







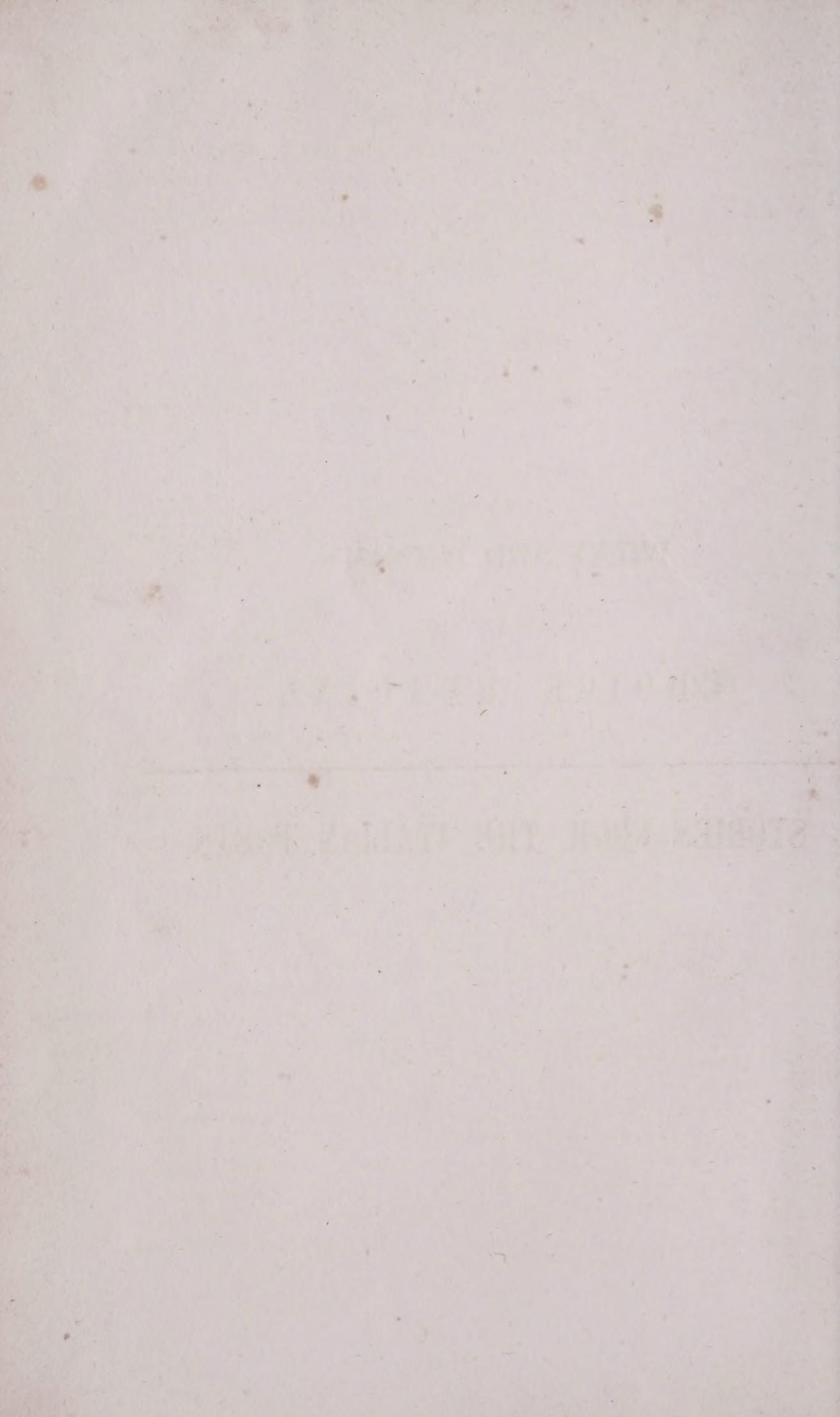


THE LIFE AND POETRY OF

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN CELLINI

THE COMPLETE AND REVISED EDITION BY B. G. B.

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THE COMPLETE AND ANNOTATED EDITION OF ROSCOE.

Notices of the Work.

“Cellini was one of the most extraordinary men in an extraordinary age; his life, written by himself, is more amusing than any novel I know.”

Horace Walpole.

[From the Retrospective Review.]

“This is, perhaps, the most perfect piece of autobiography that ever was written, whether considered with reference to the candour and veracity of the author, the spirit of the incidents, or the breathing vitality of the narrative. It has also the recommendation of having been written at a very interesting period of literary history, and of recording some curious particulars relative to the private character of the great men of the time. * * We never, in the whole course of our life, read a book of a more engaging description. * * *”

“Benvenuto Cellini, a man of great genius, and uncommon versatility of talents; caressed alike by kings, popes, and dignitaries of the Church of Rome; esteemed by men of learning; lauded by the most eminent artists of his time; and beloved by all his acquaintance. Admitted into the privacy of the most elevated in rank and station, he never forgot what was due to himself as a man: he was neither servile to kings nor their mistresses; he neither flattered popes nor their favourites; he neither worshipped a cardinal's hat nor the tiara; he was bold for the right, and thought not that St. Peter's chair could sanctify wrong, or hallow injustice—he dared to speak the truth; an audacity fatal to the hopes of the followers of courts, and the aspirers to place.

“Quick, bold, ardent and enterprising, he was eminently gifted by nature with those talents which are essential to achieve excellence; and although confined for a great portion of his life to the humble walk of the goldsmith's business, it is evident, from his extraordinary success in bronze-casting and in sculpture, that he was equally calculated to excel in the higher departments of art. Of this, his statue of Perseus and the piece of sculpture which he executed, after his vision, of a Christ upon the cross, described by Vasari as an exquisite and wonderful performance, afford sufficient proofs. His merits as an artist, indeed, are allowed by those who were best able to appreciate them—by his friends Michael Angelo and Julio Romano. Uniting the different branches of the fine arts,—at the same time a musician, a poet, and a soldier,—he seems to have been exceeded by few in the capability of his intellect, and in its various and successful application.”

STORIES

FROM THE

ITALIAN POETS:

BEING A SUMMARY IN PROSE

OF THE

POEMS OF DANTE, PULCI, BOIARDO, ARIOSTO AND TASSO;

WITH COMMENTS THROUGHOUT,

OCCASIONAL PASSAGES VERSIFIED,

AND

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE LIVES AND GENIUS OF THE AUTHORS.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

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IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.  
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TO

SIR PERCY SHELLEY, BART.

MY DEAR SIR PERCY.

As I know no man who surpasses yourself in combining a love of the most romantic fiction with the coolest good sense, and, in passing from the driest metaphysical questions to the heartiest enjoyment of humour,—I trust that even a modesty so true as yours will not grudge me the satisfaction of inscribing these volumes with your name.

That you should possess such varieties of taste is no wonder, considering what an abundance of intellectual honours you inherit; nor might the world have been the better for it, had they been tastes, and nothing more. But that you should inherit also that zeal for justice to mankind, which has become so Christian a feature in the character of the age, and that you should include in that zeal a special regard for the welfare of your Father's Friend, is a subject of constant pleasurable reflection to

Your obliged and affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

P R E F A C E .

THE purpose of these volumes is, to add to the stock of tales from the Italian writers; to retain at the same time as much of the poetry of the originals as it is in the power of the writer's prose to compass; and to furnish careful biographical notices of the authors. There have been several collections of stories from the novelists of Italy, but none from the poets; and it struck me that prose versions from these, of the kind here offered to the public, might not be unwillingly received. The stories are selected from the five principal narrative poets, Dante, Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso; they comprise the most popular of such as are fit for translation; are reduced into one continuous narrative, when diffused and interrupted, as in the instances of those of Angelica, and Armida; are accompanied with critical and explanatory notes; and, in the case of Dante, consist of an abstract of the poet's whole work. The volumes are furthermore interspersed with the most favourite *morceaux* of the originals, followed sometimes with attempts to versify them; and in the Appendix, for the better satisfaction of the student, are given entire stories, also in the original, and occasionally rendered in like manner. The book is particularly intended for such students or other lovers of the language as are pleased with any fresh endeavours to recom-

mend it; and, at the same time, for such purely English readers as wish to know something about Italian poetry, without having leisure to cultivate its acquaintance.

I did not intend in the first instance to depart from the plan of selection in the case of Dante; but when I considered what an extraordinary person he was,—how intense is every thing which he says,—how widely he has re-attracted of late the attention of the world,—how willingly perhaps his poem might be regarded by the reader as being itself one continued story (which, in fact, it is), related personally of the writer,—and lastly, what a combination of difficulties have prevented his best translators in verse from giving the public a just idea of his almost Scriptural simplicity—I began to think that an abstract of his entire work might possibly be looked upon as supplying something of a desideratum. I am aware that nothing but verse can do perfect justice to verse; but besides the imperfections which are pardonable, because inevitable, in all such metrical endeavours, the desire to impress a grand and worshipful idea of Dante has been too apt to lead his translators into a tone and manner the reverse of his passionate, practical, and creative style—a style which may be said to write things instead of words; and thus to render every word that is put out of its place, or brought in for help and filling up, a misrepresentation. I do not mean to say, that he himself never does any thing of the sort, or does not occasionally assume too much of the oracle and the schoolmaster, in manner as well as matter; but passion, and the absence of the superfluous, are the chief characteristics of his poetry. Fortunately, this sincerity of purpose and utterance in Dante, render him the least pervertible of poets in a sincere prose translation; and, since I ventured on attempting one, I have had the pleasure

of meeting with an express recommendation of such a version¹ in an early number of the *Edinburgh Review*.

The abstract of Dante, therefore, in these volumes (with every deprecation that becomes me of being supposed to pretend to give a thorough idea of any poetry whatsoever, especially without its metrical form) aspires to be regarded as, at all events, not exhibiting a false idea of the Dantesque spirit in point of feeling and expression. It is true, I have omitted long tedious lectures of scholastic divinity, and other learned absurdities of the time, which are among the bars to the poem's being read through, even in Italy (which Foscolo tells us is never the case); and I have compressed the work in other passages not essentially necessary to the formation of a just idea of the author. But quite enough remains to do so in every respect; and in no part of it have I made additions or alterations. There is warrant—I hope I may say letter—for every thing put down. Dante is the greatest poet for intensity that ever lived; and he excites a corresponding emotion in his reader—I wish I could say, always on the poet's side; but his ferocious hates and bigotries too often tempt us to hate the bigot, and always compel us to take part with the fellow-creatures whom he outrages. At least, such is their effect on myself. Such a man, however, is the last whom a reporter is inclined to misrepresent. We respect his sincerity too much, ferocious though it be; and we like to give him the full benefit of the recoil of his curses and maledictions. I hope I have not omitted one. On the other hand, as little have I closed my feelings against the lovely and enchanting sweetness which this great semi-barbarian sometimes so affectingly utters. On those occasions

¹ “It is probable that a prose translation would give a better idea of the genius and manner of this poet than any metrical one.” Vol. i. p. 310.

he is like an angel enclosed for penance in some furious giant, and permitted to weep through the creature's eyes.

The stories from goodnatured Pulci I have been obliged to compress for other reasons—chiefly their excessive diffuseness. A paragraph of the version will sometimes comprise many pages. Those of Boiardo and Ariosto are more exact; and the reader will be good enough to bear in mind, that nothing is added to any of the poets, different as the case might seem here and there, on comparison with the originals. An equivalent for whatever is said is to be found in some part of the context—generally in letter, always in spirit. The least characteristically exact passages are, some in the love-scenes of Tasso; for I have omitted the plays upon words and other corruptions in style, in which that poet permitted himself to indulge. But I have noticed the circumstance in the comment. In other respects, I have endeavoured to make my version convey some idea of the different styles and genius of the writers,—of the severe passion of Dante, the overflowing gaiety and affecting sympathies of Pulci, several of whose passages in the Battle of Roncesvalles are masterpieces of pathos; the romantic and inventive elegance of Boiardo; the great cheerful universality of Ariosto, like a healthy *anima mundi*; and the ambitious irritability, the fairy imagination, and tender but somewhat effeminate voluptuousness of the poet of Armida and Rinaldo. I do not pretend that prose versions of passages from these writers can supersede the necessity of metrical ones, supposing proper metrical ones attainable. They demand them more than Dante, the tone and manner in their case being of more importance to the effect. But with all due respect to such translators as Harrington, Rose, and Wiffen, their books are not Ariosto and Tasso, even in manner. Harrington, the gay “godson” of

Queen Elizabeth, is not always unlike Ariosto ; but when not in good spirits he becomes as dull as if her majesty had frowned on him. Rose was a man of wit, and a scholar ; yet he has undoubtedly turned the ease and animation of his original into inversion and insipidity. And Wiffen, though elegant and even poetical, did an unfortunate thing for Tasso, when he gave an additional line and a number of paraphrastic thoughts to a stanza already tending to the superfluous. Fairfax himself, who upon the whole, and with regard to a work of any length, is the best metrical translator our language has seen, and, like Chapman, a genuine poet, strangely aggravated the sins of prettiness and conceit in his original, and added to them a love of tautology amounting to that of a lawyer. As to Hoole, he is below criticism ; and other versions I have not happened to see. Now if I had no acquaintance with the Italian language, I confess I would rather get any friend who had to read to me a passage out of Dante, Tasso, or Ariosto, into the first simple prose that offered itself, than go to any of the above translators for a taste of it, Fairfax excepted ; and we have seen with how much allowance his sample would have to be taken. I have therefore, with some restrictions, only ventured to do for the public what I would have had a friend do for myself.

The *Critical and Biographical Notices* I did not intend to make so long at first ; but the interest grew upon me ; and I hope the reader will regard some of them—Dante's and Tasso's in particular—as being “stories” themselves, after their kind,—“stories, alas, too true ;” “romances of real life.” The extraordinary character of Dante, which is personally mixed up with his writings beyond that of any other poet, has led me into references to his church and creed, unavoidable at any time in the endeavour to give a thorough

estimate of his genius, and singularly demanded by certain phenomena of the present day. I hold those phenomena to be alike absurd and fugitive; but only so by reason of their being openly so proclaimed; for mankind have a tendency to the absurd, if their imaginations are not properly directed; and one of the uses of poetry is, to keep the faculty in a healthy state, and cause it to know its boundaries. Dante, in the fierce egotism of his passions, and the strange identification of his knowledge with all that was knowable, would fain have made his poetry both a sword against individuals, and a prop for the support of the superstition that corrupted them. This was reversing the duty of a Christian and a great man; and there happen to be existing reasons why it is salutary to shew that he had no right to do so, and must not have his barbarism confounded with his strength. Machiavelli was of opinion, that if Christianity had not reverted to its first principles, by means of the poverty and pious lives of St. Francis and St. Dominic,* the faith would have been lost. It may have been; but such are not the secrets of its preservation in times of science and progression, when the spirit of inquiry has established itself among all classes, and nothing is taken for granted, as it used to be. A few persons here and there, who confound a religious reaction in a corner with the reverse of the fact all over the rest of Europe, may persuade themselves, if they please, that the world

* *Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, lib. iii. cap. i. At p. 136 of the present volume I have too hastily called St. Dominic "the founder of the Inquisition." It is generally conceded, I believe, by candid Protestant inquirers, that he was not, whatever zeal in the foundation and support of the tribunal may have been manifested by his order. But this does not acquit him of the cruelty for which he has been praised by Dante: he joined in the sanguinary persecution of the Albigenses.

has not advanced in knowledge for the last three centuries, and so get up and cry aloud to us out of obsolete horn-books ; but the community laugh at them. Every body else is inquiring into first principles, while they are dogmatising on a forty-ninth proposition. The Irish themselves, as they ought to do, care more for their pastors than for the pope ; and if any body wishes to know what is thought of his holiness at head-quarters, let him consult the remarkable and admirable pamphlet which has lately issued from the pen of Mr. Mazzini.* I have the pleasure of knowing excellent Roman Catholics ; I have suffered in behalf of their emancipation, and would do so again to-morrow ; but I believe that if even their external form of Christianity has any chance of survival three hundred years hence, it will have been owing to the appearance meanwhile of some extraordinary man in power, who, in the teeth of worldly interests, or rather in charitable and sage inclusion of them, shall have proclaimed that the time had arrived for living in the flower of Christian charity, instead of the husks and thorns which may have been necessary to guard it. If it were possible for some new and wonderful pope to make this change, and draw a line between these two Christian epochs, like that between the Old and New Testaments, the world would feel inclined to prostrate itself again and for ever at the feet of Rome. In a catholic state of things like that, delighted should I be, for one, to be among the humblest of its communicants. How beautiful would their organs be then ! how ascending to an unperplexing Heaven their incense !

* It is entitled, "*Italy, Austria, and the Pope*;" and is full, not only of the eloquence of zeal, and of evidences of intellectual power, but of the most curious and instructive information.

how unselfish their salvation! how intelligible their talk about justice and love!

But if charity (and by charity I do not mean mere toleration, or any other pretended right to permit others to have eyes like ourselves, but whatever the beautiful Greek word implies of good and lovely), if this truly and only divine consummation of all Christian doctrine be not thought capable of taking a form of belief "strong" enough, Superstition must look out for some new mode of dictation altogether; for the world is outgrowing the old.

I cannot, in gratitude for the facilities afforded to myself, as well as for a more obvious and public reason, dismiss this Preface without congratulating men of letters on the establishment and increasing prosperity of the *London Library*, an institution founded for the purpose of accommodating subscribers with such books, at their own homes, as could only be consulted hitherto at the British Museum. The sole objection to the Museum is thus done away, and the literary world has a fair prospect of possessing two book-institutions instead of one, each with its distinct claims to regard, and presenting in combination all that the student can wish; for while it is highly desirable that authors should be able to have standard works at their command, when sickness or other circumstances render it impossible for them to go to the Museum, it is undoubtedly requisite that one great collection should exist in which they are sure to find the same works unremoved, in case of necessity,—not to mention curious volumes of all sorts, manuscripts, and a world of books of reference.

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DANTE:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

CRITICAL NOTICE

OF

DANTE'S LIFE AND GENIUS.*

DANTE was a very great poet, a man of the strongest passions, a claimant of unbounded powers to lead and enlighten the world ; and he lived in a semi-barbarous age, as favourable to the intensity of his imagination, as it was otherwise to the rest of his pretensions. Party zeal, and the fluctuations of moral and critical opinion, have at different periods over-rated and depreciated his memory ; and if, in the following attempt to form its just estimate, I have found myself compelled, in some important respects, to differ with preceding writers, and to protest in particular against his being regarded as a proper teacher on any one point, poetry excepted, and as far as all such genius and energy cannot in some degree help being, I have not been the less sensible of the wonderful nature of that genius, while acting within the circle to which it belongs. Dante was indeed so great a poet, and at the same time exhibited in his personal character such a mortifying exception to what we conceive to be the natural wisdom and temper of great poets ; in other words, he was such a bigoted and exasperated man, and sullied his imagination with so much that

* As notices of Dante's life have often been little but repetitions of former ones, I think it due to the painstaking character of this volume to state, that besides consulting various commentators and critics, from Boccaccio to Fratirelli and others, I have diligently perused the *Vita di Dante*, by Cesare Balbo, with Rocco's annotations ; the *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, by Ginguéné ; the *Discorso sul Testo della Commedia*, by Foscolo ; the *Amori e Rime di Dante* of Arrivabene ; the *Velvro Allegorico di Dante*, by Troja ; and Ozanam's *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au Treizième Siècle*.

is contradictory to good feeling, in matters divine as well as human; that I should not have thought myself justified in assisting, however humbly, to extend the influence of his writings, had I not believed a time to have arrived, when the community may profit both from the marvels of his power and the melancholy absurdity of its contradictions.

Dante Alighieri, who has always been known by his Christian rather than surname (partly owing to the Italian predilection for Christian names, and partly to the unsettled state of patronymics in his time), was the son of a lawyer of good family in Florence, and was born in that city on the 14th of May 1265 (sixty-three years before the birth of Chaucer). The stock is said to have been of Roman origin, of the race of the Frangipani; but the only certain trace of it is to Cacciaguida, a Florentine cavalier of the house of the Elisei, who died in the Crusades. Dante gives an account of him in his *Paradiso*.* Cacciaguida married a lady of the Alighieri family of the Val dipado; and, giving the name to one of his children, they subsequently retained it as a patronymic in preference to their own. It would appear, from the same poem, not only that the Alighieri were the more important house, but that some blot had darkened the scutcheon of the Elisei; perhaps their having been poor, and transplanted (as he seems to imply) from some disreputable district. Perhaps they were known to have been of ignoble origin; for, in the course of one of his most philosophical treatises, he bursts into an extraordinary ebullition of ferocity against such as adduce a knowledge of that kind as an argument against a family's acquired nobility; affirming that such brutal stuff should be answered not with words, but with the dagger.† The Elisei, however, must have been of some standing; for Macchiavelli, in his History of Florence, mentions them in his list of the early Guelph and Ghi-

* Canto xv. 88.

† For the doubt apparently implied respecting the district, see canto xvi. 43, or the summary of it in the present volume. The following is the passage alluded to in the philosophical treatise: "Risponder si vorrebbe, non colle parole, ma col coltello, a tanta bestialità."—*Convito*,—*Opere Minori*, 12mo. Fir. 1834, vol. ii. p. 432. "Beautiful mode" (says Perticari in a note) "of settling questions."

belline parties, where the side which they take is different from that of the poet's immediate progenitors.* The arms of the Alighieri (probably occasioned by the change in that name, for it was previously written Aldighieri) are interesting on account of their poetical and aspiring character. They are a golden wing on a field azure.†

It is generally supposed that the name Dante is an abbreviation of Durante; but this is not certain, though the poet had a nephew so called. Dante is the name he goes by in the gravest records, in law-proceedings, in his epitaph, in the mention of him put by himself into the mouth of a blessed spirit. Boccaccio intimates that he was christened Dante, and derives the name from the ablative case of *dans* (giving)—a probable etymology, especially for a Christian appellation. As an abbreviation of Durante, it would correspond in familiarity with the Ben of Ben Jonson—a diminutive that would assuredly not have been used by grave people on occasions like those mentioned, though a wit of the day gave the masons a shilling to carve “O rare Ben Jonson!” on his grave-stone. On the other hand, if given at the font, the name of Ben would have acquired all the legal gravity of Benjamin. In the English Navy List, not long ago, one of our gallant admirals used to figure as “Billy Douglas.”

Of the mother of Dante nothing is known except that she was

* *Istorie Fiorentine*, ii. 43 (in *Tutte le Opere*, 4to., 1550).

† The name has been varied into *Allagheri*, *Aligieri*, *Alleghieri*, *Alligheri*, *Aligeri*, with the accent generally on the third, but sometimes on the second syllable. See Foscolo, *Discorso sul Testamento*, p. 432. He says, that in Verona, where descendants of the poet survive, they call it *Aligieri*. But names, like other words, often wander so far from their source, that it is impossible to ascertain it. Who would suppose that *Pomfret* came from *Pontefract*, or *wig* from *parrucca*? Coats of arms, unless in very special instances, prove nothing but the whims of the heralds.

Those who like to hear of anything in connexion with Dante or his name, may find something to stir their fancies in the following grim significations of the word in the dictionaries:

“*Dante*, a kind of great wild beast in Africa, that hath a very hard skin.”
—*Florio's Dictionary*, edited by Torreggiano.

“*Dante*, an animal called otherwise the Great Beast.”—*Vocabolario della Crusca, Compendiato*, Ven. 1723.

his father's second wife, and that her Christian name was Bella, or perhaps surname Bello. It might, however, be conjectured, from the remarkable and only opportunity which our author has taken of alluding to her, that he derived his disdainful character rather from his mother than father.* The father appears to have died during the boyhood of his illustrious son.

The future poet, before he had completed his ninth year, conceived a romantic attachment to a little lady who had just entered hers, and who has attained a celebrity of which she was destined to know nothing. This was the famous Beatrice Portinari, daughter of a rich Florentine who founded more than one charitable institution. She married another man, and died in her youth; but retained the Platonical homage of her young admirer, living and dead, and became the heroine of his great poem.

It is unpleasant to reduce any portion of a romance to the events of ordinary life; but with the exception of those who merely copy from one another, there has been such a conspiracy on the part of Dante's biographers to overlook at least one disenchanting conclusion to be drawn to that effect from the poet's own writings, that the probable truth of the matter must here for the first time be stated. The case, indeed, is clear enough from his account of it. The natural tendencies of a poetical temperament (oftener evinced in a like manner than the world in general suppose) not only made the boy-poet fall in love, but, in the truly Elysian state of the heart at that innocent and adoring time of life, made him fancy he had discovered a goddess in the object of his love; and strength of purpose as well as imagination made him grow up in the fancy. He disclosed himself, as time advanced, only by his manner—received complacent recognitions in company from the young lady—offended her by seeming to devote himself to another (see the poem in the *Vita Nuova*, beginning "Ballata io vo")—rendered himself the sport of her and her young friends by his adoring timidity (see the 5th and 6th sonnets in the same work)—in short, constituted her a paragon of

* See the passage in "Hell," where Virgil, to express his enthusiastic approbation of the scorn and cruelty which Dante shews to one of the condemned, embraces and kisses him for a right "disdainful soul," and blesses the "mother that bore him."

perfection, and enabled her, by so doing, to shew that she was none. He says, that finding himself unexpectedly near her one day in company, he trembled so, and underwent such change of countenance, that many of the ladies present began to laugh with her about him—" *si gabbavano di me.*" And he adds, in verse,

"Con l' altre donne mia vista gabbate,
E non pensate, donna, onde si mova
Ch' io vi rassembri sì figura nova,
Quando riguardo la vostra beltate," &c.—Son. 5.

"You laugh with the other ladies to see how I look (literally, you mock my appearance); and do not think, lady, what it is that renders me so strange a figure at sight of your beauty."

And in the sonnet that follows, he accuses her of preventing pity of him in others, by such "killing mockery" as makes him wish for death ("*la pietà, che 'l vostro gabbo recinde,*" &c.)*

Now, it is to be admitted, that a young lady, if she is not very wise, may laugh at her lover with her companions, and yet return his love, after her fashion; but the fair Portinari laughs and marries another. Some less melancholy face, some more intelligible courtship, triumphed over the questionable flattery of the poet's gratuitous worship; and the idol of Dante Alighieri became the wife of Messer Simone de' Bardi. Not a word does he say on that mortifying point. It transpired from a clause in her father's will. And yet so bent are the poet's biographers on leaving a romantic doubt in one's mind, whether Beatrice may not have returned his passion, that not only do all of them (as far as I have observed) agree in taking no notice of these sonnets, but the author of the treatise entitled *Dante and the Catholic Philosophy of the Thirteenth Century*, "in spite" (as a critic says) "of the *Beatrice, his daughter, wife of Messer Simone de' Bardi, of the paternal will,*" describes her as dying in "all the lustre of virginity."† The assumption appears to be thus glo-

* *Opere Minori*, vol. iii. 12, Flor. 1839, pp. 292, &c.

† "Béatrix quitta la terre dans tout l'éclat de la jeunesse et de la virginité." See the work as above entitled, Paris, 1840, p. 60. The words in Latin, as quoted from the will by the critic alluded to in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (No. 65, art. *Dante Allighieri*), are, "Bici filiæ suæ et uxori D. (Domini)

riously stated, as a counterpart to the notoriety of its untruth. It must be acknowledged that Dante himself gave the cue to it by more than silence; for he not only vaunts her acquaintance in the next world, but assumes that she returns his love in that region, as if no such person as her husband could have existed, or as if he himself had not been married also. This life-long pertinacity of will is illustrative of his whole career.

Meantime, though the young poet's father had died, nothing was wanting on the part of his guardians, or perhaps his mother, to furnish him with an excellent education. It was so complete, as to enable him to become master of all the knowledge of his time; and he added to this learning more than a taste for drawing and music. He speaks of himself as drawing an angel in his tablets on the first anniversary of Beatrice's death.* One of his instructors was Brunetto Latini, the most famous scholar then living; and he studied both at the universities of Padua and Bologna. At eighteen, perhaps sooner, he had shewn such a genius for poetry as to attract the friendship of Guido Cavalcante, a young noble of a philosophical as well as poetical turn of mind, who has retained a reputation with posterity: and it was probably at the same time he became acquainted with Giotto, who drew his likeness, and with Casella, the musician, whom he greets with so much tenderness in the other world.

Nor were his duties as a citizen forgotten. The year before Beatrice's death, he was at the battle of Campaldino, which his countrymen gained against the people of Arezzo; and the year after it he was present at the taking of Caprona from the Pisans. It has been supposed that he once studied medicine with a view to it as a profession; but the conjecture probably originated in nothing more than his having entered himself of one of the city-companies (which happened to be the medical) for the purpose of

Simonis de Bardis." "Bici" is the Latin dative case of Bice, the abbreviation of Beatrice. This employment, by the way, of an abbreviated name in a will, may seem to go counter to the deductions respecting the name of Dante. And it may really do so. Yet a will is not an epitaph, nor the address of a beatified spirit; neither is equal familiarity perhaps implied, as a matter of course, in the abbreviated names of male and female.

* *Vita Nuova*, ut sup. p. 343.

qualifying himself to accept office ; a condition exacted of the gentry by the then democratic tendencies of the republic. It is asserted also, by an early commentator, that he entered the Franciscan order of friars, but quitted it before he was professed ; and, indeed, the circumstance is not unlikely, considering his agitated and impatient turn of mind. Perhaps he fancied that he had done with the world when it lost the wife of Simone de' Bardi.

Weddings that might have taken place, but do not, are like the reigns of deceased heirs-apparent ; every thing is assumable in their favour, checked only by the histories of husbands and kings. Would the great but splenetic poet have made an angel and a saint of Beatrice, had he married her ? He never utters the name of the woman whom he did marry.

Gemma Donati was a kinswoman of the powerful family of that name. It seems not improbable, from some passages in his works, that she was the young lady whom he speaks of as taking pity on him on account of his passion for Beatrice ;* and in common justice to his feelings as a man and a gentleman, it is surely to be concluded, that he felt some sort of passion for his bride, if not of a very spiritual sort ; though he afterwards did not scruple to intimate that he was ashamed of it, and Beatrice is made to rebuke him in the other world for thinking of any body after herself.† At any rate, he probably roused what was excitable in

* *Vita Nuova*, p. 345.

† In the article on *Dante*, in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, (ut supra), the exordium of which made me hope that the eloquent and assumption-denouncing writer was going to supply a good final account of his author, equally satisfactory for its feeling and its facts, but which ended in little better than the customary gratuitousness of wholesale panegyric, I was surprised to find the union with Gemma Donati characterised as "calm and cold,—rather the accomplishment of a social duty than the result of an irresistible impulse of the heart," p. 15. The accomplishment of the "social duty" is an assumption, not very probable with regard to any body, and much less so in a fiery Italian of twenty-six ; but the addition of the epithets, "calm and cold," gives it a sort of horror. A reader of this article, evidently the production of a man of ability but of great wilfulness, is tempted to express the disappointment it has given him in plainer terms than might be wished, in consequence of the extraordinary license which its writer does not scruple to allow to his own fancies, in expressing his opinion of what he is pleased to think the fancies of others.

his wife's temper, with provocations from his own ; for the nature of the latter is not to be doubted, whereas there is nothing but tradition to shew for the bitterness of hers. Foscolo is of opinion that the tradition itself arose simply from a rhetorical flourish of Boccaccio's, in his Life of Dante, against the marriages of men of letters ; though Boccaccio himself expressly adds, that he knows nothing to the disadvantage of the poet's wife, except that her husband, after quitting Florence, would never either come where she was, or suffer her to come to him, mother as she was by him of so many children ;—a statement, it must be confessed, not a little encouraging to the tradition.* Be this as it may, Dante married in his twenty-sixth year ; wrote an adoring account of his first love (the *Vita Nuova*) in his twenty-eighth ; and among the six children which Gemma brought him, had a daughter whom he named Beatrice, in honour, it is understood, of the fair Portinari ; which surely was either a very great compliment, or no mean trial to the temper of the mother. We shall see presently how their domestic intercourse was interrupted, and what absolute uncertainty there is respecting it, except as far as conclusions may be drawn from his own temper and history.

Italy, in those days, was divided into the parties of Guelphs and Ghibellines ; the former, the advocates of general church-ascendancy and local government ; the latter, of the pretensions of the Emperor of Germany, who claimed to be the Roman Cæsar, and paramount over the Pope. In Florence, the Guelphs had for a long time been so triumphant as to keep the Ghibellines in a state of banishment. Dante was born and bred a Guelph : he had twice borne arms for his country against Ghibelline neighbours ; and now, at the age of thirty-five, in the ninth of

* “ Le invettive contr' essa per tanti secoli originarono dalla enumerazione rettorica del Boccaccio di tutti gli inconvenienti del matrimonio, e dove per altro ei dichiara,—‘ Certo io non affermo queste cose a Dante essere avvenute, che non lo so ; comechè vero sia, che o a simili cose a queste, o ad altro che ne fusse cagione, egli una volta da lei partitosi, che per consolazione de' suoi affanni gli era stata data, mai nè dove ella fusse volle venire, nè sofferse che dove egli fusse ella venisse giammai, con tutto che di più figliuoli egli insieme con lei fusse parente.’ ”—*Discorso sul Testo*, ut sup. Londra, Pickering, 1825, p. 184.

his marriage, and last of his residence with his wife, he was appointed chief of the temporary administrators of affairs, called Priors;—functionaries who held office only for two months.

Unfortunately, at that moment, his party had become subdivided into the factions of the Whites and Blacks, or adherents of two different sides in a dispute that took place in Pistoia. The consequences becoming serious, the Blacks proposed to bring in, as mediator, the French Prince, Charles of Valois, then in arms for the Pope against the Emperor; but the Whites, of whom Dante was one, were hostile to the measure; and in order to prevent it, he and his brother magistrates expelled for a time the heads of both factions, to the satisfaction of neither. The Whites accused them of secretly leaning to the Ghibellines, and the Blacks of openly favouring the Whites; who being, indeed, allowed to come back before their time, on the alleged ground of the unwholesomeness of their place of exile, which was fatal to Dante's friend Cavalcante, gave a colour to the charge. Dante answered it by saying, that he had then quitted office; but he could not show that he had lost his influence. Meantime, Charles was still urged to interfere, and Dante was sent ambassador to the Pope to obtain his disapprobation of the interference; but the Pope (Boniface the Eighth), who had probably discovered that the Whites had ceased to care for any thing but their own disputes, and who, at all events, did not like their objection to his representative, beguiled the ambassador and encouraged the French prince; the Blacks, in consequence, regained their ascendancy; and the luckless poet, during his absence, was denounced as a corrupt administrator of affairs, guilty of speculation; was severely mulcted; banished from Tuscany for two years; and subsequently, for contumaciousness, was sentenced to be *burnt alive*, in case he returned ever. He never did return.

From that day forth, Dante never beheld again his home or his wife. Her relations obtained possession of power, but no use was made of it except to keep him in exile. He had not accorded with them; and perhaps half the secret of his conjugal discomfort was owing to politics. It is the opinion of some, that the married couple were not sorry to part; others think that the wife remained behind, solely to scrape together what property she

could, and bring up the children. All that is known is, that she never lived with him more.

Dante now certainly did what his enemies had accused him of wishing to do : he joined the old exiles whom he had helped to make such, the party of the Ghibellines. He alleges, that he never was really of any party but his own ; a naïve confession, probably true in one sense, considering his scorn of other people, his great intellectual superiority, and the large views he had for the whole Italian people. And, indeed, he soon quarrelled in private with the individuals composing his new party, however staunch he apparently remained to their cause. His former associates he had learnt to hate for their differences with him and for their self-seeking ; he hated the Pope for deceiving him ; he hated the Pope's French allies for being his allies, and interfering with Florence ; and he had come to love the Emperor for being hated by them all, and for holding out (as he fancied) the only chance of reuniting Italy to their confusion, and making her the restorer of himself, and the mistress of the world.

With these feelings in his heart, no money in his purse, and no place in which to lay his head, except such as chance-patrons afforded him, he now began to wander over Italy, like some lonely lion of a man, "grudging in his great disdain." At one moment he was conspiring and hoping ; at another, despairing and endeavouring to conciliate his beautiful Florence : now again catching hope from some new movement of the Emperor's ; and then, not very handsomely threatening and re-abusing her ; but always pondering and grieving, or trying to appease his thoughts with some composition, chiefly of his great work. It is conjectured, that whenever anything particularly affected him, whether with joy or sorrow, he put it, hot with the impression, into his "sacred poem." Every body who jarred against his sense of right or his prejudices he sent to the infernal regions, friend or foe : the strangest people who sided with them (but certainly no personal foe) he exalted to heaven. He encouraged, if not personally assisted, two ineffectual attempts of the Ghibellines against Florence ; wrote, besides his great work, a book of mixed prose and poetry on "Love and Virtue" (the *Convito*, or Banquet) ; a Latin treatise on Monarchy (*de Monarchia*), recommending the

“divine right” of the Emperor ; another in two parts, and in the same language, on the Vernacular Tongue (*de Vulgari Eloquentia*); and learnt to know meanwhile, as he affectingly tells us, “how hard it was to climb other people’s stairs, and how salt the taste of bread is that is not our own.” It is even thought not improbable, from one awful passage of his poem, that he may have “placed himself in some public way,” and, “stripping his visage of all shame, and trembling in his very vitals,” have stretched out his hand “for charity”^{*}—an image of suffering, which, proud as he was, yet considering how great a man, is almost enough to make one’s common nature stoop down for pardon at his feet ; and yet he should first prostrate himself at the feet of that nature for his outrages on God and man.

Several of the princes and feudal chieftains of Italy entertained the poet for a while in their houses ; but genius and worldly power, unless for worldly purposes, find it difficult to accord, especially in tempers like his. There must be great wisdom and amiableness on both sides to save them from jealousy of one another’s pretensions. Dante was not the man to give and take in such matters on equal terms ; and hence he is at one time in a palace, and at another in a solitude. Now he is in Sienna, now in Arezzo, now in Bologna ; then probably in Verona with Can Grande’s elder brother ; then (if we are to believe those who have tracked his steps) in Casentino ; then with the Marchese Moroello Malaspina in Lunigiana ; then with the great Ghibelline chieftain Faggiuola in the mountains near Urbino ; then in Romagna, in Padua, in *Paris* (arguing with the churchmen), some say in Germany, and at *Oxford* ; then again in Italy ; in Lucca (where he is supposed to have relapsed from his fidelity to Beatrice in favour of a certain “Gentucca”); then again in Verona with the new prince, the famous Can Grande (where his sarcasms appear to have lost him a doubtful hospitality) ; then in a monastery in the mountains of Umbria ; in Udine ; in Ravenna ; and there at length he put up for the rest of his life with his last and best friend, Guido Novello da Polenta, not the father, but the nephew of the hapless Francesca.

* Foscolo, in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxx. p. 351.

It was probably in the middle period of his exile, that in one of the moments of his greatest longing for his native country, he wrote that affecting passage in the *Convito*, which was evidently a direct effort at conciliation. Excusing himself for some harshness and obscurity in the style of that work, he exclaims, " Ah ! would it had pleased the Dispenser of all things that this excuse had never been needed ; that neither others had done me wrong, nor myself undergone penalty undeservedly—the penalty, I say, of exile and of poverty. For it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome—Florence—to cast me out of her most sweet bosom, where I was born, and bred, and passed half of the life of man, and in which, with her good leave, I still desire with all my heart to repose my weary spirit, and finish the days allotted me ; and so I have wandered in almost every place to which our language extends, a stranger, almost a beggar, exposing against my will the wounds given me by fortune, too often unjustly imputed to the sufferer's fault. Truly I have been a vessel without sail and without rudder, driven about upon different ports and shores by the dry wind that springs out of dolorous poverty ; and hence have I appeared vile in the eyes of many, who, perhaps, by some better report had conceived of me a different impression, and in whose sight not only has my person become thus debased, but an unworthy opinion created of every thing which I did, or which I had to do."*

* " Ahi piaciuto fosse al Dispensatore dell' universo, che la cagione della mia scusa mai non fosse stata ; che nè altri contro a me avria fallato, nè io sofferto avrei pena ingiustamente ; pena, dico, d' esilio e di povertà. Poichè fu piacere de' cittadini della bellissima e famosissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza, di gettarmi fuori del suo dolcissimo seno (nel quale nato e nudrito fui sino al colmo della mia vita, e nel quale, con buona pace di quella, desidero con tutto il core di riposare l' animo stanco, e terminare il tempo che m' è dato) ; per le parti quasi tutte, alle quali questa lingua si stende, peregrino, quasi mendicando, sono andato, mostrando contro a mia voglia la piaga della fortuna, che suole ingiustamente al piagato molte volte essere imputata. Veramente io sono stato legno senza vela e senza governo, portato a diversi porti e foci e liti dal vento secco che vapora la dolorosa povertà ; e sono vile apparito agli occhi a molti, che forse per alcuna fama in altra forma mi aveano immaginato ; nel cospetto de' quali non solamente mia persona inviliò, ma di minor pregio si fece ogni opera, si già fatta, come quella che fosse a fare."—*Opere Minori*, ut sup. vol. ii. p. 20.

How simply and strongly written! How full of the touching yet undegrading commiseration which adversity has a right to take upon itself, when accompanied with the consciousness of manly endeavour and a good motive! How could such a man condescend at other times to rage with abuse, and to delight himself in images of infernal torment!

The dates of these fluctuations of feeling towards his native city are not known; but it is supposed to have been not very long before his abode with Can Grande that he received permission to return to Florence, on conditions which he justly refused and resented in the following noble letter to a kinsman. The old spelling of the original (in the note) is retained as given by Foscolo in the article on "Dante" in the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. xxx. no. 60); and I have retained also, with little difference, the translation which accompanies it:

"From your letter, which I received with due respect and affection, I observe how much you have at heart my restoration to my country. I am bound to you the more gratefully, inasmuch as an exile rarely finds a friend. But after mature consideration, I must, by my answer, disappoint the wishes of some little minds; and I confide in the judgment to which your impartiality and prudence will lead you. Your nephew and mine has written to me, what indeed had been mentioned by many other friends, that by a decree concerning the exiles, I am allowed to return to Florence, provided I pay a certain sum of money, and submit to the humiliation of asking and receiving absolution: wherein, my father, I see two propositions that are ridiculous and impertinent. I speak of the impertinence of those who mention such conditions to me; for in your letter, dictated by judgment and discretion, there is no such thing. Is such an invitation, then, to return to his country glorious to d. all. (Dante Allighieri), after suffering in exile almost fifteen years? Is it thus they would recompense innocence which all the world knows, and the labour and fatigue of unremitting study? Far from the man who is familiar with philosophy be the senseless baseness of a heart of earth, that could act like a little sciolist, and imitate the infamy of some others, by offering himself up as it were in chains: far from the man who cries aloud for justice, this compromise by his money

with his persecutors. No, my father, this is not the way that shall lead me back to my country. I will return with hasty steps, if you or any other can open to me a way that shall not derogate from the fame and honour of d. (Dante); but if by no such way Florence can be entered, then Florence I shall never enter. What! shall I not every where enjoy the light of the sun and stars? and may I not seek and contemplate, in every corner of the earth, under the canopy of heaven, consoling and delightful truth, without first rendering myself inglorious, nay infamous, to the people and republic of Florence? Bread, I hope, will not fail me.”*

Had Dante's pride and indignation always vented themselves in this truly exalted manner, never could the admirers of his genius have refused him their sympathy; and never, I conceive, need he either have brought his exile upon him, or closed it as he did. To that close we have now come, and it is truly melan-

* “ In licteris vestris et reverentia debita et affectione receptis, quam repatriatio mea cures it vobis ex animo grata mente ac diligenti animaversione concepi, etenim tanto me districtius obligastis, quanto rarius exules invenire amicos contingit. ad illam vero significata respondeo: et si non eatenus qualitur forsam pusillanimitas appeteret aliquorum, ut sub examine vestri consilii ante iudicium, affectuose depono. ecce igitur quod per licteras vestri mei: que nepotis, necnon aliorum quamplurimum amicorum significatum est mihi. per ordinamentum nuper factum Florentie super absolute bannitorum. quod si solvere vellem certam pecunie quantitatem, vellemque pati notam oblationis et absolvi possem et redire ut presens. in quo quidem duo ridenda et male perconciliata sunt. Pater, dico male perconciliata per illos qui tali expresserunt: nam vestre litere discretius et consultius clausulate nicil de talibus continebant. estne ista revocatio gloriosa qua d. all. (i. e. *Dantes Alligherius*) revocatur ad patriam per trilustrium fere perpressus exilium? hecne meruit conscientia manifesta quibuslibet? hec sudor et labor continuatus in studiis? absit a viro philosophie domestica temeraria terreni cordis humilitas, ut more cujusdam cioli et aliorum infamiam quasi vinctus ipse se patiatur offerri. absit a viro predicante justitiam, ut perpressus injuriam inferentibus. velud benemerentibus, pecuniam suam solvat. non est hec via redeundi ad patriam, Pater mi, sed si alia per vos, aut deinde per alios invenietur que fame d. (*Dantis*) que onori non deroget, illam non lentis passibus acceptabo. quod si per nullam talem Florentia introitur, nunquam Florentiam introibo. quidni? nonne solis astrorumque specula ubique conspiciam? nonne dulcissimas veritates potero speculari ubique sub celo, ni prius inglorium, imo ignominiosum populo, Florentineque civitati me reddam? quippe panis non deficiet.”

choly and mortifying. Failure in a negotiation with the Venetians for his patron, Guido Novello, is supposed to have been the last bitter drop which made the cup of his endurance run over. He returned from Venice to Ravenna, worn out, and there died, after fifteen years' absence from his country, in the year 1231, aged fifty-seven. His life had been so agitated, that it probably would not have lasted so long, but for the solace of his poetry, and the glory which he knew it must produce him. Guido gave him a sumptuous funeral, and intended to give him a monument; but such was the state of Italy in those times, that he himself died in exile the year after. The monument, however, and one of a noble sort, was subsequently bestowed by the father of Cardinal Bembo, in 1483; and another, still nobler, as late as 1780, by Cardinal Gonzaga. His countrymen, in after years, made two solemn applications for the removal of his dust to Florence; but the just pride of the Ravennese refused them.

Of the exile's family, three sons died young; the daughter went into a nunnery; and the two remaining brothers, who ultimately joined their father in his banishment, became respectable men of letters, and left families in Ravenna; where the race, though extinct in the male line, still survives through a daughter in the noble house of Serego Alighieri. No direct descent of the other kind from poets of former times is, I believe, known to exist.

The manners and general appearance of Dante have been minutely recorded, and are in striking agreement with his character. Boccaccio and other novelists are the chief relaters; and their accounts will be received accordingly with the greater or less trust, as the reader considers them probable; but the author of the Decameron personally knew some of his friends and relations, and he intermingles his least favourable reports with expressions of undoubted reverence. The poet was of middle height, of slow and serious deportment, had a long dark visage, large piercing eyes, large jaws, an aquiline nose, a projecting under-lip, and thick curling hair—an aspect announcing determination and melancholy. There is a sketch of his countenance, in his younger days, from the immature but sweet pencil of Giotto; and it is a refreshment to look at it, though pride and dis-

content, I think, are discernible in its lineaments. It is idle, and no true compliment to his nature, to pretend, as his mere worshippers do, that his face owes all its subsequent gloom and exacerbation to external causes, and that he was in every respect the poor victim of events—the infant changed at nurse by the wicked. What came out of him, he must have had in him, at least in the germ; and so inconsistent was his nature altogether, or, at any rate, such an epitome of all the graver passions that are capable of co-existing, both sweet and bitter, thoughtful and outrageous, that one is sometimes tempted to think he must have had an angel for one parent, and—I shall leave his own toleration to say what—for the other.

To continue the account of his manners and inclinations: He dressed with a becoming gravity; was temperate in his diet; a great student; seldom spoke, unless spoken to, but always to the purpose; and almost all the anecdotes recorded of him, except by himself, are full of pride and sarcasm. He was so swarthy, that a woman, as he was going by a door in Verona, is said to have pointed him out to another, with a remark which made the saturnine poet smile—"That is the man who goes to hell whenever he pleases, and brings back news of the people there." On which her companion observed—"Very likely; don't you see what a curly beard he has, and what a dark face? owing, I dare say, to the heat and smoke." He was evidently a passionate lover of painting and music—is thought to have been less strict in his conduct with regard to the sex than might be supposed from his platonical aspirations—(Boccaccio says, that even a goitre did not repel him from the pretty face of a mountaineer)—could be very social when he was young, as may be gathered from the sonnet addressed to his friend Cavalcante about a party for a boat—and though his poetry was so intense and weighty, the laudable minuteness of a biographer has informed us, that his handwriting, besides being neat and precise, was of a long and particularly thin character: "meagre" is his word.

There is a letter, said to be nearly coeval with his time, and to be written by the prior of a monastery to a celebrated Ghibelline leader, a friend of Dante's, which, though hitherto accounted apocryphal by most, has such an air of truth, and contains an

image of the poet in his exile so exceedingly like what we conceive of the man, that it is difficult not to believe it genuine, especially as the handwriting has lately been discovered to be that of Boccaccio.* At all events, I am sure the reader will not be sorry to have the substance of it. The writer says, that he perceived one day a man coming into the monastery, whom none of its inmates knew. He asked him what he wanted; but the stranger saying nothing, and continuing to gaze on the building as though contemplating its architecture, the question was put a second time; upon which, looking round on his interrogators, he answered, "*Peace!*" The prior, whose curiosity was strongly excited, took the stranger apart, and discovering who he was, shewed him all the attention becoming his fame; and then Dante took a little book out of his bosom, and observing that perhaps the prior had not seen it, expressed a wish to leave it with his new friend as a memorial. It was "a portion," he said, "of his work." The prior received the volume with respect; and politely opening it at once, and fixing his eyes on the contents, in order, it would seem, to shew the interest he took in it, appeared suddenly to check some observation which they suggested. Dante found that his reader was surprised at seeing the work written in the vulgar tongue instead of Latin. He explained, that he wished to address himself to readers of all classes; and concluded with requesting the prior to add some notes, with the spirit of which he furnished him, and then forward it (transcribed, I presume, by the monks) to their common friend, the Ghibelline chieftain—a commission, which, knowing the prior's intimacy with that personage, appears to have been the main object of his coming to the place.†

This letter has been adduced as an evidence of Dante's poem having transpired during his lifetime: a thing which, in the teeth of Boccaccio's statement to that effect, and indeed the poet's own testimony,‡ Foscolo holds to be so impossible, that he turns

* *Opere Minori*, ut sup. vol. iii. p. 186.

† *Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, ut sup. p. 208, where the Appendix contains the Latin original.

‡ See Fraticelli's Dissertation on the *Convito*, in *Opere Minori*, ut sup. vol. ii. p. 560.

the evidence against the letter. He thinks, that if such bitter invectives had been circulated, a hundred daggers would have been sheathed in the bosom of the exasperating poet.* But I cannot help being of opinion, with some writer whom I am unable at present to call to mind (Schlegel, I think), that the strong critical reaction of modern times in favour of Dante's genius has tended to exaggerate the idea conceived of him in relation to his own. That he was of importance, and bitterly hated in his native city, was a distinction he shared with other partisans who have obtained no celebrity, though his poetry, no doubt, must have increased the bitterness; that his genius also became more and more felt out of the city, by the few individuals capable of estimating a man of letters in those semi-barbarous times, may be regarded as certain; but that busy politicians in general, war-making statesmen, and princes constantly occupied in fighting for their existence with one another, were at all alive either to his merits or his invectives, or would have regarded him as any thing but a poor wandering scholar, solacing his foolish interference in the politics of this world with the old clerical threats against his enemies in another, will hardly, I think, be doubted by any one who reflects on the difference between a fame accumulated by ages, and the living poverty that is obliged to seek its bread. A writer on a monkish subject may have acquired fame with monks, and even with a few distinguished persons, and yet have been little known, and less cared for, out of the pale of that very private literary public, which was almost exclusively their own. When we read, now-a-days, of the great poet's being so politely received by Can Grande, lord of Verona, and sitting at his princely table, we are apt to fancy that nothing but his great poetry procured him the reception, and that nobody present competed with him in the eyes of his host. But, to say nothing of the different kinds of retainers, that could sit at a prince's table in those days, Can, who was more ostentatious than delicate in his munificence, kept a sort of caravansera for clever exiles, whom he distributed into lodgings classified according to their pursuits;† and Dante only shared his bounty with the rest, till the more delicate poet could

* *Discorso sul Testo*, p. 54.

† *Balbo*, Naples edition, p. 132.

no longer endure either the buffoonery of his companions, or the amusement derived from it by the master. On one occasion, his platter is slyly heaped with their bones, which provokes him to call them dogs, as having none to shew for their own. Another time, Can Grande asks him how it is that his companions give more pleasure at court than himself; to which he answers, "Because like loves like." He then leaves the court, and his disgusted superiority is no doubt regarded as a pedantic assumption.

He stopped long nowhere, except with Guido Novello; and when that prince, whose downfall was at hand, sent him on the journey above mentioned to Venice, the senate (whom the poet had never offended) were so little aware of his being of consequence, that they declined giving him an audience. He went back, and broke his heart. Boccaccio says, that he would get into such passions with the very boys and girls in the street, who plagued him with party-words, as to throw stones at them—a thing that would be incredible, if persons acquainted with his great but ultra-sensitive nation did not know what Italians could do in all ages, from Dante's own age down to the times of Alfieri and Foscolo. It would be as difficult, from the evidence of his own works and of the exasperation he created, to doubt the extremest reports of his irascible temper, as it would be not to give implicit faith to his honesty. The charge of peculation which his enemies brought against this great poet, the world has universally scouted with an indignation that does it honour. He himself seems never to have condescended to allude to it; and a biographer would feel bound to copy his silence, had not the accusation been so atrociously recorded. But, on the other hand, who can believe that a man so capable of doing his fellow-citizens good and honour, would have experienced such excessive enmity, had he not carried to excess the provocations of his pride and scorn? His whole history goes to prove it, not omitting the confession he makes of pride as his chief sin, and the eulogies he bestows on the favourite vice of the age—revenge. His Christianity (at least as shewn in his poem) was not that of Christ, but of a furious polemic. His motives for changing his party, though probably of a mixed nature, like those of most human beings, may reasonably be supposed to have originated in something better than in-

terest or indignation. He had most likely not agreed thoroughly with any party, and had become hopeless of seeing dispute brought to an end, except by the representative of the Cæsars. The inconsistency of the personal characters of the Popes with the sacred claims of the chair of St. Peter, was also calculated greatly to disgust him; but still his own infirmities of pride and vindictiveness spoiled all; and when he loaded every body else with reproach for the misfortunes of his country, he should have recollected that, had his own faults been kept in subjection to his understanding, he might possibly have been its saviour. Dante's modesty has been asserted on the ground of his humbling himself to the fame of Virgil, and at the feet of blessed spirits; but this kind of exalted humility does not repay a man's fellow-citizens for lording it over them with scorn and derision. We learn from Boccaccio, that when he was asked to go ambassador from his party to the pope, he put to them the following useless and mortifying queries—"If I go, who is to stay?—and if I stay, who is to go?"* Neither did his pride make him tolerant of pride in others. A neighbour applying for his intercession with

* "Di se stesso presunse maravigliosamente tanto, che essendo egli glorioso nel colmo del reggimento della republica, e ragionandosi trà maggiori cittadini di mandare, per alcuna gran bisogna, ambasciata a Bonifazio Papa VIII., e che principe della ambasciata fosse Dante, ed egli in ciò in presenza di tutti quegli che ciò consigliavano richiesto, avvenne, che soprastando egli alla risposta, alcun disse, che pensi? alle quali parole egli rispose: penso, se io vo, chi rimane; e s'io rimango, chi va: quasi esso solo fosse colui che tra tutti valesse e per cui tutti gli altri valessero." And he goes on to say, respecting the stone-throwing—"Appresso, come che il nostro poeta nelle sua avversità paziente o no si fosse, in una fu impazientissimo: ed egli infino al cominciamento del suo esilio stato guelfissimo, non essendogli aperta la via del ritornare in casa sua, si fuor di modo diventò ghibellino, che ogni femminella, ogni picciol fanciullo, e quante volte avesse voluto, ragionando di parte, e la guelfa proponendo alla ghibellina, l'avrebbe non solamente fatto turbare, ma a tanta insania commosso, che se taciuto non fosse, a gittar le pietre l'avrebbe condotto." (*Vita di Dante*, prefixed to the Paris edition of the *Commedia*, 1844, p. xxv.) And then the "buon Boccaccio," with his accustomed sweetness of nature, begs pardon of so great a man, for being obliged to relate such things of him, and doubts whether his spirit may not be looking down on him that moment *disdainfully from heaven!* Such an association of ideas had Dante produced between the celestial and the scornful!

a magistrate, who had summoned him for some offence, Dante, who disliked the man for riding in an overbearing manner along the streets (stretching out his legs as wide as he could, and hindering people from going by), did intercede with the magistrate, but it was in behalf of doubling the fine in consideration of the horsemanship. The neighbour, who was a man of family, was so exasperated, that Sacchetti the novelist says it was the principal cause of Dante's expatriation. This will be considered the less improbable, if, as some suppose, the delinquent obtained possession of his derider's confiscated property; but, at all events, nothing is more likely to have injured him. The bitterest animosities are generally of a personal nature; and bitter indeed must have been those which condemned a man of official dignity and of genius to such a penalty as the stake.*

That the Florentines of old, like other half-Christianised people, were capable of any extremity against an opponent, burning included, was proved by the fates of Savonarola and others; and that Dante himself could admire the burners is evident from his eulogies and beatification of such men as Folco and St. Dominic. The tragical as well as "fantastic tricks" which

"Man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,"

plays with his energy and bad passions under the guise of duty, is among the most perplexing of those spectacles, which, according to a greater understanding than Dante's, "make the angels weep." (Dante, by the way, has introduced in his heaven no such angels as those; though he has plenty that scorn and denounce.) Lope de Vega, though a poet, was an officer of the Inquisition, and joined the famous Armada that was coming to thumbscrew and roast us into his views of Christian meekness. Whether the author of the story of *Paulo and Francesca* could have carried the Dominican theories into practice, had he been the banisher instead of the banished, is a point that may happily be doubted; but at all events he revenged himself on his enemies

* *Novelle di Franco Sacchetti*, Milan edition, 1804, vol. ii. p. 148. It forms the setting, or frame-work, of an inferior story, and is not mentioned in the heading.

after their own fashion; for he answered their decree of the stake by putting them into hell.

Dante entitled the saddest poem in the world a Comedy, because it was written in a middle style; though some, by a strange confusion of ideas, think the reason must have been because it "ended happily!" that is, because, beginning with hell (to some), it terminated with "heaven" (to others). As well might they have said, that a morning's work in the Inquisition ended happily, because, while people were being racked in the dungeons, the officers were making merry in the drawing-room. For the much-injured epithet of "Divine," Dante's memory is not responsible. He entitled his poem arrogantly enough, yet still not with that impiety of arrogance, "The Comedy of Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by nation but not by habits." The word "divine" was added by some transcriber; and it heaped absurdity on absurdity, too much of it, alas! being literally infernal tragedy. I am not speaking in mockery, any further than the fact itself cannot help so speaking. I respect what is to be respected in Dante; I admire in him what is admirable; would love (if his infernalities would let me) what is loveable; but this must not hinder one of the human race from protesting against what is erroneous in his fame, when it jars against every best feeling, human and divine. Mr. Cary thinks that Dante had as much right to avail himself of "the popular creed in all its extravagance" as Homer had of his gods, or Shakspeare of his fairies. But the distinction is obvious. Homer did not personally identify himself with a creed, or do his utmost to perpetuate the worst parts of it in behalf of a ferocious inquisitorial church, and to the risk of endangering the peace of millions of gentle minds.

The great poem thus misnomered is partly a system of theology, partly an abstract of the knowledge of the day, but chiefly a series of passionate and imaginative pictures, altogether forming an account of the author's times, his friends, his enemies, and himself, written to vent the spleen of his exile, and the rest of his feelings, good and bad, and to reform church and state by a spirit of resentment and obloquy, which highly needed reform itself. It has also a design strictly self-referential. The author feigns, that the beatified spirit of his mistress has obtained leave

to warn and purify his soul by shewing him the state of things in the next world. She deutes the soul of his master Virgil to conduct him through hell and purgatory, and then takes him herself through the spheres of heaven, where St. Peter catechises and confirms him, and where he is finally honoured with sights of the Virgin Mary, of Christ, and even a glimpse of the Supreme Being!

His hell, considered as a place, is, to speak geologically, a most fantastical formation. It descends from beneath Jerusalem to the centre of the earth, and is a funnel graduated in circles, each circle being a separate place of torment for a different vice or its co-ordinates, and the point of the funnel terminating with Satan stuck into ice. Purgatory is a corresponding mountain on the other side of the globe, commencing with the antipodes of Jerusalem, and divided into exterior circles of expiation, which end in a table-land forming the terrestrial paradise. From this the hero and his mistress ascend by a flight, exquisitely conceived, to the stars; where the sun and the planets of the Ptolemaic system (for the true one was unknown in Dante's time) form a series of heavens for different virtues, the whole terminating in the empyrean, or region of pure light, and the presence of the Beatific Vision.

The boundaries of old and new, strange as it may now seem to us, were so confused in those days, and books were so rare, and the Latin poets held in such invincible reverence, that Dante, in one and the same poem, speaks of the false gods of Paganism, and yet retains much of its lower mythology; nay, invokes Apollo himself at the door of paradise. There was, perhaps, some mystical and even philosophical inclusion of the past in this medley, as recognising the constant superintendence of Providence; but that Dante partook of what may be called the literary superstition of the time, even for want of better knowledge, is clear from the grave historical use he makes of poetic fables in his treatise on Monarchy, and in the very arguments which he puts into the mouths of saints and apostles. There are lingering feelings to this effect even now among the peasantry of Italy; where, the reader need not be told, Pagan customs of all sorts, including religious and most reverend ones, are existing

under the sanction of other names ;—heathenisms christened. A Tuscan postilion, once enumerating to me some of the native poets, concluded his list with Apollo ; and a plaster-cast man over here, in London, appeared much puzzled, when conversing on the subject with a friend of mine, how to discrepate Samson from Hercules.

Dante accordingly, while, with the frightful bigotry of the schools, he puts the whole Pagan world into hell-borders (with the exception of two or three, whose salvation adds to the absurdity), mingles the hell of Virgil with that of Tertullian and St. Dominic ; sets Minos at the door as judge ; retains Charon in his old office of boatman over the Stygian lake ; puts fabulous people with real among the damned, Dido, and Cacus, and Ephialtes, with Ezzelino and Pope Nicholas the Fifth ; and associates the Centaurs and the Furies with the agents of diabolical torture. It has pleased him also to elevate Cato of Utica to the office of warder of purgatory, though the censor's poor good wife, Marcia, is detained in the regions below. By these and other far greater inconsistencies, the whole place of punishment becomes a *reductio ab absurdum*, as ridiculous as it is melancholy ; so that one is astonished how so great a man, and especially a man who thought himself so far advanced beyond his age, and who possessed such powers of discerning the good and beautiful, could endure to let his mind live in so foul and foolish a region for any length of time, and there wreak and harden the unworthiest of his passions. Genius, nevertheless, is so commensurate with absurdity throughout the book, and there are even such sweet and balmy as well as sublime pictures in it occasionally, nay often, that not only will the poem ever be worthy of admiration, but when those increasing purifications of Christianity which our blessed reformers began, shall finally precipitate the whole dregs of the author into the mythology to which they belong, the world will derive a pleasure from it to an amount not to be conceived till the arrival of that day. Dante, meantime, with an impartiality which has been admired by those who can approve the assumption of a theological tyranny at the expense of common feeling and decency, has put friends as well as foes into hell : tutors of his childhood, kinsmen of those who treated him hospitably, even the father

of his beloved friend, Guido Cavalcante—the last for not believing in a God: therein doing the worst thing possible in behalf of the belief, and totally differing both with the pious heathen Plutarch, and the great Christian philosopher Bacon, who were of opinion that a contumelious belief is worse than none, and that it is far better and more pious to believe in “no God at all,” than in a God who would “eat his children as soon as they were born.” And Dante makes him do worse; for the whole unbaptised infant world, Christian as well as Pagan, is in his Tartarus.

Milton has spoken of the “milder shades of Purgatory;” and truly they possess great beauties. Even in a theological point of view they are something like a bit of Christian refreshment after the horrors of the *Inferno*. The first emerging from the hideous gulf to the sight of the blue serenity of heaven, is painted in a manner inexpressibly charming. So is the sea-shore with the coming of the angel; the valley, with the angels in green; the repose at night on the rocks; and twenty other pictures of gentleness and love. And yet, special and great has been the escape of the Protestant world from this part of Roman Catholic belief; for Purgatory is the heaviest stone that hangs about the neck of the old and feeble in that communion. Hell is avoidable by repentance; but Purgatory, what modest conscience shall escape? Mr. Cary, in a note on a passage in which Dante recommends his readers to think on what follows this expiatory state, rather than what is suffered there,* looks upon the poet’s injunction as an “unanswerable objection to the doctrine of purgatory,” it being difficult to conceive “how the best can meet death without horror, if they believe it must be followed by immediate and intense suffering.” Luckily, assent is not belief; and mankind’s feelings are for the most part superior to their opinions; otherwise the world would have been in a bad way indeed, and nature not been vindicated of her children. But let us watch and be on our guard against all resuscitations of superstition.

As to our Florentine’s Heaven, it is full of beauties also,

* *The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, of Dante Alighieri, &c* Smith’s edition, 1844, p. 90.

though sometimes of a more questionable and pantomimical sort than is to be found in either of the other books. I shall speak of some of them presently ; but the general impression of the place is, that it is no heaven at all. He says it is, and talks much of its smiles and its beatitude ; but always excepting the poetry—especially the similes brought from the more heavenly earth—we realise little but a fantastical assemblage of doctors and doubtful characters, far more angry and theological than celestial ; giddy raptures of monks and inquisitors dancing in circles, and saints denouncing popes and Florentines ; in short, a heaven libelling itself with invectives against earth, and terminating in a great presumption. Many of the people put there, a Calvinistic Dante would have consigned to the “other place ;” and some, if now living, would not be admitted into decent society. At the beginning of one of the cantos, the poet congratulates himself, with a complacent superiority, on his being in heaven and occupied with celestial matters, while his poor fellow-creatures are wandering and blundering on earth. But he had never got there ! A divine—worthy of that name—of the Church of England (Dr. Whichcote), has beautifully said, that “heaven is first a temper, and then a place.” According to this truly celestial topography, the implacable Florentine had not reached its outermost court. Again, his heavenly mistress, Beatrice, besides being far too didactic to sustain the womanly part of her character properly, alternates her smiles and her sarcasms in a way that jars horribly against the occasional enchantment of her aspect. She does not scruple to burst into taunts of the Florentines in the presence of Jesus himself ; and the spirit of his ancestor, Cacciaguida, in the very bosom of Christian bliss, promises him revenge on his enemies ! Is this the kind of zeal that is to be exempt from objection in a man who objected to all the world ? or will it be thought a profaneness against such profanity, to remind the reader of the philosopher in Swift, who “while gazing on the stars, was betrayed by his lower parts into a ditch !”

The reader’s time need not be wasted with the allegorical and other mystical significations given to the poem ; still less on the question whether Beatrice is theology, or a young lady, or both ; and least of all on the discovery of the ingenious Signor Rossetti,

that Dante and all the other great old Italian writers meant nothing, either by their mistresses or their mythology, but attacks on the court of Rome. Suffice it, that besides all other possible meanings, Dante himself has told us that his poem has its obvious and literal meaning; that he means a spade by a spade, purgatory by purgatory, and truly and unaffectedly to devote his friends to the infernal regions whenever he does so. I confess I think it is a great pity that Guido Cavalcante did not live to read the poem, especially the passage about his father. The understanding of Guido, who had not the admiration for Virgil that Dante had (very likely for reasons that have been thought sound in modern times), was in all probability as good as that of his friend in many respects, and perhaps more so in one or two; and modern criticism might have been saved some of its pains of objection by the poet's contemporary.

The author did not live to publish, in any formal manner, his extraordinary poem, probably did not intend to do so, except under those circumstances of political triumph which he was always looking for; but as he shewed portions of it to his friends, it was no doubt talked of to a certain extent, and must have exasperated such of his enemies as considered him worth their hostility. No wonder they did all they could to keep him out of Florence. What would they have said of him, could they have written a counter poem? What would even his friends have said of him? for we see in what manner he has treated even those; and yet how could he possibly know, with respect either to friends or enemies, what passed between them and their consciences? or who was it that gave him his right to generate the boasted distinction between an author's feelings as a man and his assumed office as a theologian, and parade the latter at the former's expense? His own spleen, hatred, and avowed sentiments of vengeance, are manifest throughout the poem; and there is this, indeed, to be said for the moral and religious inconsistencies both of the man and his verse, that in those violent times the spirit of Christian charity, and even the sentiment of personal shame, were so little understood, that the author in one part of it is made to blush by a friend for not having avenged him; and it is said to have been thought a compliment to put a lady herself

into hell, that she might be talked of, provided it was for something not odious. An admirer of this infernal kind of celebrity, even in later times, declared that he would have given a sum of money (I forget to what amount) if Dante had but done as much for one of his ancestors. It has been argued, that in all the parties concerned in these curious ethics there is a generous love of distinction, and a strong craving after life, action, and sympathy of some kind or other. Granted; there are all sorts of half-good, half-barbarous feelings in Dante's poem. Let justice be done to the good half; but do not let us take the ferocity for wisdom and piety; or pretend, in the complacency of our own freedom from superstition, to see no danger of harm to the less fortunate among our fellow-creatures in the support it receives from a man of genius. Bedlams have been filled with such horrors; thousands, nay millions of feeble minds are suffering by them or from them, at this minute, all over the world. Dante's best critic, Foscolo, has said much of the heroical nature of the age in which the poet lived; but he adds, that its mixture of knowledge and absurdity is almost inexplicable. The truth is, that like everything else which appears harsh and unaccountable in nature, it was an excess of the materials for good, working in an over-active and inexperienced manner; but knowing this, we are bound, for the sake of the good, not to retard its improvement by ignoring existing impieties, or blind ourselves to the perpetuating tendencies of the bigotries of great men. Oh! had the first indoctrinators of Christian feeling, while enlisting the "divine Plato" into the service of diviner charity, only kept the latter just enough in mind to discern the beautiful difference between the philosopher's unmalignant and improvable evil, and their own malignant and eternal one, what a world of folly and misery they might have saved us! But as the evil has happened, let us hope that even this form of it has had its uses. If Dante thought it salutary to the world to maintain a system of religious terror, the same charity which can hope that it may once have been so, has taught us how to commence a better. But did he, after all, or did he not, think it salutary? Did he think so, believing the creed himself? or did he think it from an unwilling sense of its necessity? Or, lastly, did he write only as a mythologist, and care for nothing

but the exercise of his spleen and genius? If he had no other object than that, his conscientiousness would be reduced to a low pitch indeed. Foscolo is of opinion he was not only in earnest, but that he was very near taking himself for an apostle, and would have done so had his prophecies succeeded, perhaps with success to the pretension.* Thank heaven, his "Hell" has not embittered the mild reading-desks of the Church of England. If King George the Third himself, with all his arbitrary notions, and willing religious acquiescence, could not endure the creed of St. Athanasius with its damnatory enjoinders of the impossible, what would have been said to the inscription over Dante's hell-gate, or the account of Ugolino eating an archbishop, in the gentle chapels of Queen Victoria? May those chapels have every beauty in them, and every air of heaven, that painting and music can bestow—divine gifts, not unworthy to be set before their Divine Bestower; but far from them be kept the foul fiends of inhumanity and superstition!

It is certainly impossible to get at a thorough knowledge of the opinions of Dante even in theology; and his morals, if judged according to the received standard, are not seldom puzzling. He rarely thinks as the popes do; sometimes not as the Church does; he is lax, for instance, on the subject of absolution by the priest at death.† All you can be sure of is, the predominance of his will, the most wonderful poetry, and the notions he entertained of the degrees of vice and virtue. Towards the errors of love he is inclined to be so lenient (some think because he had indulged in them himself), that it is pretty clear he would not have put Paulo and Francesca into hell, if their story had not been too recent, and their death too sudden, to allow him to assume their repentance in the teeth of the evidence required. He avails himself of orthodox license to put "the harlot Rahab" into heaven ("cette bonne fille de Jericho," as Ginguéné calls her); nay, he puts her into the planet Venus, as if to compliment her on her profession; and one of her companions there is

* *Discorso sul Testo*, pp. 64, 77-90, 335-338.

† *Purgatorio*, canto iii. 118, 138; referred to by Foscolo, in the *Discorso sul Testo*, p. 383.

a fair Ghibelline, sister of the tyrant Ezzelino, a lady famous for her gallantries, of whom the poet good-naturedly says, that she "was overcome by her star"—to wit, the said planet Venus; and yet he makes her the organ of the most unfeminine triumphs over the Guelphs. But both these ladies, it is to be understood, repented—for they had time for repentance; their good fortune saved them. Poor murdered Francesca had no time to repent; therefore her mischance was her damnation! Such are the compliments theology pays to the Creator. In fact, nothing is really punished in Dante's Catholic hell but impenitence, deliberate or accidental. No delay of repentance, however dangerous, hinders the most hard-hearted villain from reaching his heaven. The best man goes to hell for ever, if he does not think he has sinned as Dante thinks; the worst is beatified, if he agrees with him: the only thing which every body is sure of, is some dreadful duration of agony in purgatory—the great horror of Catholic death-beds. Protestantism may well hug itself on having escaped it. O Luther! vast was the good you did us. O gentle Church of England! let nothing persuade you that it is better to preach frightful and foolish ideas of God from your pulpits, than loving-kindness to all men, and peace above all things.

If Dante had erred only on the side of indulgence, humanity could easily have forgiven him—for the excesses of charity are the extensions of hope; but, unfortunately, where he is sweet-natured once, he is bitter a hundred times. This is the impression he makes on universalists of all creeds and parties; that is to say, on men who having run the whole round of sympathy with their fellow-creatures, become the only final judges of sovereign pretension. It is very well for individuals to make a god of Dante for some encouragement of their own position or pretension; but a god for the world at large he never was, or can be; and I doubt if an impression to this effect was not always, from the very dawn of our literature, the one entertained of him by the genius of our native country, which could never long endure any kind of unwarrantable dictation. Chaucer evidently thought him a man who would spare no unnecessary probe to the feelings (see the close of his version of *Ugolino*). Spenser says not a word of him, though he copied Tasso, and eulogised Ariosto.

Shakspeare would assuredly have put him into the list of those presumptuous lookers into eternity who “*take upon themselves to know*” (*Cymbeline*, act v. sc. 4). Milton, in his sonnet to Henry Lawes, calls him “that sad Florentine”—a lamenting epithet, by which we do not designate a man whom we desire to resemble. The historian of English poetry, admirably applying to him a passage out of Milton, says that

“Hell grows darker at his frown.”*

Walter Scott could not read him, at least not with pleasure. He tells Miss Seward that the “plan” of the poem appeared to him “unhappy ; the personal malignity and strange mode of revenge presumptuous and uninteresting.”† Uninteresting, I think, it is impossible to consider it. The known world is there, and the unknown pretends to be there ; and both are surely interesting to most people.

Landor, in his delightful book the *Pentameron*—a book full of the profoundest as well as sweetest humanity—makes Petrarch follow up Boccaccio’s eulogies of the episode of Paulo and Francesca with ebullitions of surprise and horror :

“*Petrarca*. Perfection of poetry ! The greater is my wonder at discovering nothing else of the same order or cast in this whole section of the poem. He who fainted at the recital of Francesca,

‘ And he who fell as a dead body falls,’

would exterminate all the inhabitants of every town in Italy ! What execrations against Florence, Pistoia, Pisa, Siena, Genoa ! what hatred against the whole human race ! what exultation and merriment at eternal and immitigable sufferings ! Seeing this, I cannot but consider the *Inferno* as the most immoral and impious book that ever was written. Yet, hopeless that our country shall ever see again such poetry, and certain that without it our future poets would be more feebly urged forward to excellence, I would

* Warton’s *History of English Poetry*, edition of 1840, vol. iii. p. 214.

† *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* vol. ii. p. 122.

have dissuaded Dante from cancelling it, if this had been his intention.”*

Most happily is the distinction here intimated between the undesirableness of Dante's book in a moral and religious point of view, and the greater desirableness of it, nevertheless, as a pattern of poetry; for absurdity, however potent, wears itself out in the end, and leaves what is good and beautiful to vindicate even so foul an origin.

Again, Petrarch says, “What an object of sadness and of consternation, he who rises up from hell like a giant refreshed!

“*Boccaccio*. Strange perversion! A pillar of smoke by day and of fire by night, to guide no one. Paradise had fewer wants for him to satisfy than hell had, all which he fed to repletion; but let us rather look to his poetry than his temper.”

See also what is said in that admirable book further on (p. 50), respecting the most impious and absurd passage in all Dante's poem, the assumption about Divine Love in the inscription over hell-gate—one of those monstrosities of conception which none ever had the effrontery to pretend to vindicate, except theologians who profess to be superior to the priests of Moloch, and who yet defy every feeling of decency and humanity for the purpose of explaining their own worldly, frightened, or hard-hearted submission to the mistakes of the most wretched understandings.

Ugo Foscolo, an excellent critic where his own temper and violence did not interfere, sees nothing but jealousy in Petrarch's dislike of Dante, and nothing but Jesuitism in similar feelings entertained by such men as Tiraboschi. But all gentle and considerate hearts must dislike the rage and bigotry in Dante, even were it true (as the Dantesque Foscolo thinks) that Italy will never be regenerated till one-half of it is baptised in the blood of the other!† Such men, with all their acuteness, are incapable of seeing what can be effected by nobler and serener times, and the progress of civilisation. They fancy, no doubt, that they are vindicating the energies of Nature herself, and the inevitable necessity of “doing evil that good may come.” But Dante in so do-

* *Pentameron and Pentalogia*, pp. 44-50.

† *Discorso sul Testò*, p. 226. The whole passage (sect. cx.) is very eloquent, horrible, and *self-betraying*.

ing violated the Scripture he professed to revere ; and men must not assume to themselves that final knowledge of results, which is the only warrant of the privilege, and the possession of which is to be arrogated by no earthly wisdom. One calm discovery of science may do away with all the boasted eternal necessities of the angry and the self-idolatrous. The passions that may be necessary to savages are not bound to remain so to civilised men, any more than the eating of man's flesh or the worship of Jugghernaut. When we think of the wonderful things lately done by science for the intercourse of the world, and the beautiful and tranquil books of philosophy written by men of equal energy and benevolence, and opening the peacefulest hopes for mankind, and views of creation to which Dante's universe was a nutshell,—such a vision as that of his poem (in a theological point of view) seems no better than the dream of an hypochondriacal savage, and his nutshell a rottenness to be spit out of the mouth.

Heaven send that the great poet's want of charity has not made myself presumptuous and uncharitable ! But it is in the name of society I speak ; and words, at all events, now-a-days are not the terrible, stake-preceding things they were in his. Readers in general, however—even those of the literary world—have little conception of the extent to which Dante carries either his cruelty or his abuse. The former (of which I shall give some examples presently) shews appalling habits of personal resentment ; the latter is outrageous to a pitch of the ludicrous—positively screaming. I will give some specimens of it out of Foscolo himself, who collects them for a different purpose ; though, with all his idolatry of Dante, he was far from being insensible to his mistakes.

“ The people of Sienna,” according to this national and Christian poet, were “ a parcel of coxcombs ; those of Arezzo, dogs ; and of Casentino, hogs. Lucca made a trade of perjury. Pistoia was a den of beasts, and ought to be reduced to ashes ; and the river Arno should overflow and drown every soul in Pisa. Almost all the women in Florence walked half-naked in public, and were abandoned in private. Every brother, husband, son, and father, in Bologna, set their women to sale. In all Lombardy were not to be found three men who were not rascals ; and in

Genoa and Romagna people went about pretending to be men, but in reality were bodies inhabited by devils, their souls having gone to the 'lowest pit of hell' to join the betrayers of their friends and kinsmen."*

So much for his beloved countrymen. As for foreigners, particularly kings, "Edward the First of England, and Robert of Scotland, were a couple of grasping fools; the Emperor Albert was an usurper; Alphonso the Second, of Spain, a debauchee; the King of Bohemia a coward; Frederick of Arragon a coward and miser; the Kings of Portugal and Norway forgers; the King of Naples a man whose virtues were expressed by a unit, and his vices by a million; and the King of France, the descendant of a Paris butcher, and of progenitors who poisoned St. Thomas Aquinas, their descendants conquering with the arms of Judas rather than of soldiers, and selling the flesh of their daughters to old men, in order to extricate themselves from a danger."†

When we add to these invectives, damnations of friends as well as foes, of companions, lawyers, men of letters, princes, philosophers, popes, pagans, innocent people as well as guilty, fools and wise, capable and incapable, men, women, and children,—it is really no better than a kind of diabolical sublimation of Lord Thurlow's anathemas in the *Rolliad*, which begins with

"Damnation seize ye all;"

and ends with

"Damn them beyond what mortal tongue can tell,
Confound, sink, plunge them all to deepest, blackest hell."‡

In the gross, indeed, this is ridiculous enough. No burlesque can beat it. But in the particular, one is astonished and saddened at the cruelties in which the poet allows his imagination to riot: horrors generally described with too intense a verisimilitude not to excite our admiration, with too astounding a perseverance not to amaze our humanity, and sometimes with an amount of positive joy and delight that makes us ready to shut

* *Discorso*, as above, p. 101.

† *Discorso*, p. 103.

‡ *Criticisms on the Rolliad, and Probationary Odès for the Laureateship*. Third edit. 1785, p. 317.

the book with disgust and indignation. Thus, in a circle in hell, where traitors are stuck up to their chins in ice (canto xxxii.), the visitor, in walking about, happens to give one of their faces a kick; the sufferer weeps, and then curses him—with such infernal truth does the writer combine the malignant with the pathetic! Dante replies to the curse by asking the man his name. He is refused it. He then seizes the miserable wretch by the hair, in order to force him to the disclosure; and Virgil is represented as commending the barbarity!* But he does worse. To barbarity he adds treachery of his own. He tells another poor wretch, whose face is iced up with his tears, as if he had worn a crystal vizer, that if he will disclose his name and offence, he will relieve his eyes awhile, *that he may weep*. The man does so; and the ferocious poet then refuses to perform his promise, adding mockery to falsehood, and observing that ill manners are the only courtesy proper towards such a fellow!† It has been conjectured that Macchiavelli apparently encouraged the enormities of the princes of his time, with a design to expose them to indignation. It might have been thought of Dante, if he had not taken a part in the cruelty, that he detailed the horrors of his hell out of a wish to disgust the world with its frightful notions of God. This is certainly the effect of the worse part of his descriptions in an age like the present. Black burning gulfs, full of outcries and blasphemy, feet red-hot with fire, men eternally eating their fellow-creatures, frozen wretches malignantly dashing their iced heads against one another, other adversaries mutually exchanging shapes by force of an attraction at once irresistible and loathing, and spitting with hate and disgust when it is done—Enough, enough, for God's sake! Take the disgust out of one's senses, O flower of true Christian wisdom and charity, now beginning to fill the air with fragrance!

But it will be said that Dante did all this out of his hate of

* The writer of the article on Dante in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* (as above) concedes that his hero in this passage becomes “almost cruel.” Almost! Tormenting a man further, who is up to his chin in everlasting ice, and whose face he has kicked!

† “Cortesia fu lui esser villano.”

Inferno, canto xxxiii. 150.

cruelty itself, and of treachery itself. Partly no doubt he did; and entirely he thought he did. But see how the notions of such retribution react upon the judge, and produce in him the bad passions he punishes. It is true the punishments are imaginary. Were a human being actually to see such things, he must be dehumanised or he would cry out against them with horror and detestation. But the poem draws them as truths; the writer's creed threatened them; he himself contributed to maintain the belief; and however we may suppose such a belief to have had its use in giving alarm to ruffian passions and barbarously ignorant times, an age arrives when a beneficent Providence permits itself to be better understood, and dissipates the superfluous horror.

Many, indeed, of the absurdities of Dante's poem are too obvious now-a-days to need remark. Even the composition of the poem, egotistically said to be faultless by such critics as Alfieri, who thought they resembled him, partakes, as every body's style does, of the faults as well as good qualities of the man. It is nervous, concise, full almost as it can hold, picturesque, mighty, primeval; but it is often obscure, often harsh, and forced in its constructions, defective in melody, and wilful and superfluous in the rhyme. Sometimes, also, the writer is inconsistent in circumstance (probably from not having corrected the poem); and he is not above being filthy. Even in the episode of Paulo and Francesca, which has so often been pronounced faultless, and which is unquestionably one of the most beautiful pieces of writing in the world, some of these faults are observable, particularly in the obscurity of the passage about *tolta forma*, the cessation of the incessant tempest, and the non-adjuration of the two lovers in the manner that Virgil prescribes.

But truly it is said, that when Dante is great, nobody surpasses him. I doubt if anybody equals him, as to the constant intensity and incessant variety of his pictures; and whatever he paints, he throws, as it were, upon its own powers; as though an artist should draw figures that started into life, and proceeded to action for themselves, frightening their creator. Every motion, word, and look of these creatures becomes full of sensibility and suggestions. The invisible is at the back of the visible; darkness becomes palpable; silence describes a character, nay, forms

the most striking part of a story ; a word acts as a flash of lightning, which displays some gloomy neighbourhood, where a tower is standing, with dreadful faces at the window ; or where, at your feet, full of eternal voices, one abyss is beheld dropping out of another in the lurid light of torment. In the present volume a story will be found which tells a long tragedy in half-a-dozen lines. Dante has the minute probabilities of a Defoe in the midst of the loftiest and most generalising poetry ; and this feeling of matter-of-fact is impressed by fictions the most improbable, nay, the most ridiculous and revolting. You laugh at the absurdity ; you are shocked at the detestable cruelty ; yet, for the moment, the thing almost seems as if it must be true. You feel as you do in a dream, and after it ;—you wake and laugh, but the absurdity seemed true at the time ; and while you laugh you shudder.

Enough of this crueller part of his genius has been exhibited ; but it is seldom you can have the genius without sadness. In the circle of hell, soothsayers walk along weeping, with their faces turned the wrong way, so that their tears fall between their shoulders. The picture is still more dreadful. Warton thinks it ridiculous. But I cannot help feeling with the poet, that it is dreadfully pathetic. It is the last mortifying insult to human pretension. Warton, who has a grudge against Dante natural to a man of happier piety, thinks him ridiculous also in describing the monster Geryon lying upon the edge of one of the gulfs of hell “like a beaver” (canto xvii.). He is of opinion that the writer only does it to show his knowledge of natural history. But surely the idea of so strange and awful a creature (a huge mild-faced man ending in a dragon’s body) lying familiarly on the edge of the gulf, as a beaver does by the water, combines the supernatural with the familiar in a very impressive manner. It is this combination of extremes which is the life and soul of the whole poem ; you have this world in the next ; the same persons, passions, remembrances, intensified by superhuman despairs or beatitudes ; the speechless entrancements of bliss, the purgatorial trials of hope and patience ; the supports of hate and anger (such as they are) in hell itself ; nay, of loving despairs, and a self-pity made unboundedly pathetic by endless suffering. Hence

there is no love-story so affecting as that of Paulo and Francesca thus told and perpetuated in another world; no father's misery so enforced upon as Ugolino's, who, for hundreds of years, has not grown tired of the revenge to which it wrought him. Dante even puts this weight and continuity of feeling into passages of mere transient emotion or illustration, unconnected with the next world; as in the famous instance of the verses about evening, and many others which the reader will meet with in this volume. Indeed, if pathos and the most impressive simplicity, and graceful beauty of all kinds, and abundant grandeur, can pay (as the reader, I believe, will think it does even in a prose abstract), for the pangs of moral discord and absurdity inflicted by the perusal of Dante's poem, it may challenge competition with any in point of interest. His Heaven, it is true, though containing both sublime and lovely passages, is not so good as his Earth. The more unearthly he tried to make it, the less heavenly it became. When he is content with earth in heaven itself,—when he literalises a metaphor, and with exquisite felicity finds himself *arrived there* in consequence of fixing his eyes on the eyes of Beatrice, then he is most celestial. But his endeavours to express degrees of beatitude and holiness by varieties of flame and light,—of dancing lights, revolving lights, lights of smiles, of stars, of starry crosses, of didactic letters and sentences, of animal figures made up of stars full of blessed souls, with saints *forming an eagle's beak* and David in its *eye!*—such superhuman attempts become for the most part tricks of theatrical machinery, on which we gaze with little curiosity and no respect.

His angels, however, are another matter. Belief was prepared for those winged human forms, and they furnished him with some of his most beautiful combinations of the natural with the supernatural. Ginguéné has remarked the singular variety as well as beauty of Dante's angels. Milton's, indeed, are commonplace in the comparison. In the eighth canto of the *Inferno*, the devils insolently refuse the poet and his guide an entrance into the city of Dis:—an angel comes sweeping over the Stygian lake to enforce it; the noise of his wings makes the shores tremble, and is like a crashing whirlwind such as beats down the trees and sends the peasants and their herds flying before it. The heavenly messen-

ger, after rebuking the devils, touches the portals of the city with his wand; they fly open; and he returns the way he came without uttering a word to the two companions. His face was that of one occupied with other thoughts. This angel is announced by a tempest. Another, who brings the souls of the departed to Purgatory, is first discovered at a distance, gradually disclosing white splendours, which are his wings and garments. He comes in a boat, of which his wings are the sails; and as he approaches, it is impossible to look him in the face for its brightness. Two other angels have green wings and green garments, and the drapery is kept in motion like a flag by the vehement action of the wings. A fifth has a face like the morning star, casting forth quivering beams. A sixth is of a lustre so oppressive, that the poet feels a weight on his eyes before he knows what is coming. Another's presence affects the senses like the fragrance of a May-morning; and another is in garments dark as cinders, but has a sword in his hand too sparkling to be gazed at. Dante's occasional pictures of the beauties of external nature are worthy of these angelic creations, and to the last degree fresh and lovely. You long to bathe your eyes, smarting with the fumes of hell, in his dews. You gaze enchanted on his green fields and his celestial blue skies, the more so from the pain and sorrow in midst of which the visions are created.

Dante's grandeur of every kind is proportionate to that of his angels, almost to his ferocity; and that is saying every thing. It is not always the spiritual grandeur of Milton, the subjection of the material impression to the moral; but it is equally such when he chooses, and far more abundant. His infernal precipices—his black whirlwinds—his innumerable cries and claspings of hands—his very odours of huge loathsomeness—his giants at twilight standing up to the middle in pits, like towers, and causing earthquakes when they move—his earthquake of the mountain in Purgatory, when a spirit is set free for heaven—his dignified Mantuan Sordello, silently regarding him and his guide as they go by, "like a lion on his watch"—his blasphemer, Capaneus, lying in unconquered rage and sullenness under an eternal rain of flakes of fire (human precursor of Milton's Satan)—his aspect of Paradise, "as if the universe had smiled"—his inhabitants of

the whole planet Saturn crying out *so loud*, in accordance with the anti-papal indignation of Saint Pietro Damiano, that the poet, though among them, *could not hear what they said*—and the blushing eclipse, like red clouds at sunset, which takes place at the apostle Peter's denunciation of the sanguinary filth of the court of Rome—all these sublimities, and many more, make us not know whether to be more astonished at the greatness of the poet or the raging littleness of the man. Grievous is it to be forced to bring two such opposites together; and I wish, for the honour and glory of poetry, I did not feel compelled to do so. But the swarthy Florentine had not the healthy temperament of his brethren, and he fell upon evil times. Compared with Homer and Shakspeare, his very intensity seems only superior to theirs from an excess of the morbid; and he is inferior to both in other sovereign qualities of poetry—to the one, in giving you the healthiest general impression of nature itself—to Shakspeare, in boundless universality—to most great poets, in thorough harmony and delightfulness. He wanted (generally speaking) the music of a happy and a happy-making disposition. Homer, from his large vital bosom, breathes like a broad fresh air over the world, amidst alternate storm and sunshine, making you aware that there is rough work to be faced, but also activity and beauty to be enjoyed. The feeling of health and strength is predominant. Life laughs at death itself, or meets it with a noble confidence—is not taught to dread it as a malignant goblin. Shakspeare has all the smiles as well as tears of nature, and discerns the “soul of goodness in things evil.” He is comedy as well as tragedy—the entire man in all his qualities, moods, and experiences; and he beautifies all. And both those truly divine poets make nature their subject through her own inspiriting medium—not through the darkened glass of one man's spleen and resentment. Dante, in constituting himself the hero of his poem, not only renders her, in the general impression, as dreary as himself, in spite of the occasional beautiful pictures he draws of her, but narrows her very immensity into his pettiness. He fancied, alas, that he could build her universe over again out of the politics of old Rome and the divinity of the schools!

Dante, besides his great poem, and a few Latin eclogues, of no

great value, wrote lyrics full of Platonical sentiment, some of which anticipated the loveliest of Petrarch's; and he was the author of various prose works, political and philosophical, all more or less masterly for the time in which he lived, and all coadjutors of his poetry in fixing his native tongue. His account of his Early Life (the *Vita Nuova*) is a most engaging history of a boyish passion, evidently as real and true on his own side as love and truth can be, whatever might be its mistake as to its object. The treatise on the Vernacular Tongue (*de Vulgari Eloquentio*) shews how critically he considered his materials for impressing the world, and what a reader he was of every production of his contemporaries. The Banquet (*Convito*) is but an abstruse commentary on some of his minor poems; but the book on Monarchy (*de Monarchia*) is a compound of ability and absurdity, in which his great genius is fairly overborne by the barbarous pedantry of the age. It is an argument to prove that the world must all be governed by one man; that this one man must be the successor of the Roman Emperor—God having manifestly designed the world to be subject for ever to the Roman empire; and lastly, that this Emperor is equally designed by God to be independent of the Pope—spiritually subject to him, indeed, but so far only as a good son is subject to the religious advice of his father; and thus making Church and State happy for ever in the two divided supremacies. And all this assumption of the obsolete and impossible the author gravely proves in all the forms of logic, by arguments drawn from the history of Æneas, and the providential cackle of the Roman geese!

How can the patriots of modern Italy, justified as they are in extolling the poet to the skies, see him plunge into such depths of bigotry in his verse and childishness in his prose, and consent to perplex the friends of advancement with making a type of their success out of so erring though so great a man? Such slavishness, even to such greatness, is a poor and unpromising thing, compared with an altogether unprejudiced and forward-looking self-reliance. To have no faith in names has been announced as one of their principles; and "God and Humanity" is their motto. What, therefore, has Dante's name to do with their principles? or what have the semi-barbarisms of the thirteenth century to do

with the final triumph of "God and Humanity?" Dante's lauded wish for that union of the Italian States, which his fame has led them so fondly to identify with their own, was but a portion of his greater and prouder wish to see the whole world at the feet of his boasted ancestress, Rome. Not, of course, that he had no view to what he considered good and just government (for what sane despot purposes to rule without that?); but his good and just government was always to be founded on the *sine qua non* principle of universal Italian domination.*

All that Dante said or did has its interest for us in spite of his errors, because he was an earnest and suffering man and a great genius; but his fame must ever continue to lie where his greatest blame does, in his principal work. He was a gratuitous logician, a preposterous politician, a cruel theologian; but his wonderful imagination, and (considering the bitterness that was in him) still more wonderful sweetness, have gone into the hearts of his fellow-creatures, and will remain there in spite of the moral and religious absurdities with which they are mingled, and of the inability which the best-natured readers feel to associate his entire memory, as a poet, with their usual personal delight in a poet and his name.

* Every body sees this who is not wilfully blind. "Passionate," says the editor of the *Opere Minori*, "for the ancient Italian glories, and the greatness of the Roman name, he was of opinion that it was only by means of combined strength, and one common government, that Italy could be finally secured from discord in its own bosom and enemies from without, and recover its ancient empire over the whole world." "Amantissimo delle antiche glorie Italiane, e della grandezza del nome romano, ei considerava, che soltanto pel mezzo d'una general forza ed autorità poteva l'Italia dalle interne contese e dalle straniere invasioni restarsi sicura, e recuperare l'antico imperio sopra tutte le genti."—Ut sup. vol. iii. p. 8

THE ITALIAN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

L.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HELL.

Argument.

THE infernal regions, according to Dante, are situate in the globe we inhabit, directly beneath Jerusalem, and consist of a succession of gulfs or circles, narrowing as they descend, and terminating in the centre; so that the general shape is that of a funnel. Commentators have differed as to their magnitude; but the latest calculation gives 315 miles for the diameter of the mouth or crater, and a quarter of a mile for that of its terminating point. In the middle is the abyss, pervading the whole depth, and 245 miles in diameter at the opening; which reduces the different platforms, or territories that surround it, to a size comparatively small. These territories are more or less varied with land and water, lakes, precipices, &c. A precipice, fourteen miles high, divides the first of them from the second. The passages from the upper world to the entrance are various; and the descents from one circle to another are effected by the poet and his guide in different manners—sometimes on foot through by-ways, sometimes by the conveyance of supernatural beings. The crater he finds to be the abode of those who have done neither good nor evil, caring for nothing but themselves. In the first circle are the whole unbaptised world—heathens and infants—melancholy, though not tormented. Here also is found the Elysium of Virgil, whose Charon and other infernal beings are among the agents of torment. In the second circle the torments commence with the sin of incontinence; and the punishment goes deepening with the crime from circle to circle, through gluttony, avarice, prodigality, wrath, sullenness, or unwillingness to be pleased with the creation, disbelief in God and the soul (with which the punishment by fire commences), usury, murder, suicide, blasphemy, seduction and other carnal enormities, adulation, simony, soothsaying, astrology, witchcraft, trafficking with the public interest, hypocrisy, highway robbery (on the great Italian scale), sacrilege, evil counsel, disturbance of the Church, heresy, false apostleship, alchemy, forgery, coining (all these, from seduction downwards, in one circle); then, in the frozen or lowest circle of all,

treachery; and at the bottom of this is Satan, stuck into the centre of the earth.

With the centre of the globe commences the antipodean attraction of its opposite side, together with a rocky ascent out of it, through a huge ravine. The poet and his guide, on their arrival at this spot, accordingly find their position reversed; and so conclude their *downward* journey *upwards*, till they issue forth to light on the borders of the sea which contains the island of Purgatory.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HELL.

Argument

Faint, mirrored text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page, containing the beginning of the poem's argument.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HELL.

DANTE says, that when he was half-way on his pilgrimage through this life, he one day found himself, towards nightfall, in a wood where he could no longer discern the right path. It was a place so gloomy and terrible, every thing in it growing in such a strange and savage manner, that the horror he felt returned on him whenever he thought of it. The pass of death could hardly be more bitter. Travelling through it all night with a beating heart, he at length came to the foot of a hill, and looking up, as he began to ascend it, he perceived the shoulders of the hill clad in the beams of morning; a sight which gave him some little comfort. He felt like a man who has buffeted his way to land out of a shipwreck, and who, though still anxious to get farther from his peril, cannot help turning round to gaze on the wide waters. So did he stand looking back on the pass that contained that dreadful wood.

After resting a while, he again betook him up the hill; but had not gone far when he beheld a leopard bounding in front of him, and hindering his progress. After the leopard came a lion, with his head aloft, mad with hunger, and seeming to frighten the very air;* and after the lion, more eager still, a she-wolf, so lean that she appeared to be sharpened with every wolfish want. The pilgrim fled back in terror to the wood, where he again found himself in a darkness to which the light never penetrated. In that place, he said, the sun never spoke word.† But the wolf was still close upon him.‡

* "Parea che l' aer ne temesse."

† "Là dove 'l sol tace."

"The sun to me is dark,
And *silent* is the moon,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave."—*Milton*.

‡ There is great difference among the commentators respecting the mean-

While thus flying, he beheld coming towards him a man, who spoke something, but he knew not what. The voice sounded strange and feeble, as if from disuse. Dante loudly called out to him to save him, whether he was a man or only a spirit. The apparition, at whose sight the wild beasts disappeared, said that he was no longer man, though man he had been in the time of the false gods, and sung the history of the offspring of Anchises.

“And art thou, then, that Virgil,” said Dante, “who has filled the world with such floods of eloquence? O glory and light of all poets, thou art my master, and thou mine *author*; thou alone the book from which I have gathered beauties that have gained me praise. Behold the peril I am in, and help me, for I tremble in every vein and pulse.”

Virgil comforted Dante. He told him that he must quit the wood by another road, and that he himself would be his guide, leading him first to behold the regions of woe underground, and then the spirits that lived content in fire because it purified them for heaven; and then that he would consign him to other hands worthier than his own, which should raise him to behold heaven itself; for as the Pagans, of whom he was one, had been rebels to the law of him that reigns there, nobody could arrive at Paradise by their means.*

ing of the three beasts; some supposing them passions, others political troubles, others personal enemies, &c. The point is not of much importance, especially as a mystery was intended; but nobody, as Mr. Cary says, can doubt that the passage was suggested by one in the prophet Jeremiah, v. 6: “Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them; a leopard shall watch over their cities.”

* “Che quello ’mperador che là su regna
Perch’ i’ fu’ ribellante a la sua legge,
Non vuol che ’n sua città per me sì vegna.”

The Pagans could not be rebels to a law they never heard of, any more than Dante could be a rebel to Luther. But this is one of the absurdities with which the impious effrontery or scarcely less impious admissions of Dante’s teachers avowedly set reason at defiance,—retaining, meanwhile, their right of contempt for the impieties of Mahometans and Brahmins; “which is odd,” as the poet says; for being not less absurd, or, as the others argued, much more so, they had at least an equal claim on the submission of the reason; since the greater the irrationality, the higher the theological triumph.

So saying, Virgil moved on his way, and Dante closely followed. He expressed a fear, however, as they went, lest being "neither Æneas nor St. Paul," his journey could not be worthily undertaken, or end in wisdom. But Virgil, after sharply rebuking him for his faintheartedness, told him, that the spirit of her whom he loved, Beatrice, had come down from heaven, on purpose to commend her lover to his care ; upon which the drooping courage of the pilgrim was raised to an undaunted confidence ; as flowers that have been closed and bowed down by frosty nights, rise all up on their stems in the morning sun.*

"Through me is the road to the dolorous city ;
 Through me is the road to the everlasting sorrows ;
 Through me is the road to the lost people.
 Justice was the motive of my exalted maker ;
 I was made by divine power, by consummate wisdom, and by primal love ;
 Before me was no created thing, if not eternal ; and eternal am I also.
 Abandon hope, all ye who enter."

Such were the words which Dante beheld written in dark characters over a portal. "Master," said he to Virgil, "I find their meaning hard."

"A man," answered Virgil, "must conduct himself at this door like one prepared. Hither must he bring no mistrust. Hither can come and live no cowardice. We have arrived at the place I told thee of. Here thou art to behold the dolorous people who have lost all intellectual good."†

* "Quale i fioretti dal notturno gelo
 Chinati e chiusi, poi che 'l sol gl' imbianca,
 Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo."
 Like as the flowers that with the frosty night
 Are bowed and closed, soon as the sun returns,
 Rise on their stems, all open and upright.

† This loss of intellectual good, and the confession of the poet that he finds the inscription over hell-portal hard to understand (*il senso lor m' è duro*), are among the passages in Dante which lead some critics to suppose that his hell is nothing but an allegory, intended at once to imply his own disbelief in it as understood by the vulgar part of mankind, and his employment of it, nevertheless, as a salutary check both to the foolish and the reflecting ;—to the foolish, as an alarm ; and to the reflecting, as a parable. It is possible, in the teeth of many appearances to the contrary, that such may have been the case ; but

So saying, Virgil placed his hand on Dante's, looking on him with a cheerful countenance; and the Florentine passed with him through the dreadful gate.

They entered upon a sightless gulf, in which was a black air without stars; and immediately heard a hubbub of groans, and wailings, and terrible things said in many languages, words of wretchedness, outcries of rage, voices loud and hoarse, and sounds of the smitings of hands one against another. Dante began to weep. The sound was as if the sand in a whirlwind were turned into noises, and filled the blind air with incessant conflict.

Yet these were not the souls of the wicked. They were those only who had lived without praise or blame, thinking of nothing but themselves. These miserable creatures were mixed with the angels who stood neutral in the war with Satan. Heaven would not dull its brightness with those angels, nor would lower hell receive them, lest the bad ones should triumph in their company.

"And what is it," said Dante, "which makes them so grievously suffer?"

"Hopelessness of death," said Virgil. "Their blind existence here, and immemorable former life, make them so wretched, that they envy every other lot. Mercy and justice alike disdain them. Let us speak of them no more. Look, and pass."

The companions went on till they came to a great river with a multitude waiting on the banks. A hoary old man appeared crossing the river towards them in a boat; and as he came, he said, "Woe to the wicked. Never expect to see heaven. I come to bear you across to the dark regions of everlasting fire and ice." Then looking at Dante, he said, "Get thee away from the dead, thou who standest there, live spirit."

"Torment thyself not, Charon," said Virgil. "He has a passport beyond thy power to question."

The shaggy cheeks of the boatman of the livid lake, who had

in the doubt that it affects either the foolish or the wise to any good purpose, and in the certainty that such doctrines do a world of mischief to tender consciences and the cause of sound piety, such monstrous contradictions, in terms, of every sense of justice and charity which God has implanted in the heart of man, are not to be passed over without indignant comment.

wheels of fire about his eyes, fell at these words ; and he was silent. But the naked multitude of souls whom he had spoken to changed colour, and gnashed their teeth, blaspheming God, and their parents, and the human species, and the place, and the hour, and the seed of the sowing of their birth ; and all the while they felt themselves driven onwards, by a fear which became a desire, towards the cruel river-side, which awaits every one destitute of the fear of God. The demon Charon, beckoning to them with eyes like brasiers, collected them as they came, giving blows to those that lingered, with his oar. One by one they dropped into the boat like leaves from a bough in autumn, till the bough is left bare ; or as birds drop into the decoy at the sound of the bird-call.

There was then an earthquake, so terrible that the recollection of it made the poet burst into a sweat at every pore. A whirlwind issued from the lamenting ground, attended by vermilion flashes ; and he lost his senses, and fell like a man stupified.

A crash of thunder through his brain woke up the pilgrim so hastily, that he shook himself like a person roused by force. He found that he was on the brink of a gulf, from which ascended a thunderous sound of innumerable groanings. He could see nothing down it. It was too dark with sooty clouds. Virgil himself turned pale, but said, " We are to go down here. I will lead the way."

" O master," said Dante, " if even thou fearest, what is to become of myself?"

" It is pity, not fear," replied Virgil, " that makes me change colour."

With these words his guide led him into the first circle of hell, surrounding the abyss. The great noise gradually ceased to be heard, as they journeyed inwards, till at last they became aware of a world of sighs, which produced a trembling in the air. They were breathed by the souls of such as had died without baptism, men, women, and infants ; no matter how good ; no matter if they worshipped God before the coming of Christ, for they worshipped him not " properly." Virgil himself was one of them. They were all lost for no other reason ; and their " only suffering" consisted in " hopeless desire !"

Dante was struck with great sorrow when he heard this, knowing how many good men must be in that place. He inquired if no one had ever been taken out of it into heaven. Virgil told him there had, and he named them; to wit, Adam, Abel, Noah, Moses, King David, obedient Abraham the patriarch, and Isaac, and Jacob, with their children, and Rachel, for whom Jacob did so much,—and “many more;” adding, however, that there was no instance of salvation before theirs.

Journeying on through spirits as thick as leaves, Dante perceived a lustre at a little distance, and observing shapes in it evidently of great dignity, inquired who they were that thus lived apart from the rest. Virgil said that heaven thus favoured them by reason of their renown on earth. A voice was then heard exclaiming, “Honour and glory to the lofty poet! Lo, his shade returns.” Dante then saw four other noble figures coming towards them, of aspect neither sad nor cheerful.

“Observe him with the sword in his hand,” said Virgil, as they were advancing. “That is Homer, the poets’ sovereign. Next to him comes Horace the satirist; then Ovid; and the last is Lucan.”

“And thus I beheld,” says Dante, “the bright school of the loftiest of poets, who flies above the rest like an eagle.”

For a while the illustrious spirits talked together, and then turned to the Florentine with a benign salutation, at which his master smiled: and “further honour they did me,” adds the father of Italian poetry, “for they admitted me of their tribe; so that to a band of that high account I added a sixth.”*

The spirits returned towards the bright light in which they lived, talking with Dante by the way, and brought him to a magnificent castle, girt with seven lofty walls, and further defended with a river, which they all passed as if it had been dry ground. Seven gates conducted them into a meadow of fresh green, the resort of a race whose eyes moved with a deliberate soberness, and whose whole aspects were of great authority, their voices sweet,

* It is seldom that a boast of this kind—not, it must be owned, bashful—has been allowed by posterity to be just; nay, in four out of the five instances, below its claims.

and their speech seldom.* Dante was taken apart to an elevation in the ground, so that he could behold them all distinctly; and there, on the "enamelled green,"† were pointed out to him the great spirits, by the sight of whom he felt exalted in his own esteem. He saw Electra with many companions, among whom were Hector and Æneas, and Cæsar in armour with his hawk's eyes; and on another side he beheld old King Latinus with his daughter Lavinia, and the Brutus that expelled Tarquin, and Lucretia, and Julia, and Cato's wife Marcia, and the mother of the Gracchi, and, apart by himself, the Sultan Saladin. He then raised his eyes a little, and beheld the "master of those who know"‡ (Aristotle), sitting amidst the family of philosophers, and honoured by them all. Socrates and Plato were at his side. Among the rest was Democritus, who made the world a chance, and Diogenes, and Heraclitus, &c. and Dioscorides, the good gatherer of simples. Orpheus also he saw, and Cicero, and the moral Seneca, and Euclid, and Hippocrates, and Avicen, and Averroes, who wrote the great commentary, and others too numerous to mention. The company of six became diminished to two, and Virgil took him forth on a far different road, leaving that serene air for a stormy one; and so they descended again into darkness.

It was the second circle into which they now came—a sphere narrower than the first, and by so much more the wretcheder. Minos sat at the entrance, gnarling—he that gives sentence on every one that comes, and intimates the circle into which each is to be plunged by the number of folds into which he casts his tail round about him. Minos admonished Dante to beware how he entered unbidden, and warned him against his conductor; but Virgil sharply rebuked the judge, and bade him not set his will against the will that was power.

* "Genti v' eran, con occhi tardi e gravi,
Di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti:
Parlavan rado, con voci soavi."

† "Sopra 'l verde smalto." Mr. Cary has noticed the appearance, for the first time, of this beautiful but now commonplace image.

‡ "Il maestro di color che sanno."

The pilgrims then descended through hell-mouth, till they came to a place dark as pitch, that bellowed with furious cross-winds, like a sea in a tempest. It was the first place of torment, and the habitation of carnal sinners. The winds, full of stifled voices, buffeted the souls for ever, whirling them away to and fro, and dashing them against one another. Whenever it seized them for that purpose, the wailing and the shrieking was loudest, crying out against the Divine Power. Sometimes a whole multitude came driven in a body like starlings before the wind, now hither and thither, now up, now down ; sometimes they went in a line like cranes, when a company of those birds is beheld sailing along in the air, uttering its dolorous clangs.

Dante, seeing a group of them advancing, inquired of Virgil who they were. "Who are these," said he, "coming hither, scourged in the blackest part of the hurricane?"

"She at the head of them," said Virgil, "was empress over many nations. So foul grew her heart with lust, that she ordained license to be law, to the end that herself might be held blameless. She is Semiramis, of whom it is said that she gave suck to Ninus, and espoused him. Leading the multitude next to her is Dido, she that slew herself for love, and broke faith to the ashes of Sichæus ; and she that follows with the next is the luxurious woman, Cleopatra."

Dante then saw Helen, who produced such a world of misery ; and the great Achilles, who fought for love till it slew him ; and Paris ; and Tristan ; and a thousand more whom his guide pointed at, naming their names, every one of whom was lost through love.

The poet stood for a while speechless for pity, and like one bereft of his wits. He then besought leave to speak to a particular couple who went side by side, and who appeared to be borne before the wind with speed lighter than the rest. His conductor bade him wait till they came nigher, and then to entreat them gently by the love which bore them in that manner, and they would stop and speak with him. Dante waited his time, and then lifted up his voice between the gusts of wind, and adjured the two "weary souls" to halt and have speech with him, if none

forbade their doing so ; upon which they came to him, like doves to the nest.*

There was a lull in the tempest, as if on purpose to let them speak ; and the female addressed Dante, saying, that as he shewed such pity for their state, they would have prayed heaven to give peace and repose to his life, had they possessed the friendship of heaven.†

“Love,” she said, “which is soon kindled in a gentle heart, seized this my companion for the fair body I once inhabited—how deprived of it, my spirit is bowed to recollect. Love, which compels the beloved person upon thoughts of love, seized me in turn with a delight in his passion so strong, that, as thou seest, even here it forsakes me not. Love brought us both to one end. The punishment of Cain awaits him that slew us.”

The poet was struck dumb by this story. He hung down his head, and stood looking on the ground so long, that his guide

* This is the famous episode of Paulo and Francesca. She was daughter to Count Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna, and wife to Giovanni Malatesta one of the sons of the lord of Rimini. Paulo was her brother-in-law. They were surprised together by the husband, and slain on the spot. Particulars of their history will be found in the Appendix, together with the whole original passage.

“Quali colombe, dal disio chiamate,
Con l' ali aperte e ferme, al dolce nido
Volan per l' aer dal voler portate :

Cotali uscir de la schiera ov' è Dido,
A noi venendo per l' aer maligno,
Sì forte fu l' affettuoso grido.”

As doves, drawn home from where they circled still,
Set firm their open wings, and through the air
Come sweeping, wafted by their pure good-will :

So broke from Dido's flock that gentle pair,
Cleaving, to where we stood, the air malign,
Such strength to bring them had a loving prayer.

† Francesca is to be conceived telling her story in anxious intermitting sentences—now all tenderness for her lover, now angry at their slayer ; watching the poet's face, to see what he thinks, and at times averting her own. I take this excellent direction from Ugo Foscolo.

asked him what was in his mind. "Alas!" answered he, "such then was this love, so full of sweet thoughts; and such the pass to which it brought them! Oh, Francesca!" he cried, turning again to the sad couple, "thy sufferings make me weep. But tell me, I pray thee, what was it that first made thee know, for a certainty, that his love was returned?—that thou couldst refuse him thine no longer?"

"There is not a greater sorrow," answered she, "than calling to mind happy moments in the midst of wretchedness.* But since thy desire is so great to know our story to the root, hear me tell it as well as I may for tears. It chanced, one day, that we sat reading the tale of Sir Launcelot, how love took him in thrall. We were alone, and had no suspicion. Often, as we read, our eyes became suspended,† and we changed colour; but one passage alone it was that overcame us. When we read how Genevra smiled, and how the lover, out of the depth of his love, could not help kissing that smile, he that is never more to be parted from me kissed me himself on the mouth, all in a tremble. Never had we go-between but that book. The writer was the betrayer. That day we read no more."

While these words were being uttered by one of the spirits, the other wailed so bitterly, that the poet thought he should have

* "Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Ne la miseria."

† "Per più fiato gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura."

"To look at one another," says Boccaccio; and his interpretation has been followed by Cary and Foscolo; but, with deference to such authorities, I beg leave to think that the poet meant no more than he says, namely, that their eyes were simply "suspended"—hung, as it were, over the book, without being able to read on; which is what I intended to express (if I may allude to a production of which both those critics were pleased to speak well), when, in my youthful attempt to enlarge this story, I wrote

"And o'er the book they hung, and nothing said,
And every lingering page grew longer as they read."

Story of Rimini.

died for pity. His senses forsook him, and he fell flat on the ground, as a dead body falls.*

On regaining his senses, the poet found himself in the third circle of hell, a place of everlasting wet, darkness, and cold, one heavy slush of hail and mud, emitting a squalid smell. The triple-headed dog Cerberus, with red eyes and greasy black beard, large belly, and hands with claws, barked above the heads of the wretches who floundered in the mud, tearing, skinning, and dismembering them, as they turned their sore and sodden bodies from side to side. When he saw the two living men, he shewed his fangs, and shook in every limb for desire of their flesh. Virgil threw lumps of dirt into his mouth, and so they passed him.

It was the place of Gluttons. The travellers passed over them, as if they had been ground to walk upon. But one of them sat up, and addressed the Florentine as his acquaintance. Dante did not know him, for the agony in his countenance. He was a man nicknamed Hog (Ciacco), and by no other name does the poet, or any one else, mention him. His countryman addressed him by it, though declaring at the same time that he wept to see him. Hog prophesied evil to his discordant native city, adding that there

* “Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,
L' altro piangeva sì, che di pietade
I' venni men così com' io morisse,
E caddi come corpo morto cade.”

This last line has been greatly admired for the corresponding deadness of its expression.

While thus one spoke, the other spirit mourn'd
With wail so woful, that at his remorse
I felt as though I should have died. I turn'd
Stone-stiff; and to the ground, fell like a corse.

