

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.

In single breath your odours manifold;
 Breathe now: and let the hunger be appeased,
 That with great craving long hath held my soul,
 Finding no food on earth. This well I know;
 That if there be in heaven a realm, that shows
 In faithful mirror the celestial Justice,
 Yours without veil reflects it. Ye discern
 The heed, wherewith I do prepare myself
 To hearken; ye, the doubt, that urges me
 With such inveterate craving." Straight I saw,
 Like to a falcon¹ issuing from the hood,
 That rears his head, and claps him with his wings,
 His beauty and his eagerness bewraying;
 So saw I move that stately sign, with praise
 Of grace divine inwoven, and high song
 Of inexpressive joy. "He," it began,
 "Who turn'd his compass² on the worlds extreme,
 And in that space so variously hath wrought,
 Both openly and in secret; in such wise
 Could not, through all the universe, display
 Impression of his glory, that the Word³
 Of his omniscience should not still remain
 In infinite excess. In proof whereof,
 He first through pride supplanted, who was sum

¹ Like to a falcon.—

"Come falcon ch' uscisse dal cappello."

Boccaccio, *Il Filostrato*, p. iv., st. 83.

Which Chaucer translates:

"As fresh as faucon coming out of mew."

Troilus and Cresseide, b. iii.

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

Frezzi, *Il Quadriregio*, lib. iv., cap. 5.

"Rinaldo stà come suole il falcone
 Uscito del capello a la veleta."

L. Pulci, Morgante Maggiore, c. xi.

² Who turn'd his compass.—"When he prepared

the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass
 upon the face of the depth." Prov. viii. 27.

"In his hand

He took the golden compasses, prepared
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
 This universe, and all created things."

Milton, Paradise Lost, b. vii. 227.

³ The Word.—"The divine nature still remained
 incomprehensible. Of this Lucifer was a proof; for
 he, though the chief of all created beings, yet,
 through his pride, waiting not for further supplies
 of the divine illumination, fell without coming to
 maturity." Thus our author, in the "De Vulgari
 Eloquentia," speaking of the fallen angels, says, "di-
 vinam curam perversi expectare noluerunt."—L. i.,
 c. 2.

Of each created being, waited not
 For light celestial; and abortive fell.
 Whence needs each lesser nature is but scant
 Receptacle unto that Good, which knows
 No limit, measured by itself alone.
 Therefore your sight, of the omnipresent Mind
 A single beam, its origin must own
 Surpassing far its utmost potency.
 The ken, your world is gifted with, descends
 In the everlasting Justice as low down,
 As eye doth in the sea; which, though it mark
 The bottom from the shore, in the wide main
 Discerns it not; and ne'ertheless it is;
 But hidden through its deepness. Light is none,
 Save that which cometh from the pure serene
 Of ne'er disturbed ether: for the rest,
 'Tis darkness all; or shadow of the flesh,
 Or else its poison. Here confess reveal'd
 That covert, which hath hidden from thy search
 The living Justice, of the which thou madest
 Such frequent question; for thou saidst—'A man
 Is born on Indus' banks, and none is there
 Who speaks of Christ, nor who doth read nor write;
 And all his inclinations and his acts,
 As far as human reason sees, are good;
 And he offendeth not in word or deed:
 But unbaptized he dies, and void of faith.
 Where is the justice that condemns him? where
 His blame, if he believeth not?'—What then,
 And who art thou, that on the stool wouldst sit
 To judge at distance of a thousand miles
 With the short-sighted vision of a span?
 To him,¹ who subtilizes thus with me,

¹ To him.—"He who should argue, on the words
 I have just used, respecting the fate of those who
 have wanted means of knowing the Gospel, would

certainly have cause enough to doubt if he did not
 defer to the authority of Scripture, which pronounces
 God to be thoroughly just."