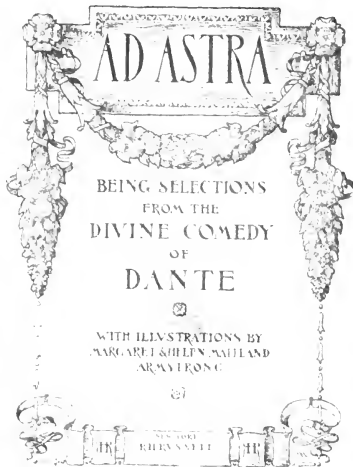


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GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison





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AD ASTRA

BEING SELECTIONS
FROM THE
DIVINE COMEDY
OF
DANTE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MARGARET & HELEN MAITLAND
ARMSTRONG

NEW YORK
R. H. RYSELL
MCMII



FROM INFERNO

THE FOREST OF LIFE	THE HARPIS' WOOD
THE GATE OF HELL	CRETE
THE NOBLE CASTLE OF PHILOSOPHY	IN THE ARSENAL
FRANCESCA AND PAOLO	THE PHENIX
FORTUNE	THE FATE OF ULYSSES
THE CITY OF UNBELIEF	THE RETURN TO EARTH
THE ANGEL AT THE GATE OF DIS	

PURGATORIO

THE SHORES OF PURGATORY	THE ANGEL OF PEACE
THE CELESTIAL PILOT	THE SMOKY LAND
MANFREDI	THE NEW-MADE SOUL
SORDELLO	STATIUS
THE HAPPY VALLEY	THE NIGHT'S REST
EVENING	ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION
THE GUARDIANS OF THE VALLEY	VIRGIL'S FAREWELL
THE THREE STEPS OF CONTRITION, PENANCE, AND ABSOLUTION	THE RIVER OF REGENERATION
THE SCULPTURES ON THE WALL	THE LADY OF THE FLOWERS
PATER NOSTER	THE PROCESSION OF THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT
VANA GLORIA	BEATRICE

PARADISO

THE ASCENT TO PARADISE

PICARDA

SELF-CONFIDENCE

ANCIENT FLORENCE

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE'S EXILE

VERA FIDES

THE PLANETS

THE GOLDEN STAIRWAY

ROSA ROSARUM

THE HOLY CITY

THE WHITE ROSE OF PARADISE

BEATRICE'S FAREWELL

GABRIEL

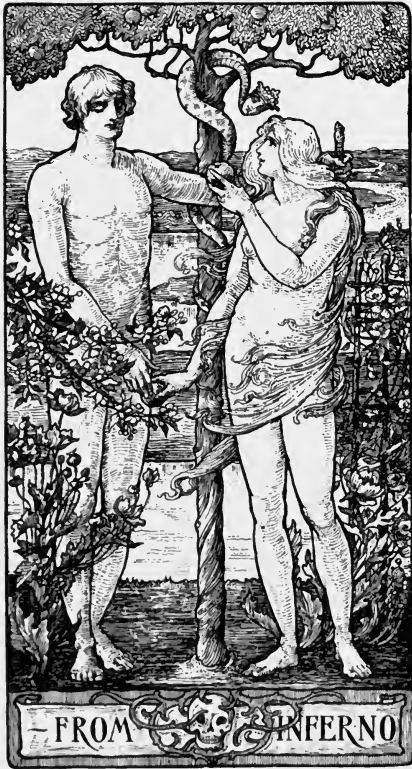
AVE MARIA

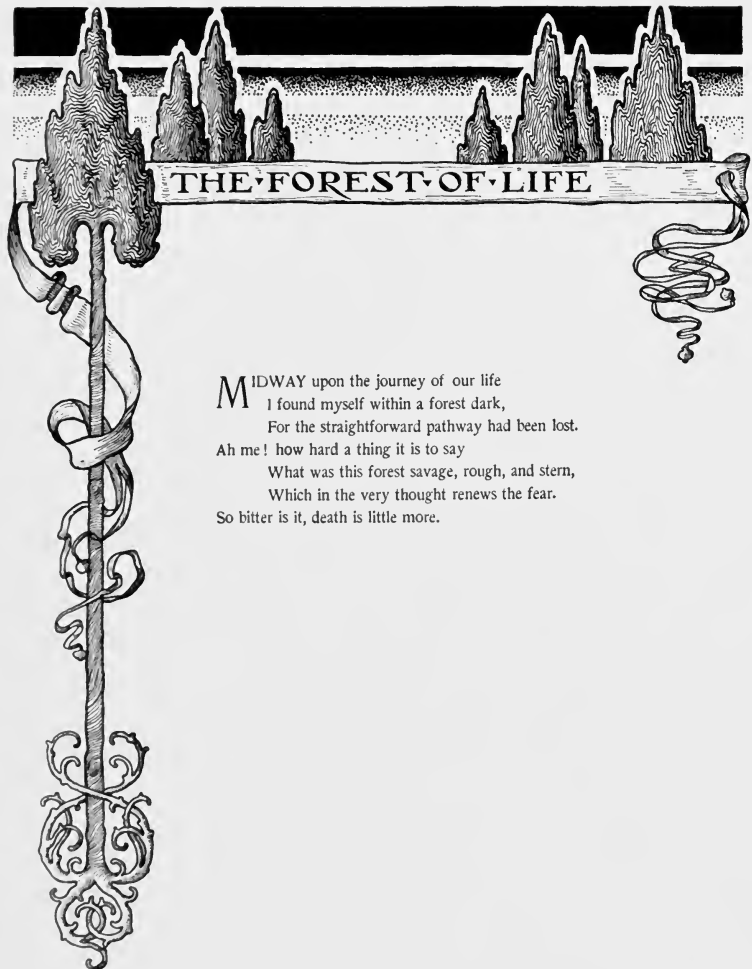
THE BEATIFIC VISION





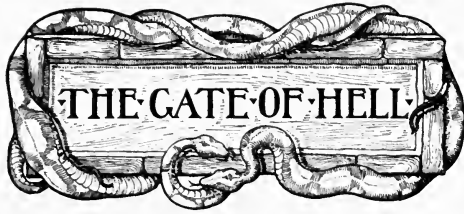






THE FOREST OF LIFE

MIDWAY upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,
Which in the very thought renews the fear.
So bitter is it, death is little more.

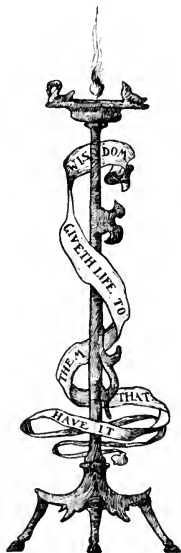


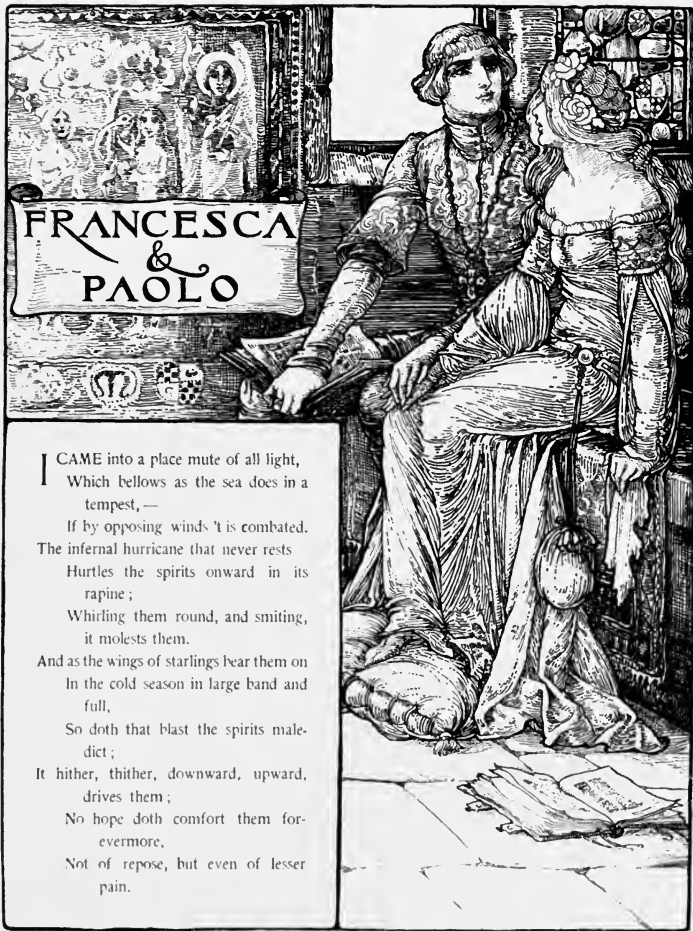
“**T**HROUGH me the way is to the city doleant ;
Through me the way is to eternal dole ;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Justice incited my sublime Creator ;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in !”
These words in sombre colour I beheld
Written upon the summit of a gate.



WE came unto a noble castle's foot,
Seven times encompass'd with lofty walls,
Defended round by a fair rivulet ;
This we passed over even as firm ground ;
Through portals seven I entered with these Sages ;
We came into a meadow of fresh verdure.
People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance ;
They spake but seldom, and with gentle voices.
Thus we withdrew ourselves upon one side
Into an opening luminous and lofty,
So that they all of them were visible.
There opposite, upon the green enamel,
Were pointed out to me the mighty spirits,
Whom to have seen I felt myself exalted.
I saw Electra with companions many,
'Mongst whom I saw both Hector and Æneas,
Cæsar in armour with gerfalcon eyes ;
I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin forth,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia and Cornelia,
And saw alone, apart, the Saladin.
When I had lifted up my brows a little,
The Master I beheld of those who know,
Sit with his philosophic family.
All gaze upon him, and all do him honour.
There I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
Who nearer him before the others stand ;

I cannot all of them portray in full,
Because so drives me onward the long theme,
That many times the word comes short of fact.
The sixfold company in two divides ;
Another way my sapient Guide conducts me
Forth from the quiet to the air that trembles ;
And to a place I come where nothing shines.





I CAME into a place mute of all light,
Which bellows as the sea does in a
tempest, —
If by opposing winds 't is combated.
The infernal hurricane that never rests
Hurttles the spirits onward in its
rapine ;
Whirling them round, and smiting,
it molests them.
And as the wings of starlings bear them on
In the cold season in large band and
full,
So doth that blast the spirits male-
dict ;
It hither, thither, downward, upward,
drives them ;
No hope doth comfort them for-
evermore,
Not of repose, but even of lesser
pain.



And as the cranes go chanting forth their lays,
Making in air a long line of themselves,
So saw I coming, uttering lamentations,
Shadows borne onward by the aforesaid stress.

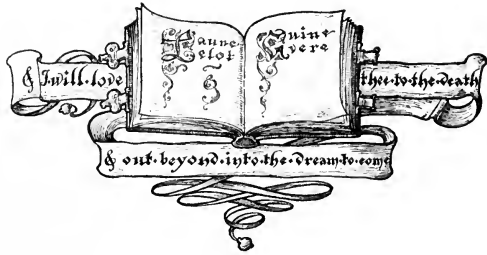


Helen I saw, for whom so many ruthless
Seasons revolved; and saw the great Achilles,
Who at the last hour combated with Love.
Paris I saw, Tristan; and more than a thousand
Shades did he name and point out with his finger,
Whom Love had separated from our life.
After that I had listened to my Teacher,
Naming the dames of eld and cavaliers,
Pity prevailed, and I was nigh bewildered.

And I began: "O Poet, willingly
Speak would I to those two, who go together,
And seem upon the wind to be so light."
And he to me: "Thou 'lt mark, when they shall be
Nearer to us; and then do thou implore them
By love which leadeth them, and they will come."
Soon as the wind in our direction sways them,
My voice uplift I: "O ye weary souls!
Come speak to us, if no one interdicts it."
As turtle-doves, called onward by desire,
With open and steady wings to the sweet nest
Fly through the air by their volition borne,
So came they from the band where Dido is,
Approaching us athwart the air malign,
So strong was the affectionate appeal.
"O living creature gracious and benignant,
Who visiting goest through the purple air,
Us, who have stained the world incarnadine,
If were the King of the Universe our friend,
We would pray unto Him to give thee peace,
Since thou hast pity on our woe perverse.
Of what it pleases thee to hear or speak,
That will we hear, and we will speak to you,
While silent is the wind, as it is now.