The poet fell thus on the ground (some of the commentators think) because he had sinned in the same way; and if Foscolo's opinion could be established—that the incident of the book is invention—their conclusion would receive curious collateral evidence, the circumstance of the perusal of the romance in company with a lady being likely enough to have occurred to Dante. But the same probability applies in the case of the lovers. The reading of such books was equally the taste of their own times; and nothing is more likely than the volume's having been found in the room where they perished.

were but two just men in it—all the rest being given up to avarice, envy, and pride. Dante inquired by name respecting the fate of five other Florentines, *who had done good*, and was informed that they were all, for various offences, *in lower gulfs of hell*. Hog then begged that he would mention having seen him when he returned to the sweet world; and so, looking at him a little, bent his head, and disappeared among his blinded companions.

“Satan! ho, Satan!” roared the demon Plutus, as the poets were descending into the fourth circle.

“Peace!” cried Virgil, “with thy swollen lip, thou accursed wolf. No one can hinder his coming down. God wills it.”*

Flat fell Plutus, collapsed, like the sails of a vessel when the mast is split.

This circle was the most populous one they had yet come to. The sufferers, gifted with supernatural might, kept eternally rolling round it, one against another, with terrific violence, and so dashing apart, and returning. “Why grasp?” cried the one—“Why throw away?” cried the other; and thus exclaiming, they dash furiously together.

They were the Avaricious and the Prodigal. Multitudes of them were churchmen, including cardinals and popes. Not all the gold beneath the moon could have purchased them a moment's rest. Dante asked if none of them were to be recognised by their countenances. Virgil said, “No;” for the stupid and sullied lives which they led on earth swept their faces away from all distinction for ever.

In discoursing of fortune, they descend by the side of a torrent, black as ink, into the fifth circle, or place of torment for the Angry, the Sullen, and the Proud. Here they first beheld a filthy marsh, full of dirty naked bodies, that in everlasting rage

* Plutus's exclamation about Satan is a great choke-pear to the commentators. The line in the original is

“Pape Satan, pape Satan aleppe.”

The words, as thus written, are not Italian. It is not the business of this abstract to discuss such points; and therefore I content myself with believing that the context implies a call of alarm on the Prince of Hell at the sight of the living creature and his guide.

tore one another to pieces. In a quieter division of the pool were seen nothing but bubbles, carried by the ascent, from its slimy bottom, of the stifled words of the sullen. They were always saying, "We were sad and dark within us in the midst of the sweet sunshine, and now we live sadly in the dark bogs." The poets walked on till they came to the foot of a tower, which hung out two blazing signals to another just discernible in the distance. A boat came rapidly towards them, ferried by the wrathful Phlegyas;* who cried out, "Aha, felon! and so thou hast come at last!"

"Thou errest," said Virgil. "We come for no longer time than it will take thee to ferry us across thy pool."

Phlegyas looked like one defrauded of his right; but proceeded to convey them. During their course a spirit rose out of the mire, looking Dante in the face, and said, "Who art thou, that comest before thy time?"

"Who art thou?" said Dante.

"Thou seest who I am," answered the other; "one among the mourners."

"Then mourn still, and howl, accursed spirit," returned the Florentine. "I know thee,—all over filth as thou art."

The wretch in fury laid hold of the boat, but Virgil thrust him back, exclaiming, "Down with thee! down among the other dogs!"

Then turning to Dante, he embraced and kissed him, saying, "O soul, that knows how to disdain, blessed be she that bore thee! Arrogant, truly, upon earth was this sinner, nor is his memory graced by a single virtue. Hence the furiousness of his spirit now. How many kings are there at this moment lord- ing it as gods, who shall wallow here, as he does, like swine in the mud, and be thought no better of by the world!"

* Phlegyas, a son of Mars, was cast into hell by Apollo for setting the god's temple on fire in resentment for the violation of his daughter Coronis. The actions of gods were not to be questioned, in Dante's opinion, even though the gods turned out to be false. Jugghanaut is as good as any, while he lasts. It is an ethico-theological puzzle, involving very nice questions; but at any rate, had our poet been a Brahmin of Benares, we know how he would have written about it in Sanscrit.

“I should like to see him smothering in it,” said Dante, “before we go.”

“A right wish,” said Virgil, “and thou shalt, to thy heart’s content.”

On a sudden the wretch’s muddy companions seized and drenched him so horribly that (exclaims Dante) “I laud and thank God for it now at this moment.”

“Have at him!” cried they; “have at Filippo Argenti;” and the wild fool of a Florentine dashed his teeth for rage into his own flesh.*

The poet’s attention was now drawn off by a noise of lamentation, and he perceived that he was approaching the city of Dis.† The turrets glowed vermilion with the fire within it, the walls appeared to be of iron, and moats were round about them. The boat circuted the walls till the travellers came to a gate, which Phlegyas, with a loud voice, told them to quit the boat and enter. But a thousand fallen angels crowded over the top of the gate, refusing to open it, and making furious gestures. At length they agreed to let Virgil speak with them inside; and he left Dante for a while, standing in terror without. The parley was

* Filippo Argenti (Philip *Silver*,—so called from his shoeing his horse with the precious metal) was a Florentine remarkable for bodily strength and extreme irascibility. What a barbarous strength and confusion of ideas is there in this whole passage about him! Arrogance punished by arrogance, a Christian mother blessed for the unchristian disdainfulness of her son, revenge boasted of and enjoyed, passion arguing in a circle! Filippo himself might have written it. Dante says,

“Con piangere e con lutto
Spirito maladetto, ti rimani.—
Via costà con gli altri cani,” &c.

• Then Virgil, kissing and embracing him,

“Alma sdegnosa
Benedetta colei che ’n te s’ incinse,” &c.

And Dante again,

“Maestro, molto sarei vago
Di vederlo attuffare in questa broda,” &c.

† Dis, one of the Pagan names of Pluto, here used for Satan. Within the walls of the city of Dis commence the punishments by fire.

in vain. They would not let them pass. Virgil, however, bade his companion be of good cheer, and then stood listening and talking to himself; disclosing by his words his expectation of some extraordinary assistance, and at the same time his anxiety for its arrival. On a sudden, three raging figures arose over the gate, coloured with gore. Green hydras twisted about them; and their fierce temples had snakes instead of hair.

“Look,” said Virgil. “The Furies! The one on the left is Megæra; Alecto is she that is wailing on the right; and in the middle is Tisiphone.” Virgil then hushed. The Furies stood clawing their breasts, smiting their hands together, and raising such hideous cries, that Dante clung to his friend.

“Bring the Gorgon’s head!” cried the Furies, looking down; “turn him to adamant!”

“Turn round,” said Virgil, “and hide thy face; for if thou beholdest the Gorgon, never again wilt thou see the light of day.” And with these words he seized Dante and turned him round himself, clapping his hands over his companion’s eyes.

And now was heard coming over the water a terrible crashing noise, that made the banks on either side of it tremble. It was like a hurricane which comes roaring through the vain shelter of the woods, splitting and hurling away the boughs, sweeping along proudly in a huge cloud of dust, and making herds and herdsmen fly before it. “Now stretch your eyesight across the water,” said Virgil, letting loose his hands;—“there, where the smoke of the foam is thickest.” Dante looked; and saw a thousand of the rebel angels, like frogs before a serpent, swept away into a heap before the coming of a single spirit, who flew over the tops of the billows with unwet feet. The spirit frequently pushed the gross air from before his face, as if tired of the base obstacle; and as he came nearer, Dante, who saw it was a messenger from heaven, looked anxiously at Virgil. Virgil motioned him to be silent and bow down.

The angel, with a face full of scorn, as soon as he arrived at the gate, touched it with a wand that he had in his hand, and it flew open.

“Outcasts of heaven,” said he; “despicable race! whence this fantastical arrogance? Do ye forget that your torments are

laid on thicker every time ye kick against the Fates? Do ye forget how your Cerberus was bound and chained till he lost the hair off his neck like a common dog?"

So saying he turned swiftly and departed the way he came, not addressing a word to the travellers. His countenance had suddenly a look of some other business, totally different from the one he had terminated.

The companions passed in, and beheld a place full of tombs red-hot. It was the region of Arch-heretics and their followers. Dante and his guide passed round betwixt the walls and the sepulchres as in a churchyard, and came to the quarter which held Epicurus and his sect, who denied the existence of spirit apart from matter. The lids of the tombs remaining unclosed till the day of judgment, the soul of a noble Florentine, Farinata degli Uberti, hearing Dante speak, addressed him as a countryman, asking him to stop.* Dante, alarmed, beheld him rise half out of his sepulchre, looking as lofty as if he scorned hell itself. Finding who Dante was, he boasted of having three times expelled the Guelphs. "Perhaps so," said the poet; "but they came back again each time; an art which their enemies have not yet acquired."

A visage then appeared from out another tomb, looking eagerly, as if it expected to see some one else. Being disappointed, the tears came into its eyes, and the sufferer said, "If it is thy genius that conducts thee hither, where is my son, and why is he not with thee?"

"It is not my genius that conducts me," said Dante, "but that of one, whom perhaps thy son held in contempt."

"How sayest thou?" cried the shade;—"held in contempt? He is dead then? He beholds no longer the sweet light?" And with these words he dropped into his tomb, and was seen no more. It was Cavalcante Cavalcanti, the father of the poet's friend, Guido.†

* Farinata was a Ghibelline leader before the time of Dante, and had vanquished the poet's connexions at the battle of Montaperto.

† What would Guido have said to this? More, I suspect, than Dante would have liked to hear, or known how to answer. But he died before the verses transpired; probably before they were written; for Dante, in the chronology of his poem, assumes what times and seasons he finds most convenient.

The shade of Farinata, who had meantime been looking on, now replied to the taunt of Dante, prophesying that he should soon have good reason to know that the art he spoke of *had* been acquired; upon which Dante, speaking with more consideration to the lofty sufferer, requested to know how the gift of prophecy could belong to spirits who were ignorant of the time present. Farinata answered that so it was; just as there was a kind of eyesight which could discern things at a distance though not at hand. Dante then expressed his remorse at not having informed Cavalcante that his son was alive. He said it was owing to his being overwhelmed with thought on the subject he had just mentioned, and entreated Farinata to tell him so.

Quitting this part of the cemetery, Virgil led him through the midst of it towards a descent into a valley, from which there ascended a loathsome odour. They stood behind one of the tombs for a while, to accustom themselves to the breath of it; and then began to descend a wild fissure in a rock, near the mouth of which lay the infamy of Crete, the Minotaur. The monster beholding them gnawed himself for rage; and on their persisting to advance, began plunging like a bull when he is stricken by the knife of the butcher. They succeeded, however, in entering the fissure before he recovered sufficiently from his madness to run at them; and at the foot of the descent, came to a river of boiling blood, on the strand of which ran thousands of Centaurs armed with bows and arrows. In the blood, more or less deep according to the amount of the crime, and shrieking as they boiled, were the souls of the Inflicters of Violence; and if any of them emerged from it higher than he had a right to do, the Centaurs drove him down with their arrows. Nessus, the one that bequeathed Hercules the poisoned garment, came galloping towards the pilgrims, bending his bow, and calling out from a distance to know who they were; but Virgil, disdaining his hasty character, would explain himself only to Chiron, the Centaur who instructed Achilles. Chiron, in consequence, bade Nessus accompany them along the river; and there they saw tyrants immersed up to the eyebrows;—Alexander the Great among them, Dionysius of Syracuse, and Ezzelino the Paduan. There was one of the Pazzi of Florence, and Rinieri of Corneto (infestors of the

public ways), now shedding bloody tears, and Attila the Scourge, and Pyrrhus king of Epirus. Further on, among those immersed up to the throat, was Guy de Montfort, the Englishman, who slew his father's slayer, Prince Henry, during divine service, in the bosom of God; and then by degrees the river became shallower and shallower till it covered only the feet; and here the Centaur quitted the pilgrims, and they crossed over into a forest.

The forest was a trackless and dreadful forest—the leaves not green, but black—the boughs not freely growing, but knotted and twisted—the fruit no fruit, but thorny poison. The Harpies wailed among the trees, occasionally shewing their human faces; and on every side of him Dante heard lamenting human voices, but could see no one from whom they came. “Pluck one of the boughs,” said Virgil. Dante did so; and blood and a cry followed it.

“Why pluckest thou me?” said the trunk. “Men have we been, like thyself; but thou couldst not use us worse, had we been serpents.” The blood and words came out together, as a green bough hisses and spits in the fire.

The voice was that of Piero delle Vigne, the good chancellor of the Emperor Frederick the Second. Just though he had been to others, he was thus tormented for having been unjust to himself; for, envy having wronged him to his sovereign, who sentenced him to lose his eyes, he dashed his brains out against a wall. Piero entreated Dante to vindicate his memory. The poet could not speak for pity; so Virgil made the promise for him, inquiring at the same time in what manner it was that Suicides became thus identified with trees, and how their souls were to rejoin their bodies at the day of judgment. Piero said, that the moment the fierce self-murderer's spirit tore itself from the body, and passed before Charon, it fell, like a grain of corn, into that wood, and so grew into a tree. The Harpies then fed on its leaves, causing both pain and a vent for lamentation. The body it would never again enter, having thus cast away itself, but it would finally drag the body down to it by a violent attraction; and every suicide's carcass will be hung upon the thorn of its wretched shade.

The naked souls of two men, whose profusion had brought

them to a violent end, here came running through the wood from the fangs of black female mastiffs—leaving that of a suicide to mourn the havoc which their passage had made of his tree. He begged his countryman to gather his leaves up, and lay them at the foot of his trunk, and Dante did so; and then he and Virgil proceeded on their journey.

They issued from the wood on a barren sand, flaming hot, on which multitudes of naked souls lay down, or sat huddled up, or restlessly walked about, trying to throw from them incessant flakes of fire, which came down like a fall of snow. They were the souls of the Impious. Among them was a great spirit, who lay scornfully submitting himself to the fiery shower, as though it had not yet ripened him.* Overhearing Dante ask his guide who he was, he answered for himself, and said, “The same dead as living. Jove will tire his flames out before they conquer me.”

“Capaneus,” exclaimed Virgil, “thy pride is thy punishment. No martyrdom were sufficient for thee, equal to thine own rage.” The besieger of Thebes made no reply.

In another quarter of the fiery shower the pilgrims met a crowd of Florentines, mostly churchmen, whose offence is not to be named; after which they beheld Usurers; and then arrived at a huge waterfall, which fell into the eighth circle, or that of the Fraudulent. Here Virgil, by way of bait to the monster Geryon, or Fraud, let down over the side of the waterfall the cord of St. Francis, which Dante wore about his waist,† and presently the dreadful creature came up, and sate on the margin of the fall, with his serpent’s tail hanging behind him in the air, after the manner of a beaver; but the point of the tail was occa-

* “Si che la pioggia non par che ’l maturi.”

This is one of the grandest passages in Dante. It was probably (as English commentators have observed) in Milton’s recollection when he conceived the character of Satan.

† The satire of friarly hypocrisy is at least as fine as Ariosto’s discovery of Discord in a monastery.

The monster Geryon, son of Chrysaor (*Golden-sword*), and the Ocean-nymph Callirhoe (*Fair-flowing*), was rich in the possession of sheep. His wealth, and perhaps his derivatives, rendered him this instrument of satire. The monstrosity, the mild face, the glancing point of venom, and the beautiful skin, make it as fine as can be.

sionally seen glancing upwards. He was a gigantic reptile, with the face of a just man, very mild. He had shaggy claws for arms, and a body variegated all over with colours that ran in knots and circles, each within the other, richer than any Eastern drapery. Virgil spoke apart to him, and then mounted on his back, bidding his companion, who was speechless for terror, do the same. Geryon pushed back with them from the edge of the precipice, like a ship leaving harbour; and then, turning about, wheeled, like a sullen unsuccessful falcon, slowly down through the air in many a circuit. Dante would not have known that he was going downward, but for the air that struck upwards on his face. Presently they heard the crash of the waterfall on the circle below, and then distinguished flaming fires and the noises of suffering. The monster Geryon, ever sullen as the falcon who seats himself at a distance from his dissatisfied master, shook his riders from off his back to the water's side, and then shot away like an arrow.

This eighth circle of hell is called Evil-Budget,* and consists of ten compartments, or gulfs of torment, crossed and connected with one another by bridges of flint. In the first were beheld Pimps and Seducers, scourged like children by horned devils; in the second, Flatterers, begrimed with ordure; in the third, Simonists, who were stuck like plugs into circular apertures, with their heads downwards, and their legs only discernible, the soles of their feet glowing with a fire which made them incessantly quiver. Dante, going down the side of the gulf with Virgil, was allowed to address one of them who seemed in greater agony than the rest; and doing so, the sufferer cried out in a malignant

* "*Malebolge*," literally Evil-Budget. *Bolgia* is an old form of the modern *baule*, the common term for a valise or portmanteau. "*Bolgia*" (says the *Vocabolario della Crusca, compendiato*, Ven. 1792), "a valise; Latin, *bulga*, hippopera; Greek, *ἵπποπήρα*. In reference to valises which open lengthways like a chest, Dante uses the word to signify those compartments which he feigns in his Hell." (Per similitudine di quelle valigie, che s' aprono per lo lungo, a guisa di cassa, significa quegli spartimenti, che Dante finge nell' Inferno.) The reader will think of the homely figurative names in Bunyan, and the contempt which great and awful states of mind have for conventional notions of rank in phraseology. It is a part, if well considered, of their grandeur.

rapture, "Aha, is it thou that standest there, Boniface?*" Thou hast come sooner than it was prophesied." It was the soul of Pope Nicholas the Third that spoke. Dante undeceived and then sternly rebuked him for his avarice and depravity, telling him that nothing but reverence for the keys of St. Peter hindered him from using harsher words, and that it was such as he that the Evangelist beheld in the vision, when he saw the woman with seven heads and ten horns, who committed whoredom with the kings of the earth.

"O Constantine!" exclaimed the poet, "of what a world of evil was that dowry the mother, which first converted the pastor of the church into a rich man!"† The feet of the guilty pope spun with fiercer agony at these words; and Virgil, looking pleased on Dante, returned with him the way he came, till they found themselves on the margin of the fourth gulf, the habitation of the souls of False Prophets.

It was a valley, in which the souls came walking along, silent and weeping, at the pace of choristers who chant litanies. Their faces were turned the wrong way, so that the backs of their heads came foremost, and their tears fell on their loins. Dante was so overcome at the sight, that he leant against a rock and wept; but Virgil rebuked him, telling him that no pity at all was the only pity fit for that place.‡ There was Amphiaraus, whom the earth opened and swallowed up at Thebes; and Tiresias, who was transformed from sex to sex; and Aruns, who lived in

* Boniface the Eighth was the pope then living, and one of the causes of Dante's exile. It is thus the poet contrives to put his enemies in hell before their time.

† An allusion to the pretended gift of the Lateran by Constantine to Pope Sylvester, ridiculed so strongly by Ariosto and others.

‡ A truly infernal sentiment. The original is,

"Qui vive la pietà quand' è ben morta."

Here pity lives when it is quite dead.

"Chi è più scellerato," continues the poet, "di colui,
Ch' al giudicio divin passion porta."

That is: "Who is wickeder than he that sets his impassioned feelings against the judgments of God?" The answer is: He that attributes judgments to God which are to render humanity pitiless.

a cavern on the side of the marble mountains of Carrara, looking out on the stars and ocean ; and Manto, daughter of Tiresias (her hind tresses over her bosom), who wandered through the world till she came and lived in the solitary fen, whence afterwards arose the city of Mantua ; and Michael Scot, the magician, with his slender loins ;* and Eurypylus, the Grecian augur, who gave the signal with Calchas at Troy when to cut away the cables for home. He came stooping along, projecting his face over his swarthy shoulders. Guido Bonatti, too, was there, astrologer of Forli ; and Ardente, shoemaker of Parma, who now wishes he had stuck to his last ; and the wretched women who quit the needle and the distaff to wreak their malice with herbs and images. Such was the punishment of those who, desiring to see too far before them, now looked only behind them, and walked the reverse way of their looking.

The fifth gulf was a lake of boiling pitch, constantly heaving and subsiding throughout, and bubbling with the breath of those within it. They were Public Peculators. Winged black devils were busy about the lake, pronging the sinners when they occasionally darted up their backs for relief like dolphins, or thrust out their jaws like frogs. Dante at first looked eagerly down into the gulf, like one who feels that he shall turn away instantly out of the very horror that attracts him. "See—look behind thee !" said Virgil, dragging him at the same time from the place where he stood, to a covert behind a crag. Dante looked round, and beheld a devil coming up with a newly-arrived sinner across his shoulders, whom he hurled into the lake, and then dashed down after him, like a mastiff let loose on a thief. It was a man from Lucca, where every soul was a false dealer except Bonturo.†

* *Ne' fianchi così poco.* Michael Scot had been in Florence ; to which circumstance we are most probably indebted for this curious particular respecting his shape. The consignment of such men to hell is a mortifying instance of the great poet's participation in the vulgarest errors of his time. It is hardly, however, worth notice, considering what we see him swallowing every moment, or pretending to swallow.

† "Bonturo must have sold him something cheap," exclaimed a hearer of this passage. No:—the exception is an irony ! There was not one honest man in all Lucca !

The devil called out to other devils, and a heap of them fell upon the wretch with hooks as he rose to the surface ; telling him, that he must practise there in secret, if he practised at all ; and thrusting him back into the boiling pitch, as cooks thrust back flesh into the pot. The devils were of the lowest and most revolting habits, of which they made disgusting jest and parade. Some of them, on a sudden, perceived Dante and his guide, and were going to seize them, when Virgil resorted to his usual holy rebuke. For a while they let him alone ; and Dante saw one of them haul a sinner out of the pitch by the clotted locks, and hold him up sprawling like an otter. The rest then fell upon him and flayed him.

It was Ciampolo, a peculator in the service of the good Thiebault, king of Navarre. One of his companions under the pitch was Friar Gomita, governor of Gallura ; and another, Michael Zanche, also a Sardinian. Ciampolo ultimately escaped by a trick out of the hands of the devils, who were so enraged that they turned upon the two pilgrims ; but Virgil, catching up Dante with supernatural force, as a mother does a child in a burning house, plunged with him out of their jurisdiction into the borders of gulf the sixth, the region of Hypocrites.

The hypocrites, in perpetual tears, walked about in a wearisome and exhausted manner, as if ready to faint. They wore huge cowls, which hung over their eyes, and the outsides of which were gilded, but the insides of lead. Two of them had been rulers of Florence ; and Dante was listening to their story, when his attention was called off by the sight of a cross, on which Caiaphas the High Priest was writhing, breathing hard all the while through his beard with sighs. It was his office to see that every soul which passed him, on its arrival in the place, was oppressed with the due weight. His father-in-law, Annas, and all his council, were stuck in like manner on crosses round the borders of the gulf. The pilgrims beheld little else in this region of weariness, and soon passed into the borders of one of the most terrible portions of Evil-budget, the land of the transformation of Robbers.

The place was thronged with serpents of the most appalling and unwonted description, among which ran tormented the naked

spirits of the robbers, agonised with fear. Their hands were bound behind them with serpents—their bodies pierced and enfolded with serpents. Dante saw one of the monsters leap up and transfix a man through the nape of the neck; when, lo! sooner than a pen could write *o* or *i*, the sufferer burst into flames, burnt up, fell to the earth a heap of ashes—was again brought together, and again became a man, aghast with his agony, and staring about him, sighing.* Virgil asked him who he was.

“I was but lately rained down into this dire gullet,” said the man, “amidst a shower of Tuscans. The beast Vanni Fucci am I, who led a brutal life, like the mule that I was, in that den Pistoia.”

“Compel him to stop,” said Dante, “and relate what brought him hither. I knew the bloody and choleric wretch when he was alive.”

The sinner, who did not pretend to be deaf to these words, turned round to the speaker with the most painful shame in his face, and said, “I feel more bitterly at being caught here by thee in this condition, than when I first arrived. A power which I cannot resist compels me to let thee know, that I am here because I committed sacrilege and charged another with the crime; but now, mark me, that thou mayest hear something not to render this encounter so pleasant: Pistoia hates thy party of the Whites, and longs for the Blacks back again. It will have them, and so will Florence; and there will be a bloody cloud shall burst over the battle-field of Piceno, which will dash many Whites to the earth. I tell thee this to make thee miserable.”

So saying, the wretch gave a gesture of contempt with his thumb and finger towards heaven, and said, “Take it, God—a fig for thee!”†

* “Intorno si mira

Tutto smarrito da la grande angoscia
Ch' egli ha sofferta, e guardando sospira.”

This is one of the most terribly natural pictures of agonised astonishment ever painted.

† I retain this passage, horrible as it is to Protestant ears, because it is not only an instance of Dante's own audacity, but a salutary warning specimen of the extremes of impiety generated by extreme superstition; for their first cause

“From that instant,” said Dante, “the serpents and I were friends; for one of them throttled him into silence, and another dashed his hands into a knot behind his back. O Pistoia! Pistoia! why art not thou thyself turned into ashes, and swept from the face of the earth, since thy race has surpassed in evil thine ancestors? Never, through the whole darkness of hell, beheld I a blasphemer so dire as this—not even Capaneus himself.”

The Pistoian fled away with the serpents upon him, followed by a Centaur, who came madly galloping up, crying, “Where is the caitiff?” It was the monster-thief Cacus, whose den upon earth often had a pond of blood before it, and to whom Hercules, in his rage, when he slew him, gave a whole hundred blows with his club, though the wretch perceived nothing after the ninth. He was all over adders up to the mouth; and upon his shoulders lay a dragon with its wings open, breathing fire on whomsoever it met.

The Centaur tore away; and Dante and Virgil were gazing after him, when they heard voices beneath the bank on which they stood, crying, “Who are ye?” The pilgrims turned their eyes downwards, and beheld three spirits, one of whom, looking about him, said, “Where’s Cianfa?” Dante made a sign to Virgil to say nothing.

Cianfa came forth, a man lately, but now a serpent with six feet.*

“If thou art slow to believe, reader, what I am about to tell thee,” says the poet, “be so; it is no marvel; for I myself, even now, scarcely credit what I beheld.”

is the degradation of the Divine character. Another, no doubt, is the impulsive vehemence of the South. I have heard more blasphemies, in the course of half an hour, from the lips of an Italian postilion, than are probably uttered in England, by people not out of their senses, for a whole year. Yet the words, after all, were mere words; for the man was a good-natured fellow, and I believe presented no image to his mind of anything he was saying. Dante, however, would certainly not have taught him better by attempting to frighten him. A violent word would have only produced more violence. Yet this was the idle round which the great poet thought it best to run!

* Cianfa, probably a condottiere of Mrs. Radcliffe’s sort, and robber, on a large scale, is said to have been one of the Donati family, connexions of the poet by marriage.

The six-footed serpent sprang at one of the three men front to front, clasping him tightly with all its legs, and plunging his fangs into either cheek. Ivy never stuck so close to a tree as the horrible monster grappled with every limb of that pinioned man. The two forms then gradually mingled into one another like melting wax, the colours of their skin giving way at the same time to a third colour, as the white in a piece of burning paper recedes before the brown, till it all becomes black. The other two human shapes looked on, exclaiming, "Oh, how thou changest, Agnello! See, thou art neither two nor yet one." And truly, though the two heads first became one, there still remained two countenances in the face. The four arms then became but two, and such also became the legs and thighs; and the two trunks became such a body as was never beheld; and the hideous two-fold monster walked slowly away.*

A small black serpent on fire now flashed like lightning on to the body of one of the other two, piercing him in the navel, and then falling on the ground, and lying stretched before him. The wounded man, fascinated and mute, stood looking at the adder's eyes, and endeavouring to stand steady on his legs, yawning the while as if smitten with lethargy or fever; the adder, on his part, looked up at the eyes of the man, and both of them breathed hard, and sent forth a smoke that mingled into one volume.

And now, let Lucan never speak more of the wretched Sabelus or Nisidius, but listen and be silent; and now, let Ovid be silent, nor speak again of his serpent that was Cadmus, or his fountain that was Arethusa; for, says the Tuscan poet, I envy him not. Never did he change the natures of two creatures face to face, so that each received the form of the other.

With corresponding impulse, the serpent split his train into a fork, while the man drew his legs together into a train; the skin of the serpent grew soft, while the man's hardened; the serpent acquired tresses of hair, the man grew hairless; the claws of the one projected into legs, while the arms of the other withdrew into

* This, and the transformation that follows, may well excite the pride of such a poet as Dante; though it is curious to see how he selects inventions of this kind as special grounds of self-complacency. They are the most appalling ever yet produced.

his shoulders ; the face of the serpent, as it rose from the ground, retreated towards the temples, pushing out human ears ; that of the man, as he fell to the ground, thrust itself forth into a muzzle, withdrawing at the same time its ears into its head, as the slug does its horns ; and each creature kept its impious eyes fixed on the other's, while the features beneath the eyes were changing. The soul which had become the serpent then turned to crawl away, hissing in scorn as he departed ; and the serpent, which had become the man, spat after him, and spoke words at him. The new human-looking soul then turned his back on his late adversary, and said to the third spirit, who remained unchanged, " Let Buoso now take to his crawl, as I have done."

The two then hastened away together, leaving Dante in a state of bewildered amazement, yet not so confused but that he recognised the unchanged one for another of his countrymen, Puccio the Lamè. " Joy to thee, Florence !" cried the poet ; " not content with having thy name bruited over land and sea, it flourishes throughout hell."

The pilgrims now quitted the seventh, and looked down from its barrier into the eighth gulf, where they saw innumerable flames, distinct from one another, flickering all over the place like fire-flies.

" In those flames," said Virgil, " are souls, each tormented with the fire that swathes it."

" I observe one," said Dante, " divided at the summit. Are the Theban brothers in it ?"

" No," replied Virgil ; " in that flame are Diomed and Ulysses." The sinners punished in this gulf were Evil Counsellors ; and those two were the advisers of the stratagem of the Trojan horse.

Virgil addressed Ulysses, who told him the conclusion of his adventures, not to be found in books : how he tired of an idle life, and sailed forth again into the wide ocean ; and how he sailed so far that he came into a region of new stars, and in sight of a mountain, the loftiest he ever saw ; when, unfortunately, a hurricane fell upon them from the shore, thrice whirled their vessel round, then dashed the stern up in air and the prow under water, and sent the billows over their heads.

“Enough,” said Virgil; “I trouble thee no more.” The soul of Guido di Montefeltro, overhearing the great Mantuan speak in a Lombard dialect, asked him news of the state of things in Romagna; and then told him how he had lost his chance of paradise, by thinking Pope Boniface could at once absolve him from his sins, and use them for his purposes.* He was going to heaven, he said, by the help of St. Francis, who came on purpose to fetch him, when a black angel met them, and demanded his absolved, indeed, but unrepented victim. “To repent evil, and to will to do it, at one and the same time, are,” said the dreadful angel, “impossible: therefore wrong me not.” “Oh, how I shook,” said the unhappy Guido, “when he laid his hands upon me!” And with these words the flame writhed and beat itself about for agony, and so took its way.

The pilgrims crossed over to the banks of the ninth gulf, where the Sowers of Scandal, the Schismatics, Heretics, and Founders of False Religions, underwent the penalties of such as load themselves with the sins of those whom they seduce.

The first sight they beheld was Mahomet, tearing open his own bowels, and calling out to them to mark him. Before him walked his son-in-law, Ali, weeping, and cloven to the chin; and the divisions in the church were punished in like manner upon all the schismatics in the place. They all walked round the circle, their gashes closing as they went; and on their reaching a certain point, a fiend hewed them open again with a sword. The Arabian prophet, ere he passed on, bade the pilgrims warn Friar Dolcino how he suffered himself to be surprised in his mountain-hold by the starvations of winter-time, if he did not wish speedily to follow him.†

* Guido, Conte di Montefeltro, a celebrated soldier of that day, became a Franciscan in his old age, in order to repent of his sins; but, being consulted in his cloister by Pope Boniface on the best mode of getting possession of an estate belonging to the Colonna family, and being promised absolution for his sins in the lump, including the opinion requested, he recommended the holy father to “promise much, and perform nothing” (*molto promettere, e nulla attendere*).

† Dolcino was a Lombard friar at the beginning of the fourteenth century, who is said to have preached a community of goods, including women, and to have pretended to a divine mission for reforming the church. He appears to have made a considerable impression, having thousands of followers, but was

Among other mangled wretches, they beheld Piero of Medicina, a sower of dissension, exhibiting to them his face and throat all over wounds; and Curio, compelled to shew his tongue cut out for advising Cæsar to cross the Rubicon; and Mosca de' Lambertini, an adviser of assassination, and one of the authors of the Guelf and Ghibelline miseries, holding up the bleeding stumps of his arms, which dripped on his face. "Remember Mosca," cried he; "remember him, alas! who said, 'A deed done is a thing ended.' A bad saying of mine was that for the Tuscan nation."

"And death to thy family," cried Dante.

The assassin hurried away like a man driven mad with grief upon grief; and Dante now beheld a sight, which, if it were not, he says, for the testimony of a good conscience—that best of friends, which gives a man assurance of himself under the breastplate of a spotless innocence*—he should be afraid to relate without further proof. He saw—and while he was writing the account of it he still appeared to see—a headless trunk about to come past him with the others. It held its severed head by the hair, like a lantern; and the head looked up at the two pilgrims, and said, "Woe is me!" The head was, in fact, a lantern to the paths of the trunk; and thus there were two separated things in one, and one in two; and how that could be, he only

ultimately seized in the mountains where they lived, and burnt with his female companion Margarita, and many others. Landino says he was very eloquent, and that "both he and Margarita endured their fate with a firmness worthy of a better cause." Probably his real history is not known, for want of somebody in such times bold enough to write it.

* Literally, "under the breastplate of knowing himself to be pure:"

"Sotto l' osbergo del sentirsi pura."

The expression is deservedly admired; but it is not allowable in English, and it is the only one admitting no equivalent which I have met with in the whole poem. It might be argued, perhaps, against the perfection of the passage, that a good "conscience," and a man's "knowing himself to be pure," are a tautology; for Dante himself has already used that word;

"Conscienza m' assicura;

La buona compagnia che l' uom francheggia

Sotto l' osbergo," &c.

But still we feel the impulsive beauty of the phrase; and I wish I could have kept it.

can tell who ordained it. As the figure came nearer, it lifted the head aloft, that the pilgrims might hear better what it said.

“Behold,” it said, “behold, thou that walkest living among the dead, and say if there be any punishment like this. I am Bertrand de Born, he that incited John of England to rebel against his father. Father and son I set at variance—closest affections I set at variance—and hence do I bear my brain severed from the body on which it grew. In me behold the work of retribution.”*

The eyes of Dante were so inebriate with all that diversity of bleeding wounds, that they longed to stay and weep ere his guide proceeded further. Something also struck them on the sudden which added to his desire to stop. But Virgil asked what ailed him, and why he stood gazing still on the wretched multitude. “Thou hast not done so,” continued he, “in any other portion of this circle; and the valley is twenty-two miles further about, and the moon already below us. Thou hast more yet to see than thou wottest of, and the time is short.”

Dante, excusing himself for the delay, and proceeding to follow his leader, said he thought he had seen, in the cavern at which he was gazing so hard, a spirit that was one of his own family—and it was so. It was the soul of Geri del Bello, a cousin of the poet's. Virgil said that he had observed him, while Dante was occupied with Bertrand de Born, pointing at his kinsman in a threatening manner. “Waste not a thought on him,” concluded the Roman, “but leave him as he is.”

“O honoured guide!” said Dante, “he died a violent death, which his kinsmen have not yet avenged; and hence it is that he disdained to speak to me; and I must needs feel for him the more on that account.”†

They came now to the last partition of the circle of Evil-budget, and their ears were assailed with such a burst of sharp wailings, that Dante was fain to close his with his hands. The misery there, accompanied by a horrible odour, was as if all the hospitals in the sultry marshes of Valdichiana had brought their

* This ghastly fiction is a rare instance of the meeting of physical horror with the truest pathos.

† The reader will not fail to notice this characteristic instance of the ferocity of the time.

maladies together into one infernal ditch. It was the place of punishment for pretended Alchemists, Coiners, Personators of other people, False Accusers, and Impostors of all such descriptions. They lay on one another in heaps, or attempted to crawl about—some itching madly with leprosy—some swollen and gasping with dropsies—some wetly reeking, like hands washed in winter-time. One was an alchemist of Sienna, a nation vainer than the French; another a Florentine, who tricked a man into making a wrong will; another, Sinon of Troy; another, Myrrha; another, the wife of Potiphar. Their miseries did not hinder them from giving one another malignant blows; and Dante was listening eagerly to an abusive conversation between Sinon and a Brescian coiner, when Virgil rebuked him for the disgraceful condescension, and said it was a pleasure fit only for vulgar minds.*

The blushing poet felt the reproof so deeply, that he could not speak for shame, though he manifested by his demeanour that he longed to do so, and thus obtained the pardon he despaired of. He says he felt like a man that, during an unhappy dream, wishes himself dreaming while he is so, and does not know it. Virgil understood his emotion, and, as Achilles did with his spear, healed the wound with the tongue that inflicted it.

A silence now ensued between the companions; for they had quitted Evil-budget, and arrived at the ninth great circle of hell, on the mound of which they passed along, looking quietly and steadily before them. Daylight had given place to twilight; and Dante was advancing his head a little, and endeavouring to discern objects in the distance, when his whole attention was called to one particular spot, by a blast of a horn so loud, that a thunder-clap was a whisper in comparison. Orlando himself blew no such terrific blast, after the dolorous rout, when Charlemagne was defeated in his holy enterprise.† The poet raised his head,

* This is admirable sentiment; and it must have been no ordinary consciousness of dignity in general which could have made Dante allow himself to be the person rebuked for having forgotten it. Perhaps it was a sort of penance for his having, on some occasion, fallen into the unworthiness.

† By the Saracens in Roncesvalles; afterwards so favourite a topic with the poets. The circumstance of the horn is taken from the Chronicle of the pretended Archbishop Turpin, chapter xxiv.

thinking he perceived a multitude of lofty towers. He asked Virgil to what region they belonged ; but Virgil said, "Those are no towers : they are giants, standing each up to his middle in the pit that goes round this circle." Dante looked harder ; and as objects clear up by little and little in the departing mist, he saw, with alarm, the tremendous giants that warred against Jove, standing half in and half out of the pit, like the towers that crowned the citadel of Monteseppone. The one whom he saw plainest, and who stood with his arms hanging down on each side, appeared to him to have a face as huge as the pinnacle of St. Peter's, and limbs throughout in proportion. The monster, as the pilgrims were going by, opened his dreadful mouth, fit for no sweeter psalmody, and called after them, in the words of some unknown tongue, *Rafel, mae a mech zabee almee*.* "Dull wretch !" exclaimed Virgil, "keep to thine horn, and so vent better whatsoever frenzy or other passion stuff thee. Feel the chain round thy throat, thou confusion ! See, what a clenching hoop is about thy gorge !" Then he said to Dante, "His howl is its own mockery. This is Nimrod, he through whose evil ambition it was that mankind ceased to speak one language. Pass him, and say nothing ; for every other tongue is to him as his is to thee."

The companions went on for about the length of a sling's throw, when they passed the second giant, who was much fiercer and huger than Nimrod. He was fettered round and round with chains, that fixed one arm before him and the other behind him—Ephialtes his name, the same that would needs make trial of his strength against Jove himself. The hands which he then wielded were now motionless, but he shook with passion ; and Dante thought he should have died for terror, the effect on the ground about him was so fearful. It surpassed that of a tower shaken by an earthquake. The poet expressed a wish to look at Briareus, but he was too far off. He saw, however, Antæus, who, not having fought against heaven, was neither tongue-confounded nor shackled ; and Virgil requested the "taker of a

* The gaping monotony of this jargon, full of the vowel *a*, is admirably suited to the mouth of the vast, half-stupid speaker. It is like a babble of the gigantic infancy of the world.

thousand lions," by the fame which the living poet had it in his power to give him, to bear the travellers in his arms down the steep descent into this deeper portion of hell, which was the region of tormenting cold. Antæus, stooping, like the leaning tower of Bologna, to take them up, gathered them in his arms, and, depositing them in the gulf below, raised himself to depart like the mast of a ship.*

Had I hoarse and rugged words equal to my subject, says the poet, I would now make them fuller of expression, to suit the rocky horror of this hole of anguish; but I have not, and therefore approach it with fear, since it is no jesting enterprise to describe the depths of the universe, nor fit for a tongue that babbles of father and mother.† Let such of the Muses assist me as turned the words of Amphion into Theban walls; so shall the speech be not too far different from the matter.

Oh, ill-starred creatures! wretched beyond all others, to inhabit a place so hard to speak of—better had ye been sheep or goats.

The poet was beginning to walk with his guide along the place in which the giant had set them down, and was still looking up at the height from which he had descended, when a voice close to him said, "Have a care where thou treadest. Hurt not with thy feet the heads of thy unhappy brethren."

Dante looked down and before him, and saw that he was walking on a lake of ice, in which were Murderous Traitors up to their chins, their teeth chattering, their faces held down, their eyes locked up frozen with tears. Dante saw two at his feet so closely stuck together, that the very hairs of their heads were mingled. He asked them who they were, and as they lifted up

* "Nè sì chinato li fece dimora,
E come albero in nave si levò."

A magnificent image! I have retained the idiomatic expression of the original *raised himself*, instead of saying *rose*, because it seemed to me to give the more grand and deliberate image.

† Of "*mamma*" and "*babbo*," says the primitive poet. We have corresponding words in English, but the feeling they produce is not identical. The lesser fervour of the northern nations renders them, in some respects, more sophisticated than they suspect, compared with the "artful" Italians.

their heads for astonishment, and felt the cold doubly congeal them, they dashed their heads against one another for hate and fury. They were two brothers who had murdered each other.* Near them were other Tuscans, one of whom the cold had deprived of his ears; and thousands more were seen grinning like dogs, for the pain.

Dante, as he went along, *kicked* the face of one of them, whether by chance, or fate, or *will*,† he could not say. The sufferer burst into tears, and cried out, "Wherefore dost thou torment me? Art thou come to revenge the defeat at Montaperto?" The pilgrim at this question felt eager to know who he was; but the unhappy wretch would not tell. His countryman seized him by the hair to force him; but still he said he would not tell, were he to be scalped a thousand times. Dante, upon this, began plucking up his hairs by the roots, the man *barking*,‡ with his eyes squeezed up, at every pull; when another soul exclaimed, "Why, Bocca, what the devil ails thee? Must thou needs bark for cold as well as chatter?"§

"Now, accursed traitor, betrayer of thy country's standard," said Dante, "be dumb if thou wilt; for I shall tell thy name to the world."

"Tell and begone!" said Bocca; "but carry the name of this babbler with thee; 'tis Buoso, who left the pass open to the enemy between Piedmont and Parma; and near him is the traitor for the pope, Beccaria; and Ganellone, who betrayed Charle-

* Alessandro and Napoleon degli Alberti, sons of Alberto, lord of the valley of Falterona in Tuscany. After their father's death they tyrannised over the neighbouring districts, and finally had a mortal quarrel. The name of Napoleon used to be so rare till of late years, even in Italian books, that it gives one a kind of interesting surprise to meet with it.

† "Se voler fu, o destino o fortuna,
Non so."

What does the Christian reader think of that?

‡ Latrando.

§ Bocca degli Abbati, whose soul barks like a dog, occasioned the defeat of the Guelfs at Montaperto, in the year 1260, by treacherously cutting off the hand of the standard-bearer.

magne ; and Tribaldello, who opened Faenza to the enemy at night-time."

The pilgrims went on, and beheld two other spirits so closely locked up together in one hole of the ice, that the head of one was right over the other's like a cowl ; and Dante, to his horror, saw that the upper head was devouring the lower with all the eagerness of a man who is famished. The poet asked what could possibly make him shew a hate so brutal ; adding, that if there were any ground for it, he would tell the story to the world.*

The sinner raised his head from the dire repast, and after wiping his jaws with the hair of it, said, "You ask a thing which it shakes me to the heart to think of. It is a story to renew all my misery. But since it will produce this wretch his due infamy, hear it, and you shall see me speak and weep at the same time. How thou camest hither I know not ; but I perceive by thy speech that thou art Florentine.

"Learn, then, that I was the Count Ugolino, and this man was Ruggieri the Archbishop. How I trusted him, and was betrayed into prison, there is no need to relate ; but of his treatment of me there, and how cruel a death I underwent, hear ; and then judge if he has offended me.

"I had been imprisoned with my children a long time in the tower which has since been called from me the Tower of Famine ; and many a new moon had I seen through the hole that served us for a window, when I dreamt a dream that foreshadowed to me what was coming. Methought that this man headed a great chase against the wolf, in the mountains between Pisa and Lucca. Among the foremost in his party were Gualandi, Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, and the hounds were thin and eager, and high-bred ; and in a little while I saw the hounds fasten on the flanks of the wolf and the wolf's children, and tear them. At that moment I awoke with the voices of my own children in my ears, asking for bread. Truly cruel must thou be, if thy heart does not ache to think of what I thought then. If thou feel not for a pang like that, what is it for which thou art accustomed to

* This is the famous story of Ugolino, who betrayed the castles of Pisa to the Florentines, and was starved with his children in the Tower of Famine.

feel? We were now all awake; and the time was at hand when they brought us bread, and we had all dreamt dreams which made us anxious. At that moment I heard the key of the horrible tower turn in the lock of the door below, and fasten it. I looked at my children, and said not a word. I did not weep. I made a strong effort upon the soul within me. But my little Anselm said, 'Father, why do you look so? Is any thing the matter?' Nevertheless I did not weep, nor say a word all the day, nor the night that followed. In the morning a ray of light fell upon us through the window of our sad prison, and I beheld in those four little faces the likeness of my own face, and then I began to gnaw my hands for misery. My children, thinking I did it for hunger, raised themselves on the floor, and said, 'Father, we should be less miserable if you would eat our own flesh. It was you that gave it us. Take it again.' Then I sat still, in order not to make them unhappier: and that day and the next we all remained without speaking. On the fourth day, Gaddo stretched himself at my feet, and said, 'Father, why won't you help me?' and there he died. And as surely as thou lookest on me, so surely I beheld the whole three die in the same manner. So I began in my misery to grope about in the dark for them, for I had become blind; and three days I kept calling on them by name, though they were dead; till famine did for me what grief had been unable to do."

With these words, the miserable man, his eyes starting from his head, seized that other wretch again with his teeth, and ground them against the skull as a dog does with a bone.

O Pisa! scandal of the nations! since thy neighbours are so slow to punish thee, may the very islands tear themselves up from their roots in the sea, and come and block up the mouth of thy river, and drown every soul within thee. What if this Count Ugolino did, as report says he did, betray thy castles to the enemy? his children had not betrayed them; nor ought they to have been put to an agony like this. Their age was their innocence; and their deaths have given thee the infamy of a second Thebes.*

* I should be loath to disturb the inimitable pathos of this story, if there did not seem grounds for believing that the poet was too hasty in giving credit to

The pilgrims passed on, and beheld other traitors frozen up in swathes of ice, with their heads upside down. Their very tears had hindered them from shedding more; for their eyes were encrusted with the first they shed, so as to be enclosed with them as in a crystal visor, which forced back the others into an accumulation of anguish. One of the sufferers begged Dante to relieve him of this ice, in order that he might vent a little of the burden which it repressed. The poet said he would do so, provided he would disclose who he was. The man said he was the friar Alberigo, who invited some of his brotherhood to a banquet in order to slay them.

“What!” exclaimed Dante, “art thou no longer, then, among the living?”

“Perhaps I appear to be,” answered the friar; “for the moment any one commits a treachery like mine, his soul gives up his body to a demon, who thenceforward inhabits it in the man’s likeness. Thou knowest Branca Doria, who murdered his father-in-law, Zanche? He seems to be walking the earth still, and yet he has been in this place many years.”*

“Impossible!” cried Dante; “Branca Doria is still alive; he eats, drinks, and sleeps, like any other man.”

“I tell thee,” returned the friar, “that the soul of the man he slew had not reached that lake of boiling pitch in which thou sawest him, ere the soul of his slayer was in this place, and his body occupied by a demon in its stead. But now stretch forth thy hand, and relieve mine eyes.”

Dante relieved them not. Ill manners, he said, were the only courtesy fit for such a wretch.†

parts of it, particularly the ages of some of his fellow-prisoners, and the guilt of the archbishop. See the Appendix to this volume.

* This is the most tremendous lampoon, as far as I am aware, in the whole circle of literature.

† “Cortesia fu lui esser villano.” This is the foulest blot which Dante has cast on his own character in all his poem (short of the cruelties he thinks fit to attribute to God). It is argued that he is cruel and false, out of hatred to cruelty and falsehood. But why then add to the sum of both? and towards a man, too, supposed to be suffering eternally? It is idle to discern in such barbarous inconsistencies any thing but the writer’s own contributions to the stock

O ye Genoese ! he exclaims,—men that are perversity all over, and full of every corruption to the core, why are ye not swept from the face of the earth ? There is one of you whom you fancy to be walking about like other men, and he is all the while in the lowest pit of hell !

“ Look before thee,” said Virgil, as they advanced : “ behold the banners of the King of Hell.”

Dante looked, and beheld something which appeared like a windmill in motion, as seen from a distance on a dark night. A wind of inconceivable sharpness came from it.

The souls of those who had been traitors to their benefactors were here frozen up in depths of pellucid ice, where they were seen in a variety of attitudes, motionless ; some upright, some downward, some bent double, head to foot.

At length they came to where the being stood who was once eminent for all fair seeming.* This was the figure that seemed tossing its arms at a distance like a windmill.

“ Satan,” whispered Virgil ; and put himself in front of Dante to re-assure him, halting him at the same time, and bidding him summon all his fortitude. Dante stood benumbed, though conscious ; as if he himself had been turned to ice. He felt neither alive nor dead.

The lord of the dolorous empire, each of his arms as big as a giant, stood in the ice half-way up his breast. He had one head,

of them. The utmost credit for right feeling is not to be given on every occasion to a man who refuses it to every one else.

* “ La creatura ch' ebbe il bel sembiante.”

This is touching ; but the reader may as well be prepared for a total failure in Dante's conception of Satan, especially the English reader, accustomed to the sublimity of Milton's. Granting that the Roman Catholic poet intended to honour the fallen angel with no sublimity, but to render him an object of mere hate and dread, he has overdone and degraded the picture into caricature. A great stupid being, stuck up in ice, with three faces, one of which is yellow, and three mouths, each eating a sinner, one of those sinners being Brutus,—is an object for derision ; and the way in which he eats these, his everlasting *bonnes-bouches*, divides derision with disgust. The passage must be given, otherwise the abstract of the poem would be incomplete ; but I cannot help thinking it the worst anti-climax ever fallen into by a great poet.

but three faces; the middle, vermilion; the one over the right shoulder a pale yellow; the other black. His sails of wings, huger than ever were beheld at sea, were in shape and texture those of a bat; and with these he constantly flapped, so as to send forth the wind that froze the depths of Tartarus. From his six eyes the tears ran down, mingling at his three chins with bloody foam; for at every mouth he crushed a sinner with his teeth, as substances are broken up by an engine. The middle sinner was the worst punished, for he was at once broken and flayed, and his head and trunk were inside the mouth. It was Judas Iscariot. Of the other two, whose heads were hanging out, one was Brutus, and the other Cassius. Cassius was very large-limbed. Brutus writhed with agony, but uttered not a word.*

“Night has returned,” said Virgil, “and all has been seen. It is time to depart onward.”

Dante then, at his bidding, clasped, as Virgil did, the huge inattentive being round the neck; and watching their opportunity, as the wings opened and shut, they slipped round it, and so down his shaggy and frozen sides, from pile to pile, clutching it as they went; till suddenly, with the greatest labour and pain, they were compelled to turn themselves upside down, as it seemed, but in reality to regain their proper footing; for they had passed the centre of gravity, and become Antipodes. Then looking down at what lately was upward, they saw Lucifer with his feet towards them; and so taking their departure, ascended a gloomy vault,

* This silence is, at all events, a compliment to Brutus, especially from a man like Dante, and the more because it is extorted. Dante, no doubt, hated all treachery, particularly treachery to the leader of his beloved Roman emperors; forgetting three things; first, that Cæsar was guilty of treachery himself to the Roman people; second, that he, Dante, has put Curio in hell for advising Cæsar to cross the Rubicon, though he has put the crosser among the good Pagans; and third, that Brutus was educated in the belief that the punishment of such treachery as Cæsar's by assassination was one of the first of duties. How differently has Shakspeare, himself an aristocratic rather than democratic poet, and full of just doubt of the motives of assassins in general, treated the error of the thoughtful, conscientious, Platonic philosopher!

till at a distance, through an opening above their heads, they beheld the loveliness of the stars.*

* At the close of this medley of genius, pathos, absurdity, sublimity, horror, and revoltingness, it is impossible for any reflecting heart to avoid asking, *Cui bono?* What is the good of it to the poor wretches, if we are to suppose it true? and what to the world—except, indeed, as a poetic study and a warning against degrading notions of God—if we are to take it simply as a fiction? Theology, disdaining both questions, has an answer confessedly incomprehensible. Humanity replies: Assume not premises for which you have worse than no proofs.

II.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH PURGATORY.

Argument.

PURGATORY, in the system of Dante, is a mountain at the Antipodes, on the top of which is the Terrestrial Paradise, once the seat of Adam and Eve. It forms the principal part of an island in a sea, and possesses a pure air. Its lowest region, with one or two exceptions of redeemed Pagans, is occupied by Excommunicated Penitents and by Delayers of Penitence, all of whom are compelled to lose time before their atonement commences. The other and greater portion of the ascent is divided into circles or plains, in which are expiated the Seven Deadly Sins. The Poet ascends from circle to circle with Virgil and Statius, and is met in a forest on the top by the spirit of Beatrice, who transports him to Heaven.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH PURGATORY.

WHEN the pilgrims emerged from the opening through which they beheld the stars, they found themselves in a scene which enchanted them with hope and joy. It was dawn: a sweet pure air came on their faces; and they beheld a sky of the loveliest oriental sapphire, whose colour seemed to pervade the whole serene hollow from earth to heaven. The beautiful planet which encourages loving thoughts made all the orient laugh, obscuring by its very radiance the stars in its train; and among those which were still lingering and sparkling in the southern horizon, Dante saw four in the shape of a cross, never beheld by man since they gladdened the eyes of our first parents. Heaven seemed to rejoice in their possession. O widowed northern pole! bereaved art thou, indeed, since thou canst not gaze upon them!*

* “Dolce color d’ oriental zaffiro
Che s’ accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
De l’ aer puro infino al primo giro,

A gli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,
Tosto ch’ io uscì fuor de l’ aura morta
Che m’ avea contristati gli occhi e ’l petto.

Lo bel pianeta, ch’ ad amar conforta,
Faceva tutto rider l’ oriente,
Velando i Pesci, ch’ erano in sua scorta.

Io mi volsi a man destra, e posi mente
All’ altro polo, e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai, fuor ch’ a la prima gente;

Goder pareva ’l ciel di lor fiammelle.
O settentrional vedovo sito,
Poi che privato sei di mirar quelle!”

The poet turned to look at the north where he had been accustomed to see stars that no longer appeared, and beheld, at his side, an old man, who struck his beholder with a veneration like that of a son for his father. He had grey hairs, and a long beard which parted in two down his bosom ; and the four southern stars

The sweetest oriental sapphire blue,
Which the whole air in its pure bosom had,
Greeted mine eyes, far as the heavens withdrew ;

So that again they felt assured and glad,
Soon as they issued forth from the dead air,
Where every sight and thought had made them sad.

The beauteous star, which lets no love despair,
Made all the orient laugh with loveliness,
Veiling the Fish that glimmered in its hair.

I turned me to the right to gaze and bless,
And saw four more, never of living wight
Beheld, since Adam brought us our distress ;

Heaven seemed rejoicing in their happy light.
O widowed northern pole, bereaved indeed,
Since thou hast had no power to see that sight !

Readers who may have gone thus far with the "Italian Pilgrim's Progress," will allow me to congratulate them on arriving at this lovely scene, one of the most admired in the poem.

This is one of the passages which make the religious admirers of Dante inclined to pronounce him divinely inspired ; for how could he otherwise have seen stars, they ask us, which were not discovered till after his time, and which compose the constellation of the Cross ? But other commentators are of opinion, that the Cross, though not so named till subsequently (and Dante, we see, gives no prophetic hint about the name), *had* been seen probably by stray navigators. An Arabian globe is even mentioned by M. Artaud (see Cary), in which the Southern Cross is set down. Mr. Cary, in his note on the passage, refers to Seneca's prediction of the discovery of America ; most likely suggested by similar information. "But whatever," he adds, "may be thought of this, it is certain that the four stars are here symbolical of the four cardinal virtues ;" and he refers to canto xxxi., where those virtues are retrospectively associated with these stars. The symbol, however, is not necessary. Dante was a very curious inquirer on all subjects, and evidently acquainted with ships and seamen as well as geography ; and his imagination would eagerly have seized a magnificent novelty like this, and used it the first opportunity. Columbus's discovery, as the reader will see, was anticipated by Pulci.

beamed on his face with such lustre, that his aspect was as radiant as if he had stood in the sun.

“Who are ye?” said the old man, “that have escaped from the dreadful prison-house? Can the laws of the abyss be violated? Or has heaven changed its mind, that thus ye are allowed to come from the regions of condemnation into mine?”

It was the spirit of Cato of Utica, the warder of the ascent of purgatory.

The Roman poet explained to his countryman who they were, and how Dante was under heavenly protection; and then he prayed leave of passage of him by the love he bore to the chaste eyes of his Marcia, who sent him a message from the Pagan circle, hoping that he would still own her.

Cato replied, that although he was so fond of Marcia while on earth that he could deny her nothing, he had ceased, in obedience to new laws, to have any affection for her, now that she dwelt beyond the evil river; but as the pilgrim, his companion, was under heavenly protection, he would of course do what he desired.* He then desired him to gird his companion with one of the simplest and completest rushes he would see by the water's side, and to wash the stain of the lower world out of his face, and so take their journey up the mountain before them, by a path which the rising sun would disclose. And with these words he disappeared.†

The pilgrims passed on, with the eagerness of one who thinks every step in vain till he finds the path he has lost. The full dawn by this time had arisen, and they saw the trembling of the

* Generous and disinterested!—Cato, the republican enemy of Cæsar, and committer of suicide, is not luckily chosen for his present office by the poet, who has put Brutus into the devil's mouth in spite of his agreeing with Cato, and the suicide Piero delle Vigne into hell in spite of his virtues. But Dante thought Cato's austere manners like his own.

† The girding with the rush (*giunco schietto*) is supposed by the commentators to be an injunction of simplicity and patience. Perhaps it is to enjoin sincerity; especially as the region of expiation has now been entered, and sincerity is the first step to repentance. It will be recollected that Dante's former girdle, the cord of the Franciscan friars, has been left in the hands of Fraud.

sea in the distance.* Virgil then dipped his hands into a spot of dewy grass, where the sun had least affected it, and with the moisture bathed the face of Dante, who held it out to him, suffused with tears;† and then they went on till they came to a solitary shore, whence no voyager had ever returned, and there the loins of the Florentine were girt with the rush.

On this shore they were standing in doubt how to proceed,—moving onward, as it were, in mind, while yet their feet were staying,—when they beheld a light over the water at a distance, rayless at first as the planet Mars when he looks redly out of the horizon through a fog, but speedily growing brighter and brighter with amazing swiftness. Dante had but turned for an instant to ask his guide what it was, when, on looking again, it had grown far brighter. Two splendid phenomena, he knew not what, then developed themselves from it on either side; and, by degrees, another below it. The two splendours quickly turned out to be wings; and Virgil, who had hitherto watched its coming in silence, cried out, “Down, down,—on thy knees! It is God’s angel. Clasp thine hands. Now thou shalt behold operancy indeed. Lo, how he needs neither sail nor oar, coming all this way with nothing but his wings! Lo, how he holds them aloft, using the air with them at his will, and knowing they can never be weary.”

The “divine bird” grew brighter and brighter as he came, so that the eye at last could not sustain the lustre; and Dante turned his to the ground. A boat then rushed to shore which the

* “L’ alba vinceva l’ ora mattutina
Che fuggia ’nnanzi, sì che di lontano
Conobbi il tremolar de la marina.”

The lingering shadows now began to flee
Before the whitening dawn, so that mine eyes
Discerned far off the trembling of the sea.

“Conobbi il tremolar de la marina”

is a beautiful-verse, both for the picture and the sound.

† This evidence of humility and gratitude on the part of Dante would be very affecting, if we could forget all the pride and passion he has been shewing elsewhere, and the torments in which he has left his fellow-creatures. With these recollections upon us, it looks like an overweening piece of self-congratulation at other people’s expense.

angel had brought with him, so light that it drew not a drop of water. The celestial pilot stood at the helm, with bliss written in his face; and a hundred spirits were seen within the boat, who, lifting up their voices, sang the psalm beginning "When Israel came out of Egypt." At the close of the psalm, the angel blessed them with the sign of the cross, and they all leaped to shore; upon which he turned round, and departed as swiftly as he came.

The new-comers, after gazing about them for a while, in the manner of those who are astonished to see new sights, inquired of Virgil and his companion the best way to the mountain. Virgil explained who they were; and the spirits, pale with astonishment at beholding in Dante a living and breathing man, crowded about him, in spite of their anxiety to shorten the period of their trials. One of them came darting out of the press to embrace him, in a manner so affectionate as to move the poet to return his warmth; but his arms again and again found themselves crossed on his own bosom, having encircled nothing. The shadow, smiling at the astonishment in the other's face, drew back; and Dante hastened as much forward to shew his zeal in the greeting, when the spirit in a sweet voice recommended him to desist. The Florentine then knew who it was,—Casella, a musician, to whom he had been much attached. After mutual explanations as to their meeting, Dante requested his friend, if no ordinance opposed it, to refresh his spirit awhile with one of the tender airs that used to charm away all his troubles on earth. Casella immediately began one of his friend's own productions, commencing with the words,

" Love, that delights to talk unto my soul
Of all the wonders of my lady's nature."

And he sang it so beautifully, that the sweetness rang within the poet's heart while recording the circumstance. The other spirits listened with such attention, that they seemed to have forgotten the very purpose of their coming; when suddenly the voice of Cato was heard, sternly rebuking their delay; and the whole party speeded in trepidation towards the mountain.*

* " Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona
De la mia donna disiosamente,"

is the beginning of the ode sung by Dante's friend. The incident is beautifully

The two pilgrims, who had at first hastened with the others, in a little while slackened their steps; and Dante found that his body projected a shadow, while the form of Virgil had none. When arrived at the foot of the mountain, they were joined by a second party of spirits, of whom Virgil inquired the way up it. One of the spirits, of a noble aspect, but with a gaping wound in his forehead, stepped forth, and asked Dante if he remembered him. The poet humbly answering in the negative, the stranger disclosed a second wound, that was in his bosom; and then, with a smile, announced himself as Manfredi, king of Naples, who was slain in battle against Charles of Anjou, and died excommunicated. Manfredi gave Dante a message to his daughter Costanza, queen of Arragon, begging her to shorten the consequences of the excommunication by her prayers; since he, like the rest of the party with him, though repenting of his contumacy against the church, would have to wander on the outskirts of Purgatory three times as long as the presumption had lasted, unless relieved by such petitions from the living.*

Dante went on, with his thoughts so full of this request, that he did not perceive he had arrived at the path which Virgil asked for, till the wandering spirits called out to them to say so. The introduced; and Casella's being made to select a production from the pen of the man who asks him to sing, very delicately implies a graceful cordiality in the musician's character.

Milton alludes to the passage in his sonnet to Henry Lawes

“Thou honour'st verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tun'st their happiest lines in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.”

* Manfredi was the natural son of the Emperor Frederick the Second. “He was lively and agreeable in his manners,” observes Mr. Cary, “and delighted in poetry, music, and dancing. But he was luxurious and ambitious, void of religion, and in his philosophy an epicurean.” *Translation of Dante*, Smith's edition, p. 77. Thus King Manfredi ought to have been in a red-hot tomb, roasting for ever with Epicurus himself, and with the father of the poet's beloved friend, Guido Cavalcante: but he was the son of an emperor, and a foe to the house of Anjou; so Dante gives him a passport to heaven. There is no ground whatever for the repentance assumed in the text.

pilgrims then, with great difficulty, began to ascend through an extremely narrow passage ; and Virgil, after explaining to Dante how it was that in this antipodal region his eastward face beheld the sun in the north instead of the south, was encouraging him to proceed manfully in the hope of finding the path easier by degrees, and of reposing at the end of it, when they heard a voice observing, that they would most likely find it expedient to repose a little sooner. The pilgrims looked about them, and observed close at hand a crag of a rock, in the shade of which some spirits were standing, as men stand idly at noon. Another was sitting down, as if tired out, with his arms about his knees, and his face bent down between them.*

“Dearest master !” exclaimed Dante to his guide, “what thinkest thou of a croucher like this, for manful journeying ? Verily he seems to have been twin-born with Idleness herself.”

The croucher, lifting up his eyes at these words, looked hard at Dante, and said, “Since thou art so stout, push on.”

Dante then saw it was Belacqua, a pleasant acquaintance of his, famous for his indolence.

“That was a good lesson,” said Belacqua, “that was given thee just now in astronomy.”

The poet could not help smiling at the manner in which his acquaintance uttered these words, it was so like his ways of old. Belacqua pretended, even in another world, that it was of no use to make haste, since the angel had prohibited his going higher up the mountain. He and his companions had to walk round the foot of it as many years as they had delayed repenting ; unless, as in the case of Manfredi, their time was shortened by the prayers of good people.

A little further on, the pilgrims encountered the spirits of such Delayers of Penitence as, having died violent deaths, repented at the last moment. One of them, Buonconte da Montefeltro, who died in battle, and whose body could not be found, described how the devil, having been hindered from seizing him by the shedding of a single tear, had raised in his fury a tremendous

* The unexpected bit of comedy here ensuing is very remarkable and pleasant. Belacqua, according to an old commentator, was a musician.

tempest, which sent the body down the river Arno, and buried it in the mud.*

Another spirit, a female, said to Dante, "Ah! when thou returnest to earth, and shalt have rested from thy long journey, remember me,—Pia. Sienna gave me life; the Marshes took it from me. This he knows, who put on my finger the wedding-ring."†

* Buonconte was the son of that Guido da Montefeltro, whose soul we have seen carried off from St. Francis by a devil, for having violated the conditions of penitence. It is curious that both father and son should have been contested for in this manner.

† This is the most affecting and comprehensive of all brief stories.

"Deh quando tu sarai tornato al mondo,
E riposato de la lunga via,
Seguitò 'l terzo spirito al secondo,

Ricorditi di me che son la Pia:
Siena mi fè; disfecemi Maremma;
Salsi colui che 'n nanellata pria

Disposando m'avea con la sua gemma."

Ah, when thou findest thee again on earth
(Said then a female soul), remember me—
Pia. Sienna was my place of birth,

The Marshes of my death. This knoweth he,
Who placed upon my hand the spousal ring.

"Nello della Pietra," says M. Beyle, in his work entitled *De l'Amour*, "obtained in marriage the hand of Madonna Pia, sole heiress of the Ptolomei, the richest and most noble family of Sienna. Her beauty, which was the admiration of all Tuscany, gave rise to a jealousy in the breast of her husband, that envenomed by wrong reports and suspicions continually reviving, led to a frightful catastrophe. It is not easy to determine at this day if his wife was altogether innocent; but Dante has represented her as such. Her husband carried her with him into the marshes of Volterra, celebrated then, as now, for the pestiferous effects of the air. Never would he tell his wife the reason of her banishment into so dangerous a place. His pride did not deign to pronounce either complaint or accusation. He lived with her alone, in a deserted tower, of which I have been to see the ruins on the sea-shore; he never broke his disdainful silence, never replied to the questions of his youthful bride, never listened to her entreaties. He waited, unmoved by her, for the air to produce its fatal effects. The vapours of this unwholesome swamp were not long in tarnishing features the most beautiful, they say, that in that age had appeared upon earth. In a

The majority of this party were so importunate with the Florentine to procure them the prayers of their friends, that he had as much difficulty to get away, as a winner at dice has to free himself from the mercenary congratulations of the by-standers. On resuming their way, Dante quoted to Virgil a passage in the *Æneid*, decrying the utility of prayer, and begged him to explain how it was to be reconciled with what they had just heard. Virgil advised him to wait for the explanation till he saw Beatrice, whom, he now said, he should meet at the top of the mountain. Dante, at this information, expressed a desire to hasten their progress; and Virgil, seeing a spirit looking towards them as they advanced, requested him to acquaint them with the shortest road.

The spirit, maintaining a lofty and reserved aspect, was as silent as if he had not heard the request; intimating by his manner that they might as well proceed without repeating it, and eyeing them like a lion on the watch. Virgil, however, went up to him, and gently urged it; but the only reply was a question as to who they were and of what country. The Latin poet beginning to answer him, had scarcely mentioned the word "Mantua," when the stranger went as eagerly up to his interrogator as the latter had done to him, and said, "Mantua! My own country! My name is Sordello." And the compatriots embraced.

O degenerate Italy! exclaims Dante; land without affections, without principle, without faith in any one good thing! here was a man who could not hear the sweet sound of a fellow-citizen's voice without feeling his heart gush towards him, and there are no people now in any one of thy towns that do not hate and torment one another.

Sordello, in another tone, now exclaimed, "But who are ye?"

Virgil disclosed himself, and Sordello fell at his feet.*

few months she died. Some chroniclers of these remote times report that Nello employed the dagger to hasten her end: she died in the marshes in some horrible manner; but the mode of her death remained a mystery, even to her contemporaries. Nello della Pietra survived, to pass the rest of his days in a silence which was never broken." Hazlitt's *Journey through France and Italy*, p. 315.

* Sordello was a famous Provençal poet; with whose writings the world

Sordello now undertook to accompany the great Roman poet and his friend to a certain distance on their ascent towards the penal quarters of the mountain; but as evening was drawing nigh, and the ascent could not be made properly in the dark, he proposed that they should await the dawning of the next day in a recess that overlooked a flowery hollow. The hollow was a lovely spot of ground, enamelled with flowers that surpassed the exquisitest dyes, and green with a grass brighter than emeralds newly broken.* There rose from it also a fragrance of a thousand different kinds of sweetness, all mingled into one that was new and indescribable; and with the fragrance there ascended the chant of the prayer beginning, "Hail, Queen of Heaven,"† which was sung by a multitude of souls that appeared sitting on the flowery sward.

Virgil pointed them out. They were penitent delayers of penitence, of sovereign rank. Among them, however, were spirits who sat mute; one of whom was the Emperor Rodolph, who ought to have attended better to Italy, the garden of the empire; and another, Ottocar, king of Bohemia, his enemy, who now comforted him; and another, with a small nose,‡ Philip the Third of France, who died a fugitive, shedding the leaves of the lily; he sat beating his breast; and with him was Henry the Third of Navarre, sighing with his cheek on his hand. One was the father, and one the father-in-law of Philip the Handsome, the bane of France; and it was on account of his unworthiness they grieved.

But among the singers Virgil pointed out the strong-limbed King of Arragon, Pedro; and Charles, king of Naples, with his masculine nose (these two were singing together); and Henry

has but lately been made acquainted through the researches of M. Raynouard, in his *Choix des Poésies des Troubadours*, &c.

* "Fresco smeraldo in l' ora che si fiacca."

An exquisite image of newness and brilliancy.

† "Salve, Regina:" the beginning of a Roman-Catholic chant to the Virgin.

‡ "With nose deprest," says Mr. Cary. But Dante says, literally, "small nose,"—*nasetto*. So, further on, he says, "masculine nose,"—*maschio naso*. He meant to imply the greater or less determination of character, which the size of that feature is supposed to indicate.

the Third of England, the king of the simple life, sitting by himself;* and below these, but with his eyes in heaven, Guglielmo marquis of Montferrat.

It was now the hour when men at sea think longingly of home, and feel their hearts melt within them to remember the day on which they bade adieu to beloved friends; and now, too, was the hour when the pilgrim, new to his journey, is thrilled with the like tenderness, when he hears the vesper-bell in the distance, which seems to mourn for the expiring day.† At this hour of the coming darkness, Dante beheld one of the spirits in the flowery hollow arise, and after giving a signal to the others to do as

* An English reader is surprised to find here a sovereign for whom he has been taught to entertain little respect. But Henry was a devout servant of the Church.

† “Era già l’ ora che volge ’l desio
A’ naviganti, e intenerisce ’l cuore
Lo dì ch’ an detto a’ dolci amici a Dio;

E che lo nuovo peregrin d’ amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano
Che paia ’l giorno pianger che si muore.”

A famous passage, untiring in the repetition. It is, indeed, worthy to be the voice of Evening herself.

’Twas now the hour, when love of home melts through
Men’s hearts at sea, and longing thoughts portray
The moment when they bade sweet friends adieu;

And the new pilgrim now, on his lone way,
Thrills, if he hears the distant vesper-bell,
That seems to mourn for the expiring day.

Every body knows the line in Gray’s Elegy, not unworthily echoed from Dante’s—

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.”

Nothing can equal, however, the *tone* in the Italian original,—the

“Paia ’l giòrno piànger che si muòre.”

Alas! why could not the great Tuscan have been superior enough to his personal griefs to write a whole book full of such beauties, and so have left us a work truly to be called Divine?

he did, stretch forth both hands, palm to palm, towards the East, and with softest emotion commence the hymn beginning,

“Thee before the closing light.”*

Upon which all the rest devoutly and softly followed him, keeping their eyes fixed on the heavens. At the end of it they remained, with pale countenances, in an attitude of humble expectation; and Dante saw the angels issue from the quarter to which they looked, and descend towards them with flaming swords in their hands, broken short of the point. Their wings were as green as the leaves in spring; and they wore garments equally green, which the fanning of the wings kept in a state of streaming fluctuation behind them as they came. One of them took his stand on a part of the hill just over where the pilgrims stood, and the other on a hill opposite, so that the party in the valley were between them. Dante could discern their heads of hair, notwithstanding its brightness; but their faces were so dazzling as to be undistinguishable.

“They come from Mary’s bosom,” whispered Sordello, “to protect the valley from the designs of our enemy yonder,—the Serpent.”

Dante looked in trepidation towards the only undefended side of the valley, and beheld the Serpent of Eve coming softly among the grass and flowers, occasionally turning its head, and licking its polished back. Before he could take off his eyes from the evil thing, the two angels had come down like falcons, and at the whirring of their pinions the serpent fled. The angels returned as swiftly to their stations.

Aurora was now looking palely over the eastern cliff on the other side of the globe, and the stars of midnight shining over the heads of Dante and his friends, when they seated themselves for rest on the mountain’s side. The Florentine, being still in the flesh, lay down for weariness, and was overcome with sleep. In his sleep he dreamt that a golden eagle flashed down like lightning upon him, and bore him up to the region of fire, where the heat was so intense that it woke him, staring and looking round about with a pale face. His dream was a shadowing of the

* “*Te lucis ante terminum;*”—a hymn sung at evening service.

truth. He had actually come to another place,—to the entrance of Purgatory itself. Sordello had been left behind, Virgil alone remained, looking him cheerfully in the face. Saint Lucy had come from heaven, and shortened the fatigue of his journey by carrying him upwards as he slept, the heathen poet following them. On arriving where they stood, the fair saint intimated the entrance of Purgatory to Virgil by a glance thither of her beautiful eyes, and then vanished as Dante woke.*

The portal by which Purgatory was entered was embedded in a cliff. It had three steps, each of a different colour; and on the highest of these there sat, mute and watching, an angel in ash-coloured garments, holding a naked sword, which glanced with such intolerable brightness on Dante, whenever he attempted to look, that he gave up the endeavour. The angel demanded who they were, and receiving the right answer, gently bade them advance.

Dante now saw, that the lowest step was of marble, so white and clear that he beheld his face in it. The colour of the next was a deadly black, and it was all rough, scorched, and full of cracks. The third was of flaming porphyry, red as a man's blood when it leaps forth under the lancet.† The angel, whose feet were on the porphyry, sat on a threshold which appeared to be rock-diamond. Dante, ascending the steps, with the encouragement of Virgil, fell at the angel's feet, and, after thrice beating himself on the breast, humbly asked admittance. The angel, with the point of his sword, inscribed the first letter of the word *peccatum* (sin) seven times on the petitioner's forehead; then, bidding him pray with tears for their erasement, and be cautious how he looked back, opened the portal with a silver and a golden

* Lucy, *Lucia* (supposed to be derived from *lux, lucis*), is the goddess (I was almost going to say) who in Roman Catholic countries may be said to preside over *light*, and who is really invoked in maladies of the eyes. She was Dante's favourite saint, possibly for that reason among others, for he had once hurt his eyes with study, and they had been cured. In her spiritual character she represents the light of grace.

† The first step typifies consciousness of sin; the second, horror of it; the third, zeal to amend.

key.* The hinges roared, as they turned, like thunder ; and the pilgrims, on entering, thought they heard, mingling with the sound, a chorus of voices singing, " We praise thee, O God ! " † It was like the chant that mingles with a cathedral organ, when the words that the choristers utter are at one moment to be distinguished, and at another fade away.

The companions continued ascending till they reached a plain. It stretched as far as the eye could see, and was as lonely as roads across deserts.

This was the first flat, or table-land, of the ascending gradations of Purgatory, and the place of trial for the souls of the Proud. It was bordered with a mound, or natural wall, of white marble, sculptured all over with stories of humility. Dante beheld among them the Annunciation, represented with so much life, that the sweet action of the angel seemed to be uttering the very word, " Hail ! " and the submissive spirit of the Virgin to be no less impressed, like very wax, in her demeanour. The next story was that of David dancing and harping before the ark, —an action in which he seemed both less and greater than a king. Michal was looking out upon him from a window, like a lady full of scorn and sorrow. Next to the story of David was that of the Emperor Trajan, when he did a thing so glorious, as moved St. Gregory to gain the greatest of all his conquests—the delivering of the emperor's soul from hell.

A widow, in tears and mourning, was laying hold of his bridle as he rode amidst his court with a noise of horses and horsemen, while the Roman eagles floated in gold over his head. The miserable creature spoke out loudly among them all, crying for vengeance on the murderers of her sons. The emperor seemed to say, " Wait till I return."

But she, in the hastiness of her misery, said, " Suppose thou returnest not ? "

" Then my successor will attend to thee," replied the emperor.

* The keys of St. Peter. The gold is said by the commentators to mean power to absolve ; the silver, the learning and judgment requisite to use it.

† " Te Deum laudimus," the well-known hymn of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.

“And what hast thou to do with the duties of another man,” cried she, “if thou attendest not to thine own?”

“Now, be of good comfort,” concluded Trajan, “for verily my duty shall be done before I go; justice wills it, and pity arrests me.”

Dante was proceeding to delight himself further with these sculptures, when Virgil whispered him to look round and see what was coming. He did so, and beheld strange figures advancing, the nature of which he could not make out at first, for they seemed neither human, nor aught else which he could call to mind. They were souls of the proud, bent double under enormous burdens.

“O proud, miserable, woe-begone Christians!” exclaims the poet; “ye who, in the shortness of your sight, see no reason for advancing in the right path! Know ye not that we are worms, born to compose the angelic butterfly, provided we throw off the husks that impede our flight?”*

The souls came slowly on, each bending down in proportion to his burden. They looked like the crouching figures in architecture that are used to support roofs or balconies, and that excite piteous fancies in the beholders. The one that appeared to have the most patience, yet seemed as if he said, “I can endure no further.”

The sufferers, notwithstanding their anguish, raised their voices in a paraphrase on the Lord’s Prayer, which they concluded with humbly stating, that they repeated the clause against temptation, not for themselves, but for those who were yet living.

Virgil, wishing them a speedy deliverance, requested them to shew the best way of going up to the next circle. Who it was that answered him could not be discerned, on account of their all being so bent down; but a voice gave them the required direction; the speaker adding, that he wished he could raise his eyes, so as

* “Non v’ accorgete voi, che noi siam vermi,
Nati a formar l’ angelica farfalla,
Che vola a giustizia senza schermi?”

Know you not, we are worms
Born to compose the angelic butterfly,
That flies to heaven when freed from what deforms?

to see the living creature that stood near him. He said that his name was Umberto—that he came of the great Tuscan race of Aldobrandesco—and that his countrymen, the Siennese, murdered him on account of his arrogance.

Dante had bent down his own head to listen, and in so doing he was recognised by one of the sufferers, who, eyeing him as well as he could, addressed him by name. The poet replied by exclaiming, “Art thou not Oderisi, the glory of Agubbio, the master of the art of illumination?”

“Ah!” said Oderisi, “Franco of Bologna has all the glory now. His colours make the pages of books laugh with beauty, compared with what mine do.* I could not have owned it while on earth, for the sin which has brought me hither; but so it is; and so will it ever be, let a man’s fame be never so green and flourishing, unless he can secure a dull age to come after him. Cimabue, in painting, lately kept the field against all comers, and now the cry is ‘Giotto.’ Thus, in song, a new Guido has deprived the first of his glory, and he perhaps is born who shall drive both out of the nest.† Fame is but a wind that changes about from all quarters. What does glory amount to at best, that a man should prefer living and growing old for it, to dying in the days of his nurse and his pap-boat, even if it should last him a thousand years? A thousand years!—the twinkling of an eye. Behold this man, who weeps before me; his name resounded once over all our Tuscany, and now it is scarcely whispered in his native place. He was lord there at the time that your once

* “Più ridon le carte

Che penelleggia Franco Bolognese :

L’ onore è tutto or suo, e mio in parte.”

† The “new Guido” is his friend Guido Cavalcante (now dead); the “first” is Guido Guinicelli, for whose writings Dante had an esteem; and the poet, who is to “chase them from the nest,” *caccerà di nido* (as the not very friendly metaphor states it), is with good reason supposed to be himself! He was right; but was the statement becoming? It was certainly not necessary. Dante, notwithstanding his friendship with Guido, appears to have had a grudge against both the Cavalcanti, probably for some scorn they had shewn to his superstition; for they could be proud themselves; and the son has the reputation of scepticism, as well as the father. See the *Decameron*, *Giorn. vi. Nov. 9.*

proud but now loathsome Florence had such a lesson given to its frenzy at the battle of Arbia."

"And what is his name?" inquired Dante.

"Salvani," returned the limner. "He is here, because he had the presumption to think that he could hold Sienna in the hollow of his hand. Fifty years has he paced in this manner. Such is the punishment for audacity."

"But why is he here at all," said Dante, "and not in the outer region, among the delayers of repentance?"

"Because," exclaimed the other, "in the height of his ascendancy he did not disdain to stand in the public place in Sienna, and, trembling in every vein, beg money from the people to ransom a friend from captivity. Do I appear to thee to speak with mysterious significance? Thy countrymen shall too soon help thee to understand me."*

Virgil now called Dante away from Oderisi, and bade him notice the ground on which they were treading. It was pavement, wrought all over with figures, like sculptured tombstones. There was Lucifer among them, struck flaming down from heaven; and Briareus, pinned to the earth with the thunderbolt, and, with the other giants, amazing the gods with his hugeness; and Nimrod, standing confounded at the foot of Babel; and Niobe, with her despairing eyes, turned into stone amidst her children; and Saul, dead on his own sword in Gilboa; and Arachne, now half spider, at fault on her own broken web; and Rehoboam, for all his insolence, flying in terror in his chariot; and Alcmaeon, who made his mother pay with her life for the ornament she received to betray his father; and Sennacherib, left dead by his son in the temple; and the head of Cyrus, thrown by the motherless woman into the goblet of blood, that it might swill what it had thirsted for; and Holofernes, beheaded; and his Assyrians flying at his death; and Troy, all become cinders

* This is the passage from which it is conjectured that Dante knew what it was to "tremble in every vein," from the awful necessity of begging. Mr. Cary, with some other commentators, thinks that the "trembling" implies fear of being refused. But does it not rather mean the agony of the humiliation? In Salvani's case it certainly does; for it was in consideration of the pang to his pride, that the good deed rescued him from worse punishment.

and hollow places. Oh! what a fall from pride was there! Now, maintain the loftiness of your looks, ye sons of Eve, and walk with proud steps, bending not your eyes on the dust ye were, lest ye perceive the evil of your ways.*

“Behold,” said Virgil, “there is an angel coming.”

The angel came on, clad in white, with a face that sent trembling beams before it, like the morning star. He shewed the pilgrims the way up to the second circle; and then, beating his wings against the forehead of Dante, on which the seven initials of sin were written, told him he should go safely, and disappeared.

On reaching the new circle, Dante, instead of the fierce wailings that used to meet him at every turn in hell, heard voices singing, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”† As he went, he perceived that he walked lighter, and was told by Virgil that the angel had freed him from one of the letters on his forehead. He put his hand up to make sure, as a man does in the street when people take notice of something on his head of which he is not aware; and Virgil smiled.

In this new circle the sin of Envy was expiated. After the pilgrims had proceeded a mile, they heard the voices of invisible spirits passing them, uttering sentiments of love and charity; for it was charity itself that had to punish envy.

The souls of the envious, clad in sackcloth, sat leaning for

* The reader will have noticed the extraordinary mixture of Paganism and the Bible in this passage, especially the introduction of such fables as Niobe and Arachne. It would be difficult not to suppose it intended to work out some half sceptical purpose, if we did not call to mind the grave authority given to fables in the poet's treatise on Monarchy, and the whole strange spirit, at once logical and gratuitous, of the learning of his age, when the acuter the mind, the subtler became the reconciliation with absurdity.

† *Beati pauperes spiritu.* “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”—one of the beautiful passages of the beautiful sermon on the Mount. How could the great poet read and admire such passages, and yet fill his books so full of all which they renounced? “Oh,” say his idolators, “he did it out of his very love for them, and his impatience to see them triumph.” So said the Inquisition. The evil was continued for the sake of the good which it prevented! The result in the long-run may be so, but not for the reasons they supposed, or from blindness to the indulgence of their bad passions.

support and humiliation, partly against the rocky wall of the circle, and partly on one another's shoulders, after the manner of beggars that ask alms near places of worship. Their eyes were sewn up, like those of hawks in training, but not so as to hinder them from shedding tears, which they did in abundance; and they cried, "Mary, pray for us!—Michael, Peter, and all the saints, pray for us!"

Dante spoke to them; and one, a female, lifted up her chin as a blind person does when expressing consciousness of notice, and said she was Sapia of Sienna, who used to be pleased at people's misfortunes, and had rejoiced when her countrymen lost the battle of Colle. "*Sapia* was my name," she said, "but *sapient* I was not,* for I prayed God to defeat my countrymen; and when he had done so (as he had willed to do), I raised my bold face to heaven, and cried out to him, 'Now do thy worst, for I fear thee not!' I was like the bird in the fable, who thought the fine day was to last for ever. What I should have done in my latter days to make up for the imperfect amends of my repentance, I know not, if the holy Piero Pettignano had not assisted me with his prayers. But who art thou that goest with open eyes, and breathest in thy talk?"

"Mine eyes," answered Dante, "may yet have to endure the blindness in this place, though for no long period. Far more do I fear the sufferings in the one that I have just left. I seem to feel the weight already upon me."†

* "*Sàvia non fui, avvegna che Sapia
Fosse chiamata.*"

The pun is poorer even than it sounds in English; for, though the Italian name may possibly remind its readers of *sapienza* (sapience), there is the difference of a *v* in the adjective *savia*, which is also accented on the first syllable. It is almost as bad as if she had said in English, "Sophist I found myself, though Sophia is my name." It is pleasant, however, to see the great saturnine poet among the punsters. It appears, from the commentators, that Sapia was in exile at the time of the battle, but they do not say for what; probably from some zeal of faction.

† We are here let into Dante's confessions. He owns to a little envy, but far more pride:

"Gli occhi, diss' io, mi fieno ancor qui tolti,
Ma picciol tempo; che poch' è l' offesa
Fatta per esser con invidia volti.

The Florentine then informed Sapia how he came thither, which, she said, was a great sign that God loved him; and she begged his prayers. The conversation excited the curiosity of two spirits who overheard it; and one of them, Guido del Duca, a noble Romagnese, asked the poet of what country he was. Dante, without mentioning the name of the river, intimated that he came from the banks of the Arno; upon which the other spirit, Rinier da Calboli, asked his friend why the stranger suppressed the name, as though it was something horrible. Guido said he well might; for the river, throughout its course, beheld none but bad men and persecutors of virtue. First, he said, it made its petty way by the sties of those brutal hogs, the people of Casentino, and then arrived at the dignity of watering the kennels of the curs of Arezzo, who excelled more in barking than in biting; then, growing unluckier as it grew larger, like the cursed and miserable ditch that it was, it found in Florence the dogs become wolves; and finally, ere it went into the sea, it passed the den of those foxes, the Pisans, who were full of such cunning that they held traps in contempt.

“It will be well,” continued Guido, “for this man to remember what he hears;” and then, after prophesying evil to Florence, and confessing to Dante his sin of envy, which used to make him pale when any one looked happy, he added, “This is Rinieri, the glory of that house of Calboli which now inherits not a spark of it. Not a spark of it, did I say, in the house of Calboli? Where is there a spark in all Romagna? Where is the good Lizio?—where Manardi, Traversaro, Carpigna? The Romagnese have all become bastards. A mechanic founds a house in Bologna! a Bernardin di Fosco finds his dog-grass become a tree in Faenza! Wonder not, Tuscan, to see me weep, when I think of the noble spirits that we have lived with—of the Guidos of Prata, and the Ugolins of Azzo—of Federigo Tignoso and his band—of the

Troppa è più la paura ond' è sospesa
L' anima mia del tormento di sotto:
Che già lo 'ncarco di là giù mi pesa.”

The first confession is singularly ingenuous and modest; the second, affecting. It is curious to guess what sort of persons Dante could have allowed himself to envy—probably those who were more acceptable to women.

Traversaros and Anastagios, families now ruined—and all the ladies and the cavaliers, the alternate employments and delights which wrapped us in a round of love and courtesy, where now there is nothing but ill-will! O castle of Brettinoro! why dost thou not fall? Well has the lord of Bagnacavallo done, who will have no more children. Who would propagate a race of Counties from such blood as the Castrocaros and the Conios? Is not the son of Pagani called the demon? and would it not be better that such a son were swept out of the family? Nay, let him live to show to what a pitch of villany it has arrived. Ubal dini alone is blessed, for his name is good, and he is too old to leave a child after him. Go, Tuscan—go; for I would be left to my tears.”

Dante and Virgil turned to move onward, and had scarcely done so when a tremendous voice met them, splitting the air like peals of thunder, and crying out, “Whoever finds me will slay me!” then dashed apart, like the thunder-bolt when it falls. It was Cain. The air had scarcely recovered its silence, when a second crash ensued from a different quarter near them, like thunder when the claps break swiftly into one another. “I am Aglauros,” it said, “that was turned into stone.” Dante drew closer to his guide, and there ensued a dead silence.*

The sun was now in the west, and the pilgrims were journeying towards it, when Dante suddenly felt such a weight of splendour on his eyes, as forced him to screen them with both his

* Aglauros, daughter of Cecrops, king of Athens, was turned to stone by Mercury, for disturbing with her envy his passion for her sister Herse.

The passage about Cain is one of the sublimest in Dante. Truly wonderful and characteristic is the way in which he has made physical noise and violence express the anguish of the wanderer’s mind. We are not to suppose, I conceive, that we see Cain. We know he has passed us, by his thunderous and headlong words. Dante may well make him invisible, for his words are things—veritable thunderbolts.

Cain comes in rapid successions of thunder-claps. The voice of Aglauros is thunder-claps crashing into one another—broken thunder. This is exceedingly fine also, and wonderful as a variation upon that awful music; but Cain is the astonishment and the overwhelmingness. If it were not, however, for the second thunder, we should not have had the two silences; for I doubt whether they are not better even than one. At all events, the final silence is tremendous.

hands. It was an angel coming to shew them the ascent to the next circle, a way that was less steep than the last. While mounting, they heard the angel's voice singing behind them, "Blessed are the merciful ; for they shall obtain mercy !" and on his leaving them to proceed by themselves, the second letter on Dante's forehead was found to have been effaced by the splendour.

The poet looked round in wonder on the new circle, where the sin of Anger was expiated, and beheld, as in a dream, three successive spectacles illustrative of the virtue of patience. The first was that of a crowded temple, on the threshold of which a female said to her son, in the sweet manner of a mother, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing :"*—and here she became silent, and the vision ended. The next was the lord of Athens, Pisistratus, calmly reproving his wife for wishing him to put to death her daughter's lover, who, in a transport, had embraced her in public. "If we are to be thus severe," said Pisistratus, "with those that love us, what is to be done with such as hate?" The last spectacle was that of a furious multitude shouting and stoning to death a youth, who, as he fell to the ground, still kept his face towards heaven, making his eyes the gates through which his soul reached it, and imploring forgiveness for his murderers.†

The visions passed away, leaving the poet staggering as if but half awake. They were succeeded by a thick and noisome fog, through which he followed his leader with the caution of a blind man, Virgil repeatedly telling him not to quit him a moment. Here they heard voices praying in unison for pardon to the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." They were the spirits of the angry. Dante conversed with one of them on free-will and necessity ; and after quitting him, and issuing by degrees from the cloud, beheld illustrative visions of anger ; such as the impious mother, who was changed into the bird that most delights in singing ; Haman, retaining his look of spite and rage on the cross ; and Lavinia, mourning for her mother, who slew herself for rage at the death of Turnus.‡

* St. Luke ii. 48.

† The stoning of Stephen.

‡ These illustrative spectacles are not among the best inventions of Dante.

These visions were broken off by a great light, as sleep is broken: and Dante heard a voice out of it saying, "The ascent is here." He then, as Virgil and he ascended into the fourth circle, felt an air on his face, as if caused by the fanning of wings, accompanied by the utterance of the words, "Blessed are the peace-makers;" and his forehead was lightened of the third letter.*

In this fourth circle was expiated Lukewarmness, or defect of zeal for good. The sufferers came speeding and weeping round the mountain, making amends for the old indifference by the haste and fire of the new love that was in them. "Blessed Mary made haste," cried one, "to salute Elizabeth." "And Cæsar," cried another, "to smite Pompey at Lerida."† "And the disobedient among the Israelites," cried others, "died before they reached the promised land." "And the tired among the Trojans preferred ease in Sicily to glory in Latium."—It was now midnight, and Dante slept and had a dream.

His dream was of a woman who came to him, having a tongue that tried ineffectually to speak, squinting eyes, feet whose distortion drew her towards the earth, stumps of hands, and a pallid face. Dante looked earnestly at her, and his look acted upon her like sunshine upon cold. Her tongue was loosened; her feet made straight; she stood upright; her paleness became a lovely rose-colour; and she warbled so beautifully, that the poet could not have refused to listen had he wished it.

"I am the sweet Syren," she said, "who made the mariners

Their introduction is forced, and the instances not always pointed. A murderess, too, of her son, changed into such a bird as the nightingale, was not a happy association of ideas in Homer, where Dante found it; and I am surprised he made use of it, intimate as he must have been with the less inconsistent story of her namesake, Philomela, in the *Metamorphoses*.

* So, at least, I conceive, by what appears afterwards; and I may here add, once for all, that I have supplied the similar requisite intimations at each successive step in Purgatory, the poet seemingly having forgotten to do so. It is necessary to what he implied in the outset. The whole poem, it is to be remembered, is thought to have wanted his final revision.

† What an instance to put among those of haste to do good! But the fame and accomplishments of Cæsar, and his being at the head of our Ghibelline's beloved emperors, fairly overwhelmed Dante's boasted impartiality.

turn pale for pleasure in the sea. I drew Ulysses out of his course with my song ; and he that harbours with me once, rarely departs ever, so well I pay him for what he abandons."

Her lips were not yet closed, when a lady of holy and earnest countenance came up to shame her. "O Virgil!" she cried angrily, "who is this?" Virgil approached, with his eyes fixed on the lady ; and the lady tore away the garments of the woman, and shewed her to be a creature so loathly, that the sleeper awoke with the horror.*

Virgil said, "I have called thee three times to no purpose. Let us move, and find the place at which we are to go higher."

It was broad day, with a sun that came warm on the shoulders ; and Dante was proceeding with his companion, when the softest voice they ever heard directed them where to ascend, and they found an angel with them, who pointed his swan-like wings upward, and then flapped them against the pilgrims, taking away the fourth letter from the forehead of Dante. "Blessed are they that mourn," said the angel, "for they shall be comforted."

The pilgrims ascended into the fifth circle, and beheld the ex-piators of Avarice grovelling on the ground, and exclaiming, as loud as they could for the tears that choked them, "My soul hath cleaved to the dust." Dante spoke to one, who turned out to be Pope Adrian the Fifth. The poet fell on his knees ; but Adrian bade him arise and err not. "I am no longer," said he, "spouse of the Church, here ; but fellow-servant with thee and with all others. Go thy ways, and delay not the time of my deliverance."

The pilgrims moving onward, Dante heard a spirit exclaim, in the struggling tones of a woman in child-bed, "O blessed Virgin ! That was a poor roof thou hadst when thou wast delivered of thy sacred burden. O good Fabricius ! Virtue with poverty was thy choice, and not vice with riches." And then it told the story of Nicholas, who, hearing that a father was about to sacrifice the honour of his three daughters for want of money, threw bags of it in at his window, containing portions for them all.

* A masterly allegory of Worldly Pleasure. But the close of it in the original has an intensity of the revolting, which outrages the last recesses of feeling, and disgusts us with the denouncer.

Dante earnestly addressed this spirit to know who he was ; and the spirit said it would tell him, not for the sake of help, for which it looked elsewhere, but because of the shining grace that was in his questioner, though yet alive.

“I was root,” said the spirit, “of that evil plant which overshadows all Christendom to such little profit. Hugh Capet was I, ancestor of the Philips and Louises of France, offspring of a butcher of Paris, when the old race of kings was worn out.* We began by seizing the government in Paris ; then plundered in Provence ; then, to make amends, laid hold of Poitou, Normandy, and Gascony ; then, still to make amends, put Conradin to death and seized Naples ; then, always to make amends, gave Saint Aquinas his dismissal to Heaven by poison. I see the time at hand when a descendant of mine will be called into Italy, and the spear that Judas *jousted with*† shall transfix the bowels of Florence. Another of my posterity sells his daughter for a sum of money to a Marquis of Ferrara. Another seizes the pope in Alagna, and mocks Christ over again in the person of his Vicar. A fourth rends the veil of the temple, solely to seize its money.

* The fierce Hugh Capet, soliloquising about the Virgin in the tones of a lady in child-bed, is rather too ludicrous an association of ideas. It was for calling this prince the son of a butcher, that Francis the First prohibited the admission of Dante’s poem into his dominions. Mr. Cary thinks the king might have been mistaken in his interpretation of the passage, and that “butcher” may be simply a metaphorical term for the bloodthirstiness of Capet’s father. But when we find the man called, not *the* butcher, or *that* butcher, or butcher in reference to his species, but in plain local parlance “a butcher of Paris” (*un beccaiio di Parigi*), and when this designation is followed up by the allusion to the extinction of the previous dynasty, the ordinary construction of the words appears indisputable. Dante seems to have had no ground for what his aristocratic pride doubtless considered a hard blow, and what King Francis, indeed, condescended to feel as such. He met with the notion somewhere, and chose to believe it, in order to vex the French and their princes. The spirit of the taunt contradicts his own theories elsewhere ; for he has repeatedly said, that the only true nobility is in the mind. But his writings (poetical truth excepted) are a heap of contradictions.

† Mr. Cary thought he had seen an old romance in which there is a combat of this kind between Jesus and his betrayer. I have an impression to the same effect.

O Lord, how shall I rejoice to see the vengeance which even now thou huggest in delight to thy bosom !*

“Of loving and liberal things,” continued Capet, “we speak while it is light; such as thou heardest me record, when I addressed myself to the blessed Virgin. But when night comes, we take another tone. Then we denounce Pygmalion,† the traitor, the robber, and the parricide, each the result of his gluttonous love of gold; and Midas, who obtained his wish, to the laughter of all time; and the thief Achan, who still seems frightened at the wrath of Joshua; and Sapphira and her husband, whom we accuse over again before the Apostles; and Heliodorus, whom we bless the hoofs of the angel’s horse for trampling;‡ and Crassus, on whom we call with shouts of derision to tell us the flavour of his molten gold. Thus we record our thoughts in the night-time, now high, now low, now at greater or less length, as each man is prompted by his impulses. And it was thus thou didst hear me recording also by day-time, though I had no respondent near me.”

The pilgrims quitted Hugh Capet, and were eagerly pursuing their journey, when, to the terror of Dante, they felt the whole mountain of Purgatory tremble, as though it were about to fall in. The island of Delos shook not so awfully when Latona, hiding there, brought forth the twin eyes of Heaven. A shout then arose on every side, so enormous, that Virgil stood nigher to

* “O Signor mio, quando sarò io lieto
A veder la vendetta che nascosa
Fa dolce l’ira tua nel tuo segreto!”

The spirit of the blasphemous witticism attributed to another Italian, viz. that the reason why God prohibited revenge to mankind was its being “too delicate a morsel for any but himself,” is here gravely anticipated as a positive compliment to God by the fierce poet of the thirteenth century, who has been held up as a great Christian divine! God hugs revenge to his bosom with delight! The Supreme Being confounded with a poor grinning Florentine!

† A ludicrous anti-climax this to modern ears! The allusion is to the Pygmalion who was Dido’s brother, and who murdered her husband, the priest Sichæus, for his riches. The term “parricide” is here applied in its secondary sense of—the murderer of any one to whom we owe reverence.

‡ Heliodorus was a plunderer of the Temple, thus supernaturally punished. The subject has been nobly treated by Raphael.

his companion, and bade him be of good heart. "Glory be to God in the highest," cried the shout; but Dante could gather the words only from those who were near him.

It was Purgatory rejoicing for the deliverance of a soul out of its bounds.*

The soul overtook the pilgrims as they were journeying in amazement onwards; and it turned out to be that of Statius, who had been converted to Christianity in the reign of Domitian.† Mutual astonishment led to inquiries that explained who the other Latin poet was; and Statius fell at his master's feet.

Statius had expiated his sins in the circle of Avarice, not for that vice, but for the opposite one of Prodigality.

An angel now, as before, took the fifth letter from Dante's forehead; and the three poets having ascended into the sixth round of the mountain, were journeying on lovingly together, Dante listening with reverence to the talk of the two ancients, when they came up to a sweet-smelling fruit-tree, upon which a clear stream came tumbling from a rock beside it, and diffusing itself through the branches. The Latin poets went up to the tree, and were met by a voice which said, "Be chary of the fruit. Mary thought not of herself at Galilee, but of the visitors, when she said, 'They have no wine.' The women of oldest Rome drank water. The beautiful age of gold feasted on acorns. Its thirst made nectar out of the rivulet. The Baptist fed on locusts and wild honey, and became great as you see him in the gospel."

The poets went on their way; and Dante was still listening to the others, when they heard behind them a mingled sound of chanting and weeping, which produced an effect at once sad and delightful. It was the psalm, "O Lord, open thou our lips!" and the chanters were expiators of the sin of Intemperance in Meats and Drinks. They were condemned to circuit the mountain, famished, and to long for the fruit and waters of the tree in

* A grand and beautiful fiction.

† Readers need hardly be told that there is no foundation for this fancy, except in the invention of the churchmen. Dante, in another passage, not necessary to give, confounds the poet Statius who was from Naples, with a rhetorician of the same name from Thoulouse.

vain. They soon came up with the poets—a pallid multitude, with hollow eyes, and bones staring through the skin. The sockets of their eyes looked like rings from which the gems had dropped.* One of them knew and accosted Dante, who could not recognise him till he heard him speak. It was Forese Donati, one of the poet's most intimate connexions. Dante, who had wept over his face when dead, could as little forbear weeping to see him thus hungering and thirsting, though he had expected to find him in the outskirts of the place, among the delayers of repentance. He asked his friend how he had so quickly got higher. Forese said it was owing to the prayers and tears of his good wife Nella; and then he burst into a strain of indignation against the contrast exhibited to her virtue by the general depravity of the Florentine women, whom he described as less modest than the half-naked savages in the mountains of Sardinia.

“What is to be said of such creatures?” continued he. “O my dear cousin! I see a day at hand, when these impudent women shall be forbidden from the pulpit to go exposing their naked bosoms. What savages or what infidels ever needed that? Oh! if they could see what Heaven has in store for them, their mouths would be this instant opened wide for howling.”†

* “Parèn l' occhiaje anella senza gemme.”

This beautiful and affecting image is followed in the original by one of the most fantastical conceits of the time. The poet says, that the physiognomist, who “reads the word *omo* (*homo*, man), written in the face of the human being, might easily have seen the letter *m* in theirs.”

“Chi nel viso de gli uomini legge *o m o*,
Bene avria quivi conosciuto l' *emme*.”

The meaning is, that the perpendicular lines of the nose and temples form the letter *m*, and the eyes the two *o*'s. The enthusiast for Roman domination must have been delighted to find that Nature wrote in Latin!

† “Se le svergognate fosser certe
Di quel che l' ciel veloce loro ammannà,
Già per urlare avrian le bocche aperte.”

This will remind the reader of the style of that gentle Christian, John Knox, who, instead of offering his own “cheek to the smiters,” delighted to smite the cheeks of women. Fury was his mode of preaching meekness, and threats of everlasting howling his reproof of a tune on Sundays. But, it will be said, he

Forese then asked Dante to explain to himself and his astonished fellow-sufferers how it was that he stood there, a living body of flesh and blood, casting a shadow with his substance.

“If thou callest to mind,” said Dante, “what sort of life thou and I led together, the recollection may still grieve thee sorely. He that walks here before us took me out of that life; and through his guidance it is that I have visited in the body the world of the dead, and am now traversing the mountain which leads us to the right path.”*

After some further explanation, Forese pointed out to his friend, among the expiators of intemperance. Buonaggiunta of Lucca, the poet; and Pope Martin the Fourth, with a face made sharper than the rest for the eels which he used to smother in wine; and

looked to consequences. Yes; and produced the worst himself, both spiritual and temporal. Let the whisky-shops answer him. However, he helped to save Scotland from Purgatory: so we must take good and bad together, and hope the best in the end.

Forese, like many of Dante’s preachers, seems to have been one of those self-ignorant or self-exasperated denouncers, who

“Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to.”

He was a glutton, who could not bear to see ladies too little clothed. The defacing of “God’s image” in his own person he considered nothing.

* The passage respecting his past life is unequivocal testimony to the fact, confidently disputed by some, of Dante’s having availed himself of the license of the time; though, in justice to such candour, we are bound not to think worse of it than can be helped. The words in the original are:

“Se ti riduci a mente
Qual fosti meco, e quale io teco fui,
Ancor fia grave il memorar presente.”

Literally: “If thou recallest to mind what (sort of person) thou wast with me, and what I was with thee, the recollection may oppress thee still.”

His having been taken out of that kind of life by Virgil (construed in the literal sense, in which, among other senses, he has directed us to construe him), may imply, either that the delight of reading Virgil first made him think of living in a manner more becoming a man of intellect, or (possibly) that the Latin poet’s description of Æneas’s descent into hell turned his thoughts to religious penitence. Be this as it may, his life, though surely it could at no time have been of any very licentious kind, never, if we are to believe Boccaccio, became spotless.

Ubaldino of Pila, grinding his teeth on air ; and Archbishop Boniface of Ravenna, who fed jovially on his flock ; and Rigogliosi of Forli, who had had time enough to drink in the other world, and yet never was satisfied. Buonaggiunta and Dante eyed one another with curiosity ; and the farmer murmured something about a lady of the name of Gentucca.

“Thou seemest to wish to speak with me,” said Dante.

“Thou art no admirer, I believe, of my native place,” said Buonaggiunta ; “and yet, if thou art he whom I take thee to be, there is a damsel there shall make it please thee. Art thou not author of the poem beginning

“Ladies, that understand the lore of love ?”*

“I am one,” replied Dante, “who writes as Love would have him, heeding no manner but his dictator’s, and uttering simply what he suggests.”†

“Ay, that is the sweet new style,” returned Buonaggiunta ; “and I now see what it was that hindered the notary, and Guitone, and myself, from hitting the right natural point.” And here he ceased speaking, looking like one contented to have ascertained a truth.‡

* The mention of Gentucca might be thought a compliment to the lady, if Dante had not made Beatrice afterwards treat his regard for any one else but herself with so much contempt. (See page 126 of the present volume.) Under that circumstance, it is hardly acting like a gentleman to speak of her at all ; unless, indeed, he thought her a person who would be pleased with the notoriety arising even from the record of a fugitive regard ; and in that case the good taste of the record would still remain doubtful. The probability seems to be, that Dante was resolved, at all events, to take this opportunity of bearding some rumour.

† A celebrated and charming passage :

“Io mi son un, che quando
Amore spira, noto ; e a quel modo
Che detta dentro, vo significando.”

I am one that notes
When Love inspires ; and what he speaks I tell
In his own way, embodying but his thoughts.

‡ Exquisite truth of painting ! and a very elegant compliment to the handsome nature of Buonaggiunta. Jacopo da Lentino, called the Notary, and

The whole multitude then, except Forese, skimmed away like cranes, swift alike through eagerness and through leanness. Forese lingered a moment to have a parting word with his friend, and to prophesy the violent end of the chief of his family, Corso, run away with and dragged at the heels of his horse faster and faster, till the frenzied animal smites him dead. Having given the poet this information, the prophet speeded after the others.

The companions now came to a second fruit-tree, to which a multitude were in vain lifting up their hands, just as children lift them to a man who tantalises them with shewing something which he withholds; but a voice out of a thicket by the road-side warned the travellers not to stop, telling them that the tree was an offset from that of which Eve tasted. "Call to mind," said the voice, "those creatures of the clouds, the Centaurs, whose feasting cost them their lives. Remember the Hebrews, how they dropped away from the ranks of Gideon to quench their effeminate thirst."*

The poets proceeded, wrapt in thought, till they heard another voice of a nature that made Dante start and shake as if he had been some paltry hackney.

"Of what value is thought," said the voice, "if it lose its way? The path lies hither."

Dante turned toward the voice, and beheld a shape glowing red as in a furnace, with a visage too dazzling to be looked upon. It met him, nevertheless, as he drew nigh, with an air from the fanning of its wings fresh as the first breathing of the wind on a May morning, and fragrant as all its flowers; and Dante lost the sixth letter on his forehead, and ascended with the two other poets into the seventh and last circle of the mountain.

This circle was all in flames, except a narrow path on the edge of its precipice, along which the pilgrims walked. A great wind

Fra Guittone of Arezzo, were celebrated verse-writers of the day. The latter, in a sonnet given by Mr. Cary in the notes to his translation, says he shall be delighted to hear the trumpet, at the last day, dividing mankind into the happy and the tormented (sufferers under *crudel martire*), because an inscription will then be seen on his forehead, shewing that he had been a slave to love! An odd way for a poet to show his feelings, and a friar his religion!

* Judges vii. 6.

from outside of the precipice kept the flames from raging beyond the path ; and in the midst of the fire went spirits expiating the sin of Incontinence. They sang the hymn beginning " God of consummate mercy ! " * Dante was compelled to divide his attention between his own footsteps and theirs, in order to move without destruction. At the close of the hymn they cried aloud, " I know not a man ! " † and then recommenced it ; after which they again cried aloud, saying, " Diana ran to the wood, and drove Calisto out of it, because she knew the poison of Venus ! " And then again they sang the hymn, and then extolled the memories of chaste women and husbands ; and so they went on without ceasing, as long as their time of trial lasted.

Occasionally the multitude that went in one direction met another which mingled with and passed through it, individuals of both greeting tenderly by the way, as emmets appear to do, when in passing they touch the antennæ of one another. These two multitudes parted with loud and sorrowful cries, proclaiming the offences of which they had been guilty ; and then each renewed their spiritual songs and prayers.

The souls here, as in former circles, knew Dante to be a living creature by the shadow which he cast ; and after the wonted explanations, he learned who some of them were. One was his predecessor in poetry, Guido Guinicelli, from whom he could not take his eyes for love and reverence, till the sufferer, who told him there was a greater than himself in the crowd, vanished away through the fire as a fish does in water. The greater one was Arnould Daniel, the Provençal poet, who, after begging the prayers of the traveller, disappeared in like manner.

The sun by this time was setting on the fires of Purgatory,

* *Summæ Deus clementiæ.* The ancient beginning of a hymn in the Roman Catholic Church ; now altered, say the commentators, to " *Summæ parens clementiæ.* "

† *Virum non cognosco.* " Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ? " — *Luke* i. 34.

The placing of Mary's interview with the angel, and Ovid's story of Calisto, upon apparently the same identical footing of authority, by spirits in all the sincerity of agonised penitence, is very remarkable. A dissertation, by some competent antiquary, on the curious question suggested by these anomalies, would be a welcome novelty in the world of letters.

when an angel came crossing the road through them, and then, standing on the edge of the precipice, with joy in his looks, and singing, "Blessed are the pure in heart!" invited the three poets to plunge into the flames themselves, and so cross the road to the ascent by which the summit of the mountain was gained. Dante, clasping his hands, and raising them aloft, recoiled in horror. The thought of all that he had just witnessed made him feel as if his own hour of death was come. His companion encouraged him to obey the angel; but he could not stir. Virgil said, "Now mark me, son; this is the only remaining obstacle between thee and Beatrice;" and then himself and Statius entering the fire, Dante followed them.

"I could have cast myself," said he, "into molten glass to cool myself, so raging was the furnace."

Virgil talked of Beatrice to animate him. He said, "Methinks I see her eyes beholding us." There was, indeed, a great light upon the quarter to which they were crossing; and out of the light issued a voice, which drew them onwards, singing, "Come, blessed of my Father! Behold, the sun is going down, and the night cometh, and the ascent is to be gained."

The travellers gained the ascent, issuing out of the fire; and the voice and the light ceased, and night was come. Unable to ascend farther in the darkness, they made themselves a bed, each of a stair in the rock; and Dante, in his happy humility, felt as if he had been a goat lying down for the night near two shepherds.

Towards dawn, at the hour of the rising of the star of love, he had a dream, in which he saw a young and beautiful lady coming over a lea, and bending every now and then to gather flowers; and as she bound the flowers into a garland, she sang, "I am Leah, gathering flowers to adorn myself, that my looks may seem pleasant to me in the mirror. But my sister Rachel abides before the mirror, flowerless; contented with her beautiful eyes. To behold is my sister's pleasure, and to work is mine."*

* An allegory of the Active and Contemplative Life;—not, I think, a happy one, though beautifully painted. It presents, apart from its terminating comment, no necessary intellectual suggestion; is rendered, by the comment itself, hardly consistent with Leah's express love of ornament; and, if it were

When Dante awoke, the beams of the dawn were visible ; and they now produced a happiness like that of the traveller, who every time he awakes knows himself to be nearer home. Virgil and Statius were already up ; and all three, resuming their way to the mountain's top, stood upon it at last, and gazed round about them on the skirts of the terrestrial Paradise. The sun was sparkling bright over a green land, full of trees and flowers. Virgil then announced to Dante, that here his guidance terminated, and that the creature of flesh and blood was at length to be master of his own movements, to rest or to wander as he pleased, the tried and purified lord over himself.

The Florentine, eager to taste his new liberty, left his companions awhile, and strolled away through the celestial forest, whose thick and lively verdure gave coolness to the senses in the midst of the brightest sun. A fragrance came from every part of the soil ; a sweet unintermitting air streamed against the walker's face ; and as the full-hearted birds, warbling on all sides, welcomed the morning's radiance into the trees, the trees themselves joined in the concert with a swelling breath, like that which rises among the pines of Chiassi, when Eolus lets loose the south-wind, and the gathering melody comes rolling through the forest from bough to bough.*

Dante had proceeded far enough to lose sight of the point at which he entered, when he found himself on the bank of a rivu-

not for the last sentence, might be taken for a picture of two different forms of Vanity.

* "Tal, qual di ramo in ramo si raccoglie
Per la pineta in sul lito di Chiassi,
Quand' Eolo scirocco fuor discioglie."

"Even as from branch to branch
Along the piny forests on the shore
Of Chiassi, rolls the gathering melody,
When Eolus hath from his cavern loosed
The dripping south,"—*Cary*.

"This is the wood," says Mr. Cary, "where the scene of Boccaccio's sublimest story (taken entirely from Elinaud, as I learn in the notes to the Decameron, ediz. Giunti, 1573, p. 62) is laid. See Dec., G. 5, N. 8, and Dryden's Theodore and Honoria. Our poet perhaps wandered in it during his abode with Guido Novello da Polenta."—*Translation of Dante*, ut sup. p. 121.

let, compared with whose crystal purity the limpidest waters on earth were clouded. And yet it flowed under a perpetual depth of shade, which no beam either of sun or moon penetrated. Nevertheless the darkness was coloured with endless diversities of May-blossoms; and the poet was standing in admiration, looking up at it along its course, when he beheld something that took away every other thought; to wit, a lady, all alone, on the other side of the water, singing and culling flowers.

“Ah, lady!” said the poet, “who, to judge by the cordial beauty in thy looks, hast a heart overflowing with love, be pleased to draw thee nearer to the stream, that I may understand the words thou singest. Thou remindest me of Proserpine, of the place she was straying in, and of what sort of creature she looked, when her mother lost her, and she herself lost the spring-time on earth.”

