Therefore when

“The Future's door is shut, thou seëst how

“Our knowledge all must cease in one Long Lightless Now.”

Then, as compunctions for my fault, I said : 13

“ Now tell that venerable Fallen One
“ That his dear child is joined *not* with the Dead,
“ But with the Living. And if, awhile agone,
“ I faltered when he askt me of his Son,
“ O tell him too, 'twas only that my thought
“ Toiled in the error thou hast solved.”—Whereon
My Master summoning me, I quick besought
— Him say with whomso else his burial-vault was fraught.

“ With thousands more I suffer,” answered he. 14

“ Here is the SECOND FREDERICK ; here too
“ THE CARDINAL—but wherefore needeth me
“ To name the rest ? ” And so, he sunk from view.
Then, musing on his words, so bodeful to
My future, as it seemed, I back retir'd
My steps toward the Antique Poet, who :
“ Why thus distraught ? ” upon the way inquir'd.
And I the cause revealed even as he desir'd.

“ Let then his bode deep in thy memory linger ! 15

“ Howbeit now,” (such was my guide's command,)
“ List here ! ” and at the word he raised his finger :

“ When i' the Heavenly Light of ~~Mer~~ thou stand
“ Whose clear eye seëth all, thou'l^t understand
“ The way thy life should go.” So said, he bended
In, from the Wall, his steps, to the left hand,
Striking a path that thro' the Tombstones trended
To the next Gulf, whose stench us ev'n up there offended.

CANTO X I.

T HUS, to the edge of a high circular bank
 Of Broken Shelving Stones our way we bent,
 Where, far below, were sufferings yet more rank ;
 But from the Souls coopt there in prisonment,
 Such noisome exhalations were up-sent,
 That we, for shelter, were enforst to come
 Behind the slab of a huge Monument :
 And lo ! " *Here lies Pope ANASTASIUS whom*
 " *Photinus led astray,*" was carven on the tomb.

" Now needs it us to pause, until somewhat

" Unto this foul-ascending draught our sense

" Grow custom'd ; after we shall heed it not."

My Master thus.—" Then find some recompense,"

I answered him with eagerness, " that hence

" No time be lost."—" So, Son, had I intended,"

Quoth he, and at the word did thus commence :

" There are, in steps, like those thou hast descended,

" Within these sloping Screes, *THREE CIRCLETS*
 comprehended.

“Doomed Spirits crowd them ; but that thou mayst know
Their crimes at sight, nor ever ask me name, 3
“Hear why and how they are confined below.
“All Malice, (which calls down Heaven’s bitterest blame,)
“Aimeth at *injury*, and each such aim
“Works others wrong by Fraud or Violence ;
“But because Fraud is man’s peculiar shame
“Tis more abhorrent unto God, and thence
“The Fraudulent are lower, in sufferings more intense.

“Thus the *FIRST CIRCLET* holds the Violent. But
“As to three kinds of persons force is done, 4
“So are *THREE BELTS* within its boundaries shut.
“To God, his Neighbour, or Himself may one
Do violence—to them, or what they own,—
“As thou by proof wilt learn. For, firstly, he
“Death or outrageous wounds may deal upon
“His Neighbour, or his Neighbour’s property
“Ravage with sword and fire and armèd robbery.

“So the *FIRST BELT* holdeth in torture-pain 5
“Manslayers, Plunderers, Robbers—band by band—
“With all who wound feloniously. Again,
“A man may on Himself lay violent hand,

“ Or dissipate his means ; so, understand

“ The *SECOND BELT* to hold, all rueful-sad,

“ Those who Self-murdered left your Upper Land,

“ Or, wasteful, gamed away what goods they had,

“ And used for their own woe what should have made
them glad.

“ And, finally, unto The Deity

6

“ Man, in his heart, may offer violence

“ Or by Denial, or by Blasphemy,

“ Or else, in slight of His Beneficence,

“ By scorning and abusing Nature. Hence

“ The Innermost, which I the *THIRD BELT* call,

“ Hath set its branding seal of evidence

“ On Cahors, and on Sodom, and on all

“ Who speak in scoff of God, with hearts unnatural.

“ Now Fraud (which nibbles every conscience) must

“ Be practist either upon him who takes

7

“ Us into trust, or him who lends no trust:

“ But, as it seems this latter method breaks

“ Only the bond of love which Nature makes,

“ So in the *SECOND CIRCLET* nest all these :

“ Thieves, Falsifiers, and Simoniacs,

“ Witch-crafts, Hypocracies, and Flatteries,

“ Swindling and Pandaring, and such-like infamies.

“ In the first, not only is the love forgotten 8
“ Which Nature makes, but, added unto this,
“ The love that hath some *special* trust begotten.
“ Therefore in the *LEAST CIRCLET*—down where is
“ The Centre of the World and Seat of Dis—
“ All Traitors are consumed eternally.”
“ Master,” then answered I, “ full clear, I wis,
“ Proceeds thine argument, and excellently
“ Divisions out this Gulf, and all its tenantry.

“ Howbeit, tell me,—those of the Fat Marsh, 9
“ Those the Rain lasht, and those the Whirlwind led,
“ And those Encountering with tongue-taunts harsh,
“ Why, if God’s anger they have merited,
“ Are *they* not punisht in the City Red ?
“ And if they have not, why is such their plight ?”
And therewithal he answered me, and said :
“ Nay ! Whither have thy senses taken flight ?
“ Why do thy wonted wits thus wander from the right ?

“ Holdest thou not in recollection still 10
“ Those words wherein thine ‘ *Ethics* ’ do express
“ The Three states most adverse to Heaven’s will,
“ Incontinence, Malice, and mad Brutishness ;
“ And how Incontinence, as being less

“Hateful to God, for lesser censure calls?
“Well, if thou inly muse those sentences,
“And if aright thy memory recalls
“The Culprits who above suffer *outside* these Walls,

“Thou wilt perceive why from this viler folk
 “They are divided, and why God doth deal
“His Justice upon *them* with lighter stroke.”—
 “O SUN! who dost all troubled vision heal,
 “When Thou enlightenest, such content I feel
“To doubt is no less grateful than to know!
 ‘Albeit revert a little, and reveal
 “Me yet—why Usury offendeth so
“Beneficence Divine?—This one last knot undo

“Philosophy to them who understand,”
Quoth he, “sheweth, in divers places, how
“Nature proceeds from the Divine Mind, and
“His Art Creative; while, if thou enow
“Thy ‘*Physics*’ search, ere many pages thou
“Wilt find *Man’s Art*, so far as competent,
“Doth follow Nature, even as, I trow,
“A scholar does his master. Whence is meant
“That Human Art to God stands second in descent.

“ Note also how it saith in Genesis, 13
“ To make his living and to multiply,
“ Man needs must toil—after the law of these
“ Nature and Art. Howbeit, in Usury
“ He violates them both, both equally
“ Despising, and elsewhere seating his hope.
“ But come: the Wain is in the West, and I
“ Am mov'd to journey on. Low in Heaven's cope
“ The Fishes glint. Far hence we must descend the slope.”

CANTO XII.

THE spot we lit on to descend the Clift
Was Alpine, and, for what was there beside,
Such as all eyes would shun. As looks that rift,
The famèd Landslip, on the hither side
Of Trent, (which struck in flank Adige's tide,
By an earthquake loosed, or, maybe, lack of prop,
Whose broken crags, sloping in one long slide,
As from the upland to the plain they drop,
Afford some passage down to him that is a-top;) 1

So seemed the slope that offered us descent; 2
While, on its ragged margin, lo ! the brood
Of the Fictitious Heifer lay distent,
The *INFAMY OF CRETE*; who, when it view'd
Our near-approach, like one of rabid mood,
Bit on Itself. Wherefore the Master saith :
“ Hither thou deemest in all likelihood
“ That Theseus, duke of Athens, travelleth,
“ Who dealt upon thee, in the World Above, thy death.

“ But away, thou Monster ! He that comes to thee 3
“ Hath no instruction from thy Sister ta'en,
“ But solely goes Hell's punishments to see.”
Like as a bull, burst madly from his chain,
Feeling beneath the stroke the fatal drain,
Staggers, and leaps, and plunges ; even so
Plunged the wild *MINOTAUR*. Wherewith again
Outspake The Sage : “ Quick to the passage go !
“ Whiles It is raging thus t'were well thou haste below.”

Then downward made we our descent, still sinking 4
By the Discharge of Stones, which, at my tread,
Oft slid as 'neath a weight unwonted. Thinking,
I went. This noting, my Conductor said :
“ Belike thou thinkest on this rift, where spread
“ The brute-force Guardian I have worsted. Well,
“ I'd have thee know that when I journeyèd
“ That other time down to this Nether Hell,
“ This rock was not then rent—but afterward it fell.

“ For, (an I do not in some error toil,) 5
“ In very sooth, ere to the realm of Dis
“ Came He who took away the Mighty Spoil
“ Of the *UPMOST CIRCLE*—little while ere this—
“ Thro' all its bounds the loathsome deep Abyss

“ So jarred and quaked, and thro’ its spaces swirl’d
“ Such elemental stir, methought, I wis,
“ The Universe felt love, whereby the World
“ Often, as some believe, to Chaos hath been hurl’d.

“ Then ’twas that here—and otherwhere—downshook
“ These time-old rocks that now afford us path. 6
“ But yonder fix thine eyes below; for look
“ *THE RIVER OF BLOOD* draws nigh, the Boiling Bath
“ Wherein is steept for aye whoever hath
“ By Violence wrought on others injury.”—
O Greed! O Wrath! Blind Greed and foolish Wrath!
How, in this little life of ours, do ye
Spur us, and then so sore plunge us eternally!

After not long I saw an ample Ditch 7
Whose bow-like curve did all the plain embrace,
Just as Mine Escort told me; twixt the which
And the long-sloping precipice’s base,
In file, as when on Earth they led the chase,
And armed with arrows, galloping *CENTAURS* ran.
But, seeing us descend, all slackt their pace,
While, from the troop, Three issued to the van,
Readying their bows and missiles, ev’n as thus began

One from afar to shout: "To what torments due 8
"Come ye who down this slope your journey take?
"Speak from your stand, else will I draw on you."—
"When to its base we come," my Master spake,
"We will our answer unto *CHIRON* make:
"Thou ever wert too rash." Then, touching me
He whisper'd: "That is *NESSUS*, who for the sake
"Of fair-faced Dejanira died, though he,
"In death, upon his foe venged himself terribly.

"And yon is *PHOLUS*, once so full of ire. 9
"He, in the midst, that on his breast doth gaze,
"Is *CHIRON* sage, Achilles' foster-sire.
"In thousands round the Foss they ever race
"Shooting their shafts on whoso would displace
"Himself from th' Blood, more than his crimes permit."
Then, as we neared the Beasts of rapid pace,
CHIRON drew forth an arrow, and some whit
Sweeping back from his jaws his beard with th' notch of it,

Bared his huge mouth, and each companion 10
Accosting, thus observed: "Are ye possest
"How he *behind* stirs what he treads upon,
"Not as The Dead are wont?" But nearer prest
My gentle Guide, and, standing at his chest

Where the two natures in his form unite,
Said: "True, he lives; and it is my behest
To show him, sole of men, this Vale of Night—
Him, whom Necessity induces, not Delight!"

"And this new office unto me is given,
" (No Robber more than he,) by ~~One~~ I say
"Who now sings halleluiah in High Heaven.
" So, by ~~Her~~ goodness, who doth move and stay
"My steps in this rough road, grant us, I pray,
"One, to be trusted, of thy Centaurs there,
"Who to the Ford may point us out the way,
"And on his back my fellow-traveller bear,
"For he no Spirit is to tread the tracks of air."

Then, on his right breast *CHIRON* bent him, and 12
To *Nessus* spake: "Return and give them guide;
"And, if thou chance upon another band,
"Keep them aloof." So, by his trusty side,
Curved we along the crimson-seething Tide
Where shriekt the scalded Sprites. Many thereunder
Steep't to their very *eyebrows* I espied;
Whence the huge Centaur spake, to ease my wonder:
"These be the Tyrants who to bloodshed took and plunder,

“ All rueing now their merciless savag’ry, 13
“ Here ALEXANDER,—DIONYSIUS there
“ Who brought such bitter years on Sicily.
“ And yonder forehead, with its raven hair,
“ Is AZZOLINO: that, with the locks more fair,
“ OBIZZO D’ESTÈ, whom assuredly
“ His stepson child slew in the Upper Air.”
To the Poet then I turned, who made reply :
“ Nay; *here* let him be first, and second Leader I.”

Brief way beyond, skirting the Bubbling Moat, 14
The Centaur paused, and pointed out to me
Souls who were issuant far as to the *throat*.
Then showing me a Shade, all solitary,
“ THAT ONE, in God’s own bosom stabbed,” said he,
“ The heart still venerated on the Thames.”
Soon, extant from the wave, more did I see
Who downward to the *breast* exposed their frames,
Full many of whom I knew, and could have called their
names.

Thus shallow and more shallow grew the blood, 15
Until at last it covered but their feet;
And there we took our passage through the flood.
Fording, the Centaur said: “ This River of Heat

“As thou hast seen it still in depth retreat
“Upon the curve we’ve past, so more and more
“Its depths decline until again they meet
“Believe me, on the other curve, where sore
“The deep-dipt Tyrants fierce their cruelties deplore.

“*There* Divine Justice lays His venging hand 16
“On PYRRHUS, and on SEXTUS: there doth He
“Wreak Him on ATTILA who to every land
“Was as a scourge; and there eternally
“Wrings He out tears, by the Heated Tide set free,
“From RINIER of CORNETO who, afar
“And nigh, with RINIER PAZZO, wantonly
“Loost on the Highways brigandage and war.”

Which said, he back returned, and sole recrost the bar.

C A N T O X I I I .

NOT yet had *Nessus* reacht the other side 1
Afore we entered on a *FOREST*, where
Path there was trodden none, our steps to guide.
No verdant leaves, but grisly-hued are there :
No glossy boughs, but gnarl'd with many a knare :
No fruits, but only poison-galls it yields.
No rougher thicket grows, nor denser lair
Twixt Cècina and Cornèto, where the bields
Of the savage wild beasts are, that shun the cultured fields.

Here 'tis the loathly *HARPIES* roost, by whom 2
The Trojans from the Strophadès were chas'd
With dismal presage of impending doom.
Perching hook-claw'd, huge-wing'd, and human-fac'd,
They swell their crops with horrid plumes disgrac'd,
And baleful dirges on the strange trees sing.
And now the Gentle Master : " Ere thou hast
" To cross this Wood, know thou art entering "
(Thus he began to say) " into the *SECOND RING* ;

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“ And there thou wilt remain until we reach 3

“ The Direful Sand ; so, be observant, when

“ Thou’lt see what will give credence to my speech.”

Sounds now I heard, that seemed like groans of men,

But, strange ! who uttered them were not in ken :

Wherefore I stopt, and all perplexèd stood.

I think he thought that I was thinking then

These many cries came from a multitude

Who, scared at our approach, had hidden in the Wood ;

For thereupon the Master thus upspake : 4

“ If from this Shrub some little twig be torn,

“ Thy wildered thoughts will sift them of mistake.”

Then, putting forth my hand, from a great thorn

I snapt a spray,—a tiny shooting horn,—

Whereat : “ Why wound me so ? ” outcried the Tree.

And lo ! again the piteous voice forlorn

Gusht with its inky gore : “ Why rend’st thou me ? ”

“ Nay : is there ne’er a tinge of pity left in thee ? ”

“ Men were we once, chang’d now to Trunks and Boles ;

“ Yet more compassion surely might attend 5

“ Thine act were we but only Serpents’ souls ! ”

Ev’n as a green brand, lighted at one end,

Spurts at the other sap, and forth doth send

A hiss of wind ; so, from the shoot I'd cropt,
Did blood and words together ooze and blend ;
Till from my hands upon the ground I dropt
The tip that I had pluckt, and terror-stricken stopt.

“O wounded Soul ! had he believed in time,” 6
(Thus unto him I heard the Sage advert,)
“The thing he saw enwritten in my Rhyme,
“'Gainst thee he ne'er had stretcht a hand to hurt :
“But so past credence seemed what I assert
“I put him to the deed which now I mourn.
“Howbeit here inform him who thou wert ;
“So will he do thee some amend, in turn,
“Freshening thy fame on Earth, when thither he return.”

Therewith the Trunk : “So luring sweet thy tongue
“I cannot choose but speak ; and be not ye 7
“Irkt if a little I my words prolong.
“I am THE MAN who held the either key
“Of Frederick's heart, and who so silently
“Lockt and unlockt it, that I kept moreo'er
“Nigh all excluded from its secrecy :
“And to the glorious charge such faith I bore,
‘ My sleep I lost—yea, even my very life outwore.

“ But She, the common death, the curse of Courts, 8
“ Who never turned her harlot eyes away
“ From Cæsar’s dwelling,—She, with base reports,
“ Infamed all hearts against me, so that they,
“ Flaming, inflamed Angustus, till my sway
“ Was turned to grief, my honours to disgust.
“ Then my indignant soul, upon a day,
“ Thinking by death to mock at his distrust,
“ Made me, most just of men, toward myself unjust.

“ But by these new-got leaves—not the old life 9
“ I dashed away—I swear to you that I
“ Ne’er to my Worthy Lord was false. Yet if
“ One of you should regain the Upper Sky,
“ O, re-exalt my fallen memory
“ Still lying prostrate under Envy’s blow.”
Pausing—“ Slip not thine opportunity,
“ Now while he rests,” the Poet whispered low,
“ But speak and ask, if more it listeth thee to know.”

“ Nay: but do *Thou* implore him to impart 10
“ Whatever thou mayst think were best for me,”
(I answered him;) “ I cannot!...for my heart
“ With pity is too full!” Then, recommencing, he

Thus spoke: " So may this Man fulfil for thee
" Freely thy wish, and all thy qualms appease,
" O Captived Soul, how cometh it to be,
" Tell us, (if, peradventure, thou shalt please,)
" That Souls are prison-bound in knotted boughs like these

" And tell us, if thou canst, this thing beside, 11
" If ever any from the imprisonment
" Of these same limbs escape?" The Trunk then sigh'd
A mighty breath, and the wind that forth it sent
Changing to words, in such-like sounds found vent :—
" Briefly shall ye be answered as is fit.
" When from the Body the fierce Soul hath rent
" Its passage out, and of its husk is quit,
" Straight to this *SEVENTH GULF* Minos down-hurleth it.

" Then, cast into this Copse, so it falls out 12
" That where Chance flingeth it, there, like a seed
" Of spelt, it lies; till, rooting, up doth sprout
" A shrub or forest wilding. With fell greed
" The *HARPIES*, after, on its foliage feed,
" Giving the pangs they cause—a passage-way.
" Yet we, like the rest, at last shall go indeed
" To fetch, but never wear, our garbs of clay;
" For, 'tis not meet men have what once they've flung away."

“Then shall we all hither our Bodies trail, 13

"In this sad Wood to be for aye suspended,

" Each to the tree that is his Soul's dark jail."

Deeming some further discourse it intended,

Still to the Talking Trunk we had attended,

When, as a hunter heareth more and more

Nighing the very spot where he has wended

The din of hunting hounds and hunted boar,

So, thro' the crash of boughs, we heard the startling roar.

And lo ! stark-naked and with briars torn,

14

Came bursting Two, upon the leftward side,

Who, in their headlong haste, smasht every thorn.

“Now unto Death, to Death !” the Foremost cried ;

The Other, flagging and outstrip, replied :

"LANO, thy legs were none so apt to run

"Once on a day at Toppo's tilting-tide!"

Which gasped—perchance from failing breath, anon,

He dropt into a Bush, and Bush and he grew one.

But on, on, after them, thus nude and ript,

I 5

Bayed many a black and eager-breathing hound,

Fleeter than greyhouuds from the leash new-slipt.

And into him, there crouchen on the ground

They fixt their fangs, tore him with many a wound.

Then off, in shreds, his wretched members haled.

Hell xiii.] [Www.librof.com.cn](http://www.librof.com.cn) THE SPENDTHRIFTS.
130-151.

[Circle vii. Belt 2.
Violent to Self.

Leading me by the hand, my Guide then found
The ravaged Bush, which—tho' it nought availed—
Forth from its bleeding rifts most pitifully wailed.

"LAPO DA SANT' ANDRÈA," it exclaimed, 16

“What hast thou gain’d by making me thy screen?

