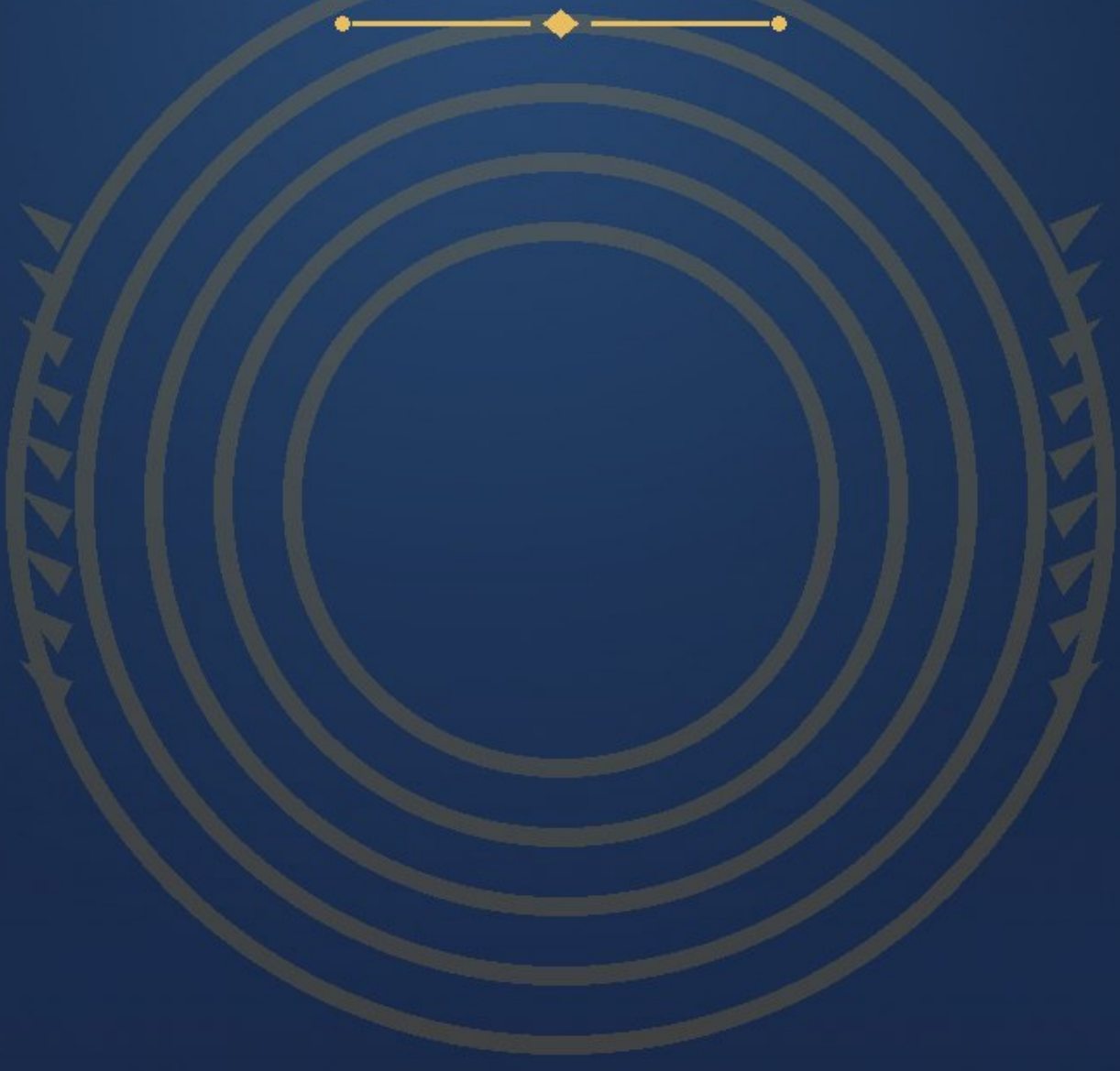
The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: The Inferno

Dante Alighieri



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THE DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

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DIVINE
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OF
DANTE
ALIGHIERI

A TRANSLATION

BY JAMES ROMANES SIBBALD

EDINBURGH
PUBLISHED BY DAVID DOUGLAS
MDCCCLXXXIV

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THE INFERNO

A TRANSLATION
WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY

JAMES ROMANES SIBBALD

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PREFACE.

A Translator who has never felt his self-imposed task to be a light one may be excused from entering into explanations that would but too naturally take the form of apologies. I will only say that while I have striven to be as faithful as I could to the words as well as to the sense of my author, the following translation is not offered as being always closely literal. The kind of verse employed I believe to be that best fitted to give some idea, however faint, of the rigidly measured and yet easy strength of Dante's _terza rima_; but whoever chooses to adopt it with its constantly recurring demand for rhymes necessarily becomes in some degree its servant. Such students as wish to follow the poet word by word will always find what they need in Dr. J. A. Carlyle's excellent prose version of the _Inferno_, a work to which I have to acknowledge my own indebtedness at many points.

The matter of the notes, it is needless to say, has been in very great part found ready to my hand in existing Commentaries. My edition of John Villani is that of Florence, 1823.

The Note at page cx was printed before it had been resolved to provide the volume with a copy of Giotto's portrait of Dante. I have to thank the Council of the Arundel Society for their kind permission to Messrs. Dawson to make use of their lithograph of Mr. Seymour

Kirkup's invaluable sketch in the production of the Frontispiece--a privilege that would have been taken more advantage of had it not been deemed advisable to work chiefly from the photograph of the same sketch, given in the third volume of the late Lord Vernon's sumptuous and rare edition of the _Inferno_ (Florence, 1865). In this Vernon photograph, as well as in the Arundel Society's chromolithograph, the disfiguring mark on the face caused by the damage to the plaster of the fresco is faithfully reproduced. A less degree of fidelity has been observed in the Frontispiece; although the restoration has not been carried the length of replacing the lost eye.

EDINBURGH, _February_, 1884.

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