

**DANTE AND BEATRICE: A
PLAY FOUNDED
ON INCIDENTS IN
DANTE'S VITA NUOVA**

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Dante and Beatrice: A Play Founded on Incidents in Dante's Vita Nuova by Emily Underdown

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EMILY UNDERDOWN

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Dante's Dream (AFTER D. G. ROSSETTI),
(By permission of the Trustees of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool).

DANTE AND BEATRICE

A PLAY FOUNDED ON INCIDENTS IN
DANTE'S *VITA NUOVA*.

BY

EMILY UNDERDOWN

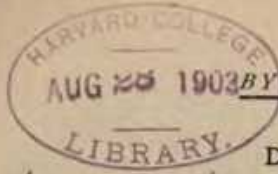
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PREFACE.

IN the following Play, suggested by incidents in Dante's *Vita Nuova*, the narrative of that work has been followed as closely as seemed compatible with dramatic construction. The principal deviations are the introduction of Scene IV. at an earlier point in the story than the corresponding incident in the *Vita Nuova*, the placing of Beatrice's death simultaneously with Dante's account of his illness and dream instead of somewhat later, and the interpolation of the scenes between Beatrice, Giovanna, and Primavera (Scene VI.), and between Beatrice and Casella (Scene IX.), which are only indirectly associated with passages in Dante's work. The exigencies of the drama have also caused Giovanna and Primavera to figure much more prominently and to be introduced as two separate personages, whereas by Dante (*Vita Nuova XXIV.*) the latter is simply a fancy name bestowed on Giovanna and is only spoken of once; a name has been given to the lady generally known as the "lady of the screen"; and the character of Tessa has been introduced and made to figure as the unnamed bride of *Vita Nuova XIV.* In introducing the idea that Beatrice not only knew of Dante's love for her, but to some extent responded, considerable licence has been taken.

The sonnet in Scene VI. is a translation from "Piangete, Amanti" (*Vita Nuova VIII.*), and the song in Scene IX. an adaptation from "Ballata io vo." (*Vita Nuova XII.*). In the latter a metre has been purposely chosen that lends itself more easily to musical setting than the complicated one of the original. In other instances occasional lines or portions of lines actually

translated from Dante's work have been indicated by italics, and where passages occur in which the general outline of the same has been somewhat closely followed a footnote, giving reference, will be found. I should wish to take this opportunity of expressing my cordial acknowledgments to Miss Elsie Fogerty, who was good enough to go through the play in Manuscript and to give me the benefit of her advice and large practical experience on several points connected with the stage arrangements; to Miss Isabel Bonus, whose designs for the costumes and properties will be found in the Costume Edition, and whose kind and sympathetic interest in the work greatly assisted me; and to Mr. Rutland Boughton, whose admirable arrangement of the musical portion cannot fail to add effectiveness to any stage production.*

* For stage directions, descriptions and illustrations of costumes, properties, &c., see Acting and Costume editions.