

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
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Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
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**Divine Comedy, Norton's
Translation, Paradise**

Dante Alighieri

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PARADISE

CANTO I. Proem. — Invocation. — Beatrice and Dante ascend to the Sphere of Fire. — Beatrice explains the cause of their ascent.

The glory of Him who moves everything penetrates through the universe, and shines in one part more and in another less. In the heaven that receives most of its light I have been, and have seen things which he who descends from thereabove neither knows how nor is able to recount; because, drawing near to its own desire,[1] our understanding enters so deep, that the memory cannot follow. Truly whatever of the Holy Realm I could treasure up in my mind shall now be the theme of my song.

[1] The innate desire of the soul is to attain the vision of God.

O good Apollo, for this last labor make me such a vessel of thy power as thou demandest for the gift of the loved laurel.[1] Thus far one summit of Parnassus has been enough for me, but now with both[2] I need to enter the remaining, arena. Enter into my breast, and breathe thou in such wise as when thou drewest Marsyas from out the sheath of his limbs. O divine Power, if thou lend thyself to me so that I may make manifest the image of the Blessed Realm imprinted within my head, thou shalt see me come to thy chosen tree, and crown myself then with those leaves of which the theme and thou will make me worthy. So rarely, Father, are they gathered for triumph or of Caesar or of poet (fault and shame of the human wills), that the Peneian leaf[3] should bring forth joy unto the joyous Delphic deity, whenever it makes any one to long for it. Great flame follows a little spark: perhaps after me prayer shall be made with better voices, whereto Cyrrha[4] may respond.

[1] So inspire me in this labor that I may deserve the gift of the laurel.

[2] The Muses were fabled to dwell on one peak of Parnassus, Apollo on the other. At the opening of the preceding parts of his poem Dante has invoked the Muses only.

[3] Daphne, who was changed to the laurel, was the daughter of Peneus.

[4] Cyrrha, a city sacred to Apollo, not far from the foot of Parnassus, and here used for the name of the god himself.

The lamp of the world rises to mortals through different passages, but from that which joins four circles with three crosses it issues with better course and conjoined with a better star, and it tempers and seals the mundane wax more after its own fashion[1] Almost such a passage had made morning there and evening here;[2] and there all that hemisphere was white, and the other part black, when I saw Beatrice turned upon the left side, and looking into the sun: never did eagle so fix himself upon it. And even as a second ray is wont to issue from the first, and mount upward again, like a pilgrim who wishes to return; thus of her action, infused through the eyes into my imagination, mine was made, and I fixed my eyes upon the sun beyond our use. Much is allowed there which here is not allowed to our faculties, thanks to the place made for the human race as its proper, abode.[3] Not long did I endure it, nor so little that I did not see it sparkling round about, like iron that issues boiling from the fire. And on a sudden,[4] day seemed to be added to day, as if He who is able had adorned the heaven with another sun.

[1] In the spring the sun rises from a point on the horizon, where the four great circles, namely, the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure, meet, and, cutting each other, form three crosses. The sun is in the sign of Aries, "a better star," because the influence of this constellation was supposed to be benignant, and under it the earth reclothes itself. It was the season assigned to the Creation, and to the Annunciation.

[2] There, in the Earthly Paradise; here, on earth. It is the morning of Thursday, April 123. The hours from the mid-day preceding to this dawn are undescribed.

[3] The Earthly Paradise, made for man in his original excellence.

[4] So rapid was his ascent to the sphere of fire, drawn upward by the eyes of Beatrice.

Beatrice was standing with her eyes wholly fixed on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed my eyes from thereabove removed. Looking at her I inwardly became such as Glaucus[1] became on tasting of the herb which made him consort in the sea of the other gods. Transhumanizing cannot be signified in words; therefore let the example[2] suffice for him to whom grace reserves experience. If I was only what of me thou didst the last create,[3] O Love that governest the heavens, Thou knowest, who with Thy light didst lift me. When the revolution which Thou, being desired, makest eternal,[4] made me attend unto itself with the harmony which Thou attunest and modulatest, so much of the heaven then seemed to me enkindled by the flame of the sun, that rain or river never made so broad a lake.

