

The vision of hell

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Dante Alighieri

HELL

Cantos 1 - 34

CANTO I

IN the midway of this our mortal life, I
found me in a gloomy wood, astray Gone
from the path direct: and e'en to tell It
were no easy task, how savage wild That
forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews, in bitterness not far from death.
Yet to discourse of what there good
befell, All else will I relate discover'd
there. How first I enter'd it I scarce can
say, Such sleepy dullness in that instant

weigh'd My senses down, when the true
path I left, But when a mountain's foot I
reach'd, where clos'd The valley, that had
pierc'd my heart with dread, I look'd
aloft, and saw his shoulders broad
Already vested with that planet's beam,
Who leads all wanderers safe through
every way.

Then was a little respite to the fear, That
in my heart's recesses deep had lain, All
of that night, so pitifully pass'd: And as a
man, with difficult short breath,
Forespent with toiling, 'scap'd from sea to
shore, Turns to the perilous wide waste,
and stands At gaze; e'en so my spirit,
that yet fail'd Struggling with terror,
turn'd to view the straits, That none hath
pass'd and liv'd. My weary frame After
short pause recomforted, again I
journey'd on over that lonely steep,

The hinder foot still firmer. Scarce the ascent Began, when, lo! a panther, nimble, light, And cover'd with a speckled skin, appear'd, Nor, when it saw me, vanish'd, rather strove To check my onward going; that oftentimes With purpose to retrace my steps I turn'd.

The hour was morning's prime, and on his way Aloft the sun ascended with those stars, That with him rose, when Love divine first mov'd Those its fair works: so that with joyous hope All things conspir'd to fill me, the gay skin Of that swift animal, the matin dawn And the sweet season. Soon that joy was chas'd, And by new dread succeeded, when in view A lion came, 'gainst me, as it appear'd,

With his head held aloft and hunger-mad,
That e'en the air was fear-struck. A she-
wolf Was at his heels, who in her
leanness seem'd Full of all wants, and
many a land hath made Disconsolate ere
now. She with such fear O'erwhelmed
me, at the sight of her appall'd, That of
the height all hope I lost. As one, Who
with his gain elated, sees the time When
all unwares is gone, he inwardly Mourns
with heart-gripping anguish; such was I,
Haunted by that fell beast, never at
peace, Who coming o'er against me, by
degrees Impell'd me where the sun in
silence rests.

While to the lower space with backward
step I fell, my ken discern'd the form one
of one, Whose voice seem'd faint through
long disuse of speech. When him in that
great desert I espied, "Have mercy on

me!" cried I out aloud, "Spirit! or living man! what e'er thou be!"

He answer'd: "Now not man, man once I was, And born of Lombard parents, Mantuana both By country, when the power of Julius yet Was scarcely firm. At Rome my life was past Beneath the mild Augustus, in the time Of fabled deities and false. A bard Was I, and made Anchises' upright son The subject of my song, who came from Troy, When the flames prey'd on Ilium's haughty towers. But thou, say wherefore to such perils past Return'st thou? wherefore not this pleasant mount Ascendest, cause and source of all delight?" "And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring, From which such copious floods of eloquence Have issued?" I with front abash'd replied. "Glory and light of all the tuneful train!

May it avail me that I long with zeal Have
sought thy volume, and with love
immense Have conn'd it o'er. My master
thou and guide! Thou he from whom
alone I have deriv'd That style, which for
its beauty into fame Exalts me. See the
beast, from whom I fled. O save me from
her, thou illustrious sage!"

"For every vein and pulse throughout my
frame She hath made tremble." He, soon
as he saw That I was weeping, answer'd,
"Thou must needs Another way pursue, if
thou wouldst 'scape From out that savage
wilderness. This beast, At whom thou
criest, her way will suffer none To pass,
and no less hindrance makes than death:
So bad and so accursed in her kind, That
never sated is her ravenous will, Still
after food more craving than before. To
many an animal in wedlock vile She

fastens, and shall yet to many more,
Until that greyhound come, who shall
destroy Her with sharp pain. He will not
life support By earth nor its base metals,
but by love, Wisdom, and virtue, and his
land shall be The land 'twixt either Feltro.
In his might Shall safety to Italia's plains
arise, For whose fair realm, Camilla,
virgin pure, Nisus, Euryalus, and Turnus
fell. He with incessant chase through
every town Shall worry, until he to hell at
length Restore her, thence by envy first
let loose. I for thy profit pond'ring now
devise, That thou mayst follow me, and I
thy guide Will lead thee hence through an
eternal space, Where thou shalt hear
despairing shrieks, and see Spirits of old
tormented, who invoke A second death;
and those next view, who dwell Content
in fire, for that they hope to come,
Whene'er the time may be, among the

blest, Into whose regions if thou then
desire T' ascend, a spirit worthier than I
Must lead thee, in whose charge, when I
depart, Thou shalt be left: for that
Almighty King, Who reigns above, a rebel
to his law, Adjudges me, and therefore
hath decreed, That to his city none
through me should come. He in all parts
hath sway; there rules, there holds His
citadel and throne. O happy those, Whom
there he chooses!" I to him in few: "Bard!
by that God, whom thou didst not adore,
I do beseech thee (that this ill and worse
I may escape) to lead me, where thou
saidst, That I Saint Peter's gate may
view, and those Who as thou tell'st, are
in such dismal plight."

Onward he mov'd, I close his steps
pursu'd.

CANTO II

NOW was the day departing, and the air,
Imbrown'd with shadows, from their toils
releas'd All animals on earth; and I alone
Prepar'd myself the conflict to sustain,
Both of sad pity, and that perilous road,
Which my unerring memory shall retrace.

O Muses! O high genius! now vouchsafe
Your aid! O mind! that all I saw hast kept
Safe in a written record, here thy worth
And eminent endowments come to proof.

I thus began: "Bard! thou who art my
guide, Consider well, if virtue be in me
Sufficient, ere to this high enterprise
Thou trust me. Thou hast told that
Silvius' sire, Yet cloth'd in corruptible

flesh, among Th' immortal tribes had
entrance, and was there Sensible
present. Yet if heaven's great Lord,
Almighty foe to ill, such favour shew'd, In
contemplation of the high effect, Both
what and who from him should issue
forth, It seems in reason's judgment well
deserv'd: Sith he of Rome, and of Rome's
empire wide, In heaven's empyreal height
was chosen sire: Both which, if truth be
spoken, were ordain'd And 'stablish'd for
the holy place, where sits Who to great
Peter's sacred chair succeeds. He from
this journey, in thy song renown'd,
Learn'd things, that to his victory gave
rise And to the papal robe. In after-times
The chosen vessel also travel'd there, To
bring us back assurance in that faith,
Which is the entrance to salvation's way.
But I, why should I there presume? or
who Permits it? not, Aeneas I nor Paul.

Myself I deem not worthy, and none else
Will deem me. I, if on this voyage then I
venture, fear it will in folly end. Thou,
who art wise, better my meaning
know'st, Than I can speak." As one, who
unresolves What he hath late resolv'd,
and with new thoughts Changes his
purpose, from his first intent Remov'd;
e'en such was I on that dun coast,
Wasting in thought my enterprise, at first
So eagerly embrac'd. "If right thy words I
scan," replied that shade magnanimous,
"Thy soul is by vile fear assail'd, which oft
So overcasts a man, that he recoils From
noblest resolution, like a beast At some
false semblance in the twilight gloom.
That from this terror thou mayst free
thyself, I will instruct thee why I came,
and what I heard in that same instant,
when for thee Grief touch'd me first. I
was among the tribe, Who rest

suspended, when a dame, so blest And
lovely, I besought her to command, Call'd
me; her eyes were brighter than the star
Of day; and she with gentle voice and
soft Angelically tun'd her speech
address'd: "O courteous shade of Mantua!
thou whose fame Yet lives, and shall live
long as nature lasts! A friend, not of my
fortune but myself, On the wide desert in
his road has met Hindrance so great, that
he through fear has turn'd. Now much I
dread lest he past help have stray'd, And
I be ris'n too late for his relief, From what
in heaven of him I heard. Speed now,
And by thy eloquent persuasive tongue,
And by all means for his deliverance
meet, Assist him. So to me will comfort
spring. I who now bid thee on this errand
forth Am Beatrice; from a place I come

(Note: Beatrice. I use this word, as it is pronounced in the Italian, as consisting of four syllables, of which the third is a long one.)

Revisited with joy. Love brought me thence, Who prompts my speech. When in my Master's sight I stand, thy praise to him I oft will tell."

She then was silent, and I thus began: "O Lady! by whose influence alone, Mankind excels whatever is contain'd Within that heaven which hath the smallest orb, So thy command delights me, that to obey, If it were done already, would seem late. No need hast thou farther to speak thy will; Yet tell the reason, why thou art not loth To leave that ample space, where to return Thou burnest, for this centre here beneath."

She then: "Since thou so deeply wouldst inquire, I will instruct thee briefly, why no dread Hinders my entrance here. Those things alone Are to be fear'd, whence evil may proceed, None else, for none are terrible beside. I am so fram'd by God, thanks to his grace! That any suff'rance of your misery Touches me not, nor flame of that fierce fire Assails me. In high heaven a blessed dame Besides, who mourns with such effectual grief That hindrance, which I send thee to remove, That God's stern judgment to her will inclines." To Lucia calling, her she thus bespake: "Now doth thy faithful servant need thy aid And I commend him to thee." At her word Sped Lucia, of all cruelty the foe, And coming to the place, where I abode Seated with Rachel, her of ancient days, She thus address'd me:

"Thou true praise of God! Beatrice! why is not thy succour lent To him, who so much lov'd thee, as to leave For thy sake all the multitude admires? Dost thou not hear how pitiful his wail, Nor mark the death, which in the torrent flood, Swoln mightier than a sea, him struggling holds?" "Ne'er among men did any with such speed Haste to their profit, flee from their annoy, As when these words were spoken, I came here, Down from my blessed seat, trusting the force Of thy pure eloquence, which thee, and all Who well have mark'd it, into honour brings."

"When she had ended, her bright beaming eyes Tearful she turn'd aside; whereat I felt Redoubled zeal to serve thee. As she will'd, Thus am I come: I sav'd thee from the beast, Who thy near way across the goodly mount Prevented.

What is this comes o'er thee then? Why,
why dost thou hang back? why in thy
breast Harbour vile fear? why hast not
courage there And noble daring? Since
three maids so blest Thy safety plan, e'en
in the court of heaven; And so much
certain good my words forebode."

As florets, by the frosty air of night Bent
down and clos'd, when day has blanch'd
their leaves, Rise all unfolded on their
spiry stems; So was my fainting vigour
new restor'd, And to my heart such kindly
courage ran, That I as one undaunted
soon replied: "O full of pity she, who
undertook My succour! and thou kind who
didst perform So soon her true behest!
With such desire Thou hast dispos'd me
to renew my voyage, That my first
purpose fully is resum'd. Lead on: one

only will is in us both. Thou art my guide,
my master thou, and lord."

So spake I; and when he had onward
mov'd, I enter'd on the deep and woody
way.

CANTO III

"THROUGH me you pass into the city of
woe: Through me you pass into eternal
pain: Through me among the people lost
for aye. Justice the founder of my fabric
mov'd: To rear me was the task of power
divine, Supremest wisdom, and primeval
love. Before me things create were none,
save things Eternal, and eternal I endure.

"All hope abandon ye who enter here."

Such characters in colour dim I mark'd
Over a portal's lofty arch inscrib'd:
Whereat I thus: "Master, these words
import Hard meaning." He as one
prepar'd replied: "Here thou must all
distrust behind thee leave; Here be vile
fear extinguish'd. We are come Where I
have told thee we shall see the souls To
misery doom'd, who intellectual good
Have lost." And when his hand he had
stretch'd forth To mine, with pleasant
looks, whence I was cheer'd, Into that
secret place he led me on.

Here sighs with lamentations and loud
moans Resounded through the air pierc'd
by no star, That e'en I wept at entering.
Various tongues, Horrible languages,
outcries of woe, Accents of anger, voices
deep and hoarse, With hands together

smote that swell'd the sounds, Made up a
tumult, that for ever whirls Round
through that air with solid darkness
stain'd, Like to the sand that in the
whirlwind flies.

I then, with error yet encompass'd, cried:
"O master! What is this I hear? What race
Are these, who seem so overcome with
woe?"

He thus to me: "This miserable fate
Suffer the wretched souls of those, who
liv'd Without or praise or blame, with that
ill band Of angels mix'd, who nor
rebellious prov'd Nor yet were true to
God, but for themselves Were only. From
his bounds Heaven drove them forth, Not
to impair his lustre, nor the depth Of Hell
receives them, lest th' accursed tribe
Should glory thence with exultation vain."

I then: "Master! what doth aggrieve them thus, That they lament so loud?" He straight replied: "That will I tell thee briefly. These of death No hope may entertain: and their blind life So meanly passes, that all other lots They envy. Fame of them the world hath none, Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both. Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by."

And I, who straightway look'd, beheld a flag, Which whirling ran around so rapidly, That it no pause obtain'd: and following came Such a long train of spirits, I should ne'er Have thought, that death so many had despoil'd.

When some of these I recogniz'd, I saw And knew the shade of him, who to base

fear Yielding, abjur'd his high estate.
Forthwith I understood for certain this the
tribe Of those ill spirits both to God
displeasing And to his foes. These
wretches, who ne'er lived, Went on in
nakedness, and sorely stung By wasps
and hornets, which bedew'd their cheeks
With blood, that mix'd with tears dropp'd
to their feet, And by disgustful worms
was gather'd there.

Then looking farther onwards I beheld A
throng upon the shore of a great stream:
Whereat I thus: "Sir! grant me now to
know Whom here we view, and whence
impell'd they seem So eager to pass o'er,
as I discern Through the blear light?" He
thus to me in few: "This shalt thou know,
soon as our steps arrive Beside the
woeful tide of Acheron."

Then with eyes downward cast and fill'd
with shame, Fearing my words offensive
to his ear, Till we had reach'd the river, I
from speech Abstain'd. And lo! toward us
in a bark Comes on an old man hoary
white with eld,

Crying, "Woe to you wicked spirits! hope
not Ever to see the sky again. I come
To take you to the other shore across, Into
eternal darkness, there to dwell In fierce
heat and in ice. And thou, who there
Standest, live spirit! get thee hence, and
leave These who are dead." But soon as
he beheld I left them not, "By other way,"
said he, "By other haven shalt thou come
to shore, Not by this passage; thee a
nimble boat Must carry." Then to him
thus spake my guide: "Charon! thyself
torment not: so 't is will'd, Where will and
power are one: ask thou no more."

Straightway in silence fell the shaggy
cheeks Of him the boatman o'er the livid
lake, Around whose eyes glar'd wheeling
flames. Meanwhile Those spirits, faint and
naked, color chang'd, And gnash'd their
teeth, soon as the cruel words They
heard. God and their parents they
blasphem'd, The human kind, the place,
the time, and seed That did engender
them and give them birth.

Then all together sorely wailing drew To
the curs'd strand, that every man must
pass Who fears not God. Charon,
demoniac form, With eyes of burning
coal, collects them all, Beck'ning, and
each, that lingers, with his oar Strikes. As
fall off the light autumnal leaves, One still
another following, till the bough Strews
all its honours on the earth beneath;

E'en in like manner Adam's evil brood
Cast themselves one by one down from
the shore, Each at a beck, as falcon at his
call.

Thus go they over through the umber'd
wave, And ever they on the opposing
bank Be landed, on this side another
throng Still gathers. "Son," thus spake
the courteous guide, "Those, who die
subject to the wrath of God, All here
together come from every clime, And to
o'erpass the river are not loth: For so
heaven's justice goads them on, that fear
Is turn'd into desire. Hence ne'er hath
past Good spirit. If of thee Charon
complain, Now mayst thou know the
import of his words."

This said, the gloomy region trembling
shook So terribly, that yet with clammy
dews Fear chills my brow. The sad earth
gave a blast, That, lightening, shot forth
a vermilion flame, Which all my senses
conquer'd quite, and I Down dropp'd, as
one with sudden slumber seiz'd.

CANTO IV

BROKE the deep slumber in my brain a
crash Of heavy thunder, that I shook
myself, As one by main force rous'd.
Risen upright, My rested eyes I mov'd
around, and search'd With fixed ken to
know what place it was, Wherein I stood.
For certain on the brink I found me of the
lamentable vale, The dread abyss, that
joins a thund'rous sound Of plaints

innumerable. Dark and deep, And thick
with clouds o'erspread, mine eye in vain
Explor'd its bottom, nor could aught
discern.

"Now let us to the blind world there
beneath Descend;" the bard began all
pale of look: "I go the first, and thou
shalt follow next."

Then I his alter'd hue perceiving, thus:
"How may I speed, if thou yieldest to
dread, Who still art wont to comfort me
in doubt?"

He then: "The anguish of that race below
With pity stains my cheek, which thou for
fear Mistakest. Let us on. Our length of
way Urges to haste." Onward, this said,
he mov'd; And ent'ring led me with him
on the bounds Of the first circle, that

surrounds th' abyss. Here, as mine ear
could note, no plaint was heard Except of
sighs, that made th' eternal air Tremble,
not caus'd by tortures, but from grief Felt
by those multitudes, many and vast, Of
men, women, and infants. Then to me
The gentle guide: "Inquir'st thou not
what spirits Are these, which thou
beholdest? Ere thou pass Farther, I would
thou know, that these of sin Were
blameless; and if aught they merited, It
profits not, since baptism was not theirs,
The portal to thy faith. If they before The
Gospel liv'd, they serv'd not God aright;
And among such am I. For these defects,
And for no other evil, we are lost;"

"Only so far afflicted, that we live
Desiring without hope." So grief assail'd
My heart at hearing this, for well I knew
Suspended in that Limbo many a soul Of

mighty worth. "O tell me, sire rever'd!
Tell me, my master!" I began through
wish Of full assurance in that holy faith,
Which vanquishes all error; "say, did e'er
Any, or through his own or other's merit,
Come forth from thence, whom afterward
was blest?"

Piercing the secret purport of my speech,
He answer'd: "I was new to that estate,
When I beheld a puissant one arrive
Amongst us, with victorious trophy
crown'd. He forth the shade of our first
parent drew, Abel his child, and Noah
righteous man, Of Moses lawgiver for
faith approv'd, Of patriarch Abraham, and
David king, Israel with his sire and with
his sons, Nor without Rachel whom so
hard he won, And others many more,
whom he to bliss Exalted. Before these,

be thou assur'd, No spirit of human kind
was ever sav'd."

We, while he spake, ceas'd not our
onward road, Still passing through the
wood; for so I name Those spirits thick
beset. We were not far On this side from
the summit, when I kenn'd A flame, that
o'er the darken'd hemisphere Prevailing
shin'd. Yet we a little space Were distant,
not so far but I in part Discover'd, that a
tribe in honour high That place possess'd.
"O thou, who every art And science
valu'st! who are these, that boast Such
honour, separate from all the rest?"

He answer'd: "The renown of their great
names That echoes through your world
above, acquires Favour in heaven, which
holds them thus advanc'd." Meantime a
voice I heard: "Honour the bard Sublime!

his shade returns that left us late!" No sooner ceas'd the sound, than I beheld Four mighty spirits toward us bend their steps, Of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad.

When thus my master kind began: "Mark him, Who in his right hand bears that falchion keen, The other three preceding, as their lord. This is that Homer, of all bards supreme: Flaccus the next in satire's vein excelling; The third is Naso; Lucan is the last. Because they all that appellation own, With which the voice singly accosted me, Honouring they greet me thus, and well they judge."

So I beheld united the bright school Of him the monarch of sublimest song, That o'er the others like an eagle soars. When they together short discourse had held,

They turn'd to me, with salutation kind
Beck'ning me; at the which my master
smil'd: Nor was this all; but greater
honour still They gave me, for they made
me of their tribe; And I was sixth amid so
learn'd a band.

Far as the luminous beacon on we pass'd
Speaking of matters, then befitting well
To speak, now fitter left untold. At foot Of
a magnificent castle we arriv'd, Seven
times with lofty walls begirt, and round
Defended by a pleasant stream. O'er this
As o'er dry land we pass'd. Next through
seven gates I with those sages enter'd,
and we came Into a mead with lively
verdure fresh.

There dwelt a race, who slow their eyes
around Majestically mov'd, and in their
port Bore eminent authority; they spake

Seldom, but all their words were tuneful
sweet.

We to one side retir'd, into a place Open
and bright and lofty, whence each one
Stood manifest to view. Incontinent
There on the green enamel of the plain
Were shown me the great spirits, by
whose sight I am exalted in my own
esteem.

Electra there I saw accompanied By
many, among whom Hector I knew,
Anchises' pious son, and with hawk's eye
Caesar all arm'd, and by Camilla there
Penthesilea. On the other side Old King
Latinus, seated by his child Lavinia, and
that Brutus I beheld, Who Tarquin chas'd,
Lucretia, Cato's wife Marcia, with Julia
and Cornelia there; And sole apart retir'd,
the Soldan fierce.

Then when a little more I rais'd my brow,
I spied the master of the sapient throng,
Seated amid the philosophic train. Him all
admire, all pay him rev'rence due. There
Socrates and Plato both I mark'd, Nearest
to him in rank; Democritus, Who sets the
world at chance, Diogenes, With
Heraclitus, and Empedocles, And
Anaxagoras, and Thales sage, Zeno, and
Dioscorides well read In nature's secret
lore. Orpheus I mark'd And Linus, Tully
and moral Seneca, Euclid and Ptolemy,
Hippocrates, Galenus, Avicen, and him
who made That commentary vast,
Averroes.

Of all to speak at full were vain attempt;
For my wide theme so urges, that
ofttimes My words fall short of what
bechanc'd. In two The six associates part.

Another way My sage guide leads me,
from that air serene, Into a climate ever
vex'd with storms: And to a part I come
where no light shines.

CANTO V

FROM the first circle I descended thus
Down to the second, which, a lesser
space Embracing, so much more of grief
contains Provoking bitter moans. There,
Minos stands Grinning with ghastly
feature: he, of all Who enter, strict
examining the crimes,

Gives sentence, and dismisses them
beneath, According as he foldeth him
around: For when before him comes th' ill
fated soul, It all confesses; and that

judge severe Of sins, considering what
place in hell Suits the transgression, with
his tail so oft Himself encircles, as
degrees beneath He dooms it to descend.
Before him stand Always a num'rous
throng; and in his turn Each one to
judgment passing, speaks, and hears His
fate, thence downward to his dwelling
hurl'd.