Sitteth the city, wherein I was born,
 Upon the sea-shore where the Po descends
 To rest in peace with all his retinue.
Love, that on gentle heart doth swiftly seize,
 Seized this man for the person beautiful
 That was ta'en from me, and still the mode offends me.
Love, that exempts no one beloved from loving,
 Seized me with pleasure of this man so strongly,
 That, as thou seest, it doth not yet desert me ;
Love has conducted us unto one death ;
 Calma waiteth him who quenched our life ! ”
 These words were borne along from them to us.
As soon as I had heard those souls tormented,
 I bowed my face, and so long held it down
 Until the Poet said to me : “ What thinkest ? ”
When I made answer, I began : “ Alas !
 How many pleasant thoughts, how much desire,
 Conducted these unto the dolorous pass. ”
Then unto them I turned me, and I spake,
 And I began : “ Thine agonies, Francesca,
 Sad and compassionate to weeping make me.
But tell me, at the time of those sweet sighs,
 By what and in what manner Love conceded,
 That you should know your dubious desires ? ”
And she to me : “ There is no greater sorrow
 Than to be mindful of the happy time
 In misery, and that thy Teacher knows.
But, if to recognise the earliest root
 Of love in us thou hast so great desire,
 I will do even as he who weeps and speaks.
One day we reading were for our delight
 Of Launcelot, how Love did him enthrall.
 Alone we were and without any fear.
Full many a time our eyes together drew
 That reading, and drove the colour from our faces ;
 But one point only was it that o'ercame us.
Whenas we read of the much-longed-for smile
 Being by such a noble lover kissed,
 This one, who ne'er from me shall be divided,

Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating.
Galeotto was the book and he who wrote it.
That day no farther did we read therein."
And all the while one spirit uttered this,
The other one did weep so, that, for pity,
I swooned away as if I had been dying,
And fell, even as a dead body falls.





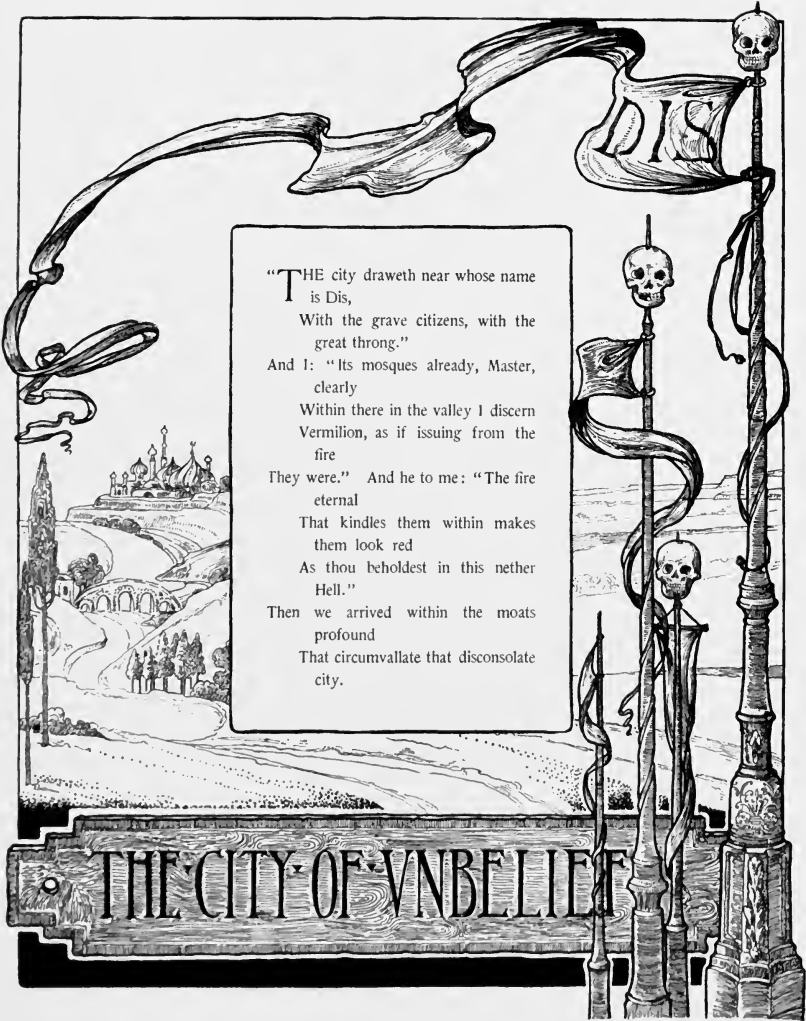
FORTVNE

"NOW canst thou, Son, behold the
transient farce
Of goods that are committed unto
Fortune,
For which the human race each
other buffet;
For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or ever has been, of these weary
souls
Could never make a single one
repose."
"Master," I said to him, "now tell me
also
What is this Fortune which thou
speakest of,
That has the world's goods so within
its clutches?"
AND he to me: "O creatures imbecile,
What ignorance is this which doth
beset you?"

TVRN.FORTVNE.
TVRN THY WHEEL
AND
LOWER THE
PROUD

Now will I have thee learn my judgment of her.
He whose omniscience everything transcends
The heavens created, and gave who should guide them,
That every part to every part may shine,
Distributing the light in equal measure;
He in like manner to the mundane splendours
Ordained a general ministriss and guide,
That she might change at times the empty treasures
From race to race, from one blood to another,
Beyond resistance of all human wisdom.
Therefore one people triumphs, and another
Languishes, in pursuance of her judgment,
Which hidden is, as in the grass a serpent.
Your knowledge has no counterstand against her ;
She makes provision, judges, and pursues
Her governance, as theirs the other gods.
Her permutations have not any truce ;
Necessity makes her precipitate,
So often cometh who his turn obtains.
And this is she who is so crucified
Even by those who ought to give her praise,
Giving her blame amiss, and bad repute.
But she is blissful, and she hears it not ;
Among the other primal creatures gladsome
She turns her sphere, and blissful she rejoices.'





"THE city draweth near whose name
is Dis,

With the grave citizens, with the
great throng."

And I: "Its mosques already, Master,
clearly

Within there in the valley I discern
Vermilion, as if issuing from the
fire

They were." And he to me: "The fire
eternal

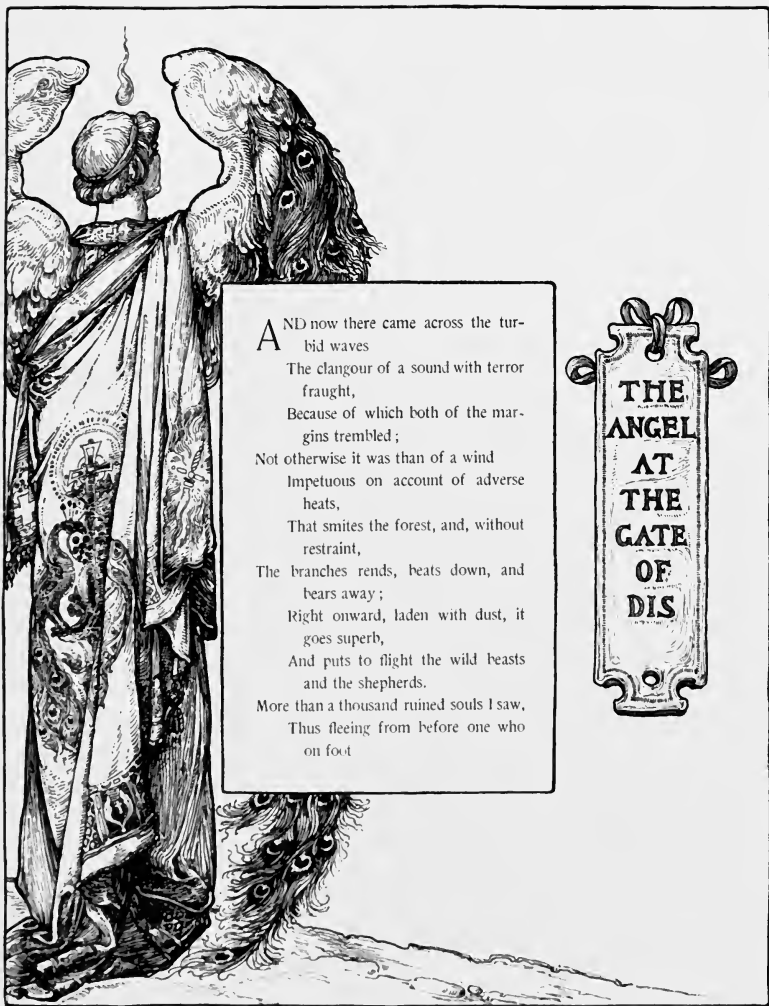
That kindles them within makes
them look red

As thou beholdest in this nether
Hell."

Then we arrived within the moats
profound

That circumvallate that disconsolate
city.

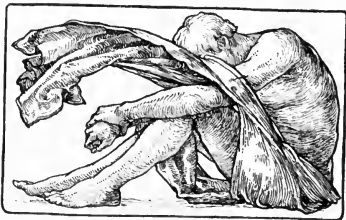
THE CITY OF UNBELIEF



AND now there came across the turbid waves
The clangour of a sound with terror fraught,
Because of which both of the margins trembled ;
Not otherwise it was than of a wind
Impetuous on account of adverse heats,
That smites the forest, and, without restraint,
The branches rends, beats down, and bears away ;
Right onward, laden with dust, it goes superb,
And puts to flight the wild beasts and the shepherds.
More than a thousand ruined souls I saw,
Thus fleeing from before one who on foot

THE
ANGEL
AT
THE
GATE
OF
DIS

Was passing o'er the Styx with soles unwet.
From off his face he fanned that unctuous air,
Waving his left hand oft in front of him,
And only with that anguish seemed he weary.
Well I perceived one sent from Heaven was he,
And to the Master turned; and he made sign
That I should quiet stand, and bow before him
Ah! how disdainful he appeared to me!
He reached the gate, and with a little rod
He opened it, for there was no resistance.
Then he returned along the miry road,
And spake no word to us, but had the look
Of one whom other care constrains and goads.



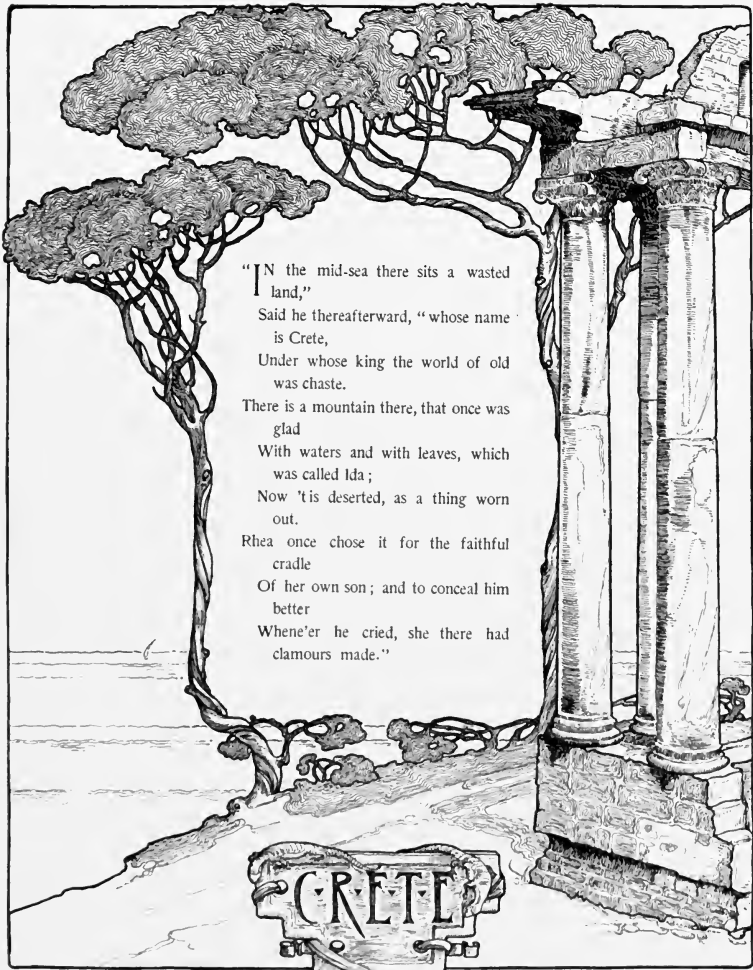
The Harpies' Wood

• • • • Within a wood,
That was not marked by any path
whate'er,
Not foliage green, but of a dusky colour,
Not branches smooth, but gnarled and
intertangled,
Not apple-trees were there, but thorns
with poison.
Such tangled thickets have not, nor so
dense,
Those savage wild-beasts, that in
hatred hold
'Twixt Cecina and Corneto the tilled
places.
There do the hideous Harpies make their
nests.
Who chased the Trojans from the
Strophades,
With sad announcement of impending
doom ;



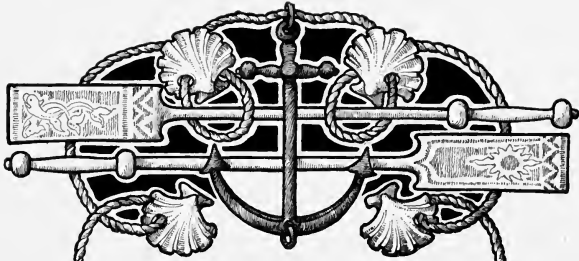
Broad wings have they, and necks and faces human,
And feet with claws, and their great bellies fledged ;
They make lament upon the wondrous trees.
I heard on all sides lamentations uttered,
And person none beheld I who might make them,
Whence, utterly bewildered, I stood still.
I think he thought that I perhaps might think
So many voices issued through those trunks
From people who concealed themselves for us ;
Therefore the Master said : " If thou break off
Some little spray from any of these trees,
The thoughts thou hast will wholly be made vain."
Then stretched I forth my hand a little forward,
And plucked a branchlet off from a great thorn ;
And the trunk cried : " Why dost thou mangle me ? "
After it had become embrowned with blood,
It recommenced its cry : " Why dost thou rend me ?
Hast thou no spirit of pity whatsoever ?
Men once we were, and now are changed to trees."