[1] A fisherman changed to a sea-god. The story is in Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, xiii.).

[2] Just cited, of Glauens.

[3] In the twenty-fifth Canto of Purgatory, Dante has said that when the articulation of the brain is perfect God breathes into it a new spirit, the living soul; and he means here that, like St. Paul caught up into Paradise, he cannot tell "whether in the body or Out of the body." (2 Corinthians, xii. 3).

[4] The desire to be united with God is the source of the eternal revolution of the heavens. "The Empyrean . . . is the cause of the most swift motion of the Primum Mobile. because of the most ardent desire of every part of the latter to be conjoined with every part of that most divine quiet heaven." – *Convito*, 14.

The novelty of the sound and the great light kindled in me a desire concerning their cause, never before felt with such acuteness. Whereupon she, who saw me as I see myself, to quiet my perturbed mind opened her mouth, ere I mine to ask, and began, "Thou thyself

makest thyself dull with false imagining, so that thou seest not what thou wouldst see, if thou hadst shaken it off. Thou art not on earth, as thou believest; but lightning, flying from its proper site, never ran as thou who thereunto[1] returnest."

[1] To thine own proper site,—Heaven, the true home of the soul.

If I was divested of my first doubt by these brief little smiled-out words, within a new one was I the more enmeshed. And I said, "Already I rested content concerning a great wonder; but now I wonder how I can transcend these light bodies." Whereupon she, after a pitying sigh, directed her eyes toward me, with that look which a mother turns on her delirious son, and she began, "All things whatsoever have order among themselves; and this is the form which makes the universe like to God. Here[1] the high creatures[2] see the imprint of the eternal Goodness, which is the end for which the aforesaid rule is made. In the order of which I speak, all natures are arranged, by diverse lots, more or less near to their source;[3] wherefore they are moved to diverse parts through the great sea of being, and each one with an instinct given to it which may bear it on. This bears the fire upward toward the moon; this is the motive force in mortal hearts; this binds together and unites the earth. Nor does this bow shoot forth.[4] Only the created things which are outside intelligence, but also those which have understanding and love. The Providence that adjusts all this, with its own light makes forever quiet the heaven[5] within which that revolves which hath the greatest speed. And thither now, as to a site decreed, the virtue of that cord bears us on which directs to a joyful mark whatever it shoots. True is it, that as the form often accords not to the intention of the art, because the material is deaf to respond, so the creature sometimes deviates from this course; for it has power, though thus impelled, to incline in another direction (even as the fire of a cloud may be seen to fall[6]), if the first impetus, bent aside by false pleasure, turn it earthwards. Thou shouldst not, if I deem aright, wonder more at thy ascent, than at a stream if from a high mountain it descends to the base. A marvel it would be in thee, if, deprived of hindrance, thou hadst sat below, even as quiet in living fire on earth would be."

[1] In this order of the universe.

[2] The created beings endowed with souls, — angels and men.

[3] The source of their being, God.

[4] This instinct directs to their proper end animate as well as inanimate things, as the bow shoots the arrow to its mark.

[5] The Empyrean, within which the Primum Mobile, the first moving heaven, revolves.

[6] Contrary to its true nature.

Thereon she turned again toward heaven her face.

CANTO II. Proem. — Ascent to the Moon. — The cause of Spots on the Moon. — Influence of the Heavens.

O ye, who are in a little bark, desirous to listen, following behind my craft which singing passes on, turn to see again Your shores; put not out upon the deep; for haply losing me, ye would remain astray. The water that I sail was never crossed. Minerva inspires, and Apollo guides me, and nine Muses point out to me the Bears.

Ye other few, who have lifted tip your necks be. times to the bread of the Angels, oil which one here subsists, but never becomes sated of it, ye may well put forth your vessel over the salt deep, keeping my wake before you on the water which turns smooth again. Those glorious ones who passed over to Colchos wondered not as ye shall do, when they saw Jason become a ploughman.