As a lady turns in the dance when it goes smoothest, moving round with lovely self-possession, and scarcely seeming to put one foot before the other, so turned the lady towards the water over the yellow and vermilion flowers, dropping her eyes gently as she came, and singing so that Dante could hear her. Then when she arrived at the water, she stopped, and raised her eyes towards him, and smiled, showing him the flowers in her hands, and shifting them with her fingers into a display of all their beauties. Never were such eyes beheld, not even when Venus herself was in love. The stream was a little stream; yet Dante felt it as great an intervention between them, as if it had been Leander’s Hellespont.

The lady explained to him the nature of the place, and how the rivulet was the Lethe of Paradise;—Lethe, where he stood, but called Eunoe higher up; the drink of the one doing away all remembrance of evil deeds, and that of the other restoring all remembrance of good.* It was the region, she said, in which Adam and Eve had lived; and the poets had beheld it perhaps in their dreams on Mount Parnassus, and hence imagined their golden age;—and at these words she looked at Virgil and Statius, who by this time had come up, and who stood smiling at her kindly words.

* Lethe, *Forgetfulness*; Eunoe, *Well-mindedness*.

Resuming her song, the lady turned and passed up along the rivulet the contrary way of the stream, Dante proceeding at the same rate of time on his side of it ; till on a sudden she cried, "Behold, and listen !" and a light of exceeding lustre came streaming through the woods, followed by a dulcet melody. The poets resumed their way in a rapture of expectation, and saw the air before them glowing under the green boughs like fire. A divine spectacle ensued of holy mystery, with evangelical and apocalyptic images, which gradually gave way and disclosed a car brighter than the chariot of the sun, accompanied by celestial nymphs, and showered upon by angels with a cloud of flowers, in the midst of which stood a maiden in a white veil, crowned with olive.

The love that had never left Dante's heart from childhood told him who it was ; and trembling in every vein, he turned round to Virgil for encouragement. Virgil was gone. At that moment, Paradise and Beatrice herself could not requite the pilgrim for the loss of his friend ; and the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Dante," said the veiled maiden across the stream, "weep not that Virgil leaves thee. Weep thou not yet. The stroke of a sharper sword is coming, at which it will behove thee to weep." Then assuming a sterner attitude, and speaking in the tone of one who reserves the bitterest speech for the last, she added, "Observe me well. I am, as thou suspectest, Beatrice indeed ;—Beatrice, who has to congratulate thee on deigning to seek the mountain at last. And hadst thou so long indeed to learn, that here only can man be happy ?"

Dante, casting down his eyes at these words, beheld his face in the water, and hastily turned aside, he saw it so full of shame.

Beatrice had the dignified manner of an offended parent ; such a flavour of bitterness was mingled with her pity.

She held her peace ; and the angels abruptly began singing, "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust ;" but went no farther in the psalm than the words, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room." The tears of Dante had hitherto been suppressed ; but when the singing began, they again rolled down his cheeks.

Beatrice, in a milder tone, said to the angels, "This man, when he proposed to himself in his youth to lead a new life, was of a

truth so gifted, that every good habit ought to have thrived with him ; but the richer the soil, the greater peril of weeds. For a while, the innocent light of my countenance drew him the right way ; but when I quitted mortal life, he took away his thoughts from remembrance of me, and gave himself to others. When I had risen from flesh to spirit, and increased in worth and beauty, then did I sink in his estimation, and he turned into other paths, and pursued false images of good that never keep their promise. In vain I obtained from Heaven the power of interfering in his behalf, and endeavoured to affect him with it night and day. So little was he concerned, and into such depths he fell, that nothing remained but to show him the state of the condemned ; and therefore I went to their outer regions, and commended him with tears to the guide that brought him hither. The decrees of Heaven would be nought, if Lethe could be passed, and the fruit beyond it tasted, without any payment of remorse.*

“ O thou,” she continued, addressing herself to Dante, “ who standest on the other side of the holy stream, say, have I not spoken truth ?”

Dante was so confused and penitent, that the words failed as they passed his lips.

“ What could induce thee,” resumed his monitress, “ when I had given thee aims indeed, to abandon them for objects that could end in nothing ?”

Dante said, “ Thy face was taken from me, and the presence of false pleasure led me astray.”

“ Never didst thou behold,” cried the maiden, “ loveliness like mine ; and if bliss failed thee because of my death, how couldst thou be allured by mortal inferiority ? That first blow should have taught thee to disdain all perishable things, and aspire after the soul that had gone before thee. How could thy spirit endure

* “ Senza alcuno scotto
Di pentimento.”

Literally, *scot-free*.—“ Scotto,” scot ;—“ payment for dinner or supper in a tavern” (says Rubbi, the Petrarchal rather than Dantesque editor of the *Parnaso Italiano*, and a very summary gentleman) ; “ here used figuratively, though it is not a word fit to be employed on serious and grand occasions” (in cose gravi ed illustri). See his “ Dante” in that collection, vol. ii. p. 297.

to stoop to further chances, or to a childish girl, or any other fleeting vanity? The bird that is newly out of the nest may be twice or thrice tempted by the snare; but in vain, surely, is the net spread in sight of one that is older.”*

Dante stood as silent and abashed as a sorry child.

“If but to hear me,” said Beatrice, “thus afflicts thee, lift up thy beard, and see what sight can do.”

Dante, though feeling the sting intended by the word “beard,” did as he was desired. The angels had ceased to scatter their clouds of flowers about the maiden; and he beheld her, though still beneath her veil, as far surpassing her former self in loveliness, as that self had surpassed others. The sight pierced him with such pangs, that the more he had loved any thing else, the more he now loathed it; and he fell senseless to the ground.

When he recovered his senses, he found himself in the hands of the lady he had first seen in the place, who bidding him keep firm hold of her, drew him into the river Lethe, and so through and across it to the other side, speeding as she went like a weaver's shuttle, and immersing him when she arrived, the angels all

* The allusion to the childish girl (*pargoletta*) or any other fleeting vanity,

“O altra vanità con sì breve uso,”

is not handsome. It was not the fault of the childish girls that he liked them; and he should not have taunted them, whatever else they might have been. What answer could they make to the great poet?

Nor does Beatrice make a good figure throughout this scene, whether as a woman or an allegory. If she is Theology, or Heavenly Grace, &c. the sternness of the allegory should not have been put into female shape; and when she is to be taken in her literal sense (as the poet also tells us she is), her treatment of the poor submissive lover, with leave of Signor Rubbi, is no better than *snubbing*;—to say nothing of the vanity with which she pays compliments to her own beauty.

I must, furthermore, beg leave to differ with the poet's thinking it an exalted symptom on his part to hate every thing he had loved before, out of supposed compliment to the transcendental object of his affections and his own awakened merits. All the heights of love and wisdom terminate in charity; and charity, by very reason of its knowing the poorness of so many things, hates nothing. Besides, it is any thing but handsome or high-minded to turn round upon objects whom we have helped to lower with our own gratified passions, and pretend a right to scorn them.

the while singing, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."* She then delivered him into the hands of the nymphs that had danced about the car,—nymphs on earth, but stars and cardinal virtues in heaven; a song burst from the lips of the angels; and Faith, Hope, and Charity, calling upon Beatrice to unveil her face, she did so; and Dante quenched the ten-years thirst of his eyes in her ineffable beauty.†

After a while he and Statius were made thoroughly regenerate with the waters of Eunoe; and he felt pure with a new being, and fit to soar into the stars.

* "Tu asperges me, et mundabor," &c. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Psalm li. 7.

† Beatrice had been dead ten years.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HEAVEN.

III.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HEAVEN

Argument.

THE Paradise or Heaven of Dante, in whose time the received system of astronomy was the Ptolemaic, consists of the Seven successive Planets according to that system, or the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn ; of the Eighth Sphere beyond these, or that of the Fixed Stars ; of the Primum Mobile, or First Mover of them all round the moveless Earth ; and of the Empyrean, or Region of Pure Light, in which is the Beatific Vision. Each of these ascending spheres is occupied by its proportionate degree of Faith and Virtue ; and Dante visits each under the guidance of Beatrice, receiving many lessons, as he goes, on theological and other subjects (here left out), and being finally admitted, after the sight of Christ and the Virgin, to a glimpse of the Great First Cause.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HEAVEN.

It was evening now on earth, and morning on the top of the hill in Purgatory, when Beatrice having fixed her eyes upon the sun, Dante fixed his eyes upon hers, and suddenly found himself in Heaven.

He had been transported by the attraction of love, and Beatrice was by his side.

The poet beheld from where he stood the blaze of the empyrean, and heard the music of the spheres; yet he was only in the first or lowest Heaven, the circle of the orb of the moon.

This orb, with his new guide, he proceeded to enter. It had seemed, outside, as solid, though as lucid, as Diamond; yet they entered it, as sunbeams are admitted into water, without dividing the substance. It now appeared, as it enclosed them, like a pearl, through the essence of which they saw but dimly; and they beheld many faces eagerly looking at them, as if about to speak, but not more distinct from the surrounding whiteness than pearls themselves are from the forehead they adorn.* Dante thought them only reflected faces, and turned round to see to whom they belonged, when his smiling companion set him right; and he entered into discourse with the spirit that seemed the most anxious to accost him. It was Piccarda, the sister of his friend Forese Donati, whom he had met in the sixth region of Purgatory. He did not know her, by reason of her wonderful increase in beauty.

* A curious and happy image.

“Tornan de' nostri visi le postille
Debili sì, che perla in bianca fronte
Non vien men tosto a le nostre pupille:
Tali vid' io più facce a parlar pronte.”

She and her associates were such as had been Vowed to a Life of Chastity and Religion, but had been Compelled by Others to Break their Vows. This had been done, in Piccarda's instance, by her brother Corso.* On Dante's asking if they did not long for a higher state of Bliss, she and her sister-spirits gently smiled; and then answered, with faces as happy as first love,† that they willed only what it pleased God to give them, and therefore were truly blest. The poet found by this answer, that every place in Heaven was paradise, though the bliss might be of different degrees. Piccarda then shewed him the spirit at her side, lustrous with all the glory of the region, Costanza, daughter of the king of Sicily, who had been forced out of the cloister to become the wife of the Emperor Henry. Having given him this information, she began singing *Ave Maria*; and, while singing, disappeared with the rest, as substances disappear in water.‡

A loving will transported the two companions, as before, to the next circle of Heaven, where they found themselves in the planet

* "Rodolfo da Tossignano, *Hist. Seraph. Relig.* P. i. p. 138, as cited by Lombardi, relates the following legend of Piccarda: 'Her brother Corso, inflamed with rage against his virgin sister, having joined with him Farinata, an infamous assassin, and twelve other abandoned ruffians, entered the monastery by a ladder, and carried away his sister forcibly to his own house; and then, tearing off her religious habit, compelled her to go in a secular garment to her nuptials. Before the spouse of Christ came together with her new husband, she knelt down before a crucifix, and recommended her virginity to Christ. Soon after, her whole body was smitten with leprosy, so as to strike grief and horror into the beholders; and thus, in a few days, through the divine disposal, she passed with a palm of virginity to the Lord. Perhaps (adds the worthy Franciscan), our poet not being able to certify himself entirely of this occurrence, has chosen to pass it over discreetly, by making Piccarda say, 'God knows how, after that, my life was framed.'"—Cary, ut sup. p. 137.

† A lovely simile indeed.

"Tanto lieta

Ch' arder pareva d' amor nel primo foco.

‡ Costanza, daughter of Ruggieri, king of Sicily, thus taken out of the monastery, was mother to the Emperor Frederick the Second. "She was fifty years old or more at the time" (says Mr. Cary, quoting from Muratori and others); "and because it was not credited that she could have a child at that age, she was delivered in a pavilion; and it was given out, that any lady who pleased was at liberty to see her. Many came and saw her, and the suspicion ceased."—*Translation of Dante*, ut sup. p. 137.

Mercury, the residence of those who had acted rather out of Desire of Fame than Love of God. The spirits here, as in the former Heaven, crowded towards them, as fish in a clear pond crowd to the hand that offers them food. Their eyes sparkled with celestial joy; and the more they thought of their joy, the brighter they grew; till one of them who addressed the poet became indistinguishable for excess of splendour. It was the soul of the Emperor Justinian. Justinian told him the whole story of the Roman empire up to his time; and then gave an account of one of his associates in bliss, Romèò, who had been minister to Raymond Beranger, Count of Provence. Four daughters had been born to Raymond Beranger, and every one became a queen; and all this had been brought about by Romèò, a poor stranger from another country. The courtiers, envying Romèò, incited Raymond to demand of him an account of his stewardship, though he had brought his master's treasury twelve fold for every ten it disbursed. Romèò quitted the court, poor and old; "and if the world," said Justinian, "could know the heart such a man must have had, begging his bread as he went, crust by crust—praise him as it does, it would praise him a great deal more."*

"Hosanna, Holy God of Sabaoth,
Superillumining with light of light
The happy fires of these thy Malahoth!"†

Thus began singing the soul of the Emperor Justinian; and then, turning as he sang, vanished with those about him, like sparks of fire.

Dante now found himself, before he was aware, in the third Heaven, or planet Venus, the abode of the Amorous.‡ He only knew it by the increased loveliness in the face of his companion.

The spirits in this orb, who came and went in the light of it

* Probably an allusion to Dante's own wanderings.

† "Hosanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth
Superillustrans claritate tuâ
Felices ignes horum Malahoth."

Malahoth; Hebrew, *kingdoms*.

‡ The epithet is not too strong, as will be seen by the nature of the inhabitants.

like sparks in fire, or like voices chanting in harmony with voice, were spun round in circles of delight, each with more or less swiftness, according to its share of the beatific vision. Several of them came sweeping out of their dance towards the poet who had sung of Love, among whom was his patron, Charles Martel, king of Hungary, who shewed him the reason why diversities of natures must occur in families ; and Cunizza, sister of the tyrant Ezzelino, who was overcome by this her star when on earth ; and Folco the Troubadour, whose place was next Cunizza in Heaven ; and Rahab the harlot, who favoured the entrance of the Jews into the Holy Land, and whose place was next Folco.* Cunizza said that she did not at all regret a lot which carried her no higher, whatever the vulgar might think of such an opinion. She spoke of the glories of the jewel who was close to her, Folco—contrasted his zeal with the inertness of her contemptible countrymen—and foretold the bloodshed that awaited the latter from wars and treacheries. The Troubadour, meanwhile, glowed in his aspect like a ruby stricken with the sun ; for in heaven joy is expressed by effulgence, as on earth by laughter. He confessed

* Charles Martel, son of the king of Naples and Sicily, and crowned king of Hungary, seems to have become acquainted with Dante during the poet's youth, when the prince met his royal father in the city of Florence. He was brother of Robert, who succeeded the father, and who was the friend of Petrarch.

“The adventures of Cunizza, overcome by the influence of her star,” says Cary, “are related by the chronicler Rolandino of Padua, lib. i. cap. 3, in Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.* tom. viii. p. 173. She eloped from her first husband, Richard of St. Boniface, in the company of Sordello (see *Purg.* canto vi. and vii.), with whom she is supposed to have cohabited before her marriage : then lived with a soldier of Trevigi, whose wife was living at the same time in the same city ; and, on his being murdered by her brother the tyrant, was by her brother married to a nobleman of Braganzo : lastly, when he also had fallen by the same hand, she, after her brother's death, was again wedded in Verona.”—*Translation of Dante*, ut sup. p. 147. See what Foscolo says of her in the *Discorso sul Testa*, p. 329.

Folco, the gallant Troubadour, here placed between Cunizza and Rahab, is no other than Folques, bishop of Thoulouse, the persecutor of the Albigenses. It is of him the brutal anecdote is related, that, being asked, during an indiscriminate attack on that people, how the orthodox and heterodox were to be distinguished, he said, “Kill all : God will know his own.”

For Rahab, see *Joshua*, chap. ii. and vi. ; and *Hebrews* xi. 31.

the lawless fires of his youth, as great (he said) as those of Dido or Hercules ; but added, that he had no recollection of them, except a joyous one, not for the fault (which does not come to mind in heaven), but for the good which heaven brings out of it. Folco concluded with explaining how Rahab had come into the third Heaven, and with denouncing the indifference of popes and cardinals (those adulterers of the Church) to every thing but accursed money-getting.*

In an instant, before he could think about it, Dante was in the fourth Heaven, the sun, the abode of Blessed Doctors of the Church. A band of them came encircling him and his guide, as a halo encircles the moon, singing a song, the beauty of which, like jewels too rich to be exported, was not conveyable by expression to mortal fancy. The spirits composing the band were those of St. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Gratian the Benedictine, Pietro Lombardo, Solomon, Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, Paulus Orosius, Boetius, Isidore, the Venerable Bede, Richard of St. Victor, and Sigebert of Gemblours. St. Thomas was the namer of them to Dante. Their song had paused that he might speak ; but when he had done speaking, they began resuming it, one by one, and circling as they moved, like the wheels of church clocks that sound one after another with a sweet tinkling, when they summon the hearts of the devout to morning prayer.†

* The reader need not be required to attend to the extraordinary theological disclosures in the whole of the preceding passage, nor yet to consider how much more they disclose, than theology or the poet might have desired.

† These fifteen personages are chiefly theologians and schoolmen, whose names and obsolete writings are, for the most part, no longer worth mention. The same may be said of the band that comes after them.

Dante should not have set them dancing. It is impossible (every respectfulness of endeavour notwithstanding) to maintain the gravity of one's imagination at the thought of a set of doctors of the Church, Venerable Bede included, wheeling about in giddy rapture like so many dancing dervises, and keeping time to their ecstatic anilities with voices tinkling like church-clocks. You may invest them with as much light or other blessed indistinctness as you please ; the beards and the old ages will break through. In vain theologians may tell us that our imaginations are not exalted enough. The answer (if such a charge must be gravely met) is, that Dante's whole Heaven itself is not

Again they stopped, and again St. Thomas addressed the poet. He was of the order of St. Dominic; but with generous grace he held up the founder of the Franciscans, with his vow of poverty, as the example of what a pope should be, and reprov'd the errors of no order but his own. On the other hand, a new circle of doctors of the Church making their appearance, and enclosing the first as rainbow encloses rainbow, rolling round with it in the unison of a two-fold joy, a voice from the new circle attracted the poet's ear, as the pole attracts the needle, and Saint Buonaventura, a Franciscan, opened upon the praises of St. Dominic, the loving minion of Christianity, the holy wrestler,—benign to his friends and cruel to his enemies;*—and so confined his reproofs to his own Franciscan order. He then, as St. Thomas had done with the doctors in the inner circle, named those who constituted the outer: to wit, Illuminato, and Agostino, and Hugues of St. Victor, and Petrus Comestor, and Pope John the Twenty-first, Nathan the Prophet, Chrysostom, Anselmo of Canterbury, Donatus who deigned to teach grammar, Raban of Mentz, and Joachim of Calabria. The two circles then varied their movement by wheeling round one another in counter directions; and after they had chanted, not of Bacchus or Apollo, but of three Persons in One, St. Thomas, who knew Dante's thoughts by intuition, again addressed him, discoursing of mysteries human and divine, exhorting him to be slow in giving assent or denial to

exalted enough, however wonderful and beautiful in parts. The schools, and the forms of Catholic worship, held even his imagination down. There is more heaven in one placid idea of love than in all these dances and tinklings.

* “Benigno a' suoi, ed a' nimici crudo.”

Cruel indeed;—the founder of the Inquisition! The “loving minion” is Mr. Cary's excellent translation of “*amoroso drudo*.” But what a minion, and how loving! With fire and sword and devilry, and no wish (of course) to thrust his own will and pleasure, and bad arguments, down other people's throats! St. Dominic was a Spaniard. So was Borgia. So was Philip the Second. There seems to have been an inherent semi-barbarism in the character of Spain, which it has never got rid of to this day. If it were not for Cervantes, and some modern patriots, it would hardly appear to belong to the right European community. Even Lope de Vega was an inquisitor; and Mendoza, the entertaining author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a cruel statesman. Cervantes, however, is enough to sweeten a whole peninsula.

propositions without examination, and bidding him warn people in general how they presumed to anticipate the divine judgment as to who should be saved and who not.* The spirit of Solomon then related how souls could resume their bodies glorified; and the two circles uttering a rapturous amen, glowed with such intolerable brightness, that the eyes of Beatrice only were able to sustain it. Dante gazed on her with a delight ineffable, and suddenly found himself in the fifth Heaven.

It was the planet Mars, the receptacle of those who had Died Fighting for the Cross. In the middle of its ruddy light stood a cross itself, of enormous dimensions, made of light still greater, and exhibiting, first, in the body of it, the Crucified Presence, glittering all over with indescribable flashes like lightning; and secondly, in addition to and across the Presence, innumerable sparkles of the intensest mixture of white and red, darting to and fro through the whole extent of the crucifix. The movement was like that of motes in a sunbeam. And as a sweet dinning arises from the multitudinous touching of harps and viols, before the ear distinguishes the notes, there issued in like manner from the whole glittering ferment a harmony indistinct but exquisite, which entranced the poet beyond all he had ever felt. He heard even the words, "Arise and conquer," as one who hears and yet hears not.

On a sudden, with a glide like a falling star, there ran down from the right horn of the Cross to the foot of it, one of the lights of this cluster of splendours, distinguishing itself, as it went, like flame in alabaster.

"O flesh of my flesh!" it exclaimed to Dante; "O superabounding Divine Grace! when was the door of Paradise ever twice opened, as it shall have been to thee?"†

Dante, in astonishment, turned to Beatrice, and saw such a

* What a pity the reporter of this advice had not humility enough to apply it to himself!

† "O sanguis meus, o superinfusa
Gratia Dei, sicut tibi, cui
Bis unquam cœli janua reclusa?"

The spirit says this in Latin, as if to veil the compliment to the poet in "the obscurity of a learned language." And in truth it is a little strong.

rapture of delight in her eyes, that he seemed, at that instant, as if his own had touched the depth of his acceptance and of his heaven.*

The light resumed its speech, but in words too profound in their meaning for Dante to comprehend. They seemed to be returning thanks to God. This rapturous absorption being ended, the speaker expressed in more human terms his gratitude to Beatrice; and then, after inciting Dante to ask his name, declared himself thus:

“O branch of mine, whom I have long desired to behold, I am the root of thy stock; of him thy great-grandsire, who first brought from his mother the family-name into thy house, and whom thou sawest expiating his sin of pride on the first circle of the mountain. Well it befitteth thee to shorten his long suffering with thy good works. Florence,† while yet she was confined within the ancient boundary which still contains the bell that summons her to prayer, abided in peace, for she was chaste and sober. She had no trinkets of chains then, no head-tires, no gaudy sandals, no girdles more worth looking at than the wearers. Fathers were not then afraid of having daughters, for fear they should want dowries too great, and husbands before their time. Families were in no haste to separate; nor had chamberers arisen to shew what enormities they dared to practise. The heights of Rome had not been surpassed by your tower of Uccellatoio, whose fall shall be in proportion to its aspiring. I saw Bellincion Berti walking the streets in a leathern girdle fastened with bone; and his wife come from her looking-glass without a painted face. I saw the Nerlis and the Vecchios contented

* “Che dentro a gli occhi suoi ardeva un riso
Tal, ch' io pensai co' miei toccar lo fondo
De la mia grazia e del mio Paradiso.”

That is, says Lombardi, “I thought my eyes could not possibly be more favoured and imparadised” (Pensai che non potessero gli occhi miei essere graziati ed imparadisati maggiormente)—*Variorum edition of Dante*, Padua, 1822, vol. iii. p. 373.

† Here ensues the famous description of those earlier times in Florence, which Dante eulogises at the expense of his own. See the original passage, with another version, in the Appendix.

with the simplest doublets, and their good dames hard at work at their spindles. O happy they! They were sure of burial in their native earth, and none were left desolate by husbands that loved France better than Italy. One kept awake to tend her child in its cradle, lulling it with the household words that had fondled her own infancy. Another, as she sat in the midst of her family, drawing the flax from the distaff, told them stories of Troy, and Fiesole, and Rome. It would have been as great a wonder, then, to see such a woman as Cianghella, or such a man as Lapo Salterello, as it would now be to meet with a Cincinnatus or a Cornelia.*

“It was at that peaceful, at that beautiful time,” continued the poet’s ancestor, “when we all lived in such good faith and fellowship, and in so sweet a place, that the blessed Virgin vouchsafed the first sight of me to the cries of my mother; and there, in your old Baptistery, I became, at once, Christian and Cacciaguida. My brothers were called Moronto and Eliseo. It was my wife that brought thee, from Val dipado, thy family name of Alighieri. I then followed the Emperor Conrad, and he made me a knight for my good service, and I went with him to fight against the wicked Saracen law, whose people usurp the fold that remains lost through the fault of the shepherd. There, by that foul crew, was I delivered from the snares and pollutions of the world; and so, from the martyrdom, came to this peace.”

Cacciaguida was silent. But his descendant praying to be told more of his family and of the old state of Florence, the beatified soldier resumed. He would not, however, speak of his own predecessors. He said it would be more becoming to say nothing as to who they were, or the place they came from. All he disclosed

* Bellincion Berti was a noble Florentine, of the house of the Ravnani. Cianghella is said to have been an abandoned woman, of manners as shameless as her morals. Lapo Salterelli, one of the co-exiles of Dante, and specially hated by him, was a personage who appears to have exhibited the rare combination of judge and fop. An old commentator, in recording his attention to his hair, seems to intimate that Dante alludes to it in contrasting him with Cincinnatus. If so, Lapo might have reminded the poet of what Cicero says of his beloved Cæsar;—that he once saw him scratching the top of his head with the tip of his finger, that he might not discompose the locks.

was, that his father and mother lived near the gate San Piero.* With regard to Florence, he continued, the number of the inhabitants fit to carry arms was at that time not a fifth of its present amount; but then the blood of the whole city was pure. It had not been mixed up with that of Campi, and Certaldo, and Figghine. It ran clear in the veins of the humblest mechanic.

“Oh, how much better would it have been,” cried the soul of the old Florentine, “had my countrymen still kept it as it was, and not brought upon themselves the stench of the peasant knave out of Aguglione, and that other from Signa, with his eye to a bribe! Had Rome done its duty to the emperor, and so prevented the factions that have ruined us, Simifonte would have kept its beggarly upstart to itself; the Conti would have stuck to their parish of Acone, and perhaps the Buondelmonti to Valdigrieye. Crude mixtures do as much harm to the body politic as to the natural body; and size is not strength. The blind bull falls with a speedier plunge than the blind lamb. One sword often slashes round about it better than five. Cities themselves perish. See what has become of Luni and of Urbisaglia; and what will soon become of Sinigaglia too, and of Chiusi! And if cities perish, what is to be expected of families? In my time the Ughi, the Catellini, the Filippi, were great names. So were the Alberichi, the Ormanni, and twenty others. The golden sword of

* “Chi ei si furo, e onde venner quivi,
Più è tacer che ragionare onesto.”

Some think Dante was ashamed to speak of these ancestors, from the lowness of their origin; others that he did not choose to make them a boast, for the height of it. I suspect, with Lombardi, from his general character, and from the willingness he has avowed to make such boasts (see the opening of canto xvi., *Paradiso*, in the original), that while he claimed for them a descent from the Romans (see *Inferno*, canto xv. 73. &c.), he knew them to be poor in fortune, perhaps of humble condition. What follows, in the text of our abstract, about the purity of the old Florentine blood, even in the veins of the humblest mechanic, may seem to intimate some corroboration of this; and is a curious specimen of republican pride and scorn. This horror of one's neighbours is neither good Christianity, nor surely any very good omen of that Italian union, of which “Young Italy” wishes to think Dante such a harbinger.

All this too, observe, is said in the presence of a vision of Christ on the Cross!

knighthood was then to be seen in the house of Galigaio. The Column, Verrey, was then a great thing in the herald's eye. The Galli, the Sacchetti, were great; so was the old trunk of the Calfucci; so was that of the peculators who now blush to hear of a measure of wheat; and the Sizii and the Arrigucci were drawn in pomp to their civic chairs. Oh, how mighty I saw them then, and how low has their pride brought them! *Florence* in those days deserved her name. She *flourished* indeed; and the balls of gold were ever at the top of the flower.* And now the descendants of these men sit in priestly stalls and grow fat. The over-weening Adimari, who are such dragons when their foes run, and such lambs when they turn, were then of note so little, that Albertino Donato was angry with Bellincion, his father-in-law, for making him brother to one of their females. On the other hand, thy foes, the Amidei, the origin of all thy tears through the just anger which has slain the happiness of thy life, were honoured in those days; and the honour was partaken by their friends. O Buondelmonte! why didst thou break thy troth to thy first love, and become wedded to another? Many who are now miserable would have been happy, had God given thee to the river Ema, when it rose against thy first coming to Florence. But the Arno had swept our Palladium from its bridge, and Florence was to be the victim on its altar."†

Cacciaguida was again silent; but his descendant begged him to speak yet a little more. He had heard, as he came through the nether regions, alarming intimations of the ill fortune that

* The *Column, Verrey* (vair, variegated, checkered with argent and azure), and the *Balls or* (Palle d' oro), were arms of old families. I do not trouble the reader with notes upon mere family-names, of which nothing else is recorded.

† An allusion, apparently acquiescent, to the superstitious popular opinion that the peace of Florence was bound up with the statue of Mars on the old bridge, at the base of which Buondelmonte was slain.

With this Buondelmonte the dissensions in Florence were supposed to have first begun. Macchiavelli's account of him is, that he was about to marry a young lady of the Amidei family, when a widow of one of the Donati, who had designed her own daughter for him, contrived that he should see her; the consequence of which was, that he broke his engagement, and was assassinated. *Historie Fiorentine*, lib. ii.

awaited him, and he was anxious to know, from so high and certain an authority, what it would really be.

Cacciaguida said, "As Hippolytus was forced to depart from Athens by the wiles of his cruel step-dame, so must even thou depart out of Florence. Such is the wish, such this very moment the plot, and soon will it be the deed, of those, the business of whose lives is to make a traffic of Christ with Rome. Thou shalt quit every thing that is dearest to thee in the world. That is the first arrow shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt experience how salt is the taste of bread eaten at the expense of others; how hard is the going up and down others' stairs. But what shall most bow thee down, is the worthless and disgusting company with whom thy lot must be partaken; for they shall all turn against thee, the whole mad, heartless, and ungrateful set. Nevertheless, it shall not be long first, before themselves, and not thou, shall have cause to hang down their heads for shame. The brutishness of all they do, will shew how well it became thee to be of no party, but the party of thyself.*

"Thy first refuge thou shalt owe to the courtesy of the great Lombard, who bears the Ladder charged with the Holy Bird.† So benignly shall he regard thee, that in the matter of asking and receiving, the customary order of things shall be reversed be-

* "Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
Più caramente; e questo è quello strale
Che l'arco de l'esilio pria saetta.

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
Lo scendere e 'l salir per l'altrui scale.

E quel che più ti graverà le spalle,
Sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
Con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle:

Che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
Si farà contra te: ma poco appresso
Ella, non tu, n'avrà rossa la tempia.

Di sua bestialitate il suo processo
Farà la pruova, sì ch' a te fia bello
Averti fatta parte per te stesso."

† The Roman eagle. These are the arms of the Scaligers of Verona.

tween you two, and the gift anticipate the request. With him thou shalt behold the mortal, born under so strong an influence of this our star, that the nations shall take note of him. They are not aware of him yet, by reason of his tender age; but ere the Gascon practise on the great Henry, sparkles of his worth shall break forth in his contempt of money and of ease; and when his munificence appears in all its lustre, his very enemies shall not be able to hold their tongues for admiration.* Look thou to this second benefactor also; for many a change of the lots of people shall he make, both rich and poor; and do thou bear in mind, but repeat not, what further I shall now tell thee of thy life." Here the spirit, says the poet, foretold many things which afterwards appeared incredible to their very beholders;— and then added: "Such, my son, is the heart and mystery of the things thou hast desired to learn. The snares will shortly gather about thee; but wish not to change places with the contrivers; for thy days will outlast those of their retribution."

Again was the spirit silent; and yet again once more did his descendant question him, anxious to have the advice of one that saw so far, and that spoke the truth so purely, and loved him so well.

"Too plainly, my father," said Dante, "do I see the time coming, when a blow is to be struck me, heaviest ever to the man that is not true to himself. For which reason it is fit that I so far arm myself beforehand, that in losing the spot dearest to me on earth, I do not let my verses deprive me of every other refuge. Now I have been down below through the region whose grief is without end; and I have scaled the mountain from the top of which I was lifted by my lady's eyes; and I have come thus far through heaven, from luminary to luminary; and in the course of this my pilgrimage I have heard things which, if I tell again, may bitterly disrelish with many. Yet, on the other hand, if I prove but a timid friend to truth, I fear I shall not survive with the generations by whom the present times will be called times of old."

The light that enclosed the treasure which its descendant had

* A prophecy of the renown of Can Grande della Scala, who had received Dante at his court.

found in heaven, first flashed at this speech like a golden mirror against the sun, and then it replied thus :

“Let the consciences blush at thy words that have reason to blush. Do thou, far from shadow of misrepresentation, make manifest all which thou hast seen, and let the sore places be galled that deserve it. Thy bitter truths shall carry with them vital nourishment—thy voice, as the wind does, shall smite loudest the loftiest summits ; and no little shall that redound to thy praise. It is for this reason that, in all thy journey, thou hast been shewn none but spirits of note, since little heed would have been taken of such as excite doubt by their obscurity.”

The spirit of Cacciaguida now relapsed into the silent joy of its reflections, and the poet was standing absorbed in the mingled feelings of his own, when Beatrice said to him, “Change the current of thy thoughts. Consider how near I am in heaven to one that repayeth every wrong.”

Dante turned at the sound of this comfort, and felt no longer any other wish than to look upon her eyes ; but she said, with a smile, “Turn thee round again, and attend. I am not thy only Paradise.” And Dante again turned, and saw his ancestor prepared to say more.

Cacciaguida bade him look again on the Cross, and he should see various spirits, as he named them, flash over it like lightning ; and they did so. That of Joshua, which was first mentioned, darted along the Cross in a stream. The light of Judas Maccabeus went spinning, as if joy had scourged it.* Charlemagne and Orlando swept away together, pursued by the poet's eyes. Guglielmo† followed, and Rinaldo, and Godfrey of Bouillon, and Robert Guiscard of Naples ; and the light of Cacciaguida himself darted back to its place, and, uttering another sort of voice,

* “Letizia era ferza del paléo.”

† Supposed to be one of the early Williams, Princes of Orange ; but it is doubted whether the First, in the time of Charlemagne, or the Second, who followed Godfrey of Bouillon. Mr. Cary thinks the former ; and the mention of his kinsman Rinaldo (Ariosto's Paladin ?) seems to confirm his opinion ; yet the situation of the name in the text brings it nearer to Godfrey ; and Rinoardo (the name of Rinaldo in Dante) might possibly mean “Raimbaud,” the kinsman and associate of the second William. Robert Guiscard is the Norman who conquered Naples.

began showing how sweet a singer he too was amidst the glittering choir.

Dante turned to share the joy with Beatrice, and, by the lovely paling of her cheek, like a maiden's when it delivers itself of the burden of a blush,* knew that he was in another and whiter star. It was the planet Jupiter, the abode of blessed Administrators of Justice.

Here he beheld troops of dazzling essences, warbling as they flew, and shaping their flights hither and thither, like birds when they rise from the banks of rivers, and rejoice with one another in new-found pasture. But the figures into which the flights were shaped were of a more special sort, being mystical compositions of letters of the alphabet, now a D, now an I, now an L, and so on, till the poet observed that they completed the whole text of Scripture, which says, *Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis terram*—(Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth). The last letter, M, they did not decompose like the rest, but kept it entire for a while, and glowed so deeply within it, that the silvery orb thereabout seemed burning with gold. Other lights, with a song of rapture, then descended like a crown of lilies, on the top of the letter; and then, from the body of it, rose thousands of sparks, as from a shaken firebrand, and, gradually expanding into the form of an eagle, the lights which had descended like lilies distributed themselves over the whole bird, encrusting it with rubies flashing in the sun.

But what, says the poet, was never yet heard of, written, or imagined,—the beak of the eagle spoke! It uttered many minds in one voice, just as one heat is given out by many embers; and proclaimed itself to have been thus exalted, because it united justice and mercy while on earth.

Dante addressed this splendid phenomenon, and prayed it to ease his mind of the perplexities of its worldly reason respecting

* Exquisitely beautiful feeling!

“ Quale è il trasmutare in picciol varco
Di tempo in bianca donna, quando 'l volto
Suo si discarchi di vergogna il carico.”

What follows, respecting letters of the alphabet and the Roman eagle, is in a very different taste, though mixed with many beauties.

the Divine nature and government, and the exclusion from heaven of goodness itself, unless within the Christian pale.

The celestial bird, rousing itself into motion with delight, like a falcon in the conscious energy of its will and beauty, when, upon being set free from its hood, it glances above it into the air, and claps its self-congratulating wings, answered nevertheless somewhat disdainfully, that it was impossible for man, in his mortal state, to comprehend such things; and that the astonishment he feels at them, though doubtless it would be excusable under other circumstances, must rest satisfied with the affirmations of Scripture.

The bird then bent over its questioner, as a stork does over the nestling newly fed when it looks up at her, and then wheeling round, and renewing its warble, concluded it with saying, "As my notes are to thee that understandest them not, so are the judgments of the Eternal to thine earthly brethren. None ever yet ascended into these heavenly regions that did not believe in Christ, either after he was crucified or before it. Yet many, who call Christ! Christ! shall at the last day be found less near to him than such as knew him not. What shall the kings of Islam say to your Christian kings, when they see the book of judgment opened, and hear all that is set down in it to their dishonour? In that book shall be read the desolation which Albert will inflict on Bohemia: *—in that book, the woes inflicted on

* The emperor Albert the First, when he obtained Bohemia for his son Rodolph. Of the sovereigns that follow, he who adulterated his people's money, and died by the "hog's teeth" (a wild boar in hunting), is the French king, Philip the Fourth; the quarrelling fools of England and Scotland are Edward the First and Baliol; the luxurious Spaniard is Ferdinand the Fourth, said to have killed himself in his youth by intemperance; the effeminate Bohemian, Wincellaus the Second; the "lame wretch of Jerusalem," Charles the Second of Naples, titular king of Jerusalem; the cowardly warder of the Isle of Fire (Sicily), Frederick of the house of Arragon; his filthy brother and uncle, James of Arragon and James of Minorca; the Portuguese (according to the probable guess of Cary), the rebellious son of King Dionysius; the Norwegian, Haco; and the Dalmatian, Wladislaus, but why thus accused, not known. As to Hungary, its crown was then disputed by rival princes; Navarre was thinking of shaking off the yoke of France; and Nicosia and Famagosta, in Cyprus, were complaining of their feeble sovereign, Henry the Second.

Paris by that adulterator of his kingdom's money, who shall die by the hog's teeth :—in that book, the ambition which makes such mad fools of the Scotch and English kings, that they cannot keep within their bounds :—in that book, the luxury of the Spaniard, and the effeminate life of the Bohemian, who neither knows nor cares for any thing worthy :—in that book, the lame wretch of Jerusalem, whose value will be expressed by a unit, and his worthlessness by a million :—in that book, the avarice and cowardice of the warder of the Isle of Fire, in which old Anchises died ; and that the record may answer the better to his abundant littleness, the writing shall be in short-hand ; and his uncle's and his brother's filthy doings shall be read in that book—they who have made such rottenness of a good old house and two diadems ; and there also shall the Portuguese and the Norwegian be known for what they are, and the coiner of Dalmatia, who beheld with such covetous eyes the Venetian ducat. O blessed Hungary, if thou wouldst resolve to endure no longer !—O blessed Navarre, if thou wouldst but keep out the Frenchman with thy mountain walls ! May the cries and groans of Nicosia and Famagosta be an earnest of those happier days, proclaiming as they do the vile habits of the beast, who keeps so close in the path of the herd his brethren.”

The blessed bird for a moment was silent ; but as, at the going down of the sun, the heavens are darkened, and then break forth into innumerable stars which the sun lights up,* so the splendours within the figure of the bird suddenly became more splendid, and broke forth into songs too beautiful for mortal to remember.

O dulcet love, that dost shew thee forth in smiles, how ardent was thy manifestation in the lustrous sparkles which arose out of the mere thoughts of those pious hearts !

After the gems in that glittering figure had ceased chiming their angelic songs, the poet seemed to hear the murmur of a river which comes falling from rock to rock, and shews, by the fulness of its tone, the abundance of its mountain spring ; and as the sound of the guitar is modulated on the neck of it, and the

* The opinion in the time of Dante.

breath of the pipe is accordant to the spiracle from which it issues, so the murmuring within the eagle suddenly took voice, and, rising through the neck, again issued forth in words. The bird now bade the poet fix his attention on its eye; because, of all the fires that composed its figure, those that sparkled in the eye were the noblest. The spirit (it said) which Dante beheld in the pupil was that of the royal singer who danced before the ark, now enjoying the reward of his superiority to vulgar discernment. Of the five spirits that composed the eyebrow, the one nearest the beak was Trajan, now experienced above all others in the knowledge of what it costs not to follow Christ, by reason of his having been in hell before he was translated to heaven. Next to Trajan was Hezekiah, whose penitence delayed for him the hour of his death: next Hezekiah, Constantine, though, in letting the pope become a prince instead of a pastor, he had unwittingly brought destruction on the world: next Constantine, William the Good of Sicily, whose death is not more lamented than the lives of those who contest his crown: and lastly, next William, Riphæus the Trojan. "What erring mortal," cried the bird, "would believe it possible to find Riphæus the Trojan among the blest?—but so it is; and he now knows more respecting the divine grace than mortals do, though even he discerns it not to the depth."*

The bird again relapsing into silence, appeared to repose on the happiness of its thoughts, like the lark which, after quivering and expatiating through all its airy warble, becomes mute and content, having satisfied its soul to the last drop of its sweetness.†

* All this part about the eagle, who, it seems, is beheld only in profile, and who bids the poet "mind his eye," in the pupil of which is King David, while the eyebrow consists of orthodox sovereigns, including Riphæus the Trojan, is irresistibly ludicrous. No consideration can or ought to hinder us from laughing at it. It was mere party-will in Dante to lug it in; and his perverseness injured his fancy, as it deserved.

In the next passage the real poet resumes himself, and with what relief to one's feelings!

† Most beautiful is this simile of the lark:

"Qual lodoletta che 'n aere si spazia
Prima cantando, e poi tace contenta
De l' ultima dolcezza che la sazia."

In the *Pentameron* and *Pentalogia*, Petrarch is made to say, "All the

But again Dante could not help speaking, being astonished to find Pagans in Heaven; and once more the celestial figure indulged his curiosity. It told him that Trajan had been delivered from hell, for his love of justice, by the prayers of St. Gregory; and that Riphæus, for the same reason, had been gifted with a prophetic knowledge of the Redemption; and then it ended with a rapture on the hidden mysteries of Predestination, and on the joy of ignorance itself when submitting to the divine will. The two blessed spirits, meanwhile, whom the bird mentioned, like the fingers of sweet lutenist to sweet singer, when they quiver to his warble as it goes, manifested the delight they experienced by movements of accord simultaneous as the twinkling of two eyes.*

Dante turned to receive his own final delight from the eyes of Beatrice, and he found it, though the customary smile on her face was no longer there. She told him that her beauty increased with such intensity at every fresh ascent among the stars, that he would no longer have been able to bear the smile; and they were now in the seventh Heaven, or the planet Saturn, the retreat of those who had passed their lives in Holy Contemplation.

verses that ever were written on the nightingale are scarcely worth the beautiful triad of this divine poet on the lark [and then he repeats them]. In the first of them, do you not see the trembling of her wings against the sky? As often as I repeat them, my ear is satisfied, my heart (like hers) contented.

“*Boccaccio*.—I agree with you in the perfect and unrivalled beauty of the first; but in the third there is a redundance. Is not *contenta* quite enough without *che la sazia*? The picture is before us, the sentiment within us; and, behold, we kick when we are full of manna.

“*Petrarch*.—I acknowledge the correctness and propriety of your remark; and yet beauties in poetry must be examined as carefully as blemishes, and even more.”—p. 92.

Perhaps Dante would have argued that *sazia* expresses the satiety itself, so that the very superfluosity becomes a propriety.

* “E come a buon cantor buon citarista

Fa seguitar lo guizzo de la corda

In che più di piacer lo canto acquista;

Sì, mentre che parlò, mi si ricorda,

Ch'io vidi le duo luci benedette,

Pur come batter d'occhi si concorda,

Con le parole muover le fiammette.”

In this crystal sphere, called after the name of the monarch who reigned over the Age of Innocence, Dante looked up, and beheld a ladder, the hue of which was like gold when the sun glisters it, and the height so great that its top was out of sight; and down the steps of this ladder he saw coming such multitudes of shining spirits, that it seemed as if all the lights of heaven must have been there poured forth; but not a sound was in the whole splendour. It was spared to the poet for the same reason that he missed the smile of Beatrice. When they came to a certain step in the ladder, some of the spirits flew off it in circles or other careers, like rooks when they issue from their trees in the morning to dry their feathers in the sun, part of them going away without returning, others returning to the point they left, and others contenting themselves with flying round about it. One of them came so near Dante and Beatrice, and brightened with such ardour, that the poet saw it was done in affection towards them, and begged the loving spirit to tell them who it was.

“Between the two coasts of Italy,” said the spirit, “and not far from thine own country, the stony mountains ascend into a ridge so lofty that the thunder rolls beneath it. Catria is its name. Beneath it is a consecrated cell; and in that cell I was called Pietro Damiano.* I so devoted myself to the service of God, that with no other sustenance than the juice of the olive, I forgot both heat and cold, happy in heavenly meditation. That cloister made abundant returns in its season to these granaries of the Lord; but so idle has it become now, that it is fit the world should know its barrenness. The days of my mortal life were drawing to a close, when I was besought and drawn into wearing the hat which descends every day from bad head to worse.† St. Peter and St. Paul came lean and barefoot, getting their bread where they could; but pastors now-a-days must be lifted from

* A corrector of clerical abuses, who, though a cardinal, and much employed in public affairs, preferred the simplicity of a private life. He has left writings, the eloquence of which, according to Tiraboschi, is “worthy of a better age.” Petrarch also makes honourable mention of him. See *Cary*, ut sup. p. 169. Dante lived a good while in the monastery of Catria, and is said to have finished his poem there.—*Lombardi in loc.* vol. iii. p. 547.

† The cardinal's hat.

the ground, and have ushers going before them, and train-bearers behind them, and ride upon palfreys covered with their spreading mantles, so that two beasts go under one skin.* O Lord, how long !”

At these words Dante saw more splendours come pouring down the ladder, and wheel round and round, and become at every wheel more beautiful. The whole dazzling body then gathered round the indignant speaker, and shouted something in a voice so tremendous, that the poet could liken it to nothing on earth. The thunder was so overwhelming, that he did not even hear what they said.†

Pallid and stunned, he turned in affright to Beatrice, who comforted him as a mother comforts a child that wants breath to speak. The shout was prophetic of the vengeance about to overtake the Church. Beatrice then directed his attention to a multitude of small orbs, which increased one another's beauty by interchanging their splendours. They enclosed the spirits of those who most combined meditation with love. One of them was Saint Benedict ; and others Macarius and Romoaldo.‡ The light of St. Benedict issued forth from among its companions to address the poet ; and after explaining how its occupant was unable farther to disclose himself, inveighed against the degeneracy of the religious orders. It then rejoined its fellows, and the whole company clustering into one meteor, swept aloft like a whirlwind. Beatrice beckoned the poet to ascend after them. He did so,

* “ Sî che duo bestie van sott' una pelle.”

† “ Dintorno a questa (voce) vennero e fermarsi,
E fero un grido di sî alto suono,
Che non potrebbe qui assomigliarsi :

Nè io lo 'ntesi, sî mi vinse il tuono.”

Around this voice they flocked, a mighty crowd,
And raised a shout so huge, that earthly wonder
Knoweth no likeness for a peal so loud ;

Nor could I hear the words, it spoke such thunder.

If a Longinus had written after Dante, he would have put this passage into his treatise on the Sublime.

‡ Benedict, the founder of the order called after his name. Macarius, an Egyptian monk and moralist. Romoaldo, founder of the Camaldoli.

gifted with the usual virtue by her eyes; and found himself in the twin light of the Gemini, the constellation that presided over his birth. He was now in the region of the fixed stars.

“Thou art now,” said his guide, “so near the summit of thy prayers, that it behoves thee to take a last look at things below thee, and see how little they should account in thine eyes.” Dante turned his eyes downwards through all the seven spheres, and saw the earth so diminutive, that he smiled at its miserable appearance. Wisest, thought he, is the man that esteems it least; and truly worthy he that sets his thoughts on the world to come. He now saw the moon without those spots in it which made him formerly attribute the variation to dense and rare. He sustained the brightness of the face of the sun, and discerned all the signs and motions and relative distances of the planets. Finally, he saw, as he rolled round with the sphere in which he stood, and by virtue of his gifted sight, the petty arena, from hill to harbour, which filled his countrymen with such ferocious ambition; and then he turned his eyes to the sweet eyes beside him.*

Beatrice stood wrapt in attention, looking earnestly towards the south, as if she expected some appearance. She resembled the bird that sits among the dewy leaves in the darkness of night,

* The reader of English poetry will be reminded of a passage in Cowley:

“Lo, I mount; and lo,
How small the biggest parts of earth’s proud title shew!

Where shall I find the noble British land?

Lo, I at last a northern speck espy,

Which in the sea does lie,

And seems a grain o’ the sand.

For this will any sin, or bleed?

Of civil wars is this the meed?

And is it this, alas, which we,

Oh, irony of words! do call Great Brittanie?”

And he afterwards, on reaching higher depths of silence, says very finely, and with a beautiful intimation of the all-inclusiveness of the Deity by the use of a singular instead of a plural verb,—

“Where am I now? angels and God is here.”

All which follows in Dante, up to the appearance of Saint Peter, is full of grandeur and loveliness.

yearning for the coming of the morning, that she may again behold her young, and have light by which to seek the food, that renders her fatigue for them a joy. So stood Beatrice, looking; which caused Dante to watch in the same direction, with the feelings of one that is already possessed of some new delight by the assuredness of his expectation.*

The quarter on which they were gazing soon became brighter and brighter, and Beatrice exclaimed, "Behold the armies of the triumph of Christ!" Her face appeared all fire, and her eyes so full of love, that the poet could find no words to express them.

As the moon, when the depths of heaven are serene with her fulness, looks abroad smiling among her eternal handmaids the stars, that paint every gulf of the great hollow with beauty; † so brightest, above myriads of splendours around it, appeared a sun which gave radiance to them all, even as our earthly sun gives light to the constellations.

"O Beatrice!" exclaimed Dante, overpowered, "sweet and beloved guide!"

"Overwhelming," said Beatrice, "is the virtue with which nothing can compare. What thou hast seen is the Wisdom and

* "Come l' augello intra l' amate fronde,
Posato al nido de' suoi dolci nati
La notte che le cose ci nasconde,

Che per veder gli aspetti desiati,
E per trovar lo cibo onde gli pasca,
In che i gravi labor gli sono aggrati,

Previene 'l tempo in su l' aperta frasca,
E con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
Fiso guardando pur che l' alba nasca

Così la donna mia si stava eretta
E attenta, involta in ver la plaga
Sotto la quale il sol mostra men fretta :

Si che veggendola io sospesa e vaga,
Fecimi quale è quei che disiando
Altro vorria, e sperando s' appaga."

† "Quale ne' plenilunii sereni
Trivia ride tra le Ninfe eterne,
Che dipingono 'l ciel per tutti i seni."

the Power, by whom the path between heaven and earth has been laid open.”*

Dante's soul—like the fire which falls to earth out of the swollen thunder-cloud, instead of rising according to the wont of fire—had grown too great for his still mortal nature; and he could afterwards find within him no memory of what it did.

“Open thine eyes,” said Beatrice, “and see me now indeed. Thou hast beheld things that empower thee to sustain my smiling.”

Dante, while doing as he was desired, felt like one who has suddenly waked up from a dream, and endeavours in vain to recollect it.

“Never,” said he, “can that moment be erased from the book of the past. If all the tongues were granted me that were fed with the richest milk of Polyhymnia and her sisters, they could not express one thousandth part of the beauty of that divine smile, or of the thorough perfection which it made of the whole of her divine countenance.”

But Beatrice said, “Why dost thou so enamour thee of this face, and lose the sight of the beautiful guide, blossoming beneath the beams of Christ? Behold the rose, in which the Word was made flesh.† Behold the lilies, by whose odour the way of life is tracked.”

Dante looked, and gave battle to the sight with his weak eyes.‡

As flowers on a cloudy day in a meadow are suddenly lit up by a gleam of sunshine, he beheld multitudes of splendours effulgent with beaming rays that smote on them from above, though he could not discern the source of the effulgence. He had invoked the name of the Virgin when he looked; and the gracious fountain of the light had drawn itself higher up within the heaven, to accommodate the radiance to his faculties. He then beheld the Virgin herself bodily present,—her who is fairest now in heaven, as she was on earth; and while his eyes were being painted with her beauty,§ there fell on a sudden a seraphic light

* He has seen Christ in his own unreflected person.

† The Virgin Mary.

‡ “Mi rendei
A la battaglia de' debili cigli.”

§ “Ambo le luci mi dipinse.”

from heaven, which, spinning into a circle as it came, formed a diadem round her head, still spinning, and warbling as it spun. The sweetest melody that ever drew the soul to it on earth would have seemed like the splitting of a thunder-cloud, compared with the music that sung around the head of that jewel of Paradise.*

“I am Angelic Love,” said the light, “and I spin for joy of the womb in which our Hope abided; and ever, O Lady of Heaven, must I thus attend thee, as long as thou art pleased to attend thy Son, journeying in his loving-kindness from sphere to sphere.”

All the other splendours now resounded the name of Mary. The Virgin began ascending to pursue the path of her Son; and Dante, unable to endure her beauty as it rose, turned his eyes to the angelical callers on the name of Mary, who remained yearning after her with their hands outstretched, as a babe yearns after the bosom withdrawn from his lips. Then rising after her themselves, they halted ere they went out of sight, and sung “O Queen of Heaven” so sweetly, that the delight never quitted the air.

A flame now approached and thrice encircled Beatrice, singing all the while so divinely, that the poet could retain no idea expressive of its sweetness. Mortal imagination cannot unfold such wonder. It was Saint Peter, whom she had besought to come down from his higher sphere, in order to catechise and discourse with her companion on the subject of faith.

The catechising and the discourse ensued, and were concluded by the Apostle’s giving the poet the benediction, and encircling his forehead thrice with his holy light. “So well,” says Dante, “was he pleased with my answers.”†

* “Qualunque melodia più dolce suona
Qua giù, e più a se l’ anima tira,
Parebbe nube che squarciata tuona,
Comparata al sonar di quella lira
Onde si coronava il bel zaffiro
Del quale il ciel più chiaro s’ inzaffira.”

† “Benedicendomi cantando
Tre volte cinse me, sì com’ io tacqui,
L’ Apostolico lume, al cui comando
Io avea detto; sì nel dir gli piacqui.”

“If ever,” continued the Florentine, “the sacred poem to which heaven and earth have set their hands, and which for years past has wasted my flesh in the writing, shall prevail against the cruelty that shut me out of the sweet fold in which I slept like a lamb, wishing harm to none but the wolves that beset it,—with another voice, and in another guise than now, will I return, a poet, and standing by the fount of my baptism, assume the crown that belongs to me; for I there first entered on the faith which gives souls to God; and for that faith did Peter thus encircle my forehead.”*

A flame enclosing Saint James now succeeded to that of Saint Peter, and after greeting his predecessor as doves greet one another, murmuring and moving round, proceeded to examine the mortal visitant on the subject of Hope. The examination was

It was this passage, and the one that follows it, which led Foscolo to suspect that Dante wished to lay claim to a divine mission; an opinion which has excited great indignation among the orthodox. See his *Discorso sul Testo*, ut sup. pp. 64, 77-90 and 335-338; and the preface of the Milanese Editors to the “Convito” of Dante,—*Opere Minori*, 12mo, vol ii. p. xvii. Foscolo’s conjecture seems hardly borne out by the context; but I think Dante had boldness and self-estimation enough to have advanced any claim whatsoever, had events turned out as he expected. What man but himself (supposing him the believer he professed to be) would have thought of thus making himself free of the courts of Heaven, and constituting St. Peter his applauding catechist!

* The verses quoted in the preceding note conclude the twenty-fourth canto of Paradise; and those, of which the passage just given is a translation, commence the twenty-fifth:

“Se mai continga, che ’l poema sacro
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra
Sì che m’ ha fatto per più anni macro,

Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra
Del bello ovile ov’ io dormi’ agnello
Nimico a’ lupi che gli danno guerra;

Con altra voce omai, con altro vello
Ritornèrò poeta, ed in sul fonte
Del mio battesimo prenderò ’l capello:

Perocchè ne la fede che fa conte
L’ anime a Dio, quiv’ entra’ io, e poi
Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte.”

closed amidst resounding anthems of "Let their hope be in thee;"* and a third apostolic flame ensued, enclosing Saint John, who completed the catechism with the topic of Charity. Dante acquitted himself with skill throughout; the spheres resounded with songs of "Holy, holy," Beatrice joining in the warble; and the poet suddenly found Adam beside him. The parent of the human race knew by intuition what his descendant wished to learn of him; and manifesting his assent before he spoke, as an animal sometimes does by movements and quiverings of the flesh within its coat, corresponding with its good-will,† told him, that his fall was not owing to the fruit which he tasted, but to the violation of the injunction not to taste it; that he remained in the Limbo on hell-borders upwards of five thousand years; and that the language he spoke had become obsolete before the days of Nimrod.

The gentle fire of Saint Peter now began to assume an awful brightness, such as the planet Jupiter might assume, if Mars and it were birds, and exchanged the colour of their plumage.‡ Silence fell upon the celestial choristers; and the Apostle spoke thus:

"Wonder not if thou seest me change colour. Thou wilt see, while I speak, all which is round about us colour in like manner. He who usurps my place on earth,—*my* place, I say,—ay, *mine*,

* "Sperant in te." *Psalm* ix. 10. The English version says, "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

† "Tal volta un animal covertò broglia
Sì che l' affetto convien che si paia
Per lo seguir che face a lui la 'nvoglia."

A natural, but strange, and surely not sufficiently dignified image for the occasion. It is difficult to be quite content with a former one, in which the greetings of St. Peter and St. James are compared to those of doves murmuring and sidling round about one another; though Christian sentiment may warrant it, if we do not too strongly present the Apostles to one's imagination.

‡ "Tal ne la sembianza sua divenne,
Qual diverrebbe Giove, s' egli e Marte
Fossero augelli e cambiassersi penne."

Nobody who opened the *Commedia* for the first time at this fantastical image would suppose the author was a great poet, or expect the tremendous passage that ensues!

—which before God is now vacant,—has converted the city in which my dust lies buried into a common-sewer of filth and blood ; so that the fiend who fell from hence rejoices himself down there.”

At these words of the Apostle the whole face of Heaven was covered with a blush, red as dawn or sunset ; and Beatrice changed colour, like a maiden that shrinks in alarm from the report of blame in another. The eclipse was like that which took place when the Supreme died upon the Cross.

Saint Peter resumed with a voice not less awfully changed than his appearance :

“Not for the purpose of being sold for money was the spouse of Christ fed and nourished with my blood, and with the blood of Linus,—the blood of Cletus. Sextus did not bleed for it, nor Pius, nor Callixtus, nor Urban ; men, for whose deaths all Christendom wept. They died that souls might be innocent and go to Heaven. Never was it intention of ours, that the sitters in the holy chair should divide one half of Christendom against the other ; should turn my keys into ensigns of war against the faithful ; and stamp my very image upon mercenary and lying documents, which make me, here in Heaven, blush and turn cold to think of. Arm of God, why sleepest thou ? Men out of Gascony and Cahors are even now making ready to drink our blood. O lofty beginning, to what vile conclusion must thou come ! But the high Providence, which made Scipio the sustainer of the Roman sovereignty of the world, will fail not its timely succour. And thou, my son, that for weight of thy mortal clothing must again descend to earth, see thou that thou openest thy mouth, and hidest not from others what has not been hidden from thyself.”

As white and thick as the snows go streaming athwart the air when the sun is in Capricorn, so the angelical spirits that had been gathered in the air of Saturn streamed away after the Apostle, as he turned with the other saints to depart ; and the eyes of Dante followed them till they became viewless.*

* In spite of the unheavenly nature of invective, of something of a lurking conceit in the making an eclipse out of a blush, and in the positive bathos, and I fear almost indecent irrelevancy of the introduction of Beatrice at all on such an occasion, much more under the feeble aspect of one young lady blush-

The divine eyes of Beatrice recalled him to herself; and at the same instant the two companions found themselves in the ninth Heaven or *Primum Mobile*, the last of the material Heavens, and the mover of those beneath it.

Here he had a glimpse of the divine essence, in likeness of a point of inconceivably sharp brightness enringed with the angelic hierarchies. All earth, and heaven, and nature, hung from it. Beatrice explained many mysteries to him connected with that sight; and then vehemently denounced the false and foolish teachers that quit the authority of the Bible for speculations of their own, and degrade the preaching of the gospel with ribald jests, and legends of Saint Anthony and his pig.*

Returning, however, to more celestial thoughts, her face became so full of beauty, that Dante declares he must cease to endeavour to speak of it, and that he doubts whether the sight can ever be thoroughly enjoyed by any save its Maker.† Her look carried him upward as before, and he was now in the Empyrean, or region of Pure Light;—of light made of intellect full of love; love of truth, full of joy; joy, transcendant above all sweetness.

Streams of living radiance came rushing and flashing round about him, swathing him with light, as the lightning sometimes enwraps and dashes against the blinded eyes; but the light was love here, and instead of injuring, gave new power to the object it embraced.

ing for another,—this scene altogether is a very grand one; and the violence itself of the holy invective awful.

A curious subject for reflection is here presented. What sort of pope would Dante himself have made? Would he have taken to the loving or the hating side of his genius? To the St. John or the St. Peter of his own poem? St. Francis or St. Dominic?—I am afraid, all things considered, we should have had in him rather a Gregory the Seventh or Julius the Second, than a Benedict the Eleventh or a Ganganelli. What fine Church-hymns he would have written!

* She does not see (so blind is even holy vehemence!) that for the same reason the denouncement itself is out of its place. The preachers brought St. Anthony and his pig into their pulpits; she brings them into Heaven!

†

“Certo io credo

Che solo il suo fattor tutta la goda.”

With this new infusion of strength into his organs of vision, Dante looked, and saw a vast flood of it, effulgent with flashing splendours, and pouring down like a river between banks painted with the loveliest flowers. Fiery living sparkles arose from it on all sides, and pitched themselves into the cups of the flowers, where they remained awhile, like rubies set in gold; till inebriated with the odours, they recast themselves into the bosom of the flood; and ever as one returned, another leaped forth. Beatrice bade him dip his eyes into the light, that he might obtain power to see deeper into its nature; for the river, and the jewels that sprang out of it to and fro, and the laughing flowers on the banks, were themselves but shadows of the truth which they included; not, indeed, in their essential selves, but inasmuch as without further assistance the beholder's eyes could not see them as they were. Dante rushed to the stream as eagerly as the lips of an infant to the breast, when it has slept beyond its time; and his eyelashes had no sooner touched it, than the length of the river became a breadth and a circle, and its real nature lay unveiled before him, like a face when a mask is taken off. It was the whole two combined courts of Heaven, the angelical and the human, in circumference larger than would hold the sun, and all blazing beneath a light, which was reflected downwards in its turn upon the sphere of the Primum Mobile below it, the mover of the universe. And as a green cliff by the water's side seems to delight in seeing itself reflected from head to foot with all its verdure and its flowers; so, round about on all sides, upon thousands of thrones, the blessed spirits that once lived on earth sat beholding themselves in the light. And yet even all these together formed but the lowest part of the spectacle, which ascended above them, tier upon tier, in the manner of an immeasurable rose, all dilating itself, doubling still and doubling, and all odorous with the praises of an ever-vernal sun. Into the base of it, as into the yellow of the flower, with a dumb glance that yet promised to speak, Beatrice drew forward her companion, and said, "Behold the innumerable assemblage of the white garments! Behold our city, how large its circuit! Behold our seats, which are, nevertheless, so full, that few comers are wanted to fill them! On that lofty one at which thou art looking, sur-

mounted with the crown, and which shall be occupied before thou joinest this bridal feast, shall be seated the soul of the great Henry, who would fain set Italy right before she is prepared for it.* The blind waywardness of which ye are sick renders ye like the bantling who, while he is dying of hunger, kicks away his purse. And Rome is governed by one that cannot walk in the same path with such a man, whatever be the road.† But God will not long endure him. He will be thrust down into the pit with Simon Magus ; and his feet, when he arrives there, will thrust down the man of Alagna still lower.”‡

In the form, then, of a white rose the blessed multitude of human souls lay manifest before the eyes of the poet ; and now he observed, that the winged portion of the blest, the angels, who fly up with their wings nearer to Him that fills them with love, came to and fro upon the rose like bees ; now descending into its bosom, now streaming back to the source of their affection. Their faces were all fire, their wings golden, their garments whiter than snow. Whenever they descended on the flower, they went from fold to fold, fanning their loins, and communicating the peace and ardour which they gathered as they gave. Dante beheld all,—every flight and action of the whole winged multitude,—without let or shadow ; for he stood in the region of light itself, and light has no obstacle where it is deservedly vouchsafed.

“ Oh,” cries the poet, “ if the barbarians that came from the north stood dumb with amazement to behold the magnificence of Rome, thinking they saw unearthly greatness in the Lateran, what must I have thought, who had thus come from human to divine, from time to eternity, from the people of Florence to beings just and sane ?”

Dante stood, without a wish either to speak or to hear. He felt like a pilgrim who has arrived within the place of his devotion,

* The Emperor Henry of Luxembourg, Dante’s idol ; at the close of whose brief and inefficient appearance in Italy, his hopes of restoration to his country were at an end.

† Pope Clement the Fifth. Dante’s enemy, Boniface, was now dead, and of course in Tartarus, in the red-hot tomb which the poet had prepared for him.

‡ Boniface himself. Pope Clement’s red-hot feet are to thrust down Pope Boniface into a gulf still hotter. So says the gentle Beatrice in Heaven, and in the face of all that is angelical !

and who looks round about him, hoping some day to relate what he sees. He gazed upwards and downwards, and on every side round about, and saw movements graceful with every truth of innocence, and faces full of loving persuasion, rich in their own smiles and in the light of the smiles of others.

He turned to Beatrice, but she was gone ;—gone, as a messenger from herself told him, to resume her seat in the blessed rose, which the messenger accordingly pointed out. She sat in the third circle from the top, as far from Dante as the bottom of the sea is from the region of thunder ; and yet he saw her as plainly as if she had been close at hand. He addressed words to her of thanks for all she had done for him, and a hope for her assistance after death ; and she looked down at him and smiled.

The messenger was St. Bernard. He bade the poet lift his eyes higher ; and Dante beheld the Virgin Mary sitting above the rose, in the centre of an intense redness of light, like another dawn. Thousands of angels were hanging buoyant around her, each having its own distinct splendour and adornment, and all were singing, and expressing heavenly mirth ; and she smiled on them with such loveliness, that joy was in the eyes of all the blessed.

At Mary's feet was sitting Eve, beautiful—she that opened the wound which Mary closed ; and at the feet of Eve was Rachel, with Beatrice ; and at the feet of Rachel was Sarah, and then Judith, then Rebecca, then Ruth, ancestress of him out of whose penitence came the song of the Miserere ;* and so other Hebrew women, down all the gradations of the flower, dividing, by the line which they made, the Christians who lived before Christ from those who lived after ; a line which, on the opposite side of the rose, was answered by a similar one of Founders of the Church, at the top of whom was John the Baptist. The rose also was divided horizontally by a step which projected beyond the others, and underneath which, known by the childishness of their looks and voices, were the souls of such as were too young to have attained Heaven by assistance of good works.

St. Bernard then directed his companion to look again at the

* David.

Virgin, and gather from her countenance the power of beholding the face of Christ as God. Her aspect was flooded with gladness from the spirits around her; while the angel who had descended to her on earth now hailed her above with "Ave, Maria!" singing till the whole host of Heaven joined in the song. St. Bernard then prayed to her for help to his companion's eyesight. Beatrice, with others of the blest, was seen joining in the prayer, their hands stretched upwards; and the Virgin, after benignly looking on the petitioners, gazed upwards herself, shewing the way with her own eyes to the still greater vision. Dante then looked also, and beheld what he had no words to speak, or memory to endure.

He awoke as from a dream, retaining only a sense of sweetness that ever trickled to his heart.

Earnestly praying afterwards, however, that grace might be so far vouchsafed to a portion of his recollection, as to enable him to convey to his fellow-creatures one smallest glimpse of the glory of what he saw, his ardour was so emboldened by help of the very mystery at whose sight he must have perished had he faltered, that his eyes, unblasted, attained to a perception of the Sum of Infinitude. He beheld, concentrated in one spot—written in one volume of Love—all which is diffused, and can become the subject of thought and study throughout the universe—all substance and accident and mode—all so compounded that they become one light. He thought he beheld at one and the same time the oneness of this knot, and the universality of all which it implies; because, when it came to his recollection, his heart dilated, and in the course of one moment he felt ages of impatience to speak of it.

But thoughts as well as words failed him; and though ever afterwards he could no more cease to yearn towards it, than he could take defect for completion, or separate the idea of happiness from the wish to attain it, still the utmost he could say of what he remembered would fall as short of right speech as the sounds of an infant's tongue while it is murmuring over the nipple; for the more he had looked at that light, the more he found in it to amaze him, so that his brain toiled with the succession of the astonishments. He saw, in the deep but clear self-subsistence,

three circles of three different colours of the same breadth, one of them reflecting one of the others as rainbow does rainbow, and the third consisting of a fire equally breathing from both.*

O eternal Light! thou that dwellest in thyself alone, thou alone understandest thyself, and art by thyself understood, and, so understanding, thou laughest at thyself, and lovest.

The second, or reflected circle, as it went round, seemed to be painted by its own colours with the likeness of a human face.†

But how this was done, or how the beholder was to express it, threw his mind into the same state of bewilderment as the mathematician experiences when he vainly pores over the circle to discover the principle by which he is to square it.

He did, however, in a manner discern it. A flash of light was vouchsafed him for the purpose; but the light left him no power to impart the discernment; nor did he feel any longer impatient for the gift. Desire became absorbed in submission, moving in as smooth unison as the particles of a wheel, with the Love that is the mover of the sun and the stars.‡

* The Trinity.

† The Incarnation.

‡ In the Variorum edition of Dante, ut sup. vol. iii. p. 845, we are informed that a gentleman of Naples, the Cavaliere Giuseppe de Cesare, was the first to notice (not long since, I presume) the curious circumstance of Dante's having terminated the three portions of his poem with the word "stars." He thinks that it was done as a happy augury of life and renown to the subject. The literal intention, however, seems to have been to shew us, how all his aspirations terminated.

CRITICAL NOTICE

PULCI'S LIFE AND GENIUS.

PULCI:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

CRITICAL NOTICE

OF

PULCI'S LIFE AND GENIUS.

PULCI, who is the first genuine romantic poet, in point of time, after Dante, seems, at first sight, in the juxtaposition, like farce after tragedy; and indeed, in many parts of his poem, he is not only what he seems, but follows his saturnine countryman with a peculiar propriety of contrast, much of his liveliest banter being directed against the absurdities of Dante's theology. But hasty and most erroneous would be the conclusion that he was nothing but a banterer. He was a true poet of the mixed order, grave as well as gay; had a reflecting mind, a susceptible and most affectionate heart; and perhaps was never more in earnest than when he gave vent to his dislike of bigotry in his most laughable sallies.

Luigi Pulci, son of Jacopo Pulci and Brigida de' Bardi, was of a noble family, so ancient as to be supposed to have come from France into Tuscany with his hero Charlemagne. He was born in Florence on the 3d of December, 1431, and was the youngest of three brothers, all possessed of a poetical vein, though it did not flow with equal felicity. Bernardo, the eldest, was the earliest translator of the Eclogues of Virgil; and Lucca wrote a romance called the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*, and is commended for his *Heroic Epistles*. Little else is known of these brothers; and not much more of Luigi himself, except that he married a lady of the name of Lucrezia degli Albizzi; journeyed in Lombardy and elsewhere; was one of the most intimate friends of Lorenzo de Medici and his literary circle; and apparently led a life the

most delightful to a poet, always meditating some composition, and buried in his woods and gardens. Nothing is known of his latter days. An unpublished work of little credit (*Zilioli On the Italian Poets*), and an earlier printed book, which, according to Tiraboschi, is of not much greater (*Scardeone De Antiquitatibus Urbis Patavinæ*), say that he died miserably in Padua, and was refused Christian burial on account of his impieties. It is not improbable that, during the eclipse of the fortunes of the Medici family, after the death of Lorenzo, Pulci may have partaken of its troubles; and there is certainly no knowing how badly his or their enemies may have treated him; but miserable ends are a favourite allegation with theological opponents. The Calvinists affirm of their master, the burner of Servetus, that he died like a saint; but I have seen a biography in Italian, which attributed the most horrible death-bed, not only to the atrocious Genevese, but to the genial Luther, calling them both the greatest villains (*sceleratissimi*); and adding, that one of them (I forget which) was found dashed on the floor of his bedroom, and torn limb from limb.

Pulci appears to have been slender in person, with small eyes and a ruddy face. I gather this from the caricature of him in the poetical paper-war carried on between him and his friend Matteo Franco, a Florentine canon, which is understood to have been all in good humour—sport to amuse their friends—a perilous speculation. Besides his share in these verses, he is supposed to have had a hand in his brother's romance, and was certainly the author of some devout poems, and of a burlesque panegyric on a country damsel, *La Beca*, in emulation of the charming poem *La Nencia*, the first of its kind, written by that extraordinary person, his illustrious friend Lorenzo, who, in the midst of his cares and glories as the balancer of the power of Italy, was one of the liveliest of the native wits, and wrote songs for the people to dance to in Carnival time.

The intercourse between Lorenzo and Pulci was of the most familiar kind. Pulci was sixteen years older, but of a nature which makes no such differences felt between associates. He had known Lorenzo from the latter's youth, probably from his birth—is spoken of in a tone of domestic intimacy by his wife—

and is enumerated by him among his companions in a very special and characteristic manner in his poem on Hawking (*La Caccia col Falcone*), when, calling his fellow-sportsmen about him, and missing Luigi, one of them says that he has strolled into a neighbouring wood, to put something which has struck his fancy into a sonnet :

“ ‘ Luigi Pulci ov’ è, che non si sente ?”

‘ Egli se n’ andò dianzi in quel boschetto,
Che qualche fantasia ha per la mente ;
Vorr à fantasticar forse un sonetto.’ ”

“ And where’s Luigi Pulci? I saw *him*.”

“ Oh, in the wood there. Gone, depend upon it,
To vent some fancy in his brain—some whim,
That will not let him rest till it’s a sonnet.”

In a letter written to Lorenzo, when the future statesman, then in his seventeenth year, was making himself personally acquainted with the courts of Italy, Pulci speaks of himself as struggling hard to keep down the poetic propensity in his friend’s absence. “If you were with me,” he says, “I should produce heaps of sonnets as big as the clubs they make of the cherry-blossoms for May-day. I am always muttering some verse or other betwixt my teeth ; but I say to myself, ‘ My Lorenzo is not here—he who is my only hope and refuge ;’ and so I suppress it.” Such is the first, and of a like nature are the latest accounts we possess of the sequestered though companionable poet. He preferred one congenial listener who understood him, to twenty critics that were puzzled with the vivacity of his impulses. Most of the learned men patronised by Lorenzo probably quarrelled with him on account of it, plaguing him in somewhat the same spirit, though in more friendly guise, as the Della Cruscan and others afterwards plagued Tasso ; so he banters them in turn, and takes refuge from their critical rules and common-places in the larger indulgence of his friend Politian and the laughing wisdom of Lorenzo.

“ So che andar dirtito mi bisogna,
Ch’ io non ci mescolassi una bugia,
Che questa non è storia da menzogna ;
Che come io esco un passo de la via,

Chi gracchia, chi riprende, e chi rampogna :
 Ognun poi mi riesce la pazzia ;
 Tanto ch' eletto ho solitaria vita,
 Che la turba di questi è infinita.

La mia Accademia un tempo, o mia Ginnasia,
 E stata volentier ne' miei boschetti ;
 E puossi ben veder l' Affrica e l' Asia :
 Vengon le Ninfe con lor canestretti,
 E portanmi o narciso o colocasia ;
 E così fuggo mille urban dispetti :
 Sì ch' io non torno a' vostri Areopaghi,
 Gente pur sempre di mal dicer vaghi."

" I know I ought to make no dereliction
 From the straight path to this side or to that ;
 I know the story I relate's no fiction,
 And that the moment that I quit some flat,
 Folks are all puff, and blame, and contradiction,
 And swear I never know what I'd be at ;
 In short, such crowds, I find, can mend one's poem,
 I live retired, on purpose not to know 'em.

Yes, gentlemen, my only ' Academe,'
 My sole ' Gymnasium,' are my woods and bowers ;
 Of Afric and of Asia there I dream ;
 And the Nymphs bring me baskets full of flowers,
 Arums, and sweet narcissus from the stream ;
 And thus my Muse escapeth your town-hours
 And town-disdains ; and I eschew your bites,
 Judges of books, grim Areopagites."

He is here jesting, as Foscolo has observed, on the academy instituted by Lorenzo for encouraging the Greek language, doubtless with the laughing approbation of the founder, who was sometimes not a little troubled himself with the squabbles of his *literati*.

Our author probably had good reason to call his illustrious friend his "refuge." The *Morgante Maggiore*, the work which has rendered the name of Pulci renowned, was an attempt to elevate the popular and homely narrative poetry chanted in the streets into the dignity of a production that should last. The age was in a state of transition on all points. The dogmatic authority of the schoolmen in matters of religion, which pre-

vailed in the time of Dante, had come to nought before the advance of knowledge in general, and the indifference of the court of Rome. The Council of Trent, as Crescimbeni advised the critics, had not then settled what Christendom was to believe; and men, provided they complied with forms, and admitted certain main articles, were allowed to think, and even in great measure talk, as they pleased. The lovers of the Platonic philosophy took the opportunity of exalting some of its dreams to an influence, which at one time was supposed to threaten Christianity itself, and which in fact had already succeeded in affecting Christian theology to an extent which the scorers of Paganism little suspect. Most of these Helenists pushed their admiration of Greek literature to an excess. They were opposed by the Virgilian predilections of Pulci's friend, Politian, who had nevertheless universality enough to sympathise with the delight the other took in their native Tuscan, and its liveliest and most idiomatic effusions. From all these circumstances in combination arose, first, Pulci's determination to write a poem of a mixed order, which should retain for him the ear of the many, and at the same time give rise to a poetry of romance worthy of higher auditors; second, his banter of what he considered unessential and injurious dogmas of belief, in favour of those principles of the religion of charity which inflict no contradiction on the heart and understanding; third, the trouble which seems to have been given him by critics, "sacred and profane," in consequence of these originalities; and lastly, a doubt which has strangely existed with some, as to whether he intended to write a serious or a comic poem, or on any one point was in earnest at all. One writer thinks he cannot have been in earnest, because he opens every canto with some pious invocation; another asserts that the piety itself is a banter; a similar critic is of opinion, that to mix levities with gravities proves the gravities to have been nought, and the levities all in all; a fourth allows him to have been serious in his description of the battle of Roncesvalles, but says he was laughing in all the rest of his poem; while a fifth candidly gives up the question, as one of those puzzles occasioned by the caprices of the human mind, which it is impossible for reasonable people to solve. Even Sismondi, who was well acquainted with

the age in which Pulci wrote, and who, if not a profound, is generally an acute and liberal critic, confesses himself to be thus confounded. "Pulci," he says, "commences all his cantos by a sacred invocation; and the interests of religion are constantly intermingled with the adventures of his story, in a manner capricious and little instructive. We know not how to reconcile this monkish spirit with the semi-pagan character of society under Lorenzo di Medici, nor whether we ought to accuse Pulci of gross bigotry or of profane derision."* Sismondi did not consider that the lively and impassioned people of the south take what may be called household-liberties with the objects of their worship greater than northerners can easily conceive; that levity of manner, therefore, does not always imply the absence of the gravest belief; that, be this as it may, the belief may be as grave on some points as light on others, perhaps the more so for that reason; and that, although some poems, like some people, are altogether grave, or the reverse, there really is such a thing as tragi-comedy both in the world itself and in the representations of it. A jesting writer may be quite as much in earnest when he professes to be so, as a pleasant companion who feels for his own or for other people's misfortunes, and who is perhaps obliged to affect or resort to his very pleasantry sometimes, because he feels more acutely than the gravest. The sources of tears and smiles lie close to, ay and help to refine one another. If Dante had been capable of more levity, he would have been guilty of less melancholy absurdities. If Rabelais had been able to weep

* *Literature of the South of Europe*, Thomas Roscoe's Translation, vol. ii. p. 54. For the opinions of other writers, here and elsewhere alluded to, see Tiraboschi (who is quite frightened at him), *Storia della Poesia Italiana*, cap. v. sect. 25; Gravina, who is more so, *Della Ragion Poetica* (quoted in Ginguéné, as below); Crescimbeni, *Commentari Intorno all' Istoria della Poesia*, &c. lib. vi. cap. 3 (Mathias's edition), and the biographical additions to the same work, 4to, Rome, 1710, vol. ii. part ii. p. 151, where he says that Pulci was perhaps the "modestest and most temperate writer" of his age ("il più modesto e moderato"); Ginguéné, *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, tom iv. p. 214; Foscolo, in the *Quarterly Review*, as further on; Panizzi on the *Romantic Poetry of the Italians*, ditto; Stebbing, *Lives of the Italian Poets*, second edition, vol. i.; and the first volume of *Lives of Literary and Scientific Men*, in *Lardner's Cyclopædia*.

as well as to laugh, and to love as well as to be licentious, he would have had faith and therefore support in something earnest, and not have been obliged to place the consummation of all things in a wine-bottle. People's every-day experiences might explain to them the greatest apparent inconsistencies of Pulci's muse, if habit itself did not blind them to the illustration. Was nobody ever present in a well-ordered family, when a lively conversation having been interrupted by the announcement of dinner, the company, after listening with the greatest seriousness to a grace delivered with equal seriousness, perhaps by a clergyman, resumed it the instant afterwards in all its gaiety, with the first spoonful of soup? Well, the sacred invocations at the beginning of Pulci's cantos were compliances of the like sort with a custom. They were recited and listened to just as gravely at Lorenzo di Medici's table; and yet neither compromised the reciters, nor were at all associated with the enjoyment of the fare that ensued. So with regard to the intermixture of grave and gay throughout the poem. How many campaigning adventures have been written by gallant officers, whose animal spirits saw food for gaiety in half the circumstances that occurred, and who could crack a jest and a helmet perhaps with almost equal vivacity, and yet be as serious as the gravest at a moment's notice, mourn heartily over the deaths of their friends, and shudder with indignation and horror at the outrages committed in a captured city? It is thus that Pulci writes, full no less of feeling than of whim and mirth. And the whole honest round of humanity not only warrants his plan, but in the twofold sense of the word embraces it.

If any thing more were necessary to shew the gravity with which our author addressed himself to his subject, it is the fact, related by himself, of its having been recommended to him by Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, a good and earnest woman, herself a poetess, who wrote a number of sacred narratives, and whose virtues he more than once records with the greatest respect and tenderness. The *Morgante* concludes with an address respecting this lady to the Virgin, and with a hope that her "devout and sincere" spirit may obtain peace for him in Paradise. These are the last words in the book. Is it credible that expressions of this kind, and employed on such an occasion,

could have had no serious meaning? or that Lorenzo listened to such praises of his mother as to a jest?

I have no doubt that, making allowance for the age in which he lived, Pulci was an excellent Christian. His orthodoxy, it is true, was not the orthodoxy of the times of Dante or St. Dominic, nor yet of that of the Council of Trent. His opinions respecting the mystery of the Trinity appear to have been more like those of Sir Isaac Newton than of Archdeacon Travis. And assuredly he agreed with Origen respecting eternal punishment, rather than with Calvin and Mr. Toplady. But a man may accord with Newton, and yet be thought not unworthy of the "starry spheres." He may think, with Origen, that God intends all his creatures to be ultimately happy,* and yet be considered as loving a follower of Christ as a "dealer of damnation round the land," or the burner of a fellow-creature.

Pulci was in advance of his time on more subjects than one. He pronounced the existence of a new and inhabited world, before the appearance of Columbus.† He made the conclusion, doubtless, as Columbus did, from the speculations of more scientific men, and the rumours of seamen; but how rare are the minds that are foremost to throw aside even the most innocent prejudices, and anticipate the enlargements of the public mind! How many also are calumniated and persecuted for so doing, whose memories, for the same identical reason, are loved, perhaps adored, by the descendants of the calumniators! In a public library, in Pulci's native place, is preserved a little withered relic, to which the attention of the visitor is drawn with reverential complacency. It stands, pointing upwards, under a glass-case, looking like a mysterious bit of parchment; and is the finger of Galileo; of that Galileo, whose hand, possessing that finger, is supposed to have been tortured by the Inquisition for writing what every one now believes. He was certainly persecuted and imprisoned by the Inquisition. Milton saw and visited him under the restraint of that scientific body in his own house. Yet Galileo did more by his disclosures of the stars towards elevating

* Canto xxv. The passage will be found in the present volume.

† Id. And this also.

our ideas of the Creator, than all the so-called saints and polemics that screamed at one another in the pulpits of East and West.

Like the *Commedia* of Dante, Pulci's "Commedia" (for such also in regard to its general cheerfulness,* and probably to its mediocrity of style, he calls it) is a representative in great measure of the feeling and knowledge of his time; and though not entirely such in a learned and eclectic sense, and not to be compared to that sublime monstrosity in point of genius and power, is as superior to it in liberal opinion and in a certain pervading lovingness, as the author's affectionate disposition, and his country's advance in civilisation, combined to render it. The editor of the *Parnaso Italiano* had reason to notice this engaging personal character in our author's work. He says, speaking of the principal romantic poets of Italy, that the reader will "admire Tasso, will adore Ariosto, but will love Pulci."† And all minds, in which lovingness produces love, will agree with him.

The *Morgante Maggiore* is a history of the fabulous exploits and death of Orlando, the great hero of Italian romance, and of the wars and calamities brought on his fellow Paladins and their sovereign Charlemagne by the envy, ambition, and treachery of the misguided monarch's favourite, Gan of Maganza (Mayence), Count of Poitiers. It is founded on the pseudo-history of Archbishop Turpin, which, though it received the formal sanction of the Church, is a manifest forgery, and became such a jest with the wits, that they took a delight in palming upon it their most incredible fictions. The title (*Morgante the Great*) seems to have been either a whim to draw attention to an old subject, or the result of an intention to do more with the giant so called than took place; for though he is a conspicuous actor in the earlier part of the poem, he dies when it is not much more than half completed.

* Canto xxvii. stanza 2.

"S' altro ajuto qui non si dimostra,
Sarà pur tragedia la istoria nostra.

Ed io pur commedia pensato avea
Iscrivere del mio Carlo finalmente,
Ed *Alcuin* così mi promettea," &c.

† "In fine tu adorerai l'Ariosto, tu ammirerai il Tasso, ma tu amerai il Pulci."—*Parn. Ital.* vol. ix. p. 344.

Orlando, the champion of the faith, is the real hero of it, and Gan the anti-hero or vice. Charlemagne, the reader hardly need be told, is represented, for the most part, as a very different person from what he appears in history. In truth, as Ellis and Panizzi have shewn, he is either an exaggeration (still misrepresented) of Charles Martel, the Armorican chieftan, who conquered the Saracens at Poitiers, or a concretion of all the Charleses of the Carlovingian race, wise and simple, potent and weak.*

The story may be thus briefly told. Orlando quits the court of Charlemagne in disgust, but is always ready to return to it when the emperor needs his help. The best Paladins follow, to seek him. He meets with and converts the giant Morgante, whose aid he receives in many adventures, among which is the taking of Babylon. The other Paladins, his cousin Rinaldo especially, have their separate adventures, all more or less mixed up with the treacheries and thanklessness of Gan (for they assist even him), and the provoking trust reposed in him by Charlemagne; and at length the villain crowns his infamy by luring Orlando with most of the Paladins into the pass of Roncesvalles, where the hero himself and almost all his companions are slain by the armies of Gan's fellow-traitor, Marsilius, king of Spain. They die, however, victorious; and the two royal and noble scoundrels, by a piece of prosaical justice better than poetical, are despatched like common malefactors with a halter.

There is, perhaps, no pure invention in the whole of this enlargement of old ballads and chronicles, except the characters of another giant, and of a rebel angel; for even Morgante's history, though told in a very different manner, has its prototype in the fictions of the pretended archbishop.† The Paladins are well dis-

* Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Poetical Romances*, vol. ii. p. 287; and Panizzi's *Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians*, in his edition of Boiardo and Ariosto, vol. i. p. 113.

† *De Vita Caroli Magni et Rolandi Historia*, &c. cap. xviii. p. 39 (Ciampi's edition). The giant in Turpin is named Ferracutus, or Fergus. He was of the race of Goliath, had the strength of forty men, and was twenty cubits high. During the suspension of a mortal combat with Orlando, they discuss the mysteries of the Christian faith, which its champion explains by a variety of similes and the most beautiful beggings of the question; after which the giant stakes the credit of their respective beliefs on the event of their encounter.

tinguished from one another ; Orlando as foremost alike in prowess and magnanimity, Rinaldo by his vehemence, Ricciardetto by his amours, Astolfo by an ostentatious rashness and self-committal ; but in all these respects they appear to have been made to the author's hand. Neither does the poem exhibit any prevailing force of imagery, or of expression, apart from popular idiomatic phraseology ; still less, though it has plenty of infernal magic, does it present us with any magical enchantments of the alluring order, as in Ariosto ; or with love stories as good as Boiardo's, or even with any of the luxuries of landscape and description that are to be found in both of those poets ; albeit, in the fourteenth canto, there is a long *catalogue raisonné* of the whole animal creation, which a lady has worked for Rinaldo on a pavilion of silk and gold.

To these negative faults must be added the positive ones of too many trifling, unconnected, and uninteresting incidents (at least to readers who cannot taste the flavour of the racy Tuscan idiom) ; great occasional prolixity, even in the best as well as worst passages, not excepting Orlando's dying speeches ; harshness in spite of his fluency (according to Foscolo), and even bad grammar ; too many low or over-familiar forms of speech (so the graver critics allege, though, perhaps, from want of animal spirits or a more comprehensive discernment) ; and lastly (to say nothing of the question as to the gravity or levity of the theology), the strange exhibition of whole successive stanzas, containing as many questions or affirmations as lines, and commencing each line with the same words. They meet the eye like palisades, or a file of soldiers, and turn truth and pathos itself into a jest. They were most likely imitated from the popular ballads. The following is the order of words in which a young lady thinks fit to complain of a desert, into which she has been carried away by a giant. After seven initiatory O's addressed to her friends and to life in general, she changes the key into E :

“ E' questa la mia patria dov' io nacqui ?
 E' questo il mio palagio e 'l mio castello ?
 E' questo il nido ov' alcun tempo giacqui ?
 E' questo il padre e 'l mio dolce fratello ?

E' questo il popol dov' io tanto piacqui ?
 E' questo il regno giusto antico e bello ?
 E' questo il porto de la mia salute ?
 E' questo il premio d' ogni mia virtute ?

Ove son or le mie purpuree veste ?
 Ove son or le gemme e le ricchezze ?
 Ove son or già le notturne feste ?
 Ove son or le mie delicatezze ?
 Ove son or le mie compagne oneste ?
 Ove son or le fuggite dolcezze ?
 Ove son or le damigelle mie ?
 Ove son, dico ? omè, non son già quie."*

Is this the country, then, where I was born ?
 Is this my palace, and my castle this ?
 Is this the nest I woke in, every morn ?
 Is this my father's and my brother's kiss ?
 Is this the land they bred me to adorn ?
 Is this the good old bower of all my bliss ?
 Is this the haven of my youth and beauty ?
 Is this the sure reward of all my duty ?

Where now are all my wardrobes and their treasures ?
 Where now are all my riches and my rights ?
 Where now are all the midnight feasts and measures ?
 Where now are all the delicate delights ?
 Where now are all the partners of my pleasures ?
 Where now are all the sweets of sounds and sights ?
 Where now are all my maidens ever near ?
 Where, do I say ? Alas, alas, not here !

There are seven more "where nows," including lovers, and "proffered husbands," and "romances," and ending with the startling question and answer,—the counterpoint of the former close,—

"Ove son l' aspre selve e i lupi adesso
 E gli orsi, e i draghi, e i tigri ? Son qui presso."

Where now are all the woods and forests drear,
 Wolves, tigers, bears, and dragons ? Alas, here !

These are all very natural thoughts, and such, no doubt, as would actually pass through the mind of the young lady, in the

* Canto xix. st. 21.

candour of desolation ; but the mechanical iteration of her mode of putting them renders them irresistibly ludicrous. It reminds us of the wager laid by the poor queen in the play of *Richard the Second*, when she overhears the discourse of the gardener :

“ My wretchedness unto a row of pins,
They'll talk of state.”

Did Pulci expect his friend Lorenzo to keep a grave face during the recital of these passages ? Or did he flatter himself that the comprehensive mind of his hearer could at one and the same time be amused with the banter of some old song and the pathos of the new one ?*

* When a proper name happens to be a part of the tautology, the look is still more extraordinary. Orlando is remonstrating with Rinaldo on his being unseasonably in love :

“ Ov' è, Rinaldo, la tua gagliardia ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, il tuo sommo potere ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, il tuo senno di pria ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, il tuo antivedere ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, la tua fantasia ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, l' arme e 'l tuo destriere ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, la tua gloria e fama ?
Ov' è, Rinaldo, il tuo core ? a la dama.”

Canto xvi. st. 50.

Oh where, Rinaldo, is thy gagliardize ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, is thy might indeed ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, thy repute for wise ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, thy sagacious heed ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, thy free-thoughted eyes ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, thy good arms and steed ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, thy renown and glory ?
Oh where, Rinaldo, *thou* ?—In a love-story.

The incessant repetition of the names in the burdens of modern songs is hardly so bad as this. The single line questions and answers in the Greek drama were nothing to it. Yet there is a still more extraordinary play upon words in canto xxiii. st. 49, consisting of the description of a hermitage. It is the only one of the kind which I remember in the poem, and would have driven some of our old hunters after alliteration mad with envy :—

*La casa cosa pareva bretta e brutta,
Vinta dal vento ; e la natta e la notte*

The want both of good love-episodes and of descriptions of external nature, in the *Morgante*, is remarkable ; for Pulci's tenderness of heart is constantly manifest, and he describes himself as being almost absorbed in his woods. That he understood love well in all its force and delicacy is apparent from a passage connected with this pavilion. The fair embroiderer, in presenting it to her idol Rinaldo, undervalues it as a gift which his great heart, nevertheless, will not disdain to accept ; adding, with the true lavishment of the passion, that "she wishes she could give him the sun ;" and that if she were to say, after all, that it was her own hands which had worked the pavilion, she should be wrong, for Love himself did it. Rinaldo wishes to thank her, but is so struck with her magnificence and affection, that the words die on his lips. The way also in which another of these loving admirers of Paladins conceives her affection for one of them, and persuades a vehemently hostile suitor quietly to withdraw his claims by presenting him with a ring and a graceful speech, is in

Stilla le stelle, ch' a tetto era tutto :
Del pane appena ne dette ta' dotte :
Pere avea pure, e qualehe fratta frutta ;
E svina e svena di botto una botte :
Poscia per pesci lasche prese a l' esca ;
Ma il letto allotta a la frasca fu fresca."

This holy hole was a vile thin-built thing,
Blown by the blast ; the night nought else o'erhead
But staring stars the rude roof entering ;
Their sup of supper was no splendid spread ;
Poor pears their fare, and such-like libelling
Of quantum suff. ;—their butt all but ;—bad bread ;—
A flash of fish instead of flush of flesh ;
Their bed a frisk al-fresco, freezing fresh.

Really, if Sir Philip Sidney and other serious and exquisite gentlemen had not sometimes taken a positively grave interest in the like pastimes of paronomasia, one should hardly conceive it possible to meet with them even in tragi-comedy. Did Pulci find these also in his ballad-authorities ? If his Greek-loving critics made objections here, they had the advantage of him : unless indeed they too, in their Alexandrian predilections, had a sneaking regard for certain shapings of verse into altars and hatchets, such as have been charged upon Theocritus himself, and which might be supposed to warrant any other conceit on occasion.

a taste as high as any thing in Boiardo, and superior to the more animal passion of the love in their great successor.* Yet the tenderness of Pulci rather shews itself in the friendship of the Paladins for one another, and in perpetual little escapes of generous and affectionate impulse. This is one of the great charms of the *Morgante*. The first adventure in the book is Orlando's encounter with three giants in behalf of a good abbot, in whom he discovers a kinsman; and this goodness and relationship combined move the Achilles of Christendom to tears. Morgante, one of these giants, who is converted, becomes a sort of squire to his conqueror, and takes such a liking to him, that, seeing him one day deliver himself not without peril out of the clutches of a devil, he longs to go and set free the whole of the other world from devils. Indeed there is no end to his affection for him. Rinaldo and other Paladins, meantime, cannot rest till they have set out in search of Orlando. They never meet or part with him without manifesting a tenderness proportionate to their valour, —the old Homeric candour of emotion. The devil Ashtaroth himself, who is a great and proud devil, assures Rinaldo, for whom he has conceived a regard, that there is good feeling (*gentilezza*) even in hell; and Rinaldo, not to hurt the feeling, answers that he has no doubt of it, or of the capability of "friendship" in that quarter; and he says he is as "sorry to part with him as with a brother." The passage will be found in our abstract. There are no such devils as these in Dante; though Milton has something like them:

"Devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds: men only disagree."

It is supposed that the character of Ashtaroth, which is a very

* See, in the original, the story of Meridiana, canto vii. King Manfredonio has come in loving hostility against her to endeavour to win her affection by his prowess. He finds her assisted by the Paladins, and engaged by her own heart to Uliviero; and in the despair of his discomfiture, expresses a wish to die by her hand. Meridiana, with graceful pity, begs his acceptance of a jewel, and recommends him to go home with his army; to which he grievously consents. This indeed is beautiful; and perhaps I ought to have given an abstract of it, as a specimen of what Pulci could have done in this way, had he chosen.

new and extraordinary one, and does great honour to the daring goodness of Pulci's imagination, was not lost upon Milton, who was not only acquainted with the poem, but expressly intimates the pleasure he took in it.* Rinaldo advises this devil, as Burns did Lucifer, to "take a thought and mend." Ashtaroth, who had been a seraph, takes no notice of the advice, except with a waving of the recollection of happier times. He bids the hero farewell, and says he has only to summon him in order to receive his aid. This retention of a sense of his former angelical dignity has been noticed by Foscolo and Panizzi, the two best writers on these Italian poems.† A Calvinist would call the expression of the sympathy "hardened." A humanist knows it to be the result of a spirit exquisitely softened. An unbounded tenderness is the secret of all that is beautiful in the serious portion of our author's genius. Orlando's good-natured giant weeps even for the death of the scoundrel Margutte; and the awful hero himself, at whose death nature is convulsed and the heavens open, begs his dying horse to forgive him if ever he has wronged it.

A charm of another sort in Pulci, and yet in most instances, perhaps, owing the best part of its charmingness to its being connected with the same feeling, is his wit. Foscolo, it is true, says it is, in general, more severe than refined; and it is perilous

* "Perhaps it was from that same politic drift that the devil whipt St. Jerome in a lenten dream for reading Cicero; or else it was a fantasm bred by the fever which had then seized him. For had an angel been his discipliner, unless it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms, and had chastised the reading and not the vanity, it had been plainly partial; first to correct him for grave Cicero, and not for scurrile Plautus, whom he confesses to have been reading not long before; next, to correct him only, and let so many more ancient fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that Basil teaches how some good use may be made of Margites, a sportful poem, not now extant, writ by Homer; and why not then of Morgante, an Italian romance much to the same purpose?"—*Areopagitica, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, Prose Works, folio, 1697, p. 378. I quote the passage as extracted by Mr. Merivale in the preface to his "Orlando in Roncesvalles,"—*Poems*, vol. ii. p. 41.

† Ut sup. p. 222. Foscolo's remark is to be found in his admirable article on the *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*, in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi. p. 525.

to differ with such a critic on such a point; for much of it, unfortunately, is lost to a foreign reader, in consequence of its dependance on the piquant old Tuscan idiom, and on popular sayings and allusions. Yet I should think it impossible for Pulci in general to be severe at the expense of some more agreeable quality; and I am sure that the portion of his wit most obvious to a foreigner may claim, if not to have originated, at least to have been very like the style of one who was among its declared admirers,—and who was a very polished writer,—Voltaire. It consists in treating an absurdity with an air as if it were none; or as if it had been a pure matter of course, erroneously mistaken for an absurdity. Thus the good abbot, whose monastery is blockaded by the giants (for the virtue and simplicity of his character must be borne in mind), after observing that the ancient fathers in the desert had not only locusts to eat, but manna, which he has no doubt was rained down on purpose from heaven, laments that the “relishes” provided for himself and his brethren should have consisted of “showers of stones.” The stones, while the abbot is speaking, come thundering down, and he exclaims, “For God’s sake, knight, come in, for the manna is falling!” This is exactly in the style of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. So when Margutte is asked what he believes in, and says he believes in “neither black nor blue,” but in a good capon, “whether roast or boiled,” the reader is forcibly reminded of Voltaire’s Traveller, *Scarmiento*, who, when he is desired by the Tartars to declare which of their two parties he is for, the party of the black-mutton or the white-mutton, answers, that the dish is “equally indifferent to him, provided it is tender.” Voltaire, however, does injustice to Pulci, when he pretends that in matters of belief he is like himself,—a mere scoffer. The friend of Lucrezia Tornabuoni has evidently the tenderest veneration for all that is good and lovely in the Catholic faith; and whatever liberties he might have allowed himself in professed *extravaganzas*, when an age without Church-authority encouraged them, and a reverend canon could take part in those (it must be acknowledged) unseemly “high jinks,” he never, in the *Morgante*, when speaking in his own person, and not in that of the worst characters, intimates disrespect towards any opinion which he did

not hold to be irrelevant to a right faith. It is observable that his freest expressions are put in the mouth of the giant Margutte, the lowest of these characters, who is an invention of the author's, and a most extraordinary personage. He is the first unmitigated blackguard in fiction, and is the greatest as well as first. Pulci is conjectured, with great probability, to have designed him as a caricature of some real person; for Margutte is a Greek who, in point of morals, has been horribly brought up, and some of the Greek refugees in Italy were greatly disliked for the cynicism of their manners and the grossness of their lives. Margutte is a glutton, a drunkard, a liar, a thief, and a blasphemer. He boasts of having every vice, and no virtue except fidelity; which is meant to reconcile Morgante to his company; but though the latter endures and even likes it for his amusement, he gives him to understand that he looks on his fidelity as only securable by the bastinado, and makes him the subject of his practical jokes. The respectable giant Morgante dies of the bite of a crab, as if to shew on what trivial chances depends the life of the strongest. Margutte laughs himself to death at sight of a monkey putting his boots on and off; as though the good-natured poet meant at once to express his contempt of a merely and grossly anti-serious mode of existence, and his consideration, nevertheless, towards the poor selfish wretch who had had no better training.

To this wit and this pathos let the reader add a style of singular ease and fluency,—rhymes often the most unexpected, but never at a loss,—a purity of Tuscan acknowledged by every body, and ranking him among the authorities of the language,—and a modesty in speaking of his own pretensions equalled only by his enthusiastic extolments of genius in others; and the reader has before him the lively and affecting, hopeful, charitable, large-hearted Luigi Pulci, the precursor, and in some respects exemplar, of Ariosto, and, in Milton's opinion, a poet worth reading for the "good use" that may be made of him. It has been strangely supposed that his friend Politian, and Ficino the Platonist, not merely helped him with their books (as he takes a pride in telling us), but wrote a good deal of the latter part of the Morgante, particularly the speculations in matters of opinion. As if (to say nothing of the difference of style) a man of genius, how-

ever lively, did not go through the gravest reflections in the course of his life, or could not enter into any theological or metaphysical question, to which he chose to direct his attention. Animal spirits themselves are too often but a counterbalance to the most thoughtful melancholy; and one fit of jaundice or hypochondria might have enabled the poet to see more visions of the unknown and the inscrutable in a single day, than perhaps ever entered the imagination of the elegant Latin scholar, or even the disciple of Plato.

HUMOURS OF GIANTS.

HUMOURS OF GIANTS.

NUMBERS OF PLANTS

HUMOURS OF GIANTS.

TWELVE Paladins had the Emperor Charlemagne in his court ; and the most wise and famous of them was Orlando. It is of him I am about to speak, and of his friend Morgante, and of Gan the traitor, who beguiled him to his death in Roncesvalles, where he sounded his horn so mightily after the dolorous rout.

It was Easter, and Charles had all his court with him in Paris, making high feast and triumph. There was Orlando, the first among them, and Ogier the Dane, and Astolfo the Englishman, and Ansuigi ; and there came Angiolin of Bayonne, and Uliviero, and the gentle Berlinghieri ; and there was also Avolio and Avino, and Otho of Normandy, and Richard, and the wise Namon, and the aged Salamon, and Walter of Monlione, and Baldwin who was the son of the wretched Gan. The good emperor was too happy, and oftentimes fairly groaned for joy at seeing all his Paladins together.

But Fortune stands watching in secret to baffle our designs. While Charles was thus hugging himself with delight, Orlando governed every thing at court, and this made Gan burst with envy ; so that he began one day talking with Charles after the following manner :—“ Are we always to have Orlando for our master ? I have thought of speaking to you about it a thousand times. Orlando has a great deal too much presumption. Here are we, counts, dukes, and kings, at your service, but not at his ; and we have resolved not to be governed any longer by one so much younger than ourselves. You began in Aspramont to give him to understand how valiant he was, and that he did great things at that fountain ; whereas, if it had not been for the good Gerard, I know very well where the victory would have been. The truth is, he has an eye upon the crown. This, Charles, is

the worthy who has deserved so much! All your generals are afflicted at it. As for me, I shall repass those mountains over which I came to you with seventy-two counts. Do you take him for a Mars?"

Orlando happened to hear these words as he sat apart, and it displeased him with the lord of Pontiers that he should speak so, but much more that Charles should believe him. He would have killed Gan, if Uliviero had not prevented him and taken his sword out of his hand; nay, he would have killed Charlemagne; but at last he went from Paris by himself, raging with scorn and grief. He borrowed, as he went, of Ermillina the wife of Ogier, the Dane's sword Cortana and his horse Rondel, and proceeded on his way to Brava. His wife, Alda the Fair, hastened to embrace him; but while she was saying, "Welcome, my Orlando," he was going to strike her with his sword, for his head was bewildered, and he took her for the traitor. The fair Alda marvelled greatly, but Orlando recollected himself, and she took hold of the bridle, and he leaped from his horse, and told her all that had passed, and rested himself with her for some days.

He then took his leave, being still carried away by his disdain, and resolved to pass over into Heathendom; and as he rode, he thought, every step of the way, of the traitor Gan; and so, riding on wherever the road took him, he reached the confines between the Christian countries and the Pagan, and came upon an abbey, situate in a dark place in a desert.

Now above the abbey was a great mountain, inhabited by three fierce giants, one of whom was named Passamonte, another Alabastro, and the third Morgante; and these giants used to disturb the abbey by throwing things down upon it from the mountain with slings, so that the poor little monks could not go out to fetch wood or water. Orlando knocked, but nobody would open till the abbot was spoken to. At last the abbot came himself, and opening the door bade him welcome. The good man told him the reason of the delay, and said that since the arrival of the giants they had been so perplexed that they did not know what to do. "Our ancient fathers in the desert," quoth he, "were rewarded according to their holiness. It is not to be supposed that they lived only upon locusts; doubtless, it also rained man-

na upon them from heaven ; but here one is regaled with stones, which the giants pour on us from the mountain. These are our nice bits and relishes. The fiercest of the three, Morgante, plucks up pines and other great trees by the roots, and casts them on us." While they were talking thus in the cemetery, there came a stone which seemed as if it would break Rondel's back.

"For God's sake, cavalier," said the abbot, "come in, for the manna is falling."

"My dear Abbot," answered Orlando, "this fellow, methinks, does not wish to let my horse feed ; he wants to cure him of being restive ; the stone seems as if it came from a good arm."

"Yes," replied the holy father, "I did not deceive you. I think, some day or other, they will cast the mountain itself on us."

Orlando quieted his horse, and then sat down to a meal ; after which he said, "Abbot, I must go and return the present that has been made to my horse." The abbot with great tenderness endeavoured to dissuade him, but in vain ; upon which he crossed him on the forehead, and said, "Go, then ; and the blessing of God be with you."

Orlando scaled the mountain, and came where Passamonte was, who, seeing him alone, measured him with his eyes, and asked him if he would stay with him for a page, promising to make him comfortable. "Stupid Saracen," said Orlando, "I come to you, according to the will of God, to be your death, and not your foot-boy. You have displeased his servants here, and are no longer to be endured, dog that you are !"

The giant, finding himself thus insulted, ran in a fury to his weapons ; and returning to Orlando, slung at him a large stone, which struck him on the head with such force, as not only made his helmet ring again, but felled him to the earth. Passamonte thought he was dead. "What could have brought that paltry fellow here ?" said he, as he turned away.

But Christ never forsakes his followers. While Passamonte was going away, Orlando recovered, and cried aloud, "How now, giant ? do you fancy you have killed me ? Turn back, for unless you have wings, your escape is out of the question,

dog of a renegade!" The giant, greatly marvelling, turned back; and stooping to pick up a stone, Orlando, who had Cortana naked in his hand, cleft his skull; upon which, cursing Mahomet, the monster tumbled, dying and blaspheming, to the ground. Blaspheming fell the sour-hearted and cruel wretch; but Orlando, in the mean while, thanked the Father and the Word.

The Paladin went on, seeking for Alabastro, the second giant; who, when he saw him, endeavoured to pluck up a great piece of stony earth by the roots. "Ho, ho!" cried Orlando, "you too are for throwing stones, are you?" Then Alabastro took his sling, and flung at him so large a fragment as forced Orlando to defend himself, for if it had struck him, he would no more have needed a surgeon;* but collecting his strength, he thrust his sword into the giant's breast, and the loggerhead fell dead.

Now Morgante, the only surviving brother, had a palace made, after giant's fashion, of earth, and boughs, and shingles, in which he shut himself up at night. Orlando knocked, and disturbed him from his sleep, so that he came staring to the door like a madman, for he had had a bewildering dream.

"Who knocks there?" quoth he.

"You will know too soon," answered Orlando; "I am come to make you do penance for your sins, like your brothers. Divine Providence has sent me to avenge the wrongs of the monks upon the whole set of you. Doubt it not; for Passamonte and Alabastro are already as cold as a couple of pilasters."

"Noble knight," said Morgante, "do me no ill; but if you are a Christian, tell me in courtesy who you are."

"I will satisfy you of my faith," replied Orlando; "I adore Christ; and if you please, you may adore him also."

"I have had a strange vision," replied Morgante, with a low voice: "I was assailed by a dreadful serpent, and called upon Mahomet in vain; then I called upon your God who was cruci-

* A common pleasantry in the old romances.—"Galaor went in, and then the halberders attacked him on one side, and the knight on the other. He snatched an axe from one, and turned to the knight and smote him, so that he had no need of a surgeon."—Southey's *Amadis of Gaul*, vol. i. p. 146.

fied, and he succoured me, and I was delivered from the serpent ; so I am disposed to become a Christian.”

“If you keep in this mind,” returned Orlando, “you shall worship the true God, and come with me and be my companion, and I will love you with perfect love. Your idols are false and vain ; the true God is the God of the Christians. Deny the unjust and villanous worship of your Mahomet, and be baptised in the name of my God, who alone is worthy.”

“I am content,” said Morgante.

Then Orlando embraced him, and said, “I will lead you to the abbey.”

“Let us go quickly,” replied Morgante, for he was impatient to make his peace with the monks.

Orlando rejoiced, saying, “My good brother, and devout withal, you must ask pardon of the abbot ; for God has enlightened you, and accepted you, and he would have you practise humility.”

“Yes,” said Morgante, “thanks to you, your God shall henceforth be my God. Tell me your name, and afterwards dispose of me as you will.” And he told him that he was Orlando.

“Blessed Jesus be thanked,” said the giant, “for I have always heard you called a perfect knight ; and as I said, I will follow you all my life long.”

And so conversing, they went together towards the abbey ; and by the way Orlando talked with Morgante of the dead giants, and sought to comfort him, saying they had done the monks a thousand injuries, and “our Scripture says the good shall be rewarded and the evil punished, and we must submit to the will of God. The doctors of our Church,” continued he, “are all agreed, that if those who are glorified in heaven were to feel pity for their miserable kindred who lie in such horrible confusion in hell, their beatitude would come to nothing ; and this, you see, would plainly be unjust on the part of God. But such is the firmness of their faith, that what appears good to him appears good to them. Do what he may, they hold it to be done well, and that it is impossible for him to err ; so that if their very fathers and mothers are suffering everlasting punishment, it does not disturb them

an atom. This is the custom, I assure you, in the choirs above.”*

“A word to the wise,” said Morgante; “you shall see if I grieve for my brethren, and whether or no I submit to the will of God, and behave myself like an angel. So dust to dust; and now let us enjoy ourselves. I will cut off their hands, all four of them, and take them to these holy monks, that they may be sure they are dead, and not fear to go out alone into the desert. They will then be certain also that the Lord has purified me, and taken me out of darkness, and assured to me the kingdom of

* “Sonsi i nostri dottori accordati,
 Pigliando tutti una conclusione,
 Che que’ che son nel ciel glorificati,
 S’ avessin nel pensier compassione
 De’ miseri parenti che dannati
 Son ne lo inferno in gran confusione,
 La lor felicità nulla sarebbe:
 E vedi che qui ingiusto Iddio parebbe.

Ma egli anno posto in Gesù ferma spene;
 E tanto pare a lor, quanto a lui pare:
 Afferman ciò ch’ e’ fa, che facci bene,
 E che non possi in nessun modo errare:
 Se padre o madre è ne l’ eterne pene,
 Di questo non si posson conturbare:
 Che quel che piace a Dio, sol piace a loro;
 Questo s’ osserva ne l’ eterno coro.

Al savio suol bastar poche parole,
 Disse Morgante: tu il potrai vedere,
 De’ miei fratelli, Orlando, se mi duole,
 E s’ io m’ accorderò di Dio al volere,
 Come tu di che in ciel servir si suole:
 Morti co’ morti; or pensiam di godere:
 Io vo’ tagliar le mani a tutti quanti,
 E porterolle a que’ monaci santi.”

This doctrine, which is horrible blasphemy in the eyes of natural feeling, is good reasoning in Catholic and Calvinistic theology. They first make the Deity’s actions a necessity from more barbarous assumption, then square them according to a dictum of the Councils, then compliment him by laying all that he has made good and kindly within us mangled and mad at his feet. Mean-time they think themselves qualified to denounce Moloch and Juggernaut!

heaven." So saying, the giant cut off the hands of his brethren, and left their bodies to the beasts and birds.

They went to the abbey, where the abbot was expecting Orlando in great anxiety ; but the monks not knowing what had happened, ran to the abbot in great haste and alarm, saying, " Will you suffer this giant to come in ?" And when the abbot saw the giant, he changed countenance. Orlando, perceiving him thus disturbed, made haste and said, " Abbot, peace be with you ! The giant is a Christian ; he believes in Christ, and has renounced his false prophet, Mahomet." And Morgante shewing the hands in proof of his faith, the abbot thanked Heaven with great contentment of mind.

The abbot did much honour to Morgante, comparing him with St. Paul ; and they rested there many days. One day, wandering over the house, they entered a room where the abbot kept a quantity of armour ; and Morgante saw a bow which pleased him, and he fastened it on. Now there was in the place a great scarcity of water ; and Orlando said, like his good brother, " Morgante, I wish you would fetch us some water." " Command me as you please," said he ; and placing a great tub on his shoulders, he went towards a spring at which he had been accustomed to drink, at the foot of the mountain. Having reached the spring, he suddenly heard a great noise in the forest. He took an arrow from the quiver, placed it in the bow, and raising his head, saw a great herd of swine rushing towards the spring where he stood. Morgante shot one of them clean through the head, and laid him sprawling. Another, as if in revenge, ran towards the giant, without giving him time to use a second arrow ; so he lent him a cuff on the head which broke the bone, and killed him also ; which stroke the rest seeing fled in haste through the valley. Morgante then placed the tub full of water upon one of his shoulders, and the two porkers on the other, and returned to the abbey which was at some distance, without spilling a drop.

The monks were delighted to see the fresh water, but still more the pork ; for there is no animal to whom food comes amiss. They let their breviaries therefore go to sleep a while, and fell

heartily to work, so that the cats and dogs had reason to lament the polish of the bones.

