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A NOTE ON AN ALLUSION TO ROME IN THE 'DIVINA COMMEDIA.'

As Dante visited Rome in the year of Jubilee, A.D. 1300, allusions to the city are naturally to be found in the pages of the *Divina Commedia*. The word 'Rome' occurs seventeen times, mostly in relation to historical events. There are also allusions to the Tiber and the Castle of St Angelo; and the Vatican and the old basilica of St Peter have furnished Dante with illustrations to his poem.

Among these allusions is one upon which it seemed possible that more light might be thrown by a further examination of the topography of the city. This is in *Inf.* XVIII, lines 28—33:

Come i Roman, per l' esercito molto
L' anno del Giubbileo, su per lo ponte
Hanno a passar la gente modo tolto :
Che dall' un lato tutti hanno la fronte
Verso il castello, e vanno a Santo Pietro,
Dall' altera sponda vanno verso il monte....

Here 'lo ponte' refers of course to the Ponte di Sant' Angelo, then the only bridge over the Tiber at that part of the city. 'Il monte' has been variously conjectured to be the Janiculum, or Monte Giordano. The first solution to be proposed, viz. the Janiculum, has been repeated by nearly all commentators. When, however, it was observed that the Janiculum was on the same side of the river as St Peter's, some explained the difficulty by remarking that the bend in the Tiber would bring the Janiculum into sight on crossing the bridge, although it could not be reached except by returning to the Vatican side: others suggested Monte Giordano, an elevation on the opposite side of the river to the Vatican, but some distance away from it, and unassociated with pilgrims. In fact, this hill was of late mediaeval formation: of small importance, it was reached by a narrow and inconvenient road. This later explanation, then, is not generally accepted¹. Would it be possible to admit as an alternative Monte Brianzo? This was an ancient hill, marked in maps representing Rome of the fourth century. It was on the opposite side of the river from St Peter's, and thus fulfils the requirements of the text. The Via di Monte Brianzo which led from the hill to the Ponte di Sant' Angelo was part of the great pilgrimage road to the Basilica. It was originally a road of considerable width, but the recent embankment of the Tiber, which, by

¹ See Dr Paget Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary* and Dr Butler's edition of the *Inferno*

necessitating the removal of houses on the bank, has exposed the opening of the Via di Monte Brianzo, has also narrowed the road itself and disguised its historical importance. At the junction of the bridge and of the road still stands the ancient Albergo dell' Orso, where Dante is said to have stayed. One ancient window remains on the outside wall of the building, and the interior is said to be practically as it was in Dante's time. Along the road to Monte Brianzo were the shops of the Florentine bankers and goldsmiths, where the Florentine pilgrims congregated¹. It would therefore be reasonable to suppose that to a Florentine Monte Brianzo would be 'Il Monte.' The hill was levelled about 1870 when many new buildings were erected there.

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GOETHE'S 'TASSO' IN ENGLAND.

On page 225, note 1, of the present volume of the *Modern Language Review*, I printed a letter from William Taylor to Henry Crabb Robinson concerning Goethe's *Iphigenie*. By an unfortunate oversight on my part, this letter was there described as unpublished; whereas it was actually edited by J. M. Carré in his article in the *Revue Germanique*, vol. VIII, no. 1, p. 36.

In this same article M. Carré refers to a fragmentary translation of Goethe's *Tasso* made by Crabb Robinson during his first stay in Germany, and to which allusion is made in the published *Diary*. M. Carré was fortunate enough to discover this translation in a bundle of loose papers amongst the Crabb Robinson documents in the Dr Williams' Library. I take the opportunity of giving a more detailed account of the fragment in question.

The allusion in the printed *Diary*², which is taken from a letter to his brother, Thomas, dated November 14, 1802, is as follows: 'After, perhaps, an unsuccessful attempt to pen a few English iambics in a

¹ See Rodolfo Lanciani, *The Golden Days of the Renaissance in Rome*, where he says that the year 1300 is 'usually called the Giubileo di Dante, because the divine poet is said to have visited Rome on that occasion, and to have met there Immanuel ben Salomo, from whom he learned the few Hebrew words which appear in the "Divina Commedia".' Lanciani also favours the tradition that Dante lodged in the Albergo dell' Orso.

² *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, edited by T. Sadler, 1872, vol. I, p. 64.