

not naturalistically coloured, but executed in white marble. The quality he admires is not so much realism as a (literally) supernatural *expressiveness*.

I. 99 *for the Craftsman's sake*: the reliefs are carved by God's own hand — or (more probably, on the analogy of the engineering works of Hell, *Inf.* xv. 11 and note) by an Intelligence under His direction.

I. 101: *a throng*: these are the Proud, whose penance will presently be described. (See Images for Canto xi.)

II. 110-11: *this woe cannot, at worst, outlive the Judgement Day*: Purgatory is temporal, and its pains end when time ends (though for most souls they will, of course, end long before that).

l. 124-9: *that we are worms*, etc.: “we have nothing in this world to be proud about, since we are but half-finished beings — grubs existing only to produce the butterfly (emblem of the soul), which, when it leaves the body, must fly to stand naked and defenceless before the judgement-seat.”

## Canto XI



THE STORY. *THE penitent Proud draw near, saying the Lord's Prayer. Virgil inquires the way, and is told by Humbert Aldobrandesco to turn right and go along with them until the stair is reached. While Humbert is telling his own story and asking for prayers, Dante hears another soul calling him and recognizes the painter Oderisi, who discourses upon the vanity of earthly fame. Oderisi then points out his fellow-penitent, Provenzano Salvani, who by one great act of humility performed for loves sake obtained release from the place of waiting and immediate admission to Purgatory.*

“Our Father, dwelling in the Heavens, nowise 1  
As circumscribed, but as the things above,  
Thy first effects, are dearest in Thine eyes,

Hallowed Thy name be and the Power thereof, 4  
By every creature, as right meet it is  
We praise the tender effluence of Thy Love.

Let come to us, let come Thy Kingdom's peace; 7  
If it come not, we've no power of our own  
To come to it, for all our subtleties.

Like as with glad Hosannas at Thy throne 10  
Thine angels offer up their wills always,  
So let men offer theirs, that Thine be done.

Our daily manna give to us this day, 13  
Without which he that through this desert wild

Toils most to speed goes backward on his way.

As we, with all our debtors reconciled, <sup>16</sup>  
Forgive, do Thou forgive us, nor regard  
Our merits, but upon our sins look mild.

Put not our strength, too easily ensnared <sup>19</sup>  
And overcome, to proof with the old foe;  
But save us from him, for he tries it hard.

This last prayer is not made for us — we know, <sup>22</sup>  
Dear Lord, that it is needless — but for those  
Who still remain behind us we pray so.”

Even thus, for their and our good speed, arose <sup>25</sup>  
Prayer from those souls beneath their burden curled  
And going, as in dreams one sometimes goes,

Where the First Cornice its slow length unfurled, <sup>28</sup>  
Painfully round, diversely laden thus,  
Purging away the tarnish of the world.

If a good word's said always there for us, <sup>31</sup>  
What should not here be done for them by prayers  
From those whose will takes root where all good does?

Truly we ought to help them cleanse the smears <sup>34</sup>  
They carried hence, that, weightless and washed white,  
They may fare forth and seek the starry spheres.

“Now, as may mercy and justice soon make light <sup>37</sup>  
Your load, that toward the goal you long to see

You may find power to move your wings in flight,

Show which direction will more speedily <sup>40</sup>  
Bring us to where the stair goes up; or show  
The gentlest rise, if more than one there be,

Because this man who's with me has to go <sup>43</sup>  
Burdened with Adam's flesh wherein he's dressed,  
So that, with his best will, his climbing's slow.”

From whom the question, thus to them addressed <sup>46</sup>  
By him whom I still followed close at hand,  
Received its answer was not manifest;

But someone said: “Turn right, and with our band <sup>49</sup>  
Follow the ledge, and you will find a crack  
That living feet may manage to ascend.

And if I were not hindered, my proud back <sup>52</sup>  
Being thus subdued beneath tins stony weight,  
Which makes me keep my face bent to the track,

I'd look at this live man — I didn't get <sup>55</sup>  
His name — to see if he to me is known,  
And win his pity for my burdened state.

Latian was I; a great man called me son: <sup>58</sup>  
Guillim Aldobrandesco of Tuscany —  
Though if you ever heard of such a one

I know not. Ancient blood, past chivalry, <sup>61</sup>  
These puffed me up — forgetting in my pride

The common mother of humanity —

To such contempt of all the world beside 64  
As killed me; all Siena, every child  
In Compagnatico knows why I died.

I am Humbert; and my arrogance beguiled 67  
To loss not only me, but all my kin  
It dragged down with it, ruined and reviled.

