

# THE DIVINE COMEDY

THE VISION  
of  
HELL, PURGATORY, AND PARADISE

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HELL  
OR THE INFERNO  
CANTO I

In the midway of this our mortal life,  
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray  
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell  
It were no easy task, how savage wild



That forest, how robust and rough its growth,  
 Which to remember only, my dismay  
 Renews, in bitterness not far from death.  
 Yet to discourse of what there good befell,  
 All else will I relate discover'd there.  
 How first I enter'd it I scarce can say,  
 Such sleepy dullness in that instant weigh'd  
 My senses down, when the true path I left,  
 But when a mountain's foot I reach'd, where clos'd  
 The valley, that had pierc'd my heart with dread,  
 I look'd aloft, and saw his shoulders broad  
 Already vested with that planet's beam,  
 Who leads all wanderers safe through every way.

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

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

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

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

Impell'd me where the sun in silence rests.

While to the lower space with backward step  
I fell, my ken discern'd the form one of one,  
Whose voice seem'd faint through long disuse of speech.  
When him in that great desert I espied,  
"Have mercy on me!" cried I out aloud,  
"Spirit! or living man! what e'er thou be!"

He answer'd: "Now not man, man once I was,  
And born of Lombard parents, Mantuana both  
By country, when the power of Julius yet  
Was scarcely firm. At Rome my life was past  
Beneath the mild Augustus, in the time  
Of fabled deities and false. A bard  
Was I, and made Anchises' upright son  
The subject of my song, who came from Troy,  
When the flames prey'd on Ilium's haughty towers.  
But thou, say wherefore to such perils past  
Return'st thou? wherefore not this pleasant mount  
Ascendest, cause and source of all delight?"  
"And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring,  
From which such copious floods of eloquence  
Have issued?" I with front abash'd replied.  
"Glory and light of all the tuneful train!  
May it avail me that I long with zeal  
Have sought thy volume, and with love immense  
Have conn'd it o'er. My master thou and guide!  
Thou he from whom alone I have deriv'd  
That style, which for its beauty into fame  
Exalts me. See the beast, from whom I fled.  
O save me from her, thou illustrious sage!"

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

Until that greyhound come, who shall destroy  
 Her with sharp pain. He will not life support  
 By earth nor its base metals, but by love,  
 Wisdom, and virtue, and his land shall be  
 The land 'twixt either Feltro. In his might  
 Shall safety to Italia's plains arise,  
 For whose fair realm, Camilla, virgin pure,  
 Nisus, Euryalus, and Turnus fell.  
 He with incessant chase through every town  
 Shall worry, until he to hell at length  
 Restore her, thence by envy first let loose.  
 I for thy profit pond'ring now devise,  
 That thou mayst follow me, and I thy guide  
 Will lead thee hence through an eternal space,  
 Where thou shalt hear despairing shrieks, and see  
 Spirits of old tormented, who invoke  
 A second death; and those next view, who dwell  
 Content in fire, for that they hope to come,  
 Whene'er the time may be, among the blest,  
 Into whose regions if thou then desire  
 T' ascend, a spirit worthier than I  
 Must lead thee, in whose charge, when I depart,  
 Thou shalt be left: for that Almighty King,  
 Who reigns above, a rebel to his law,  
 Adjudges me, and therefore hath decreed,  
 That to his city none through me should come.  
 He in all parts hath sway; there rules, there holds  
 His citadel and throne. O happy those,  
 Whom there he chooses!" I to him in few:  
 "Bard! by that God, whom thou didst not adore,  
 I do beseech thee (that this ill and worse  
 I may escape) to lead me, where thou saidst,  
 That I Saint Peter's gate may view, and those  
 Who as thou tell'st, are in such dismal plight."