“ Why for thy guilty life should I be blamed ? ”

Bent o'er the Bush, my Guide: "And who'st thou been

“Pouring from many vents such dolorous teen?”

With a gush of blood it sighed : " Kind Spirits, ye

"By whom my shameful mangling hath been seen,

“O gather up the leaves thus stript from me,

And lay them by the foot of their sad parent-tree !

"Mine was the City that for the Baptist chang'd 17

"Her earlier Patron: So the god alway

“ Will plague her with his Art to be reveng’d !

"Nay, were there not some relic to this day

"Extant of him by Arno's crossing, they

"The Burghers who rebuilt her battle-proof

"Over the ruins left by Attila,

"Vainly had laboured in their *saint's* behoof.

"I AM THE MAN WHO MADE A GIBBET OF HIS ROOF."

CANTO XIV.

LOVE of my native land constraining me, 1
I gave his leaves, upgathering them with care,
To him now hoarse with clamouring. Onward we
Then past, and to the Boundary did fare
Between the *SECOND* and the *THIRD BELT*, where
A horrible form of Justice was beheld.
Clearlier to tell the marvel, I declare
That now our course towards a Plain we held,
Which from its barren bosom every plant repell'd.

As the Red Ditch girded the Gloomful Wood, 2
So here the Wood engarlanded that Lande,
Right on whose outer margin now we stood.
'Twas all one stretch of deep and arid sand,
Not otherwise than that which Cato's band
Trod, when the Libyan Desert parcht their flight.
O Venging God! how should Thy wreakful hand
Be held in awe by all who read aright
The things that now I saw revealed unto my sight!

Herd upon herd, the naked Souls I saw

3

All weeping sore their miserable doom,

Each herd subjected to a different law.

For on the ground supine were lying some

Sundry were sitting, cramp't in little room ;

Whilst others ranged about incessantly.

And these were most that never ceast to roam ;

Those least, who to their torments down did lie,

Albeit they loost their tongues to far more bitter cry.

And over all the *SAND-WASTE*, flittering slow

4

Down dropt broad flakes of flame, as, in the high'r
Folds of the Alps, down-sails the windless snow.

In tropic India once such tufts of fire

Did Alexander see, falling entire

Upon his marching legions : wherefore he

With timely providence did straight require

His squadrons stamp the soil desistlessly,

So each jet as it fell was quencht more easily.

But here the Fiery Fall those souls did feel

5

Came down perennial ; while the Sandy Plain

Thereby, like tinder under flint and steel,

Was set a-singe, for doubling of their pain.

And there they all, under that Blistering Rain,

(As dancers do when turning and returning,)
Tossed to and fro their arms, and pluckt amain
With miserable hands, for quiet yearning,
To fling from off their forms the freshly-fallen burning.

“ O, Conqueror Thou of all—save the defiant 6
“ Demons,” quoth I, “ who at the Gate did dare
“ To bar thy entry,—who is yonder Giant
“ That scarcely seemeth for the fire to care,
“ Lying all writhen yet obdurate there,
“ As one the Shower never melloweth?”
But he himself, soon as he grew aware
I askt of him, blurted with impious breath:
“ Such as I was in life, such am I still in death!

“ Tho’ Jove wear out his Workman, from whose hand
“ To dash me dead, long centuries ago, 7
“ He snatcht exasperate his blasting-brand;
“ Tho’ He wear out, in turn, the others who
“ Swelt in dark Mongibello’s stithy too,
“ Howling, ‘ *Help, Vulcan, Help,*’ as in the Fight
“ Of Phœbra once he howled,—ev’n then, altho’
“ He hurl at me his bolts with all his might,
“ No victim’s cringing cry shall give his soul delight! ”

Hell xiv.] *THE GIANT BLASPHEMER.* [Circle vii. Belt 3.
61-81. www.motocli.com/en

He ceast. When straightway, answering him, My Guide
Spake with a force I had not heard before: 8
“O CAPANEUS! because that this thy pride
Is still untamed, thou art tormented more!
“But rave thou on! Hell hath no pang so sore
To rack thee like thine own self-torturing rage!”
Then, turning unto me with accent low’r
And kindlier lip, subjoined the Gentle Sage:
“That was One of The Seven who war with Thebes did
wage;

“Who held, and feigns to hold, God in disdain. 9
“Howbeit the fittest trappings for his breast
Are his own curst despites. But now again
Follow thou me, and have a caution lest
Upon the Scorching Sand thy footsteps rest:
“Nay, hold thee by the Wood closelier than ever.”
Speaking no word, then to a point we prest
Where, from the Forest, gusht a little River
So red—its sanguine hue in thought still makes me shiver!

Even as forth from Bulicamè glides 10
That little vaporous runnel, which the band
Of wanton women afterward divides;
So, lapsing on, across the Plain of Sand,

This Crimson Brook up-stream'd. Its Channel and
Its Banks—on both their slopes—appeared as they
Were made of stone; while, upon either hand,
The Bank-tops seemed the same, forming a way
Whereby alone I guessed our onward passage lay.

“Mid all the rest that I to thee have shewn

11

“Since we together entered The Wide Gate,

“Whose ample threshold is denied to none,

“Nought hast thou seen, so wondrous to relate,

“Like to this Stream, which, in its present state,

“Quenches above itself the Cascant Fire.”

Such were my Leader's words. Whereupon straight
I hungerly did crave him and require
To grant the food for which he'd given the desire.

“Sits in the midmost sea, a Land all waste,”

12

He answered thus,—“which men have clepèd Crete,

“Under whose King the Olden World lived chaste.

“And there a Mountain rises, once the seat

“Where streams and happy groves were wont to meet,

“Ida, by name; now left—a thing grown stale.

“This for a trusty cradle and retreat

“Chose Rhea for her Son, making the Vale

“Resound with many cries to drown his infant wail.

Hell xiv.] THE FOUR RIVERS OF HELL. [Circle vii. Belt 3.
103-126. www.hathitrust.org Violent to God.

"Caved in that Mountain stands an Image. There
"With back to Damietta—huge and old— 13

"He faces Rome, as she his mirror were.

“ His head is shapen of refinèd Gold;

"Silver his breast and arms, of purest mould;

“While all below is Brazen to the cleft.

"Thence he is choicest Iron to behold,

“ Save the right foot, and that of Clay is weft,

“ Yet standeth he on it more than upon the left.

"From all these parts, rent by a fissure—save 14

"The Gold alone—gush tears, which into one

“Collect, then stream away, and pierce the Cave.

"After, from rock to rock they ripple on

“Feeding sad *ACHERON*, *STYX*, and *PHLEGETHON*;

“Till, by this narrow duct, downward they bore

“Unto the deep where further depth is none,

"And there they form *Cocytus*. And how sore

“ A Pool that is thou’lt see,—I need not tell thee more ! ”

Then I to him: "If from Our World thus sinks 15

"The present Brook, why is it only found

"Here on this Forest's marge?" And he: "Methinks

“Thou apprehendest that This Place is round,

"And, tho' it be that we thro' Hell's profound

"Have journeyed far, still to the leftward bent

“Not yet hast thou thro’ all its circuit wound.
“Wherefore, if novel sights to us be lent,
“Scarce need it to thy face call up new wonderment.”

Yet still I questioned, speaking once again: 16

“Master, but where is *PHLEGETHON*? And where
“Is *LETHE* too? Of one thou dost remain
“All silent; while the other would appear
“Drawn from The Old Man’s ever-dropping tear.”
Hereat: “In all thy questions,” he replied,
“Thou givest me indeed right happy cheer;
“And yet the boiling of The Bloody Tide
“Might, as to one at least, full answer have supplied.

“As for the other—*LETHE*—that thou wilt 17

“Ere long, forth of this hollow Tomb survey,
“There, where the Spirits go to wash their guilt
“When penitence hath purged their sins away.
“But now the time has come,” he then did say,
“To quit this Wood. These Banks, before us spread,
“Are free of heat, and offer passage-way;
“For there the fiery flakes are quencht o’erhead:
Yet, none the less, do thou still follow close my tread.”

C A N T O X V.

BY one of these Stone Bankments on we bore,
Where from the cadent fire both flood and pier
Were sheltered by the Vapours hovering o'er.
As are the seabanks which the Flemings rear
On th' sands twixt Bruges and Wissant, out of fear
Of the great Ocean's inrush ; or as those
The Paduans raise from injury to sheer
Their burgs and farms, ere Brenta overflows
Brimmed with the melted mass of Chiarentana's snows ;

So were these Bankments, running straight and level,
(Tho' less in height and breadth,) to bound the Brook,
By whomsoe'er constructed, God or Devil. 2
By one our onward journey now we took,
And so, at last, the Gloomful Wood forsook,
Which, in a while, so far behind us shrank,
That I could scarce, with back-reverting look,
Discern it more ; when, sudden, rank on rank
We met a troop of Spirits hurrying longside the bank.

Following in line they came, and full as soon 3
 As each approacht, into our eyes he peer'd,
 Just as at night-fall under a new moon
 Men stare at one another; or, as a sear'd
 And agèd tailor stares, with head up-rear'd
 And puckered brows, threading a needle's eye.
 Thus by that company gaz'd at, as they near'd
 I was agnised of One, who instantly
 Caught at my skirts, and "Oh! What wonder here!" did cry.

Then reacht he up his arms to me, whilst I 4
 With fixèd stare scanned his baked lineament,
 Which, albeit scorcht with fire so terribly,
 Was all too well remembered. So, I bent
 My face to his, and back this answer sent:
 "Oh! SER BRUNETTO, art thou here?" And he:
 "Nay but, my Son—ah! be not ill content
 If thy LATINI turn aback with thee
 "But for a little space, and quit this varlety."

"With all my heart I do beseech you so," 5
 Cried I; "and, if ye would I sit with ye,
 "I will, an't pleases Him with whom I go."—
 "Ah! Son, whoever of this herd," quoth he,

“ Stops but one instant, a whole century
“ Thereafter must he lie unfanned in the flame.
“ So on ! I’ll follow at the skirts of thee
“ Till that I afterward rejoin yon same
“ Treaders who ever trudge, wailing their endless shame.”

Not daring quit the Causeway for the Plain 6

Level to step with him, I stoopt my head
Like one who walks with reverence, Then again
To me : “ What Fortune or what Fate hath led
“ Thee here-below, before thy date ? ” he said,
“ And who is This that sheweth thee the way ? ”
“ In the Fair Life above,” I answerèd,
“ Before mine age was ripe, I went astray
“ In a DARK VALLEY—but, the morn of yesterday

“ I left it; yet was back returning when 7

“ I met with Him, who, by such path as this,
“ Now leads me home again ! ” He answer’d then :
“ *Follow thy Star*, and so thou wilt not miss
“ The Glorious Port, unless, indeed, amiss
“ I judged of thee when that Fair Life was mine :
“ But so untimely died I—else, I wis,
“ Seeing that Heaven to thee was so benign,
“ I gladly had cheered whatever work was thine.

“But now that thankless and malignant folk, 8

“Who down from Fesulè of old did pour,

“And still smacks of the mountain and the rock,

“Ev’n for thy very virtues more and more

“Will rage against thee; and no marvel!—for

“*Figs among bitter crabs bear sorry fruit.*

“Purblind hath Fame proclaim’d them from of yore,

“Proud, avaricious, envious. Look to’t

Thou cleanse thee of their ways, and shun them branch
and root.

“Thy fortune hath for thee such honour as 9

“That Either Side will hunger after thee;

“Howbeit, from the goats far be the grass!

“Nay, let the base-born beasts of Fesulè

“Make litter of themselves, nor touch the tree

“(If such upon their filth-heap ever thrive,)

“Sprung from that sacred seed which anciently

“The Romans left, and which did still survive

“When that the place became Malignancy’s own hive.”

And I returned: “Could I my wish fulfil 10

“Verily, verily, from thy human part

“Thou hadst not yet been banisht. For, O! still

“Lives in my mind, and touches now my heart,

“ The dear good image, that thou ever wert,
 “ When like a kindly father, day by day,
 “ Thou taught’st me in the world the priceless art
 “ How man becomes immortal! Whence, alway,
 “ Whiles I have breath, my tongue its gratitude shall say.

“ As to thy bodements—them will I write down 11
 “ And keep for **One**, with other texts beside,
 “ (If e’er I come to Her) to comment on.
 “ Albeit, if in naught my conscience chide,
 “ To this extent I in myself confide,
 “ I stand prepared for Fortune’s worst: for know
 “ Such earnest of the ills that I must bide
 “ Is nowise new unto my hearing. So
 “ Let Fortune speed her wheel, the Rustic swing his hoe!”

Thereat my Sapient Guide on his right breast 12
 Half-turn’d him round: then, eyeing me a spell,
 Observed: “ He listeneth best who learneth best!”
 But I pursued: “ O, SER BRUNETTO, tell
 “ Who are the chiefest and most notable
 “ Of these thy comrades, that so numerous teem?”
 And he replied: “ To know of some is well:
 “ But of the rest silence would best beseem,
 “ Since time would scantily serve for so prolonged a theme.”

“ Know, then, in brief, they all were high-reputed 13
“ Priests and Learn’d Men of large celebrity,
“ Whom, when on Earth, the self-same sin polluted.
“ Here PRISCIAN roams with this sad company,
“ And FRANCIS OF ACCORSO; likewise HE,
“ (If thou hast any wish such scum to greet,)
“ Who left his nerves, strained to satiety,
“ By Bacchiglionè, when from Arno’s seat
“ The Servants’ Servant forced his crimes to make retreat.

“ More would I add, but now no longer must 14
“ Our walk and converse be; for yond I see
“ Arising from the Sand fresh clouds of dust,
“ Nor may I sort with such a company.
“ Farewell! my ‘Treasure’ I command to thee,
“ It will preserve my name—I ask no more! ”
Then turn’d he round and ran, and seem’d to be
A Racer for Verona’s pallium, nor
Lookt he as one who lost but who the victory bore.

CANTO XVI.

NOW was I listening, whither we had come, 1
Unto the far-off booming of the tide,
Which, with the murmur of a bee-hive's hum,
To the next Circle plunged ; when lo ! I spied
Three Shadows from their Fellow-Shades divide,
Where dript the Plague of Blistering Agony,
And run towards us, each of whom outcried :
“ Stay thee, O thou, who by thy garb shouldst be
“ Native to our own City of Iniquity.”

Ah me ! what burns I saw on all their parts, 2
Recent and old, deep-eaten by the flames :
It grieves me still to think upon their smarts !
But, hearing them thus crying in their shames,
My Teacher, rounding unto me, exclaims :
“ Here tarry, for to These is courtesy due ;
“ Nay, did the Fire thus falling on their frames
“ Not blister so, I might exhort you too
“ To haste rather to them than have them haste to you.”

So stopt we; when again their old lament 3
All Three renewed; till, coming where we were
They formed a wheel, and round rotating went.
And even as wrestlers, sleekt with oil, and bare,
Watch warely for their grip and vantage ere
They come to buffets, or in grapple meet;
So upon me these Shadows fixt their stare
As round and round they circled 'neath the heat,
With faces one way turned, and one way turned their feet.

“ Whether that thou dost utterly contemn 4
“ Us and our prayers, on these loose Sands of shame,
“ With our charred aspects sere,” cried One of them,
“ We know not; nevertheless, O let our fame
“ Move thee, thou Living Wanderer, to proclaim,
“ Who art that treadest Hell thus torture-free.
“ He, in whose steps I follow, and whose frame
“ Is skin-scathed as thou see’st—peeled tho’ he be
“ Was droughtier once in deeds than might be deemed by
thee.

“ Grandson of Good Gualdrada, he was nam’d 5
“ The GUIDOQUERRA, being in his day
“ Alike in battle and in council fam’d.
“ The Other, who behind me works his way,
“ Was TEGGH’IO ALDOBRANDI, who for aye

“ In grateful memory should be held above.
“ And I, in torment twixt them middleway,
“ Am JACOPO RUSTICUCCI, and could prove
“ That most my shrewish wife me to this evil drove.”

Had I been shrouded from the fire one whit 6
To leap into their midst I had not spurn'd ;
Ay ! and methinks my Guide had suffered it !
But since I should have been all scorcht and burn'd,
Fear overcame my wish that inly yearn'd
To have them at my bosom greedily gripp'd.
So unto them full reverently I turn'd
And said : “ When that my Lord and Master lipp'd
“ Words which implied that feet of Souls like ye up-ripp'd

“ These Torrid Sands, O then, not scorn, but sorrow 7
“ For your condition, wounded so my heart
“ As 'twill not heal until a far to-morrow !
“ I of your City am : and oft with zest
“ Have heard and told your honour'd names and gest,
“ Fondly remembered. Now I leave the Gall
“ And for the true Sweet-Apples go in quest,
“ This Trusty Guide has promist,—tho' withal
“ Far as The Centre first it needeth me to fall.”

The same Shade answer'd then these words of mine :

“Long may thy Living spirit guide thee well, 8

“And long, long, after thee, thy glory shine !

“Yet, in our City now, I prithee tell

“If Public Worth and Private Virtue dwell,

“As once they wont, or utterly are fled ?

“For One, BORSIERÈ, late condemned to Hell,

“Who yonder with our Fellow-mates doth tread,

“Backs us with qualms know by all that he hath said.”

Alack ! An upstart race with sudden gains

9

Hath bred, O Florence, such excess and pride

In thee, till now thou shrikest in thy pains !

This with up-lifted face aloud I cried.

But, at my burst, all Three each other eyed

Like men who must a bitter truth allow.

“If at so little cost,” they all replied,

“Others thou canst appease, O ! happy thou,

“Dowered with such weight of words as satisfy us now.

“Yet, if indeed thou do evade at last

10

“These Dusky Realms, and see again the bright

“And beauteous stars,—when thou recall’st the Past

“And dwellest, peradventure with delight,

“On whatsoever may have met thy sight,

“O! do thou also speak of us to men!”

This said, they brake their wheel, and took to flight
As tho’ with wingèd heels, and vanisht then
Beyond eye-reach quicker than one could say *Amen!*

With that, it pleased my Master onward go,

11

And straight I followed in his steps arear.

But far we had not journeyed thus, when lo!

The din of falling waters roared so near

That one another’s voice we scarce could hear.

Like as that stream—(the first to pour its tide

Into the sea, with its own Channel clear,

Of all the many streams that downward glide,

Eastward from Monte Viso, on th’ Appenines left side,

Which men, at first, The Quiet Waters call,

12

Ere at Forlì, down in the lowland plain,

That name it loses)—doth, with headlong fall,

Bellow above San Benedetto’s fane,

(Which well a thousand Brethren might contain,)

Loud in the hills rebooming ; ev’n so bounded

O’er a sheer Precipice, roaring amain,

The Ruddy Stream which, as below it grounded,

Deafened well-nigh our ears, so thunderous it resounded.

I had a cord, all round about me tied

13

Wherewith, upon a time, I haply thought
To take The Leopard of the spotted hide.

This from my loins I wholly now unwrought,
Even as my Master bade me and besought,
And gave to him, all in a coil up-wound.

Then, facing to the right, with hand back-raught
He hurled it far away, over the bound
Of the Great Precipice into the vast profound.

Whereon, much musing at my Master's act,

14

I to myself: "Now, of a surety,
"Some marvellous, new, and never-heard-of fact
"Unto so strange a signal must reply,
"Which thus my Master follows with his eye."
Oh ! how exceeding careful should men be
With them who not alone the deed espy,
But, with their fine sagacities, even see
The very inmost thoughts ! For thus he answered me :

"Yes: what I wait will soon come up, i' sooth,

15

"And, while thou'rt maz'dly dreaming, to thine eye
"Show palpable!"—Now, reader, to that truth
Which wears the look and likeness of a lie
Man, if he can, should close his lips. For why ?

It brings him shame all blameless tho' he be !
Yet here keep silence ne'er a whit can I :
Nay, by the notes of this my Comedy,
As it find favour in men's sight, I swear to thee

That thro' the gross dark air I now beheld 16
A Shape come swimming up, of monstrous size,
So direful strange it verily had quell'd
The stoutest heart with horror ! In such wise
Rising it came, from Hell's profundities,
As when a diver, who hath dived to find
Reefs, or aught else that in the deep sea lies,
Whereon his anchor's fluke is intertwin'd,
Swims back with arms outspread and feet up-drawn behind.

CANTO XVII.

