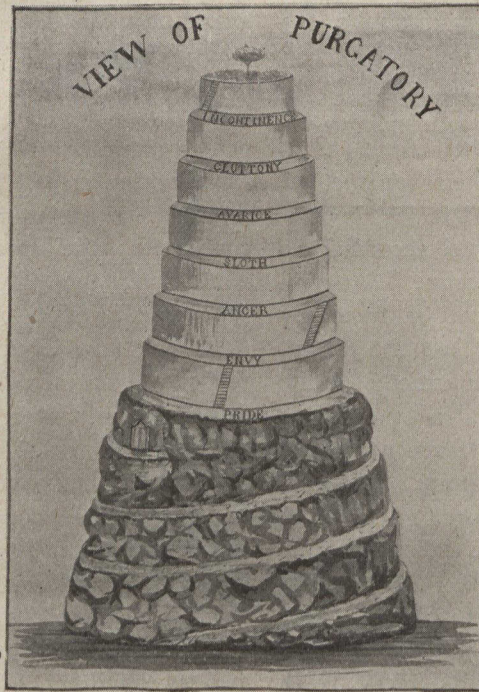


rible punishments which his Vision affords. You must remember that the age in which he lived abounded in such things; the penal codes were barbarous, and human life and suffering lightly thought of. The common view of Purgatory and Hell was far more gross and horrible than that of Dante, where it is simply terrible. You have only to read some of the

ter the Earthly Paradise and the antichamber of Heaven. Here Dante sees a procession of Apocalyptic splendour, saints, fathers, martyrs, and symbolic figures. Here Virgil leaves him, and Beatrice arrives in a car of splendid glory. She descends, and approaching Dante veiled she reproaches him bitterly for having wandered from the right way, and after deep



other visions recorded of the future life to be convinced of the fact. Nor can Dante be justly accused of carrying personal enmities into his descriptions of the penalties described. This has been done, but I am sure only by those who have given a very superficial study to this great work. Dante was governed by a most rigid and undeviating justice, though he often lets us perceive the tenderness of his own nature.

At the summit of Purgatory they en-

contrition on his part he is forgiven, and plunged first into the river of Lethe, or forgetfulness, and then into the river of Eunoe, or happy memory. The meaning of this is obvious. Beatrice now consents to unveil herself and to smile on her follower. From the Earthly Paradise they ascend to Paradise proper, first to the Heaven of the Moon, where are those who have broken their vows of virginity, and have not attained to a higher sphere.