

## CANTO XVIII.

### ARGUMENT.

Virgil discourses further concerning the nature of love. Then a multitude of spirits rush by; two of whom, in van of the rest, record instances of zeal and fervent affection, and another, who was abbot of San Zeno in Verona, declares himself to Virgil and Dante; and lastly follow other spirits, shouting forth memorable examples of the sin for which they suffer. The Poet, pursuing his meditations, falls into a dreamy slumber.

THE teacher ended,<sup>1</sup> and his high discourse  
 Concluding, earnest in my looks inquired  
 If I appear'd content; and I, whom still  
 Unsated thirst to hear him urged, was mute,  
 Mute outwardly, yet inwardly I said:  
 "Perchance my too much questioning offends."  
 But he, true father, mark'd the secret wish  
 By diffidence restrain'd; and, speaking, gave  
 Me boldness thus to speak: "Master! my sight  
 Gathers so lively virtue from thy beams,  
 That all, thy words convey, distinct is seen.  
 Wherefore I pray thee, father, whom this heart  
 Holds dearest, thou wouldst deign by proof t' unfold  
 That love, from which, as from their source, thou bring'st  
 All good deeds and their opposite." He then:  
 "To what I now disclose be thy clear ken  
 Directed; and thou plainly shalt behold  
 How much those blind have err'd, who make themselves  
 The guides of men. The soul, created apt  
 To love, moves versatile which way soe'er

<sup>1</sup> *The teacher ended.*—Compare Plato, "Protagoras," v. iii., p. 123, Bip. edit.: Πρωταγόρας μὲν τοιαῦτα κ. τ. λ. Apollonius Rhodius, l. i. 513; and Milton, "Paradise Lost," b. viii. l.

"The angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
 So charming left his voice, that he awhile  
 Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to  
 hear."



Already had my steps,  
 Though slow, so far into that ancient wood  
 Transported me, I could not ken the place  
 Where I had enter'd.

*Canto XVIII., lines 22-25.*