

close of the first canto of his *Purgatorio*,* Dante depicts with inimitable grace the morning fragrance, and the trembling light on the mirror of the gently-moved and distant sea (*il tremolar della marina*); and in the fifth canto, the bursting of the clouds, and the swelling of the rivers, when, after the battle of Campaldino, the body of Buonconte da Montefeltro was lost in the Arno.† The entrance into the thick grove of the terrestrial paradise is drawn from the poet's remembrance of the pine forest near Ravenna, "*la pineta in sul lito di chiassi*,"‡ where the matin song of the birds resounds through the leafy boughs. The local fidelity of this picture of nature contrasts in the celestial paradise with the "stream of light flashing innumerable sparks,§ which fall into the flowers on the shore, and then, as if inebriated with their sweet fragrance, plunge back into the stream, while others rise around them." It would almost seem as if this fiction had its origin in the poet's recollection of that peculiar and rare phosphorescent condition of the ocean, when luminous points appear to rise from the breaking waves, and, spreading themselves over the surface of the waters, convert the liquid plain into a moving sea of sparkling stars. The remarkable conciseness of the style of the *Divina Commedia* adds to the depth and earnestness of the impression which it produces.

In lingering on Italian ground, although avoiding the frigid pastoral romances, I would here refer, after Dante, to the plaintive sonnet in which Petrarch describes the impression

* Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto i., v. 115:

"L' alba vinceva l' ora mattutina
Che fuggia 'nnanzi, sì che di lontano
Conobbi il tremolar della marina"

† *Purg.*, canto v., v. 109-127:

"Ben sai come nell' aer si raccoglie
Quell' umido vapor, che in acqua riede,
Tosto che sale, dove 'l freddo il coglie"

‡ *Purg.*, canto xxviii., v. 1-24.

§ *Parad.*, canto xxx., v. 61-69:

"E vidi lume in forma di riviera
Fulvido di fulgori intra due rive
Dipinte di mirabil primavera.
Di tal fumana uscian faville vive
E d' ogni parte si mettean ne' fiori,
Quasi rubin, che oro circonscrive.
Poi come inebriate dagli odori,
Riprofondavan se nel miro gurge
E s' una entrava, un'altra n' usciva fuori."

I do not make any extracts from the Canzones of the *Vita Nuova*, because the similitudes and images which they contain do not belong to the purely natural range of terrestrial phenomena.