

O vëry sparkling of the Holy Spirit,
 How sudden and incandescent¹ it became
 Unto mine eyes, that vanquished bôre it not!
 But Beatrice so beautiful and smiling
 Appeared to me, that with the other sights
 That followed not my memory I must leave her.
 Then to uplift themselves mine eyes resumed
 The power, and I beheld myself translated
 To higher salvation with my Lady ônly.

DANTE ALIGHIERI.

DANTE ALIGHIERI, the greatest of Italian poets, perhaps the greatest uninspired poet of the world, was born in Florence, May 14, 1265, and died in Ravenna, Sept. 14, 1321. His chief work, the *Divina Commedia*, was written at various intervals during the last nineteen years of his life. The literal subject of this poem is described by its author as "the state of the soul after death simply considered. But if the work be taken allegorically, the subject is man, as by merit or demerit, through freedom of the will, he renders himself liable to the reward or the punishment of justice." It is divided into three parts—Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Each of these parts consists of thirty-three cantos, in allusion to the years of our Lord's life upon earth; for although there are thirty-four cantos in the Hell, the first is merely introductory. This poem has been the subject of study, comment, and unstinted admiration in every age since its production. Between the invention of printing in 1436 and the year 1500, twenty editions of the *Divina Commedia* were published in Italy. The first translation was into Spanish, and was made in 1428. The first complete English translation was made by Boyd in 1802. Cary's version was published in 1814; Longfellow's between 1867 and 1870. There are also separate translations of the *Inferno*, or Hell; Dr. T. W. Parsons of Boston having issued an excellent one in 1867.

¹ In can dës'cent, to become of a glittering whiteness.

- Abast*, 294.
Aberration, 258.
Abnormal, 267.
Aboriginal, 396.
Advertence, 197.
Affirmation, 259.
Albertus Magnus, 256.
Alembic, 340.
Alien, 391.
Allege, 91.
Allegiance, 248.
Alpenstock, 382.
Alternative, 247.
Ambition, 250.
Amica mea, 185.
Amor meus, 169.
Amphictyons, 243.
Anathema, 195.
Anchorites, 316.
Angelical, *The*, 320.
Angels, 132.
Antedate, 155.
Antenna, 161.
Apathy, 143.
Apology, 390.
Apostles, 316.
Apostolical, 310.
Apotheosis, 403.
Appreciate, 100.
Appreciatively, 197.
Apse, 102.
Aquatic, 342.
Aqueous, 340.
Aqueous Rocks, 343.
Arancarias, 345.
Archon, 393.
Arid, 188.
Ascertainable, 273.
Association, 333.
Atheistical, 207.
Audible, 97.
Auricular, 123.
Austerities, 112.
Basilica, 101.
Bayard, 355.
Benignly, 112.
Bimana, 342.
Blasphemous, 207.
Bonheur, *Rosa*, 157.
Boom, 297.
Boreas, 207.
Bow, 90.
Bow of Promise, 158.
Breviary, 103.
Bulls and Bears, 124.
Bumptious, 356.
Buonarotti, 334.
Buoyancy, 95.
Burns, *Robert*, 149.
Bush, *The*, 355.
Cambrian, 344.
Campanile, 102.
Canonization, 260.
Canon Law, 112.
Cape La Hogue, 290.
Capuchins, 151.
Caricatured, 393.
Cater, 171.
Catiline, 244.
Cenobites, 316.
Cenotaph, 147.
Centennial, 355.
Chaos, 253.
Chastisement, 143.
Chimera, 258.
Chimerical, 136.
Claude, 156.
Ethics, 198.
Clerical Abuses Bill, 431.
Cognizance, 135.
Columba mea, 185.
Commentator, 347.
Compromising, 308.
Concupiscence, 195.
Conglomeration, 124.
Conservatism, 273.
Consistory, 260.
Constructively, 272.
Contemplated, 295.
Cosmologist, 339.
Cosmopolitan, 285.
Coup d'œil, 99.
Cozens, 459.
Crises, 271.
Culpably, 400.
Cartins, 128.
Cycle, 383.
Dante, 150.
Dea Roma, 403.
Decatur, *Stephen*, 294.
Degradation, 149.
De la Chetardie, 327.
De la Salle, 325.
De Noailles, 327.
Deteriorated, 308.
Devonian, 344.
Dialects, 134.
Diplomatist, 213.
Disfranchise, 392.
Diversified, 91.
Dogma, 195.
Earneſt, 270.
Eclat, 320.
Effects, 315.
Element, 310.
Elicit, 197.
Elizabethan, 365.
Empirical, 305.
Enceladus, 279.
Ennu, 189.
Ephemeral, 322.
Epoch, 349.
Equilibrium, 95.
Ermine, 266.
Ethics, 198.
Eulogium, 100.
Evviva Gesu, 427.
Evviva Maria, 427.
Exaggerate, 100.
Exasperation, 267.
Exorcism, 196.
Explicitly, 197.
Extraordinary, 143.
Febriſuge, 461.
Financial, 124.
Forensic, 401.
Formosa mea, 185.
Fossils, 344.
Fourth Lateran Council, 395.
Franklin, *Sir J.*, 229.
Frenzy, 95.
Fribble, 270.
Ganges, 132.
Genius, 300.
Gentiles, 134.
Glory of the Saints, 470.
Graphic, 93.
Gunwale, 294.
Harbinger, 152.
Harrow, 356.
Harvey, *Wm.*, 124.
Hawser, 298.
Heresiarch, 138.
Hierarch, 387.
Hobbies, 123.
Holds, 396.
Homily, 200.
Horizon, 143.
Humanities, 112.
Humboldt, 341.
Hypothesis, 347.
Ichthyosaur, 345.
Iguanodon, 345.
Ilissus, 148.
Implacable, 144.
Improvises, 266.
Inanimate, 164.
Incandescent, 472.
Incisive, 271.
Incommensurate, 201.
Incredulous, 112.
Indispensable, 99.
Indomitable, 112.
Inestimable, 99.
Inherent, 150.
Insipidity, 143.
Intriguing, 308.
Intrinsically, 196.
Intraversion, 451.
Intuitively, 401.
Inveterate, 273.
Invidious, 243.
Invincibly, 399.
Jaundiced, 196.
Julian the Apostate, 102.
Juridical, 134.

