

**THE LYRICAL POEMS OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI: INCLUDING
THE POEMS OF THE VITA
NUOVA AND CONVITO**

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The Lyrical Poems of Dante Alighieri: Including the Poems of the Vita Nuova and Convito by
Dante Alighieri & Charles Lyell

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DANTE ALIGHIERI



Edizione a cura di [illegibile]

[illegibile]

THE
LYRICAL POEMS

OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI;

INCLUDING
THE POEMS OF THE VITA NUOVA AND CONVITO.

TRANSLATED
BY CHARLES LYELL, A.M.,
FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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MDCCLV.



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TO
SIR WILLIAM JACKSON HOOKER,
K.E., LL.D., F.R.S., ETC. ETC.
DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL GARDEN OF KEW.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I AM happy to have this opportunity of recording our long friendship and my obligations to you. The pleasure which I found in your society, when a humble fellow-labourer in aiding your earliest botanical work, "The British Jungermannia," awakened an enthusiasm which your kindness, constant correspondence, and admirable publications have never suffered to expire; a spark of it remains; and now, when age and infirmities have put an end to out-door pursuits, has been expending itself in reflection on the writings of Dante. This little volume is the result. Allow me the gratification of dedicating it to you; and of expressing thus publicly my sincerest esteem and regard.

Believe me,

My dear Sir William,

Very faithfully yours,

CHARLES LYELL.

KINROSSY,
7th March, 1845.

Tosto spero
Che altro messaggio il vero
Farà in più chiara voce manifesto.
Io venni sol per svegliare altrui.

PETRARCA.

PREFACE.

THE following are the only translations which have appeared, in English, of the Lyrical Poems of Dante. The greater part of them were published in 1835, under the title of "The Canzoniere of Dante, Italian and English," and comprehended all those given by Professor Arrivabene, in the "Amori e Rime di Dante" (Mantova 1823); to that collection are now added a few from Professor Karl Witte's "Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte" (Leipzig 1842); and others from the "Opere Minori di Dante" (Firenze 1834), by P. J. Fraticelli.

The poems of the Vita Nuova and Convito have been carefully revised, and the Canzoniere has been divided into two parts. Part 1. containing the genuine poems of Dante; Part 2. the doubtful ones. In selecting the former, I have followed Fraticelli. Among the latter are included not only those which he considers doubtful, but others which he pronounces to be spurious, and thinks he has traced to their proper authors. They have all been printed in the name of Dante, at various times, from well known ancient MSS. which give his name to them; and the question of authenticity as to some in Part 2. is far from settled.

In the present edition (in deference to the publisher) the Italian text has been omitted. This, the translator has reason to regret, as it would afford a ready apology for much that is strange or obscure. It may be presumed, however, that the reader who is disposed to confront the translation with the original, will not be unprovided with the works of Dante. The two publications which have been mentioned, of Fraticelli and Professor Witte, are particularly desirable for that purpose, and are very valuable, from giving the various readings, and being copiously enriched with original notes, and with interesting critical

and controversial dissertations. The German translation, too, occasionally differs materially from mine.

The controversy as to the nature of the *Mistica Donna*, the allegorical lady of the poet's love, first called my particular attention to these poems. It is unquestionable that in most instances they are intended to bear a double meaning, and that the words of Dionisi apply to them as truly as to the *Commedia* of Dante :

* «L'Interno, il mistico e 'l più prezioso della grand' opera di Dante Alighieri rimane in più luoghi quasi tesoro nascosto a scoprire : sicchè in ordine a queste segrete cose, le quali non sono nè poche nè lievi, ella par che sia

Come pittura in tenebrosa parte,
Che non si può mostrare,
Ne dar diletto di color nè d'arte."

Dante *Canz.* IX. *Amor che muori.*

To assist the student in ascertaining this internal mystical sense has been my object ; and with this view I have studied to make the translation correspond to the Italian with scrupulous exactness, line for line, and almost word for word ; the outward and literal sense being the first indispensable step towards a right understanding of the interior sense concealed under an allegory.

« Perocchè in ciascuna cosa che ha 'l dentro e 'l fuori, è impossibile venire al dentro se prima non si viene al di fuori." (*Conv. Trat.* 2. c. 1.)

Verbal fidelity is the sole merit to which such a translation as this can have any pretension. There is difficulty in making such a one readable, the want of spirit and elegance is inevitable, and it must be acknowledged, that as a representation of the original it is most unfaithful. The character of its imperfections cannot be more strongly drawn than in the language of Giuseppe Baretti, when speaking of a similar work of his own. I must be allowed to hope however, that, if applied to my translations, the portrait is an exaggeration.

« Io non vo estendermi in apologie della mia Traduzione, che, considerata la differente indole delle due Lingue, ho fatta ad verbum quanto m'è stato possibile. Una Traduzione libera non fu mia intenzione di fare, perchè non avrebbe quadrato col mio Disegno. Stando attaccato a' miei originali quanto dovetti qui stare, mi fu impossibile conservare alcuna delle loro bellezze ; e chiunque sa due

* Prefaz. alla edit. Bodoniana della *Div. Com.*