"O thou! who to this residence of woe
Approachest?" when he saw me coming,
cried Minos, relinquishing his dread
employ, "Look how thou enter here;
beware in whom Thou place thy trust; let
not the entrance broad Deceive thee to
thy harm." To him my guide: "Wherefore
exclaimest? Hinder not his way By
destiny appointed; so 'tis will'd Where will
and power are one. Ask thou no more."

Now 'gin the rueful wailings to be heard.
Now am I come where many a plaining
voice smites on mine ear. Into a place I
came Where light was silent all. Bellowing
there groan'd A noise as of a sea in
tempest torn By warring winds. The
stormy blast of hell With restless fury
drives the spirits on Whirl'd round and
dash'd amain with sore annoy.

When they arrive before the ruinous
sweep, There shrieks are heard, there
lamentations, moans, And blasphemies
'gainst the good Power in heaven.

I understood that to this torment sad The
carnal sinners are condemn'd, in whom
Reason by lust is sway'd. As in large
troops And multitudinous, when winter
reigns, The starlings on their wings are
borne abroad; So bears the tyrannous

gust those evil souls. On this side and on that, above, below, It drives them: hope of rest to solace them Is none, nor e'en of milder pang. As cranes, Chanting their dol'rous notes, traverse the sky, Stretch'd out in long array: so I beheld Spirits, who came loud wailing, hurried on By their dire doom. Then I: "Instructor! who Are these, by the black air so scourg'd?"--"The first 'Mong those, of whom thou question'st," he replied, "O'er many tongues was empress. She in vice Of luxury was so shameless, that she made Liking be lawful by promulg'd decree, To clear the blame she had herself incurr'd. This is Semiramis, of whom 'tis writ, That she succeeded Ninus her espous'd; And held the land, which now the Soldan rules. The next in amorous fury slew herself, And to

Sicheus' ashes broke her faith: Then follows Cleopatra, lustful queen."

There mark'd I Helen, for whose sake so long
The time was fraught with evil; there
the great Achilles, who with love fought
to the end. Paris I saw, and Tristan; and
beside A thousand more he show'd me,
and by name Pointed them out, whom
love bereav'd of life.

When I had heard my sage instructor
name Those dames and knights of
antique days, o'erpower'd By pity, well-
nigh in amaze my mind Was lost; and I
began: "Bard! willingly I would address
those two together coming, Which seem
so light before the wind." He thus: "Note
thou, when nearer they to us approach."

"Then by that love which carries them along, Entreat; and they will come." Soon as the wind Sway'd them toward us, I thus fram'd my speech: "O wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse With us, if by none else restrain'd." As doves By fond desire invited, on wide wings And firm, to their sweet nest returning home, Cleave the air, wafted by their will along; Thus issu'd from that troop, where Dido ranks, They through the ill air speeding; with such force My cry prevail'd by strong affection urg'd.

"O gracious creature and benign! who go'st Visiting, through this element obscure, Us, who the world with bloody stain imbru'd; If for a friend the King of all we own'd, Our pray'r to him should for thy peace arise, Since thou hast pity on our evil plight. ()f whatsoe'er to hear or

to discourse It pleases thee, that will we
hear, of that Freely with thee discourse,
while e'er the wind, As now, is mute. The
land, that gave me birth, Is situate on the
coast, where Po descends To rest in
ocean with his sequent streams.

"Love, that in gentle heart is quickly
learnt, Entangled him by that fair form,
from me Ta'en in such cruel sort, as
grieves me still: Love, that denial takes
from none belov'd, Caught me with
pleasing him so passing well, That, as
thou see'st, he yet deserts me not.

"Love brought us to one death: Caina
waits The soul, who spilt our life." Such
were their words; At hearing which
downward I bent my looks, And held
them there so long, that the bard cried:
"What art thou pond'ring?" I in answer

thus: "Alas! by what sweet thoughts,
what fond desire Must they at length to
that ill pass have reach'd!"

Then turning, I to them my speech
address'd. And thus began: "Francesca!
your sad fate Even to tears my grief and
pity moves. But tell me; in the time of
your sweet sighs, By what, and how love
granted, that ye knew Your yet uncertain
wishes?" She replied: "No greater grief
than to remember days Of joy, when
mis'ry is at hand! That kens Thy learn'd
instructor. Yet so eagerly If thou art bent
to know the primal root, From whence
our love gat being, I will do, As one, who
weeps and tells his tale. One day For our
delight we read of Lancelot, How him love
thrall'd. Alone we were, and no Suspicion
near us. Ofttimes by that reading Our
eyes were drawn together, and the hue

Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one
point Alone we fell. When of that smile
we read, The wished smile, rapturously
kiss'd By one so deep in love, then he,
who ne'er From me shall separate, at
once my lips All trembling kiss'd. The
book and writer both Were love's
purveyors. In its leaves that day We read
no more." While thus one spirit spake,
The other wail'd so sorely, that
heartstruck I through compassion
fainting, seem'd not far From death, and
like a corpse fell to the ground.

CANTO VI

MY sense reviving, that erewhile had
droop'd With pity for the kindred shades,
whence grief O'ercame me wholly,
straight around I see New torments, new
tormented souls, which way Soe'er I

move, or turn, or bend my sight. In the
third circle I arrive, of show'rs Ceaseless,
accursed, heavy, and cold, unchang'd For
ever, both in kind and in degree. Large
hail, discolour'd water, sleety flaw
Through the dun midnight air stream'd
down amain: Stank all the land whereon
that tempest fell.

Cerberus, cruel monster, fierce and
strange, Through his wide threefold
throat barks as a dog Over the multitude
immers'd beneath. His eyes glare
crimson, black his unctuous beard, His
belly large, and claw'd the hands, with
which He tears the spirits, flays them,
and their limbs Piecemeal disparts.
Howling there spread, as curs, Under the
rainy deluge, with one side The other
screening, oft they roll them round, A
wretched, godless crew. When that great

worm Descried us, savage Cerberus, he
op'd His jaws, and the fangs show'd us;
not a limb Of him but trembled. Then my
guide, his palms Expanding on the
ground, thence filled with earth Rais'd
them, and cast it in his ravenous maw.

E'en as a dog, that yelling bays for food
His keeper, when the morsel comes, lets
fall His fury, bent alone with eager haste
To swallow it; so dropp'd the loathsome
cheeks Of demon Cerberus, who
thund'ring stuns The spirits, that they for
deafness wish in vain.

We, o'er the shades thrown prostrate by
the brunt Of the heavy tempest passing,
set our feet Upon their emptiness, that
substance seem'd.

They all along the earth extended lay
Save one, that sudden rais'd himself to
sit, Soon as that way he saw us pass. "O
thou!" He cried, "who through the
infernal shades art led, Own, if again
thou know'st me. Thou wast fram'd Or
ere my frame was broken." I replied:
"The anguish thou endur'st perchance so
takes Thy form from my remembrance,
that it seems As if I saw thee never. But
inform Me who thou art, that in a place
so sad Art set, and in such torment, that
although Other be greater, more
disgustful none Can be imagin'd." He in
answer thus:

"Thy city heap'd with envy to the brim,
Ay that the measure overflows its
bounds, Held me in brighter days. Ye
citizens Were wont to name me Ciacco.
For the sin Of glutt'ny, damned vice,

beneath this rain, E'en as thou see'st, I
with fatigue am worn; Nor I sole spirit in
this woe: all these Have by like crime
incurr'd like punishment."

No more he said, and I my speech
resum'd: "Ciaccio! thy dire affliction
grieves me much, Even to tears. But tell
me, if thou know'st, What shall at length
befall the citizens Of the divided city;
whether any just one Inhabit there: and
tell me of the cause, Whence jarring
discord hath assail'd it thus?"

He then: "After long striving they will
come To blood; and the wild party from
the woods Will chase the other with much
injury forth. Then it behoves, that this
must fall, within Three solar circles; and
the other rise By borrow'd force of one,
who under shore Now rests. It shall a

long space hold aloof Its forehead,
keeping under heavy weight The other
oppress'd, indignant at the load, And
grieving sore. The just are two in number,
But they neglected. Av'rice, envy, pride,
Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of
all On fire." Here ceas'd the lamentable
sound; And I continu'd thus: "Still would
I learn More from thee, farther parley still
entreat. Of Farinata and Tegghiaio say,
They who so well deserv'd, of Giacopo,
Arrigo, Mosca, and the rest, who bent
Their minds on working good. Oh! tell me
where They bide, and to their knowledge
let me come. For I am press'd with keen
desire to hear, If heaven's sweet cup or
poisonous drug of hell Be to their lip
assign'd." He answer'd straight: "These
are yet blacker spirits. Various crimes
Have sunk them deeper in the dark
abyss. If thou so far descendest, thou

mayst see them. But to the pleasant world when thou return'st, Of me make mention, I entreat thee, there. No more I tell thee, answer thee no more."

This said, his fixed eyes he turn'd askance, A little ey'd me, then bent down his head, And 'midst his blind companions with it fell.

When thus my guide: "No more his bed he leaves, Ere the last angel-trumpet blow. The Power Adverse to these shall then in glory come, Each one forthwith to his sad tomb repair, Resume his fleshly vesture and his form, And hear the eternal doom re-echoing rend The vault." So pass'd we through that mixture foul Of spirits and rain, with tardy steps; meanwhile Touching, though slightly, on the life to come. For thus I question'd:

"Shall these tortures, Sir! When the great sentence passes, be increas'd, Or mitigated, or as now severe?"

He then: "Consult thy knowledge; that decides That as each thing to more perfection grows, It feels more sensibly both good and pain. Though ne'er to true perfection may arrive This race accurs'd, yet nearer then than now They shall approach it." Compassing that path Circuitous we journeyed, and discourse Much more than I relate between us pass'd: Till at the point, where the steps led below, Arriv'd, there Plutus, the great foe, we found.

CANTO VII

"AH me! O Satan! Satan!" loud exclaim'd
Plutus, in accent hoarse of wild alarm:
And the kind sage, whom no event
surpris'd, To comfort me thus spake: "Let
not thy fear Harm thee, for power in him,
be sure, is none To hinder down this rock
thy safe descent." Then to that sworn lip
turning, "Peace!" he cried,

"Curs'd wolf! thy fury inward on thyself
Prey, and consume thee! Through the
dark profound Not without cause he
passes. So 't is will'd On high, there
where the great Archangel pour'd
Heav'n's vengeance on the first adulterer
proud."

As sails full spread and bellying with the
wind Drop suddenly collaps'd, if the mast
split; So to the ground down dropp'd the
cruel fiend.

Thus we, descending to the fourth steep ledge, Gain'd on the dismal shore, that all the woe Hems in of all the universe. Ah me! Almighty Justice! in what store thou heap'st New pains, new troubles, as I here beheld! Wherefore doth fault of ours bring us to this?

E'en as a billow, on Charybdis rising, Against encounter'd billow dashing breaks; Such is the dance this wretched race must lead, Whom more than elsewhere numerous here I found, From one side and the other, with loud voice, Both roll'd on weights by main forge of their breasts, Then smote together, and each one forthwith Roll'd them back voluble, turning again, Exclaiming these, "Why holdest thou so fast?" Those answering, "And why castest thou away?"

So still repeating their despiteful song,
They to the opposite point on either hand
Travers'd the horrid circle: then arriv'd,
Both turn'd them round, and through the
middle space Conflicting met again. At
sight whereof I, stung with grief, thus
spake: "O say, my guide! What race is
this? Were these, whose heads are shorn,
On our left hand, all sep'rate to the
church?"

He straight replied: "In their first life
these all In mind were so distorted, that
they made, According to due measure, of
their wealth, No use. This clearly from
their words collect, Which they howl
forth, at each extremity Arriving of the
circle, where their crime Contrary' in kind
disparts them. To the church Were
separate those, that with no hairy cowls
Are crown'd, both Popes and Cardinals,

o'er whom Av'rice dominion absolute
maintains."

I then: "Mid such as these some needs
must be, Whom I shall recognize, that
with the blot Of these foul sins were
stain'd." He answering thus: "Vain
thought conceiv'st thou. That ignoble life,
Which made them vile before, now makes
them dark, And to all knowledge
indiscernible. Forever they shall meet in
this rude shock: These from the tomb
with clenched grasp shall rise, Those with
close-shaven locks. That ill they gave,
And ill they kept, hath of the beauteous
world Depriv'd, and set them at this
strife, which needs No labour'd phrase of
mine to set it off. Now may'st thou see,
my son! how brief, how vain, The goods
committed into fortune's hands, For
which the human race keep such a coil!

Not all the gold, that is beneath the moon, Or ever hath been, of these toil-worn souls Might purchase rest for one." I thus rejoin'd:

"My guide! of thee this also would I learn; This fortune, that thou speak'st of, what it is, Whose talons grasp the blessings of the world?"

He thus: "O beings blind! what ignorance Besets you? Now my judgment hear and mark. He, whose transcendent wisdom passes all, The heavens creating, gave them ruling powers To guide them, so that each part shines to each, Their light in equal distribution pour'd. By similar appointment he ordain'd Over the world's bright images to rule. Superintendence of a guiding hand And general minister, which at due time May change the empty

vantages of life From race to race, from
one to other's blood, Beyond prevention
of man's wisest care: Wherefore one
nation rises into sway, Another
languishes, e'en as her will Decrees, from
us conceal'd, as in the grass The serpent
train. Against her nought avails Your
utmost wisdom. She with foresight plans,
Judges, and carries on her reign, as
theirs The other powers divine. Her
changes know Nore intermission: by
necessity She is made swift, so frequent
come who claim Succession in her
favours. This is she, So execrated e'en by
those, whose debt To her is rather praise;
they wrongfully With blame requite her,
and with evil word; But she is blessed,
and for that reckes not: Amidst the other
primal beings glad Rolls on her sphere,
and in her bliss exults. Now on our way
pass we, to heavier woe Descending: for

each star is falling now, That mounted at
our entrance, and forbids Too long our
tarrying." We the circle cross'd To the
next steep, arriving at a well, That boiling
pours itself down to a foss Sluic'd from its
source. Far murkier was the wave Than
sablest grain: and we in company Of the'
inky waters, journeying by their side,
Enter'd, though by a different track,
beneath. Into a lake, the Stygian nam'd,
expands The dismal stream, when it hath
reach'd the foot Of the grey wither'd
cliffs. Intent I stood To gaze, and in the
marsh sunk descried A miry tribe, all
naked, and with looks Betok'ning rage.
They with their hands alone Struck not,
but with the head, the breast, the feet,
Cutting each other piecemeal with their
fangs.

The good instructor spake; "Now seest thou, son! The souls of those, whom anger overcame. This too for certain know, that underneath The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs Into these bubbles make the surface heave, As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn." Fix'd in the slime they say: "Sad once were we In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun, Carrying a foul and lazy mist within: Now in these murky settlings are we sad." Such dolorous strain they gurgle in their throats. But word distinct can utter none." Our route Thus compass'd we, a segment widely stretch'd Between the dry embankment, and the core Of the loath'd pool, turning meanwhile our eyes Downward on those who gulp'd its muddy lees; Nor stopp'd, till to a tower's low base we came.

CANTO VIII

MY theme pursuing, I relate that ere We
reach'd the lofty turret's base, our eyes
Its height ascended, where two cressets
hung We mark'd, and from afar another
light Return the signal, so remote, that
scarce The eye could catch its beam. I
turning round To the deep source of
knowledge, thus inquir'd: "Say what this
means? and what that other light In
answer set? what agency doth this?"

"There on the filthy waters," he replied,
"E'en now what next awaits us mayst
thou see, If the marsh-gender'd fog
conceal it not."

Never was arrow from the cord dismiss'd,
That ran its way so nimbly through the
air, As a small bark, that through the
waves I spied Toward us coming, under
the sole sway Of one that ferried it, who
cried aloud: "Art thou arriv'd, fell
spirit?"--"Phlegyas, Phlegyas, This time
thou criest in vain," my lord replied; "No
longer shalt thou have us, but while o'er
The slimy pool we pass." As one who
hears Of some great wrong he hath
sustain'd, whereat Inly he pines; so
Phlegyas inly pin'd In his fierce ire. My
guide descending stepp'd Into the skiff,
and bade me enter next Close at his side;
nor till my entrance seem'd The vessel
freighted. Soon as both embark'd,
Cutting the waves, goes on the ancient
prow, More deeply than with others it is
wont.

While we our course o'er the dead
channel held. One drench'd in mire before
me came, and said; "Who art thou, that
thou comest ere thine hour?"

I answer'd: "Though I come, I tarry not;
But who art thou, that art become so
foul?"

"One, as thou seest, who mourn:" he
straight replied.

To which I thus: "In mourning and in
woe, Curs'd spirit! tarry thou. g I know
thee well, E'en thus in filth disguis'd."
Then stretch'd he forth Hands to the
bark; whereof my teacher sage Aware,
thrusting him back: "Away! down there;

"To the' other dogs!" then, with his arms
my neck Encircling, kiss'd my cheek, and

spake: "O soul Justly disdainful! blest was she in whom Thou was conceiv'd! He in the world was one For arrogance noted; to his memory No virtue lends its lustre; even so Here is his shadow furious. There above How many now hold themselves mighty kings Who here like swine shall wallow in the mire, Leaving behind them horrible dispraise!"

I then: "Master! him fain would I behold Whelm'd in these dregs, before we quit the lake."

He thus: "Or ever to thy view the shore Be offer'd, satisfied shall be that wish, Which well deserves completion." Scarce his words Were ended, when I saw the miry tribes Set on him with such violence, that yet For that render I thanks to God and praise "To Filippo Argenti:"

cried they all: And on himself the moody
Florentine Turn'd his avenging fangs. Him
here we left, Nor speak I of him more.
But on mine ear Sudden a sound of
lamentation smote, Whereat mine eye
unbarr'd I sent abroad.

And thus the good instructor: "Now, my
son! Draws near the city, that of Dis is
nam'd, With its grave denizens, a mighty
throng."

I thus: "The minarets already, Sir! There
certes in the valley I descry, Gleaming
vermilion, as if they from fire Had issu'd."
He replied: "Eternal fire, That inward
burns, shows them with ruddy flame
Illum'd; as in this nether hell thou seest."

We came within the fosses deep, that
moat This region comfortless. The walls

appear'd As they were fram'd of iron. We
had made Wide circuit, ere a place we
reach'd, where loud The mariner cried
vehement: "Go forth! The' entrance is
here!" Upon the gates I spied More than
a thousand, who of old from heaven Were
hurl'd. With ireful gestures, "Who is this,"
They cried, "that without death first felt,
goes through The regions of the dead?"
My sapient guide Made sign that he for
secret parley wish'd; Whereat their angry
scorn abating, thus They spake: "Come
thou alone; and let him go Who hath so
hardily enter'd this realm. Alone return
he by his witless way; If well he know it,
let him prove. For thee, Here shalt thou
tarry, who through clime so dark Hast
been his escort." Now bethink thee,
reader! What cheer was mine at sound of
those curs'd words. I did believe I never
should return.

"O my lov'd guide! who more than seven times Security hast render'd me, and drawn From peril deep, whereto I stood expos'd, Desert me not," I cried, "in this extreme. And if our onward going be denied, Together trace we back our steps with speed."

My liege, who thither had conducted me, Replied: "Fear not: for of our passage none Hath power to disappoint us, by such high Authority permitted. But do thou Expect me here; meanwhile thy wearied spirit Comfort, and feed with kindly hope, assur'd I will not leave thee in this lower world."

This said, departs the sire benevolent, And quits me. Hesitating I remain At war 'twixt will and will not in my thoughts.

I could not hear what terms he offer'd
them, But they conferr'd not long, for all
at once To trial fled within. Clos'd were
the gates By those our adversaries on the
breast Of my liege lord: excluded he
return'd To me with tardy steps. Upon the
ground His eyes were bent, and from his
brow eras'd All confidence, while thus
with sighs he spake: "Who hath denied
me these abodes of woe?" Then thus to
me: "That I am anger'd, think No ground
of terror: in this trial I Shall vanquish,
use what arts they may within For
hindrance. This their insolence, not new,
Erewhile at gate less secret they
display'd, Which still is without bolt; upon
its arch Thou saw'st the deadly scroll:
and even now On this side of its
entrance, down the steep, Passing the

circles, unescorted, comes One whose strong might can open us this land."

CANTO IX

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

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

Thus I inquiring. "Rarely," he replied, "It
chances, that among us any makes This
journey, which I wend. Erewhile 'tis true
Once came I here beneath, conjur'd by
fell Erictho, sorceress, who compell'd the
shades Back to their bodies. No long
space my flesh Was naked of me, when
within these walls She made me enter, to
draw forth a spirit From out of Judas'
circle. Lowest place Is that of all,

obscurest, and remov'd Farthest from
heav'n's all-circling orb. The road Full well
I know: thou therefore rest secure. That
lake, the noisome stench exhaling, round
The city' of grief encompasses, which
now We may not enter without rage." Yet
more He added: but I hold it not in mind,
For that mine eye toward the lofty tower
Had drawn me wholly, to its burning top.
Where in an instant I beheld uprisen At
once three hellish furies stain'd with
blood: In limb and motion feminine they
seem'd; Around them greenest hydras
twisting roll'd Their volumes; adders and
cerastes crept Instead of hair, and their
fierce temples bound.

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

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

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

Mine eyes he loos'd, and spake: "And
now direct Thy visual nerve along that
ancient foam, There, thickest where the
smoke ascends." As frogs Before their foe
the serpent, through the wave Ply swiftly
all, till at the ground each one Lies on a
heap; more than a thousand spirits
Destroy'd, so saw I fleeing before one
Who pass'd with unwet feet the Stygian

sound. He, from his face removing the
gross air, Oft his left hand forth stretch'd,
and seem'd alone By that annoyance
wearied. I perceiv'd That he was sent
from heav'n, and to my guide Turn'd me,
who signal made that I should stand
Quiet, and bend to him. Ah me! how full
Of noble anger seem'd he! To the gate He
came, and with his wand touch'd it,
whereat Open without impediment it flew.

"Outcasts of heav'n! O abject race and
scorn'd!" Began he on the horrid grunsel
standing, "Whence doth this wild excess
of insolence Lodge in you? wherefore kick
you 'gainst that will Ne'er frustrate of its
end, and which so oft Hath laid on you
enforcement of your pangs? What profits
at the fays to but the horn? Your
Cerberus, if ye remember, hence Bears

still, peel'd of their hair, his throat and
maw."

