

THE EARLY LIVES OF DANTE

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The early lives of Dante by Philip H. Wicksteed

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PHILIP H. WICKSTEED

**THE EARLY
LIVES OF DANTE**

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THE EARLY LIVES
OF DANTE





THE EARLY LIVES
OF DANTE TRANSLATED BY PHILIP H.
WICKSTEED M.A.

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PREFACE

THE greater part of Boccaccio's Life of Dante, together with the whole of Bruni's, was translated by me in 1898, and was issued to my pupils, though not formally published. The work was hastily executed and contained many errors. In 1901, Mr. James Robinson Smith issued an admirable translation of both the lives, in the series of "Yale Studies in English." He was good enough to acknowledge indebtedness to my work, "for the rendering of certain words and phrases."

In completing and revising my translation for the present edition I have throughout consulted his work and by its aid have detected some mistakes in my own. Many more he would have enabled me to discover had I not already been fortunate enough to find them out for myself. I must also, in my turn, reciprocate the acknowledgment of indebtedness for "the rendering of certain words and phrases," especially in the new matter of this edition; but in the great majority of cases coincidences of expression, on whichever side the

priority lies, must be regarded as having risen independently.

Our principles of translation differ considerably. Mr. Smith's happy selection of words and his practice of breaking up the sentences of the original, have given a lucidity and precision to his work, which must excite the admiration of his rivals and the gratitude of his readers.

But for myself, whatever lesser measure of success I might have been able to attain on the same lines, I had already deliberately sacrificed to an attempt (how successful I can hardly judge) to retain something of the very special flavour of Boccaccio's style, with its quaint harmonious meanderings, flowing, in long and intricate windings through dependent clauses and participial and parenthetical constructions, to the uniting periods which we reach at last (if they come at all), with a half-surprised amusement at the long delayed gathering of the waters into a single channel. The task of the reader is certainly not lightened by this method, nor is sharpness of impression furthered by it. But, I would fain hope that some compensating pleasure, some sense of far away harmonies, together with some closer feeling of companionship with the writer, may in some cases be gained.