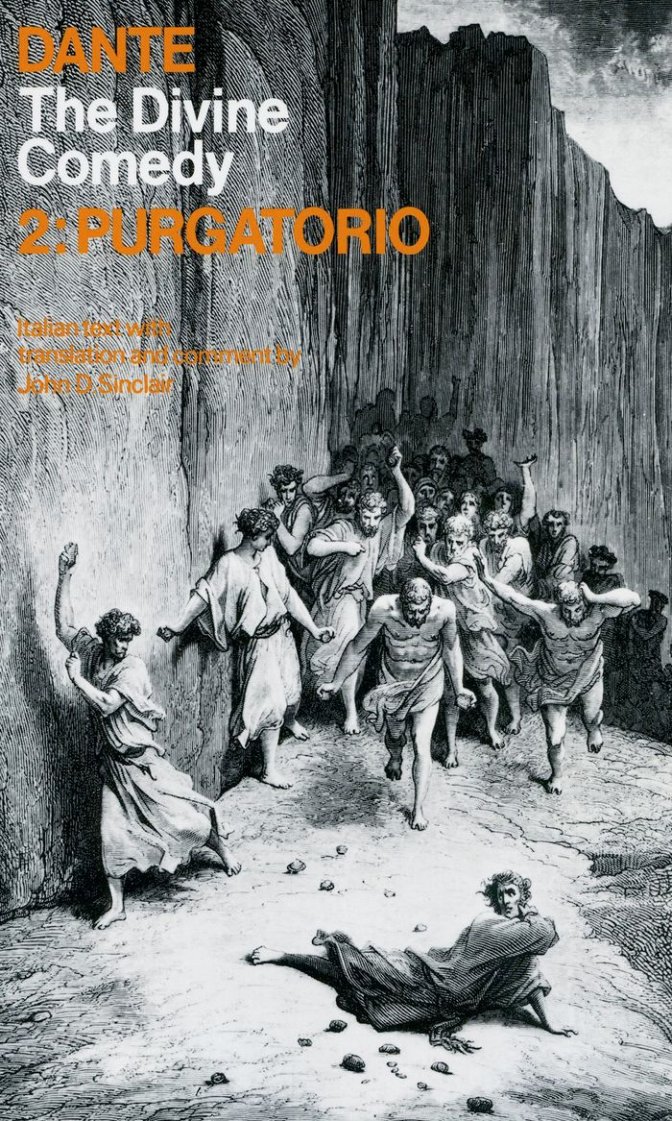


# DANTE

## The Divine Comedy

### 2: PURGATORIO

Italian text with  
translation and comment by  
John D. Sinclair



THE DIVINE  
COMEDY OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

II PURGATORIO

**uniform with this volume**

**INFERNO**

**PARADISO**

THE DIVINE  
COMEDY OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

WITH

TRANSLATION AND

COMMENT BY

JOHN D. SINCLAIR

II PURGATORIO

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
NEW YORK

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Oxford London Glasgow  
New York Toronto Melbourne Wellington  
Nairobi Dar es Salaam Cape Town  
Kuala Lumpur Singapore Jakarta Hong Kong Tokyo  
Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras Karachi

First published by Oxford University Press, New York, 1939  
First issued as an Oxford University Press paperback  
by special arrangement with THE BODLEY HEAD, 1961

printing, last digit: 39 38 37 36 35 34 33 32 31

Printed in the United States of America

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
DANTE'S PURGATORY	13
THE SYSTEM OF DANTE'S PURGATORY	15
CANTO	
I. Morning; Venus; the four stars; Cato; the rush and the dew	18
II. The ship of souls; the angel pilot; Casella's song; Cato's rebuke	32
III. Dante's shadow; the Contumacious; Manfred	44
IV. The ascent; the sun's course; Belacqua; the Lethargic	56
V. The Penitents of the last hour; Jacopo del Cassero; Buonconte da Montefeltro; La Pia	68
VI. The power of intercession; Sor- dello; the disorders of Italy and Florence	80
VII. The greetings of Virgil and Sor- dello; the Valley of the Princes	94
VIII. The guardian angels; Nino Vis- conti; the three stars; the serpent; Conrad Malaspina	106
IX. The dream of the eagle; St Lucy; the gate of Purgatory	118

# CONTENTS

CANTO	PAGE
X. The First Terrace; the sculptured wall; examples of humility; the purgation of pride	130
XI. The Lord's Prayer; examples of pride; Umberto Aldobrandeschi; Oderisi; Provenzan Salvani	142
XII. The figured pavement; the proud brought low; the angel of humility	154
XIII. The Second Terrace; examples of kindness; the purgation of envy; Sapia	168
XIV. Guido del Duca; the Arno; the degeneracy of Romagna; examples of envy	182
XV. The angel of mercy; spiritual partnership; the Third Terrace; visions of gentleness	196
XVI. The purgation of anger; Marco Lombardo; human degeneracy; the Church's misguiding of the world	208
XVII. Visions of anger; the angel of peace; disordered love the principle of sin	220
XVIII. The exposition of love; the Fourth Terrace; the purgation of sloth; examples of zeal and sloth	232
XIX. The dream of the Siren; the angel of zeal; the Fifth Terrace; the purgation of avarice and prodigality; Pope Adrian V	244
XX. Examples of generosity; Hugh Capet and the Capetian Dynasty; examples of avarice; the earthquake and the <i>Gloria in excelsis</i>	256

# CONTENTS

CANTO	PAGE
XXI. Statius; the completion of his penance; his greeting of Virgil	270
XXII. Statius's indebtedness to Virgil and his conversion; the Sixth Terrace; the purgation of gluttony; examples of temperance	282
XXIII. The wasted forms of the penitents; Forese Donati; his warning to the women of Florence	296
XXIV. Bonagiunta; 'the sweet new style'; the second tree; examples of gluttony; the angel of temperance	309
XXV. The generation of the body and creation of the soul; the Seventh Terrace; the purgation of lust; examples of chastity	324
XXVI. Dante's shadow on the flames; examples of lust; Guinicelli; Arnaut	336
XXVII. The angel of chastity; the passage through the fire; the dream of Leah; Virgil's last speech	350
XXVIII. The Earthly Paradise; the fair lady and the stream; the seeds dispersed on the earth	364
XXIX. The walk by the river; the pageant of revelation	376
XXX. Beatrice on the car; the disappearance of Virgil; Beatrice's rebuke of Dante	392
XXXI. Dante's confession; the passage through Lethe; Beatrice unveiled	402



