

Thus heard I one, who spake: "Since with its beam
The grace, whence true love lighteth first his flame,
That after doth increase by loving, shines
So multiplied in thee, it leads thee up
Along this ladder, down whose hallow'd steps
None e'er descend, and mount them not again;
Who from his phial should refuse thee wine
To slake thy thirst, no less constrained¹ were,
Than water flowing not unto the sea.
Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that bloom
In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds
This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for heaven.
I, then,² was of the lambs, that Dominic
Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way
Where well they thrive, not swoln with vanity.
He, nearest on my right hand, brother was,
And master to me: Albert of Cologne,³
Is this; and, of Aquinum, Thomas⁴ I.
If thou of all the rest wouldst be assured,
Let thine eye, waiting on the words I speak,
In circuit journey round the blessed wreath.

¹ *No less constrained*.—"The rivers might as easily cease to flow towards the sea, as we could deny thee thy request."

² *I, then*.—"I was of the Dominican order."

³ *Albert of Cologne*.—Albertus Magnus was born at Laugingen, in Thuringia, in 1193, and studied at Paris and at Padua; at the latter of which places he entered into the Dominican order. He then taught theology in various parts of Germany, and particularly at Cologne. Thomas Aquinas was his favourite pupil. In 1260, he reluctantly accepted the bishopric of Ratisbon, and in two years after resigned it, and returned to his cell in Cologne, where the remainder of his life was passed in superintending the school, and in composing his voluminous works on divinity and natural science. He died in 1280. The absurd imputation of his having dealt in the magical art is well known; and his biographers take some pains to clear him of it. "Scriptores Ordinis Prædicatorum," by Quetif and Echard, Lut., Par., 1719, fol., tom. i., p. 162. Frezzi places Albertus Magnus next in rank to Aristotle:

"Alberto Magno è dopo lui 'l secondo:
Egli supplì li membri, e 'l vestimento
Alla Filosofia in questo mondo."
Il Quadriregio, lib. iv., cap. 9.

⁴ *Of Aquinum, Thomas*.—Thomas Aquinas, of whom Bucer is reported to have said, "Take but Thomas away, and I will overturn the Church of Rome;" and whom Hooker terms "the greatest among the school divines" ("Ecclesiastical Polity," b. iii., § 9), was born of noble parents, who anxiously but vainly endeavoured to divert him from a life of celibacy and study. He died in 1274, at the age of forty-seven. Echard and Quetif, *ibid.*, p. 271. See also "Purgatory," canto xx., v. 67. A modern French writer has collected some particulars relating to the influence which the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Buonaventura had on the opinions of Dante. See the third part of Ozanam's "Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au treizième siècle," 8vo, Par., 1839.

That next resplendence issues from the smile
Of Gratian,¹ who to either forum² lent
Such help, as favour wins in Paradise.
The other, nearest, who adorns our quire,
Was Peter,³ he that with the widow gave⁴
To holy church his treasure. The fifth light,⁵
Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired,
That all your world craves tidings of his doom:⁶
Within, there is the lofty light, endow'd
With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,
That with a ken of such wide amplitude
No second hath arisen. Next behold
That taper's radiance,⁷ to whose view was shown,
Clearliest, the nature and the ministry
Angelical, while yet in flesh it dwelt.
In the other little light serenely smiles
That pleader⁸ for the Christian temples, he,

¹ *Gratian*.—"Gratian, a Benedictine monk belonging to the Convent of St. Felix and Nabor, at Bologna, and by birth a Tuscan, composed, about the year 1130, for the use of the schools, an abridgment or epitome of canon law, drawn from the letters of the pontiffs, the decrees of councils, and the writings of the ancient doctors."—*MacLaine's Mosheim*, v. iii., cent. xii., part ii., cap. i., § 6.

² *To either forum*.—"By reconciling," as Venturi explains it, "the civil with the canon law."

³ *Peter*.—"Pietro Lombardo was of obscure origin, nor is the place of his birth in Lombardy ascertained. With a recommendation from the Bishop of Lucca to St. Bernard, he went into France to continue his studies; and for that purpose remained some time at Rheims, whence he afterwards proceeded to Paris. Here his reputation was so great, that Philip, brother of Louis VII., being chosen Bishop of Paris, resigned that dignity to Pietro, whose pupil he had been. He held his bishopric only one year, and died 1160. His 'Liber Sententiarum' is highly esteemed. It contains a system of scholastic theology, so much more complete than any which had been yet seen, that it may be deemed an original work."—*Tiraboschi, Storia della Lett. Ital.*, tom. iii., lib. iv., cap. ii.