“But why do we stay here doing nothing?” said Orlando one day to Morgante; and he shook hands with the abbot, and told him he must take his leave. “I must go,” said he, “and make up for lost time. I ought to have gone long ago, my good father; but I cannot tell you what I feel within me, at the content I have enjoyed here in your company. I shall bear in mind and in heart with me for ever the abbot, the abbey, and this desert, so great is the love they have raised in me in so short a time. The great God, who reigns above, must thank you for me, in his own abode. Bestow on us your benediction, and do not forget us in your prayers.”

When the abbot heard the County Orlando talk thus, his heart melted within him for tenderness, and he said, “Knight, if we have failed in any courtesy due to your prowess and great gentleness (and indeed what we have done has been but little), pray put it to the account of our ignorance, and of the place which we inhabit. We are but poor men of the cloister, better able to regale you with masses and orisons and paternosters, than with dinners and suppers. You have so taken this heart of mine by the many noble qualities I have seen in you, that I shall be with you still wherever you go; and, on the other hand, you will always be present here with me. This seems a contradiction, but you are wise, and will take my meaning discreetly. You have saved the very life and spirit within us; for so much perplexity had those giants cast about our place, that the way to the Lord among us was blocked up. May He who sent you into these woods reward the justice and piety by which we are delivered from our trouble. Thanks be to him and to you. We shall all be disconsolate at your departure. We shall grieve that we cannot detain you among us for months and years; but you do not wear these weeds; you bear arms and armour; and you may possibly merit as well in carrying those, as in wearing this cap. You read your Bible, and your virtue has been the means of shewing the giant the way to heaven. Go in peace then, and prosper, whoever you may be. I do not seek your name; but if ever I am asked who it was that came among us, I shall say that it was

an angel from God. If there is any armour or other thing that you would have, go into the room where it is, and take it."

"If you have any armour that would suit my companion," replied Orlando, "that I will accept with pleasure."

"Come and see," said the abbot; and they went to a room that was full of armour. Morgante looked all about, but could find nothing large enough, except a rusty breast-plate, which fitted him marvellously. It had belonged to an enormous giant, who was killed there of old by Orlando's father, Milo of Angrante. There was a painting on the wall which told the whole story: how the giant had laid cruel and long siege to the abbey; and how he had been overthrown at last by the great Milo. Orlando seeing this, said within himself: "O God, unto whom all things are known, how came Milo here, who destroyed this giant?" And reading certain inscriptions which were there, he could no longer keep a firm countenance, but the tears ran down his cheeks.

When the abbot saw Orlando weep, and his brow redden, and the light of his eyes become child-like for sweetness, he asked him the reason; but, finding him still dumb with emotion, he said, "I do not know whether you are overpowered by admiration of what is painted in this chamber. You must know that I am of high descent, though not through lawful wedlock. I believe I may say I am nephew or sister's son to no less a man than that Rinaldo, who was so great a Paladin in the world, though my own father was not of a lawful mother. Ansuigi was his name; my own, out in the world, was Chiaramonte; and this Milo was my father's brother. Ah, gentle baron, for blessed Jesus' sake, tell me what name is yours!"

Orlando, all glowing with affection, and bathed in tears, replied, "My dear abbot and cousin, he before you is your Orlando." Upon this, they ran for tenderness into each other's arms, weeping on both sides with a sovereign affection, too high to be expressed. The abbot was so overjoyed, that he seemed as if he would never have done embracing Orlando. "By what fortune," said the knight, "do I find you in this obscure place? Tell me, my dear abbot, how was it you became a monk, and did not follow arms, like myself and the rest of us?"

“It is the will of God,” replied the abbot, hastening to give his feelings utterance. “Many and divers are the paths he points out for us by which to arrive at his city; some walk it with the sword—some with pastoral staff. Nature makes the inclination different, and therefore there are different ways for us to take: enough if we all arrive safely at one and the same place, the last as well as the first. We are all pilgrims through many kingdoms. We all wish to go to Rome, Orlando; but we go picking out our journey through different roads. Such is the trouble in body and soul brought upon us by that sin of the old apple. Day and night am I here with my book in hand—day and night do you ride about, holding your sword, and sweating oft both in sun and shadow; and all to get round at last to the home from which we departed—I say, all out of anxiety and hope to get back to our home of old.” And the giant hearing them talk of these things, shed tears also.

The Paladin and the giant quitted the abbey, the one on horse-back and the other on foot, and journeyed through the desert till they came to a magnificent castle, the door of which stood open. They entered, and found rooms furnished in the most splendid manner—beds covered with cloth of gold, and floors rejoicing in variegated marbles. There was even a feast prepared in the saloon, but nobody to eat it, or to speak to them.

Orlando suspected some trap, and did not quite like it; but Morgante thought nothing worth considering but the feast. “Who cares for the host,” said he, “when there’s such a dinner? Let us eat as much as we can, and bear off the rest. I always do that when I have the picking of castles.”

They accordingly sat down, and being very hungry with their day’s journey, devoured heaps of the good things before them, eating with all the vigour of health, and drinking to a pitch of weakness.* They sat late in this manner enjoying themselves, and then retired for the night into rich beds.

* “E forno al bere infermi, al mangiar sani.”

I am not sure that I am right in my construction of this passage. Perhaps Pulci means to say, that they had the appetites of men in health, and the thirst of a fever.

But what was their astonishment in the morning at finding that they could not get out of the place! There was no door. All the entrances had vanished, even to any feasible window.

“We must be dreaming,” said Orlando.

“My dinner was no dream, I’ll swear,” said the giant. “As for the rest, let it be a dream if it pleases.”

Continuing to search up and down, they at length found a vault with a tomb in it; and out of the tomb came a voice, saying, “You must encounter with me, or stay here for ever. Lift, therefore, the stone that covers me.”

“Do you hear that?” said Morgante; “I’ll have him out, if it’s the devil himself. Perhaps it’s two devils, Filthy-dog and Foul-mouth, or Itching and Evil-tail.”*

“Have him out,” said Orlando, “whoever he is, even were it as many devils as were rained out of heaven into the centre.”

Morgante lifted up the stone, and out leaped, surely enough, a devil in the likeness of a dried-up dead body, black as a coal. Orlando seized him, and the devil grappled with Orlando. Morgante was for joining him, but the Paladin bade him keep back. It was a hard struggle, and the devil grinned and laughed, till the giant, who was a master of wrestling, could bear it no longer: so he doubled him up, and, in spite of all his efforts, thrust him back into the tomb.

“You’ll never get out,” said the devil, “if you leave me shut up.”

“Why not?” inquired the Paladin.

“Because your giant’s baptism and my deliverance must go together,” answered the devil. “If he is not baptised, you can have no deliverance; and if I am not delivered, I can prevent it still, take my word for it.”

Orlando baptised the giant. The two companions then issued forth, and hearing a mighty noise in the house, looked back, and saw it all vanished.

“I could find it in my heart,” said Morgante, “to go down to those same regions below, and make all the devils disappear in like manner. Why shouldn’t we do it? We’d set free all the

* Cagnazzo, Farfarello, Libicocco, and Malacoda; names of devils in Dante.

poor souls there. Egad, I'd cut off Minos's tail—I'd pull out Charon's beard by the roots—make a sop of Phlegyas, and a sup of Phlegethon—unseat Pluto,—kill Cerberus and the Furies with a punch of the face a-piece—and set Beelzebub scampering like a dromedary."

"You might find more trouble than you wot of," quoth Orlando, 'and get worsted besides. Better keep the straight path, than thrust your head into out-of-the-way places."

Morgante took his lord's advice, and went straightforward with him through many great adventures, helping him with loving good-will as often as he was permitted, sometimes as his pioneer, and sometimes as his finisher of troublesome work, such as a slaughter of some thousands of infidels. Now he chucked a spy into a river—now felled a rude ambassador to the earth (for he didn't stand upon ceremony)—now cleared a space round him in battle with the clapper of an old bell which he had found at the monastery—now doubled up a king in his tent, and bore him away, tent and all, and a Paladin with him, because he would not let the Paladin go.

In the course of these services, the giant was left to take care of a lady, and lost his master for a time; but the office being at an end, he set out to rejoin him, and, arriving at a cross-road, met with a very extraordinary personage.

This was a giant huger than himself, swarthy-faced, horrible, brutish. He came out of a wood, and appeared to be journeying somewhere. Morgante, who had the great bell-clapper in his hand above-mentioned, struck it on the ground with astonishment, as much as to say, "Who the devil is this?" and then set himself on a stone by the way-side to observe the creature.

"What's your name, traveller?" said Morgante, as it came up.

"My name's Margutte," said the phenomenon. "I intended to be a giant myself, but altered my mind, you see, and stopped half-way; so that I am only twenty feet or so."

"I'm glad to see you," quoth his brother-giant. "But tell me, are you Christian or Saracen? Do you believe in Christ or in *Apollo*?"

"To tell you the truth," said the other, "I believe neither in

black nor blue, but in a good capon, whether it be roast or boiled. I believe sometimes also in butter, and, when I can get it, in new wine, particularly the rough sort; but, above all, I believe in wine that's good and old. Mahomet's prohibition of it is all moonshine. I am the son, you must know, of a Greek nun and a Turkish bishop; and the first thing I learned was to play the fiddle. I used to sing Homer to it. I was then concerned in a brawl in a mosque, in which the old bishop somehow happened to be killed; so I tied a sword to my side, and went to seek my fortune, accompanied by all the possible sins of Turk and Greek. People talk of the seven deadly sins; but I have seventy-seven that never quit me, summer or winter; by which you may judge of the amount of my venial ones. I am a gambler, a cheat, a ruffian, a highwayman, a pickpocket, a glutton (at beef or blows); have no shame whatever; love to let every body know what I can do; lie, besides, about what I can't do; have a particular attachment to sacrilege; swallow perjuries like figs; never give a farthing to any body, but beg of every body, and abuse them into the bargain; look upon not spilling a drop of liquor as the chief of all the cardinal virtues; but must own I am not much given to assassination, murder being inconvenient; and one thing I am bound to acknowledge, which is, that I never betrayed a messmate."

"That's as well," observed Morgante; "because you see, as you don't believe in any thing else, I'd have you believe in this bell-clapper of mine. So now, as you have been candid with me, and I am well instructed in your ways, we'll pursue our journey together."

The best of giants, in those days, were not scrupulous in their modes of living; so that one of the best and one of the worst got on pretty well together, emptying the larders on the road, and paying nothing but douses on the chops. When they could find no inn, they hunted elephants and crocodiles. Morgante, who was the braver of the two, delighted to banter, and sometimes to cheat, Margutte; and he ate up all the fare; which made the other, notwithstanding the credit he gave himself for readiness of wit and tongue, cut a very sorry figure, and seriously remonstrate: "I reverence you, said Margutte, "in other matters; but in eat-

ing, you really don't behave well. He who deprives me of my share at meals is no friend; at every mouthful of which he robs me, I seem to lose an eye. I'm for sharing every thing to a nicety, even if it be no better than a fig."

"You are a fine fellow," said Morgante; "you gain upon me very much. You are 'the master of those who know.'"*

So saying, he made him put some wood on the fire, and perform a hundred other offices to render every thing snug; and then he slept: and next day he cheated his great scoundrelly companion at drink, as he had done the day before at meat; and the poor shabby devil complained; and Morgante laughed till he was ready to burst, and again and again always cheated him.

There was a levity, nevertheless, in Margutte, which restored his spirits on the slightest glimpse of good fortune; and if he realised a hearty meal, he became the happiest, beastliest, and most confident of giants. The companions, in the course of their journey, delivered a damsel from the clutches of three other giants. She was the daughter of a great lord; and when she got home, she did honour to Morgante as to an equal, and put Margutte into the kitchen, where he was in a state of bliss. He did nothing but swill, stuff, surfeit, be sick, play at dice, cheat, filch, go to sleep, guzzle again, laugh, chatter, and tell a thousand lies.

Morgante took leave of the young lady, who made him rich presents. Margutte, seeing this, and being always drunk and impudent, daubed his face like a Christmas clown, and making up to her with a frying-pan in his hand, demanded "something for the cook." The fair hostess gave him a jewel: and the vagabond shewed such a brutal eagerness in seizing it with his filthy hands, and making not the least acknowledgment, that when they got out of the house, Morgante was ready to fell him to the earth. He called him scoundrel and poltroon, and said he had disgraced him for ever.

"Softly!" said the brute-beast. "Didn't you take me with you, knowing what sort of fellow I was? Didn't I tell you I had every sin and shame under heaven; and have I deceived you by the exhibition of a single virtue?"

* "Il maestro di color che sanno." A jocos application of Dante's praise of Aristotle.

Morgante could not help laughing at a candour of this excessive nature. So they went on their way till they came to a wood, where they rested themselves by a fountain, and Margutte fell fast asleep. He had a pair of boots on, which Morgante felt tempted to draw off, that he might see what he would do on waking. He accordingly did so, and threw them to a little distance among the bushes. The sleeper awoke in good time, and, looking and searching round about, suddenly burst into roars of laughter. A monkey had got the boots, and sat pulling them on and off, making the most ridiculous gestures. The monkey busied himself, and the light-minded drunkard laughed; and at every fresh gesticulation of the new boot-wearer, the laugh grew louder and more tremendous, till at length it was found impossible to be restrained. The glutton had a laughing fit. In vain he tried to stop himself; in vain his fingers would have loosened the buttons of his doublet, to give his lungs room to play. They couldn't do it; so he laughed and roared till he burst. The snap was like the splitting of a cannon. Morgante ran up to him, but it was of no use. He was dead.

Alas! it was not the only death; it was not even the most trivial cause of a death. Giants are big fellows, but Death's a bigger, though he may come in a little shape. Morgante had succeeded in joining his master. He helped him to take Babylon; he killed a whale for him at sea that obstructed his passage; he played the part of a main-sail during a storm, holding out his arms and a great hide; but on coming to shore, a crab bit him in the heel; and behold the lot of the great giant—he died! He laughed, and thought it a very little thing, but it proved a mighty one. “He made the East tremble,” said Orlando; “and the bite of a crab has slain him!”

O life of ours, weak, and a fallacy!*

Orlando embalmed his huge friend, and had him taken to Babylon, and honourably interred; and after many an adventure, in which he regretted him, his own days were closed by a far baser, though not so petty a cause.

How shall I speak of it? exclaims the poet. How think of

* “O vita nostra, debole e fallace!”

the horrible slaughter about to fall on the Christians and their greatest men, so that not a dry eye shall be left in France? How express my disgust at the traitor Gan, whose heart a thousand pardons from his sovereign, and the most undeserved rescues of him by the warrior he betrayed, could not shame or soften? How mourn the weakness of Charles, always deceived by him, and always trusting? How dare to present to my mind the good, the great, the ever-generous Orlando, brought by the traitor into the doleful pass of Roncesvalles and the hands of myriads of his enemies, so that even his superhuman strength availed not to deliver him out of the slaughter-house, and he blew the blast with his dying breath, which was the mightiest, the farthest heard, and the most melancholy sound that ever came to the ears of the undeceived?

Gan was known well to every body but his confiding sovereign. The Paladins knew him well; and in their moments of indignant disgust often told him so, though they spared him the consequences of his misdeeds, and even incurred the most frightful perils to deliver him out of the hands of his enemies. But he was brave; he was in favour with the sovereign, who was also their kinsman; and they were loyal and loving men, and knew that the wretch envied them for the greatness of their achievements, and might do the state a mischief; so they allowed themselves to take a kind of scornful pleasure in putting up with him. Their cousin Malagigi, the enchanter, had himself assisted Gan, though he knew him best of all, and had prophesied that the innumerable endeavours of his envy to destroy his king and country would bring some terrible evil at last to all Christendom. The evil, alas! is at hand. The doleful time has come. It will be followed, it is true, by a worse fate of the wretch himself; but not till the valleys of the Pyrenees have run rivers of blood, and all France is in mourning.

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STORIES FROM THE ITALIAN POETS.

PART II.

STORIES

FROM THE

ITALIAN POETS:

BEING A SUMMARY IN PROSE

OF THE

POEMS OF DANTE, PULCI, BOIARDO, ARIOSTO AND TASSO;