## CONTENTS

CANTO	PAGE
XXXII. The wheeling of the pageant; the great tree; disasters to the car	418
XXXIII. Beatrice's promise of a deliverer; the sanctity of the tree; the passage through Eunoe	434

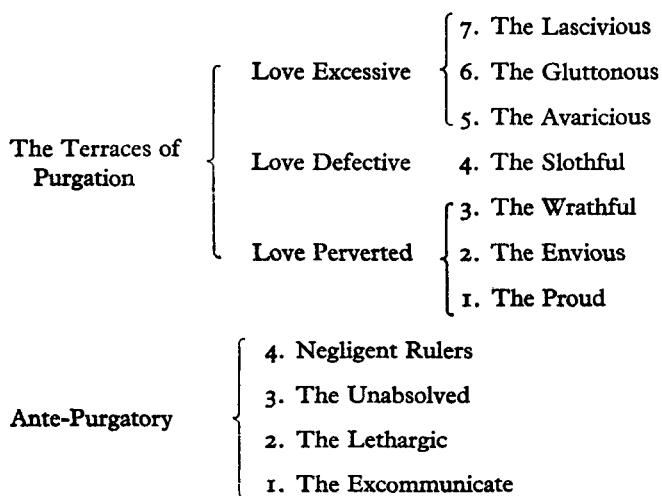
## DANTE'S PURGATORY

DANTE's Purgatory is a lofty island-mountain, the only land in the southern hemisphere, at the antipodes of Jerusalem. On the lower irregular slopes are the souls whose penitence has, for some reason, been delayed in life and whose purgation is now delayed. Above that is the gate of Purgatory proper, the place of active purgation, which consists of seven level terraces surrounding the mountain and rising one above another, connected by stair-ways in the rock. On these terraces the seven deadly sins are purged by penances from the souls that have been beset by them. On the summit of the mountain is the Garden of Eden, or Earthly Paradise, from which the purged souls ascend to Heaven.

*This page intentionally left blank*

## THE SYSTEM OF DANTE'S PURGATORY

### The Earthly Paradise



*This page intentionally left blank*

## **PURGATORIO**

## PURGATORIO

PER correr migliori acque alza le vele  
omai la navicella del mio ingegno,  
che lascia dietro a sè mar sì crudele;  
e canterò di quel secondo regno  
dove l' umano spirito si purga  
e di salire al ciel diventa degno.  
Ma qui la morta poesì resurga,  
o sante Muse, poi che vostro sono;  
e qui Calliopè alquanto surga,  
seguitando il mio canto con quel sono 10  
di cui le Piche misere sentiro  
lo colpo tal, che disperar perdono.  
Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro,  
che s'accoglieva nel sereno aspetto  
del mezzo puro insino al primo giro,  
alli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,  
tosto ch' io uscì fuor dell'aura morta  
che m'avea contristati li occhi e 'l petto.  
Lo bel pianeta che d'amar conforta 20  
faceva tutto rider l'oriente,  
velando i Pesci, ch'erano in sua scorta.  
I' mi volsi a man destra, e puosi mente  
all'altro polo, e vidi quattro stelle  
non viste mai fuor ch'alla prima gente.  
Goder pareva il ciel di lor fiammelle:  
oh settentrional vedovo sito,  
poi che privato se' di mirar quelle!

## CANTO I

*Morning; Venus; the four stars; Cato; the rush  
and the dew*

To course over better waters the little bark of my wit now lifts her sails, leaving behind her so cruel a sea, and I will sing of that second kingdom where the human spirit is purged and becomes fit to ascend to Heaven. But here let poetry rise again from the dead, O holy Muses, since I am yours; and here let Calliope rise up for a while and accompany my song with that strain which smote the ears of the wretched pies so that they despaired of pardon!<sup>1</sup>

The sweet hue of the oriental sapphire which was gathering in the serene face of the heavens from the clear zenith to the first circle<sup>2</sup> gladdened my eyes again as soon as I passed out of the dead air which had afflicted my eyes and breast. The fair planet that prompts to love made all the east laugh, veiling the Fishes which were in her train.<sup>3</sup> I turned to the right and set my mind on the other pole, and I saw four stars never seen before but by the first people; the sky seemed to rejoice in their flames. O widowed region of the north, since thou art denied that sight!<sup>4</sup>



# PURGATORIO

Com' io da loro sguardo fui partito,  
 un poco me volgendo all'altro polo,  
 là onde il Carro già era sparito, 30  
 vidi presso di me un veglio solo,  
 degno di tanta reverenza in vista,  
 che più non dee a padre alcun figliuolo.  
 Lunga la barba e di pel bianco mista  
 portava, a' suoi capelli simigliante,  
 de' quai cadeva al petto doppia lista.  
 Li raggi delle quattro luci sante  
 fregiavan sì la sua faccia di lume,  
 ch' i' 'l vedea come 'l sol fosse davante.  
 'Chi siete voi che contro al cieco fiume 40  
 fuggita avete la pregione eterna?'  
 diss'el, movendo quelle oneste piume.  
 'Chi v' ha guidati, o che vi fu lucerna,  
 uscendo fuor della profonda notte  
 che sempre nera fa la valle inferna?  
 Son le leggi d'abisso così rotte?  
 o è mutato in ciel novo consiglio,  
 che, dannati, venite alle mie grotte?'  
 Lo duca mio allor mi diè di piglio,  
 e con parole e con mani e con cenni 50  
 reverenti mi fè le gambe e 'l ciglio.  
 Poscia rispuose lui: 'Da me non venni:  
 donna scese dal ciel, per li cui prieghi  
 della mia compagnia costui sovvenni.  
 Ma da ch' è tuo voler che più si spieghi  
 di nostra condizion com'ell'è vera,  
 esser non puote il mio che a te si nieghi.  
 Questi non vide mai l' ultima sera;  
 ma per la sua follia le fu sì presso,  
 che molto poco tempo a volger era. 60  
 Sì com' io dissi, fui mandato ad esso  
 per lui campare; e non li era altra via  
 che questa per la quale i' mi son messo.  
 Mostrata ho lui tutta la gente ria;  
 e ora intendo mostrar quelli spirti  
 che purgan sè sotto la tua balla.

