

XXVII.

Tirati drento, cavalier, per Dio,
Disse l'abate, che la manna casca.
Risponde Orlando: caro abate mio,
Costui non vuol che 'l mio caval più pasca:
Veggio che lo guarrebbe del restio:
Quel sasso par che di buon braccio nasca.
Rispose il santo padre: io non t'inganno,
Credo che 'l monte un giorno gitteranno.

XXVIII.

Orlando governar fece Rondello,
E ordinar per se da colazione:
Poi disse: abate, io voglio andare a quello
Che dette al mio caval con quel cantone.
Disse l'abate: come car fratello
Consiglierotti senza passione?
Io ti sconforto, baron, di tal gita;
Ch'io so che tu vi lascerai la vita.

XXIX.

Quel Passamonte porta in man tre dardi:
Chi frombe, chi baston, chi muzzafusti;
Sai che giganti più di noi gagliardi
Son per ragion, che son anco più giusti;
E pur se vuoi andar fa che ti guardi,
Che questi son villan molto e robusti.
Rispose Orlando: io lo vedrò per certo;
Ed avviossi a piè su pel deserto.

XXX.

Disse l'abate col segnarlo in fronte:
Va, che da Dio e me sia benedetto.
Orlando, poi che salito ebbe il monte,
Si dirizzò, come l'abate detto
Gli avea, dove sta quel Passamonte;
Il quale Orlando veggendo soletto,
Molto lo squadra di drieto e davante;
Poi domandò, se star volea per fante?

XXXI.

E' prometteva di farlo godere.
Orlando disse: pazzo Saracino,
Io vengo a te, com'è di Dio volere,
Per darti morte, e non per ragazzino;
A' monaci suoi fatto hai dispiacere;
Non può più comportarti can mastino.
Questo gigante armar si corse a furia,
Quando sentì ch'è gli diceva ingiuria.

XXXII.

E ritornato ove aspettava Orlando,
Il qual non s'era partito da bomba;
Subito venne la corda girando,
E lascia un sasso andar fuor de la fromba,
Che in su la testa giugnea rotolando
Al conte Orlando, e l'elmetto rimbomba;
E' cadde per la pena tramortito;
Ma più che morto par, tanto è stordito.

XXXIII.

Passamonte pensò che fusse morto,
E disse: io voglio andarmi a disarmare:
Questo poltron per chi m'aveva scorto?
Ma Cristo i suoi non suole abbandonare,
Massime Orlando, ch'egli arebbe il torto.
Mentre il gigante l'arme va a spogliare,
Orlando in questo tempo si risente,
E rivocava e la forza e la mente.

XXVII.

"For God-sake, cavalier, come in with speed;
The manna's falling now," the abbot cried.
"This fellow does not wish my horse should feed,
Dear abbot," Roland unto him replied.
"Of restiveness he'd cure him had he need;
That stone seems with good will and aim applied."
The holy father said, "I don't deceive;
They 'll one day fling the mountain, I believe."

XXVIII.

Orlando bade them take care of Rondello,
And also made a breakfast of his own:
"Abbot," he said, "I want to find that fellow
Who flung at my good horse yon corner stone."
Said the abbot, "Let not my advice seem shallow;
As to a brother dear I speak alone;
I would dissuade you, baron, from this strife,
As knowing sure that you will lose your life."

XXIX.

"That Passamont has in his hand three darts—
Such slings, clubs, ballast-stones, that yield you
must;
You know that giants have much stouter hearts
Than us, with reason, in proportion just:
If go you will, guard well against their arts,
For these are very barbarous and robust."
Orlando answer'd, "This I'll see, be sure,
And walk the wild on foot to be secure."

XXX.

The abbot sign'd the great cross on his front,
"Then go you with God's benison and mine:"
Orlando, after he had scaled the mount,
As the abbot had directed, kept the line
Right to the usual haunt of Passamont;
Who, seeing him alone in this design,
Survey'd him fore and aft with eyes observant,
Then ask'd him, "If he wish'd to stay as servant?"

