

Of Montemurlo<sup>1</sup> still: the Cerchi still  
 Were in Acone's parish: nor had haply  
 From Valdigueve past the Buondelmonti.  
 The city's malady hath ever source  
 In the confusion of its persons, as  
 The body's, in variety of food:  
 And the blind bull<sup>2</sup> falls with a steeper plunge,  
 Than the blind lamb: and oftentimes one sword  
 Doth more and better execution,  
 Than five. Mark Luni; Urbisaglia<sup>3</sup> mark;  
 How they are gone; and after them how go  
 Chiusi and Sinigaglia:<sup>4</sup> and 'twill seem  
 No longer new, or strange to thee, to hear  
 That families fail, when cities have their end.  
 All things that appertain to ye, like yourselves,  
 Are mortal: but mortality in some  
 Ye mark not; they endure so long, and you  
 Pass by so suddenly. And as the moon<sup>5</sup>  
 Doth, by the rolling of her heavenly sphere,  
 Hide and reveal the strand unceasingly;  
 So fortune deals with Florence. Hence admire not  
 At what of them I tell thee, whose renown  
 Time covers, the first Florentines. I saw  
 The Ughi,<sup>6</sup> Catilini, and Filippi,  
 The Alberichi, Greci, and Ormanni,  
 Now in their wane, illustrious citizens  
 And great as ancient, of Sannella him,  
 With him of Arca saw, and Soldanieri,

<sup>1</sup> *Montemurlo*.—G. Villani, lib. v., cap. xxxi., relates that the Conti Guidi, not being able to defend their castle from the Pistoians, sold it to the state of Florence.

<sup>2</sup> *The blind bull*.—So Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseide," b. ii.:

"For swifter course cometh thing that is of wight  
 When it descendeth than done things light."

Compare Aristotle, "Ethic. Nic.," lib. vi., cap. xiii.:  
 ὁμαρτὶ ἰσχυρῶς, κ. τ. λ.

<sup>3</sup> *Luni; Urbisaglia*.—Cities formerly of importance, but then fallen to decay.

<sup>4</sup> *Chiusi and Sinigaglia*.—The same.

<sup>5</sup> *As the moon*.—"The fortune of us, that are the moon's men, doth ebb and flow like the sea."—*Shakespeare*, 1 *Henry IV.*, act i, sc. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *The Ughi*.—Whoever is curious to know the habitations of these and the other ancient Florentines, may consult G. Villani, lib. iv.



But so was doom'd:  
 Florence! on that maim'd stone which guards the bridge,  
 The victim, when thy peace departed, fell.  
*Canto XVI., lines 143-145.*



And Ardinghi, and Bostichi. At the poop<sup>1</sup>  
 That now is laden with new felony  
 So cumbrous it may speedily sink the bark,  
 The Ravignani sat, of whom is sprung  
 The County Guido, and whoso hath since  
 His title from the famed Bellincion ta'en.  
 Fair governance was yet an art well prized  
 By him of Pressa: Galigaio show'd  
 The gilded hilt and pommel,<sup>2</sup> in his house:  
 The column, clothed with verrey,<sup>3</sup> still was seen  
 Unshaken; the Sacchetti still were great,  
 Giouchi, Sifanti, Galli, and Barucci,  
 With them<sup>4</sup> who blush to hear the bushel named.  
 Of the Calfucci still the branchy trunk  
 Was in its strength: and, to the curule chairs,  
 Sizii and Arrigucci<sup>5</sup> yet were drawn.  
 How mighty them<sup>6</sup> I saw, whom, since, their pride  
 Hath undone! And in all their goodly deeds  
 Florence was, by the bullets of bright gold,<sup>7</sup>  
 O'erflourish'd. Such the sires of those,<sup>8</sup> who now,  
 As surely as your church is vacant, flock  
 Into her consistory, and at leisure  
 There stall them and grow fat. The o'erweening brood,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *At the poop.*—The Cerchi, Dante's enemies, had succeeded to the houses over the gate of St. Peter, formerly inhabited by the Ravignani and the Count Guido. G. Villani, lib. iv., cap. x. Many editions read *porta*, "gate."—The same metaphor is found in Æschylus, "Suppliants," 356, and is there also scarce understood by the critics:

Αἰδοῦ σὺ πρῶτον πύλαις ὧδ' ἐστειμέναις.

"Respect these wreaths, that crown your city's poop."

<sup>2</sup> *The gilded hilt and pommel.*—The symbols of knighthood.

<sup>3</sup> *The column, clothed with verrey.*—The arms of the Pigli, or, as some write it, the Billi.

<sup>4</sup> *With them.*—Either the Chiaramontesi, or the Tosighi; one of which had committed a fraud in measuring out the wheat from the public granary. See "Purgatory," canto xii. 99.

<sup>5</sup> *Sizii and Arrigucci.*—"These families still obtain the magistracies."

<sup>6</sup> *Them.*—The Uberti; according to the Latin note on the Monte Casino MS., with which the editor of the extracts from those notes says that Benvenuto agrees.

<sup>7</sup> *The bullets of bright gold.*—The arms of the Abbatini, as it is conjectured; or of the Lamberti, according to the authorities referred to in the last note.

