media," perhaps we may ask why, in the divisions of the "Inferno," the souls are only punished for *one* type of sin, whereas sins are linked together by a fine network of inextricable meshes, and he who devotes himself to one form of sin is certain to fall into many others. But Dante is awfully right here also. It is true that no man is ever contented with a single sin; yet "it is always one sin, and that the favorite one, which destroys souls. That conquered, all others fall with it; that victorious, all others follow it."

The lust and anger of the flesh do not of necessity or finally destroy; but when they become the lust and anger of the heart, "these," says Mr. Ruskin, "are the furies of Phlegethon, wholly ruinous. Lord of these, on the shattered rocks lies couched the infamy of Crete. For when the heart as well as the flesh kindles to its wrath, the whole man is corrupted, and his heart's blood is fed in its veins from the lake of fire."

Again, in all the forms which he invents for the imaginary physical punishment of Sin, Dante is pointing the lesson of 'Like to like,' the lesson that sin *is* punishment. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished." If the unchaste souls are swept round and round by a whirling storm, what is that storm but the unbridled passions of "those that lawless and incertain thoughts imagine, howling"? If yet worse carnal offenders are baked by flames of fire, falling noiselessly upon them like an incessant snow, are not the desires of a corrupted heart thick with such slow-beating flames? If his gluttons lie prostrate in the sludge, tormented by the dog-demon Cerberus, who is a sort of personified belly, what are gluttony, and the dehumanizing debasement of drunkenness, but the curse, "On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life"? If his hypocrites look like the monks of Co-

logne, with their huge hoods which display from afar their dazzling falsity, what is hypocrisy but such a crushing cloak of gilded lead? If his misers are plunged in a lake of boiling pitch, what is that filthy lake, which overflows its blighted banks, but the symbol of greed for money basely gained, selfishly spent, sordidly amassed? — for money which sticks to the fingers, and defiles the soul, and causes it to bubble up and down with excitement and depression, and the sighing of souls which it cannot satisfy? What is the frozen pool of Cocytus but the heart benumbed with cruel, cold-hearted, and treacherous selfishness? Are there no living men, who, in the very truth of things, are not more *doomed* to such places hereafter than they are in them now? Are not such places, in the light of the eternal verity, "*their own* place"? Is vice dead? Has it ceased to be grotesque and vile? Are there no living men — usurers, seducers,

traitors, furious, liars, slanderers, in high places and in low — whom a moralist as brave as Dante would, even in this day, doom to such retributions? Are any of us living in such places? Are our hands foul with that sticky pitch of greed? Are any of our tongues tipped with that envenomed fire? Have our hearts in them no sluice of hatred from the crimson ooze of Phlegethon? If so, let us learn from Dante that sin is no subject for jest and euphemism, no soft infirmity of the blood, but a rebellion against the Lord of our life. And if so, let us look to it, for evil is before us, and take to heart the words of Jesus, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

In the fifth Circle of Incontinence, — i.e., of sins which arise from the lack of self-control, — we meet those who suffer vengeance for the opposite extremes of wrath and gloomy sluggishness, of which the golden mean is just anger and right-

eous indignation. The wrathful are constantly rending each other to pieces in the filthy mud of Styx, the river of Hate; the gloomy are submerged wholly in its putrescent slime. These "gloomy-sluggish" souls are in Italian *accidiosi;* and *accidia* (the Greek ἀκηδία, the Latin *pigritia, desidia*) was once counted the eighth deadly sin. It is sloth; sullen irritation; sullen brooding over slight or fancied grievances; lack of noble anger; the weary sadness, which neither men delight nor women either. It is the express opposite of that virtuous energy, which, as Aristotle says, makes a man μακάριος, "blessed," if not εὐδαίμων, "prosperous."

We may better appreciate the sin and curse of sluggish gloom, of "a dark soul and foul thoughts," if we remember that "exultation" and "simplicity" were the distinctive characteristics of early Christianity.[1] The "Shepherd of Hermas," the

[1] Acts ii. 46, ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι.