XXXI.

And promised him an office of great ease.
But, said Orlando, "Saracen insane!
I come to kill you, if it shall so please
God, not to serve as footboy in your train;
You with his monks so oft have broke the peace—
Vile dog! 't is past his patience to sustain."
The giant ran to fetch his arms, quite furious,
When he received an answer so injurious,

XXXII.

And being return'd to where Orlando stood,
Who had not moved him from the spot, and swinging
The cord, he hurl'd a stone with strength so rude,
As show'd a sample of his skill in slinging;
It roll'd on Count Orlando's helmet good
And head, and set both head and helmet ringing,
So that he swoon'd with pain as if he died,
But more than dead, he seem'd so stupified.

XXXIII.

Then Passamont, who thought him slain outright,
Said, "I will go, and while he lies along,
Disarm me: why such craven did I fight?"
But Christ his servants ne'er abandons long,
Especially Orlando, such a knight,
As to desert would almost be a wrong.
While the giant goes to put off his defences,
Orlando has recall'd his force and senses:

XXXIV.

E gridò forte: gigante, ove vai?
Ben ti pensasti d'avermi ammazzato!
Volgiti a drieto, che, s'ale non hai,
Non puoi da me fuggir, can rinnegato:
A tradimento ingiuriato m'hai.
Donde il gigante allor maravigliato
Si volse a drieto, e riteneva il passo;
Poi si chinò per tor di terra un sasso.

XXXV.

Orlando avea Cortana ignuda in mano;
Trasse a la testa: e Cortana tagliava:
Per mezzo il teschio partì del pagano,
E Passamonte morto rovinava:
E nel cadere il superbo e villano
Divotamente Macon bestemmia;
Ma mentre che bestemmia il crudo e acerbo,
Orlando ringraziava il Padre e 'l Verbo.

XXXVI.

Dicendo: quanta grazia oggi m'ha' data!
Sempre ti sono, o signor mio, tenuto;
Per te conosco la vita salvata;
Però che dal gigante era abbattuto:
Ogni cosa a ragion fai misurata;
Non val nostro poter senza il tuo ajuto.
Priegoti, sopra me tenga la mano,
Tanto che ancor ritorni a Carlo Mano.

XXXVII.

Poi ch'ebbe questo detto sen' andòe,
Tanto che trouva Alabastro più basso
Che si sforzava, quando e' lo trovòe,
Di sveglie d'una ripa fuori un masso.
Orlando, com'è giunse a quel, gridòe;
Che pensi tu, ghiotton, gittar quel sasso?
Quando Alabastro questo grido intende,
Subitamente la sua fromba prende.

XXXVIII.

E'trasse d'una pietra molto grossa,
Tanto ch'Orlando bisognò schermisse;
Che se l'avesse giunto la perco'ssa,
Non bisognava il medico venisse.
Orlando adoperò poi la sua possa;
Nel pettignon tutta la spada mise:
E morto cadde questo babalone,
E non dimenticò però Macone.

XXXIX.

Morgante avea al suo modo un palagio
Fatto di frasche e di schegge e di terra:
Quivi, secondo lui, si posa ad agio;
Quivi la notte si rinchiude e serra.
Orlando picchia, e daragli disagio,
Perchè il gigante dal sonno si sferza;
Vennegli aprir come una cosa matta;
Ch'un'aspra visione avea fatta.

XL.

E'gli pareva ch'un feroce serpente
L'avea assalito, e chiamar Macometto;
Ma Macometto non valea niente:
Ond'è chiamata Gesù benedetto;
E liberato l'avea finalmente.
Venne alla porta, ed ebbe così detto;
Chi buzza qua? pur sempre borbottando.
Tu 'l saprai tosto, gli rispose Orlando.

XXXIV.

