

CANTO XI.

A R G U M E N T.

After a prayer uttered by the spirits who were spoken of in the last Canto, Virgil inquires the way upwards, and is answered by one, who declares himself to have been Omberto, son of the Count of Santafiore. Next our Poet distinguishes Oderigi, the illuminator, who discourses on the vanity of worldly fame, and points out to him the soul of Provenzano Salvani.

“**O** THOU Almighty Father! who dost make
 The heavens thy dwelling, not in bounds confined,
 But that, with love intenser, there thou view'st
 Thy primal effluence; hallow'd be thy name:
 Join, each created being, to extol
 Thy might; for worthy humblest thanks and praise
 Is thy blest Spirit. May thy kingdom's peace
 Come unto us; for we, unless it come,
 With all our striving, thither tend in vain.
 As, of their will, the angels unto thee
 Tender meet sacrifice, circling thy throne
 With loud hosannas; so of their's be done
 By saintly men on earth. Grant us, this day,
 Our daily manna, without which he roams
 Through this rough desert retrograde, who most
 Toils to advance his steps. As we to each
 Pardon the evil done us, pardon thou
 Benign, and of our merit take no count.
 'Gainst the old adversary, prove thou not
 Our virtue, easily subdued; but free
 From his incitements, and defeat his wiles.

¹ *O thou Almighty Father!*—The first four lines are borrowed by Pulci, “*Morgante Maggiore*,” c. vi. Dante, in his “*Credo*,” has again versified the Lord's

Prayer, if, indeed, the “*Credo*” be Dante's, which some have doubted; and in the preface to Allacci's Collection it is ascribed to Antonio di Ferrara.

This last petition, dearest Lord! is made
 Not for ourselves; since that were needless now:
 But for their sakes who after us remain.”

Thus for themselves and us good speed imploring,
 Those spirits went beneath a weight like that
 We sometimes feel in dreams; all, sore beset,
 But with unequal anguish; wearied all;
 Round the first circuit; purging as they go
 • The world's gross darkness off. In our behoof
 If their vows still be offer'd, what can here
 For them be vow'd and done by such, whose wills
 Have root of goodness in them?¹ Well beseems
 That we should help them wash away the stains
 They carried hence; that so, made pure and light,
 They may spring upward to the starry spheres.

“Ah! so may mercy-temper'd justice rid
 Your burdens speedily; that ye have power
 To stretch your wing, which e'en to your desire
 Shall lift you; as ye show us on which hand
 Toward the ladder leads the shortest way.
 And if there be more passages than one,
 Instruct us of that easiest to ascend:
 For this man, who comes with me, and bears yet
 The charge of fleshly raiment Adam left him,
 Despite his better will, but slowly mounts.”
 From whom the answer came unto these words,
 Which my guide spake, appear'd not; but 'twas said
 “Along the bank to rightward come with us;
 And ye shall find a pass that mocks not toil
 Of living man to climb: and were it not
 That I am hinder'd by the rock, wherewith
 This arrogant neck is tamed, whence needs I stoop
 My visage to the ground; him, who yet lives,

¹ *Root of goodness in them.*—The poet has before told us that there are no others on earth whose prayers avail to shorten the pains of those who are in Purgatory.

Whose name thou speak'st not, him I fain would view;
To mark if e'er I knew him, and to crave
His pity for the fardel that I bear.
I was of Latium;¹ of a Tuscan born,
A mighty one: Aldobrandesco's name,
My sire's, I know not if ye e'er have heard.
My old blood and forefathers' gallant deeds
Made me so haughty, that I clean forgot
The common mother; and to such excess
Wax'd in my scorn of all men, that I fell
Fell therefore; by what fate, Sienna's sons,
Each child in Campagnatico, can tell.

I am Omberto: not me, only, pride
Hath injured, but my kindred all involved
In mischief with her. Here my lot ordains
Under this weight to groan, till I appease
God's angry justice, since I did it not
Amongst the living, here amongst the dead."

Listening I bent my visage down: and one
(Not he who spake) twisted beneath the weight
That urged him, saw me, knew me straight, and call'd;
Holding his eyes with difficulty fix'd
Intent upon me, stooping as I went
Companion of their way. "O!" I exclaim'd,
"Art thou not Oderigi?² art not thou
Agobbio's glory, glory of that art
Which they of Paris call the limner's skill?"

"Brother!" said he, "with tints, that gayer smile,
Bolognian Franco's³ pencil lines the leaves.
His all the honour now; my light obscured.
In truth, I had not been thus courteous to him

¹ *I was of Latium.*—Omberto, the son of Guglielmo Aldobrandesco, Count of Santafore, in the territory of Sienna. His arrogance provoked his countrymen to such a pitch of fury against him that he was murdered by them at Campagnatico.