## CANTO I

When I had withdrawn my gaze from them, turning a little towards the other pole where the Wain had already disappeared, I saw beside me an old man alone, worthy by his looks of so great reverence that no son owes more to a father;<sup>5</sup> his beard was long and streaked with white, and his hair the same, a double tress falling on his breast; the rays of the four holy stars so adorned his face with light that I saw him as if the sun were before him.

‘Who are ye that have fled the eternal prison against the blind stream?’ he said, shaking those venerable locks. ‘Who has guided you or who was your lantern in coming forth from the profound night that holds in perpetual blackness the valley of Hell? Are the laws of the abyss thus broken, or has a new decree been made in Heaven, that, being damned, you come to my cliffs?’

My Leader then laid hold of me and with speech and hand and sign made me reverent in knees and brow, then answered him: ‘Of myself I came not. A lady descended from Heaven for whose prayers I succoured this man with my companionship; but since it is thy will to have it made more plain how in truth it stands with us, it cannot be mine to deny thee. This man never saw his last hour, but by his folly was so near to it that little time was left to run. I was sent to him, as I said, for his deliverance and there was no other way but this on which I have set out; I have shown him all the guilty race and now purpose to show him those spirits that cleanse themselves under thy charge.

# PURGATORIO

Com' io l' ho tratto, sarla lungo a dirti;  
 dell'alto scende virtù che m'aiuta  
 condurlo a vederti e a udirti.

Or ti piaccia gradir la sua venuta: 70  
 libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara,  
 come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta.

Tu 'l sai, che non ti fu per lei amara  
 in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti  
 la vesta ch'al gran dì sarà sì chiara.

Non son li editti etterni per noi guasti;  
 chè questi vive, e Minòs me non lega;  
 ma son del cerchio ove son li occhi casti  
 di Marzia tua, che 'n vista ancor ti priega,  
 o santo petto, che per tua la tegni: 80  
 per lo suo amore adunque a noi ti piega.

Lasciane andar per li tuoi sette regni:  
 grazie riporterò di te a lei,  
 se d'esser mentovato là giù degni.'

'Marzia piacque tanto alli occhi miei  
 mentre ch' i' fu' di là,' diss'elli allora  
 'che quante grazie volse da me, fei.

Or che di là dal mal fiume dimora,  
 più muover non mi può, per quella legge  
 che fatta fu quando me n' uscì' fora. 90

Ma se donna del ciel ti move e regge,  
 come tu di', non c'è mestier lusinghe:  
 bastisi ben che per lei mi richegge.

Va dunque, e fa che tu costui ricinghe  
 d' un giunco schietto e che li lavi 'l viso,  
 sì ch'ogni sucidume quindi stinghe;  
 chè non si converria, l'occhio sorpreso  
 d'alcuna nebbia, andar dinanzi al primo  
 ministro, ch'è di quei di paradiso.

Questa isoletta intorno ad imo ad imo, 100  
 là giù colà dove la batte l'onda,  
 porta de' giunchi sovra 'l molle limo;  
 null'altra pianta che facesse fronda  
 o indurasse, vi puote aver vita,  
 però ch'alle percosse non seconda

## CANTO I

How I have led him would be long to tell thee; there descends from above virtue which aids me in bringing him to see thee and to hear thee. May it please thee to be gracious to his coming. He goes seeking liberty, which is so dear, as he knows who gives his life for it; thou knowest it, since death for it was not bitter to thee in Utica, where thou didst leave the vesture which in the great day will be so bright.<sup>6</sup> The eternal edicts are not broken for us, for this man lives and Minos does not bind me; but I am of the circle where are the chaste eyes of thy Marcia, who in her looks still prays thee, O holy breast, that thou hold her for thine own.<sup>7</sup> For her love, then, do thou incline to us; allow us to go through thy seven kingdoms. I will report to her thy kindness, if thou deign to be spoken of there below.'

'Marcia so pleased my eyes while I was yonder' he said then 'that whatever kindness she sought of me I did; now that she dwells beyond the evil stream<sup>8</sup> she cannot move me more, by the law which was made when I came forth from thence. But if a lady from Heaven moves and directs thee, as thou sayest, there is no need of fair words; let it suffice thee to ask me for her sake. Go then, and see that thou gird him with a smooth rush and bathe his face so as to remove from it all defilement, for it would not be fitting to go with eye dimmed by any fog before the first minister of those of Paradise. This little island, round about its very base, down there where the wave beats on it, bears rushes on the soft mud; no other plant which would make leaves or harden can live there,

## PURGATORIO

Poscia non sia di qua vostra reddita;  
lo sol vi mosterrà, che surge omai,  
prendere il monte a più lieve salita.'  
Così parlò; e io su mi levai  
senza parlare, e tutto mi ritrassi 110  
al duca mio, e li occhi a lui drizzai.  
El cominciò: 'Seguisci li miei passi:  
volgiànci in dietro, chè di qua dichina  
questa pianura a' suoi termini bassi.'  
L'alba vinceva l'ora mattutina  
che fuggla innanzi, sì che di lontano  
conobbi il tremolar della marina.  
Noi andavam per lo solingo piano  
com'om che torna alla perduta strada,  
che 'nfino ad essa li pare ire invano. 120  
Quando noi fummo là 've la rugiada  
pugna col sole, e, per essere in parte  
dove adorezza, poco si dirada,  
ambo le mani in su l'erbetta sparte  
soavemente 'l mio maestro pose:  
ond' io, che fui accorto di sua arte,  
porsi ver lui le guance lacrimose:  
ivi mi fece tutto scoperto  
quel color che l' inferno mi nascose.  
Venimmo poi in sul lito deserto, 130  
che mai non vide navicar sue acque  
omo che di tornar sia poscia esperto.  
Quivi mi cinse sì com'altrui piacque:  
oh meraviglia! chè qual elli scelse  
l' umile pianta, cotal si rinacque  
subitamente là onde l'avelse.

## CANTO I

not yielding to the buffets. Afterwards let not your return be this way; the sun, which is now rising, will show you where to take the mountain at an easier ascent.'