And loud he shouted, "Giant, where dost go?
Thou thought'st me doubtless for the bier outlaid;
To the right about—without wings thou'rt too slow
To fly my vengeance—currish renegade!
'T was but by treachery thou laid'st me low.
The giant his astonishment betray'd,
And turn'd about, and stopp'd his journey on,
And then he stoop'd to pick up a great stone.

XXXV.

Orlando had Cortana bare in hand;
To split the head in twain was what he schemed:—
Cortana clave the skull like a true brand,
And pagan Passamont died unredeem'd,
Yet harsh and haughty, as he lay he bann'd,
And most devoutly Macon still blasphemed;
But while his crude, rude blasphemies he heard,
Orlando thank'd the Father and the Word,—

XXXVI.

Saying, "What grace to me thou'st this day given!
And I to thee, oh Lord! am ever bound.
I know my life was saved by thee from heaven,
Since by the giant I was fairly down'd.
All things by thee are measured just and even;
Our power without thine aid would nought be
I pray thee take heed of me, till I can [found:
At least return once more to Carloman."

XXXVII.

And having said thus much, he went his way;
And Alabaster he found out below,
Doing the very best that in him lay
To root from out a bank a rock or two.
Orlando, when he reach'd him, loud 'gan say
"How think'st thou, glutton, such a stone to throw?"
When Alabaster heard his deep voice ring,
He suddenly betook him to his sling.

XXXVIII.

And hurl'd a fragment of a size so large,
That if it had in fact fulfill'd its mission,
And Roland not avall'd him of his charge,
There would have been no need of a physician.
Orlando set himself in turn to charge,
And in his bulky bosom made incision
With all his sword. The lout fell; but o'erthrown, he
However by no means forgot Macone.

XXXIX.

Morgante had a palace in his mode,
Composed of branches, logs of wood, and earth,
And stretch'd himself at ease in this abode,
And shut himself at night within his berth.
Orlando knock'd, and knock'd again, to goad
The giant from his sleep; and he came forth
The door to open, like a crazy thing,
For a rough dream had shook him slumbering.

XL.

He thought that a fierce serpent had attack'd him;
And Mahomet he call'd; but Mahomet
Is nothing worth, and not an instant back'd him;
But praying blessed Jesu, he was set
At liberty from all the fears which rack'd him;
And to the gate he came with great regret—
"Who knocks here?" grumbling all the while, said he.
"That," said Orlando, "you will quickly see.

XLI.

Vengo per farti, come a' tuo' fratelli,
Far de' peccati tuoi la peniténzia,
Da' monaci mandato, cattivelli,
Come stato è divina provvidenzia;
Pel mal ch' avete fatto a torto a quelli,
E dato in ciel così questa sentenza;
Sappi, che freddo già più ch' un pilastro
Lasciato ho Passamonte e' l' tuo Alabastro.

XLII.

Disse Morgante: o gentil cavaliere,
Per lo tuo Dio non mi dir villania:
Di grazia il nome tuo vorrei sapere;
Se se' Cristian, deh dillo in cortesia.
Rispose Orlando: di cotal mastiere
Contenterotti per la fede mia:
Adoro Cristo, ch' è Signor verace;
E puoi tu adorarlo, se ti piace.

XLIII.

Rispose il Saracin con umil voce:
Io ho fatto una strana visione,
Che m' assaliva un serpente feroce:
Non mi valeva per chiamar Macone;
Onde al tuo Dio che fu confitto in croce
Rivolsi presto la mia intenzione:
E' mi soccorse, e fui libero e sano,
E son disposto al tutto esser Cristiano.

XLIV.

Rispose Orlando: baron giusto e pio,
Se questo buon voler terrai nel core,
L' anima tua arà quel vero Dio
Che ci può sol gradir d' eterno onore:
E s' tu vorrai, sarai compagno mio,
E amerotti con perfetto amore:
Gl' idoli vostri son bugiardi e vani:
Il vero Dio è lo Dio de' Cristiani.

XLV.

