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Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Vol. 2*  
(*Purgatorio*) (*English only trans.*) [1321]

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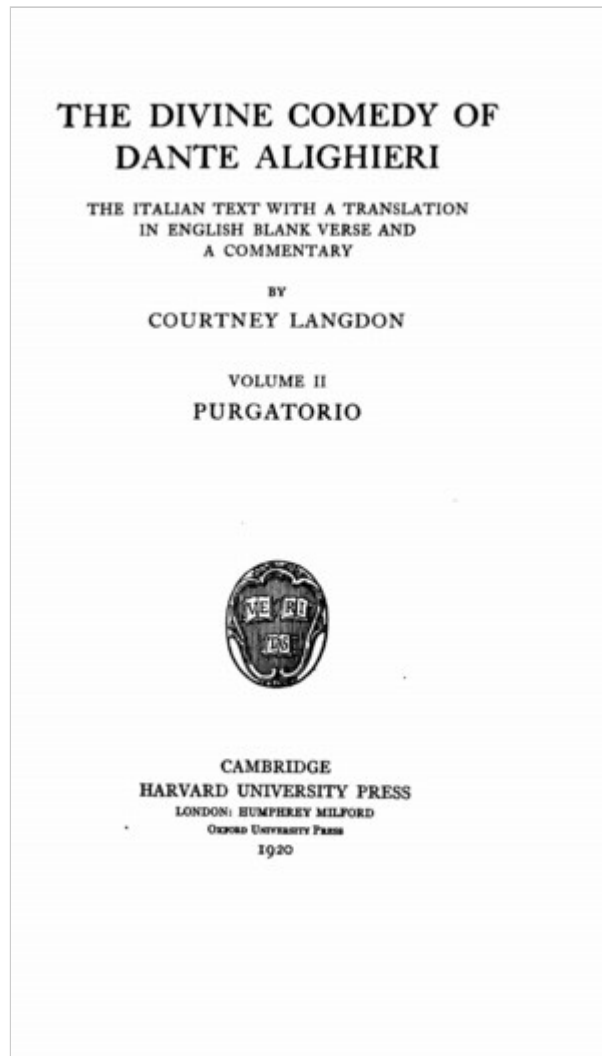
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## Edition Used:

*The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. The Italian Text with a Translation in English Blank Verse and a Commentary by Courtney Langdon, vol. 2 (Purgatorio)*  
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).

Author: [Dante Alighieri](#)

Translator: [Courtney Langdon](#)

## About This Title:

Dante's masterwork is a 3 volume work written in Italian rather than Latin. It embraces human individuality and happiness in a way which suggests the beginning of the Renaissance. This is a bilingual Italian and English edition. Vol. 2 Purgatorio (Purgatory) shows how souls might be perfected in a painful process which leads ultimately to one's moral development and improvement.

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ALLA MIA

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## ***THE PEACE OF GOD***

*. . . . the peace,  
which, following the feet of such a Guide,  
hath now become my quest from world to world.*

*Purg. V, 61–63.*

*Past understanding is the Peace of God  
By all that fail His Wrath to understand,  
Who holds the olive in His gentle hand,  
And in the other, a chastising rod.  
When lightnings kill at Jove's Olympian nod,  
When tempests drown at Neptune's stern command,  
Their deeds are His, whose face once cheered the land  
With smiles of love, whose feet the sea once trod.  
God grant us, then, to understand His Wrath  
By trusting in the justice of His Will,  
Whate'er its bidding, till war's trumpets cease;  
And follow listening on the painful path  
Where wrongs are righted, loud His voice or still,  
Who, not as man's world gives it, giveth peace.*

*June 22, 1917.*

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## PREFACE

ONE of the compensations for the obvious disadvantage of publishing the several volumes of a work like the present consecutively, is that the author is thereby given a chance to correct and improve what is still unprinted, in the light of whatever adverse or commendatory criticism he may have received in each interval. In a preface to his second volume he can look back upon his first objectively, and, while gratefully answering the criticisms and implied questions of his private and public reviewers, profit by them in what remains.

The linguistic and poetical features of this translation must stand or fall with the explanation and justification given with probably dangerous frankness in the Preface to the *Inferno*; but on the subject of Blank Verse I feel that, since a reminding word or so may be useful to some, as well as due to myself, it will not be thought impertinent by other readers. Since unrelated, however, to Interpretation, the special subject of this Preface, it is printed at the end of the notes in this volume.

Those who shall have read at all carefully the strictly interpretative parts of my notes to the *Inferno* and its sister canticles, which I hope will not be neglected as merely *obiter dicta*, will probably have seen that my object differs from that mainly aimed at by interpreters of the Divine Comedy, in that it attempts to liberate Dante's spiritual teaching from the zeal of his ultra theological and ecclesiastical friends, and save it from the silence of the poem's ultra philological and historical admirers. Now, since I attach much more importance to what shall be thought of the expository parts of my notes, and of the Commentary I hope to build upon them, than I do to any appraisal of the translation of the poem they try to explain, I want to make that object as clear as I can, and justify it, if possible. In so doing I shall develop what was merely suggested in the introduction to the Interpretative Analysis of the *Inferno*, to which I refer my readers.

Since I am undertaking to find out what the poem can mean, or could consistently be shown to mean, to those who are living now, I have not concerned myself especially with what it must have seemed to mean six hundred years ago, when, still fresh from Dante's mind and pen, its words and pictures were, so to speak, far more vernacular to his age, than they can possibly be to ours. Furthermore, being interested in the Divine Comedy only incidentally as a philological and historical document, and only secondarily as a work of art worthy of being studied for its architectural structure, and its linguistic and literary qualities — all of which were intended by Dante to serve merely as alluring and retaining means to a far higher end — my constant aim has been to study and teach it as one of the greatest monuments of Man's creative spirit and of his intuition into the moral and spiritual laws of eternal reality.

Nearly all the commentaries, however, which I have read have practically treated the Divine Comedy, either as a gloriously imagined and safely orthodox, poetic compendium and depository of the tenets of Catholic theology, which it was the commentator's or annotator's proud duty and pleasure to expound and defend; or else,

as almost exclusively, and certainly primarily, a great linguistic and historical relic of mediaeval art and philosophy, inexhaustible as a mine to be exploited by expert researchers in the manifold field of Florentine, Italian and European civilization and culture. The latter commentators, however, by their silence as to the philosophic truth and poetic beauty of its matter, deal with it, furthermore, as a work whose unmistakable teachings were so obviously out of harmony with, or contrary to, modern scientific knowledge and the beliefs of sincere educated men, that any scholarly interest in it must necessarily limit itself to ascertaining the meaning of more or less obsolete words, to tracing out the external historic sources of its ideas and art-forms, and to formulating their relation to the quaint but long exploded beliefs of a remote and alien age. Consultation of such works has often led me to wonder what Dante would think of the alternative uses, Hebraizing or Philistine, ecclesiastically partisan or genealogically scientific, to which his great emancipating and spiritual Vision had been almost universally put by his undoubtedly sincere and laborious ecclesiastical and philological students. Since, therefore, my attitude toward the poem is neither of these, I must, to make my position clear, ask permission to be fearlessly personal, in the hope of being thought to be speaking to a large extent vicariously.

Though I have no ecclesiastical or theological prepossessions, I nevertheless hold firmly to the belief that the world is essentially spiritual in its fundamental nature, by which I mean that it partakes of the nature of what each of us knows intuitionally as consciousness. I consequently hold that men are not solely, or even primarily, mortal bodies and intellects, of which it cannot, of course, be possibly proved or disproved that they *have* souls; but, rather, that in reality they *are* souls, or immortal spirits, growing from unthinkable beginnings to unimaginable ends, and initially, but only temporarily, provided with such bodies and intellects as may be necessary, through contact with determined matter, for the attainment of individuality and the development of free self-determining personality.

This belief has led me, as I think it should the many who in one way or another share it with me, to look upon the world's greatest poets as primarily prophets and seers, destined to tower permanently above the greatest of their fellow men, however intellectual, because of their exceptionally broad and sympathetic familiarity with human nature, and especially because of their intuitive knowledge of the constitution and laws of the spiritual world, which, I must believe, are potentially as open to the eyes of the human soul, as those of the material world, which is the inviolable domain of science, are to the eyes of sense when interpreted by that mastering intellect of man which is exclusively attuned to matter.

Assuming, therefore, this attitude toward such supreme spiritually human, and poetically creative geniuses as Jesus, Dante and Shakespeare are generally conceded to be in their several kinds and degrees (without prejudice, of course, to Jesus' special claims), how can one help realizing that, since these seers were forced to express themselves through the best current intellectual ideas and literary forms afforded by their day and land, those ideas and forms ought not to be allowed, when no longer expressive, to keep men from seeing the light they were intended to reveal. A thinker or poet, to be sure, can only to a limited extent rise above the intellectual high-water

mark of his age; and yet I believe it to be nevertheless true that spiritually his soul may achieve an insight into human nature and its relation to universal life, which, because the intuitions of a highly developed consciousness are undefinably and inexplicably basal, will defy the revolutions of man's intellectual fashions, and no more grow old than really seem new, however soon the fair letter in which that insight trustingly arrayed itself on its first appearance, may become antiquated, and cease to be vitally expressive of its informing spirit. Believing this, I hold that one cannot get at the vital truth which lies at the heart of a great work of human thought and art, unless one begin by believing sympathetically in its author's spirit and purpose, and then, in the revealing light of that sympathy and belief, and of one's own inner experience, study the printed text of what he uttered or wrote. If, further, one would know whether or not Dante's or any poet's spiritual teaching is true, let his soul do what, in its field, his intellect does, give it the test of experience. Let him live it. The laboratory method is as obligatory in the spiritual, as it is in the material field, and one who does not use it cannot speak with any other authority than that of a scribe, for he will not personally know that of which he is speaking.

Whatever useful purpose, for example, the scientific, or so-called higher, criticism of the New Testament may have served, the spiritual criticism which, when it comes, will prove to be the highest, and most illuminating, will certainly take some such point of view as that taken by Browning's supreme creation, the childlike Pompilia of *The Ring and the Book*, when, commenting on one of Jesus' intuitive sayings, she exclaims: "Oh how right that is, how like Jesus Christ to say that!" Not having learned to misjudge the mind of its author by reducing his insight to the average level reached by a compromise between spiritually unequal, and often conflicting, texts, whose authenticity and significance had been determined by merely intellectual criteria, or by study of their relation to what others had said before, Pompilia appraised the validity and significance of the text by her own insight into the nature of its author, attained by loving and intuitive meditation on the highest sun-lit peaks of his reported thought, whence only its manifold panorama could be adequately seen. And so should it be with Dante; and with Shakespeare, too, though the latter, for all his wonderful breadth of vision, did not attempt to fathom the depths or soar to the heights which were within the former's spiritual reach. In the spiritual, though not in the material world, a whole, when seen from above is greater than is the sum of its broken parts when seen from below, for somewhat the same reason that the sun can better explain a plant's flowers than can the soil that feeds its roots.

The Kingdom of Reality, moreover — so its arch-seers keep reporting to us from age to age — is "like unto" this and that; but while a few with eyes to see perceive the life-giving truth in their picture-like parables, and are quickened by them even intellectually; others, like those Greeks and Jews to whom the intuitions of original Christianity were but foolishness and a stumbling-block, sadly fail to understand; and quickly lowering their eyes to a level from which the life-giving spirit can be but dimly perceived, if at all, unconsciously inaugurate another age-long reign of the intellectually interesting, and aesthetically pleasing, but spiritually killing, letter.

To interpret the Divine Comedy, therefore, for one at least who holds the above more or less "mystical" belief, consists in trying to read it, as it were, through the eyes of its



author's soul, and in harmony with his evident and expressed intention, rather than through those of the well meaning theologians and philologists into whose hands his message all too quickly fell, because he had to draw upon their soon antiquated intellectual conceptions, for lack of the illustrative material with which the accumulated achievements of a later age's more familiar thought would surely have equipped his eagerly receptive and catholic genius, had he been living then. Not Dante, therefore, the fourteenth-century scholastic Catholic, who, Virgil-like, knew almost all there was then to be known; nor yet Dante, the Florentine mystic poet, and patriot, who was, alas, ignorant of nearly everything that men most boast of knowing now; but Dante, the arch-spirit, whose inmost self is revealed to his fellow men for all time in the increasingly convincing portraits he painted of the smiling and happy Beatrice, "whose lovely eyes see everything" in the well nigh blinding vision of eternity and God — that is the entrancing object at which, with the help of those who (like Bp. Carpenter in "The Spiritual Message of Dante") have done the same with neither partisanship nor derogation, I have tried to look as keenly and unflinchingly as possible, when asking myself the vital inner meaning of each little or great teaching progressively met in the living pictures of the poem, of which she, and not any institution, theology, or other abstraction, is the spiritually concrete heroine.

In doing this I have at any rate gained one thing for myself, which has gone far to assure me that I was at least moving in the right direction. I have come to know that every positive belief that is, or has been, held by any free believer, is worthy of the soul's respect, because it is sure to contain at least a nucleus of warm truth that can be reached by any one who has the patience and courage to break through the progressively misrepresenting crust of the words, forms and conceptions which harden around it as they cool. To break through this veil of thickening light in Dante's case, is at times relatively easy, as he once said it was; and again so hard, as he must often have feared it would prove, that one almost despairs of success; but never will one regret the attempt, for if earnestly and increasingly made, it will not fail to repay one with the joy incident to all inward and upward flights.

Gratefully leaving, then, to some the praiseworthy work of expounding the Divine Comedy as paramountly a cathedral-like monument of Catholicism, and to others the equally valuable task of searching its pages for those philological and historical facts, without accurate knowledge of which all ulterior understanding of the poem might be jeopardized, I have tried to let the labors of others in these fields clear my way and that of my readers to what I know is more broadly and lastingly valuable than either — a little more insight into the free intuitions of one who was so keen-sighted a spirit, that through his eyes it is possible for us to see some of that eternal reality which will ultimately be found in accord with, since basal to, the best apprehended truths dear to our times. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, from the eternal point of view, is, therefore, the phrase I want (provided 'eternity' be taken to mean spiritual reality), and therewith I will end this lame justification of an ambitious attempt to thread the rich, though cool, warp of the scholarly notes to the poem whose matter I owe to others, with the limited, but warm, woof of ideas inspired by a loving belief in Dante's inspiration, and illustrated by what little intuitive imagination, reading, and experience of life I may have had to contribute.

In closing I must, however, return to the question of my indebtedness, because of the delight received from three recent books: Bp. Carpenter's lectures already referred to, Mr. C. A. Dinsmore's *Life of Dante Alighieri*, and Prof. C. H. Grandgent's *The Ladies of Dante's Lyrics*, all lasting gifts, and also because of an acknowledgment not yet recorded, since purposely saved for this volume. Whatever criticism the literary part of the book may have received, I know of nothing but praise for the beautiful and dignified work of the Press which is bringing it out; for even the least laudatory of my reviewers acknowledged that the *Inferno* was "a handsome specimen of American typography." But no one knows but I to how great an extent what may have proved worth while in the author's contribution in its finally printed form, is due to the patience of the publishers; and for this, as well as for the courtesy, interest and useful suggestions by which it was accompanied, I wish to express my thanks to Mr. C. Chester Lane, the Director of the Harvard University Press, and to his assistants.

But what of Dante's Italy meanwhile? Since I dated the Preface to the *Inferno* much has happened in that youthfully ancient land to her everlasting glory; but because, alas, the full measure of America's gratitude to her is still waiting upon a sadly delayed appreciation of what is due to her unsurpassed, and in many ways peerless, contribution to the victory of Freedom and Civilization, I am more than ever glad of the fact that, on hearing the news of the disaster of Caporetto, I at once wrote to have the date of the *Inferno's* preface changed from September to October 28, when all seemed dark from both a moral and a military point of view; and on the same day composed the sonnet at the head of the volume, as a twofold act of faith in the *Stella d'Italia*, the Genius of the Italian people. And, because of that faith, I am sure that, when at last Italy's legions celebrate their victory over their country's age-long enemy and over themselves, and march through Rome's *Via Sacra* to her Capitol, to "crown again the brow of Dante," that Genius will prompt them to remember, as I know all Dante's American lovers will, that, though in his body the Prophet of Italy's Unity and sovereign Independence died in mid-September 1321, six centuries ago, he himself "on high Olympus triumphs, happy already in the crown he wears."

Courtney Langdon.

Providence, Rhode Island, July 29, 1920.

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## PURGATORIO I

### *Introduction to the Purgatorio*

#### *The Shore of the Island of Purgatory. Cato*

To run o'er better water hoists her sails  
the little vessel of my genius now,  
which leaves behind her such a cruel sea;  
and of that second Realm I 'll sing, wherein  
the human spirit purifies itself,  
and groweth worthy to ascend to Heaven.  
But here let Poetry arise from death,  
since, holy Muses, yours I am; and let  
Calliopë, here somewhat higher soaring,  
with those sweet tones accompany my song,  
whose power the miserable Magpies felt  
so keenly, that of pardon they despaired.  
The oriental sapphire's tender hue,  
now gathering in the sky's unclouded face,  
as far as to the first of circles pure,  
began again to give mine eyes delight,  
when forth I issued from the deadly air,  
which with its gloom had filled mine eyes and heart.  
The beauteous planet which incites to love,  
veiling with light the Fishes in her train,  
was causing all the eastern sky to laugh.  
Round to the right I turned, and set my mind  
upon the other pole, and saw four stars,  
never perceived, save by the first of men.  
The sky appeared to enjoy their little flames.  
O region of the North, that widowed art,  
because deprived of gazing thereupon!  
When I had from the sight of them withdrawn,  
turning a little toward the other pole,  
whence now the Wain had wholly disappeared,  
a lone Old Man beside me I perceived,  
deserving of such reverence in his looks,  
that no son owes his father any more.  
Long was the beard he wore, and partly white,  
as likewise was the hair upon his head,  
two locks of which hung down upon his breast.  
And so the rays of those four holy stars  
adorned his face with splendor, that to me course  
he looked as if the sun were facing him.  
"Who, then, are ye, that 'gainst the blind stream's

have from the eternal Prison escaped?" he said,  
moving the while those venerable locks.  
"Who led you, or what served you as a lamp,  
when forth ye issued from the night profound,  
which makes the infernal Vale forever black?  
Are broken thus the laws of Hell's abyss,  
or through new counsel is there change in Heaven,  
that ye, though damned, are come to these my cliffs?"  
My Leader thereupon took hold of me,  
and with his words and with his hands and signs  
imposed respect upon my legs and brow.  
He then replied: "I came not of myself;  
from Heaven came down a Lady, at whose prayer  
I helped this man with my companionship.  
But since thy will it is that our true state  
should be explained to thee more clearly, mine  
it cannot be that this should be denied thee.  
Not yet hath this man his last evening seen;  
but through his folly was so near to it,  
that he was left but very little time.  
As I have told thee, I was sent to save  
his life; nor was there any other way  
than this, to which I have addressed myself.  
I've shown him all the people who are guilty;  
and now I mean those spirits to reveal,  
who 'neath thy jurisdiction cleanse themselves.  
Long would it take to tell thee how I led him;  
virtue descendeth from on high, which helps me  
lead him to see thee and to hear thee speak.  
His coming, therefore, please to welcome; Freedom  
he seeks, which is so dear, as knoweth he  
who gives up life therefor. This thou dost know,  
since death for its sake was not bitter to thee  
in Utica, where thou didst leave the robe,  
which on the Great Day will so brightly shine.  
The eternal edicts are not void through us;  
for this man lives, and I'm not bound by Minos;  
but of that circle am, wherein the eyes  
of thy chaste Marcia are, O holy breast,  
whose looks implore thee still to hold her thine;  
for love of her, then, yield thee unto us!  
Permit us through thy seven domains to go.  
My grateful praise of thee I'll bear to her,  
if to be mentioned there below thou deign."  
"Marcia so pleased mine eyes," he then replied,  
"that, while upon the other side I was,  
I granted all the favors she desired.  
Now that she dwells beyond the evil stream,

no longer can she move me, by the law  
made at the moment when I issued thence.  
But if a Lady of Heaven impel and guide thee,  
as thou hast said, no need of flattering prayers;  
suffice it thee that for her sake thou ask.  
Go, then, and see that with a leafless rush  
thou gird this man, and that thou wash his face,  
so that therefrom all foulness thou remove;  
for 't were not fit he went, with eyes o'er cast  
by any mist, before the first of those  
who serve as Ministers of Paradise.  
This little isle around its lowest base,  
down yonder where the waves are beating it,  
produces rushes on its yielding ooze.  
No other plant, like one that brought forth leaves,  
or hardened, can maintain its life down there,  
because it yields not when receiving blows.  
Thereafter be not hither your return;  
the sun, which rises now, will show you how  
to climb the Mountain by the easiest slope.”  
Thereat he disappeared; and I arose  
without a word, and to my Leader's side  
I closely drew, and toward him turned mine eyes.  
And he began: “Son, follow thou my steps;  
let us turn backward, for the shore slopes down  
on this side toward its lowly boundaries.”  
The dawn was vanquishing the morning breeze,  
which fled before it, so that, from afar,  
I recognized the shimmering of the sea.  
We now were going o'er the lonely plain,  
as one who to a road he lost returns,  
and, till he find it, seems to go in vain.  
When we were there, where with the sun the dew  
still struggles on, through being in a place  
where, for the breeze, it slowly melts away,  
my Teacher, having spread out both his hands,  
rested them gently on the tender grass;  
whence I, who of his purpose was aware,  
yielded to him the cheeks my tears had stained;  
he then brought all that natural color back,  
which Hell had on my countenance concealed.  
We came thereafter to that lonely shore,  
which never saw its waters sailed by one  
who afterward experienced a return.  
Here, as the other pleased, he girded me.  
O wondrous sight! For, like the humble plant  
which he had chosen, another instantly  
sprang forth again from where he tore the first.

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## PURGATORIO II

### *The Shore of the Island of Purgatory*

#### *The Angel Pilot and Arriving Souls*

And now already had the sun arrived  
at that horizon, whose meridian circle  
rests with its zenith o'er Jerusalem;  
and Night, which circles opposite thereto,  
was issuing from the Ganges with the Scales,  
which, when she gains, are falling from her hands;  
so that the white and pure vermilion cheeks  
of beautiful Aurora, where I was,  
were turning orange through excessive age.  
Along the seaside we were lingering still,  
like folk who, taking thought about their road,  
go on in heart, but with their body stay;  
when lo, as, at the approach of morning, Mars,  
because of heavy vapors, groweth red  
down in the West above the ocean's floor;  
even so I saw — may I again behold it! —  
a light which o'er the sea so swiftly moved,  
that no flight is as rapid as its motion;  
from which when I a moment had withdrawn  
mine eyes, to ask a question of my Leader,  
again I saw it grown more bright and large.  
And on each side of it there then appeared  
I knew not what white thing, and underneath  
little by little came another forth.  
Meanwhile my Teacher uttered not a word  
until the first white objects looked like wings;  
then, having recognized the Pilot well,  
he cried: "See, see now that thou bend thy knees!  
This is God's Angel; fold thy hands! Henceforth  
shalt thou behold such officers as this.  
See how he so scorns human instruments,  
as to wish neither oar, nor other sail  
than his own wings, between such distant shores!  
See how he holds them straight up toward the sky,  
stroking the air with those eternal plumes,  
which do not moult as mortal feathers do!"  
And then, as more and more the Bird divine  
drew near to us, the brighter he appeared;  
therefore mine eyes endured him not near by,  
but down I cast them; with a little boat

he came ashore, so agile and so light,  
the water swallowed up no part of it.  
Such on its stern the heavenly Pilot stood,  
that he would bless one, were he but described;  
more than a hundred spirits sat within.  
“*When Israel out of Egypt came,*” they all  
in unison were singing there together,  
with what is written after in that psalm.  
Then, having signed them with the holy Cross,  
whereat all cast themselves upon the shore,  
he went away as swiftly as he came.  
The crowd which stayed seemed strangers to the place,  
and gazed around them there, as doth a man,  
who with unwonted things acquaints himself.  
The sun, which from the middle of the sky  
had hunted Capricorn with arrows bright,  
was shooting forth the day on every side,  
when those new people raised their brows toward us,  
and said: “If ye know how, point out to us  
the road that one should take to reach the Mount.”  
And Virgil answered: “Ye, perchance, believe  
that we have had experience of this place;  
but we are pilgrim-strangers like yourselves.  
We came just now, a little while before you,  
but by another way, so rough and hard,  
that going up will now seem play to us.”  
The souls who, by my breathing, had become  
aware that I was still a living being,  
in their astonishment turned death-like pale;  
and as around a messenger who bears  
the olive, people surge to hear the news,  
and, as to crowding, none of them seem shy;  
so one and all those fortune-favored souls  
fixed on my face their gaze, as if forgetting  
to go and make their spirits beautiful.  
Then one among them I beheld advance,  
in such a loving manner, to embrace me,  
that it persuaded me to do the like.  
O, save in your appearance, empty shades!  
Three times behind it did I clasp my hands,  
and to my breast therewith as oft returned.  
With wonder, I believe, I painted me;  
smiling because of this, the shade drew back,  
while, following after, I pressed further on.  
With gentle words he told me to desist;  
then who it was I knew, and begged of him  
to stop a little while and speak with me.  
“As thee I loved, when in my mortal body,”

he answered me, “even so, when freed, I love thee;  
therefore I stop; but wherefore goest thou?”  
“Casella mine,” said I, “I take this journey,  
that where I am I may return again;  
but why from thee hath so much time been taken?”  
And he to me: “No outrage hath been done me,  
if he, who takes both when and whom he likes,  
hath more than once refused me passage here;  
for to a Righteous Will is his conformed;  
yet peacefully, these three months, hath he taken  
whoever wished to enter into his boat.  
Hence I, who now was toward the sea-shore bent,  
where Tiber’s water mingles with the salt,  
was with benignity received by him  
at yonder river’s mouth, toward which his wings  
ev’n now are turned; for those who go not down  
toward Acheron, always assemble there.”  
And I: “If some new law take not from thee  
the memory or the practice of the song  
of love, which used to quiet all my longings,  
be pleased a little to console therewith  
my spirit, which, because of coming here  
when in its body, is so sore distressed!”  
“*The love that talketh with me in my mind,*”  
he thereupon began to sing so sweetly,  
that still within me is its sweetness heard.  
My Teacher, I, and those that with him were,  
seemed as contented, as if none of us  
had any other thing upon his mind.  
Absorbed in listening to his notes, we all  
were motionless; when lo, the grave Old Man,  
who cried: “Ye laggard spirits, what is this?  
What means this negligence and standing still?  
Run to the Mount, and strip ye off the slough,  
which lets not God be visible to you.”  
Ev’n as, when picking grains of wheat or tares,  
doves, met together at their feeding, calm,  
and not displaying their accustomed pride,  
if anything appear that frightens them,  
all of a sudden leave their food alone,  
because assailed by greater cause for care;  
even so I saw that new-come family  
give up the song, and toward the hillside move,  
like one who goes, but whither knoweth not;  
nor was in less haste our departure made.