"Pilgrim's Progress" of the second century, will show us what the early Christians thought of such faithless and neglectful gloom. "Unto God shall they all live," says Hermas, "who have cast out sadness from themselves, and arrayed themselves with all joy. Put sadness away from thee; for truly sadness is the sister of halfheartedness and bitterness. He that is sad doth always wickedly; first because he maketh sad the Holy Spirit, which has been given to man for joy; and secondly because he worketh lawlessness, neither praying to God nor giving Him thanks. Therefore cleanse thyself from this wicked sadness, and thou shalt live unto God." Is not this, then, a tremendous lesson against sluggish and selfish gloom in lives which ought to be bright with energy, and illumined even amid the darkness by faith in God? And have we noticed that St. Jude, in his Epistle, puts "murmurers and complainers" in the forefront of those

against whom he hurls his terrible invective?

Dante's views of the nature and results of repentance may best be seen in the two stories of a father and a son, — Guido, and Buonconte da Montefeltro. In the eighth circle of the Malebolge, or "Evil pits," he sees, swathed in a tongue of flame, Guido, who tells him that, after the life of a warrior, he thought to make amends by putting on the cord-girdle of a Franciscan like those deluded hypocrites who, in the "Paradise Lost,"

> "Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
> Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised."

But while he is in his monastery, the Pope Boniface VIII. comes to him, and promises him full absolution for whatever counsel he may give, if he will only tell the Pope how to capture Penestrina. Relying on this papal absolution, Guido tells the Pope that he may take the city by "long

promises and small performance." Shortly afterwards he dies, and St. Francis comes to claim his monk. But at the same moment appears one of the "Black Cherubim," and says, "Wrong me not! he must come down among my menials. Ever since he gave that fraudulent counsel, I have had him by the hair. For a man who does not repent cannot be absolved; and it is not possible to repent beforehand of a sin you *mean* to commit." "O wretched me!" exclaimed Guido, "how I started when this devil seized me, and said, 'Perhaps thou didst not think that I was a logician!'"

Now, in the "Purgatory" we meet Guido's son, Buonconte, who had been killed in 1289 at the battle of Campaldino. He too, like his father, had lived a careless and evil life; and in flying from the rout, wounded in the throat, he fell in a pool of his own blood amid the reeds and mire of a marsh. But his last cry was a cry for pardon; and it was heard. An angel

of God came to take his soul at the same moment as a fiend of hell. Yet all that the fiend could say was, "O thou from Heaven! why dost thou rob me? Thou art carrying off his eternal part because of one wretched little tear, — *per una lagrimetta*, — that redeems him from me." If any think that "one wretched little tear" is a small price to pay for the difference between an eternity of blessedness and an eternity of anguish, we must remember that, in Dante's days, there was not believed to be the faintest gleam of any hope beyond the grave for those who died impenitent; but, also, that our souls have to do not with a relentless demon, but with a God of love; and that

> "He who by penitence is not appeased
> Is not of earth or heaven."

But further than this, we must bear in mind that repentance, being a process within the soul, cannot be measured by

the petty sequences of time. It belongs to that sphere of existence which may easily compress eternity into an hour, or stretch an hour into eternity. And Buonconte's story reminds us of that old English one of a careless liver, who, having been killed by a fall from his horse, reappeared to his friends to say,

> "Between the saddle and the ground
> I mercy sought, and mercy found."

Next, I would ask you to consider the awful and almost lurid light which Dante has flung on his own meaning in the thirty-third canto. There, in the lowest circle, frozen in the icy pool, the poets see a lost spirit, who entreats them to remove from his eyes the dreadful congealment, which, while permitting sight, increases torment by rendering tears impossible. Dante asks who he is, and finds that he is Friar Alberigo, who, with horrible treachery, has murdered his own guests at a banquet. But

Dante knows that Alberigo is alive, and asks with surprise how he comes to be here? He receives the fearful answer, that when souls have committed crimes so deadly as his, they instantly fall rushing down to that lowest pit, leaving their bodies upon earth. From that moment they are really dead. Their body, indeed, unknown to them, eats, drinks, sleeps, seems to live on earth. But their soul is not in it; it is but a mask of clay which a demon animates.