With that he vanished, and I rose up without speaking and drew close to my Leader and set my eyes on him.

He began: 'Follow my steps; let us turn back, for this plain slopes down from here to its low bounds.'

The dawn was overcoming the morning breeze, which fled before it, so that I descried far off the trembling of the sea. We made our way over the lonely plain, like one who returns to the road he has lost and, till he finds it, seems to himself to go in vain. When we were at a part where the dew resists the sun and, being in shade, is little dispersed, my Master gently laid both hands outspread on the grass. I, therefore, aware of his purpose, reached toward him my tear-stained cheeks and on them he wholly restored that colour which Hell had hidden in me. We came then on to the desert shore that never saw man sail its waters who after had experience of return. There he girded me as the other had bidden. O marvel! for as was the lowly plant he chose such did it spring up again immediately in the place where he had plucked it.

## PURGATORIO

1. The daughters of King Pierus challenged the Muses to a contest of song and sang of the Titans that fought against Jupiter; Calliope, Muse of Epic Poetry, defeated the mortals, who, for their presumption, were turned into magpies.
2. The horizon.
3. Venus, as morning star, was in conjunction with the constellation of the Fishes, which in spring rises shortly before the sun.
4. Possibly the stars of the Southern Cross, not visible in the northern, inhabited, hemisphere, but seen from Eden in the southern.
5. Cato, fighting in the Civil War against Caesar, took his own life in the prospect of defeat rather than survive the freedom of the republic; he died in Utica, North Africa.
6. The day of judgement, when their bodies will be restored to the dead.
7. Marcia, Cato's wife, who is still in Limbo (*Inf.* iv), was given by Cato to his friend, on whose death she persuaded Cato to take her again, that it might be inscribed on her tomb that she was Cato's wife.
8. Acheron, the river of death (*Inf.* iii).

## NOTE

Dante's conception of Hell, as of Paradise, is in its general form traditional; but his Purgatory is his own. The Church conceived of Purgatory as a kind of temporary Hell and, like Hell, subterranean; for Dante it was impossible so to conceive the life of penitence and purgation by which 'the human spirit becomes fit to ascend to Heaven'. His *Inferno* is a picture of the soul's bondage and defeat, his *Purgatorio* of its liberation and victory, and he takes every means to mark the contrast. For his higher theme he needs a higher inspiration, for which he appeals to Calliope, the greatest of the Muses. By her song she had defeated the insolent challenge of the sisters who sang in praise of the rebel Titans, and it is such a song he needs now to tell of the hard-won victory of grace.

In Hell Dante has been an observer, a learner, in no sense identified with any of the sufferers there; it has been his discipline to see the operations and issues of sin, his gain to have been wholly freed from any faith in sin or fear of it in the last reckoning when he left Satan beneath his feet, and his attainment 'to see again the stars'. But in Purgatory Dante is himself a penitent among the penitents. Partly in anticipation, partly in present fact, he shares their experience of penitence and pain, of shame and aspiration, of labour and trust in grace and gradual attainment, of all that belongs to the gaining of the soul's liberty; and in his imagination of Purgatory as a great mountain rising from the sea into the sunshine and bearing a garden on its summit Dante departed from all the traditions of his time. It is opposite to Hell in situation and shape as in character and purpose, and it stands on the earth but rises clear above its earthliness.

The *Purgatorio* opens on Easter Sunday morning. It is singularly characteristic of Dante that he indicates quite un-



mistakably by various time-references—as in *Inferno* xxi—but never says expressly, that the times of his descent into Hell and his emergence from it with Virgil correspond closely with the times of Christ's death and resurrection. The correspondence is deliberately contrived and yet never referred to as a correspondence; much less is there any hint of Paul's doctrine of the soul's mystical unity with Christ—'buried with him, . . . risen with him' (*Col.* ii. 12). It is as if in this strangely veiled yet unmistakable fashion Dante would set forth his way of salvation as being—not by any plan or prior knowledge of his own, but inevitably and by the nature of things—in the very context of the passion and resurrection of Christ. He entered Hell in the dusk of Good Friday; he comes forth when Christ rose, in the hour of wonder and expectancy before dawn, Venus blazing in the whitening east and strange stars shining in the south.

It is possible that Dante had heard of the Southern Cross from Marco Polo, the great Venetian traveller, his contemporary, and as possible that he invented the four stars for his purpose. In any case they represent here the four cardinal virtues, prudence, courage, justice and temperance, specifically the virtues of the active life, of the social and civil order of humanity, that is, of the Empire, the virtues possible to paganism, in contrast with the three 'theological' virtues, faith, hope and love, which belong specifically to the Christian dispensation. Since the fall and the expulsion of the first parents from Eden humanity in general has been 'denied the sight' of them; in comparison with this clear shining, once known to unfallen man, the world is ignorant of the divine order of its life, and the object of all Purgatory, the end for which the penitents are set to climb, is the reversal of the fall, the recovery of the primal virtues, the re-entering of Eden.

Dante's Cato is a visionary and unearthly figure, hardly a realized personality, which appears and vanishes we are not told whence or whither. As a pagan, an enemy of Julius Caesar, and a suicide, he might have been found in one part or another of Hell; but in the medieval mind he had become the legendary ideal of pagan virtue, the hero and martyr of liberty. Dante writes of him in various passages elsewhere: 'O most sacred

breast of Cato, who shall presume to speak of thee? Assuredly there can be no greater speech about thee than to be silent. . . . We read of Cato that he thought of himself as born, not for himself, but for his country and for all the world. . . . That he might kindle the love of liberty in the world he showed of what worth it was, for he chose to go forth from life free rather than remain in it without liberty (*Convito* and *De Monarchia*). It would be mere misapprehension to judge of Cato's repudiation of his wife Marcia here otherwise than symbolically; his relations with her are conceived as a mere part of his unredeemed earthly life from which he has passed completely to a higher and holier loyalty, that to 'a lady from Heaven', Beatrice, the truth of God, for whose sake he admits Virgil and his charge. It was political liberty for which Cato died in Utica and it is the liberty of the soul that Dante seeks, the liberty which is identical with virtue; for Dante, public liberty and the liberty of the soul are ultimately one.