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## PURGATORIO III

### *Antepurgatory*

#### *The Repentant who died Excommunicated*

Although their sudden flight had scattered them  
over the plain, and turned them toward the Mount,  
where Justice probes us with its penalties,  
more closely to my faithful mate I drew.  
And how without him had I run my race,  
or who had drawn me up the Mountain's side?  
To me he seemed o'erwhelmed with self-reproach.  
O conscience, when both dignified and clear,  
how sharp a bite a slight fault is to thee!  
When once his feet had given up the haste,  
which of their dignity deprives all acts,  
my mind, to one thought limited at first,  
enlarged its scope with eager interest now;  
and toward that Mountain I addressed my gaze,  
which skyward rises highest from the sea.  
The sun, which back of us was flaming red,  
in front of me was broken in the shape  
wherein I lent its rays a resting place.  
I turned, and at my side I looked, afraid  
of having been abandoned, when I saw  
the ground was dark in front of me alone.  
When wholly turned, my Comforter began:  
"Why still distrustful? Dost thou not believe  
that I am with thee, and am guiding thee?  
'T is evening now where buried lies the body,  
wherein I cast a shadow; Naples now  
possesses it; from Brindisi 't was taken.  
If, then, in front of me no shadow fall,  
marvel no more than at the heavenly spheres  
thou wouldst, which hinder not each other's rays.  
That Power enables bodies such as mine  
to suffer torments, both of heat and cold,  
which wills not that Its ways be shown to us.  
Insane is he that hopes our human reason  
will ever travel o'er the boundless path,  
o'er which One Substance in three Persons moves.  
Be satisfied, O human race, with facts;  
for if ye could have seen the cause of all,  
no need had been for Mary to bear child;  
and ye 've seen, vainly longing, men so great,

that their desire would else have been appeased,  
which giv'n them is for an eternal grief;  
I speak of Aristotle and of Plato,  
and many others." Here he bowed his head,  
and, saying nothing more, remained disturbed.  
Meanwhile we had attained the Mountain's foot;  
and there we found the rocky cliff so steep,  
that legs would there be nimble all in vain.  
'Tween Lèrici and Turbìa the loneliest  
and wildest path is, if compared with that,  
a safely climbed and easy flight of stairs.  
"Now who knows on which side the hill so slopes,"  
then said my Teacher, as he stayed his steps,  
"that he who wingless goes can make the ascent?"  
Meanwhile, as he was questioning his mind  
about the path, and held his face bowed down,  
and I was gazing upward round the cliff,  
upon my left a throng of souls appeared,  
who toward us moved their feet, yet did not seem  
to move, so slowly were they coming on.  
"Teacher," said I, "lift up thine eyes; behold  
on this side people who will give us counsel,  
if thou canst not obtain it from thyself."  
He then looked up, and with relief replied:  
"Let us go toward them, for they slowly come,  
and thou, sweet son, be steadfast in thy hope."  
Those people were as yet as far away,  
after a thousand of our steps, I mean,  
as a good thrower's hand would reach, when all  
pressed up against the lofty bank's hard mass,  
and stayed there, still, and huddled up together,  
as, when in doubt, a walker stops to look.  
Virgil began: "O ye whose end was good,  
O now elected spirits, by the peace  
which I believe ye all look forward to,  
say where the Mount so lies, that going up  
be possible for us; for loss of time,  
to him who knoweth most, is most displeasing."  
As from the fold young sheep are wont to come  
by ones, and twos, and threes, while timidly  
the others stay, with downcast eyes and muzzle;  
and what the first one doth, so do the rest,  
all huddling up to her, in case she stop,  
simple and quiet, nor yet knowing why;  
even so the leader of that favored flock  
I saw start forward then, and toward us come,  
modest in face and dignified in gait.  
When those who were in front the light beheld

so broken on the ground upon my right,  
that 'gainst the cliff a shadow fell from me,  
they stopped, and backward drew a little way;  
and all the others coming on behind,  
not knowing why they did so, did the same.  
“Without your asking I affirm to you  
that this you see a human body is;  
therefore the sun's light on the ground is broken.  
Be not surprised, then, but believe that not  
without a power that cometh down from Heaven,  
is he attempting to surmount this wall.”  
My Teacher thus; those worthy people then,  
as with the back part of their hands they waved,  
said: “Turn, then, and ahead of us go in.”  
And one of them began: “Whoe'er thou art,  
as thus thou goest, turn thy face! Recall  
if thou hast ever seen me in the world.”  
Toward him I turned, and on him fixed my gaze.  
Blond, handsome, and of noble mien he was,  
although an eyebrow by a blow was cut.  
When I had with due modesty disclaimed  
having e'er seen him there, he said: “Now see!”  
and showed me high upon his breast a wound.  
Then with a smile he said: “Manfred am I,  
the grandson of the Empress Constance; hence  
I beg thee that, on thy return, thou go  
to my fair daughter, mother of the honor  
of Sicily and Aragon, and should  
aught else be told her, tell her thou the truth.  
After my body by two mortal stabs  
had been pierced through, in tears I gave myself  
to that One who forgiveth willingly.  
My sins were horrible, indeed; and yet  
the Goodness Infinite hath arms so wide,  
that It receiveth all who turn to It.  
And if Cosenza's Pastor, who by Clement  
was sent to hunt me down, had then perused  
this page in God's book, as he should have done,  
my body's bones would still be lying there,  
hard by the bridge's head near Benevento,  
under the keeping of the heavy cairn.  
Bathed by the rain, the wind now blows them round  
outside the Kingdom, near the Verde's banks,  
whither he moved them with extinguished lights.  
Not by their cursing is Eternal Love  
so lost, that it can not return again,  
as long as hope hath still a speck of green.  
'T is true that he that dieth in contempt

of Holy Church, though at the very last  
he may repent, outside this Mountain's bank  
must stay, for all the time that he hath been  
in his presumption, thirty times as long,  
unless by good prayers shortened be this ban.  
See now if thou canst make me glad, by telling  
my good Costanza both where thou hast seen me  
and of this interdict; for one is here  
greatly advanced by those that are beyond."

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## PURGATORIO IV

*Antepurgatory. The First Ledge*

*Those who Neglected Repentance until Death*

Whene'er, because of pleasure or of pain  
received by any faculty of ours,  
our soul is wholly centered thereupon,  
it seems to heed no other faculty;  
and this is 'gainst that wrong belief which holds  
that one soul in us o'er another burns.  
Therefore, when anything is heard or seen,  
which toward it holds the soul intently turned,  
time passes by, and one perceives it not;  
since one thing is the faculty which harks,  
and that which holdeth all the soul another;  
this last is bound, as 't were, the former free.  
Of this I real experience had, while hearing  
and wondering at that spirit; for the sun  
had climbed up fifty full degrees at least,  
though I had not perceived it, when we came  
to where those souls cried out to us together:  
"The place which you were asking for is here."  
Oft doth a farmer, when the grapes grow dark,  
close up a wider opening in a hedge  
with but a little forkful of his thorns,  
than was the entrance there, through which my Leader,  
and I behind him, mounted all alone,  
when once the crowd had gone away from us.  
One climbs Sanlèo, and descends to Noli;  
one wins the summit of Bismàntova,  
helped solely by one's feet; but one up here  
would have to fly; with the swift wings, I mean,  
and plumes of great desire, behind the Guide,  
who gave me hope and furnished me with light.  
As up within the cloven rock we climbed,  
its walls on each side closely hemmed us in,  
while under us the ground both feet and hands  
required. When on the high cliff's upper edge  
we were, and out upon the open slope,  
"Which way, my Teacher, shall we go?" said I.  
And he to me: "Take thou no backward step;  
keep gaining ground behind me up the Mount,  
until some guide who knows appear to us."  
So high the summit was, that it surpassed

our sight, and steeper far the slope, than were  
a line from center to mid-quadrant drawn.  
Weary was I, when I began to speak:  
“O gentle Father, turn around, and see  
how I remain alone, unless thou stop!”  
“Draw thyself up, my son, as far as there!”  
he said, and somewhat higher pointed out  
a ledge on that side circling all the hill.  
His words so spurred me, that I forced myself  
to crawl behind him on my hands and knees,  
until the girding ledge was 'neath my feet.  
There both of us sat down, and faced the East,  
whence we had made the ascent; for looking back  
upon a traversed course is wont to help.  
First to the shores below I turned mine eyes;  
then raised them to the sun, and was amazed  
that we were smitten by it on our left.  
The Poet well perceived that I was gazing  
dumbfounded at the chariot of the light,  
which now was rising 'tween the North and us.  
“If Castor” said he then to me, “and Pollux  
were in the company of yonder mirror,  
which up and down in turn conducts its light,  
thou wouldst the Zodiac's ruddy part behold  
revolving still more closely to the Bears,  
unless it issued from its ancient path.  
If thou wouldst understand how this can be,  
collect thy thoughts within thee, and imagine  
both Zion and this Mount so placed on earth,  
that both of them one sole horizon have,  
and different hemispheres; and thou wilt see  
how that the road which Phaëthon could not take,  
alas for him, must pass this Mount on one,  
while passing that one on the other side,  
if thine intelligence but clearly heed.”  
“Surely, my Teacher, never have I seen”  
said I, “as clearly as I now perceive,  
where once my mind appeared to be at fault,  
how the mid-circle of supernal motion,  
which in a certain art is called Equator,  
and ever 'tween the sun and winter stays,  
lies toward the North, for reasons giv'n by thee,  
as far on this side as the Hebrew people  
ever beheld it toward the heated parts.  
But, if it please thee, I would gladly know  
how far we have to go; because the Mount  
higher ascends than eyes of mine can rise.”  
“Such is this Mountain” said he then to me,

“that, always hard to climb at first below,  
it pains one less, the higher one ascends.  
Hence, when so pleasant to thee it shall seem,  
that going up shall be to thee as easy  
as floating with the current in a boat,  
thou then shalt have attained this pathway’s end.  
Hope there to rest thee from thy breathless toil!  
No more I answer; this I know for truth.”  
When he had ended what he had to say,  
the voice of one near by cried out: “Perhaps,  
ere that shall happen, thou wilt need to sit!”  
On hearing this, we both of us turned round,  
and saw a massive boulder on our left,  
which neither I nor he had seen before.  
Thither we drew; and there some persons were,  
who lingered in the shade behind the rock,  
as one is wont to do through indolence.  
And one of them, who weary seemed to me,  
was sitting with his arms around his knees,  
and down between the latter held his face.  
“O my sweet Lord,” said I then, “turn thine eyes  
on yonder man, who shows himself to be  
more lazy than if sloth his sister were!”  
Then turning round toward us, and giving heed,  
he moved his face no more than o’er his thigh,  
and said: “Go up now, thou that active art!”  
I then knew who it was; nor did the strain,  
which quickened still my breath a little, hinder  
my going to him; yet, when at his side  
I was, he barely raised his head, and said:  
“Hast thou at last seen why it is the sun  
driveth his car o’er thy left shoulder here?”  
His lazy actions and his few short words  
impelled my lips to smile a little; then,  
“Belacqua,” I began, “I grieve for thee  
no more; but tell me why thou sittest here?  
Art waiting for a guide, or hast thou now  
merely resumed thy customary mood?”  
And he: “What, brother, is the use of climbing?  
The Bird of God who at the Gate is seated,  
would not allow me to approach the pangs.  
The sky must first turn round me here outside,  
as long as ever in my life it did,  
since I delayed good sighs until the end,  
unless before then I be helped by prayers  
arising from a heart that lives in grace;  
of what avail are those unheard in Heaven?”  
But now the Poet, climbing on ahead,

was saying: “Come now on with me! Thou see’st  
that our meridian by the sun is touched,  
and that already from the Ganges’ banks  
Night covers up Morocco with her feet.”



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## PURGATORIO V

*Antepurgatory. The Second Ledge*

*The Negligent who died by Violence*

Already had I parted from those shades,  
and in my Leader's steps was following on,  
when one behind me, pointing with his finger,  
cried out: "See how the light seems not to shine  
upon the left side of that lower man,  
who seems to act like one that's still alive!"  
Hearing this speech, I turned mine eyes, and saw  
that with astonishment they gazed at me,  
at me alone, and at the broken light.  
"Why is thy mind so sore perplexed," then said  
my Teacher, "that thou slackenest thy pace?  
What carest thou for what is whispered here?  
Follow thou me, and let the people talk!  
Firm as a tower remain, which never shakes  
its top, however hard the winds may blow!  
For from himself he ever turns his mark,  
in whom one thought wells up behind another,  
for each of them impairs the other's strength."  
What could I say in answer, save "I come"?  
And this I said, tinged slightly with the color  
which sometimes makes one worthy of forgiveness.  
Meanwhile a little way ahead of us  
some people crosswise o'er the slope were coming,  
singing the *Miserere* verse by verse.  
When they became aware that through my body  
I gave no passage to the rays of light,  
they changed their chant into a long, hoarse "Oh!"  
and two of them, acting as messengers,  
ran out to meet us, and enquiring said:  
"Cause us to know what kind of life is yours."  
My Teacher answered: "Ye may go your way,  
and unto those that sent you out report  
that real flesh this man's body is. And if,  
as I suppose, they stopped because they saw  
his shadow, they've been answered well enough;  
if they respect him, it may profit them."  
I never saw ignited vapors cleave  
at nightfall an unclouded sky, or break  
so rapidly from August clouds at sunset,  
that these returned not up in shorter time;

and, once there, with the rest they veered toward us,  
as would a troop that ran without a curb.  
“These people who are crowding us are many,”  
the Poet said, “and come to beg of thee;  
therefore go on, and listen on thy way.”  
“O soul, that goest to be glad” they cried,  
as on they came, “with those limbs which thou hadst  
when thou wast born, a little stay thy steps!  
Recall if thou hast e’er seen one of us,  
that yonder thou mayst carry news of him!  
Why, pray, dost thou go on? Ah, why not stop?  
We all were slain of old by violence,  
and sinners were until our latest hour;  
then light from Heaven so caused us to beware,  
that we, repentant and forgiving, issued  
from life at peace with God, who in our hearts  
stirs us with grievous longings to behold Him.”  
And I: “Howe’er I gaze upon your faces,  
none do I recognize; and yet, if aught  
within my power can please you, well-born souls,  
ask it, and I will do it, by the peace,  
which, following the feet of such a Guide,  
hath now become my quest from world to world.”  
And one began: “Each trusts in thy good help  
without an oath, provided lack of power  
cut not thy good will short. Hence I, who speak  
alone before the others, beg of thee,  
if e’er thou see the country which extends  
between Romagna and the land of Charles,  
be courteous to me with thy prayers in Fano,  
that supplications due be made for me,  
to help me purge away my grievous sins.  
It was from there I came; but those deep wounds,  
whence flowed the blood wherein my life resided,  
were giv’n me in the Antenori’s lap,  
where I had trusted I should be most safe.  
The lord of Esti, who was angry with me  
beyond the bounds of justice, had it done.  
Yet toward La Mira had I only fled,  
when at Oriàgo I was overtaken,  
still yonder would I be, where people breathe.  
Toward the lagoon I ran, whose reeds and mire  
so hampered me, I fell; and there a pool  
formed from my veins I saw upon the ground.”  
Then said another: “So may that desire,  
which draws thee to the lofty Mount be granted,  
with kindly pity, prithee, help thou mine!  
I Montefeltro was, I am Buonconte;

Giovanna cares not for me, nor do others;  
hence among these I go with head bowed down.  
And I to him: "What force was it, or chance,  
caused thee to stray so far from Campaldino,  
that never hath thy burial-place been known?"  
"Oh!" he replied, "A river called Archiàno  
flows crosswise at the Casentino's foot,  
and takes its rise among the Apennines,  
above the Hermitage. There, where its name  
is lost, I came, a fugitive on foot,  
pierced through the throat, and staining with my blood  
the plain. And there it was I lost my sight,  
and ended speech with Mary's name; and there  
I fell, and all alone my flesh remained.  
The truth I tell, tell thou among the living.  
God's Angel took me, while the one from Hell  
cried out: 'Why dost thou rob me, thou from Heaven?  
Thou bearest hence this man's eternal part,  
because of one small tear which takes him from me;  
but I shall with the rest deal otherwise!'  
Well knowst thou how damp vapors in the air,  
as soon as they ascend to where the cold  
affects them, into water change again.  
He joined that wicked will, which asks for naught  
but evil, with intelligence, and stirred  
the mists and wind, by power his nature gave.  
The valley thereupon, when day was spent,  
he covered o'er with fog from Pratomagno  
up to the mountain-chain, and made the sky  
so lowering o'er it, that the pregnant air  
to water turned; the rain poured down, and what  
the soil absorbed not, reached the rivulets;  
then, having joined the torrent-brooks, it rushed  
so swiftly toward the royal stream, that naught  
could hold it back. The swift Archiàno then  
hard by its outlet found my frozen body;  
and, as it swept it on into the Arno,  
loosened the cross which with my arms I made  
upon my breast, when sorrow's pain o'erwhelmed me;  
along its banks and bed it rolled me on;  
then covered me, and wrapped me with its spoils."  
"Prithee, when to the world thou hast returned,  
and when from thy long journey thou art rested,"  
after the second spirit said the third,  
"do thou remember me, who Pia am!  
Sièna made me; Maremma me unmade;  
he knoweth what this means, who previously  
had, in betrothal, ringed me with his gem."

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## PURGATORIO VI

*Antepurgatory. The Negligent who died by Violence*

*Address to Italy and Florence*

Whene'er a game of dice is broken up,  
the one who loses sorrowing stays behind,  
and learns, as sadly he repeats the throws;  
while with the other all the people leave;  
one goes before, one grasps him from behind,  
and at his side one asks to be remembered.  
And he stops not, but that one heeds and this;  
the one whose hand he takes no longer crowds;  
and from the throng he thus defends himself.  
E'en such as he, was I in that dense crowd;  
for as I this and that way turned my face,  
and promised each, I freed myself therefrom.  
Here was the Aretine who met his death  
from Ghin di Tacco's cruel arms, and he,  
who running madly in pursuit was drowned;  
here Frederick Novello prayed with hands  
outstretched, and he of Pisa, who induced  
worthy Marzucco to reveal his strength.  
Count Orso I beheld here, and the soul  
through spite and envy from its body parted,  
and not, so he maintained, through crime committed;  
Pierre de la Brosse, I mean; and here, while still  
on earth, let Brabant's Lady see to it,  
that 'mong the worse flock she be not for this.  
When I was free from each and all those shades,  
who only prayed that others pray for them,  
that their becoming holy might be sped,  
"It seems that thou deniest," I began,  
"O thou my Light, expressly in a text,  
that prayer can cause a change in Heaven's decrees;  
and yet these people only pray for this;  
could it then be, that this their hope is vain,  
or is thy saying not quite clear to me?"  
And he to me: "That which I wrote is clear,  
nor yet delusive is this people's hope,  
if it be looked at with a healthy mind;  
for Justice stoops not from her lofty height,  
because Love's ardor all at once fulfils  
what he who dwelleth here must satisfy;  
and there where I decided on this point,

the fault was not made good again by praying,  
because the prayer discordant was with God.  
Yet in so deep a doubt decide thou not,  
unless She bid thee do so, who a light  
shall be between thine intellect and truth.  
I know not if thou understand; I speak  
of Beatrice; thou 'lt see her up above,  
smiling and happy, on this Mountain's top."  
And I: "Let 's go, then, Lord, with greater haste;  
for now I grow not weary as before;  
and see, the hillside casts its shadow now."  
"We shall go forward with this day," he answered,  
"as long as we are able; but the case  
is otherwise than what thou deemest it.  
Ere thou shalt be up there, thou him shalt see  
return, who now so shields him with the hill,  
that thou dost not compel his rays to break.  
But yonder see a soul who all alone  
is seated, and toward us is looking now;  
he will point out to us the quickest way."  
We came to him. O Lombard soul, how full  
of self-respect and noble scorn thou wast,  
and in the moving of thine eyes how slow  
and dignified! Naught did he say to us;  
but let us go our way, and only gazed  
as would a couching lion in repose.  
Virgil, meanwhile, drew near to him, and begged  
that he would show to us the best ascent;  
and he to his request made no reply,  
but asked us of our country and condition;  
and my kind Leader was with "Mantua . . ."  
beginning, when the self-collected shade,  
from where he was, sprang up to meet him, saying:  
"O Mantuan, I 'm Sordello, of thy town!"  
and each the other thereupon embraced.  
Ah, Italy, thou slave, thou inn of woe,  
ship without pilot in a mighty storm,  
not queen of provinces, but house of shame!  
So instant ready was that noble soul,  
but at the sweet sound of his city's name,  
to welcome here his fellow citizen;  
and yet within thee now, thy living sons  
are not exempt from war, and those one wall  
and moat enclose upon each other prey!  
All round thy coast-line search its shores, poor wretch,  
and then within thy bosom look, and learn  
if any part of thee be blest with peace.  
What boots it that Justinian rearranged

thy bridle, if thy saddle vacant be?  
Had it not been for that, thy shame were less.  
And ye, ah, ye, that ought to be devout,  
and so let Caesar in his saddle sit,  
if well ye heeded God's advice to you,  
behold how wild this animal has grown,  
through being uncorrected by the spur,  
since ye first set your hands upon her rein!  
O German Albert, thou that dost forsake  
this creature now become untamed and wild,  
and oughtest to bestride her saddle-bows,  
may some just judgment from the stars befall  
thy blood, and may it so unheard of be,  
and plain, that it may frighten thy successor!  
For, held by greed of lands outside its bounds,  
thou and thy father also have allowed  
the Empire's Garden to become a waste.  
Come see the Montagues and Capulets,  
Monaldi and Filipeschi, careless man,  
already troubled those, and these in dread!  
Come, come, thou cruel man, and see the oppression  
of thy nobility, and right their wrongs;  
and thou shalt see how safe is Santafor!  
Come see thy Rome, that, widowed and alone,  
is shedding tears, and day and night is calling:  
"Why dost thou not, my Caesar, stay with me?"  
Come see the people, how they love each other!  
And if for us no pity move thy soul,  
come, then, and shame thee for thine own renown!  
And, if I be allowed, O Jove Supreme,  
Thou that for us wast crucified on earth,  
are Thy just eyes, too, turned away elsewhere?  
Or in Thy counsel's depths art Thou in this  
a preparation making for some good,  
from our perception utterly cut off?  
For all Italia's towns are full of tyrants,  
and a Marcellus every churl is deemed,  
who comes to play a party henchman's rôle.  
My Florence, well mayst thou be satisfied  
with this digression, which concerns thee not,  
thanks to thy people, who look out for that!  
Many at heart are just, but slow to shoot,  
lest to the bow uncounselled they should come;  
but thy folk on their lips alone are just!  
Many refuse to bear the common burden;  
but thy folk eagerly respond, and cry,  
although uncalled: "I 'll load myself therewith!"  
Be joyful, then, since thou hast cause to be;

thou that art rich, that peaceful art, and wise!  
Whether I speak the truth, results conceal not.  
Athens and Lacedaemon, they that framed  
the ancient laws, and were so civilized,  
in living well made but a little mark  
compared with thee, that dost so carefully  
provide thee, that thy fine October spinning  
as far as mid-November reaches not.  
How many times, within thy memory,  
hast thou changed laws and coinage, offices  
and customs, and thy membership renewed!  
And if thou well recall and face the light,  
thou 'lt see thy likeness to a suffering woman,  
who on a feather-bed can find no rest,  
but seeks, by tossing, to relieve her pain.