Therefore, till God be satisfied for sin, 70  
It here behoves me bear among the dead  
The load I bore not among living men.”

I'd bowed my face, listening to what he said, 73  
And one of them — not he who spoke — slewed round  
Beneath the load that weighted down his head

And saw and knew and called me, as he wound 76  
Skew-wise along to keep me in his gaze  
Who paced with them, bent double toward the ground.

“Why, sure,” I cried, “that’s Oderisi’s face, 79  
Honour of Gubbio and the art they call  
*Illuminating*, in the Paris phrase!”

“Brother,” said he, “a touch more magical 82  
Smiles now from Franco of Bologna’s page;  
Some honour’s mine, but his is all in all.

I should have been less generous, I’ll engage, 85  
While yet I lived, and ardour to outshine

Burned in my bosom with a kind of rage.

For pride like that we here must pay the fine; 88  
Nor yet should I be here, but that contrition  
Turned me to God while power to sin was mine.

O empty glory of man’s frail ambition, 91  
How soon its topmost boughs their green must yield;  
If no Dark Age succeed, what short fruition!

Once, Cimabue thought to hold the field 94  
In painting; Giotto’s all the rage to-day;  
The other’s fame lies in the dust concealed.

Guido from Guido wrests our native bay, 97  
And born, belike, already is that same  
Shall chase both songsters from the nest away.

A breath of wind — no more — is earthly fame, 100  
And now this way it blows and that way now,  
And as it changes quarter, changes name.

Ten centuries hence, what greater fame hast thou, 103  
Stripping the flesh off late, than if thou’dst died  
Ere thou wast done with *gee-gee* and *bow-wow*?

Ten centuries hence — and that’s a briefer tide, 106  
Matched with eternity, than one eye-wink  
To that wheeled course Heaven’s tardiest sphere must ride.

His name who creeps so slow along the brink 109  
Before me, once through Tuscany rang loud;

Now in Siena even, 'tis scarce, I think,

Whispered, though he was lord there when they bowed 112  
And broke the fury of Florence, now, alas!  
As much degraded as she then was proud.

All your renown is like the hue of grass, 115  
Which comes and goes; who caused it first to start  
Green from the ground, he makes it fade and pass.”

“True words,” said I, “that rightly teach my heart 118  
Meekness, and prick my blown-up self-esteem;  
But of whom spak'st thou in the latter part?”

“Of Provenzan Salvani; his extreme 121  
Presumption brought him here,” said he;  
“he sought To tread down all Siena under him.

Thus hath he gone, and goes, and resteth not 124  
Ever since he died, for those who yonder were  
O'erweening bold, in this coin pay the scot.”

“But if,” said I, “the soul who takes no care 127  
For his repentance till his latter end  
Must wait below, and thence, if no good prayer

Aid him, is not permitted to ascend 130  
Till he have passed his life's length there perforce  
Then by what means was his admittance gained?”

And he: “In full mid-splendour of his course 133  
He in Siena's market went and stood,

Of his free-will, all shame thrown out of doors;

And, to redeem his friend from servitude 136  
In Charles's dungeon, there he bore to do  
A thing he winced at in his very blood.

I've said enough; my speech is dark, 'tis true, 139  
But soon thy neighbours shall do so to thee  
That thou shalt learn to write the gloss thereto.

That deed undid the ban and set him free.” 142

*The Images.*

*The Penance of the Proud: the Heavy Stones.* On this Cornice the penance consists in submission to the opposite virtue. The heads that were held high are now bowed in a necessary humility beneath the weight of sinfulness externalized as cold and heavy stone; and the eyes that looked down upon their neighbours are now unable to look up. (That, incidentally, is why the “Whip” of Pride is placed opposite the Mouth of the hollow way, so as to be seen by the soul on its arrival and before it assumes its burden.)

The Proud: (1) *Pride of Race*: Humbert Aldobrandesco the aristocrat; (2) *Pride of Achievement*: Oderisi the artist; (3) *Pride of Domination*: Provenzano Salvani the despot.

*Notes.*

ll. 1-24: *Our Father*, etc.: this is the Prayer of the Proud: the *Paternoster*, expanded by a brief meditation upon each clause, directed throughout to the virtue of Humility.