INDEX TO NOTES.

THE FIGURES REFER TO PAGES WHERE THE WORDS ARE TO BE FOUND.

- Ketch*, 294.
Landseer, Sir E., 157.
Lapse, 97.
Larboard, 295.
Laurentian, 344.
Lavoisier, 341.
Lea, 165.
Leaside, 95.
Leo XII., 414.
Lets, 455.
Levite, 173.
Licentious, 196.
Lineament, 90.

Mammalia, 342.
Mammon, 124.
Monichism, 195.
Marl, 119.
Mater admirabilis, 181.
Maximum, 378.
Mediatorial, 144.
Medieval, 368.
Megalosaur, 355.
Menacing, 98.
Metaphorical, 224.
Microcosm, 343.
Mien, 168.
Mizzen, 294.
Molecule, 374.
Momentous, 402.
Monte Cassino, 104.
Morland, George, 157.
Mundane, 343.

Nathless, 461.
Nemesis, 165.
Nomen imperato-rem, 176.
Non nobis, 88.
Noviciate, 112.

Obeisance, 90.
Objurcation, 129.
Oblivion, 203.
Olympus, 207.
Ontology, 258.
Oracular, 220.
Oration on the Crown, 243.
Ordeal, 100.

Oriental Churches, 308.
Orison, 470.
Orts, 221.

Pactolus, 166.
Pageant, 203.
Participate, 113.
Partisan, 272.
Peremptory, 297.
Pevoration, 243.
Perturbability, 164.
Pharisees, 201.
Phases, 91.
Phenomena, 143.
Philosophic, 99.
Piazza Santi Apostoli, 101.
Picturesque, 156.
Pitt, Wm., 334.
Pliny, 341.
Polyphemus, 301.
Port, 290.
Portent, 207.
Post hoc exilium, 177.
Potentate, 253.
Potter, Paul, 157.
Premised, 401.
Primeval, 253.
Proselytes, 397.
Protoplasm, 342.
Proximate, 400.
Psychology, 258.
Puissance, 216.
Pulchrum, 396.
Punctilious, 123.

Quadrumana, 343.
Quixotic, 286.

Raphael, 324.
Rarefied, 373.
Redshirts, 423.
Refracted, 91.
Regum placitum, 432.
Rejuvenescence, 126.
Religious Orders, 429.
Rex Pacificus, 410.
Rhetorician, 167.
Ritualists, 308.
Rogations, 151.

Roman Schools, 415.
Rosa, Salvator, 156.
Rotterdam, 120.
Rule, 107.
Ruthlessly, 268.

Sabaia, 171.
Sacerdotal, 396.
Sacred College, The, 434.
Sagacious, 225.
Saint Aloysius, 419.
Saint Cecilia, 138.
Saint Dominic, 239.
Saint Francis, 132.
Saint Francis Xavier, 134.
Saint Joseph Calasanzio, 413.
Saint Leo the Great, 406.
Saint Louis, 190.
Saint Philip Neri, 132.
Saint Rose of Lima, 132.
Saint Thomas Aquinas, 469.
Saint Thomas à Becket, 210.
Sanguine, 146.
Saturnian, 279.
Savannahs, 151.
Schliemann, H., 128.
Scientist, 341.
Scourge of God, 178.
Scribes, 201.
Scudo, 416.
Seizure of Rome, 436.
Seneschal, 275.
Silurian, 344.
Sinevy, 171.
Sinister, 206.
Sister, 133.
Skids, 121.
Socrates, 148.
Spectacle, 299.
Spume, 211.
Rex Pacificus, The, 149.
Starboard, 290.
Statuary, 120.
Stern, 90.

Stigmas of St. Francis, 460.
Stocks, 124.
Stoics, 267.
Subjugating, 98.
Subtle, 124.
Succumbed, 187.
Summa, The, 321.
Supercilious, 123.
Supereminently, 248.
Susceptible, 149.
Sweep, 298.

Tacit, 224.
Tale, 453.
Tantamount, 195.
Tarn, 165.
Tarpaulin, 298.
Teeming, 90.
Thales, 339.
Theology, 259.
Thor, 175.
Thwart, 310.
Transient, 90.
Trinity, the Holy, 470.
Truculent, 273.
Truths, 221.
Turmoil, 308.
Two Catholic armies, 248.

Unpredestinate, 221.

Vacuity, 144.
Veni, 185.
Verbiage, 396.
Vertically, 95.
Vettura, 101.
Via Crucis, 410.
Viaticum, 261.

Wall Street, 124.
Way of Triumph, 101.
Welkin, 471.
Wot, 125.
Wound, 220.

Young, Henry, 360.
Zoology, 124.

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