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

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains
of Arles, Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's
gulf, That closes Italy and laves her
bounds, The place is all thick spread with

sepulchres; So was it here, save what in
horror here Excell'd: for 'midst the graves
were scattered flames, Wherewith
intensely all throughout they burn'd, That
iron for no craft there hotter needs.

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

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

"The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
By every sect their followers; and much
more, Than thou believest, tombs are
freighted: like With like is buried; and the
monuments Are different in degrees of

heat." This said, He to the right hand
turning, on we pass'd Betwixt the
afflicted and the ramparts high.

CANTO X

NOW by a secret pathway we proceed,
Between the walls, that hem the region
round, And the tormented souls: my
master first, I close behind his steps.
"Virtue supreme!" I thus began; "who
through these ample orbs In circuit
lead'st me, even as thou will'st, Speak
thou, and satisfy my wish. May those,
Who lie within these sepulchres, be seen?
Already all the lids are rais'd, and none
O'er them keeps watch." He thus in
answer spake "They shall be closed all,
what-time they here From Josaphat

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

"O Tuscan! thou who through the city of
fire Alive art passing, so discreet of
speech! Here please thee stay awhile.
Thy utterance Declares the place of thy
nativity To be that noble land, with which
perchance I too severely dealt." Sudden
that sound Forth issu'd from a vault,
whereat in fear I somewhat closer to my

leader's side Approaching, he thus spake:
"What dost thou? Turn. Lo, Farinata,
there! who hath himself Uplifted: from his
girdle upwards all Expos'd behold him."
On his face was mine Already fix'd; his
breast and forehead there Erecting,
seem'd as in high scorn he held E'en hell.
Between the sepulchres to him My guide
thrust me with fearless hands and
prompt, This warning added: "See thy
words be clear!"

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

I, willing to obey him, straight reveal'd
The whole, nor kept back aught: whence
he, his brow Somewhat uplifting, cried:
"Fiercely were they Adverse to me, my

party, and the blood From whence I
sprang: twice therefore I abroad
Scatter'd them." "Though driv'n out, yet
they each time From all parts," answer'd
I, "return'd; an art Which yours have
shown, they are not skill'd to learn."

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

I straight replied: "Not of myself I come,
By him, who there expects me, through
this clime Conducted, whom perchance

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

Meanwhile the other, great of soul, near whom I yet was station'd, chang'd not count'nance stern, Nor mov'd the neck, nor bent his ribbed side. "And if," continuing the first discourse, "They in this art," he cried, "small skill have shown, That doth torment me more e'en than this bed. But not yet fifty times shall be relum'd Her aspect, who reigns here Queen of this realm, Ere thou shalt know

the full weight of that art. So to the pleasant world mayst thou return, As thou shalt tell me, why in all their laws, Against my kin this people is so fell?"

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

"So may thy lineage find at last repose," I thus adjur'd him, "as thou solve this knot, Which now involves my mind. If

right I hear, Ye seem to view beforehand,
that which time Leads with him, of the
present uninform'd."

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

Then conscious of my fault, and by
remorse Smitten, I added thus: "Now
shalt thou say To him there fallen, that
his offspring still Is to the living join'd;
and bid him know, That if from answer

silent I abstain'd, 'Twas that my thought
was occupied intent Upon that error,
which thy help hath solv'd."

But now my master summoning me back
I heard, and with more eager haste
besought The spirit to inform me, who
with him Partook his lot. He answer thus
return'd:

"More than a thousand with me here are
laid Within is Frederick, second of that
name, And the Lord Cardinal, and of the
rest I speak not." He, this said, from
sight withdrew. But I my steps towards
the ancient bard Reverting, ruminated on
the words Betokening me such ill.

Onward he mov'd, And thus in going
question'd: "Whence the' amaze That
holds thy senses wrapt?" I satisfied The'
inquiry, and the sage enjoin'd me

straight: "Let thy safe memory store
what thou hast heard To thee importing
harm; and note thou this," With his rais'd
finger bidding me take heed,

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

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

CANTO XI

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

Whereon this scroll I mark'd: "I have in
charge Pope Anastasius, whom Photinus
drew From the right path.--Ere our
descent behooves We make delay, that
somewhat first the sense, To the dire
breath accustom'd, afterward Regard it
not." My master thus; to whom
Answering I spake: "Some compensation
find That the time past not wholly lost."
He then: "Lo! how my thoughts e'en to
thy wishes tend! My son! within these
rocks," he thus began, "Are three close

circles in gradation plac'd, As these which
now thou leav'st. Each one is full Of
spirits accurs'd; but that the sight alone
Hereafter may suffice thee, listen how
And for what cause in durance they
abide.

"Of all malicious act abhorr'd in heaven,
The end is injury; and all such end Either
by force or fraud works other's woe But
fraud, because of man peculiar evil, To
God is more displeasing; and beneath
The fraudulent are therefore doom'd to'
endure Severer pang. The violent occupy
All the first circle; and because to force
Three persons are obnoxious, in three
rounds Each within other sep'rate is it
fram'd. To God, his neighbour, and
himself, by man Force may be offer'd; to
himself I say And his possessions, as
thou soon shalt hear At full. Death,

violent death, and painful wounds Upon
his neighbour he inflicts; and wastes By
devastation, pillage, and the flames, His
substance. Slayers, and each one that
smites In malice, plund'ers, and all
robbers, hence The torment undergo of
the first round In different herds. Man
can do violence To himself and his own
blessings: and for this He in the second
round must aye deplore With unavailing
penitence his crime, Whoe'er deprives
himself of life and light, In reckless
lavishment his talent wastes, And
sorrows there where he should dwell in
joy. To God may force be offer'd, in the
heart Denying and blaspheming his high
power, And nature with her kindly law
contemning. And thence the inmost
round marks with its seal Sodom and
Cahors, and all such as speak

Contemptuously' of the Godhead in their hearts.

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

I thus: "Instructor, clearly thy discourse
Proceeds, distinguishing the hideous
chasm And its inhabitants with skill exact.
But tell me this: they of the dull, fat pool,
Whom the rain beats, or whom the
tempest drives, Or who with tongues so
fierce conflicting meet, Wherefore within
the city fire-illum'd Are not these
punish'd, if God's wrath be on them? And
if it be not, wherefore in such guise Are
they condemned?" He answer thus
return'd: "Wherefore in dotage wanders
thus thy mind, Not so accustom'd? or
what other thoughts Possess it? Dwell not
in thy memory The words, wherein thy
ethic page describes Three dispositions
adverse to Heav'n's will, Incont'nence,
malice, and mad brutishness, And how
incontinence the least offends God, and
least guilt incurs? If well thou note This
judgment, and remember who they are,

Without these walls to vain repentance
doom'd, Thou shalt discern why they
apart are plac'd From these fell spirits,
and less wreakful pours Justice divine on
them its vengeance down."

"O Sun! who healest all imperfect sight,
Thou so content'st me, when thou solv'st
my doubt, That ignorance not less than
knowledge charms. Yet somewhat turn
thee back," I in these words Continu'd,
"where thou saidst, that usury Offends
celestial Goodness; and this knot
Perplex'd unravel." He thus made reply:
"Philosophy, to an attentive ear, Clearly
points out, not in one part alone, How
imitative nature takes her course From
the celestial mind and from its art: And
where her laws the Stagyrice unfolds, Not
many leaves scann'd o'er, observing well
Thou shalt discover, that your art on her

Obsequious follows, as the learner treads
In his instructor's step, so that your art
Deserves the name of second in descent
From God. These two, if thou recall to
mind Creation's holy book, from the
beginning Were the right source of life
and excellence To human kind. But in
another path The usurer walks; and
Nature in herself And in her follower thus
he sets at nought, Placing elsewhere his
hope. But follow now My steps on forward
journey bent; for now The Pisces play
with undulating glance Along the' horizon,
and the Wain lies all O'er the north-west;
and onward there a space Is our steep
passage down the rocky height."

CANTO XII

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

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

To him my guide exclaim'd: "Perchance
thou deem'st The King of Athens here,

who, in the world Above, thy death
contriv'd. Monster! avaunt! He comes not
tutor'd by thy sister's art, But to behold
your torments is he come."

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

"Perhaps thy thoughts are of this ruin'd
steep, Guarded by the brute violence,
which I Have vanquish'd now. Know then,

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

rampart's base On trail ran Centaurs,
with keen arrows arm'd, As to the chase
they on the earth were wont.

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

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

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

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

We to those beasts, that rapid strode
along, Drew near, when Chiron took an
arrow forth, And with the notch push'd
back his shaggy beard To the cheek-
bone, then his great mouth to view
Exposing, to his fellows thus exclaim'd:
"Are ye aware, that he who comes behind
Moves what he touches? The feet of the
dead Are not so wont." My trusty guide,
who now Stood near his breast, where
the two natures join, Thus made reply:
"He is indeed alive, And solitary so must
needs by me Be shown the gloomy vale,

thereto induc'd By strict necessity, not by
delight. She left her joyful harpings in the
sky, Who this new office to my care
consign'd. He is no robber, no dark spirit
I. But by that virtue, which empowers my
step To treat so wild a path, grant us, I
pray, One of thy band, whom we may
trust secure, Who to the ford may lead
us, and convey Across, him mounted on
his back; for he Is not a spirit that may
walk the air."

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

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

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

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

who fill'd the ways With violence and war." This said, he turn'd, And quitting us, alone repass'd the ford.

CANTO XIII

ERE Nessus yet had reach'd the other bank, We enter'd on a forest, where no track Of steps had worn a way. Not verdant there The foliage, but of dusky hue; not light The boughs and tapering, but with knares deform'd And matted thick: fruits there were none, but thorns Instead, with venom fill'd. Less sharp than these, Less intricate the brakes, wherein abide Those animals, that hate the cultur'd fields, Betwixt Corneto and Cecina's stream.

Here the brute Harpies make their nest,
the same Who from the Strophades the
Trojan band Drove with dire boding of
their future woe. Broad are their
pennons, of the human form Their neck
and count'nance, arm'd with talons keen
The feet, and the huge belly fledge with
wings These sit and wail on the drear
mystic wood.

The kind instructor in these words began:
"Ere farther thou proceed, know thou art
now I' th' second round, and shalt be, till
thou come Upon the horrid sand: look
therefore well Around thee, and such
things thou shalt behold, As would my
speech discredit." On all sides I heard sad
plainings breathe, and none could see
From whom they might have issu'd. In
amaze Fast bound I stood. He, as it
seem'd, believ'd, That I had thought so

many voices came From some amid those
thickets close conceal'd, And thus his
speech resum'd: "If thou lop off A single
twig from one of those ill plants, The
thought thou hast conceiv'd shall vanish
quite."

Thereat a little stretching forth my hand,
From a great wilding gather'd I a branch,
And straight the trunk exclaim'd: "Why
pluck'st thou me?"

Then as the dark blood trickled down its
side, These words it added: "Wherefore
tear'st me thus? Is there no touch of
mercy in thy breast? Men once were we,
that now are rooted here. Thy hand
might well have spar'd us, had we been
The souls of serpents." As a brand yet
green, That burning at one end from the'
other sends A groaning sound, and hisses

with the wind That forces out its way, so
burst at once, Forth from the broken
splinter words and blood.

I, letting fall the bough, remain'd as one
Assail'd by terror, and the sage replied:
"If he, O injur'd spirit! could have believ'd
What he hath seen but in my verse
describ'd, He never against thee had
stretch'd his hand. But I, because the
thing surpass'd belief, Prompted him to
this deed, which even now Myself I rue.
But tell me, who thou wast; That, for this
wrong to do thee some amends, In the
upper world (for thither to return Is
granted him) thy fame he may revive."

"That pleasant word of thine," the trunk
replied "Hath so inveigled me, that I from
speech Cannot refrain, wherein if I
indulge A little longer, in the snare

detain'd, Count it not grievous. I it was,
who held Both keys to Frederick's heart,
and turn'd the wards, Opening and
shutting, with a skill so sweet, That
besides me, into his inmost breast Scarce
any other could admittance find. The faith
I bore to my high charge was such, It
cost me the life-blood that warm'd my
veins. The harlot, who ne'er turn'd her
gloating eyes From Caesar's household,
common vice and pest Of courts, 'gainst
me inflam'd the minds of all; And to
Augustus they so spread the flame, That
my glad honours chang'd to bitter woes.
My soul, disdainful and disgusted, sought
Refuge in death from scorn, and I
became, Just as I was, unjust toward
myself. By the new roots, which fix this
stem, I swear, That never faith I broke to
my liege lord, Who merited such honour;
and of you, If any to the world indeed

return, Clear he from wrong my memory,
that lies Yet prostrate under envy's cruel
blow."

First somewhat pausing, till the mournful
words Were ended, then to me the bard
began: "Lose not the time; but speak and
of him ask, If more thou wish to learn."
Whence I replied: "Question thou him
again of whatsoe'er Will, as thou think'st,
content me; for no power Have I to ask,
such pity' is at my heart."

He thus resum'd; "So may he do for thee
Freely what thou entreatest, as thou yet
Be pleas'd, imprison'd Spirit! to declare,
How in these gnarled joints the soul is
tied; And whether any ever from such
frame Be loosen'd, if thou canst, that also
tell."

Thereat the trunk breath'd hard, and the
wind soon Chang'd into sounds articulate
like these;

"Briefly ye shall be answer'd. When
departs The fierce soul from the body, by
itself Thence torn asunder, to the seventh
gulf By Minos doom'd, into the wood it
falls, No place assign'd, but wheresoever
chance Hurls it, there sprouting, as a
grain of spelt, It rises to a sapling,
growing thence A savage plant. The
Harpies, on its leaves Then feeding,
cause both pain and for the pain A vent
to grief. We, as the rest, shall come For
our own spoils, yet not so that with them
We may again be clad; for what a man
Takes from himself it is not just he have.
Here we perforce shall drag them; and
throughout The dismal glade our bodies

shall be hung, Each on the wild thorn of
his wretched shade."

Attentive yet to listen to the trunk We
stood, expecting farther speech, when us
A noise surpris'd, as when a man
perceives The wild boar and the hunt
approach his place Of station'd watch,
who of the beasts and boughs Loud
rustling round him hears. And lo! there
came Two naked, torn with briers, in
headlong flight, That they before them
broke each fan o' th' wood. "Haste now,"
the foremost cried, "now haste thee
death!"

The' other, as seem'd, impatient of delay
Exclaiming, "Lano! not so bent for speed
Thy sinews, in the lists of Topppo's field."
And then, for that perchance no longer
breath Suffic'd him, of himself and of a

bush One group he made. Behind them
was the wood Full of black female
mastiffs, gaunt and fleet, As greyhounds
that have newly slipp'd the leash. On
him, who squatted down, they stuck their
fangs, And having rent him piecemeal
bore away The tortur'd limbs. My guide
then seiz'd my hand, And led me to the
thicket, which in vain Mourn'd through its
bleeding wounds: "O Giacomo Of Sant'
Andrea! what avails it thee," It cried,
"that of me thou hast made thy screen?
For thy ill life what blame on me recoils?"

When o'er it he had paus'd, my master
spake: "Say who wast thou, that at so
many points Breath'st out with blood thy
lamentable speech?"

He answer'd: "Oh, ye spirits: arriv'd in
time To spy the shameful havoc, that

from me My leaves hath sever'd thus,
gather them up, And at the foot of their
sad parent-tree Carefully lay them. In
that city' I dwelt, Who for the Baptist her
first patron chang'd, Whence he for this
shall cease not with his art To work her
woe: and if there still remain'd not On
Arno's passage some faint glimpse of
him, Those citizens, who rear'd once
more her walls Upon the ashes left by
Attila, Had labour'd without profit of their
toil. I slung the fatal noose from my own
roof."

CANTO XIV

SOON as the charity of native land
Wrought in my bosom, I the scatter'd
leaves Collected, and to him restor'd,

who now Was hoarse with utt'rance. To
the limit thence We came, which from the
third the second round Divides, and
where of justice is display'd Contrivance
horrible. Things then first seen Clearlier
to manifest, I tell how next A plain we
reach'd, that from its sterile bed Each
plant repell'd. The mournful wood waves
round Its garland on all sides, as round
the wood Spreads the sad foss. There, on
the very edge, Our steps we stay'd. It
was an area wide Of arid sand and thick,
resembling most The soil that erst by
Cato's foot was trod.

Vengeance of Heav'n! Oh! how shouldst
thou be fear'd By all, who read what here
my eyes beheld!

Of naked spirits many a flock I saw, All
weeping piteously, to different laws

Subjected: for on the' earth some lay
supine, Some crouching close were
seated, others pac'd Incessantly around;
the latter tribe, More numerous, those
fewer who beneath The torment lay, but
louder in their grief.

O'er all the sand fell slowly wafting down
Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
On Alpine summit, when the wind is
hush'd. As in the torrid Indian clime, the
son Of Ammon saw upon his warrior band
Descending, solid flames, that to the
ground Came down: whence he
bethought him with his troop To trample
on the soil; for easier thus The vapour
was extinguish'd, while alone; So fell the
eternal fiery flood, wherewith The marble
glow'd underneath, as under stove The
viands, doubly to augment the pain.

Unceasing was the play of wretched hands,
Now this, now that way glancing,
to shake off The heat, still falling fresh. I
thus began: "Instructor! thou who all
things overcom'st, Except the hardy
demons, that rush'd forth To stop our
entrance at the gate, say who Is yon
huge spirit, that, as seems, heeds not
The burning, but lies writhen in proud
scorn, As by the sultry tempest
immatur'd?"

Straight he himself, who was aware I
ask'd My guide of him, exclaim'd: "Such
as I was When living, dead such now I
am. If Jove Weary his workman out, from
whom in ire He snatch'd the lightnings,
that at my last day Transfix'd me, if the
rest be weary out At their black smithy
labouring by turns In Mongibello, while he
cries aloud; "Help, help, good Mulciber!"

as erst he cried In the Phlegraean
warfare, and the bolts Launch he full
aim'd at me with all his might, He never
should enjoy a sweet revenge."

Then thus my guide, in accent higher
rais'd Than I before had heard him:
"Capaneus! Thou art more punish'd, in
that this thy pride Lives yet unquench'd:
no torrent, save thy rage, Were to thy
fury pain proportion'd full."

Next turning round to me with milder lip
He spake: "This of the seven kings was
one, Who girt the Theban walls with
siege, and held, As still he seems to hold,
God in disdain, And sets his high
omnipotence at nought. But, as I told
him, his despiteful mood Is ornament
well suits the breast that wears it. Follow
me now; and look thou set not yet Thy

foot in the hot sand, but to the wood
Keep ever close." Silently on we pass'd To
where there gushes from the forest's
bound A little brook, whose crimson'd
wave yet lifts My hair with horror. As the
rill, that runs From Bulicame, to be
portion'd out Among the sinful women;
so ran this Down through the sand, its
bottom and each bank Stone-built, and
either margin at its side, Whereon I
straight perceiv'd our passage lay.

"Of all that I have shown thee, since that
gate We enter'd first, whose threshold is
to none Denied, nought else so worthy of
regard, As is this river, has thine eye
discern'd, O'er which the flaming volley
all is quench'd."

So spake my guide; and I him thence
besought, That having giv'n me appetite

to know, The food he too would give, that
hunger crav'd.

"In midst of ocean," forthwith he began,
"A desolate country lies, which Crete is
nam'd, Under whose monarch in old
times the world Liv'd pure and chaste. A
mountain rises there, Call'd Ida, joyous
once with leaves and streams, Deserted
now like a forbidden thing. It was the
spot which Rhea, Saturn's spouse, Chose
for the secret cradle of her son; And
better to conceal him, drown'd in shouts
His infant cries. Within the mount,
upright An ancient form there stands and
huge, that turns His shoulders towards
Damiata, and at Rome As in his mirror
looks. Of finest gold His head is shap'd,
pure silver are the breast And arms;
thence to the middle is of brass. And
downward all beneath well-temper'd

steel, Save the right foot of potter's clay,
on which Than on the other more erect
he stands, Each part except the gold, is
rent throughout; And from the fissure
tears distil, which join'd Penetrate to that
cave. They in their course Thus far
precipitated down the rock Form Acheron,
and Styx, and Phlegethon; Then by this
straiten'd channel passing hence
Beneath, e'en to the lowest depth of all,
Form there Cocytus, of whose lake
(thyself Shall see it) I here give thee no
account."

Then I to him: "If from our world this
sluice Be thus deriv'd; wherefore to us
but now Appears it at this edge?" He
straight replied: "The place, thou know'st,
is round; and though great part Thou
have already pass'd, still to the left
Descending to the nethermost, not yet

Hast thou the circuit made of the whole orb. Wherefore if aught of new to us appear, It needs not bring up wonder in thy looks."

Then I again inquir'd: "Where flow the streams Of Phlegethon and Lethe? for of one Thou tell'st not, and the other of that shower, Thou say'st, is form'd." He answer thus return'd: "Doubtless thy questions all well pleas'd I hear. Yet the red seething wave might have resolv'd One thou proposest. Lethe thou shalt see, But not within this hollow, in the place, Whither to lave themselves the spirits go, Whose blame hath been by penitence remov'd." He added: "Time is now we quit the wood. Look thou my steps pursue: the margins give Safe passage, unimpeded by the flames; For over them all vapour is extinct."

CANTO XV

One of the solid margins bears us now
Envelop'd in the mist, that from the
stream Arising, hovers o'er, and saves
from fire Both piers and water. As the
Flemings rear Their mound, 'twixt Ghent
and Bruges, to chase back The ocean,
fearing his tumultuous tide That drives
toward them, or the Paduans theirs Along
the Brenta, to defend their towns And
castles, ere the genial warmth be felt On
Chiarentana's top; such were the
mounds, So fram'd, though not in height
or bulk to these Made equal, by the
master, whosoe'er He was, that rais'd
them here. We from the wood Were not
so far remov'd, that turning round I

might not have discern'd it, when we met
A troop of spirits, who came beside the
pier.

They each one ey'd us, as at eventide
One eyes another under a new moon,
And toward us sharpen'd their sight as
keen, As an old tailor at his needle's eye.

Thus narrowly explor'd by all the tribe, I
was agniz'd of one, who by the skirt
Caught me, and cried, "What wonder
have we here!"

And I, when he to me outstretch'd his
arm, Intently fix'd my ken on his parch'd
looks, That although smirch'd with fire,
they hinder'd not But I remember'd him;
and towards his face My hand inclining,
answer'd: "Sir! Brunetto!