Venne questo Signor senza peccato
Ne la sua madre vergine pulzella:
Se conoscessi quel Signor beato,
Sanza' l' qual non respande sole o stella,
Aresti già Macon tuo rinnegato,
E la sua fede iniqua ingiusta e fella:
Battezzati al mio Dio di buon talento.
Morgante gli rispose: io son contento.

XLVI.

E corse Orlando subito abbracciare:
Orlando gran carezze gli faceva,
E disse: a la badia ti vo' menare.
Morgante, andianci presto, respondea:
Co' monaci la pace ci vuol fare.
De la qual cosa Orlando in se godea,
Dicendo; fratel mio divoto e buono,
Io vò che chiegga a l' abate perdono.

XLVII.

Da poi che Dio ralluminato t' ha,
Ed accettato per la sua umiltade;
Vuolsi che tu ancor usi umiltà.
Disse Morgante: per la tua bontade,
Poi che il tuo Dio mio sempre omai sarà,
Dimmio del nome tuo la veritade,
Poi di me dispor puoi al tuo comando;
Ond' e' gli disse, com' egli era Orlando.

XLI.

"I come to preach to you, as to your brothers,
Sent by the miserable monks — repentance;
For Providence divine, in you and others,
Condemns the evil done my new acquaintance.
'T is writ on high — your wrong must pay another's;
From heaven itself is issued out this sentence.
Know then, that colder now than a pilaster
I left your Passamont and Alabaster."

XLII.

Morgante said, "Oh, gentle cavalier!
Now by thy God say me no villany;
The favour of your name I fain would hear,
And if a Christian, speak for courtesy."
Replied Orlando, "So much to your ear
I by my faith disclose contentedly;
Christ I adore, who is the genuine Lord,
And, if you please, by you may be adored."

XLIII.

The Saracen rejoind' in humble tone,
"I have had an extraordinary vision;
A savage serpent fell on me alone,
And Macon would not pity my condition;
Hence to thy God, who for ye did atone
Upon the cross, preferr'd I my petition;
His timely succour set me safe and free,
And I a Christian am disposed to be."

XLIV.

Orlando answer'd, "Baron just and pious,
If this good wish your heart can really move
To the true God, you will not then deny us
Eternal honour, you will go above,
And, if you please, as friends we will ally us,
And I will love you with a perfect love.
Your idols are vain liars, full of fraud:
The only true God is the Christian's God."

XLV.

"The Lord descended to the virgin breast
Of Mary Mother, sinless and divine;
If you acknowledge the Redeemer blast,
Without whom neither sun nor star can shine,
Abjure bad Macon's false and felon test,
Your renegado god, and worship mine, —
Baptize yourself with zeal, since you repent."
To which Morgante answer'd, "I'm content."

XLVI.

And then Orlando to embrace him flew,
And made much of his convert, as he cried,
"To the abbey I will gladly marshal you."
To whom Morgante, "Let us go," replied;
"I to the friars have for peace to sue."
Which thing Orlando heard with inward pride,
Saying, "My brother, so devout and good,
Ask the abbot pardon, as I wish you would:"

XLVII.

"Since God has granted your illumination,
Accepting you in mercy for his own,
Humility should be your first oblation."
Morgante said, "For goodness' sake, make known —
Since that your God is to be mine — your station,
And let your name in verity be shown;
Then will I every thing at your command do."
On which the other said, he was Orlando.

XLVIII.

Disse il gigante: Gesù benedetto
Per mille volte ringraziato sia;
Sentito t' ho nomar, baron perfetto,
Per tutti i tempi de la vita mia:
E, com' io dissi, sempremai soggetto
Esser ti vo' per la tua gagliardia.
Insieme molte cose ragionato,
E n' verso la badia poi s' inviò.

XLIX.

