

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

They meet with others, who had deferred their repentance till they were overtaken by a violent death, when sufficient space being allowed them, they were then saved; and amongst these Giacopo del Cassero, Buonconte da Montefeltro, and Pia, a lady of Sienna.

NOW had I left those spirits, and pursued
The steps of my conductor; when behind,
Pointing the finger at me, one exclaim'd:
"See, how it seems as if the light not shone
From the left hand¹ of him beneath,² and he,
As living, seems to be led on." Mine eyes
I at that sound reverting, saw them gaze,
Through wonder, first at me; and then at me
And the light broken underneath, by turns.
"Why are thy thoughts thus riveted," my guide
Exclaim'd, "that thou hast slack'd thy pace? or how
Imports it thee, what thing is whisper'd here?
Come after me, and to their babblings leave
The crowd. Be as a tower,³ that, firmly set,
Shakes not its top for any blast that blows.
He, in whose bosom thought on thought shoots out,
Still of his aim is wide, in that the one
Sicklies and wastes to nought the other's strength."

¹ See, how it seems as if the light not shone from the left hand.—The sun was, therefore, on the right of our travellers. For, as before, when seated and looking to the east from whence they had ascended, the sun was on their left, so now that they have risen and are again going forward, it must be on the opposite side of them.

² Of him beneath.—Of Dante, who was following

Virgil up the mountain, and, therefore, was the lower of the two.

³ Be as a tower.—"Sta come torre ferma." So Berni, "Orlando Innamorato," lib. i., c. xvi., st. 48:
"In quei due piedi sta fermo il gigante
Com' una torre in mezzo d'un castello."

And Milton, "Paradise Lost," b. i. 591: "Stood like a tower."

What other could I answer, save "I come?"
I said it, somewhat with that colour tinged,
Which oft-times pardon meriteth for man.
Meanwhile traverse along the hill there came,
A little way before us, some who sang
The "Miserere" in responsive strains.
When they perceived that through my body I
Gave way not for the rays to pass, their song
Straight to a long and hoarse exclaim they changed;
And two of them, in guise of messengers,
Ran on to meet us, and inquiring ask'd:
"Of your condition we would gladly learn."

To them my guide. "Ye may return, and bear
Tidings to them who sent you, that his frame
Is real flesh. If, as I deem, to view
His shade they paused, enough is answer'd them:
Him let them honour: they may prize him well."

Ne'er saw I fiery vapours¹ with such speed
Cut through the serene air at fall of night,
Nor August's clouds athwart the setting sun,
That upward these did not in shorter space
Return; and, there arriving, with the rest
Wheel back on us, as with loose rein a troop.

"Many," exclaim'd the bard, "are these, who throng
Around us: to petition thee they come.
Go therefore on, and listen as thou go'st."

"O spirit! who go'st on to blessedness,
With the same limbs that clad thee at thy birth,"
Shouting they came: "a little rest thy step.
Look if thou any one amongst our tribe

¹ Ne'er saw I fiery vapours.—Imitated by Tasso, "Gierusalemme Liberata," canto xix., st. 62:

"Tal suol fendendo liquido sereno
Stella cader della gran madre in seno."

And by Milton, "Paradise Lost," b. iv. 558:

Swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air."

Compare Statius, "Thebais," l. 92: "Ilicet igne Jovis,
lapisque citatior astris."

Hast e'er beheld, that tidings of him there¹
 Thou mayst report. Ah, wherefore go'st thou on?
 Ah, wherefore tarriest thou not? We all
 By violence died, and to our latest hour
 Were sinners, but then warn'd by light from heaven:
 So that, repenting and forgiving, we
 Did issue out of life at peace with God,
 Who, with desire to see him, fills our heart."

Then I: "The visages of all I scan,
 Yet none of ye remember. But if aught
 That I can do may please you, gentle spirits!
 Speak, and I will perform it; by that peace,
 Which, on the steps of guide so excellent
 Following, from world to world, intent I seek."

In answer he began: "None here distrusts
 Thy kindness, though not promised with an oath;
 So as the will fail not for want of power.
 Whence I, who sole before the others speak,
 Entreat thee, if thou ever see that land²
 Which lies between Romagna and the realm
 Of Charles, that of thy courtesy thou pray
 Those who inhabit Fano, that for me
 Their adorations duly be put up,
 By which I may purge off my grievous sins.
 From thence I came.³ But the deep passages,
 Whence issued out the blood⁴ wherein I dwelt,
 Upon my bosom in Antenor's land⁵
 Were made, where to be more secure I thought.