And he proceeds to mention others whom Dante has seen in Hell, who still *seem* to be alive on earth, having a name to live though they are dead; being the most awful kind of ghosts, — not souls without bodies, but bodies without souls. Is not the world full of such ghosts, — of those who "have a name to live while they are dead;" of men and women who living in pleasure are "dead while they live;" — not disembodied souls, but disensouled bodies, flitting about their living tombs of

selfishness and vice? The fourteenth century, we observe, had not learnt to legitimize vice by complacent doctrines. To Dante sin was not a thing to make a mock at. His Cerberus, and his horned demons, and his red-hot cities, and his boiling blood of Phlegethon, and his snow of scorching flames, are but the shadow and reflex of men's vices, crimes, and sins. And the doom of Friar Alberigo is a literal rendering of the verse, "They shall descend alive — go down quick — into the pit:" "Thou, O God, shalt cast them into the pit of destruction," and that "before they have lived out half their days."

Even these rapid views of some few of Dante's intended lessons in the first division of his poem will show you that it was the poet's object, in this mighty work, to set forth certain eternal truths for the purpose of the loftiest, most intense, and most vivid moral guidance. Only through realizing those truths, by the help of the grace

of God, can we attain to that ideal of character which the poet had set before him, — the lovely and lofty moral ideal of one who in boyhood is gentle, obedient, and modest; in youth, temperate, resolute, and loyal; in ripe years, prudent, just, and generous; and who in old age has attained to calm wisdom and perfect peace with God.

THE PURGATORIO.

Purgatory is described by Dante as "the place where the human soul is cleansed, and becomes worthy to ascend to heaven." It is the antipodes of Hell, and the vestibule of Paradise. It represents the heart's restoration to sanity, as contrasted with the horrors and agonies of wilful and willing sin. In the Purgatory we are —

> "Saluted by the air
> Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
> From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride;"

and all the spirits in it are "*contenti nel fuoco*" — happy even in the midst of the burning fiery furnace — because they are —

> "Tending all
> To the same point, attainable by all;
> Peace in ourselves, and union with our God."

We here bid farewell to the hopeless terror of the Inferno, — its indecent fiends; its stench and sludge; its Stygian marshes and cataracts of blood, and tettering leprosies, and cruelly congealing ice; and we watch the souls submitted to the moral agencies which are remedies for sin. The poem is intensely human in its interest, and full of the hope and joy, transcending anguish, of those who can cry, "When I awake, I am present with Thee."

The chief consequences of grave wrongdoing are three: (1) the debt of just penalty; (2) the evil inclination of the will; and (3) the perverted instincts of the body and of the the mind.[1] The

[1] See Perez, "Sette Cerchi del Purgatorio."

poem, in its whole inner meaning, does not bear only on penalties after death, but on the means whereby good habits may be substituted for evil habits in this life. Purgatorial pain is necessary for the satisfaction of the debt, for the rectification of the will, and for the strengthening of the misdirected bodily and mental powers, which still do what they hate. Purgatory is "a penitentiary with seven hospitals" for every soul whose sins are capable of cure. It is less a place of *punishment* than of *perfectionment*, intended to cleanse, to rebeautify, to disinfect, the guilty heart. The lowest terraces are devoted to the purification of the three passions of the mind which are the most deadly, and which lead to all other sins — Pride, Envy, and Anger. The middle terrace furnishes the punishment for *Accidia*, the moral sloth and spiritual torpor which result from the first three sins, and lead to the next three. The last three terraces

are for the punishment and cure of the least deadly and destroying of the seven deadly sins, — the sensual and earthly, as distinct from the demonic sins, — Avarice, Gluttony, and Uncleanness. The first three sins — Pride, Envy, and Anger — are the *opposite* of love; the midmost sin, Torpor, is the *absence* of love; the last three sins — Avarice, Gluttony, Sensuality — are the *excess* of perverted love. As we shall see, there are, on each of the seven terraces of Purgatory, (1) the analogous, inevitable, retributive, self-inflicted punishments; (2) the *sferze* and *freni*, or the goads supplied by good examples and the curbs supplied by bad examples; (3) the appropriate prayer; and (4) the beautiful, liberating, attendant Angel.

