

## CANTO XXIX.

### ARGUMENT.

The lady, who in a following canto is called Matilda, moves along the side of the stream in a contrary direction to the current, and Dante keeps equal pace with her on the opposite bank. A marvellous sight, preceded by music, appears in view.

**S**INGING,<sup>1</sup> as if enamour'd, she resumed  
And closed the song, with "Blessed they whose sins  
Are cover'd."<sup>2</sup> Like the wood-nymphs then, that tripp'd  
Singly across the sylvan shadows; one  
Eager to view, and one to escape the sun;  
So moved she on, against the current, up  
The verdant rivage. I, her mincing step  
Observing, with as tardy step pursued.

Between us not an hundred paces trod,  
The bank, on each side bending equally,  
Gave me to face the orient. Nor our way  
Far onward brought us, when to me at once  
She turn'd, and cried: "My brother! look, and hearken."  
And lo! a sudden lustre ran across  
Through the great forest on all parts, so bright,  
I doubted whether lightning were abroad;  
But that, expiring ever in the spleen  
That doth unfold it, and this during still,  
And waxing still in splendour, made me question  
What it might be: and a sweet melody  
Ran through the luminous air. Then did I chide,  
With warrantable zeal, the hardihood

<sup>1</sup> Singing.—"Cantava come fosse innamorata."  
Guido Cavalcanti, *Poeti del primo secolo*,  
v. 2, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> And closed the song, with "Blessed they whose  
sins are cover'd."—Ps. xxxii. 1.





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Beneath a sky  
So beautiful, came four and twenty elders,  
By two and two, with flower-de-luces crown'd.  
*Canto XXIX. lines 80-82.*



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The one so ruddy, that her form had scarce  
Been known within a furnace of clear flame ;  
The next did look, as if the flesh and bones  
Were emerald ; snow new-fallen seem'd the third.  
*Canto XXIX. lines 118-121.*