

**DANTE: AN ELEMENTARY
BOOK FOR THOSE WHO
SEEK IN THE GREAT POET
THE TEACHER SPIRITUAL LIFE**

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Dante: An Elementary Book for Those who Seek in the Great Poet the Teacher Spiritual Life by
Henry Dwight Sedgwick

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HENRY DWIGHT SEDGWICK

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BOOKS BY HENRY DWIGHT SEDGWICK

ITALY IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

A SHORT HISTORY OF ITALY

AN APOLOGY FOR OLD MAIDS AND OTHER ESSAYS

ESSAYS ON GREAT WRITERS

LIFE OF FRANCIS PARKMAN, ETC.

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TO
S. M. S.

*Qual vuol gentili donna parere
Vada con lei.*

646577

O Friend, hope in Him while thou livest,
know Him while thou livest,
For in life is thy release.
If thy bonds be not broken while thou livest,
What hope of deliverance in death?

.
If He is found now, He is found then:
If not, we go but to dwell in the city of Death.
If thou hast union now, thou shalt have it hereafter.

.
Kabir saith: It is the spirit of the quest that helpeth.
I am the slave of the spirit of the quest.

(Kabir)

Notre cœur est plus grand que tout le monde.

ST. FRANÇOIS DE SALES

Our whole doctrine is nothing else but an instruction to
show how man may create a Kingdom of light within him-
self.

JACOB BOEHME

PREFACE

ANOTHER elementary book on Dante needs an excuse. My excuse is that interest in Dante among people who have not the time or the inclination to become serious students is very widespread, more so perhaps than ever before, and that as these people feel various sorts of curiosity about Dante, there may be those among them whose attitude towards Dante coincides with mine.

Some readers are eager to learn about the political turmoil in which he lived, about Guelphs and Ghibelines, about Blacks and Whites, about Pope Boniface VIII and Prince Philip of Valois. Others are drawn to Dante's theology, to mediaeval Christianity, to the doctrines of Albertus Magnus, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas; others still are chiefly concerned with Dante's exposition of mediaeval science, his geography, the Ptolemaic astronomy, and similar matters; and so on, through a wide range of taste and curiosity. All such readers can find on any library shelf any number of books from which to slake their thirst. For centuries scholars have been delving in the past to unearth facts about Dante's life, to discover explanations for the references and allusions in the *Divine Comedy*, and to trace the sources of his learning. The early commentators, Boccaccio, Benvenuto da Imola, Francesco da Buti, and their successors, the moderns, Witte, Ozanam, Scartazzini,