

That I, how loth soe'er, could scarce have held
 Attention from the song. "I," thus she sang,
 "I am the Syren, she, whom mariners
 On the wide sea are wilder'd when they hear:
 Such fulness of delight the listener feels.
 I, from his course, Ulysses¹ by my lay
 Enchanted drew. Whoe'er frequents me once,
 Parts seldom: so I charm him, and his heart
 Contented knows no void." Or ere her mouth
 Was closed, to shame her, at my side appear'd
 A dame² of semblance holy. With stern voice
 She utter'd: "Say, O Virgil! who is this?"
 Which hearing, he approach'd, with eyes still bent
 Toward that goodly presence: the other seized her,
 And, her robes tearing, open'd her before,
 And show'd the belly to me, whence a smell,
 Exhaling loathsome, waked me. Round I turn'd
 Mine eyes: and thus the teacher: "At the least
 Three times my voice hath call'd thee. Rise, begone.
 Let us the opening find where thou mayst pass."

I straightway rose. Now day, pour'd down from high,
 Fill'd all the circuits of the sacred mount;
 And, as we journey'd, on our shoulder smote
 The early ray. I follow'd, stooping low
 My forehead, as a man, o'ercharged with thought,
 Who bends him to the likeness of an arch
 That midway spans the flood; when thus I heard,
 "Come, enter here," in tone so soft and mild,
 As never met the ear on mortal strand.

With swan-like wings dispre'd and pointing up,
 Who thus had spoken marshal'd us along,

¹ *Ulysses*.—It is not easy to determine why Ulysses, contrary to the authority of Homer, is said to have been drawn aside from his course by the song of the Syren. No improbable way of accounting for the contradiction is, to suppose that she is here

represented as purposely deviating from the truth. Or Dante may have followed some legend of the middle ages, in which the wanderings of Ulysses were represented otherwise than in Homer.

² *A dame*.—Philosophy, or perhaps Truth.

Where, each side of the solid masonry,
The sloping walls retired; then moved his plumes,
And fanning us, affirm'd that those, who mourn,¹
Are blessed, for that comfort shall be theirs.

"What aileth thee, that still thou look'st to earth?"
Began my leader; while the angelic shape
A little over us his station took.

"New vision," I replied, "hath raised in me
Surmisings strange and anxious doubts, whereon
My soul intent allows no other thought
Or room, or entrance."—"Hast thou seen," said he,
"That old enchantress, her, whose wiles alone
The spirits o'er us weep for? Hast thou seen
How man may free him of her bonds? Enough.
Let thy heels spurn the earth;² and thy raised ken
Fix on the lure, which heaven's eternal King
Whirls in the rolling spheres." As on his feet
The falcon³ first looks down, then to the sky
Turns, and forth stretches eager for the food,
That wooes him thither; so the call I heard:
So onward, far as the dividing rock
Gave way, I journey'd, till the plain was reach'd.

On the fifth circle when I stood at large,
A race appear'd before me, on the ground
All downward lying prone and weeping sore.
"My soul⁴ hath cleaved to the dust," I heard
With sighs so deep, they well nigh choked the words.

¹ *Who mourn.*—"Blessed are they that mourn;
for they shall be comforted."—Matt. v. 4.

² *Let thy heels spurn the earth.*—This is a meta-
phor from hawking, though less apparent than in
the lines that follow.

³ *The falcon.*—

"Poi come fa 'l falcon, quando si move,
Così Umiltà al cielo alzò la vista."

Frezzi, Il Quadriregio, lib. iv., cap. v.

"Io vidi poi color tutti levare
Inverso il cielo, come fa 'l falcone,
Quando la preda sua prende in su l'are."
Ibid., cap. xiii.

One of our periodical critics has remarked that
Dante must have loved hawking; and "that he
paints his bird always to the life."—*Edinburgh Re-
view*, No. lviii., p. 472. In the same manner Mr.
Blomfield supposes that Æschylus was addicted to
fishing, because he often takes his metaphors from
fishing-nets. See that gentleman's notes to the
Perse, Glossar., v. 430.

⁴ *My soul.*—"My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken
thou me according to thy word."—Ps. cxix. 25.

"O ye elect of God! whose penal woes
Both hope and justice mitigate, direct
Towards the steep rising our uncertain way."