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## PURGATORIO VII

*Antepurgatory. The Vale of Flowers*

*Princes intent on Earthly Glory*

After their words of greeting, dignified  
and glad, had three and four times been repeated,  
Sordello, drawing back, said: "Who are ye?"  
"Or ever yet the spirits, who deserved  
to rise to God, were toward this Mount directed,  
my bones were buried by Octavian's order.  
Virgil am I; and through no other guilt  
did I lose Heaven, than through not having faith."  
'T was thus my Leader thereupon replied.  
Like one who sudden sees before him aught  
he wonders at, and, as he says: "It is . . ."  
and "No, it 's not," believes and disbelieves;  
such did the former seem; and then his head  
he bowed, and, humbly turning back to him,  
embraced him where inferior men take hold.  
"O glory of the Latins," said he then,  
"through whom our language showed what it could do,  
eternal honor of my native town,  
what merit, or what grace shows thee to me?  
Tell me, if I deserve to hear thy words,  
if thou from Hell art come, and from what cloister."  
"Through all the circles of the woeful Realm"  
he answered him, "have I come hither; virtue  
from Heaven impelled me, and therewith I come.  
'T was not for doing aught, but for not doing,  
I lost the sight of that exalted Sun  
thou longest for, and which was known by me  
too late. There is a place below, not sad  
because of pain, but only gloom, where moans  
sound not as wailings, but are merely sighs.  
There with those little innocents I dwell,  
who, not delivered yet from human guilt,  
were bitten by the teeth of death; and there  
with those I dwell, who did not clothe themselves  
with the three holy virtues, but who knew  
the others without vice, and practiced all.  
But give us, if thou know and can, some sign,  
whereby the sooner we may reach the place,  
where Purgatory hath its real beginning."  
"No fixed place is assigned us," he replied,



“I may go upward and around; I ’ll join thee,  
and be thy guide as far as I can go.  
But see already how the day declines,  
and one at night can not ascend; it, hence,  
were well to think of some fair resting place.  
Here to the right are souls that dwell apart;  
if thou permit me, I will lead thee to them,  
and not without delight will they be known.”  
“How, then, is this?” was answered, “Should one wish  
to mount by night, would some one hinder him?  
Or would one not ascend, through lack of power?  
Then with his finger good Sordello marked  
the ground, and: “See!” he said, “When once the sun  
is gone, thou couldst not even cross this line;  
though not because aught else than gloom of night  
would hinder one from climbing; that it is  
puzzles the will with impotence. One could,  
however, downward go again therewith,  
and walking o’er the hillside, wander round  
while still the horizon kept the day confined.”  
My Lord then said, as if in wonder lost:  
“Do thou, then, lead us thither, where thou saidst  
that one while waiting can enjoy himself.”  
But little had we gone away from there,  
when I perceived the hill was hollowed out,  
as here on earth our hillside valleys are.  
“Thither,” that shade said, “we ’ll betake ourselves  
where of itself the hillside forms a lap;  
and there will we await the coming day.”  
A winding path there was, nor steep nor level,  
which led us to a border of the dell,  
where more than half away the hillside falls.  
Gold and fine silver, scarlet and white lead,  
indigo blue, wood’s clear and shining brown,  
and green of emeralds when newly flaked,  
would each in hue be vanquished by the grass  
and flowers found growing in that bosomed dell,  
as by the greater vanquished is the less.  
Nature not only had been painting there;  
but with the fragrance of a thousand scents  
was making up a blend unknown on earth.  
Here, seated on the grass among the flowers,  
“*Salve, Regina*” singing, souls I saw,  
who, for the dell, could not be seen outside.  
“Before the waning sunlight nest itself,”  
began the Mantuan who had guided us,  
“desire me not to lead you among these.  
Much better from this border shall ye learn

to know the acts and faces of them all,  
than greeted 'mong them in the dale below.  
The one that sitteth highest up, and seems  
to have neglected what he should have done,  
and with his mouth joins not the others' songs,  
was Emperor Rudolph, he who might have healed  
the wounds that so have left Italia dead,  
that by another she reviveth late.  
He who appears to cheer him, ruled the land,  
where rise the waters which the Moldau gives  
the Elbe, and the Elbe gives the sea.  
Named Ottocar, he was, in swaddling clothes,  
far better than is Wenceslaus, his son,  
on whom, a bearded man, feed lust and ease.  
That small-nosed man, who close in counsel seems  
with him that hath so kind a countenance,  
died fleeing, and disflowering the Lily.  
Look at him, yonder, how he smites his breast!  
And see the other one, who for his cheek  
hath, sighing, made a cushion of his hand.  
Father and father-in-law of France's bane,  
they know the latter's foul and vicious life;  
hence comes the sorrow that so pierces them.  
The one who so large-limbed appears, and joins  
in song with him who hath the manly nose,  
was girded with the cord of every worth;  
and if the youth, who seated is behind him,  
had, following after him, remained as king,  
worth would, indeed, have gone from vase to vase;  
which of the other heirs can not be said.  
The kingdoms James and Frederick hold; but none  
is owner of the better heritage.  
Seldom doth human righteousness ascend  
among the branches; this is willed by Him  
who gives it, that of Him it may be asked.  
My words concern the large-nosed man no less  
than the other, Peter, who is singing with him,  
whence both Apulia and Provence are grieved.  
That plant is as inferior to its seed,  
as of her husband Constance still vaunts more  
than Beatrice and Margaret do of theirs.  
Behold the king, known for his simple life,  
Henry of England, seated there alone;  
he in his branches better issue hath.  
He that among them lower on the ground  
is sitting, and looks up, is Marquis William,  
for whom both Alexandria and her war  
make Montferrât and Canavèsë weep."

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## PURGATORIO VIII

*Antepurgatory. The Vale of Flowers*

*Princes intent on Earthly Glory. The Serpent*

'T was now the hour, which homeward turns the longing,  
and melts the heart of those that sail the sea,  
the day they 've said goodbye to tender friends;  
and thrills with love the pilgrim newly sped,  
if from afar he hear a tolling bell,  
that seems to mourn the slowly dying day;  
when I began to render hearing vain,  
and of those souls watch one who, risen up,  
was asking for attention with his hand.  
He joined his palms, and raising them on high,  
turned toward the East his eyes with steadfast gaze,  
as if to God he said: "I heed naught else."  
"Ere daylight fadeth" issued from his mouth  
with such devoutness, and with notes so sweet,  
that I was made unmindful of myself.  
Thereat the others, sweetly and devoutly  
followed that soul, and sang the whole hymn through,  
fixing their gaze upon the spheres above.  
Sharpen thine eyes here, Reader, for the truth;  
for now its veil is certainly so thin,  
that easy is the passage into it.  
I saw that army of the gentle-born  
gazing on high in silence after this,  
as if in expectation, pale and meek;  
and, issuing from above, and coming down,  
two Angels with two fiery swords I saw,  
which, broken off, were of their points deprived.  
As green they were, as little new-born leaves,  
and clothed with garments which, behind them trailed,  
were stroked and fanned by verdant plumes. One came  
and poised somewhat above us, while the other  
alighted on the hillside opposite,  
so that the people there remained between.  
I well perceived that golden was their hair;  
but on their faces vision went astray,  
as would a power confounded by excess.  
"From Mary's bosom both of them are come"  
Sordello said, "to guard this sheltered vale  
against the Serpent, which will soon arrive."  
Hence I, who knew not by what path, turned round,

chilled through with fear, and to the trusted shoulders  
drew closely back. Sordello thereupon  
began: "And now among the mighty shades  
let us descend, and we will speak with them;  
greatly will they be pleased to see you here."  
Only three steps, I think, did I go down,  
and was below; then one I saw, who looked  
at me alone, as if he wished to know me.  
The air had for some time been growing dark  
but not so much as, 'tween his eyes and mine,  
not to reveal what it concealed before.  
Toward me he came, and I toward him advanced.  
Noble Judge Nino, when I saw that not  
among the damned thou wast, how glad I was!  
No greetings fair were left unsaid between us;  
and then he asked: "How long ago didst thou  
o'er the far waters reach the Mountain's foot?"  
"Oh!" I exclaimed, "across the fields of woe  
I came this morn, and in the first life am,  
though by thus going, I'll the other win."  
When once my answer had been heard, Sordello  
and he drew back, like people suddenly  
perplexed. The first to Virgil turned, the other,  
to one who there was seated, crying out:  
"Get up, Corrado! Come and see what God  
hath as a favor willed."  
Then, turned toward me:  
"By that rare gratitude thou owest Him,  
who hides His primal Why in such a way,  
that there 's no fording it; when thou art past  
the wide waves, ask my Joan to pray for me  
where to the innocent replies are given.  
I think her mother loves me now no more,  
for those white wimples hath she laid aside,  
which she, poor soul, must needs want back again.  
Through her one understands with greatest ease  
how long the fire of love in woman lasts,  
unless rekindled oft by sight and touch.  
The Viper which conducts the Milanese  
afield, will never make as beautiful  
a tomb for her, as would Gallura's Cock."  
These were the words he used, his countenance  
marked with the impress of that righteous zeal,  
which burneth in the heart with temperate flame.  
My greedy eyes now sought the sky alone,  
and only there, where slowest are the stars,  
as, nearest to its axle, is a wheel.  
My Leader then: "What art thou looking at

up there, my son?" And I: "At those three torches,  
wherewith the pole on this side wholly burns."  
Then he: "The four bright stars which thou this morn  
didst see, are low down on the other side;  
and these have risen there, where those were then."  
While he was speaking thus, Sordello drew him  
aside, and saying: "Yonder see our foe!"  
lifted his finger up, to have him look.  
On that side where the little hollowed vale  
hath no defense, a Snake there was like that,  
perhaps, which gave the bitter fruit to Eve.  
On through the grass and flowers the wicked reptile  
glided, and, turning back its head at times,  
was licking like a beast that smoothes itself.  
I did not see, and therefore cannot tell,  
how the celestial Falcons 'gan to move,  
but both I clearly saw, when once in motion.  
When cleft by their green wings it heard the air,  
the Serpent fled, and back the Angels turning,  
regained their posts above with equal flight.  
The shade who, when he called him, to the Judge  
had closely drawn, throughout the whole assault  
had not one moment loosed his gaze from me.  
"So may the lantern leading thee above,  
find in thy will the wax that is required  
for one to reach the enamelled green on high;"  
he thus began, "if thou of Valdimagra,  
or of its neighboring land, dost know true news,  
tell it to me, who once was mighty there.  
Corrado Malaspina I was called;  
I 'm not the elder, but from him descended;  
I bore my race the love which here is cleansed."  
"Oh!" said I then to him, "I 've never been  
in your domains, but where throughout all Europe  
dwelleth a man who knows them not? The fame  
which honoreth your house, proclaims its lords,  
proclaims its district, so that even he  
knows of them, who hath never been there yet.  
I swear to you, so may I go on high,  
that of the glorious use of purse and sword  
your honored race doth not despoil itself.  
Nature and use so favor it, that, howe'er  
the guilty Head distort the world, alone  
it goeth straight, and scorns the evil path."  
And he: "Now go, for lo, the sun shall not  
seven times on that bed rest him, which the Ram  
now covers, and with all four feet bestrides,  
ere this thy courteously expressed opinion

shall in the middle of thy head be nailed  
with greater nails than words of other men,  
unless the course of doom decreed be stayed.”

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## PURGATORIO IX

*Antepurgatory. The Vale of Flowers*

*Dante's First Dream. The Gate of Purgatory*

Already was old Titan's concubine  
whitening upon the Orient's balcony,  
outside the arms of her sweet paramour;  
already was her forehead shining bright  
with gems, arranged according to the shape  
of that cold beast, which smites one with its tail;  
and Night had of the steps wherewith she climbs,  
already taken two where we were then,  
and now the third was lowering its wings;  
when I, who had somewhat of Adam in me,  
o'ercome with sleep, reclined upon the grass,  
on which all five of us were sitting then.  
Near morning, at the hour in which the swallow  
begins to sing her melancholy lays,  
perchance in memory of her earliest woes,  
and when, much more a pilgrim from the flesh,  
and less imprisoned by its thoughts, our mind  
well nigh prophetic in its vision is;  
an Eagle in a dream I seemed to see  
suspended in the sky, with plumes of gold  
and wings outspread, intent on swooping down;  
and it appeared to me that I was where  
his friends were left behind by Ganymede,  
when to the highest council he was raised.  
I thought within myself: "Perhaps this bird  
is wont to strike but here, and from elsewhere,  
perhaps, disdains to lift one with its claws."  
Then, having wheeled a while, it seemed to me  
that terrible as lightning it came down,  
and bore me up as far as to the fire.  
There it and I both seemed to burn together;  
and so intense was that imagined burning,  
my sleep was broken of necessity.  
Achilles roused himself no differently —  
turning around him his awakened eyes,  
nor knowing in what region he might be,  
when, sleeping in her arms, his mother took him  
away from Chiron to the isle of Scyros,  
from which the Greeks removed him afterwards —  
than I aroused myself, when from my face

sleep fled away; and death-like pale I turned,  
like one who freezes when o'ercome by fright.  
Only my Comforter was at my side,  
and now the sun was higher than two hours,  
and toward the open sea my face was turned.  
"Be not afraid!" my Lord then said to me.  
"Be reassured, for we are faring well;  
restrain not, but expand thine every power!  
At Purgatory art thou now arrived;  
behold the cliff there, which encloses it;  
behold the entrance where it broken seems.  
Just now, when, in the dawn preceding day,  
thy soul was sleeping in thee on the flowers,  
wherewith the place down yonder is adorned,  
a Lady came and said: 'I am Lucia;  
allow me to take up this sleeping man;  
I shall assist him thus upon his way.'  
Sordello and the other noble forms  
remained; she took thee, and when daylight dawned,  
hither came up, and in her foot-prints I.  
She laid thee here; and first her lovely eyes  
revealed to me that opened entrance; then  
both she and sleep together passed away."  
Like one who, when in doubt, is reassured,  
and into comfort turns his fear, when once  
the truth has been disclosed to him, I changed;  
and when my Leader wholly freed from care  
beheld me, upward o'er the cliff he moved,  
and I behind him followed toward the height.  
Reader, thou surely see'st how I exalt  
my subject; therefore be thou not surprised  
if I support it now with greater art.  
Nearer we drew, and were in such a place,  
that where at first there seemed to be a break,  
just like a fissure that divides a wall,  
I saw a Gate, and under, to approach it,  
three steps of different color each, and then  
a Keeper, who as yet said not a word.  
And as I opened more and more mine eyes,  
I saw him sitting on the upper step,  
such in his face that I endured him not;  
and in his hand he had a naked sword,  
which so reflected upon us its rays,  
that toward him oft I turned my eyes in vain.  
"Say what it is you wish, from where you are,"  
he then began, "and where your escort is.  
Beware lest coming up should do you harm."  
"A heavenly Lady, of these things aware,"



my Teacher answered him, "said unto us  
just now: 'Go thither, yonder is the Gate.'"  
"And unto good may she advance your steps!"  
the courteous Keeper of the Gate resumed,  
"Come forward, therefore, unto these our stairs."  
Made of white marble was the first great step  
to which we came, so polished and so smooth,  
I mirrored me therein as I appear.  
The second step, darker than purple-black,  
was of a rough and calcined kind of stone,  
cracked lengthwise and across. The third, which rests  
in massive shape above it, seemed to me  
to be of porphyry as flaming red,  
as blood appears when spurting from a vein.  
Upon this last God's Angel held both feet,  
sitting upon the threshold, which to me  
appeared to be a rock of adamant.  
Up over those three steps my Leader then  
drew me along with my good will, and said:  
"Humbly request him to undo the lock."  
Devoutly at his holy feet I cast me;  
I begged that of his mercy he would open,  
but first I smote upon my breast three times.  
Then with his sword's sharp point he traced seven P's  
upon my brow, and told me: "See thou to it,  
that, when inside, thou wash away these wounds!"  
Ashes, or earth when excavated dry,  
would with his garment of one color be;  
and from beneath it he drew forth two Keys.  
One was of gold, the other silver was;  
first with the white, and after with the yellow,  
he so did to the Gate that I was pleased.  
"Whenever one of these Keys faileth so,  
that in the lock it doth not rightly turn,"  
said he to us, "this passage opens not.  
More precious is the first; and yet the other,  
ere it unlock, much skill and judgment needs,  
for it is that one which unties the knot.  
Peter, from whom I hold them, bade me err  
rather in opening, than in keeping closed,  
provided folk fell prostrate at my feet."  
He pushed the holy Portal's door thereat,  
and said to us: "Go in; but I inform you  
that he who looks behind returns outside."  
And when that sacred Gateway's folding doors,  
which were of strong resounding metal made,  
were on their iron hinges turned around,  
Tarpeia roared not so, nor proved so shrill,

when good Metellus was removed from her,  
because of which she afterwards kept lean.  
I turned to heed its first resounding tones,  
and "*Thee we praise, O Lord*" I seemed to hear  
in voices mixed with those delightful sounds.  
What I was hearing made upon me then  
just the impression one is wont to get,  
when people with an organ sing; for now  
the words are heard, and now again are not.

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## PURGATORIO X

*Purgatory. The First Ring. Pride*

*Instances of Humility. The Expiation of Pride*

When past the threshold of the Gate we were,  
whose use the evil love of souls impairs,  
because it makes the crooked path seem straight,  
't was by its sound I knew that it had closed;  
and, had I turned mine eyes in its direction,  
what would have fittingly excused my fault?  
We mounted through a fissure in the rock,  
which moved about to this side and to that,  
as moves a wave that flees and draweth near.  
“A little skill must here be used by us,”  
my Leader then began, “in keeping close,  
now here, now there, to the receding side.”  
This caused our steps to be so slow and short,  
that to her bed the waning moon had gone  
to rest herself again, ere we had issued  
forth from that needle's eye; but when set free  
we were, and in the open up above,  
where back the Mountain's side recedes, I, weary,  
and both of us uncertain of our way,  
stopped short upon a level place up there,  
more lonely than are roads through desert lands.  
From where its margin borders on the void,  
up to the foot of that high rising bank,  
would measure thrice a human body's length;  
and far as e'er mine eye could wing its flight,  
now on the right, and now upon the left,  
such did this girding ledge appear to me.  
Our feet had not been moving on it yet,  
when I perceived the bank surrounding it —  
which, being perpendicular, could not  
be climbed — white marble was, and so adorned  
with carvings, that not only Polyclètus,  
but Nature, too, would there be put to shame.  
The Angel who to earth came with the word  
of peace, which, wept-for during many years,  
had after its long closure opened Heaven,  
appeared before us there in gentle mien,  
sculptured so truthfully, it did not seem  
that he could be an image that is dumb.  
One would have sworn that he was saying: “*Hail!*”

for She was there portrayed in effigy,  
who turned the key that opened Love on high;  
and in her mien and acts she had the words  
“*Behold the handmaid of the Lord*” impressed  
as clearly as a figure stamped in wax.  
“Keep not thy mind on one place only fixed!”  
my gentle Teacher said, who had me there  
on that side of him, where one has his heart;  
I therefore moved my eyes, and further on  
than Mary, on the side where him I had,  
who urged me to go on, I then beheld  
another story graven in the rock;  
passing by Virgil, therefore, I drew near  
so that it might be set before mine eyes.  
Cut in the marble there the cart and oxen  
were drawing up the holy Ark, which made  
men dread a charge not given them in trust.  
People in front appeared; and all of them,  
forming seven choirs, made one of my two senses  
say “No,” and the other one say “Yes, they sing.”  
So, too, by reason of the incense-smoke,  
which there was pictured forth, my eyes and nose  
became discordant as to Yes and No.  
The humble Psalmist there, with loins girt up,  
came dancing on, before the blessed Vessel,  
and, doing so, was more and less than king.  
And Michal, opposite to this portrayed,  
was from a palace window looking down,  
as would an angry woman filled with scorn.  
From where I was, I onward moved my feet,  
that I might closely note another tale,  
which after Michal gleamed upon me white.  
The glorious action of that Roman prince  
was storied here, whose worth moved Gregory  
to win his mighty triumph; I refer  
to Emperor Trajan; at his bridle stood  
a widow who, in tears, showed signs of grief.  
The space around him there seemed trampled down  
and thronged with horsemen, while above his head  
eagles, it seemed, upon a field of gold  
were fluttering in the wind. Among all these  
the sorrowing woman seemed to say: “My lord,  
avenge me for the slaying of my son,  
which breaks my heart.” And he to answer her:  
“Wait now till I return.” And she, like one  
whom sorrow makes impatient, said: “But what,  
my lord, if thou shouldst not return?” And he:  
“That one will do it, who shall hold my place.”

“How shall another’s goodness help thy case,”  
she answered him, “if thou forget thine own?”  
Then he: “Now be thou comforted; for needs  
must I perform my duty ere I leave;  
justice so wills, and pity keeps me here.”  
He to whose vision naught was ever new,  
created this seen language, new to us,  
since not found here on earth. While with delight  
I looked upon the pictures of such great  
humilities, which for their Maker’s sake  
are also dear to see, “On this side, lo,  
much people come, but slow the steps they take;”  
the Poet murmured, “toward the grades above  
these souls will send us forward on our way.”  
Mine eyes, intent on gazing, to behold  
new things, for which with eagerness they long,  
in turning toward him were not slow to move.  
Yet I ’d not have thee, Reader, shrink dismayed  
from thy good purposes, through hearing how  
God wills that what is due be paid. Heed not  
the nature of the torment! Think of what  
comes after! Think that, at the very worst,  
beyond the Judgment-day it cannot go.  
Then I began: “That, Teacher, which toward us  
I see advancing does not look like people,  
nor know I what, my sight is so deceived.”  
And he to me: “Their torment’s heavy nature  
so bows them toward the ground, that my eyes, too,  
struggled therewith at first. But steadily  
gaze there, and disentangle with thine eyes  
what underneath those stones is coming on;  
thou now canst see how each one smites himself.”  
O ye proud Christians, sad and weary creatures,  
who, sick in mental vision, put your trust  
in backward moving steps; perceive ye not  
that worms we are, created but to form  
the angelic butterfly, which flies unscreened  
to judgment? Why, then, is it that your mind  
soars up in pride, since ye are, as it were,  
defective insects, even as is a worm,  
in which formation is not yet complete?  
As, to hold up a ceiling or a roof,  
in lieu of corbel, one perceives at times  
a human figure joining knees to breast,  
which out of unreality gives birth  
to real distress in him who sees it; such  
seemed these to me, when I had given good heed.  
They were, in truth, both more and less bowed down,

as each had more or less upon his back;  
but he that in his acts most patient was,  
seemed to say, weeping: "I can bear no more!"

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## PURGATORIO XI

*Purgatory. The First Ring. Pride*

*The Lord's Prayer. The Proud*

“Our Father, Thou that in the Heavens dost dwell,  
not circumscribed, but for the greater love  
Thou hast for what Thou madest first on high;  
let both Thy Name and Worth be given praise  
by every creature, ev’n as it is meet  
that to Thy loving Spirit thanks be given!  
And may Thy Kingdom’s Peace come down to us,  
since we can not attain it of ourselves,  
for all our striving, save it also come!  
As gladly of their wills Thine Angels make  
a sacrifice to Thee, singing ‘*All Hail!*’,  
so likewise gladly may men do with theirs!  
Give us this day our daily spirit-food,  
without which, through this bitter wilderness,  
he backward goes, who onward toileth most!  
And as we pardon every one the wrong  
we ’ve suffered, of Thy Mercy do Thou us  
forgive, regarding not what we deserve!  
Our virtue which is easily o’ercome,  
test Thou not through our ancient Enemy,  
but set us free from him, who tempts it so!  
This last request, dear Lord, is not, indeed,  
made for ourselves, who need not make it here,  
but is for their sake who behind us stayed.”  
Thus praying good speed for themselves and us,  
those shades beneath a burden went their way,  
not unlike that whereof one dreams at times,  
unequally tormented, all of them,  
and weary, o’er the first ring, round and round,  
purging away the world’s defiling mists.  
If good things there be always said for us,  
what can be said and done on their behalf  
down here, by those whose will is rooted well?  
Surely one ought to help them wash away  
the stains they brought with them, that they may issue,  
cleansed and unburdened, to the starry spheres.  
“Pray, so may pity and Justice speedily  
unburden you, that ye may move your wings,  
and raise yourselves according to your wish,  
show us on which hand lies the shortest way

to reach the stairs; and, be there more than one,  
teach us the pass that hath the gentlest slope;  
for, owing to the load of Adam's flesh,  
which clothes his spirit, he who with me comes  
is slow in climbing, though against his will."  
As to the words, which in reply they said  
to those which he, whom I was following, spoke,  
it was not evident from whom they came;  
but this was said: "Come with us on the right  
along the bank, and ye shall find the pass,  
which may be climbed by one that's still alive.  
And were I not prevented by the stone,  
which tames my haughty neck, and forces me  
to keep my face bowed down, at this man here,  
who liveth still and telleth not his name,  
I'd look, to see if he is one I know,  
and stir his pity for this heavy load.  
Latin I was, and born to a great Tuscan;  
Guglielmo Aldobrandesco was my father;  
I know not if you ever knew his name.  
My forebears' ancient blood and noble deeds  
caused me to be so arrogant, that I,  
unmindful of our common mother, earth,  
held every man in scorn to such extent,  
I died for it, as well knows Siena's folk,  
and every child in Campagnatico.  
I am Omberto; nor to me alone  
doth this work ill, for pride hath with itself  
drawn all my kin into calamity.  
And here, for this, must I needs bear this load  
among the dead, till God be satisfied,  
since I among the living bore it not."  
Listening, I bowed my face; and one of them,  
not he who had been speaking, writhed around  
under the burden which was hampering him;  
and, having seen and recognized me, called,  
and kept his eyes with effort fixed on me,  
who, as I went along with them, was stooping.  
Then "Oh!" said I, "Art thou not Oderisi,  
the glory of Agobbio and the art,  
which is in Paris called '*illuminating*'?"  
"Brother," said he, "more smiling are the parchments  
which Franco Bolognese paints; the glory  
is now all his and only partly mine.  
Because of that great longing to excel,  
whereon my heart was set, I certainly  
would not have been so courteous while I lived.  
Here is the forfeit paid for pride like this;



nor should I be here yet, had it not been  
that, while I still could sin, I turned to God.  
O empty glory of our human powers,  
how short a time green lasts upon its top,  
unless uncultured ages overtake it!  
Once Cimabùe thought that he would hold  
the field in painting, yet the cry is all  
for Giotto now, hence that one's fame is dark.  
Thus hath one Guido taken from the other  
the glory of our tongue; and he is born,  
perhaps, who from the nest will banish both.  
Worldly repute is but a breath of wind,  
which cometh now from here, and now from there,  
and shifts its name, because its quarter shifts.  
What greater fame shalt thou have — if when old  
thou quit thy flesh, than hadst thou died ere 'pap'  
and 'chink' were dropped, — a thousand years from now?  
For that, if to eternity compared,  
is shorter than the twinkling of an eye  
is to the sky's most slowly moving sphere.  
All Tuscany proclaimed the fame of him,  
who walks so slowly on the road before me;  
yet hardly is a whisper of him left  
in Siena now, whose governor he was,  
what time the rage of Florence was destroyed,  
which then as haughty was, as abject now.  
Your worldly fame is like the hue of grass,  
which comes and goes, and he discolors it,  
through whom it springs up tender from the ground.”  
And I: “Thy true speech heart'ning me with good  
humility, thou prickst my swollen pride;  
but who is he of whom thou spok'st just now?  
“That” he replied, “is Provenzàn Salvani;  
and here he is, because presumptuously  
he brought all Siena under his control.  
Thus hath he gone, and without rest he goes,  
e'er since he died; who yonder dares too much,  
in satisfaction pays such coin as this.”  
And I then: “If the spirit who delays,  
before repenting, till the verge of life,  
abides below, and cometh not up here,  
unless good prayers assist him, till as long  
a time be passed as he had been alive,  
wherefore hath this man's coming been vouchsafed?”  
“When in his greatest glory,” he replied,  
“all shame removed, he freely took his stand  
in Siena's Campo;  
and there, to free a friend

suffering in Charles' prison, he brought himself  
to quake in every vein. I 'll say no more,  
and know that what I say is darkly spoken;  
but so, ere long, will thine own neighbors act,  
that thou 'lt be able to interpret it.  
This deed of his relieved him from those bounds."