The concrete and perpetual thirst for the deiform realm was bearing us on swift almost as ye see the heavens. Beatrice was looking upward, and I upon her, and perhaps in such time as a quarrel[1] rests, and flies, and from the notch is unlocked,[2] I saw myself arrived where a wonderful thing drew my sight to itself; and therefore she, from whom the working of my mind could not be

hid, turned toward me, glad as beautiful. "Uplift thy grateful mind to God," she said to me, "who with the first star[3] has conjoined us."

[1] The bolt for a cross-bow.

[2] The inverse order indicates the instantaneousness of the act.

[3] The moon.

It seemed to me that a cloud had covered us, lucid, dense, solid, and polished, like a diamond which the sun had struck. Within itself the eternal pearl had received us, even as water receives a ray of light, remaining unbroken. If I was body (and here[1] it is not conceivable how one dimension brooked another, which needs must be if body enter body) the desire ought the more to kindle us to see that Essence, in which is seen how our nature and God were united. There will be seen that which we hold by faith, not demonstrated, but it will be known of itself like the first truth which man believes.[2]

[1] On earth, by mortal faculties.

[2] Not demonstrated by argument, but known by direct cognition, like the intuitive perception of first principles, per se notu.

I replied, "My Lady, devoutly to the utmost that I can, do I thank him who from the mortal world has removed me. But tell me what are the dusky marks of this body, which there below on earth make people fable about Cain?"[1]

[1] Fancying the dark spaces on the surface of the moon to represent Cain carrying a thorn-bush for the fire of his sacrifice.

She smiled somewhat, and then she said, "If the opinion of mortals errs where the key of sense unlocks not, surely the shafts of wonder ought not now to pierce thee, since thou seest that the reason following the senses has short wings. But tell me what thou

thyself thinkest of it." And I, "That which here above appears to us diverse, I believe is caused by rare and dense bodies." And she, "Surely enough thou shalt see that thy belief is submerged in error, if then listenest well to the argument that I shall make against it. The eighth sphere[1] displays to you many lights, which may be noted of different aspects in quality and quantity. If rare and dense effected all this,[2] one single virtue, more or less or equally distributed, would be in all. Different virtues must needs be fruits of formal principles;[3] and by thy reckoning, these, all but one, would be destroyed. Further, if rarity were the cause of that darkness of which you ask, either this planet would be thus deficient of its matter through and through, or else as a body distributes the fat and the loan, so this would interchange the leaves in its volume. If the first were the case, it would be manifest in the eclipses of the sun, by the shining through of the light, as when it is poured out upon any other rare body. This is not so; therefore we must look at the other, and if it happen that I quash this other, thy opinion will be falsified. If it be that this rare passes not through,[4] there needs must be a limit, beyond which its contrary allows it not to pass further; and thence the ray from another body is poured back, just as color returns through a glass which hides lead behind itself. Now thou wilt say that the ray shows itself dimmer there than in the other parts, by being there reflected from further back. From this objection experiment, which is wont to be the fountain to the streams of your arts, may deliver thee, if ever thou try it. Thou shalt take three mirrors, and set two of them at an equal distance from thee, and let the other, further removed, meet thine eyes between the first two. Turning toward them, cause a light to be placed behind thy back, which may illumine the three mirrors, and return to thee thrown back front all. Although the more distant image reach thee not so great in quantity, thou wilt then see how it cannot but be of equal brightness.

[1] The heaven of the fixed stars.

[2] If all this difference were caused merely by difference in rarity and density.

[3] The stars exert various influences; hence their differences, from which the variety of their influence proceeds, must be caused by different formal principles or intrinsic causes.

[4] Extends not through the whole substance of the moon.

"Now, as beneath the blows of the warm rays that which lies under the snow remains bare both of the former color[1] and the cold, thee, thus remaining in thy intellect, will I inform with light so living that it shall tremble in its aspect to thee.[2]

[1] The color of the snow.