*Clause 1.* (ll.1-3): *in the heavens* (both the Gk. and the Vulgate have the plural here) *nowise as circumscribed*: i.e. not as implying that God is either confined spatially to the spheres or excluded from converse with any part of His creation, but acknowledging that the Angels (Intelligences) which were

His first works (“effects”) are nearest and dearest to Him, because most like Himself. (This clause, a reminder to the Proud that Man is by no means the noblest of the creatures, might also serve to remind some modern writers that “the medievals” did *not* believe the entire universe to have been created for Man’s sole benefit.) There is a very illuminating passage on the meaning of “heaven” in this connexion in Charles William’s *He Came Down from Heaven* (opening paragraph).

(ll. 4-6): *Thy Name ... Power ... Love*: allusion to the Trinity.

Clause 2. (ll. 7-9): *let come ... Thy Kingdom’s peace*: the peace of the Kingdom comes by God’s initiative, not ours (cf. *John* xiv. 27).

Clause 3. (ll. 10-12): *Thine angels offer up their wills*: as the joy of the blessed Angels is the perpetual sacrifice of their own wills to God, so should man’s be.

Clause 4. (ll. 13-15): *our daily manna*: the spiritual bread which is Christ (*John* vi. 31-3 and cf. the “supersubstantial bread” of *Vulg. Matt.* vi. n), without which our own efforts are self-defeating. (A petition for material bread would be meaningless in Purgatory.)

Clause 5. (ll. 16-18): *nor regard our merits*: an echo from the Canon of the Mass (*non aestimator meriti*) at the prayer for fellowship in the communion of saints (“not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences” — *Book of Common Prayer*).

Clauses 6 and 7. (ll. 19-21): *the old foe*: Satan (“that old serpent, which is the devil”, *Rev.* xx. 2); translating “deliver us from the Evil One”, as in R.V. margin. For this task Man’s strength is insufficient.

l. 22-4: *this last prayer*, etc.: the petition against temptation and the assaults of the devil is unnecessary for those in Purgatory, who are no longer able to sin; but the Proud, who in their lifetime cared for nobody but themselves, now learn to pray for those they have left behind on earth (and possibly also in Ante-Purgatory, see Canto viii and Images).

l. 31 *sqq.*: *if a good word*, etc.: The bond of prayer and charity between the Church on earth and the Church Expectant should be mutual; the souls in Purgatory pray for us and we for them, as the Saints in Heaven pray for all and further the petitions of all.

l. 47: *him whom I still followed*: i.e. Virgil.

l. 48: *was not manifest*: the speaker was so bent beneath his burden that his face was not visible.

ll. 58-9: *a great man called me son, Guillim Aldobrandesco*: the speaker is Humbert (Omberto) of the great Ghibelline family of the Aldobrandeschi, counts of Santaflora, whose perpetual strife with Siena is mentioned in vi. 11. In 1259, the Sienese, exasperated by his arrogance, stormed the stronghold of Campagnatico and killed him. The habit of pride which still clings to him makes him begin by boasting of his father’s greatness; his new-learned humility makes him quickly correct himself— “I do not know if you ever heard of him.”

l. 63: *the common mother of humanity*: prince or peasant, we are alike sons of Eve; moreover, our First Parents fell by pride; hence Humbert had doubly “forgotten Eve”.

l. 68: *all my kin*: the whole Aldobrandeschi family shortly became extinct, and their possessions passed into Sienese hands.

l. 70: *till God be satisfied for sin*: see Introduction, .

l. 79: *Oderisi*: of Gubbio (or Agobbio) in Umbria: a celebrated illuminator of manuscripts. He is said to have been summoned to Rome by Boniface VIII in 1295 to paint a number of books in the Papal library.

l. 81: *“Illuminating”*, *in the Paris phrase*: the usual Italian expression was not *illuminate* but *miniare* = to paint with *minium* (red lead), whence the word “immature”. Paris was in the fourteenth century the leading school and centre of the art of illumination, and Dante indulges in a little display of his knowledge of the right technical phrase.

l. 83: *Franco of Bologna*: little of this painter's work remains, but he is said to have been an excellent artist, and to have been employed in the Papal library at the same time as Oderisi, who now hastens to pay to his rival the honour which he would have scorned to pay in his lifetime.

l. 90: *while power to sin was mine*: i.e. "while I was still alive and well". Had he delayed repentance till his death-bed, he "would not yet be here", but would have been detained in Ante-Purgatory.

l. 93: *if no Dark Age succeed*: an artist's reputation is quickly eclipsed in the next generation unless, indeed, he is followed by a barbarous age which produces no artists at all.