"IN the mid-sea there sits a wasted
land,"
Said he thereafterward, "whose name
is Crete,
Under whose king the world of old
was chaste.
There is a mountain there, that once was
glad
With waters and with leaves, which
was called Ida ;
Now 'tis deserted, as a thing worn
out.
Rhea once chose it for the faithful
cradle
Of her own son ; and to conceal him
better
Whene'er he cried, she there had
clamours made."

CRETE



FROM bridge to bridge thus, speaking other things
Of which my comedy cares not to sing,
We came along, and held the summit, when
We halted to behold another fissure
Of Malebolge and vain laments ;
And I beheld it marvellously dark,
As in the Arsenal of the Venetians
Boils in the winter the tenacious pitch
To smear their unsound vessels o'er again,
For sail they cannot ; and instead thereof
One makes his vessel new, and one recaulks
The ribs of that which many a voyage has made ,
One hammers at the prow, one at the stern ;
This one makes oars, and that one cordage twists ;
Another mends the mainsail and the mizzen.

IN THE ARSENAL



EVEN thus by the great sages 't is con-
fessed

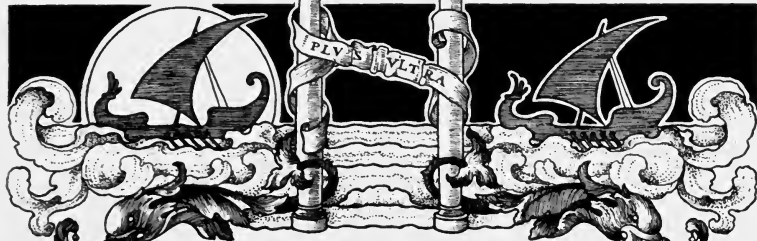
The phoenix dies, and then is born
again,

When it approaches its five-hundredth
year ;

On herb and grain it feeds not in its life,
But only on tears of incense and
amomum,
And nard and myrrh are its last wind-
ing-sheet.



THE * FATE * OF * VLYSSES



THEN of the antique flame the greater horn,
Murmuring, began to wave itself about
Even as a flame doth which the wind fatigues.
Thereafterward, the summit to and fro
Moving as if it were the tongue that spake,
It uttered forth a voice, and said: "When I
From Circe had departed, who concealed me
More than a year there near unto Gaëta,
Or ever yet Æneas named it so,
Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence
For my old father, nor the due affection
Which joyous should have made Penelope,
Could overcome within me the desire
I had to be experienced of the world,
And of the vice and virtue of mankind;
But I put forth on the high open sea
With one sole ship, and that small company
By which I never had deserted been.
Both of the shores I saw as far as Spain,
Far as Morocco, and the isle of Sardes,
And the others which that sea bathes round
about.
I and my company were old and slow
When at that narrow passage we arrived
Where Hercules his landmarks set as signals,
That man no farther onward should adventure.
On the right hand behind me left I Seville,
And on the other already had left Ceuta.

'O brothers, who amid a hundred thousand
Perils,' I said, 'have come unto the West,
To this so inconsiderable vigil
Which is remaining of your senses still,
Be ye unwilling to deny the knowledge,
Following the sun, of the unpeopled world.
Consider ye the seed from which ye sprang ;
Ye were not made to live like unto brutes,
But for pursuit of virtue and of knowledge.'
So eager did I render my companions,
With this brief exhortation, for the voyage,
That then I hardly could have held them back.
And having turned our stern unto the morning,
We of the oars made wings for our mad flight,
Evermore gaining on the larboard side.
Already all the stars of the other pole
The night beheld, and ours so very low
It did not rise above the ocean floor.
Five times rekindled and as many quenched
Had been the splendour underneath the moon,
Since we had entered into the deep pass,
When there appeared to us a mountain, dim
From distance, and it seemed to me so high
As I had never any one beheld.
Joyful were we, and soon it turned to weeping ;
For out of the new land a whirlwind rose,
And smote upon the fore part of the ship.
Three times it made her whirl with all the waters,
At the fourth time it made the stern uplift,
And the prow downward go, as pleased Another,
Until the sea above us closed again.'



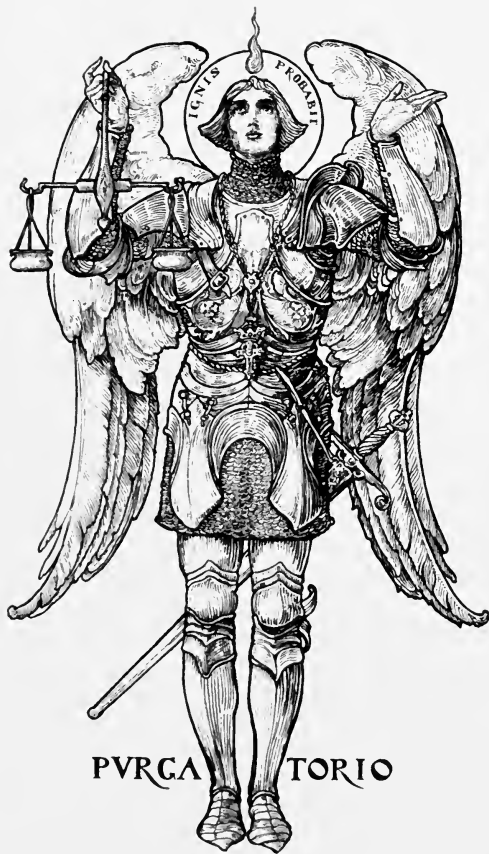


The Return to Earth.

“RISE up,” the Master said, “upon thy feet ;
The way is long, and difficult the road,
And now the sun to middle-tierce returns.”
It was not any palace corridor
There where we were, but dungeon natural,
With floor uneven and unease of light.
A place there is below, from Beelzebub
As far receding as the tomb extends,
Which not by sight is known, but by the sound
Of a small rivulet, that there descendeth
Through chasm within the stone, which it has gnawed
With course that winds about and slightly falls.
The Guide and I unto that hidden road
Now entered, to return to the bright world ;
And without care of having any rest
We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear ;
Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars.

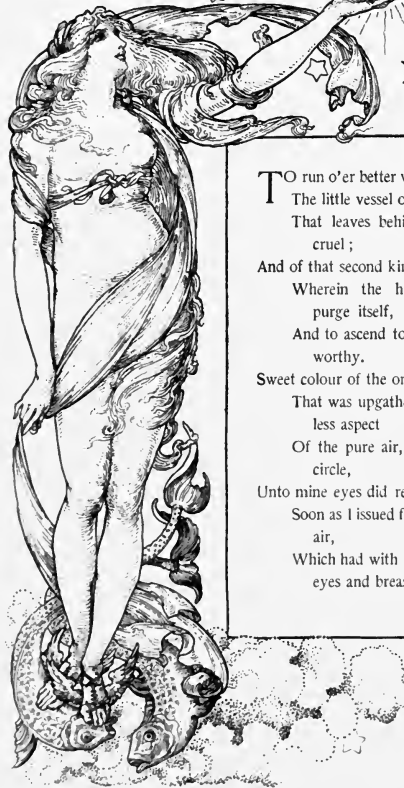
De Profundis Clamavi.





PVRGA TORIO

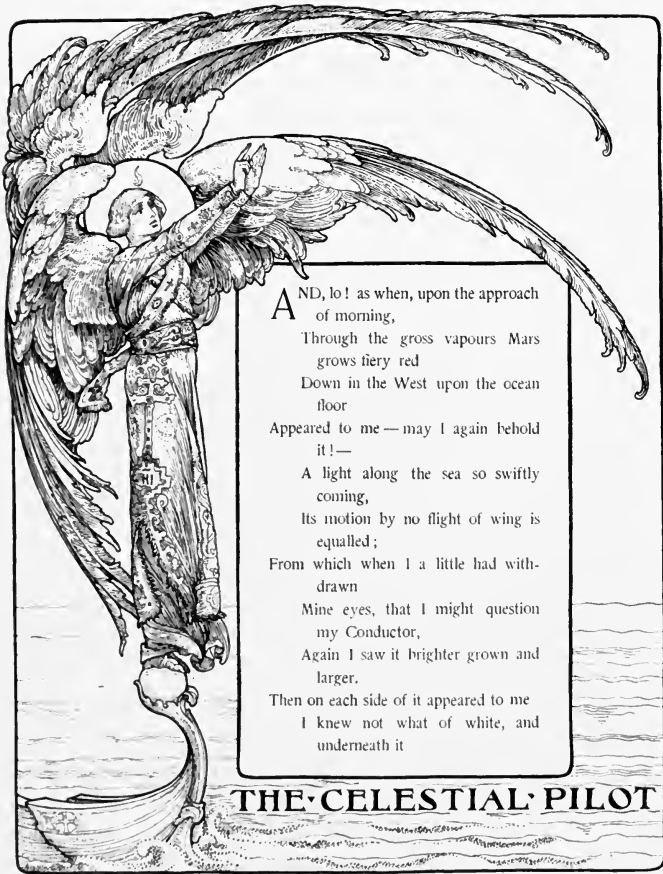
THE
SHORES OF
PVRGATORY



TO run o'er better waters hoists its sail
The little vessel of my genius now,
That leaves behind itself a sea so
cruel ;
And of that second kingdom will I sing
Wherein the human spirit doth
purge itself,
And to ascend to heaven becometh
worthy.
Sweet colour of the oriental sapphire
That was upgathered in the cloud-
less aspect
Of the pure air, as far as the first
circle,
Unto mine eyes did recommence delight
Soon as I issued forth from the dead
air,
Which had with sadness filled mine
eyes and breast.

The beauteous planet that to love incites
Was making all the orient to laugh,
Veiling the Fishes that were in her escort.
To the right hand I turned and fixed my mind
Upon the other pole, and saw four stars
Ne'er seen before save by the primal people.
The dawn was vanquishing the matin hour
Which fled before it, so that from afar
I recognised the trembling of the sea.



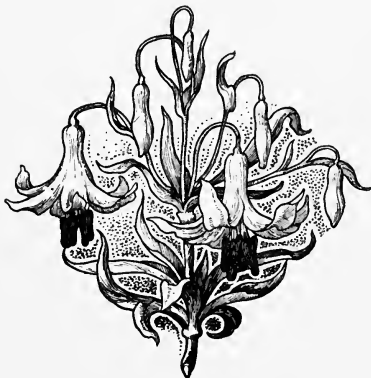


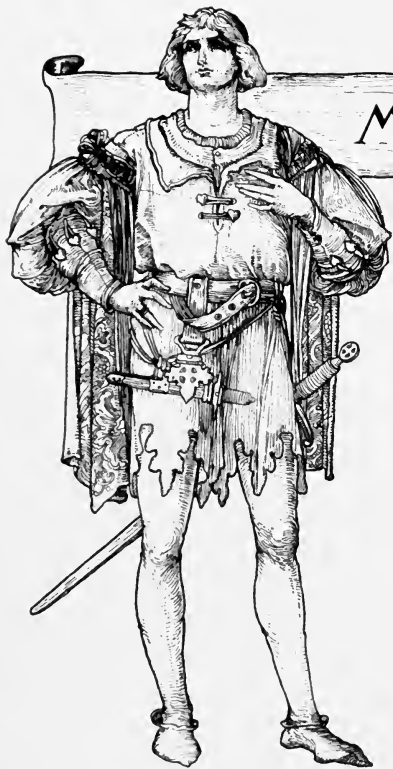
AND, lo! as when, upon the approach
of morning,
Through the gross vapours Mars
grows fiery red
Down in the West upon the ocean
floor
Appeared to me — may I again behold
it! —
A light along the sea so swiftly
coming,
Its motion by no flight of wing is
equalled;
From which when I a little had with-
drawn
Mine eyes, that I might question
my Conductor,
Again I saw it brighter grown and
larger.
Then on each side of it appeared to me
I knew not what of white, and
underneath it

THE CELESTIAL PILOT

Little by little there came forth another.
My master yet had uttered not a word
While the first whiteness into wings unfolded;
But when he clearly recognised the pilot,
He cried: "Make haste, make haste, to bow the knee!
Behold the Angel of God! fold thou thy hands!
Henceforward shalt thou see such officers!
See how he scorneth human arguments,
So that nor oar he wants, nor other sail
Than his own wings, between so distant shores.
See how he holds them pointed up to heaven,
Fanning the air with those eternal pinions,
That do not moult themselves like mortal hair!"