Cato's harsh challenge to the travellers indicates the severe conditions of the soul's quest: the faithful, and at first lonely, following of the reason, the assurance of an unseen grace beyond reason, the cleared vision for the heavenly ministries he is to meet with, and utter humbleness. Even Virgil needs direction, for reason is not sufficient here, being but the servant and deputy of higher powers.

Dante must follow Virgil across the lonely plain, 'like one who returns to the road he has lost', the first finding of the way in the life of penitence is a solitary and perplexed experience; and there, at the very base of the sloping shore, Virgil, with a kind of ritual solemnity and gentleness, washes Dante's face with the morning dew, dew being a scriptural image of the divine mercy. There too it is reason that girds him with humility, the same reason that had flung the cord of a formal outward discipline into the pit of fraud (*Inf.* xvi); it is a better security. And in place of the rush taken for his girdle another springs at once; for the penitent, by his humbleness, finds always new reasons for it, a humbleness which is not simply lowliness, but rather the meekness of spirit that 'yields to the buffets', submits to chastisement and is fitted for the ascent.

## PURGATORIO

In the first canto of the *Purgatorio*, as in that of the *Inferno*, the symbolism is elaborate and in some respects perplexing. All the more impressive is the intimate imaginative realism of Dante's story: the transport and expansion of his spirit on emerging from the pit into the serene air under the stars which are fading into the dawn—his silence, as of a child rapt with wonder, throughout—the sudden, august apparition of the aged Cato—the suspense of Dante's confidence as he follows Virgil down to the lonely shore—and his acceptance, as of a sacrament, of the bathing of his face and the girding with the rush. The abstract moral symbols are the framework; the whole is a profoundly imagined experience.

*This page intentionally left blank*

## PURGATORIO

GIÀ era 'l sole all'orizzonte giunto  
lo cui meridian cerchio coverchia  
Ierusalèm col suo più alto punto;  
e la notte, che opposita a lui cerchia,  
uscita di Gange fuor con le Bilance,  
che le caggion di man quando soverchia;  
sì che le bianche e le vermiglie guance,  
là dov' i' era, della bella Aurora  
per troppa etate divenivan rance.  
Noi eravam lunghesso mare ancora, 10  
come gente che pensa a suo cammino,  
che va col cuore e col corpo dimora.  
Ed ecco qual, sul presso del mattino,  
per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia  
giù nel ponente sovra 'l suol marino,  
cotal m'apparve, s' io ancor lo veggia,  
un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto,  
che 'l mover suo nessun volar pareggia.  
Dal qual com' io un poco ebbi ritratto 20  
l'occhio per domandar lo duca mio,  
rividil più lucente e maggior fatto.  
Poi d'ogne lato ad esso m'apparìo  
un, non sapea che, bianco, e di sotto  
a poco a poco un altro a lui uscìo.  
Lo mio maestro ancor non fece motto,  
mentre che i primi bianchi apparser ali:  
allor che ben conobbe il galeotto,

## CANTO II

*The ship of souls; the angel pilot; Casella's song;  
Cato's rebuke*

ALREADY the sun had reached the horizon whose meridian circle covers Jerusalem with its highest point, and night, circling opposite to it, was issuing from the Ganges with the Scales, which fall from her hand when she exceeds the day, so that, there where I was, the white and rosy cheeks of fair Aurora, with her increasing age, were turning orange.<sup>1</sup> We were still beside the sea, like those that ponder on their road, who go on in heart and in body linger; and lo, as on the approach of morning Mars glows ruddy through the thick vapours low in the west over the ocean floor, so appeared to me—may I see it again!—a light coming so swiftly over the sea that no flight could match its speed; from which when I had taken my eyes for a moment to question my Leader I saw it again, grown brighter and larger. Then on either side of it appeared to me a whiteness, I knew not what, and below it, little by little, another came forth. Still my Master did not say a word till the first whitenesses appeared as wings; then, when he clearly discerned the pilot, he cried: ‘Bend, bend

gridò: 'Fa, fa che le ginocchia cali:  
 ecco l'angel di Dio: piega le mani:  
 omai vedrai di sì fatti ufficiali. 30

Vedi che sdegna li argomenti umani,  
 sì che remo non vuol nè altro velo  
 che l'ali sue tra liti sì lontani.

Vedi come l' ha dritte verso il cielo,  
 trattando l'aere con l'etterne penne,  
 che non si mutan come mortal pelo.'

Poi, come più e più verso noi venne  
 l' uccel divino, più chiaro appariva;  
 per che l'occhio da presso nol sostenne,  
 ma chinail giuso; e quei sen venne a riva 40  
 con un vasello snelletto e leggiero,  
 tanto che l'acqua nulla ne 'nghiottiva.

Da poppa stava il celestial nocchiero,  
 tal che pareva beato per iscripto;  
 e più di cento spirti entro sediero.

*'In exitu Israel de Aegypto'*  
 cantavan tutti insieme ad una voce  
 con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto.

Poi fece il segno lor di santa croce;  
 ond'ei si gittar tutti in su la spiaggia, 50  
 ed el sen glì, come venne, veloce.

La turba che rimase lì selvaggia  
 pareva del loco, rimirando intorno  
 come colui che nove cose assaggia.

Da tutte parti saettava il giorno  
 lo sol, ch'avea con le saette conte  
 di mezzo il ciel cacciato Capricorno,  
 quando la nova gente alzò la fronte  
 ver noi, dicendo a noi: 'Se voi sapete,  
 mostratene la via di gire al monte.' 60

E Virgilio rispuose: 'Voi credete  
 forse che siamo esperti d'esto loco;  
 ma noi siam peregrin come voi siete.

Dianzi venimmo, innanzi a voi un poco,  
 per altra via, che fu sì aspra e forte,  
 che lo salire omai ne parrà gioco.'

## CANTO II

thy knees, behold the angel of God, clasp thy hands; such ministers shalt thou see henceforth. See how he scorns human instruments and seeks no oar nor other sail than his wings between shores so distant; see how he has them raised toward the sky, fanning the air with the eternal pinions which do not change like mortal plumage.'