“ **B**EHOOLD the Monster with the deadly sting, 1

“ That breaks arms, walls, yea, mountains passes o'er :

“ Behold the beast that tainteth everything ! ”

Such were my Leader's words, as up did soar

The Shape he beckt with signs to come ashore

Near to the Causeway's end. Whereat the rank

And monstrous form of *FRAUD* toward us bore ;

Then, on the edge, with head and bust down-sank,

Albeit his pointed tail he drew not on the bank.

His face was as the face of a just man, 2

So mild it seemed, and outwardly so fair ;

But all the rest into a reptile ran.

Two paws he had, to the arm-pits sleek with hair,

Whilst breast, and back, and both his haunches were

Painted with nodes and shields. Tartar ne'er made,

Nor Turk, on tissued cloth, colours more rare

Broid'ring in hues of niceliest-varied shade ; 3

Nor such upon her skeins Arachnè never laid.

As barges, moored on shore, have frequently 3
One part aground, one floating on the bay ;
Or—in the pools of glutton Germany—
As beavers crouch, ready to seize a prey ;
So on the stone Rim of the Sand-waste lay
That worst of monsters. Midway, in the murk
Of the great Gulf, his glitterand tail a-sway
Full many a time up-writhed its threatful fork,
Arm'd with a scorpion's sting for his doubly-treacherous
work.

Quoth then my Guide : " Now must our way be fetcht,
" In somewhat tortuous sort, down to yon Rim, 4
To reach the Guileful Monster there outstretcht."
So, by the right, descending to the brim,
We skirted, for ten steps, the Gulf's extreme,
Thuswise avoiding the hot-scorching strand
And Fall of Fire. But, when we came to him,
I saw—not distant far—a close-crampt band,
Nigh to the dizzy edge, all seated on the Sand.

" Of this *THIRD BELT*," then said my Guide to me, 5
" That to the full thy knowledge may extend,
" Go thou, and learn Their circumstance. But see
" Thy words be brief ! Meanwhile, till back thou wend,
" I with this Beast will parley, that he lend

“ For our transportance down, his shoulders strong.”
 So, by the *SEVENTH CIRCLE'S* outer bend
 I still continued, journeying along,
 All, all alone to where those gloomy Sitters throng.

And lo ! I saw there welled, with frequent burst, 6
 Rheum from their lids, which bitter grief supplied ;
 Whilst, all in vain, with hands alternate, first
 On one side, then upon the other side,
 They each kept warding off the falling tide
 Of Fire, or th' torrid Soil. Not otherwise,
 Under the burning heats of Summertide,
 Now with its paw, now with its muzzle, tries
 A dog to scratch off fleas, or ticks, or torturing flies.

Then gazing in the face of divers, whom 7
 The painful Fire still drifted down upon,
 To learn, perchance, who suffered such a doom,
 Look how I would, I recognisèd none !
 Yet saw I from the neck of every one
 There hung a Pouch, which on his breast did lie,
 In certain colours and devices done ;
 And thereupon fixing a hungry eye,
 Each seemed upon its form to feast continually.

But nearer come, as I about did glance, 8
One Purse I saw, bearing, in field of OR,
An AZURE LION's ramp and cognisance.
But scarce I'd markt, roving my ken still more,
Another, GULES, as red as blood, that bore
The semblance of a GOOSE, whiter than curd,
Than One of them,—who an ARGENT wallet wore
Blazed with a big SOW AZURE,—took the word
And to my questioning looks this answer back preferred :

“ *Thou here? Begone! Yet, since of life unreft,* 9
“ *Know that VITILIANO, by-and-by,*
“ *Will neighbour me again—upon my left.*
“ *A Paduan, mid these Florentines, am I,*
“ *Who thunder in mine ears the often cry,*
“ *O that the Prince of Usance would bring quick*
“ *His purse with TRIPLE GOATS!*” Then all awry
He screwed his mouth, and forth at me did stick
His lolling tongue, just as a steer its nose doth lick.

But, apprehensive lest my waiting Chief 10
Might, with my longer tarriance, be offended,
After he'd bidden that my stay be brief,
Back from those weary Souls my way I wended,
Leaving them to their toils that never ended,

Flinging the flames from shoulder, side, and paunch.
 When lo ! I found my Master high ascended
 Already on the Dreadful Monster's haunch,
 Whence, greeting me, he cried : " Be strenuous now, and
 staunch !

" Henceforth by such-like stairs we must descend. 11
 " So up !—in front—whilst I bestraddle it
 " Midway, and evil from its tail forfend."
 As men with ague, (ere the shivering fit
 Comes on,) ev'n at the *sight* of shade will sit
 Quaking, with livid nails ; so, at this word,
 Shook also I, with fear and trembling smit,
 Till shame at length my sinking cheer restor'd,
 Which makes a servant bold before a valorous lord.

Up-clambering then upon its shoulders vast, 12
 " Grip thou me firm," I would have utterèd,
 But utterance came there none. Howbeit, at last,
 He who had othertimes my woes be-sted,
 Soon as I settled down, with arms aspread,
 Belted my body in his strong embrace.
 And then, " Now, GERYON, away !" he said ;
 " Yet see thy bouts be large, and slow thy pace :
 " Think what a pack thou bear'st, unwonted in this place!

As slowly, slowly, backing out to sea, 13

Ships slide from shore, so thence the Monster sheer'd;

Till, when he found himself at play and free,

Turning his tail where late his chest appear'd,

He stretcht it out, then, eel-like off career'd,

With his huge paws gathering the air again.

Not more, I ween, was Phaëton afear'd

When, charioting the skies, he dropt the rein

That fired the firmament, as yet appeareth plain;

Nor, when the faithless wax began to run 14

Down his unfeathering loins, wilder affright

Felt Icarus, whilst his Father cried, 'O son,

'Ill is the way thou goest,' than was *my* plight

Finding me in mid-air, and every sight

Quencht save the Fraudful Beast. With many a wheel,

Slow, slow, he swum with ever-deepening flight;

Yet, as he gyred, no motion did I feel

Save from the draft that pusht against my face and heel.

Ere long, upon the right, I heard ascending 15

The sound of water that with hideous roar

Crasht to its pool. Then I, my head extending,

Lookt down, but th' chasm only appall'd me more,

For flames I saw and heard lamentings sore;

Wherefore I back recoiled and croucht for fear.

Then saw I,—what I had not seen before,—
That, circling round, we sank, for now full clear
Successive scenes of woe on every side drew near.

As when a falcon, long upon the wing, 16

(If haply neither bird nor lure he see,
Spite the vext fowler's cry, “What! Faltering? ”)

Down, with a hundred wheels, stoops wearily
To where he soared from swift, then spleenfully
Far from his master percheth; even so
Slowly down-circled *GERYON*, till free
He set us at the sheer Cliff's base below,
When straight he darted off like a bird-bolt from a bow.

C A N T O X V I I I .

HERE is a Place, down in Hell's lower deeps,
 Called *MALEBOLGE*, all stone and of the stain
 Of iron, like the Wall that round it sweeps.
 Full in the middle of this cursèd plane,
 Yawneth a deep wide *WELL*, (as I explain
 Hereafter, touching on its site.) Now all
 The interspace, which therefore must remain,
 Formeth a *CIRCLE* twixt the Well and Wall,
 Which in its bounds includes *TEN PITS* concentrical.

As is the look presented by the ground
 About a well-defencèd fortress, where
 Moat after moat its battlements en-round,
 Such is the aspect of the Trenches there.
 And, as the fortress' bridges, arch'd in air,
 Spread from its Gates to the last Mole outside ;
 So, from the base of the Great Barrier,
 Long spans of rockage every Pit bestride,
 Down-sloping to the Well, and ending on its side.

2

Shaken from *GERRON'S* haunch, in such a Place 3

We found ourselves ; whereon the Poet drew
Toward the left, I following pace for pace.

Soon—on our right—new miseries came to view,
New modes of Torment and Tormentors new,
Down in the *FOREMOST PIT* ; wherein were stow'd
Two files of Sinners, all stark naked, who
The near half, as they past, their faces show'd,
And half, the way we went, tho' quicker-stepping, strode.

As they of Rome found, for the pilgrim throng 4

This Year of Jubilee, such expedient
To move the crowding multitudes along,
As that, one way, over The Bridge, all went
Unto Saint Peter's with their faces bent
Toward The Castle, whilst the other way
All faced the Mount : ev'n so the rabblement
Kept fling here ; while hornèd Fiends alway
From both sides, on their backs, with stinging scourges lay.

Ah, how they skipped, the miserable herd, 5

At the first stripe ! Yea, verily, and none
Loitered for any second, or a third !
But, as I went, my gaze alighting on
A certain Shade, instant, I cried : "This one

Hell xviii.] *WWW INIQUITY OF BOLOGNA.* [Circle viii. Pit 1.
42-63. Pandars.

“ I surely lack not knowledge of ? ” And so
I paused my steps to scan him : whereupon
My ever gracious Leader halted too ;
Nay, ev’n some little space suffered me back to go.

But the flogged wretch, thinking to hide his name, 6
Lowered his face—tho’ all in vain—for I :
“ I know thee there ! thou with the looks of shame !
“ Thou art—unless thy features wear a lie—
“ *VENÈDICO CACCIA-NEMICO !* But why
“ Art thou so smartly pickled ? ” Straightway he,
“ Sore loth am I to tell thee,” groaned reply ;
“ But thy clear voice, which brings to memory
“ The world of other days, perforce constraineth me.

“ I am the ruffian Brother who led on 7
“ Fair Ghisola to do the Marquis’ will,
“ Howe’er the tale be bruited. Nor alone
“ I from Bologna come, with tears to fill
“ These precincts, which with us so overspill,
“ That fewer tongues are taught to lip to-day
“ *Sipa, twixt Reno and Savena !* Still,
“ If thou wouldst have more proof of what I say,
“ Only recall how Greed gnaws at our hearts alway ! ”

Hell xviii. ~~64-84.~~ **LIBTO** **TO** **LO** **GO** **ON** **FLOGGED** **BY** **DEMONS.** [Circle viii. Pit 1.
Seducers.

Whiles yet he spake, a Demon with his lash 8
Cut at him, crying : "Pandar thou ! Begone !
"Here be no womenkind for thee to cash !"
Then I returned to my Companion ;
And so we came, after few paces gone,
Where from the Wall a span of rock was cast,
The which full easily up-mounting on
With rightward turn, we, on its ridge, at last
From The External Circles ultimately past.

So, mounting wherebelow the Foss yawned wide, 9
And where the flagellated Souls did pace,
"Now pause, and on thy ken," observed my Guide,
"Let smite the rest of this ill-gender'd race,
"Of whom thou hast not yet beheld the face,
"Since they, like way with us, their steps did urge."
So, from that time-old Bridge, I bent my gaze
Down on the train, who, by the inner verge,
Now t'wards us scurrying came, chased likewise by the
scourge;

Wherewith, unaskt, the kindly Master said : 10
"Behold yon Great One, who, for all his pains
"Yet never condescends a tear to shed !

“ See what a royal port he still retains !
“ JASON is he, who with stout heart and brains,
“ From Colchis reft the Fleece. But, Lemnos’ Isle
“ Touching, as back he sailed—after their swains
“ Had, by the dareful dames, with ruthless bile,
“ Been given up to death—he *there*, with many a wile,

“ Troth-plights, and colourable words soft-spoken, 11
“ Betrayed the maiden, fair Hypsipylè,
(“ Who faith already with her kind had broken,)
“ Then left her childing and forlorn. But he
“ Here, for such wrong, now pays the penalty ;
“ Here too must he atone Medea’s woes.
“ With him go all Seducers. But for thee
“ Let this suffice of the FIRST TRENCH, and those
“ Whom, for the like deceits, its cruel fangs enclose.”

By this we had come, continuing our march, 12
Where the strait gang-way crost the SECOND BANK,
Which, like a buttress, propt the second Arch.
Below we heard a snuffing people rank,
Who, as their nostrils—yea, and mouths—up-drank

The fetid stench, ceast not themselves to knock
With open palms. A reek, that foully stank,
Rose from beneath, encrusting all the rock,
The which both sight and smell full grievously did shock.

But this offenceful ditch to such depth ran 13
That nought suffic'd for prospect, save we went
First to the summit of its Bridge's span ;
Where mounting, when below our eyes were bent,
I saw a tribe all foully feculent
With draff that seem'd from human cesspools clear'd.
Then, when below again my search was sent,
One I beheld with scalp so filth-besmear'd
That whether he were priest or layman scarce appear'd.

But loud he bawled : " Why glare so greedily 14
" On me above my fellows in this slough ? "
" More than the rest I fix thee," answered I,
" For thee, it minds me, have I seen ere now
" With crisper locks at Lucca ! Art not thou
" ALÈSSIO INTÈRMINÈ ? " But,
This only moaned he, drumming on his brow :
" Me thus low down my Flatteries have put,
" Wherewith my fulsome tongue I ne'er enough could glut."

Thereafterward, "Now somewhat further stretch 15
"Thy vision forward,"—thus my Guide commands,
"That so thine eyes yon foul dishevelled wretch,
"May well attain. See how the strumpet stands,
"Now scratching on herself with sullied hands,
"Now crouching in the filth ! THAIS, is she,
"Who paltered to her paramour's demands :
"Much did I pleasure thee ?"—'Nay, *Marvellously* !'
"But away ! Of such our sight hath had satiety.'

C A N T O X I X.

O SIMON MAGUS ! O ye mongering train
His wretched Followers ! ye who prostitute
The things of God for perishable gain,
Things that alone with righteousness should suit,
Now shall my voice, like a loud trumpet, bruit
Your public sentence—toomed with endless loss
Down in this *THIRD* recess ! Already to't
We'd come ; then o'er the Bridge went half-across
To where its middle plumbed the middle of the foss.

Wisdom Supreme ! What large resource hast Thou 2
In Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, in equal store
Meting thy Justice unto all ! For now
I saw the livid rock, on flank and floor,
Full of round Holes, in size not less nor more
Than those of Mine own Beauteous Baptistry
Where stand the Christeners : one of which, moreo'er,
To save a dangered life, full recently
I brake : and may these notes attest mine innocency !

Forth from the mouth of every Hole emerg'd
An Evil-doer's feet and legs—so high
As to the calf—the rest was all submerg'd.

Flames flickered on either sole, whence verily
Their jerking joints had snapt the strongest tie
Of reed or rope, so twitcht they to and fro.
And as on burning oil the flames but lie
Upon the outer surface; even so
Lightly the lambent fire glided from heel to toe.

“Master, who is yon, writhing in agony
“Fiercer than all the others of his kind,
“Whom redder flames seem sucking at?” Thus I,
And he: “If down to him thou hast a mind
“I bear thee, when the Lower slope we find,
“He, his own story, will himself impart.”—
“What pleaseth thee, to that am I resign'd:
“Thou art my Lord and know'st I ne'er depart
“From thine outspoken wish: thou knowest too my heart.”

So crost we to the *FOURTH* of all The Moles;
Then, bearing left, down our descent did make
Where lay the bottom, honeycombed with holes.

Nor did I e'er my Master's hip forsake
Until he brought me to that Sinner's break
Whose twitching legs so told his agony.
“Oh sorry Soul, implanted like a stake
“Thus with thy top below, whoe'er thou be,
“Speak, if thou canst,”—I cried—“Who art thou?
Answer me!”

Near him I stood, like a murderer's confessor, 6
(Who, summoned back, for one bare moment's grace,
Waits the last word of the half-inhumed transgressor,)
When, sudd'n, his voice uprose: “What! Boniface?
“Already here? Already in thy place!
“By sundry years the oracle hath lied,
“As seemeth. Art thou then, in so soon space,
“Cloy'd with that wealth, for which thou first applied
“Thy wits to trick, and then maltreat The Beauteous
Bride?”

As when a man by some response stands routed, 7
Not comprehending it, nor witting how
To meet it with retort, so felt I flouted;
When thus spake VIRGIL: “Quickly tell him now
“‘I'm not, indeed, I'm not the man whom thou

“ ‘*Think’st me to be,*’ ” and I obeyed his hest.

Whereat the Spirit with convulsive throw
Writhèd his feet; then, sighing as distrest,
Said with a voice of grief, “ What then is thy request ?

“ If who I was concerneth thee so sore

8

“ That down yon Bank thou carèdst to proceed,

“ Learn that I once the Mighty Mantle wore :

“ Yea, of *The Bear* I was a son indeed,

“ But over-keen *The Little Bears* to feed,

“ In pocketting means, I here did pocket me.

“ And such my Predecessors as like greed

“ Led to the cursed guilt of simony

“ Here, ‘neath my head, are press’d down in this Cavity.

“ And I, in turn, must take a deeper station

9

“ Soon as he comes, for whom I did at first

“ Misdeem thee, with my startled salutation.

“ But I already longer am immerst,

“ With glowing heels up-turned and head reverst,

“ Than he, with fiery soles, shall planted rest.

“ For, after him, (of uglier deeds accurst,

“ By whom we *both* shall be alike deprest,)

“ One will arrive, The Lawless Pastor Of The West.

“ He like another Jason will arise,
“ As writ in Maccabees. For, verily,
“ As unto that High Priest his sovereign’s eyes
“ Obeisant turned, so to this Priest shall he—
“ The monarch now of France—bend pliantly.”
I know not if I spake in foolish measure
To one already damned, but, “ Answer me,”
I flung him back reply, “ How much of treasure
‘ Was of Saint Peter askt, ere ‘twas Our Saviour’s pleasure

“ To trust the Keys to his arbitrament ?
“ Surely He askt not aught but *Follow Me!*
“ Nay, neither Peter nor The Others went
“ For moneys to Matthias, when that he
“ Was chosen for that part o’ th’ ministry
“ Lost by the soul that thro’ transgression fell.
“ So bide in thy just punishment ; and see,
“ See to thy ill-got wealth that made thee swell
“ ’Gainst Charles !—Ah, perish it and thou alike in Hell

“More,—were it not that reverence for the Keys 12
 “Thou heldest in the Upper Life so glad
“Still checkt me, weightier words I’d use than these.

“ Ye, with your avarice, make the whole world sad,
“ The good abasing, raising up the bad !
“ Ye—Shepherds such as ye—were, sure, foreseen
“ By him who once The Mighty Vision had,
“ When She that sitteth on the Waters, Queen,
“ Was with the Kings of Earth in fornication seen ;

“ She that on earth with Seven Heads did rise, 13
“ And bare Ten Horns to be her witness bold,
“ Long as her Lord had pleasure in her eyes.
“ But ye have made your God silver and gold,
“ Nor differ from the idolators of old
“ Save that they worshipped one,—a hundred ye !
“ Ah, Constantine ! what evils manifold
“ Not thy conversion bred, but what from thee
“ The first rich Father then received for patrimony.”

But all the while as I, with all my force, 14
Sang him these notes, whether 'twas rage did grieve
Or conscience gnaw him, stirring up remorse,
Wildly he spasm'd his joints. I well conceive
It pleased my Guide, so seemed he to receive,
With kindly ear and most complaisant lip,

Mine every utterance, wrung, as I believe,
Forth from my very soul. For he did clip
Me straight within his arms, and, (not upon his hip

As erewhile held, but to his *bosom* graspt,) 15

Back bore me by the way he took before;
Nor did he weary, carrying me thus claspt,
Till to the apex of The Bridge he bore
Which from the Fourth Bank to the Fifth goes o'er ;
Where down he gently set his burthen—not
Ungently, on the steep, sharp rock-way, for
So rough it was, it would have task'd a goat.
Thence, gazing downwards, I beheld another Moat.

C A N T O X X .

HERE sing I novel chastisements; and for
The Twentieth Canto of the First Canzone,
(Which treateth of The Lost For Evermore,) 1
Find argument. The spot that I was on
Being suited well for clearly seeing down
Into the Depth—which ran with tears of woe—
Mute and much-weeping, in the Round Moat, anon
I saw a people come, the rate men go
When chanting litanies, with mournful steps and slow.

But, when they nearer drew, O wondrous sight! 2
I saw, as I my vision did abase,
Each twixt the chin and chest distorted quite:
For to the reins was twisted every face,
And thus reverted, *backward* each did pace,
Because to look before him was denied.
So, peradventure, in some potent case
Of palsy, necks have thus been wrencht and wry'd;
Tho' scarce I credit it, nor e'er the like espied.

Reader!—so may God grant thee grace to reap 3

Full harvest of thy toil,—bethink how here,

At such a sight, I could not choose but weep,

When thus I saw our image drawing near

Turn'd so preposterously that every tear

Bathed the hindparts, down-channelling from the eyes

Certes I wept, leaning upon a pier

Of the hard rock, until mine Escort cries:

“Fool! Piety here lives only when pity dies!