Then as still nearer and more near us came
The Bird Divine, more radiant he appeared,
So that near by the eye could not endure him,
But down I cast it; and he came to shore
With a small vessel, very swift and light,
So that the water swallowed naught thereof.
Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot;
Beatitude seemed written in his face,
And more than a hundred spirits sat within.
"In exitu Israel de Ægypto!"
They chanted all together in one voice,
With whatso in that psalm is after written.
Then made he sign of holy rood upon them,
Whereat all cast themselves upon the shore,
And he departed swiftly as he came.





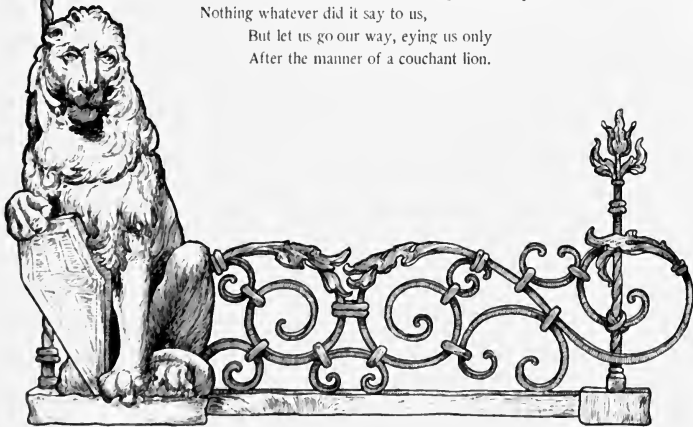
MANFREDI

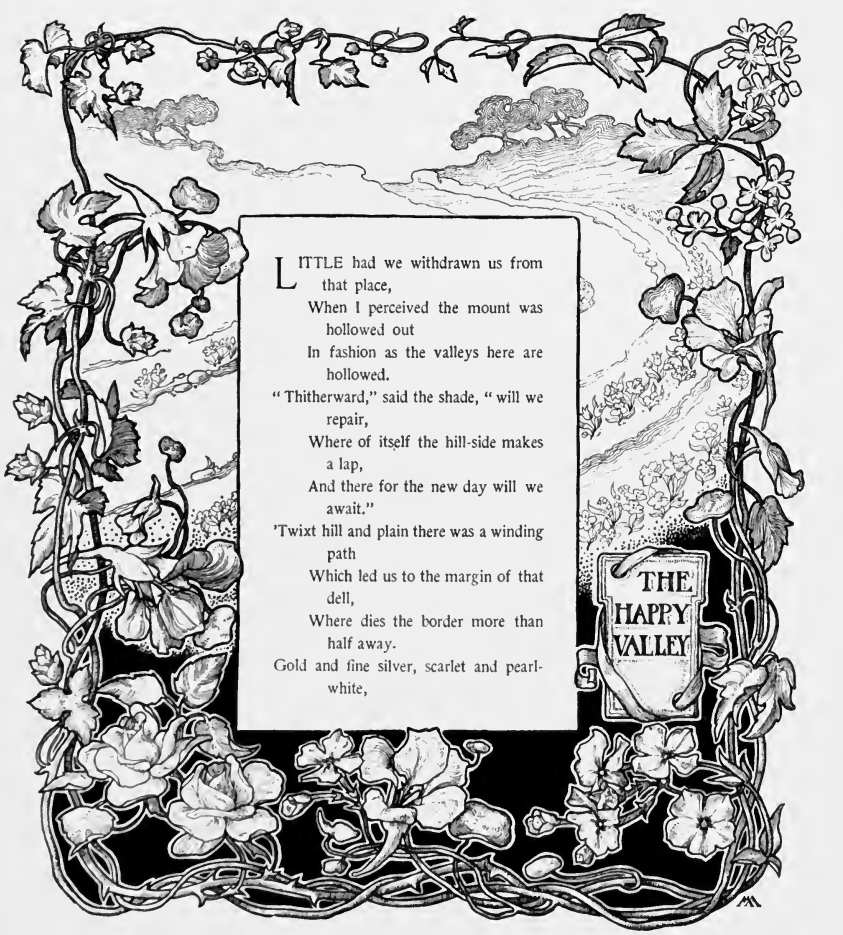
AND one of them began: "Whoe'er thou
art,
Thus going turn thine eyes, consider well
If e'er thou saw me in the other world."
I turned me tow'rds him, and looked at him
closely ;
Blond was he, beautiful, and of noble
aspect,
But one of his eyebrows had a blow
divided.
When with humility I had disclaimed
E'er having seen him, "Now behold!"
he said,
And showed me high upon his breast a
wound.
Then said he with a smile : " I am Manfredi."



SORDELLO

“**B**UT yonder there behold! a soul that stationed
All, all alone is looking hitherward;
It will point out to us the quickest way.”
We came up unto it; O Lombard soul,
How lofty and disdainful thou didst bear thee,
And grand and slow in moving of thine eyes.
Nothing whatever did it say to us,
But let us go our way, eying us only
After the manner of a couchant lion.





LITTLE had we withdrawn us from
that place,
When I perceived the mount was
hollowed out
In fashion as the valleys here are
hollowed.

"Thitherward," said the shade, "will we
repair,
Where of itself the hill-side makes
a lap,
And there for the new day will we
await."

"Twixt hill and plain there was a winding
path
Which led us to the margin of that
dell,
Where dies the border more than
half away.
Gold and fine silver, scarlet and pearl-
white,

THE
HAPPY
VALLEY

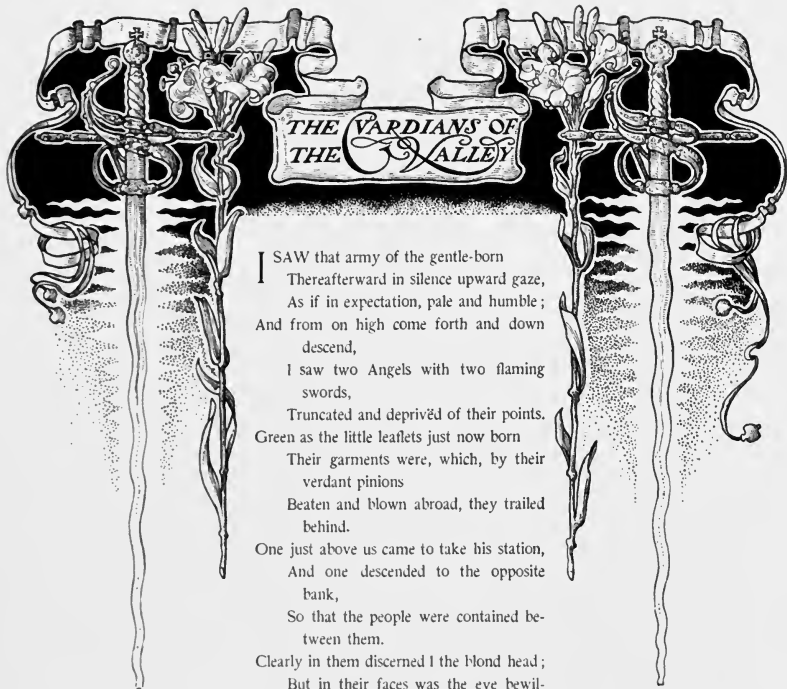
The Indian wood resplendent and serene,
Fresh emerald the moment it is broken
By herbage and by flowers within that hollow
Planted, each one in colour would be vanquished,
As by its greater vanquished is the less.
Nor in that place had nature painted only,
But of the sweetness of a thousand odours
Made there a mingled fragrance and unknown.
"Salve Regina," on the green and flowers
There seated, singing, spirits I beheld,
Which were not visible outside the valley.



Evening

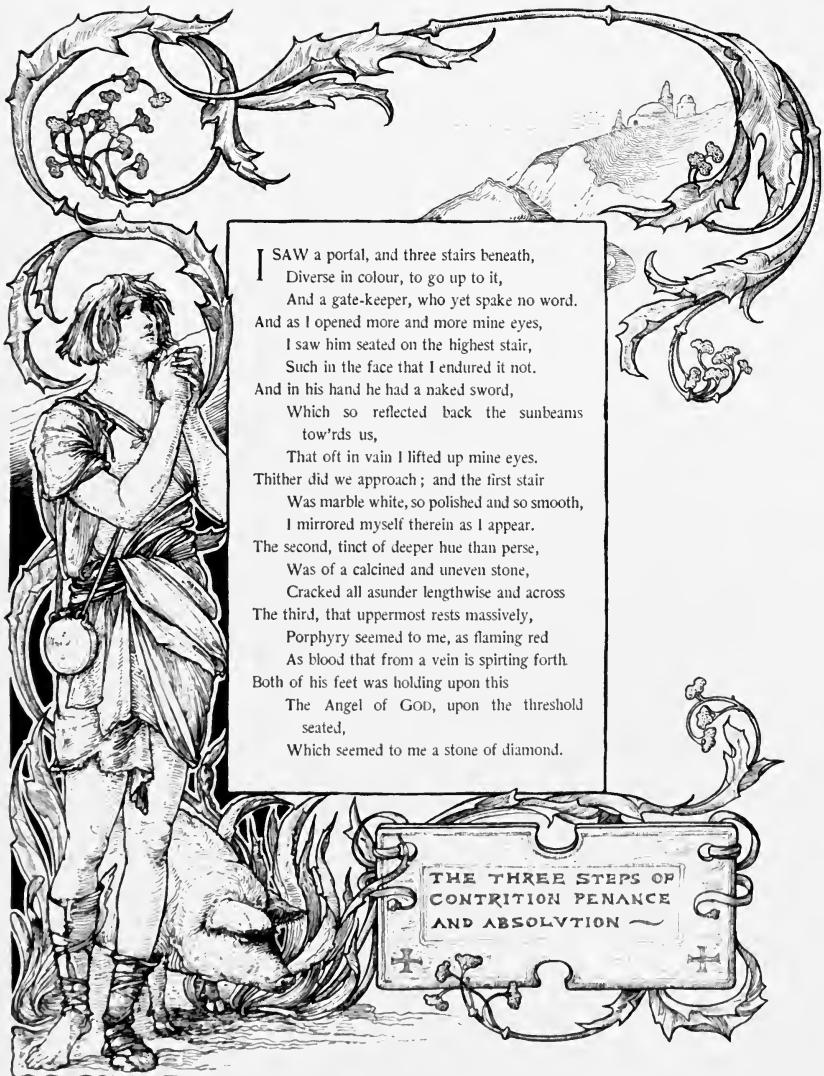
'T WAS now the hour that turneth back desire
In those who sail the sea, and melts the heart,
The day they 've said to their sweet friends farewell,
And the new pilgrim penetrates with love,
If he doth hear from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day.





THE VARDIANS OF
THE VALLEY

I SAW that army of the gentle-born
Thereafterward in silence upward gaze,
As if in expectation, pale and humble;
And from on high come forth and down
descend,
I saw two Angels with two flaming
swords,
Truncated and deprived of their points.
Green as the little leaflets just now born
Their garments were, which, by their
verdant pinions
Beaten and blown abroad, they trailed
behind.
One just above us came to take his station,
And one descended to the opposite
bank,
So that the people were contained be-
tween them.
Clearly in them discerned I the Mond head;
But in their faces was the eye bewil-
dered,
As faculty confounded by excess.
"From Mary's bosom both of them have
come,"
Sordello said, "as guardians of the
valley."