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## PURGATORIO XII

*Purgatory. The First Ring. Pride*

*Instances of Punished Pride. The Angel of Humility*

With equal steps, like oxen going yoked,  
I went along beside that burdened soul,  
as long as my dear Pedagogue allowed;  
but when he said: "Leave him, and go thou on;  
for here 't is well that each should urge his bark  
with sail and oars, as much as e'er he can,"  
I straightened me  
as much as walking called for,  
although my thoughts kept humble and depressed.  
On had I moved, and in my Teacher's steps  
was following willingly, and both of us  
were showing now how light of step we were,  
when "Downward turn thine eyes!" he said to me,  
"Well will it be, to calm thee on thy way,  
that thou shouldst see the bed thy soles are treading."  
As over those that 'neath them buried lie  
— that they may be recalled to people's minds —  
tombs level with the ground the record bear  
of what they were before; whence there they oft  
are wept for, through the prick of memory,  
which spurs to grief the pitiful alone;  
ev'n so I saw engraved in sculpture here,  
though finer in respect to workmanship,  
as much as from the Mount juts out as path.  
I saw, on one side, Him who once was made  
nobler by far than any other creature,  
fall like a flash of lightning down from Heaven.  
I saw Briareus, on the other side,  
pierced by an arrow from the sky, lie prone,  
and heavy on the ground with mortal cold.  
I saw Apollo, Mars I saw and Pallas,  
as, still in armor, round their Sire they stood,  
gazing upon the Giants' scattered limbs.  
I saw great Nimrod 'neath his mighty work  
dumb with confusion, as he watched the folk,  
who once were proud with him on Shinar's plain.  
O Niobe, with what sad eyes I thee  
saw pictured forth in stone, between thy children,  
the seven and seven thy dead, upon the road!  
O Saul, how plainly there on thine own sword

didst thou seem dead upon Gilbòa's mount,  
which felt thereafter neither rain nor dew!  
O mad Arachne, thee I saw, as when,  
already half a spider, thou wast sad  
amid the tatters of thy fatal work.  
O Rehoboam, not a threat seems now  
thy face, but terror-stricken, as away  
a chariot bears thee, lest thou be pursued.  
It showed, moreover, that hard pavement did,  
how costly once Alcmaeon caused his mother's  
unlucky ornament to seem to her.  
It showed how, in the temple's walls, his sons  
cast themselves on Sennacherib, and how,  
when he was dead, they there abandoned him.  
It showed the slaughter and the cruel woe  
wrought by Tomyris, when she said to Cyrus:  
"With blood I fill thee, that didst thirst for blood!"  
It showed, too, how the Assyrians took to flight,  
routed, when Holophernes had been killed,  
and also what was of that slaughter left.  
I saw proud Troy in ashes and in caves.  
O Ilion, how degraded and how vile  
it showed thou wast, the image there perceived!  
What master, or of brush or graving-tool,  
could reproduce the shadows and the features,  
which there would cause all cultured minds to wonder?  
The dead seemed dead, the living seemed alive;  
whoever saw the real, no better saw  
than I then did what I was treading on,  
as long as bowed I walked. Be ye, then, proud,  
and go with haughty looks, ye sons of Eve,  
nor bow your heads, to see your evil path!  
More of the Mountain had we circled now,  
and of the sun's course far more had we spent,  
than my not disengaged mind had supposed;  
when he who always walked attentively  
ahead of me, began: "Lift up thy head!  
The time for going thus absorbed is passed.  
See there an Angel who is making ready  
to come toward us; see how the sixth handmaiden  
returns now from the service of the day.  
With reverence adorn thine acts and face,  
that he may now be pleased to send us up;  
think that this day will never dawn again!"  
So well accustomed was I to his warning,  
that I should never let my time be lost,  
that on this theme he could not darkly speak.  
Toward us the lovely Creature was advancing,

arrayed in white, and in his countenance,  
such as, when trembling, seems the morning star.  
His arms he opened, then he oped his wings,  
and said to us: "Come; near by are the steps,  
and going up is easy after this."  
Only a few to this announcement come.  
O human race, why, born for upward flight,  
fallest thou so before a little wind?  
He led us on to where the rock was cut;  
and there my forehead with his wings he stroked,  
and promised that my passage would be safe.  
As, on the right hand, to ascend the mount,  
where seated is the church, which dominates  
the well ruled town o'er Rubaconte's bridge,  
the slope's bold flight is broken by the stairs  
constructed in an age, when quire and stave  
were safe;  
so, likewise, doth the bank relax,  
which from the next ledge here quite steeply falls;  
but closely on each side the high rock rubs.  
While, turning thither, we were on our way,  
"*Blest are the poor in spirit!*" voices sang  
in such a way as words could not describe.  
Alas! how different are the passes here  
from those in Hell! For one up here goes in  
with songs, but there below with frightful wails!  
We now were climbing up the holy stairs,  
and lighter far I felt than formerly  
I seemed to be, when on the level ground;  
I hence said: "Teacher, say, what heavy thing  
has been removed from me, that, as I walk,  
I almost feel no weariness at all?"  
He answered: "When the P's, which still remain  
almost extinct upon thy brow, are quite  
erased, as one is now, thy feet will so  
be conquered by good will, that they will feel  
not only no fatigue, but it will be  
a pleasure to them to be upward urged."  
I then did as do those, who go about  
with something on their head they know not of,  
till others' gestures cause them to suspect;  
whereat their hand assists in ascertaining,  
searches, and finds, and so performs the work,  
which cannot be accomplished by their sight;  
and with my right hand's fingers spread I found  
that only six the letters were, which he  
who held the Keys, had o'er my temples cut;  
on seeing which my Leader smiled with joy.

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## PURGATORIO XIII

*Purgatory. The Second Ring. Envy*

*Instances of Generosity. The Envious*

We now were at the summit of the stairs,  
where for the second time is cut away  
the Mount, ascent of which frees one from sin;  
and there a cornice, like the first one, girds  
the hillside round about, save that its arc  
more quickly curves. There is no shaded carving  
apparent here, nor is there any mark;  
the bank seems bare, as also seems the path,  
with but the livid color of the rock.  
“If we await folk here, of whom to ask  
our way,” the Poet argued, “I ’m afraid  
our choice will be, perhaps, delayed too long.”  
Then on the sun he fixed his steadfast eyes,  
made of his right the center for his motion,  
and turned the left side of himself around.  
“O thou sweet light, with confidence in whom  
I enter this new path, conduct us thou,”  
he said, “as one should be conducted here.  
Thou warm’st the world, and on it thou dost shine;  
if aught else urge not to the contrary,  
thy rays at all times ought to be our guides.”  
Already had we gone as far up there,  
as here on earth is reckoned for a mile,  
in little time, because of ready will;  
when, flying toward us, there were spirits heard,  
who, though unseen, were to the board of love  
uttering their courteous calls.  
The voice which first  
passed flying, said aloud: “*They have no wine!*”  
and then behind us kept repeating it;  
and ere, because of having moved away,  
it could be heard no more, another, passing,  
cried: “I ’m Orestes!” nor did that one linger.  
“What are these voices, Father?” said I then;  
and ev’n while I was asking, lo, a third,  
which said: “Love those, from whom ye’ve ill received!”  
The kindly Teacher then: “This circle whips  
the fault of envy, hence the scourge’s cords  
are drawn from love. The curb will probably  
give forth a sound the contrary of this;

in my opinion, I believe thou 'lt hear it,  
before the pass of pardon thou attain.  
But keenly through the air address thy gaze,  
and thou 'lt see people on ahead of us,  
who seated are, and each against the cliff.”  
Then wider than before I oped mine eyes;  
I looked ahead, and shades I saw with cloaks  
not differing from the color of the stone.  
And when a little further on we were,  
I heard one crying: “Mary, pray for us!”  
and cries to Michael, Peter, and all the Saints.  
Nor do I think there walks on earth to-day  
a man so hard, that he would not be pierced  
by sympathy for what I then perceived;  
for, after I had drawn so near to them,  
that what they did with clearness came to me,  
tears from my eyes were drawn by bitter grief.  
Covered they seemed to me with coarse hair-cloth,  
and one sustained the other with his shoulder,  
while all of them were by the bank sustained.  
Ev’n thus the blind, in want of livelihood,  
at Pardons stand to beg for what they need,  
and one upon the other bows his head,  
that pity may be speedily aroused,  
not merely by the sound of what they say,  
but by their aspect, which no less implores.  
And as the sun availeth not the blind,  
so to the shades, whereof I spoke just now,  
the sky’s light willeth not to grant itself;  
because an iron band runs through, and sews  
the eyelids of them all, as with wild hawks  
one does, since otherwise they ’d not keep still.  
To me it seemed an outrage that, unseen,  
I should see others, as I walked along;  
I therefore turned to my wise Counselor.  
He well knew what the dumb man wished to say;  
and therefore waited not for me to ask,  
but “Speak,” he said, “be brief and to the point.”  
Virgil on that side of the cornice-ledge  
was coming on with me, whence one can fall,  
because it wreathes itself with no bank there.  
On the other side I had those zealous shades,  
who through the horrid seams were pressing so  
their tears, that they were bathing both their cheeks.  
Turning to them, I thus began: “O people,  
who certain are of seeing that High Light,  
which your desire hath for its only object;  
so melt Grace soon the scum upon your conscience,

that memory's stream may through it clearly flow,  
tell me, for grateful will it be to me  
and pleasing, if there is among you here  
a soul that Latin is; it will be well  
for him, perhaps, if I should come to know it.”  
“O brother mine, we both are citizens  
of one true City; but thou meanest one,  
who, while a pilgrim, lived in Italy.”  
It seemed to me that this I heard for answer  
a little further on than where I was;  
I therefore let myself be heard much further.  
Among the rest I saw a shade which seemed  
expectant in its looks; and, if one ask  
“How so?” held up its chin as do the blind.  
“Spirit,” said I, “that dost subdue thyself,  
that thou mayst climb, if she that didst reply,  
make thyself known to me by place or name.”  
“Sienese I was;” she answered, “and with these  
cleanse here my guilty life, and pray to Him  
with tears, that He may lend Himself to us.  
Though called Sapia, sapient was I not,  
for I was far more glad of others' harm,  
than I of my good fortune ever was.  
And, that thou mayst not think that I deceive thee,  
ev'n as I tell thee, hear how mad I was,  
once my years' arch was on its downward course.  
When with their foes my fellow citizens  
were joined in battle near the town of Colle,  
I prayed to God for that which He had willed.  
When, routed there, they took the bitter path  
of flight, I felt, on seeing them pursued,  
a joy unequalled by all other joys;  
I therefore upward turned my daring face,  
and cried to God: ‘I fear Thee now no more!’  
as doth the blackbird at the least fair weather.  
When I was at the end of life, I longed  
for peace with God; but not yet would my debt  
have been diminished by repentance here,  
had it not been that Pietro Pettinagno,  
who of his charity was grieved for me,  
was mindful of me in his holy prayers.  
But who art thou, that askest of our state  
while going on, and hast thine eyes unclosed,  
as I believe, and dost, while breathing, talk?”  
“Mine eyes will yet be taken from me here,  
but not for long;” said I, “for they have not  
offended much by being turned by envy.  
Far greater is the fear, wherewith my soul



is filled, of that tormenting pain below,  
for even now the load there weighs upon me.”

And she: “Who, then, led thee to us up here,  
if to return below thou think?” And I:

“He that is with me here, and speaketh not.

But I am living, therefore ask of me,  
elected spirit, if thou’dst have me move  
my mortal feet in thy behalf on earth.”

“Oh, this” she answered, “is so strange to hear,  
that certainly it proves God’s love for thee;  
therefore assist me with thy prayers at times!

I beg thee by what most thou longest for,  
if e’er thou tread the soil of Tuscany,  
that thou among my kin restore my fame.

Among that vain folk wilt thou see them there,  
which hopes in Talamone, and will waste  
more hope on it than on the Diàna quest;  
but still more will the admirals invest.”

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## PURGATORIO XIV

*Purgatory. The Second Ring. Envy. Valdarno and*

*Romagna in 1300. Instances of punished Envy*

“Who is this spirit, who around our Mount  
is circling thus, ere death have giv’n him flight,  
and at his will opens and veils his eyes?”  
“I know not who he is, but know he ’s not  
alone; ask thou, that nearer art to him,  
and greet him fairly, so that he may speak.”  
Two spirits, who were leaning on each other,  
thus talked of me upon the right hand there;  
then turned their faces up, to speak to me;  
and one said: “Soul, that, still held in thy body,  
toward Heaven art going, of thy charity  
console us now, and tell us whence thou com’st,  
and who thou art; for thou dost cause in us  
such wonder at the grace accorded thee,  
as that demands which never was before.”  
And I: “A small stream winds through Tuscany,  
which up in Falterona hath its rise,  
and is not sated by a hundred miles.  
From somewhere on its banks I bring this body;  
vain would it be to tell you who I am,  
because my name makes no great sound as yet.”  
“If with my mind I rightly penetrate  
thy meaning,” that one then replied to me;  
who spoke before, “thou talkest of the Arno.”  
Thereat the other spirit said to him:  
“Why did this man conceal that river’s name,  
as people hide the name of dreadful things?”  
The shade who had been questioned as to this,  
discharged its duty thus: “I do not know;  
but meet it is that this vale’s name should die!  
For from its source — where that wild mountain-chain,  
whence severed is Pelorus, swells so greatly,  
that in few places doth it pass that mark —  
to there where it betakes it to restore  
whatever from the sea the sky sucks up,  
whence rivers get what goes along with them,  
virtue is, snake-like, as a foe pursued  
by all, or through the region’s evil luck,  
or through bad customs which incite men there;  
hence those that in this wretched valley dwell,

have changed their nature so, that it would seem  
that Circe had them in her pasturage.  
Among foul hogs, of acorns worthier far  
than of all other food that's fit for man  
to use, it first directs its sorry path.  
As down it comes, it afterward finds curs,  
that snarl more fiercely than their strength comports,  
and turns from these its snout aside in scorn.  
It keeps on falling; and the more it swells,  
the more that cursèd and unlucky ditch  
finds that the dogs are turning into wolves.  
Descending then through many a gloomy gorge,  
foxes it finds, so full of fraud, that naught  
have they to fear, lest cunning master them.  
Nor shall I cease to speak, though overheard;  
and for this man 't were well, if he recall  
hereafter what a truthful spirit shows me.  
Thy grandson I behold, who first becomes  
a hunter of those wolves upon the banks  
of that fierce stream, and terrifies them all.  
He sells their flesh, while still alive; then kills them,  
as an old beast he would; of life depriving  
many, himself of honor he deprives.  
He issues bloody from the dismal wood,  
and leaves it such, that in a thousand years  
't will not rewood itself as once it was."  
As at the announcement of some painful loss,  
the face of him who listens is disturbed,  
from wheresoe'er the danger may assail him;  
ev'n thus did I behold that other soul,  
who turned to listen, grow distressed and sad,  
as soon as he had gathered in that speech.  
The words of one soul and the other's face  
had caused me to desire to know their names;  
therefore with prayers I mingled this request.  
That spirit, therefore, who addressed me first,  
began again: "Thou'dst have me condescend  
to do for thee what thou for me wilt not.  
But since God wills that so much of His Grace  
should shine in thee, I 'll not be niggardly;  
Guido del Duca know, then, that I am.  
And so consumed by envy was my blood,  
that, had I seen a man becoming happy,  
livid with envy thou hadst seen me turn.  
Of what I sowed I 'm reaping now the straw.  
O human race, why set your heart on things,  
wherein companionship must be forbidden?  
This is Rinieri; this the honor is,

and glory of the house of Calboli,  
whose worth, since him, none hath inherited.  
Nor hath his blood alone despoiled itself,  
'tween Po and mountains, Reno and the sea,  
of those good things which truth and joy require;  
for in those bounds the country is so full  
of poisoned stocks, that only slowly now  
would they be lessened, ev'n if it were tilled.  
Where are good Lizio, Arrigo Mainàrdi,  
Pier Traversaro and Guido di Carpigna?  
O Romagnoles, turned into bastards now!  
When in Bologna will a Fabbro rise?  
When, in Faenza, a Bernardin di Fosco,  
the noble scion of a little plant?  
Wonder not, Tuscan, if I weep now, when,  
with Guido da Prata, I recall to mind  
Ugolin d'Azzo, who among us dwelt,  
Frederick Tignoso and his company,  
the Traversara house, the Anastagi,  
(and both these families are void of heirs),  
the ladies and the knights, the toils and ease,  
which love and courtesy once made us crave,  
where hearts have grown so bad! O Brettinoro,  
wherefore not vanish, since thy family,  
and many people with them, have departed,  
that guiltless they might be? Bagnacavàl,  
begetting sons no longer, doeth well;  
but Castrocaro ill, and Conio worse,  
which still takes trouble to beget such counts.  
Well the Pagani, too, will fare, when once  
their demon shall have gone, but not so well,  
that an unspotted fame will e'er remain  
to them. O Ugolin de' Fàntoli,  
thy name is safe, since one can now no more  
be looked for, who, as a degenerate,  
can darken it! But go thy way now, Tuscan;  
for weeping now affords me far more zest  
than speech, our talk hath so distressed my mind!"

We knew that those dear spirits heard us leaving;  
and therefore merely by their keeping still,  
they made us trust the path which we were taking.  
When we, advancing, found ourselves alone,  
a voice, which seemed like lightning when it cleaves  
the air, was heard, and, as it reached us there,  
said: "Whosoever findeth me shall slay me!"  
then vanished, as when thunder rolls away,  
if suddenly a cloud be rent apart.  
Soon as our hearing had a truce from this,

behold another with so great a crash,  
it seemed to be its following thunder-clap:  
“I am Aglauros, who was turned to stone!”  
Then, to draw closer to the Poet’s side,  
I took a backward, not a forward, step.  
The air was calm on all sides now, when he:  
“That was the painful bit, which in his bounds  
should hold a man. But ye take in the bait,  
and so the ancient Adversary’s hook  
draweth you to him; hence of small avail  
is either curb or lure.  
Heaven calleth you,  
and, showing to you its eternal beauties,  
around you moves, and yet your eyes look down;  
hence He, who seeth all things, scourges you.”

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## PURGATORIO XV

*Purgatory. The Second Ring. Envy. The Angel of*

*Generosity. The Third Ring. Anger. Instances of Gentleness*

Between the third hour's close and day's beginning  
as much as is apparent of the sphere,  
which like a child is ever given to play,  
so much now of its course toward evening seemed  
remaining to the sun; 't was vespers there,  
and midnight here; and fully on the face  
its rays were striking us, because the Mount  
had so been circled by us, that we now  
were going on directly toward the West;  
when, far more blindingly than e'er before,  
I felt my forehead overcome by splendor,  
and was bewildered by these unknown things;  
over my eyebrows, hence, I raised my hands,  
and made myself the screen which, filing off,  
tempers excessive light in what is seen.  
As when from water, or a looking-glass,  
a ray leaps up in the opposite direction,  
and in the same way mounts that down it came,  
and from the falling of a stone departs  
at equal distance to the same extent,  
as both experiment and art reveal;  
even so it seemed to me that I was smitten  
as by a light, reflected there before me;  
because of which my sight was swift to flee.  
"Dear Father, what is that," said I, "from which  
I cannot screen my face sufficiently  
to help me, and which toward us seems to come?"  
"Wonder thou not" he answered me, "if still  
Heaven's family affect thy sight; an Angel  
is this, who comes to ask us to ascend.  
It soon will happen that to see such things  
will be no burden, but as great a joy,  
as Nature hath enabled thee to feel."  
As soon as we had reached the blessèd Angel,  
with joyful voice he said: "Enter from hence  
a stairway far less steep than were the rest!"  
We were ascending, having thence departed,  
when "*Blessèd are the Merciful!*" was sung  
behind us, and "Rejoice, O thou that winnest!"  
My Teacher then, and I, we two alone,

were going up; and, as we went, I thought  
of how I might get profit from his words;  
whereat I turned toward him, and asked: "What meant  
that spirit from Romagna, when he mentioned  
'forbidden,' and 'companionship' in things?"  
Hence he: "Of his worst fault he knows the harm;  
hence let it not surprise, if he therefor  
rebuke men, that it be lamented less.  
Because your wishes aim at that, wherein  
each share is lessened through companionship,  
envy fain moves the bellows for your sighs.  
If love, though, for the highest sphere of all  
were upward turning your desires, that fear  
would not be in your breast; because the more  
there are up yonder by whom 'Ours' is said,  
so much more good doth each of them possess,  
and so much more love in that cloister burns."  
"I fast much more from being satisfied,"  
said I, "than had I silent been at first;  
and more of doubt I gather in my mind.  
How can it be, then, that a good that's shared  
should make more owners richer with itself,  
than if by but a few it be possessed?"  
And he to me: "Because thou fastenest  
thy mind exclusively on earthly things,  
thou drawest darkness out of very light.  
That Good, Ineffable and Infinite,  
which dwells up yonder, runs as fast to love,  
as to bright bodies comes a ray of light.  
So much It gives Itself, as is the warmth  
It findeth; hence, as is the extent of love,  
so much the Eternal Worth spreads over it.  
The more there are up there that love each other,  
the more there are to love, and more the love,  
and, mirror-like, the more of love each sheds  
on each. And if my talk sate not thy hunger,  
thou shalt see Beatrice, and she will fully  
free thee from this and every other want.  
Do thou, then, see to it that speedily  
thou have removed, as two already are,  
the five wounds which are closed by causing pain."  
Wishing to say: "Thou satisfiest me,"  
I saw that I had reached the following ring;  
my fond eyes, therefore, caused me to keep still.  
There it appeared to me that I was wrapt  
in an ecstatic vision all at once,  
and that within a temple I perceived  
much people; and a Lady at the door,

who with the sweet mien of a mother said:  
“Wherefore, my Son, hast thou thus dealt with us?  
Behold, thy father and I have sought for thee  
in sorrow!” Here, when she had ceased to speak,  
that disappeared which had before appeared.  
Then there appeared another, o’er whose cheeks  
those tears were streaming down, which grief distills,  
when born of great resentment toward another,  
saying: “If thou art master of the city,  
about whose name there was among the gods  
such strife, and whence all knowledge sparkles forth,  
avenge thyself on those audacious arms,  
Pisistratus, which dared embrace our daughter!”  
Kindly and gently then that lord appeared  
to answer her with looks of self-control:  
“What shall we do to him who hateth us,  
if he who loves us is by us condemned?”  
Then folk I saw inflamed by anger’s fire  
who, bent on killing a young man with stones,  
cried to each other naught but: “Kill him, kill!”  
And him I saw, bowed to the ground in death  
which now oppressed him; of his eyes he e’er  
made gates of Heaven, and in that anguish prayed  
the Lord on high with looks which unlock pity,  
that He his persecutors would forgive.  
When once my mind returned outside again  
to those things which outside of it are true,  
I recognized my not untruthful errors.  
My Leader, who could see that I was acting  
like one who frees himself from slumber, said:  
“What aileth thee, that thou canst not stand up,  
but hast been coming more than half a league,  
veiling thine eyes, and reeling with thy legs,  
like one o’ercome by either wine or sleep?”  
“O my dear Father, if thou listen to me,  
I ’ll tell thee what it was appeared to me,”  
said I, “when I was thus deprived of legs.”  
And he: “If on thy face a hundred masks  
thou hadst, thy thoughts would not be hid from me,  
however small they were. What thou hast seen  
was lest thou free thyself from opening up  
thy heart unto those waters of thy peace,  
which from the Eternal Fountain are diffused.  
I did not ask ‘What ails thee?’ as would one,  
who looks but with the eye which seeth not,  
when once the body lies inanimate;  
but asked it to endow thy feet with strength;  
so must the indolent be spurred, when slow



to use their waking time, when it returns.”  
On through the vesper hours we went along,  
forward intent, as far as e’er our eyes  
could reach, against the late and shining rays;  
when lo, a smoke in our direction came  
little by little, and as dark as night;  
nor was there any place of shelter from it;  
this of pure air deprived us and of eyes.