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

## CANTO II

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

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



I thus began: "Bard! thou who art my guide,  
 Consider well, if virtue be in me  
 Sufficient, ere to this high enterprise  
 Thou trust me. Thou hast told that Silvius' sire,  
 Yet cloth'd in corruptible flesh, among  
 Th' immortal tribes had entrance, and was there  
 Sensible present. Yet if heaven's great Lord,  
 Almighty foe to ill, such favour shew'd,  
 In contemplation of the high effect,  
 Both what and who from him should issue forth,  
 It seems in reason's judgment well deserv'd:  
 Sith he of Rome, and of Rome's empire wide,  
 In heaven's empyreal height was chosen sire:  
 Both which, if truth be spoken, were ordain'd  
 And 'stablish'd for the holy place, where sits  
 Who to great Peter's sacred chair succeeds.  
 He from this journey, in thy song renown'd,  
 Learn'd things, that to his victory gave rise  
 And to the papal robe. In after-times  
 The chosen vessel also travel'd there,  
 To bring us back assurance in that faith,  
 Which is the entrance to salvation's way.  
 But I, why should I there presume? or who  
 Permits it? not Aeneas I nor Paul.  
 Myself I deem not worthy, and none else  
 Will deem me. I, if on this voyage then  
 I venture, fear it will in folly end.  
 Thou, who art wise, better my meaning know'st,  
 Than I can speak." As one, who unresolves  
 What he hath late resolv'd, and with new thoughts  
 Changes his purpose, from his first intent  
 Remov'd; e'en such was I on that dun coast,  
 Wasting in thought my enterprise, at first  
 So eagerly embrac'd. "If right thy words  
 I scan," replied that shade magnanimous,  
 "Thy soul is by vile fear assail'd, which oft  
 So overcasts a man, that he recoils  
 From noblest resolution, like a beast  
 At some false semblance in the twilight gloom.  
 That from this terror thou mayst free thyself,  
 I will instruct thee why I came, and what

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

(Note: Beatrice. I use this word, as it is pronounced in the Italian, as consisting of four syllables, of which the third is a long one.) Revisited with joy. Love brought me thence, Who prompts my speech. When in my Master's sight I stand, thy praise to him I oft will tell."

She then was silent, and I thus began:  
"O Lady! by whose influence alone,  
Mankind excels whatever is contain'd  
Within that heaven which hath the smallest orb,  
So thy command delights me, that to obey,  
If it were done already, would seem late.

No need hast thou farther to speak thy will;  
Yet tell the reason, why thou art not loth  
To leave that ample space, where to return  
Thou burnest, for this centre here beneath.”

She then: “Since thou so deeply wouldst inquire,  
I will instruct thee briefly, why no dread  
Hinders my entrance here. Those things alone  
Are to be fear’d, whence evil may proceed,  
None else, for none are terrible beside.  
I am so fram’d by God, thanks to his grace!  
That any suff’rance of your misery  
Touches me not, nor flame of that fierce fire  
Assails me. In high heaven a blessed dame  
Besides, who mourns with such effectual grief  
That hindrance, which I send thee to remove,  
That God’s stern judgment to her will inclines.”  
To Lucia calling, her she thus bespake:  
“Now doth thy faithful servant need thy aid  
And I commend him to thee.” At her word  
Sped Lucia, of all cruelty the foe,  
And coming to the place, where I abode  
Seated with Rachel, her of ancient days,  
She thus address’d me: “Thou true praise of God!  
Beatrice! why is not thy succour lent  
To him, who so much lov’d thee, as to leave  
For thy sake all the multitude admires?  
Dost thou not hear how pitiful his wail,  
Nor mark the death, which in the torrent flood,  
Swoln mightier than a sea, him struggling holds?”  
Ne’er among men did any with such speed  
Haste to their profit, flee from their annoy,  
As when these words were spoken, I came here,  
Down from my blessed seat, trusting the force  
Of thy pure eloquence, which thee, and all  
Who well have mark’d it, into honour brings.”

“When she had ended, her bright beaming eyes  
Tearful she turn’d aside; whereat I felt  
Redoubled zeal to serve thee. As she will’d,  
Thus am I come: I sav’d thee from the beast,

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

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

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

### CANTO III

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

“All hope abandon ye who enter here.”

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

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

Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse,  
With hands together smote that swell'd the sounds,  
Made up a tumult, that for ever whirls  
Round through that air with solid darkness stain'd,  
Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies.

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

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

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

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

When some of these I recogniz'd, I saw  
And knew the shade of him, who to base fear  
Yielding, abjur'd his high estate. Forthwith  
I understood for certain this the tribe  
Of those ill spirits both to God displeasing  
And to his foes. These wretches, who ne'er lived,

Went on in nakedness, and sorely stung  
By wasps and hornets, which bedew'd their cheeks  
With blood, that mix'd with tears dropp'd to their feet,  
And by disgusting worms was gather'd there.