I SAW a portal, and three stairs beneath,
Diverse in colour, to go up to it,
And a gate-keeper, who yet spake no word.
And as I opened more and more mine eyes,
I saw him seated on the highest stair,
Such in the face that I endured it not.
And in his hand he had a naked sword,
Which so reflected back the sunbeams
tow'rds us,
That oft in vain I lifted up mine eyes.
Thither did we approach; and the first stair
Was marble white, so polished and so smooth,
I mirrored myself therein as I appear.
The second, tinct of deeper hue than perse,
Was of a calcined and uneven stone,
Cracked all asunder lengthwise and across
The third, that uppermost rests massively,
Porphyry seemed to me, as flaming red
As blood that from a vein is spiriting forth
Both of his feet was holding upon this
The Angel of GOD, upon the threshold
seated,
Which seemed to me a stone of diamond.

THE THREE STEPS OF
CONTRITION PENANCE
AND ABSOLVTION

Along the three stairs upward with good will
Did my Conductor draw me saying: " Ask
Humbly that he the fastening may undo."
Devoutly at the holy feet I cast me,
For mercy's sake besought that he would open,
But first upon my breast three times I smote.

* * * * *

And when upon their hinges were turned round
The swivels of that consecrated gate,
Which are of metal, massive and sonorous,
At the first thunder-peal I turned attentive,
And " Te Deum laudamus " seemed to hear
In voices mingled with sweet melody.
Exactly such an image rendered me
That which I heard, as we are wont to catch,
When people singing with the organ stand ;
For now we hear, and now hear not, the words.



THE SCULPTURES ON THE WALL



THEN I perceived the embankment
round about
To be of marble white, and so adorned
With sculptures, that not only Poly-
cletus,
But Nature's self, had there been put to
shame.

The Angel, who came down to earth with tidings
Of peace, that had been wept for many a year,
And opened Heaven from its long interdict,
In front of us appeared so truthfully
There sculptured in a gracious attitude,
He did not seem an image that is silent.
One would have sworn that he was saying "Ave;"
For she was there in effigy portrayed
Who turned the key to ope the exalted love,
And in her mien this language had impressed,
"Ecce ancilla DEI," as distinctly
As any figure stamps itself in wax.

.....

I moved my feet from where I had been standing,
To examine near at hand another story,
Which after Michal glimmered white upon me.
There the high glory of the Roman Prince
Was chronicled, whose great beneficence
Moved Gregory to his great victory;
'T is of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking;
And a poor widow at his bridle stood,
In attitude of weeping and of grief.
Around about him seemed it thronged and full
Of cavaliers, and the eagles in the gold
Above them visibly in the wind were moving.
The wretched woman in the midst of these
Seemed to be saying: "Give me vengeance, Lord,
For my dead son, for whom my heart is breaking."
And he to answer her: "Now wait until
I shall return." And she: "My Lord," like one
In whom grief is impatient, "shoudst thou not



Return." And he : " Who shall be where I am
Will give it thee." And she : " Good deed of others
What boots it thee, if thou neglect thine own ? "
Whence he : " Now comfort thee, for it behoves me
That I discharge my duty ere I move ;
Justice so wills and pity doth retain me."

* * * * *

Whoe'er of pencil master was or stile,
That could portray the shades and traits which there
Would cause each subtle genius to admire ?
Dead seemed the dead ; the living seemed alive !



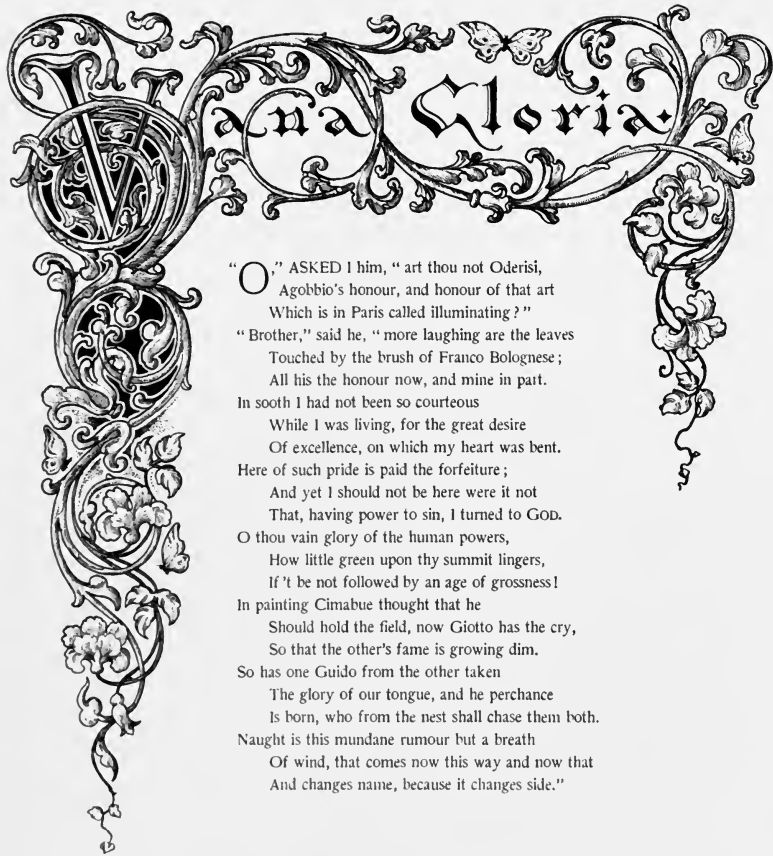
Pater Noster



“OUR Father, thou who dwellest in
the heavens,
Not circumscribed, but from the
greater love
Thou bearest to the first effects on
high,
Praised be thy name and thine omnipo-
tence
By every creature, as befitting is
To render thanks to thy sweet efflu-
ence.
Come unto us the peace of thy dominion,
For unto it we cannot of ourselves,
If it come not, with all our intellect.
Even as thine own Angels of their will
Make sacrifice to thee, Hosanna
singing,
So may all men make sacrifice of
theirs.
Give unto us this day our daily manna,

Withouten which in this rough wilderness
Backward goes he who toils most to advance.
And even as we the trespass we have suffered
Pardon in one another, pardon thou
Benignly, and regard not our desert.
Our virtue, which is easily o'ercome,
Put not to proof with the old Adversary,
But thou from him who spurs it so, deliver.
This last petition verily, dear Lord,
Not for ourselves is made, who need it not,
But for their sake who have remained behind us.'





“O,” ASKED I him, “art thou not Oderisi,
Agobbio’s honour, and honour of that art
Which is in Paris called illuminating?”
“Brother,” said he, “more laughing are the leaves
Touched by the brush of Franco Bolognese;
All his the honour now, and mine in part.
In sooth I had not been so courteous
While I was living, for the great desire
Of excellence, on which my heart was bent.
Here of such pride is paid the forfeiture;
And yet I should not be here were it not
That, having power to sin, I turned to GOD.
O thou vain glory of the human powers,
How little green upon thy summit lingers,
If ’t be not followed by an age of grossness!
In painting Cimabue thought that he
Should hold the field, now Giotto has the cry,
So that the other’s fame is growing dim.
So has one Guido from the other taken
The glory of our tongue, and he perchance
Is born, who from the nest shall chase them both.
Naught is this mundane rumour but a breath
Of wind, that comes now this way and now that
And changes name, because it changes side.”



THE
ANGEL OF PEACE

TOWARDS us came the being beautiful
Vested in white, and in his countenance
Such as appears the tremulous morning star.
His arms he opened, and opened then his wings;
“Come,” said he, “near at hand here are the steps,
* * * * *
This way goes he who goeth after peace.”
His aspect had bereft me of my sight,
So that I turned me back unto my Teacher,
Like one who goeth as his hearing guides him.
And as the harbinger of early dawn
The air of May doth move and breathe out fragrance,
Impregnate all with herbage and with flowers,
So did I feel a breeze strike in the midst
My front, and felt the moving of the plumes
That breathed around an odour of ambrosia.



The Smoky Land

WE passed along, athwart the twilight peering
Forward as far as ever eye could stretch
Against the sunbeams serotine and lucent ;
And, lo ! by slow degrees a smoke approached
In our direction, sombre as the night,
Nor was there place to hide one's self therefrom.
This of our eyes and the pure air bereft us.

.....

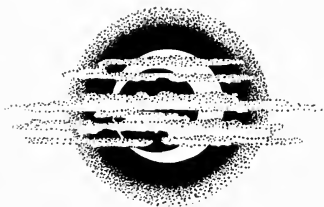
Darkness of hell, and of a night deprived
Of every planet under a poor sky,
As much as may be tenebrous with cloud,
Ne'er made unto my sight so thick a veil,
As did that smoke which there enveloped us,
Nor to the feeling of so rough a texture.
Voices I heard, and every one appeared
To supplicate for peace and misericord
The Lamb of GOD who takes away our sins.
Still " Agnus Dei " their exordium was ;
One word there was in all and metre one,
So that all harmony appeared among them.

.....

Remember, Reader, if e'er in the Alps
A mist o'ertook thee, through which thou couldst see
Not otherwise than through its membrane mole,
How, when the vapours humid and condensed
Begin to dissipate themselves, the sphere
Of the sun feebly enters in among them,

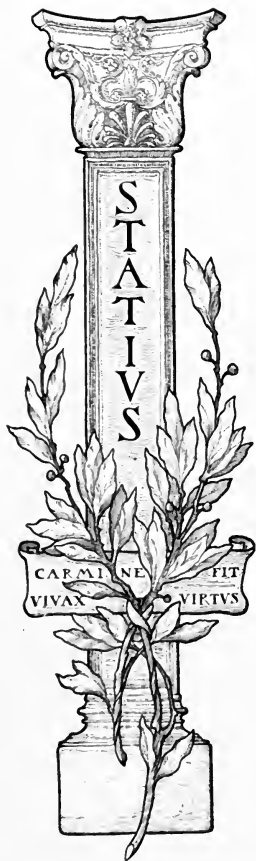


And thy imagination will be swift
In coming to perceive how I re-saw
The sun at first, that was already setting.
Thus, to the faithful footsteps of my Master
Mating mine own, I issued from that cloud
To rays already dead on the low shores.





FORTH from the hand of Him, who fondles it
Before it is, like to a little girl
Weeping and laughing in her childish sport,
Issues the simple soul, that nothing knows,
Save that, proceeding from a joyous Maker,
Gladly it turns to that which gives it pleasure.
Of trivial good at first it tastes the savour ;
Is cheated by it, and runs after it,
If guide or rein turn not aside its love.



"IN days when the good Titus, with the aid
Of the supremest King, avenged the wounds
Whence issued forth the blood by Judas sold,
Under the name that most endures and honours,
Was I on earth," that spirit made reply,
"Greatly renowned, but not with faith as yet.
My vocal spirit was so sweet that Rome
Me, a Thoulousian, drew unto herself,
Where I deserved to deck my brows with myrtle.
Stattius the people name me still on earth ;
I sang of Thebes, and then of great Achilles ;
But on the way fell with my second burden.
The seeds unto my ardour were the sparks
Of that celestial flame which heated me,
Whereby more than a thousand have been fired ;
Of the Æneid speak I, which to me
A mother was, and was my nurse in song ;
Without this weighed I not a drachma's weight.
And to have lived upon the earth what time
Virgilius lived, I would accept one sun
More than I must ere issuing from my ban."

The Night's Rest

HENCE was the day departing,
When the glad Angel of GOD
appeared to us.

"Venite, benedicti Patris mei,"

Sounded within a splendour,
which was there

Such it o'ercame me, and I could
not look.

"The sun departs," it added, "and night
cometh;

Tarry ye not, but onward urge
your steps,

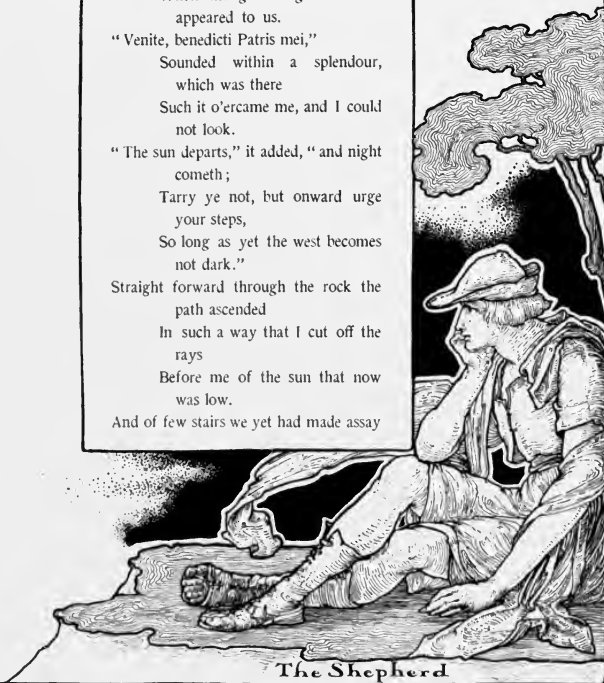
So long as yet the west becomes
not dark."