⁴ *That with the widow gave*.—This alludes to the beginning of the "Liber Sententiarum," where Peter

says: "Cupiens aliquid de penuriâ ac tenuitate nostrâ cum pauperculâ in gazophylacium domini mittere," &c.

⁵ *The fifth light*.—Solomon.

⁶ *His doom*.—It was a common question, it seems, whether Solomon were saved or no.

⁷ *That taper's radiance*.—St. Dionysius, the Areopagite. "The famous Grecian fanatic, who gave himself out for Dionysius the Areopagite, disciple of St. Paul, and who, under the protection of this venerable name, gave laws and instructions to those that were desirous of raising their souls above all human things, in order to unite them to their great source by sublime contemplation, lived most probably in this century (the fourth); though some place him before, others after, the present period."—*MacLaine's Mosheim*, v. i., cent. iv., p. ii., c. iii., § 12.

⁸ *That pleader*.—In the fifth century, Paulus Orosius "acquired a considerable degree of reputation by the History he wrote to refute the cavils of the Pagans against Christianity, and by his books against the Pelagians and Priscillianists."—*Ibid.*, v. ii., cent. v., p. ii., c. ii., § 11. A similar train of argument was pursued by Augustine, in his book "De Civitate Dei." Orosius is classed by Dante, in his treatise "De Vulgari Eloquentia," lib. ii., cap. vi., as one of his favourite authors, among those

Who did provide Augustin of his lore.
 Now, if thy mind's eye pass from light to light,
 Upon my praises following, of the eighth¹
 Thy thirst is next. The saintly soul, that shows
 The world's deceitfulness, to all who hear him,
 Is, with the sight of all the good that is,
 Blest there. The limbs, whence it was driven, lie
 Down in Cieldauro;² and from martyrdom
 And exile came it here. Lo! further on,
 Where flames the arduous spirit of Isidore;³
 Of Bede;⁴ and Richard,⁵ more than man, erewhile,
 In deep discernment. Lastly this, from whom
 Thy look on me reverteth, was the beam
 Of one, whose spirit, on high musings bent,
 Rebuked the lingering tardiness of death.
 It is the eternal light of Sigebert,⁶
 Who escaped not envy, when of truth he argued,
 Reading in the straw-litter'd street.⁷ Forthwith,
 As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God⁸
 To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
 Each part of other fitly drawn and urged,

"qui nisi sunt altissimas prosas"—"who have written prose with the greatest loftiness of style." The others are Cicero, Livy, Pliny, and Frontinus. Some commentators, with less probability, suppose that this seventh spirit is St. Ambrose, and not Orosius.

¹ *The eighth*.—Boëtius, whose book "De Consolatione Philosophiæ" excited so much attention during the middle ages, was born, as Tiraboschi conjectures, about 470. "In 524 he was cruelly put to death by command of Theodoric, either on real or pretended suspicion of his being engaged in a conspiracy."—*Della Lett. Ital.*, tom. iii., lib. i., cap. iv.

² *Cieldauro*.—Boëtius was buried at Pavia, in the monastery of St. Pietro in Ciel d'oro.

³ *Isidore*.—He was Archbishop of Seville during forty years, and died in 635. See Mariana, "Hist." lib. vi., cap. vii. Mosheim, whose critical opinions in general must be taken with some allowance, observes, that "his grammatical, theological, and historical productions discover more learning and pedantry than judgment and taste."

⁴ *Bede*.—Bede, whose virtues obtained him the

appellation of the Venerable, was born in 672, at Wermouth and Jarrow, in the bishopric of Durham, and died in 735. Invited to Rome by Pope Sergius I., he preferred passing almost the whole of his life in the seclusion of a monastery. A catalogue of his numerous writings may be seen in Kippis's "Biographia Britannica," v. ii.

⁵ *Richard*.—Richard of St. Victor, a native either of Scotland or Ireland, was canon and prior of the monastery of that name at Paris, and died in 1173. "He was at the head of the Mystics in this century; and his treatise, entitled the 'Mystical Ark,' which contains as it were the marrow of this kind of theology, was received with the greatest avidity."—*Mac-laine's Mosheim*, v. iii., cent. xii., p. ii., c. ii., § 23.

⁶ *Sigebert*.—"A monk of the abbey of Gemblours, who was in high repute at the end of the eleventh, and beginning of the twelfth century."—*Dict. de Moreri*.

⁷ *The straw litter'd street*.—The name of a street in Paris, the "Rue de Fouarre."

⁸ *The spouse of God*.—The church.

Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,
 Affection springs in well-disposed breast;
 Thus saw I move the glorious wheel; thus heard
 Voice answering voice, so musical and soft,
 It can be known but where day endless shines.