"And art thou here?" He thus to me: "My son! Oh let it not displease thee, if Brunetto Latini but a little space with thee Turn back, and leave his fellows to proceed."

I thus to him replied: "Much as I can, I thereto pray thee; and if thou be willing, That I here seat me with thee, I consent; His leave, with whom I journey, first obtain'd."

"O son!" said he, "whoever of this throng One instant stops, lies then a hundred years, No fan to ventilate him, when the fire Smites sorest. Pass thou therefore on. I close Will at thy garments walk, and then rejoin My troop, who go mourning their endless doom."

I dar'd not from the path descend to
tread On equal ground with him, but held
my head Bent down, as one who walks in
reverent guise.

"What chance or destiny," thus he began,
"Ere the last day conducts thee here
below? And who is this, that shows to
thee the way?"

"There up aloft," I answer'd, "in the life
Serene, I wander'd in a valley lost, Before
mine age had to its fullness reach'd. But
yester-morn I left it: then once more
Into that vale returning, him I met; And by
this path homeward he leads me back."

"If thou," he answer'd, "follow but thy
star, Thou canst not miss at last a
glorious haven: Unless in fairer days my
judgment err'd. And if my fate so early

had not chanc'd, Seeing the heav'ns thus
bounteous to thee, I Had gladly giv'n
thee comfort in thy work. But that
ungrateful and malignant race, Who in
old times came down from Fesole, Ay and
still smack of their rough mountain-flint,
Will for thy good deeds shew thee enmity.
Nor wonder; for amongst ill-savour'd
crabs It suits not the sweet fig-tree lay
her fruit. Old fame reports them in the
world for blind, Covetous, envious, proud.
Look to it well: Take heed thou cleanse
thee of their ways. For thee Thy fortune
hath such honour in reserve, That thou
by either party shalt be crav'd With
hunger keen: but be the fresh herb far
From the goat's tooth. The herd of Fesole
May of themselves make litter, not touch
the plant, If any such yet spring on their
rank bed, In which the holy seed revives,
transmitted From those true Romans,

who still there remain'd, When it was
made the nest of so much ill."

"Were all my wish fulfill'd," I straight
replied, "Thou from the confines of man's
nature yet Hadst not been driven forth;
for in my mind Is fix'd, and now strikes
full upon my heart The dear, benign,
paternal image, such As thine was, when
so lately thou didst teach me The way for
man to win eternity; And how I priz'd the
lesson, it behooves, That, long as life
endures, my tongue should speak, What
of my fate thou tell'st, that write I down:
And with another text to comment on For
her I keep it, the celestial dame, Who will
know all, if I to her arrive. This only
would I have thee clearly note: That so
my conscience have no plea against me;
Do fortune as she list, I stand prepar'd.
Not new or strange such earnest to mine

ear. Speed fortune then her wheel, as
likes her best, The clown his mattock; all
things have their course."

Thereat my sapient guide upon his right
Turn'd himself back, then look'd at me
and spake: "He listens to good purpose
who takes note."

I not the less still on my way proceed,
Discoursing with Brunetto, and inquire
Who are most known and chief among his
tribe.

"To know of some is well;" thus he
replied, "But of the rest silence may best
beseem. Time would not serve us for
report so long. In brief I tell thee, that all
these were clerks, Men of great learning
and no less renown, By one same sin
polluted in the world. With them is

Priscian, and Accorso's son Francesco
herds among that wretched throng: And,
if the wish of so impure a blotch
Possess'd thee, him thou also might'st
have seen, Who by the servants' servant
was transferr'd From Arno's seat to
Bacchiglione, where His ill-strain'd nerves
he left. I more would add, But must from
farther speech and onward way Alike
desist, for yonder I behold A mist new-
risen on the sandy plain. A company, with
whom I may not sort, Approaches. I
commend my TREASURE to thee,
Wherein I yet survive; my sole request."

This said he turn'd, and seem'd as one of
those, Who o'er Verona's champain try
their speed For the green mantle, and of
them he seem'd, Not he who loses but
who gains the prize.

CANTO XVI

NOW came I where the water's din was heard,
As down it fell into the other round,
Resounding like the hum of swarming bees:
When forth together issu'd from a troop,
That pass'd beneath the fierce tormenting storm,
Three spirits, running swift. They towards us came,
And each one cried aloud, "Oh do thou stay!
Whom by the fashion of thy garb we deem
To be some inmate of our evil land."

Ah me! what wounds I mark'd upon their limbs,
Recent and old, inflicted by the flames!
E'en the remembrance of them grieves me yet.

Attentive to their cry my teacher paus'd,
And turn'd to me his visage, and then
spake; "Wait now! our courtesy these
merit well: And were 't not for the nature
of the place, Whence glide the fiery darts,
I should have said, That haste had better
suited thee than them."

They, when we stopp'd, resum'd their
ancient wail, And soon as they had
reach'd us, all the three Whirl'd round
together in one restless wheel. As naked
champions, smear'd with slippery oil, Are
wont intent to watch their place of hold
And vantage, ere in closer strife they
meet; Thus each one, as he wheel'd, his
countenance At me directed, so that
opposite The neck mov'd ever to the
twinkling feet.

"If misery of this drear wilderness," Thus one began, "added to our sad cheer And destitute, do call forth scorn on us And our entreaties, let our great renown Incline thee to inform us who thou art, That dost imprint with living feet unharm'd The soil of Hell. He, in whose track thou see'st My steps pursuing, naked though he be And reft of all, was of more high estate Than thou believest; grandchild of the chaste Gualdrada, him they Guidoguerra call'd, Who in his lifetime many a noble act Achiev'd, both by his wisdom and his sword. The other, next to me that beats the sand, Is Aldobrandi, name deserving well, In the' upper world, of honour; and myself Who in this torment do partake with them, Am Rusticucci, whom, past doubt, my wife Of savage temper, more than aught beside Hath to this evil brought." If from the fire

I had been shelter'd, down amidst them
straight I then had cast me, nor my
guide, I deem, Would have restrain'd my
going; but that fear Of the dire burning
vanquish'd the desire, Which made me
eager of their wish'd embrace.

I then began: "Not scorn, but grief much
more, Such as long time alone can cure,
your doom Fix'd deep within me, soon as
this my lord Spake words, whose tenour
taught me to expect That such a race, as
ye are, was at hand. I am a countryman
of yours, who still Affectionate have
utter'd, and have heard Your deeds and
names renown'd. Leaving the gall For the
sweet fruit I go, that a sure guide Hath
promis'd to me. But behooves, that far As
to the centre first I downward tend."

"So may long space thy spirit guide thy limbs," He answer straight return'd; "and so thy fame Shine bright, when thou art gone; as thou shalt tell, If courtesy and valour, as they wont, Dwell in our city, or have vanish'd clean? For one amidst us late condemn'd to wail, Borsiere, yonder walking with his peers, Grieves us no little by the news he brings."

"An upstart multitude and sudden gains, Pride and excess, O Florence! have in thee Engender'd, so that now in tears thou mourn'st!" Thus cried I with my face uprais'd, and they All three, who for an answer took my words, Look'd at each other, as men look when truth Comes to their ear. "If thou at other times," They all at once rejoin'd, "so easily Satisfy those, who question, happy thou, Gifted with words, so apt to speak thy thought!"

Wherefore if thou escape this darksome
clime, Returning to behold the radiant
stars, When thou with pleasure shalt
retrace the past, See that of us thou
speak among mankind."

This said, they broke the circle, and so
swift Fled, that as pinions seem'd their
nimble feet.

Not in so short a time might one have
said "Amen," as they had vanish'd.
Straight my guide Pursu'd his track. I
follow'd; and small space Had we pass'd
onward, when the water's sound Was now
so near at hand, that we had scarce
Heard one another's speech for the loud
din.

E'en as the river, that holds on its course
Unmingled, from the mount of Vesulo, On

the left side of Apennine, toward The
east, which Acquacheta higher up They
call, ere it descend into the vale, At Forli
by that name no longer known, Rebellow
o'er Saint Benedict, roll'd on From the'
Alpine summit down a precipice, Where
space enough to lodge a thousand
spreads; Thus downward from a craggy
steep we found, That this dark wave
resounded, roaring loud, So that the ear
its clamour soon had stunn'd.

I had a cord that brac'd my girdle round,
Wherewith I erst had thought fast bound
to take The painted leopard. This when I
had all Unloosen'd from me (so my
master bade) I gather'd up, and stretch'd
it forth to him. Then to the right he
turn'd, and from the brink Standing few
paces distant, cast it down Into the deep
abyss. "And somewhat strange," Thus to

myself I spake, "signal so strange
Betokens, which my guide with earnest
eye Thus follows." Ah! what caution must
men use With those who look not at the
deed alone, But spy into the thoughts
with subtle skill!

"Quickly shall come," he said, "what I
expect, Thine eye discover quickly, that
whereof Thy thought is dreaming." Ever
to that truth, Which but the semblance of
a falsehood wears, A man, if possible,
should bar his lip; Since, although
blameless, he incurs reproach. But
silence here were vain; and by these
notes Which now I sing, reader! I swear
to thee, So may they favour find to latest
times! That through the gross and murky
air I spied A shape come swimming up,
that might have quell'd The stoutest
heart with wonder, in such guise As one

returns, who hath been down to loose An
anchor grappled fast against some rock,
Or to aught else that in the salt wave lies,
Who upward springing close draws in his
feet.

CANTO XVII

"LO! the fell monster with the deadly
sting! Who passes mountains, breaks
through fenced walls And firm embattled
spears, and with his filth Taints all the
world!" Thus me my guide address'd, And
beckon'd him, that he should come to
shore, Near to the stony causeway's
utmost edge.

Forthwith that image vile of fraud
appear'd, His head and upper part

expos'd on land, But laid not on the shore
his bestial train. His face the semblance
of a just man's wore, So kind and
gracious was its outward cheer; The rest
was serpent all: two shaggy claws
Reach'd to the armpits, and the back and
breast, And either side, were painted o'er
with nodes And orbits. Colours variegated
more Nor Turks nor Tartars e'er on cloth
of state With interchangeable embroidery
wove, Nor spread Arachne o'er her
curious loom. As ofttimes a light skiff,
moor'd to the shore, Stands part in water,
part upon the land; Or, as where dwells
the greedy German boor, The beaver
settles watching for his prey; So on the
rim, that fenc'd the sand with rock, Sat
perch'd the fiend of evil. In the void
Glancing, his tail upturn'd its venomous
fork, With sting like scorpion's arm'd.
Then thus my guide: "Now need our way

must turn few steps apart, Far as to that
ill beast, who couches there."

Thereat toward the right our downward
course We shap'd, and, better to escape
the flame And burning marle, ten paces
on the verge Proceeded. Soon as we to
him arrive, A little further on mine eye
beholds A tribe of spirits, seated on the
sand Near the wide chasm. Forthwith my
master spake: "That to the full thy
knowledge may extend Of all this round
contains, go now, and mark The mien
these wear: but hold not long discourse.
Till thou returnest, I with him meantime
Will parley, that to us he may vouchsafe
The aid of his strong shoulders." Thus
alone Yet forward on the' extremity I
pac'd Of that seventh circle, where the
mournful tribe Were seated. At the eyes
forth gush'd their pangs. Against the

vapours and the torrid soil Alternately
their shifting hands they plied. Thus use
the dogs in summer still to ply Their jaws
and feet by turns, when bitten sore By
gnats, or flies, or gadflies swarming
round.

Noting the visages of some, who lay
Beneath the pelting of that dolorous fire,
One of them all I knew not; but perceiv'd,
That pendent from his neck each bore a
pouch With colours and with emblems
various mark'd, On which it seem'd as if
their eye did feed.

And when amongst them looking round I
came, A yellow purse I saw with azure
wrought, That wore a lion's countenance
and port. Then still my sight pursuing its
career, Another I beheld, than blood more
red. A goose display of whiter wing than

curd. And one, who bore a fat and azure
swine Pictur'd on his white scrip,
addressed me thus: "What dost thou in
this deep? Go now and know, Since yet
thou livest, that my neighbour here
Vitaliano on my left shall sit. A Paduan
with these Florentines am I. Ofttimes
they thunder in mine ears, exclaiming 'O
haste that noble knight! he who the
pouch With the three beaks will bring!'"
This said, he writh'd The mouth, and loll'd
the tongue out, like an ox That licks his
nostrils. I, lest longer stay He ill might
brook, who bade me stay not long,
Backward my steps from those sad spirits
turn'd.

My guide already seated on the haunch
Of the fierce animal I found; and thus He
me encourag'd. "Be thou stout; be bold.
Down such a steep flight must we now

descend! Mount thou before: for that no
power the tail May have to harm thee, I
will be i' th' midst."

As one, who hath an ague fit so near, His
nails already are turn'd blue, and he
Quivers all o'er, if he but eye the shade;
Such was my cheer at hearing of his
words. But shame soon interpos'd her
threat, who makes The servant bold in
presence of his lord.

I settled me upon those shoulders huge,
And would have said, but that the words
to aid My purpose came not, "Look thou
clasp me firm!"

But he whose succour then not first I
prov'd, Soon as I mounted, in his arms
aloft, Embracing, held me up, and thus
he spake: "Geryon! now move thee! be

thy wheeling gyres Of ample circuit, easy
thy descent. Think on th' unusual burden
thou sustain'st."

As a small vessel, back'ning out from
land, Her station quits; so thence the
monster loos'd, And when he felt himself
at large, turn'd round There where the
breast had been, his forked tail. Thus,
like an eel, outstretch'd at length he
steer'd, Gath'ring the air up with
retractile claws.

Not greater was the dread when Phaeton
The reins let drop at random, whence
high heaven, Whereof signs yet appear,
was wrapt in flames; Nor when ill-fated
Icarus perceiv'd, By liquefaction of the
scalded wax, The trusted pennons
loosen'd from his loins, His sire
exclaiming loud, "Ill way thou keep'st!"

Than was my dread, when round me on
each part The air I view'd, and other
object none Save the fell beast. He slowly
sailing, wheels His downward motion,
unobserv'd of me, But that the wind,
arising to my face, Breathes on me from
below. Now on our right I heard the
cataract beneath us leap With hideous
crash; whence bending down to' explore,
New terror I conceiv'd at the steep
plunge:

For flames I saw, and wailings smote
mine ear: So that all trembling close I
crouch'd my limbs, And then
distinguish'd, unperceiv'd before, By the
dread torments that on every side Drew
nearer, how our downward course we
wound.

As falcon, that hath long been on the
wing, But lure nor bird hath seen, while
in despair The falconer cries, "Ah me!
thou stoop'st to earth!" Wearied
descends, and swiftly down the sky In
many an orbit wheels, then lighting sits
At distance from his lord in angry mood;
So Geryon lighting places us on foot Low
down at base of the deep-furrow'd rock,
And, of his burden there discharg'd,
forthwith Sprang forward, like an arrow
from the string.

CANTO XVIII

THERE is a place within the depths of hell
Call'd Malebolge, all of rock dark-stain'd
With hue ferruginous, e'en as the steep
That round it circling winds. Right in the

midst Of that abominable region, yawns A
spacious gulf profound, whereof the
frame Due time shall tell. The circle, that
remains, Throughout its round, between
the gulf and base Of the high craggy
banks, successive forms Ten trenches, in
its hollow bottom sunk.

As where to guard the walls, full many a
foss Begirds some stately castle, sure
defence Affording to the space within, so
here Were model'd these; and as like
fortresses E'en from their threshold to the
brink without, Are flank'd with bridges;
from the rock's low base Thus flinty paths
advanc'd, that 'cross the moles And
dikes, struck onward far as to the gulf,
That in one bound collected cuts them
off. Such was the place, wherein we
found ourselves From Geryon's back

dislodg'd. The bard to left Held on his way,
and I behind him mov'd.

On our right hand new misery I saw, New pains,
new executioners of wrath, That swarming peopled the first chasm. Below
Were naked sinners. Hitherward they came,
Meeting our faces from the middle point, With us beyond but with a larger stride.
E'en thus the Romans, when the year returns Of Jubilee, with better speed to rid
The thronging multitudes, their means devise For such as pass the bridge;
that on one side All front toward the castle, and approach Saint Peter's fane,
on th' other towards the mount.

Each divers way along the grisly rock,
Horn'd demons I beheld, with lashes huge,
That on their back unmercifully

smote. Ah! how they made them bound
at the first stripe!

None for the second waited nor the third.

Meantime as on I pass'd, one met my
sight Whom soon as view'd; "Of him,"
cried I, "not yet Mine eye hath had his
fill." With fixed gaze I therefore scann'd
him. Straight the teacher kind Paus'd with
me, and consented I should walk
Backward a space, and the tormented
spirit, Who thought to hide him, bent his
visage down. But it avail'd him nought;
for I exclaim'd: "Thou who dost cast thy
eye upon the ground, Unless thy features
do belie thee much, Venedico art thou.
But what brings thee Into this bitter
seas'ning?" He replied: "Unwillingly I
answer to thy words. But thy clear
speech, that to my mind recalls The world

I once inhabited, constrains me. Know
then 'twas I who led fair Ghisola To do
the Marquis' will, however fame The
shameful tale have bruited. Nor alone
Bologna hither sendeth me to mourn
Rather with us the place is so
o'erthrong'd That not so many tongues
this day are taught, Betwixt the Reno and
Savena's stream, To answer SIPA in their
country's phrase. And if of that securer
proof thou need, Remember but our
craving thirst for gold."

Him speaking thus, a demon with his
thong Struck, and exclaim'd, "Away!
corrupter! here Women are none for
sale." Forthwith I join'd My escort, and
few paces thence we came To where a
rock forth issued from the bank. That
easily ascended, to the right Upon its
splinter turning, we depart From those

eternal barriers. When arriv'd, Where
underneath the gaping arch lets pass The
scourged souls: "Pause here," the teacher
said, "And let these others miserable,
now Strike on thy ken, faces not yet
beheld, For that together they with us
have walk'd."

From the old bridge we ey'd the pack,
who came From th' other side towards
us, like the rest, Excoriate from the lash.
My gentle guide, By me unquestion'd,
thus his speech resum'd: "Behold that
lofty shade, who this way tends, And
seems too woe-begone to drop a tear.
How yet the regal aspect he retains!
Jason is he, whose skill and prowess won
The ram from Colchos. To the Lemnian
isle His passage thither led him, when
those bold And pitiless women had slain
all their males. There he with tokens and

fair witching words Hypsipyle beguil'd, a
virgin young, Who first had all the rest
herself beguil'd. Impregnated he left her
there forlorn. Such is the guilt condemns
him to this pain. Here too Medea's inj'ries
are avenged. All bear him company, who
like deceit To his have practis'd. And thus
much to know Of the first vale suffice
thee, and of those Whom its keen
torments urge." Now had we come
Where, crossing the next pier, the
straighten'd path Bestrides its shoulders
to another arch.

Hence in the second chasm we heard the
ghosts, Who jibber in low melancholy
sounds, With wide-stretch'd nostrils
snort, and on themselves Smite with their
palms. Upon the banks a scurf From the
foul steam condens'd, encrusting hung,

That held sharp combat with the sight
and smell.

So hollow is the depth, that from no part,
Save on the summit of the rocky span,
Could I distinguish aught. Thus far we
came; And thence I saw, within the foss
below, A crowd immers'd in ordure, that
appear'd Draff of the human body. There
beneath Searching with eye inquisitive, I
mark'd One with his head so grim'd, 't
were hard to deem, If he were clerk or
layman. Loud he cried: "Why greedily
thus bendest more on me, Than on these
other filthy ones, thy ken?"

"Because if true my mem'ry," I replied, "I
heretofore have seen thee with dry locks,
And thou Alessio art of Lucca sprung.
Therefore than all the rest I scan thee
more."

Then beating on his brain these words he spake: "Me thus low down my flatteries have sunk, Wherewith I ne'er enough could glut my tongue."

My leader thus: "A little further stretch Thy face, that thou the visage well mayst note Of that besotted, sluttish courtezan, Who there doth rend her with defiled nails, Now crouching down, now risen on her feet.

"Thais is this, the harlot, whose false lip Answer'd her doting paramour that ask'd, 'Thankest me much!'--'Say rather wondrously,' And seeing this here satiate be our view."

CANTO XIX

WOE to thee, Simon Magus! woe to you,
His wretched followers! who the things of
God, Which should be wedded unto
goodness, them, Rapacious as ye are, do
prostitute For gold and silver in adultery!
Now must the trumpet sound for you,
since yours Is the third chasm. Upon the
following vault We now had mounted,
where the rock impends Directly o'er the
centre of the foss.

Wisdom Supreme! how wonderful the art,
Which thou dost manifest in heaven, in
earth, And in the evil world, how just a
meed Allotting by thy virtue unto all!

I saw the livid stone, throughout the
sides And in its bottom full of apertures,
All equal in their width, and circular each,

Nor ample less nor larger they appear'd
Than in Saint John's fair dome of me
belov'd Those fram'd to hold the pure
baptismal streams, One of the which I
brake, some few years past, To save a
whelming infant; and be this A seal to
undeceive whoever doubts The motive of
my deed. From out the mouth Of every
one, emerg'd a sinner's feet And of the
legs high upward as the calf The rest
beneath was hid. On either foot The soles
were burning, whence the flexile joints
Glanc'd with such violent motion, as had
snapt Asunder cords or twisted withs. As
flame, Feeding on unctuous matter, glides
along The surface, scarcely touching
where it moves; So here, from heel to
point, glided the flames.

"Master! say who is he, than all the rest
Glancing in fiercer agony, on whom A
ruddier flame doth prey?" I thus inquir'd.

"If thou be willing," he replied, "that I
Carry thee down, where least the slope
bank falls, He of himself shall tell thee
and his wrongs."

I then: "As pleases thee to me is best.
Thou art my lord; and know'st that ne'er
I quit Thy will: what silence hides that
knowest thou." Thereat on the fourth pier
we came, we turn'd, And on our left
descended to the depth, A narrow strait
and perforated close. Nor from his side
my leader set me down, Till to his orifice
he brought, whose limb Quiv'ring
express'd his pang. "Whoe'er thou art,
Sad spirit! thus revers'd, and as a stake
Driv'n in the soil!" I in these words

began, "If thou be able, utter forth thy voice."

There stood I like the friar, that doth
shrive A wretch for murder doom'd, who
e'en when fix'd, Calleth him back, whence
death awhile delays.