Straight forward through the rock the
path ascended

In such a way that I cut off the
rays

Before me of the sun that now
was low.

And of few stairs we yet had made assay



The Shepherd

Ere by the vanquished shadow the sun's setting
Behind us we perceived, I and my Sages.
And ere in all its parts immeasurable
The horizon of one aspect had become,
And Night her boundless dispensation held,
Each of us of a stair had made his bed ;
Because the nature of the mount took from us
The power of climbing, more than the delight.
Even as in ruminating passive grow
The goats who have been swift and venturesome
Upon the mountain-tops ere they were fed,
Hushed in the shadow, while the sun is hot,
Watched by the herdsman, who upon his staff
Is leaning, and in leaning tendeth them ;
And as the shepherd, lodging out of doors,
Passes the night beside his quiet flock,
Watching that no wild beast may scatter it,
Such at that hour were we, all three of us,
I like the goat, and like the herdsman they,
Begirt on this side and on that by rocks.
Little could there be seen of things without ;
But through that little I beheld the stars.





ACTION & CONTEMPLATION

IT was the hour, I think, when from the
East
First on the mountain Cytherea
beamed,
Who with the fire of love seems always
burning ;
Youthful and beautiful in Dreams, methought
I saw a lady walking in a meadow,
Gathering flowers ; and singing she was
saying :
“ Know whosoever may my name demand
That I am Leah, and go moving round
My beauteous hands to make myself a
garland.
To please me at the mirror here I deck me,
But never does my sister Rachel leave
Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day
long.
To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she,
As I am to adorn me with my hands ;
Her, seeing, and me, doing, satisfies.”

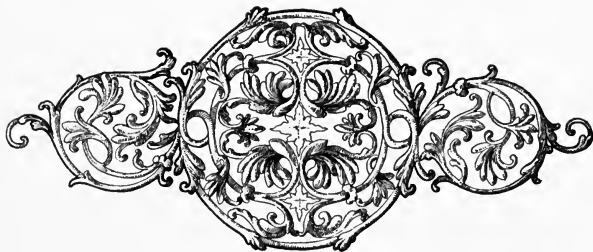


VIRGIL'S FAREWELL



WHEN underneath us was the stair-
way all
Run o'er, and we were on the
highest step,
Virgilius fastened upon me his eyes,
And said: "The temporal fire and the
eternal,
Son, thou hast seen, and to a place
art come
Where of myself no farther I discern.
By intellect and art I here have brought
thee ;
Take thine own pleasure for thy
guide henceforth ;
Beyond the steep ways and the nar-
row art thou.
Behold the sun that shines upon thy
forehead ;
Behold the grass, the flowerets, and
the shrubs

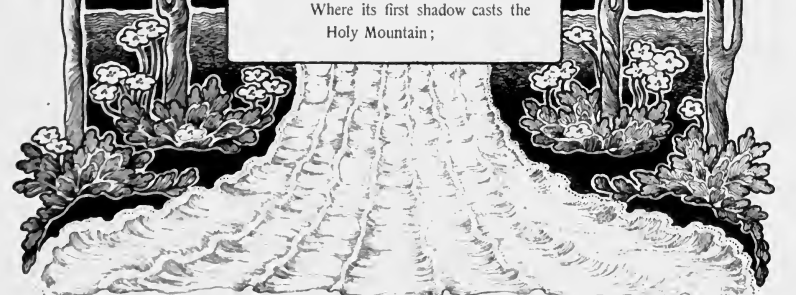
Which of itself alone this land produces,
Until rejoicing come the beauteous eyes
Which weeping caused me to come unto thee,
Thou canst sit down and thou canst walk among them.
Expect no more or word or sign from me ;
Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,
And error were it not to do its bidding ;
Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre !”





THE RIVER OF REGENERATION

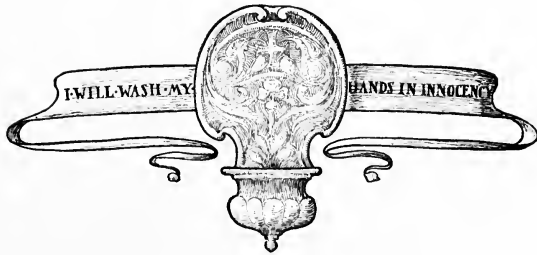
EAGER already to search in and
round
The heavenly forest, dense and
living green,
Which tempered to the eyes the
new-born day,
Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Taking the level country slowly,
slowly
Over the soil that everywhere
breathes fragrance.
A softly-breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, upon the forehead
smote me
No heavier blow than of a gentle
wind,
Whereat the branches, lightly tremulous,
Did all of them bow downward
toward that side
Where its first shadow casts the
Holy Mountain;




Yet not from their upright direction swayed,
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should leave the practice of each art of theirs ;
But with full ravishment the hour of prime,
Singing, received they in the midst of leaves ;
That ever bore a burden to their rhymes,
Such as from branch to branch goes gathering on
Through the pine forest on the shores of Chiassi,
When Eolus unlooses the Sirocco.
Already my slow steps had carried me
Into the ancient wood so far, that I
Could not perceive where I had entered it.
And, lo ! my further course a stream cut off,
Which tow'rd the left hand with its little waves
Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.
All waters that on earth most limpid are
Would seem to have within themselves some mixture
Compared with that which nothing doth conceal,
Although it moves on with a brown, brown current,
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.

* * * * *

From the most holy water I returned
Regenerate, in the manner of new trees
That are renewed with a new foliage,
Pure and disposed to mount unto the stars.





AND there appeared to me (even as appears
Suddenly something that doth turn aside
Through very wonder every other thought)
A lady all alone, who went along
Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
With which her pathway was all painted
over.
" Ah, beauteous lady, who in rays of love
Dost warm thyself, if I may trust to looks,
Which the heart's witnesses are wont to
be,
May the desire come unto thee to draw
Near to this river's bank," I said to her,
" So much that I may hear what thou art
singing.
Thou makest me remember where and what
Proserpina that moment was when lost
Her mother her, and she herself the
Spring."
As turns herself, with feet together pressed
And to the ground a lady who is dancing,
And hardly puts one foot before the other,

The Lady of the Flowers


On the vermilion and the yellow flowerets,
She turned towards me, not in other wise
Than maiden who her modest eyes casts down;
And my entreaties made to be content,
So near approaching, that the dulcet sound
Came unto me together with its meaning.
As soon as she was where the grasses are
Bathed by the waters of the beauteous river
To lift her eyes she granted me the boon.
I do not think there shone so great a light
Under the lids of Venus, when transfixed
By her own son, beyond his usual custom !
Erect upon the other bank she smiled,
Bearing full many colours in her hands,
Which that high land produces without seed.

* * * * *

And even as Nymphs, that wandered all alone
Among the sylvan shadows, sedulous
One to avoid and one to see the sun,
She then against the stream moved onward, going
Along the bank and I abreast of her,
Her little steps with little steps attending
Between her steps and mine were not a hundred,
When equally the margins gave a turn
In such a way, that to the East I faced.
Nor even thus our way continued far
Before the lady wholly turned herself
Unto me, saying, " Brother, look and listen !"
And, lo ! a sudden lustre ran across
On every side athwart the spacious forest,
Such that it made me doubt if it were lightning.
But since the lightning ceases as it comes,
And that continuing brightened more and more,
Within my thoughts I said, " What thing is this ?"
And a delicious melody there ran
Along the luminous air.



THE · PRO · CE · SS · I · O · N · OF · THE
CHV · RCH · TR · I · V · M · P · H · A · N · T



NOW Helicon must needs pour forth
for me,
And with her choir Urania must
assist me,
To put in verse things difficult to
think.

A little farther on, seven trees of gold
In semblance the long space still
intervening
Between ourselves and them did
counterfeit;

But when I had approached so near to
them

The common object, which the
sense deceives,

Lost not by distance any of its
marks,

The faculty that lends discourse to
reason

Did apprehend that they were
candle-sticks,

NUBES MAGNA,
ET IGNIS INVOLVENS.
ET SPLENDOR IN CIRCVITV EJVS

And in the voices of the song "Hosanna!"
 Above them flamed the harness beautiful,
 Far brighter than the moon in the serene
 Of midnight, at the middle of her month.
 I turned me round, with admiration filled,
 To good Virgilius, and he answered me
 With visage no less full of wonderment.
 Then back I turned my face to those high things,
 Which moved themselves towards us so sedately,
 They had been distanced by new-wedded brides.
 Then saw I people, as behind their leaders,
 Coming behind them, garmented in white,
 And such a whiteness never was on earth.
 * * * * *
 And I beheld the flamelets onward go,
 Leaving behind themselves the air depicted,
 And they of trailing pennons had the semblance,
 So that it overhead remained distinct
 With sevenfold lists, all of them of the colours
 Whence the sun's bow is made, and Delia's girdle.
 These standards to the rearward longer were
 Than was my sight; and, as it seemed to me,
 Ten paces were the outermost apart.
 Under so fair a heaven as I describe
 The four and twenty Elders, two by two,
 Came on incoronate with flower-de-luce.
 They all of them were singing: "Blessed thou
 Among the daughters of Adam art, and blessed
 Forevermore shall be thy loveliness."
 After the flowers and other tender grasses
 In front of me upon the other margin
 Were disencumbered of that race elect,
 Even as in heaven star followeth after star,
 There came close after them four animals,
 Incoronate each one with verdant leaf.
 Plumed with six wings was every one of them,
 The plumage full of eyes; the eyes of Argus
 If they were living would be such as these.
 Reader! to trace their forms no more I waste
 My rhymes; for other spendings press me so,
 That I in this cannot be prodigal.





Beatrice

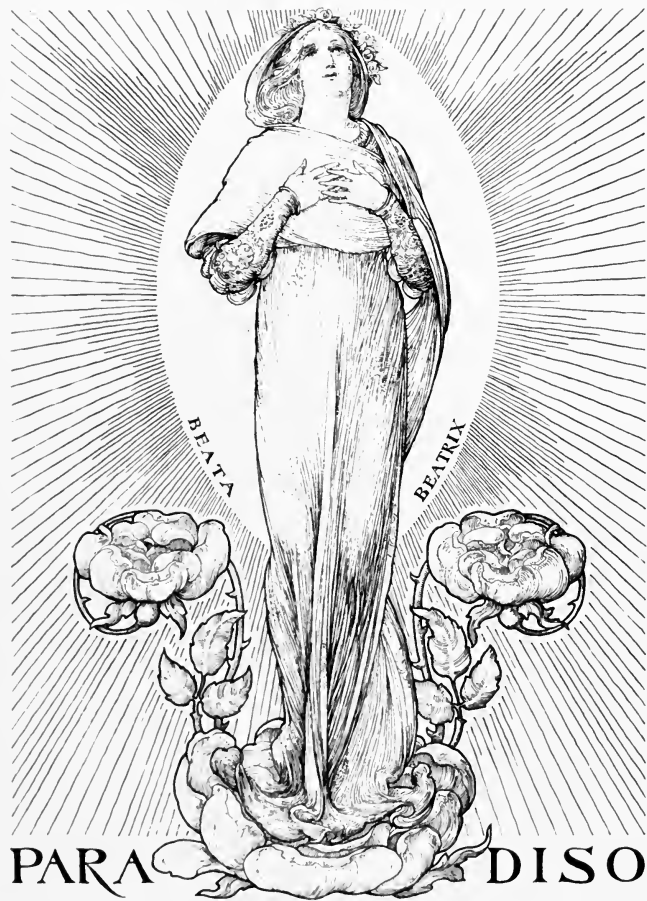


ERE now have I beheld, as day began,
The eastern hemisphere all tinged with rose,
And the other heaven with fair serene adorned;
And the sun's face uprising, overshadowed
So that by tempering influence of vapours
For a long interval the eye sustained it;
Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers
Which from these hands angelical ascended,
And downward fell again inside and out,
Over her snow-white veil with olive cinct

 Appeared a lady under a green mantle,
 Vested in colour of the living flame.
And my own spirit, that already now
 So long a time had been, that in her presence
 Trembling with awe it had not stood abashed,
Without more knowledge having by mine eyes,
 Through occult virtue that from her proceeded
 Of ancient love the mighty influence felt.

.....
Although the veil that from her head descended,
 Encircled with the foliage of Minerva,
 Did not permit her to appear distinctly,
In attitude still royally majestic
 Continued she, like unto one who speaks,
 And keeps his warmest utterance in reserve:
"Look at me well; in sooth, I'm Beatrice!"







