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| Top of Form   |  | | --- | |  |   Bottom of Form   |  | | --- | | **Dante Alighieri (1265–1321).  The Divine Comedy: Inferno** | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | “THROUGH me you pass into the city of woe: |  | | Through me you pass into eternal pain: |  | | Through me among the people lost for aye. |  | | Justice the founder of my fabric moved: |  | | To rear me was the task of Power divine, | *5* | | Supremest Wisdom, and primeval Love. |  | | Before me things create were none, save things |  | | Eternal, and eternal I endure. |  | | All hope abandon, ye who enter here.” |  | | Such characters, in color dim, I mark’d | *10* | | Over a portal’s lofty arch inscribed. |  | | Whereat I thus: “Master, these words import |  | | Hard meaning.” He as one prepared replied: |  | | “Here thou must all distrust behind thee leave; |  | | Here be vile fear extinguish’d. We are come | *15* | | Where I have told thee we shall see the souls |  | | To misery doom’d, who intellectual good |  | | Have lost.” And when his hand he had stretch’d forth |  | | To mine, with pleasant looks, whence I was cheer’d, |  | | Into that secret place he led me on. | *20* | | Here sighs, with lamentations and loud moans, |  | | Resounded through the air pierced by no star, |  | | That e’en I wept at entering. Various tongues, |  | | Horrible languages, outcries of woe, |  | | Accents of anger, voices deep and hoarse, | *25* | | With hands together smote that swell’d the sounds, |  | | Made up a tumult, that forever whirls |  | | Round through that air with solid darkness stain’d, |  | | Like to the sand that in the whirlwind flies. |  | | I then, with horror yet encompast, cried: | *30* | | “O master! what is this I hear? what race |  | | Are these, who seem so overcome with woe?” |  | | He thus to me: “This miserable fate |  | | Suffer the wretched souls of those, who lived |  | | Without or praise or blame, with that ill band | *35* | | Of angels mix’d, who nor rebellious proved, |  | | Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves |  | | Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth |  | | Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth |  | | Of Hell receives them, lest the accursed tribe | *40* | | Should glory thence with exultation vain.” |  | | I then: “Master! what doth aggrieve them thus, |  | | That they lament so loud?” He straight replied: |  | | “That will I tell thee briefly. These of death |  | | No hope may entertain: and their blind life | *45* | | So meanly passes, that all other lots |  | | They envy. Fame of them the world hath none, |  | | Nor suffers; Mercy and Justice scorn them both. |  | | Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by.” |  | | And I, who straightway look’d, beheld a flag, | *50* | | Which whirling ran around so rapidly, |  | | That it no pause obtain’d: and following came |  | | Such a long train of spirits, I should ne’er |  | | Have thought that death so many had despoil’d. |  | | When some of these I recognized, I saw | *55* | | And knew the shade of him, who to base fear |  | | Yielding, abjured his high estate. Forthwith |  | | I understood, for certain, this the tribe |  | | Of those ill spirits both to God displeasing |  | | And to His foes. These wretches, who ne’er lived, | *60* | | Went on in nakedness, and sorely stung |  | | By wasps and hornets, which bedew’d their cheeks |  | | With blood, that, mix’d with tears, dropp’d to their feet, |  | | And by disgustful worms was gather’d there. |  | | Then looking further onwards, I beheld | *65* | | A throng upon the shore of a great stream: |  | | Whereat I thus: “Sir! grant me now to know |  | | Whom here we view, and whence impell’d they seem |  | | So eager to pass o’er, as I discern |  | | Through the blear light?” He thus to me in few: | *70* | | “This shalt thou know, soon as our steps arrive |  | | Beside the woful tide of Acheron.” |  | | Then with eyes downward cast, and fill’d with shame, |  | | Fearing my words offensive to his ear, |  | | Till we had reach’d the river, I from speech | *75* | | Abstain’d. And lo! toward us in a bark |  | | Comes on an old man, hoary white with eld, |  | | Crying, “Woe to you, wicked spirits! hope not |  | | Ever to see the sky again. I come |  | | To take you to the other shore across, | *80* | | Into eternal darkness, there to dwell |  | | In fierce heat and in ice. And thou, who there |  | | Standest, live spirit! get thee hence, and leave |  | | These who are dead.” But soon as he beheld |  | | I left them not, “By other way,” said he, | *85* | | “By other haven shalt thou come to shore, |  | | Not by this passage; thee a nimbler boat |  | | Must carry.” Then to him thus spake my guide: |  | | “Charon! thyself torment not: so ’tis will’d, |  | | Where will and power are one: ask thou no more.” | *90* | | Straightway in silence fell the shaggy cheeks |  | | Of him, the boatman o’er the livid lake, |  | | Around whose eyes glared wheeling flames. Meanwhile |  | | Those spirits, faint and naked, color changed, |  | | And gnash’d their teeth, soon as the cruel words | *95* | | They heard. God and their parents they blasphemed, |  | | The human kind, the place, the time, and seed, |  | | That did engender them and give them birth, |  | | Then all together sorely wailing drew |  | | To the curst strand, that every man must pass | *100* | | Who fears not God. Charon, demoniac form, |  | | With eyes of burning coal, collects them all, |  | | Beckoning, and each, that lingers, with his oar |  | | Strikes. As fall off the light autumnal leaves |  | | One still another following, till the bough | *105* | | Strews all its honours on the earth beneath; |  | | E’en in like manner Adam’s evil brood |  | | Cast themselves, one by one, down from the shore, |  | | Each at a beck, as falcon at his call. |  | | Thus go they over through the umber’d wave; | *110* | | And ever they on the opposing bank |  | | Be landed, on this side another throng |  | | Still gathers. “Son,” thus spake the courteous guide, |  | | “Those who die subject to the wrath of God |  | | All here together come from every clime | *115* | | And to o’erpass the river are not loth: |  | | For so Heaven’s justice goads them on, that fear |  | | Is turn’d into desire. Hence ne’er hath past |  | | Good spirit. If of thee Charon complain, |  | | Now mayst thou know the import of his words.” | *120* | | This said, the gloomy region trembling shook |  | | So terribly, that yet with clammy dews |  | | Fear chills my brow. The sad earth gave a blast, |  | | That, lightening, shot forth a vermilion flame, |  | | Which all my senses conquer’d quite, and I | *125* | | Down dropp’d, as one with sudden slumber seized. |  |  |  | | --- | |  | |  | | |  |

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