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## PURGATORIO XVI

*Purgatory. The Third Ring. Anger*

*Free Will and the Corruption of the World*

The gloom of Hell and of a night deprived  
of every planet, 'neath a narrow sky,  
darkened as much as possible by clouds,  
ne'er made so thick a veil before my face,  
nor to my feeling was so rough in tissue,  
as was the smoke which covered us up there;  
for that permitted not of opened eyes;  
because of which my wise and trusty Escort  
drew near to me, and offered me his shoulder.  
Even as a blind man walks behind his guide,  
in order not to go astray, and strike  
aught that might hurt him, or might even kill;  
so, going through that foul and bitter air,  
I listened to my Leader, who said only:  
"Take care that thou be not cut off from me!"  
Voices I heard, and each appeared to pray  
for peace and mercy to the Lamb of God,  
who taketh sins away. Their only prelude  
was "*Lamb of God*"; and all had but one word  
and intonation, hence among them all  
there seemed to be the fullest harmony.  
"Are those, then, spirits, Teacher, whom I hear?"  
said I; and he to me: "Thou judgest rightly;  
as on they go, they loosen anger's knot."  
"Now who art thou, that cleavest thus our smoke,  
and yet dost speak of us, as if thou still  
by monthly calends wert dividing time?"  
These words were uttered by a single voice;  
my Teacher therefore said to me: "Reply,  
and ask him if on this side one goes up."  
And I: "O creature, that dost cleanse thyself,  
that beautiful thou mayst return to Him  
who made thee, thou'lt hear marvels, following me."  
"I 'll follow thee as far as I 'm allowed,"  
he answered, "and, if smoke permit not sight,  
hearing, instead, will keep us linked together."  
I thereupon began: "I go on high  
while in that swathing-band which death dissolves;  
and through the infernal anguish came I here;  
and whereas God hath wrapt me in His Grace

so much, that He would have me see His court  
by means entirely out of modern use,  
conceal not who thou wast before thy death,  
but tell it me, and whether toward the pass  
I rightly go; and be thy words our guides.”  
“Lombard I was, and Marco was I called;  
familiar with the world, I loved the worth,  
toward which all men have now unbent their bows.  
For mounting upward thou art going rightly.”  
He thus replied, and added: “I beseech thee,  
pray for me there, when thou shalt be above.”  
And I to him: “I pledge my faith to thee  
that what thou askest of me I will do;  
but with a doubt I ’ll burst, unless therefrom  
I free myself. Simple at first, it now  
is doubled by thy speech, which makes me, here  
and elsewhere, sure of that wherewith I link it.  
The world is certainly as wholly void  
of every virtue as thou tellest me,  
and is with evil big and overspread;  
but, pray, point out its cause, that I may see,  
and show it unto other men; for one  
puts it in heaven, another, here below.”  
At first he heaved a sigh profound, which grief  
to “Ah me!” changed; then “Brother,” he began,  
“the world is blind, and thou, indeed, com’st hence.  
Ye that are living still attribute upward  
each cause to heaven alone, as though it moved  
everything with it of necessity.  
If this were so, Free Will would be destroyed  
within you, and no justice would there be  
in having joy for good, and grief for ill.  
Heaven starts your inclinations, though I say  
not all; but ev’n supposing that I did,  
light has been giv’n to you for good and evil,  
with Free Will, which, if it endure fatigue  
in its first fights with heaven, will afterward,  
if duly nourished, conquer everything.  
Beneath a greater Power and better Nature  
ye freely lie; and that creates within you  
the mind, which heaven hath not in its control.  
Hence, if the present world go wrong, the cause  
is in yourselves, and should in you be sought;  
of this I ’ll now a true spy be for thee.  
Forth from the hand of Him, who ere it lives  
delights in it, ev’n like a little maid,  
who weeps and laughs, and wantons like a child,  
issues the simple soul, which knoweth nought,

save that, proceeding from a Joyous Maker,  
it gladly turns to that which pleases it.  
At first it tasteth things of little good;  
deceived thereby, it runneth after them,  
unless a guide or check divert its love.  
Hence, as a bit, a law must needs be set;  
a king must needs be had, who should at least  
the tower of the truthful town discern.  
The laws exist, but who sets hand to them?  
No one; because the Shepherd who precedes  
can chew the cud, but hath not cloven hoofs;  
the people, hence, who see their guide strive solely  
for those good things for which it longs itself,  
feedeth thereon, and asks for nothing more.  
Well canst thou see that evil leadership,  
and not that Nature in you is corrupt,  
is what has caused the world to be so wicked.  
Rome, which once made it good, was wont to have  
two Suns, which rendered visible both roads,  
that of the world, and that of God. One now  
hath quenched the other; to the bishop's staff  
the sword is joined, and badly needs must one  
fare with the other, since, together joined,  
neither the other fears; recall to mind,  
if thou believe me not, the ear of corn;  
for every grass is by its own seed known.  
Throughout the country watered by the Po  
and Adige, one used to find both virtue  
and courtesy, ere Frederick had his strife;  
with safety it can nowadays be crossed  
by any who, through shame, refrained from speech  
with good men, or avoided intercourse.  
There are, indeed, three old men still, in whom  
the old age chides the modern, and who long  
for God to give them back a better life:  
Corrado da Palazzo, good Gherardo,  
and Guido da Castello, better called,  
the simple Lombard, as in France he is.  
Say, therefore, that today the Church of Rome,  
by joining in herself two kinds of rule,  
falls in the mire, and fouls her self and load!"  
"O Marco mine," said I, "thine arguments  
are good; and now I see why Levi's sons  
were from inheriting debarred. But which  
Gherardo is the one, who, as thou sayst,  
as sample of the people now extinct,  
remaineth to reproach this savage age?"  
"Thy speech deceives or tests me," he replied,

“for, thou, addressing me in Tuscan speech,  
seemst not to know who good Gherardo was.  
I know him not by other added name,  
unless I took it from his daughter, Gaia.  
God keep you, for with you I come no further!  
Already whitening now, behold the light,  
which rays out through the smoke, and I must go —  
the Angel ’s there — ere I be seen by him.”  
He thus turned back, nor would he hear me more.

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## PURGATORIO XVII

*Purgatory. The Third Ring. Anger*

*Instances of Punished Anger. The Angel of Peace. Love*

Reader, remind thyself, if e'er a fog  
o'ertook thee on a mountain, one through which  
thou couldst not see in any other way  
than moles do through the membrane o'er their eyes,  
how, when the damp, thick mists begin to thin,  
the sun's orb feebly pierces them; and quickly  
will thine imagination come to see  
how I first saw the sun again, which now  
was at its setting. Thus, as I mine own  
was matching with my Teacher's trusty steps,  
from such a cloud I came into the beams,  
already dead upon the shores below.  
O thou Imagination, which at times  
dost steal us so from outer things, that though  
a thousand trumpets blow, one hears them not,  
what moveth thee, if sense contribute naught?  
A light which takes in Heaven its form impels thee,  
freely, or by a Will which sends it down.  
The vision of her cruelty, who changed  
her form into the bird, which most delights  
in song, appeared in my imagination;  
and hereupon my mind was so shut up  
within itself, that nothing that was then  
received by it, came to it from without.  
Then into my high fantasy there rained  
one crucified, contemptuous and proud  
in aspect, and as such he met his death.  
Around him were the great Ahasuerus,  
Esther his wife, and righteous Mordecai,  
who so whole-hearted was in word and deed.  
And as this picture of its own accord  
broke up, as doth a bubble when it lacks  
the water it was formed withal; a maid  
rose in my vision next, who bitterly  
was weeping, and was saying: "Why, O Queen,  
didst thou through anger wish to be no more?"  
Lavinia not to lose, thyself hast slain;  
and now hast lost me! Mother, this is I,  
who, ere I mourn another's loss, mourn thine."  
As sleep is broken, when unwonted light

strikes closed eyes suddenly, and, being broken,  
quivers before it wholly dies away;  
ev'n so did my imagining break up,  
as soon as on my face there smote a light  
brighter by far than we are wont to see.  
I turned around to notice where I was,  
when lo, a voice which said: "The ascent is here,"  
from every other interest turned my mind;  
and made my will so eager to behold  
the speaker, that, when such, it never rests  
until it sees its object face to face.  
But as before the sun, which whelms our eyes,  
and veils its figure, through excess of light,  
so likewise here my visual powers failed.  
"A godlike spirit this, who, though unasked,  
is pointing out to us our upward path,  
and with his own light is himself concealing.  
With us he deals as one would with himself;  
for he that waits till asked, when seeing need,  
inclines already meanly to refuse.  
To such a bidding let us now accord  
our feet, and try to climb ere darkness come;  
for later one could not, till day returned."  
Thus said my Leader then, and I with him  
turned toward a flight of stairs our feet; and I,  
when on its first step, near me felt, as 't were,  
the motion of a wing, and on my face  
a fanning, while a voice said: "*Blessèd are  
the Peaceful*, who are free from evil wrath!"  
So high above us now were those last beams  
which by the night are followed, that the stars  
were coming out on many sides. And "O  
my strength, why dost thou fade away so fast?"  
I to myself was saying, for a truce,  
I felt, was set the powers of my legs.  
We now were where the flight of stairs went up  
no further, and as motionless we were,  
as is a vessel when the shore is reached;  
and for a while I waited to find out  
if aught upon the new ring could be heard;  
then, toward my Teacher turning round, I said:  
"Say, my dear Father, what offense is purged  
in this ring, here where now we are? Although  
our feet keep still, let not thy talking cease."  
And he to me: "The love of good, when scant  
of what it should have been, is here atoned;  
here beats again the ill-retarded oar.  
But now, in order that thou understand

more clearly still, turn thou thy mind to me,  
and some good fruit thou 'lt gather from our stay.  
Neither Creator," he began, "nor creature  
was e'er devoid of either innate love,  
or that which conscious is; and this thou knowst.  
The innate love is always free from error;  
but the other kind can err through evil aim,  
or through deficient, or excessive strength.  
While well directed toward the primal goods,  
and toward the secondary self-restrained,  
it cannot be the cause of sinful pleasure;  
but when it turns toward evil things, or runs  
to good, with more or less zeal than it ought,  
the creature then against his Maker works.  
From this, then, thou canst understand that love  
must be the seed in you of every virtue,  
and every deed that merits punishment.  
And now, since love can never turn its face  
from its own subject's welfare, from self-hate  
all are secure; and since one cannot think  
of any self as being from the First  
divided, and existing of itself,  
all hearts are thus debarred from hating Him.  
It follows, that, if I in arguing  
judge well, one's neighbor's is the harm one loves,  
and this is born in three ways in your clay.  
There 's he, who on the abasement of his neighbor  
his hope of rising sets, and only longs  
that from his greatness he may be brought low;  
and he, who fears the loss of power, favor,  
renown and honor, should another rise,  
and grieves so, that he loves the contrary;  
then he, who by injustice seems so shamed,  
that greedy he becometh for revenge;  
and such must needs prepare for others' harm.  
This triform love is wept for here below;  
but now I 'd have thee hear about the other,  
which runs to love in a corrupted way.  
All apprehend confusedly a good  
wherein the mind can rest, and long for it;  
and therefore every one attempts to reach it.  
If slothful be the love impelling you  
to see or win it, after just repentance,  
this present cornice tortures you for that.  
Another good there is, which never makes  
man happy; it is not real happiness,  
nor the Good Essence, fruit and root of all  
that 's good. The love that yields too much to that,



is wept for in three rings above us here;  
but why it 's reckoned threefold I say not,  
that thou mayst seek the reason for thyself.”

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## PURGATORIO XVIII

*Purgatory. The Fourth Ring. Sloth*

*Love and Free Will. Instances of Punished Sloth*

The lofty Doctor, having ended thus  
his argument, was looking in my eyes,  
eager to see if I seemed satisfied;  
and I, who by new thirst was still spurred on,  
was silent outwardly, and in me said:  
“My many questions trouble him perhaps;”  
but that true Father, who perceived the wish,  
which, being shy, did not disclose itself,  
by speaking first, emboldened me to speak.  
Hence I: “My vision, Teacher, in thy light  
becomes so keen, that clearly I discern  
all that thy talk implieth or unfolds;  
I therefore beg of thee, sweet Father dear,  
explain to me why thou ascrib’st to love  
every good action and its contrary.”  
“Direct thine understanding’s sharpened eyes  
toward me,” he said, “and clear to thee will be  
the error of the blind who pose as guides.  
The mind, which is created prone to love,  
inclines toward everything that pleases it,  
when roused by pleasure to activity.  
Your faculty of apprehending draws  
an image from reality, and so  
displays it in you, that your mind is caused  
to turn to it; and if, thus turned, your mind  
inclines thereto, that tendency is love,  
is nature bound in you again by pleasure.  
Then, just as fire, by reason of its form,  
moves upward, being made for mounting thither,  
where, in its element, it longer lasts;  
ev’n so the captive mind begins to yearn,  
(a motion of the soul) and never rests  
until the thing it loveth gives it joy.  
Apparent to thee now can be the extent  
to which the truth is hid from those that claim  
that each love in itself deserveth praise,  
because, perhaps, its object in itself  
seems always to be good; and yet not good  
is every seal, though good may be its wax.”  
“Thy words, together with my heeding mind,”

I answered him, "have shown me what love is;  
but this hath made me bigger with a doubt;  
for, if love from without is born in us,  
and if the soul can do naught else, her doing  
or right or wrong, is no desert of hers."  
And he: "What Reason sees here I can tell thee;  
for aught beyond its ken, look thou alone  
to Beatrice, for that 's a work of Faith.  
Every substantial form which is distinct  
from matter, and is also joined with it,  
hath in it a specific power collected,  
which, save in operation, is not seen,  
and only shows itself in its effects,  
as life doth, by its green leaves, in a plant.  
None knows, however, whence the understanding  
of first cognitions comes, or whence the bent  
toward those first appetites which are in you,  
as zeal for making honey is in bees;  
this first will, hence, deserves nor praise nor blame.  
Now, that all others be conformed to this,  
the power which counsels inborn is in you,  
and ought to hold the threshold of assent.  
This is the source, whence comes the ground  
of merit in you, as it gathers in,  
and winnows out, your good and guilty loves.  
Those who in reasoning attained the bottom,  
perceived this inborn liberty, and left  
the world the teachings of morality.  
Supposing, then, that every love that flames  
within you, rises of necessity,  
within you lies the power to master it.  
This noble virtue is by Beatrice  
called Freedom of the Will; hence see that thou  
recall it, should she speak of it to thee."

The moon, in rising, close to midnight late,  
and looking like a bucket all on fire,  
was causing now the stars to seem more rare;  
as, counter to the heavens, it coursed the paths  
the sun enflames, whene'er the Roman sees it  
setting between the Sards and Corsicans;  
and now that noble shade, whence Piètola  
hath greater fame than any Mantuan village,  
had put aside the load I laid on him;  
hence I who, as an answer to my questions,  
had reaped his clear and easy talk, remained  
like one confused because of drowsiness.  
But suddenly this sleepiness of mine

was taken from me by a crowd of people,  
who, back of us, were circling toward us now.  
And as Ismenus and Asopus once  
along their banks saw maddened throngs at night,  
whene'er the Thebans needed Bacchus; such  
were those who, sweeping scythe-like round that ring,  
were coming on, from what I saw of them,  
by good will ridden and by righteous love.  
And soon were they upon us, for the whole  
of that great crowd was moving at a run;  
and two ahead in tears were crying out:  
"Mary proceeded to the hills in haste," and "Caesar,  
in order to subdue Ilerda, struck  
Marseilles, then hurried on to Spain."  
"Quick, quick, lest time be lost through lack of love,"  
cried those that came behind them, "so that zeal  
in doing good may make Grace green again!"  
"O folk, in whom keen fervor now redeems,  
perhaps, the negligence and slowness shown  
by your tepidity in doing good,  
this man who lives, and truly I lie not,  
desires, when sunlight once returns, to mount;  
hence tell us where the nearest opening lies."  
These were my Leader's words; and one of those  
same spirits said: "Come on behind us, then,  
and thou wilt find the hole. So keen we are  
to keep on moving, that we cannot stop;  
forgive us, then, if lack of courtesy  
thou deem, what we consider righteousness.  
I was San Zeno's Abbot at Verona,  
under the rule of worthy Barbarossa,  
of whom Milàn in sorrow talketh still.  
And he has one foot in the grave already,  
who soon will for that monastery weep,  
and grieve because he had it in his power;  
for he his son, in body wholly sick,  
worse still in mind, and also ill-begot,  
has had installed in its true shepherd's place."  
I know not if aught else he said, or ceased,  
so far had he run past us now; but this  
I heard, and I've enjoyed retaining it.  
Then he who was my help in every need,  
said: "Turn in this direction, and behold  
two coming on, who give a bite to sloth."  
Moving behind them all, they said: "The folk,  
for whom the sea was opened up, were dead,  
before the Jordan had perceived their heirs;  
and those who with the son of Anchises

could not endure to toil unto the end,  
gave themselves up to lead inglorious lives.”  
Then, when those shades were separated from us  
so far, that they no longer could be seen,  
a new thought made its way into my mind,  
whence many other different thoughts were born;  
and I between them so confused became,  
that, wandering to and fro, I closed mine eyes,  
and changed what I had thought into a dream.

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## PURGATORIO XIX

*Purgatory. The Fourth Ring. Sloth. Dante's Second Dream*

*The Angel of Zeal. The Fifth Ring. Avarice and Prodigality*

Within the hour, when, vanquished by the earth,  
or ev'n at times by Saturn, day-time's heat  
can warm the coldness of the moon no longer;  
when geomancers see their Greater Fortune  
rise in the East ere dawn, and on a path  
which doth not long stay dark for it; a Female  
approached me in a dream, with stammering tongue,  
with eyes asquint, and crooked on her feet,  
with hands lopped off, and pallor on her face.  
I fixed my gaze on her; and as the sun  
brings comfort to cold limbs which night-time chills,  
ev'n so my looking at her freed her tongue,  
and afterward, in but a little time,  
completely straightened her, and gave that hue  
to her discolored face which love desires.  
As soon as she had thus unloosed her speech,  
she then began to sing in such a way,  
that from her I could hardly take my gaze.  
"I am" she sang, "the lovely Siren, she  
who in mid-ocean mariners bewitches;  
so much I please whoever heareth me!  
I turned Ulysses from his wandering course  
to hear my song; and who gets used to me  
seldom departs, so wholly I content him!"  
Her mouth had not yet closed, when lo,  
a holy Lady at my side appeared,  
who ready was to put her to confusion.  
"O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?" she cried  
in scornful tones; whereat he then advanced  
with eyes set only on the modest one.  
She seized the other, opened her in front,  
and rent her garments, showing me her belly;  
this woke me with the stench that issued from it.  
I turned my eyes, and my good Teacher said:  
"I 've called thee thrice at least. Arise and come.  
We' ll find the gate through which thou mayst ascend."  
I rose, and all the holy Mountain's rings  
were with the high day's light already filled,  
as with the new sun back of us we moved.  
While I was following him, I held my head

like one who, having it bowed down by thought,  
makes of himself a half-arch of a bridge;  
and then I heard: "Come on; the pass is here,"  
uttered in such a gentle, kindly way,  
as in this mortal land is never heard.  
With outspread wings, which seemed the wings of swans,  
he who thus spoke directed us on high  
'tween the two side walls of the granite rock.  
He moved his pinions then, and fanning us,  
affirmed that "*those who mourn*" are happy, since  
possessed of comfort shall their spirits be.  
"What aileth thee, that only on the ground  
thou gazest?" said my Guide, when past the Angel  
both he and I had climbed a little way.  
And I: "A recent dream, which to itself  
inclines me, makes me with such doubt advance,  
that I cannot refrain from thought of it."  
"Thou hast perceived" said he, "that ancient witch  
who henceforth o'er us is alone lamented;  
and seen how from her one is freed. Let that  
suffice thee; strike thy heels upon the ground,  
and turn thine eyes up toward the calling lure  
the Eternal King whirls with the mighty wheels!"  
As is the falcon, which at first looks down,  
then turns around when called, and spreads his wings,  
keen for the quarry which attracts him; such  
was I; and thus, as long as e'er the rock  
was cleft, to make a path for those that climb,  
I went along to where the circling starts.  
When out upon the fifth ring I had come,  
people therein I saw who, shedding tears,  
were lying wholly prone upon its bed.  
"*My soul hath cloven to the trodden ground!*"  
I heard them saying with such heavy sighs,  
that what they said could hardly be made out.  
"O ye elect of God, whose sufferings here  
Justice and hope are making less intense,  
direct us toward the steps that lead on high!"  
"If ye are come exempt from lying down,  
and wish to find the path with greatest speed,  
let your right sides be always outward turned."  
Thus asked the Poet, and, not far ahead,  
thus was the answer giv'n; hence, as he spoke,  
I noticed where the other speaker hid,  
and then I turned mine eyes unto my Lord;  
whereat he granted with a cheerful nod  
that which the looks of my desiring asked.  
When I was free to act as I inclined,

I came and stood above the soul, whose words  
had made me notice him at first, and said:  
“Spirit, who by thy tears art ripening that,  
without which one can not return to God,  
for my sake stay a while thy greater care.  
Say who thou wast, why ye hold up your backs,  
and whether thou wouldst have me get thee aught  
from there, whence I, a living man, set forth.”  
And he to me: “Why toward itself the sky  
is turning here our backs, thou ’lt know; but, first,  
know thou that I once sat in Peter’s chair.  
’Tween Sièstri and Chiaveri there descends  
a lovely mountain stream, and from its name  
my race’s title takes its greatest boast.  
For one month and a little more I felt  
how much the mighty Mantle weights on him  
who keeps it from the mire; for all loads else  
seem feathers. My conversion was, alas!  
delayed; but when Rome’s Shepherd I was made,  
I came to know how false the world’s life was.  
I saw that in it hearts can find no rest;  
nor could one in it higher rise than I;  
the love of this life, hence, was kindled in me.  
Till that time I had been a wretched soul,  
cut off from God, and wholly giv’n to greed;  
now, as thou see’st, I’m punished for it here.  
What avarice doth is here made manifest,  
in this purgation of converted souls;  
nor hath this Mount a penalty more bitter.  
And as our eyes were never upward turned,  
because intently fixed on earthly things,  
so Justice here hath turned them to the ground.  
As avarice quenched our love for all good things,  
until well doing had completely ceased,  
so here doth Justice hold us in restraint,  
bound fast and fettered in our hands and feet;  
and here we ’ll stay, stretched out and motionless  
as long as it shall please the Righteous Lord.”  
I had knelt down, and wished to speak; but just  
as I began, and he was made aware,  
by listening only, of my reverence,  
“What cause” said he, “hath bent thee downward thus?”  
And I to him: “Because of your high rank  
my conscience troubled me for standing up.”  
“Straighten thy legs, my brother,” he replied,  
“and rise! Err not! With thee and with the rest  
a fellow-servant of one Power am I.  
If thou hast ever fully understood



those holy Gospel words: '*They neither marry,*'  
well canst thou see why I am speaking thus.  
And now begone! I 'd have thee stay no more;  
for, lingering here, thou hinderest the tears,  
wherewith I ripen that which thou hast said.  
A niece I have up yonder called Alàgia,  
good in herself, so be it that our house  
by its example do not make her bad;  
and she is all that 's left to me up there"

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## PURGATORIO XX

*Purgatory. The Fifth Ring. Avarice and Prodigality*

*Instances of Liberality and of Greed. The Earthquake*

A will fights weakly 'gainst a stronger will;  
hence I, myself displeasing, him to please,  
out of the water drew my sponge unfilled.  
I started; and along the space left clear  
close to the rocky cliff my Leader moved,  
as 'neath its battlements one hugs a wall;  
for those who through their eyes pour drop by drop  
the evil which pervadeth all the world,  
approach too closely to the outer edge.  
Be thou accurst, thou ancient Wolf, that prey  
far greater hast than have all other beasts,  
by reason of thy hunger's endless depth!  
O Heaven, through whose revolving, some, it seems,  
believe that here below conditions change,  
when will he come, through whom this beast shall leave?  
As on we went with slow and scanted steps,  
and I was listening to the shades I heard  
weeping and uttering piteous lamentations;  
by chance I heard in front of us a voice  
cry out 'Sweet Mary!' in the tearful tones  
wherewith a woman cries in childbirth's pangs;  
and this was followed by: "As poor thou wast,  
as by the hostelry may be perceived,  
where thou didst lay thy sacred burden down."  
Next after this I heard: "O good Fabricius,  
with virtue thou didst poverty prefer  
to great possessions with iniquity."  
So pleasing had these last words been to me,  
that further on I moved, that I might know  
the spirit from whose lips they seemed to come.  
He now was speaking of the generous gift  
bestowed by Nicholas upon the maids,  
to guide their youth into an honored path.  
"O soul, that speakest of such worthy deeds,  
say who thou wast," said I, "and why alone  
thou thus renewest this deserved praise.  
Thy words will not remain without reward,  
if I return to end that life's short course,  
which flieth onward toward its final term."  
And he: "I 'll tell it thee, though not for help

that I may look for yonder, but because  
Grace shines so brightly in thee, ere thy death.  
I was the root of that malignant plant,  
whose shadow darkens all the Christian land,  
so that good fruit is seldom picked from it.  
But if Douai, Lille, Ghent, and Bruges could,  
vengeance would soon be wrought for this; and I  
of Him request it, who is Judge of all.  
Yonder my name was Hugh Capet; from me  
have sprung the Philips and the Louises,  
who have in recent ages governed France.  
A Paris butcher's son I was; when all  
the ancient kings had passed away, save one,  
a gray-robed monk, tight in my hands I found  
the bridle of the kingdom's government,  
with so much power of recent gain, and such  
a host of friends, that to the widowed crown  
was raised the head of mine own son, with whom  
the line of their anointed bones began.  
As long as its great dowry of Provence  
had not deprived my family of shame,  
its worth was small, but still it did no harm.  
With that began its thefts by force and fraud;  
for afterward, to make amends, Ponthieu  
it seized, with Normandy and Gascony.  
Charles came to Italy; and there, to make  
amends, a victim made of Conradin; and then,  
to make amends, drove Thomas back to Heaven.  
A time I see, not very long from now,  
which out of France will bring another Charles,  
to make both him and his the better known.  
He issues thence alone and with no host,  
but with the jousting lance of Judas; this  
he thrusts so, that he bursts the paunch of Florence.

As a result not land, but sin and shame  
he 'll win, of so much greater weight for him,  
the lighter he accounts such loss. I see  
the other Charles, once captured from his ship,  
his daughter sell, and haggle for the price,  
as corsairs do with slave-girls not their own.  
What more, O Avarice, canst thou do with us,  
since thou hast to thyself so drawn my race,  
that ev'n for its own flesh it careth not?  
That future ills and past ones may seem less,  
I see Alagna by the Lily entered,  
and, in his Vicar, Christ a prisoner made.  
I see the latter mocked a second time;

I see the vinegar and gall renewed,  
and Him I see 'mong living robbers killed.  
And this new Pilate I behold so ruthless,  
that, not content with this, he lawlessly  
into the Temple bears his greedy sails.  
Oh, when, my Lord, shall I rejoice to see  
the vengeance, in Thy secret counsel hid,  
which now avails to make Thine anger sweet?  
What of the Holy Spirit's only Bride  
I said just now, and thereby made thee turn  
to me for explanation, serves as answer  
to all our prayers, as long as daylight lasts;  
but soon as night returns, instead of these,  
we utter words which sound the opposite.  
We thereupon rehearse Pygmalion's story,  
and how of him his greedy lust for gold  
a traitor made, a thief, and parricide;  
and avaricious Midas' misery,  
which followed from his covetous request,  
and at which one will always have to laugh.  
Next, foolish Achan every one recalls,  
who stole the plunder, so that even here  
the wrath of Joshua seems to bite him still.  
We then accuse Sapphira with her husband;  
we praise the kicks which Heliodorus got;  
while Polymnestor circles all the Mount  
in infamy, who Polydorus killed;  
and finally, our cry is: 'Tell us, Crassus,  
for thou dost know it, what 's the taste of gold?'  
Aloud at times speaks one, another low,  
as each one's feelings spur him on to speak,  
in stronger now, and now in weaker tones;  
hence I, in speaking of the good, which here  
is talked about by day, was not alone;  
but near us here none other spoke aloud."  
Already had we gone away from him,  
striving to make our way along the path  
as fast as was allowed our powers; when I,  
like something falling, felt the Mountain quake;  
then such a chill took hold of me, as he  
is wont to have who goeth to his death.  
Delos, indeed, shook not so terribly,  
before Latona made therein her nest,  
in order to give birth to heaven's two eyes.  
Then such a cry arose on every side,  
that close to me my Teacher drew, and said:  
"Be not afraid, while I am guiding thee!"  
"*Glory to God*" they all said, "*in the highest*,"

as far as I could understand from those near by,  
where what was being shouted could be heard.  
Both motionless and in suspense we stood,  
as stood the shepherds who first heard that song,  
till, when the trembling stopped, the shouting ceased.  
Thereafter we resumed our holy journey,  
watching the shades that lay upon the ground,  
returned already to their wonted plaint.  
No ignorance had ever with as great  
anxiety made me desire to know,  
unless in this my memory go astray,  
as that which, as I thought, I seemed to have;  
I neither dared to ask, because of haste,  
nor could I see there anything myself;  
so on I went, timid and lost in thought.