“For who is more condemnable than he 4

“Who harbours pity at the just and right

“Decrees of God? Nay, lift thy brow, and see

“The giant-king Earth swallow'd in the sight

“Of leaguer'd Thebes, all shouting in affright:

“‘Oh! AMPHIARÄUS, whither wouldest thou fall?’

“‘And wherefore art thou fleeing from the fight?’

“Yet stayed he none, but, ruining, rusht withal

“Headlong to Minos down, who cites to judgment all.

“Mark, how he now o'er-looks his shoulder-blade! 5

“And, for he wisht to see too far before,

“Here seëth—ay, and walketh, retrograde.

“ Note too TIRESIAS yonder, who of yore
“ Was chang’d in face and limbs and sex all o’er,
“ From man becoming woman ; nor till when
“ With divination rod he smote once more,
“ In amorous lock convolved, the serpents twain,
“ E’er could he readopt his manly plumes again.

“ Nigh on his paunch comes backling ARUNS, who
“ On Luni’s mountains, where Carrara’s wight 6
“ Tilleth above and tenteth him below,
“ Took up his dwelling ’mong the marbles white,
“ Within an antre vast, whence he had sight
“ Unbounded of the stars and open sea.
“ The next who comes, with loosened tresses quite
“ Covering her bosom, which thou canst not see,
“ And all her hair on the other side, was MANTO. She,

“ Once wandering many lands for many a year, 7
“ At length found resting-place where I was born :
“ Whence, for a while, I please to crave thine ear.
“ ’Twas when her agèd sire from life was torn,
“ And Bacchus’ city fell enslaved, forlorn
“ She roam’d the earth. Now, underneath your skies,

“ In Italy The Beautiful, nigh the bourn
“ Of the great Alps, which above Tyrol rise
“ To shut out Germany, a lake, Benacus, lies.

“ A thousand rills, and more, down to this lake, 8
“ Twixt Garda and the Vale Camonica,
“ Watering the Pennine Mount, their progress take.
“ Midway’s a spot where the three Pastors—they
“ Of Trent, and Brescia, and Verona,—may
“ Each, passing, give his benison. Nigh these
“ Peschiera sits in beauty, strong to sway
“ And front the Brescians and the Bergamese,
“ Down where the fieldward shores slope their declivities.

There, all Benacus’ bosom holds not, slippeth 9
“ Into a stream which gently winds below
“ Thro’ verdant meadowlands, then onward dippeth
“ (Benacus called no more, but Mincio)
“ Down to Governus, where it meets the Po.
“ Yet, little distance hath it headed, when,
“ Finding a flat, it there doth overflow,
“ And far and wide stagnateth as a fen,
“ Which oft in summer heats is baneful unto men.

“ Thither the sorcerous Maiden past; and there, 10
 “ Land in the middle of the fen espying
 “ Barren of culture and of dwellers bare,
 “ She, from all human conversation flying,
 “ Stopt with her minions, and, her weird arts plying,
 “ There lived and left her body. When she died,
 “ The scattered folk around, all thither hieing,
 “ Formed one community, there to abide
 “ As in a stronghold safe with the swamp on every side.

“ Soon, o'er her bones, they reared a city free; 11
 “ And, after her, who first approved the seat,
 “ Without resort to other augury,
 “ They named it Mantua. Once, more replete
 “ With folk it was, ere Pinamont's deceit
 “ Imposed on Casalodi. Thus did rise
 “ My City. So I charge thee and entreat,
 “ If thou shouldst hear it dated otherwise,
 “ Let not the proper truth be played upon by lies.”

Then answered I: “ My Master and my Chief, 12
 “ From point to point thine arguments succeed
 “ So certainly, and kindle so belief,
 “ That all else seems to me but lifeless glede !

“ But tell me of the Spirits that proceed
 “ If, among them, thou sightest any one
 “ Worth, peradventure, noting; for indeed
 “ My eager mind harks back to that alone.”
 Then he again up-speaking, answered me anon:

“ Yon Shape, over whose tawny shoulder runs 13
 “ Such wealth of beard, down-drooping from his cheek
 “ Was, (when all Greece was emptied of her sons,
 “ Till, in their cradles, scarce remain’d one Greek,)
 “ An Augur, who, with Calchas in the creek
 “ Of Aulis, bade to set the cables free:
 “ EURYPYLU^S his name, of whom I speak
 “ Somewheres within my lofty Tragedy,
 “ As well thou knowest, for ‘tis all well known to thee.

“ The next—who has so little on his flanks— 14
 “ Was MICHAEL SCOT, who, in good sooth, well knew
 “ The Wizard’s art, and all its juggling pranks!
 “ GUIDO BONATTI see: ASDENTÈ too,
 “ Who left his awl—and now too late doth rue.
 “ Behold the hags in divinations deft,
 “ The miserable FORTUNE-TELLERS, who,
 “ To work with herb and waxen image, left
 “ The spindle and the spool, the woof and warp and weft.

“ But on ! Already Cain upon the bourn 15
“ Of either hemisphere—and touching quite
“ The wave 'neath Seville—stands with Bush o' Thorn ;
“ Yea, and already with full-orbèd light
“ Round was the Moon the night ere yesternight.
“ This well shouldst thou remember, for it stood
“ Thee oft in no mean service in thy plight
“ When so miswandered in the deep Dark Wood.”
He spake : and we the while onward our way pursued.

CANTO XXI.

THUS travelling on, we past from Bridge to Bridge
With converse other than my Comedy 1
Cares to recall; till, high upon the ridge
Of the *FIFTH* Arch upclimbing, there did we
Check for a while our steps, alert to see
Another cleft of Malebolge, and mark
Other Lost Spirits wailing bootlessly:
But lo! I found, while tarrying there to hark,
That all the Pit below was marvellously dark.

As in the Arsenal at Venice boils 2
The viscid pitch when winter-storms allow
No vessel forth, and every seaman toils
Instead to build new craft, or caulks with tow
The old rent ribs of galleys that ere now
Have weather'd many a cruise; and one doth smite
Upon the poop, another on the prow;
Some fashion oars, some twine the cordage tight;
Whilst others set the main or mizen sail aright:

So, not by dint of fire, but Divine Wit, 3

Boiled herebelow a glutinous pitch-stuff dense,

On every hand the shores beliming. It

Indeed I saw, though nothing else, save thence

Upbelched upon its heave and subsidence,

Bubbles which dotted all the seething tide.

But downward as I peered with gaze intense,

Sudden a cry, "Look, look!" raised by my Guide,

Drew me, from where I stood, in terror to his side.

Turning I fled, nor ever slackt my pace, 4

Like one some sudden panic hath undone,

Who ever runneth with reverted face

As fain to see the thing he most would shun;

For close behind us, on the Bridge of stone,

I saw—of aspect fierce and sour to sight—

A coal-black Demon coming at a run!

O, how his very gait was full of fright,

With pinions waving wide, and fiendish footfall light!

His shoulders, that were sharp and high upwrought,

Were laden with a Wretch who sat astride, 5

Gript by the ankles.—"Hither have I brought,

“ Ho ! Sinner-Snatchers,” from our Bridge he cried,
“ ONE of Saint Zita’s COUNCILLORS. In the tide
“ Now souse him ye, whilst I again repair
“ To the City where I’ve plenty more beside :
“ For—save Bonturo—every man is there
“ A Trafficker who for gold Yea into Nay will swear.”

Hurling him in, then back by the cruel Bank 6

He sped away, nor swiftlier ever went
Slipt mastiff after thief. The Offender sank,
But, coming up again all double-bent,
“ Ha ! ” shriekt the Fiends under the Arch up-pent,
“ Here is no Holy Image to be knee’d,
“ Nor ducking in the Serchio to the bent
“ Of thine own sportive humour : nay, take heed
“ Lest we enfork thee if thou forth the Pitch exceed ! ”

Then with a hundred gaffs his carcass scathing 7

And yelling out,—“ Here be thy pilferings took
“ I’ the dark ; and, if thou canst, enjoy thy bathing ! ”—
Down dipt they him, as scullions for a cook
Plunge meat into the pot, each with his hook,
To hinder it from floating. Then my Guide

In a whisper said : " Now get thee to some nook,
" Some jag of rock—where haply thou canst hide
" As 'neath a screen, lest here thy presence be espied.

" Nor, whatsoever outrage me befall, 8
" Be thou dismayed ; for I, tofore, have fac'd
" The self-same brunt, and know these matters all."
So saying, beyond the Bridge's head he past ;
But to the *SIXTH* Bank when he came at last
Need had he there to show a dauntless breast.
For with such fury and tempestuous haste
As dogs fly out on a poor man distrest,
Who, sudden, stops at a door a morsel to request ;

So from the Bridge the Demons rusht, and high 9
Against him all their weapons did up-rear.
But he : " Avaunt ! nor do me scath," did cry ;
" Nay, rather, let some One of you draw near,
" Ere that your hooks have stricken me, and hear :
" Then, if ye deem it well, have into me ! "
" Be it then, *TERRORTAIL*," they all did jeer,
But, devil-like, hung back themselves, whilst he
Muttered, slow moving forth, " How shall this vantage
thee ? "

“Ah! *TERRORTAIL*, think’st thou that I am sent 10
“Down to this place,” my Master made reply,
“Secure thus long against impediment
“Save by God’s Will and Favouring Destiny?
“Let me then pass: for It is ~~Willed~~ on ~~High~~
“I lead Another on this uncouth way!”
Therewith his pride was dasht so utterly,
Down at his feet he dropt his hook straightway,
And, “Lift not a hand against him,” tremblingly did say.

My Guide then loud accosting me,—“Ho! thou 11
“Low croucht among the Bridge’s jags,”—he said,
“Come forth! for thou mayst safelier join me now.”
So up I rose and swift towards him fled,
But straight at me the Fiends so furious sped,
That I could scarce forbear the fearful doubt
Lest they would break their pact. With equal dread
Once from Caprona saw I troops pass out
Trembling, though under terms, such were the foes about.

So, shrinking closer to my Chief, I stood 12
Fast by his side, with fixèd eyes confin’d
Still on their looks, which shaped for nothing good.
Then lowering their prongs: “Hast thou a mind,”
Each whispered each, “I touch him up behind?”

“ Yea, nick him *thou*,” like a coward each replied.
But he, the Fiend, who with my Master kind
Had holden parley, turned abrupt and cried,
(As who would silence all): “ Peace, Thou Great
TOUSELHIDE! ”

Then unto us he said : “ This spot supplies 13

“ No further passage on, for here below
“ The *SIXTH* Arch shattered all in fragments lies.
“ Still, an to journey on, it please ye so,
“ Follow this craggy ledge, nor far ye'll go
“ Ere, for a path, *another* Arch there is.
“ For yesterday Twelve Centuries ago
“ And Three Score years and Six, later than this
“ By just Five Hours, the way was broken to the Abyss.

“ Thither I'm now despatching scouts along 14

“ To spy who's out airing himself a space.
“ Ye'll walk with them ? They would not do ye wrong ! ”
Then, “ Forward *POUNCE*, forward *PUPPYFACE*, ”
Loud he hallooed; “ you also, *TRAMPLEGRACE*—
“ Ten o' ye—and let *SHOCKBEARD* lead the crew.
“ Up, *BLOODIMOOB* and *DRAGONOZZLE* base ;
“ On, tuskèd *GEYLL* ; on, *SCARAHOUND* ; and you
“ *HELLBAT*, away with them, and frantic *BLAZER* too.

“ Away! and search ye round the simmering Pitch ; 15
“ But let these Travellers pass unharmed of ye,
“ Till that ye reach the *other* Archway which
“ Unbroken spans the dens.”—Then I; “ Ah me !
“ Ah ! Master mine, what, what is this I see ?
“ If 't be thou know'st the way, O let us now
“ Without such escort go, for verily
“ I ask it not—nay : if thou 'rt wise, look how
“ They grin their teeth and scowl deceit from every brow ! ”

So I: and he replied to me anon : 16

“ Courage ! I would not have thee foster fear.
“ Let them, to their hearts' content, go grinning on,
“ 'Tis but against the wretches stewing here ! ”
Which said, the Demon-pack, with leftward veer,
Moved for the march ; but, ere they started, each
As signal to his Chief, with sidelong leer,
Forth, twixt his teeth, a ribald tongue did reach,
Whilst he, for answer, made a trumpet of his breach.

C A N T O X X I I .

HORSEMEN I've seen ere now shifting from camp
For battle, or for show of marshalled might, 1
Have seen them too retreating; seen the ramp
Over your plains of scouring footmen light,
Ye Aretines; seen forayers in flight,
The shock of jousts, tilts in the tourney-field,
And 'larum-signals blared from Castle-height;
Heard trumpets blown, drums beat, and war-bells peal'd,
All musics sound, our own or outland nations yield;

But ne'er, to such an instrument of wind, 2
Yet saw I starting either Horse or Foot,
Or Ship by star or land-light. Thus behind
The Demons Ten upon our way we put,
Ah, verily, an uncouth company—but
In Church with Saints, in Drinking-dens with Sots!
Howbeit upon the scalded Sinners shut
Within the Pitch, that many a bubble dots,
My mind was all intent to learn their various lots.

As dolphins rise with bended backs and dip, 3
Before the eyes of mariners, in the Main,
And thus premonish them to save their ship ;
So would some sinner oft, to ease his pain,
Curve up his back, then, instant, hide again
Quicker than it lightens ; or, as frogs below
The shallow margins of a watery fen
Sit squat, and only forth their nozzles show,
With feet and bloated bulk all hidden ; even so

These Swindlers round about the brinks were breathing.
Tho' soon as *SHOCKBEARD* shew'd, they one and all 4
Dived, on the instant, underneath the seething.
Then saw I—what doth yet my heart appal—
One linger so, as oft it might befall
That one frog stays when the rest have disappear'd,
Whom *SCARAHOUND*, who nearest was withal,
Lister'd, and by the locks all tar-besmear'd
Sprawling uphauled, as tho' an otter he had spear'd.

Full well the name of every Fiend I knew, 5
So had I markt their choosing, and how they
Had each on other called. Then the curst crew
All shriekt together : “ Now thy talons lay

“ Into him, *BLAZER*. Ay, and see thou flay
“ The sorry fool ! ”— But, interposing, “ O,
“ My Master,” I exclaimed, “ if that thou may,
“ Try first the luckless wretch’s name to know,
“ Who thus hath come within the reach of such a foe.”

Then, drawing somewhat nearer him, my Guide 6
Askt him from whence he hail’d.—“ *NAVARRE*’s domain
“ My birthplace was,” he pantingly replied.
“ My Mother put me Page in a Squire’s train,
“ For she had borne me to an unthrift swain,
“ A wastrel of himself and his estate.
“ In good *King Thibald*’s service, rising then
“ As *Seneschal*, I took to peculate,
“ And, for it, in this heat now pay most bitter rate.”

He ceast. Then *GRYLL*, from out whose jowl a tooth
Issued on either side, like a snouted boar, 7
Ript him with one of them. The mouse, insooth,
Mid savage cats had fallen ! But *SHOCKBEARD* tore
Him forth their clutches, clamouring a-roar :
“ Off ! Let *me* cuddle him ! ” The Fiend then aim’d
His face toward my Master, and, “ If more
“ Thou covetest to learn, ask,” —he exclaim’d—
“ Ask of him now before by others he be maim’d.”

Thereon my Guide upspake: "Now tell us thou, 8
"Know'st any Latins 'mong thy Partners here
"Under the Pitch?" And he: "A Mate right now
"I quitted who to Such was *neighbour* near;
"And O that I were with him covered there,
"Then should I reck not either claw or crook!"
With that snarled *BLOODMOOR*: "Too much we bear!"
And, snatching at his arm with felon hook,
So gasht it that away part of the brawn he took.

Next *DRAGONOZZLE* fain had made a snatch 9
Lower at his legs, but their Decurion
Whiskt round at him, and kept forbidding watch.
So, when their savagery was somewhat done,
Accosting him who still was gazing on
His late-inflicted wound, my Guide demanded
Without delaying more: "Now who was Yon
"With whom thou saidst thou recently wast banded,
"But so untimely left, thus to be hookt and landed?"—

"The Friar GOMITA, he—Sink of all fraud! 10
"Who, in Gallura, his Liege's enemy
"So treated, that they all his conduct laud.
" 'Largess for me, for them their Liberty,'

“ Such was his quip. But in all functions he
“ Rankt, above other rogues, Swindler supreme !
“ ~~DON MICHAEL~~ ZANCHE bears him company :
“ Of Logodóro he; and well I deem
“ Their tongues ne'er weary when Sardinia is the theme.

“ But, O for me ! See how that Other's grinning— 11
“ More would I add, but that I greatly fear
“ He's readying him to give me further skinning !”
To *HELLBAT* then, glaring with frightful leer
In act to strike, their Marshaler did veer
Rebuking thus: “ Off ! Villainous Bird of Doom !”
Wherewith : “ If ye desire to see or hear
“ Tuscans or Lombards,” straightway did resume
The reassured Corrupter, “ I will make them come.

“ But let the Sinner-Snatchers first retreat, 12
“ That so my Mates no retribution dread,
“ And I will make, sitting outside the heat,
“ For me—one sole,—seven others come instead,
“ Whistling them up as we're accustomed
“ When one creeps forth.” Then *PUPPYFACE* deriding
Upcurled his snout, and shook his ears, and said :
“ Hark to the means the crafty knave's providing
“ To 'scape our clutches now, and plunge him into hiding !”

Quoth he, who'd many a subterfuge in store : 13

“ Too crafty: ay! devising greater ill
“ Thus for my friends! ” Then *POUNCE* could no more
Refrain himself; but, with the opposition still
Of all the rest, outcryed: “ Plunge, if thou will!
“ I'll trot thee none, whilst I have wings to hover
“ Above the Pitch! So, Comrades, from the hill
“ Let us retreat, and make its brow a cover,
“ And see if he alone Us Ten can come it over! ”

O Thou who Read'st, to novel sport now list ! 14

As each to the rear slope his vision flung,
(He first who most the project did resist,)
Nicking his time, the Navarrese then sprung
To foot—made one leap forward—and so wrung
Himself free from their plots. Then it befell,
That with self-censure every one was stung,
He most that caused his 'scape; and so he fell
To following him, and—“ Yea, I'll have thee yet! ”—did yell.

But vain his vaunt; for swifter far than wings 15

Is the terror of the One, who down doth go,
While up, with airward breast, the Other springs.
Thus, like a flash, the water-fowl whenso
A falcon swoops upon her, dives below

While he soars off defeated. At the trick
So high-infuriate *TRAMPLEGRACE* did grow,
He sprang upon the wing, and following quick
Wist him escaped that so a quarrel he might pick.

Then, when the Cheater quite away had slipt, 16

Turning upon his fellow, in mid-air
The two, above the tar, each other gript.

But *POUNCEZ* proved a very kite to tear
And grapple him; till, thus enlockt, the pair
Dropt in the middle of the boiling flood.

The heat at once unclutcht them battling there
In devilish hate; albeit neither could
Rise from the clogging Pitch, their vans were so beglued.

Then *SHOCKBEARD*, like the Others of his host, 17

Galled at the turn of things, instant bids Four
Speed on the wing, straight to the further coast,
To have at them with hooks. In wild uproar,
This side and that, down to their posts they pour;
Then, stretching out their spikes, each forward leant
To spit the wranglers, now all crusted o'er
And cookt to their very inwards. Them intent
Thus on their broil we left, in hideous jangle blent.

C A N T O X X I I .

SOLE, silent, unescorted we were wending, 1
The One in front, the Other close behind
Like Minor Friars, our faces groundward bending,
When—as I paced along with thoughts confin'd
Upon the recent fray—I turned my mind
On *Æsop's* Fable of the Frog and Mouse ;
For *Yea* and *Yes* are not more like in kind
Than that and this, provided ye espouse
Same cause to same effect. Then, as one thought will rouse

Another thought, even so, immediately, 2
From that reflection was a second born,
Doubling my former terror. For, (mused I,)
Thro' us these Devils have been put to scorn,
With loss and mock, so little to be borne,
That doubtless they'll resent their sore mishaps.
If, therefore, to their malice, ne'er outworn,
Be added rage, they'll after us perhaps
More felly than a dog the leveret that he snaps.