² *Oderigi.*—The illuminator, or miniature painter, a friend of Giotto and Dante.

³ *Bolognian Franco.*—Franco of Bologna, who is said to have been a pupil of Oderigi's.

The whilst I lived, through eagerness of zeal
For that pre-eminence my heart was bent on.
Here, of such pride, the forfeiture is paid.¹
Nor were I even here, if, able still
To sin, I had not turn'd me unto God.
O powers of man! how vain your glory, nipt
E'en in its height of verdure, if an age
Less bright succeed not.² Cimabue³ thought
To lord it over painting's field; and now
The cry is Giotto's,⁴ and his name eclipsed.
Thus hath one Guido from the other⁵ snatch'd

¹ *The forfeiture is paid.*—

"Di tal superbia qui si paga il fio."
So in the "Inferno," c. xxvii. 135:

"In che si paga il fio."

And Ariosto, "Orlando Furioso," c. xxii. 59:

"Prestate oia, che qui si paga il fio."

² *If an age less bright succeed not.*—If a generation of men do not follow, among whom none exceeds or equals those who have immediately preceded them. "Etati grosse;" to which Volpi remarks a similar expression in Boileau:

"Villon sût le premier, dans ces siècles grossiers,
Debrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers."

Art Poétique, ch. i.

³ *Cimabue.*—Giovanni Cimabue, the restorer of painting, was born at Florence, of a noble family, in 1240, and died in 1300. The passage in the text is an allusion to his epitaph:

"Credidit ut Cimabos picturæ castra tenere,
Sic tenuit vivens: nunc tenet astra poli."

⁴ *The cry is Giotto's.*—In Giotto we have a proof of how early a period the fine arts were encouraged in Italy. His talents were discovered by Cimabue, while he was tending sheep for his father in the neighbourhood of Florence, and he was afterwards patronised by Pope Benedict XI. and Robert King of Naples; and enjoyed the society and friendship of Dante, whose likeness he has transmitted to posterity. He died in 1336, at the age of 60.

⁵ *One Guido from the other.*—Guido Cavalcanti, the friend of our poet (see "Hell," canto x. 59), had eclipsed the literary fame of Guido Guinicelli, of a noble family in Bologna, whom we shall meet with in the twenty-sixth canto, and of whom frequent and honourable mention is made by our poet in his treatise "De Vulgari Eloquentia." Guinicelli died in 1276, as is proved by Fantuzzi, on the Bolognian writers, tom. iv., p. 345. See Mr. Mathias's "Tiraboschi," tom. i., p. 110. There are more of Guini-

celli's poems to be found in Allacci's Collection, than Tiraboschi, who tells us he had not seen it, supposed. From these I have selected two which appear to me singularly pathetic. It must, however, be observed that the former of them is attributed in the Vatican MS. 3213, to Cino da Pistoia, as Bottari informs us in the notes to "Lettere di Fra Guittone d'Arezzo," p. 171. Many of Cavalcanti's writings, hitherto in MS., are said to be publishing at Florence. See "Esprit des Journaux," Jan., 1813. [They were edited there in that year, but not for sale, by Antonio Ciciaporci, as I learn from Gamba's "Testi di Lingua Ital." 272.]

"Noi provamo ch' in questo cieco mondo
Ciascun si vive in angosciosa doglia,
Ch' in ogni avversità ventura 'l tira.
Beata l' alma che lassa tal pondo.
E va nel ciel, dove è compita zoggia,
Zoglioso cor far de corrotto e dira.
Or dunque di chel vostro cor sospira
Che rallegrar si dè del suo migliore,
Che Dio, nostro signore,
Volse di lei, come avea l'angel detto,
Fare il ciel perfetto.
Per nuova cosa ogni santo la mira:
Ed ella sta d'avante alla salute;
Ed in ver lei parla ogni vertute."

Allacci, *Ediz. Napoli*, 1661, p. 378.

"By proof, in this blind mortal world, we know,
That each one lives in grief and sore annoy;
Such ceaseless strife of fortune we sustain.
Blessed the soul, that leaves this weight below,
And goes its way to heaven, where it hath joy
Entire, without a touch of wrath or pain.
Now then what reason hath thy heart to sigh,
That should be glad, as for desire fulfill'd,
That God, our Sovereign, will'd
She, as He told His angel, should be given
To bless and perfect heaven?
Each saint looks on her with admiring eye;
And she stands ever in salvation's sight;
And every virtue bends on her its light."
"Conforto già conforto l'amor chiama,
E pietà prega per Dio, fatti resto;