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

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



Crying, "Woe to you wicked spirits! hope not  
Ever to see the sky again. I come  
To take you to the other shore across,  
Into eternal darkness, there to dwell  
In fierce heat and in ice. And thou, who there  
Standest, live spirit! get thee hence, and leave  
These who are dead." But soon as he beheld  
I left them not, "By other way," said he,  
"By other haven shalt thou come to shore,  
Not by this passage; thee a nimbler boat  
Must carry." Then to him thus spake my guide:  
"Charon! thyself torment not: so 't is will'd,

Where will and power are one: ask thou no more.”

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

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

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

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

This said, the gloomy region trembling shook

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

## CANTO IV

Broke the deep slumber in my brain a crash  
 Of heavy thunder, that I shook myself,  
 As one by main force rous'd. Risen upright,  
 My rested eyes I mov'd around, and search'd  
 With fixed ken to know what place it was,  
 Wherein I stood. For certain on the brink  
 I found me of the lamentable vale,  
 The dread abyss, that joins a thund'rous sound  
 Of plaints innumerable. Dark and deep,  
 And thick with clouds o'erspread, mine eye in vain  
 Explor'd its bottom, nor could aught discern.

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

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

He then: “The anguish of that race below  
 With pity stains my cheek, which thou for fear  
 Mistakest. Let us on. Our length of way  
 Urges to haste.” Onward, this said, he mov'd;  
 And ent'ring led me with him on the bounds  
 Of the first circle, that surrounds th' abyss.  
 Here, as mine ear could note, no plaint was heard  
 Except of sighs, that made th' eternal air  
 Tremble, not caus'd by tortures, but from grief  
 Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,  
 Of men, women, and infants. Then to me  
 The gentle guide: “Inquir'st thou not what spirits  
 Are these, which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass

Farther, I would thou know, that these of sin  
 Were blameless; and if aught they merited,  
 It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,  
 The portal to thy faith. If they before  
 The Gospel liv'd, they serv'd not God aright;  
 And among such am I. For these defects,  
 And for no other evil, we are lost;

“Only so far afflicted, that we live  
 Desiring without hope.” So grief assail'd  
 My heart at hearing this, for well I knew  
 Suspended in that Limbo many a soul  
 Of mighty worth. “O tell me, sire rever'd!  
 Tell me, my master!” I began through wish  
 Of full assurance in that holy faith,  
 Which vanquishes all error; “say, did e'er  
 Any, or through his own or other's merit,  
 Come forth from thence, whom afterward was blest?”

Piercing the secret purport of my speech,  
 He answer'd: "I was new to that estate,  
 When I beheld a puissant one arrive  
 Amongst us, with victorious trophy crown'd.  
 He forth the shade of our first parent drew,  
 Abel his child, and Noah righteous man,  
 Of Moses lawgiver for faith approv'd,  
 Of patriarch Abraham, and David king,  
 Israel with his sire and with his sons,  
 Nor without Rachel whom so hard he won,  
 And others many more, whom he to bliss  
 Exalted. Before these, be thou assur'd,  
 No spirit of human kind was ever sav'd."

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

He answer'd: "The renown of their great names  
 That echoes through your world above, acquires  
 Favour in heaven, which holds them thus advanc'd."  
 Meantime a voice I heard: "Honour the bard  
 Sublime! his shade returns that left us late!"  
 No sooner ceas'd the sound, than I beheld  
 Four mighty spirits toward us bend their steps,  
 Of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad.

When thus my master kind began: "Mark him,  
 Who in his right hand bears that falchion keen,  
 The other three preceding, as their lord.  
 This is that Homer, of all bards supreme:  
 Flaccus the next in satire's vein excelling;

The third is Naso; Lucan is the last.  
Because they all that appellation own,  
With which the voice singly accosted me,  
Honouring they greet me thus, and well they judge.”

So I beheld united the bright school  
Of him the monarch of sublimest song,  
That o’er the others like an eagle soars.  
When they together short discourse had held,  
They turn’d to me, with salutation kind  
Beck’ning me; at the which my master smil’d:  
Nor was this all; but greater honour still

They gave me, for they made me of their tribe;  
And I was sixth amid so learn'd a band.

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

There dwelt a race, who slow their eyes around  
Majestically mov'd, and in their port  
Bore eminent authority; they spake  
Seldom, but all their words were tuneful sweet.