He shouted: "Ha! already standest there?
Already standest there, O Boniface! By
many a year the writing play'd me false.
So early dost thou surfeit with the
wealth, For which thou fearedst not in
guile to take The lovely lady, and then
mangle her?"

I felt as those who, piercing not the drift
Of answer made them, stand as if
expos'd In mockery, nor know what to
reply, When Virgil thus admonish'd: "Tell

him quick, I am not he, not he, whom
thou believ'st."

And I, as was enjoin'd me, straight
replied.

That heard, the spirit all did wrench his
feet, And sighing next in woeful accent
spake: "What then of me requirest? If to
know So much imports thee, who I am,
that thou Hast therefore down the bank
descended, learn That in the mighty
mantle I was rob'd, And of a she-bear
was indeed the son, So eager to advance
my whelps, that there My having in my
purse above I stow'd, And here myself.
Under my head are dragg'd The rest, my
predecessors in the guilt Of simony.
Stretch'd at their length they lie Along an
opening in the rock. 'Midst them I also
low shall fall, soon as he comes, For

whom I took thee, when so hastily I
question'd. But already longer time Hath
pass'd, since my souls kindled, and I thus
Upturn'd have stood, than is his doom to
stand Planted with fiery feet. For after
him, One yet of deeds more ugly shall
arrive, From forth the west, a shepherd
without law, Fated to cover both his form
and mine. He a new Jason shall be call'd,
of whom In Maccabees we read; and
favour such As to that priest his king
indulgent show'd, Shall be of France's
monarch shown to him."

I know not if I here too far presum'd, But
in this strain I answer'd: "Tell me now,
What treasures from St. Peter at the first
Our Lord demanded, when he put the
keys Into his charge? Surely he ask'd no
more But, Follow me! Nor Peter nor the
rest Or gold or silver of Matthias took,

When lots were cast upon the forfeit
place Of the condemned soul. Abide thou
then; Thy punishment of right is merited:
And look thou well to that ill-gotten coin,
Which against Charles thy hardihood
inspir'd. If reverence of the keys
restrain'd me not, Which thou in happier
time didst hold, I yet Severer speech
might use. Your avarice O'ercasts the
world with mourning, under foot Treading
the good, and raising bad men up. Of
shepherds, like to you, th' Evangelist Was
ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld,
She who with seven heads tower'd at her
birth, And from ten horns her proof of
glory drew, Long as her spouse in virtue
took delight. Of gold and silver ye have
made your god, Diff'ring wherein from
the idolater, But he that worships one, a
hundred ye? Ah, Constantine! to how

much ill gave birth, Not thy conversion,
but that plenteous dower, Which the first
wealthy Father gain'd from thee!"

Meanwhile, as thus I sung, he, whether
wrath Or conscience smote him, violent
upsprang Spinning on either sole. I do
believe My teacher well was pleas'd, with
so compos'd A lip, he listen'd ever to the
sound Of the true words I utter'd. In both
arms He caught, and to his bosom lifting
me Upward retrac'd the way of his
descent.

Nor weary of his weight he press'd me
close, Till to the summit of the rock we
came, Our passage from the fourth to the
fifth pier. His cherish'd burden there
gently he plac'd Upon the rugged rock
and steep, a path Not easy for the
clamb'ring goat to mount.

Thence to my view another vale appear'd

CANTO XX

AND now the verse proceeds to torments new, Fit argument of this the twentieth strain Of the first song, whose awful theme records The spirits whelm'd in woe. Earnest I look'd Into the depth, that open'd to my view, Moisten'd with tears of anguish, and beheld A tribe, that came along the hollow vale, In silence weeping: such their step as walk Quires chanting solemn litanies on earth.

As on them more direct mine eye descends, Each wondrously seem'd to be revers'd At the neck-bone, so that the

countenance Was from the reins averted:
and because None might before him look,
they were compell'd To' advance with
backward gait. Thus one perhaps Hath
been by force of palsy clean transpos'd,
But I ne'er saw it nor believe it so.

Now, reader! think within thyself, so God
Fruit of thy reading give thee! how I long
Could keep my visage dry, when I beheld
Near me our form distorted in such guise,
That on the hinder parts fall'n from the
face The tears down-streaming roll'd.
Against a rock I leant and wept, so that
my guide exclaim'd: "What, and art thou
too witless as the rest? Here pity most
doth show herself alive, When she is
dead. What guilt exceedeth his, Who with
Heaven's judgment in his passion strives?
Raise up thy head, raise up, and see the
man, Before whose eyes earth gap'd in

Thebes, when all Cried out, 'Amphiaraus,
whither rushest? 'Why leavest thou the
war?' He not the less Fell ruining far as to
Minos down, Whose grapple none eludes.
Lo! how he makes The breast his
shoulders, and who once too far Before
him wish'd to see, now backward looks,
And treads reverse his path. Tiresias
note, Who semblance chang'd, when
woman he became Of male, through
every limb transform'd, and then Once
more behov'd him with his rod to strike
The two entwining serpents, ere the
plumes, That mark'd the better sex,
might shoot again.

"Aruns, with more his belly facing,
comes. On Luni's mountains 'midst the
marbles white, Where delves Carrara's
hind, who wons beneath, A cavern was

his dwelling, whence the stars And main-
sea wide in boundless view he held.

"The next, whose loosen'd tresses
overspread Her bosom, which thou seest
not (for each hair On that side grows)
was Manto, she who search'd Through
many regions, and at length her seat
Fix'd in my native land, whence a short
space My words detain thy audience.
When her sire From life departed, and in
servitude The city dedicate to Bacchus
mourn'd, Long time she went a wand'rer
through the world. Aloft in Italy's
delightful land A lake there lies, at foot of
that proud Alp, That o'er the Tyrol locks
Germania in, Its name Benacus, which a
thousand rills, Methinks, and more, water
between the vale Camonica and Garda
and the height Of Apennine remote.
There is a spot At midway of that lake,

where he who bears Of Trento's flock the
past'ral staff, with him Of Brescia, and
the Veronese, might each Passing that
way his benediction give. A garrison of
goodly site and strong Peschiera stands,
to awe with front oppos'd The Bergamese
and Brescian, whence the shore More
slope each way descends. There,
whatsoev'er Benacus' bosom holds not,
tumbling o'er Down falls, and winds a
river flood beneath Through the green
pastures. Soon as in his course The
stream makes head, Benacus then no
more They call the name, but Mincius, till
at last Reaching Governo into Po he falls.
Not far his course hath run, when a wide
flat It finds, which overstretchmg as a
marsh It covers, pestilent in summer oft.
Hence journeying, the savage maiden
saw 'Midst of the fen a territory waste
And naked of inhabitants. To shun All

human converse, here she with her
slaves Plying her arts remain'd, and liv'd,
and left Her body tenantless. Thenceforth
the tribes, Who round were scatter'd,
gath'ring to that place Assembled; for its
strength was great, enclos'd On all parts
by the fen. On those dead bones They
rear'd themselves a city, for her sake,
Calling it Mantua, who first chose the
spot, Nor ask'd another omen for the
name, Wherein more numerous the
people dwelt, Ere Casalodi's madness by
deceit Was wrong'd of Pinamonte. If thou
hear Henceforth another origin assign'd
Of that my country, I forewarn thee now,
That falsehood none beguile thee of the
truth."

I answer'd: "Teacher, I conclude thy
words So certain, that all else shall be to
me As embers lacking life. But now of

these, Who here proceed, instruct me, if
thou see Any that merit more especial
note. For thereon is my mind alone
intent."

He straight replied: "That spirit, from
whose cheek The beard sweeps o'er his
shoulders brown, what time Graecia was
emptied of her males, that scarce The
cradles were supplied, the seer was he In
Aulis, who with Calchas gave the sign
When first to cut the cable. Him they
nam'd Eurypilus: so sings my tragic
strain, In which majestic measure well
thou know'st, Who know'st it all. That
other, round the loins So slender of his
shape, was Michael Scot, Practis'd in
ev'ry slight of magic wile.

"Guido Bonatti see: Asdente mark, Who
now were willing, he had tended still The

thread and cordwain; and too late
repents.

"See next the wretches, who the needle
left, The shuttle and the spindle, and
became Diviners: baneful witcheries they
wrought With images and herbs. But
onward now: For now doth Cain with fork
of thorns confine On either hemisphere,
touching the wave Beneath the towers of
Seville. Yesternight The moon was round.
Thou mayst remember well: For she good
service did thee in the gloom Of the deep
wood." This said, both onward mov'd.

CANTO XXI

THUS we from bridge to bridge, with
other talk, The which my drama cares not

to rehearse, Pass'd on; and to the
summit reaching, stood To view another
gap, within the round Of Malebolge, other
bootless pangs.

Marvelous darkness shadow'd o'er the
place.

In the Venetians' arsenal as boils Through
wintry months tenacious pitch, to smear
Their unsound vessels; for th' inclement
time Sea-faring men restrains, and in
that while His bark one builds anew,
another stops The ribs of his, that hath
made many a voyage; One hammers at
the prow, one at the poop; This shapeth
oars, that other cables twirls, The mizen
one repairs and main-sail rent So not by
force of fire but art divine Boil'd here a
glutinous thick mass, that round Lim'd all
the shore beneath. I that beheld, But

therein nought distinguish'd, save the
surge, Rais'd by the boiling, in one
mighty swell Heave, and by turns
subsiding and fall. While there I fix'd my
ken below, "Mark! mark!" my guide
Exclaiming, drew me towards him from
the place, Wherein I stood. I turn'd
myself as one, Impatient to behold that
which beheld He needs must shun, whom
sudden fear unmans, That he his flight
delays not for the view. Behind me I
discern'd a devil black, That running, up
advanc'd along the rock. Ah! what fierce
cruelty his look bespake! In act how
bitter did he seem, with wings Buoyant
outstretch'd and feet of nimblest tread!
His shoulder proudly eminent and sharp
Was with a sinner charg'd; by either
haunch He held him, the foot's sinew
gripping fast.

"Ye of our bridge!" he cried, "keen-talon'd fiends! Lo! one of Santa Zita's elders! Him Whelm ye beneath, while I return for more. That land hath store of such. All men are there, Except Bonturo, barterers: of 'no' For lucre there an 'aye' is quickly made."

Him dashing down, o'er the rough rock he turn'd, Nor ever after thief a mastiff loos'd Sped with like eager haste. That other sank And forthwith writing to the surface rose. But those dark demons, shrouded by the bridge, Cried "Here the hallow'd visage saves not: here Is other swimming than in Serchio's wave. Wherefore if thou desire we rend thee not, Take heed thou mount not o'er the pitch." This said, They grappled him with more than hundred hooks, And shouted:

"Cover'd thou must sport thee here; So,
if thou canst, in secret mayst thou filch."

E'en thus the cook bestirs him, with his
grooms, To thrust the flesh into the
caldron down With flesh-hooks, that it
float not on the top.

Me then my guide bespake: "Lest they
descry, That thou art here, behind a
craggy rock Bend low and screen thee;
and whate'er of force Be offer'd me, or
insult, fear thou not: For I am well
advis'd, who have been erst In the like
fray." Beyond the bridge's head Therewith
he pass'd, and reaching the sixth pier,
Behov'd him then a forehead terror-proof.

With storm and fury, as when dogs rush
forth Upon the poor man's back, who
suddenly From whence he standeth

makes his suit; so rush'd Those from
beneath the arch, and against him Their
weapons all they pointed. He aloud: "Be
none of you outrageous: ere your time
Dare seize me, come forth from amongst
you one,

"Who having heard my words, decide he
then If he shall tear these limbs." They
shouted loud, "Go, Malacoda!" Whereat
one advanc'd, The others standing firm,
and as he came, "What may this turn
avail him?" he exclaim'd.

"Believ'st thou, Malacoda! I had come
Thus far from all your skirmishing
secure," My teacher answered, "without
will divine And destiny propitious? Pass
we then For so Heaven's pleasure is, that
I should lead Another through this savage
wilderness."

Forthwith so fell his pride, that he let
drop The instrument of torture at his feet,
And to the rest exclaim'd: "We have no
power To strike him." Then to me my
guide: "O thou! Who on the bridge
among the crags dost sit Low crouching,
safely now to me return."

I rose, and towards him moved with
speed: the fiends Meantime all forward
drew: me terror seiz'd Lest they should
break the compact they had made. Thus
issuing from Caprona, once I saw Th'
infantry dreading, lest his covenant The
foe should break; so close he hemm'd
them round.

I to my leader's side adher'd, mine eyes
With fixt and motionless observance bent
On their unkindly visage. They their

hooks Protruding, one the other thus
bespake: "Wilt thou I touch him on the
hip?" To whom Was answer'd: "Even so;
nor miss thy aim."

But he, who was in conf'rence with my
guide, Turn'd rapid round, and thus the
demon spake: "Stay, stay thee,
Scarmiglione!" Then to us He added:
"Further footing to your step This rock
affords not, shiver'd to the base Of the
sixth arch. But would you still proceed,
Up by this cavern go: not distant far,
Another rock will yield you passage safe.
Yesterday, later by five hours than now,
Twelve hundred threescore years and six
had fill'd The circuit of their course, since
here the way Was broken. Thitherward I
straight dispatch Certain of these my
scouts, who shall espy If any on the
surface bask. With them Go ye: for ye

shall find them nothing fell. Come
Alichino forth," with that he cried, "And
Calcabrina, and Cagnazzo thou! The troop
of ten let Barbariccia lead. With Libicocco
Draghinazzo haste, Fang'd Ciriatto,
Grafflacane fierce, And Farfarello, and
mad Rubicant. Search ye around the
bubbling tar. For these, In safety lead
them, where the other crag Uninterrupted
traverses the dens."

I then: "O master! what a sight is there!
Ah! without escort, journey we alone,
Which, if thou know the way, I covet not.
Unless thy prudence fail thee, dost not
mark How they do gnarl upon us, and
their scowl Threatens us present
tortures?" He replied: "I charge thee fear
not: let them, as they will, Gnarl on: 't is
but in token of their spite Against the
souls, who mourn in torment steep'd."

To leftward o'er the pier they turn'd; but
each Had first between his teeth prest
close the tongue, Toward their leader for
a signal looking, Which he with sound
obscene triumphant gave.

CANTO XXII

IT hath been heretofore my chance to see
Horsemen with martial order shifting
camp, To onset sallying, or in muster
rang'd, Or in retreat sometimes
outstretch'd for flight; Light-armed
squadrons and fleet foragers Scouring thy
plains, Arezzo! have I seen, And clashing
tournaments, and tilting jousts, Now with
the sound of trumpets, now of bells,
Tabors, or signals made from castled

heights, And with inventions multiform,
our own, Or introduc'd from foreign land;
but ne'er To such a strange recorder I
beheld, In evolution moving, horse nor
foot, Nor ship, that tack'd by sign from
land or star.

With the ten demons on our way we
went; Ah fearful company! but in the
church With saints, with gluttons at the
tavern's mess.

Still earnest on the pitch I gaz'd, to mark
All things whate'er the chasm contain'd,
and those Who burn'd within. As
dolphins, that, in sign To mariners, heave
high their arched backs, That thence
forewarn'd they may advise to save Their
threaten'd vessels; so, at intervals, To
ease the pain his back some sinner

show'd, Then hid more nimbly than the lightning glance.

E'en as the frogs, that of a wat'ry moat
Stand at the brink, with the jaws only
out, Their feet and of the trunk all else
concealed, Thus on each part the sinners
stood, but soon As Barbariccia was at
hand, so they Drew back under the wave.
I saw, and yet My heart doth stagger,
one, that waited thus, As it befalls that
oft one frog remains, While the next
springs away: and Graffiacan, Who of the
fiends was nearest, grappling seiz'd His
clotted locks, and dragg'd him sprawling
up, That he appear'd to me an otter. Each
Already by their names I knew, so well
When they were chosen, I observ'd, and
mark'd How one the other call'd. "O
Rubicant! See that his hide thou with thy

talons flay," Shouted together all the
cursed crew.

Then I: "Inform thee, master! if thou
may, What wretched soul is this, on
whom their hand His foes have laid." My
leader to his side Approach'd, and
whence he came inquir'd, to whom Was
answer'd thus: "Born in Navarre's domain
My mother plac'd me in a lord's retinue,
For she had borne me to a losel vile, A
spendthrift of his substance and himself.
The good king Thibault after that I serv'd,
To peculating here my thoughts were
turn'd, Whereof I give account in this dire
heat."

Straight Ciriatto, from whose mouth a
tusk Issued on either side, as from a
boar, Ript him with one of these. 'Twixt
evil claws The mouse had fall'n: but

Barbariccia cried, Seizing him with both arms: "Stand thou apart, While I do fix him on my prong transpierc'd." Then added, turning to my guide his face, "Inquire of him, if more thou wish to learn, Ere he again be rent." My leader thus: "Then tell us of the partners in thy guilt; Knowest thou any sprung of Latian land Under the tar?"--"I parted," he replied, "But now from one, who sojourn'd not far thence; So were I under shelter now with him! Nor hook nor talon then should scare me more."--.

"Too long we suffer," Libicocco cried, Then, darting forth a prong, seiz'd on his arm, And mangled bore away the sinewy part. Him Draghinazzo by his thighs beneath Would next have caught, whence angrily their chief, Turning on all sides round, with threat'ning brow Restrain'd

them. When their strife a little ceas'd, Of
him, who yet was gazing on his wound,
My teacher thus without delay inquir'd:
"Who was the spirit, from whom by evil
hap Parting, as thou has told, thou cam'st
to shore?"--

"It was the friar Gomita," he rejoin'd, "He
of Gallura, vessel of all guile, Who had his
master's enemies in hand, And us'd them
so that they commend him well. Money
he took, and them at large dismiss'd. So
he reports: and in each other charge
Committed to his keeping, play'd the part
Of barterer to the height: with him doth
herd The chief of Logodoro, Michel
Zanche. Sardinia is a theme, whereof
their tongue Is never weary. Out! alas!
behold That other, how he grins! More
would I say, But tremble lest he mean to
maul me sore."

Their captain then to Farfarello turning,
Who roll'd his moony eyes in act to strike,
Rebuk'd him thus: "Off! cursed bird!
Avaunt!"--

"If ye desire to see or hear," he thus
Quaking with dread resum'd, "or Tuscan
spirits Or Lombard, I will cause them to
appear. Meantime let these ill talons bate
their fury, So that no vengeance they
may fear from them, And I, remaining in
this self-same place, Will for myself but
one, make sev'n appear, When my shrill
whistle shall be heard; for so Our custom
is to call each other up."

Cagnazzo at that word deriding grinn'd,
Then wagg'd the head and spake: "Hear
his device, Mischievous as he is, to
plunge him down."

Whereto he thus, who fail'd not in rich
store Of nice-wove toils; "Mischief
forsooth extreme, Meant only to procure
myself more woe!"

No longer Alichino then refrain'd, But
thus, the rest gainsaying, him bespake:
"If thou do cast thee down, I not on foot
Will chase thee, but above the pitch will
beat My plumes. Quit we the vantage
ground, and let The bank be as a shield,
that we may see If singly thou prevail
against us all."

Now, reader, of new sport expect to hear!

They each one turn'd his eyes to the'
other shore, He first, who was the
hardest to persuade. The spirit of Navarre
chose well his time, Planted his feet on

land, and at one leap Escaping
disappointed their resolve.

Them quick resentment stung, but him
the most, Who was the cause of failure;
in pursuit He therefore sped, exclaiming;
"Thou art caught."

But little it avail'd: terror outstripp'd His
following flight: the other plung'd
beneath, And he with upward pinion
rais'd his breast: E'en thus the water-
fowl, when she perceives The falcon near,
dives instant down, while he Enrag'd and
spent retires. That mockery In Calcabrina
fury stirr'd, who flew After him, with
desire of strife inflam'd; And, for the
barterer had 'scap'd, so turn'd His talons
on his comrade. O'er the dyke In grapple
close they join'd; but the' other prov'd A
goshawk able to rend well his foe;

And in the boiling lake both fell. The heat
Was umpire soon between them, but in
vain To lift themselves they strove, so
fast were glued Their pennons.

Barbariccia, as the rest, That chance
lamenting, four in flight dispatch'd From
the' other coast, with all their weapons
arm'd. They, to their post on each side
speedily Descending, stretch'd their
hooks toward the fiends, Who flounder'd,
inly burning from their scars: And we
departing left them to that broil.

CANTO XXIII

IN silence and in solitude we went, One
first, the other following his steps, As
minor friars journeying on their road.

The present fray had turn'd my thoughts
to muse Upon old Aesop's fable, where he
told What fate unto the mouse and frog
befell. For language hath not sounds
more like in sense, Than are these
chances, if the origin And end of each be
heedfully compar'd. And as one thought
bursts from another forth, So afterward
from that another sprang, Which added
doubly to my former fear. For thus I
reason'd: "These through us have been
So foil'd, with loss and mock'ry so
complete, As needs must sting them
sore. If anger then Be to their evil will
conjoin'd, more fell They shall pursue us,
than the savage hound Snatches the
leveret, panting 'twixt his jaws."

Already I perceiv'd my hair stand all On
end with terror, and look'd eager back.

"Teacher," I thus began, "if speedily
Thyself and me thou hide not, much I
dread Those evil talons. Even now behind
They urge us: quick imagination works So
forcibly, that I already feel them."

He answer'd: "Were I form'd of leaded
glass, I should not sooner draw unto
myself Thy outward image, than I now
imprint That from within. This moment
came thy thoughts Presented before
mine, with similar act And count'nance
similar, so that from both I one design
have fram'd. If the right coast Incline so
much, that we may thence descend Into
the other chasm, we shall escape Secure
from this imagined pursuit."

He had not spoke his purpose to the end,
When I from far beheld them with spread

wings Approach to take us. Suddenly my
guide Caught me, ev'n as a mother that
from sleep Is by the noise arous'd, and
near her sees The climbing fires, who
snatches up her babe And flies ne'er
pausing, careful more of him Than of
herself, that but a single vest Clings
round her limbs. Down from the jutting
beach Supine he cast him, to that
pendent rock, Which closes on one part
the other chasm.

Never ran water with such hurrying pace
Adown the tube to turn a landmill's
wheel, When nearest it approaches to the
spokes, As then along that edge my
master ran, Carrying me in his bosom, as
a child, Not a companion. Scarcely had
his feet Reach'd to the lowest of the bed
beneath,

When over us the steep they reach'd; but
fear In him was none; for that high
Providence, Which plac'd them ministers
of the fifth foss, Power of departing
thence took from them all.