WITH COMMENTS THROUGHOUT,

OCCASIONAL PASSAGES VERSIFIED,

AND

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE LIVES AND GENIUS OF THE AUTHORS.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

~~~~~  
IN THREE PARTS.

PART II.  
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NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

—————
1846.

Notice

This is the

an event which national and religious associations throughout Europe
popular mind of Europe. It was the last of the great battles of
the French people in history.

When Charlemagne with his army of 100,000 men
crossed the Pyrenees into Spain in 792, he was
pursuing the remnants of the Visigoths who had fled
from the battle of Tours in 732. He was also
seeking to convert the Spanish people to Christianity.
The battle of Roncesvalles was fought on October 10, 792,
when a small force of Basques ambushed and
destroyed the rear guard of Charlemagne's army.

THE BATTLE OF RONCESVALLES.

The battle of Roncesvalles was a decisive
victory for the Basques. It was the last
of the great battles of the Middle Ages.
The battle was fought on a narrow
pass between two high mountains.
The Basques had hidden their
ambush in the forest on the
left side of the pass. The
rear guard of Charlemagne's
army was marching in a
single file. The Basques
suddenly attacked from the
left. The rear guard was
destroyed. Charlemagne's
army was forced to retreat
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Notice.

THIS is the

“sad and fearful story
Of the Roncesvalles fight;”

an event which national and religious exaggeration impressed deeply on the popular mind of Europe. Hence Italian romances and Spanish ballads: hence the famous passage in Milton,

“When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia:”

hence Dante's record of the *dolorosa rotta* (dolorous rout) in the *Inferno*, where he compares the voice of Nimrod with the horn sounded by the dying Orlando: hence the peasant in Cervantes, who is met by Don Quixote singing the battle as he comes along the road in the morning: and hence the song of Roland actually thundered forth by the army of William the Conqueror as they advanced against the English.

But Charlemagne did not “fall,” as Milton has stated. Nor does Pulci make him do so. In this respect, if in little else, the Italian poet adhered to the fact. The whole story is a remarkable instance of what can be done by poetry and popularity towards misrepresenting and aggrandising a petty though striking adventure. The simple fact was the cutting off the rear of Charlemagne's army by the revolted Gascons, as he returned from a successful expedition into Spain. Two or three only of his nobles perished, among whom was his nephew Roland, the obscure warden of his marches of Brittany. But Charlemagne was the temporal head of Christendom; the poets constituted his nephew its champion; and hence all the glories and superhuman exploits of the Orlando of Pulci and Ariosto. The whole assumption of the wickedness of the Saracens, particularly of the then Saracen king of Spain, whom Pulci's authority, the pseudo-Archbishop, Turpin, strangely called Marsilius, was nothing but a pious fraud; the pretended Marsilius having been no less a person than the great and good Abdoùrahmaùn the First, who wrested the dominion of that country out of the hands of the usurpers of his family-rights. Yet so potent and long-lived are the most extravagant fictions, when genius has put its heart into them, that to this day we read of the devoted Orlando and his friends not only with gravity, but with the liveliest emotion.

THE BATTLE OF RONCESVALLES.

A MISERABLE man am I, cries the poet ; for Orlando, beyond a doubt, died in Roncesvalles ; and die therefore he must in my verses. Altogether impossible is it to save him. I thought to make a pleasant ending of this my poem, so that it should be happier somehow, throughout, than melancholy ; but though Gan will die at last, Orlando must die before him, and that makes a tragedy of all. I had a doubt, whether, consistently with the truth, I could give the reader even that sorry satisfaction ; for at the beginning of the dreadful battle, Orlando's cousin, Rinaldo, who is said to have joined it before it was over, and there, as well as afterwards, to have avenged his death, was far away from the seat of slaughter, in Egypt ; and how was I to suppose that he could arrive soon enough in the valleys of the Pyrenees ? But an angel upon earth shewed me the secret, even Angelo Poliziano, the glory of his age and country. He informed me how Arnould, the Provençal poet, had written of this very matter, and brought the Paladin from Egypt to France by means of the wonderful skill in occult science possessed by his cousin Malagigi—a wonder to the ignorant, but not so marvellous to those who know that all the creation is full of wonders, and who have different modes of relating the same events. By and by, a great many things will be done in the world, of which we have no conception now, and people will be inclined to believe them works of the devil, when, in fact, they will be very good works, and contribute to angelical effects, whether the devil be forced to have a hand in them or not ; for evil itself can work only in subordination to good. So listen when the astonishment comes, and reflect and think the best. Meantime, we must speak of another and more

truly devilish astonishment, and of the pangs of mortal flesh and blood.

The traitor Gan, for the fiftieth time, had secretly brought the infidels from all quarters against his friend and master, the Emperor Charles ; and Charles, by the help of Orlando, had conquered them all. The worst of them, Marsilius, king of Spain, had agreed to pay the court of France tribute ; and Gan, in spite of all the suspicions he excited in this particular instance, and his known villany at all times, had succeeded in persuading his credulous sovereign to let him go ambassador into Spain, where he put a final seal to his enormities, by plotting the destruction of his employer, and the special overthrow of Orlando. Charles was now old and white-haired, and Gan was so too ; but the one was only confirmed in his credulity, and the other in his crimes. The traitor embraced Orlando over and over again at taking leave, praying him to write if he had anything to say before the arrangements with Marsilius, and taking such pains to seem loving and sincere, that his villany was manifest to every one but the old monarch. He fastened with equal tenderness on Uliviero, who smiled contemptuously in his face, and thought to himself, " You may make as many fair speeches as you choose, but you lie." All the other Paladins who were present thought the same, and they said as much to the emperor ; adding, that on no account should Gan be sent ambassador to Marsilius. But Charles was infatuated. His beard and his credulity had grown old together.

Gan was received with great honour in Spain by Marsilius. The king, attended by his lords, came fifteen miles out of Saragossa to meet him, and then conducted him into the city amid tumults of delight. There was nothing for several days but balls, and games, and exhibitions of chivalry, the ladies throwing flowers on the heads of the French knights, and the people shouting " France ! France ! Mountjoy and St. Denis !"

Gan made a speech, " like a Demosthenes," to King Marsilius in public ; but he made him another in private, like nobody but himself. The king and he were sitting in a garden ; they were traitors both, and began to understand, from one another's looks, that the real object of the ambassador was yet to be discussed. Marsilius accordingly assumed a more than usually cheerful and

confidential aspect; and, taking his visitor by the hand, said, "You know the proverb, Mr. Ambassador—'At dawn, the mountain; afternoon, the fountain.' Different things at different hours. So here is a fountain to accommodate us."

It was a very beautiful fountain, so clear that you saw your face in it as in a mirror; and the spot was encircled with fruit-trees that quivered with the fresh air. Gan praised it very much, contriving to insinuate, on one subject, his satisfaction with the glimpses he got into another. Marsilius understood him; and as he resumed the conversation, and gradually encouraged a mutual disclosure of their thoughts, Gan, without appearing to look him in the face, was enabled to do so by contemplating the royal visage in the water, where he saw its expression become more and more what he desired. Marsilius, meantime, saw the like symptoms in the face of Gan. By degrees, he began to touch on that dissatisfaction with Charlemagne and his court, which he knew was in both their minds: he lamented, not as to the ambassador, but as to the friend, the injuries which he said he had received from Charles in the repeated attacks on his dominions, and the emperor's wish to crown Orlando king of them; till at length he plainly uttered his belief, that if that tremendous Paladin were but dead, good men would get their rights, and his visitor and himself have all things at their disposal.

Gan heaved a sigh, as if he was unwillingly compelled to allow the force of what the king said; but, unable to contain himself long, he lifted up his face, radiant with triumphant wickedness, and exclaimed, "Every word you utter is truth. Die he must; and die also must Uliviero, who struck me that foul blow at court. Is it treachery to punish affronts like those? I have planned every thing—I have settled every thing already with their besotted master. Orlando could not be expected to be brought hither, where he has been accustomed to look for a crown; but he will come to the Spanish borders—to Roncesvalles—for the purpose of receiving the tribute. Charles will await him, at no great distance, in St. John Pied de Port. Orlando will bring but a small band with him; you, when you

meet him, will have secretly your whole army at your back. You surround him ; and who receives tribute then ?”

The new Judas had scarcely uttered these words, when the delight of him and his associate was interrupted by a change in the face of nature. The sky was suddenly overcast ; it thundered and lightened ; a laurel was split in two from head to foot ; the fountain ran into burning blood ; there was an earthquake, and the carob-tree under which Gan was sitting, and which was of the species on which Judas Iscariot hung himself, dropped some of its fruit on his head. The hair of the head rose in horror.

Marsilius, as well as Gan, was appalled at this omen ; but on assembling his soothsayers, they came to the conclusion that the laurel-tree turned the omen against the emperor, the successor of the Cæsars ; though one of them renewed the consternation of Gan, by saying that he did not understand the meaning of the tree of Judas, and intimating that perhaps the ambassador could explain it. Gan relieved his consternation with anger ; the habit of wickedness prevailed over all considerations ; and the king prepared to march for Roncesvalles at the head of all his forces.

Gan wrote to Charlemagne, to say how humbly and properly Marsilius was coming to pay the tribute into the hands of Orlando, and how handsome it would be of the emperor to meet him half way, as agreed upon, at St. John Pied de Port, and so be ready to receive him, after the payment, at his footstool. He added a brilliant account of the tribute and its accompanying presents. They included a crown in the shape of a garland which had a carbuncle in it that gave light in darkness ; two lions of an “immeasurable length, and aspects that frightened every body ;” some “lively buffalos,” leopards, crocodiles, and giraffes ; arms and armour of all sorts ; and apes and monkeys seated among the rich merchandise that loaded the backs of the camels. This imaginary treasure contained, furthermore, two enchanted spirits, called “Floro and Faresse,” who were confined in a mirror, and were to tell the emperor wonderful things, particularly Floro (for there is nothing so nice in its details as lying) ; and Orlando was to have heaps of caravans full of Eastern wealth, and a hundred white horses, all with saddles and bridles of gold.

There was a beautiful vest, too, for Uliviero, all over jewels, worth ten thousand "seraffi," or more.

The good emperor wrote in turn to say how pleased he was with the ambassador's diligence, and that matters were arranged precisely as he wished. His court, however, had its suspicions still. Nobody could believe that Gan had not some new mischief in contemplation. Little, nevertheless, did they imagine, after the base endeavours he had but lately made against them, that he had immediately plotted a new and greater one, and that his object in bringing Charles into the neighbourhood of Roncesvalles was to deliver him more speedily into the hands of Marsilius, in the event of the latter's destruction of Orlando.

Orlando, however, did as his lord and sovereign desired. He went to Roncesvalles, accompanied by a moderate train of warriors, not dreaming of the atrocity that awaited him. Gan himself, meantime, had hastened on to France before Marsilius, in order to shew himself free and easy in the presence of Charles, and secure the success of his plot; while Marsilius, to make assurance doubly sure, brought into the passes of Roncesvalles no less than three armies, who were successively to fall on the Paladin, in case of the worst, and so extinguish him with numbers. He had also, by Gan's advice, brought heaps of wine and good cheer to be set before his victims in the first instance; "for that," said the traitor, "will render the onset the more effective, the feasters being unarmed; and, supposing prodigies of valour to await even the attack of your second army, you will have no trouble with your third. One thing, however, I must not forget," added he; "my son Baldwin is sure to be with Orlando; you must take care of his life for my sake."

"I give him this vest off my own body," said the king; "let him wear it in the battle, and have no fear. My soldiers shall be directed not to touch him."

Gan went away rejoicing to France. He embraced the court and his sovereign all round, with the air of a man who had brought them nothing but blessings; and the old king wept for very tenderness and delight.

"Something is going on wrong, and looks very black," thought Malagigi, the good wizard; "and Rinaldo is not here, and it is in-

dispensably necessary that he should be. I must find out where he is, and Ricciardetto too, and send for them with all speed, and at any price."

Malagigi called up, by his art, a wise, terrible, and cruel spirit, named Ashtaroth; no light personage to deal with—no little spirit, such as plays tricks with you like a fairy. A much blacker visitant was this.

"Tell me, and tell me truly of Rinaldo," said Malagigi to the spirit.

Hard looked the demon at the Paladin, and said nothing. His aspect was clouded and violent. He wished to see whether his summoner retained all the force of his art.

The enchanter, with an aspect still cloudier, bade Ashtaroth lay down that look. While giving this order, he also made signs indicative of a disposition to resort to angrier compulsion; and the devil, apprehending that he would confine him in some hateful place, loosened his tongue, and said, "You have not told me what you desire to know of Rinaldo."

"I desire to know what he has been doing, and where he is," returned the enchanter.

"He has been conquering and baptising the world, east and west," said the demon, "and is now in Egypt with Ricciardetto."

"And what has Gan been plotting with Marsilius," inquired Malagigi, "and what is to come of it?"

"On neither of those points can I enlighten you," said the devil. "I was not attending to Gan at the time, and we fallen spirits know not the future. Had we done so, we had not been so willing to incur the danger of falling. All I discern is, that, by the signs and comets in the heavens, something dreadful is about to happen—something very strange, treacherous, and bloody; and that Gan has a seat ready prepared for him in hell."

"Within three days," cried the enchanter, loudly, "fetch Rinaldo and Ricciardetto into the pass of Roncesvalles. Do it, and I hereby undertake never to summon thee more."

"Suppose they will not trust themselves with me," said the spirit.

"Enter Rinaldo's horse, and bring him, whether he trust thee or not."

“It shall be done,” returned the demon; “and my serving-devil Foul-Mouth, or Fire-Red, shall enter the horse of Ricciardetto. Doubt it not. Am I not wise, and thyself powerful?”

There was an earthquake, and Ashtaroth disappeared.

Marsilius has now made his first movement towards the destruction of Orlando, by sending before him his vassal-king Blanchardin with his presents of wines and other luxuries. The temperate but courteous hero took them in good part, and distributed them as the traitor wished; and then Blanchardin, on pretence of going forward to salute Charlemagne at St. John Pied de Port, returned and put himself at the head of the second army, which was the post assigned him by his liege lord. The device on his flag was an “Apollo” on a field azure. King Falseron, whose son Orlando had slain in battle, headed the first army, the device of which was a black figure of the devil Belphegor on a dapple-grey field. The third army was under King Balugante, and had for ensign a Mahomet with golden wings in a field of red. Marsilius made a speech to them at night, in which he confessed his ill faith, but defended it on the ground of Charles’s hatred of their religion, and of the example of “Judith and Holofernes.” He said that he had not come there to pay tribute, and sell his countrymen for slaves, but to make all Christendom pay tribute to them as conquerors; and he concluded by recommending to their good-will the son of his friend Gan, whom they would know by the vest he had sent him, and who was the only soul among the Christians they were to spare.

This son of Gan, meantime, and several of the Paladins who were disgusted with Charles’s credulity, and anxious at all events to be with Orlando, had joined the hero in the fated valley; so that the little Christian host, considering the tremendous valour of their lord and his friends, and the comparative inefficiency of that of the infidels, were at any rate not to be sold for nothing. Rinaldo, alas! the second thunderbolt of Christendom, was destined not to be there in time to save their lives. He could only avenge the dreadful tragedy, and prevent still worse consequences to the whole Christian court and empire. The Paladins had in vain begged Orlando to be on his guard against treachery, and send for a more numerous body of men. The great heart of the

Champion of the Faith was unwilling to think the worst as long as he could help it. He refused to summon aid that might be superfluous; neither would he do any thing but what his liege lord had desired. And yet he could not wholly repress a misgiving. A shadow had fallen on his heart, great and cheerful as it was. The anticipations of his friends disturbed him, in spite of the face with which he met them. I am not sure that he did not, by a certain instinctive foresight, expect death itself; but he felt bound not to encourage the impression. Besides, time pressed; the moment of the looked-for tribute was at hand; and little combinations of circumstances determine often the greatest events.

King Blanchardin had brought Orlando's people a luxurious supper; King Marsilius was to arrive early next day with the tribute; and Uliviero accordingly, with the morning sun, rode forth to reconnoitre, and see if he could discover the peaceful pomp of the Spanish court in the distance. Guottibuoffi was with him, a warrior who had expected the very worst, and repeatedly implored Orlando to believe it possible. Uliviero and he rode up the mountain nearest them, and from the top of it beheld the first army of Marsilius already forming in the passes.

"O Guottibuoffi!" exclaimed he, "behold thy prophecies come true! behold the last day of the glory of Charles! Every where I see the arms of the traitors around us. I feel Paris tremble all the way through France, to the ground beneath my feet. O Malagigi, too much in the right wert thou! O devil Gan, this then is the consummation of thy good offices!"

Uliviero put spurs to his horse, and galloped back down the mountain to Orlando.

"Well," cried the hero, "what news?"

"Bad news," said his cousin; "such as you would not hear of yesterday. Marsilius is here in arms, and all the world has come with him."

The Paladins pressed round Orlando, and entreated him to sound his horn, in token that he needed help. His only answer was, to mount his horse, and ride up the mountain with Sansonetto.

As soon, however, as he cast forth his eyes and beheld what was round about him, he turned in sorrow, and looked down into

Roncesvalles, and said, "O valley, miserable indeed! the blood that is shed in thee this day will colour thy name for ever."

Many of the Paladins had ridden after him, and they again pressed him to sound his horn, if only in pity to his own people. He said, "If Cæsar and Alexander were here, Scipio and Hannibal, and Nebuchadnezzar with all his flags, and Death stared me in the face with his knife in his hand, never would I sound my horn for the baseness of fear."

Orlando's little camp were furious against the Saracens. They armed themselves with the greatest impatience. There was nothing but lacing of helmets and mounting of horses; and good Archbishop Turpin went from rank to rank, exhorting and encouraging the warriors of Christ. Accoutrements and habiliments were put on the wrong way; words and deeds mixed in confusion; men running against one another out of very absorption in themselves; all the place full of cries of "Arm! arm! the enemy!" and the trumpets clanged over all against the mountain-echoes.

Orlando and his captains withdrew for a moment to consultation. He fairly groaned for sorrow, and at first had not a word to say; so wretched he felt at having brought his people to die in Roncesvalles.

Uliviero spoke first. He could not resist the opportunity of comforting himself a little in his despair, with referring to his unheeded advice.

"You see, cousin," said he, "what has come at last. Would to God you had attended to what I said; to what Malagigi said; to what we all said! I told you Marsilius was nothing but an anointed scoundrel. Yet forsooth, he was to bring us tribute! and Charles is this moment expecting his mummeries at St. John Pied de Port! Did ever any body believe a word that Gan said, but Charles? And now you see this rotten fruit has come to a head; this medlar has got its crown."

Orlando said nothing in answer to Uliviero; for in truth he had nothing to say. He broke away to give orders to the camp; bade them take refreshment; and then addressing both officers and men, he said, "I confess, that if it had entered my heart to conceive the king of Spain to be such a villain, never would you

have seen this day. He has exchanged with me a thousand courtesies and good words; and I thought that the worse enemies we had been before, the better friends we had become now. I fancied every human being capable of this kind of virtue on a good opportunity, saving, indeed, such base-hearted wretches as can never forgive their very forgivers; and of these I certainly did not suppose him to be one. Let us die, if we must die, like honest and gallant men; so that it shall be said of us, it was only our bodies that died. It becomes our souls to be invincible, and our glory immortal. Our motto must be, 'A good heart and no hope.' The reason why I did not sound the horn was, partly because I thought it did not become us, and partly because our liege lord could be of little use, even if he heard it. Let Gan have his glut of us like a carrion crow; but let him find us under heaps of his Saracens,—an example for all time. Heaven, my friends, is with us, if earth is against us. Methinks I see it open this moment, ready to receive our souls amidst crowns of glory; and therefore, as the champion of God's church, I give you my benediction; and the good archbishop here will absolve you; and so, please God, we shall all go to Heaven and be happy."

And with these words Orlando sprang to his horse, crying, "Away against the Saracens!" but he had no sooner turned his face than he wept bitterly, and said, "O holy Virgin, think not of me, the sinner Orlando, but have pity on these thy servants."

Archbishop Turpin did as Orlando said, giving the whole band his benediction at once, and absolving them from their sins, so that every body took comfort in the thought of dying for Christ, and thus they embraced one another, weeping; and then lance was put to thigh, and the banner was raised that was won in the jousting at Aspramont.

And now with a mighty dust, and an infinite sound of horns, and tambours, and trumpets, which came filling the valley, the first army of the infidels made its appearance, horses neighing, and a thousand pennons flying in the air. King Falseron led them on, saying to his officers, "Now, gentlemen, recollect what I said. The first battle is for the leaders only;—and, above all, let nobody dare to lay a finger on Orlando. He belongs to my-

self. The revenge of my son's death is mine. I will cut the man down that comes between us."

"Now, friends," said Orlando, "every man for himself, and St. Michael for us all. There is no one here that is not a perfect knight."

And he might well say it; for the flower of all France was there, except Rinaldo and Ricciardetto; every man a picked man; all friends and constant companions of Orlando. There was Richard of Normandy, and Guottibuoffi, and Uliviero, and Count Anselm, and Avolio, and Avino, and the gentle Berlinghieri, and his brother, and Sansonetto, and the good Duke Egibard, and Astolfo the Englishman, and Angiolin of Bayona, and all the other Paladins of France, excepting those two whom I have mentioned. And so the captains of the little troop and of the great array sat looking at one another, and singling one another out, as the latter came on; and then either side began raising their war-cries, and the mob of the infidels halted, and the knights put spear in rest, and ran for a while, two and two in succession, each one against the other.

Astolfo was the first to move. He ran against Arlotto of Soria; and Angiolin then ran against Malducco; and Mazzarigi the Renegade came against Avino; and Uliviero was borne forth by his horse Rondel, who couldn't stand still, against Malprimo, the first of the captains of Falseron.

And now lances began to be painted red, without any brush but themselves; and the new colour extended itself to the bucklers, and the cuishes, and the cuirasses, and the trappings of the steeds.

Astolfo thrust his antagonist's body out of the saddle, and his soul into the other world; and Angiolin gave and took a terrible blow with Malducco; but his horse bore him onward; and Avino had something of the like encounter with Mazzarigi; but Uliviero, though he received a thrust which hurt him, sent his lance right through the heart of Malprimo.

Falseron was daunted at this blow. "Verily," thought he, "this is a miracle." Uliviero did not press on among the Saracens, his wound was too painful; but Orlando now put himself and his whole band into motion, and you may guess what an up-

roar ensued. The sound of the rattling of the blows and helmets was as if the forge of Vulcan had been thrown open. Falseron beheld Orlando coming so furiously, that he thought him a Lucifer who had burst his chain, and was quite of another mind than when he proposed to have him all to himself. On the contrary, he recommended himself to his gods; and turning away, begged for a more auspicious season of revenge. But Orlando hailed and arrested him with a terrible voice, saying, "O thou traitor! Was this the end to which old quarrels were made up? Dost thou not blush, thou and thy fellow-traitor Marsilius, to have kissed me on the cheek like a Judas, when last thou wert in France?"

Orlando had never shewn such anger in his countenance as he did that day. He dashed at Falseron with a fury so swift, and at the same time a mastery of his lance so marvellous, that though he plunged it in the man's body so as instantly to kill him, the body did not move in the saddle. The hero himself, as he rushed onwards, was fain to see the end of a stroke so perfect, and, turning his horse back, he touched the carcass with his sword, and it fell on the instant. They say, that it had no sooner fallen than it disappeared. People got off their horses to lift up the body, for it seemed to be there still, the armour being left; but when they came to handle the armour, it was found as empty as the shell that is cast by a lobster. O new, and strange, and portentous event! proof manifest of the anger with which God regards treachery.

When the first infidel army beheld their leader dead, such fear fell upon them, that they were for leaving the field to the Paladins; but they were unable. Marsilius had drawn the rest of his forces round the valley like a net, so that their shoulders were turned in vain. Orlando rode into the thick of them, with Count Anselm by his side. He rushed like a tempest; and wherever he went, thunderbolts fell upon helmets. The Paladins drove here and there after them, each making a whirlwind round about him and a bloody circle. Uliviero was again in the *mêlée*; and Walter of Amulion threw himself into it; and Baldwin roared like a lion; and Avino and Avolio reaped the wretches' heads like a turnip-field; and blows blinded men's eyes; and Arch-

bishop Turpin himself had changed his crozier for a lance, and chased a new flock before him to the mountains.

Yet what could be done against foes without number? Multitudes fill up the spaces left by the dead without stopping. Marsilius, from his anxious and raging post, constantly pours them in. The Paladins are as units to thousands. Why tarry the horses of Rinaldo and Ricciardetto?

The horses did not tarry; but fate had been quicker than enchantment. Ashtaroth, nevertheless, had presented himself to Rinaldo in Egypt, as though he had issued out of a flash of lightning. After telling his mission, and giving orders to hundreds of invisible spirits round about him (for the air was full of them), he and Foul-Mouth, his servant, entered the horses of Rinaldo and Ricciardetto, which began to neigh and snort and leap with the fiends within them, till off they flew through the air over the pyramids, crowds of spirits going like a tempest before them. Ricciardetto shut his eyes at first, on perceiving himself so high in the air; but he speedily became used to it, though he looked down on the sun at last. In this manner they passed the desert, and the sea-coast, and the ocean, and swept the tops of the Pyrenees, Ashtaroth talking to them of wonders by the way; for he was one of the wisest of the devils, and knew a great many things which were then unknown to man. He laughed, for instance, as they went over sea, at the notion, among other vain fancies, that nothing was to be found beyond the pillars of Hercules; "for," said he, "the earth is round, and the sea has an even surface all over it; and there are nations on the other side of the globe, who walk with their feet opposed to yours, and worship other gods than the Christians."

"Hah!" said Rinaldo; "and may I ask whether they can be saved?"

"It is a bold thing to ask," said the devil; "but do you take the Redeemer for a partisan, and fancy he died for you only? Be assured he died for the whole world, Antipodes and all. Perhaps not one soul will be left out the pale of salvation at last, but the whole human race adore the truth, and find mercy. The Christian is the only true religion; but Heaven loves all goodness that believes honestly, whatsoever the belief may be."

Rinaldo was mightily taken with the humanity of the devil's opinions; but they were now approaching the end of their journey, and began to hear the noise of the battle; and he could no longer think of any thing but the delight of being near Orlando, and plunging into the middle of it.

"You shall be in the very heart of it instantly," said his bearer. "I love you, and would fain do all you desire. Do not fancy that all nobleness of spirit is lost among us people below. You know what the proverb says, 'There's never a fruit, however degenerate, but will taste of its stock.' I was of a different order of beings once, and ——— But it is as well not to talk of happy times. Yonder is Marsilius; and there goes Orlando. Farewell, and give me a place in your memory."

Rinaldo could not find words to express his sense of the devil's good-will, nor that of Foul-Mouth himself. He said: "Ashtaroth, I am as sorry to part with you as if you were a brother; and I certainly do believe that nobleness of spirit exists, as you say, among your people below. I shall be glad to see you both sometimes, if you can come; and I pray God (if my poor prayer be worth any thing) that you may all repent and obtain his pardon; for without repentance, you know, nothing can be done for you."

"If I might suggest a favour," returned Ashtaroth, "since you are so good as to wish to do me one, persuade Malagigi to free me from his service, and I am yours for ever. To serve you will be a pleasure to me. You will only have to say, 'Ashtaroth,' and my good friend here will be with you in an instant."

"I am obliged to you," cried Rinaldo, "and so is my brother. I will write Malagigi, not merely a letter, but a whole packet-full of your praises; and so I will to Orlando; and you shall be set free, depend on it, your company has been so perfectly agreeable."

"Your humble servant," said Ashtaroth, and vanished with his companion like lightning.

But they did not go far.

There was a little chapel by the road-side in Roncesvalles, which had a couple of bells; and on the top of that chapel did the devils place themselves, in order that they might catch the souls of the infidels as they died, and so carry them off to the in-

fernal regions. Guess if their wings had plenty to do that day ! Guess if Minos and Rhadamanthus were busy, and Charon sung in his boat, and Lucifer hugged himself for joy. Guess, also, if the tables in heaven groaned with nectar and ambrosia, and good old St. Peter had a dry hair in his beard.

The two Paladins, on their horses, dropped right into the middle of the Saracens, and began making such havoc about them, that Marsilius, who overlooked the fight from a mountain, thought his soldiers had turned one against the other. He therefore descended in fury with his third army ; and Rinaldo, seeing him coming, said to Ricciardetto, " We had better be off here, and join Orlando ;" and with these words, he gave his horse one turn round before he retreated, so as to enable his sword to make a bloody circle about him ; and stories say, that he sheared off twenty heads in the twirl of it. He then dashed through the astonished beholders towards the battle of Orlando, who guessed it could be no other than his cousin, and almost dropped from his horse, out of desire to meet him. Ricciardetto followed Rinaldo ; and Uliviero coming up at the same moment, the rapture of the whole party is not to be expressed. They almost died for joy. After a thousand embraces, and questions, and explanations, and expressions of astonishment (for the infidels held aloof awhile, to take breath from the horror and mischief they had undergone), Orlando refreshed his little band of heroes, and then drew Rinaldo apart, and said, " O my brother, I feel such delight at seeing you, I can hardly persuade myself I am not dreaming. Heaven be praised for it. I have no other wish on earth, now that I see you before I die. Why didn't you write ? But never mind. Here you are, and I shall not die for nothing."

" I did write," said Rinaldo, " and so did Ricciardetto ; but villany intercepted our letters. Tell me what to do, my dear cousin ; for time presses, and all the world is upon us."

" Gan has brought us here," said Orlando, " under pretence of receiving tribute from Marsilius—you see of what sort ; and Charles, poor old man, is waiting to receive his homage at the town of St. John ! I have never seen a lucky day since you left us. I believe I have done for Charles more than in duty bound,

and that my sins pursue me, and I and mine must all perish in Roncesvalles."

"Look to Marsilius," exclaimed Rinaldo; "he is right upon us."

Marsilius was upon them, surely enough, at once furious and frightened at the coming of the new Paladins; for his camp, numerous as it was, had not only held aloof, but turned about to fly like herds before the lion; so he was forced to drive them back, and bring up his other troops, reasonably thinking that such numbers must overwhelm at last, if they could but be kept together.

Not the less, however, for this, did the Paladins continue to fight as if with joy. They killed and trampled wheresoevr they went; Rinaldo fatiguing himself with sending infinite numbers of souls to Ashtaroth, and Orlando making a bloody passage towards Marsilius, whom he hoped to settle as he had done Falseron.

In the course of this his tremendous progress, the hero struck a youth on the head, whose helmet was so good as to resist the blow, but at the same time flew off; and Orlando seized him by the hair to kill him. "Hold!" cried the youth, as loud as want of breath could let him; "you loved my father—I'm Bujaforte."

The Paladin had never seen Bujaforte; but he saw the likeness to the good old Man of the Mountain, his father; and he let go the youth's hair, and embraced and kissed him. "O Bujaforte!" said he; "I loved him indeed—my good old man; but what does his son do here, fighting against his friend?"

Bujaforte was a long time before he could speak for weeping. At length he said, "Orlando, let not your noble heart be pained with ill thoughts of my father's son. I am forced to be here by my lord and master Marsilius. I had no friend left me in the world, and he took me into his court, and has brought me here before I knew what it was for; and I have made a shew of fighting, but have not hurt a single Christian. Treachery is on every side of you. Baldwin himself has a vest given him by Marsilius, that every body may know the son of his friend Gan, and do him no injury. See there—look how the lances avoid him."

“Put your helmet on again,” said Orlando, “and behave just as you have done. Never will your father’s friend be an enemy to the son. Only take care not to come across Rinaldo.”

The hero then turned in fury to look for Baldwin, who was hastening towards him at that moment with friendliness in his looks.

“’Tis strange,” said Baldwin; “I have done my duty as well as I could, yet no body will come against me. I have slain right and left, and cannot comprehend what it is that makes the stoutest infidels avoid me.”

“Take off your vest,” cried Orlando, contemptuously, “and you will soon discover the secret, if you wish to know it. Your father has sold us to Marsilius, all but his honourable son.”

“If my father,” cried Baldwin, impetuously tearing off the vest, “has been such a villain, and I escape dying any longer, by God! I will plunge this sword through his heart. But I am no traitor, Orlando; and you do me wrong to say it. You do me foul dishonour, and I’ll not survive it. Never more shall you behold me alive.”

Baldwin spurred off into the fight, not waiting to hear another word from Orlando, but constantly crying out, “You have done me dishonour;” and Orlando was very sorry for what he had said, for he perceived that the youth was in despair.

And now the fight raged beyond all it had done before; and the Paladins themselves began to fall, the enemy were driven forward in such multitudes by Marsilius. There was unhorsing of foes, and re-seating of friends, and great cries, and anguish, and unceasing labour; and twenty Pagans went down for one Christian; but still the Christians fell. One Paladin disappeared after another, having too much to do for mortal men. Some could not make way through the press for very fatigue of killing, and others were hampered with the falling horses and men. Sansonetto was thus beaten to earth by the club of Grandonio; and Walter d’Amulion had his shoulders broken; and Angiolin of Bayona, having lost his lance, was thrust down by Marsilius, and Angiolin of Bellonda by Sirionne; and Berlinghieri and Ot-tone are gone; and then Astolfo went, in revenge of whose death Orlando turned the spot on which he died into a gulf of Saracen

blood. Rinaldo met the luckless Bujaforte, who had just begun to explain how he seemed to be fighting on the side which his father hated, when the impatient hero exclaimed, "He who is not with me is against me;" and gave him a volley of such horrible cuffs about the head and ears, that Bujaforte died without being able to speak another word. Orlando, cutting his way to a spot in which there was a great struggle and uproar, found the poor youth Baldwin, the son of Gan, with two spears in his breast. "I am no traitor now," said Baldwin; and so saying, fell dead to the earth; and Orlando lifted up his voice and wept, for he was bitterly sorry to have been the cause of his death. He then joined Rinaldo in the hottest of the tumult; and all the surviving Paladins gathered about them, including Turpin the archbishop, who fought as hardily as the rest; and the slaughter was lavish and horrible, so that the eddies of the wind chucked the blood into the air, and earth appeared a very seething-cauldron of hell. At length down went Uliviero himself. He had become blind with his own blood, and smitten Orlando without knowing him, who had never received such a blow in his life.

"How now, cousin!" cried Orlando; "have you too gone over to the enemy?"

"O, my lord and master, Orlando," cried the other, "I ask your pardon, if I have struck you. I can see nothing—I am dying. The traitor Arcaliffe has stabbed me in the back; but I killed him for it. If you love me, lead my horse into the thick of them, so that I may not die unavenged."

"I shall die myself before long," said Orlando, "out of very toil and grief; so we will go together. I have lost all hope, all pride, all wish to live any longer: but not my love for Uliviero. Come—let us give them a few blows yet; let them see what you can do with your dying hands. One faith, one death, one only wish be ours."

Orlando led his cousin's horse where the press was thickest, and dreadful was the strength of the dying man and of his half-dying companion. They made a street, through which they passed out of the battle; and Orlando led his cousin away to his tent, and said, "Wait a little till I return, for I will go and sound the horn on the hill yonder."

“’Tis of no use,” said Uliviero ; “ and my spirit is fast going, and desires to be with its Lord and Saviour.” He would have said more, but his words came from him imperfectly, like those of a man in a dream ; only his cousin gathered that he meant to commend to him his sister, Orlando’s wife, Alda the Fair, of whom indeed the great Paladin had not thought so much in this world as he might have done. And with these imperfect words he expired.

But Orlando no sooner saw him dead, than he felt as if he was left alone on the earth ; and he was quite willing to leave it ; only he wished that Charles at St. John Pied de Port should hear how the case stood before he went ; and so he took up the horn, and blew it three times with such force that the blood burst out of his nose and mouth. Turpin says, that at the third blast the horn broke in two.

In spite of all the noise of the battle, the sound of the horn broke over it like a voice out of the other world. They say that birds fell dead at it, and that the whole Saracen army drew back in terror. But fearfuller still was its effect at St. John Pied de Port. Charlemagne was sitting in the midst of his court when the sound reached him ; and Gan was there. The emperor was the first to hear it.

“ Do you hear that ?” said he to his nobles. “ Did you hear the horn, as I heard it ?”

Upon this they all listened ; and Gan felt his heart misgive him.

The horn sounded the second time.

“ What is the meaning of this ?” said Charles.

“ Orlando is hunting,” observed Gan, “ and the stag is killed. He is at the old pastime that he was so fond of in Aspramonte.”

But when the horn sounded yet a third time, and the blast was one of so dreadful a vehemence, every body looked at the other, and then they all looked at Gan in fury. Charles rose from his seat. “ This is no hunting of the stag,” said he. “ The sound goes to my very heart, and, I confess, makes me tremble. I am awakened out of a great dream. O Gan ! O Gan ! Not for thee do I blush, but for myself, and for nobody else. O my God, what is to be done ! But whatever is to be done, must be done

quickly. Take this villain, gentlemen, and keep him in hard prison. O foul and monstrous villain! Would to God I had not lived to see this day! O obstinate and enormous folly! O Malagigi, had I but believed thy foresight! 'Tis thou wert the wise man, and I the grey-headed fool."

Ogier the Dane, and Namor and others, in the bitterness of their grief and anger, could not help reminding the emperor of all which they had foretold. But it was no time for words. They put the traitor into prison; and then Charles, with all his court, took his way to Roncesvalles, grieving and praying.

It was afternoon when the horn sounded, and half an hour after it when the emperor set out; and meantime Orlando had returned to the fight that he might do his duty, however hopeless, as long as he could sit his horse, and the Paladins were now reduced to four; and though the Saracens suffered themselves to be mowed down like grass by them and their little band, he found his end approaching for toil and fever, and so at length he withdrew out of the fight, and rode all alone to a fountain which he knew of, where he had before quenched his thirst.

His horse was wearier still than he, and no sooner had its master alighted, than the beast, kneeling down as if to take leave, and to say, "I have brought you to your place of rest," fell dead at his feet. Orlando cast water on him from the fountain, not wishing to believe him dead; but when he found it to no purpose, he grieved for him as if he had been a human being, and addressed him by name in tears, and asked forgiveness if ever he had done him wrong. They say, that the horse at these words once more opened his eyes a little, and looked kindly at his master, and so stirred never more.

They say also that Orlando then, summoning all his strength, smote a rock near him with his beautiful sword Durlindana, thinking to shiver the steel in pieces, and so prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy; but though the rock split like a slate, and a deep fissure remained ever after to astonish the eyes of pilgrims, the sword remained unhurt.

"O strong Durlindana," cried he, "O noble and worthy sword, had I known thee from the first as I know thee now, never would I have been brought to this pass."

And now Rinaldo and Ricciardetto and Turpin came up, having given chase to the Saracens till they were weary, and Orlando gave joyful welcome to his cousin, and they told him how the battle was won, and then Orlando knelt before Turpin, his face all in tears, and begged remission of his sins, and confessed them, and Turpin gave him absolution; and suddenly a light came down upon him from heaven like a rainbow, accompanied with a sound of music, and an angel stood in the air blessing him, and then disappeared; upon which Orlando fixed his eyes on the hilt of his sword as on a crucifix, and embraced it and said, "Lord, vouchsafe that I may look on this poor instrument as on the symbol of the tree upon which Thou sufferedst thy unspeakable martyrdom!" and so adjusting the sword to his bosom, and embracing it closer, he raised his eyes, and appeared like a creature seraphical and transfigured; and in bowing his head he breathed out his pure soul. A thunder was then heard in the heavens, and the heavens opened and seemed to stoop to the earth, and a flock of angels was seen like a white cloud ascending with his spirit, who were known to be what they were by the trembling of their wings. The white cloud shot out golden fires, so that the whole air was full of them; and the voices of the angels mingled in song with the instruments of their brethren above, which made an inexpressible harmony, at once deep and dulcet. The priestly warrior Turpin, and the two Paladins, and the hero's squire Terigi, who were all on their knees, forgot their own beings, in following the miracle with their eyes.

It was now the office of that squire to take horse and ride off to the emperor at St. John Pied de Port, and tell him of all that had occurred; but in spite of what he had just seen, he lay for a time overwhelmed with grief. He then rose, and mounted his steed, and left the Paladins and the archbishop with the dead body, who knelt about it, guarding it with weeping love.

The good squire Terigi met the the emperor and his cavalcade coming towards Roncesvalles, and alighted and fell on his knees, telling him the miserable news, and how all his people were slain but two of his Paladins, and himself, and the good archbishop. Charles for anguish began tearing his white locks; but Terigi comforted him against so doing, by giving an account of

the manner of Orlando's death, and how he had surely gone to heaven. Nevertheless, the squire himself was broken-hearted with grief and toil ; and he had scarcely added a denouncement of the traitor Gan, and a hope that the emperor would appease Heaven finally by giving his body to the winds, than he said, "The cold of death is upon me ;" and so he fell dead at the emperor's feet.

Charles was ready to drop from his saddle for wretchedness. He cried out, "Let nobody comfort me more. I will have no comfort. Cursed be Gan, and cursed this horrible day, and this place, and every thing. Let us go on, like blind miserable men that we are, into Roncesvalles ; and have patience if we can, out of pure misery, like Job, till we do all that can be done."

So Charles rode on with his nobles ; and they say, that for the sake of the champion of Christendom and the martyrs that died with him, the sun stood still in the sky till the emperor had seen Orlando, and till the dead were buried.

Horrible to his eyes was the sight of the field of Roncesvalles. The Saracens, indeed, had forsaken it, conquered ; but all his Paladins but two were left on it dead ; and the slaughtered heaps among which they lay made the whole valley like a great dumb slaughter-house, trampled up into blood and dirt, and reeking to the heat. The very trees were dropping with blood ; and every thing, so to speak, seemed tired out, and gone to a horrible sleep.

Charles trembled to his heart's core for wonder and agony. After dumbly gazing on the place, he again cursed it with a solemn curse, and wished that never grass might grow within it again, nor seed of any kind, neither within it, nor on any of its mountains around with their proud shoulders ; but the anger of Heaven abide over it for ever, as on a pit made by hell upon earth.

Then he rode on, and came up to where the body of Orlando awaited him with the Paladins, and the old man, weeping, threw himself as if he had been a reckless youth from his horse, and embraced and kissed the dead body, and said, "I bless thee, Orlando. I bless thy whole life, and all that thou wast, and all that thou ever didst, and thy mighty and holy valour, and the father that begot thee ; and I ask pardon of thee for believing those

who brought thee to thine end. They shall have their reward, O thou beloved one! But, indeed, it is thou that livest, and I that am worse than dead."

And now, behold a wonder. For the emperor, in the fervour of his heart and of the memory of what had passed between them, called to mind that Orlando had promised to give him his sword, should he die before him; and he lifted up his voice more bravely, and adjured him even now to return it to him gladly; and it pleased God that the dead body of Orlando should rise on its feet, and kneel as he was wont to do at the feet of his liege lord, and gladly, and with a smile on its face, return the sword to the Emperor Charles. As Orlando rose, the Paladins and Turpin knelt down out of fear and horror, especially seeing him look with a stern countenance; but when they saw that he knelt also, and smiled, and returned the sword, their hearts became re-assured, and Charles took the sword like his liege lord, though trembling with wonder and affection: and in truth he could hardly clench his fingers around it.

Orlando was buried in a great sepulchre in Aquisgrana, and the dead Paladins were all embalmed and sent with majestic cavalcades to their respective counties and principalities, and every Christian was honourably and reverently put in the earth, and recorded among the martyrs of the Church.

But meantime the flying Saracens, thinking to bury their own dead, and ignorant of what still awaited them, came back into the valley, and Rinaldo beheld them with a dreadful joy, and shewed them to Charles. Now the emperor's cavalcade had increased every moment; and they fell upon the Saracens with a new and unexpected battle, and the old emperor, addressing the sword of Orlando, exclaimed, "My strength is little, but do thou do thy duty to thy master, thou famous sword, seeing that he returned it to me smiling, and that his revenge is in my hands." And so saying, he met Balugante, the leader of the infidels, as he came borne along by his frightened horse; and the old man, raising the sword with both hands, cleaved him, with a delighted mind, to the chin.

O sacred Emperor Charles! O well-lived old man! Defender of the Faith! light and glory of the old time! thou hast cut off

the other ear of Malchus, and shewn how rightly thou wert born into the world, to save it a second time from the abyss.

Again fled the Saracens, never to come to Christendom more : but Charles went after them into Spain, he and Rinaldo and Ricciardetto and the good Turpin ; and they took and fired Saragossa ; and Marsilius was hung to the carob-tree under which he had planned his villany with Gan ; and Gan was hung, and drawn and quartered, in Roncesvalles, amidst the execrations of the country.

And if you ask, how it happened that Charles ever put faith in such a wretch, I shall tell you that it was because the good old emperor, with all his faults, was a divine man, and believed in others out of the excellence of his own heart and truth. And such was the case with Orlando himself.

BOIARDO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

CRITICAL NOTICE

OF

BOIARDO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.*

WHILE Pulci in Florence was elevating romance out of the street-ballads, and laying the foundation of the chivalrous epic, a poet appeared in Lombardy (whether inspired by his example is uncertain) who was destined to carry it to a graver though still cheerful height, and prepare the way for the crowning glories of Ariosto. In some respects he even excelled Ariosto: in all, with the exception of style, shewed himself a genuine though immature master.

Little is known of his life, but that little is very pleasant. It exhibits him in the rare light of a poet who was at once rich, romantic, an Arcadian and a man of the world, a feudal lord and an indulgent philosopher, a courtier equally beloved by prince and people.

Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, Lord of Arceto, Casalgrande, &c., Governor of Reggio, and Captain of the citadel of Modena (it is pleasant to repeat such titles when so adorn-

* The materials for the biography in this notice have been gathered from Tiraboschi and others, but more immediately from the copious critical memoir from the pen of Mr. Panizzi, in that gentleman's admirable edition of the combined poems of Boiardo and Ariosto, in nine volumes octavo, published by Mr. Pickering. I have been under obligations to this work in the notice of Pulci, and shall again be so in that of Boiardo's successor; but I must not a third time run the risk of omitting to give it my thanks (such as they are), and of earnestly recommending every lover of Italian poetry, who can afford it, to possess himself of this learned, entertaining, and only satisfactory edition of either of the *Orlandos*. The author writes an English almost as correct as it is elegant; and he is as painstaking as he is lively.

ed), is understood to have been born about the year 1434, at Scandiano, a castle at the foot of the Apennines, not far from Reggio, and famous for its vines.

He was of an ancient family, once lords of Rubiera, and son of Giovanni, second count of Scandiano, and Lucia, a lady of a branch of the Strozzi family in Florence, and sister and aunt of Tito and Erole Strozzi, celebrated Latin poets. His parents appear to have been wise people, for they gave him an education that fitted him equally for public and private life. He was even taught, or acquired, more Greek than was common to the men of letters of that age. His whole life seems, accordingly, to have been divided, with equal success, between his duties as a servant of the dukes of Modena, both military and civil, and the prosecution of his beloved art of poetry,—a combination of pursuits which have been idly supposed incompatible. Milton's poetry did not hinder him from being secretary to Cromwell, and an active partisan. Even the sequestered Spenser was a statesman; and poets and writers of fiction abound in the political histories of all the great nations of Europe. When a man possesses a thorough insight into any one intellectual department (except, perhaps, in certain corners of science), it only sharpens his powers of perception for the others, if he chooses to apply them.

In the year 1469, Boiardo was one of the noblemen who went to meet the Emperor Frederick the Third on his way to Ferrara, when Duke Borso of Modena entertained him in that city. Two years afterwards, Borso, who had been only Marquis of Ferrara, received its ducal title from the Pope; and on going to Rome to be invested with his new honours, the name of our poet is again found among the adorners of his state. A few days after his return home this prince died; and Boiardo, favoured as he had been by him, appears to have succeeded to a double portion of regard in the friendship of the new duke, Ercole, who was more of his own age.

During all this period, from his youth to his prime, our author varied his occupations with Italian and Latin poetry; some of it addressed to a lady of the name of Antonia Caprara, and some to another, whose name is thought to have been Rosa; but whether these ladies died, or his love was diverted elsewhere, he took

to wife, in the year 1472, Taddea Gonzaga, of the noble house of that name, daughter of the Count of Novellara. In the course of the same year he is supposed to have begun his great poem. A popular court favourite, in the prime of life, marrying and commencing a great poem nearly at one and the same time, presents an image of prosperity singularly delightful. By this lady Boiardo had two sons and four daughters. The younger son, Francesco Maria, died in his childhood; but the elder, Camillo, succeeded to his father's title, and left an heir to it,—the last, I believe, of the name. The reception given to the poet's bride, when he took her to Scandiano, is said to have been very splendid.

In the ensuing year the duke his master took a wife himself. She was Eleonora, daughter of the King of Naples: and the newly-married poet was among the noblemen who were sent to escort her to Ferrara. For several years afterwards, his time was probably filled up with the composition of the *Orlando Innamorato*, and the entertainments given by a splendid court. He was appointed Governor of Reggio, probably in 1478. At the expiration of two or three years he was made Captain of the citadel of Modena; and in 1482 a war broke out with the Venetians, in which he took part, for it interrupted the progress of his poem. In 1484 he returned to it; but ten years afterwards was again and finally interrupted by the unprincipled descent of the French on Italy under Charles the Eighth; and in the December following he died. The *Orlando Innamorato* was thus left unfinished. Eight years before his decease the author published what he had written of it up to that time, but the first complete edition was posthumous. The poet was writing when the French came: he breaks off with an anxious and bitter notice of the interruption, though still unable to deny himself a last word on the episode which he was relating, and a hope that he should conclude it another time.

“Mentre che io canto, o Dio redentore,
Vedo l' Italia tutta a fiamma e foco,
Per questi Galli, che con gran valore
Vengon, per disertar non so che loco:

Però vi lascio in questo vano amore
 Di Fiordespina ardente poco a poco:
 Un' altra volta, se mi fia concesso,
 Racconterovvi il tutto per espresso."

But while I sing, mine eyes, great God! behold
 A flaming fire light all the Italian sky,
 Brought by these French, who, with their myriads bold,
 Come to lay waste, I know not where or why.
 Therefore, at present, I must leave untold
 How love misled poor Fiordespina's eye.*
 Another time, Fate willing, I shall tell,
 From first to last, how every thing befell.

Besides the *Orlando Innamorato*, Boiardo wrote a variety of prose works, a comedy in verse on the subject of Timon, lyrics of great elegance, with a vein of natural feeling running through them, and Latin poetry of a like sort, not, indeed, as classical in its style as that of Politian and the other subsequent revivers of the ancient manner, but perhaps not the less interesting on that account; for it is difficult to conceive a thorough copyist in style expressing his own thorough feelings. Mr. Panizzi, if I am not mistaken, promised the world a collection of the miscellaneous poems of Boiardo; but we have not yet had the pleasure of seeing them. In his life of the poet, however, he has given several specimens, both Latin and Italian, which are extremely agreeable. The Latin poems consist of ten eclogues and a few epigrams; but the epigrams, this critic tells us, are neither good nor on a fitting subject, being satirical sallies against Nicolò of Este, who had attempted to seize on Ferrara, and been beheaded. Boiardo was not of a nature qualified to indulge in bitterness. A man of his chivalrous disposition probably misgave himself while he was writing these epigrams. Perhaps he suffered them to escape his pen out of friendship for the reigning branch of the family. But it must be confessed, that some of the best-natured men have too often lost sight of their higher feelings during the pleasure and pride of composition.

With respect to the comedy of *Timon*, if the whole of it is written as well as the concluding address of the misanthrope (which

* She had taken a damsel in male attire for a man.

Mr. Panizzi has extracted into his pages), it must be very pleasant. Timon conceals a treasure in a tomb, and thinks he has baffled some knaves who had a design upon it. He therefore takes leave of his audience with the following benedictions :

“Pur ho scacciate queste due formiche,
Che raspavano l' oro alla mia buca,
Or vadan pur, che Dio le malediche.

Cotal fortuna a casa li conduca,
Che lor fiacchi le gambe al primo passo,
E nel secondo l' osso della nuca.

Voi altri, che ascoltate giuso al basso,
Chiedete, se volete alcuna cosa,
Prima ch' io parta, perchè mo vi lasso.

Benchè abbia l' alma irata e disdegnosa,
Da ingiusti oltraggi combattuta e vinta,
A voi già non l' avrò tanto ritrosa.

In me non è pietade al tutto estinta :
Faccia di voi la prova chi gli pare,
Sino alla corda, che mi trovo cinta ;

Gli presterò, volendosi impiccare.”

So! I've got rid of these two creeping things,
That fain would have scratched up my buried gold.
They're gone; and may the curse of God go with them!
May they reach home just in good time enough
To break their legs at the first step in doors,
And necks i' the second!—And now then, as to you,
Good audience,—groundlings,—folks who love low places,
You too perhaps would fain get something of me,
Ere I take leave.—Well;—angered though I be,
Scornful and torn with rage at being ground
Into the dust with wrong, I'm not so lost
To all concern and charity for others
As not to be still kind enough to part
With something near to me—something that's wound
About my very self. Here, sirs; mark this;—

[Untying the cord round his waist.

Let any that would put me to the test,
Take it with all my heart, and hang themselves.

The comedy of *Timon*, which was chiefly taken from Lucian, and one, if not more, of Boiardo's prose translations from other

ancients, were written at the request of Duke Ercole, who was a great lover of dramatic versions of this kind, and built a theatre for their exhibition at an enormous expense. These prose translations consist of Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, Herodotus (the Duke's order), the *Golden Ass* of Lucian, Xenophon's *Cyropædia* (not printed), Emilius Probus (also not printed, and supposed to be Cornelius Nepos), and Riccobaldo's credulous *Historia Universalis*, with additions. It seems not improbable, that he also translated Homer and Diodorus; and Doni the bookmaker asserts, that he wrote a work called the *Testamento dell' Anima* (the Soul's Testament): but Mr. Panizzi calls Doni "a barefaced impostor;" and says, that as the work is mentioned by nobody else, we may be "certain that it never existed," and that the title was "a forgery of the impudent priest."

Nothing else of Boiardo's writing is known to exist, but a collection of official letters in the archives of Modena, which, according to Tiraboschi, are of no great importance. It is difficult to suppose, however, that they would not be worth looking at. The author of the *Orlando Innamorato* could hardly write, even upon the driest matters of government, with the aridity of a common clerk. Some little lurking well-head of character or circumstance, interesting to readers of a later age, would probably break through the barren ground. Perhaps the letters went counter to some of the good Jesuit's theology.

Boiardo's prose translations from the authors of antiquity are so scarce, that Mr. Panizzi himself, a learned and miscellaneous reader, says he never saw them.* I am willing to get the only advantage in my power over an Italian critic, by saying that I have had some of them in my hands,—brought there by the pleasant chances of the bookstalls; but I can give no account of them. A modern critic, quoted by this gentleman (Gamba, *Testi di Lingua*), calls the version of Apuleius "rude and curious;" but adds, that it contains "expressions full of liveliness and propriety." By "rude" is probably meant obsolete, and comparatively unlearned. Correctness of interpretation and classical

* Crescimbeni himself had not seen the translation from Apuleius, nor, apparently, several others.—*Commentari*, &c. vol. ii. part ii. lib. vii. sect. xi.

nicety of style (as Mr. Panizzi observes) were the growths of a later age.

Nothing is told us by his biographers of the person of Boiardo : and it is not safe to determine a man's *physique* from his writings, unless perhaps with respect to the greater or less amount of his animal spirits ; for the able-bodied may write effeminately, and the feeblest supply the defect of corporal stamina with spiritual. Portraits, however, seem to be extant. Mazzuchelli discovered that a medal had been struck in the poet's honour ; and in the castle of Scandiano (though "the halls where knights and ladies listened to the adventures of the Paladin are now turned into granaries," and Orlando himself has nearly disappeared from the outside, where he was painted in huge dimensions as if "entrusted with the wardenship") there was a likeness of Boiardo executed by Niccolò dell' Abate, together with the principal events of the *Orlando Innamorato* and the *Æneid*. But part of these paintings (Mr. Panizzi tells us) were destroyed, and part removed from the castle to Modena "to save them from certain loss ;" and he does not add whether the portrait was among the latter.

From anecdotes, however, and from the poet's writings, we gather the nature of the man ; and this appears to have been very amiable. There is an aristocratic tone in his poem, when speaking of the sort of people of whom the mass of soldiers is wont to consist ; and Foscolo says, that the Count of Scandiano writes like a feudal lord. But common soldiers are not apt to be the *élite* of mankind ; neither do we know with how good-natured a smile the mention of them may have been accompanied. People often give a tone to what they read, more belonging to their own minds than the author's. All the accounts left us of Boiardo, hostile as well as friendly, prove him to have been an indulgent and popular man. According to one, he was fond of making personal inquiries among its inhabitants into the history of his native place ; and he requited them so generously for their information, that it was customary with them to say, when they wished good fortune to one another, "Heaven send Boiardo to your house !" There is said to have been a tradition at Scandiano, that having tried in vain one day, as he was riding out, to dis-

cover a name for one of his heroes, expressive of his lofty character, and the word *Rodamonte* coming into his head, he galloped back with a pleasant ostentation to his castle, crying it out aloud, and ordering the bells of the place to be rung in its honour; to the astonishment of the good people, who took "Rodamonte" for some newly-discovered saint. His friend Paganelli of Modena, who wrote a Latin poem on the *Empire of Cupid*, extolled the Governor of Reggio for ranking among the deity's most generous vassals,—one who, in spite of his office of magistrate, looked with an indulgent eye on errors to which himself was liable, and who was accustomed to prefer the study of love-verses to that of the law. The learned lawyer, his countryman Panciroli, probably in resentment, as Panizzi says, of this preference, accused him of an excess of benignity, and of being fitter for writing poems than punishing ill deeds; and in truth, as the same critic observes, "he must have been considered crazy by the whole tribe of lawyers of that age," if it be true that he anticipated the opinion of Beccaria, in thinking that no crime ought to be punished with death.

The great work of this interesting and accomplished person, the *Orlando Innamorato*, is an epic romance, founded on the love of the great Paladin for the peerless beauty Angelica, whose name has enamoured the ears of posterity. The poem introduces us to the pleasantest paths in that track of reading in which Milton has told us that his "young feet delighted to wander." Nor did he forsake it in his age.

"Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica."—*Paradise Regained*.

The *Orlando Innamorato* may be divided into three principal portions:—the search for Angelica by Orlando and her other lovers; the siege of her father's city Albracca by the Tartars; and that of Paris and Charlemagne by the Moors. These, however, are all more or less intermingled, and with the greatest art; and there are numerous episodes of a like intertexture. The fairies and fairy-gardens of British romance, and the fabulous glories of the house of Este, now proclaimed for the first

time, were added by the author to the enchantments of Pulci, together with a pervading elegance; and had the poem been completed, we were to have heard again of the traitor Gan of Maganza, for the purpose of exalting the imaginary founder of that house, Ruggero.

This resuscitation of the Helen of antiquity, under a more seducing form, was an invention of Boiardo's; so was the subjection of Charles's hero Orlando to the passion of love; so, besides the heroine and her name, was that of other interesting characters with beautiful names, which afterwards figured in Ariosto. This inventive faculty is indeed so conspicuous in every part of the work, on small as well as great occasions, in fairy-adventures and those of flesh and blood, that although the author appears to have had both his loves and his fairies suggested to him by our romances of Arthur and the Round Table, it constitutes, next to the pervading elegance above mentioned, his chief claim to our admiration. Another of his merits is a certain tender gallantry, or rather an honest admixture of animal passion with spiritual, also the precursor of the like ingenuous emotions in Ariosto; and he furthermore set his follower the example, not only of good breeding, but of a constant heroical cheerfulness, looking with faith on nature. Pulci has a constant cheerfulness, but not with so much grace and dignity. Foscolo has remarked, that Boiardo's characters even surpass those of Ariosto in truth and variety, and that his Angelica more engages our feelings;* to which I will venture to add, that if his style is less strong and complete, it never gives us a sense of elaboration. I should take Boiardo to have been the healthier man, though of a less determined will than Ariosto, and perhaps, on the whole, less robust. You find in Boiardo almost all which Ariosto perfected,—chivalry, battles, combats, loves and graces, passions, enchantments, classical and romantic fable, eulogy, satire, mirth, pathos, philosophy. It is like the first sketch of a great picture, not the worse in some respects for being a sketch; free and light, though not so grandly coloured. It is the morning before the sun is up, and when the dew is on the grass. Take the stories which are translated in the pres-

* Article on the *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*, in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 62, p. 527.

ent volume, and you might fancy them all written by Ariosto, with a difference; the *Death of Agrican* perhaps with minuter touches of nature, but certainly not with greater simplicity and earnestness. In the *Saracen Friends* there is just Ariosto's balance of passion and levity; and in the story which I have entitled *Seeing and Believing*, his exhibition of triumphant cunning. During the lives of Pulci and Boiardo, the fierce passions and severe ethics of Dante had been gradually giving way to a gentler and laxer state of opinion before the progress of luxury; and though Boiardo's enamoured Paladin retains a kind of virtue not common in any age to the heroes of warfare, the lord of Scandiano, who appears to have recited his poem, sometimes to his vassals and sometimes to the ducal circle at court, intimates a smiling suspicion that such a virtue would be considered a little rude and obsolete by his hearers. Pulci's wandering gallant, Uliviero, who in Dante's time would have been a scandalous profligate, had become the prototype of the court-lover in Boiardo's. The poet, however, in his most favourite characters, retained and recommended a truer sentiment, as in the instance of the loves of Brandimart and Fiordelisa; and there is a graceful cheerfulness in some of his least sentimental ones, which redeems them from grossness. I know not a more charming fancy in the whole loving circle of fairy-land, than the female's shaking her long tresses round Mandricardo, in order to furnish him with a mantle, when he issues out of the enchanted fountain.*

* "E' suoi capelli a sè sciolse di testa,
 Che n' avea molti la dama gioconda;
 Ed, abbracciato il cavalier con festa,
 Tutto il coperse de la treccia bionda:
 Così, nascosi entrambi di tal vesta,
 Uscir' di quella fonte e la bell' onda."

Her locks she loosened from her lovely head,
 For many and long had that same lady fair;
 And clasping him in mirth as round they spread,
 Covered the knight with the sweet-shaken hair:
 And so, thus both together garmented,
 They issued from the fount to the fresh air.

Readers of the *Faerie Queene* will here see where Spenser has been, among his other visits to the Bowers of Bliss.

But Boiardo's poem was unfinished: there are many prosaical passages in it, many lame and harsh lines, incorrect and even ungrammatical expressions, trivial images, and, above all, many Lombard provincialisms, which are not in their nature of a "significant or graceful" sort,* and which shocked the fastidious Florentines, the arbiters of Italian taste. It was to avoid these in his own poetry, that Boiardo's countryman Ariosto carefully studied the Tuscan dialect, if not visited Florence itself; and the consequence was, that his greater genius so obscured the popularity of his predecessor, that a remarkable process, unique in the history of letters, appears to have been thought necessary to restore its perusal. The facetious Berni, a Tuscan wit full of genius, without omitting any particulars of consequence, or adding a single story except of himself, re-cast the whole poem of Boiardo, altering the diction of almost every stanza, and supplying introductions to the cantos after the manner of Ariosto; and the Florentine idiom and unfailing spirit of this re-fashioner's verse (though, what is very curious, not till after a long chance of its being overlooked itself, and a posthumous editorship which has left doubts on the authority of the text) gradually effaced almost the very mention of the man's name who had supplied him with the whole staple commodity of his book, with all the heart of its interest, and with far the greater part of the actual words. The first edition of Berni was prohibited in consequence of its containing a severe attack on the clergy; but even the prohibition did not help to make it popular. The reader may imagine a similar occurrence in England, by supposing that Dryden had re-written the whole of Chaucer, and that his reconstruction had in the course of time as much surpassed the original in popularity, as his version of the *Flower and the Leaf* did, up to the beginning of the present century.

I do not mean to compare Chaucer with Boiardo, or Dryden with Berni. Fine poet as I think Boiardo, I hold Chaucer to be a far finer; and spirited, and in some respects admirable, as are Dryden's versions of Chaucer, they do not equal that of Boiardo by the Tuscan. Dryden did not apprehend the sentiment of Chaucer in any such degree as Berni did that of his original.

* Foscolo, *ut sup.* p. 528.

Indeed, Mr. Panizzi himself, to whom the world is indebted both for the only good edition of Boiardo and for the knowledge of the most curious facts respecting Berni's *rifacimento*, declares himself unable to pronounce which of the two poems is the better one, the original Boiardo, or the re-modelled. It would therefore not very well become a foreigner to give a verdict, even if he were able; and I confess, after no little consideration (and apart, of course, from questions of dialect, which I cannot pretend to look into), I feel myself almost entirely at a loss to conjecture on which side the superiority lies, except in point of invention and a certain early simplicity. The advantage in those two respects unquestionably belongs to Boiardo; and a great one it is, and may not unreasonably be supposed to settle the rest of the question in his favour; and yet Berni's fancy, during a more sophisticate period of Italian manners, exhibited itself so abundantly in his own witty poems, his pen at all times has such a charming facility, and he proved himself, in his version of Boiardo, to have so strong a sympathy with the earnestness and sentiment of his original in his gravest moments, that I cannot help thinking the two men would have been each what the other was in their respective times;—the Lombard the comparative idler, given more to witty than serious invention, under a corrupt Roman court; and the Tuscan the originator of romantic fictions, in a court more suited to him than the one he avowedly despised. I look upon them as two men singularly well matched. The nature of the present work does not require, and the limits to which it is confined do not permit, me to indulge myself in a comparison between them corroborated by proofs; but it is impossible not to notice the connexion: and therefore, begging the reader's pardon for the sorry substitute of affirmative for demonstrative criticism, I may be allowed to say, that if Boiardo has the praise of invention to himself, Berni thoroughly appreciated and even enriched it; that if Boiardo has sometimes a more thoroughly charming simplicity, Berni still appreciates it so well, that the difference of their times is sufficient to restore the claim of equality of feeling; and finally, that if Berni strengthens and adorns the interest of the composition with more felicitous expressions, and with a variety of lively and beautiful trains of thought, you feel that Boiardo was quite capable

of them all, and might have done precisely the same had he lived in Berni's age. In the greater part of the poem the original is altered in nothing except diction, and often (so at least it seems to me) for no other reason than the requirements of the Tuscan manner. And this is the case with most of the noblest, and even the liveliest passages. My first acquaintance, for example, with the *Orlando Innamorato* was through the medium of Berni; and on turning to those stories in his version, which I have translated from his original for the present volume, I found that every passage but one, to which I had given a mark of admiration, was the property of the old poet. That single one, however, was in the exquisitest taste, full of as deep a feeling as any thing in its company (I have noticed it in the translated passage). And then, in the celebrated introductions to his cantos, and the additions to Boiardo's passages of description and character (those about Rodamonte, for example, so admired by Foscolo), if Berni occasionally shews a comparative want of faith which you regret, he does it with a regret on his own part, visible through all his jesting. Lastly, the singular and indignant strength of his execution often makes up for the trustingness that he was sorry to miss. If I were asked, in short, which of the two poems I should prefer keeping, were I compelled to choose, I should first complain of being forced upon so hard an alternative, and then, with many a look after Berni, retain Boiardo. The invention is his; the first earnest impulse; the unmisgiving joy; the primitive morning breath, when the town-smoke has not polluted the fields, and the birds are singing their "wood-notes wild." Besides, after all, one cannot be *sure* that Berni could have invented as Boiardo did. If he could, he would probably have written some fine serious poem of his own. And Panizzi has observed, with striking and conclusive truth, that "without Berni the *Orlando Innamorato* will be read and enjoyed; without Boiardo not even the name of the poem remains."

Nevertheless this conclusion need not deprive us of either work. Berni raised a fine polished edifice, copied and enlarged after that of Boiardo;—on the other hand, the old house, thank Heaven, remains; and our best way of settling the question between the two is, to be glad that we have got both. Let the reader who is rich

in such possessions look upon Berni's as one of his town mansions, erected in the park-like neighbourhood of some metropolis; and Boiardo's as the ancient country original of it, embosomed in the woods afar off, and beautiful as the Enchanted Castle of Claude—

“Lone sitting by the shores of old romance.”

A late amiable man of wit, Mr. Stewart Rose, has given a prose abstract of Berni's *Orlando Innamorato*, with occasional versification; but it is hardly more than a dry outline, and was, indeed, intended only as an introduction to his version of the *Furioso*. A good idea, however, of one of the phases of Berni's humour may be obtained from the same gentleman's abridgment of the *Animali Parlanti* of Casti, in which he has introduced a translation of the Tuscan's description of himself and of his way of life, out of his additions to Boiardo's poem. The verses in the prohibited edition of Berni's *Orlando*, in which he denounced the corruptions of the clergy, have been published, for the first time in this country, in the notes to the twentieth canto of Mr. Panizzi's Boiardo. They have all his peculiar wit, together with a *Lutheran* earnestness; and shew him, as that critic observes, to have been “Protestant at his heart.”

Since writing this note I have called to mind that a translation of Berni's account of himself is to be found in Mr. Rose's prose abstract of the *Innamorato*.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

Argument.

Angelica, daughter of Galafron, king of Cathay, the most beautiful of woman-kind, and a possessor of the art of magic, comes, with her brother Argalia, to the court of Charlemagne under false pretences, in order to carry away his knights to the country of her father. Her immediate purpose is defeated, and her brother slain; but all the knights, Orlando in particular, fall in love with her; and she herself, in consequence of drinking at an enchanted fountain, becomes in love with Rinaldo. On the other hand, Rinaldo, from drinking a neighbouring fountain of a reverse quality, finds his own love converted to loathing. Various adventures arise out of these circumstances; and the fountains are again drunk, with a mutual reversal of their effects.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

IT was the month of May and the feast of Pentecost, and Charlemagne had ordained a great jousting, which brought into Paris an infinite number of people, baptised and infidel; for there was truce proclaimed, in order that every knight might come. There was King Grandonio from Spain, with his serpent's face; and Ferragus, with his eyes like an eagle; and Balugante, the emperor's kinsman; and Orlando, and Rinaldo, and Duke Namor; and Astolfo of England, the handsomest of mankind; and the enchanter Malagigi; and Isoliero and Salamone; and the traitor Gan, with his scoundrel followers; and, in short, the whole flower of the chivalry of the age, the greatest in the world. The tables at which they feasted were on three sides of the hall, with the emperor's canopy midway at the top; and at that first table sat crowned heads; and down the table on the right sat dukes and marquises; and down the table on the left, counts and cavaliers. But the Saracen nobles, after their doggish fashion, looked neither for chair nor bench, but preferred a carpet on the floor, which was accordingly spread for them in the midst.

High sat Charlemagne at the head of his vassals and his Paladins, rejoicing in the thought of all the great men of which they consisted, and holding the infidels cheap as the sands which are scattered by the tempest. To each of his lords, as they drank, he sent round, by his pages, gifts of enamelled cups of exquisite workmanship; and to every body some mark of his princely distinction; and so they were all sitting and hearing music, and feasting off dishes of gold, and talking of lovely things with low voices,* when suddenly there came into the hall four enormous

* "Con parlar basso e bei ragionamenti."

giants, in the midst of whom was a lady, and behind the lady there followed a cavalier. She was a very lily of the field, and a rose of the garden, and a morning-star ; in short, so beautiful that the like had never been seen. There was Galerana in the hall ; there was Alda, the wife of Orlando ; and Clarice, and Armellina the kind-hearted, and abundance of other ladies, all beautiful till she made her appearance ; but after that they seemed nothing. Every Christian knight turned his face that way ; and not a Pagan remained on the floor, but arose and got as near to her as he could ; while she, with a cheerful sweetness, and a smile fit to enamour a heart of stone, began speaking the following words :

“High-minded lord, the renown of your worthiness, and the valour of these your knights, which echoes from sea to sea, encourages me to hope, that two pilgrims who have come from the ends of the world to behold you, will not have encountered their fatigue in vain. And to the end that I may not hold your attention too long with speaking, let me briefly say, that this knight here, Uberto of the Lion, a prince renowned also for his achievements, has been wrongfully driven from out his dominions ; and that I, who was driven out with him, am his sister, whose name is Angelica. Fame has told us of the jousting this day appointed, and of the noble press of knights here assembled, and how your generous natures care not to win prizes of gold or jewels, or gifts of cities, but only a wreath of roses ; and so the prince my brother has come to prove his own valour, and to say, that if any or all of your guests, whether baptised or infidel, choose to meet him in the joust, he will encounter them one by one, in the green meadow without the walls, near the place called the Horse-block of Merlin, by the Fountain of the Pine. And his conditions are these,—that no knight who chances to be thrown shall have license to renew the combat in any way whatsoever, but remain a submissive prisoner in his hands ; he, on the other hand, if himself be thrown, agreeing to take his departure out of the country with his giants, and to leave his sister, for prize, in the hands of the conqueror.”

Kneeling at the close of these words, the lady awaited the answer of Charlemagne, and every body gazed on her with aston-

ishment. Orlando especially, more than all the rest, felt irresistibly drawn towards her, so that his heart trembled, and he changed countenance. But he felt ashamed at the same time; and casting his eyes down, he said to himself, "Ah, mad and unworthy Orlando! whither is thy soul being hurried? I am drawn, and cannot say nay to what draws me. I reckoned the whole world as nothing, and now I am conquered by a girl. I cannot get her sweet look out of my heart. My soul seems to die within me, at the thought of being without her. It is love that has seized me, and I feel that nothing will set me free;—not strength, nor courage, nor my own wisdom, nor that of any adviser. I see the better part, and cleave to the worse."*

Thus secretly in his heart did the frank and noble Orlando lament over his new feelings; and no wonder; for every knight in the hall was enamoured of the beautiful stranger, not excepting even old white-headed Duke Namor. Charlemagne himself did not escape.

All stood for awhile in silence, lost in the delight of looking at her. The fiery youth Ferragus was the first to exhibit symptoms in his countenance of uncontrollable passion. He refrained

* *Video meliora, proboque, &c.* Writers were now beginning to pride themselves on their classical reading. The present occasion, it must be owned, was a very good one for introducing the passage from Horace. The previous words have an affecting ingenuousness; and, indeed, the whole stanza is beautiful:

"Io non mi posso dal cor dipartire
 La dolce vista del viso sereno,
 Perch' io mi sento senza lei morire,
 E 'l spirito a poco a poco venir meno.
 Or non mi vale forza, nè l'ardire
 Contra d'amor, che m'ha già posto il freno;
 Nè mi giova saper, ne altrui consiglio:
 Il meglio veggio, ed al peggior m'appiglio."

Alas! I cannot, though I shut mine eyes,
 Lose the sweet look of that delightful face;
 The very soul within me droops and dies,
 To think that I may fail to gain her grace.
 No strong limbs now, no valour, will suffice
 To burst the spell that roots me to the place:
 No, nor reflection, nor advice, nor force;
 I see the better part, and clasp the worse.

with difficulty from going up to the giants, and tearing her out of their keeping. Rinaldo also turned as red as fire; while his cousin Malagigi the enchanter, who had discovered that the stranger was not speaking truth, muttered softly, as he looked at her, "Exquisite false creature! I will play thee such a trick for this, as will leave thee no cause to boast of thy visit."

Charlemagne, to detain her as long as possible before him, made a speech in answer, in which he talked and looked, and looked and talked, till there seemed no end of it. At length, however, the challenge was accepted in all its forms; and the lady quitted the hall with her brother and the giants.

She had not yet passed the gates, when Malagigi the enchanter consulted his books; and that no means might be wanting to complete the counteraction of what he suspected, he summoned to his aid three spirits out of the lower regions. But how serious his look turned, how his very soul within him was shaken, when he discovered that the most dreadful disasters hung over Charles and his court, and that the sister of the pretended Uberto was daughter of King Galafron of Cathay, a beauty accomplished in every species of enchantment, and sent there by her father on purpose to betray them all! Her brother's name was not Uberto, but Argalia. Galafron had given him a horse swifter than the wind, an enchanted sword, a golden lance, also enchanted, which overthrew all whom it touched,* and a ring of a virtue so extraordinary, that if put into the mouth, it rendered the person invisible, and if worn on the finger, nullified every enchantment. But beyond even all this, he gave him his sister for a companion; rightly judging, that every body that saw her would fall into the proposal of the joust; and trusting that, at the close of it, she would bring him the whole court of France into Cathay, prisoners in her hands.

* Ἀργυρέαις λόγχαισι μάχων, καὶ πάντα κρατήσεις.

"Make war with silver spears, and you'll beat all."

The reader will note the allegory or not, as he pleases. It is a very good allegory; but allegory, by the due process of enchantment, becomes matter of fact; and it is pleasant to take it as such.

Such, Malagigi discovered, was the plot of the accursed infidel hound, King Galafron.*

Meantime the pretended Uberto had returned to his station at the Horseblock of Merlin. He had had a beautiful pavilion pitched there; and under this pavilion he lay down awhile to refresh himself with sleep. His sister Angelica lay down also, but in the open air, under the great pine by the fountain. The four giants kept watch: and as she lay thus asleep, with her fair head on the grass, she appeared like an angel come down from heaven.

By this time Malagigi, borne by one of his demons, had arrived in the same place. He saw the beauty asleep by the flowery water, and the four giants all wide awake; and he said within his teeth,—“Brute scoundrels, I will take every one of you into my net without a blow.”

Malagigi took his book, and cast a spell out of it; and in an instant the whole four giants were buried in sleep. Then, drawing his sword, he softly approached the young lady, intending to despatch her as quickly: but seeing her look so lovely as she slept, he paused, and considered within himself, and resolved to detain her in the same state by enchantment, so long as it should please him. Laying down the naked sword in the grass, he again took his book, and read and read on, and still read on, and fancied he was locking up her senses all the while in a sleep unwakeable. But the ring of which I have spoken was on her finger. She had borrowed it of her brother; and a superior power rendered all other magic of no avail. A touch from Malagigi to prove the force of his spell awoke her, to the magician's consternation, with a great cry. She fled into the arms of her brother, whom it aroused; and, by the help of his sister's knowledge of enchantment, Argalia mastered and bound the magician. The book was then turned against him, and the place was suddenly filled with a crowd of his own demons, every one of them crying out to Angelica, “What commandest thou?”

“Take this man,” said Angelica, “and bear him prisoner to the great city between Tartary and India, where my father Gal-

* “Rè Galafron, il maledetto cane.”

afron is lord. Present him to him in my name, and say it was I that took him; and add, that having so taken the master of the book, I care not for all the other lords of the court of Charlemagne."

At the end of these words, and at one and the same instant, the magician was conveyed to the feet of Galafron in Cathay, and locked up in a rock under the sea.

In due time the enamoured knights, according to agreement, came to the spot for the purpose of jousting with the supposed Uberto, each anxious to have the first encounter, particularly Orlando, in order that he might not see the beauty carried off by another. But they were obliged to draw lots; and thirty other names appeared before his, the first of which was that of Astolfo the Englishman.

Now Astolfo was son of the king of England; and as I said before, he was the handsomest man in the world. He was also very rich and well bred, and loved to dress well, and was as brave as he was handsome; but his success was not always equal to his bravery. He had a trick of being thrown from his horse, a failing which he was accustomed to attribute to accident; and then he would mount again, and be again thrown from the saddle, in the boldest manner conceivable.

This gallant prince was habited, on the present occasion, in arms worth a whole treasury. His shield had a border of large pearls; his mail was of gold; on his helmet was a ruby as big as a chestnut; and his horse was covered with a cloth all over golden leopards.* He issued to the combat, looking at nobody and fearing nothing; and on his sounding the horn to battle, Argalia came forth to meet him. After courteous salutations, the two combatants rushed together; but the moment the Englishman was touched with the golden lance, his legs flew over his head.

"Cursed fortune!" cried he, as he lay on the grass; "this is out of all calculation. But it was entirely owing to the saddle. You can't but acknowledge, that if I had kept my seat, the beau-

* The lions in the shield of England were leopards in the "olden time," and it is understood, I believe, ought still to be so,—as Napoleon, with an invidious pedantry, once permitted himself to be angry enough to inform us.

tiful lady would have been mine. But thus it is when Fortune chooses to befriend infidels !”*

The four giants, who had by this time been disenchanted out of their sleep by Angelica, took up the English prince, and put him in the pavilion. But when he was stripped of his armour, he looked so handsome, that the lovely stranger secretly took pity on him, and bade them shew him all the courtesies that captivity allowed. He was permitted to walk outside by the fountain ; and Angelica, from a dark corner, looked at him with admiration, as he walked up and down in the moonlight.†

The violent Ferragus had the next chance in the encounter, and was thrown no less speedily than Astolfo ; but he did not so easily put up with the mischance. Crying out, “ What are the emperor’s engagements to me ?” he rushed with his sword against Argalia, who, being forced to defend himself unexpectedly, dismounted and set aside his lance, and got so much the worse of the fight, that he listened to proposals of marriage from Ferragus to his sister. The beauty, however, not feeling an inclination to match with so rough and savage-looking a person, was so dis-

* The character of Astolfo, the germ of which is in our own ancient British romances, appears to have been completed by the lively invention of Boiardo, and is a curious epitome of almost all which has been discerned in the travelled Englishmen by the envy of poorer and the wit of livelier foreigners. He has the handsomeness and ostentation of a Buckingham, the wealth of a Beckford, the generosity of a Carlisle, the invincible pretensions of a Crichton, the self-committals and bravery of a Digby, the lucklessness of a Stuart, and the *non-chalance* “ under difficulties” of “ *Milord-What-then*” in Voltaire’s *Princess of Babylon*, where the noble traveller is discovered philosophically reading the newspaper in his carriage after it was overturned. English beauty, ever since the days of Pope Gregory, with his pun about Angles and Angels, has been greatly admired in the south of Europe—not a little, perhaps, on account of the general fairness of its complexion. I once heard a fair-faced English gentleman, who would have been thought rather effeminate-looking at home, called an “ Angel” by a lady in Genoa.

† “ Stava disciolto, senza guardia alcuna,
Ed intorno a la fonte sollazzava ;
Angelica nel lume de la luna,
Quanto potea nascosa, lo mirava.”

There is something wonderfully soft and *lunar* in the liquid monotony of the third line.

mayed at the offer, that, hastily bidding her brother meet her in the forest of Arden, she vanished from the sight of both, by means of the enchanted ring. Argalia, seeing this, took to his horse of swiftness, and dashed away in the same direction; Ferragus, in distraction, pursued Argalia; and Astolfo, thus left to himself, took possession of the golden lance, and again issued forth—not, indeed, with quite his usual confidence of the result, but determined to run all risks, in any thing that might ensue, for the sake of the emperor. In fine, to cut this part of the history short, Charlemagne, finding the lady and her brother gone, ordered the joust to be restored to its first intention; and Astolfo, who was as ignorant as the others of the treasure he possessed in the enchanted lance, unhorsed all comers against him like so many children, equally to their astonishment and his own.

The Paladin Rinaldo now learnt the issue of the fight between Ferragus and the stranger, and galloped in a loving agony of pursuit after the fair fugitive. Orlando learnt the disappearance of Rinaldo, and, distracted with jealousy, pushed forth in like manner; and at length all three are in the forest of Arden, hunting about for her who is invisible.

Now in this forest were two enchanted waters, the one a running stream, and the other a built fountain; the first caused every body who tasted it to fall in love, and the other (so to speak) to fall *out* of love; say, rather, to feel the love turned into hate. To the latter of these two waters Rinaldo happened to come; and being flushed with heat and anxiety, he dismounted from his horse, and quenched, in one cold draught, both his thirst and his passion. So far from loving Angelica as before, or holding her beauty of any account, he became disgusted with its pursuit, nay, hated her from the bottom of his heart; and so, in this new state of mind, and with feelings of lofty contempt, he remounted and rode away, and happened to come on the bank of the running stream. There, enticed by the beauty of the place, which was all sweet meadow-ground and bowers of trees, he again quitted his saddle, and, throwing himself on the ground, fell fast asleep.

Unfortunately for the proud beauty Angelica, or rather in just punishment for her contempt, her palfrey conducted her to this

very place. The water tempted her to drink, and, dismounting and tying the animal to one of the trees, she did so, and then cast her eyes on the sleeping Rinaldo. Love instantly seized her, and she stood rooted to the spot.

The meadow round about was all full of lilies of the valley and wild roses. Angelica, not knowing what to do, at length plucked a quantity of these, and with her white hand she dropped them on the face of the sleeper. He woke up; and seeing who it was, not only received her salutations with a change of countenance, but remounting his horse, galloped away through the thickest part of the forest. In vain the beautiful creature followed and called after him; in vain asked him what she had done to be so despised, and entreated him, at any rate, to take care how he went so fast. Rinaldo disappeared, leaving her to wring her hands in despair; and she returned in tears to the spot on which she had found him sleeping. There, in her turn, she herself lay down, pressing the spot of earth on which he had lain; and so, weeping and lamenting, yet blessing every flower and bit of grass that he had touched, fell asleep out of fatigue and sorrow.

As Angelica thus lay, the good or bad fortune of Orlando conducted him to the same place. The attitude in which she was sleeping was so lovely that it is not even to be conceived, much less expressed. The very grass seemed to flower on all sides of her for joy; and the stream, as it murmured along, to go talking of love.* Orlando stood gazing like a man who had been transported to another sphere. "Am I on earth," thought he, "or am I in paradise? Surely it is I myself that am sleeping, and this is my dream."

But his dream was proved to be none, in a manner which he

* "La qual dormiva in atto tanto adorno,
Che pensar non si può, non ch' io lo scriva:
Parea che l' erba a lei fiorisse intorno,
E d' amor ragionasse quella riva."

Her posture, as she lay, was exquisite
Above all words—nay, thought itself above:
The grass seemed flowering round her in delight,
And the soft river murmuring of love.

little desired. Ferragus, who had slain Argalia, came up raging with jealousy, and a combat ensued which awoke the sleeper. Terrified at what she beheld, she rushed to her palfrey; and while the fighters were occupied with one another, fled away through the forest.

Fast fled the beauty in the direction taken by Rinaldo; nor did she cease travelling, by one conveyance or another, till she reached her own country, whither she had sent Malagigi. Him she freed from his prison, on condition that he would employ his art for the purpose of bringing Rinaldo to a palace of hers, which she possessed in an island; and accordingly Rinaldo was inveigled by a spirit into an enchanted barque, which he found on a sea-shore, and which conveyed him, without any visible pilot, into Joyous Palace (for so the island was called).

The whole island was a garden, fifteen miles in extent. It was full of trees and lawns; and on the western side, close to the sea, was the palace, built of a marble so clear and polished, that it reflected the landscape round about. Rinaldo, not knowing what to think of his strange conveyance, lost no time in leaping to shore; upon which a lady made her appearance, who invited him within. The house was a most beautiful house, full of rooms adorned with azure and gold, and with noble paintings; and within as well as without it were the loveliest flowers, the purest fountains, and a fragrance fit to turn sorrow to joy. The lady led the knight into an apartment painted with stories, and opening to the garden through pillars of crystal with golden capitals. Here he found a bevy of ladies, three of whom were singing in concert, while another played on some foreign instrument of exquisite accord, and the rest were dancing round about them. When the ladies beheld him coming, they turned the dance into a circuit round about himself; and then one of them, in the sweetest manner, said, "Sir knight, the tables are set, and the hour for the banquet is come:" and with these words they all drew him, still dancing, across the lawn in front of the apartment, to a table that was spread with cloth of gold and fine linen, under a bower of damask roses, by the side of a fountain.*

Four ladies were already seated there, who rose and placed

* Supremely elegant all this appears to me.

Rinaldo at their head, in a chair set with pearls. And truly indeed was he astonished. A repast ensued, consisting of viands the most delicate, and wines as fragrant as they were fine, drunk out of jewelled cups; and when it drew towards its conclusion, harps and lutes were heard in the distance, and one of the ladies said in the knight's ear, "This house, and all that you see in it, are yours. For you alone was it built, and the builder is a queen; and happy indeed must you think yourself, for she loves you, and she is the greatest beauty in the world. Her name is Angelica."

The moment Rinaldo heard the name he so detested, disgust and wretchedness fell upon his heart, notwithstanding the joys around him. He started up with a changed countenance, and, in spite of all that the lady could say, broke off across the garden, and never ceased hastening till he reached the place where he landed. He would have thrown himself into the sea, rather than stay any longer in that island; but the enchanted barque was still on the shore. He sprang into it, and attempted instantly to push off, for he still saw nobody in it but himself; but the barque for a while resisted his efforts; till, on his feeling a wish to drown himself, or to do any thing rather than return to that detested house, it suddenly loosed itself from its moorings, and dashed away with him over the sea, as if in a fury.

All night did the pilotless barque dash on, till it reached, in the morning, a distant shore covered with a gloomy forest. Here Rinaldo, surrounded by enchantments of a very different sort from those which he had lately resisted, was entrapped into a pit.

The pit belonged to a castle which was hung with human heads, and painted red with blood; and as the Paladin was calling upon God to help him, a hideous white-headed old woman, of a spiteful countenance, made her appearance on the edge of the pit, and told him that he must fight with a monster born of Death and Desire.

"Be it so," said the Paladin. "Let me but remain armed as I am, and I fear nothing." For Rinaldo had with him his renowned sword *Fusberta*.*

* Sometimes called in the romances *Frusberta* (query, from *fourbir*, to bur-nish; or *froisser*, to crush?). The meaning does not seem to be known. I

The old woman laughed in derision. Rinaldo remained in the den all night, and next day was taken to a place where a portcullis was lifted up, and the monster rushed forth. He was a mixture of hog and serpent, larger than an ox, and not to be looked at without horror. He had eyes like a traitor, the hands of a man, but clawed, a beard dabbled with blood, a skin of coarse variegated colours, too hard to be cut through, and two horns on his temples, which he could turn on all sides of him at his pleasure, and which were so sharp that they cut like a sword.

Rising on his hind-legs, and opening a mouth six palms in width, this horrible beast fell heavily on Rinaldo, who was nevertheless quick enough to give it a blow on the snout which increased its fury. Returning the knight a tremendous cuff, it seized his coat of mail between breast and shoulder, and tore away a great strip of it down to the girdle, leaving the skin bare. Every successive rent and blow was of the like irresistible violence; and though the Paladin himself never fought with more force and fury, he lost blood every instant. The monster at length tearing his sword out of his hand, the Paladin surely began to think that his last hour was arrived.

Looking about to see what might possibly help him, he observed overhead a beam sticking out of a wall at the height of some ten feet. He took a leap more than human; and reaching the beam with his hand, succeeded in flinging himself up across it. Here he sat for hours, the furious brute continually trying to reach him. Night-time then came on with a clear starry sky and moonlight, and the Paladin could discern no way of escaping, when he heard a sound of something, he knew not what, coming through the air like a bird. Suddenly a female figure stood on the end of the beam, holding something in her hand towards him, and speaking in a loving voice.

It was Angelica, come with means for destroying the monster, and carrying the knight away.

But the moment Rinaldo saw her, desperate as seemed to be his condition, he renounced all offers of her assistance; and at

ought to have observed, in the notes to Pulci, that the name of Orlando's sword, *Durlindana* (called also *Durindana*, *Durandal*, &c.), is understood to mean *Hard-hitter*.

length became so exasperated with her good offices, especially when she opened her arms and offered to bear him away in them, that he threatened to cast himself down to the monster if she did not go away.*

Angelica, saying that she would lose her life rather than displease him, descended from the beam; and having given the monster a cake of wax which fastened up his teeth, and then caught and fixed him in a set of nooses she had brought for that purpose, took her miserable departure. Rinaldo upon this got down from the beam himself; and having succeeded, though with the greatest difficulty, in beating and squeezing the life out of the monster, dealt such havoc among the people of the castle who assailed him, that the horrible old woman, whose crimes had made her the creature's housekeeper, and led her to take delight in its cruelty, threw herself headlong from a tower. The Paladin then took his way forth, turning his back on the castle and the sea-shore.

Angelica returned to the capital of her father's dominion, Albracca; and the pertinacity of others in seeking her love being as great as that of hers for Rinaldo, she found King Galafron, in a short time, besieged there for her sake, by the fierce Agrican, king of Tartary.

In a short time a jealous feud sprang up between the loving friends Rinaldo and Orlando; and Angelica, torn with conflicting emotions, from her dread on her father's account as well as her own, and her aversion to every knight but her detester, was at one time compelled to apply to Orlando for assistance, and at another, being afraid that he would have the better of Rinaldo in combat, to send him away on a perilous adventure elsewhere, with a promise of accepting his love should he succeed.† Orlando went, but not before he had slain Agrican and delivered Albracca. Circumstances, however, again took him with her to a distance, as the reader will see, ere he could bring her to perform her promise; and the Paladins in general having again been

* The force of aversion was surely never better imagined than in this scene of the opened arms of beauty, and the knight's preference of the most odious death.

† Legalised, I presume, by a divorce from the hero's wife, the fair Alda; who, though she is generally designated by that epithet, seems never to have had much of his attention.

scattered abroad, it happened that Rinaldo a second time found himself in the forest of Arden ; and here, without expecting it, he became an altered man ; for he now tasted a very different stream from that which had given him his hate for Angelica ; namely, the one which had made her fall in love with himself. He was led to do this by a very extraordinary adventure.

In the thick of the forest he had come upon a mead full of flowers, in which there was a naked youth, singing in the midst of three damsels, who were naked also, and who were dancing round about him. They had bunches of flowers in their hands, and garlands on their heads ; and as they were thus delighting themselves, with faces full of love and joy, they suddenly changed countenance on seeing Rinaldo. "Behold," cried they, "the traitor ! Behold him, villain ~~that~~ he is, and the scorner of all delights ! He has fallen into the net at last." With these words they fell upon him with the flowers like so many furies ; and tender as such scourges might be thought, every blow which the roses and violets gave him, every fresh stroke of the lilies and the hyacinths, smote him to the very heart, and filled his veins with fire. The flowers in the hands of the nymphs being exhausted, the youth gave him a blow on the helmet with a tall garden-lily, which felled him to the earth ; and so, taking him by the legs, and dragging him over the grass, his conqueror went the whole circuit of the mead with him, the nymphs taking the very garlands off their heads, and again scourging him with their white and red roses.*

At the close of this discipline, which left him more exhausted than twenty battles, his enemies suddenly developed wings from their shoulders, the feathers of which were of white and gold and vermilion, every feather having an eye in it, not like those in the peacock's feathers, but one full of life and motion, being a female eye, lovely and gracious. And with these wings they poised themselves a little, and so sprung up to heaven.†

* This violent effect of weapons so extremely gentle is beautifully conceived.

† The "female eye, lovely and gracious," is charmingly painted *per se* ; but of this otherwise thoroughly beautiful description I must venture to doubt, whether *living* eyes of any sort, instead of those in the peacock's feathers, are in good taste. The imagination revolts from life misplaced.

The Paladin, more dead than alive, lay helpless among the flowers, when a fourth nymph came up to him, of inexpressible beauty. She told him that he had grievously offended the naked youth, who was no other than Love himself; and added, that his only remedy was to be penitent, and to drink of the waters of a stream hard by, which he would find running from the roots of an olive-tree and a pine. With these words, she vanished in her turn like the rest; and Rinaldo, dragging himself as well as he could to the olive and pine, stooped down, and greedily drank of the water. Again and again he drank, and wished still to be drinking, for it took not only all pain out of his limbs, but all hate and bitterness out of his soul, and produced such a remorseful and doating memory of Angelica, that he would fain have galloped that instant to Cathay, and prostrated himself at her feet. By degrees he knew the place; and looking round about him, and preparing to remount his horse, he discerned a knight and a lady in the distance. The knight was in a coat of armour unknown to him, and the lady kneeling and drinking at a fountain, which was the one that had formerly quenched his own thirst; to wit, the Fountain of Disdain.

Alas! it was Angelica herself; and the knight was Orlando. She had allowed him to bring her into France, ostensibly for the purpose of wedding him at the court of Charlemagne, whither the hero's assistance had been called against Agramant king of the Moors, but secretly with the object of discovering Rinaldo. Rinaldo, behold! is discovered; but the fatal averse water has been drunk, and Angelica now hates him in turn, as cordially as he detested her. In vain he accosted her in the humblest and most repentant manner, calling himself the unworthiest of mankind, and entreating to be allowed to love her. Orlando, disclosing himself, fiercely interrupted him; and a combat so terrific ensued, that Angelica fled away on her palfrey till she came to a large plain, in which she beheld an army encamped.

The army was Charlemagne's, who had come to meet Rodamonte, one of the vassals of Agramant. Angelica, in a tremble, related how she had left the two Paladins fighting in the wood; and Charlemagne, who was delighted to find Orlando so near him, proceeded thither with his lords, and parting the combatants

by his royal authority, suppressed the dispute between them for the present, by consigning the object of their contention to the care of Namo duke of Bavaria, with the understanding that she was to be the prize of the warrior who should best deserve her in the approaching battle with the infidels.

[This is the last we hear of Angelica in the unfinished poem of Boiardo. For the close of her history see its continuation by Ariosto in the present volume.]

THE DEATH OF AGRICAN.

Argument.

Agrican, king of Tartary, in love with Angelica, and baffled by the prowess of the unknown Orlando in his attempts to bring the siege of Albracca to a favourable conclusion, entices him apart from the battle into a wood, in the hope of killing him in single combat. The combat is suspended by the arrival of night-time; and a conversation ensues between the warriors, which is furiously interrupted by Agrican's discovery of his rival, and the latter's refusal to renounce his love. Agrican is slain; and in his dying moments requests baptism at the hand of his conqueror, who, with great tenderness, bestows it.

THE DEATH OF AGRICAN.

THE siege of Albracca was going on formidably under the command of Agrican, and the city of Galafron was threatened with the loss of the monarch's daughter, Angelica, when Orlando, at his earnest prayer, came to assist him, and changing at once the whole course of the war, threw the enemy in his turn into transports of anxiety. Wherever the great Paladin came, pennon and standard fell before him. Men were cut up and cloven down, at every stroke of his sword; and whereas the Indians had been in full rout but a moment before, and the Tartars ever on their flanks, Galafron himself being the swiftest among the spurrers away, it was now the Tartars that fled for their lives; for Orlando was there, and a band of fresh knights were about him, and Agrican in vain attempted to rally his troops. The Paladin kept him constantly in his front, forcing him to attend to nobody else.

The Tartar king, who cared not a button for Galafron and all his army,* provided he could but rid himself of this terrible knight (whom he guessed at, but did not know), bethought him of a stratagem. He turned his horse, and made a show of flying in despair. Orlando dashed after him, as he desired; and Agrican fled till he reached a green place in a wood, with a fountain in it.

The place was beautiful, and the Tartar dismounted to refresh himself at the fountain, but without taking off his helmet, or laying aside any of his armour. Orlando was quickly at his back, crying out, "So bold, and yet such a fugitive! How could you

* "Che tutti insieme, e 'l suo Rè Galafrone,
Non li stimava quanto un vil bottone."

fly from a single arm, and yet think to escape? When a man can die with honour, he should be glad to die; for he may live and fare worse. He may get death and infamy together."

The Tartar king had leaped on his saddle the moment he saw his enemy; and when the Paladin had done speaking, he said in a mild voice, "Without doubt you are the best knight I ever encountered; and fain would I leave you untouched for your own sake, if you would cease to hinder me from rallying my people. I pretended to fly, in order to bring you out of the field. If you insist upon fighting, I must needs fight and slay you; but I call the sun in the heavens to witness, that I would rather not. I should be very sorry for your death."

The County Orlando felt pity for so much gallantry; and he said, "The nobler you shew yourself, the more it grieves me to think, that in dying without a knowledge of the true faith, you will be lost in the other world. Let me advise you to save body and soul at once. Receive baptism, and go your way in peace."

Agrican looked him in the face, and replied, "I suspect you to be the Paladin Orlando. If you are, I would not lose this opportunity of fighting with you, to be king of Paradise. Talk to me no more about your things of the other world; for you will preach in vain. Each of us for himself, and let the sword be umpire."

No sooner said than done. The Tartar drew his sword, boldly advancing upon Orlando; and a cut and thrust fight began, so long and so terrible, each warrior being a miracle of prowess, that the story says it lasted from noon till night. Orlando then, seeing the stars come out, was the first to propose a respite.

"What are we to do," said he, "now that daylight has left us?"

Agrican answered readily enough, "Let us repose in this meadow, and renew the combat at dawn."

The repose was taken accordingly. Each tied up his horse, and reclined himself on the grass, not far from one another, just as if they had been friends,—Orlando by the fountain, Agrican beneath a pine. It was a beautiful clear night; and as they talked together before addressing themselves to sleep, the champion of Christendom, looking up at the firmament, said, "That is

a fine piece of workmanship, that starry spectacle. God made it all,—that moon of silver, and those stars of gold, and the light of day and the sun,—all for the sake of human kind.”

“You wish, I see, to talk of matters of faith,” said the Tartar. “Now I may as well tell you at once, that I have no sort of skill in such matters, nor learning of any kind. I never could learn anything when I was a boy. I hated it so, that I broke the man’s head who was commissioned to teach me ; and it produced such an effect on others, that nobody ever afterwards dared so much as shew me a book. My boyhood was therefore passed as it should be, in horsemanship, and hunting, and learning to fight. What is the good of a gentleman’s poring all day over a book ? Prowess to the knight, and prattle to the clergyman. That is my motto.”

“I acknowledge,” returned Orlando, “that arms are the first consideration of a gentleman ; but not at all that he does himself dishonour by knowledge. On the contrary, knowledge is as great an embellishment of the rest of his attainments, as the flowers are to the meadow before us ; and as to the knowledge of his Maker, the man that is without it is no better than a stock or a stone, or a brute beast. Neither, without study, can he reach anything like a due sense of the depth and divineness of the contemplation.”

“Learned or not learned,” said Agrican, “you might shew yourself better bred than by endeavouring to make me talk on a subject on which you have me at a disadvantage. I have frankly told you what sort of person I am ; and I dare say, that you for your part are very learned and wise. You will therefore permit me, if you say anything more of such things, to make you no answer. If you choose to sleep, I wish you good night ; but if you prefer talking, I recommend you to talk of fighting, or of fair ladies. And, by the way, pray tell me—are you, or are you not, may I ask, that Orlando who makes such a noise in the world ? And what is it, pray, brings you into these parts ? Were you ever in love ? I suppose you must have been ; for to be a knight and never to have been in love, would be like being a man with no heart in his breast.”

The County replied, “Orlando I am, and in love I am.*

* Berni has here introduced the touching words, “Would I were not so !” (Così non foss’ io !)

Love has made me abandon every thing, and brought me into these distant regions ; and to tell you all in one word, my heart is in the hands of the daughter of King Galafron. You have come against him with fire and sword, to get possession of his castles and his dominions ; and I have come to help him, for no object in the world but to please his daughter, and win her beautiful hand. I care for nothing else in existence."

Now when the Tartar king Agrican heard his antagonist speak in this manner, and knew him to be indeed Orlando, and to be in love with Angelica, his face changed colour for grief and jealousy, though it could not be seen for the darkness. His heart began beating with such violence, that he felt as if he should have died. "Well," said he to Orlando, "we are to fight when it is daylight, and one or the other is to be left here, dead on the ground. I have a proposal to make to you ; nay, an entreaty. My love is so excessive for the same lady, that I beg you to leave her to me. I will owe you my thanks, and give up the fight myself. I cannot bear that any one else should love her, and I live to see it. Why, therefore, should either of us perish ? Give her up. Not a soul shall know it."*

"I never yet," answered Orlando, "made a promise which I did not keep ; and, nevertheless, I own to you, that were I to make a promise like that, and even swear to keep it, I should not. You might as well ask me to tear away the limbs from my body, and the eyes out of my head. I could as soon live without breath itself, as cease loving Angelica."

Agrican had scarcely patience enough to let the speaker finish, ere he leaped furiously on horseback, though it was midnight. "Quit her," said he, "or die !"

Orlando, seeing the infidel getting up, and not being sure that he would not add treachery to fierceness, had been hardly less quick in mounting for the combat. "Never !" exclaimed he. "I never could have quitted her if I would ; and now I wouldn't if I could. You must seek her by other means than these."

Fiercely dashed their horses together, in the night-time, on the

* This proposal is in the highest ingenuous spirit of the absurd wilfulness of passion, thinking that every thing is to give way before it, not excepting the same identical wishes in other people.

green mead. Despiteful and terrible were the blows they gave and took by the moonlight. There was no need of their looking out for one another, night-time though it was. Their business was to take a sharp heed of every movement, as if it had been noon-day.*

Agrican fought in a rage : Orlando was cooler. And now the struggle had lasted more than five hours, and dawn began to be visible, when the Tartar king, furious to find so much trouble given him, dealt his enemy a blow sharp and violent beyond conception. It cut the shield in two, as if it had been a cheesecake ; and though blood could not be drawn from Orlando, because he was fated, it shook and bruised him, as if it had started every joint in his body.

His body only, however ; not a particle of his soul. So dreadful was the blow which the Paladin gave in return, that not only shield, but every bit of mail on the body of Agrican, was broken in pieces, and three of his left ribs cut asunder.

The Tartar, roaring like a lion, raised his sword with still greater vehemence than before, and dealt a blow on the Paladin's helmet, such as he had never yet received from mortal man. For a moment it took away his senses. His sight failed ; his ears tinkled ; his frightened horse turned about to fly ; and he was falling from the saddle, when the very action of falling jerked his head upwards, and with the jerk he regained his recollection.

“ O my God ! ” thought he, “ what a shame is this ! how shall I ever again dare to face Angelica ! I have been fighting, hour after hour, with this man, and he is but one, and I call myself Orlando. If the combat last any longer, I will bury myself in a monastery, and never look on sword again.”

Orlando muttered with his lips closed and his teeth ground together ; and you might have thought that fire instead of breath came out of his nose and mouth. He raised his sword Durindana with both his hands, and sent it down so tremendously on Agrican's left shoulder, that it cut through breast-plate and belly-piece down to the very haunch ; nay, crushed the saddle-bow, though it was made of bone and iron, and felled man and horse to the earth. From shoulder to hip was Agrican cut through his

* Very fine all this, I think.

weary soul, and he turned as white as ashes, and felt death upon him. He called Orlando to come close to him with a gentle voice, and said, as well as he could, "I believe in Him who died on the Cross. Baptise me, I pray thee, with the fountain, before my senses are gone. I have lived an evil life, but need not be rebellious to God in death also. May He who came to save all the rest of the world, save me! He is a God of great mercy."

And he shed tears, did that king, though he had been so lofty and fierce.

Orlando dismounted quickly, with his own face in tears. He gathered the king tenderly in his arms, and took and laid him by the fountain, on a marble cirque which it had; and then he wept in concert with him heartily, and asked his pardon, and so baptised him in the water of the fountain, and knelt and prayed to God for him with joined hands.

He then paused and looked at him; and when he perceived his countenance changed, and that his whole person was cold, he left him there on the marble cirque by the fountain, all armed as he was, with the sword by his side, and the crown upon his head.

I think I may anticipate the warm admiration of the reader for the whole of this beautiful episode, particularly its close. "I think," says Panizzi, "that Tasso had this passage particularly in view when he wrote the duel of Clorinda and Tancredi, and her conversion and baptism before dying. The whole passage, from stanza xii. (where Agrican receives his mortal blow) to this, is beautiful; and the delicate proceeding of Orlando in leaving Agrican's body armed, even with the sword in his hand, is in the noblest spirit of chivalry."—Edition of *Boiardo and Ariosto*, vol. iii. page 357.

The reader will find the original in the Appendix No. I.

In the course of the poem (canto xix. stanza xxvi.) a knight, with the same noble delicacy, who is in distress for a set of arms, borrows those belonging to the dead body, with many excuses, and a kiss on its face.

THE SARACEN FRIENDS.

Argument

THE SARACEN FRIENDS.

A FAIRY LOVE-TALE.

Argument.

Prasildo, a nobleman of Babylon, to his great anguish, falls in love with his friend's wife, Tisbina; and being overheard by her and her husband threatening to kill himself, the lady, hoping to divert him from his passion by time and absence, promises to return it on condition of his performing a distant and perilous adventure. He performs the adventure; and the husband and wife, supposing that there is no other way of her escaping the consequences, resolve to take poison; after which the lady goes to Prasildo's house, and informs him of their having done so. Prasildo resolves to die with them; but hearing, in the mean time, that the apothecary had given them a drink that was harmless, he goes and tells them of their good fortune; upon which the husband is so struck with his generosity, that he voluntarily quits Babylon for life, and the lady marries the lover. The new husband subsequently hears that his friend's life is in danger, and quits the wife to go and deliver him from it at the risk of his own, which he does.

This story, which has resemblances to it in Boccaccio and Chaucer, is told to Rinaldo while riding through a wood in Asia, with a damsel behind him on the same horse. He has engaged to combat in her behalf with a band of knights; and the lady relates it to beguile the way.

The reader is to bear in mind, that the age of chivalry took delight in mooted points of love and friendship, such as in after times would have been out of the question; and that the parties in this story are Mahometans, with whom divorce was an easy thing, and caused no scandal.

THE SARACEN FRIENDS.

IROLDO, a knight of Babylon, had to wife a lady of the name of Tisbina, whom he loved with a passion equal to that of Tristan for Iseult;* and she returned his love with such fondness, that her thoughts were occupied with him from morning till night. Among other pleasant circumstances of their position, they had a neighbour who was accounted the greatest nobleman in the city; and he deserved his credit, for he spent his great riches in doing nothing but honour to his rank. He was pleasant in company, formidable in battle, full of grace in love; an open-hearted, accomplished gentleman.

This personage, whose name was Prasildo, happened to be of a party one day with Tisbina, who were amusing themselves in a garden, with a game in which the players knelt down with their faces bent on one another's laps, and guessed who it was that struck them. The turn came to himself, and he knelt down to the lap of Tisbina; but no sooner was he there, than he experienced feelings he had never dreamt of; and instead of trying to guess correctly, took all the pains he could to remain in the same position.

These feelings pursued him all the rest of the day, and still more closely at night. He did nothing but think and sigh, and find the soft feathers harder than any stone. Nor did he get better as time advanced. His once favourite pastime of hunting now ceased to afford him any delight. Nothing pleased him but to be giving dinners and balls, to make verses and sing them to his lute, and to joust and tournay in the eyes of his love, dressed in the most sumptuous apparel. But above all, gentle and graceful as he had been before, he now became still more gentle and

* The hero and heroine of the famous romance of *Tristan de Leonois*.

graceful—for good qualities are always increased when a man is in love. Never in my life did I know them turn to ill in that case. So, in Prasildo's, you may guess what a super-excellent person he became.

The passion which had thus taken possession of this gentleman was not lost upon the lady for want of her knowing it. A mutual acquaintance was always talking to her on the subject, but to no purpose; she never relaxed her pride and dignity for a moment. The lover at last fell ill; he fairly wasted away; and was so unhappy, that he gave up all his feasting and entertainments. The only pleasure he took was in a solitary wood, in which he used to plunge himself in order to give way to his grief and lamentations.

It happened one day, early in the morning, while he was thus occupied, that Iroldo came into the wood to amuse himself with bird-catching. He had Tisbina with him; and as they were coming along, they overheard their neighbour during one of his paroxysms, and stopped to listen to what he said.

“Hear me,” exclaimed he, “ye flowers and ye woods. Hear to what a pass of wretchedness I am come, since that cruel one will hear me not. Hear, O sun that hast taken away the night from the heavens, and you, ye stars, and thou the departing moon, hear the voice of my grief for the last time, for exist I can no longer; my death is the only way left me to gratify that proud beauty, to whom it has pleased Heaven to give a cruel heart with a merciful countenance. Fain would I have died in her presence. It would have comforted me to see her pleased even with that proof of my love. But I pray, nevertheless, that she may never know it; since, cruel as she is, she might blame herself for having shewn a scorn so extreme; and I love her so, I would not have her pained for all her cruelty. Surely I shall love her even in my grave.”

With these words, turning pale with his own mortal resolution, Prasildo drew his sword, and pronouncing the name of Tisbina more than once with a loving voice, as though its very sound would be sufficient to waft him to Paradise, was about to plunge the steel into his bosom, when the lady herself, by leave of her

husband, whose manly visage was all in tears for pity, stood suddenly before him.

“Prasildo,” said she, “if you love me, listen to me. You have often told me that you do so. Now prove it. I happen to be threatened with nothing less than the loss of life and honour. Nothing short of such a calamity could have induced me to beg of you the service I am going to request; since there is no greater shame in the world than to ask favours from those to whom we have refused them. But I now promise you, that if you do what I desire, your love shall be returned. I give you my word for it. I give you my honour. On the other side of the wilds of Barbary is a garden which has a wall of iron. It has four gates. Life itself keeps one; Death another; Poverty the third; the fairy of Riches the fourth. He who goes in at one gate must go out at the other opposite; and in the midst of the garden is a tree, tall as the reach of an arrow, which produces pearls for blossoms. It is called the Tree of Wealth, and has fruit of emeralds and boughs of gold. I must have a bough of that tree, or suffer the most painful consequences. Now, then, if you love me, I say, prove it. Prove it, and most assuredly I shall love you in turn, better than ever you loved myself.”

What need of saying that Prasildo, with haste and joy, undertook to do all that she required? If she had asked the sun and stars, and the whole universe, he would have promised them. Quitting her in spite of his love, he set out on the journey without delay, only dressing himself before he left the city in the habit of a pilgrim.

Now you must know, that Iroldo and his lady had set Prasildo on that adventure, in the hope that the great distance which he would have to travel, and the change which it might assist time to produce, would deliver him from his passion. At all events, in case this good end was not effected before he arrived at the garden, they counted to a certainty on his getting rid of it when he did; because the fairy of that garden, which was called the Garden of Medusa, was of such a nature, that whosoever did but look on her countenance forgot the reason for his going thither; and whoever saluted, touched, and sat down to converse by her side, forgot all that had ever occurred in his lifetime.

Away, however, on his steed went our bold lover ; all alone, or rather with Love for his companion ; and so, riding hard till he came to the Red Sea, he took ship, and journeyed through Egypt, and came to the mountains of Barca, where he overtook an old grey-headed palmer.

Prasildo told the palmer the reason of his coming, and the palmer told him what the reader has heard about the garden ; adding, that he must enter by the gate of Poverty, and take no arms or armour with him, excepting a looking-glass for a shield, in which the fairy might behold her beauty. The old man gave him other directions necessary for his passing out of the gate of Riches ; and Prasildo, thanking him, went on, and in thirty days found himself entering the garden with the greatest ease, by the gate of Poverty.

The garden looked like a Paradise, it was so full of beautiful trees, and flowers, and fresh grass. Prasildo took care to hold the shield over his eyes, that he might avoid seeing the fairy Medusa ; and in this manner, guarding his approach, he arrived at the Golden Tree. The fairy, who was reclining against the trunk of it, looked up, and saw herself in the glass. Wonderful was the effect on her. Instead of her own white-and-red blooming face, she beheld that of a dreadful serpent. The spectacle made her take to flight in terror ; and the lover finding his object so far gained, looked freely at the tree, and climbed it, and bore away a bough.*

With this he proceeded to the gate of Riches. It was all of loadstone, and opened with a great noise. But he passed through it happily, for he made the fairy who kept it a present of half the bough ; and so he issued forth out of the garden, with indescribable joy.

Behold our loving adventurer now on his road home. Every step of the way appeared to him a thousand. He took the road of Nubia to shorten the journey ; crossed the Arabian Gulf with

* "Mr. Rose observes, that Medusa may be designed by Boiardo as the 'type of conscience;' and he is confirmed in his opinion by the circumstance mentioned in this canto (12, lib. i. stan. 39) of Medusa not being able to contemplate the reflection of her own hideous appearance, though beautiful in the sight of others. I fully agree with him."—PANIZZI, *ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 333.

a breeze in his favour; and travelling by night as well as by day, arrived one fine morning in Babylon.

No sooner was he there than he sent to tell the object of his passion how fortunate he had been. He begged her to name her own place and time for receiving the bough at his hands, taking care to remind her of her promise; and he could not help adding, that he should die if she broke it.

Terrible was the grief of Tisbina at this unlooked-for news. She threw herself on her couch in despair, and bewailed the hour she was born. "What on earth am I to do?" cried the wretched lady; "death itself is no remedy for a case like this, since it is only another mode of breaking my word. To think that Prasildo should return from the garden of Medusa! who could have supposed it possible? And yet, in truth, what a fool I was to suppose any thing impossible to love! O my husband! little didst thou think what thou thyself advisedst me to promise!"

The husband was coming that moment towards the room; and overhearing his wife grieving in this distracted manner, he entered and clasped her in his arms. On learning the cause of her affliction, he felt as though he should have died with her on the spot.

"Alas!" cried he, "that it should be possible for me to be miserable while I am so dear to your heart. But you know, O my soul! that when love and jealousy come together, the torment is the greatest in the world. Myself—myself, alas! caused the mischief, and myself alone ought to suffer for it. You must keep your promise. You must abide by the word you have given, especially to one who has undergone so much to perform what you asked him. Sweet face, you must. But oh! see him not till after I am dead. Let Fortune do with me what she pleases, so that I be saved from a disgrace like that. It will be a comfort to me in death to think that I alone, while I was on earth, enjoyed the fond looking of that lovely face. Nay," concluded the wretched husband, "I feel as though I should die over again, if I could call to mind in my grave how you were taken from me."

Iroldo became dumb for anguish. It seemed to him as if his very heart had been taken out of his breast. Nor was Tisbina

less miserable. She was as pale as death, and could hardly speak to him, or bear to look at him. At length turning her eyes upon him, she said, "And do you believe I could make my poor sorry case out in this world without Iroldo? Can he bear, himself, to think of leaving his Tisbina? he who has so often said, that if he possessed heaven itself, he should not think it heaven without her? O dearest husband, there is a way to make death not bitter to either of us. It is to die together. I must only exist long enough to see Prasildo! Death, alas! is in that thought; but the same death will release us. It need not even be a hard death, saving our misery. There are poisons so gentle in their deadliness, that we need but faint away into sleep, and so, in the course of a few hours, be delivered. Our misery and our folly will then alike be ended."

Iroldo assenting, clasped his wife in distraction; and for a long time they remained in the same posture, half stifled with grief, and bathing one another's cheeks with their tears. Afterwards they sent quietly for the poison; and the apothecary made up a preparation in a cup, without asking any questions; and so the husband and wife took it. Iroldo drank first, and then endeavoured to give the cup to his wife, uttering not a word, and trembling in every limb; not because he was afraid of death, but because he could not bear to ask her to share it. At length, turning away his face and looking down, he held the cup towards her, and she took it with a chilled heart and trembling hand, and drank the remainder to the dregs. Iroldo then covered his face and head, not daring to see her depart for the house of Prasildo; and Tisbina, with pangs bitterer than death, left him in solitude.

Tisbina, accompanied by a servant, went to Prasildo, who could scarcely believe his ears when he heard that she was at the door requesting to speak with him. He hastened down to shew her all honour, leading her from the door into a room by themselves; and when he found her in tears, addressed her in the most considerate and subdued, yet still not unhappy manner, taking her confusion for bashfulness, and never dreaming what a tragedy had been meditated.

Finding at length that her grief was not to be done away, he conjured her by what she held dearest on earth to let him know

the cause of it; adding, that he could still die for her sake, if his death would do her any service. Tisbina spoke at these words; and Prasildo then heard what he did not wish to hear. "I am in your hands," answered she, "while I am yet alive. I am bound to my word, but I cannot survive the dishonour which it costs me, nor, above all, the loss of the husband of my heart. You also, to whose eyes I have been so welcome, must be prepared for my disappearance from the earth. Had my affections not belonged to another, ungentle would have been my heart not to have loved yourself, who are so capable of loving; but (as you must well know) to love two at once is neither fitting nor in one's power. It was for that reason I never loved you, baron; I was only touched with compassion for you; and hence the miseries of us all. Before this day closes, I shall have learnt the taste of death." And without further preface she disclosed to him how she and her husband had taken poison.

Prasildo was struck dumb with horror. He had thought his felicity at hand, and was at the same instant to behold it gone for ever. She who was rooted in his heart, she who carried his life in her sweet looks, even she was sitting there before him, already, so to speak, dead.

"It has pleased neither Heaven nor you, Tisbina," exclaimed the unhappy young man, "to put my best feelings to the proof. Often have two lovers perished for love; the world will now behold a sacrifice of three. Oh, why did you not make a request to me in your turn, and ask me to free you from your promise? You say you took pity on me! Alas, cruel one, confess that you have killed yourself, in order to kill me. Yet why? Never did I think of giving you displeasure; and I now do what I would have done at any time to prevent it, I absolve you from your oath. Stay, or go this instant, as it seems best to you."

A stronger feeling than compassion moved the heart of Tisbina at these words. "This indeed," replied she, "I feel to be noble; and truly could I also now die to save you. But life is fitting; and how may I prove my regard?"

Prasildo, who had in good earnest resolved that three instead of two should perish, experienced such anguish at the extraordinary position in which he found all three, that even her sweet words

came but dimly to his ears. He stood like a man stupified ; then begged of her to give him but one kiss, and so took his leave without further ado, only intimating that her way out of the house lay before her. As he spake, he removed himself from her sight.

Tisbina reached home. She found her husband with his head covered up as she left him ; but when she recounted what had passed, and the courtesy of Prasildo, and how he had exacted from her but a single kiss, Iroldo got up, and removed the covering from his face, and then clasping his hands, and raising it to heaven, he knelt with grateful humility, and prayed God to give pardon to himself, and reward to his neighbour. But before he had ended, Tisbina sunk on the floor in a swoon. Her weaker frame was the first to undergo the effects of what she had taken. Iroldo felt icy chill to see her, albeit she seemed to sleep sweetly. Her aspect was not at all like death. He taxed Heaven with cruelty for treating two loving hearts so hardly, and cried out against Fortune, and life, and Love itself.

Nor was Prasildo happier in his chamber. He also exclaimed against the bitter tyrant "whom men call Love ;" and protested, that he would gladly encounter any fate, to be delivered from the worse evils of his false and cruel ascendancy.

But his lamentations were interrupted. The apothecary who sold the potion to the husband and wife was at the door below, requesting to speak with him. The servants at first had refused to carry the message ; but the old man persisting, and saying it was a matter of life and death, entrance for him into his master's chamber was obtained.

"Noble sir," said the apothecary, "I have always held you in love and reverence. I have unfortunately reason to fear that somebody is desiring your death. This morning a handmaiden of the lady Tisbina applied to me for a secret poison ; and just now it was told me, that the lady herself had been at this house. I am old, sir, and you are young ; and I warn you against the violence and jealousies of womankind. Talk of their flames of love ! Satan himself burn them, say I, for they are fit for nothing better. Do not be too much alarmed, however, this time : for in truth I gave the young woman nothing of the sort that she

asked for, but only a draught so innocent, that if you have taken it, it will cost you but four or five hours' sleep. So, in God's name, give up the whole foolish sex ; for you may depend on it, that in this city of ours there are ninety-nine wicked ones among them to one good."

You may guess how Prasildo's heart revived at these words. Truly might he be compared to flowers in sunshine after rain ; he rejoiced through all his being, and displayed again a cheerful countenance. Hastily thanking the old man, he lost no time in repairing to the house of his neighbours, and telling them of their safety : and you may guess how the like joy was theirs.

But behold a wonder ! Iroldo was so struck with the generosity of his neighbour's conduct throughout the whole of this extraordinary affair, that nothing would content his grateful though ever-grieving heart, but he must fairly give up Tisbina after all. Prasildo, to do him justice, resisted the proposition as stoutly as he could ; but a man's powers are ill seconded by an unwilling heart ; and though the contest was long and handsome, as is customary between generous natures, the husband adhered firmly to his intention. In short, he abruptly quitted the city, declaring that he would never again see it, and so left his wife to the lover. And I must add (concluded the fair lady who was telling the story to Rinaldo), that although Tisbina took his departure greatly to heart, and sometimes felt as if she should die at the thoughts of it, yet since he persisted in staying away, and there appeared no chance of his ever doing otherwise, she did, as in that case we should all do, we at least that are young and kind, and took the handsome Prasildo for second spouse.*

* "Tisbina," says Panizzi, in a note on this passage, "very wisely acted like Emilia (in Chaucer), who, when she saw she could not marry Arcita, because he was killed, thought of marrying Palemone, rather than 'be a mayden all hire lyf.' It is to be observed, that although she regretted very much what had happened, and even fainted away, she did not, however, stand on ceremonies, as the poet says in the next stanza, but yielded immediately, and married Prasildo. This, at first, I thought to be somewhat inconsistent ; but on consideration I found I was wrong. Tisbina was wrong ; because, having lost Iroldo, she did not know what Prasildo would do ; but so soon as the latter offered to fill up the place, she nobly and magnanimously resigned herself to her fate."—*Ut sup.*, vol. iii. p. 336.

It might be thought inconsistent in Tisbina, notwithstanding Mr. Panizzi's pleasantry, to be so willing to take another husband, after having poisoned herself for the first; but she seems intended by the poet to exhibit a character of impulse in contradistinction to permanency of sentiment. She cannot help shewing pity for Prasildo; she cannot help poisoning herself for her husband; and she cannot help taking his friend, when she has lost him. Nor must it be forgotten that the husband was the first to break the tie. We respect him more than we do her, because he was capable of greater self-denial; but if he himself preferred his friend to his love, we can hardly blame her (custom apart) for following the example.

PART THE SECOND.

THE conclusion of this part of the history of Iroldo and Prasildo was scarcely out of the lady's mouth, when a tremendous voice was heard among the trees, and Rinaldo found himself confronting a giant of a frightful aspect, who with a griffin on each side of him was guarding a cavern that contained the enchanted horse which had belonged to the brother of Angelica. A combat ensued; and after winning the horse, and subsequently losing the company of the lady, the Paladin, in the course of his adventures, came upon a knight who lay lamenting in a green place by a fountain. The knight heeding nothing but his grief, did not perceive the new comer, who for some time remained looking at him in silence, till, desirous to know the cause of his sorrow, he dismounted from his horse, and courteously begged to be informed of it. The stranger in his turn looked a little while in silence at Rinaldo, and then told him he had resolved to die, in order to be rid of a life of misery. And yet, he added, it was not his own lot which grieved him, so much as that of a noble friend who would die at the same time, and who had nobody to help him.

The knight, who was no other than Tisbina's husband Iroldo, then briefly related the events which the reader has heard, and proceeded to state how he had traversed the world ever since for two years, when it was his misfortune to arrive in the territories of the enchantress Falerina, whose custom it was to detain foreigners in prison, and daily give a couple of them (a lady and a cavalier) for food to a serpent which kept the entrance of her enchanted garden. To this serpent he himself was destined to

be sacrificed, when Prasildo, the possessor of his wife Tisbina, hearing of his peril, set out instantly from Babylon, and rode night and day till he came to the abode of the enchantress, determined that nothing should hinder him from doing his utmost to save the life of a friend so generous. Save it he did, and that by a generosity no less devoted ; for having attempted in vain to bribe the keeper of the prison, he succeeded in prevailing on the man to let him substitute himself for his friend ; and he was that very day, perhaps that very moment, preparing for the dreadful death to which he would speedily be brought.

“ I will not survive such a friend,” concluded Iroldo. “ I know I shall contend with his warders to no purpose ; but let the wretches come, if they will, by thousands ; I shall fight them to the last gasp. One comfort in death, one joy I shall at all events experience. I shall be with Prasildo in the other world. And yet when I think what sort of death he must endure, even the release from my own miseries afflicts me, since it will not prevent him from undergoing that horror.”

The Paladin shed tears to hear of a case so piteous and affectionate, and in a tone of encouragement offered his services towards the rescue of his friend. Iroldo looked at him in astonishment, but sighed and said, “ Ah, sir, I thank you with all my heart, and you are doubtless a most noble cavalier, to be so fearless and good-hearted ; but what right have I to bring you to destruction for no reason and to no purpose ? There is not a man on earth but Orlando himself, or his cousin Rinaldo, who could possibly do us any good ; and so I beg you to accept my thanks and depart in safety, and may God reward you.”

“ It is true,” replied the Paladin, “ I am not Orlando ; and yet, for all that, I doubt not to be able to effect what I propose. Nor do I offer my assistance out of desire of glory, or of thanks, or return of any kind ; except indeed, that if two such unparalleled friends could admit me to be a third, I should hold myself a happy man. What ! you have given up the woman of your heart, and deprived yourself of all joy and comfort ; and your friend, on the other hand, has become a prisoner and devoted to death, for your sake ; and can I be expected to leave two such friends in a

jeopardy so monstrous, and not do all in my power to save them? I would rather die first myself, and on your own principle; I mean, in order to go with you into a better world."

While they were talking in this manner, a great ill-looking rabble, upwards of a thousand strong, made their appearance, carrying a banner, and bringing forth two prisoners to die. The wretches were armed after their disorderly fashion; and the prisoners each tied upon a horse. One of these hapless persons too surely was Prasildo; and the other turned out to be the damsel who had told Rinaldo the story of the friends. Having been deprived of the Paladin's assistance, her subsequent misadventures had brought her to this terrible pass. The moment Rinaldo beheld her, he leaped on his horse, and dashed among the villains. The sight of such an onset was enough for their cowardly hearts. The whole posse fled before him with precipitation, all except the leader, who was a villain of gigantic strength; and him the Paladin, at one blow, clove through the middle. Iroldo could not speak for joy, as he hastened to release Prasildo. He was forced to give him tears instead of words. But when speech at length became possible, the two friends, fervently and with a religious awe, declared that their deliverer must have been divine and not human, so tremendous was the death-blow he had given the ruffian, and such winged and contemptuous slaughter he had dealt among the fugitives. By the time he returned from the pursuit, their astonishment had risen to such a pitch, that they fell on their knees and worshipped him for the Prophet of the Saracens, not believing such prowess possible to humanity, and devoutly thanking him for the mercy he had shewn them in coming thus visibly from heaven. Rinaldo for the moment was not a little disturbed at this sally of enthusiasm; but the singular good faith and simplicity of it restored him to himself; and with a smile between lovingness and humility he begged them to lay aside all such fancies, and know him for a man like themselves. He then disclosed himself for the Rinaldo of whom they had spoken, and made such an impression on them with his piety, and his attributing what had appeared a superhuman valour to nothing but his belief in the Christian religion, that the transported friends

became converts on the spot, and accompanied him thenceforth as the most faithful of his knights.

The story tells us nothing further of Tisbina, though there can be no doubt that Boiardo meant to give us the conclusion of her share in it; for the two knights take an active part in the adventures of their new friend Rinaldo. Perhaps, however, the discontinuance of the poem itself was lucky for the author, as far as this episode was concerned; for it is difficult to conceive in what manner he would have wound it up to the satisfaction of the reader.

SEEING AND BELIEVING.

Argument.

A lady has two suitors, a young and an old one, the latter of whom wins her against her inclinations by practising the artifice of Hippomanes in his race with Atalanta. Being very jealous, he locks her up in a tower; and the youth, who continued to be her lover, makes a subterraneous passage to it; and pretending to have married her sister, invites the old man to his house, and introduces his own wife to him as the bride. The husband, deceived, but still jealous, facilitates their departure out of the country, and returns to his tower to find himself deserted.

This story, like that of the *Saracen Friends*, is told by a damsel to a knight while riding in his company; with this difference, that she is the heroine of it herself. She is a damsel of a nature still lighter than the former; and the reader's sympathy with the trouble she brings on herself, and the way she gets out of it, will be modified accordingly. On the other hand, nobody can respect the foolish old man with his unwarrantable marriage; and the moral of Boiardo's story is still useful for these "enlightened times," though conveyed with an air of levity.

In addition to the classics, the poet has been to the Norman fablers for his story. The subterranean passage has been more than once repeated in romance; and the closing incident, the assistance given by the husband to his wife's elopement, has been imitated in the farce of *Lionel and Clarissa*.

SEEING AND BELIEVING.

My father (said the damsel) is King of the Distant Islands, where the treasure of the earth is collected. Never was greater wealth known, and I was heiress of it all.

But it is impossible to foresee what is most to be desired for us in this world. I was a king's daughter, I was rich, I was handsome, I was lively ; and yet to all those advantages I owed my ill-fortune.

Among other suitors for my hand there came two on the same day, one of whom was a youth named Ordauro, handsome from head to foot ; the other an old man of seventy, whose name was Folderico. Both were rich and of noble birth ; but the greybeard was counted extremely wise, and of a foresight more than human. As I did not feel in want of his foresight, the youth was far more to my taste ; and accordingly I listened to him with perfect goodwill, and gave the wise man no sort of encouragement.

I was not at liberty, however, to determine the matter ; my father had a voice in it ; so, fearing what he would advise, I thought to secure a good result by cunning and management. It is an old observation, that the craft of a woman exceeds all other craft. Indeed, it is Solomon's own saying. But now-a-days people laugh at it ; and I found to my cost that the laugh is just. I requested my father to proclaim, first, that nobody should have me in marriage who did not surpass me in swiftness (for I was a damsel of a mighty agility) ; and secondly, that he who did surpass me should be my husband. He consented, and I thought my happiness secure. You must know, I have run down a bird, and caught it with my own hand.

Well, both my suitors came to the race ; the youth on a large

war-horse, trapped with gold, which curvetted in a prodigious manner, and seemed impatient for a gallop; the old man on a mule, carrying a great bag at his side, and looking already tired out. They dismounted on the place chosen for the trial, which was a meadow. It was encircled by a world of spectators; and the greybeard and myself (for his age gave him the first chance) only waited for the sound of the trumpet to set off.

I held my competitor in such contempt, that I let him get the start of me, on purpose to make him ridiculous; but I was not prepared for his pulling a golden apple out of his bag, and throwing it as far as he could in a direction different from that of the goal. The sight of a curiosity so tempting was too much for my prudence; and it rolled away so roundly, and to such a distance, that I lost more time in reaching it than I looked for. Before I overtook the old gentleman, he threw another apple, and this again led me a chase after it. In short, I blush to say, that, resolved as I was to be tempted no further, seeing that the end of our course was now at hand, and my marriage with an old man instead of a young man was out of the question, he seduced me to give chase to a third apple, and fairly reached the goal before me. I wept for rage and disgust, and meditated every species of unconjugal treatment of the old fox. What right had he to marry such a child as I was? I asked myself the question at the time; I asked it a thousand times afterwards; and I must confess, that the more I have tormented him, the more the retaliation delights me.

However, it was of no use at the moment. The old wretch bore me off to his domains with an ostentatious triumph; and then, his jealousy misgiving him, he shut me up in a castle on a rock, where he endeavoured from that day forth to keep me from the sight of living being. You may judge what sort of castle it was by its name—*Altamura* (lofty wall). It overlooked a desert on three sides, and the sea on the fourth; and a man might as well have flown as endeavoured to scale it. There was but one path up to the entrance, very steep and difficult; and when you were there, you must have pierced outwork after outwork, and picked the lock of gate after gate. So there sat I in this delicious retreat, hopeless, and bursting with rage. I called upon death day and night, as my only refuge. I had no comfort but in see-

ing my keeper mad with jealousy, even in that desolate spot. I think he was jealous of the very flies.

My handsome youth, Ordauro, however, had not forgotten me ; no, nor even given me up. Luckily he was not only very clever, but rich besides ; without which, to be sure, his brains would not have availed him a pin. What does he do, therefore, but take a house in the neighbourhood on the sea-shore ; and while my tormentor, in alarm and horror, watches every movement, and thinks him coming if he sees a cloud or a bird, Ordauro sets people secretly to work night and day, and makes a subterraneous passage up to the very tower !

Guess what I felt when I saw him enter ! Assuredly I did not shew him the face which I shewed Folderico. I die with joy this moment to think of my delight. As soon as we could discourse of any thing but our meeting, Ordauro concerted measures for my escape ; and the greatest difficulty being surmounted by the subterraneous passage, they at last succeeded. But our enemy gave us a frightful degree of trouble.

There was no end of the old man's prying, peeping, and precautions. He left me as little as possible by myself ; and he had all the coast thereabouts at his command, together with the few boats that ever touched it.

Ordauro, however, did a thing at once the most bold and the most ingenious. He gave out that he was married ; and inviting my husband to dinner, who had heard the news with transport, presented me, to his astonished eyes, for the bride. The old man looked as if he would have died for rage and misery.

"Horrible villain !" cried he, "what is this ?"

Ordauro professed astonishment in his turn.

"What !" asked he ; "do you not know that the princess, your lady's sister, is wonderfully like her, and that she has done me the honour of becoming my wife ? I invited you in order to do honour to yourself, and so bring the good families together."

"Detestable falsehood !" cried Folderico. "Do you think I'm blind, or a born idiot ? But I'll see to this business directly ; and terrible shall be my revenge."

So saying, he flung out, and hastened, as fast as age would let him, to the room in the tower, where he expected to find me not.

But there he did find me :—there was I, sitting as if nothing had happened, with my hand on my cheek, and full of my old melancholy.

“God preserve me!” exclaimed he; “this is astonishing indeed! Never could I have dreamt that one sister could be so like another! But is it so, or is it not? I have terrible suspicions. It is impossible to believe it. Tell me truly,” he continued; “answer me on the faith of a daring woman, and you shall get no hurt by it. Has any one opened the portals for you to-day? Who was it? How did you get out? Tell me the truth, and you shall not suffer for it; but deceive me, and there is no punishment that you may not look for.”

It is needless to say how I vowed and protested that I had never stirred; that it was quite impossible; that I could not have done it if I would, &c. I took all the saints to witness to my veracity, and swore I had never seen the outside of his tremendous castle.

The monster had nothing to say to this; but I saw what he meant to do—I saw that he would return instantly to the house of Ordauro, and ascertain if the bride was there. Accordingly, the moment he turned the key on me, I flew down the subterraneous passage, tossed on my new clothes like lightning, and sat in my lover’s house as before, waiting the arrival of the panting old gentleman.

“Well,” exclaimed he, as soon as he set eyes upon me, “never in all my life—no—I must allow it to be impossible—never can my wife at home be the lady sitting here.”

From that day forth the old man, whenever he saw me in Ordauro’s house, treated me as if I were indeed his sister-in-law, though he never had the heart to bring the two wives together, for fear of old recollections. Nevertheless, this state of things was still very perilous; and my new husband and myself lost no time in considering how we should put an end to it by leaving the country. Ordauro resorted, as before, to a bold expedient. He told Folderico that the air of the sea-coast disagreed with him; and the old man, whose delight at getting rid of his neighbour helped to blind him to the deceit, not only expedited the movement, but offered to see him part of the way on his journey!

The offer was accepted. Six miles he rode forth with us, the stupid old man ; and then, taking his leave, to return home, we pushed our horses like lightning, and so left him to tear his hair and his old beard with cries and curses, as soon as he opened the door of his tower.

CRITICAL NOTICE

ARISTO'S LIFE AND GENIUS

ARISTO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

CRITICAL NOTICE

OF

ARIOSTO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.*

THE congenial spirits of Pulci and Boiardo may be said to have attained to their height in the person of Ariosto, upon the principle of a transmigration of souls, or after the fashion of that hero in romance, who was heir to the bodily strengths of all whom he conquered.

Lodovico Giovanni Ariosto was born on the 8th of September, 1474, in the fortress at Reggio, in Lombardy, and was the son of Niccolò Ariosto, captain of that citadel (as Boiardo had been), and Daria Maleguzzi, whose family still exists. The race was transplanted from Bologna in the century previous, when Obizzo the Third of Este, Marquess of Ferrara, married a lady belonging to it, whose Christian name was Lippa. Niccolò Ariosto, besides holding the same office as Boiardo had done, at Modena as well as at Reggio, was master of the household to his two successive patrons, the Dukes Borso and Ercole. He was also em-

* The materials for this notice have been chiefly collected from the poet's own writings (rich in autobiographical intimation) and from his latest editor Panizzi. I was unable to see this writer's principal authority, Baruffaldi, till I corrected the proofs and the press was waiting; otherwise I might have added two or three more particulars, not, however, of any great consequence. Panizzi is, as usual, copious and to the purpose; and has, for the first time I believe, critically proved the regularity and connectedness of Ariosto's plots, as well as the hollowness of the pretensions of the house of Este to be considered patrons of literature. It is only a pity that his *Life of Ariosto* is not better arranged. I have, of course, drawn my own conclusions respecting particulars, and sometimes have thought I had reason to differ with those who have preceded me; but not, I hope, with a presumption unbecoming a foreigner.

ployed, like him, in diplomacy ; and was made a count by the Emperor Frederick the Third, though not, it seems, with remainder to his heirs.

Lodovico was the eldest of ten children, five sons and five daughters. During his boyhood, theatrical entertainments were in great vogue at court, as we have seen in the life of Boiardo ; and at the age of twelve, a year after the decease of that poet (who must have been well known to him, and probably encouraged his attempts), his successor is understood to have dramatised, after his infant fashion, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and to have got his brothers and sisters to perform it. Panizzi doubts the possibility of these precocious private theatricals ; but considering what is called "writing" on the part of children, and that only one other performer was required in the piece, or at best a third for the lion (which some little brother might have "roared like any sucking-dove"), I cannot see good reason for disbelieving the story. Pope was not twelve years old when he turned the siege of Troy into a play, and got his school-fellows to perform it, the part of Ajax being given to the gardener. Man is a theatrical animal (*ζῶον μιμητικόν*), and the instinct is developed at a very early period, as almost every family can witness that has taken its children to the "playhouse."

At fifteen the young poet, like so many others of his class, was consigned to the study of the law, and took a great dislike to it. The extreme mobility of his nature, and the wish to please his father, appear to have made him enter on it willingly enough in the first instance ;* but as soon as he betrayed symptoms of disgust, Niccolò, whose affairs were in a bad way, drove him back to it with a vehemence which must have made bad worse.† At the expiration of five years he was allowed to give it up.

* See in his Latin poems the lines beginning,

"Hæc me verbosas suasit perdiscere leges."

De Diversis Amoribus.

† "Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi e lancie," &c.

Satira vi.

There is some appearance of contradiction in this passage and the one referred to in the preceding note ; but I think the conclusion in the text the probable one, and that he was not compelled to study the law in the first instance. He

There is reason to believe that Ariosto was "theatricalising" during no little portion of this time ; for, in his nineteenth year, he is understood to have been taken by Duke Ercole to Pavia and to Milan, either as a writer or performer of comedies, probably both, since the courtiers and ducal family themselves occasionally appeared on the stage ; and one of the poet's brothers mentions his having frequently seen him dressed in character.*

On being delivered from the study of the law, the young poet appears to have led a cheerful and unrestrained life for the next four or five years. He wrote, or began to write, the comedy of the *Cassaria* ; probably meditated some poem in the style of Boiardo, then in the height of his fame ; and he cultivated the Latin language, and intended to learn Greek, but delayed, and unfortunately missed it in consequence of losing his tutor. Some of his happiest days were passed at a villa, still possessed by the Maleguzzi family, called La Mauriziana, two miles from Reggio. Twenty-five years afterwards he called to mind, with sighs, the pleasant spots there which used to invite him to write verses ; the garden, the little river, the mill, the trees by the water-side, and all the other shady places in which he enjoyed himself during that sweet season of his life "betwixt April and May."† To complete his happiness, he had a friend and cousin, Pandolfo Ariosto, who loved every thing that he loved, and for whom he augured a brilliant reputation.

But a dismal cloud was approaching. In his twenty-first year he lost his father, and found a large family left on his hands in narrow circumstances. The charge was at first so heavy, especially when aggravated by the death of Pandolfo, that he tells us he wished to die. He took to it manfully, however, in spite of these fits of gloom ; and he lived to see his admirable efforts rewarded ; his brothers enabled to seek their fortunes, and his sisters properly taken care of. Two of them, it seems, had become nuns. A third married ; and a fourth remained long in his house. It is not known what became of the fifth.

speaks more than once of his father's memory with great tenderness, particularly in the lines on his death, entitled *De Nicolao Areosto*.

* His brother Gabriel expressly mentions it in his prologue to the *Scholastica*.

† "Già mi fur dolci inviti," &c.—*Satira v.*

In these family-matters the anxious son and brother was occupied for three or four years, not, however, without recreating himself with his verses, Latin and Italian, and recording his admiration of a number of goddesses of his youth. He mentions, in particular, one of the name of Lydia, who kept him often from "his dear mother and household," and who is probably represented by the princess of the same name in the *Orlando*, punished in the smoke of Tartarus for being a jilt and coquette.* His friend Bembo, afterwards the celebrated cardinal, recommended him to be blind to such little immaterial points as ladies' infidelities. But he is shocked at the advice. He was far more of Othello's opinion than Congreve's in such matters; and declared, that he would not have shared his mistress's good-will with Jupiter himself.†

Towards the year 1504, the poet entered the service of the unworthy prince, Cardinal Ippolito of Este, brother of the new Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso the First. His eminence, who had been made a prince of the church at thirteen years of age by the infamous Alexander the Sixth (Borgia), was at this period little more than one-and-twenty; but he took an active part in the duke's affairs, both civil and military, and is said to have made himself conspicuous in his father's lifetime for his vices and brutality. He is charged with having ordered a papal messenger to be severely beaten for bringing him some unpleasant despatches: which so exasperated his unfortunate parent, that he was exiled to Mantua; and the marquess of that city, his brother-in-law, was obliged to come to Ferrara to obtain his pardon. But this was a trifle compared with what he is accused of having done to one of his brothers. A female of their acquaintance, in answer to a speech made her by the reverend gallant, had been so unlucky as to say that she preferred his brother Giulio's eyes to his eminence's whole body: upon which the monstrous villain hired two

* See, in the present volume, the beginning of *Astolfo's Journey to the Moon*.

† "Me potius fugiat, nullis mollita querelis,

Dum simulet reliquos Lydia dura procos.

Parte carere omni malo, quam admittere quemquam

In partem. Cupiat Juppiter ipse, negem."

Ad Petrum Bembum.

ruffians to put out his brother's eyes; some say, was present at the attempt. Attempt only it fortunately turned out to be, at least in part; the opinion being, that the sight of one of the eyes was preserved.*

Party-spirit has so much to do with stories of princes, and princes are so little in a condition to notice them, that, on the principle of not condemning a man till he has been heard in his defence, an honest biographer would be loath to credit these horrors of Cardinal Ippolito, did not the violent nature of the times, and the general character of the man, even with his defenders, incline him to do so. His being a soldier rather than a churchman was a fault of the age, perhaps a credit to the man, for he appears to have had abilities for war, and it was no crime of his if he was put into the church when a boy. But his conduct to Ariosto shewed him coarse and selfish; and those who say all they can for him admit that he was proud and revengeful, and that nobody regretted him when he died. He is said to have had a taste for mathematics, as his brother had for mechanics. The truth seems to be, that he and the duke, who lived in troubled times, and had to exert all their strength to hinder Ferrara from becoming a prey to the court of Rome, were clever, harsh men, of no grace or elevation of character, and with no taste but for war; and if it had not been for their connexion with Ariosto, nobody would have heard of them, except while perusing the annals of the time. Ippolito might have been, and probably was, the ruffian which the anecdote of his brother Giulio represents him; but the world would have heard little of the villany, had he not treated a poet with contempt.

The admirers of our author may wonder how he could become the servant of such a man, much more how he could praise him as he did in the great work which he was soon to begin writing.

* Panizzi, on the authority of Guicciardini and others. Giulio and another brother (Ferrante) afterwards conspired against Alfonso and Ippolito, and, on the failure of their enterprise, were sentenced to be imprisoned for life. Ferrante died in confinement at the expiration of thirty-four years; Giulio, at the end of fifty-three, was pardoned. He came out of prison on horseback, dressed according to the fashion of the time when he was arrested, and "greatly excited the curiosity of the people."—*Idem*, vol. i. p. xii.

But Ariosto was the son of a man who had passed his life in the service of the family; he had probably been taught a loyal blindness to its defects; gratuitous panegyrics of princes had been the fashion of men of letters since the time of Augustus; and the poet wanted help for his relatives, and was of a nature to take the least show of favour for a virtue, till he had learnt, as he unfortunately did, to be disappointed in the substance. It is not known what his appointment was under the cardinal. Probably he was a kind of gentleman of all work; an officer in his guards, a companion to amuse, and a confidential agent for the transaction of business. The employment in which he is chiefly seen is that of an envoy, but he is said also to have been in the field of battle; and he intimates in his *Satires*, that household attentions were expected of him which he was not quick to offer, such as pulling off his eminence's boots, and putting on his spurs.* It is certain that he was employed in very delicate negotiations, sometimes to the risk of his life from the perils of roads and torrents. Ippolito, who was a man of no delicacy, probably made use of him on every occasion that required address, the smallest as well as greatest,—an interview with a pope one day, and a despatch to a dog-fancier the next.

His great poem, however, proceeded. It was probably begun before he entered the cardinal's service; certainly was in progress during the early part of his engagement. This appears from a letter written to Ippolito by his sister the Marchioness of Mantua, to whom he had sent Ariosto at the beginning of the year 1509 to congratulate her on the birth of a child. She gives her brother special thanks for sending his message to her by "Messer Ludovico Ariosto," who had made her, she says, pass two delightful days, with giving her an account of the poem he was writing.†

* "Che debbo fare io qui ?

Agli usatti, agli spron (perch' io son grande)

Non mi posso adattar, per porne o trarne."

Satira ii.

† "Per la lettera de la S. V. Reverendiss. et a bocha da Ms. Ludovico Ariosto ho inteso quanta leticia ha conceputa del felice parto mio: il che mi è stato summamente grato, cussi lo ringrazio de la visitazione, et particolarmente di havermi mandato il dicto Ms. Ludovico, per che ultra che mi sia stato acetto, representando la persona de la S. V. Reverendiss. lui anche per conto suo mi ha

Isabella was the name of this princess ; and the grateful poet did not forget to embalm it in his verse.*

Ariosto's latest biographer, Panizzi, thinks he never served under any other leader than the cardinal ; but I cannot help being of opinion with a former one, whom he quotes, that he once took arms under a captain of the name of Pio, probably a kinsman of his friend Alberto Pio, to whom he addresses a Latin poem. It was probably on occasion of some early disgust with the cardinal ; but I am at a loss to discover at what period of time. Perhaps, indeed, he had the cardinal's permission, both to quit his service, and return to it. Possibly he was not to quit it at all, except according to events ; but merely had leave given him to join a party in arms, who were furthering Ippolito's own objects. Italy was full of captains in arms and conflicting interests. The poet might even, at some period of his life, have headed a troop under another cardinal, his friend Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo the Tenth. He had certainly been with him in various parts of Italy ; and might have taken part in some of his bloodless, if not his most military, equitations.

Be this as it may, it is understood that Ariosto was present at the repulse given to the Venetians by Ippolito, when they came up the river Po against Ferrara towards the close of the year 1509 ; though he was away from the scene of action at his subsequent capture of their flotilla, the poet having been despatched between the two events to Pope Julius the Second on the delicate business of at once appeasing his anger with the duke for resisting his allies, and requesting his help to a feudatary of the church. Julius was in one of his towering passions at first, but gave way before the address of the envoy, and did what he desired. But Ariosto's success in this mission was nearly being the death of him in another ; for Alfonso having accompanied the French the year following in their attack on Vicenza, where they committed cruelties of the same horrible kind as have shocked Europe with-

addutta gran soddisfazione, havendomi cum la narratione de l' opera che compone facto passar questi due giorni non solum senza fastidio, ma cum piacer grandissimo."—Tiraboschi, *Storia della Poesia Italiana*, Matthias' edition, vol. iii. p. 197.

* *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxix. st. 29.

in a few months past,* the poet's tongue, it was thought, might be equally efficacious a second time; but Julius, worn out of patience with his too independent vassal, who maintained an alliance with the French when the pope had ceased to desire it, was to be appeased no longer. He excommunicated Alfonso, and threatened to pitch his envoy into the Tiber; so that the poet was fain to run for it, as the duke himself was afterwards, when he visited Rome to be absolved. Would Julius have thus treated Ariosto, could he have foreseen his renown? Probably he would. The greater the opposition to the will, the greater the will itself. To chuck an accomplished envoy into the river would have been much; but to chuck the immortal poet there, laurels and all, in the teeth of the amazement of posterity, would have been a temptation irresistible.

It was on this occasion that Ariosto, probably from inability to choose his times or modes of returning home, contracted a cough, which is understood to have shortened his existence; so that Julius may have killed him after all. But the pope had a worse enemy in his own hosom—his violence—which killed himself in a much shorter period. He died in little more than two years afterwards; and the poet's prospects were all now of a very different sort—at least he thought so; for in March, 1513, his friend Giovanni de' Medici succeeded to the papacy, under the title of Leo the Tenth.

Ariosto hastened to Rome, among a shoal of visitants, to congratulate the new pope, perhaps not without a commission from Alfonso to see what he could do for his native country, on which the rival Medici family never ceased to have designs. The poet was full of hope, for he had known Leo under various fortunes; had been styled by him not only a friend, but a brother; and promised all sorts of participations of his prosperity. Not one of them came. The visitor was cordially received. Leo stooped from his throne, squeezed his hand, and kissed him on both his cheeks; but "at night," says Ariosto, "I went all the way to the Sheep to get my supper, wet through." All that Leo gave him was a "bull," probably the one securing to him the profits

* See the horrible account of the suffocated Vicentine Grottoes, in Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, &c. vol. iv. p. 48.

of his *Orlando*; and the poet's friend Bibbiena—wit, cardinal, and kinsman of Berni—facilitated the bull, but the receiver discharged the fees. He did not get one penny by promise, pope, or friend.* He complains a little, but all in good humour; and good-naturedly asks what he was to expect, when so many hungry kinsmen and partisans were to be served first. Well and wisely asked too, and with a superiority to his fortunes which Leo and Bibbiena might have envied.

It is thought probable, however, that if the poet had been less a friend to the house of Este, Leo would have kept his word with him, for their intimacy had undoubtedly been of the most cordial description. But it is supposed that Leo was afraid he should have a Ferrarese envoy constantly about him, had he detained Ariosto in Rome. The poet, however, it is admitted, was not a good hunter of preferment. He could not play the assenter, and bow and importune: and sovereigns, however friendly they may have been before their elevation, go the way of most princely flesh when they have attained it. They like to take out a man's gratitude beforehand, perhaps because they feel little security in it afterwards.

The elevation to the papacy of the cheerful and indulgent son of Lorenzo de' Medici, after the troublous reign of Julius, was hailed with delight by all Christendom, and nowhere more so than in the pope's native place, Florence. Ariosto went there to see the spectacles; and there, in the midst of them, he found himself robbed of his heart by the lady whom he afterwards married. Her name was Alessandra Benucci. She was the widow of one of the Strozzi family, whom he had known in Ferrara, and he had long admired her. The poet, who, like Petrarch and Boccaccio,

* “Piegossi a me dalla beata sede;
La mano e poi le gote ambe mi prese,
E il santo bacio in amendue mi diede.

Di mezza quella bolla anco cortese
Mi fu, della quale ora il mio Bibbiena
Espedito m' ha il resto alle mie spese.

Indi col seno e con la falda piena
Di speme, ma di pioggia molle e brutto,
La notte andai sin al Montone a cena.” *Sat. iv.*

has recorded the day on which he fell in love, which was that of St. John the Baptist (the showy saint-days of the south offer special temptations to that effect), dwells with minute fondness on the particulars of the lady's appearance. Her dress was black silk, embroidered with two grape-bearing vines intertwined; and "between her serene forehead and the path that went dividing in two her rich and golden tresses," was a sprig of laurel in bud. Her observer, probably her welcome if not yet accepted lover, beheld something very significant in this attire; and a mysterious poem, in which he records a device of a black pen feathered with gold, which he wore embroidered on a gown of his own, has been supposed to allude to it. As every body is tempted to make his guess on such occasions, I take the pen to have been the black-haired poet himself, and the golden feather the tresses of the lady. Beautiful as he describes her, with a face full of sweetness, and manners noble and engaging, he speaks most of the charms of her golden locks. The black gown could hardly have implied her widowhood: the allusion would not have been delicate. The vine belongs to dramatic poets, among whom the lover was at that time to be classed, the *Orlando* not having appeared. Its duplication intimated another self; and the crowning laurel was the success that awaited the heroic poet and the conqueror of the lady's heart.*

The marriage was never acknowledged. The husband was in the receipt of profits arising from church-offices, which put him into the condition of the fellow of a college with us, who cannot marry so long as he retains his fellowship: but it is proved to have taken place, though the date of it is uncertain. Ariosto, in a satire written three or four years after his falling in love, says he never intends either to marry or to take orders; because, if he takes orders, he cannot marry; and if he marries, he cannot take orders—that is to say, must give up his semi-priestly emoluments. This is one of the falsehoods which the Roman Catholic religion thinks itself warranted in tempting honest men to fall into; thus perplexing their faith as to the very roots of all faith, and tending to maintain a sensual hypocrisy, which can do

* See *canzone* the first, "Non so s' io potrò," &c.; and the *capitolo* beginning "Della mia negra penna in fregio d' oro."

no good to the strongest minds, and must terribly injure the weak.

Ariosto's love for this lady I take to have been one of the causes of dissatisfaction between him and the cardinal. "Fortunately for the poet," as Panizzi observes, Ippolito was not always in Ferrara. He travelled in Italy, and he had an archbishopric in Hungary, the tenure of which compelled occasional residence. His company was not desired in Rome, so that he was seldom there. Ariosto, however, was an amusing companion; and the cardinal seems not to have liked to go anywhere without him. In the year 1515 he was attended by the poet part of the way on a journey to Rome and Urbino; but Ariosto fell ill, and had leave to return. He confesses that his illness was owing to an anxiety of love; and he even makes an appeal to the cardinal's experience of such feelings; so that it might seem he was not afraid of Ippolito's displeasure in that direction. But the weakness which selfish people excuse in themselves becomes a "very different thing" (as they phrase it) in another. The appeal to the cardinal's experience might only have exasperated him, in its assumption of the identity of the case. However, the poet was, at all events, left this time to the indulgence of his love and his poetry; and in the course of the ensuing year, a copy of the first edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, in forty cantos, was put into the hands of the illustrious person to whom it was dedicated.

The words in which the cardinal was pleased to express himself on this occasion have become memorable. "Where the devil, Master Lodovick," said the reverend personage, "have you picked up such a parcel of trumpery?" The original term is much stronger, aggravating the insult with indecency. There is no equivalent for it in English; and I shall not repeat it in Italian. "It is as low and indecent," says Panizzi, "as any in the language." Suffice it to say that, although the age was not scrupulous in such matters, it was one of the last words befitting the lips of the reverend Catholic; and that, when Ippolito of Este (as Ginguéné observes) made that speech to the great poet, "he uttered—prince, cardinal, and mathematician as he was—an impertinence."*

* *Histoire Littéraire*, &c. vol. iv. p. 335.

Was the cardinal put out of temper by a device which appeared in this book? On the leaf succeeding the title-page was the privilege for its publication, granted by Leo in terms of the most flattering personal recognition.* So far so good; unless the unpoetical Este patron was not pleased to see such interest taken in the book by the tasteful Medici patron. But on the back of this leaf was a device of a hive, with the bees burnt out of it for their honey, and the motto "Evil for good" (*Pro bono malum*). Most biographers are of opinion that this device was aimed at the cardinal's ill return for all the sweet words lavished on him and his house. If so, and supposing Ariosto to have presented the dedication-copy in person, it would have been curious to see the faces of the two men while his Eminence was looking at it. Some will think that the goodnatured poet could hardly have taken such an occasion of displaying his resentment. But the device did not express at whom it was aimed: the cardinal need not have applied it to himself if he did not choose, especially as the book was full of his praises; and goodnatured people will not always miss an opportunity of covertly inflicting a sting. The device, at all events, shewed that the honey-maker had got worse than nothing by his honey; and the house of Este could not say they had done any thing to contradict it.

I think it probable that neither the poet's device nor the cardinal's speech were forgotten, when, in the course of the next year, the parties came to a rupture in consequence of the servant's re-

* "Singularis tua et pervetus erga nos familiamque nostrum observantia, egregiaque bonarum artium et litterarum doctrina, atque in studiis mitioribus, præsertimque poetices elegans et præclarum ingenium, jure prope suo a nobis exposcere videntur, ut quæ tibi usui futuræ sint, justa præsertim et honesta petenti, ea tibi liberaliter et gratiose concedamus. Quamobrem," &c. "On the same page," says Panizzi, "are mentioned the privileges granted by the king of France, by the republic of Venice, and other potentates;" so that authors, in those days, appear to have been thought worthy of profiting by their labours, wherever they contributed to the enjoyment of mankind.

Leo's privilege is the one that so long underwent the singular obloquy of being a bull of excommunication against all who objected to the poem! a misconception on the part of some ignorant man, or misrepresentation by some malignant one, which affords a remarkable warning against taking things on trust from one writer after another. Even Bayle (see the article "Leo X." in his Dictionary) suffered his inclinations to blind his vigilance.