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

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

Then when a little more I rais'd my brow,  
I spied the master of the sapient throng,  
Seated amid the philosophic train.  
Him all admire, all pay him rev'rence due.  
There Socrates and Plato both I mark'd,



Nearest to him in rank; Democritus,  
 Who sets the world at chance, Diogenes,  
 With Heraclitus, and Empedocles,  
 And Anaxagoras, and Thales sage,  
 Zeno, and Dioscorides well read  
 In nature's secret lore. Orpheus I mark'd  
 And Linus, Tully and moral Seneca,  
 Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates,  
 Galenus, Avicen, and him who made  
 That commentary vast, Averroes.

Of all to speak at full were vain attempt;  
 For my wide theme so urges, that ofttimes  
 My words fall short of what bechanc'd. In two  
 The six associates part. Another way  
 My sage guide leads me, from that air serene,  
 Into a climate ever vex'd with storms:  
 And to a part I come where no light shines.

## CANTO V

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

Gives sentence, and dismisses them beneath,  
 According as he foldeth him around:  
 For when before him comes th' ill fated soul,  
 It all confesses; and that judge severe  
 Of sins, considering what place in hell  
 Suits the transgression, with his tail so oft  
 Himself encircles, as degrees beneath  
 He dooms it to descend. Before him stand  
 Always a num'rous throng; and in his turn  
 Each one to judgment passing, speaks, and hears  
 His fate, thence downward to his dwelling hurl'd.

"O thou! who to this residence of woe  
 Approachest?" when he saw me coming, cried  
 Minos, relinquishing his dread employ,  
 "Look how thou enter here; beware in whom  
 Thou place thy trust; let not the entrance broad  
 Deceive thee to thy harm." To him my guide:

“Wherefore exclaimest? Hinder not his way  
By destiny appointed; so ’tis will’d  
Where will and power are one. Ask thou no more.”

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

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

I understood that to this torment sad  
The carnal sinners are condemn'd, in whom  
Reason by lust is sway'd. As in large troops  
And multitudinous, when winter reigns,  
The starlings on their wings are borne abroad;  
So bears the tyrannous gust those evil souls.  
On this side and on that, above, below,  
It drives them: hope of rest to solace them  
Is none, nor e'en of milder pang. As cranes,  
Chanting their dol'rous notes, traverse the sky,  
Stretch'd out in long array: so I beheld  
Spirits, who came loud wailing, hurried on  
By their dire doom. Then I: "Instructor! who  
Are these, by the black air so scourg'd?"—"The first  
'Mong those, of whom thou question'st," he replied,  
"O'er many tongues was empress. She in vice  
Of luxury was so shameless, that she made  
Liking be lawful by promulg'd decree,  
To clear the blame she had herself incurr'd.  
This is Semiramis, of whom 'tis writ,  
That she succeeded Ninus her espous'd;  
And held the land, which now the Soldan rules.  
The next in amorous fury slew herself,  
And to Sicheus' ashes broke her faith:  
Then follows Cleopatra, lustful queen."

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

When I had heard my sage instructor name  
Those dames and knights of antique days, o'erpower'd  
By pity, well-nigh in amaze my mind  
Was lost; and I began: "Bard! willingly

I would address those two together coming,  
Which seem so light before the wind.” He thus:  
“Note thou, when nearer they to us approach.

“Then by that love which carries them along,  
Entreat; and they will come.” Soon as the wind  
Sway’d them toward us, I thus fram’d my speech:  
“O wearied spirits! come, and hold discourse  
With us, if by none else restrain’d.” As doves  
By fond desire invited, on wide wings  
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,  
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along;

Thus issu'd from that troop, where Dido ranks,  
They through the ill air speeding; with such force  
My cry prevail'd by strong affection urg'd.

“O gracious creature and benign! who go'st  
Visiting, through this element obscure,  
Us, who the world with bloody stain imbru'd;  
If for a friend the King of all we own'd,  
Our pray'r to him should for thy peace arise,  
Since thou hast pity on our evil plight.  
Of whatsoe'er to hear or to discourse  
It pleases thee, that will we hear, of that  
Freely with thee discourse, while e'er the wind,  
As now, is mute. The land, that gave me birth,  
Is situate on the coast, where Po descends  
To rest in ocean with his sequent streams.

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

“Love brought us to one death: Caina waits  
The soul, who spilt our life.” Such were their words;  
At hearing which downward I bent my looks,  
And held them there so long, that the bard cried:  
“What art thou pond’ring?” I in answer thus:  
“Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire  
Must they at length to that ill pass have reach’d!”