E per la via da que' giganti morti
Orlando con Morgante si ragiona:
De la lor morte vo' che ti conforti;
E poi che piace a Dio, a me perdona;
A' monaci avean fatto mille torti;
E la nostra scrittura aperto suona.
Il ben remunerato, e' l' mal punito;
E mai non ha questo Signor fallito.

L.

Però ch' egli ama la giustizia tanto,
Che vuol, che sempre il suo giudicio morda
Ognun ch' abbi peccato tanto o quanto;
E così il ben ristorar si ricorda:
E non saria senza giustizia santo:
Adunque al suo voler presto t' accorda;
Che debbe ognun voler quel che vuol questo,
Ed accordarsi volentieri e presto.

LI.

E 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 ingusto Iddio parrebbe.

LII.

Ma egli anno posto in Gesù ferma spene;
E tanto pare a lor, quanto a lui pare;
Afferman ciò ch' e' fa, che fatti bene,
E che non possi in nessun modo errare:
Se padre o madre è nell' 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.

LIII.

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 servar si suole:
Morti co' morti; or pensiam di godere;
Io vo tagliar le mani a tutti quanti,
E porterolle a que' monaci santi,

LIV.

Acciò ch' ognun sia più sicuro e certo,
Com' e' son morti, e non abbin paura
Andar soletti per questo deserto;
E perchè veggan la mia mente pura
A quel Signor che m' ha il suo regno aperto.
E tratto fuor di tenebre sì oscura.
E poi tagliò le mani a' due fratelli,
E lasciagli a le fiere ed agli uccelli.

XLVIII.

"Then," quoth the giant, "blessed be Jesu
A thousand times with gratitude and praise!
Oft, perfect baron! have I heard of you
Through all the different periods of my days:
And, as I said, to be your vassal too
I wish, for your great gallantry always."
Thus reasoning, they continued much to say,
And onwards to the abbey went their way.

XLIX.

And by the way about the giants dead
Orlando with Morgante reason'd: "Be,
For their decease, I pray you, comforted;
And, since it is God's pleasure, pardon me;
A thousand wrongs unto the monks they bred,
And our true Scripture soundeth openly,
Good is rewarded, and chastised the ill,
Which the Lord never faileth to fulfil:"

L.

"Because his love of justice unto all
Is such, he wills his judgment should devour
All who have sin, however great or small;
But good he well remembers to restore.
Nor without justice holy could we call
Him, whom I now require you to adore.
All men must make his will their wishes sway,
And quickly and spontaneously obey."

LI.

"And here our doctors are of one accord,
Coming on this point to the same conclusion, —
That in their thoughts who praise in heaven the Lord
If pity e'er was guilty of intrusion
For their unfortunate relations stored
In hell below, and damn'd in great confusion, —
Their happiness would be reduced to nought,
And thus unjust the Almighty's self be thought."

LII.

"But they in Christ have firmest hope, and all
Which seems to him, to them too must appear
Well done; nor could it otherwise befall:
He never can in any purpose err.
If sire or mother suffer endless thrall,
They don't disturb themselves for him or her;
What pleases God to them must joy inspire; —
Such is the observance of the eternal choir."

LIII.

"A word unto the wise," Morgante said,
"Is wont to be enough, and you shall see
How much I grieve about my brethren dead;
And if the will of God seem good to me,
Just, as you tell me, 'tis in heaven obey'd —
Ashes to ashes, — merry let us be!
I will cut off the hands from both their trunks,
And carry them unto the holy monks."

LIV.

"So that all persons may be sure and certain
That they are dead, and have no further fear
To wander solitary this desert in,
And that they may perceive my spirit clear
By the Lord's grace, who hath withdrawn the curtain
Of darkness, making his bright realm appear."
He cut his brethren's hands off at these words,
And left them to the savage beasts and birds.

LV.

A la badia insieme se ne vanno,
Ove l'abate assai dubbioso aspetta:
I monaci che l' fatto ancor non sanno,
Correvano a l' abate tutti in fretta,
Dicendo paurosi e pien' d' affanno:
Volete voi costui drento si metta?
Quando l' abate vedeva il gigante,
Si turbò tutto nel primo sembiante.