There in the depth we saw a painted
tribe, Who pac'd with tardy steps around,
and wept, Faint in appearance and
o'ercome with toil. Caps had they on,
with hoods, that fell low down Before
their eyes, in fashion like to those Worn
by the monks in Cologne. Their outside
Was overlaid with gold, dazzling to view,
But leaden all within, and of such weight,
That Frederick's compar'd to these were
straw. Oh, everlasting wearisome attire!

We yet once more with them together
turn'd To leftward, on their dismal moan
intent. But by the weight oppress'd, so

slowly came The fainting people, that our
company Was chang'd at every
movement of the step.

Whence I my guide address'd: "See that
thou find Some spirit, whose name may
by his deeds be known, And to that end
look round thee as thou go'st."

Then one, who understood the Tuscan
voice, Cried after us aloud: "Hold in your
feet, Ye who so swiftly speed through the
dusk air. Perchance from me thou shalt
obtain thy wish."

Whereat my leader, turning, me bespake:
"Pause, and then onward at their pace
proceed."

I staid, and saw two Spirits in whose look
Impatient eagerness of mind was mark'd

To overtake me; but the load they bare
And narrow path retarded their approach.

Soon as arriv'd, they with an eye askance
Perus'd me, but spake not: then turning
each To other thus conferring said: "This
one Seems, by the action of his throat,
alive. And, be they dead, what privilege
allows They walk unmantled by the
cumbrous stole?"

Then thus to me: "Tuscan, who visitest
The college of the mourning hypocrites,
Disdain not to instruct us who thou art."

"By Arno's pleasant stream," I thus
replied, "In the great city I was bred and
grew, And wear the body I have ever
worn. but who are ye, from whom such
mighty grief, As now I witness, courseth
down your cheeks? What torment breaks

forth in this bitter woe?" "Our bonnets
gleaming bright with orange hue," One of
them answer'd, "are so leaden gross,
That with their weight they make the
balances To crack beneath them. Joyous
friars we were, Bologna's natives,
Catalano I, He Loderingo nam'd, and by
thy land Together taken, as men used to
take A single and indifferent arbiter, To
reconcile their strifes. How there we
sped, Gardingo's vicinage can best
declare."

"O friars!" I began, "your miseries--" But
there brake off, for one had caught my
eye, Fix'd to a cross with three stakes on
the ground: He, when he saw me, writh'd
himself, throughout Distorted, ruffling
with deep sighs his beard. And Catalano,
who thereof was 'ware,

Thus spake: "That pierced spirit, whom
intent Thou view'st, was he who gave the
Pharisees Counsel, that it were fitting for
one man To suffer for the people. He doth
lie Transverse; nor any passes, but him
first Behoves make feeling trial how each
weighs. In straits like this along the foss
are plac'd The father of his consort, and
the rest Partakers in that council, seed of
ill And sorrow to the Jews." I noted then,
How Virgil gaz'd with wonder upon him,
Thus abjectly extended on the cross In
banishment eternal. To the friar He next
his words address'd: "We pray ye tell, If
so be lawful, whether on our right Lies
any opening in the rock, whereby We
both may issue hence, without constraint
On the dark angels, that compell'd they
come To lead us from this depth." He
thus replied: "Nearer than thou dost
hope, there is a rock From the next circle

moving, which o'ersteps Each vale of
horror, save that here his cope Is
shatter'd. By the ruin ye may mount: For
on the side it slants, and most the height
Rises below." With head bent down
awhile My leader stood, then spake: "He
warn'd us ill, Who yonder hangs the
sinners on his hook."

To whom the friar: At Bologna erst "I
many vices of the devil heard, Among the
rest was said, 'He is a liar, And the father
of lies!'" When he had spoke, My leader
with large strides proceeded on,
Somewhat disturb'd with anger in his
look.

I therefore left the spirits heavy laden,
And following, his beloved footsteps
mark'd.

CANTO XXIV

IN the year's early nonage, when the sun
Tempers his tresses in Aquarius' urn, And
now towards equal day the nights recede,
When as the rime upon the earth puts on
Her dazzling sister's image, but not long
Her milder sway endures, then riseth up
The village hind, whom fails his wintry
store, And looking out beholds the plain
around All whiten'd, whence impatiently
he smites His thighs, and to his hut
returning in, There paces to and fro,
wailing his lot, As a discomfited and
helpless man; Then comes he forth
again, and feels new hope Spring in his
bosom, finding e'en thus soon The world
hath chang'd its count'nance, grasps his
crook, And forth to pasture drives his

little flock: So me my guide dishearten'd
when I saw His troubled forehead, and so
speedily That ill was cur'd; for at the
fallen bridge Arriving, towards me with a
look as sweet, He turn'd him back, as
that I first beheld At the steep mountain's
foot. Regarding well The ruin, and some
counsel first maintain'd With his own
thought, he open'd wide his arm And took
me up. As one, who, while he works,
Computes his labour's issue, that he
seems Still to foresee the' effect, so
lifting me Up to the summit of one peak,
he fix'd His eye upon another. "Grapple
that," Said he, "but first make proof, if it
be such As will sustain thee." For one
capp'd with lead This were no journey.
Scarcely he, though light, And I, though
onward push'd from crag to crag, Could
mount. And if the precinct of this coast
Were not less ample than the last, for

him I know not, but my strength had
surely fail'd. But Malebolge all toward the
mouth Inclining of the nethermost abyss,
The site of every valley hence requires,
That one side upward slope, the other
fall.

At length the point of our descent we
reach'd From the last flag: soon as to
that arriv'd, So was the breath exhausted
from my lungs, I could no further, but did
seat me there.

"Now needs thy best of man;" so spake
my guide: "For not on downy plumes, nor
under shade Of canopy reposing, fame is
won, Without which whosoe'er consumes
his days Leaveth such vestige of himself
on earth, As smoke in air or foam upon
the wave. Thou therefore rise: vanish thy
weariness By the mind's effort, in each

struggle form'd To vanquish, if she suffer
not the weight Of her corporeal frame to
crush her down. A longer ladder yet
remains to scale. From these to have
escap'd sufficeth not. If well thou note
me, profit by my words."

I straightway rose, and show'd myself
less spent Than I in truth did feel me.
"On," I cried, "For I am stout and
fearless." Up the rock Our way we held,
more rugged than before, Narrower and
steeper far to climb. From talk I ceas'd
not, as we journey'd, so to seem Least
faint; whereat a voice from the other foss
Did issue forth, for utt'rance suited ill.
Though on the arch that crosses there I
stood, What were the words I knew not,
but who spake Seem'd mov'd in anger.
Down I stoop'd to look, But my quick eye
might reach not to the depth For

shrouding darkness; wherefore thus I
spake: "To the next circle, Teacher, bend
thy steps, And from the wall dismount
we; for as hence I hear and understand
not, so I see Beneath, and naught
discern."--"I answer not," Said he, "but
by the deed. To fair request Silent
performance maketh best return."

We from the bridge's head descended,
where To the eighth mound it joins, and
then the chasm Opening to view, I saw a
crowd within Of serpents terrible, so
strange of shape And hideous, that
remembrance in my veins Yet shrinks the
vital current. Of her sands Let Lybia
vaunt no more: if Jaculus, Pareas and
Chelyder be her brood, Cenchrus and
Amphisboena, plagues so dire Or in such
numbers swarming ne'er she shew'd, Not

with all Ethiopia, and whate'er Above the
Erythraean sea is spawn'd.

Amid this dread exuberance of woe Ran
naked spirits wing'd with horrid fear, Nor
hope had they of crevice where to hide,
Or heliotrope to charm them out of view.
With serpents were their hands behind
them bound, Which through their reins
infix'd the tail and head Twisted in folds
before. And lo! on one Near to our side,
darted an adder up, And, where the neck
is on the shoulders tied, Transpierc'd him.
Far more quickly than e'er pen Wrote O
or I, he kindled, burn'd, and chang'd To
ashes, all pour'd out upon the earth.
When there dissolv'd he lay, the dust
again Uproll'd spontaneous, and the self-
same form Instant resumed. So mighty
sages tell, The' Arabian Phoenix, when
five hundred years Have well nigh circled,

dies, and springs forthwith Renascent.
Blade nor herb throughout his life He
tastes, but tears of frankincense alone
And odorous amomum: swaths of nard
And myrrh his funeral shroud. As one
that falls, He knows not how, by force
demoniac dragg'd To earth, or through
obstruction fettering up In chains invisible
the powers of man, Who, risen from his
trance, gazeth around, Bewilder'd with
the monstrous agony He hath endur'd,
and wildly staring sighs; So stood aghast
the sinner when he rose.

Oh! how severe God's judgment, that
deals out Such blows in stormy
vengeance! Who he was My teacher next
inquir'd, and thus in few He answer'd:
"Vanni Fucci am I call'd, Not long since
rained down from Tuscany To this dire
gullet. Me the bestial life And not the

human pleas'd, mule that I was, Who in
Pistoia found my worthy den."

I then to Virgil: "Bid him stir not hence,
And ask what crime did thrust him hither:
once A man I knew him choleric and
bloody."

The sinner heard and feign'd not, but
towards me His mind directing and his
face, wherein Was dismal shame
depictur'd, thus he spake: "It grieves me
more to have been caught by thee In this
sad plight, which thou beholdest, than
When I was taken from the other life. I
have no power permitted to deny What
thou inquirest. I am doom'd thus low To
dwell, for that the sacristy by me Was
rifled of its goodly ornaments, And with
the guilt another falsely charged. But that
thou mayst not joy to see me thus, So as

thou e'er shalt 'scape this darksome
realm Open thine ears and hear what I
forebode. Reft of the Neri first Pistoia
pines, Then Florence changeth citizens
and laws. From Valdimagra, drawn by
wrathful Mars, A vapour rises, wrapt in
turbid mists, And sharp and eager driveth
on the storm With arrowy hurtling o'er
Piceno's field, Whence suddenly the cloud
shall burst, and strike Each helpless
Bianco prostrate to the ground. This have
I told, that grief may rend thy heart."

CANTO XXV

WHEN he had spoke, the sinner rais'd his
hands Pointed in mockery, and cried:
"Take them, God! I level them at thee!"
From that day forth The serpents were

my friends; for round his neck One of
then rolling twisted, as it said, "Be silent,
tongue!" Another to his arms Upgliding,
tied them, riveting itself So close, it took
from them the power to move.

Pistoia! Ah Pistoia! why dost doubt To
turn thee into ashes, cumb'ring earth No
longer, since in evil act so far Thou hast
outdone thy seed? I did not mark,
Through all the gloomy circles of the'
abyss, Spirit, that swell'd so proudly
'gainst his God, Not him, who headlong
fell from Thebes. He fled, Nor utter'd
more; and after him there came A
centaur full of fury, shouting, "Where
Where is the caitiff?" On Maremma's
marsh Swarm not the serpent tribe, as on
his haunch They swarm'd, to where the
human face begins. Behind his head upon
the shoulders lay, With open wings, a

dragon breathing fire On whomsoe'er he
met. To me my guide: "Cacus is this, who
underneath the rock Of Aventine spread
oft a lake of blood. He, from his brethren
parted, here must tread A different
journey, for his fraudulent theft Of the great
herd, that near him stall'd; whence found
His felon deeds their end, beneath the
mace Of stout Alcides, that perchance
laid on A hundred blows, and not the
tenth was felt."

While yet he spake, the centaur sped
away: And under us three spirits came, of
whom Nor I nor he was ware, till they
exclaim'd; "Say who are ye?" We then
brake off discourse, Intent on these
alone. I knew them not; But, as it
chanceth oft, befell, that one Had need to
name another. "Where," said he, "Doth
Cianfa lurk?" I, for a sign my guide

Should stand attentive, plac'd against my
lips The finger lifted. If, O reader! now
Thou be not apt to credit what I tell, No
marvel; for myself do scarce allow The
witness of mine eyes. But as I looked
Toward them, lo! a serpent with six feet
Springs forth on one, and fastens full
upon him: His midmost grasp'd the belly,
a forefoot Seiz'd on each arm (while deep
in either cheek He flesh'd his fangs); the
hinder on the thighs Were spread, 'twixt
which the tail inserted curl'd Upon the
reins behind. Ivy ne'er clasp'd A dodder'd
oak, as round the other's limbs The
hideous monster intertwin'd his own.
Then, as they both had been of burning
wax, Each melted into other, mingling
hues, That which was either now was
seen no more. Thus up the shrinking
paper, ere it burns, A brown tint glides,
not turning yet to black, And the clean

white expires. The other two Look'd on
exclaiming: "Ah, how dost thou change,
Agnello! See! Thou art nor double now,
"Nor only one." The two heads now
became One, and two figures blended in
one form Appear'd, where both were lost.
Of the four lengths Two arms were made:
the belly and the chest The thighs and
legs into such members chang'd, As
never eye hath seen. Of former shape All
trace was vanish'd. Two yet neither
seem'd That image miscreate, and so
pass'd on With tardy steps. As
underneath the scourge Of the fierce
dog-star, that lays bare the fields,
Shifting from brake to brake, the lizard
seems A flash of lightning, if he thwart
the road, So toward th' entrails of the
other two Approaching seem'd, an adder
all on fire, As the dark pepper-grain, livid

and swart. In that part, whence our life is
nourish'd first, One he transpierc'd; then
down before him fell Stretch'd out. The
pierced spirit look'd on him But spake
not; yea stood motionless and yawn'd, As
if by sleep or fev'rous fit assail'd. He ey'd
the serpent, and the serpent him. One
from the wound, the other from the
mouth Breath'd a thick smoke, whose
vap'ry columns join'd.

Lucan in mute attention now may hear,
Nor thy disastrous fate, Sabellus! tell, Nor
shine, Nasidius! Ovid now be mute. What
if in warbling fiction he record Cadmus
and Arethusa, to a snake Him chang'd,
and her into a fountain clear, I envy not;
for never face to face Two natures thus
transmuted did he sing, Wherein both
shapes were ready to assume The other's
substance. They in mutual guise So

answer'd, that the serpent split his train
Divided to a fork, and the pierc'd spirit
Drew close his steps together, legs and
thighs Compacted, that no sign of
juncture soon Was visible: the tail
disparted took The figure which the spirit
lost, its skin Soft'ning, his indurated to a
rind. The shoulders next I mark'd, that
ent'ring join'd The monster's arm-pits,
whose two shorter feet So lengthen'd, as
the other's dwindling shrunk. The feet
behind then twisting up became That part
that man conceals, which in the wretch
Was cleft in twain. While both the
shadowy smoke With a new colour veils,
and generates Th' excrescent pile on one,
peeling it off From th' other body, lo!
upon his feet One upright rose, and prone
the other fell. Not yet their glaring and
malignant lamps Were shifted, though
each feature chang'd beneath. Of him

who stood erect, the mounting face
Retreated towards the temples, and what
there Superfluous matter came, shot out
in ears From the smooth cheeks, the rest,
not backward dragg'd, Of its excess did
shape the nose; and swell'd Into due size
protuberant the lips. He, on the earth
who lay, meanwhile extends His
sharpen'd visage, and draws down the
ears Into the head, as doth the slug his
horns. His tongue continuous before and
apt For utt'rance, severs; and the other's
fork Closing unites. That done the smoke
was laid. The soul, transform'd into the
brute, glides off, Hissing along the vale,
and after him The other talking sputters;
but soon turn'd His new-grown shoulders
on him, and in few Thus to another
spake: "Along this path Crawling, as I
have done, speed Buoso now!"

So saw I fluctuate in successive change
Th' unsteady ballast of the seventh hold:
And here if aught my tongue have
swerv'd, events So strange may be its
warrant. O'er mine eyes Confusion hung,
and on my thoughts amaze.

Yet 'scap'd they not so covertly, but well I
mark'd Sciancato: he alone it was Of the
three first that came, who chang'd not:
thou, The other's fate, Gaville, still dost
rue.

CANTO XXVI

FLORENCE exult! for thou so mightily
Hast thriven, that o'er land and sea thy
wings Thou beatest, and thy name
spreads over hell! Among the plund'ers

such the three I found Thy citizens,
whence shame to me thy son, And no
proud honour to thyself redounds.

But if our minds, when dreaming near the
dawn, Are of the truth presageful, thou
ere long Shalt feel what Prato, (not to say
the rest) Would fain might come upon
thee; and that chance Were in good time,
if it befell thee now. Would so it were,
since it must needs befall! For as time
wears me, I shall grieve the more.

We from the depth departed; and my
guide Remounting scal'd the flinty steps,
which late We downward trac'd, and drew
me up the steep. Pursuing thus our
solitary way Among the crags and
splinters of the rock, Sped not our feet
without the help of hands.

Then sorrow seiz'd me, which e'en now
revives, As my thought turns again to
what I saw, And, more than I am wont, I
rein and curb The powers of nature in
me, lest they run Where Virtue guides
not; that if aught of good My gentle star,
or something better gave me, I envy not
myself the precious boon.

As in that season, when the sun least
veils His face that lightens all, what time
the fly Gives way to the shrill gnat, the
peasant then Upon some cliff reclin'd,
beneath him sees Fire-flies innumeros
spangling o'er the vale, Vineyard or tilth,
where his day-labour lies: With flames so
numberless throughout its space Shone
the eighth chasm, apparent, when the
depth Was to my view expos'd. As he,
whose wrongs The bears aveng'd, at its
departure saw Elijah's chariot, when the

steeds erect Rais'd their steep flight for
heav'n; his eyes meanwhile, Straining
pursu'd them, till the flame alone
Upsoaring like a misty speck he kenn'd;
E'en thus along the gulf moves every
flame, A sinner so enfolded close in each,
That none exhibits token of the theft.

Upon the bridge I forward bent to look,
And grasp'd a flinty mass, or else had
fall'n, Though push'd not from the height.
The guide, who mark'd How I did gaze
attentive, thus began:

"Within these ardours are the spirits,
each Swath'd in confining fire."--"Master,
thy word," I answer'd, "hath assur'd me;
yet I deem'd Already of the truth, already
wish'd To ask thee, who is in yon fire,
that comes So parted at the summit, as it
seem'd Ascending from that funeral pile,

where lay The Theban brothers?" He replied: "Within Ulysses there and Diomedes endure Their penal tortures, thus to vengeance now Together hasting, as erewhile to wrath. These in the flame with ceaseless groans deplore The ambush of the horse, that open'd wide A portal for that goodly seed to pass, Which sow'd imperial Rome; nor less the guile Lament they, whence of her Achilles 'reft Deidamia yet in death complains. And there is rued the stratagem, that Troy Of her Palladium spoil'd."--"If they have power Of utterance from within these sparks," said I, "O master! think my prayer a thousand fold In repetition urg'd, that thou vouchsafe To pause, till here the horned flame arrive. See, how toward it with desire I bend."

He thus: "Thy prayer is worthy of much
praise, And I accept it therefore: but do
thou Thy tongue refrain: to question
them be mine, For I divine thy wish: and
they perchance, For they were Greeks,
might shun discourse with thee."

When there the flame had come, where
time and place Seem'd fitting to my
guide, he thus began: "O ye, who dwell
two spirits in one fire! If living I of you
did merit aught, Whate'er the measure
were of that desert, When in the world
my lofty strain I pour'd, Move ye not on,
till one of you unfold In what clime death
o'ertook him self-destroy'd."

Of the old flame forthwith the greater
horn Began to roll, murmuring, as a fire
That labours with the wind, then to and
fro Wagging the top, as a tongue uttering

sounds, Threw out its voice, and spake:
"When I escap'd From Circe, who beyond
a circling year Had held me near Caieta,
by her charms, Ere thus Aeneas yet had
nam'd the shore, Nor fondness for my
son, nor reverence Of my old father, nor
return of love, That should have crown'd
Penelope with joy, Could overcome in me
the zeal I had T' explore the world, and
search the ways of life, Man's evil and his
virtue. Forth I sail'd Into the deep
illimitable main, With but one bark, and
the small faithful band That yet cleav'd to
me. As Iberia far, Far as Morocco either
shore I saw, And the Sardinian and each
isle beside Which round that ocean
bathes. Tardy with age Were I and my
companions, when we came To the strait
pass, where Hercules ordain'd The
bound'ries not to be o'erstepp'd by man.

The walls of Seville to my right I left, On
the' other hand already Ceuta past.

"O brothers!" I began, "who to the west
Through perils without number now have
reach'd, To this the short remaining
watch, that yet Our senses have to wake,
refuse not proof Of the unpeopled world,
following the track Of Phoebus. Call to
mind from whence we sprang: Ye were
not form'd to live the life of brutes But
virtue to pursue and knowledge high.
With these few words I sharpen'd for the
voyage The mind of my associates, that I
then Could scarcely have withheld them.
To the dawn Our poop we turn'd, and for
the witless flight Made our oars wings,
still gaining on the left. Each star of the'
other pole night now beheld, And ours so
low, that from the ocean-floor It rose not.
Five times re-illum'd, as oft Vanish'd the

light from underneath the moon Since the
deep way we enter'd, when from far
Appear'd a mountain dim, loftiest
methought Of all I e'er beheld. Joy seiz'd
us straight, But soon to mourning
changed. From the new land A whirlwind
sprung, and at her foremost side Did
strike the vessel. Thrice it whirl'd her
round With all the waves, the fourth time
lifted up The poop, and sank the prow: so
fate decreed: And over us the booming
billow clos'd."

CANTO XVII

NOW upward rose the flame, and still'd
its light To speak no more, and now
pass'd on with leave From the mild poet
gain'd, when following came Another,

from whose top a sound confus'd, Forth
issuing, drew our eyes that way to look.

As the Sicilian bull, that rightfully His
cries first echoed, who had shap'd its
mould, Did so rebellow, with the voice of
him Tormented, that the brazen monster
seem'd Pierc'd through with pain; thus
while no way they found Nor avenue
immediate through the flame, Into its
language turn'd the dismal words: But
soon as they had won their passage
forth, Up from the point, which vibrating
obey'd Their motion at the tongue, these
sounds we heard: "O thou! to whom I
now direct my voice! That lately didst
exclaim in Lombard phrase,

"Depart thou, I solicit thee no more,
Though somewhat tardy I perchance
arrive Let it not irk thee here to pause

awhile, And with me parley: lo! it irks not
me And yet I burn. If but e'en now thou
fall into this blind world, from that
pleasant land Of Latium, whence I draw
my sum of guilt, Tell me if those, who in
Romagna dwell, Have peace or war. For of
the mountains there Was I, betwixt
Urbino and the height, Whence Tyber first
unlocks his mighty flood."