Then turning, I to them my speech address’d.  
And thus began: “Francesca! your sad fate  
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.  
But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,  
By what, and how love granted, that ye knew  
Your yet uncertain wishes?” She replied:  
“No greater grief than to remember days  
Of joy, when mis’ry is at hand! That kens  
Thy learn’d instructor. Yet so eagerly

If thou art bent to know the primal root,  
From whence our love gat being, I will do,  
As one, who weeps and tells his tale. One day  
For our delight we read of Lancelot,  
How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no  
Suspicion near us. Ofttimes by that reading  
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue  
Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point  
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,  
The wished smile, rapturously kiss'd  
By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er  
From me shall separate, at once my lips  
All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both  
Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day  
We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,  
The other wail'd so sorely, that heartstruck  
I through compassion fainting, seem'd not far  
From death, and like a corpse fell to the ground.





## CANTO VI

My sense reviving, that erewhile had droop'd  
With pity for the kindred shades, whence grief  
O'ercame me wholly, straight around I see  
New torments, new tormented souls, which way  
Soe'er I move, or turn, or bend my sight.  
In the third circle I arrive, of show'rs  
Ceaseless, accursed, heavy, and cold, unchang'd  
For ever, both in kind and in degree.  
Large hail, discolour'd water, sleety flaw

Through the dun midnight air stream'd down amain:  
Stank all the land whereon that tempest fell.

Cerberus, cruel monster, fierce and strange,  
Through his wide threefold throat barks as a dog  
Over the multitude immers'd beneath.  
His eyes glare crimson, black his unctuous beard,  
His belly large, and claw'd the hands, with which  
He tears the spirits, flays them, and their limbs  
Piecemeal disparts. Howling there spread, as curs,  
Under the rainy deluge, with one side  
The other screening, oft they roll them round,  
A wretched, godless crew. When that great worm  
Descried us, savage Cerberus, he op'd  
His jaws, and the fangs show'd us; not a limb  
Of him but trembled. Then my guide, his palms  
Expanding on the ground, thence filled with earth  
Rais'd them, and cast it in his ravenous maw.

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

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

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

“Thy city heap’d with envy to the brim,  
Ay that the measure overflows its bounds,  
Held me in brighter days. Ye citizens  
Were wont to name me Ciacco. For the sin  
Of glutt’ny, damned vice, beneath this rain,  
E’en as thou see’st, I with fatigue am worn;  
Nor I sole spirit in this woe: all these  
Have by like crime incurr’d like punishment.”

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

He then: "After long striving they will come  
 To blood; and the wild party from the woods  
 Will chase the other with much injury forth.  
 Then it behoves, that this must fall, within  
 Three solar circles; and the other rise  
 By borrow'd force of one, who under shore  
 Now rests. It shall a long space hold aloof  
 Its forehead, keeping under heavy weight  
 The other oppress'd, indignant at the load,  
 And grieving sore. The just are two in number,  
 But they neglected. Av'rice, envy, pride,  
 Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all  
 On fire." Here ceas'd the lamentable sound;  
 And I continu'd thus: "Still would I learn  
 More from thee, farther parley still entreat.  
 Of Farinata and Tegghiaio say,  
 They who so well deserv'd, of Giacopo,  
 Arrigo, Mosca, and the rest, who bent  
 Their minds on working good. Oh! tell me where  
 They bide, and to their knowledge let me come.  
 For I am press'd with keen desire to hear,  
 If heaven's sweet cup or poisonous drug of hell  
 Be to their lip assign'd." He answer'd straight:  
 "These are yet blacker spirits. Various crimes  
 Have sunk them deeper in the dark abyss.  
 If thou so far descendest, thou mayst see them.  
 But to the pleasant world when thou return'st,  
 Of me make mention, I entreat thee, there.  
 No more I tell thee, answer thee no more."

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

When thus my guide: "No more his bed he leaves,  
 Ere the last angel-trumpet blow. The Power  
 Adverse to these shall then in glory come,  
 Each one forthwith to his sad tomb repair,  
 Resume his fleshly vesture and his form,  
 And hear the eternal doom re-echoing rend

The vault.” So pass’d we through that mixture foul  
 Of spirits and rain, with tardy steps; meanwhile  
 Touching, though slightly, on the life to come.  
 For thus I question’d: “Shall these tortures, Sir!  
 When the great sentence passes, be increas’d,  
 Or mitigated, or as now severe?”