THE ASCENT TO PARADISE

THE glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe and shine
In one part more and in another less.

Within that heaven which most his light
receives

Was I, and things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows, nor can, who from above
descends;

Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.

Truly whatever of the holy realm

I had the power to treasure in my mind
Shall now become the subject of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last emprise

Make of me such a vessel of thy power

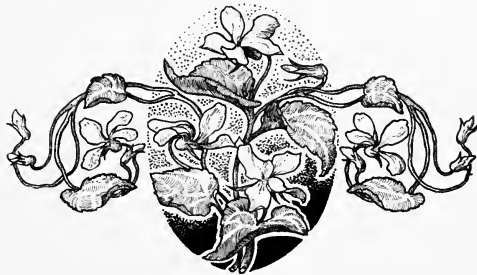
As giving the beloved laure asks!
O power divine, lend'st thou thyself to me
So that the shadow of the blessed realm
Stamped in my brain I can make manifest,
Thou 'lt see me come unto thy darling tree,
And crown myself thereafter with those leaves
Of which the theme and thou shalt make me worthy.

* * * * *

O ye, who in some pretty little boat,
Eager to listen, have been following
Behind my ship, that singing sails along,
Turn back to look again upon your shores ;
Do not put out to sea, lest peradventure
In losing me, you might yourselves be lost.
The sea I sail has never yet been passed ;
Minerva breathes, and pilots me Apollo,
And Muses nine point out to me the Bears.
Ye other few who have the neck uplifted
Betimes to th' bread of Angels upon which
One liveth here and grows not sated by it,
Well may you launch upon the deep salt-sea
Your vessel, keeping still my wake before you
Upon the water that grows smooth again.

* * * * *

It seemed to me a cloud encompassed us,
Luminous, dense, consolidate and bright
As adamant on which the sun is striking.
Into itself did the eternal pearl
Receive us, even as water doth receive
A ray of light, remaining still unbroken.





SUCH as through polished and transparent glass,
Or waters crystalline and undisturbed,
But not so deep as that their bed be lost,
Come back again the outline of our faces
So feeble, that a pearl on forehead white
Comes not less speedily unto our eyes :
Such saw I many faces prompt to speak
So that I ran in error opposite
To that which kindled love 'twixt man and fountain.
As soon as I became aware of them,
Esteeming them as mirrored semblances
To see of whom they were mine eyes I turned.
Then I unto the shade that seemed most wishful
To speak directed me, and I began,
As one whom too great eagerness bewilders ;
“ O well-created spirit, who in the rays
Of life eternal dost the sweetness taste
Which being untasted ne'er is comprehended,
Grateful 't will be to me, if thou content me
Both with thy name and with thy destiny.”
Whereat she promptly and with laughing eyes :
“ Our charity doth never shut the doors
Against a just desire, except as one
Who wills that all her court be like herself.

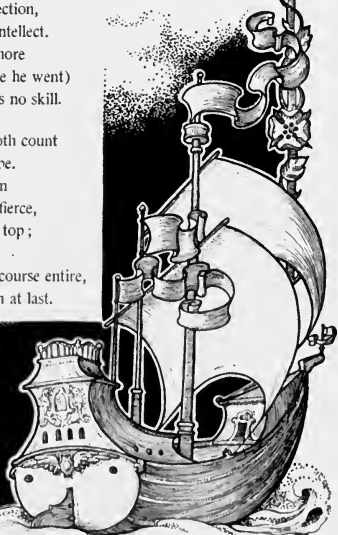
I was a virgin sister in the world ;
And if thy mind doth contemplate me well,
The being more fair will not conceal me from thee.
But thou shalt recognise I am Piccarda,
Who, stationed here among these other blessed,
Myself am blessed in the slowest sphere.

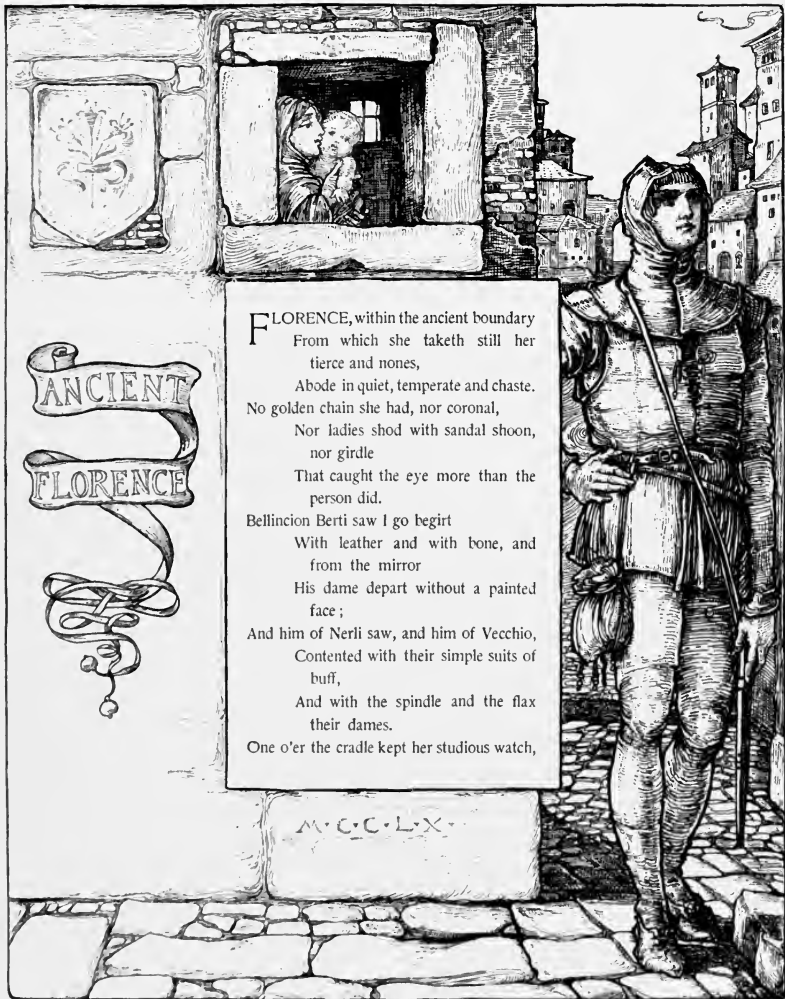
* * * * *
Of perfect life and merit high in heaven
There is a lady o'er us, by whose rule
Down in your world they vest and veil themselves,
That until death they may both watch and sleep
Beside that Spouse who every vow accepts
Which charity conformeth to his pleasure.
To follow her, in girlhood from the world
I fled and in her habit shut myself,
And pledged me to the pathway of her sect.
Then men accustomed to the evil more
Than unto good, from the sweet cloister tore me ;
GOD knows what afterward my life became."
Thus unto me she spake, and then began
"Ave Maria " singing, and in singing
Vanished, as through deep water something heavy.



SELF-CONFIDENCE

FOR very low among the fools is he
Who affirms without distinction, or denies,
As well in one as in the other case ;
Because it happens that full often bends
Current opinion in the false direction,
And then the feelings bind the intellect.
Far more than uselessly he leaves the shore
(Since he returneth not the same he went)
Who fishes for the truth and has no skill.
Nor yet shall people be too confident
In judging, even as he is who doth count
The corn in field or ever it be ripe.
For I have seen all winter long the thorn
First show itself intractable and fierce,
And after bear the rose upon its top ;
And I have seen a ship direct and swift
Run o'er the sea throughout its course entire,
To perish at the harbour's mouth at last.





FLORENCE, within the ancient boundary
From which she taketh still her
tierce and nones,
Abode in quiet, temperate and chaste.
No golden chain she had, nor coronal,
Nor ladies shod with sandal shoon,
nor girdle
That caught the eye more than the
person did.

Bellincion Berti saw I go begirt
With leather and with bone, and
from the mirror
His dame depart without a painted
face ;
And him of Nerli saw, and him of Vecchio,
Contented with their simple suits of
buff,
And with the spindle and the flax
their dames.
One o'er the cradle kept her studious watch,

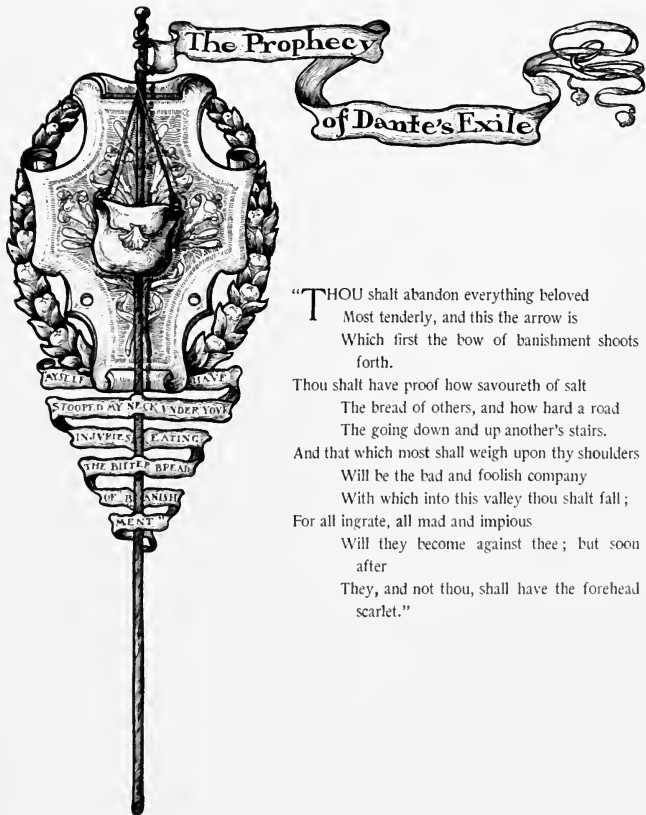
M.C.C.L.X.

And in her lullaby the language used
That first delights the fathers and the mothers ;
Another, drawing tresses from her distaff,
Told o'er among her family the tales
Of Trojans and of Fesole and Rome.
With all these families, and others with them,
Florence beheld I in so great repose
That no occasion had she whence to weep ;

.....

With all these families beheld so just
And glorious her people, that the lily
Never upon the spear was placed reversed,
Nor by division was vermilion made.





“THOU shalt abandon everything beloved
 Most tenderly, and this the arrow is
 Which first the bow of banishment shoots
 forth.

Thou shalt have proof how savoureth of salt
 The bread of others, and how hard a road
 The going down and up another's stairs.
 And that which most shall weigh upon thy shoulders
 Will be the bad and foolish company
 With which into this valley thou shalt fall ;
 For all ingrate, all mad and impious
 Will they become against thee ; but soon
 after
 They, and not thou, shall have the forehead
 scarlet.”



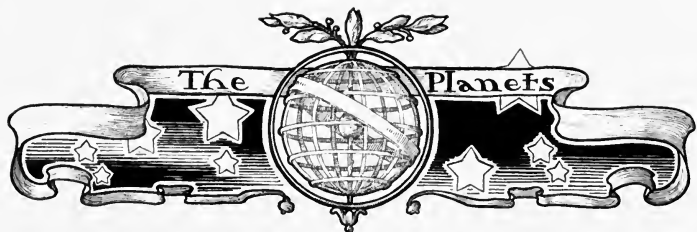
FOR saidst thou : " Born a man is on the shore
Of Indus, and is none there who can speak
Of Christ, nor who can read, nor who can write ;
And all his inclinations and his actions
Are good, so far as human reason sees,
Without a sin in life or in discourse :
He dieth unbaptized and without faith ;
Where is this justice that condemneth him ?
Where is his fault, if he do not believe ? "

Now who art thou that on the bench wouldst sit
In judgment at a thousand miles away,
With the short vision of a single span ?
• • • • • Unto this kingdom never
Ascended one who had not faith in Christ,
Before or since he to the tree was nailed.

But look thou, many crying are, " Christ, Christ ! "
Who at the judgment shall be far less near
To Him than some shall be who knew not Christ.

Such Christians shall the Ethiop condemn,
When the two companies shall be divided,
The one forever rich, the other poor.

What to your kings may not the Persians say,
When they that volume opened shall behold
In which are written down all their dispraises ?