Already I felt my hair bristling with dread

3

Whiles thus imagining; so stopt, and as

Backward I stole a glance, "Master," I said,

"Unless indeed it quickly come to pass

"Thou hide thyself and me, I fear, alas,

"The Fiends will be upon us! Nay, even now

"I hear, I feel them!"—"If a leaded-glass

"I were, I could not quicklier, I trow,

"Mirror thine outward shape, than I have markt, what thou

"Hast inwardly imagined, on my heart.

4

"Yea, with so similar a form and face,

"Thy thoughts already are of mine a part

"That both suggest one counsel. So, in case

"The right-hand slope to the next Torture-place

"So slants that somewise it can be descended,

"Secure we will escape this fancied chase."

But—hard at hand—ere he his words had ended,

I saw them coming after us, with wings extended.

So, sudd'n, my Guide, upsnaatching me in his arm— 5

Just as a mother would upsnaatch her son,

When, wak'd by cries of 'Fire,' all in alarm

(Less thinking of herself than little one)

She seizes him and flees, nor stops to don

Even the covering of a shift,—down sank
Right on the hard rock's border, till, anon,
Giving himself to the next Gully's flank,
He, sliding on his back, shot down the pendant bank.

Never raced water thro' a conduit faster 6
To turn a water-wheel, when rapides
It shoots towards the paddles, than my Master
Thus, from the summit of the shelving crest,
Down-glided, holding me upon his breast,
Not as a Comrade, but as his own Son !
Howbeit, barely had his feet found rest
Against the Trench's bottom, when upon
The height above They showed : but fear it gave him none.

For, by the high decree of Providence, 7
As Ministrants of the FIFTH Torture-place,
None had the power of ever issuing thence.
Below, we came upon a painted race,
Who, round and round, with dull slow steps did pace.
Weary, bowed down, and weeping. A long cape
Each wore. Their eyes and all their upper face
Were hidden in deep hoods, made in the shape
Of those that at Cologne the Monkish Brethren drape.

Outside, all gilt to dazzling us they were ; 8
Within, all lead, that weighed so heavily,
That Frederick's Mantles seemèd by compare
Mere straw to them ! O, for eternity
What weary, weary wearing ! Leftward we
Swerved and walked with them, hearing how they wept ;
But, 'neath their great gross loads, so tardily
They staggered on, that evermore we kept
New company at our hip, with every step we stept.

Wherefore I spake : " While now we thus proceed, 9
" Strive, Master, if thy keener gaze may reach
" Some Sufferer known to thee by name or deed."
Then One, who recognised my Tuscan speech,
Cried after us : " O stay ye, I beseech,
" Ye who are running on at such a rate
" Here thro' the dark, for haply I can teach
" The thing thou askest." Whence to me : " Now wait,"
My Guide said, turning round—" then suit to his thy gait."

Halting, I saw Two by their looks bewray 10
Great eagerness of mind to reach my side ;
Howbeit their burden and the narrow way
Kept them arear. At length—toiled up—they eyed

Silent a while my form, with glance aside,
Then each to other faced, and, whispering, said :
“ Yon, by his throat, seems never to have died !
“ Or, by what privilege, if both be dead,
“ Go they unmantled here of the ponderous stole of lead ?

“ O Tuscan ! Thou that comest to the college 11
“ Of the sad Hypocrites ”—to me they said,
“ Who thou mayst be, spurn not to give us knowledge.”
“ By Arno’s Beauteous Stream,” I answerèd,
“ In The Great City was I born and bred,
“ And wear the body I have always holden.
“ But who are ye, adown whose cheeks is shed
“ Such spilth of tears as I have now beholden ?
“ And what this punishment that shines on ye so golden ? ”

“ These orange cowls, under whose weight we wail, 12
“ Are, oh, so leaden gross,” One answered me,
“ We tremble ’neath them like a creaking scale !
“ Both Jovial Friars, and Bolognese were we,
“ I CATALÀNO named, LODERINGO he ;
“ Together chosen by your City, where
“ ’Tis wont to have *one only*, party-free,
“ To be her peace-preserved. What we were
“ Gardigno’s wasted ward doth to this day declare ! ”

“Ah! Friars, your crime”...I had begun to say, 13

But stopt; for lo! a Culprit caught mine eyes

Cross-fixt, with rivets three, athwart the way;

Who, when he saw me, in his agonies

Blew thro’ his bush of beard a storm of sighs.

But Friar CATALÀNO forward leant

And said to me: “HE WHO TRANSFIXED LIES,

“And over whom thou porest thus intent,

“Counselling the Pharisees, said ‘twas expedient

“That One Man suffer for the people. Now 14

“The bare-stript wretch, transverse upon the way,

“Must ever feel each Passer’s weight, as thou

“Perceivest. So his Consort’s FATHER, yea,

“And EVERY OTHER of THAT COUNCIL,—they

Who sowed such ill for Jewry—in this foss

Are lying stretcht.”—Then saw I Virgil stay

And gaze with wonder at him on his cross

Thus in vile exile rackt and everlasting loss.

Thereafterward, in syllables like these, 15

I heard my Master of the Friar demand:

“So it be lawful, and if so ye please,

“Now tell us whether, on the dexter hand,

“Shews any gap or outscape from this strand

“Whereby we both may issue, nor constrain
“The Angels Black to come—that Demon band—
“And extricate us from this Depth again ? ”

And thereupon the Friar replied to us full fain :

“Yea, for there runs from the Great Barrier’s side
“A stretch of rockage, nearer than ye hope, 16

“Which all the cruel Pits doth overstride,

“Save that *o’er this* down shattered is the cope.

“But ye its ruins well may scale, which slope

“Against the Bank, just as all-heapt they fell.”

My Guide stood still, then let his head down droop,

And, after, said : “False then the Fiend did tell

“The way to us, who hooks the Sinners there ! ”—“Ah !
well,

“Oft heard I in Bologna,” quoth the Friar, 17

“Full many of the Devil’s vices told,

“Among the which I heard he is a liar

“And Father of all Lies ! ” Him somewhat cold

My Master eyed, then, with large steps and bold,

Strode on, slight anger ruffling up his face.

Whereat from forth those Sinners heavy-stol’d

I also straight departed, on the trace

Of his belovèd footprints, following pace for pace.

CANTO XXXIV.

AS, at that period of the youthful year, 1
When Sol beneath Aquarius slakes his locks,
And lessening nights to half the day draw near,
When the Hoar-Frost fantastically mocks
Her Snowy Sister's likeness on the rocks,
Tho' little lasts her copy, feathery light;
The Shepherd, lacking forage for his flocks,
Risen betimes, goes forth, but, seeing all white
The hills and dales around, sadly his thigh doth smite,

And home returns, and up and down doth plain, 2
Like a poor wretch scarce knowing what to do ;
Till, sallying forth, he taketh hope again,
Seeing how soon the world has changed its hue,
Then, crook in hand, driveth to meadows new
His little lambs, a twice-contented pastor;
So lost I heart when I at first did view
The trouble on the forehead of my Master,
And so unto my hurt was laid the healing plaster ;

For so it was that, when our way we took 3
Unto the Bridge in Ruins, there my Guide
Turned him toward me with the same sweet look,
That first I saw upon the MOUNTAIN's side !
Then, having well the ruins over-eyed
And taken counsel with himself, he straight
Uphoisted me with arms out-reachen wide.
And ev'n as men, who well deliberate,
Seem alway to foresee the end they contemplate ;

So, up one boulder lifting me, he said, 4
Sighting another : " Grapple that ; but try
" First if it bear thee." None with Cloak of Lead
Had done it ! For, tho' he was light, and I
From block to block pusht on, yet verily
Even thus our utmost efforts scarce avail'd :
Nay, on this slope had not the Boundary
Been shorter than the other to be scal'd,
I know not as for him, but I had surely fail'd.

But since all Malebolge—one gradient—shelves 5
Down to the mouth of the Nether Well below,
Hence, in construction, must its deep-dug Delves
Have one flank high, the other flank more low.

But when at length, unto the point—whereso
 The last great stone lay sundered—we attain'd,
 Surmounting it, no further could I go :
 Nay, so from out my lungs the breath was drain'd,
 That straight I seated me, soon as the top was gain'd.

“ So let dull sloth be doft,” my Guide begun,

6

“ For under canopies, in shady ways,

“ Sitting on down, Fame never yet was won :

“ Without the which whoso consumes his days

“ Leaves of himself upon the earth such trace

“ As smoke i' the wind, or foam upon the wave.

So rouse ! and conquer now thy weariness

“ By that which conquereth all—the spirit brave,

“ Unless the grosser flesh down-crush it and enslave !

“ A Longer Stairway thou hast yet to scale :

7

“ 'Tis not enough from These to have departed :

“ If well thou mark me, act that it avail ! ”

Then with a show of breath and stouter-hearted,

(More than, indeed, I felt,) I rose and parted,

Saying : “ On ! for I am strong and confident ! ”

Then up the flinty thoroughfare we started,

Narrow, and jagged, and hard; but as we went

Far steeper than before now seemed the arched ascent.

Talking, not to seem spent, I made advance, 8
When forth ascended from the following Ditch
A voice ill-tuned to clear vociferance.
I know not what it said, tho' on the pitch
I now was standing of the Archway which
Bestrode the deep ravine, but seemingly
The speaker spoke in gall. So into the niche
I threw my gaze: albeit no living eye
Straining below could pierce the dense obscurity.

“Master, now let us go”—I made demand— 9
“To yon low Bank, and part descend its wall;
“For as from hence I hear, nor understand,
“So see I down, nor aught discern at all.”
“A fairly-made request doth ever call
“For silent work; whence give I thee,” he said,
“None answer other than the deed withal!”
So from the Bridge down went we (where its head
Joins the **EIGHTH** Bank), then clear the pit before me spread.

And therewithin I saw a hideous brood 10
Of Serpents direful-strange, a sumless host,
Whose very memory curdles still my blood!
Vaunt, Libya, of thy sands to the uttermost!

Tho' Pharëas and Hydras swarm my coast,
 With Cenchris, Amphisboenas, Jaculæ,
 And plagues a thousand more—with all thy boast,
 Thou nor the borders of Erythra's Sea,
 Nor all the Ethiop land, e'er spawned such serpentry.

And lo ! among the dread and loathly swarms 11
 Ran naked Shades, with terror in their eyes,
 Hopeless of hole or heliotrope. Their arms
 Were fixt behind with Snakes, which thro' their thighs
 Shot head and tail, in coiled intricacies
 Knotting in front. Ere long, our side the Pit,
 A Crawling Creature suddenly did rise
 And fanged a sinner's nape. Never was writ
 An 'O' or 'I' more quick, than, set a-fire by it,

He dropt all ashes. These, on the ground outstrew'd,
 Gathering themselves together, straightway then 12
 The self-same form spontaneously renew'd.

Thus, when her years five centuries attain,
 Dieth the Phoenix and is born again,
 (As antique sages manywheres repeat,)
 Who tastes in all her life nor blade nor grain,
 But only balm, and tears of incense sweet,
 Whilst flaming nard and myrrh form her last winding-
 sheet.

As one who sudden falls, nor wotteth how, 13
Whether by Power Demoniac dragg'd to ground,
Or other seizure held, that oft enow
Flings a man down with all his senses bound ;
Who, on arising up and gazing round,
Dazed and dumbfounded, all about him throws
His haggard eyes, and heaving sighs profound
Groans o'er the anguish that he undergoes ;
So stood that Soul aghast when he again up-rose.

Justice of God ! Oh, how severe Thou art 14
Showering such blows in righteous vengeance down !
My Guide then bade the sinner to impart,
Who he might be ; and he replied thereon :
“ I VANNI FUCCI am, short while agone
“ Rained down from Tuscany to this monstrous pen,
“ Mule that I was—a very beast—yea, one
“ Who chose the life of brutes and not of men ;
“ Tho’ in Pistoia, sure, I found a fitting den ! ”

I also to my Guide then made response : 15
“ Bid him not shirk, but ask of him again
“ What felony has thrust him there ; for once
“ I knew him as a man of choleric vein
“ And bloody hands.” With no attempt to feign

The reprobate, soon as *my* voice he heard,
His whole attention unto me did strain ;
Then, on me riveting a face all blurr'd
With shame's disgraceful hue, this answer he preferr'd :

“ More than my loss of life it me doth irk 16
“ Thus to be seen of thee in misery ;
“ Yet may I not thine inquisition shirk.
“ Therefore, be 't known that thus low down am I
“ Because that in our famous Sacristy
“ I played the Thief, filching its goodly gear
“ While falsely charging others. But on high,
“ (These precincts left,) lest that should give thee cheer,
“ To this I now announce open thine ears, and hear :

“ Pistoia of her *Blacks* will thin her first : 17
“ Next, Florence will admit new modes and men :
“ From Valdimagra *Mars*, with thunder-burst,
“ Will send *A Bolt*, girt with dark clouds, and then
“ With bitter shock upon Piceno's plain
“ Terribly the storm of battle-strife will roll :
“ There will be riven the mists asunder, when
“ Each smitten *White* will suffer grievous dole.
“ This tell I thee, well sure 'twill pang thy very soul ! ”

C A N T O X X V.

ENDED his flout, the Thief in mockery
 Made figs with both his thumbs, which he upthrew
 Outyelling : 'Take them, God ! They're flung at Thee !'
 Now lookt I on the Snakes with friendlier view ;
 For, twining round his throat, one at him flew,
 As saying : "Further shalt thou utter not!"
 Another, fastening on his arms, anew
 Bound them behind, and then in front did knot,
 So that the wretch thenceforth could stir them ne'er a jot.

Pistoia, ah Pistoia ! Why—O, why
 Dost not decree in ashes to consume
 Thyself, and all within thee utterly,
 And cumber Earth no more; since with thy sum
 Of evil thou hast even overcome
 The Ill Seed whence thou sprang'st ? For, in dark Hell,
 Thro' all its Rounds, of them that suffer doom,
 None saw I against God so impious swell,
 Nay, not ev'n him who down from the Theban ramparts
 fell.

The miscreant fled, nor uttered more. But ere 3
 Far he had gone, I saw a Centaur trip
 After him, full of fume, and crying, "Where,
 " Where is the Scoffer?" Snakes along his hip,
 Even unto where begins our human lip,
 Swarmed, such as ne'er Maremma could beget.
 Behind his head, a Dragon did begrip
 Both shoulders, with its wings wide-open set,
 Belching consuming flames on whomsoe'er it met.

"Behold now CACUS"—thus the Master spake— 4
 "Who, in his cave beneath Mount Aventine,
 "Made with his slaughterings many a sanguine lake;
 "But, for his fraudulent thievery of the kine
 "Browsing innumEROus near his cavern'd mine,
 "He treads not with his mates the Bloody Belt.
 "Howbeit his operations serpentine
 "Ceast 'neath the mace of Hercules, who dealt
 "Perchance a hundred blows, tho' not one tithe he felt!"

While thus he parled, the Centaur past away. 5
 When lo! beneath us, Spirits Three did speed
 Whom neither was aware of, till that they
 Cried, sudden—"Who are ye?" And then, indeed,
 Pausing our tale, we gave them all our heed.

I knew them not! However, it fell out,
As oft it fortuneth, that one had need
To name the other; for—as if in doubt—
“Whither has CIANFA gone?” one of The Three did shout.

Raising a hushing finger to my lips, 6
I signed my Master to observance. Now
Reader, if, peradventure, it eclipse
Thy power to credit what I here avow,
No marvel; for myself can scarce allow
My very own eyes witness! For, as round
I bent on them a scrutinising brow,
Lo! a Six-footed Serpent from the ground
Sprang up in front of One, and o'er his body wound.

Its middle claws unto his belly clove; 7
Two gript his shoulders; while, beneath his eyes,
Deep into either cheek its fangs it drove.
Its hinder claws were fastened on his thighs,
Twixt which It thrust its tail, then, curling-wise,
Twisted it upwards on his loins behind.
Ivy, with all its intertwining ties,
So closely round a tree did never wind,
As round that felon's limbs the hideous Monster twin'd.

But while the pair thus one another belted, 8

Gradually, Neither's colour seemed the same,
So—like hot wax—Each in the Other melted.

Even thus on paper ere it burst afame,
Oft have I seen, before the black tinge came,
The gradual-browning white evanish slow.

Meanwhile his two associates both exclaim
With horror in their looks: "AGNELLO, O
"How thou dost change! For now thou'rt neither one
nor two!"

Scarce had their two heads merged together, when 9

Two sets of features fusing in one face
Appeared, though each was lost in either. Then
Two arms their former four did straight replace,
While chest, pannch, hips, and legs, in quicker space,
Became such members as were never dream'd.

Thus of their primal shapes cancelled all trace,
Nor Man nor Beast the Monstrous Mixture seem'd;
And such it shambled off, but slowly, as I deem'd.

Nor stood his Fellows gazing long. For lo! 10

As a lizard, changing hedges, flits athwart
The road, seeming a lightning-flash; even so
Sudden, a fiery little Reptile, swart

As peppercorn and livid, straight did dart
Right at the midriffs of the other Two,
In One of whom it stung the very part
Whence first we draw our nurture, piercing thro',
Then down before him fell, and lay full-stretcht to view.

The pierced Thief saw, but uttered not a word ; 11
Nay, only yawned as he half-conscious were
In sleep or fever, nor a footstep stirr'd.
He eyed the Snake, the Snake at him did glare,
As it from out its mouth, He from his tare
Smokt volubly, and then the twain smokes met.
Henceforth let Lucan's lay be silent, where
He sings Sabellus and Nasidius. Let
Him list unto *my* flight than *his* more wondrous yet !

Silent be also Ovid's Arethuse, 12
And Cadmus too ! Tho' him he made a Snake
And her a Fount, I envy not his Muse :
Since never, front to front, thus did he make
Two natures mutually so prompt to take
Each other's shape and substance ! For these twain
So tallied, that whenas the lizard brake
Bifurcate—splitting wide its scaly train,
Instant the wounded Thief closed up his stride again.

And therewithal his legs and thighs as well 13

Clung so together, and became so thin,
No trace of juncture soon was visible.

Meantime, the cleft tail took the leg-shape in
The Other that was lost, and while Its skin
Grew soft, the Sinner's hardened. Next I saw
His human arms into their pits begin
To shrink, and then the Reptile's scantier claw
Slowly to lengthen out, — his slowly in withdraw.

Next, its hind claws, coiling together, grew 14

The member man concealeth, whilst anon'
Claws from the Wretch's own there sprouted two.
Then, while the veiling fumes gave Either One
A new complexion, generating on
The Reptile hair, and all the Sinner baring,
The Beast rose upright, and the Man fell down !
Unchanged alone was their malignant staring,
Each, as his visage changed, still on the other glaring.

Then in the One Erect the features rush'd 15

Backwards up to its temples, out of whose
Excess two ears behind its smooth cheeks push'd.
The mass which yet remained, nor upward rose,
Made, of such surplus, to its face a nose,

With lips beneath to fit proportions spread.

Meanwhile the prostrate Spirit forward throws
His snout, and sinks his ears within his head,
As a snail draws in her horns at some disturbing tread.

Last, while his undivided tongue, that erst 16

Was glib for parlance, split, the fork in the head
Of the Other joined. Which done, the smoke disperst.

The Thief, now changed into a reptile, fled
Hissing along the foss, but as it sped,
The Other following gibed, and at it spat.

Then giving it his back, the *new* Soul said
Loud to the Third: "Loth am I nothing that
"BUOSO—as I have done—crawl on his belly flat!"

Thus I beheld these dregs change and recharge 17

In the *SEVENTH* Hold; nor let me be disprais'd
If haply here my pen too largely range:

I plead the Novelty! Grant, my mind maz'd,
And my confusèd eyesight somewhat daz'd,
Yet not so covertly away they crept
But that the hip-shot Puccio well I trac'd,
Sole of The Three who untransmuted kept.

The OTHER, yet unnamed, was whom Gavilla wept.

C A N T O X X V I.

JOY, Florence, joy ! O thou that dost excel,
Beating thy mighty wings o'er land and sea,
Joy, for thy name is bruited ev'n in Hell !
For, 'mong the Thieves I lighted upon Three,
Yea, Five, thy Citizens ; whence unto me
Comes shame enow, and truly not a deal
Of honour upon Thee ! But, if it be
That morning dreams are true, ere long thou'l feel
What Others—ay ! even Prato—crave against thy weal.

And, were it done already, better so !
Nay, be it *soon*, since done it must be ; for
'Twill weigh the more on me older I grow !
But thence departing, by the ladder sore
Whose jutting stones had made us steps before,
My Guide remounts, and me behind him drags.
But, as upon our lonesome way we bore,
Over the following Bridge's spurs and jags,
Not without hands our feet clambered its steepy crags.