Leaning I listen'd yet with heedful ear,
When, as he touch'd my side, the leader
thus: "Speak thou: he is a Latian." My
reply Was ready, and I spake without
delay:

"O spirit! who art hidden here below!
Never was thy Romagna without war In
her proud tyrants' bosoms, nor is now:
But open war there left I none. The state,
Ravenna hath maintain'd this many a

year, Is steadfast. There Polenta's eagle
broods, And in his broad circumference of
plume O'ershadows Cervia. The green
talons grasp The land, that stood
erewhile the proof so long, And pil'd in
bloody heap the host of France.

"The' old mastiff of Verruchio and the
young, That tore Montagna in their wrath,
still make, Where they are wont, an
augre of their fangs.

"Lamone's city and Santerno's range
Under the lion of the snowy lair.
Inconstant partisan! that changeth sides,
Or ever summer yields to winter's frost.
And she, whose flank is wash'd of Savio's
wave, As 'twixt the level and the steep
she lies, Lives so 'twixt tyrant power and
liberty.

"Now tell us, I entreat thee, who art thou? Be not more hard than others. In the world, So may thy name still rear its forehead high."

Then roar'd awhile the fire, its sharpen'd point
On either side wav'd, and thus breath'd at last:
"If I did think, my answer were to one,
Who ever could return unto the world,
This flame should rest unshaken. But since ne'er,
If true be told me, any from this depth
Has found his upward way, I answer thee,
Nor fear lest infamy record the words.

"A man of arms at first, I cloth'd me then
In good Saint Francis' girdle, hoping so T'
have made amends. And certainly my hope
Had fail'd not, but that he, whom curses light on,
The' high priest again seduc'd me into sin. And how and

wherefore listen while I tell. Long as this
spirit mov'd the bones and pulp My
mother gave me, less my deeds bespake
The nature of the lion than the fox. All
ways of winding subtlety I knew, And
with such art conducted, that the sound
Reach'd the world's limit. Soon as to that
part Of life I found me come, when each
behoves To lower sails and gather in the
lines; That which before had pleased me
then I rued, And to repentance and
confession turn'd; Wretch that I was! and
well it had bested me! The chief of the
new Pharisees meantime, Waging his
warfare near the Lateran, Not with the
Saracens or Jews (his foes All Christians
were, nor against Acre one Had fought,
nor traffic'd in the Soldan's land), He his
great charge nor sacred ministry In
himself, rev'renc'd, nor in me that cord,
Which us'd to mark with leanness whom

it girded. As in Socrate, Constantine
besought To cure his leprosy Sylvester's
aid, So me to cure the fever of his pride
This man besought: my counsel to that
end He ask'd: and I was silent: for his
words Seem'd drunken: but forthwith he
thus resum'd: 'From thy heart banish
fear: of all offence I hitherto absolve
thee. In return, Teach me my purpose so
to execute, That Penestrino cumber earth
no more. Heav'n, as thou knowest, I have
power to shut And open: and the keys
are therefore twain, The which my
predecessor meanly priz'd.'"

Then, yielding to the forceful arguments,
Of silence as more perilous I deem'd, And
answer'd: "Father! since thou washest me
Clear of that guilt wherein I now must
fall, Large promise with performance

scant, be sure, Shall make thee triumph
in thy lofty seat."

"When I was number'd with the dead,
then came Saint Francis for me; but a
cherub dark He met, who cried: 'Wrong
me not; he is mine, And must below to
join the wretched crew, For the deceitful
counsel which he gave. E'er since I
watch'd him, hov'ring at his hair, No
power can the impenitent absolve; Nor to
repent and will at once consist, By
contradiction absolute forbid.'" Oh mis'ry!
how I shook myself, when he Seiz'd me,
and cried, "Thou haply thought'st me not
A disputant in logic so exact." To Minos
down he bore me, and the judge Twin'd
eight times round his callous back the
tail, Which biting with excess of rage, he
spake: "This is a guilty soul, that in the
fire Must vanish. Hence perdition-doom'd

I rove A prey to rankling sorrow in this garb."

When he had thus fulfill'd his words, the flame
In dolour parted, beating to and fro,
And writhing its sharp horn. We onward went,
I and my leader, up along the rock,
Far as another arch, that overhangs
The foss, wherein the penalty is paid
Of those, who load them with committed sin.

CANTO XXVIII

WHO, e'en in words unfetter'd, might at full
Tell of the wounds and blood that now I saw,
Though he repeated oft the tale?
No tongue So vast a theme could equal,
speech and thought Both impotent alike.

If in one band Collected, stood the people
all, who e'er Pour'd on Apulia's happy soil
their blood, Slain by the Trojans, and in
that long war When of the rings the
measur'd booty made A pile so high, as
Rome's historian writes Who errs not,
with the multitude, that felt The grinding
force of Guiscard's Norman steel, And
those the rest, whose bones are gather'd
yet At Ceperano, there where treachery
Branded th' Apulian name, or where
beyond Thy walls, O Tagliacozzo, without
arms The old Alardo conquer'd; and his
limbs One were to show transpierc'd,
another his Clean lopt away; a spectacle
like this Were but a thing of nought, to
the' hideous sight Of the ninth chasm. A
rundlet, that hath lost Its middle or side
stave, gapes not so wide, As one I
mark'd, torn from the chin throughout
Down to the hinder passage: 'twixt the

legs Dangling his entrails hung, the
midriff lay Open to view, and wretched
ventricle, That turns th' englutted aliment
to dross.

Whilst eagerly I fix on him my gaze, He
ey'd me, with his hands laid his breast
bare, And cried; "Now mark how I do rip
me! lo!

"How is Mohammed mangled! before me
Walks Ali weeping, from the chin his face
Cleft to the forelock; and the others all
Whom here thou seest, while they liv'd,
did sow Scandal and schism, and
therefore thus are rent. A fiend is here
behind, who with his sword Hacks us thus
cruelly, slivering again Each of this ream,
when we have compast round The dismal
way, for first our gashes close Ere we
repass before him. But say who Art thou,

that standest musing on the rock, Haply
so lingering to delay the pain Sentenc'd
upon thy crimes?"--"Him death not yet,"
My guide rejoin'd, "hath overta'en, nor
sin Conducts to torment; but, that he
may make Full trial of your state, I who
am dead Must through the depths of hell,
from orb to orb, Conduct him. Trust my
words, for they are true."

More than a hundred spirits, when that
they heard, Stood in the foss to mark
me, through amazed, Forgetful of their
pangs. "Thou, who perchance Shalt
shortly view the sun, this warning thou
Bear to Dolcino: bid him, if he wish not
Here soon to follow me, that with good
store Of food he arm him, lest impris'ning
snows Yield him a victim to Novara's
power, No easy conquest else." With foot
uprais'd For stepping, spake Mohammed,

on the ground Then fix'd it to depart.
Another shade, Pierc'd in the throat, his
nostrils mutilate E'en from beneath the
eyebrows, and one ear Lopt off, who with
the rest through wonder stood Gazing,
before the rest advanc'd, and bar'd His
wind-pipe, that without was all
o'ersmear'd With crimson stain. "O thou!"
said he, "whom sin Condemns not, and
whom erst (unless too near Resemblance
do deceive me) I aloft Have seen on
Latian ground, call thou to mind Piero of
Medicina, if again Returning, thou
behold'st the pleasant land That from
Vercelli slopes to Mercabo;

"And there instruct the twain, whom Fano
boasts Her worthiest sons, Guido and
Angelo, That if 't is giv'n us here to scan
aright The future, they out of life's
tenement Shall be cast forth, and

whelm'd under the waves Near to
Cattolica, through perfidy Of a fell tyrant.
'Twixt the Cyprian isle And Balearic, ne'er
hath Neptune seen An injury so foul, by
pirates done Or Argive crew of old. That
one-ey'd traitor (Whose realm there is a
spirit here were fain His eye had still
lack'd sight of) them shall bring To
conf'rence with him, then so shape his
end, That they shall need not 'gainst
Focara's wind Offer up vow nor pray'r." I
answering thus:

"Declare, as thou dost wish that I above
May carry tidings of thee, who is he, In
whom that sight doth wake such sad
remembrance?"

Forthwith he laid his hand on the cheek-
bone Of one, his fellow-spirit, and his
jaws Expanding, cried: "Lo! this is he I

wot of; He speaks not for himself: the
outcast this Who overwhelm'd the doubt
in Caesar's mind, Affirming that delay to
men prepar'd Was ever harmful." Oh how
terrified Methought was Curio, from
whose throat was cut The tongue, which
spake that hardy word. Then one Maim'd
of each hand, uplifted in the gloom The
bleeding stumps, that they with gory
spots Sullied his face, and cried:
"Remember thee Of Mosca, too, I who,
alas! exclaim'd, 'The deed once done
there is an end,' that prov'd A seed of
sorrow to the Tuscan race."

I added: "Ay, and death to thine own
tribe."

Whence heaping woe on woe he hurried
off, As one grief stung to madness. But I
there Still linger'd to behold the troop,

and saw Things, such as I may fear
without more proof To tell of, but that
conscience makes me firm, The boon
companion, who her strong breast-plate
Buckles on him, that feels no guilt within
And bids him on and fear not. Without
doubt I saw, and yet it seems to pass
before me, A headless trunk, that even
as the rest Of the sad flock pac'd onward.
By the hair It bore the sever'd member,
lantern-wise Pendent in hand, which
look'd at us and said,

"Woe's me!" The spirit lighted thus
himself, And two there were in one, and
one in two. How that may be he knows
who ordereth so.

When at the bridge's foot direct he stood,
His arm aloft he rear'd, thrusting the
head Full in our view, that nearer we

might hear The words, which thus it
utter'd: "Now behold This grievous
torment, thou, who breathing go'st To
spy the dead; behold if any else Be
terrible as this. And that on earth Thou
mayst bear tidings of me, know that I Am
Bertrand, he of Born, who gave King John
The counsel mischievous. Father and son
I set at mutual war. For Absalom And
David more did not Ahitophel, Spurring
them on maliciously to strife. For parting
those so closely knit, my brain Parted,
alas! I carry from its source, That in this
trunk inhabits. Thus the law Of
retribution fiercely works in me."

CANTO XXIX

SO were mine eyes inebriate with view Of
the vast multitude, whom various wounds
Disfigur'd, that they long'd to stay and
weep.

But Virgil rous'd me: "What yet gazest
on? Wherefore doth fasten yet thy sight
below Among the maim'd and miserable
shades? Thou hast not shewn in any
chasm beside This weakness. Know, if
thou wouldst number them That two and
twenty miles the valley winds Its circuit,
and already is the moon Beneath our
feet: the time permitted now Is short,
and more not seen remains to see."

"If thou," I straight replied, "hadst
weigh'd the cause For which I look'd,
thou hadst perchance excus'd The
tarrying still." My leader part pursu'd His
way, the while I follow'd, answering him,

And adding thus: "Within that cave I deem,
Whereon so fixedly I held my ken,
There is a spirit dwells, one of my blood,
Wailing the crime that costs him now so dear."

Then spake my master: "Let thy soul no more
Afflict itself for him. Direct elsewhere
Its thought, and leave him. At the bridge's foot
I mark'd how he did point with menacing look
At thee, and heard him by the others nam'd
Geri of Bello. Thou so wholly then Wert
busied with his spirit, who once rul'd
The towers of Hautefort, that thou lookedst not
That way, ere he was gone."--"O guide
belov'd! His violent death yet unaveng'd,"
said I, "By any, who are partners in his
shame, Made him contemptuous:
therefore, as I think, He pass'd me

speechless by; and doing so Hath made
me more compassionate his fate."

So we discours'd to where the rock first
show'd The other valley, had more light
been there, E'en to the lowest depth.
Soon as we came O'er the last cloister in
the dismal rounds Of Malebolge, and the
brotherhood Were to our view expos'd,
then many a dart Of sore lament assail'd
me, headed all With points of thrilling
pity, that I clos'd Both ears against the
volley with mine hands.

As were the torment, if each lazar-house
Of Valdichiana, in the sultry time 'Twixt
July and September, with the isle Sardinia
and Maremma's pestilent fen, Had heap'd
their maladies all in one foss Together;
such was here the torment: dire The

stench, as issuing steams from fester'd limbs.

We on the utmost shore of the long rock
Descended still to leftward. Then my
sight Was livelier to explore the depth,
wherein The minister of the most mighty
Lord, All-searching Justice, dooms to
punishment The forgers noted on her
dread record.

More rueful was it not methinks to see
The nation in Aegina droop, what time
Each living thing, e'en to the little worm,
All fell, so full of malice was the air (And
afterward, as bards of yore have told,
The ancient people were restor'd anew
From seed of emmets) than was here to
see The spirits, that languish'd through
the murky vale Up-pil'd on many a stack.
Confus'd they lay, One o'er the belly, o'er

the shoulders one Roll'd of another;
sideling crawl'd a third Along the dismal
pathway. Step by step We journey'd on,
in silence looking round And list'ning
those diseas'd, who strove in vain To lift
their forms. Then two I mark'd, that sat
Propp'd 'gainst each other, as two brazen
pans Set to retain the heat. From head to
foot, A tetter bark'd them round. Nor saw
I e'er Groom currying so fast, for whom
his lord Impatient waited, or himself
perchance Tir'd with long watching, as of
these each one Plied quickly his keen
nails, through furiousness Of ne'er abated
pruriency. The crust Came drawn from
underneath in flakes, like scales Scrap'd
from the bream or fish of broader mail.

"O thou, who with thy fingers rendest off
Thy coat of proof," thus spake my guide
to one, "And sometimes makest tearing

pincers of them, Tell me if any born of
Latian land Be among these within: so
may thy nails Serve thee for everlasting
to this toil."

"Both are of Latium," weeping he replied,
"Whom tortur'd thus thou seest: but who
art thou That hast inquir'd of us?" To
whom my guide: "One that descend with
this man, who yet lives, From rock to
rock, and show him hell's abyss."

Then started they asunder, and each
turn'd Trembling toward us, with the rest,
whose ear Those words redounding
struck. To me my liege Address'd him:
"Speak to them whate'er thou list."

And I therewith began: "So may no time
Filch your remembrance from the
thoughts of men In th' upper world, but

after many suns Survive it, as ye tell me,
who ye are, And of what race ye come.
Your punishment, Unseemly and
disgustful in its kind, Deter you not from
opening thus much to me."

"Arezzo was my dwelling," answer'd one,
"And me Albero of Sienna brought To die
by fire; but that, for which I died, Leads
me not here. True is in sport I told him,
That I had learn'd to wing my flight in air.
And he admiring much, as he was void Of
wisdom, will'd me to declare to him The
secret of mine art: and only hence,
Because I made him not a Daedalus,
Prevail'd on one suppos'd his sire to burn
me. But Minos to this chasm last of the
ten, For that I practis'd alchemy on earth,
Has doom'd me. Him no subterfuge
eludes."

Then to the bard I spake: "Was ever race
Light as Sienna's? Sure not France herself
Can show a tribe so frivolous and vain."

The other leprous spirit heard my words,
And thus return'd: "Be Stricca from this
charge Exempted, he who knew so
temp'rately To lay out fortune's gifts; and
Niccolo Who first the spice's costly luxury
Discover'd in that garden, where such
seed Roots deepest in the soil: and be
that troop Exempted, with whom Caccia
of Asciano Lavish'd his vineyards and
wide-spreading woods, And his rare
wisdom Abbagliato show'd A spectacle for
all. That thou mayst know Who seconds
thee against the Siennese Thus gladly,
bend this way thy sharpen'd sight, That
well my face may answer to thy ken; So
shalt thou see I am Capocchio's ghost,
Who forg'd transmuted metals by the

power Of alchemy; and if I scan thee
right, Thus needs must well remember
how I aped Creative nature by my subtle
art."

CANTO XXX

WHAT time resentment burn'd in Juno's
breast For Semele against the Theban
blood, As more than once in dire
mischance was rued, Such fatal frenzy
seiz'd on Athamas, That he his spouse
beholding with a babe Laden on either
arm, "Spread out," he cried, "The
meshes, that I take the lioness And the
young lions at the pass:" then forth
Stretch'd he his merciless talons,
grasping one, One helpless innocent,
Learchus nam'd, Whom swinging down he

dash'd upon a rock, And with her other
burden self-destroy'd The hapless mother
plung'd: and when the pride Of all-
presuming Troy fell from its height, By
fortune overwhelm'd, and the old king
With his realm perish'd, then did Hecuba,
A wretch forlorn and captive, when she
saw Polyxena first slaughter'd, and her
son, Her Polydorus, on the wild sea-beach
Next met the mourner's view, then reft of
sense Did she run barking even as a dog;
Such mighty power had grief to wrench
her soul. Bet ne'er the Furies or of
Thebes or Troy With such fell cruelty were
seen, their goads Infixing in the limbs of
man or beast, As now two pale and naked
ghost I saw That gnarling wildly
scamper'd, like the swine Excluded from
his sty. One reach'd Capocchio, And in
the neck-joint sticking deep his fangs,
Dragg'd him, that o'er the solid pavement

rubb'd His belly stretch'd out prone. The other shape, He of Arezzo, there left trembling, spake; "That sprite of air is Schicchi; in like mood Of random mischief vent he still his spite."

To whom I answ'ring: "Oh! as thou dost hope, The other may not flesh its jaws on thee, Be patient to inform us, who it is, Ere it speed hence."--"That is the ancient soul Of wretched Myrrha," he replied, "who burn'd With most unholy flame for her own sire,

"And a false shape assuming, so perform'd The deed of sin; e'en as the other there, That onward passes, dar'd to counterfeit Donati's features, to feign'd testament The seal affixing, that himself might gain, For his own share, the lady of the herd."

When vanish'd the two furious shades, on
whom Mine eye was held, I turn'd it back
to view The other cursed spirits. One I
saw In fashion like a lute, had but the
groin Been sever'd, where it meets the
forked part. Swoln dropsy,
disproportioning the limbs With ill-
converted moisture, that the paunch
Suits not the visage, open'd wide his lips
Gasping as in the hectic man for drought,
One towards the chin, the other upward
curl'd.

"O ye, who in this world of misery,
Wherefore I know not, are exempt from
pain," Thus he began, "attentively regard
Adamo's woe. When living, full supply
Ne'er lack'd me of what most I coveted;
One drop of water now, alas! I crave. The
rills, that glitter down the grassy slopes

Of Casentino, making fresh and soft The
banks whereby they glide to Arno's
stream, Stand ever in my view; and not
in vain; For more the pictur'd semblance
dries me up, Much more than the
disease, which makes the flesh Desert
these shrivel'd cheeks. So from the place,
Where I transgress'd, stern justice urging
me, Takes means to quicken more my
lab'ring sighs. There is Romena, where I
falsified The metal with the Baptist's form
imprest, For which on earth I left my
body burnt. But if I here might see the
sorrowing soul Of Guido, Alessandro, or
their brother, For Branda's limpid spring I
would not change The welcome sight.
One is e'en now within, If truly the mad
spirits tell, that round Are wand'ring. But
wherein besteads me that? My limbs are
fetter'd. Were I but so light, That I each
hundred years might move one inch, I

had set forth already on this path,
Seeking him out amidst the shapeless
crew, Although eleven miles it wind, not
more Than half of one across. They
brought me down Among this tribe;
induc'd by them I stamp'd The florens
with three carats of alloy."

"Who are that abject pair," I next
inquir'd, "That closely bounding thee
upon thy right Lie smoking, like a band in
winter steep'd In the chill
stream?"--"When to this gulf I dropt," He
answer'd, "here I found them; since that
hour They have not turn'd, nor ever shall,
I ween, Till time hath run his course. One
is that dame The false accuser of the
Hebrew youth; Sinon the other, that false
Greek from Troy. Sharp fever drains the
reeky moistness out, In such a cloud
upsteam'd." When that he heard, One,

gall'd perchance to be so darkly nam'd,
With clench'd hand smote him on the
braced paunch, That like a drum
resounded: but forthwith Adamo smote
him on the face, the blow Returning with
his arm, that seem'd as hard.

"Though my o'erweighty limbs have ta'en
from me The power to move," said he, "I
have an arm At liberty for such employ."
To whom Was answer'd: "When thou
wentest to the fire, Thou hadst it not so
ready at command, Then readier when it
coin'd th' impostor gold."

And thus the dropsied: "Ay, now speak'st
thou true. But there thou gav'st not such
true testimony, When thou wast
question'd of the truth, at Troy."

"If I spake false, thou falsely stamp'dst the coin," Said Sinon; "I am here but for one fault, And thou for more than any imp beside."

"Remember," he replied, "O perjur'd one, The horse remember, that did teem with death, And all the world be witness to thy guilt."

"To thine," return'd the Greek, "witness the thirst Whence thy tongue cracks, witness the fluid mound, Rear'd by thy belly up before thine eyes, A mass corrupt." To whom the coiner thus: "Thy mouth gapes wide as ever to let pass Its evil saying. Me if thirst assails, Yet I am stuff'd with moisture. Thou art parch'd, Pains rack thy head, no urging would'st thou need To make thee lap Narcissus' mirror up."

I was all fix'd to listen, when my guide
Admonish'd: "Now beware: a little more.
And I do quarrel with thee." I perceiv'd
How angrily he spake, and towards him
turn'd With shame so poignant, as
remember'd yet Confounds me. As a man
that dreams of harm Befall'n him,
dreaming wishes it a dream, And that
which is, desires as if it were not, Such
then was I, who wanting power to speak
Wish'd to excuse myself, and all the while
Excus'd me, though unweeting that I did.

"More grievous fault than thine has been,
less shame," My master cried, "might
expiate. Therefore cast All sorrow from
thy soul; and if again Chance bring thee,
where like conference is held, Think I am
ever at thy side. To hear Such wrangling
is a joy for vulgar minds."

CANTO XXXI

THE very tongue, whose keen reproof
before Had wounded me, that either
cheek was stain'd, Now minister'd my
cure. So have I heard, Achilles and his
father's javelin caus'd Pain first, and then
the boon of health restor'd.

Turning our back upon the vale of woe, W
cross'd th' encircled mound in silence.
There Was twilight dim, that far long the
gloom Mine eye advanc'd not: but I heard
a horn Sounded aloud. The peal it blew
had made The thunder feeble. Following
its course The adverse way, my strained
eyes were bent On that one spot. So
terrible a blast Orlando blew not, when

that dismal rout O'erthrew the host of
Charlemagne, and quench'd His saintly
warfare. Thitherward not long My head
was rais'd, when many lofty towers
Methought I spied. "Master," said I, "what
land Is this?" He answer'd straight: "Too
long a space Of intervening darkness has
thine eye To traverse: thou hast therefore
widely err'd In thy imagining. Thither
arriv'd Thou well shalt see, how distance
can delude The sense. A little therefore
urge thee on."