<sup>8</sup> *The sires of those.*—"Of the Visdomini, the Tosighi, and the Cortigiani, who, being sprung from the founders of the bishopric of Florence, are the curators of its revenues, which they do not spare, whenever it becomes vacant."

<sup>9</sup> *The o'erweening brood.*—The Adimari. This family was so little esteemed, that Ubertino Donato, who had married a daughter of Bellincion Berti, himself indeed derived from the same stock (see note to "Hell," canto xvi. 38), was offended with his father-in-law for giving another of his daughters in marriage to one of them.



That plays the dragon after him that flees,  
 But unto such as turn and show the tooth,  
 Ay or the purse, is gentle as a lamb,  
 Was on its rise, but yet so slight esteem'd,  
 That Ubertino of Donati grudged  
 His father-in-law should yoke him to its tribe.  
 Already Caponsacco<sup>1</sup> had descended  
 Into the mart from Fesole: and Giuda  
 And Infangato<sup>2</sup> were good citizens.  
 A thing incredible I tell, though true:<sup>3</sup>  
 The gateway,<sup>4</sup> named from those of Pera, led  
 Into the narrow circuit of your walls.  
 Each one, who bears the sightly quarterings  
 Of the great Baron<sup>5</sup> (he whose name and worth  
 The festival of Thomas still revives),  
 His knighthood and his privilege retain'd;  
 Albeit one,<sup>6</sup> who borders them with gold,  
 This day is mingled with the common herd.  
 In Borgo yet the Gualterotti dwelt,  
 And Importuni:<sup>7</sup> well for its repose,  
 Had it still lack'd of newer neighbourhood.<sup>8</sup>  
 The house,<sup>9</sup> from whence your tears have had their spring,

<sup>1</sup> *Caponsacco*.—The family of Caponsacchi, who had removed from Fesole, lived at Florence in the Mercato Vecchio.

<sup>2</sup> *Giuda and Infangato*.—Giuda Guidi and the family of Infangati.

<sup>3</sup> *A thing incredible I tell, though true*.—"Io dirò cosa incredibile e vera." *Ἐγὼ σοὶ ἐρῶ, ἔφη, ὃ Σόκρατες, ἀπιστοῦ μὲν νῦν τοῖς θεοῖς, ἀληθεῖς δὲ.*—*Plato, Theages*, Bipont. edit., tom. ii., p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *The gateway*.—Landino refers this to the smallness of the city; Vellutello, with less probability, to the simplicity of the people in naming one of the gates after a private family.

<sup>5</sup> *The great Baron*.—The Marchese Ugo, who resided at Florence as lieutenant of the Emperor Otho III., gave many of the chief families licence to bear his arms. See G. Villani, lib. iv., cap. ii., where the vision is related, in consequence of which he sold all his possessions in Germany, and founded seven abbeys; in one whereof his memory was celebrated at Florence on St. Thomas's day. "The marquis,

when hunting, strayed away from his people, and wandering through a forest, came to a smithy, where he saw black and deformed men tormenting others with fire and hammers; and, asking the meaning of this, he was told that they were condemned souls, who suffered this punishment, and that the soul of the Marquis Ugo was doomed to suffer the same if he did not repent. Struck with horror, he commended himself to the Virgin Mary; and soon after founded the seven religious houses."

<sup>6</sup> *One*.—Giano della Bella, belonging to one of the families thus distinguished, who no longer retained his place among the nobility, and had yet added to his arms a bordure or. See Macchiavelli, "Ist. Fior.," lib. ii., p. 86, ediz. Giolito.

<sup>7</sup> *Gualterotti dwell, and Importuni*.—Two families in the compartment of the city called Borgo.

<sup>8</sup> *Newer neighbourhood*.—Some understand this of the Bardi, and others of the Buondelmonti.

<sup>9</sup> *The house*.—Of Amidei. See notes to canto xxviii. of "Hell," 102.

Through the just anger, that hath murder'd ye,  
 And put a period to your gladsome days,  
 Was honour'd; it, and those consorted with it.  
 O Buondelmonti! what ill counselling  
 Prevail'd on thee to break the plighted bond?  
 Many, who now are weeping, would rejoice,  
 Had God to Ema<sup>1</sup> given thee, the first time  
 Thou near our city camest. But so was doom'd:  
 Florence! on that maim'd stone<sup>2</sup> which guards the bridge,  
 The victim, when thy peace departed, fell.  
 "With these and others like to them, I saw  
 Florence in such assured tranquillity,  
 She had no cause at which to grieve: with these  
 Saw her so glorious and so just, that ne'er  
 The lily<sup>3</sup> from the lance had hung reverse,  
 Or through division been with vermeil dyed."

<sup>1</sup> *To Ema*.—"It had been well for the city if thy ancestor had been drowned in the Ema, when he crossed that stream on his way from Montebuono to Florence."

<sup>2</sup> *On that maim'd stone*.—See "Hell," canto xiii. 144. Near the remains of the statue of Mars, Buondelmonti was slain, as if he had been a victim

to the god; and Florence had not since known the blessing of peace.

<sup>3</sup> *The lily*.—"The arms of Florence had never hung reversed on the spear of her enemies in token of her defeat, nor been changed from argent to gules;" as they afterwards were when the Guelfi gained the predominance.