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

## CANTO VII

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

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

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

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

E’en as a billow, on Charybdis rising,



Against encounter'd billow dashing breaks;  
 Such is the dance this wretched race must lead,  
 Whom more than elsewhere numerous here I found,  
 From one side and the other, with loud voice,  
 Both roll'd on weights by main forge of their breasts,  
 Then smote together, and each one forthwith  
 Roll'd them back voluble, turning again,  
 Exclaiming these, "Why holdest thou so fast?"  
 Those answering, "And why castest thou away?"  
 So still repeating their despicable song,  
 They to the opposite point on either hand  
 Travers'd the horrid circle: then arriv'd,  
 Both turn'd them round, and through the middle space  
 Conflicting met again. At sight whereof  
 I, stung with grief, thus spake: "O say, my guide!  
 What race is this? Were these, whose heads are shorn,  
 On our left hand, all sep'rate to the church?"

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

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

Now may'st thou see, my son! how brief, how vain,  
The goods committed into fortune's hands,  
For which the human race keep such a coil!  
Not all the gold, that is beneath the moon,  
Or ever hath been, of these toil-worn souls  
Might purchase rest for one." I thus rejoin'd:

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

He thus: "O beings blind! what ignorance  
Besets you? Now my judgment hear and mark.  
He, whose transcendent wisdom passes all,  
The heavens creating, gave them ruling powers  
To guide them, so that each part shines to each,  
Their light in equal distribution pour'd.

By similar appointment he ordain'd  
 Over the world's bright images to rule  
 Superintendence of a guiding hand  
 And general minister, which at due time  
 May change the empty vantages of life  
 From race to race, from one to other's blood,  
 Beyond prevention of man's wisest care:  
 Wherefore one nation rises into sway,  
 Another languishes, e'en as her will  
 Decrees, from us conceal'd, as in the grass  
 The serpent train. Against her nought avails  
 Your utmost wisdom. She with foresight plans,  
 Judges, and carries on her reign, as theirs  
 The other powers divine. Her changes know  
 None intermission: by necessity  
 She is made swift, so frequent come who claim  
 Succession in her favours. This is she,  
 So execrated e'en by those, whose debt  
 To her is rather praise; they wrongfully  
 With blame requite her, and with evil word;  
 But she is blessed, and for that reck not:  
 Amidst the other primal beings glad  
 Rolls on her sphere, and in her bliss exults.  
 Now on our way pass we, to heavier woe  
 Descending: for each star is falling now,  
 That mounted at our entrance, and forbids  
 Too long our tarrying." We the circle cross'd  
 To the next steep, arriving at a well,  
 That boiling pours itself down to a foss  
 Sluic'd from its source. Far murkier was the wave  
 Than sablest grain: and we in company  
 Of the inky waters, journeying by their side,  
 Enter'd, though by a different track, beneath.  
 Into a lake, the Stygian nam'd, expands  
 The dismal stream, when it hath reach'd the foot  
 Of the grey wither'd cliffs. Intent I stood  
 To gaze, and in the marish sunk descried  
 A miry tribe, all naked, and with looks  
 Betok'ning rage. They with their hands alone  
 Struck not, but with the head, the breast, the feet,  
 Cutting each other piecemeal with their fangs.

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

## CANTO VIII

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“To the other dogs!” then, with his arms my neck  
Encircling, kiss’d my cheek, and spake: “O soul  
Justly disdainful! blest was she in whom  
Thou was conceiv’d! He in the world was one  
For arrogance noted; to his memory  
No virtue lends its lustre; even so  
Here is his shadow furious. There above  
How many now hold themselves mighty kings  
Who here like swine shall wallow in the mire,  
Leaving behind them horrible dispraise!”

I then: “Master! him fain would I behold

Whelm'd in these dregs, before we quit the lake."

He thus: "Or ever to thy view the shore  
Be offer'd, satisfied shall be that wish,  
Which well deserves completion." Scarce his words  
Were ended, when I saw the miry tribes  
Set on him with such violence, that yet  
For that render I thanks to God and praise  
"To Filippo Argenti:" cried they all:  
And on himself the moody Florentine  
Turn'd his avenging fangs. Him here we left,  
Nor speak I of him more. But on mine ear  
Sudden a sound of lamentation smote,  
Whereat mine eye unbarr'd I sent abroad.