Hell xxvi.] *THE DRIFTING FLAMES.* [Circle viii. Pit 8.
19-38.] Circle viii. Pit 8.
Evil Counsellors.

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Then how I sorrowed, O most grievously, 3
And how, in truth, I sorrow yet again
Now that I redirect my memory
To what I next beheld! Whence I restrain
The gift within me, and my genius rein
More than my wont, lest I be also driven
Where virtue leadeth not; and lest, too vain,
I do abuse my better nature given
By favouring Star of Fate, or kindlier power of Heaven.

Even as a Peasant, resting on a hill, 4
(When least the World-enlightener hides his face,)
Sees—in the hour when evening is most still
And night-gnats come to take the dayfly's place—
Down in the valley, an innumerable race,
The Fire-flies in his tilth and vineyard gleaming ;
So, when we gat to the EIGHTH Torture-space,
I saw innumerable flamelets beaming
Like myriad stars, wherewith its noiseless depths were
teeming.

And like as he, whom the Bears aveng'd, once watch'd
Elijah's chariot upward in its flight 5
To heaven direct by fiery coursers snatch'd,
Yet saw not, as he followed with his sight,
Aught but the far-off blaze, which, soaring bright,

Hell xxvi. 39-60. ~~W~~ **SOULS ENCLOSED IN FLAME.** [Circle viii. Pit 8.
Evil Counsellors.

Seemed like a little cloud ; thus, in the cleft
Of the dark Foss, kept hovering each Light,
Every of which from view a Soul had reft,
Nor, as it drifted on, did any show its theft.

So on the Bridge I stood that, even untouched, 6
I would have fallen as I forward leant,
If fast unto a rock I had not clutcht,
When spake my Guide, seeing me thus intent :
“ In yonder wandering lights are Spirits pent,
“ Each swath’d in that which scorches him.” Thus he,
And I : “ Master, I’m but more confident
“ Hearing thy words ; for, that it so would be
“ Already I forefelt, and wished to ask of thee

“ Whom yonder Double-pointed Flame might smother
“ That comes as tho’ uprising from the pyre 7
“ Of Eteocles and his hated brother ?”
“ DIOMEDE and ULYSSES in yon fire
“ Are tortured,” answered he ; “ for as in ire
“ They coupled were, so here they are leashed in doom.
“ Within one flame they dole the ambush dire
“ Of the Trojan Horse, that proved the door wherfrom
“ Issued the Noble Seed whence rose Imperial Rome.

“There, for deceived Deïdamia too 8
“(Who even in death still mourns Achilles,) they
“Must rankle, and the filched Pallidium rue.”
Then I: “Master, if ought these Souls can say
“Within their fiery wrappage, much I pray
“And re-pray till my prayers a thousand be,
“Deny me not to wait till on its way
“Yon two-topt Flame drift hither; for O see
“How t’wards it with desire I now am bending me !”

And he returned: “I willingly receive 9
“Thy prayer so worthy of applause. But seek
“Not thou to parle with them! I well conceive
“What is thy wish: therefore, leave me to speak,
“Lest, peradventure, in that they are Greek
“They might disdain thy ruder utterance.”
So, after, when the Flame of Double-peak
Came opportunely near, seizing his chance
My Master thus I heard this plea to them advance:

“Ye Spirits Twain within one fire—O, if 10
“I merited of ye, whether it were
“Little or much I merited in life,
“Chanting my lofty verse in the Upper Air,

“ Move ye not on till one of ye declare
“ Whither, far wandering, he went to die.”
Therewith the antique Flame began to flare,
Waving its broader spire, whilst murmuringly
It sighed as, 'neath a wind, a bickering torch might sigh.

Quickening the tremor of its top, it then, 11
As 'twere a tongue, articulately clear
Tossed out its utterance and answered : “ When
“ I quitted Circe, who, beyond a year,
“ Held me her captive by Gaëta near,
“ Ere yet *Aeneas* thus had named the shore ;
“ Nor fondness for my Son, nor reverence dear
“ Of my old Sire, nay, nor the love I bore
“ Penelope, which should have cheered her life once more,

“ Could overcome in me my mighty zeal 12
“ Experience of the world of men to gain,
“ Their virtues and their vice, their woe and weal.
“ So putting forth on the deep open Main
“ With one sole vessel, and my little train
“ Of Comrades that were never faithless found ;
“ Both shores I coasted far as unto Spain—
“ Far as Morocco—and the Islands round,
“ Sardinia and the rest, within the same Sea's bound.

"I and my Mariners were old and slow 13

“ When to that Narrow Pass we drove our flight

"Where Hercules had stamp'd his Pillars so

"That ne'er beyond might venture mortal wight.

"Then, leaving Seville lying on our right,

"Ceuta already passed on the other side:

“ O Brothers who, thro’ perils infinite,

“ ‘Have pusht with me into the West,’ I cried,

“ ‘ Whiles somewhat yet remains, O be it not denied ’

“ ‘ Now, in the waning vigil of your sense,

14

“ ‘ To sail behind the Sun for worlds unknown,

“ ‘ And crown with me a life’s experience.

“‘ Consider ye your origin—ye none

“ ‘ ‘ Were born to the low life of brutes, but on

“To quest for Noble deeds, and Knowledge high.”

"And so it fell, with these brief words. I won

"Such zeal in my Companions, that I

Now scarcely could have checkt the voyag

try.

"So, having swung our helm to face the morn,

15

"We of our oars made wings for the fatuous flight.

" Still gaining on the South. Thus, seaward borne.

“ Around the other Pole, I saw by night
“ The stars upcreep—our Pole so sink to sight,
“ Longer it rose not from the ocean-floor.
“ Five times, rekindled and requencht, the light
“ Had grown beneath the moon, when lo ! before
“ Our eyes—tho’ dimly seen—as still we onward bore,

“ A Mountain, in the distance, rose to view, 16
“ Whose like I never saw, up-looming vast !
“ Large was our joy, but soon to grief it grew ;
“ For, from the New Land, sudden rusht a blast
“ And smote the good ship’s bows. Thrice, tempest-fast,
“ She reeled ; the fourth—deep in the trough enclosed—
“ Up-heaved her stern, while down her prow at last
“ Plunged, even as *ANOTHER* had disposed ;
“ And thus the Yawning Deep forever o’er us closed.”

C A N T O X X V I I .

SCARCE had the summit of the Flame grown steady
And husht itself, as if no more 'twould say, 1
And, under leave of the Sweet Bard, already
Past, with its high-erected crest, away,
Than therewithal Another of bright ray
Came sailing onward, following in its rear,
Which drew immediately our eyes that way
By reason of the sounds that did appear
To struggle from its top, and clamour for our ear.

For as the Bull of Sicily,—which first 2
Roar'd with its own Inventor's yells, (as was
But right,) since he had shap'd the thing accurst,—
Kept bellowing forth its victims' anguish, as
They shriekt within, so that, tho' made of brass,
It seemed itself thro'-thrilled with agony;
Thus, lacking proper vent, it came to pass
That in no other language but a cry
The Flame's sad words at first throbbed forth confusedly.

But, thro' its top, when they had pierct a way, 3

Making its quivering pinnacle vibrate

Obedient to the tongue, we heard it say :

“ O Thou, at whom my voice is aimèd straight,

“ Who didst the Lombard speech articulate,

“ Saying—‘ *Now pass : no more I trouble thee,*’—

“ Albeit I come perchance a little late,

“ Be thou not irkt to pause and parle with me,

“ Since me it irketh none, all burning tho' I be.

“ If only now, down to this rayless World, 4

“ From that Delightsome Land of Italy,

“ Whence all my sins I date, thou hast been hurl'd,

“ Tell me if they that in Romagna lie

“ Have peace or war ? For of the hills was I

“ There 'twixt Urbino and the lofty yoke

“ Whence Tiber springs a runlet.”—Wistfully

I still was leaning down, when with light stroke

Touching me on the side, thus soft mine Escort spoke :

“ Speak *thou* ; for This One is Italian,” 5

So unto me he whispered. Wherefore I,

Who had my answer ready, straight began

Withouten more ado to make reply

In tenour such as this : “ In verity,

“O Thou, who art secreted there below,
“Never, within her Princes’ hearts, was thy
“Romagna void of war, nor is not now;
“Tho’, when I left her late, no *open* war did show.

“Ravenna stands as she for years hath stood: 6
“Polenta’s *Eagle*, whose wide wings enfold
“All far as Cervia, over her doth brood.
“The City famed for her resistance bold,
“And Burial-Mound of Frenchmen, high up-roll’d,
“’Neath the *Green Talons* finds herself once more.
“The *Mastiffs* of Verruchio, young and old,
“Who so upon Montagna dealt of yore,
“There, where they ever wont, show how their fangs can bore.

“The *Lioncel* of the White Field now ranges 7
“Where flows Santerno and Lamone’s wave,
“Changing his party as the season changes:
“While She, whose walls the Savio doth lave,
“Lives half in liberty and half a slave,
“Just as she lies half-way ’twixt hill and plain.
“But now—who thou mayst be, tell us, I crave,
“Nor harder be than others; so again
“High on the earth thy name its forehead will maintain.”

When with prelusive moan the Flame had flutter'd, 8

Swaying its sharp point to and fro, anon

Its vented voice flasht forth, and thus it utter'd :

“ If I believed my answer were to one

“ Who Earthward could return, the light I don

“ Should wave no more in tell-tale interview.

“ But, inasmuch as from this gullet none

“ Yet went alive, if what I hear be true,

“ Fearless of infamy I now will answer you.

“ I was a man of arms ; then, with the rope

9

“ Of Good Saint Francis girt me, hoping so

“ To make my mends. And certainly my hope

“ Had prospered well ; but the Great Pontiff—O

“ Beshrew him !—made me lapse again. To know

“ The how and wherefore, prythee listen. While

“ I in the frame of bones and flesh did go

“ My Mother gave me, all my deeds of guile

“ Showed less the lion than the fox. For, every wile

“ And policy I knew: yea, saw their worth,

10

“ And such a master waxed in subtle shift,

“ The sound thereof ran to the ends of Earth.

“ But to that period as mine age did drift

“ When, nearing port, men lower sail and lift
“ Their tackle in, what pleased me once, instead
“ Now pained; so with confession and due shrift
“ I yielded me to God, and pardon pled,
· Ah, miserable man!—yet sure it had be-sted,

"But that the Chief of the New Pharisees

"Nigh to the Lateran warring terrible—

“(And not with Jews nor Saracens—no ! not these,

"But burning only *Christian* men to quell,

“Who neither in the Soldan’s land did sell

"Nor conquer Acre, falsely renegade;

"He, his High Office not regarding well

"Nor Sacred Orders—nay, nor the Cord I'd laid

"About my loins, that should its wearer lean have made,—

"As Constantine to cure his leprosy

12

" Summoned Silvester from Soracte's side,

"So, for the fever of his pride, did he

"Call me and seek my counsel. I replied

"With silence, for I deemed his words allied

"To drunkenness. Then he, my qualms to mock,

"Cast no more doubts: I do absolve thee," cried

“ ‘If thou but show how Palestrina’s rock’

"Can with the dust be levelled. Heaven I can lock."

“ And unlock too ; so be thou well advis'd ; ” 13
“ For well thou wottest that the Keys are twain , ”
“ Keys which my Predecessor poorly priz'd ; ”
“ Then, 'neath his arguments' so weighty strain ,
“ Thinking that muteness were the lesser gain ,
“ Father , ” I cried , “ since Thou , with shrift complete , ”
“ From this my sin dost scour away the stain , ”
“ Large Promise , Small Performance—this , I weet , ”
“ Will make Thee triumph sure upon thy Loftly Seat . ”

“ I died . But when for me Saint Francis came 14
“ He found a Swarthy Cherub o'er me bent ,
“ Who cried : ‘ Nay , wrong me not : His soul I claim ! ’
“ Mong my familiars down must he be sent , ”
“ Because he gave the counsel fraudulent , ”
“ Since when , about his hair , I've hovered near . ”
“ Remission means Repentance—but repent ”
“ And still in reprobance to persevere , ”
“ Seems unto me in terms a contradiction clear ! ”

“ O , wretched as I was , how I did shrink 15
“ When seizing me he snarl'd : ‘ Me so profound
“ In Logic , haply thou wouldest never think ! ’ ”

“Then he to Minos hurried me, who wound
“Eight times his tail his callous back around,
“Biting it fiercely wroth, with this accost :
“‘*That recreant for the Thievish Fire is bound!*’
“So, garb’d as thou beholdest me, and most
“Bitterly grieving, here I drift for ever lost.”

He ceast. But scarce his words were ended thus 16
Ere that the Flame, with utter-hopeless mourn,
Departed on its way all dolorous,
Writhing and tossing up its taper horn.
Whereon, descending from so sad a bourn,
I and my Guide crost the next Bank, and so
Gained the *NINTH* Bridge, over that Pit upborne
Where They pay toll who amongst men did sow
Discord, and for themselves a double crop of woe.

CANTO XXXVIII.

WHO, even in prose, retelling oft the tale, 1
Could say what Wounds and Blood now greeted me?
Nay, every tongue assuredly would fail,
Since neither speech nor brain's capacity
Could compass it! For, if the butchery
That drencht with gore Apulia's fateful soil
Under the Trojans; with the carnage he,
The flawless Livy, wrote of, in the broil
Of the Long War that heaped of Roman rings such spoil;

Were added to the slaughtered host of those 2
Who warred with Norman Guiscard—but to gain
Nothing, save only bitter-grievous blows:
And them whose bones are gather'd yet, the slain
At Ceperâno, where the Apulian train
Played renegade; and them Old Erard's wit
Unweaponed slew on Tagliacozzo's plain—
The sight of all at once, gored, gasht and split:
Were nought against the mode of the *NINTH* hideous Pit.

Reft of a stave or cant, no kilderkin 3
Did e'er a wider aperture present
Than One I now beheld, cleft from his chin
Down to the part whence basest sound is sent ;
While, twixt his legs, were dangling from the rent
His guts and pluck, and the foul sack beside
That turneth into dross our aliment.
But even as I stood all occupied
In gazing down on him, he lookt at me, and cried :

(With both his hands widening his gash to view,) 4
“Behold how I my wretched carcass tear !
“Behold how MAHOMET is rent atwo !
“Before me, ALI, all in tears doth fare,
“Slasht in the face from chin to frontlet-hair.
“Yea, in their life of old antagonism,
“The many Others thou beholdest there,
“Were sowers all of Scandal and of Schism ;
“For the which cause they now are cleft in this abyssm.

“A cruel Fiend, stationed behind not far, 5
“Oft as the Doleful Round we iterate,
“Wild-brandishing a trenchant scimitar,
“Hacks and re-hacks us as we circulate,

“Our wounds, ere we repass him thus in wait,
“Still healing up. But now, who may’st thou be
“Thus sniffing on the Bridge, haply to bate
“By lingering, somewhat of the penalty
“Adjudged thee on thine own self-implicating plea ?”

“Death hath not toucht him yet, nor doth offence 6
“Bring him for chastisement,” my Master said ;
“But, that he may have full experience,
“Down thro’ this Hell it needed him be led,
“From Deep to Deep, by me—me who am dead :
“Yea : ev’n as here I speak ‘tis truly so !”
Then hundreds, hearing how he answerèd,
At *me* to gaze stopt in the Moat below,
For very wonderment forgetting all their woe.

“O then do thou, who mayst the Sun of Noon 7
“Ere long behold,—thou there who lingerest,
“Tell Fra Dolcino, if he wish not soon
“To follow me down here, that, with the rest,
“He arm himself betimes with rations, lest
“A stress of snows may give the Novarese
“A victory which else were hard to wrest.”
Poising one foot to step, such words as these
Speaks *MAHOMET*, then down sets it to earth, and flees.

Another, with slit throat, and mutilate 8

 Down from his eyebrows with off-sever'd nose,
 And one ear docked, gaping with those who late
 Had stopt in wonder, now in front of those
 Issues and gasps, as open wide he throws
 His weasand all without as red as gore:

 “ Oh thou whom guilt condemns not to our woes,
 “ And whom on Latin soil I've seen before,
 “ If likeness all too like mislead me not full sore,

“ Remember PIER DA MEDICINA!—O, 9

 “ And if thou e'er revisit the sweet plain
 “ That from Vercelli slopes to Marcabò,
 “ Tell it in Fano that her worthiest twain,
 “ (Unless our foresight here be wholly vain),
 “ Guido and Angioletto, both shall be
 “ Forth from their vessel cast into the Main,
 “ And, thro' a cruel Despot's perfidy,
 “ Nigh to Catholica be sack-drowned in the sea.

“ Nor, between Cyprus and Majorca's Isle, 10

 “ Saw Neptune e'er so foul an injury
 “ By Pirates wrought, or Argives. For, ev'n while
 “ That perjured Traitor, with his one dark eye,

(“Lord of the land whereon the Shade I’m nigh
“Rues that his sight had ever broken fast),
“Lureth them on to friendly colloquy,
“Round them his toils so craftily he’ll cast
“They’ll need no vows nor prayers against Focara’s blast.”

“If, up above,” quoth I, “aught of thy news 11
“Thou’dst have me bear, first let me understand
“Who is he that of his sight so sorely rues ? ”
Then on a Neighbour’s jaw clapping his hand,
And, making wide agape his mouth expand,
He cried: “Behold him: speechless now for aye !
“This was the caitiff who—an exile bann’d—
Quencht Cæsar’s doubts, protesting that alway
“When men are well prepared ’tis fatal to delay.”

But he with tongue torn out, nigh beyond reach, 12
How utter abject now he seemed to view—
CURIO—that once so dareful was in speech !
Then One, with both hands amputate, upthrew
His arm-stumps in the dusk, and while outflew
The spirting blood, bespattering all his face,
Shouted: “Thou shalt remember MOSCA too,
“Who cried, ‘Done Deed will Speed’—ah ! curse the phrase
“That sowed the seed of ill for all the Tuscan race.”

“ Yea,” I subjoin’d, “ and death to *thine own clan!* ”

Whereat, as ‘neath a doubled sorrow, he 13

Off, like a thing demented, sadly ran.

Then I, who lingered still the rest to see,

Saw what I fear to tell, for verily

It seems to need more witness. Howbeit I

A conscience have which reassureth me,

The good companion which doth fortify

Man’s bosom with the steel of self-felt purity.

Certes I saw, and still I seem to see,

14

A Trunk without a head proceeding there,

Just like the rest of that sad company.

His head he held a-dangle by the hair,

Swinging it like a lantern. With wild glare

The Head glowered at us, merely muttering “ *O!* ”

The man was lamp unto himself. Thus were

They ever two in one, and one in two :

How it could be He knows who had ordained it so !

But, as the Bridge’s foot he now was nearing,

15

With mounted arm he raised the pendent Head

To thrust its utterance closer to our hearing ;

When : “ See this grievous punishment,” it said,

“ Thou breathing wight, thus visiting the Dead —

“ See whether chastisement was ever dealt

“Greater than this! Yet, when thou hence art fled,
“That thou mayst bear, in telling of this Belt,
“My tidings too,—I was, when on the Earth I dwelt,

BERTRAND DE BORN, he who in days foregone 16

“Ill-counselled the Young King, making rebel
“Son against Father, Father war on Son.
“And, for I parted those who loved so well,
“(As with his machinations damnable
“Ahithophel—scarce baser—did toward
“Both Absalom and David,) so in Hell
“My brains I carry parted from their cord:
“And thus is seen in me The Law Of Right Reward.”

CANTO XXX.

THE diverse wounds and victims numberless

1

Made me so yearn to weep, I could not go
On, for my vision reeled to drunkenness.

But VIRGIL roused me: "Wherefore look'st thou so?

"Why on the maimed and mournful Shades below
"Dost rivet still thy gaze? Not thus inclin'd
"Wert thou at any other chasm of woe.

"Think, if to number them thou hast a mind,
"That Two-and-Twenty Miles this valley round doth wind.

"Moreo'er, the Moon is now beneath our feet:

2

"Henceforth the time allotted us is brief;
"And thou hast sights other than this to meet."

Then answer'd I: "Hadst Thou but known the grief
"That lay behind my looking, Thou wouldest lief
"Have pardoned me perhaps a longer stay."

But ere I had replied, some space my Chief
Had started; so behind him on the way
I followed, and the while continued still to say:

Hell xxix.] ~~THE LIBERTY~~ **THE NEGLECTED VENDETTA.** [Circle viii. Pit 9.
19-42. Sowers of Discord.