¹ *There*.—Upon the earth.

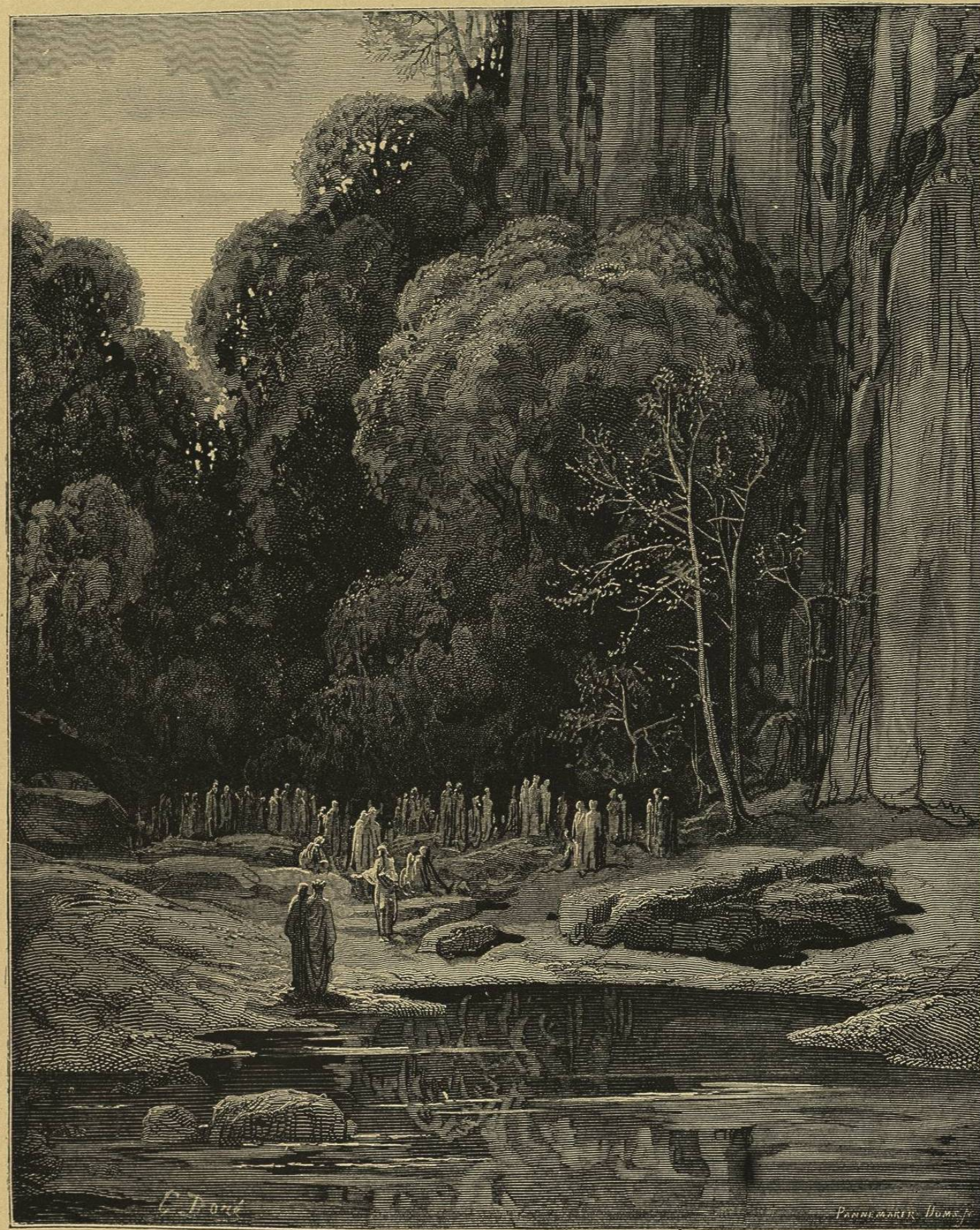
² *If thou ever see that land*.—The Marca d'Ancona, between Romagna and Apulia, the kingdom of Charles of Anjou.

³ *From thence I came*.—Giacopo del Cassero, a citizen of Fano, who having spoken ill of Azzo da Este, Marquis of Ferrara, was by his orders put to death. Giacopo was overtaken by the assassins at Oriaco, a place near the Brenta, from whence, if he had fled towards Mira, higher up on that river, instead of

making for the marsh on the sea-shore, he might have escaped.

⁴ *The blood*.—Supposed to be the seat of life.

