

The avowal which he led to; and resumed:  
 "All grappling bonds, that knit the heart to God,  
 Confederate to make fast our charity.  
 The being of the world; and mine own being;  
 The death which He endured, that I should live;  
 And that, which all the faithful hope, as I do;  
 To the foremention'd lively knowledge join'd;  
 Have from the sea of ill love saved my bark,  
 And on the coast secured it of the right.  
 As for the leaves,<sup>1</sup> that in the garden bloom,  
 My love for them is great, as is the good  
 Dealt by the eternal hand, that tends them all."

I ended: and therewith a song most sweet  
 Rang through the spheres; and "Holy, holy, holy,"  
 Accordant with the rest, my lady sang.  
 And as a sleep is broken and dispersed  
 Through sharp encounter of the nimble light,  
 With the eye's spirit running forth to meet  
 The ray, from membrane on to membrane urged;  
 And the upstartled wight loathes that he sees;  
 So, at his sudden waking, he misdeems  
 Of all around him, till assurance waits  
 On better judgment: thus the saintly dame  
 Drove from before mine eyes the motes away,  
 With the resplendence of her own, that cast  
 Their brightness downward, thousand miles below.  
 Whence I my vision, clearer than before,  
 Recover'd; and well nigh astounded, ask'd  
 Of a fourth light, that now with us I saw.

And Beatrice: "The first living soul,  
 That ever the first virtue framed,<sup>2</sup> admires  
 Within these rays his Maker." Like the leaf,  
 That bows its lithe top till the blast is blown;

<sup>1</sup> The leaves.—Created beings.

<sup>2</sup> The first living soul, that ever the first virtue framed.—Adam.

By its own virtue rear'd, then stands aloof:  
 So I, the whilst she said, awe-stricken bow'd.  
 Then eagerness to speak embolden'd me;  
 And I began: "O fruit! that wast alone  
 Mature, when first engender'd; ancient father!  
 That doubly seest in every wedded bride  
 Thy daughter, by affinity and blood;  
 Devoutly as I may, I pray thee hold  
 Converse with me: my will thou seest: and I,  
 More speedily to hear thee, tell it not."

It chanceth oft some animal bewrays,  
 Through the sleek covering<sup>1</sup> of his furry coat,  
 The fondness, that stirs in him, and conforms  
 His outside seeming to the cheer-within:  
 And in like guise was Adam's spirit moved  
 To joyous mood, that through the covering shone,  
 Transparent, when to pleasure me it spake:  
 "No need thy will be told, which I untold  
 Better discern, than thou whatever thing  
 Thou hold'st most certain: for that will I see  
 In Him, who is truth's mirror; and Himself,  
 Parhelion<sup>2</sup> unto all things, and nought else,  
 To Him. This wouldst thou hear: how long since, God  
 Placed me in that high garden, from whose bounds  
 She led me up this ladder, steep and long;  
 What space endured my season of delight;  
 Whence truly sprang the wrath that banish'd me;  
 And what the language, which I spake and framed.

<sup>1</sup> Through the sleek covering.—Lombardi's explanation of this passage is somewhat ludicrous. By "an animal covert," he understands, not an animal in its natural covering of fur or hair, but one drest up with clothes, as a dog, for instance, "so clad for sport;" "un cane per trastullo coperto." Chaucer describes, as one of the tokens of pleasure in a dog, "the smoothing down of his hairs."

"It came and crept to me as low,

Right as it nad me yknow,  
 Held down his head, and joynd his eares  
 And laid all smooth downe his heares."

*The Dreame of Chaucer, or the Book of the Duchesse*, ed. 1602, fol. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Parhelion.—Who enlightens and comprehends all things; but is himself enlightened and comprehended by none.



Not that I tasted<sup>1</sup> of the tree, my son,  
 Was in itself the cause of that exile,  
 But only my transgressing of the mark  
 Assign'd me. There, whence<sup>2</sup> at thy lady's hest  
 The Mantuan moved him, still was I debarr'd  
 This council, till the sun had made complete,  
 Four thousand and three hundred rounds and twice,  
 His annual journey; and, through every light  
 In his broad pathway, saw I him return,  
 Thousand save seventy times, the whilst I dwelt  
 Upon the earth. The language<sup>3</sup> I did use  
 Was worn away, or ever Nimrod's race  
 Their unaccomplishable work began.  
 For nought,<sup>4</sup> that man inclines to, e'er was lasting;  
 Left by his reason free, and variable  
 As is the sky that sways him. That he speaks,  
 Is nature's prompting: whether thus, or thus,  
 She leaves to you, as ye do most affect it.  
 Ere I descended into hell's abyss,  
 El<sup>5</sup> was the name on earth of the Chief Good,  
 Whose joy enfolds me: Eli then 'twas call'd.  
 And so beseemeth: for, in mortals, use<sup>6</sup>  
 Is as the leaf upon the bough: that goes,

<sup>1</sup> *Not that I tasted.*—So Frezzi:

"Per colpa fu l'uom messo in bando,  
 Non solamente per gustar del pomo;  
 Ma perch' e' trapassò di Dio il comando."

*Il Quadriregio*, lib. iv., cap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Whence.*—That is, from Limbo. See "Hell," canto ii. 53. Adam says that 5232 years elapsed from his creation to the time of his deliverance, which followed the death of Christ.

<sup>3</sup> *The language.*—"Hac forma locutionis locutus est Adam, hac forma locuti sunt omnes posterius ejus usque ad ædificationem turris Babel."—*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, lib. i., cap. vi. "This form of speech Adam used; this, all his posterity until the building of the tower of Babel."

<sup>4</sup> *For nought.*—There is a similar passage in the "De Vulgari Eloquentia," lib. i., cap. ix. "Since, therefore, all our language, except that which was

created together with the first man by God, has been repaired according to our own will and pleasure, after that confusion, which was nothing else than a forgetfulness of the former; and since man is a being most unstable and variable, our language can neither be lasting nor continuous; but, like other things which belong to us, as customs and dress, must be varied by distances of places and times."

<sup>5</sup> *El.*—Some read *Un*, "One," instead of *El*: but the latter of these readings is confirmed by a passage from Dante's treatise "De Vulgari Eloquentia," lib. i., cap. iv.: "Quod prius vox primi loquentis sonaverit, viro sanæ mentis in promptu esse non dubito ipsum fuisse quod Deus est, videlicet El." St. Isidore, in the "Origines," lib. vii., cap. i., had said, "Primum apud Hebræos Dei nomen El dicitur."

<sup>6</sup> *For, in mortals, use.*—From Horace, "Ars Poet.," 62.





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Then "Glory to the Father, to the Son,  
And to the Holy Spirit," rang aloud  
Throughout all Paradise; that with the song  
My spirit reel'd, so passing sweet the strain.  
*Canto XXVII., lines 1-4.*

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PARADISE.—CANTO XXVI.

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And other comes instead. Upon the mount  
Most high above the waters, all my life,<sup>1</sup>  
Both innocent and guilty, did but reach  
From the first hour, to that which cometh next  
(As the sun changes quarter) to the sixth."

<sup>1</sup> *Most high above the waters, all my life.*—"I remained in the terrestrial Paradise only to the seventh hour." In the "Historia Scolastica" of Petrus Co-

mestor, it is said of our first parents: "Quidam tradunt eos fuisse in Paradiso septem horas."—f. 9, ed. Par., 1513, 4to.