Then tenderly he caught me by the hand;
"Yet know," said he, "ere farther we
advance, That it less strange may seem,
these are not towers, But giants. In the
pit they stand immers'd, Each from his
navel downward, round the bank."

As when a fog disperseth gradually, Our
vision traces what the mist involves
Condens'd in air; so piercing through the
gross And gloomy atmosphere, as more
and more We near'd toward the brink,
mine error fled, And fear came o'er me.
As with circling round Of turrets,
Montereggion crowns his walls, E'en thus
the shore, encompassing th' abyss, Was
turreted with giants, half their length
Uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from
heav'n Yet threatens, when his mutt'ring
thunder rolls.

Of one already I descried the face,
Shoulders, and breast, and of the belly
huge Great part, and both arms down
along his ribs.

All-teeming nature, when her plastic hand
Left framing of these monsters, did

display Past doubt her wisdom, taking
from mad War Such slaves to do his
bidding; and if she Repent her not of th'
elephant and whale, Who ponders well
confesses her therein Wiser and more
discreet; for when brute force And evil
will are back'd with subtlety, Resistance
none avails. His visage seem'd In length
and bulk, as doth the pine, that tops
Saint Peter's Roman fane; and th' other
bones Of like proportion, so that from
above The bank, which girdled him below,
such height Arose his stature, that three
Friezelanders Had striv'n in vain to reach
but to his hair. Full thirty ample palms
was he expos'd Downward from whence a
man his garments loops. "Raphel bai
ameth sabi almi," So shouted his fierce
lips, which sweeter hymns Became not;
and my guide address'd him thus:

"O senseless spirit! let thy horn for thee
Interpret: therewith vent thy rage, if rage
Or other passion wring thee. Search thy
neck, There shalt thou find the belt that
binds it on. Wild spirit! lo, upon thy
mighty breast Where hangs the baldrick!"
Then to me he spake: "He doth accuse
himself. Nimrod is this, Through whose ill
counsel in the world no more One tongue
prevails. But pass we on, nor waste Our
words; for so each language is to him, As
his to others, understood by none."

Then to the leftward turning sped we
forth, And at a sling's throw found
another shade Far fiercer and more huge.
I cannot say What master hand had girt
him; but he held Behind the right arm
fetter'd, and before The other with a
chain, that fasten'd him From the neck
down, and five times round his form

Apparent met the wreathed links. "This proud one Would of his strength against almighty Jove Make trial," said my guide; "whence he is thus Requited: Ephialtes him they call.

"Great was his prowess, when the giants brought Fear on the gods: those arms, which then he piled, Now moves he never." Forthwith I return'd: "Fain would I, if 't were possible, mine eyes Of Briareus immeasurable gain'd Experience next." He answer'd: "Thou shalt see Not far from hence Antaeus, who both speaks And is unfetter'd, who shall place us there Where guilt is at its depth. Far onward stands Whom thou wouldst fain behold, in chains, and made Like to this spirit, save that in his looks More fell he seems." By violent earthquake rock'd Ne'er shook a tow'r, so reeling to its base,

As Ephialtes. More than ever then I
dreaded death, nor than the terror more
Had needed, if I had not seen the cords
That held him fast. We, straightway
journeying on, Came to Antaeus, who five
ells complete Without the head, forth
issued from the cave.

"O thou, who in the fortunate vale, that
made Great Scipio heir of glory, when his
sword Drove back the troop of Hannibal
in flight, Who thence of old didst carry for
thy spoil An hundred lions; and if thou
hadst fought In the high conflict on thy
brethren's side, Seems as men yet
believ'd, that through thine arm The sons
of earth had conquer'd, now vouchsafe To
place us down beneath, where numbing
cold Locks up Cocytus. Force not that we
crave Or Tityus' help or Typhon's. Here is
one Can give what in this realm ye covet.

Stoop Therefore, nor scornfully distort
thy lip. He in the upper world can yet
bestow Renown on thee, for he doth live,
and looks For life yet longer, if before the
time Grace call him not unto herself."
Thus spake The teacher. He in haste forth
stretch'd his hands, And caught my
guide. Alcides whilom felt That grapple
straighten'd score. Soon as my guide Had
felt it, he bespake me thus: "This way
That I may clasp thee;" then so caught
me up, That we were both one burden.
As appears The tower of Carisenda, from
beneath Where it doth lean, if chance a
passing cloud So sail across, that
opposite it hangs, Such then Antaeus
seem'd, as at mine ease I mark'd him
stooping. I were fain at times T' have
pass'd another way. Yet in th' abyss, That
Lucifer with Judas low ingulfs, Lightly he

plac'd us; nor there leaning stay'd, But
rose as in a bark the stately mast.

CANTO XXXII

COULD I command rough rhimes and
hoarse, to suit That hole of sorrow, o'er
which ev'ry rock His firm abutment rears,
then might the vein Of fancy rise full
springing: but not mine Such measures,
and with falt'ring awe I touch The mighty
theme; for to describe the depth Of all
the universe, is no emprize To jest with,
and demands a tongue not us'd To infant
babbling. But let them assist My song,
the tuneful maidens, by whose aid
Amphion wall'd in Thebes, so with the
truth My speech shall best accord. Oh ill-
starr'd folk, Beyond all others wretched!

who abide In such a mansion, as scarce
thought finds words To speak of, better
had ye here on earth Been flocks or
mountain goats. As down we stood In the
dark pit beneath the giants' feet, But
lower far than they, and I did gaze Still
on the lofty battlement, a voice Bespoke
me thus: "Look how thou walkest. Take
Good heed, thy soles do tread not on the
heads Of thy poor brethren." Thereupon I
turn'd, And saw before and underneath
my feet A lake, whose frozen surface liker
seem'd To glass than water. Not so thick
a veil In winter e'er hath Austrian Danube
spread O'er his still course, nor Tanais far
remote Under the chilling sky. Roll'd o'er
that mass Had Tabernich or Pietrapana
fall'n,

Not e'en its rim had creak'd. As peeps the
frog Croaking above the wave, what time

in dreams The village gleaner oft pursues
her toil, So, to where modest shame
appears, thus low Blue pinch'd and
shrin'd in ice the spirits stood, Moving
their teeth in shrill note like the stork. His
face each downward held; their mouth
the cold, Their eyes express'd the dolour
of their heart.

A space I look'd around, then at my feet
Saw two so strictly join'd, that of their
head The very hairs were mingled. "Tell
me ye, Whose bosoms thus together
press," said I, "Who are ye?" At that
sound their necks they bent, And when
their looks were lifted up to me,
Straightway their eyes, before all moist
within, Distill'd upon their lips, and the
frost bound The tears betwixt those orbs
and held them there. Plank unto plank
hath never cramp clos'd up So stoutly.

Whence like two enraged goats They
clash'd together; them such fury seiz'd.

And one, from whom the cold both ears
had reft, Exclaim'd, still looking
downward: "Why on us Dost speculate so
long? If thou wouldst know Who are
these two, the valley, whence his wave
Bisenzio slopes, did for its master own
Their sire Alberto, and next him
themselves. They from one body issued;
and throughout Caina thou mayst search,
nor find a shade More worthy in
congealment to be fix'd, Not him, whose
breast and shadow Arthur's land At that
one blow dissever'd, not Focaccia, No not
this spirit, whose o'erjutting head
Obstructs my onward view: he bore the
name Of Mascheroni: Tuscan if thou be,
Well knowest who he was: and to cut
short All further question, in my form

behold What once was Camiccione. I
await Carlino here my kinsman, whose
deep guilt Shall wash out mine." A
thousand visages Then mark'd I, which
the keen and eager cold Had shap'd into
a doggish grin; whence creeps A shiv'ring
horror o'er me, at the thought Of those
frore shallows. While we journey'd on
Toward the middle, at whose point unites
All heavy substance, and I trembling
went Through that eternal chillness, I
know not If will it were or destiny, or
chance, But, passing 'midst the heads,
my foot did strike With violent blow
against the face of one.

"Wherefore dost bruise me?" weeping, he
exclaim'd, "Unless thy errand be some
fresh revenge For Montaperto, wherefore
troublest me?"

I thus: "Instructor, now await me here,
That I through him may rid me of my
doubt. Thenceforth what haste thou wilt."
The teacher paus'd, And to that shade I
spake, who bitterly Still curs'd me in his
wrath. "What art thou, speak, That raillest
thus on others?" He replied: "Now who
art thou, that smiting others' cheeks
Through Antenora roamest, with such
force As were past suff'rance, wert thou
living still?"

"And I am living, to thy joy perchance,"
Was my reply, "if fame be dear to thee,
That with the rest I may thy name enrol."

"The contrary of what I covet most," Said
he, "thou tender'st: hence; nor vex me
more. Ill knowest thou to flatter in this
vale."

Then seizing on his hinder scalp, I cried:
"Name thee, or not a hair shall tarry
here."

"Rend all away," he answer'd, "yet for
that I will not tell nor show thee who I
am, Though at my head thou pluck a
thousand times."

Now I had grasp'd his tresses, and stript
off More than one tuft, he barking, with
his eyes Drawn in and downward, when
another cried, "What ails thee, Bocca?
Sound not loud enough Thy chatt'ring
teeth, but thou must bark outright? What
devil wrings thee?"--"Now," said I, "be
dumb, Accursed traitor! to thy shame of
thee True tidings will I bear."--"Off," he
replied, "Tell what thou list; but as thou
escape from hence To speak of him
whose tongue hath been so glib, Forget

not: here he wails the Frenchman's gold.
'Him of Duera,' thou canst say, 'I mark'd,
Where the starv'd sinners pine.' If thou
be ask'd What other shade was with
them, at thy side Is Beccaria, whose red
gorge distain'd The biting axe of Florence.
Farther on, If I misdeem not, Soldanieri
bides, With Ganellon, and Tribaldello, him
Who op'd Faenza when the people slept."

We now had left him, passing on our way,
When I beheld two spirits by the ice Pent
in one hollow, that the head of one Was
cowl unto the other; and as bread Is
raven'd up through hunger, th' uppermost
Did so apply his fangs to th' other's brain,
Where the spine joins it. Not more
furiously On Menalippus' temples Tydeus
gnaw'd, Than on that skull and on its
garbage he.

"O thou who show'st so beastly sign of
hate 'Gainst him thou prey'st on, let me
hear," said I "The cause, on such
condition, that if right Warrant thy
grievance, knowing who ye are, And what
the colour of his sinning was, I may repay
thee in the world above, If that,
wherewith I speak be moist so long."

CANTO XXXIII

HIS jaws uplifting from their fell repast,
That sinner wip'd them on the hairs o' th'
head, Which he behind had mangled,
then began: "Thy will obeying, I call up
afresh Sorrow past cure, which but to
think of wrings My heart, or ere I tell
on't. But if words, That I may utter, shall
prove seed to bear Fruit of eternal infamy

to him, The traitor whom I gnaw at, thou
at once Shalt see me speak and weep.
Who thou mayst be I know not, nor how
here below art come: But Florentine thou
seemest of a truth, When I do hear thee.
Know I was on earth Count Ugolino, and
th' Archbishop he Ruggieri. Why I
neighbour him so close, Now list. That
through effect of his ill thoughts In him
my trust reposing, I was ta'en And after
murder'd, need is not I tell. What
therefore thou canst not have heard, that
is, How cruel was the murder, shalt thou
hear, And know if he have wrong'd me. A
small grate Within that mew, which for
my sake the name Of famine bears,
where others yet must pine, Already
through its opening sev'ral moons Had
shown me, when I slept the evil sleep,
That from the future tore the curtain off.
This one, methought, as master of the

sport, Rode forth to chase the gaunt wolf
and his whelps Unto the mountain, which
forbids the sight Of Lucca to the Pisan.
With lean brachs Inquisitive and keen,
before him rang'd Lanfranchi with
Sismondi and Gualandi. After short
course the father and the sons Seem'd
tir'd and lagging, and methought I saw
The sharp tusks gore their sides. When I
awoke Before the dawn, amid their sleep
I heard My sons (for they were with me)
weep and ask For bread. Right cruel art
thou, if no pang Thou feel at thinking
what my heart foretold; And if not now,
why use thy tears to flow? Now had they
waken'd; and the hour drew near When
they were wont to bring us food; the
mind Of each misgave him through his
dream, and I Heard, at its outlet
underneath lock'd up The' horrible tower:
whence uttering not a word I look'd upon

the visage of my sons. I wept not: so all
stone I felt within. They wept: and one,
my little Anslem, cried: "Thou lookest so!
Father what ails thee?" Yet I shed no tear,
nor answer'd all that day Nor the next
night, until another sun Came out upon
the world. When a faint beam Had to our
doleful prison made its way, And in four
countenances I descry'd The image of my
own, on either hand Through agony I bit,
and they who thought I did it through
desire of feeding, rose O' th' sudden, and
cried, 'Father, we should grieve Far less, if
thou wouldst eat of us: thou gav'st These
weeds of miserable flesh we wear,

'And do thou strip them off from us
again.' Then, not to make them sadder, I
kept down My spirit in stillness. That day
and the next We all were silent. Ah,
obdurate earth! Why open'dst not upon

us? When we came To the fourth day,
then Geddo at my feet Outstretch'd did
fling him, crying, 'Hast no help For me,
my father!' There he died, and e'en
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three
Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and
sixth:

"Whence I betook me now grown blind to
grope Over them all, and for three days
aloud Call'd on them who were dead.
Then fasting got The mastery of grief."
Thus having spoke,

Once more upon the wretched skull his
teeth He fasten'd, like a mastiff's 'gainst
the bone Firm and unyielding. Oh thou
Pisa! shame Of all the people, who their
dwelling make In that fair region, where
th' Italian voice Is heard, since that thy
neighbours are so slack To punish, from

their deep foundations rise Capraia and
Gorgona, and dam up The mouth of Arno,
that each soul in thee May perish in the
waters! What if fame Reported that thy
castles were betray'd By Ugolino, yet no
right hadst thou To stretch his children on
the rack. For them, Brigata, Ugaccione,
and the pair Of gentle ones, of whom my
song hath told, Their tender years, thou
modern Thebes! did make Uncapable of
guilt. Onward we pass'd, Where others
skarf'd in rugged folds of ice Not on their
feet were turn'd, but each revers'd.

There very weeping suffers not to weep;
For at their eyes grief seeking passage
finds Impediment, and rolling inward
turns For increase of sharp anguish: the
first tears Hang cluster'd, and like crystal
vizors show, Under the socket brimming
all the cup.

Now though the cold had from my face
dislodg'd Each feeling, as 't were callous,
yet me seem'd Some breath of wind I
felt. "Whence cometh this," Said I, "my
master? Is not here below All vapour
quench'd?"--"'Thou shalt be speedily," He
answer'd, "where thine eye shall tell thee
whence The cause descrying of this airy
shower."

Then cried out one in the chill crust who
mourn'd: "O souls so cruel! that the
farthest post Hath been assign'd you,
from this face remove The harden'd veil,
that I may vent the grief Impregnate at
my heart, some little space Ere it congeal
again!" I thus replied: "Say who thou
wast, if thou wouldst have mine aid; And
if I extricate thee not, far down As to the
lowest ice may I descend!"

"The friar Alberigo," answered he, "Am I, who from the evil garden pluck'd Its fruitage, and am here repaid, the date More luscious for my fig."--"Hah!" I exclaim'd, "Art thou too dead!"--"How in the world aloft It fareth with my body," answer'd he, "I am right ignorant. Such privilege Hath Ptolomea, that ofttimes the soul Drops hither, ere by Atropos divorc'd. And that thou mayst wipe out more willingly The glazed tear-drops that o'erlay mine eyes, Know that the soul, that moment she betrays, As I did, yields her body to a fiend Who after moves and governs it at will, Till all its time be rounded; headlong she Falls to this cistern. And perchance above Doth yet appear the body of a ghost, Who here behind me winters. Him thou know'st, If thou but newly art arriv'd below. The

years are many that have pass'd away,
Since to this fastness Branca Doria
came."

"Now," answer'd I, "methinks thou
mockest me, For Branca Doria never yet
hath died, But doth all natural functions
of a man, Eats, drinks, and sleeps, and
putteth raiment on."

He thus: "Not yet unto that upper foss By
th' evil talons guarded, where the pitch
Tenacious boils, had Michael Zanche
reach'd, When this one left a demon in
his stead In his own body, and of one his
kin, Who with him treachery wrought. But
now put forth Thy hand, and ope mine
eyes." I op'd them not. Ill manners were
best courtesy to him.

Ah Genoese! men perverse in every way,
With every foulness stain'd, why from the
earth Are ye not cancel'd? Such an one of
yours I with Romagna's darkest spirit
found, As for his doings even now in soul
Is in Cocytus plung'd, and yet doth seem
In body still alive upon the earth.

CANTO XXXIV

"THE banners of Hell's Monarch do come
forth Towards us; therefore look," so
spake my guide, "If thou discern him."
As, when breathes a cloud Heavy and
dense, or when the shades of night Fall
on our hemisphere, seems view'd from
far A windmill, which the blast stirs
briskly round, Such was the fabric then
methought I saw,

To shield me from the wind, forthwith I
drew Behind my guide: no covert else
was there.

Now came I (and with fear I bid my strain
Record the marvel) where the souls were
all Whelm'd underneath, transparent, as
through glass Pellucid the frail stem.
Some prone were laid, Others stood
upright, this upon the soles, That on his
head, a third with face to feet Arch'd like
a bow. When to the point we came,
Whereat my guide was pleas'd that I
should see The creature eminent in
beauty once, He from before me stepp'd
and made me pause.

"Lo!" he exclaim'd, "lo Dis! and lo the
place, Where thou hast need to arm thy
heart with strength."

How frozen and how faint I then became,
Ask me not, reader! for I write it not,
Since words would fail to tell thee of my
state. I was not dead nor living. Think
thyself If quick conception work in thee at
all, How I did feel. That emperor, who
sways The realm of sorrow, at mid breast
from th' ice Stood forth; and I in stature
am more like A giant, than the giants are
in his arms. Mark now how great that
whole must be, which suits With such a
part. If he were beautiful As he is hideous
now, and yet did dare To scowl upon his
Maker, well from him May all our mis'ry
flow. Oh what a sight! How passing
strange it seem'd, when I did spy Upon
his head three faces: one in front Of hue
vermilion, th' other two with this Midway
each shoulder join'd and at the crest; The
right 'twixt wan and yellow seem'd: the

left To look on, such as come from
whence old Nile Stoops to the lowlands.
Under each shot forth Two mighty wings,
enormous as became A bird so vast. Sails
never such I saw Outstretch'd on the
wide sea. No plumes had they, But were
in texture like a bat, and these He flapp'd
i' th' air, that from him issued still Three
winds, wherewith Cocytus to its depth
Was frozen. At six eyes he wept: the
tears Adown three chins distill'd with
bloody foam. At every mouth his teeth a
sinner champ'd Bruis'd as with pond'rous
engine, so that three Were in this guise
tormented. But far more Than from that
gnawing, was the foremost pang'd By the
fierce rending, whence ofttimes the back
Was stript of all its skin. "That upper
spirit, Who hath worse punishment," so
spake my guide, "Is Judas, he that hath
his head within And plies the feet

without. Of th' other two, Whose heads
are under, from the murky jaw Who
hangs, is Brutus: lo! how he doth writhe
And speaks not! Th' other Cassius, that
appears So large of limb. But night now
re-ascends, And it is time for parting. All
is seen."

I clipp'd him round the neck, for so he
bade; And noting time and place, he,
when the wings Enough were op'd,
caught fast the shaggy sides, And down
from pile to pile descending stepp'd
Between the thick fell and the jagged ice.

Soon as he reach'd the point, whereat the
thigh Upon the swelling of the haunches
turns, My leader there with pain and
struggling hard Turn'd round his head,
where his feet stood before, And grappled

at the fell, as one who mounts, That into
hell methought we turn'd again.

"Expect that by such stairs as these,"
thus spake The teacher, panting like a
man forespent, "We must depart from
evil so extreme." Then at a rocky opening
issued forth, And plac'd me on a brink to
sit, next join'd With wary step my side. I
rais'd mine eyes, Believing that I Lucifer
should see Where he was lately left, but
saw him now With legs held upward. Let
the grosser sort, Who see not what the
point was I had pass'd, Bethink them if
sore toil oppress'd me then.

"Arise," my master cried, "upon thy feet.
The way is long, and much uncouth the
road; And now within one hour and half
of noon The sun returns." It was no
palace-hall Lofty and luminous wherein

we stood, But natural dungeon where ill
footing was And scant supply of light.
"Ere from th' abyss I sep'rate," thus when
risen I began, "My guide! vouchsafe few
words to set me free From error's
thralldom. Where is now the ice? How
standeth he in posture thus revers'd? And
how from eve to morn in space so brief
Hath the sun made his transit?" He in few
Thus answering spake: "Thou deemest
thou art still On th' other side the centre,
where I grasp'd Th' abhorred worm, that
boreth through the world. Thou wast on
th' other side, so long as I Descended;
when I turn'd, thou didst o'erpass That
point, to which from ev'ry part is dragg'd
All heavy substance. Thou art now arriv'd
Under the hemisphere opposed to that,
Which the great continent doth
overspread, And underneath whose
canopy expir'd The Man, that was born

sinless, and so liv'd. Thy feet are planted
on the smallest sphere, Whose other
aspect is Judecca. Morn Here rises, when
there evening sets: and he, Whose
shaggy pile was scal'd, yet standeth fix'd,
As at the first. On this part he fell down
From heav'n; and th' earth, here
prominent before, Through fear of him
did veil her with the sea, And to our
hemisphere retir'd. Perchance To shun
him was the vacant space left here By
what of firm land on this side appears,
That sprang aloof." There is a place
beneath, From Belzebub as distant, as
extends The vaulted tomb, discover'd not
by sight, But by the sound of brooklet,
that descends This way along the hollow
of a rock, Which, as it winds with no
precipitous course, The wave hath eaten.
By that hidden way My guide and I did
enter, to return To the fair world: and

heedless of repose We climbed, he first, I
following his steps, Till on our view the
beautiful lights of heav'n Dawn'd through
a circular opening in the cave: Thus
issuing we again beheld the stars.

— — — — The End — — — —

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