

# CANTO XXIV.

## ARGUMENT.

Forese points out several others by name who are here, like himself, purifying themselves from the vice of gluttony; and amongst the rest, Buonaggiunta of Lucca, with whom our Poet converses. Forese then predicts the violent end of Dante's political enemy, Corso Donati; and when he has quitted them, the Poet, in company with Statius and Virgil, arrives at another tree, from whence issue voices that record ancient examples of gluttony; and proceeding forwards, they are directed by an angel which way to ascend to the next cornice of the mountain.

OUR journey was not slacken'd by our talk,  
Nor yet our talk by journeying. Still we spake,  
And urged our travel stoutly, like a ship  
When the wind sits astern. The shadowy forms,  
That seem'd things dead and dead again, drew in  
At their deep-delved orbs rare wonder of me,  
Perceiving I had life; and I my words  
Continued, and thus spake: "He journeys<sup>1</sup> up  
Perhaps more tardily than else he would,  
For others' sake. But tell me, if thou know'st  
Where is Piccarda?<sup>2</sup> Tell me, if I see  
Any of mark, among this multitude  
Who eye me thus."—"My sister (she for whom,  
'Twixt beautiful and good,<sup>3</sup> I cannot say  
Which name was fitter) wears e'en now her crown,  
And triumphs in Olympus." Saying this,  
He added: "Since spare diet<sup>4</sup> hath so worn

<sup>1</sup> *He journeys*.—The soul of Statius perhaps proceeds more slowly, in order that he may enjoy as long as possible the company of Virgil.

<sup>2</sup> *Piccarda*.—See "Paradise," canto iii.

<sup>3</sup> *'Twixt beautiful and good*.—

"Tra bella e onesta  
Qual fu più, lasciò in dubbio."  
*Petrarca, Son. Ripensando a quel.*

<sup>4</sup> *Diet*.—Dieta.

"And dieted with fasting every day."

*Spenser, Faery Queen, b. i., c. i., st. 23.*

"Spare fast that oft with gods doth diet."

*Milton, Il Penseroso.*

Our semblance out, 'tis lawful here to name  
Each one. This," and his finger then he raised,  
"Is Buonaggiunta,<sup>1</sup>—Buonaggiunta, he  
Of Lucca: and that face beyond him, pierced  
Unto a leaner fineness than the rest,  
Had keeping of the church; he was of Tours,<sup>2</sup>  
And purges by wan abstinence away  
Bolsena's eels and cups of muscadel."<sup>3</sup>

He show'd me many others, one by one:  
And all, as they were named, seem'd well content;  
For no dark gesture I discern'd in any.

<sup>1</sup> *Buonaggiunta*.—Buonaggiunta Urbiciani, of Lucca. "There is a canzone by this poet, printed in the collection made by the Giunti (p. 209), and a sonnet to Guido Guinicelli in that made by Corbinelli (p. 169), from which we collect that he lived not about 1230, as Quadrio supposes (t. ii., p. 159), but towards the end of the thirteenth century. Concerning other poems by Buonaggiunta, that are preserved in MS. in some libraries, Crescimbeni may be consulted."—*Tiraboschi, Mr. Mathias's ed.*, v. i., p. 115. Three of these, a canzone, a sonnet, and a ballata, have been published in the "Anecdota Literaria ex MSS. Codicibus eruta," 8vo, Roma (no year), v. iii., p. 453. He is thus mentioned by our author in his "Treatise de Vulgari Eloquentia," lib. i., cap. xiii.: "Next let us come to the Tuscans, who, made senseless by their folly, arrogantly assume to themselves the title of a vernacular diction, more excellent than the rest; nor are the vulgar alone misled by this wild opinion, but many famous men have maintained it, as Guittone d'Arezzo, who never addicted himself to the polished style of the court, Buonaggiunta of Lucca, Gallo of Pisa, Mino Mocato of Sienna, and Brunetto of Florence, whose compositions, if there shall be leisure for examining them, will be found not to be in the diction of the court, but in that of their respective cities." As a specimen of Buonaggiunta's manner, the reader will take the following Sonnet from Corbinelli's Collection added to the "Bella Mano."—

"Qual uomo è in su la rota per Ventura,  
Non si rallegrì, perchè sia innalzato;  
Che quando più si mostra chiara, e pura,  
Allor si gira, ed hallo disbassato.  
E nullo prato ha sì fresca verdura,  
Che li suoi fiori non cangino stato;  
E questo saccio, che avvien per natura;  
Più grave cade, chi più è montato.