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## PURGATORIO XXI

*Purgatory. The Fifth Ring. Avarice and Prodigality*

*Statius. The Cause of the Earthquake*

The natural thirst, which never can be quenched,  
save by the water asked for by the lowly  
young woman of Samaria as a boon,  
was troubling me, while hurry spurred me on  
behind my Leader o'er the cumbered path,  
and I was grieving for the just revenge.  
Then lo, as Luke records for us that Christ,  
when risen from the burial cave, appeared  
before the two upon the road, a shade  
appeared, and came behind us as we watched  
the crowd, which lay around us at our feet;  
but we perceived him not; hence he spoke first,  
and said: "May God, my brethren, give you peace!"  
We turned at once, and to this greeting Virgil  
replied with that which corresponds to it.  
Then he began: "Within the blest assembly  
mayst thou be set at peace by that just court  
which in eternal exile bindeth me."  
"What!" he replied, as quickly on we went,  
"If ye are shades whom God deigns not on high,  
who guided you so far along His stairs?"  
My Teacher then: "If thou regard the marks  
which this one bears, and which the Angel draws,  
thou 'lt see that with the good he needs must reign.  
But whereas she, who spinneth night and day,  
had not as yet drawn off for him the flax,  
which Clotho lays and packs for every one,  
his soul, which sister is to thee and me,  
could not, in climbing here, come up alone,  
because it seeth not as we. Hence I  
out of the ample throat of Hell was drawn,  
to show the way to him, and I shall show it,  
as far as e'er my school can lead him on.  
But tell us, if thou knowest, why the Mountain  
shook so just now, and why all seemed to shout  
with one accord down to its oozy base?"  
Thus by his asking he had threaded so  
the needle's eye of my desire, that, merely  
with hope, my thirst had come to be less craving.  
The former then began: "Nothing exists

which this Mount's sacred government can feel,  
that void of order is, or 'gainst its wont.  
From every change this place up here is free;  
whate'er Heaven's self from its own self receives,  
can be the cause of it, and nothing else;  
for neither rain, nor hail, nor snow, nor dew,  
nor frost falls any higher up than lies  
the little stairway of the three short steps;  
clouds neither dense or rarefied appear,  
nor lightning flashes, nor yet Thaumás' daughter,  
who often changes quarter in the world.  
Dry vapor goes no higher than the top  
of those three steps whereof I spoke to thee,  
and on which Peter's vicar hath his feet.  
Below, perhaps, it trembles more or less,  
but never quakes up here because of wind  
concealed, I know not how, inside the earth.  
It trembles here whenever any soul  
feels pure enough to rise, or starts to climb;  
and such a cry as this endorses it.  
Of purity the will alone gives proof,  
which, seizing on the soul, now wholly free  
to change its company, by willing helps it.  
It wills this from the first; but that desire  
which, 'gainst the will, God's Justice turns toward pain,  
as it was once toward sin, allows it not.  
And I, who have five hundred years and more  
lain in this woe, felt only now within me  
a free volition for a better sphere.  
That 's why thou didst the earthquake feel, and hear  
the pious spirits on this Mountain praise  
that Lord, who soon, I pray, will send them up.”  
He thus addressed us; and, since one in drink  
delights, according as his thirst is great,  
I could not say how much he did me good.  
And my wise Leader: “Now I see the net  
which holds you here, and how it opens, why  
it trembles here, and why ye all rejoice.  
Now who thou wast be pleased to let me know,  
and also let thy words include for me  
why thou hast lain so many centuries here.”  
“At that time when, helped by the Most High King,  
good Titus took due vengeance for the wounds,  
from which came forth the blood by Judas sold,  
I was in great renown” that spirit said,  
“up yonder with the name which longest lasts,  
and honors most, but not as yet with faith.  
So sweet my song, that, though a Toulousan,

Rome drew me to herself, where I deserved  
to have my temples crowned with myrtle wreath.  
Statius they call me still up there; of Thebes  
I sang, of great Achilles next; but 'neath  
this second load I sank upon the way.  
The seeds of my enthusiasm were the sparks,  
which warmed me, of that fire divine, wherewith  
more than a thousand poets are enflamed;  
I mean the Aeneid, which my mother was  
and nurse in poetry; and, lacking which,  
not by a drachm's weight had I stirred the scales.  
And to have lived on earth when Virgil lived,  
to one sun's period more would I consent  
than what I owe, to issue from my ban."  
These words turned Virgil toward me with a look,  
which, silently, "Be silent!" said; and yet  
the power that wills can not do everything;  
for tears and laughter follow so the passion,  
from which they each take rise, that least of all  
do they obey the will in those most truthful.  
I only smiled, like one who winks; whereat  
the shade kept still, and looked into my eyes,  
wherein expression is most fixed, and said:  
"So mayst thou bring unto a happy end  
so great a toil, why was it that thy face  
showed me just now the flashing of a smile?"  
I now am caught on one side and the other;  
one asks for silence, the other conjures me  
to speak; I therefore sigh, and by my Teacher  
am understood. "Be not afraid to talk,"  
the latter said to me, "but speak, and tell him  
what he so eagerly desires to know."  
I therefore said: "Perhaps thou marvellest,  
O ancient spirit, at the smile I gave;  
but I would have still greater wonder seize thee.  
This spirit here, who upward leads mine eyes,  
that Virgil is, from whom thou didst of old  
derive the strength to sing of men and gods.  
If thou hast given my smile some other cause,  
leave it as not the true one, and believe  
it was the words thyself didst say of him."  
Already was he stooping to embrace  
my Teacher's feet; but he said: "Brother, no;  
for thou, a shade now, dost a shade behold."  
Rising, he said: "Thou now canst understand  
the sum of love which warmeth me toward thee,  
since I forget our disembodied state,  
and act with shades as if they solid were."



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## PURGATORIO XXII

*Purgatory. Statius. The Angel of Justice*

*The Sixth Ring. Gluttony. Instances of Temperance*

Already was the Angel left behind,  
the Angel who had toward the sixth ring turned us,  
after erasing from my face a wound;  
and he had said to us that those are blest,  
whose longing is for justice, and his words,  
with nothing further, ended this with “*thirst*.”  
Hence, lighter now than at the other passes,  
I so advanced, that I, without fatigue,  
was following up the spirits who were swift,  
when Virgil thus began: “A love that flames,  
by virtue kindled, always lights another,  
if but its flame be outwardly revealed.  
And therefore from the hour when Juvenal,  
who let me know thy love for me, came down  
among us in the Borderland of Hell,  
my good will hath been such toward thee, that none  
e’er bound me more to one I had not seen;  
these stairs will, therefore, now seem short to me.  
But tell me, and forgive me as a friend,  
if too great confidence relax my rein,  
and as a friend converse with me henceforth:  
how was it avarice could find a place  
within thy breast together with such wisdom,  
as that wherewith thou by thy zeal wast filled?”  
At first these words made Statius smile a little;  
and then he answered: “Every word of thine  
is of thy love for me a precious proof.  
Things, of a truth, quite frequently appear,  
which offer one false arguments for doubt,  
because their real occasions are concealed.  
Thy question makes me sure of thy belief,  
due, maybe, to the ring where I was found,  
that I was in the last life avaricious.  
Know, then, that avarice was too far from me,  
and that this lack of temperance on my part  
thousands of courses of the moon have punished.  
And were it not that I corrected me,  
when I had understood thee in thy cry,  
indignant, as it were, with human nature:  
‘Why dost thou not, O virtuous love of gold,

govern the appetite of mortal men?’  
I ’d now, by rolling, feel the wretched jousts.  
I then perceived that hands could ope their wings  
too much in spending, and repented me  
of that, as well as of my other sins.  
How many from the grave shall hairless rise  
through ignorance which, in life and at the last,  
deprives them of repentance for this fault!  
Know, too, that any fault which of a sin  
is just the opposite, together with it  
drieth its green leaves here. If, therefore, I,  
to purge myself, have been among the folk  
who avarice bewail, to me it happened  
because of what was contrary thereto.”  
“When thou didst sing, then, of the cruel strife  
between the two afflictions of Jocasta,”  
said he who sang bucolic songs, “by that  
which Clio singeth with thee there, the faith,  
without which doing good is not enough,  
had not, it seems, yet made thee a believer.  
If this be so, what sun, or else what candles  
lightened thy darkness so, that thou thereafter  
didst set thy sails behind the Fisherman?”  
“Thou first didst send me to Parnassus’ slopes  
to drink,” he said to him, “and then the first  
thou wast, who, next to God, illumined me.  
Thou didst like him, who, when he walks by night,  
a light behind him bears nor helps himself,  
but maketh those that follow after see,  
when thou didst say: ‘The age renews itself;  
Justice returns, and man’s primeval times,  
as down from Heaven a new-born race descends.’  
Through thee a poet I became, through thee  
a Christian! But, that thou mayst better see  
my sketch, I ’ll set my hand to color it.  
Pregnant already with the true belief,  
sowed by the eternal Kingdom’s messengers,  
was every portion of the whole wide world;  
and now thy words, to which I ’ve just referred,  
with these new preachers harmonized so well,  
that I became accustomed to frequent them.  
Thereat so holy did they come to seem,  
that when Domitian persecuted them,  
their lamentations did not lack my tears;  
and while I still remained in yonder world,  
I helped them; and their upright mode of life  
caused me to treat with scorn all other sects.  
And ere in poetry I led the Greeks

to see the streams of Thebes, baptized I was;  
and yet, through fear, a secret Christian only,  
I long pretended faith in paganism;  
this lukewarmness around the fourth ring moved me  
till far beyond the fourth centennial year.  
Thou, therefore, that didst lift the covering veil  
which hid from me the good whereof I speak,  
tell me, while we have still a little more  
to climb, where our old Terence is, and where  
Cecilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou know;  
tell me if they are damned, and in what ward.”  
“Both they and Persius, I and many others”  
my Leader answered him, “are with the Greek,  
whom more than any else the Muses nursed,  
in the first circle of the sightless Prison;  
and frequently we talk about the mount,  
which always hath our nurses on its slopes.  
Euripides and Antiphon are there  
with us, Simonides and Agathon,  
and many other Greeks, who once adorned  
their brows with laurel. There, of thine own folk,  
Antigone is seen, Deiphile,  
Argia, and, as sad as once, Ismène.  
There, too, may she be seen, who showed Langia;  
there is Tiresias’ daughter, Thetis also,  
and with her sisters there, Deidamia.”  
And now the Poets, both of them, were silent,  
intent again on looking round, since free  
from climbing up and free from walls; and while  
four handmaids of the day had dropped behind,  
the fifth was at the sun-car’s pole, still upward  
pointing its burning horn; whereat my Leader:  
“I think that it behooves us now to turn  
our right sides toward the outer edge, and circle  
the Mountain as our wont it is to do.”  
Thus was our custom our instructor there;  
and with less doubt we started on again,  
because of that deserving soul’s assent.  
In front they went, and I behind, alone,  
listening the while to what they had to say,  
which gave me understanding for my verse.  
But soon their pleasant talk a Tree broke off,  
which in the middle of the road we found,  
with fruit agreeable and sweet to smell;  
and as a fir-tree tapers up from branch  
to branch, so likewise this one tapered down,  
in order, I believe, that none may climb it.  
And on the side on which our path was closed,

down from the lofty cliff a limpid stream  
was falling, and spraying upward o'er its leaves.  
Then toward the Tree the two Bards turned their steps;  
and from among its leaves a voice cried out:  
"Of this food there will be for you a dearth!"  
Then: "More did Mary think of honoring,  
the marriage feast, and making it complete,  
than of her mouth, which pleadeth now for you;  
the ancient Roman women were content  
with water for their only drink; and Daniel  
thought little of his food, but wisdom gained.  
The primal age was beautiful as gold;  
with hunger it made acorns sweet to taste,  
and nectar every little brook, with thirst.  
Honey and flying locusts were the food  
which fed the Baptist in the wilderness;  
hence he is now as glorious and as great,  
as by the Gospel is revealed to you."

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## PURGATORIO XXIII

*Purgatory. The Sixth Ring. Gluttony*

*The Punishment of Gluttons. Forese Donati*

While I, as likewise he is wont to do,  
who wastes his life in hunting little birds,  
was piercing thus the green leaves with mine eyes,  
my more than Father said to me: "My son,  
come on now, for the time assigned to us  
should be more usefully distributed."  
I turned my face, and, no less soon, my steps  
behind the Sages, who so talked, that walking  
they caused to be of no expense to me.  
Then lo, in tearful and in singing tones  
"*My lips, O Lord*" was heard in such a way,  
that to delight and sorrow it gave birth.  
"O gentle Father, what is that I hear?"  
said I; and he then: "Shades who, moving on,  
loosen, perhaps, the knot of what they owe."  
As pilgrim travellers do, who lost in thought,  
on meeting unknown people on the road,  
turn round to look at them, but do not stop;  
ev'n so behind us, though more quickly moving,  
there came a band of souls, who as they passed,  
devout and silent, gazed at us in wonder.  
Each was expressionless and hollow-eyed,  
pale in his face, and lacking so in flesh,  
that of his bones his skin assumed the shape.  
I do not think that even Erysichthon  
became so withered into utter skin,  
because of fasting, when he feared it most.  
Thinking within myself, I said: "Behold  
the people who once lost Jerusalem,  
when Mary thrust her beak into her son!"  
The sockets of their eyes seemed gemless rings;  
and he that OMO reads in human faces,  
would surely there have recognized the M.  
Who would believe the perfume of a fruit  
and odor of a water could so act,  
and cause such craving, if he knew not how?  
I still was wondering what so famished them,  
because the reason of their being lean,  
and of their wretched scurf was not yet clear;  
when lo, a shade from deep within his head

turning his eyes toward me, looked hard, and then  
cried out aloud: "What grace is this to me?"  
I never should have known him by his face;  
but that to me was in his voice revealed,  
which in itself his aspect had suppressed.  
That spark rekindled all that I had known  
of that disfigured countenance, and thus  
I recognized it as Forese's face.  
"Ah, prithee, heed thou not the dried up scab,"  
he pleaded, "which discolors thus my skin,  
nor any lack of flesh that I may have!  
But tell the truth about thyself, and who  
those two souls are, who bear thee company;  
refrain no longer from addressing me."  
I answered him: "Thy face, which once as dead  
I mourned for, gives me now no smaller cause  
for weeping, that I see it so disfigured.  
For God's sake tell me, then, what strips you thus;  
make me not talk and wonder, too; for ill  
can he converse, who longs for something else."  
"A virtue from the Eternal Will" he said,  
"comes down into the water and the Tree  
we left behind, whereby I thus grow lean.  
And all these people who in tears are singing,  
because of following unchecked love of food,  
are here resanctified in thirst and hunger.  
The pleasant odor, issuing from the fruit,  
and from the spray which o'er the verdure spreads,  
kindles in us the wish to eat and drink.  
And not once only is our pain renewed,  
as on this floor we move around — our pain,  
I say, though solace ought to be my word;  
for to the Tree doth that same longing lead us,  
which once led Christ in happiness to cry:  
'*My God!*', when with His blood He set us free."  
And I to him: "Forese, from the day,  
when thou didst for a better life change world,  
five years have not yet rolled away till now.  
If power of sinning further ended in thee  
before the coming of that happy hour  
of sorrow, which reweddeth us to God,  
how is it thou art come up here? I thought  
that I should find thee still below, down there,  
where time restores itself by means of time."  
Whence he to me: "My Nella, with the tears  
which streamed from her, enabled me to drink  
the pleasant wormwood of this pain so soon.  
She, with her pious prayers and with her sighs,

hath drawn me from the hillside where one waits,  
and freed me from the other lower rings.  
So much the dearer a delight to God  
is my poor widow whom I loved so much,  
the more alone she is in doing right;  
for far more modest in its women is  
the wild Barbagia region of Sardinia,  
than the Barbagia which I left her in.  
O my dear brother, what wouldst have me say?  
I have, e'en now, a future time in sight,  
to which this hour will not be very old,  
when from the pulpit shameless Florence women  
will be prohibited to go abroad  
showing their bosoms with the breasts exposed.  
What Barbary women, or what Saracens  
e'er needed spiritual or other laws,  
to keep them covered up when going out?  
But if the shameless ones were sure of what  
a swiftly moving heaven prepares for them,  
their mouths for howling would be open now;  
for, if my foresight here deceive me not,  
they 'll grieve, ere that one's cheek grows hair, who still  
is hushed with lullabies. Now, brother, see,  
I pray, that from me thou no longer hide!  
Thou seest that not only I, but all  
these people gaze where thou dost veil the sun."  
Hence I to him: "If thou recall to mind  
what thou with me wast once, and with thee I,  
still grievous will our present memory be.  
Who goes before me turned me from that life  
the other day, when that one's sister round  
was seen by you;" (and at the sun I pointed).  
"Through the deep night hath he conducted me,  
and from among the truly dead, still clothed  
in this real flesh, which follows in his steps.  
Thence his encouragements have drawn me on,  
as up I climbed, and circled round the Mount,  
which straightens you whom crooked made the world.  
He says that he will make me his companion,  
till there I am, where Beatrice shall be;  
up there without him must I needs remain.  
Virgil is he, who tells me so," (at him  
I pointed), "and this other one, the shade,  
because of whom just now on every slope  
your Realm, which from itself removes him, quaked."

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## PURGATORIO XXIV

*Purgatory. The Sixth Ring. Gluttony*

*Instances of Gluttony. The Angel of Temperance*

Speaking slowed not our gait, nor did our gait  
our speaking; but, still talking, we went on  
apace, as, by a fair wind driv'n, a ship.  
The shades, meanwhile, who looked like things twice dead,  
drew wonder through their hollowed eyes at me,  
when they perceived that I was still alive.  
And I, continuing my talking, said:  
"He, for another's sake, is going up  
more slowly than, perhaps, he else would do.  
But, if thou know, say where Piccarda is;  
and whether I see any here worth noting  
among these people who so gaze at me."  
"My sister who, 'tween fair and good, was most  
I know not which, on high Olympus triumphs,  
happy already in the crown she wears."  
This he said first, and then: "We 're not forbid  
to name each here, since by our abstinence,  
our aspects are so greatly milked away.  
This Bonagiunta is," his finger showed him,  
"the Lucca Bonagiunta; while the face  
beyond him, more embroidered than the rest,  
had in his arms the Holy Church; of Tours  
he was, and now, by fasting, expiates  
Bolsena's eels and rare vernaccia wine."  
And many more he named me, one by one;  
and all, when named, seemed satisfied, hence I,  
because of this, saw not a gloomy act.  
Using their teeth through hunger, though in vain,  
I saw both Ubaldino della Pila,  
and Boniface, who pastured with his crook  
much folk. I Ser Marchese saw, who once  
had time to drink less dryly at Forlì,  
yet such he was, that he did not feel sated.  
But, as one looks, and more of one man thinks  
than of another, so did I at him  
of Lucca, who, it seemed, most wished to know me.  
He murmured, and I heard I know not what  
about 'Gentucca,' uttered where he felt  
the wound of Justice which consumes them so.  
"O soul, that seemst so fain to speak to me,"



said I, “so do that I may understand,  
and with thy words appease thyself and me.”  
“There is a woman born,” he then began,  
“nor weareth yet the veil, who, howsoe’er  
it be reproached, shall cause my town to please thee.  
With this prevision shalt thou now go on;  
and if by what I murmured thou wast led  
astray, events shall make it clear to thee.  
But tell me whether him I here behold,  
who those new rhymes produced, which thus begin:  
*‘Ye ladies, who well know what loving is.’*”  
And him I answered: “I am one, who heed  
when Love within me breathes, and outwardly  
express myself as in me Love dictates.”  
“O brother, now I see” said he, “the bar,  
which kept this side the sweet new style I hear,  
the Notary, Guittone, and myself.  
I clearly see that your pens closely follow  
in the dictator’s wake, which certainly  
was not the case with ours; and he who further  
sets himself most to look, between these styles  
perceives no other difference.” Whereupon,  
as if content with this, he ceased to speak.  
As birds that spend the winter ’long the Nile,  
form in the air at times a flock, and then  
with greater speed fly on, and in a line  
advance; so likewise all the people there,  
quickened their steps with faces turned around,  
since through their leanness light, and through their will.  
And as a man who weary is of running,  
lets his companions go, and only walks,  
until the panting of his chest has ceased;  
ev’n so Forese let the holy flock  
pass on, and saying: “When shall I again  
behold thee?” came along behind with me.  
“I know not,” I replied, “how long I ’ll live;  
but I shall not so soon return, that sooner  
I shall not with my will be on the shore;  
because the place where I was set to live,  
strips itself further day by day of goodness,  
and now to dismal ruin seems ordained.”  
“Now go,” said he, “for him I see, who most  
hath blame for this, behind a beast’s tail dragged  
down to the Vale, where none e’er frees himself  
from fault. The beast with every step goes faster,  
and ever faster, till it hurls him down,  
and leaves his body in disgraceful plight.  
Those spheres have not much further to revolve,”

(he raised his eyes toward heaven) “ere clear to thee  
will that become, which my words can explain  
no more. Stay now behind; for in this Realm  
so precious is our time, that, coming thus  
at even pace with thee, I lose too much.”  
As at a gallop from a riding troop  
a horseman issues forth at times, and goes  
to win the honor of the first encounter;  
so he with longer strides departed from us;  
and on the road with those two I remained,  
who of the world such mighty marshals were.  
When he had gone so far ahead, that now  
mine eyes became such followers of his form,  
as of his words my mind, the heavy laden  
and living branches of another Tree  
appeared before me not so far away,  
since toward it I had only then turned round.  
Beneath it folk I saw with upraised hands,  
who toward the foliage cried I know not what,  
like eager children who in vain beseech,  
while he, to whom they pray, replieth not,  
but with a view to make their longing keen,  
holds what they long for up, and hides it not.  
They then departed, as if undeceived;  
and thereupon to that great Tree we came,  
which turns away so many prayers and tears.  
“Pass on without approaching! Higher up  
a Tree there is, which bitten was by Eve,  
and this one is an offshoot sprung from that.”  
Thus said I know not who among the branches;  
hence Virgil, I, and Statius, close together,  
advanced along the side which rises up.  
“Recall” he said, “those cursèd cloud-born creatures,  
who, gorged with food and drink, ’gainst Theseus strove  
with double breasts; the Hebrews, too, recall,  
who at their drinking showed that they were soft,  
whence as his fellows Gideon had them not,  
when he on Midian down the hills advanced.”  
Thus, hugging close one margin of the ring,  
we passed, and heard of gluttonies,  
which once were followed by distressful gains.  
Then, spreading out across the lonely path,  
more than a thousand steps had borne us on,  
in contemplation each without a word.  
“What think ye three, as thus alone ye go?”  
a voice cried suddenly; whereat I started,  
as scared and sluggish beasts are wont to do.  
I raised my head to see who this might be;

and ne'er were metals in a furnace seen,  
or glass, as red and bright, as one I saw  
who said: "If ye are pleased to mount above,  
ye must in this direction turn aside;  
this way goes he, who goes in quest of peace."  
His aspect had bereft me of my sight;  
I therefore turned and stepped behind my Teachers  
like one who guides his feet by what he hears.  
And as, when heralding the light of dawn,  
the breeze of May sheds fragrance as it stirs,  
all redolent of grasses and of flowers;  
so, 'gainst my brow I felt a zephyr's stroke,  
and well perceived the motion of the wing  
which made me scent ambrosian odors there.  
*"Blessèd are they, whom so much Grace illumines,"*  
I heard one saying, "that the love of taste  
stirs not too great a longing in their breast,  
but always hunger only as is right!"