fusing to attend his master into Hungary. Ariosto excused himself on account of the state of his health and of his family. He said that a cold climate did not agree with him; that his chest was affected, and could not bear even the stoves of Hungary; and that he could not, in common decency and humanity, leave his mother in her old age, especially as all the rest of the family were away but his youngest sister, whose interests he had also to take care of. But Ippolito was not to be appeased. The public have seen, in a late female biography, a deplorable instance of the unfeelingness with which even a princess with a reputation for religion could treat the declining health and unwilling retirement of a poor slave in her service, fifty times her superior in every thing but servility. Greater delicacy was not to be expected of the military priest. The nobler the servant, the greater the desire to trample upon him and keep him at a disadvantage. It is a grudge which rank owes to genius, and which it can only waive when its possessor is himself "one of God Almighty's gentlemen." I do not mean in point of genius, which is by no means the highest thing in the world, whatever its owners may think of it; but in point of the highest of all things, which is nobleness of heart. I confess I think Ariosto was wrong in expecting what he did of a man he must have known so well, and in complaining so much of courts, however good-humouredly. A prince occupies the station he does, to avert the perils of disputed successions, and not to be what his birth cannot make him—if nature has not supplied the materials. Besides, the cardinal, in his quality of a mechanical-minded man with no taste, might with reason have complained of his servant's attending to poetry when it was "not in his bond;" when it diverted from the only attentions which his employer understood or desired. Ippolito candidly confessed, as Ariosto himself tells us, that he not only did not care for poetry, but never gave his attendant one stiver in patronage of it, or for any thing whatsoever but going his journeys and doing as he was bidden.* On the other hand, the cardinal's payments were sorry

* "Apollo, tua mercè, tua mercè, santo
Collegio delle Muse, io non mi trovo
Tanto per voi, ch' io possa farmi un manto:

ones ; and the poet might with justice have thought, that he was not bound to consider them an equivalent for the time he was expected to give up. The only thing to have been desired in this case was, that he should have said so ; and, in truth, at the close of the explanation which he gave on the subject to his friends at court, he did—boldly desiring them, as became him, to tell the cardinal, that if his eminence expected him to be a “serf” for what he received, he should decline the bargain ; and that he preferred the humblest freedom and his studies to a slavery so preposterous.*

The truth is, the poet should have attached himself wholly to the Medici. Had he not adhered to the duller house, he might have led as happy a life with the pope as Pulci did with the pope’s father ; perhaps have been made a cardinal, like his friends Bembo and Sadolet. But then we might have lost the *Orlando*.

The only sinecure which the poet is now supposed to have retained, was a grant of twenty-five crowns every four months on the episcopal chancery of Milan : so, to help out his petty income, he proceeded to enter into the service of Alfonso, which shews that both the brothers were not angry with him. He tells us, that he would gladly have had no new master, could he have helped it ; but that, if he must needs serve, he would rather serve the master of every body else than a subordinate one. At this juncture he had a brief prospect of being as free as he wished ;

E se 'l signor m' ha dato onde far novo
Ogni anno mi potrei più d' un mantello,
Che mi abbia per voi dato, non approvo.

Egli l' ha detto.”

Satira ii.

* “ Se avermi dato onde ogni quattro mesi
Ho venticinque scudi, nè s'ì fermi,
Che molte volte non mi sien contesi,

Mi debbe incatenar, schiavo tenermi,
Obbligarmi ch' io sudi e tremi senza
Rispetto alcun, ch' io muoja o ch' io m' infermi,

Non gli lasciate aver questa credenza :
Ditegli, che più tosto ch' esser servo,
Torrò la povertade in pazienza.”

Satira ii.

for an uncle died leaving a large landed property still known as the Ariosto lands (*Le Arioste*); but a convent demanded it on the part of one of their brotherhood, who was a natural son of this gentleman; and a more formidable and ultimately successful claim was advanced in a court of law by the Chamber of the Duchy of Ferrara, the first judge in the cause being the duke's own steward and a personal enemy of the poet's. Ariosto, therefore, while the suit was going on, was obliged to content himself with his fees from Milan and a monthly allowance which he received from the duke of "about thirty-eight shillings," together with provisions for three servants and two horses. He entered the duke's service in the spring of 1518, and remained in it for the rest of his life. But it was not so burdensome as that of the cardinal; and the consequence of the poet's greater leisure was a second edition of the *Furioso*, in the year 1521, with additions and corrections; still, however, in forty cantos only. It appears, by a deed of agreement,* that the work was printed at the author's expense; that he was to sell the bookseller one hundred copies for sixty livres (about 5*l.* 12*s.*) on condition of the book's not being sold at the rate of more than sixteen sous (1*s.* 8*d.*); that the author was not to give, sell, or allow to be sold, any copy of the book at Ferrara, except by the bookseller; that the bookseller, after disposing of the hundred copies, was to have as many more as he chose on the same terms; and that, on his failing to require a further supply, Ariosto was to be at liberty to sell his volumes to whom he pleased. "With such profits," observes Panizzi, "it was not likely that the poet would soon become independent:" and it may be added, that he certainly got nothing by the first edition, whatever he may have done by the second. He expressly tells us, in the satire which he wrote on declining to go abroad with Ippolito, that all his poetry had not procured him money enough to purchase a cloak.† Twenty years afterwards, when he was dead, the poem was in such request, that, between 1542 and 1551, Panizzi calculates there must have been a sale of it in Europe to the amount of a hundred thousand copies.‡

* Panizzi, vol. i. p. 29. The agreement itself is in Baruffaldi.

† See the lines before quoted, beginning "Apollo, tua mercè."

‡ *Bibliographical Notices of Editions of Ariosto*, prefixed to his first vol. p. 51.

The second edition of the *Furioso* did not extricate the author from very serious difficulties ; for the next year he was compelled to apply to Alfonso, either to relieve him from his necessities, or permit him to look for some employment more profitable than the ducal service. The answer of this prince, who was now rich, but had always been penurious, and who never laid out a farthing, if he could help it, except in defence of his capital, was an appointment of Ariosto to the government of a district in a state of anarchy, called Garfagnana, which had nominally returned to his rule in consequence of the death of Leo, who had wrested it from him. It was a wild spot in the Apennines, on the borders of the Ferrarese and papal territories. Ariosto was there three years, and is said to have reduced it to order ; but, according to his own account, he had very doubtful work of it. The place was overrun with banditti, including the troops commissioned to suppress them. It required a severer governor than he was inclined to be ; and Alfonso did not attend to his requisitions for supplies. The candid and goodnatured poet intimates that the duke might have given him the appointment rather for the governor's sake than the people's ; and the cold, the loneliness and barrenness of the place, and, above all, his absence from the object of his affections, oppressed him. He did not write a verse for twelve months ; he says he felt like a bird moulting.* The best thing got out of it was an anecdote for posterity. The poet was riding out one day with a few attendants—some say walking out in a fit of absence of mind—when he found himself in the midst of a band of outlaws, who, in a suspicious manner, barely suffered him to pass. A reader of Mrs. Radcliffe might suppose them a band of *condottieri*, under the command of some profligate desperado ; and such perhaps they were. The governor had scarcely gone by, when

* “La novità del loco è stata tanta,
C' ho fatto come augel che muta gabbia,
Che molti giorni resta che non canta.”

For the rest of the above particulars see the fifth satire, beginning “Il vigesimo giorno di Febbraio.” I quote the exordium, because these compositions are differently numbered in different editions. The one I generally use is that of Molini—*Poesie Varie di Lodovico Ariosto, con Annotazioni*. Firenze, 12mo. 1824.

the leader of the band, discovering who he was, came riding back with much earnestness, and making his obeisance to the poet, said, that he never should have allowed him to pass in that manner had he known him to be the Signor Ludovico Ariosto, author of the *Orlando Furioso*; that his own name was Filippo Pacchione (a celebrated personage of his order); and that his men and himself, so far from doing the signor displeasure, would have the honour of conducting him back to his castle. "And so they did," says Baretti, "entertaining him all along the way with the various excellences they had discerned in his poem, and bestowing upon it the most rapturous praises."*

On his return from Garfagnana, Ariosto is understood to have made several journeys in Italy, either with or without the duke his master; some of them to Mantua, where it has been said that he was crowned with laurel by the Emperor Charles the Fifth. But the truth seems to be, that he only received a laureate diploma: it does not appear that Charles made him any other gift. His majesty, and the whole house of Este, and the pope, and all the other Italian princes, left that to be done by the imperial general, the celebrated Alfonso Davallos, Marquess of Vasto, to whom he was sent on some mission by the Duke of Ferrara, and who settled on him an annuity of a hundred golden ducats; "the only reward," says Panizzi, "which we find to have been conferred on Ariosto expressly as a poet."† Davallos was one of the con-

* *Italian Library*, p. 52. I quote Baretti, because he speaks with a corresponding enthusiasm. He calls the incident "a very rare proof of the irresistible powers of poetry, and a noble comment on the fables of Orpheus and Amphion," &c. The words "noble comment" might lead us to fancy that Johnson had made some such remark to him while relating the story in Bolt Court. Nor is the former part of the sentence unlike him: "A very rare proof, *sir*, of the irresistible powers of poetry, and a noble comment," &c. Johnson, notwithstanding his classical predilections, was likely to take much interest in Ariosto on account of his universality and the heartiness of his passions. He had a secret regard for "wildness" of all sorts, provided it came within any pale of the sympathetic. He was also fond of romances of chivalry. On one occasion he selected the history of Felixmarte of Hyrcania as his course of reading during a visit.

† The deed of gift sets forth the interest which it becomes princes and commanders to take in men of letters, particularly poets, as heralds of their fame, and consequently the special fitness of the illustrious and superexcellent poet

querors of Francis the First, young and handsome, and himself a writer of verses. The grateful poet accordingly availed himself of his benefactor's accomplishments to make him, in turn, a present of every virtue under the sun. Cæsar was not so liberal, Nestor so wise, Achilles so potent, Nireus so beautiful, nor even Ladas, Alexander's messenger, so swift.* Ariosto was now verging towards the grave; and he probably saw in the hundred ducats a golden sunset of his cares.

Meantime, however, the poet had built a house, which, although small, was raised with his own money; so that the second edition of the *Orlando* may have realized some profits at last. He recorded the pleasant fact in an inscription over the door, which has become celebrated:

'Parva, sed apta mihi; sed nulli obnoxia; sed non
Sordida; parta meo sed tamen ære domus.'

Small, yet it suits me; is of no offence;
Was built, not meanly, at my own expense.

What a pity (to compare great things with small) that he had not as long a life before him to enjoy it, as Gil Blas had with his own comfortable quotation over his retreat at Lirias!†

The house still remains; but the inscription unfortunately became effaced; though the following one remains, which was added by his son Virginio:

"Sic domus hæc Areostea
Propitios habeat deos, olim ut Pindarica."

Dear to the gods, whatever come to pass,
Be Ariosto's house, as Pindar's was.

This was an anticipation—perhaps the origin—of Milton's son-

Lodovico Ariosto for receiving from Alfonso Davallos, Marquess of Vasto, the irrevocable sum of, &c. &c. Panizzi has copied the substance of it from Baruffaldi, vol. i. p. 67.

* *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxxiii. st. 28.

† "Inveni portum: spes et fortuna, valete;
Sat me lusistis; ludite nunc alios."

My port is found: adieu, ye freaks of chance;
The dance ye led me, now let others dance.

net about his own house, addressed to "Captains and Collonels," during the civil war.*

Davallos made the poet his generous present in the October of the year 1531 ; and in the same month of the year following the *Orlando* was published as it now stands, with various insertions throughout, chiefly stories, and six additional cantos. Cardinal Ippolito had been dead some time ; and the device of the beehive was exchanged for one of two vipers, with a hand and pair of shears cutting out their tongues, and the motto, "Thou hast preferred ill-will to good" (*Dilexisti malitiam super benignitatem*). The allusion is understood to have been to certain critics whose names have all perished, unless Sperone (of whom we shall hear more by and by) was one of them. The appearance of this edition was eagerly looked for ; but the trouble of correcting the press, and the destruction of a theatre by fire which had been built under the poet's direction, did his health no good in its rapidly declining condition ; and after suffering greatly from an obstruction, he died, much attenuated, on the sixth day of June, 1533. His decease, his fond biographers have told us, took place "about three in the afternoon ;" and he was "aged fifty-eight years, eight months, and twenty-eight days." His body, according to his direction, was taken to the church of the Benedictines during the night by four men, with only two tapers, and in the most private and simple manner. The monks followed it to the grave out of respect, contrary to their usual custom.

So lived, and so died, and so desired humbly to be buried, one of the delights of the world.

His son Virginio had erected a chapel in the garden of the house built by his father, and he wished to have his body removed thither ; but the monks would not allow it. The tomb, at first a very humble one, was subsequently altered and enriched several times ; but remains, I believe, as rebuilt at the beginning of the century before last by his grand-nephew, Ludovico Ariosto, with a bust of the poet, and two statues representing Poetry and Glory.

* "The great Emathian conqueror bade spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground," &c.

Ariosto was tall and stout, with a dark complexion, bright black eyes, black and curling hair, aquiline nose, and shoulders broad but a little stooping. His aspect was thoughtful, and his gestures deliberate. Titian, besides painting his portrait, designed that which appeared in the woodcut of the author's own third edition of his poem, which has been copied into Mr. Panizzi's. It has all the look of truth of that great artist's vital hand; but, though there is an expression of the genial character of the mouth, notwithstanding the exuberance of beard, it does not suggest the sweetness observable in one of the medals of Ariosto, a wax impression of which is now before me; nor has the nose so much delicacy and grace.*

The poet's temperament inclined him to melancholy, but his intercourse was always cheerful. One biographer says he was strong and healthy—another, that he was neither. In all probability he was naturally strong, but weakened by a life full of emotion. He talks of growing old at forty-four, and of having been bald for some time.† He had a cough for many years before he died. His son says he cured it by drinking good old wine. Ariosto says that “vin fumoso” did not agree with him; but that might only mean wine of a heady sort. The chances, under such circumstances, were probably against wine of any kind; and Panizzi thinks the cough was never subdued. His physicians forbade him all sorts of stimulants with his food.‡

* This medal is inscribed “Ludovicus Ariost. Poet.” and has the bee-hive on the reverse, with the motto “Pro bono malum.” Ariosto was so fond of this device, that in his fragment called the *Five Cantos* (c. v. st. 26), the Paladin Rinaldo wears it embroidered on his mantle.

† “Io son de' dieci il primo, e vecchio fatto
Di quaranta quattro anni, e il capo calvo
Da un tempo in qua sotto il cuffiotto appiatto.”

Satira ii.

‡ “Il vin fumoso, a me vie più interdetto
Che 'l toscano, costì a inviti si tracanna,
E sacrilegio è non ber molto, e schietto.”

(He is speaking of the wines of Hungary, and of the hard drinking expected of strangers in that country.)

Tutti li cibi son con pepe e canna,
Di amomo e d' altri aromati, che tutti
Come nocivi il medico mi danna.”

Satira ii.

His temper and habits were those of a man wholly given up to love and poetry. In his youth he was volatile, and at no time without what is called some "affair of the heart." Every woman attracted him who had modesty and agreeableness; and as, at the same time, he was very jealous, one might imagine that his wife, who had a right to be equally so, would have led no easy life. But it is evident he could practise very generous self-denial; and probably the married portion of his existence, supposing Alessandra's sweet countenance not to have belied her, was happy on both sides. He was beloved by his family, which is never the case with the unamiable. Among his friends were most of the great names of the age, including a world of ladies, and the whole graceful court of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, for which Catiglione wrote his book of the *Gentleman* (*Il Cortegiano*). Raphael addressed him a sonnet, and Titian painted his likeness. He knew Vittoria Colonna, and Veronica da Gambera, and Giulia Gonzaga (whom the Turks would have run away with), and Ippolita Sforza, the beautiful blue-stocking, who set Bandello on writing his novels, and Bembo, and Flaminio, and Berni, and Molza, and Sannazzaro, and the Medici family, and Vida, and Macchiavelli; and nobody doubts that he might have shone at the court of Leo the brightest of the bright. But he thought it "better to enjoy a little in peace, than seek after much with trouble."* He cared for none of the pleasures of the great, except building, and that he was content to satisfy in Cowley's fashion, with "a small house in a large garden." He was plain in his diet, disliked ceremony, and was frequently absorbed in thought. His indignation was roused by mean and brutal vices; but he took a large and liberal view of human nature in general; and, if he was somewhat free in his life, must be pardoned for the custom of the times, for his charity to others, and for the genial disposition which made him an enchanting poet. Above all, he was an affectionate son; lived like a friend with his children; and, in spite of his tendency to pleasure, supplied the place of an anxious and careful father to his brothers and sisters, who idolized him.

* Pigna, *I Romanzi*, p. 119.

“Ornabat pietas et grata modestia vatem,”

wrote his brother Gabriel,

“Sancta fides, dictique memor, munitaque recto
Justitia, et nullo patientia victa labore,
Et constans virtus animi, et clementia mitis,
Ambitione procul pulsa fastusque tumore;
Credere uti posses natum felicibus horis,
Felici fulgente astro Jovis atque Diones.”*

Devoted tenderness adorn'd the bard,
And grateful modesty and grave regard
To his least word, and justice arm'd with right,
And patience counting every labour light,
And constancy of soul, and meekness too,
That neither pride nor worldly wishes knew.
You might have thought him born when there concur
The sweet star and the strong, Venus and Jupiter.

His son Virginio, and others, have left a variety of anecdotes corroborating points in his character. I shall give them all, for they put us into his company.

It is recorded, as an instance of his reputation for honesty, that an old kinsman, a clergyman, who was afraid of being poisoned for his possessions, would trust himself in no other hands; but the clergyman was his own grand-uncle and namesake, probably godfather; so that the compliment is not so very great.

In his youth he underwent a long rebuke one day from his father without saying a word, though a satisfactory answer was in his power; on which his brother Gabriel expressing his surprise, he said that he was thinking all the time of a scene in a comedy he was writing, for which the paternal lecture afforded an excellent study.

He loved gardening better than he understood it; was always shifting his plants, and destroying the seeds, out of impatience to see them germinate. He was rejoicing once on the coming up of some “capers,” which he had been visiting every day to see how they got on, when it turned out that his capers were elder-trees!

* *Epicedium* on his brother's death. It is reprinted (perhaps for the first time since 1582) in Mr. Panizzi's Appendix to the Life, in his first volume, n. clxi.

He was perpetually altering his verses. His manuscripts are full of corrections. He wrote the exordium of the *Orlando* over and over again; and at last could only be satisfied with it in proportion as it was not his own; that is to say, in proportion as it came nearer to the beautiful passage in Dante from which his ear and his feelings had caught it.*

He, however, discovered that correction was not always improvement. He used to say, it was with verses as with trees. A plant naturally well growing might be made perfect by a little delicate treatment; but over-cultivation destroyed its native grace. In like manner, you might perfect a happily-inspired verse by taking away any little fault of expression; but too great a polish deprived it of the charm of the first conception. It was like over-training a naturally graceful child. If it be wondered how he who corrected so much should succeed so well, even to an appearance of happy negligence, it is to be considered that the most impulsive writers often put down their thoughts too hastily, then correct, and re-correct them in the same impatient manner; and so have to bring them round, by as many steps, to the feeling which they really had at first, though they were too hasty to do it justice.

Ariosto would have altered his house as often as his verses, but did not find it so convenient. Somebody wondering that he contented himself with so small an abode, when he built such magnificent mansions in his poetry, he said it was easier to put words together than blocks of stone.†

* "Le donne, i cavalier, l' arme, gli amori,
Le cortesie, le audaci imprese, io canto,"

is Ariosto's commencement;

Ladies, and cavaliers, and loves, and arms,
And courtesies, and daring deeds, I sing.

In Dante's *Purgatory* (canto xiv.), a noble Romagnese, lamenting the degeneracy of his country, calls to mind with graceful and touching regret,

"Le donne, i cavalier, gli affanni e gli agi,
Che ispiravano amore e cortesia."

The ladies and the knights, the cares and leisures,
Breathing around them love and courtesy.

† The original is much pithier, but I cannot find equivalents for the allitera-

He liked Virgil; commended the style of Tibullus; did not care for Propertius; but expressed high approbation of Catullus and Horace. I suspect his favourite to have been Ovid. His son says he did not study much, nor look after books; but this may have been in his decline, or when Virginio first took to observing him. A different conclusion as to study is to be drawn from the corrected state of his manuscripts, and the variety of his knowledge; and with regard to books, he not only mentions the library of the Vatican as one of his greatest temptations to visit Rome, but describes himself, with all the gusto of a book-worm, as enjoying them in his chimney-corner.*

To intimate his secrecy in love-matters, he had an inkstand with a Cupid on it, holding a finger on his lips. I believe it is still in existence.† He did not disclose his mistresses' names, as Dante did, for the purpose of treating them with contempt; nor, on the other hand, does he appear to have been so indiscriminately gallant as to be fond of goitres.‡ The only mistress of whom he complained he concealed in a Latin appellation; and of her he did not complain with scorn. He had loved, besides Alessandra Benucci, a lady of the name of Ginevra; the mother of one of his children is recorded as a certain Orsolina; and that of the

tion. He said, "Porvi le pietre e porvi le parole non è il medesimo."—*Pigna*, p. 119. According to his son, however, his remark was, that "palaces could be made in poems without money." He probably expressed the same thing in different ways to different people.

* Vide Sat. iii. "Mi sia un tempo," &c.; and the passage in Sat. vii. beginning "Di libri antiqui."

† The inkstand which Shelley saw at Ferrara (*Essays and Letters*, p. 149) could not have been this; probably his eye was caught by a wrong one. Doubts also, after what we know of the tricks practised upon visitors of Stratford-upon-Avon, may unfortunately be entertained of the "plain old wooden piece of furniture," the arm-chair. Shelley describes the handwriting of Ariosto as "a small, firm, and pointed character, expressing, as he should say, a strong and keen, but circumscribed energy of mind." Every one of Shelley's words is always worth consideration; but handwritings are surely equivocal testimonies of character; they depend so much on education, on times and seasons and moods, conscious and unconscious wills, &c. What would be said by an auto-graphist to the strange old, ungraceful, slovenly handwriting of Shakspeare?

‡ See vol. i. of the present work, pp. 16, 118, and 126.

other was named Maria, and is understood to have been a governess in his father's family.*

He ate fast, and of whatever was next him, often beginning with the bread on the table before the dishes came ; and he would finish his dinner with another bit of bread. "Appetiva le rape," says his good son ; videlicet, he was fond of turnips. In his fourth Satire, he mentions as a favourite dish, turnips seasoned with vinegar and boiled *must* (*sapa*), which seems, not unjustifiably, to startle Mr. Panizzi.† He cared so little for good eating, that he said of himself, he should have done very well in the days when people lived on acorns. A stranger coming in one day at the dinner-hour, he ate up what was provided for both ; saying afterwards, when told of it, that the gentleman should have taken care of himself. This does not look very polite ; but of course it was said in jest. His son attributed this carelessness at table to absorption in his studies.

He carried this absence of mind so far, and was at the same time so good a pedestrian, that Virginio tells us he once walked all the way from Carpi to Ferrara in his slippers, owing to his having strolled out of doors in that direction.

The same biographers who describe him as a brave soldier, add, that he was a timid horseman and seaman ; and indeed he appears to have eschewed every kind of unnecessary danger. It was a maxim of his to be the last in going out of a boat. I know not what Orlando would have said to this ; but there is no doubt that the good son and brother avoided no pain in pursuit of his duty. He more than once risked his life in the service of government from the perils of travelling among war-makers and banditti. Imagination finds something worthy of itself on great occasions, but is apt to discover the absurdity of staking existence on small ones. Ariosto did not care to travel out of Italy. He preferred, he says, going round the earth in a map ; visiting coun-

* Baruffaldi, 1807 ; p. 105.

† "In casa mia mi sa meglio una rapa
Ch' io cuoca, e cotta s' un stecco m' inforco,
E mondo, e spargo poi di aceto e sapa,

Che all' altrui mensa tordo, starno, o porco
Selvaggio."

tries without having to pay innkeepers, and ploughing harmless seas without thunder and lightning.*

His outward religion, like the one he ascribed to his friend Cardinal Bembo, was "that of other people." He did not think it of use to disturb their belief: yet excused rather than blamed Luther, attributing his heresy to the necessary consequences of mooted points too subtle for human apprehension.† He found it impossible, however, to restrain his contempt of bigotry; and like most great writers in Catholic countries, was a derider of the pretensions of devotees, and the discords and hypocrisies of the convent. He evidently laughed at Dante's figments about the other world; not at the poetry of them, for that he admired, and sometimes imitated, but at the superstition and presumption. He turned the Florentine's moon into a depository of nonsense; and found no hell so bad as the hearts of tyrants. The only other people he put into the infernal regions are ladies who were cruel to their lovers! He had a noble confidence in the intentions of his Creator; and died in the expectation of meeting his friends again in a higher state of existence.

Of Ariosto's four brothers, one became a courtier at Naples, another a clergyman, another an envoy to the Emperor Charles the Fifth; and the fourth, who was a cripple and a scholar, lived with Lodovico, and celebrated his memory. His two sons, whose

* "Chi vuole andare," &c. *Satira* iv.

† "Se Nicoletto o Fra Martin fan segno
D' infedele o d' eretico, ne accuso
Il saper troppo, e men con lor mi sdegno:

Perchè salendo lo intelletto in suso
Per veder Dio, non de' parerci strano
Se talor cade giù cieco e confuso."

Satira vi.

This satire was addressed to Bembo. The cardinal is said to have asked a visitor from Germany whether Brother Martin really believed what he preached; and to have expressed the greatest astonishment when told that he did. Cardinals were then what augurs were in the time of Cicero—wondering that they did not burst out a-laughing in one another's faces. This was bad; but inquisitors are a million times worse. By the Nicoletto here mentioned by Ariosto in company with Luther, we are to understand (according to the conjecture of Molini) a Paduan professor of the name of Niccolò Vernia, who was accused of holding the Pantheistic opinions of Averroes.

names were Virginio and Gianbattista, and who were illegitimate (the reader is always to bear in mind the more indulgent customs of Italy in matters of this nature, especially in the poet's time), became, the first a canon in the cathedral of Ferrara, and the other an officer in the army. It does not appear that he had any other children.

Ariosto's renown is wholly founded on the *Orlando Furioso*, though he wrote satires, comedies, and a good deal of miscellaneous poetry, all occasionally exhibiting a master-hand. The comedies, however, were unfortunately modelled on those of the ancients; and the constant termination of the verse with trisyllables contributes to render them tedious. What comedies might he not have written, had he given himself up to existing times and manners !*

The satires are rather good-natured epistles to his friends, written with a charming ease and straightforwardness, and containing much exquisite sense and interesting autobiography.

On his lyrical poetry he set little value; and his Latin verse is not of the best order. Critics have expressed their surprise at its inferiority to that of contemporaries inferior to him in genius; but the reason lay in the very circumstance. I mean, that his large and liberal inspiration could only find its proper vent in his own language; he could not be content with potting up little delicacies in old-fashioned vessels.

The *Orlando Furioso* is, literally, a continuation of the *Orlando Innamorato*; so much so, that the story is not thoroughly intelligible without it. This was probably the reason of a circumstance that would be otherwise unaccountable, and that was ridiculously

* Take a specimen of this leap-frog versification from the prologue to the *Cassaria* :—

“ Questa commedia, ch' oggi rscitâtavi
Sarà, se nol sapete, è la *Cassària*,
Ch' un'altra volta, già vent' anni pàssano,
Veder si fece sopra questi pùlpiti
Ed allora assai piacque a tutto il pòpolo,
Ma non ne ripostò già degno prèmio,
Che data in preda a gl' importuni ed àvidi
Stampator fu,” &c.

This through five comedies in five acts !

charged against him as a proof of despairing envy by the despairing envy of Sperone ; namely, his never having once mentioned the name of his predecessor. If Ariosto had despaired of equalling Boiardo, he must have been hopeless of reaching posterity, in which case his silence must have been useless ; and, in any case, it is clear that he looked on himself as the continuator of another's narration. But Boiardo was so popular when he wrote, that the very silence shews he must have thought the mention of his name superfluous. Still it is curious that he never should have alluded to it in the course of the poem. It could not have been from any dislike to the name itself, or the family ; for in his Latin poems he has eulogised the hospitality of the house of Boiardo.*

The *Furioso* continued not only what Boiardo did, but what he intended to do ; for as its subject is Orlando's love, and knight-errantry in general, so its object was to extol the house of Este, and deduce it from its fabulous ancestor Ruggiero. Orlando is the open, Ruggiero the covert hero ; and almost all the incidents of this supposed irregular poem, which, as Panizzi has shewn, is one of the most regular in the world, go to crown with triumph and wedlock the originator of that unworthy race. This is done on the old groundwork of Charlemagne and his Paladins, of the treacheries of the house of Gan of Maganza, and of the wars of the Saracens against Christendom. Bradamante, the Amazonian *intended* of Ruggiero, is of the same race as Orlando, and a great overthrower of infidels. Ruggiero begins with being an infidel himself, and is kept from the wars, like a second Achilles, by the devices of an anxious guardian, but ultimately fights, is converted, and marries ; and Orlando all the while slays his thousands, as of old, loves, goes mad for jealousy, is the foolishlest and wisest of mankind (somewhat like the poet himself) ; and crowns the glory of Ruggiero, not only by being present at his marriage, but putting on his spurs with his own hand when he goes forth to conclude the war by the death of the king of Algiers.

The great charm, however, of the *Orlando Furioso* is not in its knight-errantry, or its main plot, or the cunning interweavement of its minor ones, but in its endless variety, truth, force,

* In the verses entitled *Bacchi Statua*.

and animal spirits ; in its fidelity to actual nature while it keeps within the bounds of the probable, and its no less enchanting verisimilitude during its wildest sallies of imagination. At one moment we are in the midst of flesh and blood like ourselves ; at the next with fairies and goblins ; at the next in a tremendous battle or tempest ; then in one of the loveliest of solitudes ; then hearing a tragedy, then a comedy ; then mystified in some enchanted palace ; then riding, dancing, dining, looking at pictures ; then again descending to the depths of the earth, or soaring to the moon, or seeing lovers in a glade, or witnessing the extravagances of the great jealous hero Orlando ; and the music of an enchanting style perpetually attends us, and the sweet face of Angelica glances here and there like a bud : and there are gallantries of all kinds, and stories endless, and honest tears, and joyous bursts of laughter, and beardings for all base opinions, and no bigotry, and reverence for whatsoever is venerable, and candour exquisite, and the happy interwoven names of " Angelica and Medoro," young for ever.

But so great a work is not to be dismissed with a mere rhapsody of panegyric. Ariosto is inferior, in some remarkable respects, to his predecessors Pulci and Boiardo. His characters, for the most part, do not interest us as much as theirs by their variety and good fellowship ; he invented none as Boiardo did, with the exception, indeed, of Orlando's, as modified by jealousy ; and he has no passage, I think, equal in pathos to that of the struggle at Roncesvalles ; for though Orlando's jealousy is pathetic, as well as appalling, the effects of it are confined to one person, and disputed by his excessive strength. Ariosto has taken all tenderness out of Angelica, except that of a kind of boarding-school first love (which, however, as hereafter intimated, may have simplified and improved her general effect), and he has omitted all that was amusing in the character of Astolfo. Knighterrantry has fallen off a little in his hands from its first youthful and trusting freshness ; more sophisticate times are opening upon us ; and satire more frequently and bitterly interferes. The licentious passages (though never gross in words, like those of his contemporaries,) are not redeemed by sentiment as in Boiardo ; and it seems to me, that Ariosto hardly improved so much as he

might have done upon his predecessor's imitations of the classics. I cannot help thinking that, upon the whole, he had better have left them alone, and depended entirely on himself. Shelley says, he has too much fighting and "revenge,"*—which is true; but the revenge was only among his knights. He was himself (like my admirable friend) one of the most forgiving of men; and the fighting was the taste of the age, in which chivalry was still flourishing in the shape of such men as Bayard, and ferocity in men like Gaston de Foix. Ariosto certainly did not anticipate, any more than Shakspeare did, that spirit of human amelioration which has ennobled the present age. He thought only of reflecting nature as he found it. He is sometimes even as uninteresting as he found other people; but the tiresome passages, thank God, all belong to the house of Este! His panegyrics of Ippolito and his ancestors recoiled on the poet with a retributive dulness.

But in all the rest there is a wonderful invigoration and enlargement. The genius of romance has increased to an extraordinary degree in power, if not in simplicity. Its shoulders have grown broader, its voice louder and more sustained; and if it has lost a little on the sentimental side, it has gained prodigiously, not only in animal vigour, but, above all, in knowledge of human nature, and a brave and joyous candour in shewing it. The poet takes a universal, an acute, and, upon the whole, a cheerful view, like the sun itself, of all which the sun looks on; and readers are charmed to see a knowledge at once so keen and so happy. Herein lies the secret of Ariosto's greatness; which is great, not because it has the intensity of Dante, or the incessant thought and passion of Shakspeare, or the dignified imagination of Milton, to all of whom he is far inferior in sustained excellence, but because he is like very Nature herself. Whether great, small, serious, pleasurable, or even indifferent, he still has the life, ease, and beauty of the operations of the daily planet. Even where he seems dull and commonplace, his brightness and originality at other times make it look like a good-natured condescension to our own common habits of thought and discourse; as though he did it but on purpose to leave nothing unsaid that

* *Essays and Letters, ut sup.* vol. ii. p. 125.

could bring him within the category of ourselves. His charming manner intimates that, instead of taking thought, he chooses to take pleasure with us, and compare old notes; and we are delighted that he does us so much honour, and makes, as it were, Ariostos of us all. He is Shakspearian in going all lengths with Nature as he found her, not blinking the fact of evil, yet finding a "soul of goodness" in it, and, at the same time, never compromising the worth of noble and generous qualities. His young and handsome Medoro is a pitiless slayer of his enemies; but they were his master's enemies, and he would have lost his life, even to preserve his dead body. His Orlando, for all his wisdom and greatness, runs mad for love of a coquette, who triumphs over warriors and kings, only to fall in love herself with an obscure lad. His kings laugh with all their hearts, like common people; his mourners weep like such unaffected children of sorrow, that they must needs "swallow some of their tears."* His heroes, on the arrival of intelligence that excites them, leap out of bed and write letters before they dress, from natural impatience, thinking nothing of their "dignity." When Astolfo blows the magic horn which drives every body out of the castle of Atlantes, "not a mouse" stays behind;—not, as Hoole and such critics think, because the poet is here writing ludicrously, but because he uses the same image seriously, to give an idea of desolation, as Shakspeare in *Hamlet* does to give that of silence, when "not a mouse is stirring." Instead of being mere comic writing, such incidents are in the highest epic taste of the meeting of extremes,—of the impartial eye with which Nature regards high and low. So, give Ariosto his hippogriff, and other marvels with which he has enriched the stock of romance, and Nature takes as much care of the verisimilitude of their actions, as if she had made them herself. His hippogriff returns, like a common horse, to the stable to which he has been accus-

* "Le lacrime scendean tra gigli e ròse,
Là dove avvien ch' alcune sè n' inghiozzi."

Canto xii. st. 94.

Which has been well translated by Mr. Rose:

"And between rose and lily, from her eyes
Tears fall so fast, she needs must swallow some."

tomed. His enchanter, who is gifted with the power of surviving decapitation and pursuing the decapitator so long as a fated hair remains on his head, turns deadly pale in the face when it is scalped, and falls lifeless from his horse. His truth, indeed, is so genuine, and at the same time his style is so unaffected, sometimes so familiar in its grace, and sets us so much at ease in his company, that the familiarity is in danger of bringing him into contempt with the inexperienced, and the truth of being considered old and obvious, because the mode of its introduction makes it seem an old acquaintance. When Voltaire was a young man, and (to Anglicise a favourite Gallic phrase) fancied he had *profounded* every thing deep and knowing; he thought nothing of Ariosto. Some years afterwards he took him for the first of grotesque writers, but nothing more. At last he pronounced him equally "entertaining and sublime, and humbly apologised for his error." Foscolo quotes this passage from the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*; and adds another from Sir Joshua Reynolds, in which the painter speaks of a similar inability on his own part, when young, to enjoy the perfect nature of Raphael, and the admiration and astonishment which, in his riper years, he grew to feel for it.*

The excessive "wildness" attributed to Ariosto is not wilder than many things in Homer, or even than some things in Virgil (such as the transformation of ships into sea-nymphs). The reason why it has been thought so is, that he rendered them more popular by mixing them with satire, and thus brought them more universally into notice. One main secret of the delight they give us is their being poetical comments, as it were, on fancies and metaphors of our own. Thus, we say of a suspicious man, that he is suspicion itself; Ariosto turns him accordingly into an actual being of that name. We speak of the flights of the poets; Ariosto makes them literally flights—flights on a hippogriff, and to the moon. The moon, it has been said, makes lunatics; he accordingly puts a man's wits into that planet. Vice deforms beauty; therefore his beautiful enchantress turns out to be an old hag. Ancient defeated empires are sounds and emptiness;

* Essay on the *Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians*, in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi.

therefore the Assyrian and Persian monarchies become, in his limbo of vanities, a heap of positive bladders. Youth is headstrong, and kissing goes by favour ; so Angelica, queen of Cathay, and beauty of the world, jilts warriors and kings, and marries a common soldier.

And what a creature is this Angelica ! what effect has she not had upon the world in spite of all her faults, nay, probably by very reason of them ! I know not whether it has been remarked before, but it appears to me, that the charm which every body has felt in the story of Angelica consists mainly in that very fact of her being nothing but a beauty and a woman, dashed even with coquetry, which renders her so inferior in character to most heroines of romance. Her interest is founded on nothing exclusive or prejudiced. It is not addressed to any special class. She might or might not have been liked by this person or that ; but the world in general will adore her, because nature has made them to adore beauty and the sex, apart from prejudices right or wrong. Youth will attribute virtues to her, whether she has them or not ; middle-age be unable to help gazing on her ; old-age dote on her. She is womankind itself in form and substance ; and that is a stronger thing, for the most part, than all our figments about it. Two musical names, "Angelica and Medoro," have become identified in the minds of poetical readers with the honeymoon of youthful passion.

The only false and insipid fiction I can call to mind in the *Orlando Furioso* is that of the "swans" who rescue "medals" from the river of oblivion (canto xxxv.). It betrays a singular forgetfulness of the poet's wonted verisimilitude ; for what metaphor can reconcile us to swans taking an interest in medals ? Popular belief had made them singers ; but it was not a wise step to convert them into antiquaries.

Ariosto's animal spirits, and the brilliant hurry and abundance of his incidents, blind a careless reader to his endless particular beauties, which, though he may too often "describe instead of paint" (on account, as Foscolo says, of his writing to the many), shew that no man could paint better when he chose. The bosoms of his females "come and go, like the waves on the sea-

coast in summer airs.”* His witches draw the fish out of the water

“With simple words and a pure warbled spell.”†

He borrows the word “painting” itself, like a true Italian and friend of Raphael and Titian, to express the commiseration in the faces of the blest for the sufferings of mortality :

“Dipinte di pietade il viso pio.”‡

Their pious looks painted with tenderness.

Jesus is very finely called, in the same passage, “il sempiterno Amante,” the eternal Lover. The female sex are the

“Schiera gentil che pur adorna il mondo.”§

The gentle bevy that adorns the world.

He paints cabinet pictures like Spenser, in isolated stanzas, with a pencil at once solid and light ; as in the instance of the charming one that tells the story of Mercury and his net ; how he watched the Goddess of Flowers as she issued forth at dawn with her lap full of roses and violets, and so threw the net over her “one day,” and “took her ;”

“un dì lo presse.”||

But he does not confine himself to these gentle pictures. He has many as strong as Michael Angelo, some as intense as Dante. He paints the conquest of America in five words :

“Veggio da diece cacciar mille.”¶

I see thousands

Hunted by tens.

He compares the noise of a tremendous battle heard in the neighbourhood to the sound of the cataracts of the Nile :

* “Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.”

Canto vii. st. 14.

† “Con semplici parole e puri incanti.”

Canto vi. st. 38.

‡ Canto xiv. st. 79.

§ Canto xxviii. st. 98.

|| Canto xv. st. 57.

¶ *Id.* st. 23.

“un alto suon ch' a quel s' accorda
Con che i vicin' cadendo il Nil assorda.”*

He “scourges” ships at sea with tempests—say rather the “miserable seamen;” while night-time grows blacker and blacker on the “exasperated waters.”†

When Rodomont has plunged into the thick of Paris, and is carrying every thing before him (“like a serpent that has newly cast his skin, and goes shaking his three tongues under his eyes of fire”), he makes this tremendous hero break the middle of the palace-gate into a huge “window,” and look through it with a countenance which is suddenly beheld by a crowd of faces as pale as death :

“E dentro fatto l' ha tanta finestra,
Che ben vedere e veduto esser puote
Dai visi impressi di color di morte †

The whole description of Orlando's jealousy and growing madness is Shaksperian for passion and circumstance, as the reader may see even in the prose abstract of it in this volume ; and his sublimation of a suspicious king into suspicion itself (which it also contains) is as grandly and felicitously audacious as any thing ever invented by poet. Spenser thought so ; and has imitated and emulated it in one of his own finest passages. Ariosto has not the spleen and gall of Dante, and therefore his satire is not so tremendous ; yet it is very exquisite, as all the world have acknowledged in the instances of the lost things found in the moon, and the angel who finds Discord in a convent. He does not take things so much to heart as Chaucer. He has nothing so profoundly pathetic as our great poet's *Griselda*. Yet many a gentle eye has moistened at the conclusion of the story of Isabella ; and to recur once more to Orlando's jealousy, all who have experienced that passion will feel it shake them. I have read somewhere of a visit paid to Voltaire by an Italian gentleman, who recited it to him, and who (being moved perhaps by the recollection of some passage in his own history) had the tears all the while pouring down his cheeks.

* Canto xvi. st. 56.

† Canto xviii. st. 142.

‡ Canto xvii. st. 12.

Such is the poem which the gracious and good Cardinal Ippolito designated as a "parcel of trumpery." It had, indeed, to contend with more slights than his. Like all originals, it was obliged to wait for the death of the envious and the self-loving, before it acquired a popularity which surpassed all precedent. Foscolo says, that Macchiavelli and Ariosto, "the two writers of that age who really possessed most excellence, were the least praised during their lives. Bembo was approached in a posture of adoration and fear; the infamous Aretino extorted a fulsome letter of praises from the great and the learned."* He might have added, that the writer most in request "in the circles" was a gentleman of the name of Bernardo Accolti, then called the *Unique*, now never heard of. Ariosto himself eulogised him among a shoal of writers, half of whose names have perished; and who most likely included in that half the men who thought he did not praise them enough. For such was the fact! I allude to the charming invention in his last canto, in which he supposes himself welcomed home after a long voyage. Gay imitated it very pleasantly in an address to Pope on the conclusion of his Homer. Some of the persons thus honoured by Ariosto were vexed, it is said, at not being praised highly enough; others at seeing so many praised in their company; some at being left out of the list; and some others at being mentioned at all! These silly people thought it taking too great a liberty! The poor flies of a day did not know that a god had taken them in hand to give them wings for eternity. Happily for them the names of most of these mighty personages are not known. One or two, however, took care to make posterity laugh. Trissino, a very great man in his day, and the would-be restorer of the ancient epic, had the face, in return for the poet's too honourable mention of him, to speak, in his own absurd verses, of "Ariosto, with that *Furioso* of his, which pleases the vulgar:"

"L' Ariosto

Con quel *Furioso* suo che piace al volgo."

"*His* poem," adds Panizzi, "has the merit of not having pleased any body."† A sullen critic, Sperone (the same that afterwards

* *Essay*, as above, p. 534.

† *Boiardo and Ariosto*, vol. iv. p. 318.

plagued Tasso), was so disappointed at being left out, that he became the poet's bitter enemy. He talked of Ariosto taking himself for a swan and "dying like a goose" (the allusion was to the fragment he left called the *Five Cantos*). What has become of the swan Sperone? Bernardo Tasso, Torquato's father, made a more reasonable (but which turned out to be an unfounded) complaint, that Ariosto had established a precedent which poets would find inconvenient. And Macchiavelli, like the true genius he was, expressed a goodnatured and flattering regret that his friend Ariosto had left him out of his list of congratulators, in a work which was "fine throughout," and in some places wonderful."*

The great Galileo knew Ariosto nearly by heart.†

He is a poet whom it may require a certain amount of animal spirits to relish thoroughly. The *air* of his verse must agree with you before you can perceive all its freshness and vitality. But if read with any thing like Italian sympathy, with allowance for times and manners, and with a *sense* as well as *admittance* of the different kinds of the beautiful in poetry (two very different things), you will be almost as much charmed with the "divine Ariosto" as his countrymen have been for ages.

* *Life*, in Panizzi, p. ix.

† *Opere di Galileo*, Padova, 1744, vol. i. p. lxxii.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

Argument.

PART I.—Angelica flies from the camp of Charlemagne into a wood, where she meets with a number of her suitors. Description of a beautiful natural bower. She claims the protection of Sacripant, who is overthrown, in passing, by an unknown warrior that turns out to be a damsel. Rinaldo comes up, and Angelica flies from both. She meets a pretended hermit, who takes her to some rocks in the sea, and casts her asleep by magic. They are seized and carried off by some mariners from the isle of Ebuda, where she is exposed to be devoured by an orc, but is rescued by a knight on a winged horse. He descends with her into a beautiful spot on the coast of Brittany, but suddenly misses both horse and lady. He is lured, with the other knights, into an enchanted palace, whither Angelica comes too. She quits it, and again eludes her suitors.

PART II.—Cloridan and Medoro, two Moorish youths, after a battle with the Christians, resolve to find the dead body of their master, King Dardinel, and bury it. They kill many sleepers as they pass through the enemy's camp, and then discover the body; but are surprised, and left for dead themselves. Medoro, however, survives his friend, and is cured of his wounds by Angelica, who happens to come up. She falls in love with and marries him. Account of their honeymoon in the woods. They quit them to set out for Cathay, and see a madman on the road.

Part III.—When the lovers had quitted their abode in the wood, Orlando, by chance, arrived there, and saw every where, all round him, in-doors and out-of-doors, inscriptions of "Angelica and Medoro." He tries in vain to disbelieve his eyes; finally, learns the whole story from the owner of the cottage, and loses his senses. What he did in that state, both in the neighbourhood and afar off, where he runs naked through the country. His arrival among his brother Paladins; and the result.

THE ADVENTURES OF ANGELICA.

(CONTINUED BY ARIOSTO FROM BOIARDO.*)

PART THE FIRST.

ANGELICA AND HER SUITORS.

ANGELICA, not at all approving her consignment to the care of Namor by Charlemagne, for the purpose of being made the prize of the conqueror, resolved to escape before the battle with the Pagans. She accordingly mounted her palfrey at once, and fled with all her might till she found herself in a wood.

Scarcely had she congratulated herself on being in a place of refuge, when she met a warrior full armed, whom with terror she recognised to be the once-loved but now detested Rinaldo. He had lost his horse, and was looking for it. Angelica turned her palfrey aside instantly, and galloped whithersoever it chose to carry her, till she came to a river-side, where she found another of her suitors, Ferragus. She called loudly upon him for help. Rinaldo had recognised her in turn; and though he was on foot, she knew he would be coming after her.

Come after her he did. A fight between the rivals ensued; and the beauty, taking advantage of it, again fled away—fled like the fawn, that, having seen its mother's throat seized by a wild beast, scours through the woods, and fancies herself every instant in the jaws of the monster. Every sweep of the wind in the trees—every shadow across her path—drove her with sudden

* See p. 32 of the present volume.

starts into the wildest cross-roads ; for it made her feel as if Rinaldo was at her shoulders.*

Slackening her speed by degrees, she wandered afterwards she knew not whither, till she came, next day, to a pleasant wood that was gently stirring with the breeze. There were two streams in it, which kept the grass always green ; and when you listened, you heard them softly running among the pebbles with a broken murmur.

Thinking herself secure at last, and indeed feeling as if she were now a thousand miles off from Rinaldo—tired also with her long journey, and with the heat of the summer sun—she here determined to rest herself. She dismounted ; and having relieved her horse of his bridle, and let him wander away in the fresh pasture, she cast her eyes upon a lovely natural bower, formed of wild roses, which made a sort of little room by the water's side. The bower beheld itself in the water ; trees enclosed it overhead, on the three other sides ; and in the middle was room enough to lie down on the sward ; while the whole was so thickly trellised with the leaves and branches, that the sunbeams themselves could not enter, much less any prying sight. The place invited her to rest ; and accordingly the beautiful creature laid herself down, and so gathering herself, as it were, together, went fast asleep.†

* “ Fugge tra selve spaventose e scure,
Per lochi inabitati, ermi e selvaggi.
Il mover de le frondi e di verzure
Che di cerri sentia, d' olmi e di faggi,
Fatto le avea con subite paure
Trovar di quà e di là strani viaggi ;
Ch' ad ogni ombra veduta o in monte o in valle
Temea Rinaldo aver sempre alle spalle.”

Canto i. st. 33.

† “ Ecco non lungi un bel cespuglio vede
Di spin fioriti e di vermiglie ròse,
Che de le liquide onde al specchio siède,
Chiuso dal Sol fra l' alte quercie ombrose ;
Così vòto nel mezo, che concede
Fresca stanza fra l' ombre più nascose :
E la foglie coi rami in modo è mista,
Che 'l Sol non v' entra, non che minor vista.

She had not slept long when she was awakened by the tramping of a horse; and getting up, and looking cautiously through the trees, she perceived a cavalier, who dismounted from his steed, and sat himself down by the water in a melancholy posture. It was Sacripant, king of Circassia, one of her lovers, wretched at the thought of having missed her in the camp of King Charles. Angelica loved Sacripant no more than the rest; but, considering him a man of great conscientiousness, she thought he would make her a good protector while on her journey home. She therefore suddenly appeared before him out of the bower, like a goddess of the woods, or Venus herself, and claimed his protection.

Never did a mother bathe the eyes of her son with tears of such exquisite joy, when he came home after news of his death in battle, as the Saracen king beheld this sudden apparition with its divine face and beautiful manners.* He could not help clasping her in his arms; and very different intentions were coming into his head than those for which she had given him credit, when the noise of a second warrior thundering through the woods made him remount his horse and prepare for an encounter. The stranger speedily made his appearance, a personage of a gallant and fiery bearing, clad in a surcoat white as snow, with a white streamer for a crest. He seemed more bent on having the way cleared before him than anxious about the manner of it; so couching his lance as he came, while Sacripant did the like with his, he dashed upon the Circassian with such violence as to cast him on the ground; and though his own horse slipped at the same time, he had it up again in an instant

Dentro letto vi fan tener' erbette,
 Ch' invitano a posar chi s' appresenta.
 La bella donna in mezo a quel si mette;
 Ivi si scorca, et ivi s' addormenta."

St. 37.

An exquisite picture!

* And how lovely is this!

"E fuor di quel cespuglio oscuro e cieco
 Fa di se bella et improvvisa mostra,
 Come di selva o fuor d' ombroso speco
 D'iana in scena, o Citerea si mostra," &c.

St. 52.

with his spurs; and so, continuing his way, was a mile off before the Saracen recovered from his astonishment.

As the stunned and stupid ploughman, who has been stretched by a thunderbolt beside his slain oxen, raises himself from the ground after the lofty crash, and looks with astonishment at the old pine-tree near him which has been stripped from head to foot, with just such amazement the Circassian got up from his downfall, and stood in the presence of Angelica, who had witnessed it. Never in his life had he blushed so red as at that moment.

Angelica comforted him in sorry fashion, attributing the disaster to his tired and ill-fed horse, and observing that his enemy had chosen to risk no second encounter; but, while she was talking, a messenger, with an appearance of great fatigue and anxiety, came riding up, who asked Sacripant if he had seen a knight in a white surcoat and crest.

"He has this instant," answered the king, "overthrown me, and galloped away. Who is he?"

"It is no *he*," replied the messenger. "The rider who has overthrown you, and thus taken possession of whatever glory you may have acquired, is a damsel; and she is still more beautiful than brave. Bradamante is her illustrious name."

And with these words the horseman set spurs to his horse, and left the Saracen more miserable than before. He mounted Angelica's horse without a word, his own having been disabled; and so, taking her up behind him, proceeded on the road in continued silence.*

They had just gone a couple of miles, when they again heard a noise, as of some powerful body in haste; and in a little while, a horse without a rider came rushing towards them, in golden trappings. It was Rinaldo's horse, Bayardo.† The Circassian,

* How admirable is the suddenness, brevity, and force of this scene! And it is as artful and dramatic as off-hand; for this Amazon, Bradamante, is the future heroine of the warlike part of the poem, and the beauty from whose marriage with Ruggiero is to spring the house of Este. Nor without her appearance at this moment, as Panizzi has shewn (vol. i. p. cvi.), could a variety of subsequent events have taken place necessary to the greatest interests of the story. All the previous passages in romance about Amazons are nothing compared with this flash of a thunderbolt.

† From *bayard*, old French; *bay-colour*.

dismounting, thought to seize it, but was welcomed with a curvet, which made him beware how he hazarded something worse. The horse then went straight to Angelica in a way as caressing as a dog; for he remembered how she fed him in Albracca at the time when she was in love with his ungracious master: and the beauty recollected Bayardo with equal pleasure, for she had need of him. Sacripant, however, watched his opportunity, and mounted the horse; so that now the two companions had each a separate steed. They were about to proceed more at their ease, when again a great noise was heard, and Rinaldo himself was seen coming after them on foot, threatening the Saracen with furious gestures, for he saw that he had got his horse; and he recognised, above all, in a rage of jealousy, the lovely face beside him. Angelica in vain implored the Circassian to fly with her. He asked if she had forgotten the wars of Albracca, and all which he had done to serve her, that thus she supposed him afraid of another battle.

Sacripant endeavoured to push Bayardo against Rinaldo; but the horse refusing to fight his master, he dismounted, and the two rivals encountered each other with their swords. At first they went through the whole sword-exercise to no effect; but Rinaldo, tired of the delay, raised the terrible Fusberta,* and at one blow cut through the other's twofold buckler of bone and steel, and benumbed his arm. Angelica turned as pale as a criminal going to execution; and, without farther waiting, galloped off through the forest, looking round every instant to see if Rinaldo was upon her.

She had not gone far when she met an old man who seemed to be a hermit, but was in reality a magician, coming along upon an ass. He was of venerable aspect, and seemed worn out with age and mortifications; yet, when he beheld the exquisite face before him, and heard the lady explain how it was she needed his assistance, even he, old as he really was, began to fancy himself a lover, and determined to use his art for the purpose of keeping his two rivals at a distance. Taking out a book, and reading a little in it, there issued from the air a spirit in likeness of a ser-

* His famous sword, vide p. 27.

vant, whom he sent to the two combatants with directions to give them a false account of Orlando's having gone off to France with Angelica. The spirit disappeared ; and the magician journeying with his companion to the sea-coast, raised another, who entered Angelica's horse, and carried her, to her astonishment and terror, out to sea, and so round to some lonely rocks. There, to her great comfort at first, the old man rejoined her ; but his proceedings becoming very mysterious, and exciting her indignation, he cast her into a deep sleep.

It happened, at this moment, that a ship was passing by the rocks, bound upon a tragical commission from the island of Ebuda. It was the custom of that place to consign a female daily to the jaws of a sea-monster, for the purpose of averting the wrath of one of their gods ; and as it was thought that the god would be appeased if they brought him one of singular beauty, the mariners of the ship seized with avidity on the sleeping Angelica, and carried her off, together with the old man. The people of Ebuda, out of love and pity, kept her, unexposed to the sea-monster, for some days ; but at length she was bound to the rock where it was accustomed to seek its food ; and thus, in tears and horror, with not a friend to look to, the delight of the world expected her fate. East and west she looked in vain ; to the heavens she looked in vain ; every where she looked in vain. That beauty which had made King Agrican come from the Caspian gates, with half Scythia, to find his death from the hands of Orlando ; that beauty which had made King Sacripant forget both his country and his honour ; that beauty which had tarnished the renown and the wisdom of the great Orlando himself, and turned the whole East upside down, and laid it at the feet of loveliness, has now not a soul near it to give it the comfort of a word.

Leaving our heroine a while in this condition, I must now tell you that Ruggiero, the greatest of all the infidel warriors, had been presented by his guardian, the magician Atlantes, with two wonderful gifts ; the one a shield of dazzling metal, which blinded and overthrew every one that looked at it ; and the other an animal which combined the bird with the quadruped, and was called the Hippogriff, or griffin-horse. It had the plumage, the wings, head, beak, and front-legs of a griffin, and the rest like a horse.

It was not made by enchantment, but was a creature of a natural kind found but very rarely in the Riphæan mountains, far on the other side of the Frozen Sea.*

With these gifts, high mounted in the air, the young ward of Atlantes was now making the grandest of grand tours. He had for some time been confined by the magician in a castle, in order to save him from the dangers threatened in his horoscope. From this he had been set free by the lady with whom he was destined to fall in love; he had then been inveigled by a wicked fairy into her tower, and set free by a good one; and now he was on his travels through the world, to seek his mistress and pursue knightly adventures.

Casting his eyes on the coast of Ebuda, the rider of the hippogriff beheld the amazing spectacle of the lady tied to the rock; and struck with a beauty which reminded him of her whom he loved, he resolved to deliver her from a peril which soon became too manifest.

A noise was heard in the sea; and the huge monster, the Orc, appeared half in the water, and half out of it, like a ship which drags its way into port after a long and tempestuous voyage.† It seemed a huge mass without form except the head, which had

* To richness and rarity, how much is added by remoteness! It adds distance to the other difficulties of procuring it.

† “Ecco apparir lo smisurato mostro
Mezo ascoso ne l' onda, e mezo sorto.
Come sospinto suol da Borea o d' Ostro
Venir lungo navilio a pigliar porto.”

Canto x. st. 100.

Improved from Ovid, *Metamorph.* lib. iv. 706:

‡ “Ecce velut navis præfixo concita rostro
Sulcat aquas, juvenum sudantibus acta lacertis;
Sic fera,” &c.

As when a galley with sharp beak comes fierce,
Ploughing the waves with many a sweating oar.

Ovid is brisker and more obviously to the purpose; but Ariosto gives the ponderousness and dreary triumph of the monster. The comparison of the fly and the mastiff is in the same higher and more epic taste. The classical reader need not be told that the whole ensuing passage, as far as the combat is concerned, is imitated from Ovid's story of Perseus and Andromeda.

eyes sticking out, and bristles like a boar. Ruggiero, who had dashed down to the side of Angelica, and attempted to encourage her in vain, now rose in the air; and the monster, whose attention was diverted by a shadow on the water of a couple of great wings dashing round and above him, presently felt a spear on his neck; but only to irritate him, for it could not pierce the skin. In vain Ruggiero tried to do so a hundred times. The combat was of no more effect than that of the fly with the mastiff, when it dashes against his eyes and mouth, and at last comes once too often within the gape of his snapping teeth. The orc raised such a foam and tempest in the waters with the flapping of his tail, that the knight of the hippogriff hardly knew whether he was in air or sea. He began to fear that the monster would disable the creature's wings; and where would its rider be then? He therefore had recourse to a weapon which he never used but at the last moment, when skill and courage became of no service: he unveiled the magic shield. But first he flew to Angelica, and put on her finger the ring which neutralized its effect. The shield blazed on the water like another sun. The orc, beholding it, felt it smite its eyes like lightning; and rolling over its unwieldy body in the foam which it had raised, lay turned up, like a dead fish, insensible. But it was not dead; and Ruggiero was so long in making ineffectual efforts to pierce it, that Angelica cried out to him for God's sake to release her while he had the opportunity, lest the monster should revive. "Take me with you," she said; "drown me; any thing, rather than let me be food for this horror."

The knight released her instantly. He set her behind him on the winged horse, and in a few minutes was in the air, transported with having deprived the brute of his delicate supper. Then, turning as he went, he imprinted on her a thousand kisses. He had intended to make a tour of Spain, which was not far off; but he now altered his mind, and descended with his prize into a lovely spot on the coast of Brittany, encircled with oaks full of nightingales, with here and there a solitary mountain.

It was a little green meadow with a brook.* Ruggiero looked about him with transport, and was preparing to disencumber

* "Sul lito un bosco era di querce ombrose,
Dove ogn' or par che Filomena piagna;

himself of his hot armour, when the blushing beauty, casting her eyes downwards, beheld on her finger the identical magic ring which her father had given her when she first entered Christendom, and which had delivered her out of so many dangers. If put on the finger only, it neutralized all enchantment; but put into the mouth, it rendered the wearer invisible. It had been stolen from her, and came into the hands of a good fairy, who gave it to Ruggiero, in order to deliver him from the wiles of a bad one. Falsehood to the good fairy's friend, his own mistress Bradamante, now rendered him unworthy of its possession; and at the moment when he thought Angelica his own beyond redemption, she vanished out of his sight. In vain he knew the secret of the ring, and the possibility of her being still present—the certainty, at all events, of her not being very far off. He ran hither and thither like a madman, hoping to clasp her in his arms, and embracing nothing but the air. In a little while she was distant far enough; and Ruggiero, stamping about to no purpose in a rage of disappointment, and at length resolving to take horse, perceived he had been deprived, in the mean time, of his hippogriff. It had loosened itself from the tree to which he had tied it, and taken its own course over the mountains. Thus he had lost horse, ring, and lady, all at once.*

Pursuing his way, with contending emotions, through a valley between lofty woods, he heard a great noise in the thick of them. He rushed to see what it was; and found a giant combating with

Ch' in mezo avea un pratel con una fonte,
E quinci e quindi un solitario monte.

Quivi il bramoso cavalier ritenne
L' audace corso, e nel pratel discese."

St. 113.

What a landscape! and what a charm beyond painting he has put into it with his nightingales! and then what figures besides! A knight on a winged steed descending with a naked beauty into a meadow in the thick of woods, with "here and there a solitary mountain." The mountains make no formal circle; they keep their separate distances, with their various intervals of light and shade. And what a heart of solitude is given to the meadow by the loneliness of these its waiters aloof!

* Nothing can be more perfectly wrought up than this sudden change of circumstances.

a young knight. The giant got the better of the knight; and having cast him on the ground, unloosed his helmet for the purpose of slaying him, when Ruggiero, to his horror, beheld in the youth's face that of his unworthily-treated mistress Bradamante. He rushed to assault her enemy; but the giant, seizing her in his arms, took to his heels; and the penitent lover followed him with all his might, but in vain. The wretch was hidden from his eyes by the trees. At length Ruggiero, incessantly pursuing him, issued forth into a great meadow, containing a noble mansion; and here he beheld the giant in the act of dashing through the gate of it with his prize.

The mansion was an enchanted one, raised by the anxious old guardian of Ruggiero for the purpose of enticing into it both the youth himself, and all from whom he could experience danger in the course of his adventures. Orlando had just been brought there by a similar device, that of the apparition of a knight carrying off Angelica; for the supposed Bradamante was equally a deception, and the giant no other than the magician himself. There also were the knights Ferragus, and Brandimart, and Grandonio, and King Sacripant, all searching for something they had missed. They wandered about the house to no purpose; and sometimes Ruggiero heard Bradamante calling him; and sometimes Orlando beheld Angelica's face at a window.*

At length the beauty arrived in her own veritable person. She was again on horseback, and once more on the look-out for a knight who should conduct her safely home—whether Orlando or Sacripant she had not determined. The same road which had brought Ruggiero to the enchanted house having done as much for her, she now entered it invisibly by means of the ring.

Finding both the knights in the place, and feeling under the necessity of coming to a determination respecting one or the other,

* To feel the complete force of this picture, a reader should have been in the South, and beheld the like sudden apparitions, at open windows, of ladies looking forth in dresses of beautiful colours, and with faces the most interesting. I remember a vision of this sort at Carrara, on a bright but not too hot day (I fancied that the marble mountains there cooled it). It resembled one of Titian's women, with its broad shoulders, and boddice and sleeves differently coloured from the petticoat; and seemed literally framed in the unsashed window. But I am digressing.

Angelica made up her mind in favour of King Sacripant, whom she reckoned to be more at her disposal. Contriving therefore to meet him by himself, she took the ring out of her mouth, and suddenly appeared before him. He had hardly recovered from his amazement, when Ferragus and Orlando himself came up; and as Angelica now was visible to all, she took occasion to deliver them from the enchanted house by hastening before them into a wood. They all followed of course, in a frenzy of anxiety and delight; but the lady being perplexed with the presence of the whole three, and recollecting that she had again obtained possession of her ring, resolved to trust her safe conduct to invisibility alone; so, in the old fashion, she left them to new quarrels by suddenly vanishing from their eyes. She stopped, nevertheless, a while to laugh at them, as they all turned their stupified faces hither and thither; then suffered them to pass her in a blind thunder of pursuit; and so, gently following at her leisure on the same road, took her way towards the East.

It was a long journey, and she saw many places and people, and was now hidden and now seen, like the moon, till she came one day into a forest near the walls of Paris, where she beheld a youth lying wounded on the grass, between two companions that were dead.

PART THE SECOND.

ANGELICA AND MEDORO.

Now, in order to understand who the youth was that Angelica found lying on the grass between the two dead companions, and how he came to be so lying, you must know that a great battle had been fought there between Charlemagne and the Saracens, in which the latter were defeated, and that these three people belonged to the Saracens. The two that were slain were Dardinel, king of Zumara, and Cloridan, one of his followers; and the wounded survivor was another, whose name was Medoro. Cloridan and Medoro had been loving and grateful servants of Dardinel, and very fast friends of one another; such friends, indeed, that on their own account, as well as in honour of what they did for their master, their history deserves a particular mention.

They were of a lowly stock on the coast of Syria, and in all the various fortunes of their lord had shewn him a special attachment. Cloridan had been bred a huntsman, and was the robuster person of the two. Medoro was in the first bloom of youth, with a complexion rosy and fair, and a most pleasant as well as beautiful countenance. He had black eyes, and hair that ran into curls of gold; in short, looked like a very angel from heaven.

These two were keeping anxious watch upon the trenches of the defeated army, when Medoro, unable to cease thinking of the master who had been left dead on the field, told his friend that he could no longer delay to go and look for his dead body, and bury it. "You," said he, "will remain, and so be able to do justice to my memory, in case I fail."

Cloridan, though he delighted in this proof of his friend's noble-heartedness, did all he could to dissuade him from so peril-

ous an enterprise ; but Medoro, in the fervour of his gratitude for benefits conferred on him by his lord, was immovable in his determination to die or to succeed ; and Cloridan, seeing this, determined to go with him.

They took their way accordingly out of the Saracen camp, and in a short time found themselves in that of the enemy. The Christians had been drinking over-night for joy at their victory, and were buried in wine and sleep. Cloridan halted a moment, and said in a whisper to his friend, " Do you see this ? Ought I to lose such an opportunity of revenging our beloved master ? Keep watch, and I will do it. Look about you, and listen on every side, while I make a passage for us among these sleepers with my sword."

Without waiting an answer, the vigorous huntsman pushed into the first tent before him. It contained, among other occupants, a certain Alpheus, a physician and caster of nativities, who had prophesied to himself a long life, and a death in the bosom of his family. Cloridan cautiously put the sword's point in his throat, and there was an end of his dreams. Four other sleepers were despatched in like manner, without time given them to utter a syllable. After them went another, who had entrenched himself between two horses ; then the luckless Grill, who had made himself a pillow of a barrel which he had emptied. He was dreaming of opening a second barrel, but, alas, was tapped himself. A Greek and a German followed, who had been playing late at dice ; fortunate, if they had continued to do so a little longer ; but they never counted a throw like this among their chances.

By this time the Saracen had grown ferocious with his bloody work, and went slaughtering along like a wild beast among sheep. Nor could Medoro keep his own sword unemployed ; but he disdained to strike indiscriminately—he was choice in his victims. Among these was a certain Duke La Brett, who had his lady fast asleep in his arms. Shall I pity them ? That will I not. Sweet was their fated hour, most happy their departure ; for, embraced as the sword found them, even so, I believe, it dismissed them into the other world, loving and enfolded.

Two brothers were slain next, sons of the Count of Flanders,

and newly-made valorous knights. Charlemagne had seen them turn red with slaughter in the field, and had augmented their coat of arms with his lilies, and promised them lands beside in Friesland. And he would have bestowed the lands, only Medoro forbade it.

The friends now discovered that they had approached the quarter in which the Paladins kept guard about their sovereign. They were afraid, therefore, to continue the slaughter any further; so they put up their swords, and picked their way cautiously through the rest of the camp into the field where the battle had taken place. There they experienced so much difficulty in the search for their master's body, in consequence of the horrible mixture of the corpses, that they might have searched till the perilous return of daylight, had not the moon, at the close of a prayer of Medoro's, sent forth its beams right on the spot where the king was lying. Medoro knew him by his cognizance, *argent* and *gules*. The poor youth burst into tears at the sight, weeping plentifully as he approached him, only he was obliged to let his tears flow without noise. Not that he cared for death—at that moment he would gladly have embraced it, so deep was his affection for his lord; but he was anxious not to be hindered in his pious office of consigning him to the earth.

The two friends took up the dead king on their shoulders, and were hasting away with the beloved burthen, when the whiteness of dawn began to appear, and with it, unfortunately, a troop of horsemen in the distance, right in their path.

It was Zerbino, prince of Scotland, with a party of horse. He was a warrior of extreme vigilance and activity, and was returning to the camp after having been occupied all night in pursuing such of the enemy as had not succeeded in getting into their entrenchments.*

* Ariosto elsewhere represents him as the handsomest man in the world; saying of him, in a line that has become famous,

“Natura il fece, e poi roppe la stampa.”

Canto x. st. 84.

—Nature made him, and then broke the mould.

(The word is generally printed *ruppe*; but I use the primitive text of Mr. Pan-

“My friend,” exclaimed the huntsman, “we must e’en take to our heels. Two living people must not be sacrificed to one who is dead.”

With these words he let go his share of the burden, taking for granted that the friend, whose life as well as his own he was thinking to secure, would do as he himself did. But attached as Cloridan had been to his master, Medoro was far more so. He accordingly received the whole burden on his shoulders. Cloridan meantime scoured away, as fast as feet could carry him, thinking his companion was at his side: otherwise he would sooner have died a hundred times over than have left him.

In the interim, the party of the Scottish prince had dispersed themselves about the plain, for the purpose of intercepting the two fugitives, whichever way they went; for they saw plainly they were enemies, by the alarm they shewed.

There was an old forest at hand in those days, which, besides being thick and dark, was full of the most intricate cross-paths, and inhabited only by game. Into this Cloridan had plunged. Medoro, as well as he could, hastened after him; but hampered as he was with his burden, the more he sought the darkest and most intricate paths, the less advanced he found himself, especially as he had no acquaintance with the place.

On a sudden, Cloridan having arrived at a spot so quiet that he became aware of the silence, missed his beloved friend. “Great God!” he exclaimed, “what have I done? Left him I know not where, or how!” The swift runner instantly turned about, and, retracing his steps, came voluntarily back on the road to his own death. As he approached the scene where it was to take place, he began to hear the noise of men and horses; then he discerned voices threatening; then the voice of his unhappy friend; and at length he saw him, still bearing his load, in the midst of the whole troop of horsemen. The prince was commanding them to seize him. The poor youth, however, burdened as he was, rendered it no such easy matter; for he turned himself about like a wheel, and entrenched himself, now behind this tree, and now

nizzi's edition.) Boiardo's handsomest man, Astolfo, was an Englishman; Ariosto's is a Scotchman. See, in the present volume, the note on the character of Astolfo, p. 23.

behind that. Finding this would not do, he laid his beloved burden on the ground, and then strode hither and thither, over and round about it, parrying the horsemen's endeavours to take him prisoner. Never did poor hunted bear feel more conflicting emotions, when, surprised in her den, she stands over her offspring with uncertain heart, groaning with a mingled sound of tenderness and rage. Wrath bids her rush forward, and bury her nails in the flesh of their enemy; love melts her, and holds her back in the middle of her fury, to look upon those whom she bore.*

Cloridan was in an agony of perplexity what to do. He longed to rush forth and die with his friend; he longed also still to do what he could, and not to let him die unavenged. He therefore halted a while before he issued from the trees, and, putting an arrow to his bow, sent it well-aimed among the horsemen. A Scotsman fell dead from his saddle. The troop all turned to see

* "Come orsa, che l' alpestre cacciatore
 Ne la pietrosa tana assalita abbia,
 Sta sopra i figli con incerto core,
 E freme in suono di pietà e di rabbia:
 Ira la 'nvita e natural furore
 A spiegar l' ugne, e a insanguinar le labbia;
 Amor la 'ntenerisce, e la ritira
 A riguardare a i figli in mezo l' ira."

Like as a bear, whom men in mountains start
 In her old stony den, and dare, and goad,
 Stands o'er her children with uncertain heart,
 And roars for rage and sorrow in one mood:
 Anger impels her, and her natural part,
 To use her nails, and bathe her lips in blood;
 Love melts her, and, for all her angry roar,
 Holds back her eyes to look on those she bore.

This stanza in Ariosto has become famous as a beautiful transcript of a beautiful passage in Statius, which, indeed, it surpasses in style, but not in feeling, especially when we consider with whom the comparison originates:

"Ut lea, quam sævo fœtam pressere cubili
 Venantes Numidæ, natos erecta superstat
 Mente sub incerta, torvum ac miserabile frendens:
 Illa quidem turbare globos, et frangere morsu
 Tela queat; sed prolis amor crudelia vincit
 Pectora, et in media catulos circumspicit ira."

Thebais, x. 414.

whence the arrow came ; and as they were raging and crying out, a second stuck in the throat of the loudest.

“ This is not to be borne,” cried the prince, pushing his horse towards Medoro ; “ you shall suffer for this.” And so speaking, he thrust his hand into the golden locks of the youth, and dragged him violently backwards, intending to kill him ; but when he looked on his beautiful face, he couldn't do it.

The youth betook himself to entreaty. “ For God's sake, sir knight !” cried he, “ be not so cruel as to deny me leave to bury my lord and master. He was a king. I ask nothing for myself—not even my life. I do not care for my life. I care for nothing but to bury my lord and master.”

These words were spoken in a manner so earnest, that the good prince could feel nothing but pity ; but a ruffian among the troop, losing sight even of respect for his lord, thrust his lance into the poor youth's bosom right over the prince's hand. Zerbino turned with indignation to smite him, but the villain, seeing what was coming, galloped off ; and meanwhile Cloridan, thinking that his friend was slain, came leaping full of rage out of the wood, and laid about him with his sword in mortal desperation. Twenty swords were upon him in a moment ; and perceiving life flowing out of him, he let himself fall down by the side of his friend.*

* This adventure of Cloridan and Medoro is imitated from the Nisus and Euryalus of Virgil. An Italian critic, quoted by Panizzi, says, that the way in which Cloridan exposes himself to the enemy is inferior to the Latin poet's famous

“ Me, me (adsum qui feci), in me convertite ferrum.”

Me, me ('tis I who did the deed), slay me.

And the reader will agree with Panizzi, that he is right. The circumstance, also, of Euryalus's bequeathing his aged mother to the care of his prince, in case he fails in his enterprise, is very touching ; and the main honour, both of the invention of the whole episode and its particulars, remains with Virgil. On the other hand, the enterprise of the friends in the Italian poet, which is that of burying their dead master, and not merely of communicating with an absent general, is more affecting, though it may be less patriotic ; the inability of Zerbino to kill him, when he looked on his face, is extremely so ; and, as Panizzi has shewn, the adventure is made of importance to the whole story of the poem, and is not simply an episode, like that in the Æneid. It serves, too, in a very particular manner to introduce Medoro worthily to the affection of

The Scotsmen, supposing both the friends to be dead, now took their departure ; and Medoro indeed would have been dead before long, he bled so profusely. But assistance of a very unusual sort was at hand.

A lady on a palfrey happened to be coming by, who observed signs of life in him, and was struck with his youth and beauty. She was attired with great simplicity, but her air was that of a person of high rank, and her beauty inexpressible. In short, it was the proud daughter of the lord of Cathay, Angelica herself. Finding that she could travel in safety and independence by means of the magic ring, her self-estimation had risen to such a height, that she disdained to stoop to the companionship of the greatest man living. She could not even call to mind that such lovers as the County Orlando or King Sacripant existed : and it mortified her beyond measure to think of the affection she had entertained for Rinaldo.

“Such arrogance,” thought Love, “is not to be endured.” The little archer with the wings put an arrow to his bow, and stood waiting for her by the spot where Medoro lay.

Now, when the beauty beheld the youth lying half dead with his wounds, and yet, on accosting him, found that he lamented less for himself than for the unburied body of the king his master, she felt a tenderness unknown before creep into every particle of her being ; and as the greatest ladies of India were accustomed to dress the wounds of their knights, she bethought her of a balsam which she had observed in coming along ; and so, looking about for it, brought it back with her to the spot, together with a herdsman whom she had met on horseback in search of one of his stray cattle. The blood was ebbing so fast, that the poor youth was on the point of expiring ; but Angelica bruised the plant between stones, and gathered the juice into her delicate hands, and restored his strength with infusing it into the wounds ; so that, in a little while, he was able to get on the horse belonging to the herdsman, and be carried away to the man’s cottage. He would not quit his lord’s body, however, nor that of his

Angelica ; for, mere female though she be, we should hardly have gone along with her passion as we do, in a poem of any seriousness, had it been founded merely on his beauty.

friend, till he had seen them laid in the ground. He then went with the lady, and she took up her abode with him in the cottage, and attended him till he recovered, loving him more and more day by day ; so that at length she fairly told him as much, and he loved her in turn ; and the king's daughter married the lowly-born soldier.

O County Orlando ! O King Sacripant ! That renowned valour of yours, say, what has it availed you ? That lofty honour, tell us, at what price is it rated ? What is the reward ye have obtained for all your services ? Shew us a single courtesy which the lady ever vouchsafed, late or early, for all that you ever suffered in her behalf.

O King Agrican ! if you could return to life, how hard would you think it to call to mind all the repulses she gave you—all the pride and aversion and contempt with which she received your advances !

O Ferragus ! O thousands of others too numerous to speak of, who performed thousands of exploits for this ungrateful one, what would you all think at beholding her in the arms of the courted boy !

Yes, Medoro had the first gathering of the kiss off the lips of Angelica—those lips never touched before—that garden of roses on the threshold of which nobody ever yet dared to venture. The love was headlong and irresistible ; but the priest was called in to sanctify it ; and the brideswoman of the daughter of Cathay was the wife of the cottager.

The lovers remained upwards of a month in the cottage. Angelica could not bear her young husband out of her sight. She was for ever gazing on him, and hanging on his neck. In-doors and out-of-doors, day as well as night, she had him at her side. In the morning or evening they wandered forth along the banks of some stream, or by the hedge-rows of some verdant meadow. In the middle of the day they took refuge from the heat in a grotto that seemed made for lovers ; and wherever, in their wanderings, they found a tree fit to carve and write on, by the side of fount or river, or even a slab of rock soft enough for the purpose, there they were sure to leave their names on the bark or marble ; so that, what with the inscriptions in-doors and out-of-

doors (for the walls of the cottage displayed them also), a visitor of the place could not have turned his eye in any direction without seeing the words

“ANGELICA AND MEDORO”

written in as many different ways as true-lovers' knots could run.*

Having thus awhile enjoyed themselves in the rustic solitude, the Queen of Cathay (for in the course of her adventures in Christendom she had succeeded to her father's crown) thought it time to return to her beautiful empire, and complete the triumph of love by crowning Medoro king of it.

She took leave of the cottagers with a princely gift. The islanders of Ebuda had deprived her of every thing valuable but a rich bracelet, which, for some strange, perhaps superstitious, reason, they left on her arm. This she took off, and made a present of it to the good couple for their hospitality; and so bade them farewell.

The bracelet was of inimitable workmanship, adorned with gems, and had been given by the enchantress Morgana to a favourite youth, who was rescued from her wiles by Orlando. The youth, in gratitude, bestowed it on his preserver; and the hero had humbly presented it to Angelica, who vouchsafed to accept it, not because of the giver, but for the rarity of the gift.

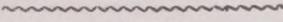
The happy bride and bridegroom, bidding farewell to France, proceeded by easy journeys, and crossed the mountains into Spain, where it was their intention to take ship for the Levant. Descending the Pyrenees, they discerned the ocean in the dis-

* Canto xix. st. 34, &c. All the world have felt this to be a true picture of first love. The inscription may be said to be that of every other pair of lovers that ever existed, who knew how to write their names.

How musical, too, are the words “Angelica and Medoro!” Boiardo invented the one; Ariosto found the match for it. One has no end to the pleasure of repeating them. All hail to the moment when I first became aware of their existence, more than fifty years ago, in the house of the gentle artist Benjamin West! (Let the reader indulge me with this recollection.) I sighed with pleasure to look on them at that time; I sigh now, with far more pleasure than pain, to look back on them, for they never come across me but with delight; and poetry is a world in which nothing beautiful ever thoroughly forsakes us.

tance, and had now reached the coast, and were proceeding by the water-side along the high road to Barcelona, when they beheld a miserable-looking creature, a madman, all over mud and dirt, lying naked in the sands. He had buried himself half inside them for shelter from the sun; but having observed the lovers as they came along, he leaped out of his hole like a dog, and came raging against them.

But, before I proceed to relate who this madman was, I must return to the cottage which the two lovers had occupied, and recount what passed in it during the interval between their bidding it adieu and their arrival in this place.

PART THE THIRD.


THE JEALOUSY OF ORLANDO.

DURING the course of his search for Angelica, the County Orlando had just restored two lovers to one another, and was pursuing a Pagan enemy to no purpose through a wild and tangled wood, when he came into a beautiful spot by a river's side, which tempted him to rest himself from the heat. It was a small meadow, full of daisies and butter-cups, and surrounded with trees. There was an air abroad, notwithstanding the heat, which made the shepherds glad to sit without their jerkins, and receive the coolness on their naked bodies: even the hard-skinned cattle were glad of it; and Orlando, who was armed *cap-a-pie*, was delighted to take off his helmet, and lay aside his buckler, and repose awhile in the midst of a scene so refreshing. Alas! it was the unhappiest moment of his life.

Casting his eyes around him, while about to get off his horse, he observed a handwriting on many of the trees which he thought he knew. Riding up to the trees, and looking more closely, he was sure he knew it; and in truth it was no other than that of his adored mistress Angelica, and the inscription one of those numerous inscriptions of which I have spoken. The spot was one of the haunts of the lovers while they abode in the shepherd's cottage. Wherever the County turned his eyes, he beheld, tied together in true-lovers' knots, nothing but the words

“ANGELICA AND MEDORO.”

All the trees had them—his eyes could see nothing else; and every letter was a dagger that pierced his heart.

The unhappy lover tried in vain to disbelieve what he saw.

He endeavoured to compel himself to think that it was some other Angelica who had written the words ; but he knew the handwriting too well. Too often had he dwelt upon it, and made himself familiar with every turn of the letters. He then strove to fancy that "Medoro" was a feigned name, intended for himself ; but he felt that he was trying to delude himself, and that the more he tried, the bitterer was his conviction of the truth. He was like a bird fixing itself only the more deeply in the lime in which it is caught, by struggling and beating its wings.

Orlando turned his horse away in his anguish, and paced it towards a grotto covered with vine and ivy, which he looked into. The grotto, both outside and in, was full of the like inscriptions. It was the retreat the lovers were so fond of at noon. Their names were written on all sides of it, some in chalk and coal,* others carved with a knife.

The wretched beholder got off his horse and entered the grotto. The first thing that met his eyes was a larger inscription in the Saracen lover's own handwriting and tongue—a language which the slayer of the infidels was too well acquainted with. The words were in verse, and expressed the gratitude of the "poor Medoro," the writer, for having had in his arms, in that grotto, the beautiful Angelica, daughter of King Galafron, whom so many had loved in vain. The writer invoked a blessing on every part of it, its shades, its waters, its flowers, its creeping plants ; and entreated every person, high and low, who should chance to visit it, particularly lovers, that they would bless the place likewise, and take care that it was never polluted by foot of herd.

Thrice, and four times, did the unhappy Orlando read these words, trying always, but in vain, to disbelieve what he saw. Every time he read, they appeared plainer and plainer ; and every time did a cold hand seem to be wringing the heart in his bosom. At length he remained with his eyes fixed on the stone, seeing nothing more, not even the stone itself. He felt as if his wits were leaving him, so abandoned did he seem of all comfort.

* " Scritti, qual con carbone e qual con gesso."

Canto xxiii. st. 106.

Ariosto did not mind soiling the beautiful fingers of Angelica with coal and chalk. He knew that Love did not mind it.

Let those imagine what he felt who have experienced the same emotions—who know, by their own sufferings, that this is the grief which surpasses all other griefs. His head had fallen on his bosom; his look was deprived of all confidence; he could not even speak or shed a tear. His impetuous grief remained within him by reason of his impetuosity—like water which attempts to rush out of the narrow-necked bottle, but which is so compressed as it comes, that it scarcely issues drop by drop.

Again he endeavoured to disbelieve his eyes—to conclude that somebody had wished to calumniate his mistress, and drive her lover mad, and so had done his best to imitate her handwriting. With these sorry attempts at consolation, he again took horse, the sun having now given way to the moon, and so rode a little onward, till he beheld smoke rising out of the tops of the trees, and heard the barking of dogs and the lowing of cattle. By these signs he knew that he was approaching a village. He entered it, and going into the first house he came to, gave his horse to the care of a youth, and was disarmed, and had his spurs of gold taken off, and so went into a room that was shewn him without demanding either meat or drink, so entirely was he filled with his sorrow.

Now it happened that this was the very cottage into which Medoro had been carried out of the wood by the loving Angelica. There he had been cured of his wounds—there he had been loved and made happy—and there, wherever the County Orlando turned his eyes, he beheld the detested writing on the walls, the windows, the doors. He made no inquiries about it of the people of the house: he still dreaded to render the certainty clearer than he would fain suppose it.

But the cowardice availed him nothing; for the host seeing him unhappy, and thinking to cheer him, came in as he was getting into bed, and opened on the subject of his own accord. It was a story he told to every body who came, and he was accustomed to have it admired; so with little preface he related all the particulars to his new guest—how the youth had been left for dead on the field, and how the lady had found him, and had him brought to the cottage—and how she fell in love with him as he grew well—and how she could be content with nothing but mar-

rying him, though she was daughter of the greatest king of the East, and a queen herself. At the conclusion of his narrative, the good man produced the bracelet which had been given him by Angelica, as evidence of the truth of all that he had been saying.

This was the final stroke, the last fatal blow, given to the poor hopes of Orlando by the executioner, Love. He tried to conceal his misery, but it was no longer to be repressed; so finding the tears rush into his eyes, he desired to be alone. As soon as the man had retired, he let them flow in passion and agony. In vain he attempted to rest, much less to sleep. Every part of the bed appeared to be made of stones and thorns.

At length it occurred to him, that most likely they had slept in that very bed. He rose instantly, as if he had been lying on a serpent. The bed, the house, the herdsman, every thing about the place, gave him such horror and detestation, that, without waiting for dawn, or the light of moon, he dressed himself, and went forth and took his horse from the stable, and galloped onwards into the middle of the woods. There, as soon as he found himself in the solitude, he opened all the flood-gates of his grief, and gave way to cries and outcries.

But he still rode on. Day and night did Orlando ride on, weeping and lamenting. He avoided towns and cities, and made his bed on the hard earth, and wondered at himself that he could weep so long.

“These,” thought he, “are no tears that are thus poured forth. They are life itself, the fountains of vitality; and I am weeping and dying both. These are no sighs that I thus eternally exhale. Nature could not supply them. They are Love himself storming in my heart, and at once consuming me and keeping me alive with his miraculous fires. No more—no more am I the man I seem. He that was Orlando is dead and buried. His ungrateful mistress has slain him. I am but the soul divided from his body—doomed to wander here in this misery, an example to those that put their trust in love.”

For the wits of the County Orlando were going; and he wandered all night round and round in the wood, till he came back to the grotto where Medoro had written his triumphant verses. Mad-

ness then indeed fell upon him. Every particle of his being seemed torn up with rage and fury ; and he drew his mighty sword, and hewed the grotto and the writing, till the words flew in pieces to the heavens. Woe to every spot in the place in which were written the names of " Angelica and Medoro." Woe to the place itself : never again did it afford refuge from the heat of day to sheep or shepherd ; for not a particle of it remained as it was. With arm and sword Orlando defaced it all, the clear and gentle fountain included. He hacked and hewed it inside and out, and cut down the branches of the trees that hung over it, and tore away the ivy and the vine, and rooted up great bits of earth and stone, and filled the sweet water with the rubbish, so that it was never clear and sweet again ; and at the end of his toil, not having satisfied or being able to satisfy his soul with the excess of his violence, he cast himself on the ground in rage and disdain, and lay groaning towards the heavens.

On the ground Orlando threw himself, and on the ground he remained, his eyes fixed on heaven, his lips closed in dumbness ; and thus he continued for the space of three days and three nights, till his frenzy had mounted to such a pitch, that it turned against himself. He then arose in fury, and tore off mail and breastplate, and every particle of clothing from his body, till humanity was degraded in his heroic person, and he became naked as the beasts of the field.

In this condition, and his wits quite gone, sword was forgotten as well as shield and helm ; and he tore up fir-tree and ash, and began running through the woods. The shepherds hearing the cries of the strong man, and the crashing of the boughs, came hastening from all quarters to know what it was ; but when he saw them he gave them chase, and smote to death those whom he reached, till the whole country was up in arms, though to no purpose ; for they were seized with such terror, that while they threatened and closed after him, they avoided him. He entered cottages, and tore away the food from the tables ; and ran up the craggy hills and down into the valleys ; and chased beasts as well as men, tearing the fawn and the goat to pieces, and stuffing their flesh into his stomach with fierce will.

Raging and scouring onwards in this manner, he arrived one

day at a bridge over a torrent, on which the fierce Rodomont had fixed himself for the purpose of throwing any one that attempted to pass it into the water. It was a very narrow bridge, with scarcely room for two horses. But Orlando took no heed of its narrowness. He dashed right forwards against man and steed, and forced the champion to wrestle with him on foot; and, winding himself about him with hideous strength, he leaped backwards with him into the torrent, where he left him, and so mounted the opposite bank, and again rushed over the country. A more terrible bridge than this was in his way—even a precipitous pass of frightful height over a valley; but still he scoured onwards, throwing over it the agonised passengers that dared, in their ignorance of his strength, to oppose him; and so always rushing and raging, he came down the mountains by the sea-side to Barcelona, where he cast his eyes on the sands, and thought, in his idiot mind, to make himself a house in them for coolness and repose; and so he grubbed up the sand, and laid himself down in it: and this was the terrible madman whom Angelica and Medoro saw looking at them as they were approaching the city.

Neither of them knew him, nor did he know Angelica; but, with an idiot laugh, he looked at her beauty, and liked her, and came horribly towards her to carry her away. Shrieking, she put spurs to her horse and fled; and Medoro, in a fury, came after the pursuer and smote him, but to no purpose. The great madman turned round and smote the other's horse to the ground, and so renewed his chase after Angelica, who suddenly regained enough of her wits to recollect the enchanted ring. Instantly she put it into her lips and disappeared; but in her hurry she fell from her palfrey, and Orlando forgot her in the instant, and, mounting the poor beast, dashed off with it over the country till it died: and so at last, after many dreadful adventures by flood and field, he came running into a camp full of his brother Paladins, who recognised him with tears; and, all joining their forces, succeeded in pulling him down and binding him, though not without many wounds; and by the help of these friends, and the special grace of the apostle St. John (as will be told in another place), the wits of the champion of the church were restored, and he be-

came ashamed of that passion for an infidel beauty which the heavenly powers had thus resolved to punish.

But Angelica and Medoro pursued the rest of their journey in peace, and took ship on the coast of Spain for India; and there she crowned her bridegroom King of Cathay.

The description of Orlando's jealousy and growing madness is reckoned one of the finest things in Italian poetry; and very fine it surely is—as strong as the hero's strength, and sensitive as the heart of man. The circumstances are heightened, one after the other, with the utmost art as well as nature. There is a scriptural awfulness in the account of the hero's becoming naked; and the violent result is tremendous. I have not followed Orlando into his feats of ultra-supernatural strength. The reader requires to be prepared for them by the whole poem. Nor are they necessary, I think, to the production of the best effect; perhaps would hurt it in an age unaccustomed to the old romances.

ASTOLFO'S JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

Argument.

THE Paladin Astolfo ascends on the hippogriff to the top of one of the mountains at the source of the Nile, called the Mountains of the Moon, where he discovers the Terrestrial Paradise, and is welcomed by St. John the Evangelist. The Evangelist then conveys him to the Moon itself, where he is shewn all the things that have been lost on earth, among which is the Reason of Orlando, who had been deprived of it for loving a Pagan beauty. Astolfo is favoured with a singular discourse by the Apostle, and is then presented with a vial containing the Reason of his great brother Paladin, which he conveys to earth.

ASTOLFO'S JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

WHEN the hippogriff loosened itself from the tree to which Ruggiero had tied it in the beautiful spot to which he descended with Angelica,* it soared away, like the faithful creature it was, to the house of its own master, Atlantes the magician. But not long did it remain there—no, nor the house itself, nor the magician; for the Paladin Astolfo came with a mighty horn given him by a greater magician, the sound of which overthrew all such abodes, and put to flight whoever heard it; and so the house of Atlantes vanished, and the enchanter fled; and the Paladin took possession of the griffin-horse, and rode away with it on farther adventures.

One of these was the deliverance of Senapus, king of Ethiopia, from the visitation of the dreadful harpies of old, who came infesting his table as they did those of Æneas and Phineus. Astolfo drove them with his horse towards the sources of the river Nile, in the Mountains of the Moon, and pursued them with the hippogriff till they entered a great cavern, which, by the dreadful cries and lamentings that issued from the depths within it, the Paladin discovered to be the entrance from earth to Hell.

The daring Englishman, whose curiosity was excited, resolved to penetrate to the regions of darkness. "What have I to fear?" thought he; "the horn will assist me, if I want it. I'll drive the triple-mouthed dog out of the way, and put Pluto and Satan to flight."†

Astolfo tied the hippogriff to a tree, and pushed forward in spite of a smoke that grew thicker and thicker, offending his eyes and nostrils. It became, however, so exceedingly heavy

* See p. 116.

† Ariosto is here imitating Pulci, and bearding Dante. See vol. i. p. 200.

and noisome, that he found it would be impossible to complete his enterprise. Still he pushed forward as far as he could, especially as he began to discern in the darkness something that appeared to stir with an involuntary motion. It looked like a dead body which has hung up many days in the rain and sun, and is waved unsteadily by the wind. It turned out to be a condemned spirit in this first threshold of Hell, sentenced there, with thousands of others, for having been cruel and false in love. Her name was Lydia, and she had been princess of the country so called.* Anaxarete was among them, who, for her hard-heartedness, became a stone; and Daphne, who now discovered how she had erred in making Apollo "run so much;" and multitudes of other women; but a far greater number of men—men being worthier of punishment in offences of love, because women are proner to believe. Theseus and Jason were among them; and Amnon, the abuser of Tamar; and he that disturbed the old kingdom of Latinus.†

Astolfo would fain have gone deeper into the jaws of Hell, but the smoke grew so thick and palpable, it was impossible to move a step farther. Turning about, therefore, he regained the entrance; and having refreshed himself in a fountain hard by, and remounted the hippogriff, felt an inclination to ascend as high as he possibly could in the air. The excessive loftiness of the mountain above the cavern made him think that its top could be at no great distance from the region of the Moon; and accordingly he pushed his horse upwards, and rose and rose, till at length he

* I know of no story of a cruel Lydia but the poet's own mistress of that name, whom I take to be the lady here "shadowed forth." See *Life*, p. 114.

† The story of Anaxarete is in Ovid, lib. xiv. Every body knows that of Daphne, who made Apollo, as Ariosto says, "run so much" (*correre tanto*). Theseus and Jason are in hell, as deserters of Ariadne and Medea; Amnon, for the atrocity recorded in the Bible (2 Samuel, chap. xiii.); and Æneas for interfering with Turnus and Lavinia, and taking possession of places he had no right to. It is delightful to see the great, generous poet going upon grounds of reason and justice in the teeth of the trumped-up rights of the "pious Æneas," that shabby deserter of Dido, and canting prototype of Augustus. He turns the tables, also, with brave candour, upon the tyrannical claims of the stronger sex to privileges which they deny the other; and says, that there are more faithless men in Hell than faithless women; which, if personal infidelity sends people there, most undoubtedly is the case beyond all comparison.

found himself on its table-land. It exhibited a region of celestial beauty. The flowers were like beds of precious stones for colour and brightness; the grass, if you could have brought any to earth, would have been found to surpass emeralds; and the trees, whose leaves were no less beautiful, were in fruit and flower at once. Birds of as many colours were singing in the branches; the murmuring rivulets and dumb lakes were more limpid than crystal: a sweet air was for ever stirring, which reduced the warmth to a gentle temperature; and every breath of it brought an odour from flowers, fruit-trees, and herbage all at once, which nourished the soul with sweetness.*

In the middle of this lonely plain was a palace radiant as fire. Astolfo rode his horse round about it, constantly admiring all he saw, and filled with increasing astonishment; for he found that the dwelling was thirty miles in circuit, and composed of one entire carbuncle, lucid and vermilion. What became of the boasted wonders of the world before this? The world itself, in the comparison, appeared but a lump of brute and fetid matter.†

As the Paladin approached the vestibule, he was met by a venerable old man, clad in a white gown and red mantle, whose beard descended on his bosom, and whose aspect announced him as one of the elect of Paradise. It was St. John the Evangelist, who lived in that mansion with Enoch and Elijah, the only three mortals who never tasted death; for the place, as the saint informed him, was the Terrestrial Paradise; and the inhabitants were to live there till the angelical trumpet announced the coming of Christ "on the white cloud." The Paladin, he said, had

* "*Che di soavità l' alma notriva*" is beautiful; but the passage, as a whole, is not well imitated from the Terrestrial Paradise of Dante. It is not bad in itself, but it is very inferior to the one that suggested it. See vol. i. p. 122, &c. Ariosto's Terrestrial Paradise was at home, among the friends who loved him, and whom he made happy.

† This is better; and the house made of one jewel thirty miles in circuit is an extravagance that becomes reasonable on reflection, affording a just idea of what might be looked for among the endless planetary wonders of Nature, which confound all our relative ideas of size and splendour. The "lucid vermilion" of a structure so enormous, and under a sun so pure, presents a gorgeous spectacle to the imagination. Dante himself, if he could have forgiven the poet his animal spirits and views of the Moon so different from his own, might have stood in admiration before an abode at once so luscious and so vast.

been allowed to visit it, by the favour of God, for the purpose of fetching away to earth the lost wits of Orlando, which the champion of the Church had been deprived of for loving a Pagan, and which had been attracted out of his brains to the neighbouring sphere, the Moon.

Accordingly, after the new friends had spent two days in discourse, and meals had been served up, consisting of fruit so exquisite that the Paladin could not help thinking our first parents had some excuse for eating it,* the Evangelist, when the Moon arose, took him into the car which had borne Elijah to heaven; and four horses, redder than fire, conveyed them to the lunar world.

The mortal visitant was amazed to see in the Moon a world resembling his own, full of wood and water, and containing even cities and castles, though of a different sort from ours. It was strange to find a sphere so large which had seemed so petty afar off; and no less strange was it to look down on the world he had left, and be compelled to knit his brows and look sharply before he could well discern it, for it happened at the time to want light.†

But his guide did not leave him much time to look about him. He conducted him with due speed into a valley that contained, in one miraculous collection, whatsoever had been lost or wasted on earth. I do not speak only (says the poet) of riches and dominions, and such like gratuities of Fortune, but of things also which Fortune can neither grant nor resume. Much fame is there which Time has withdrawn—infinite prayers and vows which are made to God Almighty by us poor sinners. There lie

* “De’ frutti a lui del Paradiso diero,
Di tal sapor, ch’ a suo giudizio, senza
Scusa non sono i due primi parenti,
Se pur quei fur si poco ubbidienti.”

Canto xxxiv. st. 60.

† Modern astronomers differ very much both with Dante’s and Ariosto’s Moon; nor do the “argent fields” of Milton appear better placed in our mysterious satellite, with its no-atmosphere and no-water, and its tremendous precipices. It is to be hoped (and believed) that knowledge will be best for us all in the end; for it is not always so by the way. It displaces beautiful ignorances.

the tears and the sighs of lovers, the hours lost in pastimes, the leisures of the dull, and the intentions of the lazy. As to desires, they are so numerous that they shadow the whole place. Astolfo went round among the different heaps, asking what they were. His eyes were first struck with a huge one of bladders which seemed to contain mighty sounds and the voices of multitudes. These he found were the Assyrian and Persian monarchies, together with those of Greece and Lydia.* One heap was nothing but hooks of silver and gold, which were the presents, it seems, made to patrons and great men in hopes of a return. Another consisted of snares in the shape of garlands, the manufacture of parasites. Others were verses in praise of great lords, all made of crickets which had burst themselves with singing. Chains of gold he saw there, which were pretended and unhappy love-matches; and eagles' claws, which were deputed authorities; and pairs of bellows, which were princes' favours; and overturned cities and treasuries, being treasons and conspiracies; and serpents with female faces, that were coiners and thieves; and all sorts of broken bottles, which were services rendered in miserable courts. A great heap of overturned soup † he found to be alms to the poor, which had been delayed till the giver's death. He then came to a great mount of flowers, which once had a sweet smell, but now a most rank one. This (*with submission*) was the present which the Emperor Constantine made to good Pope Sylvester. ‡ Heaps of twigs he saw next, set with bird-

* Very fine and scornful, I think, this. Mighty monarchies reduced to actual bladders, which, little too as they were, contained big sounds.

† Such, I suppose, as was given at convent-gates.

‡ The pretended gift of the palace of St. John Lateran, the foundation of the pope's temporal sovereignty. This famous passage was quoted and translated by Milton.

“ Di varii fiori ad un gran monte passa
Ch' ebbe già buon odore, or putia forte.
Questo era il dono (se però dir lece)
Che Constantino al buon Silvestro fece.”

Canto xxxiv. st. 80.

The lines were not so bold in the first edition. They stood thus:

“ Ad un monte di rose e gigli passa,
Ch' ebbe già buon odore, or putia forte,

lime, which, dear ladies, are your charms. In short there was no end to what he saw. Thousands and thousands would not complete the list. Every thing was there which was to be met with on earth, except folly in the raw material, for that is never exported.*

There he beheld some of his own lost time and deeds ; and yet, if nobody had been with him to make him aware of them, never would he have recognised them as his.†

They then arrived at something, which none of us ever prayed God to bestow, for we fancy we possess it in superabundance ; yet here it was in greater quantities than any thing else in the place—I mean, sense. It was a subtle fluid, apt to evaporate if not kept closely ; and here accordingly it was kept in vials of greater or less size. The greatest of them all was inscribed with the following words : “ The sense of Orlando.” Others, in like manner, exhibited the names of the proper possessors ; and among them the frank-hearted Paladin beheld the greater portion of his own. But what more astonished him, was to see multitudes of the vials

Ch' era corrotto ; e da Giovanni intese,
Che fu un gran don ch' un gran signor mal spese.”

“ He came to a mount of lilies and roses, that once had a sweet smell, but now stank with corruption ; and he understood from John that it was a great gift which a great lord ill expended.”

The change of these lines to the stronger ones in the third edition, as they now stand, served to occasion a charge against Ariosto of having got his privilege of publication from the court of Rome for passages which never existed, and which he afterwards basely introduced ; but, as Panizzi observes, the third edition had a privilege also ; so that the papacy put its hand, as it were, to these very lines. This is remarkable ; and doubtless it would not have occurred in some other ages. The Spanish Inquisition, for instance, erased it, though the holy brotherhood found no fault with the story of Giocondo.

* “ Sol la pazzia non v' è, poca nè assai ;
Che sta quà giù, nè se ne parte mai.”

St. 78.

† Part of this very striking passage is well translated by Harrington :

“ He saw some of his own lost time and deeds,
And yet he knew them not to be his own.”

I have heard these lines more than once repeated with touching earnestness by Charles Lamb.

almost full to the stopper, which bore the names of men whom he had supposed to enjoy their senses in perfection. Some had lost them for love, others for glory, others for riches, others for hopes from great men, others for stupid conjurers, for jewels, for paintings, for all sorts of whims. There was a heap belonging to sophists and astrologers, and a still greater to poets.*

Astolfo, with leave of the "writer of the dark Apocalypse," took possession of his own. He had but to uncork it, and set it under his nose, and the wit shot up to its place at once. Turpin acknowledges that the Paladin, for a long time afterwards, led the life of a sage man, till, unfortunately, a mistake which he made lost him his brains a second time.†

The Evangelist now presented him with the vial containing the wits of Orlando, and the travellers quitted the vale of Lost Treasure. Before they returned to earth, however, the good saint shewed his guest other curiosities, and favoured him with many a sage remark, particularly on the subject of poets, and the neglect of them by courts. He shewed him how foolish it was in princes and other great men not to make friends of those who can immortalise them; and observed, with singular indulgence, that crimes themselves might be no hindrance to a good name with posterity, if the poet were but feed well enough for spices to embalm the criminal. He instanced the cases of Homer and Virgil.

"You are not to take for granted," said he, "that Æneas was so pious as fame reports him, or Achilles and Hector so brave. Thousands and thousands of warriors have excelled them; but their descendants bestowed fine houses and estates on great writers, and it is from their honoured pages that all the glory has proceeded. Augustus was no such religious or clement prince as the trumpet of Virgil has proclaimed him. It was his good taste in poetry that got him pardoned his iniquitous proscription. Nero himself might have fared as well as Augustus, had he possessed as much wit. Heaven and earth might have been his enemies to

* Readers need not have the points of this exquisite satire pointed out to them. In noticing it, I only mean to enjoy it in their company—particularly the passage about the men accounted wisest, and the emphatic "I mean, sense" (Io dico, il senno).

† Admirable lesson to frailty!

no purpose, had he known how to keep friends with good authors. Homer makes the Greeks victorious, the Trojans a poor set, and Penelope undergo a thousand wrongs rather than be unfaithful to her husband ; and yet, if you would have the real truth of the matter, the Greeks were beaten, and the Trojans the conquerors, and Penelope was a ——.* See, on the other hand, what infamy has become the portion of Dido. She was honest to her heart's core ; and yet, because Virgil was no friend of hers, she is looked upon as a baggage.

“Be not surprised,” concluded the good saint, “if I have expressed myself with warmth on this subject. I love writers, and look upon their cause as my own, for I was a writer myself when I lived among you ; and I succeeded so well in the vocation, that time and death will never prevail against me. Just therefore is it, that I should be thankful to my beloved Master, who procured me so great a lot. I grieve for writers who have fallen on evil times—men that, with pale and hungry faces, find the doors of courtesy closed against all their hardships. This is the reason there are so few poets now, and why nobody cares to study. Why should he study ? The very beasts abandon places where there is nothing to feed them.”

At these words the eyes of the blessed old man grew so inflamed with anger, that they sparkled like two fires. But he presently suppressed what he felt ; and, turning with a sage and gracious smile to the Paladin, prepared to accompany him back to earth with his wonted serenity.

He accordingly did so in the sacred car : and Astolfo, after receiving his gentle benediction, descended on his hippogriff from the mountain, and, joining the delighted Paladins with the vial, his wits were restored, as you have heard, to the noble Orlando.

The figure which is here cut by St. John gives this remarkable satire a most remarkable close. His association of himself with the fraternity of authors was

* I do not feel warranted in injuring the strength of the term here made use of by the indignant apostle, and yet am withheld from giving it in all its force by the delicacy, real or false, of the times. I must therefore leave it to be supplied by the reader according to the requirements of his own feelings.

thought a little "strong" by Ariosto's contemporaries. The lesson read to the house of Este is obvious, and could hardly have been pleasant to men reputed to be such "criminals" themselves. Nor can Ariosto, in this passage, be reckoned a very flattering or conscientious pleader for his brother-poets. Resentment, and a good jest, seemed to have conspired to make him forget what was due to himself.

The original of St. John's remarks about Augustus and the ancient poets must not be omitted. It is exquisite of its kind, both in matter and style. Voltaire has quoted it somewhere with rapture.

"Non fu sì santo nè benigno Augusto
 Come la tuba di Virgilio suona:
 L' aver avuto in poesia buon gusto
 La proscrizion iniqua gli perdona.
 Nessun sapria se Neron fosse ingiusto,
 Nè sua fama saria forse men buona,
 Avesse avuto e terra e ciel nimici,
 Se gli scrittor sapea tenersi amici.

Omero Agamennon vittorioso,
 E fe' i Trojan parer vili et inertì;
 E che Penelope fida al suo sposo
 Da i prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti:
 E, se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
 Tutta al contrario l' istoria converti:
 Che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
 E che Penelope fu meretrice.

Da l' altra parte odi che fama lascia
 Elissa, ch' ebbe il cor tanto pudico;
 Che riputata viene una bagascia,
 Solo perchè Maron non le fu amico."

Canto xxxv. st. 26.

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LEIGH HUNT.

S T O R I E S

FROM THE

I T A L I A N P O E T S :

BEING A SUMMARY IN PROSE

OF THE

POEMS OF DANTE, PULCI, BOIARDO, ARIOSTO AND TASSO;

WITH COMMENTS THROUGHOUT,

OCCASIONAL PASSAGES VERSIFIED,

AND

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE LIVES AND GENIUS OF THE AUTHORS.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

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IN THREE PARTS.

PART III.  
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1846.

ARIODANTE AND GINEVRA.

ARIODANTE AND GINEVRA.

Argument.

THE Duke of Albany, pretending to be in love with a damsel in the service of Ginevra, Princess of Scotland, but desiring to marry the princess herself, and not being able to compass his design by reason of her being in love with a gentleman from Italy named Ariodante, persuades the damsel, in his revenge, to personate Ginevra in a balcony at night, and so make her lover believe that she is false. Ariodante, deceived, disappears from court. News is brought of his death; and his brother Lurcanio publicly denounces Ginevra, who, according to the laws of Scotland, is sentenced to death for her supposed lawless passion. Lurcanio then challenges the unknown paramour (for the duke's face had not been discerned in the balcony); and Ariodante, who is not dead, is fighting him in disguise, when the Paladin Rinaldo comes up, discloses the whole affair, and slays the deceiver.

ARIODANTE AND GINEVRA.*

CHARLEMAGNE had suffered a great defeat at Paris, and the Paladin Rinaldo was sent across the Channel to ask succours of the King of England; but a tempest arose ere he could reach the coast, and drove him northwards upon that of Scotland, where he found himself in the Caledonian Forest, a place famous of old for knightly adventure. Many a clash of arms had been heard in its shady recesses—many great things had been done there by knights from all quarters, particularly the Tristans and the Launcelots, and the Gawains, and others of the Round Table of King Arthur.

Rinaldo, bidding the ship await him at the town of Berwick, plunged into the forest with no other companion than his horse Bayardo, seeking the wildest paths he could find, in the hope of some strange adventure.† He put up, for the first day, at an abbey which was accustomed to entertain the knights and ladies that journeyed that way; and after availing himself of its hospitality, he inquired of the abbot and his monks if they could direct him where to find what he looked for. They said that plenty of adventures were to be met with in the forest; but that, for the

* The main point of this story, the personation of Ginevra by one of her ladies, has been repeated by many writers—among others by Shakspeare, in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The circumstance is said to have actually occurred in Ferrara, and in Ariosto's own time. Was Ariosto himself a party? "Ariodante" almost includes his name; and it is certain that he was once in love with a lady of the name of Ginevra.

† Rinaldo is an ambassador, and one upon very urgent business; yet he halts by the way in search of adventures. This has been said to be in the true taste of knight-errantry; and in one respect it is so. We may imagine, however, that the ship is wind-bound, and that he meant to return to it on change of weather. The Caledonian Forest, it is to be observed, is close at hand.

most part, they remained in as much obscurity as the spots in which they occurred. It would be more becoming his valour, they thought, to exert itself where it would not be hidden; and they concluded with telling him of one of the noblest chances for renown that ever awaited a sword. The daughter of their king was in need of a defender against a certain baron of the name of Lurcanio, who sought to deprive her both of life and reputation. He accused her of having been found in the arms of a lover without the license of the priest; which, by the laws of Scotland, was a crime only to be expiated at the stake, unless a champion could be found to disprove the charge before the end of a month. Unfortunately the month had nearly expired, and no champion yet made his appearance, though the king had promised his daughter's hand to anybody of noble blood who should establish her innocence; and the saddest part of the thing was, that she was accounted innocent by all the world, and a very pattern of modesty.

While this horrible story was being told him, the Paladin fell into a profound state of thought. After remaining silent for a little while, at the close of it he looked up, and said, "A lady then, it seems, is condemned to death for having been too kind to one lover, while thousands of our sex are playing the gallant with whomsoever they please, and not only go unpunished for it, but are admired! Perish such infamous injustice! The man was a madman who made such a law, and they are little better who maintain it. I hope in God to be able to shew them their error."

The good monks agreed, that their ancestors were very unwise to make such a law, and kings very wrong who could, but would not, put an end to it. So, when the morning came, they speeded their guest on his noble purpose of fighting in the lady's behalf. A guide from the abbey took him a short cut through the forest towards the place where the matter was to be decided; but, before they arrived, they heard cries of distress in a dark quarter of the forest, and, turning their horses thither to see what it was, they observed a damsel between two vagabonds, who were standing over her with drawn swords. The moment the wretches saw the new comer, they fled; and Rinaldo, after re-assuring the damsel, and requesting to know what had brought her to a pass so dreadful, made his guide take her up on his horse behind him,

in order that they might lose no more time. The damsel, who was very beautiful, could not speak at first, for the horror of what she had expected to undergo; but, on Rinaldo's repeating his request, she at length found words, and, in a voice of great humility, began to relate her story.

But before she begins, the poet interferes with an impatient remark.—“Of all the creatures in existence,” cries he, “whether they be tame or wild, whether they are in a state of peace or of war, man is the only one that lays violent hands on the female of his species. The bear offers no injury to his; the lioness is safe by the side of the lion; the heifer has no fear of the horns of the bull. What pest of abomination, what fury from hell, has come to disturb, in this respect, the bosom of human kind? Husband and wife deafen one another with injurious speeches, tear one another's faces, bathe the genial bed with tears, nay, sometimes with bloodshed. In my eyes the man who can allow himself to give a blow to a woman, or to hurt even a hair of her head, is a violater of nature, and a rebel against God; but to poison her, to strangle her, to take the soul out of her body with a knife,—he that can do that, never will I believe him to be a man at all, but a fiend out of hell with a man's face.”*

Such must have been the two villains who fled at the sight of Rinaldo, and who had brought the woman into this dark spot to stifle her testimony for ever.

But to return to what she was going to say.—

“You are to know, sir,” she began, “that I have been from my childhood in the service of the king's daughter, the princess Ginevra. I grew up with her; I was held in honour, and I led

* All honour and glory to the manly and loving poet!

“Lavezzuola,” says Panizzi, “doubts the conjugal concord of beasts, more particularly of bears. ‘Ho letto presso degno autore un orso aver cavato un occhio ad un orsa con la zampa.’ (I have read in an author worthy of credit, that a bear once deprived a she-bear of an eye with a blow of his paw.) The reader may choose between Ariostó and this nameless author, which of them is to be believed. I, of course, am for my poet.”—Vol. i. p. 84. I am afraid, however, that Lavezzuola is right. Even turtle-doves are said not to be always the models of tenderness they are supposed to be. Brutes have even devoured their offspring. The violence is most probably owing (at least in excessive cases) to some unnatural condition of circumstances.

a happy life, till it pleased the cruel passion of love to envy me my condition, and make me think that there was no being on earth to be compared to the Duke of Albany. He pretended to love me so much, that, in return, I loved him with all my heart. Unable, by degrees, to refuse him anything, I let him into the palace at night, nay, into the room which of all others the princess regarded as most exclusively her own ; for there she kept her jewels, and there she was accustomed to sleep during inclement states of the weather. It communicated with the other sleeping-room by a covered gallery, which looked out to some lonely ruins ; and nobody ever passed that way, day or night.

“ Our intercourse continued for several months ; and, finding that I placed all my happiness in obliging him, he ventured to disclose to me one day a design he had upon the princess’s hand ; nay, did not blush to ask my assistance in furthering it. Judge how I set his wishes above my own, when I confess that I undertook to do so. It is true, his rank was nearer to the princess’s than to mine ; and he pretended that he sought the alliance merely on that account ; protesting that he should love me more than ever, and that Ginevra would be little better than his wife in name. But, God knows, I did it wholly out of the excess of my desire to please him.

“ Day and night I exerted all my endeavours to recommend him to the princess. Heaven is my witness that I did it in real earnest, however wrong it was. But my labour was to no purpose, for she was in love herself. She returned in all its warmth the passion of a most accomplished and valiant gentleman, who had come into Scotland with a younger brother from Italy, and who had made himself such a favourite with every body, my lover included, that the king himself had bestowed on him titles and estates, and put him on a footing with the greatest lords of the land.

“ Unfortunately, the princess not only turned a deaf ear to all I said in the duke’s favour, but grew to dislike him in proportion to my recommendation ; so that, finding there was no likelihood of his success, his own love was secretly turned into hate and rage. He studied, little as I dreamt he could be so base, how he could best destroy her prospect of happiness. He resorted, for

this purpose, to a most crafty expedient, which I, poor fool, took for nothing but what he feigned it to be. He pretended that a whim had come into his head for seeming to prosper in his suit, out of a kind of revenge for his not being able to do so in reality; and, in order to indulge this whim, he requested me to dress myself in the identical clothes which the princess put off when she went to bed that night, and then to appear in them at my usual post in the balcony, and so let down the ladder as though I were her very self, and receive him into my arms.

“I did all that he desired, mad fool that I was; and out of the part which I played has come all this mischief. I have intimated to you that the duke and Ariodante (for such was the other's name) had been good friends before Ginevra preferred him to my false lover. Pretending therefore to be still his friend, and entering on the subject of a passion which he said he had long entertained for her, he expressed his wonder at finding it interfered with by so noble a gentleman, especially as it was returned by the princess with a fervour of which the other, if he pleased, might have ocular testimony.

“Greatly astonished at this news was Ariodante. He had received all the proofs of his mistress's affection which it was possible for chaste love to bestow, and with the greatest scorn refused to believe it; but as the duke, with the air of a man who could not help the melancholy communication, quietly persisted in his story, the unhappy lover found himself compelled, at any rate, to let him afford those proofs of her infidelity which he asserted to be in his power. The consequence was, that Ariodante came with his brother to the ruins I spoke of; and there the two were posted on the night when I played my unhappy part in the balcony. He brought Lurcanio with him (that was the brother's name), because he suspected that the duke had a design on his life, not conceiving what he alleged against Ginevra to be possible. Lurcanio, however, was not in the secret of his brother's engagement with the princess. It had been disclosed hitherto neither to him nor to any one, the lady not yet having chosen to divulge it to the king himself. Ariodante, therefore, requested his brother to take his station at a little distance, out of sight of the palace,

and not to come to him unless he should call: 'otherwise, my dear brother,' concluded he, 'stir not a step, if you love me.'

"'Doubt me not,' said Lurcanio; and, with these words, the latter entrenched himself in his post.

"Ariodante now stood by himself, gazing at the balcony,—the only person visible at that moment in all the place. In a few minutes the Duke of Albany appeared below it, making the signal to which I had been accustomed; and then I, in my horrible folly, became visible to the eyes of both, and let down the ladder.

"Meantime Lurcanio, beginning to be very uneasy at the mysterious situation in which he found himself, and to have the most alarming fears for his brother, had cautiously picked his way after him at a little distance; so that he also, though still hidden in the shade of the lonely houses, perceived all that was going on.

"I was dressed, as I had undertaken to be, in the identical clothes which the princess had put off that night; and as I was not unlike her in air and figure, and wore the golden net with red tassels peculiar to ladies of the royal family, and the two brothers, besides, were at quite sufficient distance to be deceived, I was taken by both of them for her very self. The duke impatiently mounted the ladder; I received him as impatiently in my arms; and circumstances, though from very different feelings, rendered the caresses that passed between us of unusual ardour.

"You may imagine the grief of Ariodante. It rose at once to despair. He did not call out; so that, had not his brother followed him, still worse would have ensued than did; for he drew his sword, and was proceeding in distraction to fall upon it, when Lurcanio rushed in and stopped him. 'Miserable brother!' exclaimed he, 'are you mad? Would you die for a woman like this? You see what a wretch she is. I discern all your case at once, and, thank God, have preserved you to turn your sword where it ought to be turned, against the defender of such a pattern of infamy.'

"Ariodante put up his sword, and suffered himself to be led away by his brother. He even pretended, in a little while, to be able to review his condition calmly, but not the less had he secretly resolved to perish. Next day he disappeared, nobody knew whither; and about eight days afterwards, news was se-

cretly brought to Ginevra, by a pilgrim, that he had thrown himself from a headland into the sea.

“‘I met him by chance,’ said the pilgrim, ‘and we happened to be standing on the top of the headland, conversing, when he cried out to me, ‘Relate to the princess what you beheld on parting from me ; and add, that the cause of it was my having seen too much. Happy had it been for me had I been blind!’ And with these words,’ concluded the pilgrim, ‘he leaped into the sea below, and was instantly buried beneath it.’

“The princess turned as pale as death at this story, and for a while remained stupified. But, alas ! what a scene was it my fate to witness, when she found herself in her chamber at night, able to give way to her misery. She tore her clothes, and her very flesh, and her beautiful hair, and kept repeating the last words of her lover with amazement and despair.

The disappearance of Ariodante, and a rumour which transpired of his having slain himself on account of some hidden anguish, surprised and afflicted the whole court. But his brother Lurcanio evinced more and more his impatience at it, and let fall the most terrible words. At length he entered the court when the king was holding one of his fullest assemblies, and laid open, as he thought, the whole matter ; setting forth how his unhappy brother had secretly, but honourably, loved the princess ; how she had professed to love him in return ; and how she had grossly deceived him, and played him impudently false before his own eyes. He concluded with calling upon her unknown paramour to come forth, and shew reasons against him with his sword why she ought not to die.

“I need not tell you what the king suffered at hearing this strange and terrible recital. He lost no time in sharply investigating the truth of the allegation ; and for this purpose, among other proceedings, he sent for the ladies of his daughter’s chamber. You may judge, sir,—especially as, I blush to say it, I still loved the Duke of Albany,—that I could not await an examination like that. I hastened to meet the duke, who was as anxious to get me out of the way as I was to go ; and to this end professing the greatest zeal for my security, he commissioned two men to convey me secretly to a fortress he possessed in this forest.

'Tis at no great distance from the place where Heaven sent you to my deliverance. You saw, sir, how little those wretches intended to take me anywhere except to my grave ; and by this you may judge of the agonies and shame I have endured in knowing what a dupe I have been to one of the cruelest of men. But thus it is that Love treats his most faithful servants."

The damsel here concluded her story ; and the Paladin, rejoicing at having become possessed of all that was required to establish the falsehood of the duke, proceeded with her on his road to St. Andrews, where the lists had been set up for the determination of the question. The king and his court were anxiously praying at that instant for the arrival of some champion to fight with the dreaded Lurcanio ; for the month, as I have stated, was nearly expired, and this terrible brother appeared to have the business all his own way ; so that the stake was soon to be looked for at which the hapless Ginevra was to die.

Fast and eagerly the Paladin rode for St. Andrews, with his squire and the trembling damsel, who was now agitated for new reasons, though the knight gave her assurances of his protection. They were not far from the city when they found people talking of a champion who had certainly arrived, but whose name was unknown, and his face constantly concealed by his visor. Even his own squire, it seems, did not know him ; for the man had but lately been taken into his service. Rinaldo, as soon as he entered the city, left the damsel in a place of security, and then spurred his horse to the scene of action, when he found the accuser and the champion in the very midst of the fight. The Paladin, whose horse, notwithstanding the noise of the combat, had been heard coming like a tempest, and whose sudden and heroic appearance turned all eyes towards him, rode straight to the royal canopy, and, begging the king to stop the combat, disclosed the whole state of the matter, to the enchantment of all present, except the Duke of Albany ; for the villain himself was on horseback there in state as grand constable, and had been feasting his miserable soul with the hope of seeing Ginevra condemned. The combatants were soon changed. Instead of Lurcanio and the unknown champion (whom the new comer had taken care to extol for his generosity), it was the Paladin and the Duke that were op-

posed, and horribly did the latter's heart fail him. But he had no remedy. Fight he must. Rinaldo, desirous to make short work of him, took his station with fierce delight; and at the third sound of the trumpets, the Duke was forced to couch his spear and meet him at full charge. Sheer went the Paladin's ashen staff through the false bosom, sending the villain to the earth eight feet beyond the saddle. The conqueror dismounted instantly, and unlacing the man's helmet, enabled the king to hear his dying confession, which he had hardly finished when life forsook him. Rinaldo then took off his own helmet; and the king, who had seen the great Paladin before, and who felt more rejoiced at his daughter's deliverance than if he had lost and regained his crown, lifted up his hands to heaven, and thanked God for having honoured her innocence with so illustrious a defender.

The other champion, who, in the mean time, had been looking on through the eyelets of his visor, was now entreated to disclose his own face. He did so with peculiar emotion, and king and all recognised with transport the face of the loved, and, as it was supposed, lost Ariodante. The pilgrim, however, had told no falsehood. The lover had indeed thrown himself into the sea, and disappeared from the man's eyes; but (as oftener happens than people suppose) the death which was desired when not present became hated when it was so; and Ariodante, lover as he was, rising at a little distance, struck out lustily for the shore, and reached it.* He felt even a secret contempt for his attempt to kill himself; yet putting up at an hermitage, became interested in the reports concerning the princess, whose sorrow flattered, and whose danger, though he could not cease to think her guilty, afflicted him. He grew exasperated with the very brother he loved, when he found that Lurcanio pursued her thus to the death; and on all these accounts he made his appearance at the place of combat to fight him, though not to slay. His purpose was to seek his own death. He concluded that Ginevra would then see who it was that had really loved her, while his brother would mourn the rashness which made him pursue the destruction of a woman.

* This is quite in Ariosto's high and bold taste for truth under all circumstances. A less great and unmisgiving poet would have had the lover picked up by a fisherman.

“Guilty she is,” thought he, “but no such guilt can deserve so cruel a punishment. Besides, I could not bear that she should die before me. She is still the woman I love, still the idol of my thoughts. Right or wrong, I must die in her behalf.”

With this intention he purchased a suit of black armour, and obtained a squire unknown in those parts, and so made his appearance in the lists. What ensued there I need not repeat ; but the king was so charmed with the issue of the whole business, with the resuscitation of the favourite whom he thought dead, and the restoration of the more than life of his beloved daughter, that, to the joy of all Scotland, and at the special instance of the great Paladin, he made the two lovers happy without delay ; and the bride brought her husband for dowry the title and estates of the man who had wronged him.

SUSPICION.

SUSPICION.

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SECTION

SUSPICION.*

It is impossible to conceive a nobler thing in the world than a just prince—a thoroughly good man, who shuns no part of the burden of his duty, though it bend him double; who loves and cares for his people as a father does for his children, and who is almost incessantly occupied in their welfare, very seldom for his own.

Such a man puts himself in front of dangers and difficulties in order that he may be a shield to others; for he is not a mercenary, taking care of none but himself when he sees the wolf coming; he is the right good shepherd, staking his own life in that of his flock, and knowing the faces of every one of them, just as they do his own.

Such princes, in times of old, were Saturn, Hercules, Jupiter, and others—men who reigned gently, yet firmly, equal to all chances that came, and worthy of the divine honours that awaited them. For mankind could not believe that they quitted the world

* This daring and grand apologue is not in the *Furioso*, but in a poem which Ariosto left unfinished, and which goes under the name of the *Five Cantos*. The fragment, though bearing marks of want of correction, is in some respects a beautiful, and altogether a curious one, especially as it seems to have been written after the *Furioso*; for it touches in a remarkable manner on several points of morals and politics, and contains an extravagance wilder than any thing in Pulci,—a whale *inhabited* by knights! It was most likely for these reasons that his friend Bembo and others advised him to suppress it. Was it written in his youth? The apologue itself is not one of the least daring attacks on the Borgias and such scoundrels, who had just then afflicted Italy.

Did Ariosto, by the way, omit Macchiavelli in his list of the friends who hailed the close of his great poem, from not knowing what to make of his book entitled the *Prince*? It has perplexed all the world to this day, and is not unlikely to have made a particularly unpleasant impression on a mind at once so candid and humane as Ariosto's.

in the same way as other men. They thought they must be taken up into heaven to be the lords of demigods.

When the prince is good, the subjects are good, for they always imitate their masters ; or at least, if the subjects cannot attain to this height of virtue, they at least are not as bad as they would be otherwise ; and, at all events, public decency is observed. Oh, blessed kingdoms that are governed by such hearts ! and oh, most miserable ones that are at the mercy of a man without justice, a fellow-creature without feelings !

Our Italy is full of such, who will have their reward from the pens of posterity. Greater wretches never appeared in the shapes of Neros and Caligulas, or any other such monsters, let them have been who they might. I enter not into particulars ; for it is always better to speak of the dead than the living ; but I must say, that Agrigentum never fared worse under Phalaris, nor Syracuse under Dionysius, nor Thebes in the hand of the bloody tyrant Eteocles, even though all those wretches were villains by whose orders every day, without fault, without even charge, men were sent by dozens to the scaffold or into hopeless exile.

But they are not without torments of their own. At the core of their own hearts there stands an inflicter of no less agonies. There he stands every day and every moment—one who was born of the same mother with Wrath, and Cruelty, and Rapine, and who never ceased tormenting his infant brethren before they saw the light. His name is Suspicion.*

Yes, Suspicion ;—the cruelest visitation, the worst evil spirit and pest that ever haunted with its poisonous whisper the mind of human being. This is their tormentor by excellence. He does not trouble the poor and lowly. He agonises the brain in the proud heads of those whom fortune has put over the heads of their fellow-creatures. Well may the man hug himself on his freedom who fears nobody because nobody hates him. Tyrants are

* A tremendous fancy this last !

“ Sta lor la pena, de la qual dicea
 Che nacque quando la brutt' Ira nacque,
 La Crudeltade, e la Rapina rea ;
 E quantunque in un ventre con lor giacque,
 Di tormentarle mai non rimanea.”

in perpetual fear. They never cease thinking of the mortal revenge taken upon tormentors of their species openly or in secret. The fear which all men feel of the one single wretch, makes the single wretch afraid of every soul among them.

Hear a story of one of these miserales, which, whatever you may think of it, is true to the letter; such letter, at all events, as is written upon the hearts of his race. He was one of the first who took to the custom of wearing beards; for, great as he was, he had a fear of the race of barbers! He built a tower in his palace, guarded by deep ditches and thick walls. It had but one drawbridge and one bay-window. There was no other opening; so that the very light of day had scarcely admittance, or the inmates a place to breathe at. In this tower he slept; and it was his wife's business to put a ladder down for him when he came in. A dog kept watch at the drawbridge; and except the dog and the wife, not a soul was to be discerned about the place. Yet he had such little trust in her, that he always sent spies to look about the room before he withdrew for the night.

Of what use was it all? The woman herself killed him with his own sword, and his soul went straight to hell.

Rhadamanthus, the judge there, thrust him under the boiling lake, but was astonished to find that he betrayed no symptoms of anguish. He did not weep and howl as the rest did, or cry out, "I burn, I burn!" He evinced so little suffering, that Rhadamanthus said, "I must put this fellow into other quarters." Accordingly, he sent him into the lowest pit, where the torments are beyond all others.

Nevertheless, even here he seemed to be under no distress. At length they asked him the reason. The wretch then candidly acknowledged, that hell itself had no torments for him, compared with those which suspicion had given him on earth.

The sages of hell laid their heads together at this news. Amelioration of his lot on the part of a sinner was not to be thought of in a place of eternal punishment; so they called a parliament together, the result of which was an unanimous conclusion, that the man should be sent back to earth, and consigned to the torments of suspicion for ever.

He went; and the earthly fiend re-entered his being anew with

a subtlety so incorporate, that their two natures were identified, and he became SUSPICION ITSELF. Fruits are thus engrafted on wild stocks. One colour thus becomes the parent of many, when the painter takes a portion of this and of that from his palette in order to imitate flesh.

The new being took up his abode on a rock by the sea-shore, a thousand feet high, girt all about with mouldering crags, which threatened every instant to fall. It had a fortress on the top, the approach to which was by seven drawbridges, and seven gates, each locked up more strongly than the other; and here, now this moment, constantly thinking Death is upon him, Suspicion lives in everlasting terror. He is alone. He is ever watching. He cries out from the battlements, to see that the guards are awake below, and never does he sleep day or night. He wears mail upon mail, and mail again, and feels the less safe the more he puts on; and is always altering and strengthening everything on gate, and on barricado, and on ditch, and on wall. And do whatever he will, he never seems to have done enough.

Great poet, and good man, Ariosto! your terrors are better than Dante's; for they warn, as far as warning can do good, and they neither afflict humanity nor degrade God.

Spenser has imitated this sublime piece of pleasantry; for, by a curious intermixture of all which the mind can experience from such a fiction, pleasant it is in the midst of its sublimity,—laughable with satirical archness, as well as grand and terrible in the climax. The transformation in Spenser is from a jealous man into Jealousy. His wife has gone to live with the Satyrs, and a villain has stolen his money. The husband, in order to persuade his wife to return, steals into the horde of the Satyrs, by mixing with their flock of goats,—as Norandino does in a passage imitated from Homer by Ariosto. The wife flatly refuses to do any such thing, and the poor wretch is obliged to steal out again.

“ So soon as he the prison-door did pass,
 He ran as fast as both his feet could bear,
 And never lookèd who behind him was,
 Nor scarcely who before. Like as a bear
 That creeping close among the hives, to rear
 An honeycomb, the wakeful dogs espy,
 And him assailing, sore his carcass tear,
 That hardly he away with life does fly,
 Nor stays till safe himself he see from jeopardy.

Nor stay'd he till he came unto the place
 Where late his treasure he entombèd had ;
 Where, when he found it not (for Trompart base
 Had it purloinèd for his master bad),
 With extreme fury he became quite mad,
 And ran away—ran with himself away ;
 That who so strangely had him seen bestad,
 With upstart hair and staring eyes' dismay,
 From Limbo-lake him late escapèd sure would say.

High over hills and over dales he fled,
 As if the wind him on his wings had borne ;
 Nor bank nor bush could stay him, when he sped
 His nimble feet, as treading still on thorn ;
 Grief, and Despite, and Jealousy, and Scorn,
 Did all the way him follow hard behind ;
 And he himself himself loath'd so forlorn,
 So shamefully forlorn of womankind,
 That, as a snake, still lurkèd in his wounded mind.

Still fled he forward, looking backward still ;
 Nor stay'd his flight nor fearful agony
 Till that he came unto a rocky hill
 Over the sea suspended dreadfully,
 That living creature it would terrify
 To look a-down, or upward to the height :
 From thence he threw himself dispiteously,
 All desperate of his fore-damnèd spright,
 That seem'd no help for him was left in living sight.

But through long anguish and self-murd'ring thought,
 He was so wasted and forpinèd quite,
 That all his substance was consumed to nought,
 And nothing left but like an airy sprite ;
 That on the rocks he fell so flit and light,
 That he thereby received no hurt at all ;
 But chancèd on a craggy cliff to light ;
 Whence he with crooked claws so long did crawl,
 That at the last he found a cave with entrance small.

Into the same he creeps, and thenceforth there
 Resolved to build his baleful mansion,
 In dreary darkness, and continual fear
 Of that rock's fall, which ever and anon
 Threats with huge ruin him to fall upon,
 That he dare never sleep, but that one eye
 Still ope he keeps for that occasion ;

Nor ever rests he in tranquillity,
The roaring billows beat his bower so boisterously.

Nor ever is he wont on aught to feed
But toads and frogs, his pasture poisonous,
Which in his cold complexion do breed
A filthy blood, or humour rancorous,
Matter of doubt and dread suspicious,
That doth with cureless care consume the heart,
Corrupts the stomach with gall vicious,
Cross-cuts the liver with internal smart,
And doth transfix the soul with death's eternal dart.

Yet can he never die, but dying lives,
And doth himself with sorrow new sustain,
That death and life at once unto him gives,
And painful pleasure turns to pleasing pain;
There dwells he ever, miserable swain,
Hateful both to himself and every wight;
Where he, through privy grief and horror vain,
Is waxen so deformed, that he has quite
Forgot he was a man, and Jealousy is hight."

Spenser's picture is more subtly wrought and imaginative than Ariosto's; but it removes the man farther from ourselves, except under very special circumstances. Indeed, it might be taken rather for a picture of hypochondria than jealousy, and under that aspect is very appalling. But nothing, under more obvious circumstances, comes so dreadfully home to us as Ariosto's poor wretch feeling himself "the less safe the more he puts on," and calling out dismally from his tower, a thousand feet high, to the watchers and warders below to see that all is secure.

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.*

RODOMONT, King of Algiers, was the fiercest of all the enemies of Christendom, not out of love for his own faith (for he had no piety), but out of hatred to those that opposed him. He had now quarrelled, however, with his friends too. He had been rejected by a lady, in favour of the Tartar king, Mandricardo, and mortified by the publicity of the rejection before his own lord paramount, Agramante, the leader of the infidel armies. He could not bear the rejection; he could not bear the sanction of it by his liege lord; he resolved to quit the scene of warfare and return to Africa; and, in the course of his journey thither, he had come into the south of France, where, observing a sequestered spot that suited his humour, he changed his mind as to going home, and persuaded himself he could live in it for the rest of his life. He accordingly took up his abode with his attendants in a chapel, which had been deserted by its clergy during the rage of war.

This vehement personage was standing one morning at the door of the chapel in a state of unusual thoughtfulness, when he beheld coming towards him, through a path in the green meadow before it, a lady of a lovely aspect, accompanied by a bearded monk. They were followed by something covered with black, which they were bringing along on a great horse.

Alas! the lady was the widow of Zerbino, the Scottish prince,

* The ingenious martyrdom in this story, which has been told by other writers of fiction, is taken from an alleged fact related in Barbaro's treatise *De Re Uxorica*. It is said, indeed, to have been actually resorted to more than once; and possibly may have been so, even from a knowledge of it; for what is more natural with heroical minds than that the like outrages should produce the like virtues? But the colouring of Ariosto's narration is peculiarly his own; and his apostrophe at the close beautiful.

who spared the life of Medoro, and who now himself lay dead under that pall. He had expired in her arms from wounds inflicted during a combat with Mandricardo; and she had been thrown by the loss into such anguish of mind that she would have died on his sword but for the intervention of the hermit now with her, who persuaded her to devote the rest of her days to God in a nunnery. She had now come into Provence with the good man for that purpose, and to bury the corpse of her husband in the chapel which they were approaching.

Though the lady seemed lost in grief, and was very pale, and had her hair all about the ears, and though she did nothing but weep and lament, and looked in all respects quite borne down with her misery, nevertheless she was still so beautiful that love and grace appeared to be indestructible in her aspect. The moment the Saracen beheld her, he dismissed from his mind all the determinations he had made to hate and detest

The gentle bevy, that adorns the world.

He was bent solely on obtaining the new angel before him. She seemed precisely the sort of person to make him forget the one that had rejected him. Advancing, therefore, to meet her without delay, he begged, in as gentle a manner as he could assume, to know the cause of her sorrow.

The lady, with all the candour of wretchedness, explained who she was, and how precious a burden she was conveying to its last home, and the resolution she had taken to withdraw from a vain world into the service of God. The proud pagan, who had no belief in a God, much less any respect for restraints or fidelities of what kind soever, forgot his assumed gravity when he heard this determination, and laughed outright at the simplicity of such a proceeding. He pronounced it, in his peremptory way, to be foolish and frivolous; compared it with the miser who, in burying a treasure, does good neither to himself nor any one else: and said that lions and serpents might indeed be shut up in cages, but not things lovely and innocent.

The monk, overhearing these observations, thought it his duty to interfere. He calmly opposed all which the other asserted,

and then proceeded to set forth a repast of spiritual consolation not at all to the Saracen's taste. The fierce warrior interrupted the preacher several times ; told him that he had nothing to do with the lady, and that the sooner he returned to his cell the better ; but the hermit, nothing daunted, went on with his advice till his antagonist lost all patience. He laid hands on his sacred person ; seized him by the beard ; tore away as much of it as he grasped ; and at length worked himself up into such a pitch of fury, that he griped the good man's throat with all the force of a pair of pincers, and, swinging him twice or thrice round, as one might a dog, flung him off the headland into the sea.

What became of the poor creature I cannot say. Reports are various. Some tell us that he was found on the rocks, dashed all to pieces, so that you could not distinguish foot from head ; others, that he fell into the sea at the distance of three miles, and perished in consequence of not knowing how to swim, in spite of the prayers and tears that he addressed to Heaven ; others again affirm, that a saint came and assisted him, and drew him to shore before people's eyes. I must leave the reader to adopt which of these accounts he looks upon as the most probable.

The Pagan, as soon as he had thus disposed of the garrulous hermit, turned towards Isabella (for that was the lady's name), and with a face somewhat less disturbed, began to talk to her in the common language of gallantry, protesting that she was his life and soul, and that he should not know what to do without her ; for the sweetness of her appearance mollified even him ; and indeed, with all his violence, he would rather have possessed her by fair means than by foul. He therefore flattered himself that, by a little hypocritical attention, he should dispose her to return his inclinations.

On the other hand, the poor disconsolate creature, who, in a country unknown to her, and a place so remote from help, felt like a mouse in the cat's claws, began casting in her mind by what possible contrivance she could escape from such a wretch with honour. She had made up her mind to perish by her own hand, rather than be faithless, however unwillingly, to the dear husband that had died in her arms : but the question was, how she could protect herself from the pagan's violence, before she had secured the means

of so doing ; for his manner was becoming very impatient, and his speeches every moment less and less civil.

At length an expedient occurred to her. She told him, that if he would promise to respect her virtue, she would put him in possession of a secret that would redound far more to his honour and glory, than any wrong which he could inflict on the innocent. She conjured him not to throw away the satisfaction he would experience all the rest of his life from the consciousness of having done right, for the sake of injuring one unhappy creature. "There were thousands of her sex," she observed, "with cheerful as well as beautiful faces, who might rejoice in his affection ; whereas the secret she spoke of was known to scarcely a soul on earth but herself."

She then told him the secret ; which consisted in the preparation of a certain herb boiled with ivy and rue over a fire of cypress-wood, and squeezed into a cup by hands that had never done harm. The juice thus obtained, if applied fresh every month, had the virtue of rendering bodies invulnerable. Isabella said she had seen the herb in the neighbourhood, as she came along, and that she would not only make the preparation forthwith, but let its effects be proved on her own person. She only stipulated, that the receiver of the gift should swear not to offend her purity in deed or word.

The fierce infidel took the oath immediately. It delighted him to think that he should be enabled to have his fill of war and slaughter for nothing ; and the oath was the more easy to him, inasmuch as he had no intention of keeping it.

The poor Isabella went into the fields to look for her miraculous herb, still, however, attended by the Saracen, who would not let her go out of his sight. She soon found it ; and then going with him into his house, passed the rest of the day and the whole night in preparing the mixture with busy solemnity,—Rodomont always remaining with her.

The room became so hot and close with the fire of cypress-wood, that the Saracen, contrary to his law and indeed to his habits, indulged himself in drinking ; and the consequence was, that, as soon as it was morning, Isabella lost no time in proving to him the success of her operations. "Now," she said, "you shall be

convinced how much in earnest I have been. You shall see all the virtue of this blessed preparation. I have only to bathe myself thus, over the head and neck, and if you then strike me with all your force, as though you intended to cut off my head,—which you must do in good earnest,—you will see the wonderful result.”

With a glad and rejoicing countenance the paragon of virtue held forth her neck to the sword; and the bestial pagan, giving way to his natural violence, and heated perhaps beyond all thought of a suspicion with his wine, dealt it so fierce a blow, that the head leaped from the shoulders.

Thrice it bounded on the ground where it fell, and a clear voice was heard to come out of it, calling the name of “Zerbino,” doubtless in joy of the rare way which its owner had found of escaping from the Saracen.

O blessed soul, that heldest thy virtue and thy fidelity dearer to thee than life and youth! go in peace, thou soul blessed and beautiful. If any words of mine could have force in them sufficient to endure so long, hard would I labour to give them all the worthiness that art can bestow, so that the world might rejoice in thy name for thousands and thousands of years. Go in peace, and take thy seat in the skies, and be an example to womankind of faith beyond all weakness.

TASSO:

Critical Notice of his Life and Genius.

CRITICAL NOTICE

OF

TASSO'S LIFE AND GENIUS.*

THE romantic poetry of Italy having risen to its highest and apparently its most lawless pitch in the *Orlando Furioso*, a reaction took place in the next age in the *Jerusalem Delivered*. It did not hurt, however, the popularity of Ariosto. It only increased the number of poetic readers; and under the auspices,

* My authorities for this notice are, Black's *Life of Tasso* (2 vols. 4to, 1810), his original, Serassi, *Vita di Torquato Tasso* (do. 1790), and the works of the poet in the Pisan edition of Professor Rosini (33 vols. 8vo, 1832). I have been indebted to nothing in Black which I have not ascertained by reference to the Italian biographer, and quoted nothing stated by Tasso himself but from the works. Black's *Life*, which is a free version of Serassi's, modified by the translator's own opinions and criticism, is elegant, industrious, and interesting. Serassi's was the first copious biography of the poet founded on original documents; and it deserved to be translated by Mr. Black, though servile to the house of Este, and, as might be expected, far from being always ingenuous. Among other instances of this writer's want of candour is the fact of his having been the discoverer and suppresser of the manuscript review of Tasso by Galileo. The best summary account of the poet's life and writings which I have met with is Ginguéné's, in the fifth volume of his *Histoire Littéraire*, &c. It is written with his usual grace, vivacity, and acuteness, and contains a good notice of the Tasso controversy. As to the Pisan edition of the works, it is the completest, I believe, in point of contents ever published, comprises all the controversial criticism, and is, of course, very useful; but it contains no life except Manso's (now known to be very inconclusive), has got a heap of feeble variorum comments on the *Jerusalem*, no notes worth speaking of to the rest of the works, and notwithstanding the claim in the title-page to the merit of a "better order," has left the correspondence in a deplorable state of irregularity, as well as totally without elucidation. The learned Professor is an agreeable writer, and, I believe, a very pleasant man, but he certainly is a provoking editor.

or rather the control, of a Luther-fearing Church, produced, if not as classical a work as it claimed to be, or one, in the true sense of the word, as catholic as its predecessor, yet certainly a far more Roman Catholic, and at the same time very delightful fiction. The circle of fabulous narrative was thus completed, and a link formed, though in a very gentle and qualified manner, both with Dante's theocracy and the obvious regularity of the *Æneid*, the oldest romance of Italy.

The author of this epic of the Crusades was of a family so noble and so widely diffused, that, under the patronage of the emperors and the Italian princes, it flourished in a very remarkable manner, not only in its own country, but in Flanders, Germany, and Spain. There was a Tasso once in England, ambassador of Philip the Second; another, like Cervantes, distinguished himself at the battle of Lepanto; and a third gave rise to the sovereign German house of Tour and Taxis. *Taxus* is the Latin of Tasso. The Latin word, like the Italian, means both a badger and a yew-tree; and the family in general appear to have taken it in the former sense. The animal is in their coat of arms. But the poet, or his immediate relatives, preferred being more romantically shadowed forth by the yew-tree. The parent stock of the race was at Bergamo in Lombardy; and here was born the father of Tasso, himself a poet of celebrity, though his fame has been eclipsed by that of his son.

Bernardo Tasso, author of many elegant lyrics, of some volumes of letters, not uninteresting but too florid, and of the *Ama-digi*, an epic romance now little read, was a man of small property, very honest and good-hearted, but restless, ambitious, and with a turn for expense beyond his means. He attached himself to various princes, with little ultimate advantage, particularly to the unfortunate Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno, whom he faithfully served for many years. The prince had a high sense of his worth, and would probably have settled him in the wealth and honours he was qualified to adorn, but for those Spanish oppressions in the history of Naples which ended in the ruin of both master and servant. Bernardo, however, had one happy interval of prosperity; and during this, at the age of forty-six, he married Porzia di Rossi, a young lady of a rich and noble family, with a

claim to a handsome dowry. He spent some delightful years with her at Sorrento, a spot so charming as to have been considered the habitation of the Sirens; and here, in the midst of his orange-trees, his verses, and the breezes of an aromatic coast, he had three children, the eldest of whom was a daughter named Cornelia, and the youngest the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. The other child died young. The house distinguished by the poet's birth was restored from a dilapidated condition by order of Joseph Bonaparte when King of Naples, and is now an hotel.

Torquato Tasso was born March the 11th, 1544, nine years after the death of Ariosto, who was intimate with his father. He was very devoutly brought up; and grew so tall, and became so premature a scholar, that at nine, he tells us, he might have been taken for a boy of twelve. At eleven, in consequence of the misfortunes of his father, who had been exiled with the Prince of Salerno, he was forced to part from his mother, who remained at home to look after a dowry which she never received. Her brothers deprived her of it; and in two years' time she died, Bernardo thought by poison. Twenty-four years afterwards her illustrious son, in the midst of his own misfortunes, remembered with sighs the tears with which the kisses of his poor mother were bathed when she was forced to let him go.*

* In the beautiful fragment beginning, *O del grand' Apennino* :

“ Me dal sen della madre empia fortuna
 Pargoletto divelse. Ah! di que' baci,
 Ch' ella bagnò di lagrime dolenti,
 Con sospir mi rimembra, e degli ardenti
 Pregghi, che sen portár l' aure fugaci,
 Ch' io giunger non dovea più volto a volto
 Fra quelle braccia accolto
 Con nodi così stretti e sì tenaci.
 Lasso! e seguì con mal sicure piante,
 Qual Ascanio, o Camilla, il padre errante.”

Me from my mother's bosom my hard lot
 Took when a child. Alas! though all these years
 I have been used to sorrow,
 I sigh to think upon the floods of tears
 Which bathed her kisses on that doleful morrow:
 I sigh to think of all the prayers and cries
 She wasted, straining me with lifted eyes:

The little Torquato following, as he says, like another Ascanius, the footsteps of his wandering father, joined Bernardo in Rome. After two years' study in that city, partly under an old priest who lived with them, the vicissitudes of the father's lot took away the son first to Bergamo, among his relations, and then to Pesaro, in the duchy of Urbino, where his education was associated for nearly two years with that of the young prince, afterwards Duke Francesco Maria the Second (della Rovere), who retained a regard for him through life. In 1559 the boy joined his father in Venice, where the latter had been appointed secretary to the Academy; but next year he was withdrawn from these pleasing varieties of scene by the parental delusion so common in the history of men of letters—the study of the law; which Bernardo intended him to pursue henceforth in the city of Padua. He accordingly arrived in Padua at the age of sixteen and a half, and fulfilled his legal destiny by writing the poem of *Rinaldo*, which was published in the course of less than two years at Venice. The goodnatured and poetic father, convinced by this specimen of jurisprudence how useless it was to thwart the hereditary passion, permitted him to devote himself wholly to literature, which he therefore went to study in the university of Bologna; and there, at the early age of nineteen, he began his *Jerusalem Delivered*; that is to say, he planned it, and wrote three cantos, several of the stanzas of which he retained when the poem was matured. He quit- ted Bologna, however, in a fit of indignation at being accused of the authorship of a satire; and after visiting some friends at Castelvetro and Correggio, returned to Padua on the invitation of his friend Scipio Gonzaga, afterwards cardinal, who wished him to become a member of an academy he had instituted, called the *Eterei* (Ethereals). Here he studied his favourite philosopher, Plato, and composed three Discourses on Heroic Poetry, dedicated to his friend. He now paid a visit to his father in Mantua,

For never more on one another's face
Was it our lot to gaze and to embrace!
Her little stumbling boy,
Like to the child of Troy,
Or like to one doomed to no haven rather,
Followed the footsteps of his wandering father.

where the unsettled man had become secretary to the duke ; and here, it is said, he fell in love with a young lady of a distinguished family, whose name was Laura Peperara ; but this did not hinder him from returning to his Paduan studies, in which he spent nearly the whole of the following year. He was then informed that the Cardinal of Este, to whom he had dedicated his *Rinaldo*, and with whom interest had been made for the purpose, had appointed him one of his attendants, and that he was expected at Ferrara by the 1st of December. Returning to Mantua, in order to prepare for this appointment with his father, he was seized with a dangerous illness, which detained him there nearly a twelvemonth longer. On his recovery he hastened to Ferrara, and arrived in that city on the last day of October, 1565, the first of many years of glory and misery.

The cardinal of Este was the brother of the reigning Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso the Second, grandson of the Alfonso of Ariosto. It is curious to see the two most celebrated romantic poets of Italy thrown into unfortunate connexion with two princes of the same house and the same respective ranks. Tasso's cardinal, however, though the poet lost his favour, and though very little is known about him, left no such bad reputation behind him as Ippolito. It was in the service of the duke that the poet experienced his sufferings.

This prince, who was haughty, ostentatious, and quarrelsome, was, at the time of the stranger's arrival, rehearsing the shows and tournaments intended to welcome his bride, the sister of the Emperor Maximilian the Second. She was his second wife. The first was a daughter of the rival house of Tuscany, which he detested ; and the marriage had not been happy. The new consort arrived in the course of a few weeks, entering the city in great pomp ; and for a time all went happily with the young poet. He was in a state of ecstasy with the beauty and grandeur he beheld around him—obtained the favourable notice of the duke's two sisters and the duke himself—went on with his *Jerusalem Delivered*, which, in spite of the presence of Ariosto's memory, he was resolved to load with praises of the house of Este ; and in this tumult of pride and expectation, he beheld the duke, like one of the heroes of his poem, set out to assist the emperor against the Turks at the

head of three hundred gentlemen, armed at all points, and mantled in various-coloured velvets embroidered with gold.

To complete the young poet's happiness, or commence his disappointments, he fell in love, notwithstanding the goddess he had left in Mantua, with the beautiful Lucrezia Bendidio, who does not seem, however, to have loved in return; for she became the wife of a Macchiavelli. Among his rivals was Guarini, who afterwards emulated him in pastoral poetry, and who accused him on this occasion of courting two ladies at once.

Guarini's accusation has been supposed to refer to the duke's sister Leonora, whose name has become so romantically mixed up with the poet's biography; but the latest inquiries render it probable that the allusion was to Laura Peperara.* The young poet, however, who had not escaped the influence of the free manners of Italy, and whose senses and vanity may hitherto have been more interested than his heart, rhymed and flattered on all sides of him, not of course omitting the charms of princesses. In order to win the admiration of the ladies in a body, he sustained for three days, in public, after the fashion of the times, *Fifty Amorous Conclusions*; that is to say, affirmations on the subject of love; doubtless to the equal delight of his fair auditors and himself, and the creation of a good deal of jealousy and ill-will on the part of such persons of his own sex as had not wit or spirits enough for the display of so much logic and love-making.

In 1569, the death of his father, who had been made governor of Ostiglia by the Duke of Mantua, cost the loving son a fit of illness; but the continuation of his *Jerusalem*, an *Oration* spoken at the opening of the Ferrarese academy, the marriage of Leonora's sister Lucrezia with the Prince of Urbino, and the society of Leonora herself, who led the retired life of a person in delicate health, and was fond of the company of men of letters, helped to divert him from melancholy recollections; and a journey to France, at the close of the year following, took him into scenes that were not only totally new, but otherwise highly interesting to the singer of Godfrey of Boulogne. The occasion of it was a visit of the cardinal, his master, to the court of his relative

* Rosini, *Saggio sugli Amori di Torquato Tasso*, &c., in the Professor's edition of his works, vol. xxxiii.

Charles the Ninth. It is supposed that his Eminence went to confer with the king on matters relative to the disputes which not long afterwards occasioned the detestable massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Before his departure, Tasso put into the hands of one of his friends a document, which, as it is very curious, and serves to illustrate perhaps more than one cause of his misfortunes, is here given entire.

Memorial left by Tasso on his departure to France.

“Since life is frail, and it may please Almighty God to dispose of me otherwise in this my journey to France, it is requested of Signor Ercole Rondinelli that he will, in that case, undertake the management of the following concerns :

“In the first place, with regard to my compositions, it is my wish that all my love-sonnets and madrigals should be collected and published ; but with regard to those, whether amatory or otherwise, *which I have written for any friend*, my request is, that *they should be buried with myself*, save only the one commencing “*Or che l' aura mia dolce altrove spira.*” I wish the publication of the *Oration* spoken in Ferrara at the opening of the academy, of the four books on *Heroic Poetry*, of the six last cantos of the *Godfrey* (the *Jerusalem*), and of those stanzas of the two first which shall seem least imperfect. All these compositions, however, are to be submitted to the review and consideration of Signor Scipio Gonzaga, of Signor Domenico Veniero, and of Signor Battista Guarini, who, I persuade myself, will not refuse this trouble, when they consider the zealous friendship I have entertained for themselves.

“Let them be informed, too, that it was my intention that they should cut and hew without mercy whatever should appear to them defective or superfluous. With regard to additions or changes, I should wish them to proceed more cautiously, since, after all, the poem would remain imperfect. As to my other compositions, should there be any which, to the aforesaid Signor Rondinelli and the other gentlemen, might seem not unworthy of publication, let them be disposed of according to their pleasure.

“In respect to my property, I wish that such part of it as I have *pledged to Abram* — for twenty-five lire, and seven pieces of arras, which are *likewise in pledge to Signor Ascanio for thirteen scudi*, together with whatever I have in this house, should be sold, and that the overplus of the proceeds should go to defray the expense of the following epitaph to be inscribed on a monument to my father, whose body is in St. Polo. And should any impediment take place in these matters, I entreat Signor Ercole to have recourse to the favour of the most excellent *Madame Leonora, whose liberality I confide in, for my sake.*”

“I, Torquato Tasso, have written this, Ferrara, 1570.”

I shall have occasion to recur to this document by and by. I will merely observe, for the present, that the marks in it, both of imprudence in money-matters and confidence in the goodwill of a princess, are very striking. “Abram” and “Signor Ascanio” were both Jews. The pieces of arras belonged to his father; and probably this was an additional reason why the affectionate son wished the proceeds to defray the expense of the epitaph. The epitaph recorded his father’s poetry, state-services, and vicissitudes of fortune.

Tasso was introduced to the French king as the poet of a French hero and of a Catholic victory; and his reception was so favourable (particularly as the wretched Charles, the victim of his mother’s bigotry, had himself no mean poetic feeling), that, with a rash mixture of simplicity and self-reliance (respect makes me unwilling to call it self-importance), the poet expressed an impolitic amount of astonishment at the favour shown at court to the Hugonots—little suspecting the horrible design it covered. He shortly afterwards broke with his master the cardinal; and it is supposed that this unseasonable escape of zeal was the cause. He himself appears to have thought so.* Perhaps the cardinal only wanted to get the imprudent poet back to Italy; for, on Tasso’s return to Ferrara, he was not only received into the service of the duke with a salary of some fifteen golden scudi a-month, but told that he was exempted from any particular duty, and might attend in

* *Lettere Inedite*, p. 33, in the *Opere*, vol. xvii.

peace to his studies. Balzac affirms, that while Tasso was at the court of France, he was so poor as to beg a crown from a friend; and that, when he left it, he had the same coat on his back that he came in.* The assertions of a professed wit and hyperbolist are not to be taken for granted; yet it is difficult to say to what shifts improvidence may not be reduced.

The singer of the house of Este would now, it might have been supposed, be happy. He had leisure; he had money; he had the worldly honours that he was fond of; he occupied himself in perfecting the *Jerusalem*; and he wrote his beautiful pastoral, the *Aminta*, which was performed before the duke and his court to the delight of the brilliant assembly. The duke's sister Lucrezia, princess of Urbino, who was a special friend of the poet, sent for him to read it to her at Pesaro; and in the course of the ensuing carnival it was performed with similar applause at the court of her father-in-law. The poet had been as much enchanted by the spectacle which the audience at Ferrara presented to his eyes, as the audience with the loves and graces with which he enriched their stage. The shepherd Thyrsis, by whom he meant himself, reflected it back upon them in a passage of the performance. It is worth while dwelling on this passage a little, because it exhibits a brief interval of happiness in the author's life, and also shews us what he had already begun to think of courts at the moment he was praising them. But he ingeniously contrives to put the praise in his own mouth, and the blame in another's. The shepherd's friend, Mopsus (by whom Tasso is thought to have meant Speroni), had warned him against going to court:

"Però, figlio,
Va su l' avviso," &c.

"Therefore, my son, take my advice. Avoid
The places where thou seest much drapery,
Colours, and gold, and plumes, and heraldries,
And such new-fanglements. But, above all,
Take care how evil chance or youthful wandering
Bring thee upon the house of Idle Babble."

"What place is that?" said I; and he resumed;—
"Enchantresses dwell there, who make one see

* *Entretiens*, 1663, p. 169, quoted by Serassi, pp. 175, 182.

Things as they are not, ay and hear them too.
 That which shall seem pure diamond and fine gold
 Is glass and brass; and coffers that look silver,
 Heavy with wealth, are baskets full of bladders.*
 The very walls there are so strangely made,
 They answer those who talk; and not in syllables,
 Or bits of words, like echo in our woods,
 But go the whole talk over, word for word,
 With something else besides, that no one said.†
 The tressels, tables, bedsteads, curtains, lockers,
 Chairs, and whatever furniture there is
 In room or bedroom, all have tongues and speech,
 And are for ever tattling. Idle Babble
 Is always going about, playing the child;
 And should a dumb man enter in that place,
 The dumb would babble in his own despite.
 And yet this evil is the least of all
 That might assail thee. Thou might'st be arrested
 In fearful transformation to a willow,
 A beast, fire, water,—fire for ever sighing,
 Water for ever weeping.”—Here he ceased:
 And I, with all this fine foreknowledge, went
 To the great city; and, by Heaven's kind will,
 Came where they live so happily. The first sound
 I heard was a delightful harmony,
 Which issued forth, of voices loud and sweet;—
 Sirens, and swans, and nymphs, a heavenly noise
 Of heavenly things;—which gave me such delight,
 That, all admiring, and amazed, and joyed,
 I stopped awhile quite motionless. There stood
 Within the entrance, as if keeping guard
 Of those fine things, one of a high-souled aspect,
 Stalwart withal, of whom I was in doubt
 Whether to think him better knight or leader.‡
 He, with a look at once benign and grave,
 In royal guise, invited me within;
 He, great and in esteem; me, lorn and lowly.
 Oh, the sensations and the sights which then
 Shower'd on me. Goddesses I saw, and nymphs

* Suggested by Ariosto's furniture in the Moon.

† This was a trick which he afterwards thought he had reason to complain of in a style very different from pleasantry.

‡ Alfonso. The word for “leader” in the original, *duce*, made the allusion more obvious. The epithet “royal,” in the next sentence, conveyed a welcome intimation to the ducal ear, the house of Este being very proud of its connexion with the sovereigns of Europe, and very desirous of becoming royal itself.

Graceful and beautiful, and harpers fine
As Linus or as Orpheus; and more deities,
All without veil or cloud, bright as the virgin
Aurora, when she glads immortal eyes,
And sows her beams and dew-drops, silver and gold.