“ Down in that chasm, wherein I so did peer, 3

“ Was One, methinks, by blood to me allied,

“ Rueing the crime that costs him now so dear.”

“ Waste not a thought on him! There let him bide,

“ And otherwhere attend,” my Lord replied;

“ For at the Bridge’s foot I saw this same

“ Point at thee with his finger, and beside

“ Passionately menace thee with fierce exclaim—

“ GERI DEL BELLO,—so I heard them call his name.

“ But thou the while so wholly wast engag’d, 4

“ Thinking on Hautefort’s former lord instead,

“ As never t’ward that Spirit so enrag’d

“ To turn a look, until away he sped.”

“ My Guide, ‘tis that his violent death,” I said,

“ Remains still unavenged by us who bore

“ Share in his shame, that he indignant fled,

“ And, as I think, from speech with me forbore;

“ Whereby he only makes me pity him the more.”

Thus parléd we to that point upon our road 5

Where, from the Bridge’s rise, with stronger light,

The **TENTH** Ravine, down to its depth had show’d.

But scarce had we up-laboured to its height,

So that the Brotherhood appeared in sight

In the Last Crypt of Malebolge, when lo !
 Up-flew such lamentations,—like a flight
 Of arrows shod with pity,—volleying so,
 That I was forst both hands about mine ears to throw.

If all Maremma's and Sardinia's sick 6
 In summer-time, with every wight and wench
 In Val di Chiana's lazars-houses thick,
 Were flung together down into one trench,
 Less were their grief, and far less foul their stench,
 Reeking from rotted limbs and sores unmended,
 Than what now met us here. Yet, without blench,
 On by the long Rock-Bridge we down descended
 To the Last Bank, from whence, as still to the left we wended,

More vividly I saw where the instrument 7
 Of the High Sire, Justice Infallible,
 The Falsifiers puts to punishment,
 Writ on Her rolls. Nor sadder 'twere to tell
 Of them that in *A*egina once did dwell—
 (When in the air such influence did reign
 That man and beast alike pest-stricken fell
 Dead, to the meanest worm ; till, Bards maintain,
 From germins of the ant the old race grew again)—

Than now 'tis sad to tell, with what sore anguish 8
Lying in heaps all thro' that Trench of stone,
I there beheld these helpless Spirits langnish.
This sprawl'd on that one's belly, whilst upon
His shoulders lay a third: many a one,
Shifting his place, across the sad path crept
All-fours, to ease his aches. So looking on
And listening to those Sick Souls as they wept,
Too weak to raise themselves,—wordless along we stopt;

Till, propt against each other—just as pot 9
Leans upon pot to warm—Two did I scan
Sitting, whom sores from head to heel did spot.
Nor saw I ever comb by stableman
(For whom his master waits, or who scarce can
Keep from his bed,) applied so rapidly
As, up and down, the nails of either ran
Rasping their flesh, so furious seemed to be
That itch of theirs which knew no other remedy.

But, while their claws the scabs were shedding now,
As from a bream, or fish of broader scale, 10
A whittle scrapes the flakes off, “Ho there! thou
“Who with thy fingers dost thyself dismial,
“And oft as tweasers makest them avail,

“ Tell me, of such as in this Valley moil,
“ Do, peradventure, any of ye hail,”
(Thus called my Guide to one,) “ from Latin soil ?
So may thy nails suffice for thine eternal toil.”

“ Latins are we thou see’st disfigured thus,
“ Both of us : ” answer’d One who sore did weep.
“ But who art thou who hast inquired of us ? ”
“ I, ” cried Mine Escort,—“ I am one who keep
“ Leading this *Living Man* from steep to steep,
“ With hest to show him Hell! ” Even at the sound,
 Breaking their prop, asunder both did creep,
Then all on tremble turned to me around,
With those who heard his cry from rock to rock rebound.

Me then accosting, thus the Master kind
Bespoke: "Say now whate'er thou list to say."
And I began even as he design'd:
 " So may your memories never fade away
 " In the Fore-World from human minds, but may
 " They live 'neath many suns—O who are ye,
 " And of what City? Tell me now, I pray;
 " Nor let your shameful loathsome penalty
 Make ye one whit afeared to show yourselves to me."

“I of Arezzo was,” the One return’d, 13
“Whom Albert of Siena caused to die,
“Burnt at the stake; tho’ that for which I burn’d
“Brought me not hither. True it is, that I
“Professed me able thro’ the air to fly,
“So saying but in gamefulness of heart.
“Howbeit the Youth, who had, in verity,
“Much whim but little wit, prayed me apart
“That I to him would show the secret of mine art;

“And, for I made him not a Dædalus, 14
“He made the Bishop who begat him, then
“Roast me for heresy. But I am thus
“Doom’d to this final Pit of all the Ten
“By Minos rightly, for that among men
“I played the Alchymist.”—Holding his peace,
I thus addressed me to the Poet: “When
“Were folk so silly as the Sienese?
“Truly the very French were never light like these!”

But the Other Leper heard and answered me: 15
“Nay, sift out STRICCA who contrived to prove
“How easy ’tis to spend with modesty!
“And NICHOLAS too, who first the sumptuous clove
“Sowed in the garden where so well it thrrove:

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“And O leave out that Spendthrift Company

“Where CACCIA OF ASCIANO squandered grove,

“Vineyard, and spreading tilth and granary,

“And ABBAGLIATO brought his wit in lieu of fee !

“Haply thou'dst know for certain who it is

16

“That 'gainst the Sienese thus seconds thee ?

“Turn hither then thy sharpened sight, that this

“Disfeatured face of mine may best for me

“Give verier answer back. So wilt thou see

“CAPOCCHIO's Shade—the Falsifier who

“Transmuted metals with his Alchymy.

“And *Thou* should'st mind, if I recall thee true,

“How excellent an ape I was of Nature too !”

C A N T O X X X.

WHEN Juno, wroth for Semelè, 'gainst the House 1
Of Thebes re-raged, such frenzy seized the brain
Of Athamas, that, when he saw his spouse
Laden, on either arm, with children twain :
“Spread toils,” he cried, “that in her run be ta'en,
“Yon Lioness and her Whelps !” So, snatching one—
Learchus called—with pitiless hands insane,
He whirled him high, then dasht him on a stone,
Whilst she, as mad, in the waves plunged with her other
son.

So, when the pride of all-adventuring Troy 2
Was lowered by Fortune, and its King had been
Wiped with his Kingdom out ; when, lost to joy,
The wretched Hecuba, a captive queen,
The murder of Polyxena had seen,
And, after, found her mangled Polydore
Stretcht on the bleak sea-sand—in dolorous teen
Loud like a dog she barked about the shore,
Of reason all bereft, so grief had wrung her sore.

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Howbeit, so high-infuriate never show'd

3

Theban nor Trojan in their cruelty,
Nor so did frenzy ever brute-beast goad

Much less a human shape, as that which I

Now saw in Phantoms Twain, who, rushing by,
White-faced and naked, all around them bit,
Just like a famisht hog, loost from its sty,
Tusking and tearing all that meeteth it.

Then, to CAPOCCHIO come, One of them, in mad fit,

Its tusklike fangs deep-fleshing in his nape, 4
Down threw him, and so dragg'd him till it made
His very belly on the hard ground scrape.

At sight of which the Aretine dismayed
All-quivering said to me : " That Goblin-Shade
" Is GIANNI SCHICCHI whose demoniac way
" Is thus to trim up others ! "—Then I said :
" So may the other rend not *thee*, now say
" Who is that Second Sprite, ere hence she flit away."

And he to me : " That Ancient Sprite doth prove 5
" Outrageous MYRRHA, she who woo'd her kin—
" Ay, her own Sire—to more than rightful love ;
" Daring misrepresent herself within
" A borrowed guise to do her deed of sin ;

“Even as he, just past, dared represent,
“(That he the *Lady of the Stud* might win,)
“Buoso Donati, and with that intent
“Drew up in fullest form the dead man’s testament.”

Scarce had they brusht away, those Maniac Two, 6
Whom so I’d watcht, when, fastening mine eyes
Down on the misbegotten residue,
Lo! I beheld One shapen in the guise
And likeness of a lute, had but his thighs
There, where a man is forkt, been amputate.
Dropsy, (whose ill-absorbed fluidities
Make a man’s bulk so disproportionate
That to the face no more the figure doth relate,)

Kept his lips parted, just as one who burneth 7
With hectic fever, in his quenchless thirst,
One lip to chin, the other upward turneth.
“O Ye, who free from punishment have burst—
“I know not why—into this World accurst,”
Sighing he gaspt to us: “O look and think
“On MASTER ADAM’s pain,—on me who erst
“Had all I wisht and more at every brink;
“Now, woe is me! I crave one poorest drop to drink.

“The little streams that down the emerald hills 8
“Of Casentino into Arno pour,
“Moistening their cool lush banks with freshest rills,
“Are ever in my sight—nor vainly; for
“Their fancied image parches me far more
“Even than the plague that wizzens up my face.
“And so stern Justice, racking me thus sore,
“Taketh occasion from the very place
“Wherein I sinned, to make bitterer my bitter case.

“There is Romena where I falsified 9
“The coin imprinted with the Baptist,—so
“They burnt me for it—burnt me till I died.
“But might I see *their* Spirits here in woe,
“Guy’s, Alexander’s or his brother’s,—no,
“Not for all Fonte Branda would I change
“The trebly-welcome sight! And yet, I trow,
“One to this place already is not strange,
“If truth the Mad Shades tell that round this Valley range.

“What boots it, tho’? My limbs are fetter’d! Yet
“Were I so light that in one century 10
“I could advance one inch, forth I’d have set
“Already on the road—if but to see
“Him in this scurvy gang—spite that it be

“Eleven miles round nor less than half across !

“For *them* am I in such a company :

“Their prompture 'twas that led me, to my loss,

“The florins to infuse with carats three of dross.”

Then I : “Who be the Abject Pair, that smoke 11

“Like a hot hand in winter-time immerst

“In water, lying at thy right ? ” I spoke,

And he : “I found them when I rained here first,

“Since when they've mov'd not from their place

“Nor ever will. Falsely THE ONE did seek [accurst,

“To rain Joseph, and his name asperst.

“From Troy 's the Other—SINON, the false Greek.

“'Tis fever makes them thus from every pore to reek.”

Here one of them misliking to be so 12

Ignobly named, right in his rigid paunch

With doubled fist strake out with such a blow

It sounded like a drum. ADAM, as staunch,

Full in his face an answering blow did launch,

Straight from the shoulder, no less heavily,

Adding in words : “Albeit this laden haunch

“Cuts me from all progression off, yet free

“I have at least an arm for such necessity ! ”

“ 'Twas none so ready tho',” quoth he, rejoining, 13
“ When to the stake you trod with both hands tied !
“ Though ready enough it ever was for coining !”
“ Now say you true,” he of the Dropsey cried,
“ But no such verity you testified
“ When askt the truth at Troy, upon a time !”
“ I but in words was false,” SINON replied,
“ You deeds ; and here I answer one sole crime,
“ You more than any other devil of this clime.”

Then he, retorting, back this answer hurl'd : 14

“ Base Perjurer ! Bethink thee of The Horse
“ With the big belly ; and since *all the world*
“ Wots of thy crime, let that too be a source
“ Of added pang to thee ! ”—“ Ah ! pang thee worse
“ That belly of thine, heaping its monstrous stack
“ Before thine eyes, while, in thy throttle coarse,
“ Thirst parch thee till thy very tongue doth crack ! ”

Thus rail'd false Greek, and thus false Coiner rated back :

“ So still, as ever wont, your scuril mouth 15
“ For voiding rankest utterance,” he said,
“ Stands wide agape. Yet, grant that I have drouth,
“ While moisture bloats my body, you instead
“ Have parching fever and a racking head ;

“ Nor many words you’d want, foul as you are,
“ To lap Narcissus’ mirror ! ”—I was led
To look and listen so unto their jar
That th’ Master cried : “ Yea, look ! Much more, and
I’m not far

“ From falling out with *thee* ! ” At such wroth tone
I turned to him ashamed—so shamed I seem 16
To blush again, remembering ‘t. And as one
Who dreams a dream where horrors overteem,
And dreaming wishes it might be a dream,
Craving the thing that is as tho’ twere nought ;
So I—altho’ my tongue refused its theme—
Whilst wishing to excuse me, little thought
That all the while I thus mine own excuse had wrought.

“ Less shame would wipe away a soil far worse, 17
“ Than this of thine hath been,” the Master cried,
“ Therefore disburden thee of all remorse.
“ Consider I am alway at thy side :
“ And if, perchance, it should again betide
“ That Fortune bring thee into any place
“ Where scandal-mongers brawl, and lies are lied,
“ Shun them, as thou wouldest shun thine own disgrace,
“ For the wish to listen even is harmful and most base.”

C A N T O X X X I .

T HUS did the very tongue that wounded me, 1
Until with shame my burning cheeks were blurr'd,
Itself breathe balm on its own injury.
So of Achilles' spear oft have I heard—
His Sire's bequest—that it administer'd,
After the giving of a grievous wound,
The boon of healing. Then, with no more word,
Straightway upon that pestful Trench's bound
Turning our backs, we crost the mole that banked it round.

Here it was less than night, and less than day, 2
So that our vision ranged not far, when lo !
High in the gloom, hearing a Bugle bray
(Such as had made, so shrilly did it blow,
The gruffest thunder feeble,) straight thereto
Full in its wake I sent my straining eye.
Ah ! sure, after the Dolorous Overthrow,
When Charlemain lost his sainted chivalry,
Not even Orlando's horn blasted so terribly !

Brief time I thitherward had raised my head 3

When Towers, many and high, methought I spied :

Whence—"Master, say what City's this?" I said.

"Such is the intervening darkness wide

"Wherethro' thine eye transpierces," he replied,

"That Fancy dupes thee. But, departing hence,

"Soon wilt thou see, when closer we have hied,

"How distance lends delusion to the sense ;

"Wherefore now spur thee on with more expedience."

Then by the hand taking me lovingly, 4

He said: "Ere further we advance at all,

"That so the fact may seem less strange to thee,

"Learn now, these are no Towers but GIANTS tall,

"Who stand within the WELL, topping its wall,

"Each to his navel in its depths immnr'd."

As when a landscape, neath a fog's thick pall,

Little by little groweth more assur'd

As the eye reshapes what first the lifting haze obscur'd ;

So, more and more, as t'ward the brink we pass, 5

With eyes astrive to bore the welkin dim,

Fear waxes—error wanes. For lo! ev'n as

Mount Reggionè's towers her ramparts rim,

So, with one half their height, the Giants grim
(Whom Jove's high thunders still make terrified)

Huge round the *WELL* enturretet its brim :
Of One the face already I desried,
Shoulders, chest, paunch in part, and both arms at his side.

Sure Nature, when her hand forwent the skill 6

To form these monster-growths, was well inclin'd,

Wresting from Mars such ministers of ill :

And if She keeps, according to their kind,
The whale and elephant, a subtle mind
May see therein, if he discern aright,
She proves herself more provident and kind ;
For man must ever be defenceless quite
Where Power and Wit and Will for evil ends unite.

In length and girth his massy head was like 7

Saint Peter's pine at Rome : his bones betray'd
The same proportions vast ; so that the dyke

Of the deep *WELL*, which apron-like array'd
His limbs below the waist, above display'd
Such height that only to have reached his hair
Three tall-limb'd Frisians vainly had essay'd :
For, thirty ample palms, downward from where
Men buckle fast their cloaks, loomed he enormous there.

“*Rafel Mai Amech Zabì Almì,*”

8

The creature from its mouth discrepant roar'd,
A mouth unapt for sweeter psalmody.

“Keep to thy horn, thou vacuous Soul Abhorr'd,
“And vent thyself with that,” (my Guide toward
Not to him cried,) “and, when wrath touches thee,
“Feel on thy neck and thou wilt find the cord
“That slings it—Spirit of Confusion!—See,
“There! where it decks thy breast that swells so prudefully.

“His jargon stamps him,” then to me he said,

9

“For this is *NIMROD*, whose misweening brain
“Builded the Tower whence many tongues were spread.

“But let him be! We only speak in vain;
“For every language has for him the strain
“His has for others, which is known to none.”

Therewith we gat us on our way again,
Till, having leftward turned, we came upon
One still more huge and fierce, about a bowshot on.

What Master 'twas that could this Giant bind

10

I cannot say; yet there he stood fast bound
One arm in front—the right arm gyved behind.
Down from his neck a ponderous chain we found
That all about his Titan stature wound;

Five times upon the part of him that hove
Visible to view, it girted him around.
Whence spake my Guide: "This haughty Spirit strove—
"Hence his reward—to gage his might against High Jove.

" EPHIALTES he, who made the vast endeavour 11

" What time the Giants put the Gods in fear ;
" But the arms he wielded then, now moves he never ! "

Then I upspoke: " If possible it were
" Would that my eyes might have experience here
" Of BRIAREUS, the measureless."—" Thou wilt
" See next," quoth he, " ANTEUS who is near
" And speaks, nor fetters none hath ever felt,
" And who will set us down at The Bottom Of All Guilt."

" He whom thou seek'st is further on—a Giant 12

" Shackled and shaped like this one, save that he
" Is even more ferocious and defiant ! "

Shook by an earthquake, tower so violently .
Never yet swayed, as, struggling to be free,
Swayed EPHIALTES now; nor e'er before
Felt I such dread of death; nay, verily,
Had I not seen what mighty chains he bore,
I, for sheer fright had died—there needed nothing more.

Howbeit, continuing our journey now 13
We reach't ANTÆUS, who, besides his head,
Full five ells topt the Cavity. "O Thou
" Who in the fateful vale—the vale that made
" Great Scipio heir to Fame, when 'fore him fled
" The hosts of Hannibal—didst for thy prey
" A thousand lions take, and who in the dread
" High War with Heaven, hadst *thou* been there, some say
" The Sons of Earth, with thee, had conquered in the fray ;

" Grudge not the toil, nor all disdainfully 14
" Refuse to set us in the depth below
" Where cold locks up Cocytus, else must we
" Straight unto TYPHON or to TITYUS go.
" Nay, curl no lips in scorn, but bend thee low ;
" For One is here who can thy fame restore,
" Who gives what ye in Hell all crave for so,
" For still he lives and yet hath years in store,
" Unless, untimely, Grace do summon him before."

So urged The Master. Then with eagerness 15
His outstretcht hands he laid about my Guide,
Hands of which Hercules ev'n had felt the stress !
Finding himself thus grapt then VIRGIL cried
To me : "Come ! let my arms be round thee tied,"
And so he made one bundle of the pair.

As Carisenda on its leaning side
Seemeth itself to move, when high in air
Clouds drift against its inclination ; even so there

ANTZEUS seemed to me, as, like a tower, 16
I saw him bend above us, till anon
He lifted us, when ah ! 'twas such an hour
Another way far leifer had I gone.
But lightly in the Well the Giant One—
The Well that gorgeth, to its bottom cast,
Both Lucifer and Judas—set us down.
Nor stayed he bent, but ere a moment past
Straight he upreared himself, as in a ship the mast.

CANTO XXXIII.

RASPING and rough had I of rimes such stock 1

As might the Miserable Hole befit,
Down upon which thrusts every other rock,
Now would I wring the juices of my wit
To the last drop; but, since I lack of it,
Not without fear I face the enterprise.

For 'tis no child's play to describe the pit
Which at the Universe's Centre lies,
Nor suits it with a tongue that 'Dad' and 'Mammy' cries!

But may the Maidens Nine their help afford 2

Who helpt Amphion anciently to raise
Thebes' lofty walls, that so may best accord
My verse with truth. O, Worthless Populace,
Past all mis-natured, sunken in the Place
So arduous to describe, better had ye
On Earth been sheep or goats!—Now, at its base
When in the WELL the Giant set us free,
Beneath his feet, some way down the declivity,

Whiles I was scanning the Great Wall in wonder 3

With upcast gaze, all suddenly—"Have care!"

I heard a voice crying to me from under

My very feet. "Look how you step! Beware

"Lest on the heads of us, A WRETCHED PAIR

"OF BROTHERS here, you trample as you pass."

Then, facing round, I saw before me there

And underfoot A LAKE—one solid mass—

In semblance now no more water, but liker glass.