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## PURGATORIO XXV

*Purgatory. The Seventh Ring. Lust*

*Sensuality Punished. Instances of Chastity*

The hour was when ascent brooked no delay,  
because the sun had left the noon-time ring  
to Taurus, as to Scorpio had the Night;  
therefore, as doth a man who, whatsoe'er  
appear to him, stops not, but goes his way,  
if spurred by goading of necessity;  
so, one before the other, through the gap  
we entered in, and took the flight of stairs,  
which by its narrowness parts those who climb.  
And like the little stork, which lifts its wings,  
because it longs to fly, but ventures not  
to leave its nest, and lets them droop again;  
even such was I, with kindled, and with quenched  
desire to ask, when coming to the act  
of one who starts to speak. Nor, though our pace  
was fast, did my dear Father check himself,  
but said to me: "Discharge the bow of speech,  
which to the arrow-head thou now hast drawn."  
With confidence I opened then my mouth,  
and said: "How can one possibly grow lean,  
where need of nourishment doth not obtain?"  
"Shouldst thou recall" he said, "how, when the brand  
was burning, Meleager was consumed,  
this would not be so difficult for thee;  
and shouldst thou think how, at your quivering,  
your image quivers in the looking-glass,  
that which seems hard to thee would easy seem.  
But that thou ease thee to thy heart's content,  
lo, here is Statius; him I call and beg  
that he be now a healer of thy wounds."  
"If I unfold for him the eternal view,  
when in thy presence," Statius then replied,  
"be my excuse that I cannot refuse thee."  
He then began: "If, son, thy mind shall hear  
and understand my words, they 'll prove a light  
for thee unto the 'how' which thou dost ask.  
The perfect blood, which by the thirsty veins  
is never drunk, but stays as doth the food  
which from the table thou dost take away,  
gets in the heart a power informative

for all the human members, being that  
which floweth through the veins to form the same.  
When redigested, it flows down to parts,  
whereof more seemly silence is than speech;  
then on another's blood it trickles thence  
into the natural vessel. There both meet,  
passive the one, the other active, since  
perfect the place from which it was distilled;  
joining the former, it begins to work,  
coagulating first, then quickening that,  
which it had formed as matter for itself.  
The active virtue, now become a soul, —  
as of a plant, though so far differing from it,  
that this is on its way, and that, arrived, —  
so worketh next, that now it moves and feels,  
like fungi of the sea; then undertakes  
to organize the powers whose germ it is.  
That virtue, son, now spreads, and now extends,  
which from the generator's heart derives,  
where Nature on all members is intent.  
But how from animal it comes to be  
a child, thou see'st not yet; a point so hard,  
it led a wiser man than thou so far  
astray, that, in his teaching, from the soul  
he parted the potential intellect,  
because he saw no organ it assumed.  
Open thy mind unto the coming truth,  
and know that, when the brain's organization  
is in the foetus to perfection brought,  
the Primal Mover, glad of such a work  
of Nature, turns toward it, and breathes therein  
a spirit new and full of powers, which draws  
into its substance what it active finds  
therein, and so becomes a single soul,  
which lives and feels, and on itself reflects.  
And that the less thou wonder at my words,  
consider how to wine the sun's heat turns,  
when joined to juices flowing from the vine!  
When Lachesis hath no more thread, the soul  
frees itself from the flesh, and bears away  
potentially the human and divine;  
mute one and all the other faculties,  
with memory, intelligence, and will  
far keener in their action than before.  
Then, without stopping, of itself it falls  
in wondrous way to one or other shore;  
here first it learns its road. As soon as place  
has circumscribed it there, the forming virtue

rays round it in the same degree and way,  
as when the members were alive it did;  
and as the air, when fully charged with rain,  
is by another's rays, which it reflects  
within itself, adorned with many hues;  
so here the neighboring air takes on the shape  
the soul, which settled there, impresses on it,  
as would a seal, by its own forming power;  
and afterward, as doth the little flame,  
which follows fire where'er it changes place,  
so the new shape accompanies its spirit;  
which, since it hence takes visibility,  
is called a shade; and therewith organizes  
each of the senses, up to that of sight.  
By means of this we speak, by means of this  
we laugh, and by this means we make the tears  
and sighs, thou mayst have heard upon the Mount.  
As our desires and other passions move us,  
our shade takes shape accordingly; and this  
the reason is of what thou wonderest at."  
We now had reached the final circling place,  
and, to the right hand having turned our steps,  
intent we were upon another care.  
The bank here outwardly shoots forth a flame,  
while upward from the ledge below a blast  
is breathed, which drives it back, and keeps it off;  
hence one by one along the open side  
we had to walk; while I on one hand feared  
the fire, and, on the other, falling down.  
My Leader said to me: "Along this path  
a tight rein must be kept upon one's eyes,  
for one might very easily go wrong."  
"*O God of highest Clemency,*" I then  
heard sung within the bosom of the fire,  
whose glowing no less made me wish to turn;  
and spirits moving through the flame I saw;  
hence at their steps I looked, and at mine own,  
lending my eyes to each from time to time.  
After the lines with which that hymn concludes,  
aloud they shouted: "*I know not a man;*"  
then in low tones began the hymn again.  
They cried again, this ended: "To the woods  
Diana kept, and thence drove Hêlicē,  
for having known the taste of Venus' poison."  
Then they resumed the song; and then proclaimed  
the names of wives and husbands who were chaste,  
as virtue and the marriage state enjoin.  
And this course, I believe, suffices them

for all the period, during which the fire  
is burning them; and such the care and diet,  
wherewith the wound is finally sewed up.

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## PURGATORIO XXVI

*Purgatory. The Seventh Ring. Lust*

*Instances of Natural and of Unnatural Lust*

While thus, one 'fore the other, 'long the edge  
we went, and my good Teacher often said:  
“Attention pay; and let my warning help thee!”  
the sun, which with its rays was changing now  
from azure all the western skies to white,  
was on my right side striking me; and I  
was with my shadow giving to the flame  
a brighter red; I noticed many shades  
give heed to this small sign, as on they moved.  
This was what started them to speak of me;  
and they began to say among themselves:  
“That one seems not to have an unreal body.”  
Then some of them, as far as possible  
drew near to me, though always with due care  
not to come out where they would not be burned.  
“O thou that goest on behind the rest,  
though not from sloth, but from respect, perhaps  
reply to me, who burn with thirst and fire!  
Nor is by me alone thine answer needed;  
for all these here have greater thirst therefor  
than Indians or Ethiopians for cold water.  
Inform us how it is that with thyself  
thou makest thus a wall against the sun,  
as if thou hadst not entered death's snare yet.”  
Thus one of them addressed me; and at once  
had I declared myself, had I not heeded  
another novelty which then appeared;  
for through the middle of the flaming road  
folk with their faces turned the other way  
came on, and made me stop to gaze at them.  
There all the shades on every side I see  
make haste, and, without stopping, kiss each other,  
with this short form of greeting satisfied.  
Thus one ant from among its dark host touches  
its muzzle to another's, to obtain,  
perhaps, directions as to path or fortune.  
As soon as they leave off their friendly greeting,  
and ere the first step has been taken there,  
each struggles to outcry the other shade;  
the new-come band shouts: “Sodom and Gomorrah!”



the other: "In the cow Pasiphaë  
reclines, that to her lust the bull may run."  
Thereat, like cranes, — if some of them should fly  
toward the Riphæan heights, and toward the sands  
the rest, these shunning ice, and those the sun, —  
one band departs, the other comes along;  
and weeping to their previous song they turn,  
and to the cry which best befitteth them.  
Then those same shades who had entreated me,  
drew near to me, as they had done before,  
with eagerness to listen in their looks.  
And I, who twice had seen what they desired,  
began: "O souls, who now are sure of having,  
whenever it may be, a state of peace,  
my body's members have not stayed beyond,  
either unripe or ripe, but with their blood,  
and with their joints are really with me here.  
I hence go up, to be no longer blind.  
On high a Lady wins us Grace, whereby  
I carry through your world my mortal part.  
But, so may your best wish be soon fulfilled,  
in order that that heaven may shelter you,  
which, full of love, is amplest in its spread,  
tell me, that I may rule more paper for it,  
both who ye are, and what is yonder crowd,  
which onward goes its way behind your backs."  
A mountaineer becomes not otherwise  
confused, nor, looking round, grows dumb,  
when, rough and wild, he enters first a town,  
than each shade did in its appearance there;  
but, when set free from that astonishment,  
which soon diminishes in high-born hearts,  
the one who questioned me before resumed:  
"Happy art thou, that shippest thus experience  
of these our bounds, that better thou mayst live!  
The people who come not along with us,  
in that offended, for which Caesar once  
when triumphing heard 'Queen' cried out against him;  
from us they therefore separate with cries  
of 'Sodom,' and by self-reproach assist,  
as thou hast heard, the burning by their shame.  
Our sin was intersexual; but, since we,  
by following our appetites like beasts,  
failed to conform ourselves to human law,  
to our confusion, when we leave the others,  
her name we cry, who bestialized herself  
by lying in the beast-resembling frame.  
Thou knowest now our deeds, and what our guilt;

if who we are thou 'dst know, perhaps, by name,  
there is no time to tell, nor could I do it.  
As to myself, I 'll rid thee of thy wish;  
I'm Guido Guinizelli, and purge me now,  
because of grieving well before the end."  
As in Lycurgus' anguish those two sons  
became, when they again beheld their mother,  
ev'n such did I, though I went not so far,  
when him I heard self-named, who father was  
to me and others, better men than I,  
who e'er made sweet and graceful rhymes of love;  
hence, lost in thought, nor hearing aught or speaking,  
I moved, and long I gazed at him in wonder,  
but, for the fire, no nearer drew to him.  
When I with looking had been fully fed,  
I put myself entirely at his service  
with those assurances which win belief.  
And he: "Thou leav'st in me a memory,  
from what I hear, so great and plain, that Lethe  
can neither wipe it out nor make it dim.  
But, if thy words swore what was true just now,  
tell me: why hast thou by thy speech and looks  
revealed to me that thou dost hold me dear?"  
And I to him: "'T was those sweet rhymes of yours  
which, while the modern form of speech endures,  
will e'er endear to me their very ink."  
"Brother," he said, "he whom I indicate,"  
(he pointed at a spirit on ahead)  
was of his mother tongue a better smith.  
In love-songs and in stories of romance  
he vanquished all; hence let those fools talk on,  
who think the Limousin excelleth him.  
To rumor, rather than to truth, they turn  
their faces, forming their opinions thus,  
ere art or reason have by them been heeded.  
Thus with Guittone many ancients did,  
giving, from cry to cry, to him alone  
the prize, until with most the truth prevailed.  
If now so amply privileged thou art,  
that lawful is thy going to the cloister,  
where Christ is Abbot of the brotherhood,  
a Pater-noster say to Him for me,  
or all of it that we in this world need,  
wherein no longer it is ours to sin."  
And then, perhaps to yield his place to one  
near by him there, he vanished through the fire,  
as to the bottom would a fish through water.  
Toward him who had been pointed out I moved

a little way, and said that my desire  
was for his name a gracious place preparing.  
“Your courteous question” he, unurged, began,  
“delighteth me so much, that I can not,  
nor do I wish to, hide myself from you.  
Arnaut am I, who, going, weep and sing;  
with sorrow my past folly I behold,  
and see with joy the hoped-for coming day.  
Now by the Power which guides you to the top  
of this short flight of stairs, I beg of you  
be mindful in due time of this my pain!”  
Then in the fire refining them he hid.

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## PURGATORIO XXVII

*Purgatory. The Seventh Ring. Lust. The Angel of Purity*

*Dante's Third Dream. Virgil's Last Words*

As when he sends his earliest quivering beams  
where his Creator shed his blood, while Ebro  
'neath lofty Libra falls, and Ganges' waves  
are being scalded by the heat of noon,  
so stood the sun; daylight was, hence, departing,  
when God's glad Messenger appeared to us.  
Outside the flames upon the bank he stood,  
and, in a voice far clearer than is ours  
was singing: "*Blessèd are the pure in heart!*"  
"No further may ye go, ye holy souls,  
until the fire have burned you; enter it,  
and be not deaf unto the song beyond!"  
he told us next, when we were near to him;  
hence I, on hearing him, became like one  
who in the grave is laid. Clasp my hands  
together, over them I bowed, and watched  
the fire, while vivid images I formed  
of human bodies I had once seen burned.  
Toward me my kindly Escorts turned around;  
and Virgil said to me: "There may, my son,  
be pain here, but not death. Recall to mind,  
recall to mind! . . . if even on Geryon's back  
I safely led thee, what shall I do now,  
that nearer God I am? Assuredly believe  
that, if within the center of this flame  
thou shouldst for ev'n a thousand years remain,  
it could not make thee lose a single hair;  
and if, perchance, thou think that I deceive thee,  
draw near to it, and make thyself believe  
with thine own hands upon thy garment's hem.  
Lay now aside, lay now aside all fear!  
Turn round toward me, and come ahead, assured!"  
And yet, though 'gainst my conscience, I moved not.  
On seeing me still motionless and firm,  
somewhat disturbed, he said: "Now see, my son;  
this wall remains 'tween Beatrice and thee."  
As Pyramus, when dying, at the name  
of Thisbe, oped his eyes, and looked at her,  
what time the mulberry became vermilion;  
ev'n so, my stubbornness becoming weak,

I turned to my wiser Leader, when I heard  
the name that ever wells up in my heart.  
Thereat he shook his head, and said: "What 's this?  
Do we on this side wish to stay?" then smiled,  
as one does at a child an apple wins.  
Then, entering the fire in front of me,  
Statius he begged to come behind, who erst  
had over a long road divided us.  
When once inside, I would have thrown myself,  
that I might cool me, into boiling glass,  
so without measure was the burning there.  
My tender Father, to encourage me,  
talked, as we moved, of Beatrice alone,  
and said: "I seem to see her eyes already."  
A voice that sang upon the further side,  
was guiding us; and we, on it alone  
intent, came forth to where the ascent began.  
"*Ye blessèd of my Father, come!*" was said  
within a light there, such that I thereby  
was overcome, and could not look at it.  
"The sun is setting, and the evening comes;"  
it added, "tarry not, but hasten on,  
while yet the western sky has not grown dark."  
Straight upward went the pathway through the rock  
in such direction, that in front of me  
I cut the low sun's rays; not many stairs  
had we yet tried, when I and my wise Leaders  
were, by my shadow's vanishing, aware  
that back of us the sun had gone to rest.  
And ere in all of its unmeasured range  
the horizon had assumed one single tone,  
and night had everywhere diffused itself,  
each of a step had made himself a bed;  
because the nature of the Mount deprived us  
rather of power to climb than of desire.  
Like goats which, swift of foot and wanton once  
when on the mountain heights, ere being fed,  
grow tamely quiet when they ruminate,  
all silent in the shade, while yet the sun  
is hot, and guarded by a herd who leans  
upon his staff, and serves them as he leans;  
and like the shepherd in the open living,  
who calmly spends the night beside his flock,  
and keepeth watch lest some wild animal  
should scatter it; ev'n such all three of us  
were then, I like a goat, and they like shepherds,  
by the high rock hemmed in on either side.  
But little of the outer world could there

be seen; but through that little I perceived  
the stars more bright and larger than their wont.  
While I was ruminating thus, and thus  
was gazing at them, sleep o’ertook me; sleep,  
which oft receiveth news of future things  
before they are. At that same hour, methinks,  
when Cytherèa, who, it seems, e’er burns  
with fires of love, beamed first upon the Mount  
from out the East, dreaming I seemed to see  
a Lady, young and fair, who, gathering flowers,  
was walking through a field, and as she sang,  
said: “Know, who asks my name, that I am Leah,  
and that I move my lovely hands about  
to make myself a wreath. To please myself  
when at my mirror, I adorn me here;  
but never doth my sister Rachel leave  
her looking-glass, but sits there all day long.  
Her pleasure is to see her lovely eyes,  
as mine is to adorn me with my hands;  
seeing contenteth her, and doing, me.”  
And now, before the splendid beams of dawn,  
which rise with greater thanks from travelers,  
as, coming home, they lodge less far away,  
the shades of night were fleeing everywhere,  
and with them sleep; hence I arose and saw  
that my great Teachers had already risen.  
“That pleasant fruit, which on so many boughs  
the care of men is ever looking for,  
shall give thine every hunger peace today.”  
These were the very words which Virgil used,  
when turned toward me; and never were there gifts,  
which in their sweetness could have equaled these.  
Such longing upon longing overcame me  
to be above, that at each step thereafter,  
I felt my pinions growing for the flight.  
When all the stairway had beneath us passed,  
and we were standing on its topmost step,  
on me then Virgil fixed his eyes, and said:  
“The temporal and the eternal fire, my son,  
thou now hast seen, and to a place art come,  
where I can, of myself, no further see.  
I’ve brought thee here by genius and by art;  
henceforth as leader thine own pleasure take;  
forth art thou from both steep and narrow paths.  
Behold the sun there shining on thy brow;  
behold the tender grass, the flowers and shrubs,  
which here the soil yields of itself alone.  
Until in happiness those lovely eyes

appear, which, weeping, made me come to thee,  
thou mayst be seated, or among them walk.  
From me expect no further word or sign.  
Free, right and sound is thine own will, and wrong  
were not to act according to its hest;  
hence o'er thyself I crown and mitre thee."

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## PURGATORIO XXVIII

*Terrestrial Paradise. The Divine Forest*

*Matelda. The River Lethe*

Keen now to look within and round about  
the wood divine, whose foliage dense and green  
was tempering for mine eyes the new day's light,  
waiting no longer there, I left the edge,  
and entered very slowly on the plain,  
across a soil which everywhere breathed fragrance.  
A pleasant breeze, unvaried in itself,  
smote me upon the forehead with a stroke  
no greater than a gently blowing wind;  
whereby the branches trembling readily  
were all of them in that direction swaying,  
where first the holy Mount its shadow casts;  
yet ne'er deflecting from their upright state  
so much, that on their tops the little birds  
should give up practicing their every art;  
but singing with full gladness, they received  
the earliest breezes 'mong the leaves, which sang  
in undertone a burden to their songs,  
like that which gathers strength from bough to bough,  
throughout the grove of pines on Chiassi's shore,  
when Aeolus has set Scirocco free.  
My slow steps now had carried me so far  
inside the ancient wood, that I no longer  
could see whence I had entered it; then, lo,  
a stream deprived me of advancing further,  
which with its little waves was toward the left  
bending the grass which sprang upon its bank.  
All waters which are purest here on earth  
would seem to have within themselves some mixture,  
if they should be compared to that one there,  
which hideth naught, though very darkly flowing  
'neath the perpetual shade, which ne'er allows  
the rays of sun or moon to shine on it.  
I checked my feet, and with mine eyes passed on  
beyond the little stream, to gaze upon  
the great variety of flowering trees;  
and there, as when aught suddenly appears  
that turns through wonder every thought aside,  
a Lady all alone appeared to me,  
who singing went her way, and picking flowers,



wherewith her path on every side was painted.  
“Prithee, fair Lady, thou that in love’s beams  
art warming thee, if outward looks I trust,  
which use to be a witness to the heart,  
let it thy pleasure be” said I to her,  
“to draw thee forward toward this stream so far,  
that I may understand what thou art singing.

Thou makest me recall both where and what  
Prosèrpina was at the time, when her  
her mother lost, and she the flowers of spring.”  
As turns around a lady who, while dancing,  
her feet together keeps and on the ground,  
and hardly sets one foot before the other;  
so on the little red and yellow flowers  
turned she toward me, no otherwise than would  
a virgin lowering her modest eyes;  
and satisfied my prayers, for near to me  
she drew in such a way, that her sweet tones  
reached me with all of their significance.  
As soon as she was where the grass is bathed  
by that fair river’s wavelets, she conferred  
on me the gift of raising up her eyes.  
Nor do I think so bright a light shone forth  
from under Venus’ eyelids, when transfixed,  
wholly against his custom, by her son.  
As smiling on the other bank she stood,  
her hands kept picking other bright-hued flowers,  
which without seed the highland there brings forth.  
The river kept us still three steps apart;  
but ev’n the Hellespont, where Xerxes crossed it,  
a bridle still to every human pride,  
endured no greater hatred from Leander,  
because it surged ’tween Sestos and Abydos,  
than this from me because it then oped not.  
“New-comers are ye,” she began, “and hence  
because I smile in this place, which was chosen  
for human nature as its nest, some doubt,  
perhaps, still keeps you wondering here; and yet  
the psalm called ‘*Delectasti*’ gives you light,  
which from your minds can drive away your mist.  
And thou that art in front and didst entreat me,  
say whether thou wouldst hear aught else; for I  
came ready for thine every question’s need.”  
“The water and the music of the wood”  
said I, “impugn in me a recent faith  
in what I heard, which contradicted this.”  
Whence she: “I ’ll tell thee how from its own cause

proceedeth that which makes thee wonder now,  
and clear the mist obstructing thee. The Good  
Supreme, which only by Itself is pleased,  
made man both good and apt to good, and gave him  
this place as earnest of eternal peace.  
Through his own fault he but a little while  
stayed here; through his own fault, for tears and toil  
exchanged he honest laughter and sweet play.  
In order that the trouble which, below,  
the earth's and water's exhalations cause  
by their own trend, which is to follow heat  
as best they may, should wage no war on man,  
this Mountain rose up toward the sky thus far;  
and free from them it is from where it 's locked.  
And now, since all the atmosphere revolves  
and circles with the sphere of primal motion,  
unless its whirling round be somewhere broken,  
such motion strikes against this eminence,  
which in the living air is wholly free,  
and makes the forest, which is dense, resound;  
and so much power hath the stricken plant,  
that with its virtue it imbues the air,  
which by revolving scatters it about;  
the other land, as able of itself,  
or through its climate, next conceives and bears  
the divers qualities of divers trees.  
If this were heard, it would not seem to be  
a wonder yonder, when a plant takes root,  
without there being evidence of seed.  
And thou must know that all this holy plain  
where thou art now, is full of every seed,  
and fraught with fruit which yonder is not picked.  
The water thou beholdest wells not up  
from fountains fed by mists condensed by cold,  
as doth a stream which gains and loses breath;  
but issues from a sure and constant fount,  
which by the will of God regains as much  
as, open on both sides, it poureth forth.  
On this side with a virtue it descends,  
which takes from men all memory of sin;  
on the other it restoreth that of all  
good deeds. On this side it is Lethe called,  
on the other Eunoë, and worketh not,  
till tasted both on this side and on that.  
This greater is than are all other saviors;  
and though thy thirst might be completely sated,  
should I reveal no more to thee, I 'll give thee  
a corollary as a further grace;

nor do I think my words will be less dear  
to thee, should they extend beyond my promise.  
Those who in ancient times sang of the Age  
of Gold, and of its happy state, perchance  
dreamed on Parnassus of this very place.  
Here was the root of mankind innocent;  
spring's flowers and every fruit are always here;  
the nectar this, whereof all poets speak."  
Thereat I turned around and, having faced  
my Poets, I perceived that they had heard  
this last interpretation with a smile;  
then toward the Lady beautiful I turned my face.

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## PURGATORY XXIX

*Terrestrial Paradise. The River Lethe*

*The Mystic Pageant of the Church*

Singing as an enamoured lady would,  
when once her words were ended, she went on:  
“*Blessèd are they whose sins are covered up!*”  
And like the nymphs who used to go alone  
through woodland shades, desiring, one to see,  
the other to avoid, the sun; she then  
moved counter to the stream’s course, going up  
along its bank, and I at even pace,  
matching her little steps with steps as small.  
Her paces were with mine not yet a hundred,  
when both the margins equally were bent  
in such a way, that toward the East I faced.  
Nor had we yet as far again moved on,  
when round toward me the Lady wholly turned,  
and said: “My brother, look and listen now!”  
And lo, so bright a luster suddenly  
traversed the mighty wood in all directions,  
that I of lightning was compelled to think;  
but since this ceases as it comes, while that,  
the longer it endured, the brighter grew,  
within me I kept saying: “What is this?”  
And through the illumined air was running now  
a gentle melody; hence righteous zeal  
made me reproach the hardihood of Eve,  
who, while both earth and heaven obedient were,  
the only woman, and but just created,  
could not endure to stay beneath a veil;  
’neath which if she had but devoutly kept,  
I should have tasted those unspeakable  
delights before, and for a longer time.  
While I mid such first fruits of bliss eternal  
was going all enrapt, and eager still  
for further joys,  
in front of us the air  
’neath the green boughs became a blazing fire,  
and that sweet sound was now known as a song.  
O Virgins sacrosanct, if I have ever  
been hungry, cold or sleepless for your sake,  
good reasons spur my claiming a reward.  
For me now Helicon must pour her streams,

and with her choir Urania give me help  
to set in verse things difficult to think.  
A little further on, the lengthy space  
still intervening 'tween ourselves and them,  
showed falsely what appeared seven trees of gold;  
but when I'd drawn so near to them, that now  
the common object which deceiveth sense,  
because of distance lost no attribute;  
the virtue which prepares discourse for reason  
perceived that they were candlesticks, and heard  
'*Hosanna!*' in the voices of the song.  
Above, the fair array flamed far more brightly  
than in unclouded skies the midnight moon,  
when at the middle of her monthly course.  
Filled with astonishment, I turned around  
to my good Virgil, and he answered me  
with looks no less with wonder fraught. I then  
gazed back again at those exalted things,  
which toward us moved so slowly, that outrun  
they would have been by newly wedded brides.  
The Lady chided me: "Why dost thou gaze  
so ardently at those bright lights alone,  
and dost not look at that which follows them?  
I then saw people who were coming on,  
as if behind their leaders, clothed in white;  
and never was such whiteness here on earth.  
The water was resplendent on my left,  
and, like a mirror, if I looked in it,  
reflected back my body's left to me.  
When I was on my bank so placed, that now  
only the river kept me at a distance,  
I checked my steps that I might better see,  
and I beheld the little flames advance,  
leaving the air behind them bright with color,  
and look like strokes a painter's brush had drawn;  
so that, above, the air remained marked out  
by seven long bands, all in the hues wherewith  
the sun his bow, and Delia makes her belt.  
These standards further to the rear extended  
than I could see; as far as I could judge,  
the outermost ten paces were apart.  
There now were coming 'neath as fair a sky  
as I describe here, four and twenty Elders,  
two at a time, and crowned with fleur-de-lys.  
And all of them were saying: "Blest be thou  
'mong Adam's daughters, aye, and blessed be  
throughout eternity thy beauty's charms!"  
After the flowers and other tender blooms

in front of me upon the other bank,  
had been set free from that elected folk,  
as in the sky star follows after star,  
so after these, four living Creatures came,  
each with a wreath of verdant foliage crowned.  
And each of them was feathered with six wings,  
their feathers full of eyes; and these were such,  
as, were they living, Argus' eyes would be.  
I'll waste no more rhymes, Reader, to describe  
their forms; for other spending so constrains me,  
that I in this one cannot be profuse.  
But read thou in Ezechiel, who depicts them,  
as from the sky's cold parts he saw them move,  
accompanied by wind, and clouds and fire;  
and such as in his pages thou wilt find them,  
such were they here, except that, as to wings,  
John is with me, and disagrees with him.  
The space extending 'tween the four contained  
a triumph-Chariot moving on two wheels,  
which came along drawn by a Griffon's neck.  
Both of His wings the latter stretched on high  
'tween the mid banner and the three and three,  
so that, by cleaving it, He injured none;  
so high they rose that they were lost to sight.  
His members were of gold as far as bird  
He was, and white the others mixed with red.  
Not only Rome ne'er with so fair a Car  
made Africanus or Augustus glad,  
but ev'n the Sun's were poor, compared with this —  
the Sun's, which, when it lost its way, was burned  
in answer to the suppliant Earth's request,  
when Jupiter inscrutably was just.  
At its right wheel three Ladies in a ring  
came dancing on; the first so red, that hardly  
would she be noticed, if in fire she were;  
and such the second was, as if her flesh  
and very bones were made of emerald;  
the third one looked like newly fallen snow;  
and now led by the white one they appeared,  
now by the red; and from the latter's song  
the others took their time, both slow and fast.  
Upon the left hand four, in purple clothed,  
were making glad, according to the gait  
of one of them with three eyes in her head.  
Behind the whole group I have here described,  
two old men I beheld, unlike in clothes,  
but like in mien, both dignified and grave;  
one showed himself a pupil of that great

Hippocrates, whom for the animals  
she loves most dearly, Nature made; the other  
revealed the opposite intention with a sword  
so glittering and sharp, that though I stood  
on this side of the stream, it caused me fear.  
Then four I saw who were of humble mien;  
and, back of all, an aged, keen-faced man  
advancing by himself and lost in sleep.  
These seven were robed in garments which resembled  
those of the primal company, though on their heads  
they wore not lily garlands, but were crowned  
with roses and with other crimson flowers;  
a distant sight of them had made one swear  
that all on fire they were above their brows.  
And when the Chariot was abreast of me,  
thunder was heard; whereat those worthy people  
appeared to have advance forbidden them,  
and stopped there with the standards in their van.