Non si dee uomo troppo rallegrare  
Di gran grandezza, nè tenere spene;  
Che egli è gran doglia, allegrezza fallire:  
Anzi si debbe molto umiliare;  
Non far soperchio, perchè aggia gran bene;  
Che ogni monte a valle dee venire."  
*La Bella Mano e Rime Antiche, ediz. Firenze, 1715, p. 170.*

"What man is raised on Fortune's wheel aloft,  
Let him not triumph in his bliss elate;  
For when she smiles with visage fair and soft,  
Then whirls she round, reversing his estate.  
Fresh was the verdure in the sunny croft,  
Yet soon the wither'd flowerets met their fate;  
And things exalted most, as chanceth oft,  
Fall from on high to earth with ruin great.  
Therefore ought none too greatly to rejoice  
In greatness, nor too fast his hope to hold:  
For one, that triumphs, great pain is to fail,  
But lowly meekness is the wiser choice;  
And he must down, that is too proud and bold:  
For every mountain stoopeth to the vale."

<sup>2</sup> *He was of Tours*.—Simon of Tours became Pope with the title of Martin IV. in 1281, and died in 1285.

<sup>3</sup> *Bolsena's eels and cups of muscadel*.—The Nidobeatina edition and the Monte Casino MS. agree in reading

"L'anguille di Bolsena in la vernaccia;"

from which it would seem, that Martin IV. refined so much on epicurism as to have his eels killed by being put into the wine called vernaccia, in order to heighten their flavour. The Latin annotator on the MS. relates that the following epitaph was inscribed on the sepulchre of the pope:

"Gaudet anguilla, quod mortuus hic jacet ille,  
Qui quasi morte reas excoibat eas."



I saw, through hunger, Ubaldino<sup>1</sup> grind  
His teeth on emptiness; and Boniface,<sup>2</sup>  
That waved the crozier<sup>3</sup> o'er a numerous flock:  
I saw the Marquis,<sup>4</sup> who had time erewhile  
To swill at Forli with less drought; yet so,  
Was one ne'er sated. I howe'er, like him  
That, gazing 'midst a crowd, singles out one,  
So singled him of Lucca; for methought  
Was none amongst them took such note of me.  
Somewhat I heard him whisper of Gentucca:<sup>5</sup>  
The sound was indistinct, and murmur'd there,<sup>6</sup>  
Where justice, that so strips them, fix'd her sting.

"Spirit!" said I, "it seems as thou wouldst fain  
Speak with me. Let me hear thee. Mutual wish  
To converse prompts, which let us both indulge."

He, answering, straight began: "Woman is born,  
Whose brow no wimple shades yet,<sup>7</sup> that shall make  
My city please thee, blame it as they may.<sup>8</sup>  
Go then with this forewarning. If aught false  
My whisper too implied, the event shall tell.  
But say, if of a truth I see the man  
Of that new lay the inventor, which begins  
With 'Ladies, ye that con the lore of love.'<sup>9</sup>"

<sup>1</sup> *Ubaldino*.—Ubaldino degli Ubaldini, of Pila, in the Florentine territory.

<sup>2</sup> *Boniface*.—Archbishop of Ravenna. By Venturi he is called Bonifazio de' Fieschi, a Genoese; by Vellutello, the son of the above-mentioned Ubaldini; and by Landino, Francioso, a Frenchman.

<sup>3</sup> *Crozier*.—It is uncertain whether the word "rocco," in the original, means a "crozier" or a "bishop's rochet," that is, his episcopal gown. In support of the latter interpretation Lombardi cites Du Fresno's Glossary, article *Roccus*: "*Rochettum hodie vocant vestem linteam episcoporum . . . quasi parvum roccum*;" and explains the verse,

"Che pasturò col rocco molte genti."

"who, from the revenues of his bishopric, supported in luxury a large train of dependents." If the reader wishes to learn more on the subject, he is referred to Monti's "Proposta," under the word "Roeco."

<sup>4</sup> *The Marquis*.—The Marchese de' Rigogliosi, of Forli. When his butler told him it was commonly reported in the city that he did nothing but drink, he is said to have answered, "And do you tell them that I am always thirsty."

<sup>5</sup> *Gentucca*.—Of this lady it is thought that our poet became enamoured during his exile. See note to canto xxxi. 56.

<sup>6</sup> *There*.—In the throat, the part in which they felt the torment inflicted by the divine justice.