Now, if I were writing four or five papers on the Purgatorio instead of one, I could show how it abounds in thrilling incidents, and in lessons full of the noblest moral insight and the deepest spiritual

wisdom. As it is, I must be content to give a general sketch of the poem as a whole.

No sooner had Dante and Virgil struggled out of the abyss where impenitent sin is punished, to the foot of the mountain where sin is purged, than the whole atmosphere of the poem changes. We have left beneath our feet utterly, and forever, the horror and the infamy, the silent burning tombs, the brutal monsters, the noisome gloom where the spirits rage in their slimy marsh, the dolorous and harpy-haunted wood of the suicides, the stifling mephitic region of the Furies and of Medusa, where even an Angel's sweetness seems changed into anger and disdainfulness, and where no lip ventures to utter the Redeemer's name. No sooner have Dante and Virgil reached the upper light, than "the sweet hue of the Eastern sapphire, deepened to the far horizon in the pure serenity of air," bathes the aching vision, and gladdens the disgusted

heart. Overhead shine the four stars of the four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude, and the Easter Day of the year of jubilee begins to dawn. They have reached the Ante-Purgatory; and Cato, the stern guardian of the place, — the type of Stoic virtue and self-discipline, — bids Virgil go and gird Dante with a smooth rush, — for in the Inferno he has dropped his monastic girdle into the abyss of fraud, — and to bathe his face, all stained by the mirk of the abyss, which it is not fit for Angels to look upon. The mountain-island of Purgatory is placed in the Western Hemisphere of water; and on its marge nothing grows but rushes, because they alone can live in the beating of the restless surge. The poets hasten towards the shore; and in a shady place, whence first they catch sight of the tremulous shimmer of the sea, Virgil places his hands on the ground, and bathes in dew the tear-stained cheeks which Dante offers him, discolored

as they are by the foul air of hell. "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning." Then he plucks a smooth rush, and girds him with it; and, where he plucked up the humble plant, another is instantly reborn. You will doubtless see the poet's meaning. Rushes, and no other plant, will grow on the oozy shore, because they are the emblem of humility. St. Peter said to his converts, *τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε*, "Tie humility around you with knots, like a slave's apron;"[1] and Dante, before he can climb the mountain of cleansing, must be clothed and girded with humility, the virtue which he needed most. Rushes bend to the beating wave, and so are not broken or destroyed, just as the wearied soul when it meekly submits to God's chastisements, finds them to be for healing. And when the rush is plucked, another springs up in its place, because the means of grace are not wasted in the using. The lesson is for all

[1] 1 Pet. v. 5.

time, and for life as well as for death. He who would enter the realm of penitence must be girded with meekness, and his face must be washed in the pure dew of heaven, gathered in the shady places of godly sorrow.

Then, over the sea, in the morning dawn, a gleam approaches them, swift as the flight of birds, and ever growing brighter, till they recognize the white wings of an Angel, as he stands high on the stern of a light shallop. He needs neither oar nor sail; but the boat speeds forward by the waving of his eternal plumes, and in it are more than a hundred spirits, singing the Psalm, "When Israel came out of Egypt." The Angel, whose look seems inscribed with happiness, blesses the spirits with the sign of the Cross, as they leap ashore, and then speeds swiftly away. Dante recognizes one of the newly arrived souls as his friend, the musician Casella; and at his request Casella sings Dante's song, "O love which dost

hold converse in my mind." He sings with such sweetness that all the spirits stop to listen, till the guardian of the place scatters them as a flock of feeding doves are scattered, by sternly bidding them remember that there must be no slothful loitering till they have cast off the covering which veils their souls from God. They hasten onwards, and the pure and noble conscience of Virgil seems to be troubled and remorseful for that slight fault. It is one of the many reminders which we receive throughout the "Purgatorio," that not even innocent things must keep us back from the steep path through penitence to heaven. We must forget those things that are behind; even the innocent doves must be taken from the Temple.