ll. 94-5: *Cimabue ... Giotto*: Giovanni Cimabue (1240-1308) was a Florentine painter, highly celebrated in his time, whose art was the first to free itself from the hieratic stiffness of the Byzantine tradition. His pupil and fellow-Florentine, Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337) surpassed him in fluency of line and truth to nature, and has been called "the father of modern painting". Giotto was a personal friend of Dante, whose portrait in the Bargello at Florence is said to be by his hand.

l. 97: *Guido from Guido*: The two poets who are thus said to contest the glory of the Italian tongue are usually thought to be Guido Guinicelli of Bologna (c. 1230-r. 1276), whom we shall presently meet on the 7th Cornice (*Purg.* xxvi. 16 *sqq.*), and Dante's friend, Guido Cavalcanti (mentioned in *Inf.* x. 63 and Glossary) of Florence (c. 1256-1300). Some, however, identify the first Guido with Guittone d'Arezzo (see Canto xxvi. 124 and note) and the second with Guinicelli.

l. 98: *and born, belike, already is that same*: Most commentators suppose (without the smallest evidence) that Oderisi is here alluding to Dante himself — which would make "born, perchance, already" a highly ironical meiosis, seeing that Dante was 35 at the date he assigns to his vision. But it is more

becoming to acquit the poet of paying himself this compliment, and allow him to be speaking generally.

l. 105: *ere thou wast done with "gee-gee" and "bow-wow"*: (lit. "with *pappo* and *dindi*") — baby-talk for "food" and "money"): "while you were still in the nursery".

l. 108: *Heaven's tardiest sphere*: the outermost sphere, that of the Fixed Stars; "the almost imperceptible movement which it makes from west to east, at the rate of a degree in a hundred years" — Dante, *Convivio*, ii. 15. (Note that in its *daily* motion from *east to west* the outermost sphere is, of course, the swiftest; but in its *proper* motion from *west to east*, the slowest. The motion of the Primum Mobile is incalculable, and the Empyrean, being beyond space, cannot be said to have motion at all.) (See Dante's Universe, *Inf.* .)

l. 112-13: *when they bowed and broke the fury of Florence*: i.e. at the Battle of Montaperti (see *Inf.* Introduction, ; *Inf.* x. 85; xxxii. 81 and note).

l. 121: *Provenzan(o) Salvani*: a powerful Sienese nobleman, leader of the Tuscan Ghibellines after Montaperti, when he was one of those who urged the destruction of Florence (see *Inf.* x. 92 and note). He was killed in 1269, when the Sienese were defeated at Colle di Valterra (see Canto xiii. n 5-19).

l. 127: *the soul who takes no care*: Dante, knowing (no doubt from public report) that Provenzan had remained arrogant to the day of his death, asks how it is that he has been *in* Purgatory, "ever since he died", and was not detained with the other Late Repentant on the Terrace below. Oderisi tells him how one heroic act of humility done for a friend's sake availed to "undo the ban". This is Dante's only instance of a sinner's being released from the "place of waiting" as a consequence of his *own* conduct — in every other case he has to depend upon the charity of others. Charity is the operative word: the time is redeemed only by charity, bestowed or received (cf. vi. 37 and note).

ll. 133-8: *in full mid-splendour ... his very blood*: In order to procure the ransom of a friend (probably Mino dei Mini) who had been taken prisoner (? at Tagliacozzo) by Charles of Anjou, Provenzan took his stand in the public square at Siena and begged from the passers-by.

l. 140: *thy neighbours shall do so to thee*: Oderisi hints that Dante himself will soon experience, in the days of his exile and ruin, the humiliation of having to ask for money.

## Canto XII



THE STORY. *As he goes along, Dante sees graven upon the floor of the Cornice images representing the sin and fall of Pride. The Poets are met by the Angel of Humility, who erases the first P from Dante's forehead and, pronouncing the appropriate Beatitude, guides them up by the Pass of Pardon. Already, with the purging of Pride, the penitent's feet move more lightly.*

So, step for step, like oxen in the yoke, <sup>1</sup>  
Beside that burdened soul I held my way  
So long as my kind schoolmaster would brook;

But when he said: "Now leave him; come, I say, <sup>4</sup>  
Press on; for here must each with sail and oar  
Urge the ship forward strongly as he may,"

I raised me, as good walkers should, and bore <sup>7</sup>  
My body upright, though the thoughts in me  
Remained bowed down and shrunken as before.

I'd put on speed and was most willingly <sup>10</sup>  
Following my master's footsteps, he and I  
Showing how fleet of foot we both could be,

When he addressed me: "Downward cast thine eye; <sup>13</sup>  
For solace of the way, 'twere good thou fall  
To scanning what beneath thy feet may be."