Then, as the divine bird came towards us more and more, he appeared brighter, so that my eyes could not bear him close and I cast them down, and he came on to the shore with a vessel so swift and light that the water took in nothing of it. On the poop stood the heavenly steersman, such that blessedness seemed written upon him, and more than a thousand spirits sat within. *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*<sup>2</sup> they sang all together with one voice, with all that is written after of that psalm; then he made over them the sign of Holy Cross, at which they all flung themselves on the beach, and he went swiftly as he came.

The crowd that remained there seemed strange to the place, gazing about like those that make trial of things new. On all sides the sun was shooting forth the day and with his keen arrows had chased Capricorn from mid-heaven,<sup>3</sup> when the new people raised their faces toward us, saying to us: 'If you know, show us the way to go to the mountain.'

And Virgil answered: 'You think, perhaps, we are acquainted with this place, but we are strangers like yourselves; we came but now, a little while before you, by another road which was so rough and hard that now the climb will seem to us a pastime.'



# PURGATORIO

L'anime che si fuor di me accorte,  
 per lo spirar, ch' i' era ancora vivo,  
 maravigliando diventaro smorte.

E come a messagger che porta ulivo 70  
 tragge la gente per udir novelle,  
 e di calcar nessun si mostra schivo,  
 così al viso mio s'affisar quelle  
 anime fortunate tutte quante,  
 quasi obliando d'ire a farsi belle.

Io vidi una di lor trarresi avanti  
 per abbracciarmi, con sì grande affetto,  
 che mosse me a fare il simigliante.

Oi ombre vane, fuor che nell'aspetto!  
 Tre volte dietro a lei le mani avvinsi, 80  
 e tante mi tornai con esse al petto.

Di maraviglia, credo, mi dipinsi;  
 per che l'ombra sorrise e si ritrasse,  
 e io, seguendo lei, oltre mi pinsi.

Soavemente disse ch' io posasse:  
 allor conobbi chi era, e pregai  
 che, per parlar mi, un poco s'arrestasse.

Rispuosemi: 'Così com' io t'amai  
 nel mortal corpo, così t'amo sciolta:  
 però m'arresto; ma tu perchè vai?' 90

'Casella mio, per tornar altra volta  
 là dov' io son, fo io questo viaggio;  
 diss' io 'ma a te com'è tanta ora tolta?'

Ed elli a me: 'Nessun m'è fatto oltraggio,  
 se quei che leva quando e cui li piace,  
 più volte m' ha negato esto passaggio;  
 chè di giusto voler lo suo si face:  
 veramente da tre mesi elli ha tolto  
 chi ha voluto intrar, con tutta pace.

Ond' io, ch'era ora alla marina volto 100  
 dove l'acqua di Tevero s' insala,  
 benignamente fu' da lui ricolto.

A quella foce ha elli or dritta l'ala,  
 però che sempre quivi si ricoglie  
 quale verso Acheronte non si cala.'

The souls, who had perceived from my breathing that I was still in life, turned pale with wonder, and as to a messenger who bears an olive-branch<sup>4</sup> the people crowd to hear the news and no one heeds the crush, so every one of these fortunate souls fixed his eyes on my face, as if forgetting to go and make them fair. I saw one of them come forward with so much affection to embrace me that it moved me to do the same. O empty shades, except in semblance! Three times I clasped my hands behind him and as often brought them back to my breast. Wonder, I think, was painted in my looks, at which the shade smiled and drew back and I, following him, pressed forward. Gently he bade me stand; then I knew who it was and begged him that he would stay a little and talk with me.

He answered me: 'Even as I loved thee in my mortal flesh, so do I love thee freed; therefore I stay. But thou, why art thou on this journey?'

'My Casella,<sup>5</sup> to return another time where I am I take this road; but from thee how has so much time been taken?'

And he said to me: 'No wrong is done me if he who takes up whom and when he will has many times denied me this passage, for of a righteous will his own is framed; nevertheless, for three months he has taken with all peace whoever would embark.<sup>6</sup> I, therefore, who had now turned to the shore where Tiber's waters become salt, was kindly gathered in by him. To that river-mouth he has now set his wing, for there the souls are always gathering that sink not down to Acheron.'

E io: 'Se nuova legge non ti toglie  
 memoria o uso all'amoroso canto  
 che mi solea quietar tutte mie voglie,  
 di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto  
 l'anima mia, che, con la mia persona 110  
 venendo qui, è affannata tanto!'  
*'Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona'*  
 cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente,  
 che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi sona.  
 Lo mio maestro e io e quella gente  
 ch'eran con lui parevan sì contenti,  
 come a nessun toccasse altro la mente.  
 Noi eravam tutti fissi e attenti  
 alle sue note; ed ecco il veglio onesto  
 gridando: 'Che è ciò, spiriti lenti? 120  
 qual negligenza, quale stare è questo?  
 Correte al monte a spogliarvi lo scoglio  
 ch'esser non lascia a voi Dio manifesto.'  
 Come quando, cogliendo biada o loglio,  
 li colombi adunati alla pastura,  
 queti, senza mostrar l'usato orgoglio,  
 se cosa appare ond'elli abbian paura,  
 subitamente lasciano star l'esca,  
 perch'assaliti son da maggior cura;  
 così vid' io quella masnada fresca 130  
 lasciar lo canto, e gire inver la costa,  
 com' uom che va, nè sa dove rïesca:  
 nè la nostra partita fu men tosta.

## CANTO II

And I: 'If a new law does not take from thee memory or practice of the songs of love which used to quiet all my longings, may it please thee to refresh my soul with them for a while, which is so spent coming here with my body.'

*Love that discourses to me in my mind*<sup>7</sup> he began then, so sweetly that the sweetness sounds within me still. My Master and I and these people who were with him seemed as content as if nothing else touched the mind of any. We were all rapt and attentive to his notes, when lo, the venerable old man, crying: 'What is this, laggard spirits? What negligence, what delay is this? Haste to the mountain to strip you of the slough that allows not God to be manifest to you.'

As when doves collected at their feeding, picking up wheat or tares, quiet, without their usual show of pride, if something appears that frightens them suddenly leave their food lying, because they are assailed with a greater care; so I saw that new troop leave the song and go towards the slope, like those who go they know not where; nor was our departure in less haste.