> "Man must pass
> From what once seemed good, to what now proves best."

Speeding on, they are directed by some spirits to an aperture through which they

must climb. It is so small and mean-looking that Dante has often seen a vine-dresser fill up a larger gap with a forkful of briers when the grapes begin to purple. Passing that strait and narrow entrance, they find the climb up the craggy mountain-side so steep and hard that to Dante it seems more rugged than the steepest passes of the Apennines, which had become familiar to his exiled feet. But here a man needs not only the hands and feet of effort; he must fly — fly on the swift wings and plumes of burning desire, guided by faith and illuminating hope; though, even then, he will need all the toil of heart and knees and hands, to scale those toppling crags. And sometimes Dante cries to Virgil almost in despair, but he is told that he must not fall back till they reach a resting-place. And when he is discouraged by the thought that the summit of the mountain rises far out of sight, yet — for repentance grows ever easier by effort — Virgil tells him that,

the higher men climb, the less does the ascent hurt them, till at last it becomes, not easy alone, but pleasant and spontaneous.

When the poets reach a resting-place they learn that they are still in the Ante-Purgatory. For, as there is an Ante-hell for the souls of the sluggishly selfish, so there is an Ante-purgatory for the souls of those who have not repented till the hour of death, but have even then found the great arms of the Infinite Goodness spread wide open to receive them. These souls chant the *Miserere* as they go; and among these Dante converses with the excommunicated King Manfred of Naples, and with Buonconte of Montefeltro. But meanwhile they must pause. The night is coming on. No upward step can ever be taken after the sunset. "The night cometh, when no man can work." Let us note, in passing, that the Ante-purgatory, like the Ante-hell, is *crowded* with spirits; for are not selfishness

and worldly aims all but universal among mankind? And, even if our souls have grace to struggle an inch or two above these, are we not all tempted to moral indolence and spiritual sloth?

But since the twilight is falling, they are led by the spirit of the poet-patriot Sordello to a lovely dell, enamelled with flowers of all hues, and balmy with fragrance indescribable, where they see the spirits of many of the noble dead; and among them we are pleased to find our own King Henry III., "the king of simple life," the builder of Westminster Abbey. These spirits, through the cares of sovereignty, have been too tardy in repentance. Under the light of three stars — the three theological virtues, the stars of Faith and Hope and Charity — they are singing the old mediæval compline hymn —

"*Te lucis ante terminum*
Rerum Creator poscimus
Ut pro tua clementia
Sis Praesul et custodia."

"Thee, ere the closing of the day,
Creator of the world we pray,
We pray Thee of Thy clemency
Our guardian and our Lord to be."

Two Angels, armed with swords which are of flame, but short and with no points, descend, and stand on the hill on either side. Green were their plumes as the freshborn leaflets of spring; and green — the radiant color of hope — were the robes fluttered by the beating of their wings; and their fair golden heads were visible, though their faces dazzled the sight. And when down the unguarded end of the valley a huge serpent, the one which gave Eve that bitter food, comes creeping through the grass and flowers, slyly and self-complacently, turning its head and ever sleeking its glittering scales, — down swept from the opposite heights those two heavenly falcons; and, hearing their green wings cleave the air, the serpent fled, and the angels wheeled upward to resume their guard. Exquisite

allegory! The dell, all flowers and fragrance, represents the resting-places of the soul which has felt the stirrings of repentance and the certain hope of forgiveness. The starry lights of the virtues shine upon it. It breathes of celestial song and gladness. The temptations of sin, sleek and subtle and glozing, ever creep serpent-like to surprise its denizens, but the Angels of hope keep watch over it, the hue of whose robes and radiant wings is that of the rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. It is the land of Beulah in the "Pilgrim's Progress;" but the poet implies the deeply necessary caution that the soul, even when it has repented, has still need to watch and pray.

Just before the dawn, Santa Lucia, type of God's illuminating grace, bears Dante upwards, as on an "eagle's golden pinions," to the ramparts of Purgatory. Then follows an allegory no less clear and beautiful. The poets reach a gate, which looks like