“ AND therefore, ere thou enter farther in,
Look down once more, and see how vast a world
Thou hast already put beneath thy feet ;”
I with my sight returned through one and all
The sevenfold spheres, and I beheld this globe
Such that I smiled at its ignoble semblance ;
I saw the daughter of Latona shining
Without that shadow, which to me was cause
That once I had believed her rare and dense.
The aspect of thy son, Hyperion,
Here I sustained, and saw how move themselves
Around and near him Maia and Dione.
Thence there appeared the temperateness of Jove
’Twixt son and father, and to me was clear
The change that of their whereabouts they make ;
And all the seven made manifest to me
How great they are, and eke how swift they are,
And how they are in distant habitations.
The threshing-floor that maketh us so proud,
To me revolving with the eternal Twins,
Was all apparent made from hill to harbour !



The Golden Stairway

WITHIN the crystal which, around the
world

Revolving, bears the name of its dear
leader,

Under whom every wickedness lay dead,
Coloured like gold, on which the sunshine
gleams,

A stairway I beheld to such a height
Uplifted, that my eye pursued it not.

Likewise beheld I down the steps descending
So many splendours, that I thought each
light

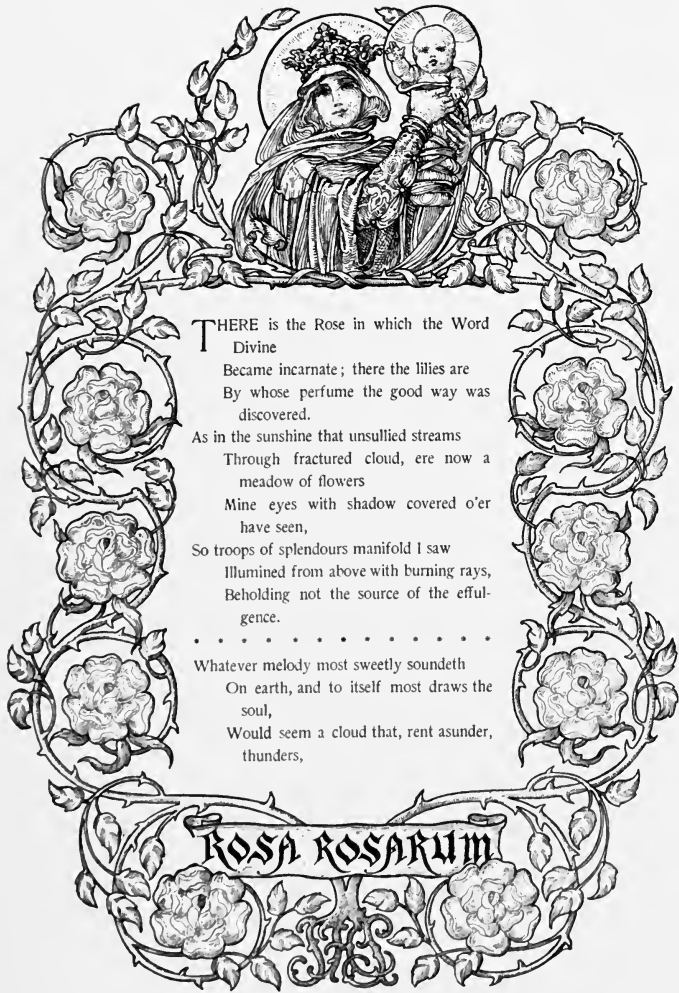
That in the heaven appears was there
diffused.

And as accordant with their natural custom
The rooks together at the break of day
Bestir themselves to warm their feathers
cold ;

Then some of them fly off without return,
Others come back to where they started
from,

And others, wheeling round, still keep at
home ;

Such fashion it appeared to me was there
Within the sparkling that together came.



THERE is the Rose in which the Word
Divine

Became incarnate; there the lilies are
By whose perfume the good way was
discovered.

As in the sunshine that unsullied streams
Through fractured cloud, ere now a
meadow of flowers

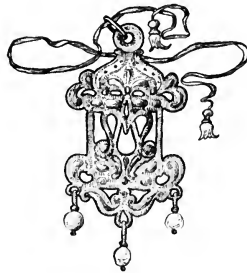
Mine eyes with shadow covered o'er
have seen,

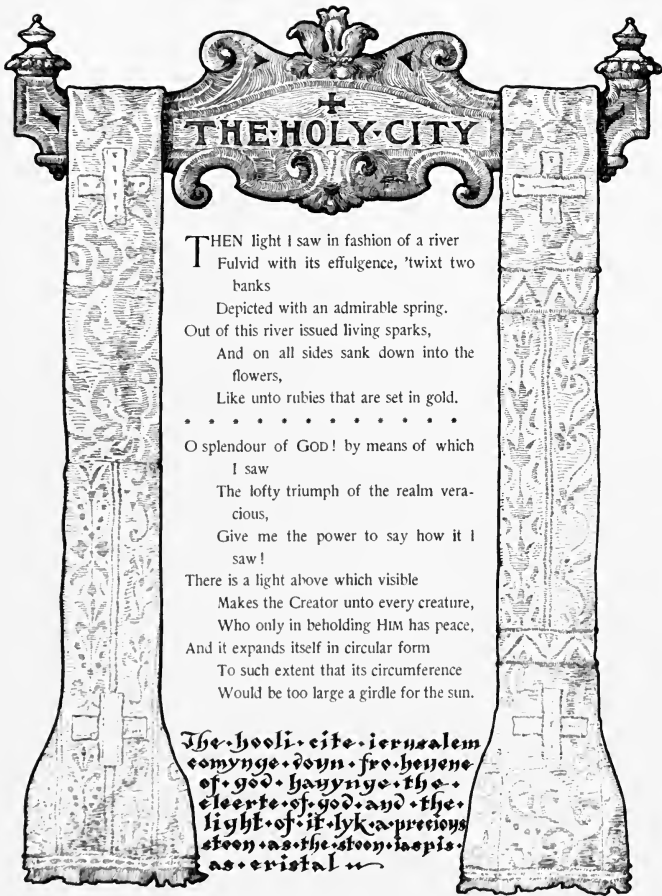
So troops of splendours manifold I saw
Illumined from above with burning rays,
Beholding not the source of the efful-
gence.

.....
Whatever melody most sweetly soundeth
On earth, and to itself most draws the
soul,
Would seem a cloud that, rent asunder,
thunders,

ROSA ROSARUM

Compared unto the sounding of that lyre
Wherewith was crowned the Sapphire beautiful,
Which gives the clearest heaven its sapphire hue.
“ I am Angelic Love, that circle round
The joy sublime which breathes from out the womb
That was the hostelry of our Desire ;
And I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, while
Thou followest thy Son, and mak'st diviner
The sphere supreme, because thou enterest there.”
Thus did the circulated melody
Seal itself up ; and all the other lights
Were making to resound the name of Mary.





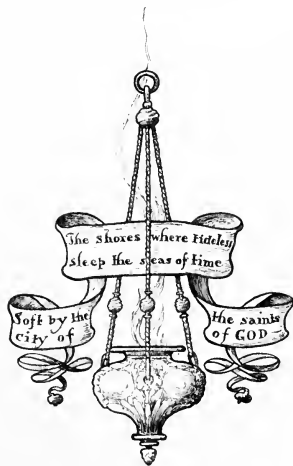
THE HOLY CITY

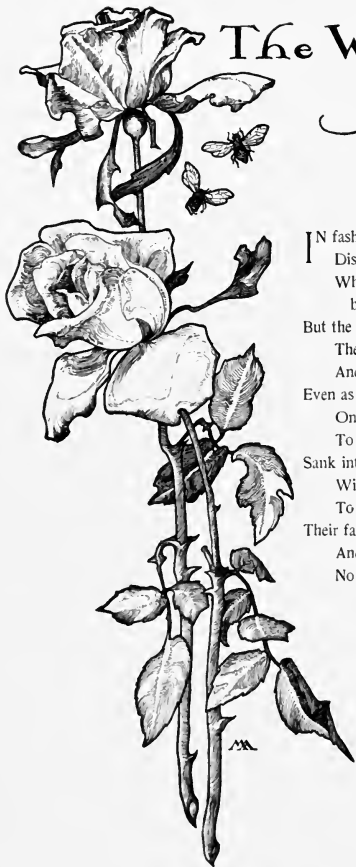
THEN light I saw in fashion of a river
Fulvid with its effulgence, 'twixt two
banks
Depicted with an admirable spring.
Out of this river issued living sparks,
And on all sides sank down into the
flowers,
Like unto rubies that are set in gold.

.....
O splendour of GOD! by means of which
I saw
The lofty triumph of the realm vera-
cious,
Give me the power to say how it I
saw!
There is a light above which visible
Makes the Creator unto every creature,
Who only in beholding HIM has peace,
And it expands itself in circular form
To such extent that its circumference
Would be too large a girdle for the sun.

The . hooli . cite . ierusalem
comynge . down . fro . hevene
of . god . havynge . the .
eleerte . of . god . and . the .
light . of . it . lyk . a . precious
steen . as . the . stoon . iaspis .
as . erystal .

The semblance of it is all made of rays
 Reflected from the top of Primal Motion,
 Which takes therefrom vitality and power.
 And as a hill in water at its base
 Mirrors itself, as if to see its beauty
 When affluent most in verdure and in flowers,
 So ranged aloft all round about the light
 Mirrored I saw in more ranks than a thousand
 All who above there have from us returned.
 And if the lowest row collect within it
 So great a light, how vast the amplitude
 Is of this Rose in its extremest leaves !
 My vision in the vastness and the height
 Lost not itself, but comprehended all
 The quantity and quality of that gladness.
 There near and far nor add nor take away ;
 For there where GOD immediately doth govern,
 The natural law in naught is relevant.
 Into the yellow of the Rose Eternal
 That spreads and multiplies and breathes an odour
 Of praise unto the ever-vernal Sun,
 As one who silent is and fain would speak,
 Me Beatrice drew on, and said, " Behold
 Of the white stoles how vast the convent is !
 Behold how vast the circuit of our City !
 Behold our seats so filled to overflowing,
 That here henceforward are few people wanting ! "





The White Rose of Paradise

I N fashion then as of a snow-white rose
Displayed itself to me the saintly host,
Whom Christ in his own blood had made his
bride,
But the other host, that flying sees and sings
The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
And the goodness that created it so noble,
Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers
One moment, and the next returns again
To where its labour is to sweetness turned,
Sank into the great flower, that is adorned
With leaves so many, and thence reascended
To where its love abideth evermore.
Their faces had they all of living flame,
And wings of gold, and all the rest so white
No snow unto that limit doth attain.



Beatrice's Farewell

AND "She, where is she?" instantly I said;
Whence he: "To put an end to my desire,
Me Beatrice hath sent from mine own place.
And if thou lookest up to the third round
Of the first rank, again shalt thou behold her
Upon the throne her merits have assigned her."
Without reply I lifted up mine eyes,
And saw her, as she made herself a crown
Reflecting from herself the eternal rays.
Not from that region which the highest thunders
Is any mortal eye so far removed,
In whatsoever sea it deepest sinks,

As there from Beatrice my sight; but this
Was nothing unto me; because her image
Descended not to me by medium blurred.
"O Lady, thou in whom my hope is strong,
And who for my salvation didst endure
In Hell to leave the imprint of thy feet,
Of whatsoever things I have beheld,
As coming from thy power and from thy goodness,
I recognise the virtue and the grace.
Thou from a slave hast brought me unto freedom,
By all those ways, by all the expedients,
Whereby thou hadst the power of doing it.
Preserve towards me thy magnificence,
So that this soul of mine, which thou hast healed,
Pleasing to thee be loosened from the body."
Thus I implored: and she, so far away,
Smiled, as it seemed, and looked once more at me;
Then unto the Eternal Fountain turned.



AND the same Love that first descended
there,
"Ave Maria, gratia plena," singing,
In front of her his wings expanded
wide.

"Who is the Angel that with so much joy
Into the eyes is looking of our Queen,
Enamoured so that he seems made of
fire?"

And he to me, "Such gallantry and grace
As there can be in Angel and in soul,
All is in him; and thus we fain would
have it;

Because he is the one who bore the palm
Down unto Mary when the Son of
GOD
To take our burden on Himself de-
creed."

· G · A · B · R · I · E · L ·



·AVE·MARIA·

“THOU Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel,
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make Himself its creature.
Within thy womb rekindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.
Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountain-head of hope.
Lady, thou art so great and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace, nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.
Not only thy benignity gives succour
To him who asketh it, but oftentimes
Forerunneth of its own accord the asking.
In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature.
Now doth this man, who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as this has seen
One after other the spiritual lives,
Supplicate thee through grace for so much power
That with his eyes he may uplift himself
Higher towards the uttermost salvation.”



The
Beatific
Vision

○ LIGHT Eterne, sole in Thyself
that dwellest,
Sole knowest Thyself, and, known
unto Thyself
And knowing, lovest and smilest
on Thyself!

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