⁵ *Antenor's land*.—The city of Padua, said to be founded by Antenor. This implies a reflection on the Paduans. See "Hell," xxxii. 89. Thus G. Villani calls the Venetians "the perfidious descendants from the blood of Antenor, the betrayer of his country, Troy."—Lib. xi., cap. lxxxix.



"Many," exclaim'd the bard, "are these, who throng
 Around us: to petition thee, they come.
 Go therefore on, and listen as thou go'st."

Canto V., lines 42-44.

The author of the deed was Este's prince,
Who, more than right could warrant, with his wrath
Pursued me. Had I towards Mira fled,
When overta'en at Oriaco, still
Might I have breathed. But to the marsh I sped;
And in the mire and rushes tangled there
Fell, and beheld my life-blood float the plain."

Then said another: "Ah! so may the wish,
That takes thee o'er the mountain, be fulfill'd,
As thou shalt graciously give aid to mine.
Of Montefeltro I;¹ Buonconte I:

Giovanna² nor none else have care for me;
Sorrowing with these I therefore go." I thus:
"From Campaldino's field what force or chance
Drew thee, that ne'er thy sepulture was known?"

"Oh!" answer'd he, "at Casentino's foot
A stream there courseth, named Archiano, sprung
In Apennine above the hermit's seat.³
E'en where its name is cancel'd,⁴ there came I,
Pierced in the throat,⁵ fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
Fail'd me; and, finishing with Mary's name,
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remain'd.
I will report the truth; which thou again
Tell to the living. Me God's angel took,⁶
Whilst he of hell exclaim'd: 'O thou from heaven:
Say wherefore hast thou robb'd me? Thou of him
The eternal portion bear'st with thee away,

¹ *Of Montefeltro I.*—Buonconte (son of Guido da Montefeltro, whom we have had in the twenty-seventh canto of "Hell") fell in the battle of Campaldino (1289), fighting on the side of the Aretini. In this engagement our poet took a distinguished part, as we have seen related in his Life. See Fazio degli Uberti, "Dittamondo," lib. ii., cap. xxix.

² *Giovanna.*—Either the wife or a kinswoman of Buonconte.

³ *The hermit's seat.*—The hermitage of Camaldoli.

⁴ *Where its name is cancel'd.*—That is, between Bibbiena and Poppi, where the Archiano falls into the Arno.

⁵ *Throat.*—In the former editions it was printed "heart." Mr. Carlyle has observed the error.

⁶ *Me God's angel took.*—"Cum autem finem vitæ explesset servus Dei aspiciens vidit diabolum simul et Angelum ad animam stantem ac unum quemque illam sibi tollere festinantem."—*Alberici Visio*, § 18.

For one poor tear¹ that he deprives me of.
But of the other, other rule I make.'

"Thou know'st how in the atmosphere collects
That vapour dank, returning into water
Soon as it mounts where cold condenses it.
That evil will,² which in his intellect
Still follows evil, came; and raised the wind
And smoky mist, by virtue of the power
Given by his nature. Thence the valley, soon
As day was spent, he cover'd o'er with cloud,
From Pratomagno to the mountain range;³
And stretch'd the sky above; so that the air
Impregnate changed to water. Fell the rain;
And to the fosses came all that the land
Contain'd not; and, as mightiest streams are wont,
To the great river, with such headlong sweep,
Rush'd, that nought stay'd its course. My stiffen'd frame,
Laid at his mouth, the fell Archiano found,
And dash'd it into Arno; from my breast
Loosening the cross, that of myself I made
When overcome with pain. He hurl'd me on,
Along the banks and bottom of his course;
Then in his muddy spoils encircling wrapt."

"Ah! when thou to the world shalt be return'd,
And rested after thy long road," so spake
Next the third spirit; "then remember me.
I once was Pia.⁴ Sienna gave me life;
Maremma took it from me. That he knows,
Who me with jewel'd ring had first espoused."

¹ For one poor tear.—"Visum est quod angelus Domini lacrimas quas dives ille . . . fuderat in ampulla teneret."—*Alberici Visio*, § 18.

² That evil will.—The devil. Lombardi refers us to Albertus Magnus "De Potentiâ Dæmonum." This notion of the Evil Spirit having power over the elements, appears to have arisen from his being termed the "prince of the air" in the New Testament.

³ From Pratomagno to the mountain range.—From Pratomagno, now called Prato Vecchio (which divides the Valdarno from Casentino), as far as to the Apennine.

⁴ Pia.—She is said to have been a Siennese lady, of the family of Tolommei, secretly made away with by her husband, Nello della Pietra, of the same city, in Maremma, where he had some possessions.