In the summer of 1574, the Duke of Ferrara went to Venice to pay his respects to the successor of Charles the Ninth, Henry the Third, then on his way to France from his kingdom of Poland. Tasso went with the Duke, and is understood to have taken the opportunity of looking for a printer of his *Jerusalem*, which was now almost finished. Writers were anxious to publish in that crafty city, because its government would give no security of profit to books printed elsewhere. Alfonso, who was in mourning for Henry's brother, and to whom mourning itself only suggested a new occasion of pomp and vanity, took with him to this interview five hundred Ferrarese gentlemen, all dressed in long black cloaks; who walking about Venice (says a reporter) "by twos and threes," wonderfully impressed the inhabitants with their "gravity and magnificence."* The mourners feasted, however; and Tasso had a quartan fever, which delayed the completion of the *Jerusalem* till next year. This was at length effected; and now once more, it might have been thought, that the writer would have reposed on his laurels.

But Tasso had already begun to experience the uneasiness attending superiority; and, unfortunately, the strength of his mind was not equal to that of his genius. He was of an ultra-sensitive temperament, and subject to depressing fits of sickness. He could not calmly bear envy. Sarcasm exasperated, and hostile criticism afflicted him. The seeds of a suspicious temper were nourished by prosperity itself. The author of the *Armida* and the *Jerusalem* began to think the attentions he received unequal to his merits; while with a sort of hysterical mixture of demand for applause, and provocation of censure, he not only condescended to read his poems in manuscript wherever he went, but, in order to secure the goodwill of the papal licenser, he transmitted it for revisal to Rome, where it was mercilessly criticised for the space of two years by the bigots and hypocrites of a court, which Lu-

* Serassi, vol. i. p. 210.

ther had rendered a very different one from that in the time of Ariosto.

This new source of chagrin exasperated the complexional restlessness which now made our author think that he should be more easy anywhere than in Ferrara ; perhaps more able to communicate with and convince his critics ; and, unfortunately, he permitted himself to descend to a weakness the most fatal of all others to a mind naturally exalted and ingenuous. Perhaps it was one of the main causes of all which he suffered. Indeed, he himself attributed his misfortunes to irresolution. What I mean in the present instance was, that he did not disdain to adopt underhand measures. He shewed a face of satisfaction with Alfonso, at the moment that he was taking steps to exchange his court for another. He wrote for that purpose to his friend Scipio Gonzaga, now a prelate at the court of Rome, earnestly begging him, at the same time, not to commit him in their correspondence ; and Scipio, who was one of his kindest and most indulgent friends, and who doubtless saw that the Duke of Ferrara and his poet were not of dispositions to accord, did all he could to procure him an appointment with one of the family of the Medici.

Most unhappily for this speculation (and perhaps even the good-natured Gonzaga took a little more pleasure in it on that account), Alfonso inherited all the detestation of his house for that lucky race ; and it is remarkable, that the same jealousies which hindered Ariosto's advancement with the Medici were still more fatal to the hopes of Tasso ; for they served to plunge him into the deepest adversity. In vain he had warnings given him, both friendly and hostile. The princess, now Duchess of Urbino, who was his particular friend, strongly cautioned him against the temptation of going away. She said he was watched. He himself thought his letters were opened ; and probably they were. They certainly were at a subsequent period. Tasso, however, persisted, and went to Rome. Scipio Gonzaga introduced him to Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany ; and Ferdinand made him offers of protection so handsome, that they excited his suspicion. The self-tormenting poet thought they savoured more of hatred to the Este family, than honour to

himself.* He did not accept them. He did nothing at Rome but make friends, in order to perplex them; listen to his critics, in order to worry himself; and perform acts of piety in the churches, by way of shewing that the love-scenes in the *Jerusalem* were innocent. For the bigots had begun to find something very questionable in mixing up so much love with war. The bloodshed they had no objection to. The love bearded their prejudices, and excited their envy.

Tasso returned to Ferrara, and endeavoured to solace himself with eulogising two fair strangers who had arrived at Alfonso's court,—Eleonora Sanvitale, who had been newly married to the Count of Scandiano (a Tiene, not a Boiardo, whose line was extinct), and Barbara Sanseverino, Countess of Sala, her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law, who was a Juno-like beauty, wore her hair in the form of a crown. The still more beautiful daughter-in-law had an under lip such as Anacreon or Sir John Suckling would have admired,—pouting and provoking,—*προκαλουμενον φιλημα*. Tasso wrote verses on them both, but particularly to the lip; and this Countess of Scandiano is the second, out of the three Leonoras, with whom Tasso was said by his friend Manso to have been in love. The third, it is now ascertained, never existed; and his love-making to the new or second Leonora, goes to shew how little of real passion there was in the praises of the first (the Princess Leonora), or probably of any lady at court. He even professed love, as a forlorn hope, to the countess's waiting-maid. Yet these gallantries of sonnets are exalted into bewilderments of the heart.

His restlessness returning, the poet now condescended to craft a second time. Expecting to meet with a refusal, and so to be afforded a pretext for quitting Ferrara, he applied for the vacant office of historiographer. It was granted him; and he then disgusted the Medici by pleading an unlooked-for engagement, which he could only reconcile to his applications for their favour by renouncing his claim to be believed. If he could have deceived others, why might he not have deceived them?

* “Alla lor magnanimità è convenevole il mostrar, ch' amor delle virtù, non odio verso altri, gli abbia già mossi ad invitarmi con invito così largo.” *Opere*, vol. xv. p. 94.

All the lurking weakness of the poet's temperament began to display itself at this juncture. His perplexity excited him to a degree of irritability bordering on delirium; and circumstances conspired to increase it. He had lent an acquaintance the key of his rooms at court, for the purpose (he tells us) of accommodating some intrigue; and he suspected this person of opening cabinets containing his papers. Remonstrating with him one day in the court of the palace, either on that or some other account, the man gave him the lie. He received in return a blow on the face, and is said by Tasso to have brought a set of his kinsmen to assassinate him, all of whom the heroic poet immediately put to flight. At one time he suspected the Duke of jealousy respecting the dedication of his poem, and at another, of a wish to burn it. He suspected his servants. He became suspicious of the truth of his friend Gonzaga. He doubted, even, whether some praises addressed to him by Orazio Ariosto, the nephew of the great poet, which, one would have thought, would have been to him a consummation of bliss, were not intended to mystify and hurt him. At length he fancied that his persecutors had accused him of heresy to the Inquisition; and, as he had gone through the metaphysical doubts, common with most men of reflection respecting points of faith and the mysteries of creation, he feared that some indiscreet words had escaped him, giving colour to the charge. He thus beheld enemies all around him. He dreaded stabbing and poison; and one day, in some paroxysm of rage or horror, how occasioned it is not known, ran with a knife or dagger at one of the servants of the Duchess of Urbino in her own chamber.

Alfonso, upon this, apparently in the mildest and most reasonable manner, directed that he should be confined to his apartments, and put into the hands of the physician. These unfortunate events took place in the summer of 1577, and in the poet's thirty-third year.

Tasso shewed so much affliction at this treatment, and, at the same time, bore it so patiently, that the duke took him to his beautiful country-seat of Belriguardo; where, in one of his accounts of the matter, the poet says that he treated him as a brother; but in another, he accuses him of having taken pains to

make him criminate himself, and confess certain matters, real or supposed, the nature of which is a puzzle with posterity. Some are of opinion (and this is the prevailing one), that he was found guilty of being in love with the Princess Leonora, perhaps of being loved by herself. Others think the love out of the question, and that the duke was concerned at nothing but his endeavouring to transfer his services and his poetic reputation into the hands of the Medici. Others see in the duke's conduct nothing but that of a good master interesting himself in the welfare of an afflicted servant.

It is certain that Alfonso did all he could to prevent the surreptitious printing of the *Jerusalem Delivered* in various towns of Italy, the dread of which had much afflicted the poet; and he also endeavoured, though in vain, to ease his mind on the subject of the Inquisition; for these facts are attested by state-papers and other documents, not dependent either on the testimony of third persons or the partial representations of the sufferer. But Tasso felt so uneasy at Belriguardo, that he requested leave to retire a while into a convent. He remained there several days, apparently so much to his satisfaction, that he wrote to the duke to say that it was his intention to become a friar; and yet he had no sooner got into the place, than he addressed a letter to the Inquisition at Rome, beseeching it to desire permission for him to come to that city, in order to clear himself from the charges of his enemies. He also wrote to two other friends, requesting them to further his petition; and adding that the duke was enraged with him in consequence of the anger of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who, it is supposed, had accused Tasso of having revealed to Alfonso some indecent epithet which his highness had applied to him.* These letters were undoubtedly intercepted, for they were found among the secret archives of Modena, the only principality

* The application is the conjecture of Black, vol. i. p. 317. Serassi suppressed the whole passage. The indecent word would have been known but for the delicacy or courtliness of Muratori, who substituted an *et-cetera* in its place, observing, that he had "covered" with it "an indecent word not fit to be printed" ("sotto quell' *et-cetera* ho io coperta un' indecente parola, che non era lecito di lasciar correre alle stampe." *Opere del Tasso*, vol. xvi. p. 114.) By "covered" he seems to have meant blotted out; for in the latest edition of Tasso the *et-cetera* is retained.

ultimately remaining in the Este family ; so that, agreeably to the saying of listeners hearing no good of themselves, if Alfonso did not know the epithet before, he learnt it then. The reader may conceive his feelings. Tasso, too, at the same time, was plaguing him with letters to similar purpose ; and it is observable, that while in those which he sent to Rome he speaks of Cosmo de' Medici as "Grand Duke," he takes care in the others to call him simply the "Duke of Florence." Alfonso had been exasperated to the last degree at Cosmo's having had the epithet "Grand" added by the Pope to his ducal title ; and the reader may imagine the little allowance that would be made by a haughty and angry prince for the rebellious courtesy thus shewn to a detested rival. Tasso, furthermore, who had not only an infantine hatred of bitter "physic," but reasonably thought the fashion of the age for giving it a ridiculous one, begged hard, in a manner which it is humiliating to witness, that he might not be drenched with medicine. The duke at length forbade his writing to him any more ; and Tasso, whose fears of every kind of ill usage had been wound up to a pitch unbearable, watched an opportunity when he was carelessly guarded, and fled at once from the convent and Ferrara.

The unhappy poet selected the loneliest ways he could find, and directed his course to the kingdom of Naples, where his sister lived. He was afraid of pursuit ; he probably had little money ; and considering his ill health and his dread of the Inquisition, it is pitiable to think what he may have endured while picking his long way through the back states of the Church and over the mountains of Abruzzo, as far as the Gulf of Naples. For better security, he exchanged clothes with a shepherd ; and as he feared even his sister at first, from doubting whether she still loved him, his interview with her was in all its circumstances painfully dramatic. Cornelia Tasso, now a widow, with two sons, was still residing at Sorrento, where the poet, casting his eyes around him as he proceeded towards the house, must have beheld with singular feelings of wretchedness the lovely spots in which he had been a happy little boy. He did not announce himself at once. He brought letters, he said, from the lady's brother ; and it is affecting to think, that whether his sister might or might not have retained otherwise any personal recollection of him since

that time (for he had not seen her in the interval), his disguise was completed by the alterations which sorrow had made in his appearance. For, at all events, she did not know him. She saw in him nothing but a haggard stranger who was acquainted with the writer of the letters, and to whom they referred for particulars of the risk which her brother ran, unless she could afford him her protection. These particulars were given by the stranger with all the pathos of the real man, and the loving sister fainted away. On her recovery, the visitor said what he could to reassure her, and then by degrees discovered himself. Cornelia welcomed him in the tenderest manner. She did all that he desired; and gave out to her friends that the gentleman was a cousin from Bergamo, who had come to Naples on family affairs.

For a little while the affection of his sister, and the beauty and freshness of Sorrento, rendered the mind of Tasso more easy: but his restlessness returned. He feared he had mortally offended the Duke of Ferrara; and, with his wonted fluctuation of purpose, he now wished to be restored to his presence for the very reason he had run away from it. He did not know with what vengeance he might be pursued. He wrote to the duke; but received no answer. The Duchess of Urbino was equally silent. Leonora alone responded, but with no encouragement. These appearances only made him the more anxious to dare or to propitiate his doom; and he accordingly determined to put himself in the duke's hands. His sister entreated him in vain to alter his resolution. He quitted her before the autumn was over; and, proceeding to Rome, went directly to the house of the duke's agent there, who, in concert with the Ferrarese ambassador, gave his master advice of the circumstance. Gonzaga, however, and another good friend, Cardinal Albano, doubted whether it would be wise in the poet to return to Ferrara under any circumstances. They counselled him to be satisfied with being pardoned at a distance, and with having his papers and other things returned to him; and the two friends immediately wrote to the duke requesting as much. The duke apparently acquiesced in all that was desired; but he said that the illness of his sister, the Duchess of Urbino, delayed the procurement of the papers, which, it seems, were chiefly in her hands.

The upshot was, that the papers did not come ; and Tasso, with a mixture of rage and fear, and perhaps for more reasons than he has told, became uncontrollably desirous of retracing the rest of his steps to Ferrara. Love may have been among these reasons—probably was ; though it does not follow that the passion must have been for a princess. The poet now, therefore, petitioned to that effect ; and Alfonso wrote again, and said he might come, but only on condition of his again undergoing the ducal course of medicine ; adding, that if he did not, he was to be finally expelled his highness's territories.

He was graciously received—too graciously, it would seem, for his equanimity ; for it gave him such a flow of spirits, that the duke appears to have thought it necessary to repress them. The unhappy poet, at this, began to have some of his old suspicions ; and the unaccountable detention of his papers confirmed them. He made an effort to keep the suspicions down, but it was by means, unfortunately, of drowning them in wine and jollity ; and this gave him such a fit of sickness as had nearly been his death. He recovered, only to make a fresh stir about his papers, and a still greater one about his poems in general, which, though his *Jerusalem* was yet only known in manuscript, and not even his *Aminta* published, he believed ought to occupy the attention of mankind. People at Ferrara, therefore, not foreseeing the respect that posterity would entertain for the poet, and having no great desire perhaps to encourage a man who claimed to be a rival of their countryman Ariosto, now began to consider their Neapolitan guest not merely an ingenious and pitiable, but an overweening and tiresome enthusiast. The court, however, still seemed to be interested in its panegyrist, though Tasso feared that Alfonso meant to burn his *Jerusalem*. Alfonso, on the other hand, is supposed to have feared that he would burn it himself, and the ducal praises with it. The papers, at all events, apparently including the only fair copy of the poem, were constantly withheld ; and Tasso, in a new fit of despair, again quitted Ferrara. This mystery of the papers is certainly very extraordinary.

The poet's first steps were to Mantua, where he met with no such reception as encouraged him to stay. He then went to Urbino, but did not stop long. The prince, it is true, was very gra-

cious ; and bandages for a cautery were applied by the fair hands of his highness's sister ; but, though the nurse enchanted, the surgery frightened him. The hapless poet found himself pursued wherever he went by the tormenting beneficence of medicine. He escaped, and went to Turin. He had no passport ; and presented, besides, so miserable an appearance, that the people at the gates roughly refused him admittance. He was well received, however, at court ; and as he had begun to acknowledge that he was subject to humours and delusions, and wrote to say as much to Cardinal Albano, who returned him a most excellent and affecting letter, full of the kindest regard and good counsel, his friends entertained a hope that he would become tranquil. But he disappointed them. He again applied to Alfonso for permission to return to Ferrara—again received it, though on worse than the old conditions—and again found himself in that city in the beginning of the year 1579, delighted at seeing a brilliant assemblage from all quarters of Italy on occasion of a new marriage of the duke's (with a princess of Mantua). He made up his mind to think that nothing could be denied him, at such a moment, by the bridegroom whom he meant to honour and glorify.

Alas ! the very circumstance to which he looked for success, tended to throw him into the greatest of his calamities. Alfonso was to be married the day after the poet's arrival. He was therefore too busy to attend to him. The princesses did not attend to him. Nobody attended to him. He again applied in vain for his papers. He regretted his return ; became anxious to be any where else ; thought himself not only neglected but derided ; and at length became excited to a pitch of frenzy. He broke forth into the most unmeasured invectives against the duke, even in public ; invoked curses on his head and that of his whole race ; retracted all he had ever said in the praise of any of them, prince or otherwise ; and pronounced him and his whole court " a parcel of ingrates, rascals, and poltroons."* The outbreak was reported to the duke ; and the consequence was, that the poet was sent to the hospital of St. Anne, an establishment for the reception of the poor and lunatic, where he remained (with the

* Black's version (vol. ii. p. 58) is not strong enough. The words in Serassi are " una ciurma di poltroni, ingrati, e ribaldi," ii. p. 33.

exception of a few unaccountable leave-days) upwards of seven years. This melancholy event happened in the March of the year 1579.

Tasso was stunned by this blow as much as if he had never done or suffered any thing to expect it. He could at first do nothing but wonder and bewail himself, and implore to be set free. The duke answered, that he must be cured first. Tasso replied by fresh entreaties; the duke returned the same answers. The unhappy poet had recourse to every friend, prince, and great man he could think of, to join his entreaties; he sought refuge in composition, but still entreated; he occasionally reproached and even bantered the duke in some of his letters to his friends, all of which, doubtless, were opened; but still he entreated, flattered, adored, all to no purpose, for seven long years and upwards. In time he became subject to maniacal illusions; so that if he was not actually mad before, he was now considered so. He was not only visited with sights and sounds, such as many people have experienced whose brains have been over-excited, but he fancied himself haunted by a sprite, and become the sport of "magicians." The sprite stole his things, and the magicians would not let him get well. He had a vision such as Benvenuto Cellini had, of the Virgin Mary in her glory; and his nights were so miserable, that he ate too much in order that he might sleep. When he was temperate, he lay awake. Sometimes he felt "as if a horse had thrown himself on him." "Have pity on me," he says to the friend to whom he gives these affecting accounts; "I am miserable, because the world is unjust."*

The physicians advised him to leave off wine; but he says he could not do that, though he was content to use it in moderation. In truth he required something to support him against the physicians themselves, for they continued to exhaust his strength by their medicines, and could not supply the want of it with air and freedom. He had ringings in the ears, vomits, and fluxes of blood. It would be ludicrous, if it were not deplorably pathetic, to hear so great a man, in the commonest medical terms, now protesting against the eternal drenches of these practitioners, now humbly

* *Opere*, vol. xiv. pp. 158, 174, &c.

submitting to them, and now entreating like a child, that they might at least not be "so bitter." The physicians, with the duke at their head, were as mad for their rhubarbs and lancets as the quacks in Molière; and nothing but the very imagination that had nearly sacrificed the poet's life to their ignorance could have hindered him from dashing his head against the wall, and leaving them to the execrations of posterity. It is the only occasion in which the noble profession of medicine has not appeared in wise and beneficent connexion with the sufferings of men of letters. Why did Ferrara possess no Brocklesby in those days? no Garth, Mead, Warren, or Southwood Smith?

Tasso enabled himself to endure his imprisonment with composition. He supported it with his poetry and his poem, and what, alas! he had been too proud of during his liberty, the praises of his admirers. His genius brought him gifts from princes, and some money from the booksellers: it supported him even against his critics. During his confinement the *Jerusalem Delivered* was first published; though, to his grief, from a surreptitious and mutilated copy. But it was followed by a storm of applause; and if this was succeeded by as great a storm of objection and controversy, still the healthier part of his faculties were roused, and he exasperated his critics and astonished the world by shewing how coolly and learnedly the poor, wild, imprisoned genius could discuss the most intricate questions of poetry and philosophy. The disputes excited by his poem are generally supposed to have done him harm; but the conclusion appears to be ill founded. They diverted his thoughts, and made him conscious of his powers and his fame. I doubt whether he would have been better for entire approbation: it would have put him in a state of elevation, unfit for what he had to endure. He had found his pen his great solace, and he had never employed it so well. It would be incredible what a heap of things he wrote in this complicated torment of imprisonment, sickness, and "physic," if habit and mental activity had not been sufficient to account for much greater wonders. His letters to his friends and others would make a good-sized volume; those to his critics, another; sonnets and odes, a third; and his Dialogues after the manner of Plato, two more. Perhaps a good half of all he wrote was written in this hospital

of St. Anne; and he studied as well as composed, and had to read all that was written at the time, *pro* and *con*, in the discussions about his *Jerusalem*, which, in the latest edition of his works, amount to three out of six volumes octavo! Many of the occasions, however, of his poems, as well as letters, are most painful to think of, their object having been to exchange praise for money. And it is distressing, in the letters, to see his other little wants, and the fluctuations and moods of his mind. Now he is angry about some book not restored, or some gift promised and delayed. Now he is in want of some books to be lent him; now of some praise to comfort him; now of a little fresh linen. He is very thankful for visits, for respectful letters, for "sweetmeats;" and greatly puzzled to know what to do with the bad sonnets and panegyrics that are sent him. They were sometimes too much even for the allowed ultra courtesies of Italian acknowledgment. His compliments to most people are varied with astonishing grace and ingenuity; his accounts of his condition often sufficient to bring the tears into the manliest eyes; and his ceaseless and vain efforts to procure his liberation mortifying when we think of himself, and exasperating when we think of the petty despot who detained him in so long, so degrading, and so worse than useless a confinement.

Tasso could not always conceal his contempt of his prisoner from the ducal servants. Alfonso excelled the grandiloquent poet himself in his love of pomp and worship; and as he had no particular merits to warrant it, his victim bantered his love of titles. He says, in a letter to the duke's steward, "If it is the pleasure of the Most Serene Signor Duke, Most Clement and Most Invincible, to keep me in prison, may I beg that he will have the goodness to return certain little things of mine, which his Most Invincible, Most Clement, and Most Serene Highness has so often promised me."*

But these were rare ebullitions of gaiety, perhaps rather of

* "Prego V. Signoria che si contenti, se piace al Serenissimo Signor Duca, Clementissimo ed Invitissimo, che io stia in prigione, di farmi dar le poche robicciolate mie, che S. A. Invitissima, Clementissima, Serenissima m' ha promesse tante volte," &c. *Opere*, vol. xiv. p. 6.

bitter despair. A playful address to a cat to lend him her eyes to write by, during some hour in which he happened to be without a light (for it does not appear to have been denied him), may be taken as more probable evidence of a mind relieved at the moment, though the necessity for the relief may have been very sad. But the style in which he generally alludes to his situation is far different. He continually begs his correspondents to pity him, to pray for him, to attribute his errors to infirmity. He complains of impaired memory, and acknowledges that he has become subject to the deliriums formerly attributed to him by the enemies that had helped to produce them. Petitioning the native city of his ancestors (Bergamo) to intercede for him with the duke, he speaks of the writer as "this unhappy person;" and subscribes himself,—

"Most illustrious Signors, your affectionate servant, Torquato Tasso, a prisoner, and infirm, in the hospital of St. Anne in Ferrara."

In one of his addresses to Alfonso, he says most affectingly :

"I have sometimes attributed much to myself, and considered myself as somebody. But now, seeing in how many ways imagination has imposed on me, I suspect that it has also deceived me in this opinion of my own consequence. Indeed, methinks the past has been a dream; and hence I am resolved to rely on my imagination no longer."

Alfonso made no answer.

The causes of Tasso's imprisonment, and its long duration, are among the puzzles of biography. The prevailing opinion, notwithstanding the opposition made to it by Serassi and Black, is, that the poet made love to the Princess Leonora—perhaps was beloved by her; and that her brother the duke punished him for his arrogance. This was the belief of his earliest biographer, Manso, who was intimately acquainted with the poet in his latter days; and from Manso (though he did not profess to receive the information from Tasso, but only to gather it from his poems) it spread over all Europe. Milton took it on trust from him;* and so have our English translators Hoole and Wiffen. The Abbé de

* "Altera Torquatam cepit Leonora poetam," &c.

Charnes, however, declined to do so ;* and Montaigne, who saw the poet in St. Anne's hospital, says nothing of the love at all. He attributes his condition to poetical excitement, hard study, and the meeting of the extremes of wisdom and folly. The philosopher, however, speaks of the poet's having survived his reason, and become unconscious both of himself and his works, which the reader knows to be untrue. He does not appear to have conversed with Tasso. The poet was only shewn him ; probably at a sick moment, or by a new and ignorant official.† Muratori, who was in the service of the Este family at Modena, tells us, on the authority of an old acquaintance who knew contemporaries of Tasso, that the "good Torquato" finding himself one day in company with the duke and his sister, and going close to the princess in order to answer some question which she had put to him, was so transported by an impulse "more than poetical," as to give her a kiss ; upon which the duke, who had observed it, turned about to his gentlemen, and said, "What a pity to see so great a man distracted !" and so ordered him to be locked up.‡ But this writer adds, that he does not know what to think of the anecdote : he neither denies nor admits it. Tiraboschi, who was also in the service of the Este family, doubts the truth of the anecdote, and believes that the duke shut the poet up solely for fear lest his violence should do harm.§ Serassi, the second biographer of Tasso, who dedicated his book to an Este princess inimical to the poet's memory, attributes the confinement, on his own shewing, to the violent words he had uttered against his master.|| Walker, the author of the *Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, says, that the life by Serassi himself induced him to credit the love-story :¶ so does

* *Vie du Tasse*, 1695, p. 51.

† In the *Apology for Raimond de Sebonde* ; *Essays*, vol. ii. ch. 12.

‡ In his *Letter to Zeno*,—*Opere del Tasso*, xvi. p. 118.

§ *Storia della Poesia Italiana* (Mathias's edition), vol. iii. part i. p. 236.

|| Serassi is very peremptory, and even abusive. He charges every body who has said any thing to the contrary with imposture. "Egli non v' ha dubbio, che le troppe imprudenti e temerarie parole, che il Tasso si lasciò uscir di bocca in questo incontro, furono la sola cagione della sua prigionia, e ch' è mera favola ed *impostura* tutto ciò, che diversamente è stato affermato e scritto da altri in tale proposito." Vol. ii. p. 33. But we have seen that the good Abbé could practise a little imposition himself.

¶ Black, ii. 88.

Ginguéné.* Black, forgetting the age and illnesses of hundreds of enamoured ladies, and the distraction of lovers at all times, derides the notion of passion on either side : because, he argues, Tasso was subject to frenzies, and Leonora forty-two years of age, and not in good health.† What would Madame d'Houdetot have said to him ? or Mademoiselle L'Espinasse ? or Mrs. Inchbald, who used to walk up and down Sackville Street in order that she might see Dr. Warren's light in his window ? Foscolo was a believer in the love ;‡ Sismondi admits it ;§ and Rosini, the editor of the latest edition of the poet's works, is passionate for it. He wonders how any body can fail to discern it in a number of passages, which, in truth, may mean a variety of other loves ; and he insists much upon certain loose verses (*lascivi*) which the poet, among his various accounts of the origin of his imprisonment, assigns as the cause, or one of the causes, of it.||

I confess, after a reasonable amount of inquiry into this subject, that I can find no proofs whatsoever of Tasso's having made love to Leonora ; though I think it highly probable. I believe the main cause of the duke's proceedings was the poet's own violence of behaviour and incontinence of speech. I think it very likely that, in the course of the poetical love-making to various ladies, which was almost identical in that age with addressing them in verse, Torquato, whether he was in love or not, took more liberties with the princesses than Alfonso approved ; and it is equally probable, that one of those liberties consisted in his indulging his imagination too far. It is not even impossible, that more gallantry may have been going on at court than Alfonso could

* *Hist. Litt. d'Italie*, v. 243, &c.

† Vol. ii. p. 89.

‡ Such at least is my impression ; but I cannot call the evidence to mind.

§ *Literature of the South of Europe* (Roscoe's translation), vol. ii. p. 165. To shew the loose way in which the conclusions of a man's own mind are presented as facts admitted by others, Sismondi says, that Tasso's "passion" was the cause of his return to Ferrara. There is not a tittle of evidence to shew for it.

|| *Saggio sugli Amori*, &c. ut sup. p. 84, and passim. As specimens of the learned professor's reasoning, it may be observed that whenever the words *humble*, *daring*, *high*, *noble*, and *royal*, occur in the poet's love-verses, he thinks they *must* allude to the Princess Leonora ; and he argues, that Alfonso never could have been so angry with any "versi lascivi," if they had not had the same direction.

endure to see alluded to, especially by an ambitious pen. But there is no evidence that such was the case. Tasso, as a gentleman, could not have hinted at such a thing on the part of a princess of staid reputation; and, on the other hand, the "love" he speaks of as entertained by her for him, and warranting the application to her for money in case of his death, was too plainly worded to mean any thing but love in the sense of friendly regard. "Per amor mio" is an idiomatical expression, meaning "for my sake;" a strong one, no doubt, and such as a proud man like Alfonso might think a liberty, but not at all of necessity an amatory boast. If it was, its very effrontery and vanity were presumptions of its falsehood. The lady whom Tasso alludes to in the passage quoted on his first confinement is complained of for her coldness towards him; and, unless this was itself a gentlemanly blind, it might apply to fifty other ladies besides the princess. The man who assaulted him in the streets, and who is supposed to have been the violator of his papers, need not have found any secrets of love in them. The servant at whom he aimed the knife or the dagger might be as little connected with such matters; and the sonnets which the poet said he wrote for a friend, and which he desired to be buried with him, might be alike innocent of all reference to Leonora, whether he wrote them for a friend or not. Leonora's death took place during the poet's confinement; and, lamented as she was by the verse-writers according to custom, Tasso wrote nothing on the event. This silence has been attributed to the depth of his passion; but how is the fact proved? and why may it not have been occasioned by there having been no passion at all?

All that appears certain is, that Tasso spoke violent and contemptuous words against the duke; that he often spoke ill of him in his letters; that he endeavoured, not with perfect ingenuousness, to exchange his service for that of another prince; that he asserted his madness to have been pretended in the first instance purely to gratify the duke's whim for thinking it so (which was one of the reasons perhaps why Alfonso, as he complained, would not believe a word he said); and finally, that, whether the madness was or was not so pretended, it unfortunately became a confirmed though milder form of mania, during a long confinement.

Alfonso, too proud to forgive the poet's contempt, continued thus to detain him, partly perhaps because he was not sorry to have a pretext for revenge, partly because he did not know what to do with him consistently either with his own or the poet's safety. He had not been generous enough to put Tasso above his wants; he had not address enough to secure his respect; he had not merit enough to overlook his reproaches. If Tasso had been as great a man as he was a poet, Alfonso would not have been reduced to these perplexities. The poet would have known how to settle quietly down on his small court-income, and wait patiently in the midst of his beautiful visions for what fortune had or had not in store for him. But in truth, he, as well as the duke, was weak; they made a bad business of it between them; and Alfonso the Second closed the accounts of the Este family with the Muses, by keeping his panegyrist seven years in a mad-house, to the astonishment of posterity, and the destruction of his own claims to renown.

It does not appear that Tasso was confined in any such dungeon as they now exhibit in Ferrara. The conduct of the Prior of the Hospital is more doubtful. His name was Agostino Mosti; and, strangely enough, he was the person who had raised a monument to Ariosto, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. To this predilection has been attributed his alleged cruelty to the stranger from Sorrento, who dared to emulate the fame of his idol;—an extraordinary, though perhaps not incredible, mode of shewing a critic's regard for poetry. But Tasso, while he laments his severity, wonders at it in a man so well bred and so imbued with literature, and thinks it can only have originated in "orders."* Perhaps there were faults of temper on both sides; and Mosti, not liking his office, forgot the allowance to be made for that of a prisoner and sick man. His nephew Giulio Mosti, became strongly attached to the poet, and was a great comfort to him.

At length the time for liberation arrived. In the summer of 1586, Don Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, kinsman of the poet's friend Scipio, came to Ferrara for the purpose of complimenting Alfonso's heir on his nuptials. The whole court of Mantua, with hereditary regard for Tasso, whose father had been one

* *Opere*, vol. xvii. p. 32.

of their ornaments, were desirous of having him among them; and the prince extorted Alfonso's permission to take him away, on condition (so hard did he find this late concession to humanity, and so fearful was he of losing the dignity of jailor) that his deliverer should not allow him to quit Mantua without obtaining leave. A young and dear friend, his most frequent visitor, Antonio Constantini, secretary to the Tuscan ambassador, went to St. Anne's to prepare the captive by degrees for the good news. He told him that he really might look for his release in the course of a few days. The sensitive poet, now a premature old man of forty-two, was thrown into a transport of mingled delight and anxiety. He had been disappointed so often that he could scarcely believe his good fortune. In a day or two he writes thus to his visitor :

“Your kindness, my dear friend, has so accustomed me to your precious and frequent visits, that I have been all day long at the window expecting your coming to comfort me as you are wont. But since you have not yet arrived, and in order not to remain altogether without consolation, I visit you with this letter. It encloses a sonnet to the ambassador, written with a trembling hand, and in such a manner that he will not, perhaps, have less difficulty in reading it than I had in writing.”

Two days afterwards, the prince himself came again, requested of the poet some verses on a given subject, expressed his esteem for his genius and virtues, and told him that, on his return to Mantua, he should have the pleasure of conducting him to that city. Tasso lay awake almost all night, composing the verses; and next day enclosed them, with a letter, in another to Constantini, ardently begging him to keep the prince in mind of his promise. The prince had not forgotten it; and two or three days afterwards, the order for the release arrived, and Tasso quitted his prison. He had been confined seven years, two months, and several days. He awaited the prince's departure for a week or two in his friend's abode, paying no visits, probably from inability to endure so much novelty. Neither was he inclined or sent for to pay his respects to the duke. Two such parties could hardly have been desirous to look on each other. The duke must especially have disliked the thought of it; though Tasso afterwards

fancied otherwise, and that he was offended at his non-appearance. But his letters, unfortunately, differ with themselves on this point, as on most others. About the middle of July 1586, the poet quitted Ferrara for ever.

At Mantua Tasso was greeted with all the honours and attentions which his love of distinction could desire. The good old duke, the friend of his father, ordered handsome apartments to be provided for him in the palace; the prince made him presents of costly attire, including perfumed silken hose (kindred elegancies to the Italian gloves of Queen Elizabeth); the princess and her mother-in-law were declared admirers of his poetry; the courtiers caressed the favourite of their masters; Tasso found literary society; he pronounced the very bread and fruit, the fish and the flesh, excellent; the wines were sharp and brisk ("such as his father was fond of"); and even the physician was admirable, for he ordered confections. One might imagine, if circumstances had not proved the cordial nature of the Gonzaga family, and the real respect and admiration entertained for the poet's genius by the greatest men of the time, in spite of the rebuke it had received from Alfonso, that there had been a confederacy to mock and mystify him, after the fashion of the duke and duchess with Don Quixote (the only blot, by the way, in the book of Cervantes; if, indeed, he did not intend it as a satire on the mystifiers).

For a while, in short, the liberated prisoner thought himself happy. He corrected his prose works, resumed and finished the tragedy of *Torrismond*, which he had begun some years before, corresponded with princes, and completed and published a narrative poem left unfinished by his father. Torquato was as loving a son as Mozart or Montaigne. Whenever he had a glimpse of felicity, he appears to have associated the idea of it with that of his father. In the conclusion of his fragment, "O del grand' Apennino," he affectingly begs pardon of his blessed spirit for troubling him with his earthly griefs.*

* "Padre, o buon padre, che dal ciel rimirì,
Egro e morto ti piansi, e ben tu il sai;
E gemendo scaldai
La tomba e il letto. Or che negli altri giri
Tu godi, a te si deve onor, non lutto:
A me versato il mio dolor sia tutto."

But, alas, what had been an indulgence of self-esteem had now become the habit of a disease ; and in the course of a few months the restless poet began to make his old discovery, that he was not sufficiently cared for. The prince had no leisure to attend to him ; the nobility did not “ yield him the first place,” or at least (he adds) they did not allow him to be treated “ externally as their equal ; and he candidly confessed that he could not live in a place where such was the custom.* He felt also, naturally enough, however well it might have been intended, that it was not pleasant to be confined to the range of the city of Mantua, attended by a servant, even though he confessed that he was now subject to “ frenzy.” He contrived to stay another half-year by help of a brilliant carnival and of the select society of the prince’s court, who were evidently most kind to him ; but at the end of the twelvemonth he was in Bergamo among his relations. The prince gave him leave to go ; and the Cavaliere Tasso, his kinsman, sent his chariot on purpose to fetch him.

Here again he found himself at a beautiful country-seat, which the family of Tasso still possesses near that city ; and here again, in the house of his father, he proposed to be happy, “ having never desired,” he says, “ any journey more earnestly than this.” He left it in the course of a month, to return to Mantua.

And it was only to wander still. Mantua he quitted in less than two months to go to Rome, in spite of the advice of his best friends. He vindicated the proceeding by a hope of obtaining some permanent settlement from the Pope. He took Loretto by the way, to refresh himself with devotion ; arrived in a transport at Rome ; got nothing from the Pope (the hard-minded Sixtus the Fifth) ; and in the spring of the next year, in the triple hope of

O father, my good father, looking now
 On thy poor son from heaven, well knowest thou
 What scalding tears I shed
 Upon thy grave, upon thy dying bed ;
 But since thou dwellest in the happy skies,
 ’Tis fit I raise to thee no sorrowing eyes :
 Be all my grief on my own head.

* “ Non posso viver in città, ove tutti i nobili, o non mi concedano i primi luoghi, o almeno non si contentino che la cosa in quel che appartiene a queste esteriori dimostrazioni, vada del pari.” *Opere*, vol. xiii. p. 153.

again embracing his sister, and recovering the dowry of his mother and the confiscated property of his father, he proceeded to Naples.

Naples was in its most beautiful vernal condition, and the Neapolitans welcomed the poet with all honour and glory; but his sister, alas, was dead; he got none of his father's property, nor (till too late) any of his mother's; and before the year was out, he was again in Rome. He acquired in Naples, however, another friend, as attached to him and as constant in his attentions as his beloved Constantini, to wit, Giambattista Manso, Marquis of Villa, who became his biographer, and who was visited and praised for his good offices by Milton. In the society of this gentleman he seemed for a short while to have become a new man. He entered into field sports, listened to songs and music, nay, danced, says Manso, with "the girls." (One fancies a poetical Dr. Johnson with the two country damsels on his knees.) In short, good air and freedom, and no medicine, had conspired with the lessons of disappointment to give him, before he died, a glimpse of the power to be pleased. He had not got rid of all his spiritual illusions, even those of a melancholy nature; but he took the latter more quietly, and had grown so comfortable with the race in general, that he encouraged them. He was so entirely freed from his fears of the Inquisition and of charges of magic, that whereas he had formerly been anxious to shew that he meant nothing but a poetical fancy by the spirit which he introduced as communing with him in his dialogue entitled the *Messenger*, he now maintained its reality against the arguments of his friend Manso; and these arguments gave rise to the most poetical scene in his history. He told Manso that he should have ocular testimony of the spirit's existence; and accordingly one day while they were sitting together at the marquis's fireside, "he turned his eyes," says Manso, "towards a window, and held them a long time so intensely on it, that, when I called him, he did not answer. At last, 'Behold,' said he, 'the friendly spirit which has courteously come to talk with me. Lift up your eyes and see the truth.' I turned my eyes thither immediately (continues the marquis); but though I endeavoured to look as keenly as I could, I beheld nothing but the rays of the sun, which streamed through the panes

of the window into the chamber. Whilst I still looked around, without beholding any object, Torquato began to hold, with this unknown something, a most lofty converse. I heard, indeed, and saw nothing but himself; nevertheless his words, at one time questioning, at another replying, were such as take place between those who reason strictly on some important subject. And from what was said by the one, the reply of the other might be easily comprehended by the intellect, although it was not heard by the ear. The discourses were so lofty and marvellous, both by the sublimity of their topics and a certain unwonted manner of talking, that, exalted above myself in a kind of ecstasy, I did not dare to interrupt them, nor ask Tasso about the spirit, which he had announced to me, but which I did not see. In this way, while I listened between stupefaction and rapture, a considerable time had elapsed; till at last the spirit departed, as I learned from the words of Torquato; who, turning to me, said, 'From this day forward all your doubts will have vanished from your mind.' 'Nay,' said I, 'they are rather increased; since, though I have heard many things worthy of marvel, I have seen nothing of what you promised to shew me to dispel them.' He smiled, and said, 'You have seen and heard more of him than perhaps ——,' and here he paused. Fearful of importuning him with new questions, the discourse ended; and the only conclusion I can draw is, what I before said, that it is more likely his visions or frenzies will disorder my own mind than that I shall extirpate his true or imaginary opinion."*

Did the "smile" of Tasso at the close of this extraordinary scene, and the words which he omitted to add, signify that his friend had seen and heard more, perhaps, than the poet *would have liked* to explain? Did he mean that he himself alone had been seen and heard, and was author of the whole dialogue? Perhaps he did; for credulity itself can impose;—can take pleasure in seeing others as credulous as itself. On the other hand, enough has become known in our days of the phenomena of morbid perception, to render Tasso's actual belief in such visions not at all surprising. It is not uncommon for the sanest

* Black, vol. ii. p. 240.

people of delicate organisation to see faces before them while going to sleep, sometimes in fantastical succession. A stronger exercise of this disposition in temperaments more delicate will enlarge the face to figure ; and there can be no question that an imagination so heated as Tasso's, so full of the speculations of the later Platonists, and accompanied by a state of body so "nervous," and a will so bent on its fancies, might embody whatever he chose to behold. The dialogue he could as easily read in the vision's looks, whether he heard it or not with ears. If Nicholay, the Prussian bookseller, who saw crowds of spiritual people go through his rooms, had been a poet, and possessed of as wilful an imagination as Tasso, he might have gifted them all with *speaking countenances* as easily as with coats and waistcoats. Swedenborg founded a religion on this morbid faculty ; and the Catholics worship a hundred stories of the like sort in the Lives of the Saints, many of which are equally true and false ; false in reality, though true in supposition. Luther himself wrote and studied till he saw the Devil ; only the great reformer retained enough of his naturally sturdy health and judgment to throw an inkstand at Satan's head,—a thing that philosophy has been doing ever since.

Tasso's principal residence while at Naples had been in the beautiful monastery of Mount Olivet, on which the good monks begged he would write them a poem ; which he did. A cold reception at Rome, and perhaps the difference of the air, brought back his old lamentations ; but here again a monastery gave him refuge, and he set himself down to correct his former works and compose new ones. He missed, however, the comforts of society and amusement which he had experienced at Naples. Nevertheless, he did not return thither. He persuaded himself that it was necessary to be in Rome in order to expedite the receipt of some books and manuscripts from Bergamo and other places ; but his restlessness desired novelty. He thus slipped back from the neighbourhood of Rome to the city itself, and from the city back to the monastery, his friends in both places being probably tired of his instability. He thought of returning to Mantua ; but a present from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, accompanied by an invitation to his court, drew him, in one of his short-lived-trans-

ports, to Florence. He returned, in spite of the best and most generous reception, to Rome; then left Rome for Mantua, on invitation from his ever-kind deliverer from prison, now the reigning duke; tired again, even of him; returned to Rome; then once more to Naples, where the Prince of Conca, Grand Admiral of the kingdom, lodged and treated him like an equal; but he grew suspicious of the admiral, and went to live with his friend Manso; quitted Manso for Rome again; was treated with reverence on the way, like Ariosto, by a famous leader of banditti; was received at Rome into the Vatican itself, in the apartments of his friend Cintio Aldobrandino, nephew of the new pope Clement the Eighth, where his hopes now seemed to be raised at once to their highest and most reasonable pitch; but fell ill, and was obliged to go back to Naples for the benefit of the air. A life so strangely erratic to the last (for mortal illness was approaching) is perhaps unique in the history of men of letters, and might be therefore worth recording even in that of a less man than Tasso; but when we recollect that this poet, in spite of all his weaknesses, and notwithstanding the enemies they provoked and the friends they cooled, was really almost adored for his genius in his own time, and instead of refusing jewels one day and soliciting a ducat the next, might have settled down almost anywhere in quiet and glory, if he had but possessed the patience to do so,—it becomes an association of weakness with power, and of adversity with the means of prosperity, the absurdity of which admiration itself can only drown in pity.

He now took up his abode in another monastery, that of San Severino, where he was comforted by the visits of his friend Manso, to whom he had lately inscribed a dialogue on *Friendship*; for he continued writing to the last. He had also the consolation, such as it was, of having the lawsuit for his mother's dowry settled in his favour, though under circumstances that rendered it of little importance, and only three months before his death. So strangely did Fortune seem to take delight in sporting with a man of genius, who had thought both too much of her and too little; too much for pomp's sake, and too little in prudence. Among his new acquaintances were the young Marino, afterwards the corrupter of Italian poetry, and the Prince of Venosa, an amateur

composer of music. The dying poet wrote madrigals for him so much to his satisfaction, that, being about to marry into the house of Este, he wished to reconcile him with the Duke of Ferrara; and Tasso, who to the last moment of his life seems never to have been able to resist the chance of resuming old quarters, apparently from the double temptation of renouncing them, wrote his old master a letter full of respects and regrets. But the duke, who himself died in the course of the year, was not to be moved from his silence. The poet had given him the last possible offence by recasting his *Jerusalem*, omitting the glories of the house of Este, and dedicating it to another patron. Alfonso, who had been extravagantly magnificent, though not to poets, had so weakened his government, that the Pope wrested Ferrara from the hands of his successor, and reduced the Este family to the possession of Modena, which it still holds and dishonours. The duke and the poet were thus fading away at the same time; they never met again in this world; and a new Dante would have divided them far enough in the next.*

The last glimpse of honour and glory was now opening in a very grand manner on the poet—the last and the greatest, as if on purpose to give the climax to his disappointments. Cardinal Cintio requested the Pope to give him the honour of a coronation. It had been desired by the poet, it seems, three years before. He was disappointed of it at that time; and now that it was granted, he was disappointed of the ceremony. Manso says he no longer cared for it; and, as he felt himself dying, this is not improbable. Nevertheless he went to Rome for the purpose; and though the severity of the winter there delayed the intention till spring, wealth and honours seemed determined to come in floods upon the poor expiring great man, in order to take away the breath which they had refused to support. The Pope assigned him a yearly pension of a hundred scudi; and the withholders of his mother's dowry came to an accommodation by which he was to have an annuity of a hundred ducats, and a considerable sum in hand.

* The world in general have taken no notice of Tasso's re-construction of his *Jerusalem*, which he called the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*. It never "obtained," as the phrase is. It was the mere tribute of his declining years to bigotry and new acquaintances; and therefore I say no more of it.

His hand was losing strength enough to close upon the money. Scarcely was the day for the coronation about to dawn, when the poet felt his dissolution approaching. Alfonso's doctors had killed him at last by superinducing a habit of medicine-taking, which defeated its purpose. He requested leave to return to the monastery of St. Onofrio—wrote a farewell letter to Constantini—received the distinguished honour of a plenary indulgence from the Pope—said (in terms very like what Milton might have used, had he died a Catholic), that “this was the chariot upon which he hoped to go crowned, not with laurel as a poet into the capitol, but with glory as a saint to heaven”—and expired on the 25th of April, 1575, and the fifty-first year of his age, closely embracing the crucifix, and imperfectly uttering the sentence beginning, “Into thy hands, O Lord!”*

Even after death, success mocked him; for the coronation took place on the senseless dead body. The head was wreathed with laurel; a magnificent toga delayed for a while the shroud; and a procession took place through the city by torchlight, all the inhabitants pouring forth to behold it, and painters crowding over the bier to gaze on the poet's lineaments, from which they produced a multitude of portraits. The corpse was then buried in the church of St. Onofrio; and magnificent monuments talked of, which never appeared. Manso, however, obtained leave to set up a modest tablet; and eight years afterwards a Ferrarese cardinal (Bevilacqua) made what amends he could for his countrymen, by erecting the stately memorial which is still to be seen.

Poor, illustrious Tasso! weak enough to warrant pity from his inferiors—great enough to overshadow in death his once-fancied superiors. He has been a by-word for the misfortunes of genius; but genius was not his misfortune; it was his only good, and might have brought him all happiness. It is the want of genius, as far as it goes, and apart from martyrdoms for conscience' sake, which produces misfortunes even to genius itself—the want of as much wit and balance on the common side of things, as genius is supposed to confine to the uncommon.

Manso has left a minute account of his friend's person and

* *In manus tuas, Domine.* One likes to know the actual words; at least so it appears to me.

manners. He was tall, even among the tall ; had a pale complexion, sunken cheeks, lightish brown hair, head bald at the top, large blue eyes, square forehead, big nose inclining towards the mouth, lips pale and thin, white teeth, delicate white hands, long arms, broad chest and shoulders, legs rather strong than fleshy, and the body altogether better proportioned than in good condition ; the result, nevertheless, being an aspect of manly beauty and expression, particularly in the countenance, the dignity of which marked him for an extraordinary person even to those who did not know him. His demeanour was grave and deliberate ; he laughed seldom ; and though his tongue was prompt, his delivery was slow ; and he was accustomed to repeat his last words. He was expert in all manly exercises, but not equally graceful ; and the same defect attended his otherwise striking eloquence in public assemblies. His putting to flight the assassins in Ferrara gave him such a reputation for courage, that there went about in his honour a popular couplet :

“Colla penna e colla spada
Nessun val quanto Torquato.”

For the sword as well as pen
Tasso is the man of men.

He was a little eater, but not averse to wine, particularly such as combined piquancy with sweetness ; and he always dressed in black.

Manso's account is still more particular, and yet it does not tell all ; for Tasso himself informs us that he stammered, and was near-sighted ;* and a Neapolitan writer who knew him adds to the near-sightedness some visible defect in the eyes.† I should doubt, from what Tasso says in his letters, whether he was fond of speaking in public, notwithstanding his *début* in that line with the *Fifty Amorous Conclusions*. Nor does he appear to have

* Serassi, ii. 276.

† “Quem *cernis*, quisquis es, procera statura virum, *luscis* oculis, &c. hic Torquatus est.”—Cappacio, *Illustrium Literis Virorum Elogia et Judicia*, quoted by Serassi, ut sup. The Latin word *luscus*, as well as the Italian *losco*, means, I believe, near-sighted ; but it certainly means also a great deal more ; and unless the word *cernis* (thou beholdest) is a mere form of speech implying a foregone conclusion, it shews that the defect was obvious to the spectator.

been remarkable for his conversation. Manso has left a collection of one hundred of his pithy sayings—a suspicious amount, and unfortunately more than warranting the suspicion; for almost every one of them is traceable to some other man. They come from the Greek and Latin philosophers, and the apothegms of Erasmus. The two following have the greatest appearance of being genuine :

A Greek, complaining that he had spoken ill of his country, and maintaining that all the virtues in the world had issued out of it, the poet assented; with the addition, that they had not left one behind them.

A foolish young fellow, garnished with a number of golden chains, coming into a room where he was, and being overheard by him exclaiming, “Is this the great man that was mad?” Tasso said, “Yes; but that people had never put on him more than one chain at a time.”

His character may be gathered, but not perhaps entirely, from what has been written of his life; for some of his earlier letters shew him to have been not quite so grave and refined in his way of talking as readers of the *Jerusalem* might suppose. He was probably at that time of life not so scrupulous in his morals as he professed to be during the greater part of it. His mother is thought to have died of chagrin and impatience at being separated so long from her husband, and not knowing what to do to save her dowry from her brothers; and I take her son to have combined his mother's ultra-sensitive organisation with his father's worldly imprudence and unequal spirits. The addition of the nervous temperament of one parent to the aspiring nature of the other gave rise to the poet's trembling eagerness for distinction; and Torquato's very love for them both hindered him from seeing what should have been corrected in the infirmities which he inherited. Falling from the highest hopes of prosperity into the most painful afflictions, he thus wanted solid principles of action to support him, and was forced to retreat upon an excess of self-esteem, which allowed his pride to become a beggar, and his naturally kind, loving, just, and heroical disposition to condescend to almost every species of inconsistency. The Duke of Ferrara,

he complains, did not believe a word he said;* and the fact is, that, partly from disease, and partly from a want of courage to look his defects in the face, he beheld the same things in so many different lights, and according as it suited him at the moment, that, without intending falsehood, his statements are really not to be relied on. He degraded even his verses, sometimes with panegyrics for interest's sake, sometimes out of weak wishes to oblige, of which he was afterwards ashamed; and, with the exception of Constantini, we cannot be sure that any one person praised in them retained his regard in his last days. His suspicion made him a kind of Rousseau; but he was more amiable than the Genevese, and far from being in the habit of talking against old acquaintances, whatever he might have thought of them. It is observable, not only that he never married, but he told Manso he had led a life of entire continence ever since he entered the walls of his prison, being then in his thirty-fifth year.† Was this out of fidelity to some mistress? or the consequence of a previous life the reverse of continent? or was it from some principle of superstition? He had become a devotee, apparently out of a dread of disbelief; and he remained extremely religious for the rest of his days. The two unhappiest of Italian poets, Tasso and Dante, were the two most superstitious.

As for the once formidable question concerning the comparative merits of this poet and Ariosto, which anticipated the modern quarrels of the classical and romantic schools, some idea of the treatment which Tasso experienced may be conceived by supposing all that used to be sarcastic and bitter in the periodical party-criticism among ourselves some thirty years back, collected into one huge vial of wrath, and poured upon the new poet's head. Even the great Galileo, who was a man of wit, bred up in the pure Tuscan school of Berni and Casa, and who was an idolator of Ariosto, wrote, when he was young, a "review" of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, which it is painful to read, it is so unjust and

* "Il Signor Duca non crede ad alcuna mia parola." *Opere*, xiv. 161.

† "Fui da bocca di lui medesimo rassicurato, che dal tempo del suo ritegno in sant' Anna, ch' avvenne negli anni trentacinque della sua vita e sedici avanti la morte, egli intieramente fu casto: degli anni primi non mi favellò mai di modo ch' io possa alcuna cosa di certo qui raccontare." *Opere*, xxxiii. 235.

contemptuous.* But now that the only final arbiter, posterity, has accepted both the poets, the dispute is surely the easiest thing in the world to settle; not, indeed, with prejudices of creeds or temperaments, but before any judges thoroughly sympathising with the two claimants. Its solution is the principle of the greater including the less. For Ariosto errs only by having an unbounded circle to move in. His sympathies are unlimited; and those who think him inferior to Tasso, only do so in consequence of their own want of sympathy with the vivacities that degrade him in their eyes. Ariosto can be as grave and exalted as Tasso when he pleases, and he could do a hundred things which Tasso never attempted. He is as different in this respect as Shakspeare from Milton. He had far more knowledge of mankind than Tasso, and he was superior in point of taste. But it is painful to make disadvantageous comparisons of one great poet with another. Let us be thankful for Tasso's enchanted gardens, without being forced to vindicate the universal world of his predecessor. Suffice it to bear in mind, that the grave poet himself agreed with the rest of the Italians in calling the Ferrarese the "divine Ariosto;" a title which has never been popularly given to his rival.

The *Jerusalem Delivered* is the history of a Crusade, related with poetic license. The Infidels are assisted by unlawful arts; and the libertinism that brought scandal on the Christians, is converted into youthful susceptibility, led away by enchantment. The author proposed to combine the ancient epic poets with Ariosto, or a simple plot, and uniformly dignified style, with romantic varieties of adventure, and the luxuriance of fairy-land. He did what he proposed to do, but with a judgment inferior to Virgil's; nay, in point of the interdependence of the adventures, to Ariosto, and with far less general vigour. The mixture of affectation with his dignity is so frequent, that, whether Boileau's famous line about Tasso's tinsel and Virgil's gold did or did not mean to imply that the *Jerusalem* was nothing but tinsel, and the *Æneid* all gold, it is certain that the tinsel is so interwoven with the gold, as to render it more of a rule than an exception, and

* It is to be found in the collected works, *ut supra*, both of the philosopher and the poet.

put a provoking distance between Tasso's epic pretensions and those of the greatest masters of the art. People who take for granted the conceits because of the "wildness" of Ariosto, and the good taste because of the "regularity" of Tasso, just assume the reverse of the fact. It is a rare thing to find a conceit in Ariosto; and, where it does exist, it is most likely defensible on some Shakspearian ground of subtle propriety. Open Tasso in almost any part, particularly the love-scenes, and it is marvellous if, before long, you do not see the conceits vexatiously interfering with the beauties.

"Oh meraviglia! Amor, che appena è nato,
Già grande vola, e già trionfa armato." Canto i. st. 47.

Oh, miracle! Love is scarce born, when, lo,
He flies full wing'd, and lords it with his bow!

"Se 'l miri fulminar ne l' arme avvolto,
Marte lo stimi; Amor, se scopre il volto." St. 58.

Mars you would think him, when his thund'ring race
In arms he ran; Love, when he shew'd his face.

Which is as little true to reason as to taste; for no god of war could look like a god of love. The habit of mind would render it impossible. But the poet found the prettiness of the Greek Anthology irresistible.

Olindo, tied to the stake amidst the flames of martyrdom, can say to his mistress:

"Altre fiamme, altri nodi amor promise." Canto ii. st. 34.

Other flames, other bonds than these, love promised.

The sentiment is natural, but the double use of the "flames" on such an occasion, miserable.

In the third canto the fair Amazon Clorinda challenges her love to single combat.

"E di due morti in un punto lo sfida." St. 23.

"And so at once she threats to kill him twice." *Fairfax.*

That is to say, with her valour and beauty.

Another twofold employment of flame, with an exclamation

to secure our astonishment, makes its appearance in the fourth canto :

“ Oh miracol d' amor ! che le faville
Tragge del pianto, e i cor' ne l' acqua accende.” St. 76.

Oh, miracle of love ! that draweth sparks
Of fire from tears, and kindest hearts in water !

This puerile antithesis of *fire* and *water*, *fire* and *ice*, *light* in *darkness*, *silence* in *speech*, together with such pretty turns as *wounding one's-self in wounding others*, and the worse sacrifice of consistency and truth of feeling,—lovers making long speeches on the least fitting occasions, and ladies retaining their rosy cheeks in the midst of fears of death,—is to be met with, more or less, throughout the poem. I have no doubt they were the proximate cause of that general corruption of taste which was afterwards completed by Marino, the acquaintance and ardent admirer of Tasso when a boy. They have been laid to the charge of Petrarch ; but, without entering into the question, how far and in what instances conceits may not be natural to lovers haunted, as Petrarch was, with one idea, and seeing it in every thing they behold, what had the great epic poet to do with the faults of the lyrical ? And what is to be said for his standing in need of the excuse of bad example ? Homer and Milton were in no such want. Virgil would not have copied the tricks of Ovid. There is an effeminacy and self reflection in Tasso, analogous to his Rinaldo, in the enchanted garden ; where the hero wore a looking-glass by his side, in which he contemplated his sophisticated self, and the meretricious beauty of his enchantress.*

Agreeably to this tendency to weakness, the style of Tasso, when not supported by great occasions (and even the occasion itself sometimes fails him), is too apt to fall into tameness and commonplace,—to want movement and picture ; while, at the same time, with singular defect of enjoyment, it does not possess

* It is an extraordinary instance of a man's violating, in older life, the better critical principles of his youth,—that Tasso, in his *Discourses on Poetry*, should have objected to a passage in Ariosto about sighs and tears, as being a “ conceit too lyrical,” (though it was warranted by the subtleties of madness, see present volume, p. 131), and yet afterwards riot in the same conceits when wholly without warrant.

the music which might be expected from a lyrical and voluptuous poet. Bernardo prophesied of his son, that, however he might surpass him in other respects, he would never equal him in sweetness; and he seems to have judged him rightly. I have met with a passage in Torquato's prose writings (but I cannot lay my hands on it), in which he expresses a singular predilection for verses full of the same vowel. He seems, if I remember rightly, to have regarded it, not merely as a pleasing variety, which it is on occasion, but as a reigning principle. Voltaire (I think, in his treatise on *Epic Poetry*) has noticed the multitude of *o*'s in the exordium of the *Jerusalem*. This apparent negligence seems to have been intentional.

“Cantò l' armi pietòse e 'l capitano
 Che 'l gran Sepòlcrò liberò di Cristò;
 Moltò egli òprò còl sennò e còn la manò,
 Moltò sòffrì nel glòriòsò acquistò;
 E invan l' infernò a lui s' òppòse; e invanò
 S' armò d' Asia e di Libia il pòpòl mistò;
 Che il ciel gli diè favòre, e sòttò ai santi
 Segni ridusse i sudi còmpagni erranti.”

The reader will not be surprised to find, that he who could thus confound monotony with music, and commence his greatest poem with it, is too often discordant in the rest of his versification. It has been thought, that Milton might have taken from the Italians the grand musical account to which he turns a list of proper names, as in his enumerations of realms and deities; but I have been surprised to find how little the most musical of languages appears to have suggested to its poets anything of the sort. I am not aware of it, indeed, in any poets but our own. All others, from Homer, with his catalogue of leaders and ships, down to Metastasio himself, though he wrote for music, appear to have overlooked this opportunity of playing a voluntary of fine sounds, where they had no other theme on which to modulate. Its inventor, as far as I am aware, is that great poet, Marlowe.*

* Δαρδανίων αυτ' ηρχεν, εὗς καὶ Αγχισσο,
 Αινειας' τον ὑπ' Αγχιση τεκε δι Αφροδιτη
 Ιδης εν κνημοισι, θεα βροτω εννηθεισα'

There are faults of invention as well as style in the *Jerusalem*. The Talking Bird, or bird that sings with a human voice (canto iv. 13), is a piece of inverisimilitude, which the author, perhaps, thought justifiable by the speaking horses of the ancients. But

Ουκ οιος' άμα τωγε δνω Αντηνορος οίε,
Αρχιλοχος τ', Ακαμας τε, μαχης εν ειδοτε πασης.

Iliad, ii. 819.

It is curious that these five lines should abound as much in *a*'s as Tasso's first stanza does in *o*'s. Similar monotonies are strikingly observable in the nomenclatures of Virgil. See his most perfect poem, the *Georgics* :

"Omnia secum

'Armentarius 'Afer agit, tectumque, Laremque,
'Armæque, 'Amyclæumque canem, Cressamque pharetram."

Lib. iii. 343.

It is clear that Dante never thought of this point. See his *Mangiadore*, *Sanvittore*, *Natan*, *Raban*, &c. at the end of the twelfth canto of the *Paradiso*. Yet in his time poetry was *recitativè* to music. So it was in Petrarch's, who was a lutenist, and who "tried" his verses, to see how they would go to the instrument. Yet Petrarch could allow himself to write such a quatrain as the following list of rivers :

"Non Tesin, Pò, Varo, Arno, Adige e Tebro,
Eufrate, Tigre, Nilo, Ermo, Indo e Gange,
Tana, Istro, Alfeo, Garrona, è 'l mar che frange,
Rodano, Ibero, Ren, Senna, *Albia*, *Era*, *Ebro*!"

In Tasso's *Sette Giornate*, to which Black thinks Milton indebted for his grand use of proper names, the following is the way in which the poet writes :

"Di Silvani

Di Pàni, e d' Egipàni, e d' altri erranti,
Ch' empier lè solitariè incultè selvè
D' antichè maravigliè ; e quell' accoltò
Esercitò di Baccò in òriente
Ond' egli vinse, e trionfò degl' Indi,
Tornandò glòriòsò ai Greci lidi,
Siccòm' e favòlòsò anticò gridò."

The most diversified passage of this kind (as far as I am aware) is Ariosto's list of his friends at the close of the *Orlando*; and yet such writing as follows would seem to shew that it was an accident :

"Iò veggìò il Fracastòrò, il Bevazzanò,
Trifon Gabriel, e il Tassò più lontanò ;
Veggò Niccòlò Tiepoli, e còn essò
Niccòlò Amanìò in me affissar le ciglia ;

the latter were moved supernaturally for the occasion, and for a very fine occasion. Tasso's bird is a mere born contradiction to nature and for no necessity. The vulgar idea of the devil with horns and a tail (though the retention of it argued a genius in Tasso very inferior to that of Milton) is defensible, I think, on the plea of the German critics, that malignity should be made a thing low and deformed; but as much cannot be said for the storehouse in heaven, where St. Michael's spear is kept with which he slew the dragon, and the trident which is used for making earthquakes (canto vii. st. 81). The tomb which supernaturally comes out of the ground, inscribed with the name and virtues of Sueno, (canto viii. st. 39), is worthy only of a pantomime; and the wizard in robes, with beech-leaves on his head, who walks dry-shod on water, and superfluously helps the knights on their way to Armida's retirement (xiv. 33), is almost as ludicrous as the burlesque of the river-god in the *Voyage* of Bachaumont and Chapelle.

But let us not wonder, nevertheless, at the effect which the *Jerusalem* has had upon the world. It could not have had it without great nature and power. Rinaldo, in spite of his aberrations with Armida, knew the path to renown, and so did his poet. Tasso's epic, with all its faults, is a noble production, and justly

Autòn Fulgòsò, ch' a vedermi appressò
Al litò, mòstra gaudiò e meraviglia.
Il miò Valeriò e quel che là s' è messò
Fuòr de le dònne," &c.

Even Metastasio, who wrote expressly for singers, and often with exquisite modulation, especially in his songs, forgets himself when he comes to the names of his *dramatis personæ*,—" 'Artàserse, 'Aràtbàno, 'Arbàce, Màndàne, Semirà, Megàbise,"—all in one play.

" Gran cose io temo. Il mio germàno 'Arbàce
Pàrte prià de l' aurorà. Il pàdre armàto
Incontro, e non mi parlà. 'Accusà il cielo
'Agitàto 'Artàserse, e m' àbbàndonà." Atto i. sc. 6.

I am far from intending to say that these reiterations are not sometimes allowable, nay, often beautiful and desirable. Alliteration itself may be rendered an exquisite instrument of music. I am only speaking of monotony or discord in the enumeration of proper names.

considered one of the poems of the world. Each of those poems hit some one great point of universal attraction, at least in their respective countries, and among the givers of fame in others. Homer's poem is that of action; Dante's, of passion; Virgil's, of judgment; Milton's, of religion; Spenser's, of poetry itself; Ariosto's, of animal spirits (I do not mean as respects gaiety only, but in strength and readiness of accord with the whole play of nature); Tasso looked round with an ultra-sensitive temperament, and an ambition which required encouragement, and his poem is that of tenderness. Every thing inclines to this point in his circle, with the tremulousness of the needle. Love is its all in all, even to the design of the religious war which is to rescue the sepulchre of the God of Charity from the hands of the unloving. His heroes are all in love, at least those on the right side; his leader, Godfrey, notwithstanding his prudence, narrowly escapes the passion, and is full of a loving consideration; his amazon, Clorinda, inspires the truest passion, and dies taking her lover's hand; his Erminia is all love for an enemy; his enchantress Armida falls from pretended love into real, and forsakes her religion for its sake. An old father (canto ix.) loses his five sons in battle, and dies on their dead bodies of a wound which he has provoked on purpose. Tancred cannot achieve the enterprise of the Enchanted Forest, because his dead mistress seems to come out of one of the trees. Olindo thinks it happiness to be martyred at the same stake with Sophronia. The reconciliation of Rinaldo with his enchantress takes place within a few stanzas of the close of the poem, as if contesting its interest with religion. The *Jerusalem Delivered*, in short, is the favourite epic of the young: all the lovers in Europe have loved it. The French have forgiven the author his conceits for the sake of his gallantry: he is the poet of the gondoliers; and Spenser, the most luxurious of his brethren, plundered his bowers of bliss. Read Tasso's poem by this gentle light of his genius, and you pity him twenty-fold, and know not what excuse to find for his jailer.

The stories translated in the present volume, though including war and magic, are all love-stories. They were not selected on that account. They suggested themselves for selection, as containing most of the finest things in the poem. They are conducted with

great art, and the characters and affections happily varied. The first (*Olindo and Sophronia*) is perhaps unique for the hopelessness of its commencement (I mean with regard to the lovers), and the perfect, and at the same time quite probable, felicity of the conclusion. There is no reason to believe that the staid and devout Sophronia would have loved her adorer at all, but for the circumstance that first dooms them both to a shocking death, and then sends them, with perfect warrant, from the stake to the altar. Clorinda is an Amazon, the idea of whom, as such, it is impossible for us to separate from very repulsive and unfeminine images; yet, under the circumstances of the story, we call to mind in her behalf the possibility of a Joan of Arc's having loved and been beloved; and her death is a surprising and most affecting variation upon that of Agrican in Boiardo. Tasso's enchantress Armida is a variation of the Angelica of the same poet, combined with Ariosto's Alcina; but her passionate voluptuousness makes her quite a new character in regard to the one; and she is as different from the painted hag of the *Orlando* as youth, beauty, and patriotic intention can make her. She is not very sentimental; but all the passion in the world has sympathised with her; and it was manly and honest in the poet not to let her Paganism and vehemence hinder him from doing justice to her claims as a human being and a deserted woman. Her fate is left in so pleasing a state of doubt, that we gladly avail ourselves of it to suppose her married to Rinaldo, and becoming the mother of a line of Christian princes. I wish they had treated her poet half so well as she would infallibly have treated him herself.

But the singer of the Crusades can be strong as well as gentle. You discern in his battles and single combats the poet ambitious of renown, and the accomplished swordsman. The duel of Tancred and Argantes, in which the latter is slain, is as earnest and fiery writing throughout as truth and passion could desire; that of Tancred and Clorinda is also very powerful as well as affecting; and the whole siege of Jerusalem is admirable for the strength of its interest. Every body knows the grand verse (not, however, quite original) that summons the devils to council, "Chiama gli abitator," &c.; and the still grander, though less original one,

describing the desolations of time, "Giace l' alta Cartago."* The forest filled with supernatural terrors by a magician, in order that the Christians may not cut wood from it to make their engines of war, is one of the happiest pieces of invention in romance. It is founded in as true human feeling as those of Ariosto, and is made an admirable instrument for the aggrandizement of the character of Rinaldo. Godfrey's attestation of all time, and of the host of heaven, when he addresses his army in the first canto, is in the highest spirit of epic magnificence. So is the appearance of the celestial armies, together with that of the souls of the slain Christian warriors, in the last canto, where they issue forth in the air to assist the entrance into the conquered city. The classical poets are turned to great and frequent account throughout the poem; and yet the work has a strong air of originality, partly owing to the subject, partly to the abundance of love-scenes, and to a certain compactness in the treatment of the main story, notwithstanding the luxuriance of the episodes. The *Jerusalem Delivered* is stately, well-ordered, full of action and character, sometimes sublime, always elegant, and very interesting—more so, I think, as a whole, and in a popular sense, than any other story in verse, not excepting the *Odyssey*. For the exquisite domestic attractiveness of the second Homeric poem is injured, like the hero himself, by too many diversions from the main point. There is an interest, it is true, in that very delay; but we become too much used to the disappointment. In the epic of Tasso the reader constantly desires to learn how the success of the enterprise is to be brought about; and he scarcely loses sight of any of the persons but he wishes to see them again. Even in the love-scenes, tender and absorbed as they are, we feel that the heroes are fighters, or going to fight. When you are introduced to Armida in the Bower of Bliss, it is by warriors who come to take her lover away to battle.

One of the reasons why Tasso hurt the style of his poem by a manner too lyrical was, that notwithstanding its deficiency in sweetness, he was one of the profusest lyrical writers of his nation, and always having his feelings turned in upon himself. I

* See them both in the present volume, pp. 420 and 445.

am not sufficiently acquainted with his odes and sonnets to speak of them in the gross ; but I may be allowed to express my belief that they possess a great deal of fancy and feeling. It has been wondered how he could write so many, considering the troubles he went through : but the experience was the reason. The constant succession of hopes, fears, wants, gratitudes, loves, and the necessity of employing his imagination, accounts for all. Some of his sonnets, such as those on the Countess of Scandiano's lip (" Quel labbro," &c.) ; the one to Stigliano, concluding with the affecting mention of himself and his lost harp ; that beginning

" Io veggio in ciela scintillar le stelle,"

recur to my mind oftener than any others except Dante's " Tanto gentile" and Filicaia's *Lament on Italy* ; and, with the exception of a few of the more famous odes of Petrarch, and one or two of Filicaia's and Guidi's, I know of none in Italian like several of Tasso's, including his fragment " O del grand' Apennino," and the exquisite chorus on the *Golden Age*, which struck a note in the hearts of the world.

His *Aminta*, the chief pastoral poem of Italy, though, with the exception of that ode, not equal in passages to the *Faithful Shepherdess* (which is a Pan to it compared with a beardless shepherd), is elegant, interesting, and as superior to Guarini's more sophisticated yet still beautiful *Pastor Fido* as a first thought may be supposed to be to its emulator. The objection of its being too elegant for shepherds he anticipated and nullified by making Love himself account for it in a charming prologue, of which the god is the speaker :

" Queste selve oggi ragionar d' Amore
S' udranno in nuova guisa ; e ben parassi,
Che la mia Deità sia quì presente
In se medesima, e non ne' suoi ministri.
Spirerò nobil sensi à rozzi petti ;
Raddolcirò nelle lor lingue il suono :
Perchè, ovunque i' mi sia, io sono Amore
Ne' pastori non men che negli eroi ;
E la disagguaglianza de' soggetti,
Come a me piace, agguaglio : e questa è pure

Suprema gloria, e gran miracol mio,
 Render simili alle più dotte cetre
 Le rustiche sampogne.”

After new fashion shall these woods to-day
 Hear love discoursed ; and it shall well be seen
 That my divinity is present here
 In its own person, not its ministers.
 I will inbreathe high fancies in rude hearts ;
 I will refine and render dulcet sweet
 Their tongues ; because, wherever I may be,
 Whether with rustic or heroic men,
 There am I Love ; and inequality,
 As it may please me, do I equalise ;
 And 'tis my crowning glory and great miracle
 To make the rural pipe as eloquent
 Even as the subtlest harp.

I ought not to speak of Tasso's other poetry, or of his prose, for I have read little of either ; though, as they are not popular with his countrymen, a foreigner may be pardoned for thinking his classical tragedy, *Torrismondo*, not attractive—his *Sette Giornate* (Seven Days of the Creation) still less so—and his platonical and critical discourses better filled with authorities than reasons.

Tasso was a lesser kind of Milton, enchanted by the Sirens. We discern the weak parts of his character, more or less, in all his writings ; but we see also the irrepressible elegance and superiority of the mind, which, in spite of all weakness, was felt to tower above its age, and to draw to it the homage as well as the resentment of princes.

OLINDO AND SOPHRONIA.

Argument.

THE Mahomedan king of Jerusalem, at the instigation of Ismeno, a magician, deprives a Christian church of its image of the Virgin, and sets it up in a mosque, under a spell of enchantment, as a palladium against the Crusaders. The image is stolen in the night; and the king, unable to discover who has taken it, orders a massacre of the Christian portion of his subjects, which is prevented by Sophronia's accusing herself of the offence. Her lover, Olindo, finding her sentenced to the stake in consequence, disputes with her the right of martyrdom. He is condemned to suffer with her. The Amazon Clorinda, who has come to fight on the side of Aladin, obtains their pardon in acknowledgment of her services; and Sophronia, who had not loved Olindo before, now returns his passion, and goes with him from the stake to the marriage-altar.

OLINDO AND SOPHRONIA.

GODFREY of Boulogne, the leader of the Crusaders, was now in full march for Jerusalem with the Christian army ; and Aladin, the old infidel king, became agitated with wrath and terror. He had heard nothing but accounts of the enemy's irresistible advance. There were many Christians within his walls whose insurrection he dreaded ; and though he had appeared to grow milder with age, he now, in spite of the frost in his veins, felt as hot for cruelty, as the snake excited by the fire of summer. He longed to stifle his fears of insurrection by a massacre, but dreaded the consequence in the event of the city's being taken. He therefore contented himself, for the present, with laying waste the country round about it, destroying every possible receptacle of the invaders, poisoning the wells, and doubly fortifying the only weak point in his fortifications.

At this juncture the renegade Ismeno stood before him—a bad old man who had studied unlawful arts. He could bind and loose evil spirits, and draw the dead out of their tombs, restoring to them breath and perception. This man told the king, that in the church belonging to his Christian subjects there was an altar underground, on which stood a veiled image of the woman whom they worshipped—the mother, as they called her, of their dead and buried God. A dazzling light burnt for ever before it ; and the walls were hung with the offerings of her credulous devotees. If this image, he said, were taken away by the king's own hand, and set up in a mosque, such a spell of enchantment could be thrown about it as should render the city impregnable so long as the idol was kept safe.

Aladin proceeded instantly to the Christian temple, and, treating the priests with violence, tore the image from its shrine and

conveyed it to his own place of worship. The necromancer then muttered before it his blasphemous enchantment.

But the light of morning no sooner appeared in the mosque, than the official to whose charge the palladium had been committed missed it from its place, and in vain searched every other to find it. In truth it never was found again; nor is it known to this day how it went. Some think the Christians took it; others that Heaven interfered in order to save it from profanation. And well (says the poet) does it become a pious humility so to think of a disappearance so wonderful.

The king, who fell into a paroxysm of rage, not doubting that some Christian was the offender, issued a proclamation setting a price on the head of any one who concealed it. But no discovery was made. The necromancer resorted to his art with as little effect. The king then ordered a general Christian massacre. His savage wrath huffed itself on the reflection, that the criminal would be sure to perish, perish else who might.

The Christians heard the order with an astonishment that took away all their powers of resistance. The suddenness of the presence of death stupified them. They did not resort even to an entreaty. They waited, like sheep, to be butchered. Little did they think what kind of saviour was at hand.

There was a maiden among them of ripe years, grave and beautiful; one who took no heed of her beauty, but was altogether absorbed in high and holy thoughts. If she thought of her beauty ever, it was only to subject it to the dignity of virtue. The greater her worth, the more she concealed it from the world, living a close life at home, and veiling herself from all eyes.

But the rays of such a jewel could not but break through their casket. Love would not consent to have it so locked up. Love turned her very retirement into attraction. There was a youth who had become enamoured of this hidden treasure. His name was Olindo; Sophronia was that of the maiden. Olindo, like herself, was a Christian; and the humbleness of his passion was equal to the worth of her that inspired it. He desired much, hoped little, asked nothing.* He either knew not how to disclose

* "Brama assai, proco spera, e nulla chiede."—Canto ii. st. 16.

his love, or did not dare it. And she either despised it, or did not, or would not, see it. The poor youth, up to this day, had got nothing by his devotion, not even a look.

The maiden, who was nevertheless as generous as she was virtuous, fell into deep thought how she might save her Christian brethren. She soon came to her resolve. She delayed the execution of it a little, only out of a sense of virgin decorum, which, in its turn, made her still more resolute. She issued forth by herself, in the sight of all, not muffling up her beauty, nor yet exposing it. She withdrew her eyes beneath a veil, and, attired neither with ostentation nor carelessness, passed through the streets with unaffected simplicity, admired by all save herself. She went straight before the king. His angry aspect did not repel her. She drew aside the veil, and looked him steadily in the face.

“I am come,” she said, “to beg, sir, that you will suspend your wrath, and withhold the orders given to your people. I know and will give up the author of the deed which has offended you, on that condition.”

At the noble confidence thus displayed, at the sudden apparition of so much lofty and virtuous beauty, the king’s countenance was confused, and its angry expression abated. Had his spirit been less stern, or the look she gave him less firm in its purpose, he would have loved her. But haughty beauty and haughty beholder are seldom drawn together. Glances of pleasure are the baits of love. And yet, if the ungentle king was not enamoured, he was impressed. He was bent on gazing at her; he felt an emotion of delight.

“Say on,” he replied; “I accept the condition.”

“Behold then,” said she, “the offender. The deed was the work of this hand. It was I that conveyed away the image. I am she whom you look for. I am the criminal to be punished.”

And as she spake, she bent her head before him, as already yielding it to the executioner.

Oh, noble falsehood! when was truth to be compared with thee?*

* “Magnanima mengogna! or quando è il vero
Sì bello, che si possa a te preporre?”

The king was struck dumb. He did not fall into his accustomed transports of rage. When he recovered from his astonishment, he said, "Who advised you to do this? Who was your accomplice?"

"Not a soul," replied the maiden. "I would not have allowed another person to share a particle of my glory. I alone knew of the deed; I alone counselled it; I alone did it."

"Then be the consequence," cried he, "on your own head."

"'Tis but just," returned Sophronia. "Mine was the sole honour; mine, therefore, should be the only punishment."

The tyrant at this began to feel the accession of his old wrath. "Where," he said, "have you hidden the image?"

"I did not hide it," she replied, "I burnt it. I thought it fit and righteous to do so. I knew of no other way to save it from the hands of the unbelieving. Ask not for what will never again be found. Be content with the vengeance you have before you."

Oh, chaste heart! oh, exalted soul! oh, creature full of nobleness! think not to find a forgiving moment return. Beauty itself is thy shield no longer.

The glorious maiden is taken and bound. The cruel king has condemned her to the stake. Her veil, and the mantle that concealed her chaste bosom, are torn away, and her soft arms tied with a hard knot behind her. She said nothing; she was not terrified; but yet she was not unmoved. Her bosom heaved in spite of its courage. Her lovely colour was lost in a pure white.

The news spread in an instant, and the city crowded to the sight, Christians and all, Olindo among them. He had thought within himself, "What if it should be Sophronia!" But when he beheld that it was she indeed, and not only condemned, but already at the stake, he made through the crowd with violence, crying out, "This is not the person,—this poor simpleton! She never thought of such a thing; she had not the courage to do it; she had not the strength. How was she to carry the sacred image away? Let her abide by her story if she dare. I did it."

Such was the love of the poor youth for her that loved him not.

When he came up to the stake, he gave a formal account of what he pretended to have done. "I climbed in," he said, "at the window of your mosque at night, and found a narrow passage round to the image, where nobody could expect to meet me. I shall not suffer the penalty to be usurped by another. I did the deed, and I will have the honour of doing it, now that it comes to this. Let our places be exchanged."

Sophronia had looked up when she heard the youth call out, and she gazed on him with eyes of pity. "What madness is this!" exclaimed she. "What can induce an innocent person to bring destruction on himself for nothing? Can I not bear the thing by myself? Is the anger of one man so tremendous, that one person cannot sustain it? Trust me, friend, you are mistaken. I stand in no need of your company."

Thus spoke Sophronia to her lover; but not a whit was he disposed to alter his mind. Oh, great and beautiful spectacle! Love and virtue at strife;—death the prize they contend for;—ruin itself the salvation of the conqueror!

But the contest irritated the king. He felt himself set at nought; felt death itself despised, as if in despite of the inflictor. "Let them be taken at their words," cried he; "let both have the prize they long for."

The youth is seized on the instant, and bound like the maiden. Both are tied to the stake, and set back to back. They behold not the face of one another. The wood is heaped round about them; the fire is kindled.

The youth broke out into lamentations, but only loud enough to be heard by his fellow-sufferer. "Is this, then," said he, "the bond which I hoped might join us? Is this the fire which I thought might possibly warm two lovers' hearts?*" Too long (is it not so?) have we been divided, and now too cruelly are we united: too cruelly, I say, but not as regards me; for since I am not to be partner of thy existence, gladly do I share thy death. It is thy fate, not mine, that afflicts me. Oh! too happy were it to me, too sweet and fortunate, if I could obtain grace enough to be set with thee heart to heart, and so breathe out my soul into thy

* This conceit is more dwelt upon in the original, coupled with the one noticed at p. 217.

lips! Perhaps thou wouldst do the like with mine, and so give me thy last sigh."

Thus spoke the youth in tears; but the maiden gently reproved him.

She said: "Other thoughts, my friend, and other lamentations befit a time like this. Why thinkest thou not of thy sins, and of the rewards which God has promised to the righteous? Meet thy sufferings in his name; so shall their bitterness be made sweet, and thy soul be carried into the realms above. Cast thine eyes upwards, and behold them. See how beautiful is the sky; how the sun seems to invite thee towards it with its splendour."

At words so noble and piteous as these the Pagans themselves, who stood within hearing, began to weep. The Christians wept too, but in voices more lowly. Even the king felt an unusual emotion of pity; but disdaining to give way to it, turned aside and withdrew. The maiden alone partook not of the common grief. She for whom every body wept wept not for herself.

The flames were now beginning to approach the stake, when there appeared, coming through the crowd, a warrior of noble mien, habited in the arms of another country. The tiger, which formed the crest of his helmet, drew all eyes to it, for it was a cognizance well known. They began to think that it was a heroine instead of a hero which they saw, even the famous Clorinda. Nor did they err in the supposition.

A despiser of feminine habits had Clorinda been from her childhood. She disdained to put her hand to the needle and the distaff. She renounced every soft indulgence, every timid retirement, thinking that virtue could be safe wherever it went in its own courageous heart; and so she armed her countenance with pride, and pleased herself with making it stern, but not to the effect she looked for, for the sternness itself pleased. While yet a child her little right hand would control the bit of the charger, and she wielded the sword and spear, and hardened her limbs with wrestling, and made them supple for the race; and then as she grew up, she tracked the footsteps of the bear and lion, and followed the trumpet to the wars; and in those and in the depths of the forest she seemed a wild creature to mankind, and a man to the wildest creature. She had now come out of Persia to

wreak her displeasure on the Christians, who had already felt the sharpness of her sword; and as she arrived near this assembled multitude, death was the first thing that met her eyes, but in a shape so perplexing, that she looked narrowly to discern what it was, and then spurred her horse towards the scene of action. The crowd gave way as she approached, and she halted as she entered the circle round the stake, and sat gazing on the youth and maiden. She wondered to see the male victim lamenting, while the female was mute. But indeed she saw that he was weeping not out of grief but pity; or at least, not out of grief for himself; and as to the maiden, she observed her to be so wrapt up in the contemplation of the heavens at which she was gazing, that she appeared to have already taken leave of earth.

Pity touched the heart of the Amazon, and the tears came into her eyes. She felt sorry for both the victims, but chiefly for the one that said nothing. She turned to a white-headed man beside her, and said, "What is this? Who are these two persons whom crime, or their ill-fortune, has brought hither?"

The man answered her briefly, but to the purpose; and she discerned at once that both must be innocent. She therefore determined to save them. She dismounted, and set the example of putting a stop to the flames, and then said to the officers, "Let nobody continue this work till I have spoken to the king. Rest assured he will hold you guiltless of the delay." The officers obeyed, being struck with her air of confidence and authority; and she went straight towards the king, who had heard of her arrival, and who was coming to bid her welcome.

"I am Clorinda," she said. "Thou knowest me? Then thou knowest, sir, one who is desirous to defend the good faith and the king of Jerusalem. I am ready for any duty that may be assigned me. I fear not the greatest, nor do I disdain the least. Open field or walled city, no post will come amiss to the king's servant."

"Illustrious maiden," answered the king, "who knoweth not Clorinda? What region is there so distant from Asia, or so far away out of the paths of the sun, to which the sound of thy achievements has not arrived? Joined by thee and by thy sword I fear nothing. Godfrey, methinks, is too slow to attack me.

Dost thou ask to which post thou shalt be appointed? To the greatest! None else become thee. Thou art lady and mistress of the war."

Clorinda gave the king thanks for his courtesy, and then resumed. "Strange is it, in truth," she said, "to ask my reward before I have earned it; but confidence like this reassures me. Grant me, for what I propose to do in the good cause, the lives of those two persons. I wave the uncertainty of their offence; I wave the presumption of innocence afforded by their own behaviour. I ask their liberation as a favour. And yet it becomes me, at the same time, to confess, that I do not believe the Christians to have taken the image out of the mosque. It was an impious thing of the magician to put it there. An idol has no business in a Musulman temple, much less the idols of unbelievers; and my opinion is, that the miracle was the work of Mahomet himself, out of scorn and hatred of the contamination. Let Ismeno prefer his craft, if he will, to the weapons of a man; but let him not take upon himself the defence of a nation of warriors."

The warlike damsel was silent; and the king, though he could with difficulty conquer his anger, yet did so, to please his guest. "They are free," said he; "I can deny nothing to such a petitioner. Whether it be justice or not to absolve them, absolved they are. If they are innocent, I pronounce them so; if guilty, I concede their pardon."

At these words the youth and the maiden were set free; and blissful indeed was the fortune of Olindo; for love so proved as his awoke love in the noble bosom of Sophronia, and so he passed from the stake to the marriage-altar, a husband, instead of a wretch condemned—a lover beloved, instead of a hopeless adorer.

TANCRED AND CLORINDA.

Argument.

THE Mussulman Amazon Clorinda, who is beloved by the Christian chief Tancred, goes forth in disguise at night to burn the battering tower of the Christian army. She effects her purpose: but, in retreating from its discoverers, is accidentally shut out of the gate through which she had left the city. She makes her way into the open country, trusting to get in at one of the other gates; but, having been watched by Tancred, who does not know her in the armour in which she is disguised, a combat ensues between them, in which she is slain. She requests baptism in her last moments, and receives it from the hands of her despairing lover.

TANCRED AND CLORINDA.

THE Christians, in their siege of Jerusalem, had brought a huge rolling tower against the walls, from which they battered and commanded the city with such deadly effect that the generous Amazon Clorinda resolved to go forth in disguise and burn it. She disclosed her design to the chieftain Argantes, for the purpose of recommending to him the care of her damsels, in case any misfortune should happen to her; but the warrior, jealous of the glory of such an enterprise, insisted on partaking it. The old king, weeping for gratitude, joyfully gave them leave; and the Soldan of Egypt, with a generous emulation, would fain join them. Argantes was about to give him a disdainful refusal, when the king interposed, and persuaded the Soldan to remain behind, lest the city should miss too many of its best defenders at a time; adding, that the risk of sallying forth should be his, in case the burners of the tower were pursued on their return. Argantes and the Amazon then retired to prepare for the exploit, and the magician Ismeno compounded two balls of sulphur for the work of destruction.

Clorinda took off her beautiful helmet, and her surcoat of cloth of silver, and laid aside all her haughty arms, and dressed herself (unfortunate omen!) in black armour without polish, the better to conceal herself from the enemy. Her faithful servant, the good old eunuch Arsetes, who had attended her from infancy, and was now following her about as well as he could with his accustomed zeal, anxiously noticed what she was doing, and guessing it was for some desperate enterprise, entreated her, by his white hairs and all the love he had shewn her, to give it up. Finding his prayers to no purpose, he requested with great emotion that she would give ear to certain matters in her family his-

tory, which he at length felt it his duty to disclose. "It would then," he said, "be for herself to judge, whether she would persist in the enterprise or renounce it." Clorinda, at this, looked at the good man, and listened with attention.

"Not long ago," said he, "there reigned in Ethiopia, and perhaps is still reigning, a king named Senapus, who in common with his people professed the Christian religion. They are a black, though a handsome people, and the king and his queen were of the same colour. The king loved her dearly, but was unfortunately so jealous, that he concealed her from the sight of mankind. Had it been in his power, I think he would have hindered the very eyes of heaven from beholding her. The sweet lady, however, was wise and humble, and did every thing she could to please him.

"I was not a Christian myself. I was a Pagan slave, employed among the women about the queen, and making one of her special attendants.

"It happened that the royal bed-chamber was painted with the story of a holy knight saving a maiden from a dragon;* and the maiden had a face beautifully fair, with blooming cheeks. The queen often prayed and wept before this picture; and it made so great an impression on her, particularly the maiden's face, that when she bore a child, she saw with consternation that the infant's skin was of the same fair colour. This child was thyself.†

"Terrified with the thoughts of what her husband would feel at such a sight, what a convincing proof he would hold it of a faith on her part the reverse of spotless, she procured a babe of her own colour by means of a confidant; and before thou wert baptised (which is a ceremony that takes place in Ethiopia later than elsewhere) committed thee to my care to be brought up at a distance. Who shall relate the tears which thy mother poured forth, and the sighs and sobs with which they were interrupted?

* St. George.

† This fiction of a white Ethiop child is taken from the Greek romance of Heliodorus, book the fourth. The imaginative principle on which it is founded is true to physiology, and Tasso had a right to use it; but the particular and excessive instance does not appear happy in the eyes of a modern reader acquainted with the history of *albinos*.

How many times, when she thought she had given thee the last embrace, did she not gather thee to her bosom once more !* At length, raising her eyes to heaven, she said, ‘ O thou that seest into the hearts of mortals, and knowest in this matter the spotlessness of mine, dark though it be otherwise with frailty and with sin, save, I pray thee, this innocent creature who is denied the milk of its mother’s breast. Vouchsafe that she resemble her hapless parent in nothing but a chaste life. And thou, celestial warrior, that didst deliver the maiden out of the serpent’s mouth, if I have ever lit humble taper on thine altar, and set before thee offerings of gold and incense, be, I implore thee, her advocate. Be her advocate to such purpose, that in every turn of fortune she may be enabled to count on thy good help.’ Here she ceased, tore to her very heart-strings, with a face painted of the colour of death ; and I, weeping myself, received thee, and bore thee away hidden in a sweet covering of flowers and leaves.

“ I journeyed with thee along a forest, where a tiger came upon us with fury in its eyes. I betook me, alas ! to a tree, and left thee lying on the ground, such terror was in me ; and the horrible beast looked down upon thee. But it fell to licking thee with its dreadful tongue, and thou didst smile to it, and put thy little hand to its jaws ; and lo ! it gave thee suck, being a mother itself, and then, wonderful to relate, it returned into the woods, leaving me to venture down from the tree, and bear thee onward to my place of refuge. There, in a little obscure cottage, I had thee nursed for more than a year ; till, feeling that I grew old, I resolved to avail myself of the riches the queen had given me, and go into my own country, which was Egypt. I set out for it accordingly, and had to cross a torrent where thieves threatened me on one side, and the fierce water on the other. I plunged in, holding thee above the torrent with one hand, till I came to an eddy that tore thee from me. I thought thee lost. What was my delight and astonishment, on reaching the bank, to find that the water itself had tossed thee upon it in safety !

* The conceit is more antithetically put in the original :

“ Ch’ egli avria del candor che in te si vede
Argomentato in lei non bianca fede.”

“But I had a dream at night, which seemed to shew me the cause of thy good fortune. A warrior appeared before me with a threatening countenance, holding a sword in my face, and saying in an imperious voice, ‘Obey the commands of the child’s mother and of me, and baptise it. She is favoured of Heaven, and her lot is in my keeping. It was I that put tenderness in the heart of the wild beast, and even a will to save her in the water. Woe to thee, if thou believest not this vision. It is a message from the skies.’

“The spirit vanished, and I awoke and pursued my journey; but thinking my own creed the true one, and therefore concluding the dream to be false, I baptised thee not; I bred thee what I was myself, a Pagan; and thou didst grow up, and become great and wonderful in arms, surpassing the deeds of men, and didst acquire riches and lands; and what thy life has been since, thou knowest as well as I; ay, and thou knowest mine own ways too, how I have followed and cautiously waited on thee ever, being to thee both as a servant and father.

“Now yesterday morning, as I lay heavily asleep, in consequence of my troubled mind, the same figure of the warrior made its appearance, but with a countenance still more threatening, and speaking in a louder voice. ‘Wretch,’ it exclaimed, ‘the hour is approaching when Clorinda shall end both her life and her belief. She is mine in despite of thee. Misery be thine.’ With these words it darted away as though it flew.

“Consider then, delight of my soul, what these dreams may portend. They threaten thee terrible things; for what reason I know not. Can it be, that mine own faith is the wrong one, and that of thy parents the right? Ah! take thought at least, and repress this daring courage. Lay aside these arms that frighten me.”

Tears hindered the old man from saying more. Clorinda grew thoughtful, and felt something of dread, for she had a like kind of dream. At length, however, cheerfully looking up, she said, “I must follow the faith I was bred in; the faith which thou thyself bred’st me in, although thy words would now make me doubt it. Neither can I give up the enterprise that calls me forth. Such

a withdrawal is not to be expected of an honourable soul. Death may put on the worst face it pleases. I shall not retreat."

The intrepid maiden, however, did her best to console her good friend ; but the time having arrived for the adventure, she finally bade him be of good heart, and so left him.

Silently, and in the middle of the night, Argantes and Clorinda took their way down the hills of Jerusalem, and, quitting the gates, went stealthily towards the site of the tower. But its ever-watchful guards were alarmed. They demanded the watch-word ; and, not receiving it, cried out, "To arms! to arms!" The dauntless adventurers plunged forwards with their swords ; they dashed aside every assailant, pitched the balls of sulphur into the machine, and in a short time, in the midst of a daring conflict, had the pleasure of seeing the smoke and the flame arise, and the whole tower blazing to its destruction. A terrible sight it was to the Christians. Waked up, they came crowding to the place ; and the two companions, notwithstanding their skill and audacity, were compelled to make a retreat. The besieged, with the king at their head, now arrived also, crowding on the walls ; and the gate was opened to let the adventurers in. The Soldan issued forth at the same moment to cover the retreat. Argantes was forced through the gate by Clorinda in spite of himself ; and she, but for a luckless antagonist, would have followed him ; but a soldier aiming at her a last blow, she rushed back to give the man his death ; and, in the confusion of the moment, the warders, believing her to have entered, shut up the gate, and the heroine was left without.

Behind Clorinda was the gate—before and round about her was a host of foes ; and surely at that moment she thought that her life was drawing to its end. Finding, however, that her dark armour befriended her in the tumult, she mingled with the enemy as though she had been one of themselves, and so, by degrees, picked her way through the confusion caused by the fire. As the wolf, with its bloody mouth, seeks covert in the woods, even so Clorinda got clear out of the multitude into the darkness and the open country.

Not, however, so clear, alas ! but that Tancred perceived her—Tancred, her foe in creed, but her adoring lover, whose heart

she had conquered in the midst of strife, and whose passion for her she knew. But now she knew not that he had seen her; nor did he, poor valiant wretch, know that the knight in black armour whom he pursued was a woman, and Clorinda. Tancred had seen the warrior strike down the assailant at the gate; he had watched him as he picked his way to escape; and Clorinda now heard the unknown Tancred coming swiftly on horseback behind her as she was speeding round towards another gate in hopes of being let in.

The heroine at length turned, and said, "How now, friend?—what is thy business?"

"Death!" answered the pursuer.

"Thou shalt have it," replied the maiden.

The knight, as his enemy was on foot, dismounted, in order to render the combat equal; and their swords are drawn in fury, and the fight begins.*

Worthy of the brightest day-time was that fight—worthy of a theatre full of valiant beholders. Be not displeased, O Night! that I draw it out of thy bosom, and set it in the serene light of renown: the splendour will but the more set off the great shade of thy darkness.

No trial was this of skill—no contest of warding and traversing and taking heed—no artful interchange of blows now pretended, now given in earnest, now glancing. Night-time and rage cast aside all consideration. The swords horribly clashed and hammered on one another. Not a cut descended in vain—not a thrust was without substance. Shame and fury aggravated one another. Every blow became fiercer than the last. They closed—they could use their blades no longer; they dashed the pummels of their swords at one another's faces; they butted and shouldered with helm and buckler. Three times the man threw his arms round the woman with other embraces than those of love—three

* The poet here compares his hero and heroine to two jealous "bulls," no happy comparison certainly.

"Vansi a ritrovar non altrimenti
Che duo tori gelosi."

times they returned to their swords, and cut and slashed one another's bleeding bodies ; till at length they were obliged to hold back for the purpose of taking breath.

Tancred and Clorinda stood fronting one another in the darkness, leaning on their swords for want of strength. The last star in the heavens was fading in the tinge of dawn ; and Tancred saw that his enemy had lost more blood than himself, and it made him proud and joyful. Oh, foolish mind of us humans, elated at every fancy of success ! Poor wretch ! for what dost thou rejoice ? How sad will be thy victory ! What a misery to look back upon, thy delight ! Every drop of that blood will be paid for with worlds of tears !

Dimly thus looking at one another stood the combatants, bleeding a while in peace. At length Tancred, who wished to know his antagonist, said, "It hath been no good fortune of ours to be compelled thus to fight where nobody can behold us ; but we have at least become acquainted with the good swords of one another. Let me request, therefore (if to request any thing at such a time be not unbecoming), that I may be no stranger to thy name. Permit me to learn, whatever be the result, who it is that shall honour my death or my victory."

"I am not accustomed," answered the fierce maiden, "to disclose who I am ; nor shall I disclose it now. Suffice to hear that thou seest before thee one of the burners of the tower."

Tancred was exasperated at this discovery. "In an evil moment," cried he, "hast thou said it. Thy silence and thy speech alike disgust me."

Into the combat again they dash, feeble as they were. Fero-cious indeed is the strife in which skill is not thought of, and strength itself is dead ; in which valour rages instead of contends, and feebleness becomes hate and fury. Oh, the gates of blood that were set open in wounds upon wounds ! If life itself did not come pouring forth, it was only because scorn withheld it.

As in the *Ægean* Sea, when the south and north winds have lost the violence of their strength, the billows do not subside nevertheless, but retain the noise and magnitude of their first motion ; so the continued impulse of the combatants carried them still

against one another, hurling them into mutual injury, though they had scarcely life in their bodies.*

And now the fatal hour has come when Clorinda must die. The sword of Tancred is in her bosom to the very hilt. The stomacher under the cuirass which enclosed it is filled with a hot flood. Her legs give way beneath her. She falls—she feels that she is departing. The conqueror, with a still threatening countenance, prepares to follow up his victory, and treads on her as she lies.

But a new spirit had come upon her—the spirit which called the beloved of Heaven to itself; and, speaking in a sorrowing voice, she thus uttered her last words:

“My friend, thou hast conquered—I forgive thee. Forgive thou me, not for my body’s sake, which fears nothing, but for the sake, alas! of my soul. Baptise me, I beseech thee.”

There was something in the voice, as the dying person spake these words, that went, he knew not why, to the heart of Tancred. The tears forced themselves into his eyes. Not far off there was a little stream, and the conqueror went to it and filled his helmet; and returning, prepared for the pious office by unlacing his adversary’s helmet. His hands trembled when he first beheld the forehead, though he did not yet know it; but when the vizor was all down, and the face disclosed, he remained without speech and motion.

Oh, the sight!—Oh, the recognition!

He did not die. He summoned up all the powers within him to support his heart for that moment. He resolved to hold up his duty above his misery, and give life with the sweet water to her whom he had slain with sword. He dipped his fingers in it, and marked her forehead with the cross, and repeated the words of

* “Qual l’ alto Egeo, perche Aquilone o Noto
Cessi, che tutto prima il volse e scosse,
Non s’ accheta però, ma ’l suono e ’l moto
Ritien de l’ onde anco agitate e grosse;
Tal, se ben manca in lor col sangue voto
Quel vigor che le braccia ai colpi mosse,
Serbano ancor l’ impeto primo, e vanno
Da quel sospinti a giunger danno a danno.”

the sacred office ; and while he was repeating them, the sufferer changed countenance for joy, and smiled, and seemed to say, in the cheerfulness of her departure, "The heavens are opening—I go in peace." A paleness and a shade together then came over her countenance, as if lilies had been mixed with violets. She looked up at heaven, and heaven itself might be thought for very tenderness to be looking at her ; and then she raised a little her hand towards that of the knight (for she could not speak), and so gave it him in sign of goodwill ; and with his pressure of it her soul passed away, and she seemed asleep.

But Tancred no sooner beheld her dead than all the strength of mind which he had summoned up to support him fell flat on the instant. He would here give way to the most frantic outcries ; but life and speech seemed to be shut up in one point in his heart ; despair seized him like death, and he fell senseless beside her : and surely he would have died indeed, had not a party of his countrymen happened to come up. They were looking for water, and had found it, and they discovered the bodies at the same time. The leader knew Tancred by his arms. The beautiful body of Clorinda, though he deemed her a Pagan, he would not leave exposed to the wolves ; and so he directed both to be carried to the pavilion of Tancred, and there placed in separate chambers.

Dreadful was the waking of Tancred—not for the solemn whispering before him—not for his aching wounds, terrible as they were, but for the agony of the recollection that rushed upon him. He would have gone staggering out of the pavilion to seek the remains of his Clorinda, and save them from the wolves ; but his friends told him they were at hand, under the curtain of his own dwelling. A gleam of pleasure shot across his face, and he staggered into the chamber ; but when he beheld the body gored with his own hand, and the face, calm indeed, but calm like a pale night without stars, he trembled so, that he would have sunk to the ground but for his supporters.

"O sweet face !" he exclaimed ; "thou may'st be calm now, but what is to calm me ? O hand that was held up to me in sign of peace and forgiveness ! to what have I brought thee ? Wretch that I am, I do not even weep. Mine eyes are as cruel as my hands. My blood shall be shed instead."

And with these words he began tearing off the bandages which the surgeons had put upon him; and he thrust his fingers into his wounds, and would have slain himself thus outright, had not the pain made him faint away.

He was then taken back to his own chamber. Godfrey came in the mean time with the venerable hermit Peter; and when the sufferer awoke, they addressed him in kind words, which even his impatience respected; but it was not to be calmed till the preacher put on the terrors of religion, remonstrating with him as an ingrate to God, and threatening him with the doom of a sinner. The tears then crept into his eyes, and he tried to be patient, and in some degree was so—only breaking out ever and anon, now with exclamations of horror, and now with fond lamentations, talking as if with the shade of his beloved.

Thus lay Tancred for days together, ever moaning and woful; till, falling asleep one night towards the dawn, the shade of Clorinda did indeed appear more beautiful than ever, and clad in light and joy. She seemed to stoop and wipe the tears from his eyes; and then said, "Behold how happy I am. Behold me, O beloved friend, and see how happy, and bright, and beautiful I am; and consider that it is all owing to thyself. 'Twas thou that took'st me out of the false path, and made me worthy of admission among saints and angels. There, in heaven, I love and rejoice; and there I look to see thee in thine appointed time; after which we shall both love the great God and one another for ever and ever. Be faithful, and command thyself, and look to the end; for, lo! as far as it is permitted to a blessed spirit to love mortality, even now I love thee!"

With these words the eyes of the vision grew bright beyond mortal beauty; and then it turned and was hidden in the depth of its radiance, and disappeared.

Tancred slept a quiet sleep; and when he awoke he gave himself patiently up to the will of the physician; and the remains of Clorinda were gathered into a noble tomb.*

* This tomb, Tancred says, in an address which he makes to it, "has his flames inside of it, and his tears without."

"Che dentro hai le mie fiamme, e fuori il pianto." St. 96.

I am loath to disturb the effect of a really touching story; but if I do not occasionally give instances of these conceits, my translations will belie my criticism.

RINALDO AND ARMIDA:

WITH THE

ADVENTURES OF THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

Argument.

PART I.—Satan assembles the fiends in council to consider the best means of opposing the Christians. Armida, the niece of the wizard king of Damascus, is incited to go to their camp under false pretences, and endeavour to weaken it; which she does by seducing away many of the knights, and sowing a discord which ends in the flight of Rinaldo.

PART II.—Armida, after making the knights feel the power of her magic, dismisses them bound prisoners for Damascus. They are rescued on their way by Rinaldo. Armida pursues him in wrath, but falls in love with him.

PART III.—The magician Ismeno succeeds in frightening the Christians in their attempt to cut wood from the enchanted forest. Rinaldo is sent for as the person fated to undo the enchantment.

PART IV.—Rinaldo and Armida, in love with each other, pass their time in a bower of bliss. He is fetched away by two knights, and leaves her in despair.

PART V.—Rinaldo disenchants the forest, and has the chief hand in the taking of Jerusalem. He meets and reconciles Armida.

RINALDO AND ARMIDA, ETC.

PART THE FIRST.

ARMIDA IN THE CHRISTIAN CAMP.

THE Christians had now commenced their attack on Jerusalem, and brought a great rolling tower against the walls, built from the wood of a forest in the neighbourhood; when the Malignant Spirit, who has never ceased his war with Heaven, cast in his mind how he might best defeat their purpose. It was necessary to divide their forces; to destroy their tower; to hinder them from building another; and to make one final triumphant effort against the whole progress of their arms.

Forgetting how the right arm of God could launch its thunderbolts, the Fiend accordingly seated himself on his throne, and ordered his powers to be brought together.

The Tartarean trumpet, with its hoarse voice, called up the dwellers in everlasting darkness. The huge black caverns trembled to their depths, and the blind air rebellowed with the thunder. The bolt does not break forth so horribly when it comes bursting after the flash out of the heavens; nor had the world before ever trembled with such an earthquake.*

* " Chiama gli abitator' de l' ombre eterne
Il rauco suon de la tartarea tromba.
Tremen le spaziose atre caverne,
E l' aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba.
Nè sì stridendo mai da le superne
Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba:
Nè sì scossa già mai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in sen gravida serra."

Canto iv. st. 3.

The trump of Tartarus, with iron roar,
Called to the dwellers the black regions under:

The gods of the abyss came thronging up on all sides through the gates ;—terrible-looking beings with unaccountable aspects, dispensers of death and horror with their eyes ;—some stamping with hoofs, some rolling on enormous spires,—their faces human, their hair serpents. There were thousands of shameless Harpies, of pallid Gorgons, of barking Scyllas, of Chimeras that vomited ashes, and of monsters never before heard or thought of, with perverse aspects all mixed up in one.

The Power of Evil sat looking down upon them, huger than a rock in the sea, or an alp with forked summits. A certain horrible majesty augmented the terrors of his aspect. His eyes reddened ; his poisonous look hung in the air like a comet ; the mouth, as it opened in the midst of clouds of beard, seemed an abyss of darkness and blood ; and out of it, as from a volcano, issued fires, and vapours, and disgust.

Satan laid forth to his dreadful hearers his old quarrel with Heaven, and its new threats of an extension of its empire. Christendom was to be brought into Asia ; their worshippers were to perish ; souls were to be rescued from their devices, and Satan's

Hell through its caverns trembled to the core,
 And the blind air rebelled to the thunder :
 Never yet fiery bolt more fiercely tore
 The crashing firmament, like rocks, asunder ;
 Nor with so huge a shudder earth's foundations
 Quake to their mighty heart, lifting the nations.

The tone of this stanza was caught from a fine one in Politian, the fourth verse of which (about the cataracts of the Nile) has the grandest "echo to the sense" which I have met with in Italian poetry :

"Con tal romor, qualor l' aer di scorda,
 Di Giove il foco d' alta nube piomba :
 Con tal tumulto, onde la gente assorda,
 Da l' alte cataratte il Nil rimbomba :
 Con tal orror del Latin sangue ingorda
 Sondò Megera la tartarea tromba."

Fragment on the Jousting of Guiliano de' Medici.

Such is the noise, when through his cloudy floor
 The bolt of Jove falls on the pale world under ;
 So shakes the land where Nile with deafening roar
 Plunges his clattering cataracts in thunder ;
 Horribly so, through Latium's realm of yore,
 The trump of Tartarus blew ghastly wonder.

kingdom on earth put an end to. He exhorted them therefore to issue forth once for all and prevent this fatal consummation by the destruction of the Christian forces. Some of the leaders he bade them do their best to disperse, others to slay, others to draw into effeminate pleasures, into rebellion, into the ruin of the whole camp, so that not a vestige might remain of its existence.

The assembly broke up with the noise of hurricanes. They issued forth to look once more upon the stars, and to sow seeds every where of destruction to the Christians. Satan himself followed them, and entered the heart of Hydraotes, king of Damascus.

Hydraotes was a wizard as well as a king, and held the Christians in abhorrence. But he was wise enough to respect their valour; and with Satan's help he discerned the likeliest way to counteract it. He had a niece, who was the greatest beauty of the age. He had taught her his art: and he concluded, that the enchantments of beauty and magic united would prove irresistible. He, therefore, disclosed to her his object. He told her that every artifice was lawful, when the intention was to serve one's country and one's faith; and he conjured her to do her utmost to separate Godfrey himself from his army, or in the event of that not being possible, to bring away as many as she could of his noblest captains.

Armida (for that was her name), proud of her beauty, and of the unusual arts that she had acquired, took her way the same evening, alone, and by the most sequestered paths,—a female in gown and tresses issuing forth to conquer an army.*

She had not travelled many days ere she came in sight of the Christian camp, the outskirts of which she entered immediately. The Frenchmen all flocked to see her, wondering who she was, and who could have sent them so lovely a messenger. Armida passed onwards, not with a misgiving air, not with an unalluring

* "La bella Armida, di sua forma altiera,
E de' doni del sesso e de l' etate,
L' impresa prende: e in su la prima sera
Parte, e tiene sol vie chiuse e celate:
E 'n treccia e 'n gonna femminile spera
Vincer popoli invitti e schiere armate."

and yet not with an immodest one. Her golden tresses she suffered at one moment to escape from under veil, and at another gathered them again within it. Her rosy mouth breathed simplicity as well as voluptuousness. Her bosom was so artfully draped, as to let itself be discerned without seeming to intend it. And thus she passed along, surprising and transporting every body. Coming at length among the tents of the officers, she requested to be shewn that of the leader; and Eustace eagerly stepped forward to conduct her.

Eustace was the younger brother of Godfrey. He had all the ardour of his time of life, and the gallantry, in every respect, of a Frenchman. After paying her a profusion of compliments, and learning that she was a fugitive in distress, he promised her every thing which his brother's authority and his own sword could do for her; and so led her into Godfrey's presence.

The pretended fugitive made a lowly obeisance, and then stood mute and blushing, till the general re-assured her. She then told him, that she was the rightful queen of Damascus, whose throne was usurped by an uncle; that her uncle sought her death, from which she had been saved by the man who was bribed to inflict it; and that although her creed was Mahometan, she had brought her mind to conclude, that so noble an enemy as Godfrey would take pity on her condition, and permit some of his captains to aid the secret wishes of her people, and seat her on the throne. Ten selected chiefs would overcome, she said, all opposition; and she promised in return to become his grateful and faithful vassal.

The leader of the Christian army sat a while in deliberation. His heart was inclined to befriend the lady, but his prudence was afraid of a Pagan artifice; and he thought it did not become his piety to turn aside from the great enterprise which God had favoured. He therefore gave her a gentle refusal; but added, that should success attend him, and Jerusalem be taken, he would instantly do what she required.

Armida looked down, and wept. A mixture of indignation and despair appeared to seize her; and exclaiming that she had no longer a wish to live, she accused, she said, not a heart so renowned for generosity as his, but Heaven itself which had steeled

it against her. What was she to do? She could not remain in his camp. Virgin modesty forbade that. She was not safe out of its bounds. Her enemies tracked her steps. It was fit that she should die by her own hand.

An indignant pity took possession of the French officers. They wondered how Godfrey could resist the prayers of a creature so beautiful; and Eustace openly, though respectfully, remonstrated. He said, that if ten of the best of his captains could not be spared, ten others might; that it especially became the Christian to redress the wrongs of the innocent; that the death of a tyrant, instead of being a deviation from the service of God, was one of the directest means of performing it; and that France would never endure to hear, that a lady had applied to her knights for assistance, and found her suit refused.

A murmur of approbation followed the words of Eustace. His companions pressed nearer to the general, and warmly urged his request.

Godfrey assented to a wish expressed by so many, but not with perfect good will. He bade them remember, that the measure was the result of their own opinion, not his; and concluded by requesting them at all events, for his sake, to moderate the excess of their confidence. The transported warriors had scarcely any answer to make but that of congratulations to the lady. She, on her side, while mischief was rejoicing in her heart, first expressed her gratitude to all in words intermixed with smiles and tears, and then carried herself towards every one in particular in the manner which she thought most fitted to ensnare. She behaved to this person with cordiality, to that with comparative reserve; to one with phrases only, to another with looks besides, and intimations of secret preference. The ardour of some she repressed, but still in a manner to rekindle it. To others she was all gaiety and attraction; and when others again had their eyes upon her, she would fall into fits of absence, and shed tears, as if in secret, and then look up suddenly and laugh, and put on a cheerful patience. And then she drew them all into her net.

Yet none of all these men confessed that passion impelled them; every body laid his enthusiasm to the account of honour—Eustace particularly, because he was most in love. He was also

very jealous, especially of the heroical Rinaldo, Prince of Este ; and as the squadron of horse to which they both belonged—the greatest in the army—had lately been deprived of its chief, Eustace cast in his mind how he might keep Rinaldo from going with Armida, and at the same time secure his own attendance on her, by advancing him to the vacant post. He offered his services to Rinaldo for the purpose, not without such emotion as let the hero into his secret ; but as the latter had no desire to wait on the lady, he smilingly assented, agreeing at the same time to assist the wishes of the lover. The emissaries of Satan, however, were at work in all quarters. If Eustace was jealous of Rinaldo as a rival in love, Gernando, Prince of Norway, another of the squadron that had lost its chief, was no less so of his gallantry in war, and of his qualifications for being his commander. Gernando was a haughty barbarian, who thought that every sort of pre-eminence was confined to princes of blood royal. He heard of the proposal of Eustace with a disgust that broke into the unworthiest expressions. He even vented it in public, in the open part of the camp, when Rinaldo was standing at no great distance ; and the words coming to the hero's ears, and breaking down the tranquillity of his contempt, the latter darted towards him, sword in hand, and defied him to single combat. Gernando beheld death before him, but made a show of valour, and stood on his defence. A thousand swords leaped forth to back him, mixed with as many voices ; and half the camp of Godfrey tried to withhold the impetuous youth who was for deciding his quarrel without the general's leave. But the hero's transport was not to be stopped ; he dashed through them all, forced the Norwegian to encounter him, and after a storm of blows that dazzled the man's eyes and took away his senses, ran his sword thrice through the prince's body. He then sent the blade into his sheath reeking as it was, and, taking his way back to his tent, reposed in the calmness of his triumph.

The victor had scarcely gone when the general arrived on the ground, where he beheld the slain Prince of Norway with acute feelings of regret. What was to become of his army, if the leaders thus quarrelled among themselves, and his authority was set at nought ? The friends of the slain man increased his an-

ger against Rinaldo, by charging him with all the blame of the catastrophe. The hero's friend, Tancred, assuaged it somewhat by disclosing the truth, and then ventured to ask pardon for the outbreak. But the wise commander shewed so many reasons why such an offence could not be overlooked, and his countenance expressed such a determination to resent it, that the gallant youth hastened secretly to his friend, and urged him to quit the camp till his services should be needed. Rinaldo at first called for his arms, and was bent on resisting every body who came to seize him, had it been even Godfrey himself; but Tancred shewing him how unjust that would be, and how fatal to the Christian cause, he consented with an ill grace to depart. He would take nobody with him but two squires; and he went away raging with a sense of ill requital for his achievements, but resolving to prove their value by destroying every infidel prince that he could encounter.

Armida now tried in vain to make an impression on the heart of Godfrey. He was insensible to all her devices; but she succeeded in quitting the camp with her ten champions. Lots were drawn to determine who should go; and all who failed to be in the list—Eustace among them—were so jealous of the rest, that at night-time, after the others had been long on the road, they set out to overtake them, each by himself, and all in violation of their soldierly words. The ten opposed them as they came up, but to no purpose. Armida reconciled them all in appearance, by feigning to be devoted to each in secret; and thus she rode on with them many a mile, till she came to a castle on the Dead Sea, where she was accustomed to practise her unfriendliest arts.

Meanwhile news came to Godfrey that his Egyptian enemies were at hand with a great fleet, and that his caravan of provisions had been taken by the robbers of the desert. His army was thus threatened with ruin from desertion, starvation, and the sword. He maintained a calm and even a cheerful countenance; but in his thoughts he had great anxiety.

PART THE SECOND.

ARMIDA'S WRATH AND LOVE WITH RINALDO.

THE castle to which Armida took her prisoners occupied an island close to the shore in the loathsome Dead Sea. They entered it by means of a narrow bridge; but if their pity had been great at seeing her forced to take refuge in a spot so desolate and repulsive, how pleasingly was it changed into as great a surprise at finding a totally different region within the walls! The gardens were extensive and lovely; the rivulets and fountains as sweet as the flowery thickets they watered; the breezes refreshing, the skies of a sapphire blue, and the birds were singing round about them in the trees. Her riches astonished them no less. The side of the castle that looked on the gardens was all marble and gold; a banquet awaited them beside a water on a shady lawn, consisting of the exquisitest viands on the costliest plate; and a hundred beautiful maidens attended them while they feasted. The enchantress was all smiles and delight; and such was her art, that although she bestowed no favour on any body beyond his banquet and his hopes, every body thought himself the favoured lover.

But no sooner was the feast over, than the greatest and worst of their astonishments ensued. The lady quitted them, saying she should return presently. She did so with a troubled and unfriendly countenance, having a book in one hand, and a little wand in the other. She read in the book in a low voice, and while she was reading shook the little wand; and the guests, altering in every part of their being, and shrinking into minute bodies, felt an inclination, which they obeyed, to plunge into the water beside them. They were fish. In a little while they were again men, looking her in the face with dread and amaze-

ment. She had restored them to their humanity. She regarded them with a severe countenance, and said: "You have tasted my power; I can exercise it far more terribly—can put you in dungeons for ever—can turn you to roots in the ground—to flints within the rock. Beware of my wrath, and please me; quit your faiths for mine, and fight against the blasphemer Godfrey."

Every Christian but one rejected her alternative with abhorrence. Him she made one of her champions; the rest were tied and bound, and after being kept a while in a dungeon were sent off as a present to the King of Egypt, with an escort that came from Damascus to fetch them.

Exulting was left the fair and bigoted magician; but she little guessed what a new fortune awaited them on the road. The discord with which the powers of evil had seconded her endeavours to weaken the Christian camp had turned in this instance against herself. It had made Rinaldo a wanderer; it had brought his wanderings into this very path; and he now met the prisoners, and bade defiance to the escort. A battle ensued, in which the hero won his accustomed victory. The Christians, receiving the armour of their foes, joyfully took their way back to the camp; and one of the escort who escaped the slaughter, returned to Armida with news of the deliverance of her captives.

The mortified enchantress took horse and went in pursuit of Rinaldo, with wrath and vengeance in her heart. She tracked him from place to place, till she knew he must arrive on the banks of the Orontes; and there, making a stealthy circuit, she cast a spell, and lay in wait for him in a little island which divided the stream in two.*

Rinaldo came up with his squires; he beheld on the bank a pillar of white marble, and beside it on the water a little boat. The pillar presented an inscription, inviting travellers to cross to the island and behold a wonder of the world. The hero accepted the invitation; but as the boat was too small to hold more than

* "That sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes." *Parad. Lost*, book iv.

It was famous for the most luxurious worship of antiquity. *Vide* Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 198.

one person, and the circumstance probably an appeal to his courage, he bade his squires wait for him, and proceeded by himself.

On reaching the island and casting his eyes eagerly round about, the adventurer could discern nothing but trees, and grottos, flowers, and grass, and water. He thought himself trifled with; but as the spot was beautiful and refreshing, he took off his helmet, resolving to stay a little and repose. He crossed to the farther side of the island, and lay down on the river-side.

On a sudden he observed the water bubble and gurgle in a manner that was very strange; and presently the top of a head arose, with beautiful hair, then the face of a damsel, then the bosom. The fair creature stood half out of the stream, and warbled a song so luxurious and so lulling, that the little wind there was seemed to fall in order to listen; and the young warrior was so drowsed with the sweetness, that languor crept through all his senses, and he slept.

Armida came from out a thicket and looked on him. She had resolved that he should perish.

But when she saw how placidly he breathed, and what an intimation of beautiful eyes there was in his very eyelids, she hung over him, still looking.

In a little while she sat down by his side, always looking. She hung over him as Narcissus did over the water, and indignation melted out of her heart. She cooled his face with her veil; she made a fan of it; she gave herself up to the worship of those hidden eyes. Of an enemy she became a lover.*

Armida gathered trails of roses and lilies from the thickets around her, and cast a spell on them, and made bands with which she fettered his sleeping limbs; and then she called her nymphs, and they put him into her car, and she went away with him through the air far off, even to one of the Fortunate Islands in the great ocean, where her jealousy, assisted by her art, would be in dread of no visitors, no discovery. She bore him to the top of a mountain, and cast a spell about the mountain, to make the top lovely and the sides inaccessible. She put shapes of wild beasts

* I omit a point about "fires" of love, and "ices" of the heart; and I will here observe, once for all, that I omit many such in these versions of Tasso, for the reason given in the Preface.

and monsters in the woods of the lowest region ; and heaps of ice in the second ; and alluring and betraying shapes and enchantments towards the summit ; and round the summit she put walls and labyrinths of inextricable error ; and in the heart of these was a palace by a lake, and the loveliest of gardens.

Here Rinaldo was awaked by love and beauty, and here for the present he is left.

PART THE THIRD.

MEANTIME the siege of the Holy City had gone on, with various success on either side, but chiefly to the loss of the Christians. The machinations of Satan were prevailing. Rinaldo, in his absence, was thought to have been slain by the contrivance of Godfrey, which nearly produced a revolt of the forces. Godfrey was himself wounded in battle by Clorinda; and now the great wooden tower was burnt, and Clorinda slain in consequence (as you have heard in another place), which oppressed the courage of Tancred with melancholy.

On the other hand, the Powers of Evil were far from being as prosperous as they wished. They had lost the soul of Clorinda. They had seen Godfrey healed by a secret messenger from Heaven, who dropt celestial balsam into his wound. They had seen the return of Armida's prisoners, who had arrived just in time to change the fortune of a battle, and drive the Pagans back within their walls. And worse than all, they had again felt the arm of St. Michael, who had threatened them with worse consequences if they reappeared in the contest.

The fiends, however, had colleagues on earth, who plotted for them meanwhile. The Christians had set about making another tower; but in this proceeding they were thwarted by the enchanter Ismeno, who cast his spells to better purpose this time than he had done in the affair of the stolen image. The forest in which the Christians obtained wood for these engines lay in a solitary valley, not far from the camp. It was very old, dark, and intricate; and had already an evil fame as the haunt of impure spirits. No shepherd ever took his flock there; no Pagan would cut a bough from it; no traveller approached it, unless he

had lost his way : he made a large circuit to avoid it, and pointed it out anxiously to his companions.

The necessity of the Christians compelled them to defy this evil repute of the forest ; and Ismeno hastened to oppose them. He drew his line, and uttered his incantations, and called on the spirits whom St. Michael had rebuked, bidding them come and take charge of the forest—every one of his tree, as a soul of its body. The spirits delayed at first, not only for dread of the great angel, but because they resented the biddings of mortality, even in their own cause. The magician, however, persisted ; and his spells becoming too powerful to be withstood, presently they came pouring in by myriads, occupying the whole place, and rendering the very approach to it a task of fear and labour. The first party of men that came to cut wood were unable to advance when they beheld the trees, but turned like children, and became the mockery of the camp. Godfrey sent them back, with a chosen squadron to animate them to the work ; but the squadron themselves, however boldly they affected to proceed, had no sooner approached the spot than they found reason to forgive the fears of the wood-cutters. The earth shook ; a great wind began rising, with a sound of waters ; and presently, every dreadful noise ever heard by man seemed mingled into one, and advancing to meet them—roarings of lions, hissings of serpents, peelings and rolls of thunder. The squadron went back to Godfrey, and plainly confessed that it had not courage enough to enter such a place.

A leader, of the name of Alcasto, shook his head at this candour with a contemptuous smile. He was a man of the stupider sort of courage, without mind enough to conceive danger. “ Pretty soldiers ! ” exclaimed he, “ to be afraid of noises and sights ! Give the duty to me. Nothing shall stop Alcasto, though the place be the mouth of hell.”

Alcasto went ; and he went farther than the rest, and the trembling woodcutters once more prepared their axes ; but, on a sudden, there sprang up between them and the trees a wall of fire which girded the whole forest. It had glowing battlements and towers ; and on these there appeared armed spirits, with the strangest and most bewildering aspects. Alcasto retired—slowly indeed, but with shame and terror ; nor had he the courage to re-

appear before his commander. Godfrey had him brought, but could hardly get a word from his lips. The man talked like one in a dream.

At last Tancred went. He would have gone before ; but he had neither thought the task so difficult, nor did he care for any thing that was going forward. His mind was occupied with the dead Clorinda. He had now work that aroused him ; and he set out in good earnest for the forest, not unmoved in his imagination, but resolved to defy all appearances.

Arrived at the wall of fire, Tancred halted a moment, and looked up at the visages on its battlements, not without alarm. Many reflections passed swiftly through his mind, some urging him forward, others withholding ; but he concluded with stepping right through the fire. It did not resist him : he did not feel it.

The fire vanished ; and, in its stead, there poured down a storm of hail and rain, black as midnight. This vanished also.

Tancred stood amazed for an instant, and then passed on. He was soon in the thick of the wood, and for some time made his way with difficulty. On a sudden, he issued forth into a large open glade, like an ampitheatre, in which there was nothing but a cypress-tree that stood in the middle. The cypress was marked with hieroglyphical characters, mixed with some words in the Syrian tongue which he could read ; and these words requested the stranger to spare the fated place, nor trouble the departed souls who were there shut up in the trees. Meantime the wind was constantly moaning around it ; and in the moaning was a sound of human sighs and tears.

Tancred's heart, for a moment, was overcome with awe and pity ; but recollecting himself, and resolving to make amends for his credulity, he smote with all his might at the cypress. The blow, wonderful to see, produced an effusion of blood, which dyed the grass about the root. Tancred's hair stood on end. He smote, however, again, with double violence, resolving to see the end of the marvel ; and then he heard a woful voice issuing as from a tomb.

“Hast thou not hurt me,” it said, “Tancred, enough already ? Hast thou slain the human body which I once joyfully inhabited ; and now must thou cut and rend me, even in this wretched en-

closure? My name was Clorinda. Every tree which thou beholdest is the habitation of some Christian or Pagan soul; for all come hither that are slain beneath the walls of the city, compelled by I know not what power, or for what reason. Every bough in the forest is alive; and when thou cuttest down a tree thou slayest a soul.”

As a sick man in a dream thinks, and yet thinks not, that he sees some dreadful monster, and, notwithstanding his doubt, wishes to fly from the horrible perplexity; so the trembling lover, though suspecting what he beheld, had so frightful an image before his thoughts of Clorinda weeping and wailing after death, and bleeding in her very soul, that he had not the heart to do more, or to remain in the place. He returned in bewildered sorrow to Godfrey, and told him all. “It is not in my power,” he said, “to touch another bough of that forest.”*

The astonished leader of the Christians now made up his mind to go himself; and so, with prayer and valour united, bring this appalling adventure to some conclusion. But the hermit Peter dissuaded him. The holy man, in an ecstasy of foreknowledge, beheld the coming of the only champion fated to conclude it; and Godfrey himself the same night had a vision from heaven, bidding him grant the petition of those who should sue him next day for the recall of Rinaldo from exile—Rinaldo, the right hand of the army, as Godfrey was its head.

The petition was made as soon as daylight appeared: and two knights, Carlo and Ubaldo, were despatched in search of the fated hero.

* In the original an impetuous gust of wind carries away the sword of Tancred; a circumstance which I mention because Collins admired it (see the quotation from him in the Preface). I confess I cannot do so. It seems to me quite superfluous; and when the reader finds the sword conveniently lying for the hero outside the wood, as he returns, the effect is childish and pantomimic. If the magician wanted him not to fight any more, why should he give him the sword back? And if it was meant as a present to him from Clorinda, what gave her the power to make the present? Tasso retained both the particulars in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*.

PART THE FOURTH.

THE LOVES OF RINALDO AND ARMIDA.

THE knights, with information procured on the road from a good wizard, struck off for the seacoast, and embarking in a pinnace which miraculously awaited them, sailed along the shores of the Mediterranean for the retreat of Armida. They saw the Egyptian army assembled at Gaza, but hoped to return with Rinaldo before it could effect any thing at Jerusalem. They passed the mouths of the Nile, and Alexandria, and Cyrene, and Ptolemais, and the cities of the Moors, and the dangers of the Greater and Lesser Whirlpools, and their pilot shewed them the spot where Carthage stood,—Carthage, now a dead city, whose grave is scarcely discernible. For cities die; kingdoms die;—a little sand and grass covers all that was once lofty in them and glorious. And yet man, forsooth, disdains that he is mortal! Oh, mind of ours, inordinate and proud!*

* “Giace l’alta Cartago appena i segni
De l’alte sue ruine il lido serba.
Muiono le città: muiono i regni:
Copre i fasti e le pompe arena ed erba:
E l’uom d’esser mortal par che si sdegni.
Oh nostra mente cupida e superba!”

Canto xv. st. 20.

Great Carthage is laid low. Scarcely can eye
Trace where she stood with all her mighty crowd:
For cities die; kingdoms and nations die;
A little sand and grass is all their shroud;
Yet mortal man disdains mortality!
O mind of ours, inordinate and proud!

Very fine is this stanza of Tasso; and yet, like some of the finest writing of Gray, it is scarcely more than a cento. The commentators call it a “beautiful imitation” of a passage in Sannazzaro, and it is; but the passage in Sannazzaro

After looking towards the site of Carthage, they passed Algiers, and Oran, and Tingitana, and beheld the opposite coast of Spain, and then they cleared the narrow sea of Gibraltar, and came out into the immeasurable ocean, leaving all sight of land behind them; and so speeding ever onward in the billows, they beheld at last a cluster of mountainous and beautiful islands; the larger ones inhabited by a simple people, the smaller quite wild and desolate. So at least they appeared. But in one of these smaller islands was the mountain, on the top of which, in the indulgence of every lawless pleasure, lay the champion of the Christian faith. This the pilot shewed to the two knights, and then

is also beautiful. It contains not only the "Giace Cartago," and the "appena i segni," &c., but the contrast of the pride with the mortality of man, and, above all, the "dying" of the cities, which is the finest thought in the stanza of its imitator.

"Qua devictæ Carthaginis arces
Procubuere, jacentque infunsto in littore turres
Eversæ; quantam ille metu, quantum illa laborum
Urbs dedit insultans Latio et Laurentibus arvis!
Nunc passim vix reliquias, vix nomina servans
Obruitur propriis non agnoscenda ruinis.
Et querimur genus infelix, humaa labare
Membra ævo, cum regna palam moriantur et urbes."

De Partu Virginis, lib. ii.

The commentators trace the conclusion of this passage to Dante, where he says that it is no wonder families perish, when cities themselves "have their terminations" (*termin hano*); but though there is a like germ of thought in Dante, the mournful flower of it, the word "death" is not there. It was evidently suggested by a passage (also pointed out by the commentators) in the consolatory letter of Salpicius to Cicero, on the death of his daughter Tullia;—"Heu nos homunculi indiatamur, si quis nostrum interiit, aut occisus est, quorum vita brevior esse debet, cum uno loco tot oppidorum cadavera projecta jaceant." (Alas! we poor human creatures are indignant if any one of us dies or is slain, frail as are the materials of which we are constituted; and yet we can see, lying together in one place, the dead bodies of I know not how many cities!) The music of Tasso's line was indebted to one in Petrarch's *Trionfo del Tempo*, v. 112:

"Passan le signorie, passano i regni;"

and the fine concluding verse, "Oh nostra mente," to another, perhaps, in his *Trionfo della Divinità*, v. 61, not without a recollection of Lucretius, lib. ii. v. 14:

"O miseras hominum menteis! o pectora cæca!"

steered the pinnacle into its bay ; and here, after a voyage of four days and nights, it dropped its sails without need of anchor, so mild and sheltered was the port, with natural moles curving towards the entrance, and evergreen woods over head.

It was evening, with a beautiful sunset. The knights took leave of the pilot, and proceeding instantly on their journey, well furnished with all advices how to proceed, slept that night at the foot of the mountain ; for they were not to begin to scale it till sunrise. With the first beams of the sun they arose and ascended. They had not climbed far, when a serpent rushed out upon the path, entirely stopping it, but fled at the sound of a slender rod, which Ubaldo whisked as he advanced. A lion, for all his cavernous jaws, did the same ; nor was greater resistance made by a whole herd of monsters. They now mounted with great labour the region of ice and snow ; but, at the top of it, emerged from winter-time into summer. The air was full of sweet odours, yet fresh ; they sauntered (for they could not walk fast) over a velvet sward, under trees, by the side of a shady river ; and a bewitching pleasure began to invite their senses. But they knew the river, and bore in mind their duty. It was called the River of Laughter.* A little way on, increasing in beauty as it went, it formed a lucid pool in a dell ; and by the side of this pool was a table spread with every delicacy, and in the midst of it two bathing damsels, talking and laughing. Sometimes they sprinkled one another, then dived, then partly came up without shewing their faces, then played a hundred tricks, pretending all the while not to see the travellers. Then they became quiet, and sunk gently ; and, as they reappeared, one of them rose half into sight, sweetly as the morning star when it issues from the water dewy and dropping, or as Venus herself arose out of the froth of the sea. Such looked this damsel, and so did the crystal moisture go dropping from her tresses. Then she turned her eyes towards the travellers, and feigning to behold them for the first time, shrunk within herself. She hastened to undo the knot in which her tresses were tied up, and

* A fountain which caused laughter that killed people is in Pomponius Mela's account of the Fortunate Islands ; and was the origin of that of Boiardo ; as I ought to have noticed in the place.

shook them round about her, and down they fell to the water thick and long, enclosing that beautiful sight ; and yet the enclosure itself was not less beautiful. So, hid in the pool below, and in her tresses above, she glanced at the knights through her hair, with a blushing gladness. She blushed and she laughed at the same time ; and the blushing was more beautiful for the laughter, and the laughter for the blushing ; and then she said, in a voice which would alone have conquered any other hearers, " You are very happy to be allowed to come to this place. Nothing but delight is here. Our queen must have chosen you from a great number. But be pleased first to rid you of the dust of your journey, and to refresh yourselves at this table."

So spake the one ; and the other accompanied her speech with accordant looks and gestures, as the dance accompanies the music.

Nor was the allurement unfelt.

But the companions passed on, taking no notice ; and the bathers went sullenly under the water.*

* All this description of the females bathing is in the highest taste of the voluptuous ; particularly the latter part :

" Qual mattutina stella esce de l' onde
 Rugiadosa e stillante : o come fuore
 Spuntò nascendo già da le feconde
 Spume de l' oceàn la Dea d' Amore :
 Tale apparve costei : tal le sue bionde
 Chiome stillavan cristallino umore.
 Poi girò gli occhi, e pur allor s' infuse
 Que' duo vedere, e in se tutta si strinse :

 E 'l crin che 'n cima al capo avea raccolto
 In un sol nodo, immantinente sciolse ;
 Che lunghissimo in giù cadendo e folto,
 D' un aureo manto i molli avori involse.
 Oh che vago spettacolo è lor tolto !
 Ma mon men vago fu chi loro il tolse.
 Così da l' acque e da capelli ascosa,
 A lor si volse, lieta e vergognosa.

 Rideva insieme, e insieme ella arrossia ;
 Ed era nel rossor più bello il riso,
 E nel riso il rossor, che le copria
 Insino al mento il delicato viso."

Canto xv. st. 60.

The knights passed through the gates of the park of Armida, and entered a labyrinth made with contrivance the most intricate. Here their path would have been lost, but for a map traced by one who knew the secret. By the help of this they threaded it in safety, and issued upon a garden beautiful beyond conception. Every thing that could be desired in gardens was presented to their eyes in one landscape, and yet without contradiction or confusion,—flowers, fruits, water, sunny hills, descending woods, retreats into corners and grottos: and what put the last loveliness upon the scene was, that the art which did all was no where dis-

Spenser, among the other obligations which it delighted him to owe to this part of Tasso's poem, has translated these last twelve lines:

“ With that the other likewise up arose,
 And her fair locks, which formerly were bound
 Up in one knot, she low adown did loose,
 Which, flowing long and thick, her cloth'd around,
 And th' ivory in golden mantle gown'd:
 So that fair spectacle from him was reft;
 Yet that which reft it, no less fair was found.
 So hid in locks and waves from looker's theft,
 Nought but her lovely face she for his looking left.

Withal she laughèd, and she blush'd withal;
 That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,
 And laughter to her blushing.”

Fairy Queen, book ii. canto 12, st. 67.

Tasso's translator, Fairfax, worthy both of his original and of Spenser, has had the latter before him in his version of the passage, not without a charming addition of his own at the close of the first stanza:

“ And her fair locks, that in a knot were tied
 High on her crown, she 'gan at large unfold:
 Which falling long and thick, and spreading wide,
 The ivory soft and white mantled in gold:
 Thus her fair skin the dame would clothe and hide;
 And that which hid it, no less fair was hold.
 Thus clad in waves and locks, her eyes divine
 From them ashamed would she turn and twine.

Withal she smilèd, and she blush'd withal;
 Her blush her smiling, smiles her blushing graced.”

cernible.* You might have supposed (so exquisitely was the wild and the cultivated united) that all had somehow happened, not been contrived. It seemed to be the art of Nature herself; as though, in a fit of playfulness, she had imitated her imitator. But the temperature of the place, if nothing else, was plainly the work of magic, for blossoms and fruit abounded at the same time. The ripe and the budding fig grew on the same bough; green apples were clustered upon those with red cheeks; the vines in one place had small leaves and hard little grapes, and in the next they laid forth their richest tapestry in the sun, heavy with bunches full of nectar. At one time you listened to the warbling of birds, and a minute after, as if they had stopped on purpose, nothing was heard but the whispering of winds and the fall of waters. It seemed as if every thing in the place contributed to the harmony and the sweetness. The notes of the turtle-dove were deeper than any where else; the hard oak, and the chaste laurel, and the whole exuberant family of trees, the earth, the water, every element of creation, seemed to have been compounded but for one object, and to breathe forth the fulness of its bliss.†

“E quel che 'l bello e 'l caro accresce a l' opre,
L' arte, che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.

Stimi (si misto il culto è col negletto)
Sol natural e glii ornamenti e i siti.
Di natura arte par, che per diletto
L' imitatrice sua scherzando imiti.”

The idea of Nature imitating Art, and playfully imitating her, is in Ovid; but that of a mixture of cultivation and wildness is, as far as I am aware, Tasso's own; and gives him the honour of having been the first to suggest the picturesque principle of modern gardening, as I ought to have remembered, when assigning it to Spenser in a late publication (*Imagination and Fancy*, p. 109). I should have noticed also, in the same work, the obligations of Spenser to the Italian poet for the passage before quoted about the nymph in the water.

† “Par che la dura quercia e 'l casto alloro,
E tutta la frondosa ampia famiglia,
Par che la terra e l' acqua e formi e spiri
Dolcissimi d' amor sensi e sospiri.”

Id. st. 16.

Fairfax in this passage is very graceful and happy (in the first part of his

The two messengers, hardening their souls with all their might against the enchanting impression, moved forward silently among the trees ; till, looking through the branches into a little opening which formed a flower, they saw—or did they but think they saw ?—no, they saw indeed the hero and his Armida reclining on the grass.* Her dress was careless, her hair loose in the summer-wind. His head lay in her bosom ; a smile trembled on her lips and in her eyes, like a sunbeam in water ; and as she thus looked on him with passionate love, he looked up at her, face to face, and returned it with all his soul.

Now she kissed his lips, now his eyes ; and then they looked again at one another with their ever hungry looks, and then she kissed him again, and he gave a sigh so deep you would have thought his soul had gone out of him, and passed into hers. The two warriors from their covert gazed on the loving scene.

At the lover's side there hung a strange accoutrement for a warrior, namely, a crystal mirror. He rose a little on his elbow, and gave it into Armida's hands ; and in two different objects each beheld but one emotion, she hers in the glass, and he his own in her eyes. But he would not suffer her to look long at any thing but himself ; and then they spake loving and adoring words ; and after a while Armida bound up her hair, and put some flowers into it, as jewels might be put upon gold, and added a rose or two to the lilies of her bosom, and adjusted her veil. And never did peacock look so proudly beautiful when he displays the pomp of his eyed plumes ; nor was ever the rainbow so

stanza he is speaking of a bird that sings with a human voice—which I have omitted):

“ She ceased : and as approving all she spoke
 The choir of birds their heavenly tunes renew ;
 The turtles sigh'd, and sighs with kisses broke ;
 The fowls to shades unseen by pairs withdrew ;
 It seem'd the laurel chaste and stubborn oak,
 And all the gentle trees on earth that grew,
 It seem'd the land, the sea, and heaven above,
 All breath'd out fancy sweet, and sigh'd out love.”

* “ Ecco tra fronde e fronde il guardo avante
 Penetra, e vede, o pargli di vedere,
 Vede per certo,” &c.

Id. st. 17.

sweetly coloured when it curves forth its dewy bosom against the light.* But lovely above all was the effect of a magic girdle which the enchantress had made with her whole art, and which she never laid aside day or night. Spirit in it had taken substance; the subtlest emotions of the soul a shape and palpability. Tender disdains were in it, and repulses that attracted, and levities that endeared, and contentments full of joy, and smiles, and little words, and drops of delicious tears, and short-coming sighs, and soft kisses. All these she had mingled together, and made one delight out of many, and wound it about her heart, and wore it for a charm irresistible.†

And now she kissed him once more, and begged leave of a little absence (for love is courteous ever), and so went as usual to her books and her magic arts. Rinaldo remained where he was, for he had no power to wish himself out of the sweet spot; only he would stray a while among the trees, and amuse himself with the birds and squirrels, and so be a loving hermit till she returned. And at night they retired under one roof, still in the midst of the garden.

But no sooner had Armida gone, than the two warriors issued

* The line about the peacock,

“Spiega la pompa de l’occhiute piume,”

Opens wide the pomp of his eyed plumes,

was such a favourite with Tasso that he has repeated it from the *Aminta*, and (I think) in some other place, but I cannot call it to mind.

† “Teneri sdegni, e placide e tranquille

Repulse, e cari vezzi, e liete paci,

Sorrisi, e parolette, e dolci stille

Di pianto, e sospir’ tronchi, e molli baci.”

St. 25.

This is the *cestus* in Homer, which Venus lends to Juno for the purpose of enchanting Jupiter:

Ἡ' και απο στηθεσφιν ελυσατο κεστον ἱμαντα

Ποικιλον' ενθα δε οι θελκτηρια παντα τετυκτο.

Ενθ' ἐνι μεν φιλοτης, εν δ' ἡμερος, εν δ' οαριστυς,

Παρφασις, ἡ τ' εκλειψε νοον πυκα περ φρονοντων.

Iliad, lib. xiv. 214.

She said; and from her balmy bosom loosed
The girdle that contained all.

from their hiding-place, and stood before the lover glittering in their noble arms.

As a war-horse, that has been taken from the wars, and become the luxurious husband of the stud, wanders among the drove in the meadows in vile enjoyment, should by chance a trumpet be heard in the place, or a dazzling battle-axe become visible, he turns towards it that instant, and neighs, and longs to be in the lists, and vehemently desires the rider on his back who is to dash and be dashed at in the course ; even so turned the young hero when the light of the armour flashed upon him, even so longed for the war, even so shook himself up out of his bed of pleasure, with all his great qualities awaked and eager.

Ubaldo saw the movement in his heart, and held right in his face the shield of adamant, which had been brought for the purpose. It was a mirror that shewed to the eyes of every one who looked into it the very man as he was.

But when Rinaldo beheld himself indeed,—when he read his transformation, not in the flattering glass of the enchantress, but by the light of this true, and simple, and severe reflector,—his hair tricked out with flowers and unguents, his soft mantle of exquisitest dye, and his very sword rendered undistinguishable for what it was by a garland,—shame and remorse fell upon him. He felt indeed like a dreamer come to himself. He looked down. He could not speak. He wished to hide himself in the bottom of the sea.

Ubaldo raised his voice and spoke. “All Europe and Asia,” said he, “are in arms. Whoever desires fame, or is a worshipper of his Saviour, is a fighter in the land of Syria. Thou only, O son of Bertoldo, remainest out of the high way of renown—in luxury—in a little corner ; thou only, unmoved with the movement of the world, the champion of a girl. What dream, what lethargy can have drowned a valour like thine ? What vileness have had attraction for thee ? Up, up, and with us. The camp, the commander himself calls for thee ; fortune and victory await thee. Come, fated warrior, and finish thy work ; and see the false creed which thou hast shaken laid low beneath thy inevitable sword.”

On hearing these words the noble youth remained for a time

without speaking, without moving. At length shame gave way to a passionate sense of his duty ; and, with a new fire in his cheeks, he tore away the effeminate ornaments of his servitude, and quitted the spot without a word. In a few moments he had threaded the labyrinth : he was outside the gate. Ere long he was descending the mountain.

But meantime Armida had received news of the two visitors ; and coming to look for them, and casting her eyes down the steep, she beheld—with his face, alas ! turned no longer towards her own—the hasty steps of her hero between his companions. She wished to cry aloud, but was unable. She might have resorted to some of her magic devices, but her heart forbade her. She ran, however—for what cared she for dignity ?—she ran down the mountain, hoping still by her beauty and her tears to arrest the fugitive ; but his feet were too strong, even for love : she did not reach him till he had arrived on the sea-shore. Where was her pride now ? where the scorn she had exhibited to so many suitors ? where her coquetry and her self-sufficiency—her love of being loved, with the power to hate the lover ? The enchantress was now taught what the passion was, in all its despair as well as delight. She cried aloud. She cared not for the presence of the messengers. “ Oh, go not, Rinaldo,” she cried ; “ go not, or take me with thee. My heart is torn to pieces. Take me, or turn and kill me. Stop, at least, and be cruel to me here. If thou hast the heart to fly me, it will not be hard to thee to stay and be unkind.”

Even the messengers were moved at this, or seemed to be moved. Ubaldo told the fugitive that it would be heroic in him to wait and hear what the lady had to say, with gentleness and firmness. His conquest over himself would then be complete.

Rinaldo stopped, and Armida came up breathless and in tears—lovelier than ever. She looked earnestly at him at first, without a word. He gave her but a glance, and looked aside.

As a fine singer, before he lets loose his tongue in the lofty utterance of his emotion, prepares the minds of his hearers with some sweet prelude, exquisitely modulating in a lower tone, so the enchantress, whose anguish had not deprived her of all sense of her art, breathed a few sighs to dispose the soul of her idol to

hear her, and then said: "I do not beg thee to hear me as one that loves me. We both loved once; but that is over. I beg thee to hear, even though as one that loves me not. It will cost thy disdain nothing to grant me that. Perhaps thou hast discovered a pleasure in hating me: do so. I come not to deprive thee of it: if it seem just to thee, just let it be. I too once hated. I hated the Christians—hated even thee. I thought it right to do so: I was bred up to think it. I pursued thee to do thee mischief; I overtook thee; I bore thee away; and worse than all—for now, perhaps, thou loatest me for it—I loved thee. I loved thee, for the first time that I loved any one; nay, I made thee love me in turn; and, alas! I gave myself into thine arms. It was wrong. I was foolish; I was wicked. I grant that I have deserved thou shouldst think ill of me, that thou shouldst punish me, and quit me, and hate to have any remembrance of this place which I had filled with delights. Go; pass over the seas; make war against my friends and my country; destroy us all, and the religion we believe in. Alas! 'we' do I say? It is mine no longer—O thou, the cruel idol of my soul. Oh, let me go with thee, if it be but as thy servant, thy slave. Let the conqueror take with him his captive; let her be mocked; let her be pointed at; only let her be with thee. I will cut off these tresses, which no longer please thee: I will clothe myself in other attire, and go with thee into the battle. I have courage and strength enough to bear thy lance, to lead thy spare-horse, and be, above all, thy shield-bearer—thy shield. Nothing shall touch thee but through me—through this bosom, Rinaldo. Perhaps mischance may spare thee for its sake. Not a word? not a little word? Do I dare to boast of what thou hadst once a kind word for, though now thou wilt neither look upon me nor speak to me?"

She could say no more: her words were suffocated by a torrent of tears. But she sought to take his hand, to arrest him by his mantle—in vain. He could scarcely, it is true, restrain his tears: but he did. He looked sorrowful, but composed; and at length he said: "Armida, would I could do as thou wishest; but I cannot. I would relieve thee instantly of all this tumult of emotion. No hate is there in him that must quit thee; no such

disdain as thou fanciest ; nothing but the melancholy and impetuous sense of his duty. Thou hast erred, it is true—erred both in love and hate ; but have I not erred with thee ? and can I find excuse which is not found for thyself ? Dear and honoured ever wilt thou be with Rinaldo, whether in joy or sorrow. Count me, if it please thee, thy champion still, as far as my country and my faith permit ; but here, in this spot, must be buried all else—buried, not for my sake only, but for that of thy beauty, thy worthiness, thy royal blood. Consent to disparage thyself no longer. Peace be with thee. I go where I have no permission to take thee with me. Be happy, be wise.”

While Rinaldo was speaking in this manner, Armida changed colour ; her bosom heaved ; her eyes took a new kind of fire ; scorn rose upon her lip. When he finished, she looked at him with a bitterness that rejected every word he had said ; and then she exclaimed : “ Thou hast no such blood in thine own veins as thou canst fear to degrade. Thy boasted descent is a fiction : base, and brutish, and insensible was thy stock. What being of gentle blood could quit a love like mine without even a tear—a sigh ? What but the mockery of a man could call me his, and yet leave me ? vouchsafe me his pardon, as if I had offended him ? excuse my guilt and my tenderness ; he, the sage of virtue, and me, the wretch ! O God ! and these are the men that take upon them to slaughter the innocent, and dictate faiths to the world ! Go, hard heart, with such peace as thou leavest in this bosom. Begone ; take thine injustice from my sight for ever. My spirit will follow thee, not as a help, but a retribution. I shall die first, and thou wilt die speedily : thou wilt perish in the battle. Thou wilt lie expiring among the dead and bleeding, and wilt call on Armida in thy last moments, and I shall hear it—yes, I shall hear it ; I shall look for that.”

Down fell Armida on the ground, senseless ; and Rinaldo stood over her, weeping at last. Open thine eyes, poor wretch, and see him. Alas, the heavens deny thee the consolation ! What will he do ? Will he leave thee lying there betwixt dead and alive ? Or will he go—pitying thee, but still going ? He goes ; he is gone ; he is in the bark, and the wind is in the sail ; and

he looks back—ever back ; but still goes : the shore begins to be out of sight.

Armida woke, and was alone. She raved again, but it was for vengeance. In a few days she was with the Egyptian army, a queen at the head of her vassals, going against the Christians at Jerusalem.

PART THE FIFTH.

THE DISENCHANTMENT OF THE FOREST, AND THE
TAKING OF JERUSALEM, &c.

RINALDO arrived without loss of time in the Christian camp before Jerusalem. Every body rejoiced to see the right hand of the army. Godfrey gladly pardoned him; the hermit Peter blessed him; he himself retired to beg the forgiveness and favour of Heaven; and then he went straight to the enchanted forest.

It was a beautiful morning, and the forest, instead of presenting its usual terrors, appeared to him singularly tranquil and pleasing. On entering it he heard not dreadful thunder-claps, but harmonies made up of all sorts of gentle and lovely sounds—brooks, whispering winds, nightingales, organs, harps, and human voices. He went slowly and cautiously, and soon came to a beautiful river which encircled the heart of the wood. A bridge of gold carried him over. He had no sooner crossed it than the river higher up suddenly swelled and rushed like a torrent, sweeping the bridge away. The harmony meanwhile had become silent. Admiring, but nothing daunted, the hero went on.

Every thing as he advanced appeared to start into fresh beauty. His steps produced lilies and roses; here leaped up a fountain, and there came falling a cascade; the wood itself seemed to grow young as with sudden spring; and he again heard the music and the human voices, though he could see no one.

Passing through the trees, he came into a glade in the heart of the wood, in the centre of which he beheld a myrtle-tree, the largest and most beautiful ever seen: it was taller than a cypress or palm, and seemed the queen of the forest. Looking around him, he observed to his astonishment an oak suddenly cleave it-

self open, and out of it there came a nymph. A hundred other trees did the same, giving birth to as many nymphs. They were all habited as we see them in theatres; only, instead of bows and arrows, each held a lute or guitar. Coming towards the hero with joyful eyes, they formed a circle about him, and danced; and in their dancing they sang, and bade him welcome to the haunt of their mistress, their loving mistress, of whom he was the only hope and joy. Looking as they spoke towards the myrtle, Rinaldo looked also, and beheld issuing out of it—Armida.

Armida came sweetly towards him, with a countenance at once grieving and rejoicing, but expressing above all infinite affection. “And do I indeed see thee again?” she said; “and wilt thou not fly me a second time? am I visited to be consoled, or to be treated again as an enemy? is poor Armida so formidable, that thou must needs close up thine helmet when thou beholdest her? Thou mightest surely have vouchsafed her once more a sight of thine eyes. Let us be friends, at least, if we may be nothing more. Wilt thou not take her hand?”

Rinaldo’s answer was, to turn away as from a cheat, to look towards the myrtle-tree, to draw his sword, and proceed with manifest intentions of assailing it. She ran before him shrieking, and hugged it round. “Nay, thou wilt not,” she said, “thou wilt not hurt my tree—not cut and slay what is bound up with the life of Armida? Thy sword must pass first through her bosom.”

Armida writhed and wailed; Rinaldo nevertheless raised his sword, and it was coming against the tree, when her shape, like a thing in a dream, was metamorphosed as quick as lightning. It became a giant, a Briareus, wielding a hundred swords, and speaking in a voice of thunder. Every one of the nymphs at the same instant became a Cyclops; tempest and earthquake ensued, and the whole air was full of ghastly spectres.

Rinaldo again raised his arm with a more vehement will; he struck, and at the same instant every horror disappeared. The sky was cloudless; the forest was neither terrible nor beautiful, but heavy and sombre as of old—a natural gloomy wood, but no prodigy.

Rinaldo returned to the camp, his aspect that of a conqueror;

the silver wings of his crest, the white eagle, glittering in the sun. The hermit Peter came forward to greet him; a shout was sent up by the whole camp; Godfrey gave him high reception; nobody envied him. Workmen, no longer trembling, were sent to the forest to cut wood for the machines of war; and the tower was rebuilt, together with battering rams and balistas, and catapults, most of them an addition to what they had before. The tower also was now clothed with bulls-hides, as a security against being set on fire; and a bridge was added to the tower, from which the besiegers could at once step on the city walls.

With these long-desired invigorations of his strength, the commander of the army lost no time in making a general assault on Jerusalem; for a dove, supernaturally pursued by a falcon, had brought him letters intended for the besieged, informing them that if they could only hold out four days longer their Egyptian allies would be at hand. The Pagans beheld with dismay the resuscitated tower, and all the new engines coming against them. They fought valiantly; but Rinaldo and Godfrey prevailed; the former being the first to scale the walls, the latter to plant his standard from the bridge. The city was entered on all sides, and the enemy driven, first into Solomon's Temple, and then into the Citadel, or Tower of David. Before the assault, Godfrey had been vouchsafed a sight of armies of angels in the air, accompanied by the souls of those who had fallen before Jerusalem; the latter still fighting, the former rejoicing; so that there was no longer doubt of triumph; only it still pleased Heaven that human virtue should be tried.

And now, after farther exploits on both sides, the last day of the war, and the last hope of the Infidels, arrived at the same time; for the Egyptian army came up to give battle with the Christians, and to restore Jerusalem, if possible, to its late owners, now cramped up in one corner of it—the citadel. The besiegers in their narrow hold raised a shout of joy at the sight; and Godfrey, leaving them to be detained in it by an experienced captain, went forth to meet his new opponents. Crowns of Africa and of Persia were there, and the king of the Indies; and in the midst of all, in a chariot surrounded by her knights and suitors, was Armida.

The battle joined, and great was the bravery and the slaughter on both sides. It seemed at first all glitter and gaiety—its streamers flying, its arms flashing, drums and trumpets rejoicing, and horses rushing with their horsemen as to the tournament. Horror looked beautiful in the spectacle. Out of the midst of the dread itself there issued a delight. But soon it was a bloody, and a turbulent, and a raging, and a groaning thing. Pennons down, horses and men rolling over, foes heaped upon one another, bright armour exchanged for blood and dirt, flesh trampled, and spirit fatigued. Brave were the Pagans; but how could they stand against Heaven? Godfrey ordered every thing calmly like a Divine mind; Rinaldo swept down the fiercest multitudes, like an arm of God. The besieged in the citadel broke forth only to let the conquerors in. Jerusalem was won before the battle was over. King after king fell, and yet the vanquished did not fly. Rinaldo went every where to hasten the rout; and still had to fight and slay on. Armida beheld him coming where she sat in the midst of her knights; he saw her, and blushed a little; she turned as cold as ice, then as hot as fire. Her anger was doubled by the slaughter of her friends; and with her woman's hand she sent an arrow out of her bow, hoping, and yet even then hoping not, to slay or to hurt him. The arrow fell on him like a toy; and he turned aside, as she thought, in disdain. Yet he disdained not to smite down her champions; and hope of every kind deserted her. Resolving to die by herself in some lonely spot, she got down from her chariot to horse, and fled out of the field. Rinaldo saw the flight; and though one of the knights that remained to her struck him such a blow as made him reel in his saddle, he despatched the man with another like a thunderbolt, and then galloped after the fugitive.

Armida was in the act of putting a shaft to her bosom, in order to die upon it, when her arm was arrested by a mighty grasp; and turning round, she beheld with a shriek the beloved face of him who had caused the ruin of her and hers. She closed her disdainful eyes and fainted away. Rinaldo supports her; he loosens her girdle; he bathes her bosom and her eyelids with his tears. Coming at length to herself, still she would not look at him. She would fain not have been supported by him. She en-

deavoured with her weak fingers to undo the strong ones that clasped her; she wept bitterly, and at length spoke, but still without meeting his eyes.

“And may I not,” she said, “even die? must I be followed and tormented even in my last moments? What mockery of a wish to save me is this! I will not be watched; I believe not a syllable of such pity; and I will not be made a sight of, and a by-word. I ask my life of thee no longer; I want nothing but death, and death itself I would not receive at such hands; they would render even that felicity hateful: leave me. I could not be hindered long from putting an end to my miseries, whatever barbarous restraint might be put upon me. There are a thousand ways of dying; and I will be neither hindered, nor deceived, nor flattered—oh, never more!”

Weeping she spoke—weeping always, and sobbing, and full of wilful words. But yet she felt all the time the arm that was round her.

“Armida,” said Rinaldo, in a voice full of tenderness, “be calm, and know me for what I am—no enemy, no conqueror, nothing that intends thee shame or dishonour; but thy champion, thy restorer—he that will preserve thy kingdom for thee, and seat thee in house and home. Look at me—look in these eyes, and see if they speak false. And oh, would to heaven thou would’st be as I am in faith. There isn’t a queen in all the East should equal thee in glory.”

His tears fell on her eyelids as he spoke—scalding tears; and she looked at him, and her heart re-opened to its lord, all love and worship; and Armida said, “Behold thy handmaid; dispose of her even as thou wilt.”

And that same day Godfrey of Boulogne was lord of Jerusalem, and paid his vows on the sepulchre of his Master.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

STORY OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

POSCIA ch' i' ebbi il mio dottore udito
Nomar le donne antiche e i cavalieri,
Pietà mi vinse, e fui quasi smarrito.

I' cominciai: Poeta, volentier'
Parlerei a que' duo che 'nsieme vanno,
E pajon sì al vento esser leggieri.

Ed egli a me: Vedrai, quando saranno
Più presso a noi: e tu allor gli prega,
Per quell' amor ch' ei mena; e quei verranno.

Sì tosto come 'l vento a noi gli piega,
Mossi la voce: O anime affannate,
Venite a noi parlar, s' altri nol niega.

Quali colombe dal disio chiamate,
Con l' ali aperte e ferme, al dolce nido
Volan per l' aer dal voler portate:

Cotali uscir de la schiera ov' è Dido,
A noi venendo per l' aer maligno,
Sì forte fu l' affettuoso grido.

O animal grazioso e benigno,
Che visitando vai per l' aer perso
Noi che tignemmo il mondo di sanguigno;

Se fosse amico il Re de l' Universo,
Noi pregheremmo lui per la tua pace,
Poich' hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.

Di quel ch' udire e che parlar ti piace,
Noi udiremo, e parleremo a vui,
Mentre che 'l vento, come fa, si tace.

Siede la terra, dove nata fui,
Su la marina, dove 'l Pò discende,
Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.

Amor ch' al cor gentil ratto s' apprende,
Prese costui de la bella persona
Che mi fu tolta, e 'l modo ancor m' offende :

Amor ch' a null' amato amar perdona,
Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
Che come vedi ancor non m' abbandona :

Amor condusse noi ad una morte :
Caina attende chi 'n vita ci spense.
Queste parole da lor ci fur porte.

Da ch' io 'ntesi quell' anime offense,
Chinai 'l viso, e tanto 'l tenni basso,
Finchè 'l poeta mi disse : Che pense ?

Quando risposi, cominciai : O lasso,
Quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio
Mendò costoro al doloroso passo !

Po' mi rivolsi a loro, e parla' io,
E cominciai : Francesca, i tuoi martiri
A lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.

Ma dimmi : al tempo de' dolci sospiri,
A che, e come concedette amore
Che conosceste i dubbiosi desiri ?

Ed ella a me : Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Ne la miseria ; e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.

Ma s' a conoscer la prima radice
Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
Farò come colui che piange e dice.

Noi leggiavamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancilotto, come amor lo strinse :
Soli eravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.

Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci 'l viso :
Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.

Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
 Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
 Questi che mai da me non sia diviso,

La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante :
 Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse :
 Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.

Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,
 L' altro piangeva sì, che di pietade
 I' venni men così com' io morisse,

E caddi come corpo morto cade.