[2][My argument has removed the error which covered thy mind, and now I will tell thee the true cause of the variety in the surface of the moon.

"Within the heaven of the divine peace revolves a body, in whose virtue lies the being of all that it contains.[1] The following heaven[2] which has so many sights, distributes that being through divers essences[3] from it distinct, and by it contained. The other spheres, by various differences, dispose the distinctions which they have within themselves unto their ends and their seeds.[4] These organs of the world thus proceed, as thou now seest, from grade to grade; for they receive from above, and operate below. Observe me well, how I advance through this place to the truth which thou desirest, so that hereafter thou mayest know to keep the ford alone. The motion and the virtue of the holy spheres must needs be inspired by blessed motors, as the work of the hammer by the smith. And the heaven, which so many lights make beautiful, takes its image from the deep Mind which revolves it, and makes thereof a seal. And as the soul within your dust is diffused through different members, and conformed to divers potencies, so the Intelligence[5] displays its own goodness multiplied through the stars, itself circling upon its own unity. Divers virtue makes divers alloy with the precious body that it quickens, in which, even as life in you, it is bound. Because of the glad nature whence, it flows, the virtue mingled through the body shines,[6] as gladness through the living pupil. From this,[7] comes whatso seems different between light and light, not from dense and rare; this is the formal principle

which produces, conformed unto its goodness, the dark and the bright."

[1] Within the motionless sphere of the Empyrean revolves that of the Primum Mobile, from whose virtue, communicated to it from the Empyrean, all the inferior spheres contained within it derive their special mode of being.

[2] The heaven of the Fixed Stars.

[3] Through the planets, called essences because each has a specific mode of being.

[4] "The rays of the heavens are the way by which their virtue descends to the things below."—Convito, ii. 7.

[5] Which moves the heavens.

[6] The brightness of the stars comes from the joy which radiates through them.

[7] From the divers virtue making divers alloy.

CANTO III. The Heaven of the Moon.—Spirits whose vows had been broken.—Piccarda Donati.—The Empress Constance.

That sun which first had heated my breast with love, proving and refuting, had uncovered to me the sweet aspect of fair truth; and I, in order to confess myself corrected and assured so far as was needful, raised my head more erect to speak. But a vision appeared which held me to itself so close in order to be seen, that of my confession I remembered not.

As through transparent and polished glasses, or through clear and tranquil waters, not so deep that their bed be lost, the lineaments of our faces return so feebly that a pearl on a white brow comes not less readily to our eyes, so I saw many faces eager to speak; wherefore I ran into the error contrary to that which kindled love between the man and the fountain.[1] Suddenly, even as I became aware of them, supposing them mirrored semblances, I turned my eyes to see of whom they were; and I saw nothing; and I turned them forward again, straight into the light of the sweet guide who,

smiling, was glowing in her holy eyes. "Wonder not because I smile," she said to me, "at thy puerile thought, since thy foot trusts itself not yet upon the truth, but turns thee, as it is wont, to emptiness. True substances are these which thou seest, here relegated through failure in their vows. Therefore speak with them, and hear, and believe; for the veracious light which satisfies them allows them not to turn their feet from itself."

[1] Narcissus conceived the image to be a true face; Dante takes the real faces to be mirrored semblances.

And I directed me to the shade that seemed most eager to speak, and I began, even like a man whom too strong wish confuses, "O well-created spirit, who in the rays of life eternal tastest the sweetness, which untasted never is understood, it will be gracious to me, if thou contentest me with thy name, and with your destiny." Whereon she promptly, and with smiling eyes, "Our charity locks not its door to a just wish, more than that which wills that all its court be like itself. I was in the world a virgin sister,[1] and if thy mind well regards, my being more beautiful will not conceal me from thee; but thou wilt recognize that I am Piccarda,[2] who, placed here with these other blessed Ones, am blessed in the slowest sphere. Our affections, which are inflamed only in the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, rejoice in being formed according to His order;[3] and this allotment, which appears so low, is forsooth given to us, because our vows were neglected or void in some part." Whereon I to her, In your marvellous aspects there shines I know not what divine which transmutes you from our first conceptions; therefore I was not swift in remembering; but now that which you say to me assists me, so that refiguring is plainer to me. But tell me, ye who are happy here, do ye desire a higher place, in order to see more, or to make yourselves more friends?" With those other shades she first smiled a little; then answered me so glad, that she seemed to burn in the first fire of love, "Brother, virtue of charity[4] quiets our will, and makes us wish only for that which we have, and for aught else makes us not thirsty. Should we desire to be higher up, our desires would be discordant with the will of Him who assigns us to this place, which thou wilt see is not possible in these circles, if to be