## PURGATORIO

1. The sun passes from the hemisphere whose centre is Jerusalem to that of Purgatory, the two hemispheres being regarded as having a common horizon; midnight is passing over the Ganges with the constellation of the Scales, which night loses in winter when it becomes longer than day; it is dawn in Purgatory.
2. 'When Israel went out of Egypt' (*Ps.* cxiv. 1).
3. The constellation fading from the zenith.
4. Sign of good news.
5. A Florentine musician of Dante's day who died before 1300.
6. In the Papal Jubilee Year, from Christmas of 1299, plenary indulgence was granted to pilgrims.
7. An early poem of Dante's.

## NOTE

The elaborately astronomical way of telling the time with which the canto opens is more than a piece of medieval pedantry; it is an introduction to Dante's first representation of the redeemed life, showing the world surrounded by the heavens and marking the newness, the strangeness, the separation from old conditions 'there where I was', with the sun, the light of God, rising on it. The mood of wonder still holds as in the first canto, with the approach of the angel in the gathering dawn, first the mysterious light in the distance, then his near splendour, his power, his swiftness, his silence; and the newness of life for the redeemed shows in their eagerness and their bewilderment.

The general contrast between Hell and Purgatory is wrought out in many correspondences. The ship of souls coming over the ocean is plainly meant to contrast with the ferry on Acheron (*Inf.* iii), the shining angel-pilot with Charon, 'with eyes of burning coal', the chanting of the psalm of redemption by the redeemed with the howling blasphemies of Charon's passengers; and as the monsters in Hell are the embodiments of the sins, holding the souls there captive, so the angels are the agents of grace, working out the souls' deliverance. This angel brings the boat with no aid from the souls in it, 'scorning human instruments' and using only his own wings; souls do not save themselves, they are saved by grace. We are reminded here of the other silent angel at the gate of Dis (*Inf.* ix).

In a letter to Can Grande Dante gave the mystical interpretation of these first words of the psalm, 'When Israel went out of Egypt', as 'the departure of the sanctified soul from the bondage of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory'. 'The psalm had been from the sixth century in use in the Western Church in the last offices for the dying and in the burial of

the dead' (*E. H. Plumptre*), and the song of the mourners is continued as the song of the redeemed; what was in the old life a longing of faith is here a fulfilled deliverance. 'All that is written after of that psalm' is occupied with God's liberation of His people, and the angel as it were completes and verifies it with 'the sign of Holy Cross'. All through Purgatory its disciplines are accompanied with the prayers and praises of the Church, the old liturgies used now with a new depth and integrity of meaning. The Tiber mouth from which the boat has sailed is, of course, the port of Rome; the souls come from the bosom of the Church and are still singing its songs when they land in Purgatory. We shall find more of the Church's fellowship in the next canto.

We are reminded again that Virgil does not know his way in Purgatory as he did in Hell, for he cannot direct the newcomers. For reason itself the way of the soul's penitence and aspiration is a continual revelation and discovery, to be known only by the following of it in the light of the sun and in the fellowship of the redeemed.

The insubstantial nature of the visible forms of these disembodied spirits, which here takes Dante by surprise, is not maintained with entire consistency throughout the poem, but the general idea seems to be that the soul's 'airy shape' is 'more substantial in proportion to its proximity to the centre of the universe (which is also the centre of sin) and more ethereal as it rises above the earth's surface' (*C. H. Grandgent*).

Practically nothing is known of Casella except what is here indicated, that he was a composer of Florence who set some of Dante's verse to music and that he died some time before the supposed date of the vision. Knowing the fact, Dante realizes that Casella's passage to Purgatory has been, for some reason, delayed, and he learns that it was granted in the plenary indulgence given to pilgrims in the Jubilee year by Pope Boniface. That Dante should attach such spiritual authority to the act of such a man as Pope Boniface, as he is known to us in the *Inferno* (xix and xxvii), is a singular evidence of the place held by the Church and the Papacy in his mind.

The meeting of Dante and Casella, with its eager intimacy and its culmination in the song and the company's absorption

## CANTO II

in it, is the first of many incidents which give a peculiarly human quality to the *Purgatorio* in comparison with the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso*; it has much more of the character of the life we live and know.

Dante's 'song of love' which is sung by Casella must not be taken in the obvious, romantic sense suggested to us by the language of the canto. Whatever it meant originally, it was expounded by Dante himself in the *Convito* as the praise of the Lady Philosophy, following a convention which had precedents in the *Book of Proverbs*, the *Book of Wisdom* and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. It recalls, therefore, the period of his intense and laborious absorption in the study of scholastic speculation. Not only Dante and the other pilgrims but Virgil himself is seized and held by the song 'as if nothing else touched the mind of any', until they are recalled to their business by Cato's rebuke. The incident tells of Dante's delight, which is otherwise known to us, in music and in the philosophy of which he sang; but it tells too that life is more than speculation, that reason itself may forget its function, that the psalm of redemption means more than this song of love, that God becomes manifest to the soul not by its listening to a song, but by its climbing of a mountain.



## PURGATORIO

AVVEGNA che la subitana fuga  
dispergesse color per la campagna,  
rivolti al monte ove ragion ne fruga,  
i' mi ristrinsi alla fida compagna:  
e come sare' io senza lui corso?  
chi m'avria tratto su per la montagna?  
El mi pareo da sè stesso rimorso:  
o dignitosa coscienza e netta,  
come t'è picciol fallo amaro morso!  
Quando li piedi suoi lasciar la fretta, 10  
che l'onestade ad ogn'atto dismaga,  
la mente mia, che prima era ristretta,  
lo 'ntento rallargò, sì come vaga,  
e diedi 'l viso mio incontro al poggio  
che 'nverso il ciel più alto si dislaga.  
Lo sol, che dietro fiammeggiava roggio,  
rotto m'era dinanzi, alla figura  
ch'avea in me de' suoi raggi l'appoggio.  
Io mi volsi da lato con paura  
d'essere abbandonato, quand' io vidi 20  
solo dinanzi a me la terra oscura;  
e 'l mio conforto 'Perchè pur diffidi?'  
a dir mi cominciò tutto rivolto:  
'non credi tu me teco e ch' io ti guidi?  
Vespero è già colà dov'è sepolto  
lo corpo dentro al quale io facea ombra:  
Napoli l' ha, e da Brandizio è tolto.  
Ora, se innanzi a me nulla s'aombra,  
non ti maravigliar più che de' cieli  
che l' uno all'altro raggio non ingombra. 30

### CANTO III

*Dante's shadow; the Contumacious; Manfred*

WHILE the sudden flight scattered them through the plain, turned to the mountain where reason searches us, I drew close to my faithful comrade. And how should I have sped without him? Who would have brought me up the mountain? He seemed to me smitten with self-reproach. O pure and noble conscience, how bitter a sting to thee is a little fault!