Never in winter such a veil of ice 4

Covered the Danube o'er in Osterich,

Nor the far Tanais under frostier skies,

Like what was here; so that if Tabernich

Had fallen on't, or Pietrapana's peak,

Not all their weight, so solid did it seem,

Would even at the edge have made a 'crick.'

And just as sweltered frogs croak in a stream

With muzzles peeping forth, when country-maids oft dream

Of gleaning in the heat; so, blue with cold, 5

The Shades, far as their necks, froze in the ice,

Chattering their teeth like storks. Nor could they hold

Their faces up for shame; and while their eyes

Told of their inward bosoms' miseries

Their mouths to the outer cold like witness bare.
Then, having ceast all round to scrutinize,
I glanced toward my feet, and saw The Pair
So on each other prest they mixt their very hair.

“ O, breast to breast embracing, who are Ye ? ” 6
“ Tell me,” I cried. Then back their necks they bended.
But, soon as each had raised his face to me,
Their eyes, whose brimming grief was held suspended,
Gusht into tears, but, ere the drops descended,
Frost froze them up, and fast their eyelids shut ;
Nor board to board by clamp was ever blended
Closelier than they. Whereon they fell to butt
Each other, like two goats, their mutual hate to glut.

With that a Shade who thro’ the cold had lost ” 7
Both ears, mumbled with down-hung face : “ O you
“ Watching our features, mirrored in this frost,
“ Why stare ye so ? List ye to ken These Two ?
“ They shared—’twas from their father Albert due—
“ The Valley where Bisenzio’s waters wind,
“ And one same body bare them both ; but thro’
“ All *CAINA* ye may search, nor will ye find
Souls fitted more to be in gelid crust confined.

“ Not worse was He, whom Arthur at one blow 8
“ Pierced—breast and shadow ! Nay, nor even he,
“ FOCACCIA ; nor the traitor that doth so
“ Obstruct me with his head I cannot see,
“ Called SASSOL MASCHERONI—if thou be
“ A Tuscan, well thou know’st the recreant’s fate !
“ And I, (that nothing more be askt of me,)
“ Am CAMICION DE’ PAZZI, and await
“ CARLINO here, whose crimes will mine extenuate.”

Purple with cold, ah me ! what countless hordes 9
I next beheld—thro’ me a shuddering thrill
Swept, and sweeps ever, at those Frozen Fords !
But, all a-shiver from the eternal chill,
As to the Centre we were journeying still,
Whereto all heavy things incline ; anon
(Whether by Chance, or Destiny, or Will,
I know not,) but, ’mid the heads while stepping on,
My foot I hard up-dashed against the face of One.

“ Why foot me thus ? ” loud-crying shouted he. 10
“ Unless thou comest vengeance to increase
“ For Mont’ Aperti, why torment’st thou me ? ”
Then I : “ My Master, bide me here a piece,
“ That, touching him, I set a doubt at ease,

“Then, after, haste me as thou wilt.”—*My Guide*
Stood still. Then to that Shade, who did not cease
Meanwhile to curse me bitterly, I cried:
“Traducer, who art thou thou dar’st another chide ?”

“Nay, who art thou thro’ *ANTENÔRA* giving 11
“Such blows to others’ cheeks,” he did exclaim,
“Heavier than might be dealt by one still living ?”—
“Living I am ; and, if thou covet fame,
“It may be dear to thee I set thy name
“Among the other notes.” Then did he roar:
“Far other wish have I in this my shame!
“So get thee hence, and pester me no more:
“Ill knowest thou the way to cozen on *this* shore.”

But, seizing him by the *afterscalp*, I said : 12
“Name thee thou shalt ! Name thee, I say, or there
“Shall not a hair remain upon thy head !”
Then he : “Tho’ every lock away thou tear
“I will not tell thee, nor my face declare,
“If a thousand times on me thou fallest foul !”
Already round my hand I’d coiled his hair
And more than one tuft pluckt, whilst he, vile Soul,
Keeping his face still down, dog-like for pain did howl;

When, " *BOCCA!* " cried a Third, " What ailest thou ?

 " Boom not enough thy jaws but thou must bay 13

 " Too, like a hound ? What Devil's at thee now ? "

 Then I : " Curst Traitor, now thou needst not say :

 " For now the truth of thee I'll bear away

 " And make thy shame for ever manifest ! "

 " Begone ! " he shriekt, " and tell what please thee may ;

 " Yet be not dumb, if hence thou issuest,

 " Of *HIM* who keeps his tongue to blabbing so addrest ;

 " For he it is who rues the Frenchman's gold.

14

 " *HIM OF DUEA*, say too, thou didst see

 " Where such delinquents are—out in the cold !

 " And be thou askt who else was here with me,

 " Thou hast at foot that *BECCARIA*, he

 " Whose gorge was slit by Florence. Yonder too

 " *GIANNI DEL SOLDANIÈR* must surely be,

 " With *GANELLO*, and *TRIBALDELLO* who

 " Wide, when *Faenza* slept, her portals open threw."

So left we him among these traitors foul :

15

 When Two so in a single hole I saw,

 One's head seemed to the other like a cowl.

 As bread is torn for hunger, so the jaw

 Of the Uppermore the Other's scalp did flaw,

 Riving it where the nape joins with the brain.

Not fiercelier did frenzied Tydeus gnaw
Dead Menalippus' temples with disdain,
Than he this skull and what thereto did appertain.

“O thou ! that shovest by such beast-like act 16
“Thy hate of him on whom with appetence
“Thou thus art ravening ; now—upon this pact—
“Tell me,” I cried, “ tell me its why and whence,
“That— f in any reasonable sense,
“Thou shouldst have aught of charge against him, I,
“By knowing who Ye are, and *his* offence,
“Will yet revenge thee in the World on high,
“If this wherewith I speak ere then become not dry.”

C A N T O X X X I I I.

HIS mouth uplifting from the fierce repast 1
The Grim Offender wiped it on the hair
Of the head he gnaw'd behind ; then spake : "Thou hast
 " A wish that I renew a grief which, ere
 " I give it tongue, my very heart doth tear,
 " So bitter, bitter is its memory.
 " Still, if the words I sow full fruit may bear
 " To this Foul Traitor's lasting infamy,
" Wrung tho' I be to tears, I'll tell the truth to thee.

 " Yet who thou art I know not, nor divine 2
 " The manner of thy coming here below,
 " But well I ween thou art a Florentine,
 " Hearing thy speech. I was, as thou shalt know,
 " COUNT *UGOLINO* ; he, I mangle so
 " ARCHBISHOP *RUGGIERI* ; and 'twere well
 " To say why thus I neighbour him ; altho'
 " My trust—my capture—and my murder fell,
" The work of his ill thoughts—it needeth not to tell.

“ But what could never have been heard by thee, 3
 “ How cruel was my death unnatural,
 “ Hear now, and judge if he has injured me !
 “ A narrow loop within that Dungeon’s wall,
 “ Where more will yet be mewed, and which men call
 “ From me The Tower of Famine, thro’ its rift
 “ Had shewn me many moons, when there did fall
 “ An evil dream on me that seemed to lift
 “ The Future’s darksome veil, and thus appeared its drift

“ *Lord of the Sport I saw this Man pursue* 4
 “ *A hunted Wolf and Whelps over the hill*
 “ *That shuts out Lucca from the Pisans’ view.*
 “ *With Bloodhounds lean, of train’d and eager skill,*
 “ *He set Sismondi on, while, keen to kill,*
 “ *Lanfranchi and Gualandi ran before.*
 “ *Soon Sire and Sons weary and wearier still*
 “ *Seemed i’ the Chase to grow, till, giving o’er,*
 “ *Methought that savage fangs their panting sides did gore.*

“ With that I woke. ‘Twas scarcely dawn. With dread
 “ I heard my Children sobbing in their sleep, 5
 “ (For they were with me,) ‘*Bread! O give us bread!*’
 “ If now thou weepst not, what can make thee weep ?

“ O thou art hard if thou from tears can keep
“ Thinking what then my boding heart did brood !
“ At last they woke ; while on the hour did creep
“ When it was wont to bring to us our food,
“ But, for his dream, each lay in dumb disquietude.

“ Sudden,—below—of the Horrible Tower I heard 6
“ Them nailing up the door ! I gazed upon
“ The faces of my Sons, but said no word !
“ I wept not, so within I'd turned all stone.
“ They wept. Then little Anselm cried anon :
“ ‘ Father, what aileth thee ? Thou lookest so ! ’
“ Still not a tear I shed, nor answer none
“ Gave all that day, nor its after night of woe,
“ Till high above the world a second sun did show :

“ When, by the pale and scanty glimmer thrown 7
“ Athwart our doleful Keep, seeing, in brief,
“ Four faces, each the reflex of my own,
“ Both of my hands I bit for very grief.
“ But they, deeming I did it for relief
“ Of hunger's pangs, leapt up with suddenness,
“ And cried : ‘ O Father, we had much more lief
“ ‘ Thou feed on us ; 'twould work us less distress :
“ ‘ Thou gavest, therefore take, these weeds of wretchedness ! ’

“ With that I calmed me to assuage their sorrow. 8
 “ O pitiless Earth ! Why open’d thou not ? Then they
 “ Grew mute, like me, that day and all the morrow.
 “ But, at my feet, when dawned the fourth dread day
 “ Down Gaddo flung him, and as there he lay
 “ Gaspt, ‘ *Father Mine, hast thou no help for me ?* ’
 “ And there stiff-stricken died ! Then saw I—yea,
 “ As plainly as I now am seen by thee—
 “ ’Tween the fifth morn and sixth each of the other Three

“ Fall dead, one after one. Then I became 9
 “ Stark blind ; yet, o’er their corpses, lovingly
 “ Still did I grope, and fondly by his name
 “ Kept calling each, for days and long nights three ;
 “ Then Hunger more than Anguish vanquished me ! ”
 This said, once more he seized the wretch beneath,
 With haggard eyes distort ; then, savagely,
 Even as a dog into a bone, his teeth
 Into the Wretched Skull deep he again did sheath.

Ah Pisa ! Thou opprobrium of the race 10
 That have their dwelling in that Beauteous Land
 Where ‘ *Si* ’ is softly spok’n—thou Earth’s disgrace !
 Since that *thy* neighbours who around thee stand
 Are slow to lay on thee their chastening hand,

Swift let the Isles from their foundations roll—
Gorgona and Capraia—on thy strand,
And, damming Arno's mouth with massy mole,
So in thy cursèd streets drown every breathing soul !

For even if, as common fame reports, 11
Count Ugolino did, thro' treachery,
Basely betray thee in thy Castled Forts,
That was no reason why, thus vengefully,
Thou shouldst have done to death his progeny !
Thou Modern Thebes ! Their very youth did prove
Brigata's, Uguccione's innocence,
And theirs, the other Two my song above
Has nam'd—children alike in guilelessness and love !

So past we where the rugged Ice embraces 12
Another sort, not with heads down, but pent
Under the surface, *showing but their faces.*
Here weeping was its own impediment ;
And thus their grief, finding no proper vent,
Turned inward to increase their agonies.
For all their first-shed tears, together blent,
Like crystal visors had encased their eyes,
Up to their eyebrows filling both concavities.

And now, albeit from this frigid place 13

So callous I had grown that, verily,

All feeling had untenanted my face,

And numbed was every sensibility;

Yet, notwithstanding, it appeared to me

As if I felt a wind against me blow.

Whence I exclaim'd: "Master, how may this be?

"Who can have set this air in motion so:

"For is not every heat extinguisht here below?"

Whence he to me: "Thou art approaching fast 14

"To where thine eyes will give thee answer just,

"Seeing the Cause that poureth down such blast."

Whereat a Catiff in the icy crust

Cried out: "O Souls! so merciless ye must

"Down to the Last Depth go, pray ye unseal

"Mine eyes; remove their brittle veils—O, just

"One moment—that my bursting heart may feel

"Ev'n that relief before its sorrows re-congeal!"

Then I: "An thou wouldest have me succour thee, 15

"Say who thou art: and if I free thee not

"Down to The Bottom may I go!" Then he:

"Famed for my '*fruits*'—from no good garden-plot—

"FRIAR ALBERIC am I, but here have got

“Dates for my dastard figs !”—“What !” I outcried,
“Art thou then dead ?” And thereupon : “God wot
“How with my earthly Body it betide—
“I have no knowledge,” (thus this *foredoomed* Soul replied;)

“For *Ptolomæa* such prerogative 16
“Enjoys, that Souls oft fall into This Place
“Ere Atropos impells. But, that thou give
“Thy succourance unto me with readier grace,
“And rid the glazen tears from off my face,
“Know that forthwith, the moment any soul,
“Like as mine did, the *trust of friends* betrays,
“A Fiend usurps Its place, ‘neath whose control
“The Body lives until its years run out their roll;

“While It to suchlike depth falls ruining ! 17
“And, chance, on Earth *his* Body too may show
“Whose Soul behind me here is wintering !
“For learn, if but alate thou com’st below,
“He is *SER BRANCA DORIA*, and know
“’Tis many a year since hither he did sink.”—
“But *BRANCA DORIA* hath not died yet ? No,”
(Said I,) “thou wouldest beguile me now, I think ;
“For still he puts on clothes, doth sleep and eat and drink.”

Then answering me: "Not yet down to the Ditch 18

" Wherein the Sinner-Snatchers bide," he said,

" And where for ever boils the viscous pitch,

" Had MICHAEL ZANCHÈ gone, ere enterèd

" A devil This Man's flesh, in his soul's stead,

" As into HIM who shared his treachery.

" But now put forth thy hand," again he pled,

" And open thou mine eyes."—Howbeit I

Opened them not: to be unkind was courtesy!

Ah, Genoese! at variance with the race

19

Of all mankind, in manners far the worst,

And full of every vice, why from the face

Of Earth are ye not scattered and disperst?

For with Romagna's Spirit most accurst

One of your Citizens I found so vile

That in *Cocytus* is his *Soul* immerst

Already for his monstrous deeds of guile,

Tho' still alive on Earth his *Body* walks the while!

CANTO XXXIV.

“*V*EXILLA REGIS PRODEUNT INFERNI;

“ So, if thine eyes in front of thee do peer,
“Him,” said the Master, “now shalt thou discern.” I
Lookt—and as ere a heavy fog doth clear,
Or, as when night involves our hemisphere,
Seemeth, far off, a windmill under wind,
So was the Structure that did now appear.
Further, such was the gale, I shrank behind
My Guide, for I could there no other shelter find.

For now I’d come—I verse the fact with awe— 2

Where in the Ice the Shades were covered quite,
Transpicuous, as in glass mere bits of straw.

Some were lain level; some in standing plight,
This with his heels, that with his head upright;
Another, face to feet, bent like a bow.

But, further still, soon as he deemed he might
The Creature Of The Once Fair Visage show,
Stepping from front of me, and making me forslow,

“Behold now *DIS!*” whispered to me my Leader, 3

“The Place, the Consummation, now behold

“Where thou must arm thyself with courage!” Reader

Ask not—I write not—none can e'er be told

How faint I grew, then how my blood ran cold—

Into no words my terror could be weft!

I neither died nor lived. So if thou hold

One grain of wit, conceive how I was left,

And what I then became of either state bereft!

The Emperor of The Realm of Misery,

4

Upbulking from the Ice with half his bust,

Was such, a Giant's height more matches me

Than to his arms a Giant would adjust.

Judge from this portion how prodigious must

His whole dimensions be! Ah, if indeed

He once was fair as now he's foul, ere thrust

From Heav'n, when from Heav'n's King he dar'd secede,

Well may from him all Crime and Misery proceed.

And O, how passing marvellous 'twas to view

5

When on his head Three faces met my sight!

The one in front was of a Ruddy hue:

The others, topping either shoulder—right

Above their middle—did with this unite,

And all together formed his haughty crest.

The dexter seemed twixt Yellowish and White :

The sinister a Blacker tint possest,

Such as the swarthy tribes of valeward Nile invest.

Beneath each face perpetually whirr'd 6

Two spacious wings, high in the air outswell'd

Stupendous, as became so huge a Bird.

Sea-sails so broad I never had beheld !

Plumes they had none ; but each was film'd and fell'd

And fashioned like a Bat's ; and these he flapt

In such wise that there ever from him well'd

Three bitter-freezing Winds, whereby it hapt

That all Cocyts' Lake in solid ice was wrapt.

Out of Six Eyes he bitterly was weeping, 7

Whose dribbling tears, with gory slaver blended,

His triple chins eternally kept steeping.

A Malefactor from each mouth depended,

Whom, like a mill, his jaggy teeth ne'er ended

To crunch, all Three the self-same torture sharing.

Howbeit to *him*, who from the front descended,

The champing was as nothing to the tearing !

So oft The Fiend his flesh from off his spine kept baring.

“JUDAS ISCARIOT,” the Master said, 8
“Is he who there the greatest pain doth show,
“His spasming legs outside,—inside his head.
“Of the other twain, jutting their heads below,
“He, from the black jowl hung, is BRUTUS. How
“He writhes, nor utters word! The other soul
“So full of limb, is CASSIUS. But now
“The night is re-arising on our pole,
“And hence must we depart, FOR WE HAVE SEEN THE WHOLE!”

Clasping my Master’s neck—for so he pleas’d— 9
Soon as the Monster’s wings were spreaded wide
He, having place and time at vantage seiz’d,
Fast to Its bristled flanks himself applied.
Then, twixt the Ice-crust and the shaggy hide,
Gradual we lowered us from fell to fell.
But when we’d reacht that point upon Its side
Where moves the hip under the haunch’s swell,
Sore-struggling and short-breath’d, more than I list to tell,

Round, where his feet had been, my Master turning 10
His head,—as one who *mounts*, so gript the hair
Methought at first we were to Hell returning.
But, like a man with panting breath and spare,
He cried: “Clip fast! for now by suchlike Stair

"We must depart from so much Evil!" Then,
Issuing ere long at a Rock-opening, there
He set me seated on its edge; and when
Warily he'd stridden across, he drew to me again.

I raised my eyes expecting still to meet,
As I had left him, *LUCIFER*; but lo,
I saw, high in the air, his upturned feet !
Whether I now was wonderstruck or no
The grosser many may imagine who
See not *what Point* I'd past ! With that did say
My Master : "Up ! Rise to thy feet; for know
"Long is the road and difficult the way :
"And now at middle-tierce the Sun renews the day."

It was indeed no palace corridor,
There where we stood ; but natural cavity
With great unease of light and evil floor.
Rising I said : " Master, I crave of thee,
" Ere from The Great Abyss I sever me,
" Deign a few words mine error to displace.
" Where is the Ice ? And how is it that He
" Is thus reverst ? And how, in such brief space,
" Can thus, from eve to morn, the Sun have run his race ? "

And he returned: "Thou thinkest thou art still 13

"Yon side the Centre where I graspt the hair
"Of the Evil Worm that thro' the World doth drill.

"Whiles I descended thou indeed wast there;
"But, when I turned, we past The *Point* to where
"All weights do gravitate. Now thou dost halt
"Beneath the counter hemisphere of Air
"To that which doth The Dry Land overvault,
"And 'neath whose zenith died The Man Who Had No Fault.

"And on a Little Sphere thy feet are borne 14

"*JUDECOA*'s other face: so doth it tide
"That when 'tis evening there, here it is morn.

"And He, who made us stairway with his hide,
"Is fixt as first thou saw'st him. On this side
"Headlong from Heaven he fell; when, over here
"The Land,—emergent once—as terrified
"At his accurst approach, for very fear
"With Water veiled herself and sought Our Hemisphere.

"And, chance, to shun him as thro' Earth he push'd, 15

"What shows on this side, as a Mount ascending,
"Left here this hollowed Way as up it rush'd."—

For from *BEELZEBUB* a way is wending,
In length, proportion'd to Hell's tomb, extending,
To sight unknown,—traced only by the sound

Of a *SMALL RILL* that thro' it is descending,
Which, with a gentle gradient, round and round
Frets thro' the channelled rock, in many a spiral wound.

There entering in, my Guide and I forthright 16

Along that Secret Course our footsteps chose,
To come again into The World Of Light.
And altogether heedless of repose,
He First, and Second I—up, up we rose
Till thro' an Opening, which the sky unbars,
Heaven did at last unto mine eyes disclose
Its splendours riding in their radiant cars;
And thence we issued forth to rebehold the Stars.

END OF
THE INFERN.

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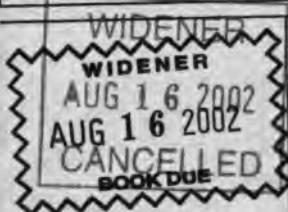
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