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

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

We came within the fosses deep, that moat  
This region comfortless. The walls appear'd  
As they were fram'd of iron. We had made  
Wide circuit, ere a place we reach'd, where loud  
The mariner cried vehement: "Go forth!  
The entrance is here!" Upon the gates I spied  
More than a thousand, who of old from heaven  
Were hurl'd. With ireful gestures, "Who is this,"  
They cried, "that without death first felt, goes through  
The regions of the dead?" My sapient guide  
Made sign that he for secret parley wish'd;  
Whereat their angry scorn abating, thus  
They spake: "Come thou alone; and let him go  
Who hath so hardily enter'd this realm.  
Alone return he by his witless way;



If well he know it, let him prove. For thee,  
Here shalt thou tarry, who through clime so dark  
Hast been his escort.” Now bethink thee, reader!  
What cheer was mine at sound of those curs’d words.  
I did believe I never should return.

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

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

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

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

Passing                    the                    circles,                    unescorted,                    comes  
One whose strong might can open us this land.”

## CANTO IX

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

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

Thus    I    inquiring.    “Rarely,”    he    replied,  
“It    chances,    that    among    us    any    makes  
This    journey,    which    I    wend.    Erewhile    'tis    true  
Once    came    I    here    beneath,    conjur'd    by    fell  
Erictho,    sorceress,    who    compell'd    the    shades  
Back    to    their    bodies.    No    long    space    my    flesh  
Was    naked    of    me,    when    within    these    walls  
She    made    me    enter,    to    draw    forth    a    spirit  
From    out    of    Judas'    circle.    Lowest    place  
Is    that    of    all,    obscurest,    and    remov'd  
Farthest    from    heav'n's    all-circling    orb.    The    road  
Full    well    I    know:    thou    therefore    rest    secure.  
That    lake,    the    noisome    stench    exhaling,    round  
The    city'    of    grief    encompasses,    which    now  
We    may    not    enter    without    rage.”    Yet    more

He added: but I hold it not in mind,  
For that mine eye toward the lofty tower  
Had drawn me wholly, to its burning top.  
Where in an instant I beheld uprisen  
At once three hellish furies stain'd with blood:  
In limb and motion feminine they seem'd;  
Around them greenest hydras twisting roll'd  
Their volumes; adders and cerastes crept  
Instead of hair, and their fierce temples bound.

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

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

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

Mine eyes he loos'd, and spake: "And now direct  
 Thy visual nerve along that ancient foam,  
 There, thickest where the smoke ascends." As frogs  
 Before their foe the serpent, through the wave  
 Ply swiftly all, till at the ground each one  
 Lies on a heap; more than a thousand spirits  
 Destroy'd, so saw I fleeing before one  
 Who pass'd with unwet feet the Stygian sound.  
 He, from his face removing the gross air,  
 Oft his left hand forth stretch'd, and seem'd alone  
 By that annoyance wearied. I perceiv'd  
 That he was sent from heav'n, and to my guide

Turn'd me, who signal made that I should stand  
Quiet, and bend to him. Ah me! how full  
Of noble anger seem'd he! To the gate  
He came, and with his wand touch'd it, whereat  
Open without impediment it flew.

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

This said, he turn’d back o’er the filthy way,

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

As where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles,  
Or as at Pola, near Quarnaro's gulf,  
That closes Italy and laves her bounds,  
The place is all thick spread with sepulchres;  
So was it here, save what in horror here  
Excell'd: for 'midst the graves were scattered flames,  
Wherewith intensely all throughout they burn'd,  
That iron for no craft there hotter needs.

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

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

“The arch-heretics are here, accompanied  
By every sect their followers; and much more,  
Than thou believest, tombs are freighted: like  
With like is buried; and the monuments  
Are different in degrees of heat.” This said,  
He to the right hand turning, on we pass’d  
Betwixt the afflicted and the ramparts high.

## CANTO X



Now by a secret pathway we proceed,  
 Between the walls, that hem the region round,  
 And the tormented souls: my master first,  
 I close behind his steps. "Virtue supreme!"  
 I thus began; "who through these ample orbs  
 In circuit lead'st me, even as thou will'st,  
 Speak thou, and satisfy my wish. May those,  
 Who lie within these sepulchres, be seen?  
 Already all the lids are rais'd, and none  
 O'er them keeps watch." He thus in answer spake  
 "They shall be closed all, what-time they here  
 From Josaphat return'd shall come, and bring  
 Their bodies, which above they now have left.  
 The cemetery on this part obtain  
 With Epicurus all his followers,  
 Who with the body make the spirit die.  
 Here therefore satisfaction shall be soon  
 Both to the question ask'd, and to the wish,  
 Which thou conceal'st in silence." I replied:  
 "I keep not, guide belov'd! from thee my heart  
 Secreted, but to shun vain length of words,  
 A lesson erewhile taught me by thyself."

