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So, within the lights,
The saintly creatures flying, sang; and made
Now D, now I, now L, figured i' the air.
Canto XVIII., lines 70-72.



51

Ye host of heaven, whose glory I survey !
O beg ye grace for those, that are, on earth,
All after ill example gone astray.
Canto XVIII., lines 120-122.

Becoming of these signs, a little while
 Did rest them, and were mute. O nymph divine,¹
 Of Pegasean race! who souls, which thou
 Inspirest, makest glorious and long-lived, as they
 Cities and realms by thee; thou with thyself
 Inform me; that I may set forth the shapes,
 As fancy doth present them: be thy power
 Display'd in this brief song. The characters,²
 Vocal and consonant, were five-fold seven.
 In order, each, as they appear'd, I mark'd
 Diligite Justitiam, the first,
 Both verb and noun all blazon'd; and the extreme,
 Qui judicatis terram. In the M
 Of the fifth word they held their station;
 Making the star seem silver streak'd with gold.
 And on the summit of the M, I saw
 Descending other lights, that rested there,
 Singing, methinks, their bliss and primal good.
 Then, as at shaking of a lighted brand,
 Sparkles innumerable on all sides
 Rise scatter'd, source of augury to the unwise;³
 Thus more than thousand twinkling lustres hence
 Seem'd reascending; and a higher pitch
 Some mounting, and some less, e'en as the sun,
 Which kindleth them, decreed. And when each one
 Had settled in his place; the head and neck
 Then saw I of an eagle, lively
 Graved in that streaky fire. Who painteth there,⁴
 Hath none to guide Him: of Himself he guides:
 And every line and texture of the nest
 Doth own from Him the virtue fashions it.

¹ O nymph divine, of Pegasean race.—"O muse, thou that makest thy votaries glorious and long-lived, as they, assisted by thee, make glorious and long-lived the cities and realms which they celebrate, now enlighten me," &c.

² The characters, vocal and consonant, were five-fold seven.—"Diligite justitiam qui judicatis ter-

ram." "Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth."—*Wisdom of Solomon* i. 1.

³ Source of augury to the unwise.—Who augur future riches to themselves in proportion to the quantity of sparks that fly from the lighted brand when it is shaken.

⁴ Who painteth there.—The Deity himself.

The other bright beatitude,¹ that seem'd
Erewhile, with liled crowning, well content
To over-canopy the M, moved forth,
Following gently the impress of the bird.

Sweet star! what glorious and thick-studded gems
Declared to me our justice on the earth
To be the effluence of that heaven, which thou,
Thyself a costly jewel, dost inlay.

Therefore I pray the Sovran Mind, from whom
Thy motion and thy virtue are begun,
That He would look from whence the fog doth rise,
To vitiate thy beam; so that once more²
He may put forth his hand 'gainst such, as drive
Their traffic in that sanctuary, whose walls
With miracles and martyrdoms were built.

Ye host of heaven, whose glory I survey!
O beg ye grace for those, that are, on earth,
All after ill example gone astray.
War once had for his instrument the sword:
But now 'tis made, taking the bread away,³
Which the good Father locks from none.—And thou,
That writest but to cancel,⁴ think, that they,
Who for the vineyard, which thou wastest, died,
Peter and Paul, live yet, and mark thy doings.
Thou hast good cause to cry, "My heart so cleaves
To him,⁵ that lived in solitude remote,
And for a dance⁶ was dragg'd to martyrdom,
I wist not of the fisherman nor Paul."

¹ *Beatitude*.—The band of spirits; for "beatitudo" is here a noun of multitude.

² *That once more he may put forth his hand against them*.—"That he may again drive out those who buy and sell in the temple."

³ *Taking the bread away*.—"Excommunication, or interdiction of the eucharist, is now employed as a weapon of warfare."

⁴ *That writest but to cancel*.—"And thou, Pope Boniface, who writest thy ecclesiastical censures for no other purpose than to be paid for revoking them."

⁵ *To him*.—The coin of Florence was stamped with the impression of John the Baptist; and for this the avaricious pope is made to declare that he felt more devotion than either for Peter or Paul. Lombardi, I know not why, would apply this to Clement V. rather than to Boniface VIII.

⁶ *And for a dance was dragg'd to martyrdom*.—I am indebted to an intelligent critic in the *Monthly Review*, 1823, for pointing out my former erroneous translation of the words "per salti," "From the wilds."

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The eagle speaks as with one voice proceeding from a multitude of spirits that compose it, and declares the cause for which it is exalted to that state of glory. It then solves a doubt which our Poet had entertained respecting the possibility of salvation without belief in Christ; exposes the inefficacy of a mere profession of such belief; and prophesies the evil appearance that many Christian potentates will make at the day of judgment.

BEFORE my sight appear'd, with open wings,
The beauteous image; in fruition sweet,
Gladdening the thronged spirits. Each did seem
A little ruby, whereon so intense
The sun-beam glow'd, that to mine eyes it came
In clear refraction. And that, which next
Befalls me to pourtray, voice hath not utter'd,
Nor hath ink written,¹ nor in fantasy
Was e'er conceived. For I beheld and heard
The beak discourse; and, what intention form'd
Of many, singly as of one express,
Beginning: "For that I was just and piteous
I am exalted to this height of glory,
The which no wish exceeds: and there on earth
Have I my memory left, e'en by the bad
Commended, while they leave its course untrod."

Thus is one heat from many embers felt;
As in that image many were the loves,
And one the voice, that issued from them all;
Whence I address'd them: "O perennial flowers
Of gladness everlasting! that exhale

¹ *Nor hath ink written*.—"This joie ne maie not written be with inke."

Chaucer, *Troilus and Cresseide*, b. iii.