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## PURGATORIO XXX

*Terrestrial Paradise. Lethe*

*Appearance of Beatrice. Disappearance of Virgil*

When the Septentrion of the highest heaven, —  
which never either setting knew, or rising,  
or veil of other mist than that of guilt,  
and which was causing every creature there  
to know his duty, as the lower one  
makes him who turns the helm to reach a port, —  
stopped suddenly; the people of the truth,  
who first had come between it and the Griffon,  
turned around toward the Car, as toward their peace;  
and one of them, as though from Heaven sent down,  
sang thrice aloud: “*Come thou from Lebanon,  
my spouse!*” and all the rest sang after him.  
As at the last trump-call each of the blest  
will quickly rise from out his tomb, and sing  
the Halleluiah with a voice regained;  
even so there rose upon the Car divine,  
at such an elder’s voice, a hundred servants  
and message-bearers of eternal life.  
They all were saying: “*Blest be thou that comest!*”  
and, strewing flowers on high and all around,  
“*Oh, scatter forth your lilies with full hands!*”  
I ’ve seen ere now when day began to dawn,  
the eastern skies all rosy, and the rest  
adorned with beauty and serenity;  
and then the sun rise with its face o’ershadowed  
in such a way that, through the tempering  
of mists, the human eye could long endure it;  
so likewise standing in a cloud of flowers,  
which rose from angel hands, and fell again  
within and out the Car, a Lady, crowned  
with a wreath of olives o’er a pure white veil,  
appeared before me, ’neath a cloak of green,  
clothed with the color of a living flame.  
My spirit hereupon, which for so long  
a time had not been trembling in her presence,  
or felt itself all broken down with awe,  
with no more knowledge of her by mine eyes,  
but through a hidden virtue issuing from her,  
felt the great power of the olden love.  
As soon as that high virtue smote my sight,



which formerly had pierced me through and through,  
ere I had passed beyond my boyhood's years,  
round to the left I turned me with the trust  
wherewith an infant to its mother runs,  
whenever terrified or in distress,  
to say to Virgil: "Less now than a drachm  
of blood remains in me that is not trembling;  
I feel the tokens of the olden flame."  
But Virgil now had left us of himself  
deprived, Virgil, my dearest father, Virgil,  
to whom for my salvation I had giv'n me;  
nor yet did all our ancient mother lost  
avail to keep my cheeks, though cleansed with dew,  
from turning dark again because of tears.  
"Dante, though Virgil leave, weep thou not yet,  
weep thou not yet; for thou wilt need to weep  
by reason of another sword than this."  
Even as an admiral, who, both on stern  
and prow, comes to behold the men that serve  
on the other ships, and urge them to do well;  
so likewise on the left side of the Car,  
when I had turned around me at the sound  
of mine own name, which here must needs be mentioned,  
I saw the Lady who had first appeared  
concealed beneath the Angels' festival,  
direct her eyes toward me across the stream.  
Although the veil, which from her head hung down,  
encircled by Minerva's olive leaves,  
did not allow her to appear distinctly;  
she went on royally, still stern in mien,  
as one doth who, when speaking, holdeth back  
his warmest words: "Look at us well, for we,  
indeed, are, we, indeed, are Beatrice!  
How wast thou able to approach the Mountain?  
Didst thou not know that man is happy here?"  
My lowered eyes fell on the limpid stream;  
but when I saw myself reflected there,  
I drew them to the grass, so great the shame  
that weighed my forehead down! As to her child  
a mother seems severe, so she to me,  
for bitter tastes the savor of harsh pity.  
Silent she kept, then suddenly the Angels  
chanted: "*In Thee, Lord, have I set my trust,*"  
but further than "*my feet*" they did not go.  
Even as the snow among the living beams  
grown on the back of Italy is frozen,  
when blown and hardened by Slavonian winds;  
and then, when melting, trickles through itself,

if but the land that loses shadows breathe,  
and thus seems like a fire that melts a candle;  
ev'n so was I with neither tears nor sighs,  
before the song of those who ever tune  
their notes to music of eternal spheres.  
But when I heard in their sweet harmonies  
the sympathy they had for me, far more  
than had they said: "Why, Lady, shame him so?"  
the ice bound tightly round my heart was turned  
to breath and water, and through mouth and eyes  
issued with anguish from my inmost breast.  
Then she, still standing motionless  
upon the same side of the Car, addressed  
those sympathetic creatures with these words:  
"Ye keep your watches through the eternal day,  
so that nor night nor slumber robs from you  
one step the world may take upon its course;  
my answer, hence, is made with greater care,  
that he, who yonder weeps, may understand,  
and guilt and sorrow of one measure be.  
Not only through the work of those great spheres,  
which to some end directly guide each seed,  
according as the stars are its companions;  
but through the bounty of the Grace divine,  
which for its rain hath clouds so very high,  
our eyes cannot approach them; this one here  
was such potentially in early life,  
that all right dispositions would have had  
wondrous results in him. But all the more  
malign and savage doth a soil become,  
when sown with evil seed and left untilled,  
the better and more vigorous it is.  
I for a while sustained him with my face;  
and showing him my youthful eyes, I led him  
along with me turned in the right direction.  
But when the threshold of my second age  
I reached, and changed my life, he took himself  
away from me, and gave him to another.  
And when from flesh to spirit I had risen,  
and beauty and virtue had increased in me,  
less dear and pleasing was I then to him;  
and o'er an untrue path he turned his steps,  
following deceitful images of good,  
which naught that they have promised pay in full.  
Nor yet did it avail me to obtain  
the inspirations, wherewith both in dreams  
and otherwise I called him back; he cared  
so little for them! So low down he fell,

that short were now all means for his salvation,  
save showing him the people that are lost.  
I visited the Gateway of the dead  
for this, and unto him who guided him  
up hither, fraught with tears, my prayers were borne.  
God's high, fate-ordered Will would broken be,  
if Lethe should be passed, and should such food  
be tasted without paying first the scot  
of penitence made manifest by tears."

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## PURGATORIO XXXI

*Terrestrial Paradise. Dante's Confession*

*His Immersion in Lethe. Beatrice Unveiled*

“O thou that art across the sacred stream,”  
toward me directing with its point her speech,  
which even edgewise had seemed sharp to me,  
continuing, she began without delay:  
“Say, say if this be true, to such a charge  
must thy confession be united now.”  
My strength was so confounded, that my voice  
began to move, and wholly died away,  
ere by its organs it had been released.  
A while she bore it; then: “What thinkest thou?”  
she said, “Reply; for thy sad memories  
are not extinguished by the water yet.”  
Perplexity and fear together mixed  
extorted such a ‘Yes’ from out my mouth,  
that eyes to hear its utterance were required.  
Even as a crossbow breaks its cord and bow,  
whenever with too great a tension shot,  
and with less force the arrow strikes its mark;  
so ’neath that heavy burden I broke down,  
and as I poured forth gushing tears and sighs,  
my voice more slowly through its passage came.  
Then she: “Across the paths which I desired,  
and which were leading thee to love the Good,  
beyond which there is nothing one can wish,  
what trenches didst thou find, or hindering chains,  
for which thou thus must needs despoil thyself  
of hope of further progress on thy way?  
What luring charms or what advantages  
displayed themselves upon the brows of others,  
that thou shouldst pay thy passing court to them?”  
Thereat, when I had heaved a bitter sigh,  
I scarcely had the voice to make an answer,  
and painfully my lips gave form to it.  
Weeping, I said: “Things of the present turned  
with their delusive joy my steps aside,  
as soon as e’er your face was hid from me.”  
“Hadst thou been silent, or hadst thou denied”  
said she, “what thou confessest, no less clear  
would be thy guilt, since known by such a Judge.  
But when self-accusation of one’s sin

from one's own cheek breaks forth, in this our court  
the wheel is turned to blunt the sharpened edge.  
And yet, that for thy fault thou mayst be now  
the more ashamed, and that, when thou again  
shalt hear the sirens, thou mayst stronger be,  
desist thou now from sowing tears, and hark;  
so shalt thou hear o'er what a different path  
my buried body should have moved thy feet.  
Nature ne'er showed thee, nor did art, such beauty  
as did the pleasing members which enclosed me,  
and which are scattered now, dissolved in earth;  
hence if the highest pleasure failed thee thus  
by reason of my death, what mortal thing  
should afterward have drawn thee to desire it?  
At the first arrow of deceitful things  
thou surely oughtest to have risen up  
to follow me, who was no longer such.  
Thy wings, at least, should not have been weighed down,  
to wait for further blows from some young girl,  
or other vain thing of as brief a use.  
A young bird waits for two blows or for three;  
but 'fore the eyes of fully feathered birds  
a net is spread or arrow shot in vain."  
As children who are silent when ashamed,  
and with their eyes upon the ground, keep list'ning,  
and conscience-stricken and repentant are;  
so I remained; and she: "Since thou art grieved  
because of hearing me, lift up thy beard,  
and thou from seeing shalt receive more grief."  
With less resistance is a sturdy oak  
uprooted, either by our native wind,  
or by the wind that blows from Jarba's land,  
than I at her behest raised up my chin;  
and when by 'beard' she asked to see my face,  
I well perceived the venom in her words.  
Thereafter when my face was raised again,  
I saw that those first creatures were at rest  
from strewing flowers; and thereupon mine eyes,  
which were as yet but partially assured,  
saw Beatrice turned toward the Animal  
which in two natures one sole person is.  
Though 'neath her veil and 'cross the stream, it seemed  
to me that she surpassed her old-time self,  
more than she did all others, when on earth.  
So pricked me now the nettle of repentance,  
that, of all other things, what turned me most  
unto its love, became to me most hostile.  
Whereat such great contrition gnawed my heart,

that, overcome, I fell; and what I then  
became, she knows who gave me cause for it.  
Then, when my heart restored my outward strength,  
I saw the Lady I found alone, above me,  
saying: "Hold on to me! Hold on to me!"  
Into the stream she had already borne me  
up to my neck, and, dragging me behind her,  
light as a shuttle o'er its top was moving.  
When I was near the blessed shore, I heard:  
'*Purge me with hyssop*' said in tones so sweet,  
that far from writing, I can not recall it.  
The lovely Lady, stretching out her arms,  
embraced my head, and plunged me in the stream  
so far, that I was forced to drink its water.  
Drawing me thence, she set me when thus bathed  
within the dance-ring of the lovely four;  
and each of them embraced me with her arm.  
"Nymphs are we here, and in the sky are stars;  
ere Beatrice came down into the world  
we were ordained to be her maids. We 'll lead thee  
to see her eyes; but, for the joyous light  
therein, the three upon the other side,  
who more profoundly gaze, will sharpen thine."  
Thus singing they began; and thereupon  
they led me with them to the Griffon's breast,  
where, turning toward us, Beatrice remained.  
And "See to it that thou spare not thine eyes;"  
they said, "before the emeralds we have set thee,  
whence Love of old against thee drew his shafts."  
A thousand wishes hotter far than flames  
bound mine eyes fast to those resplendent eyes,  
which on the Griffon set their steady gaze.  
As in a glass the sun, not otherwise  
the two-fold Animal was gleaming in them,  
at first in one, then in another way.  
Think, Reader, if I wondered, when I saw  
that It was keeping quiet in Itself,  
while in Its image It was changing form.  
While, glad and with amazement filled, my soul  
was tasting of the food, which, while it sates,  
still causes thirst and hunger for itself;  
proving themselves to be of higher rank  
by reason of their deeds, the other three  
came dancing to their angel roundelay.  
"Turn thou," their song was, "turn thou, Beatrice,  
thy holy eyes upon thy faithful one,  
who hath, to see thee, ta'en so many steps.  
Kindly do us the favor to unveil

thy mouth to him, that he may thus perceive  
the second loveliness which thou dost hide.”  
O Splendor of eternal living Light,  
who, 'neath Parnassus' shades, e'er grew so pale,  
or from its cistern e'er so deeply drank,  
as not to feel bewildered in his mind,  
should he attempt to paint what thou didst seem,  
when, symbolized by Heaven's own harmonies,  
thou didst reveal thee in the open air?

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## PURGATORIO XXXII

*Terrestrial Paradise. Vicissitudes and*

*Transformation of the Car. The Harlot and the Giant*

So steadfast were mine eyes and so intent  
on gratifying their decennial thirst,  
that all my other senses were asleep;  
and both on this side and on that a wall  
of heedlessness they had, the holy smile  
so strongly drew them with the olden net;  
when forcibly my face was toward my left  
turned by those Goddesses, for from their lips  
I now was hearing a "Too steadfastly!"  
Thereat the state of vision which exists  
in eyes but newly smitten by the sun,  
caused me to be awhile deprived of sight.  
But when my eyes were to the small accustomed,  
(I say 'the small' with reference to the great  
resplendence, whence perforce I turned away,)  
I saw that on the right the glorious host  
had wheeled, and was returning with the sun  
and with the sevenfold flame in front of it.  
As, to protect itself, a troop revolves  
beneath its shields, and wheeleth with its flag,  
before the whole of it can change direction;  
even so the heavenly Kingdom's soldiery  
who forward were, had wholly passed us by,  
before its pole had made the Chariot turn.  
Back to the wheel the Ladies then returned;  
and so the Griffon drew His blessèd burden,  
that, though He moved, no feather of him shook.  
The Lady fair, who through the ford had drawn me,  
Statius and I, were following the wheel  
which made its orbit with the smaller arc.  
As thus we crossed the lofty wood, unpeopled  
because of her who trusted to the Serpent,  
a song angelic kept our steps in time.  
A liberated arrow in three flights,  
perhaps, as great a distance would have gone,  
as we had moved, when Beatrice alighted.  
"Adam!" I then heard murmured by them all;  
they circled then around a Tree, despoiled  
of flowers and other leaves on every branch.  
Its crowning boughs, spread out in greater width,



the higher up they are, would for their height  
be wondered at by Indians in their woods.  
“Thou, Griffon, happy art, since with Thy beak  
Thou tearest not this pleasant tasting wood,  
because one’s belly writhes in pain therewith.”  
Thus round the sturdy Tree the others cried;  
whereat the Double-natured Animal:  
“Thus is the seed of all just deeds preserved.”  
Then, turning toward the pole which He had drawn,  
He dragged it forward to the widowed Tree,  
and ’neath it left that part of it tied up.  
As our plants swell, when falls the great light, mixed  
with that which shines behind the heavenly Carp,  
and as each thereupon renews itself  
in its own color, ere the sun yokes up  
his racing horses ’neath another star;  
even so, a hue revealing, not as bright  
as that which roses have, and more than that  
of violets, that Tree renewed itself,  
whose branches once had been so bare of leaves.  
I understood not (’t is not sung on earth,)  
the hymn which thereupon that people sang,  
nor did I bear to hear the whole song through.  
If I could picture how the unpitying eyes,  
on hearing Syrinx’ story, sleepy grew,  
the eyes to which much waking cost so dear;  
as doth an artist who from models paints,  
would I describe how I then fell asleep;  
but let whoever will, feign sleeping well.  
Hence to the point I pass, when I awoke;  
and say a splendor rent my slumber’s veil,  
and then a call: “Arise! What doest thou?”  
As Peter, John and James were led to see  
some of the early blossoms of the apple,  
which makes the Angels eager for its fruit,  
and causes endless marriage-feasts in Heaven;  
and, overcome, recovered at the word  
whereby far greater slumbers had been broken;  
and even as they perceived their company  
diminished both by Moses and Elias,  
and all the raiment of their Master changed;  
so I, recovering, near me standing saw  
that pitying Lady who before had been  
the leader of my steps along the stream.  
“But where is Beatrice?” all lost in doubt  
I said. Whence she: “Behold her sitting there,  
beneath the Tree’s new leaves, upon its roots.  
Behold the company surrounding her;

the rest on high behind the Griffon go,  
with songs of sweeter sound and deeper theme.”  
I know not if at greater length her words  
were poured, because now in mine eyes was she,  
who hindered my attending to aught else.  
On the bare ground she sat, and all alone,  
left there to be the guardian of the Car  
I saw the Biformed Animal tie up.  
Circling, the seven Nymphs with their persons formed  
a hedge for her, those lights held in their hands,  
which safe from Auster are and Aquilo.  
“Here for a while shalt thou a woodman be;  
then without end with me a citizen  
of that Rome, whereof Christ a Roman is.  
Hence, for the world’s sake, which lives badly, keep  
thine eyes upon the Car, and what thou see’st  
be sure to write, when once on earth again.”  
Thus Beatrice; and I, who now was wholly  
devoted at the feet of her commands,  
whither she wished turned both my mind and eyes.  
Fire ne’er descended with so swift a motion  
out of dense clouds, when from the highest region  
the rain is falling, as I now beheld  
the bird of Jove swoop down upon the Tree,  
and break not only its new budding leaves  
and blossoms, but its bark; with all his might  
he smote the Chariot next; whereat it reeled,  
as in a storm a ship, when by the waves  
to starboard now, and now to larboard driven.  
And then a she-Fox which from all good food  
seemed fasting, I perceived, hurling herself  
against the bottom of the triumph-Car;  
but, for her ugly sins upbraiding her,  
my Lady put her to such speedy flight  
as was permitted by her fleshless bones.  
Thereafter, whence it first had come, I saw  
the Eagle down into the Chariot’s ark  
descend, and leave it feathered with his plumes;  
and such a voice as from a suffering heart  
comes forth, was that which came from Heaven, and said:  
“My little Ship, how badly thou art laden!”  
Between both wheels the earth seemed opened then,  
and forth from it I saw a Dragon come,  
who upward through the Chariot thrust his tail;  
and like a wasp which draweth back its sting,  
withdrawing his bad tail, he drew away  
part of its floor, and, keen for more, went off.  
That which remained reclothed itself again,

as rich soil doth with grasses, with the plumes,  
offered, perhaps, with wise and kind intent;  
then one wheel and the other and the pole  
were covered up so quickly, that a mouth  
is open kept much longer by a sigh.  
When thus the holy Structure was transformed,  
it put forth heads upon its members, three  
upon its pole, and at each corner one.  
The first were horned like oxen, but the four  
had on their foreheads but a single horn;  
never had such a monster yet been seen.  
Sitting thereon, as boldly as a fort  
is seated on a lofty mountain-top,  
a shameless Prostitute appeared before me,  
with eyebrows that were quick to wander round;  
and then, to see that none should take her from him,  
I saw a Giant standing at her side;  
at times they kissed each other there; but since  
she turned her greedy, fickle eyes on me,  
that cruel lover scourged her from her head  
unto her soles. Then, filled with jealousy,  
and cruel in his wrath, loosing the Monster,  
he dragged it through the wood so far away,  
that with this last alone he shielded me  
against the Harlot and unnatural Beast.

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## PURGATORIO XXXIII

*Terrestrial Paradise. Beatrice's Prophecy*

*Dante's Final Purification in the River Eunoë*

“O God, the heathen folk are come,” now three,  
now four, alternately, and shedding tears,  
the Ladies a sweet psalmody began;  
and Beatrice with sighs of sympathy  
was listening to their words with such a look,  
that Mary at the cross changed little more.  
But when the other maids had given way  
that she might speak, she rose upon her feet,  
and, colored with the hue of fire, replied;  
“A little while, and ye shall not behold me;  
and then again, beloved sisters mine,  
a little while, and me ye shall behold.”  
All seven she thereupon before her placed,  
and, merely by a nod, behind her moved  
me and the Lady, and the Sage who stayed.  
She thus was going on, nor do I think  
her tenth step had been set upon the ground,  
when with her eyes she forcibly met mine;  
then with a tranquil face she said to me:  
“More quickly come, that, if I speak to thee,  
for listening to me thou mayst be well placed.”  
As soon as I was with her as I ought,  
she said to me: “Why, brother, dost not venture  
to question me, now that thou comest with me?”  
As unto those who show excessive reverence,  
when speaking in the presence of their elders,  
and therefore draw no clear voice to their teeth,  
to me it happed that with imperfect tones  
“Madonna,” I began, “my welfare’s needs  
you know, and that which may be good for it.”  
And she to me: “From fear and bashfulness  
I wish thee now to extricate thyself,  
that thou mayst speak no more like one who dreams.  
Know that the Vessel which the Serpent broke,  
was, and is not; but let whose fault it is,  
believe God’s vengeance fears not human sops.  
Nor shall the Eagle heirless for all time  
remain, who left his feathers on the Car,  
whence monstrous it became, and then a prey;  
for I see well, and therefore tell it, stars

now near, and from all checks and obstacles  
secure, which for us shall a time obtain,  
within which a Five Hundred Ten and Five,  
sent forth by God, shall kill the female Thief,  
and that great Giant who with her is guilty.  
And my prediction, which is dark, perhaps,  
as Themis and the Sphinx, persuades thee less,  
because, as theirs did, it beclouds thy mind;  
but facts will soon become the Naiades,  
which shall this difficult enigma solve,  
without the loss of either sheep or grain.  
Give heed; and ev'n as uttered by myself,  
see that thou teach these words of mine to those  
that live the life which is a race toward death;  
and bear in mind, when thou art writing them,  
not to conceal in what state thou hast seen  
the Tree, which twice now hath been here despoiled.  
Whoever robs or teareth that apart,  
with blasphemy of deed offendeth God,  
who for His own use only made it holy.  
For biting it, in pain and in desire  
the first soul longed for Him five thousand years  
and more, who punished in Himself the bite.  
Thy mind is sleeping, if it deemeth not  
that for a special cause it soars so high,  
and at its summit so inverted is.  
And if the vain thoughts which surround thy mind  
had not been Elsa water, and their pleasure  
as to the mulberry a Pyramus,  
thou, by so many circumstances only,  
wouldst in the interdict upon the Tree  
see morally God's Justice. But, since made  
of stone I see thee in thine understanding,  
and, being petrified, so dark in mind  
that thou art blinded by my speech's light,  
I also, if not written, wish that painted,  
at least, thou bear it in thee, for the reason  
the pilgrim's staff is carried wreathed with palm."  
And I: "As sealing-wax, which changes not  
the shape imprinted on it by the seal,  
so likewise is my brain now stamped by you.  
But why so far above my mental sight  
are your desired words now flying up,  
it loses them the more, the more it strives?"  
"That thou," she said, "mayst thus appraise the school  
which thou hast followed, and perceive how able  
its teaching is to carry out my word;  
and also see that your ways are removed

as far from the divine, as e'er the heaven  
which speeds most high is distant from the earth."  
Whence her I answered: "I do not recall  
that I have e'er estranged myself from you,  
nor am I conscious of remorse therefor."  
"And if thou canst not call it to thy mind,"  
she answered with a smile, "remember now  
that this same day thou hast of Lethe drunk;  
and if from smoke a fire may be inferred,  
this thy forgetfulness but clearly proves  
a fault in thy desire intent elsewhere.  
Truly my words shall naked be henceforth,  
as much at least as it shall needful seem  
to make them clear to thine untutored sight."  
Both more refulgent and with slower steps  
the sun was holding now the noonday circle,  
which, with each point of view, moves here and there;  
when, even as he, who as a leader goes  
ahead of people, stops, if something new  
he find upon his path, the Ladies seven  
stopped at a death-pale shadow's edge,  
like that which 'neath green leaves and darkling boughs  
the Alps cast o'er their icy mountain-streams.  
In front of them I seemed to see Euphrates  
and Tigris from one fountain issue forth,  
and from each other slowly part as friends.  
"O Light and Glory of the human race,  
what stream is this which from one source unfolds,  
and then from its own self itself withdraws?"  
In answer to this question I was told:  
"Pray that Matelda tell thee." Whereupon,  
like one who frees himself from blame, replied  
the lovely Lady: "This, with other things,  
hath he been told by me; and I am sure  
that Lethe's water hath not hid it from him."  
And Beatrice: "Perhaps a greater care  
which oft deprives one's memory of its power,  
hath made the vision of his mind's eye dark.  
But Eunoë behold, which yonder now  
is flowing forth; conduct him to its bank,  
and, as thou 'rt wont, revive his lifeless power."  
Even as a noble soul makes no excuse,  
but to another's will its own conforms,  
as soon as e'er by outward signs disclosed;  
even so, when she had taken hold of me,  
the lovely Lady moved, and then to Statius  
said with a lady's manner: "Come with him."  
If, Reader, I had now more space for writing,

I'd sing, at least in part, of that sweet drink,  
which never would have satisfied my thirst;  
but inasmuch as filled are all the pages  
planned warp-like for this second Canticle,  
no further doth art's bridle let me go.  
From that most holy water I returned  
made young again, as new trees are in spring,  
when with new foliage they renew themselves,  
pure, and disposed to rise up to the stars.

PRINTED AT THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS CAMBRIDGE ,MASS.,  
U.S.A.