"O Tuscan! thou who through the city of fire  
 Alive art passing, so discreet of speech!  
 Here please thee stay awhile. Thy utterance  
 Declares the place of thy nativity  
 To be that noble land, with which perchance  
 I too severely dealt." Sudden that sound  
 Forth issu'd from a vault, whereat in fear  
 I somewhat closer to my leader's side  
 Approaching, he thus spake: "What dost thou? Turn.  
 Lo, Farinata, there! who hath himself  
 Uplifted: from his girdle upwards all  
 Expos'd behold him." On his face was mine  
 Already fix'd; his breast and forehead there  
 Erecting, seem'd as in high scorn he held  
 E'en hell. Between the sepulchres to him  
 My guide thrust me with fearless hands and prompt,  
 This warning added: "See thy words be clear!"

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

I, willing to obey him, straight reveal'd  
The whole, nor kept back aught: whence he, his brow  
Somewhat uplifting, cried: "Fiercely were they  
Adverse to me, my party, and the blood  
From whence I sprang: twice therefore I abroad  
Scatter'd them." "Though driv'n out, yet they each time  
From all parts," answer'd I, "return'd; an art  
Which yours have shown, they are not skill'd to learn."

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

I straight replied: "Not of myself I come,  
 By him, who there expects me, through this clime  
 Conducted, whom perchance Guido thy son  
 Had in contempt." Already had his words  
 And mode of punishment read me his name,  
 Whence I so fully answer'd. He at once  
 Exclaim'd, up starting, "How! said'st thou he HAD?  
 No longer lives he? Strikes not on his eye  
 The blessed daylight?" Then of some delay  
 I made ere my reply aware, down fell  
 Supine, not after forth appear'd he more.

Meanwhile the other, great of soul, near whom  
 I yet was station'd, chang'd not count'nance stern,  
 Nor mov'd the neck, nor bent his ribbed side.  
 "And if," continuing the first discourse,  
 "They in this art," he cried, "small skill have shown,  
 That doth torment me more e'en than this bed.  
 But not yet fifty times shall be relum'd  
 Her aspect, who reigns here Queen of this realm,  
 Ere thou shalt know the full weight of that art.  
 So to the pleasant world mayst thou return,  
 As thou shalt tell me, why in all their laws,  
 Against my kin this people is so fell?"

"The slaughter and great havoc," I replied,  
 "That colour'd Arbia's flood with crimson stain—  
 To these impute, that in our hallow'd dome  
 Such orisons ascend." Sighing he shook  
 The head, then thus resum'd: "In that affray

I stood not singly, nor without just cause  
Assuredly should with the rest have stirr'd;  
But singly there I stood, when by consent  
Of all, Florence had to the ground been raz'd,  
The one who openly forbad the deed."

"So may thy lineage find at last repose,"  
I thus adjur'd him, "as thou solve this knot,  
Which now involves my mind. If right I hear,  
Ye seem to view beforehand, that which time  
Leads with him, of the present uninform'd."

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

Then conscious of my fault, and by remorse  
Smitten, I added thus: "Now shalt thou say  
To him there fallen, that his offspring still  
Is to the living join'd; and bid him know,  
That if from answer silent I abstain'd,  
'Twas that my thought was occupied intent  
Upon that error, which thy help hath solv'd."

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

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

Reverting,                    ruminated                    on                    the                    words  
Betokening                    me                    such                    ill.                    Onward                    he                    mov'd,  
And                    thus                    in                    going                    question'd:                    "Whence                    the                    amaze  
That                    holds                    thy                    senses                    wrapt?"                    I                    satisfied  
The                    inquiry,                    and                    the                    sage                    enjoin'd                    me                    straight:  
"Let                    thy                    safe                    memory                    store                    what                    thou                    hast                    heard  
To                    thee                    importing                    harm;                    and                    note                    thou                    this,"  
With                    his                    rais'd                    finger                    bidding                    me                    take                    heed,

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

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