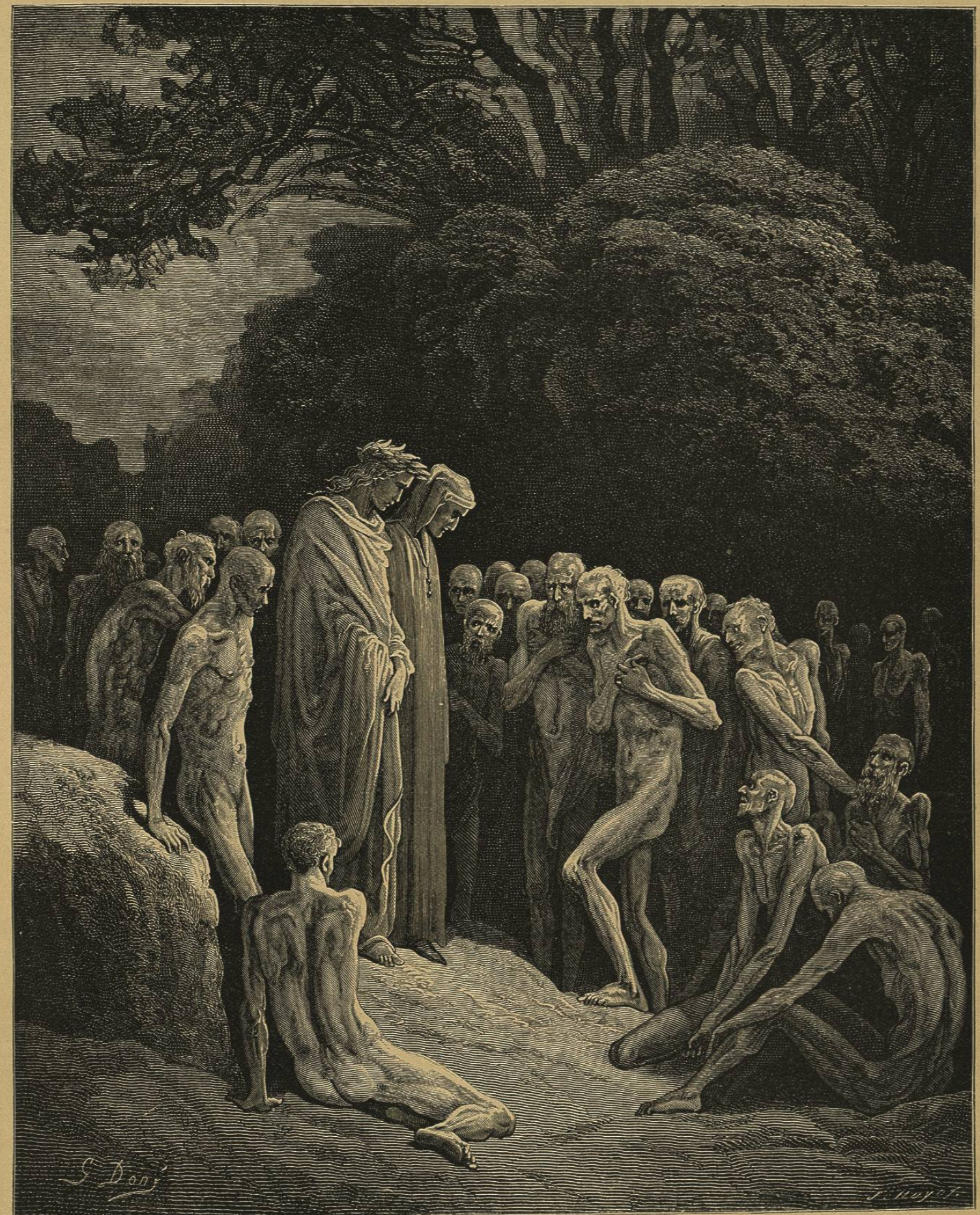
<sup>7</sup> *Whose brow no wimple shades yet*.—"Who has not yet assumed the dress of a woman."

<sup>8</sup> *Blame it as they may*.—See "Hell," canto xxi. 39.

<sup>9</sup> *Ladies, ye that con the lore of love*.—

"Donne ch' avete intelletto d'amore."

The first verse of a canzone in our author's "Vita Nuova."



The shadowy forms,  
That seem'd things dead and dead again, drew in  
At their deep-delved orbs rare wonder of me,  
Perceiving I had life.

*Canto XXIV., lines 4-7.*