in charity is here necesse,[5] and if its nature thou dost well consider. Nay, it is essential to this blessed existence to hold ourselves within the divine will, whereby our very wills are made one. So that as we are, from stage to stage throughout this realm, to all the realm is pleasing, as to the King who inwills us with His will. And His will is our peace; it is that sea whereunto is moving all that which It creates and which nature makes."

[1] A nun, of the order of St. Clare.

[2] The sister of Corso Donati and of Forese: see Purgatory, Canto XXIII. It may not be without intention that the first blessed spirit whom Dante sees in Paradise is a relative of his own wife, Gemma dei Donati.

[3] Rejoice in whatever grade of bliss is assigned to them in that order of the universe which is the form that makes it like unto God.

[4] Charity here means love, the love of God.

[5] Of necessity; the Latin word being used for the rhyme's sake. "Mansionem Deus habere non potest ubi charitas non est" B. Alberti Magni, De adhoerendo Deo, c. xii.

Clear was it then to me, how everywhere in Heaven is Paradise, although the grace of the Supreme Good rains not there in one measure.

But even as it happen, if one food sates, and for another the appetite still remains, that this is asked for, and that declined with thanks; so did I, with gesture and with speech, to learn from her, what was the web whereof she did not draw the shuttle to the head.[1] "Perfect life and high merit in-heaven a lady higher up," she said to me, "according to whose rule, in your world below, there are who vest and veil themselves, so that till death they may wake and sleep with that Spouse who accepts every vow which love conforms unto His pleasure. A young girl, I fled from the world to follow her, and in her garb I shut myself, and pledged me to the pathway of her order. Afterward men, more used to ill than good, dragged me forth from the sweet cloister;[2] and God knows what then my life became. And this other splendor, which shows itself to

thee at my right side, and which glows with all the light of our sphere, that which I say of me understands of herself.[3] A sister was she; and in like manner from her head the shadow of the sacred veils was taken. But after she too was returned unto the world against her liking and against good usage, from the veil of the heart she was never unbound.[4] This is the light of the great Constance,[5] who from the second wind of Swabia produced the third and the last power."

[1] To learn from her what was the vow which she did not fulfil.

[2] According to the old commentators, her brother Corso forced Piccarda by violence to leave the convent, in order to make a marriage which he desired for her.

[3] Her experience was similar to that of Piccarda.

[4] She remained a nun at heart.

[5] Constance, daughter of the king of Sicily, Roger I.; married, in 1186, to the Emperor, Henry VI., the son of Frederick Barbarossa, and father of Frederick II, who died in 1250, the last Emperor of his line.

Thus she spoke to me, and then began singing "Ave Maria," and Singing vanished, like a heavy thing through deep water. My sight, that followed her so far as was possible, after it lost her turned to the mark of greater desire, and wholly rendered itself to Beatrice; but she so flashed upon my gaze that at first the sight endured it not: and this made me more slow in questioning.

CANTO IV. Doubts of Dante, respecting the justice of Heaven and the abode of the blessed, solved by Beatrice. — Question of Dante as to the possibility of reparation for broken vows.

Between two viands, distant and attractive in like measure, a free man would die of hunger, before he would bring one of them to his teeth. Thus a lamb would stand between two ravens of fierce wolves, fearing equally; thus would stand a dog between two does.