"If ye approach secure from this our doom,
Prostration, and would urge your course with speed,
See that ye still to rightward keep the brink."

So them the bard besought; and such the words,
Beyond us some short space, in answer came.

I noted what remain'd yet hidden from them:¹
Thence to my liege's eyes mine eyes I bent,
And he, forthwith interpreting their suit,
Beckon'd his glad assent. Free then to act
As pleased me, I drew near, and took my stand
Over that shade whose words I late had mark'd,
And, "Spirit!" I said, "in whom repentant tears
Mature that blessed hour when thou with God
Shalt find acceptance, for a while suspend
For me that mightier care. Say who thou wast;
Why thus ye grovel on your bellies prone;
And if, in aught, ye wish my service there,
Whence living I am come." He answering spake:
"The cause why Heaven our back toward his cope
Reverses, shalt thou know: but me know first,
The successor of Peter,² and the name
And title of my lineage, from that stream
That 'twixt Chiaveri and Siestri draws
His limpid waters³ through the lowly glen.
A month and little more by proof I learnt,
With what a weight that robe of sovereignty
Upon his shoulder rests, who from the mire

¹ *I noted what remain'd yet hidden from them.*—
They were ignorant, it appeared, whether Dante was
come there to be purged of his sins.

² *The successor of Peter.*—Ottobuono, of the family
of Fieschi, Counts of Lavagno, died thirty-nine days

after he became pope, with the title of Adrian V.,
in 1276.

³ *That stream that 'twixt Chiaveri and Siestri
draws his limpid waters.*—The river Lavagno, in
the Genoese territory; to the east of which territory
are situated Siestri and Chiaveri.

Would guard it; that each other fardel seems
 But feathers in the balance. Late, alas!
 Was my conversion: but, when I became
 Rome's pastor, I discern'd at once the dream
 And cozenage of life; saw that the heart
 Rested not there, and yet no prouder height
 Lured on the climber: wherefore, of that life
 No more enamour'd, in my bosom love
 Of purer being kindled. For till then
 I was a soul in misery, alienate
 From God, and covetous of all earthly things;
 Now, as thou seest, here punish'd for my doting
 Such cleansing from the taint of avarice,
 Do spirits, converted, need. This mount inflicts
 No direr penalty. E'en as our eyes
 Fasten'd below, nor e'er to loftier clime
 Were lifted;¹ thus hath justice level'd us,
 Here on the earth. As avarice quench'd our love
 Of good, without which is no working; thus
 Here justice holds us prison'd, hand and foot
 Chain'd down and bound, while heaven's just Lord shall please,
 So long to tarry, motionless, outstretch'd."

My knees I stoop'd, and would have spoke; but he,
 Ere my beginning, by his ear perceived
 I did him reverence; and "What cause," said he,
 "Hath bow'd thee thus?"—"Compunction," I rejoin'd,
 "And inward awe of your high dignity."

"Up," he exclaim'd, "brother! upon thy feet
 Arise; err not:² thy fellow servant I
 (Thine and all others'), of one Sovran Power.
 If thou hast ever mark'd those holy sounds

¹ *Were lifted*.—Rosa Morando and Lombardi are very severe on Venturi's perplexity occasioned by the word "aderse." They have none of them noticed Landino's reading of "aperse." Ediz. 1484.

² *Err not*.—"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus."—Rev. xix. 10.

Of gospel truth, 'nor shall be given in marriage,'¹
 Thou mayst discern the reasons of my speech.
 Go thy ways now; and linger here no more.
 Thy tarrying is a let unto the tears,
 With which I hasten that whereof thou spakest.²
 I have on earth a kinswoman;³ her name
 Alagia, worthy in herself, so ill
 Example of our house corrupt her not:
 And she is all remaineth of me there."

¹ *Nor shall be given in marriage*.—"Since in this state we neither marry nor are given in marriage, I am no longer the spouse of the church, and therefore no longer retain my former dignity." See Matt. xxii. 30.

² *That whereof thou spakest*.—See ver. 89.

³ *A kinswoman*.—Alagia is said to have been the wife of the Marchese Marcello Malaspina, one of the poet's protectors during his exile. See canto viii. 133.