~~~~~

*Translation in the terza rima of the original.*

SCARCE had I learnt the names of all that press  
 Of knights and dames, than I beheld a sight  
 Nigh reft my wits for very tenderness.

“ O guide !” I said, “ fain would I, if I might,  
 Have speech with yonder pair, that hand in hand  
 Seem borne before the dreadful wind so light.”

“ Wait,” said my guide, “ until thou seest their band  
 Sweep round. Then beg them, by that love, to stay ;  
 And they will come, and hover where we stand.”

Anon the whirlwind flung them round that way ;  
 And then I cried, “ Oh, if I ask nought ill,  
 Poor weary souls, have speech with me, I pray.”

As doves, that leave some bevy circling still,  
 Set firm their open wings, and through the air  
 Sweep homewards, wafted by their pure good-will ;

So broke from Dido's flock that gentle pair,  
 Cleaving, to where we stood, the air malign ;  
 Such strength to bring them had a loving prayer.

The female spoke. “ O living soul benign !”  
 She said, “ thus, in this lost air, visiting  
 Us who with blood stain'd the sweet earth divine ;

Had we a friend in heaven's eternal King,  
 We would beseech him keep thy conscience clear,  
 Since to our anguish thou dost pity bring.

Of what it pleaseth thee to speak and hear,  
To that we also, till this lull be o'er  
That falleth now, will speak and will give ear.

The place where I was born is on the shore,  
Where Po brings all his rivers to depart  
In peace, and fuse them with the ocean floor.

Love, that soon kindleth in a gentle heart,  
Seized him thou look'st on for the form and face.  
Whose end still haunts me like a rankling dart.

Love, which by love will be denied no grace,  
Gave me a transport in my turn so true,  
That lo ! 'tis with me, even in this place.

Love brought us to one grave. The hand that slew  
Is doom'd to mourn us in the pit of Cain."  
Such were the words that told me of those two.

Downcast I stood, looking so full of pain  
To think how hard and sad a case it was,  
That my guide ask'd what held me in that vein.

His voice aroused me ; and I said, " Alas !  
All their sweet thoughts then, all the steps that led  
To love, but brought them to this dolorous pass."

Then turning my sad eyes to theirs, I said,  
" Francesca, see—these human cheeks are wet—  
Truer and sadder tears were never shed.

But tell me. At the time when sighs were sweet,  
What made thee strive no longer ?—hurried thee  
To the last step where bliss and sorrow meet ?"

" There is no greater sorrow," answered she,  
" And this thy teacher here knoweth full well,  
Than calling to mind joy in misery.

But since thy wish be great to hear us tell  
How we lost all but love, tell it I will,  
As well as tears will let me. It befel,

One day, we read how Lancelot gazed his fill  
At her he loved, and what his lady said.  
We were alone, thinking of nothing ill.

Oft were our eyes suspended as we read,  
And in our cheeks the colour went and came ;  
Yet one sole passage struck resistance dead.

'Twas where the lover, moth-like in his flame,  
 Drawn by her sweet smile, kiss'd it. O then, he  
 Whose lot and mine are now for aye the same,

All in a tremble, on the mouth kiss'd *me*.  
 The book did all. Our hearts within us burn'd  
 Through that alone. That day no more read wo."

While thus one spoke, the other spirit mourn'd  
 With wail so woful, that at his remorse  
 I felt as though I should have died. I turned

Stone-stiff; and to the ground fell like a corse.

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## No. II.

ACCOUNTS GIVEN BY DIFFERENT WRITERS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES  
 RELATING TO PAULO AND FRANCESCA; CONCLUDING WITH THE  
 ONLY FACTS ASCERTAINED.

### BOCCACCIO'S ACCOUNT:

Translated from his Commentary on the Passage.

"You must know, that this lady, Madonna Francesca, was daughter of Messer Guido the Elder, lord of Ravenna and of Cervia, and that a long and grievous war having been waged between him and the lords Malatesta of Rimini, a treaty of peace by certain mediators was at length concluded between them; the which, to the end that it might be the more firmly established, it pleased both parties to desire to fortify by relationship; and the matter of this relationship was so discoursed, that the said Messer Guido agreed to give his young and fair daughter in marriage to Gianciotto, the son of Messer Malatesta. Now, this being made known to certain of the friends of Messer Guido, one of them said to him, 'Take care what you do; for if you contrive not matters discreetly, such relationship will beget scandal. You know what manner of person your daughter is, and of how lofty a spirit; and if she see Gianciotto before the bond is tied, neither you nor any one else will have power to persuade her to marry him; therefore, if it so please you, it seems to me that it would be good to conduct the matter thus: namely, that Gianciotto should not come hither himself to marry her, but that a brother of his should come and espouse her in his name.'

"Gianciotto was a man of great spirit, and hoped, after his father's death, to become lord of Rimini; in the contemplation of which event, albeit he was rude in appearance and a cripple, Messer Guido desired him for a son-in-law above any one of his brothers. Discerning, therefore, the reasonableness of

what his friend counselled, he secretly disposed matters according to his device ; and a day being appointed, Polo, a brother of Gianciotto, came to Ravenna with full authority to espouse Madonna Francesca. Polo was a handsome man, very pleasant, and of a courteous breeding ; and passing with other gentlemen over the court-yard of the palace of Messer Guido, a damsel who knew him pointed him out to Madonna Francesca through an opening in the casement, saying, ' That is he that is to be your husband ;' and so indeed the poor lady believed, and incontinently placed in him her whole affection ; and the ceremony of the marriage having been thus brought about, and the lady conveyed to Rimini, she became not aware of the deceit till the morning ensuing the marriage, when she beheld Gianciotto rise from her side ; the which discovery moved her to such disdain, that she became not a whit the less rooted in her love for Polo. Nevertheless, that it grew to be unlawful I never heard, except in what is written by this author (Dante), and possibly it might so have become ; albeit I take what he says to have been an invention framed on the possibility, rather than any thing which he knew of his own knowledge. Be this as it may, Polo and Madonna Francesca living in the same house, and Gianciotto being gone into a certain neighbouring district as governor, they fell into great companionship with one another, suspecting nothing ; but a servant of Gianciotto's noting it, went to his master and told him how matters looked ; with the which Gianciotto being fiercely moved, secretly returned to Rimini ; and seeing Polo enter the room of Madonna Francesca the while he himself was arriving, went straight to the door, and finding it locked inside, called to his lady to come out ; for, Madonna Francesca and Polo having descried him, Polo thought to escape suddenly through an opening in the wall, by means of which there was a descent into another room ; and therefore, thinking to conceal his fault either wholly or in part, he threw himself into the opening, telling the lady to go and open the door. But his hope did not turn out as he expected ; for the hem of a mantle which he had on caught upon a nail, and the lady opening the door meantime, in the belief that all would be well by reason of Polo's not being there, Gianciotto caught sight of Polo as he was detained by the hem of the mantle, and straightway ran with his dagger in his hand to kill him ; whereupon the lady, to prevent it, ran between them ; but Gianciotto having lifted the dagger, and put the whole force of his arm into the blow, there came to pass what he had not desired—namely, that he struck the dagger into the bosom of the lady before it could reach Polo ; by which accident, being as one who had loved the lady better than himself, he withdrew the dagger and again struck at Polo, and slew him ; and so leaving them both dead, he hastily went his way and betook him to his wonted affairs ; and the next morning the two lovers, with many tears, were buried together in the same grave."

The reader of this account will have observed, that while Dante assumes the guilt of all parties, and puts them into the infernal regions, the good-natured Boccaccio is for doubting it, and consequently for sending them all to heaven.

He will ignore as much of the business as a gentleman can ; boldly doubts any guilt in the case ; says nothing of the circumstance of the book ; and affirms that the husband loved his wife, and was miserable at having slain her. There is, however, one negative point in common between the two narrators ; they both say nothing of certain particulars connected with the date of Francesca's marriage, and not a little qualifying the first romantic look of the story

Now, it is the absence of these particulars, combined with the tradition of the father's artifice (omitted perhaps by Dante out of personal favour), and with that of the husband's ferocity of character (the belief in which Boccaccio did not succeed in displacing), that has left the prevailing impression on the minds of posterity, which is this :—that Francesca was beguiled by her father into the marriage with the deformed and unamiable Giovanni, and that the unconscious medium of the artifice was the amiable and handsome Paulo ; that one or both of the victims of the artifice fell in love with the other ; that their intercourse, whatever it was, took place not long after the marriage ; and that when Paulo and Francesca were slain in consequence, they were young lovers, with no other ties to the world.

It is not pleasant in general to dispel the illusions of romance, though Dante's will bear the operation with less hurt to a reader's feelings than most ; and I suspect, that if nine out of ten of all the implied conclusions of other narratives in his poem could be compared with the facts, he would be found to be one of the greatest of romancers in a new and not very desirable sense, however excusable he may have been in his party-prejudice. But a romance may be displaced, only to substitute perhaps matters of fact more really touching, by reason of their greater probability. The following is the whole of what modern inquirers have ascertained respecting Paulo and Francesca. Future enlargers on the story may suppress what they please, as Dante did ; but if any one of them, like the writer of the present remarks, is anxious to speak nothing but the truth, I advise him (especially if he is for troubling himself with making changes in his story) not to think that he has seen all the authorities on the subject, or even remembered all he has seen, until he has searched every corner of his library and his memory. All the poems hitherto written upon this popular subject are indeed only to be regarded as so many probable pieces of fancy, that of Dante himself included.

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THE ONLY PARTICULARS HITHERTO REALLY ASCERTAINED RESPECTING
THE HISTORY OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

Francesca was daughter of Guido Novello da Polenta, lord of Ravenna.

She was married to Giovanni, surnamed the *Lame*, one of the sons of Malatesta da Verrucchio, lord of Rimini.

Giovanni the *Lame* had a brother named Paulo the *Handsome*, who was a widower, and left a son.

Twelve years after Francesca's marriage, by which time she had become mother of a son who died, and of a daughter who survived her, she and her brother-in-law Paulo were slain together by the husband, and buried in one grave.

Two hundred years afterwards, the grave was opened, and the bodies found lying together in silken garments, the silk itself being entire.

Now, a far more touching history may have lurked under these facts than in the half-concealed and misleading circumstances of the received story—long patience, long duty, struggling conscience, exhausted hope.

On the other hand, it may have been a mere heartless case of intrigue and folly.

But tradition is to be allowed its reasonable weight; and the probability is, that the marriage was an affair of state, the lady unhappy, and the brothers too different from one another.

The event took place in Dante's twenty-fourth year; so that he, who looks so much older to our imaginations than his heroine, was younger; and this renders more than probable what the latest biographers have asserted—namely, that the lord of Ravenna, at whose house he finished his days, was not her father, Guido da Polenta, the third of that name, but her nephew, Guido the Fifth.

No. III.

STORY OF UGOLINO.

Noi eravam partiti già da ello,
 Ch' i' vidi duo ghiacciati in una buca
 Sì, che l'un capo a l' altro era capello :

E come 'l pan per fame si manduca,
 Così 'l sovràn li denti a l' altro pose
 Là 've 'l cervel s' aggiunge con la nuca.

Non altrimenti Tideo sì rose
 Le tempie a Menalippo per disdegno,
 Che quei faceva 'l teschio e l' altre cose.

O tu che mostri per sì bestial segno
 Odio sovra colui che tu ti mangi
 Dimmi 'l perchè, diss' io, per tal convegno,

Che se tu a ragion di lui ti piangi,
 Sappiendo chi voi siete, e la sua pecca,
 Nel mondo suso ancor io te ne cangi,

Se quella con ch' i' parlo non si secca.

La bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto
Quel peccator, forbendola a' capelli
Del capo ch' egli avea dietro guasto :

Poi cominciò : tu vuoi ch' i' rinnovelli
Disperato dolor che 'l cuor mi preme
Già pur pensando, pria ch' i' ne favelli.

Ma se le mie parole esser den seme,
Che frutti infamia al traditor ch' i' rodo,
Parlare e lagrimar vedrai insieme.

I' non so chi tu sei, nè per che modo
Venuto se' qua giù : ma Fiorentino
Mi sembri veramente, quand' i' t' odo.

Tu de' saper ch' i' fu 'l Conte Ugolino,
E questi l' Arcivescovo Ruggieri :
Or ti dirò perch' i' son tal vicino.

Che per l' effetto de' suo' ma' pensieri,
Fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso,
E poscia morto, dir non è mestieri.

Però quel che non puoi avere inteso,
Cioè, come la morte mia fu cruda,
Udirai e saprai se m ha offeso.

Breve pertugio dentro da la muda,
La qual per me ha 'l titol da la fame,
E 'n che conviene ancor ch' altrui si chiuda,

M' avea mostrato per lo suo forame
Più lune già, quand' i' feci 'l mal sonno,
Che del futuro mi squarciò 'l velame.

Questi pareva a me maestro e donno,
Cacciando 'l lupo e i lupicini al monte,
Perchè i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno.

Con cagne magre studiose e conte
Gualandi con Sismondi e con Lanfranchi
S' avea messi dinanzi da la fronte.

In picciol corso mi pareano stanchi
Lo padre e i figli, e con l' agute scane
Mi pareva lor veder fender li fianchi.

Quando fui desto innanzi la dimane,
Pianger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli
Ch' eran con meco, e dimandar del pane.

Ben se' crudel, se tu già non ti duoli
Pensando ciò ch' al mio cuor s' annunziava :
E se non piangi, di che pianger suoli ?

Già eràm desti, e l' ora s' appressava
Che 'l cibo ne soleva essere addotto,
E per suo sogno ciascun dubitava,

Ed io senti' chiaver l' uscio di sotto
A l' orribile torre : ond' io guardai
Nel viso a miei figliuoi senza far motto :

I' non piangeva, sì dentro impietraì :
Piangevan' elli ; ed Anselmuccio mio
Disse, Tu guardi sì, padre : che hai ?

Però non lagrimai nè rispos' io
Tutto quel giorno nè la notte appresso,
Infìn che l' altro sol nel mondo uscìo.

Com' un poco di raggio si fu messo
Nel doloroso carcere, ed io scorsi
Per quattro visi il mio aspetto stesso,

Ambo le mani per dolor mi morsi :
E quei pensando ch' i 'l fessi per voglia
Di manicar, di subito levorsi

E disser : Padre, assai ci sia men doglia,
Se tu mangi di noi : tu ne vestisti
Queste misere carni, e tu le spoglia.

Quetami allor per non fargli più tristi :
Quel dí e l' altro stemmo tutti muti :
Ahi dura terra, perchè non t' apristi ?

Posciachè fummo al quarto dí venuti,
Gaddo mi si gittò disteso a' piedi,
Dicendo : Pardre mio, che non m' ajuti ?

Quivi morì : e come tu mi vedi,
Vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
Tra'l quinto dì, e 'l sesto : ond' i' mi diedi

Già cieco a brancolar sovra ciascuno,
E tre dí gli chiamai poich' e 'fur morti :
Poscia, più che 'l dolor, poté 'l digiuno.

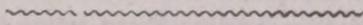
Quand' ebbe detto ciò, con gli occhj torti
Riprese 'l teschio misero co' denti,
Che furo a l' osso come d' un can forti.

Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti,
 Del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona ;
 Poiche i vicini a te punir son lenti,

Muovasi la Capraja e la Gorgona,
 E faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
 Sì ch' egli annieghi in te ogni persona :

Che se 'l Conte Ugolino aveva voce
 D' aver tradita te de le castella,
 Non dovei tu i figliuoi porre a tal croce,

Innocenti facea 'l età novella ;
 Novella Tebe, Uguccione, e 'l Brigata,
 E gli altri duo che 'l canto suso appella.



Translation in the heroic couplet.

QUITTING the traitor Bocca's barking soul,
 We saw two more, so iced up in one hole,
 That the one's visage capp'd the other's head :
 And as a famish'd man devoureth bread,
 So rent the top one's teeth the skull below
 'Twixt nape and brain. Tydeus, as stories shew,
 Thus to the brain of Menalippus ate :—
 " O thou !" I cried, " shewing such bestial hate
 To him thou tearest, read us whence it rose ;
 That, if thy cause be juster than thy foe's,
 The world, when I return, knowing the truth,
 May of thy story have the greater ruth."

His mouth he lifted from his dreadful fare,
 That sinner, wiping it with the grey hair
 Whose roots he had laid waste ; and thus he said :—
 " A desperate thing thou askest ; what I dread
 Even to think of. Yet, to sow a seed
 Of infamy to him on whom I feed,
 Tell it I will :—ay, and thine eyes shall see
 Mine own weep all the while for misery.
 Who thou may'st be, I know not ; nor can dream
 How thou cam'st hither ; but thy tongue doth seem
 To shew thee, of a surety, Florentine.
 Know then, that I was once Count Ugoline,

And this man was Ruggieri, the archpriest.
 Still thou may'st wonder at my raging feast ;
 For though his snares be known, and how his key
 He turn'd upon my trust, and murder'd me,
 Yet what the murder was, of what strange sort
 And cruel, few have had the true report.
 Hear then, and judge.—In the tower, called since then
 The Tower of Famine, I had lain and seen
 Full many a moon fade through the narrow bars,
 When, in a dream one night, mine evil stars
 Shew'd me the future with its dreadful face.
 Methought this man led a great lordly chase
 Against a wolf and cubs, across the height
 Which barreth Lucca from the Pisan's sight.
 Lean were the hounds, high-bred, and sharp for blood ;
 And foremost in the press Gualandi rode,
 Lanfranchi, and Sismondi. Soon were seen
 The father and his sons, those wolves I mean,
 Limping, and by the hounds all crush'd and torn :
 And as the cry awoke me in the morn,
 I heard my boys, the while they dozed in bed
 (For they were with me), wail, and ask for bread.
 Full cruel, if it move thee not, thou art,
 To think what thoughts then rush'd into my heart.
 What wouldst thou weep at, weeping not at this ?
 All had now waked, and something seemed amiss,
 For 'twas the time they used to bring us bread,
 And from our dreams had grown a horrid dread.
 I listen'd ; and a key, down stairs, I heard
 Lock up the dreadful turret. Not a word
 I spoke, but look'd my children in the face :
 No tear I shed, so firmly did I brace
 My soul ; but *they* did ; and my Anselm said,
 ' Father, you look so !—Won't they bring us bread ?'
 E'en then I wept not, nor did answer word
 All day, nor the next night. And now was stirr'd,
 Upon the world without, another day ;
 And of its light there came a little ray,
 Which mingled with the gloom of our sad jail ;
 And looking to my children's bed, full pale,
 In four small faces mine own face I saw.
 Oh, then both hands for misery did I gnaw ;
 And they, thinking I did it, being mad
 For food, said, ' Father, we should be less sad
 If you would feed on us. Children, they say,
 Are their own father's flesh. Starve not to-day.'

Thenceforth they saw me shake not, hand nor foot.
 That day, and next, we all continued mute.
 O thou hard Earth !—why opened'st thou not ?
 Next day (it was the fourth in our sad lot)
 My Gaddo stretched him at my feet, and cried,
 ' Dear father, won't you help me ?' and he died.
 And surely as thou seest me here undone,
 I saw my whole three children, one by one,
 Between the fifth day and the sixth, all die.
 I became blind ; and in my misery
 Went groping for them, as I knelt and crawl'd
 About the room ; and for three days I call'd
 Upon their names, as though they could speak too,
 Till famine did what grief had fail'd to do."

Having spoke thus, he seiz'd with fiery eyes
 That wretch again, his feast and sacrifice,
 And fasten'd on the skull, over a groan,
 With teeth as strong as mastiff's on a bone.

Ah, Pisa ! thou that shame and scandal be
 To the sweet land that speaks the tongue of *Si*,*
 Since Florence spareth thy vile neck the yoke,
 Would that the very isles would rise, and choke
 Thy river, and drown every soul within
 Thy loathsome walls. What if this Ugolin
 Did play the traitor, and give up (for so
 The rumour runs) thy castles to the foe,
 Thou hadst no right to put to rack like this
 His children. Childhood innocency is.
 But that same innocence, and that man's name,
 Have damn'd thee, Pisa, to a Theban fame.†

REAL STORY OF UGOLINO,

AND CHAUCER'S FEELING RESPECTING THE POEM.

CHAUCER has told the greater part of this story beautifully in his "Canterbury Tales ;" but he had not the heart to finish it. He refers for the conclu-

* *Si*, the Italian *yes*. A similar territorial designation is familiar to the reader in the word "Languedoc," meaning *langue d'oc*, or tongue of *Oc*, which was the pronunciation of the *oui* or *yes* of the French in that quarter.

† Alluding to the cruel stories in the mythology of Bœotia.

sion to his original, hight "Dant" the "grete poete of Itaille;" adding, that Dante will not fail his readers a single word—that is to say, not an atom of the cruelty.

Our great gentle-hearted countryman, who tells Fortune that it was

" great cruelte
Such birdes for to put in such a cage,"

adds a touch of pathos in the behaviour of one of the children, which Dante does not seem to have thought of :

" There day by day this child began to cry,
Till in his father's barme (lap) adown he lay ;
And said, ' Farewell, father, I muste die,'
And *kiss'd his father*, and diëd the same day."

It will be a relief, perhaps, instead of a disappointment, to the readers of this appalling story, to hear that Dante's particulars of it are as little to be relied on as those of the Paulo and Francesca. The only facts known of Ugolino are, that he was an ambitious traitor, who did actually deliver up the fortified places, as Dante acknowledges ; and that his rivals, infamous as he, or more infamous, prevailed against him, and did shut him up and starve him and some of his family. But the " little" children are an invention of the poet's, or probably his belief, when he was a young man, and first heard the story ; for some of Ugolino's fellow-prisoners may have been youths, but others were grown up—none so childish as he intimates ; and they were not all his own sons ; some were his nephews.

And as to Archbishop Ruggieri, there is no proof whatever of his having had any share in the business—hardly a ground of suspicion ; so that historians look upon him as an " ill-used gentleman." Dante, in all probability, must have learnt the real circumstances of the case, as he advanced in years ; but if charity is bound to hope that he would have altered the passage accordingly, had he revised his poem, it is forced to admit that he left it unaltered, and that his " will and pleasure" might have found means of reconciling the retention to his conscience. Pride, unfortunately, includes the power to do things which it pretends to be very foreign to its nature ; and in proportion as detraction is easy to it, retraction becomes insupportable.*

Rabelais, to shew his contempt for the knights of chivalry, has made them galley-slaves in the next world, their business being to help Charon row his boat over the river Styx, and their payment a piece of mouldy bread and a filip on the nose. Somebody should write a burlesque of the enormities in Dante's poem, and invent some Rabelaesque punishment for a great poet's pride and presumption. What should it be ?

* The controversial character of Dante's genius, and the discordant estimate formed of it in so many respects by different writers, have already carried the author of this book so far beyond his intended limits, that he is obliged to refer for evidence in the cases of Ugolino and Francesca to Balbo, *Vita di Dante* (Napoli, 1840), p. 33 ; and to Troya, *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante* (Firenze, 1826), pp. 28, 32, and 176.

No. IV.

PICTURE OF FLORENCE IN THE TIME OF DANTE'S ANCESTORS.

FIorenza dentro da la cerchia antica,
Ond' ella toglie ancora e Terza e Nona,
Si stava in pace sobria e pudica.

Non avea catenella, non corona,
Non donne contigate, non cintura
Che fosse a veder più che la persona.

Non faceva nascendo ancor paura
La figlia al padre, che 'l tempo e la dotte
Non fuggian quinci e quindi la misura.

Non avea case di famiglia vote :
Non v' era giunto ancor Sardanapalo
A mostrar ciò che 'n camera si puote.

Non era vinto ancora Montemalo
Dal vostro Uccellatojo, che com' è vinto
Nel montar su, così sarà nel calo.

Bellincion Berti vid' io andar cinto
Di cuojo e d' osso, e venir da lo specchio
La donna sua senza 'l viso dipinto :

E vidi quel de' Nerli e quel del Vecchio
Esser contenti a la pelle scoperta,
E le sue donne al fuso ed al penneccio.

O fortunate ! e ciascuna era certa
De la sua sepoltura, ed ancor nulla
Era per Francia nel letto deserta.

L' una vegghiava a studio de la culla,
E consolando usava l' idioma
Che pria li padri e le madri trastulla.

L' altra traendo a la rocca la chioma
Favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
Di Trojani e di Fiesole e di Roma.

Saria tenuta allor tal maraviglia
Una Cianghella, un Lapo Salterello,
Qual or saria Cincinnato e Corniglia.

Translation in blank verse.

FLORENCE, before she broke the good old bounds,
Whence yet are heard the chimes of eve and morn,
Abided well, in modesty and peace.
No coronets had she—no chains of gold—
No gaudy sandals—no rich girdles rare
That caught the eye more than the person did.
Fathers then feared no daughter's birth for dread
Of wantons courting wealth; nor were their homes
Emptied with exile. Chamberers had not shewn
What they could dare, to prove their scorn of shame.
Your neighbouring uplands then beheld no towers
Prouder than Rome's, only to know worse fall.
I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad
Girt with a thong of leather; and his wife
Come from the glass without a painted face.
Nerlis I saw, and Vecchios, and the like,
In doublets without cloaks; and their good dames
Contented while they spun. Blest women those!
They knew the place where they should lie when dead;
Nor were their beds deserted while they liv'd.
They nurs'd their babies; lull'd them with the songs
And household words of their own infancy;
And while they drew the distaff's hair away,
In the sweet bosoms of their families,
Told tales of Troy, and Fiesole, and Rome.
It had been then as marvellous to see
A man of Lapo Salterello's sort,
Or woman like Cianghella, as to find
A Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.

No. V.

THE DEATH OF AGRICAN.

BOIARDO.

ORLANDO ed Agricane un' altra fiata
Ripreso insieme avean crudel battaglia,
La più terribil mai non fu mirata,
L' arme l' un l' altro a pezzo a pezzo taglia.
Vede Agrican sua gente sbarattata,
Nè le può dar aiuto, che le vaglia.
Però che Orlando tanto stretto il tiene,
Che star con seco a fronte gli conviene.

Nel suo segreto fè questo pensiero,
Trar fuor di schiera quel Conte gagliardo ;
E poi che ucciso l' abbia in su 'l sentiero,
Tornare a la battaglia senza tardo ;
Però che a lui par facile e leggiero
Cacciar soletto quel popol codardo ;
Chè tutti insieme, e 'l suo Re Galafrone,
Non li stimava quanto un vil bottone.

Con tal proposto si pone a fuggire,
Forte correndo sopra la pianura ;
Il Conte nulla pensa a quel fallire,
Anzi crede che 'l faccia per paura.
Senz' altro dubbio se 'l pone a seguire,
E già son giunti ad una selva scura :
Appunto in mezzo a quella selva piana,
Era un bel prato intorno a una fontana.

Fermossi ivi Agricane a quella fonte,
E smontò de l' arcion per riposare,
Ma non si tolse l' elmo da la fronte,
Nè piastra, o scudo si volse levare ;

E poco dimorò, che giunse 'l Conte,
 E come il vide a la fonte aspettare,
 Disseglì: Cavalier, tu sei fuggito,
 E sì forte mostravi e tanto ardito!

Come tanta vergogna puoi soffrire,
 A dar le spalle ad un sol cavaliere!
 Forse credesti la morte fuggire,
 Or vedi che fallito hai il pensiero;
 Chi morir può onorato dee morire;
 Che spesse volte avviene e di leggiero,
 Che, per durar in questa vita trista,
 Morte e vergogna ad un tratto s' acquista.

Agrican prima rimontò in arcione,
 Poi con voce soave rispondea:
 Tu sei per certo il più franco Barone,
 Ch' io mai trovassi ne la vita mia,
 E però del tuo scampo fia cagione
 La tua prodezza e quella cortesia,
 Che oggi sì grande al campo usato m' hai,
 Quando soccorso a mia gente donai.

Però ti voglio la vita lasciare,
 Ma non tornasti più per darmi inciampo.
 Questo la fuga mi fè simulare,
 Nè v' ebbi altro partito a darti scampo.
 Se pur ti piace meco battagliaiare,
 Morto ne rimarrai su questo campo;
 Ma siami testimonio il cielo e 'l sole,
 Che darti morte mi dispiace e duole.

Il Conte gli rispose molto umano,
 Perchè avea preso già di lui pietate;
 Quanto sei, disse, più franco e soprano,
 Più di te mi rincresce in veritate,
 Che sarai morto, e non sei Cristiano,
 Ed anderai tra l' anime dannate;
 Ma se vuoi il corpo e l' anima salvare,
 Piglia battesimo, e lascierotti andare.

Disse Agricane, e riguardollo in viso:
 Se tu sei Cristiano, Orlando sei.
 Chi mi facesse Re del Paradiso,
 Con tal ventura non la cangiarei;
 Ma sin or ti ricordo e dotti avviso,
 Che non mi parli de' fatti de' Dei,
 Perchè potresti predicar invano;
 Difenda il suo ciascun co 'l brando in mano.

Nè più parole ; ma trasse Tranchera,
E verso Orlando con ardir s' affronta.

Or si comincia la battaglia fiera,
Con aspri colpi, di taglio e di punta ;
Ciascun è di prodezza una lumiera,
E sterno insieme, com' il libro conta,
Da mezzo giorno insino a notte scura,
Sempre più franchi a la battaglia dura.

Ma poi che 'l sol avea passato il monte
E cominciossi a far il ciel stellato,
Prima verso del Re parlava il Conte ;
Che farem, disse, che 'l giorno n' è andato ?
Disse Agricane, con parole prontè :
Ambi ci poseremo in questo prato,
E domattina, come il giorno appare,
Ritorneremo insieme a battagliaire.

Così d' accordo il partito si prese ;
Lega il destrier ciascun come gli piace,
Poi sopra a l' erba verde si distese :
Come fosse tra loro antica pace,
L' uno a l' altro vicino era e palese.
Orlando presso al fonte isteso giace,
Ed Agricane al bosco più vicino
Stassi colcato, a l' ombra d' un gran pino.

E ragionando insieme tutta via
Di cose degne e condecanti a loro,
Guardava il Conte il ciel, poscia dicia :
Questo che ora veggiamo, è un bel lavoro,
Che fece la divina Monarchia,
La luna d' argento e le stelle d' oro,
E la luce del giorno e 'l sol lucente,
Dio tutto ha fatto per l' umana gente.

Disse Agricane : Io comprendo per certo,
Che tu vuoi de la fede ragionare ;
Io di nulla scienza son esperto,
Nè mai sendo fanciul, volsi imparare ;
E ruppi il capo al maestro mio per merto ;
Poi non si potè un altro ritrovare,
Che mi mostrasse libro, nè scrittura,
Tanto ciascun avea di me paura.

E così spesi la mia fanciullezza,
In caccie, in giochi d' arme e in cavalcare ;
Nè mi par che convenga a gentilezza,
Star tutto il giorno ne' libri a pensare ;

Ma la forza del corpo e la destrezza
 Conviensi al cavaliere esercitare ;
 Dottrina al prete, ed al dottor sta bene ;
 Io tanto saccio quanto mi conviene.

Rispose Orlando : Io tiro teco a un segno,
 Che l' armi son del' uomo il primo onore ;
 Ma non già che 'l saper faccia un men degno,
 Anzi l' adorna com' un prato il fiore ;
 Ed è simile a un bove, a un sasso, a un legno,
 Che non pensa a l' eterno Creatore ;
 Nè ben si puo pensar, senza dottrina,
 La somma maestade, alta e divina.

Disse Agricane : Egli è gran scortesia
 A voler contrastar con avvantaggio.
 Io t' ho scoperto la natura mia,
 E te conosco, che sei dotto e saggio ;
 Se più parlassi, io non risponderia ;
 Piacendoti dormir, dormiti ad aggio ;
 E se meco parlar hai pur diletto,
 D' arme o d' amor a ragionar t' aspetto.

Ora ti prego, che a quel ch' io domando
 Risponda il vero, a fè d' uomo pregiato ;
 Se tu se' veramente quell' Orlando,
 Che vien tanto nel mondo nominato ;
 E perchè quì sei giunto, e come, e quando ;
 E se mai fosti ancora innamorato ;
 Perchè ogni cavalier, ch' è senza amore,
 Se in vista è vivo, vivo senza core.

Rispose il Conte : Quell' Orlando sono,
 Che uccise Almonte e 'l suo fratel Troiano ;
 Amor m' ha posto tutto in abbandono,
 E venir fammi in questo luogo strano.
 E perchè teco più largo ragiono,
 Voglio che sappi che 'l mio cor è in mano
 De la figliuola del Re Galafrone,
 Che ad Albracca dimora nel girone.

Tu fai co 'l padre guerra a gran furore,
 Par prender suo paese e sua castella ;
 Ed io quà son condotto per amore,
 E per piacer a quella damisella ;
 Molte fiate son stato per onore
 E per la fede mia sopra la sella ;
 Or sol per acquistar la bella dama
 Faccio battaglia, e d' altro non ho brama.

Quando Agrican ha nel parlare accolto,
Che questo è Orlando, ed Angelica amava,
Fuor di misura si turbò nel volto,
Ma per la notte non lo dimostrava;
Piangeva sospirando come un stolto,
L' anima e 'l petto e 'l spirito gli avvampava,
E tanto gelosia gli batte il core,
Che non è vivo, e di doglia non more.

Poi disse a Orlando: Tu debbi pensare,
Che come il giorno sarà dimostrato,
Debbiamo insieme la battaglia fare,
E l' uno o l' altro rimarrà su 'l prato.
Or d' una cosa ti voglio pregare,
Che, prima che vegnamo e cotal piato,
Quella donzella, che 'l tuo cor disia,
Tu l' abbandoni e lascila per mia.

Io non potria patire, essendo vivo,
Che altri con meco amasse il viso adorno:
O l' uno o l' altro al tutto sarà privo
Del spirito e de la dama al novo giorno;
Altri mai non saprà, che questo rivo
E questo bosco, ch' è quivi d' intorno,
Che l' abbi rifiutata in cotal loco
E in cotal tempo, che sarà sì poco.

Diceva Orlando al Re: Le mie promesse
Tutte ho servate, quante mai ne fei;
Ma se quel che or mi chiedi io promettesse
E s' io il giurassi, io non l' attenderei;
Così poria spiccar mie membra istesse
E levarmi di fronte gli occhi miei,
E viver senza spirito e senza core,
Come lasciar d' Angelica l' amore.

Il Re Agrican, che ardeva oltre misura,
Non puotè tal risposta comportare;
Benchè sia 'l mezzo de la notte scura,
Prese Bajardo e su v' ebbe a montare,
Ed orgoglioso, con vista sicura,
Isgrida al Conte, ed ebbel a sfidare,
Dicendo: Cavalier, la dama gaglia
Lasciar convienti, o far meco battaglia.

Era già il Conte in su l' arcion salito,
Perchè, come si mosse il Re possente,
Temendo dal Pagan esser tradito,
Saltò sopra 'l destrier subitamente;

Onde rispose con animo ardito :

Lasciar colei non posso per niente ;
E s' io potessi, ancora io non vorria ;
Avertela convien per altra via.

Come in mar la tempesta a gran fortuna,

Cominciarno l' assalto i cavalieri :
Nel verde prato, per la notte bruna,
Con sproni urtarno addosso i buon destrieri ;
E si scorgeano al lume de la luna,
Dandosi colpi dispietati e fieri,
Ch' era ciascun di lor forte ed ardito :
Ma più non dico ; il Canto è quì finito.



Signori e cavalieri innamorati,

Cortesi damigelle e graziose,
Venite quì davanti, ed ascoltati

L' alte avventure e le guerre amorose,
Che fer gli antiqui cavalier pregiati,
E furno al mondo degne e gloriose ;
Ma sopra tutti Orlando ed Agricane
Ferno opre per amor alte e soprane.

Sì come io dissi nel Canto di sopra,

Con fier assalto dispietato e duro,
Per una dama ciaschedun s' adopra ;
E ben che sia la notte e 'l ciel oscuro,
Già non vi fa mestier che alcun si scuopra,
Ma conviensi guardare e star sicuro,
E ben difeso di sopra e d' intorno,
Come il sol fosse in cielo a mezzo giorno.

Agrican combattea con più furore,

Il Conte con più senno si servava ;
Già contrastato avean più di cinque ore,
E l' alba in Oriente si schiarava,
Or s' incomincia la zuffa maggiore ;
Il superbo Agrican si disperava,
Che tanto contra d' esso Orlando dura,
E mena un colpo fiero oltra misura.

Giunse a traverso il colpo disperato,

E 'l scudo com' un latte al mezzo taglia ;
Piagar non puote Orlando, ch' è affatato,
Ma fracassa ad un punto piastra e maglia.

Non potea il franco Conte aver il fiato,
Benchè Tranchera sua carne non taglia;
Fu con tanta ruina la percossa,
Che avea fiaccati i nervi, e peste l' ossa.

Ma non fu già per questo sbigottito,
Anzi colpisce con maggior fierezza.
Giunse nel scudo, e tutto l' ha partito,
Ogni piastra del sbergo e maglia spezza,
E nel sinistro fianco l' ha ferito;
E fu quel colpo di cotanta asprezza,
Che 'l scudo mezzo al prato andò di netto,
E ben tre coste gli tagliò nel petto.

Come rugge il leon per la foresta,
Allor che l' ha ferito il cacciatore,
Così il fier Agrican, con più tempesta,
Rimena un colpo di troppo furore;
Giunse ne l' elmo, al mezzo de la testa,
Non ebbe il Conte mai botta maggiore,
E tanto uscito è fuor di conoscenza,
Che non sa s' egli ha il capo, o s' egli è senza.

Non vedea lume per gli occhi niente,
E l' una e l' altra orecchia tintinnava;
Sì spaventato è 'l suo destrier corrente,
Ch' intorno al prato fuggendo il portava;
E sarebbe caduto veramente,
Se in quella stordigion punto durava;
Ma sendo nel cader, per tal cagione
Tornògli 'l spirto e tennesi a l' arcione.

E venne di se stesso vergognoso,
Poi che cotanto si vede avanzato.
Com' anderai, diceva doloroso,
Ad Angelica mai, vituperato?
Non ti ricordi quel viso amoroso,
Che a far questa battaglia t' ha mandato?
Ma chi è richiesto e indugia il suo servire,
Servendo poi, fa il guiderdon perire.

Presso a dui giorni ho già fatto dimora,
Per il conquisto d' un sol cavaliere,
E seco a fronte mi ritrovo ancora,
Ne li he vantaggio più che 'l di primiero.
Ma, se più indugio la battaglia un' ora,
L' arme abbandono ed entro al monastero,
Frate mi faccio, e chiamomi dannato,
Se mai più brando mi fia visto allato.

Il fin del suo parlar già non e inteso,
 Che batti i denti e le parole incocca;
 Fuoco rassembra di furore acceso
 Il fiato, ch' esce fuor di naso e bocca.
 Verso Agricane se ne va disteso,
 Con Durindano ad ambe mani il tocca
 Sopra la spalla destra di reverso;
 Tutta la taglia quel colpo diverso.

Il crudel brando nel petto dichina,
 E rompe il sbergo e taglia il pancirone,
 Benchè sia grosso e d' una maglia fina,
 Tutto lo fende insin sotto al gallone.
 Non fu veduta mai tanta ruina;
 Scende la spada e guinse ne l' arcione;
 D' osso era questa ed intorno ferrato,
 Ma Durindana lo mandò su 'l prato.

Dal destro lato a l' anguinaglia stanca
 Era tagliato il Re cotanto forte;
 Perse la vista, ed ha la faccia bianca,
 Come colui ch' è già giunto a la morte;
 E ben che 'l spirto e 'l anima gli manca,
 Chiamava Orlando, e con parole scorte
 Sospirando diceva in bassa voce:
 Io credo nel tuo Dio, che morì in croce.

Battezzami, Barone, a la fontana,
 Prima ch' io perda in tutto la favella;
 E se mia vita è stata iniqua e strana,
 Non sia la morte almen di Dio ribella;
 Lui, che venne a salvar in gente umana,
 L' anima mia ricoglia tapinella;
 Ben mi confesso che molto peccai,
 Ma sua misericordia è graude assai.

Piangea quel Re, che fu cotanto fiero,
 E tenea il viso al ciel sempre voltato.
 Poi ad Orlando disse: Cavaliere,
 In questo giorno d' oggi hai guadagnato,
 Al mio parere, il più franco destriero,
 Che mai fosse nel mondo cavalcato;
 Questo fu tolto ad un forte Barone,
 Che nel mio campo dimora prigionero.

Io non mi posso ormai più sostenere;
 Levami tu d' arcion, Baron accorto.
 Deh non lasciar quest' anima perire!
 Battezzami oramai, che già sòn morto!

Se tu mi lasci a tal guisa morire,
 Ancor n' arai gran pena e disconforto.
 Questo diceva e molte altre parole;
 Oh quanto al Conte ne rincresce e duole!

Egli avea pien di lagrime la faccia,
 E fu smontato in su la terra piana;
 Ricolse il Re ferito ne le braccia,
 E sopra 'l marmo il pose a la fontana,
 E di pianger con seco non si saccia,
 Chiedendogli perdon con voce umana.
 Poi battezzollo a l' acqua de la fonte,
 Pregando Dio per lui con le man gionte.

Poco poi stette, che l' ebbe trovato
 Freddo nel viso e tutta la persona,
 Onde s' avvide ch' egli era passato.
 Sopra al marmor al fonte l' abbandona,
 Così com' era tutto quanto armato,
 Co 'l brando in mano, e con la sua corona.

No. VI.

ANGELICA AND MEDORO.

ARIOSTO.

SEGUON gli Scotti ove la guida loro
 Per l' alta selva alto disdegno mena,
 Poi che lasciato ha l' uno e l' altro Moro,
 L' un morto in tutto, e l' altro vivo a pena.
 Giacque gran pezzo il giovine Medoro,
 Spicciando il sangue da sì larga vena,
 Che di sua vita al fin saria venuto,
 Se non sopravvenia chi gli diè aiuto.

Gli sopravvenne a caso una donzella,
 Avvolta in pastorale et umil veste,
 Ma di real presenza, e in viso bella,
 D' alte maniere e accortamente oneste.
 Tanto è ch' io non ne dissi più novella,
 Ch' a pena riconoscer la dovreste;
 Questa, se non sapete, Angelica era,
 Del gran Can del Catai la figlia altiera.

Poi che 'l suo anello Angelica riebbe,
 Di che Brunel l' avea tenuta priva,
 In tanto fasto, in tanto orgoglio crebbe,
 Ch' esser pareva di tutto 'l mondo schiva:
 Sè ne va sola, e non si degnerebbe
 Compagno aver qual più famoso viva;
 Si sdegnava a rimembrar che già suo amante
 Abbia Orlando nomato, o Sacripante.

E, sopra ogn' altro error, via più pentita
 Era del ben che già a Rinaldo volse.
 Troppo parendole essersi avvilita,
 Ch' a riguardar si basso gli occhi volse.
 Tant' arroganza avendo Amor sentita,
 Più lungamente comportar non volse.
 Dove giacea Medor, si pose al varco,
 E l' aspettò, posto lo strale all' arco.

Quando Angelica vide il giovinetto
 Languir ferito, assai vicino a morte,
 Che del suo Re che giacea senza tetto,
 Più che del proprio mal, si dolea forte,
 Insolita pietade io mezo al petto
 Si sentì entrar per disusate porte,
 Che le fe' il duro cor tenero e molle;
 E più quando il suo caso egli narrolle.

E rivocando alla memoria l' arte
 Ch' in India imparò già chirurgia,
 (Chè par che questo studio in quella parte
 Nobile e degno e di gran laude sia;
 E, senza molto rivoltar di carte,
 Che 'l padre a i figli ereditario il dia)
 Si dispose operar con succo d' erbe,
 Ch' a più matura vita lo riserbe.

E ricordossi che passando avea
 Veduta un' erba in una spiaggia amena;
 Fosse dittamo, o fosse panacea,
 O non so qual di tal effetto piena,
 Che stagna il sangue, a de la piaga rea
 Leva ogni spasmo e perigliosa pena,
 La trovò non lontana, e, quella còlta,
 Dove lasciato avea Medor, diè volta.

Nel ritornar s' incontra in un pastore,
 Ch' a cavallo pel bosco ne veniva
 Cercando una iuvenca, che gli fuore
 Duo dì di mandra e senza guardia giva.

Seco lo trasse ove perdea il vigore
 Medor col sangue che del petto usciva;
 E già n' avea di tanto il terren tinto,
 Ch' era omai presso a rimanere estinto.

Del palafreno Angelica giù scese,
 E scendere il pastor seco fece anche.
 Pestò con sassi l' erba, indi la presse,
 E succo ne cavò fra le man bianche:
 Ne la piaga n' infuse, e ne distese
 E pel petto e pel ventre e fin a l' anche;
 E fu di tal virtù questo liquore,
 Che stagnò il sangue e gli tornò il vigore:

E gli diè forza, che potè salire
 Sopra il cavallo che l' pastor condusse.
 Non però volse indi Medor partire
 Prima ch' in terra il suo signor non fosse,
 E Cloridan col Re fe' sepelire;
 E poi dove a lei piacque si ridusse;
 Et ella per pietà ne l' umil case
 Del cortese pastor seco rimase.

Nè, fin che nol tornasse in sanitade,
 Volea partir: così di lui fe' stima:
 Tanto sè inteneri de la pietade
 Che n' ebbe, come in terra il vide prima.
 Poi, vistone i costumi e la beltade,
 Roder si sentì il cor d' ascosa lima;
 Roder si sentì il core, e a poco a poco
 Tutto infiammato d' amoroso fuoco.

Stava il pastore in assai buona e bella
 Stanza, nel bosco infra duo monti piatta,
 Con la moglie e co i figli; et avea quella
 Tutta di nuovo e poco inanzi fatta.
 Quivi a Medoro fu per la donzella
 La piaga in breve a sanità ritratta;
 Ma in minor tempo si sentì maggiore
 Piaga di questa avere ella nel core.

Assai più larga piaga e più profonda
 Nel cor sentì da non veduto strale,
 Che da' begli occhi e da la testa bionda
 Di Medoro avventò l' arcier c' ha l' ale.
 Arder si sente, e sempre il fuoco abonda,
 E più cura l' altrui che 'l proprio male.
 Di sè non cura; e non è ad altro intenta,
 Ch' a risanar chi lei fere e tormenta.

La sua piaga più s' apre e più incrudisce,
 Quanto più l' altra si restringe e salda.
 Il giovine si sana : ella languisce
 Di nuova febbre, or agghiacciata or calda.
 Di giorno in giorno in lui beltà fiorisce :
 La misera si strugge, come falda
 Strugger di neve intempestiva suole,
 Ch' in loco aprico abbia scoperta il sole.

Se di disio non vuol morir, bisogna
 Che senza indugio ella sè stessa aiti :
 E ben le par che, di quel ch' essa agogna,
 Non sia tempo aspettar ch' altri la 'nviti.
 Dunque, rotto ogni freno di vergogna,
 La lingua ebbe non men che gli occhi arditi ;
 E di quel colpo domandò mercede,
 Che, forse non sapendo, esso le diede.

O Conte Orlando, o Re di Circassia,
 Vestra inclita virtù, dite, che giova ?
 Vostro alto onor, dite, in che prezzo sia ?
 O che mercè vostro servir ritruova ?
 Mostratemi una sola cortesia,
 Che mai costei v' usasse, o vecchia o nuova,
 Per ricompensa e guidardone e merto
 Di quanto avete già per lei sofferto.

Oh, se potessi ritornar mai vivo,
 Quanto ti parria duro, o Re Agricane !
 Che già mostrò costei sì averti a schivo
 Con repulse crudeli et inumane.
 O Ferrau, o mille altri ch' io non scrivo,
 Ch' avete fatto mille pruove vane
 Per questa ingrata, quanto aspro vi fora
 S' a costu' in braccio voi la vedesse ora !

Angelica a Medor la prima rōsa
 Coglièr lasciò, non ancor tocca inante ;
 Nè persona fu mai sì avventurosa,
 Ch' in quel giardin potesse por le piante.
 Per adombrar, per onestar la cosa,
 Si celebrò con ceremonie sante
 Il matrimonio, ch' auspice ebbe Amore,
 E pronuba la moglie del pastore.

Fèrsi le nozze sotto all' umil tetto
 Le più solenni che vi potean farsi ;
 E più d' un mese poi stero a diletto
 I duo tranquilli amanti a ricrearsi.

Più lunge non vedea del giovinetto

La donna, nè di lui potea saziarsi:
Nè, per mai sempre pendegli dal collo,
Il suo disir sentià di lui satollo.

Se stava all' ombra o se del tetto usciva,

Avea dì e notte il bel giovine a lato:
Matino e sera or questa or quella riva
Cercando andava, o qualche verde prato:
Nel mezo giorno un antro li copriva,

Forse non men di quel commodo e grato
Ch' ebber, fuggendo l' acque, Enea e Dido,
De' lor secreti testimonio fido.

Fra piacer tanti, ovunque un arbor dritto

Vedesse ombrare o fonte o rivo puro,
V' avea spillo o coltel subito fitto;
Così, se v' era alcun sasso men duro.

Et era fuori in mille luoghi scritto,
E così in casa in altri tanti il muro,
Angelica e Medoro, in varii modi
Legati insieme di diversi nodi.

Poi che le parve aver fatto soggiorno

Quivi più ch' a bastanza, fe' disegno
Di fare in India del Catai ritorno,
E Medor coronar del suo bel regno.
Portava al braccio un cerchio d' oro, adorno
Di ricche gemme, in testimonio e segno
Del ben che 'l Conte Orlando le volea;
E portato gran tempo ve l' avea.

Quel donò già Morgana a Ziliante,

Nel tempo che nel lago ascoso il tenne;
Et esso, poi ch' al padre Monodante
Per opra e per virtù d' Orlando venne,
Lo diede a Orlando: Orlando ch' era amante,
Di porsi al braccio il cerchio d' or sostenne,
Avendo disegnato di donarlo
Alla Regina sua di ch' io vi parlo.

Non per amor del Paladino, quanto

Perch' era ricco e d' artificio egregio,
Caro avuto l' avea la donna tanto
Che più non si può aver cosa di pregio.
Sè lo serbò ne l' Isola del pianto,
Non so già dirvi con che privilegio,
Là dove esposta al marin mostro nuda
Fu da la gente inospitale e cruda.

Quivi non si trovando altra mercede,
 Ch' al buon pastore et alla moglie dessi,
 Che serviti gli avea con sì gran fede
 Dal dì che nel suo albergo si fur messi;
 Levò dal braccio il cerchio, e gli lo diede,
 E volse per suo amor che lo tenessi;
 Indi saliron verso la montagna
 Che divide la Francia da la Spagna.

Dentro a Valenza o dentro a Barcellona
 Per qualche giorno avean pensato porsi,
 Fin che accadesse alcuna nave buona, rA
 Che per Levante apparecchiasse a sciorsi.
 Videro il mar scoprir sotto a Girona
 Ne lo smontar giù de i montani dorsi;
 E, costeggiando a man sinistra il lito,
 A Barcellona andâr pel camin trito.

Ma non vi giunser prima ch' un uom pazzo
 Giaccer trovaro in su l' estreme arene,
 Che, come porco, di loto e di guazzo
 Tutto era brutto, e volto e petto e schene.
 Costui si scagliò lor, come cagnazzo
 Ch' aslair forestier subito viene;
 E diè lor noia e fu per far lor scorno.

* * * * *

The troop then follow'd where their chief had gone,
 Pursuing his stern chase among the trees,
 And leave the two companions there alone,
 One surely dead, the other scarcely less.
 Long time Medoro lay without a groan,
 Losing his blood in such large quantities,
 That life would surely have gone out at last,
 Had not a helping hand been coming past.

There came, by chance, a damsel passing there,
 Dress'd like a shepherdess in lowly wise,
 But of a royal presence, and an air
 Noble as handsome, with clear maiden eyes.
 'Tis so long since I told you news of her,
 Perhaps you know her not in this disguise.
 This, you must know then, was Angelica,
 Proud daughter of the Khan of great Cathay.

You know the magic ring and her distress ?

Well, when she had recovered this same ring,
It so increased her pride and haughtiness,
She seem'd too high for any living thing.
She goes alone, desiring nothing less
Than a companion, even though a king :
She even scorns to recollect the flame
Of one Orlando, or his very name.

But, above all, she hates to recollect
That she had taken to Rinaldo so ;
She thinks it the last want of self-respect,
Pure degradation, to have look'd so low.
"Such arrogance," said Cupid, " must be check'd."
The little god betook him with his bow
To where Medoro lay ; and, standing by,
Held the shaft ready with a lurking eye.

Now when the princess saw the youth all pale,
And found him grieving with his bitter wound,
Not for what one so young might well bewail,
But that his king should not be laid in ground,—
She felt a something strange and gentle steal
Into her heart by some new way it found,
Which touch'd its hardness, and turn'd all to grace ;
And more so, when he told her all his case.

And calling to her mind the little arts
Of healing, which she learnt in India,
(For 'twas a study valued in those parts
Even by those who were in sovereign sway,
And yet so easy too, that, like the heart's,
'Twas more inherited than learnt, they say),
She cast about, with herbs and balmy juices,
To save so fair a life for all its uses.

And thinking of an herb that caught her eye
As she was coming, in a pleasant plain
(Whether 'twas panacea, dittany,
Or some such herb accounted sovereign
For stanching blood quickly and tenderly,
And winning out all spasm and bad pain),
She found it not far off, and gathering some,
Returned with it to save Medoro's bloom.

In coming back she met upon the way
A shepherd, who was riding through the wood
To find a heifer that had gone astray,
And been two days about the solitude.

She took him with her where Medoro lay,
 Still feebler than he was, with loss of blood;
 So much he lost, and drew so hard a breath,
 That he was now fast fading to his death.

Angelica got off her horse in haste,
 And made the shepherd get as fast from his;
 She ground the herbs with stones, and then express'd
 With her white hands the balmy milkiness;
 Then dropp'd it in the wound, and bath'd his breast,
 His stomach, feet, and all that was amiss:
 And of such virtue was it, that at length
 The blood was stopp'd, and he look'd round with strength.

At last he got upon the shepherd's horse,
 But would not quit the place till he had seen
 Laid in the ground his lord and master's corse;
 And Cloridan lay with it, who had been
 Smitten so fatally with sweet remorse.

He then obey'd the will of the fair queen;
 And she, for very pity of his lot,
 Went and stay'd with him at the shepherd's cot.

Nor would she leave him, she esteem'd him so,
 Till she had seen him well with her own eye;
 So full of pity did her bosom grow,
 Since first she saw him faint and like to die.
 Seeing his manners now, and beauty too,
 She felt her heart yearn somehow inwardly;
 She felt her heart yearn somehow, till at last
 'Twas all on fire, and burning warm and fast.

The shepherd's home was good enough and neat,
 A little shady cottage in a dell:
 The man had just rebuilt it all complete,
 With room to spare, in case more births befell.
 There with such knowledge did the lady treat
 Her handsome patient, that he soon grew well;
 But not before she had, on her own part,
 A secret wound much greater in her heart.

Much greater was the wound, and deeper far,
 Which the sweet arrow made in her heart's strings;
 'Twas from Medoro's lovely eyes and hair;
 'Twas from the naked archer with the wings.
 She feels it now; she feels, and yet can bear
 Another's less than her own sufferings.
 She thinks not of herself: she thinks alone
 How to cure him by whom she is undone.

The more his wound recovers and gets ease,
 Her own grows worse, and widens day by day.
 The youth gets well; the lady languishes,
 Now warm, now cold, as fitful fevers play.
 His beauty heightens, like the flowering trees;
 She, miserable creature, melts away
 Like the weak snow, which some warm sun has found
 Fall'n, out of season, on a rising ground.

And must she speak at last, rather than die?
 And must she plead, without another's aid?
 She must, she must: the vital moments fly:
 She lives—she dies, a passion-wasted maid.
 At length she bursts all ties of modesty:
 Her tongue explains her eyes; the words are said;
 And she asks pity, underneath that blow
 Which he, perhaps, that gave it did not know.

O County Orlando! O King Sacripant!
 That fame of yours, say, what avails it ye?
 That lofty honour, those great deeds ye vaunt,—
 Say, what's their value with the lovely she?
 Shew me—recall to memory (for I can't)—
 Shew me, I beg, one single courtesy
 That ever she vouchsafed ye, far or near,
 For all you've done and have endured for her.

And you, if you could come to life again,
 O Agrican, how hard 'twould seem to you,
 Whose love was met by nothing but disdain,
 And vile repulses, shocking to go through!
 O Ferragus! O thousands, who, in vain,
 Did all that loving and great hearts could do,
 How would ye feel, to see, with all her charms,
 This thankless creature in a stripling's arms?

The young Medoro had the gathering
 Of the world's rose, the rose untouch'd before;
 For never, since that garden blush'd with spring,
 Had human being dared to touch the door.
 To sanction it—to consecrate the thing,—
 The priest was called to read the service o'er,
 (For without marriage what can come but strife?)
 And the bride-mother was the shepherd's wife.

All was perform'd, in short, that could be so
 In such a place, to make the nuptials good;
 Nor did the happy pair think fit to go,
 But spent the month and more within the wood.

The lady to the stripling seemed to grow.

His step her step, his eyes her eyes pursued ;
Nor did her love lose any of its zest,
Though she was always hanging on his breast.

In doors and out of doors, by night, by day,
She had the charmer by her side for ever ;
Morning and evening they would stroll away,
Now by some field or little tufted river ;
They chose a cave in middle of the day,
Perhaps not less agreeable or clever
Than Dido and Æneas found to screen them,
When they had secrets to discuss between them.

And all this while there was not a smooth tree,
That stood by stream or fountain with glad breath,
Nor stone less hard than stones are apt to be,
But they would find a knife to carve it with ;
And in a thousand places you might see,
And on the walls about you and beneath,
ANGELICA AND MEDORO, tied in one,
As many ways as lovers' knots can run.

And when they thought they had outspent their time,
Angelica the royal took her way,
She and Medoro, to the Indian clime,
To crown him king of her great realm, Cathay.*

No. VII.

THE JEALOUSY OF ORLANDO.

THE SAME.

FERON camin diverso i cavallieri,
Di quà Zerbino, e di là il Conte Orlando.
Prima che pigli il Conte altri sentieri,
All' arbor tolse, e a sè ripose il brando ;
E, dove meglio col Pagan pensosse
Di potersi incontrare, il destrier mosse.

Lo strano corso che tenne il cavallo
Del Saracin pel bosco senza via,

* This version of the present episode has appeared in print before. So has a portion of the *Monks and the Giants*.

Fece ch' Orlando andò duo giorni in fallo,
 Nè lo trovò, nè pote averne spia.
 Giunse ad un rivo, che pareva cristallo,
 Ne le cui sponde un bel pratel fioria,
 Di nativo color vago e dipinto,
 E di molti e belli arbori distinto.

Il merigge facea grato l' orezo
 Al duro armento et al pastore ignudo ;
 Si che nè Orlando sentia alcun ribrezo,
 Che la corazza avea, l' elmo e lo scudo.
 Quivi egli entrò, per riposarsi, in mezo ;
 E v' ebbe travaglioso albergo e crudo,
 E, più che dir si possa, empio soggiorno,
 Quell' infelice e sfortunato giorno.

Volgendosi ivi intorno, vidi scritti
 Molti arbuscelli in su l' ombrosa riva.
 Tosto che fermi v' ebbe gli occhi e fitti,
 Fu certo esser di man de la sua Diva.
 Questo era un di quei lochi già descritti,
 Ove sovente con Medor veniva
 Da casa del pastore indi vicina
 La bella donna del Catai Regina.

Angelica e Medor con cento nodi
 Legati insieme, e in cento lochi vede.
 Quante lettere son, tanti son chiodi
 Co i quali Amore il cor gli punge e fiede.
 Va col pensier cercando in mille modi
 Non creder quel ch' al suo dispetto crede :
 Ch' altra Angelica sia, creder si sforza,
 Ch' abbia scritto il suo nome in quella scorza.

Poi dice : Conosco io pur queste note ;
 Di tal io n' ho tante e vedute e lette.
 Finger questo Medoro ella si puote ;
 Forse ch' a me questo cognome mette.
 Con tali opinion dal ver remote
 Usando fraude a sè medesmo, stette
 Ne la speranza il mal contento Orlando,
 Che si seppe a sè stesso ir procacciando.

Ma sempre più raccende e più rinuova,
 Quanto spenger più cerca, il rio sospetto ;
 Come l' incauto augel che si ritrova
 In ragna o in visco aver dato di petto,
 Quanto più batte l' ale e più si prova
 Di disbrigar, più vi si lega stretto.

Orlando viene ove s' incurva il monte
A guisa d' arco in su la chiara fonte.

Aveano in su l' entrata il luogo adorno
Coi piedi storti edere e viti erranti.
Quivi soleano al più cocente giorno
Stare abbracciati i duo felici amanti.
V' aveano i nomi lor dentro e d' intorno
Più che in altro de i luoghi circostanti,
Scritti, qual con carbone e qual con gesso,
E qual con punte di coltelli impresso.

Il mesto Conte a piè quivi discese ;
E vide in su l' entrata de la grotta
Parole assai, che di sua man distese
Medoro avea, che parean scritte allotta.
Del gran piacer che ne la grotta prese,
Questa sentenza in versi avea ridotta :
Che fosse culta in suo linguaggio io penso ;
Et era ne la nostra tale in senso :

Liete piante, verdi erbe, limpide acque,
Spelunca opaca e di fredde ombre grata,
Dove la bella Angelica, che nacque
Di Galafron, da molti in vano amata,
Spesso ne le mie braccia nuda giacque ;
De la commodità che quì m' è data,
Io povero Medor ricompensarvi
D' altro non posso, che d' ognior lodarvi :

E di pregare ogni signore amante
E cavallieri e damigelle, e ognuna
Persona o paësana o viandante,
Che quì sua volontà meni o Fortuna,
Ch' all' erbe, all' ombra, all' antro, al rio, alle piante
Dica : Benigno abbiate e sole e luna,
E de le nimfe il coro che provvegga,
Che non conduca a voi pastor mai greggia.

Era scritta in Arabico, che 'l Conte
Intendea così ben, come Latino.
Fra molte lingue e molte ch' avea pronte
Prontissima avea quella il Paladino
E gli schivò più volte e danni et onte,
Che si trovò tra il popul Saracino.
Ma non si vanti, se già n' ebbe frutto ;
Ch' un danno or n' ha, che può scontargli il tutto.
Tre volte, e quattro, e sei, lesse lo scritto
Quello infelice, e pur cercando in vano

Che non vi fosse quel che v' era scritto ;
E sempre lo vedea più chiaro e piano ;
Et ogni volta in mezo il petto afflitto
Stringersi il cor sentia con fredda mano.
Rimase il fin con gli occhi e con la mente
Fissi nel sasso, al sasso indifferente.

Fu allora per uscir del sentimento ;
Sì tutto in preda del dolor si lassa.
Credete a chi n' ha fatto esperimento,
Che questo è 'l duol che tutti gli altri passa.
Caduto gli era sopra il petto il mento,
La fronte priva di baldanza, e bassa ;
Nè pote aver (chè 'l duol l' occupò tanto)
Alle querele voce, o umore al pianto.

L' impetuosa doglia entro rimase,
Che volea tutta uscir con troppa fretta.
Così veggian restar l' acqua nel vase,
Che largo il ventre e la bocca abbia stretta ;
Chè, nel voltar che si fa in su la base,
L' umor, che vorria uscir, tanto s' affretta,
E ne l' angusta via tanto s' intrica,
Ch' a goccia a goccia fuore esce a fatica.

Poi ritorna in sè alquanto, e pensa come
Possa esser che non sia la cosa vera :
Che voglia alcun così infamare il nome
De la sua donna e crede e brama e spera,
O gravar lui d' insopportabil some
Tanto di gelosia, che sè ne pera ;
Et abbia quel, sia chi si voglia stato,
Molto la man di lei bene imitato.

In così poca, in così debol speme
Sveglia gli spirti, e gli rifranca un poco ;
Indi al suo Brigliadoro il dosso preme,
Dando già il sole alla sorella loco.
Non molto va, che da le vie supreme
De i tetti uscir vede il vapor del fuoco,
Sente cani abbaiar, muggiare armento ;
Viene alla villa, e piglia alloggiamento.

Languido smonta, e lascia Brigliadoro
A un discreto garzon che n' abbia cura.
Altri il disarmo, altri gli sproni d' oro
Gli leva, altri a forbir va l' armatura.
Era questa la casa ove Medoro
Giacque ferito, e v' ebbe alta avventura.

Corcarsi Orlando e non cenar domanda,
Di dolor sazio e non d' altra vivanda.

Quanto più cerca ritrovar quiete,
Tanto ritrova più travaglio e pene;
Chè de 'l odiato scritto ogni parete,
Ogni uscio, ogni finestra vede piena.
Chieder ne vuol: poi tien le labra chete;
Chè teme non si far troppo serena,
Tropo chiara la cosa, che di nebbia
Cerca offuscar, perchè men nuocer debbia.

Poco gli giova usar fraude a sè stesso;
Chè senza domandarne è chi ne parla.
Il pastor, che lo vede così oppresso
Da sua tristrizia, e che vorria levarla,
L' istoria nota a sè che dicea spesso
Di quei duo amanti a chi volea ascoltarla,
Ch' a molti dilettevole fu a udire,
Gl' incominciò senza rispetto a dire:

Come esso a prieghi d' Angelica bella,
Portato avea Medoro alla sua villa;
Ch' era ferito gravemente, e ch' ella
Curò la piaga, e in pochi di guarilla:
Ma che nel cor d' una maggior di quella
Lei ferì amor: e di poca scintilla
L' accesse tanto e sì cocente fuoco,
Che n' ardea tutta, e non trovava loco.

E, senza aver rispetto ch' ella fosse
Figlia del maggior Re ch' abbia il Levante,
Da troppo amor constretta si condusse
A farsi moglie d' un povero fante.
All' ultimo l' istoria si ridusse,
Che 'l pastor fe' portar la gemma inante,
Ch' alla sua dipartenza, per mercede
Del buono albergo, Angelica gli diede.

Questa conclusion fu la secure
Che 'l capo a un colpo gli levò dal collo,
Poi che d' innumerabil battiture
Si vide il manigoldo Amor satollo.
Celar si studia Orlando il duolo; e pure
Quel gli fa forza, e male asconder puollo;
Per lacrime e suspir da bocca e d' occhi
Convien, voglia o non voglia, al fin che scocchi.

Poi ch' allagare il freno al dolor puote
(Che resta solo, e senza altrui rispetto),

Giù da gli occhi rigando per le gote
 Sparge un fiume di lacrime su 'l petto :
 Sospira e geme, e va con spesse ruote
 Di quà di là tutto cercando il letto ;
 E più duro ch' un sasso, e più pungente
 Che se fosse d' urtica, sè lo sente.

In tanto aspro travaglio gli soccorre,
 Che nel medesimo letto in che giaceva
 L' ingrata donna venutasi a porre
 Col suo drudo più volte esser doveva.
 Non altrimenti or quella piuma abborre
 Nè con minor prestezza sè ne leva,
 Che de l' erba il villan, che s' era messo
 Per chiuder gli occhi, e vegga il serpe appresso.

Quel letto, quella casa, quel pastore
 Immantinente in tant' odio gli casca,
 Che senza aspettar luna, o che l' albore
 Che va dinanzi al nuovo giorno, nasca,
 Piglia l' arme e il destriero, et esce fuore
 Per mezo il bosco alla più oscura frasca ;
 E quando poi gli e avviso d' esser solo,
 Con gridi et urlì apre le porte al duolo.

Di pianger mai, mai di gridar non resta ;
 Nè la notte nè 'l dì si dà mai pace ;
 Fugge cittadi e borghi, e alla foresta
 Su 'l terren duro al discoperto giace.
 Di sè si maraviglia ch' abbia in testa
 Una fontana d' acqua sì vivace,
 E come sospirar possa mai tanto ;
 E spesso dice a sè così nel pianto :

Queste non son più lacrime, che fuore
 Stillo da gli occhi con sì larga vena.
 Non suppliron le lacrime al dolore ;
 Finìr, ch' a mezo era il dolore a pena.

Dal fuoco spinto ora il vitale umore
 Fugge per quella via ch' a gli occhi mena
 Et è quel che si versa, e trarrà insieme
 E 'l dolore e la vita all' ore estreme.

Questi, ch' indizio fan del mio tormento,
 Sospir non sono ; nè i sospir son tali.
 Quelli han triegua talora ; io mai non sento
 Che 'l petto mio men la sua pena esali.
 Amor, che m' arde il cor, fa questo vento,
 Mentre dibatte intorno al fuoco l' ali.

Amor, con che miracolo lo fai,
Che 'n fuoco il tenghi, e nol consumi mai ?

Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso ;
Quel, ch' era Orlando, è morto, et è sotterra ;
La sua donna ingrattissima l' ha ucciso ;
Sì, mancando di fe, gli ha fatto guerra.
Io son lo spirito suo da lui diviso,
Ch' in questo inferno tormentandosi erra,
Acciò con l' ombra sia, che sola avanza,
Esempio a chi in amor pone speranza.

Pel bosco errò tutta la notte il Conte ;
E allo spuntar della diurna fiamma
Lo tornò il suo destin sopra la fonte,
Dove Medoro insculse l' epigramma.
Veder l' ingiuria sua scritta nel monte
L' accese sì, ch' in lui non restò dramma
Che non fosse odio, rabbia, ira e furore ;
Nè più indugiò, che trasse il brando fuore.

Tagliò lo scritto e 'l sasso, e sin al cielo
A volo alzar fe' le minute schegge.
Infelice quell' antro, et ogni stelo
In cui Medoro e Angelica si legge !
Così restâr quel dì, ch' ombra nè gielo
A pastor mai non daran più, nè a gregge :
E quella fonte già si chiara e pura,
Da cotanta ira fu poco sicura :

Che rami, e ceppi, e tronchi, e sassi, e zolle
Non cessò di gittar ne le bell' onde,
Fin che da sommo ad imo sì turbolle
Che non furo mai più chiare nè monde ;
E stanco al fin, e, al fin di sudor molle,
Poi che la lena vinta non risponde
Allo sdegno, al grave odio, all' ardente ira,
Cade sul prato, e verso il ciel sospira.

Afflitto e stanco al fin cade ne l' erba,
E ficca gli occhi al cielo, e non fa motto ;
Senza cibo e dormir così si serba,
Che 'l sole esce tre volte, e torna sotto.
Di crescer non cessò la pena acerba,
Che fuor del senno al fin l' ebbe condotto.
Il quarto dì, da gran furor commosso,
E maglie e piastre si stracciò di dosso.

Quì riman l' elmo, e là riman lo scudo ;
Lontan gli arnesi, e più lontan l' usbergo :

L' arme sue tutte, in somma vi concludo,
 Avean pel bosco differente albergo.
 E poi si squarciò i panni, e mostrò ignudo
 L' ispidò ventre, e tutto 'l petto e 'l tergo ;
 E cominciò la gran follia, sì orrenda,
 Che de la più non sarà mai ch' intenda.

In tanta rabbia, in tanto furor venne,
 Che rimase offuscato in ogni senso.
 Di tor la spada in man non gli sovvenne,
 Che fatte avria mirabil cose, penso.
 Ma nè quella nè scure nè bipenne
 Era bisogno al suo vigore immenso.
 Quivi fe' ben de le sue prove eccelse ;
 Ch' un alto pino al primo crollo svelse ;

E svelse dopo il primo altri parecchi,
 Come fosser finocchi, ebuli o aneti ;
 E fe' il simil di querce e d' olmi vecchi,
 Di faggi e d' orni e d' illici a d' abeti ;
 Quel ch' un uccellator, che s' apparecchi
 Il campo mondo, fa, per por le reti,
 De i giunchi e de le stoppie e de l' urtiche,
 Facchi de cerri e d' altre piante antiche.

I pastor, che sentito hanno il fracasso,
 Lasciando il gregge sparso alla foresta,
 Chi di quà, chi di là, tutti a gran passo
 Vi vengono a veder che cosa è questa.

* * * * *

The poet breaks off here, and enters afterwards at large into the consequences of the madness of Orlando ; omitted in this work, for the reasons mentioned at page 366.

No. VIII.

THE DEATH OF CLORINDA.

TASSO.

MA, ecco omai l' ora fatale è giunta
 Che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve.
 Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,
 Che vi s' immerge, e 'l sangue avido beve ;

E la veste che d' or vago trapunta
 Le mammelle stringea tenera e leve
 L' empie d' un caldo fiume. Ella già sente
 Morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.

Quel segue la vittoria, e la trafitta
 Vergine minacciando incalza e preme:
 Ella, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta
 Movendo, disse le parole estreme:
 Parole ch' a lei novo un spirto ditta,
 Spirto di fè, di carità, di speme:
 Virtù ch' or Dio le infonde; e se rubella
 In vita fu, la vuole in morte ancella:

Amico, hai vinto; io ti perdon: perdona
 Tu ancora, al corpo no, che nulla pave,
 All' alma sì: deh! per lei prega: e dona
 Battesimo a me ch' ogni mia colpe lave.
 In queste voci languide risuona
 Un non so che di flebile e soave,
 Che al cor gli serpe, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
 E gli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia e sforza.

Poco quindi lontan nel sen del monte
 Scaturia mormorando un picciol rio:
 Egli v' accorse, e l' elmo empie nel fonte,
 E tornò mesto al grande ufficio e pio.
 Tremar sentì la man, mentre la fronte,
 Non conosciuta ancor, sciolse e scoprio.
 La vide, e la conobbe; e restò senza
 E voce, e moto. Ahi vista! ah! cognoscenza!

Non morì già; che sue virtù accolse
 Tutte in quel punto, e in guardia al cor le mise;
 E, premendo il suo affanno, a dar si volse
 Vita, coll' acqua a chi col ferro uccise.
 Mentre egli il suon de' sacri detti sciolse,
 Colei di gioia trasmutossi, e rise:
 E in atto di morir lieto e vivace,
 Dir pareo; S'apre il cielo; io vado in pace.

D' un bel pallore ha il bianco volto asperso,
 Come a gigli sarian miste viole;
 E gli occhi al cielo affisa, e in lei converso
 Sembra per la pietate il cielo e 'l sole;
 E la man nuda e fredda alzando verso
 Il cavaliere, in vece di parole,
 Gli dà pegno di pace. In questa forma
 Passa la bella donna, e par che dorma.

Come l' alma gentile uscita ei vede,
 Rallenta quel vigor ch' avea raccolto,
 E l' imperio di sè libero cede
 Al duol già fatto impetuoso e stolto,
 Ch' al cor si stringe, e chiusa in breve sede
 La vita, empie di morte i sensi e 'l volto.
 Già simile all' estinto il vivo langue
 Al colore, al silenzio, agli atti, al sangue.
 E ben la vita sua sdegnosa e schiva,
 Spezzando a sforza il suo ritegno frale,
 La bell' anima sciolta alfin seguiva,
 Che poco innanzi a lei spiegava l' ale;
 Ma quivi stuol d' Franchi a caso arriva,
 Cui trae bisogno d' acqua, o d' altro tale;
 E con la donna il cavalier ne porta,
 In sè mal vivo, e morto in lei ch' è morta.

No. IX.

TANCRED IN THE ENCHANTED FOREST.

THE SAME.

ERA in prence Tancredi intanto sorto
 A seppellir la sua diletta amica;
 E, benchè in volto sia languido e smorto,
 E mal atto a portar elmo e lorica,
 Nulladimen, poi che 'l bisogno ha scorto,
 Ei non ricusa il rischio o la fatica;
 Chè 'l cor vivace il suo vigor trasfonde
 Al corpo sì, che par ch' esso n' abbonde.
 Vassene il valoroso in sè ristretto,
 E tacito e guardingo al rischio ignoto:
 E sostien della selva il fero aspetto,
 E 'l gran romor del tuono e del tremoto;
 E nulla sbigottisce; e sol nel petto
 Sente, ma tosto il seda, un picciol moto.
 Trapassa; ed ecco in quel silvestre loco
 Sorge improvvisa la città del foco.
 Allor s' arretra, e dubbio alquanto resta,
 Fra sè dicendo: Or qui che vaglion l' armi?
 Nelle fauci de' mostri, e 'n gola a questa
 Divoratrice fiamma andrò a gettarmi?

Non mai la vita, ove cagione onesta
 Del comun pro la chiedo, altri risparmi;
 Ma nè prodigo sia d' anima grande
 Uom degno; e tale è ben chi qui la spande.

Pur l' oste che dirà, s' indarno io riedo?
 Qual altra selva ha di troncar speranza?
 Nè intentato lasciar vorrà Goffredo

Mai questo varco. Or, s' oltre alcun s' avanza,
 Forse l' incendio, che qui sorto i' vedo,
 Fia d' effetto minor che sembianza;
 Ma seguane che puote. E in questo dire
 Dentro saltovvi: oh memorando ardire!

Nè sotto l' arme già sentir gli parve
 Caldo o fervor come di foco intenso;
 Ma pur, se fosser vere fiamme o larve,
 Mal potè giudicar sì tosto il senso:
 Perchè repente, appena tocco, sparve
 Quel simulacro, e giunse un nuvol denso,
 Che portò notte e verno; e 'l verno ancora,
 E l' ombra dileguossi in picciol' ora.

Stupido sì, ma intrepido rimane
 Tancredi; e poichè vede il tutto cheto,
 Mette sicuro il piè nelle profane
 Soglie, e spia della selva ogni secreto.
 Nè più apparenze inusitate e strane,
 Nè trova alcun per via scontro o divieto,
 Se non quanto per sè ritarda il bosco
 La vista e i passi, involupato e fosco.

Alfine un largo spazio in forma scorge
 D' anfiteatro, e non è pianta in esso,
 Salvo che nel suo mezzo altero sorge,
 Quasi eccelsa piramide, un cipresso.
 Colà si drizza, e nel mirar s' accorge
 Ch' era di varj segni il tronco impresso,
 Simil a quei, chè in vece usò di scritto
 L' antico già misterioso Egitto.

Fra i segni ignoti alcune note ha scorte
 Del sermon di Soria, ch' ei ben possiede:
 O tu, che dentro ai chiostri della morte
 Osasti por, guerriero audace, il piede,
 Deh! se non sei crudel, quanto sei forte,
 Deh! non turbar questa secreta sede.
 Perdona all' alme omai di luce prive:
 Non dee guerra co' morti aver chi vive.

Così dicea quel motto. Egli era intento
Delle brevi parole ai sensi occulti.
Fremere intanto udia continuo il vento
Tra le frondi del bosco e tra i virgulti;
E trarne un suon che flebile concento
Par d' umani sospiri e di singulti;
E un non so che confuso instilla al core
Di pietà, di spavento-e di dolore.

Pur tragge alfin la spada, e con gran forza
Percote l' alta pianta. Oh meraviglia!
Manda fuor sangue la recisa scorza,
E fa la terra intorno a sè vermiglia.
Tutto si raccapriccia; e pur rinforza
Il colpo, e 'l fin vederne ei si consiglia.
Allor, quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente
Un indistinto gemito dolente;

Che poi distinto in voci: Ahi troppo, disse,
M' hai tu, Tancredi, offeso: or tanto basti:
Tu dal corpo, che meco e per me visse,
Felice albergo già, mi discacciasti.
Perchè il misero tronco, a cui m' affisse
Il mio duro destino, ancor mi guasti?
Dopo la morte gli avversarj tuoi,
Crudel, ne' lor sepolcri offender vuoi?

Clorinda fui: nè sol qui spirto umano
Albergo in questa pianta rozza e dura;
Ma ciascun altro ancor, Franco o Pagano,
Che lassi i membri, a piè dell' alte mura,
Astretto è qui da novo incanto e strano,
Non so s' io dica in corpo o in sepoltura.
Son di sensi animati i rami e i tronchi;
E micidial sei tu, se legno tronchi.

Qual inferno talor, ch' in sogno scorge
Drago, o cinta di fiamme alta Chimera,
Sebben sospetta, o in parte anco s' accorge
Che simulacro sia non forma vera,
Pur desia di fuggir, tanto gli porge
Spavento la sembianza orrida e fera:
Tale il timido amante appien non crede
Ai falsi inganni: e pur ne teme, e cede:

E dentro il cor gli è in modo tal conquiso
Da varj affetti, che s' agghiaccia e trema;
E nel moto potente ed improvviso
Gli cade il ferro: e 'l manco è in lui la tema.

Va fuor di sè. Presente aver gli è avviso

L' offesa donna sua, che plori e gema :
Nè può soffrir di rimirar quel sangue,
Nè quei gemiti udir d' egro che langue.

Così quel contra morte audace core
Nulla forma turbò d' alto spavento ;
Ma lui, che solo è fievole in amore,
Falsa imago deluse e van lamento.
Il suo caduto ferro instantly fuore
Portò del bosco impetuoso vento,
Sicchè vinto partissi ; e in sulla strada
Ritrovò poscia, e ripigliò la spada.

Pur non tornò, né ritentando ardio
Spiar di novo le cagioni ascose ;
E poi che, giunto al sommo Duce, unio
Gli spirti alquanto, e l' animo compose,
Incominciò : Signor, nunzio son io
Di non credute e non credibil cose.
Ciò che dicean dello spettacol fero,
E del suon paventoso, è tutto vero.

Maraviglioso foco indi m' apparse,
Senza materia in un istante appreso ;
Che sorse, e, dilatando un muro farse
Parve, e d' armati mostri esser difeso.
Pur vi passai ; chè nè l' incendio m' arse,
Nè dal ferro mi fu l' andar conteso :
Vernò in quel punto, ed annottò : fe' il giorno
E la serenità poscia ritorno.

Di più dirò ; ch' agli alberi dà vita
Spirito uman, che sente e che ragiona.
Per prova sollo : io n' ho la voce udita,
Che nel cor flebilmente anco mi suona.
Stilla sangue de' tronchi ogni ferita,
Quasi di molle carne abbian persona.
No, no, più non potrei (vinto mi chiamo)
Nè corteccia scorzar, nè sveller ramo.

161 Broadway, January, 1846.

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