When his feet ceased from the haste that mars the dignity of every action, my mind, till then restrained, took in its eagerness a wider range and I set my face to the hill that rises highest heavenward from the sea. The sun, which was flaming red behind, was broken before me in the shape it made by its rays resting on me. I turned to my side, fearing that I was abandoned when I saw the ground darkened before me only; and my comfort, turning quite round, began to speak to me: 'Why art thou still distrustful? Believest thou not that I am with thee and guide thee? It is evening now in the place where the body is buried within which I cast a shadow; Naples holds it and it was taken from Brindisi.<sup>1</sup> If there is now no shadow before me do not marvel more than at the heavens, that one does not obstruct a ray from another.'<sup>2</sup> The

A sofferir tormenti e caldi e geli  
 simili corpi la Virtù dispone  
 che, come fa, non vuol ch'a noi si sveli.  
 Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione  
 possa trascorrer la infinita via  
 che tiene una sustanza in tre persone.  
 State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*;  
 chè se possuto aveste veder tutto,  
 mestier non era parturir Maria;  
 e disiâr vedeste senza frutto 40  
 tai che sarebbe lor disio quetato,  
 ch'etternalmente è dato lor per lutto:  
 io dico d'Aristotile e di Plato  
 e di molt'altri'; e qui chinò la fronte,  
 e più non disse, e rimase turbato.  
 Noi divenimmo intanto a piè del monte:  
 quivi trovammo la roccia sì erta,  
 che 'ndarno vi sarien le gambe pronte.  
 Tra Lerice e Turbia, la più diserta,  
 la più rotta ruina è una scala, 50  
 verso di quella, agevole e aperta.  
 'Or chi sa da qual man la costa cala'  
 disse 'l maestro mio, fermando il passo,  
 'sì che possa salir chi va sanz'ala?'  
 E mentre ch'e' tenendo il viso basso  
 essaminava del cammin la mente,  
 e io mirava suso intorno al sasso,  
 da man sinistra m'apparì una gente  
 d'anime, che movleno i piè ver noi,  
 e non pareva, sì venian lente. 60  
 'Leva,' diss' io 'maestro, li occhi tuoi:  
 ecco di qua chi ne darà consiglio,  
 se tu da te medesmo aver nol puoi.'  
 Guardò allora, e con libero piglio  
 rispuose: 'Andiamo in là, ch'ei vegnon piano;  
 e tu ferma la spene, dolce figlio.'  
 Ancora era quel popol di lontano,  
 i' dico dopo i nostri mille passi,  
 quanto un buon gittator trarrìa con mano,

### CANTO III

Power fits such bodies as these to suffer torments of heat and frost which wills not that the way of its working should be revealed to us. Foolish is he who hopes that our reason can trace the infinite ways taken by one Substance in three Persons. Rest content, race of men, with the *quia*;<sup>3</sup> for if you had been able to see all there was no need for Mary to give birth, and you have seen the fruitless desire of men such that their desire would have been set at rest which is given them for an eternal grief—I speak of Aristotle and of Plato and of many others.’ And here he bent down his brow and said no more and remained disquieted.

We came meanwhile to the foot of the mountain. There we found the cliff so steep that the nimblest legs would have been useless on it; the wildest and most broken scree between Lerici and Turbia,<sup>4</sup> compared with it, is an easy and open stairway.

‘Now who knows on which hand the hill slopes,’ said my Master, staying his steps, ‘so that one going without wings may climb?’

And while he held his face down and pondered in his mind on the way and I was gazing up round the rock, there appeared to me on the left a company of souls who were moving their steps towards us and not seeming to approach, they came so slowly.

‘Lift thine eyes, Master,’ I said ‘see there those who will give us counsel, if thou canst not find it in thyself.’

He looked then and with an air of relief replied: ‘Let us go that way, for they come slowly, and thou, dear son, be steadfast in thy hope.’

These people were still at a distance—I mean after we had gone a thousand paces—as far as a

quando si strinser tutti ai duri massi 70  
 dell'alta ripa, e stetter fermi e stretti  
 com'a guardar, chi va dubbiando, stassi.  
 'O ben finiti, o già spiriti eletti,'  
 Virgilio incominciò 'per quella pace  
 ch' i' credo che per voi tutti s'aspetti,  
 ditene dove la montagna giace  
 sì che possibil sia l'andare in suso;  
 chè perder tempo a chi più sa più spiace.'  
 Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso  
 a una, a due, a tre, e l'altre stanno 80  
 timidette atterrando l'occhio e 'l muso;  
 e ciò che fa la prima, e l'altre fanno,  
 addossandosi a lei, s'ella s'arresta,  
 semplici e quete, e lo 'mperchè non sanno;  
 sì vid' io muovere a venir la testa  
 di quella mandra fortunata allotta,  
 pudica in faccia e nell'andare onesta.  
 Come color dinanzi vider rotta  
 la luce in terra dal mio destro canto,  
 sì che l'ombra era da me alla grotta, 90  
 restaro, e trasser sè in dietro alquanto,  
 e tutti li altri che venieno appresso,  
 non sappiendo il perchè, fenno altrettanto.  
 'Sanza vostra domanda io vi confesso  
 che questo è corpo uman che voi vedete;  
 per che il lume del sole in terra è fesso.  
 Non vi maravigliate; ma credete  
 che non sanza virtù che da ciel vegna  
 cerchi di soverchiar questa parete.'  
 Così 'l maestro; e quella gente degna 100  
 'Tornate,' disse 'intrate innanzi dunque',  
 coi dossi delle man facendo insegna.  
 E un di loro incominciò: 'Chiunque  
 tu se', così andando volgi il viso:  
 pon mente se di là mi vedesti unque.'  
 Io mi volsi ver lui e guardail fiso:  
 biondo era e bello e di gentile aspetto,  
 ma l'un de' cigli un colpo avea diviso.