LVI.

Orlando che turbato così il vede,
Gli disse presto: abate, datti pace,
Questo è Cristiano, e in Cristo nostro crede,
E rinnegato ha il suo Macon fallace.
Morgante i moncherin mostrò per fede,
Come i giganti ciascun morto giace;
Donde l' abate ringraziava Iddio,
Dicendo; or m' hai contento, Signor mio.

LVII.

E risguardava, e squadrava Morgante,
La sua grandezza e una volta e due,
E poi gli disse: O famoso gigante,
Sappi ch' io non mi maraviglio più,
Che tu svegliessi e gittassi le piante,
Quand' io riguardo or le fattezze tue:
Tu sarai or perfetto e vero amico
A Cristo, quanto tu gli eri nimico.

LVIII.

Un nostro apostol, Saul già chiamato,
Perseguì molto la fede di Cristo:
Un giorno poi da lo spirito infiammato,
Perchè pur mi persegui? disse Cristo:
E' si ravvide allor del suo peccato
Andò poi predicando sempre Cristo;
E fatto è or de la fede una tromba,
La qual per tutto risuona e rimbomba.

LIX.

Così farai tu ancor, Morgante mio:
E chi s' emenda, è scritto nel Vangelo,
Che maggior festa fa d' un solo Iddio,
Che di novantanove altri su in cielo:
Io ti conforto ch' ogni tuo disio
Rivolga a quel Signor con giusto zelo,
Che tu sarai felice in sempiterno,
Ch' eri perduto, e dannato all' inferno.

LX.

E grande onore a Morgante faceva
L' abate, e molti dì si son posti:
Un giorno, come ad Orlando piaceva,
A spasso in quà e in là si sono andati:
L' abate in una camera sua aveva
Molte armature e certi archi appiccati:
Morgante gliene piacque un che ne vede;
Onde e' sel cinse bench' oprar nol crede.

LXI.

Avea quel luogo d' acqua carestia:
Orlando disse come buon fratello:
Morgante, vo' che di piacer ti sia
Andar per l' acqua; ond' e' rispose a quello:
Comanda ciò che vuol che fatto sia;
E posesi in ispalla un gran tinello,
Ed avviossi là verso una fonte
Dove soleva ber sempre appiè del monte.

LV.

Then to the abbey they went on together,
Where waited them the abbot in great doubt.
The monks, who knew not yet the fact, ran thither
To their superior, all in breathless rout,
Saying with tremor, " Please to tell us whether
You wish to have this person in or out?"
The abbot, looking through upon the giant,
Too greatly fear'd, at first, to be compliant.

LVI.

Orlando, seeing him thus agitated,
Said quickly, " Abbot, be thou of good cheer;
He Christ believes, as Christian must be rated,
And hath renounced his Macon false;" which here
Morgante with the hands corroborated,
A proof of both the giants' fate quite clear:
Thence, with due thanks, the abbot God adored,
Saying, " Thou hast contented me, oh Lord!"

LVII.

He gazed; Morgante's height he calculated,
And more than once contemplated his size;
And then he said, " Oh giant celebrated!
Know, that no more my wonder will arise,
How you could tear and fling the trees you late did,
When I behold your form with my own eyes,
You now a true and perfect friend will show
Yourself to Christ, as once you were a foe.

LVIII.

" And one of our apostles, Saul once named,
Long persecuted sore the faith of Christ,
Till, one day, by the Spirit being inflamed,
" Why dost thou persecute me thus?" said Christ;
And then from his offence he was reclaim'd,
And went for ever after preaching Christ,
And of the faith became a trump, whose sounding
O'er the whole earth is echoing and rebounding.

LIX.

" So, my Morgante, you may do likewise;
He who repents—thus writes the Evangelist—
Occasions more rejoicing in the skies
Than ninety-nine of the celestial list.
You may be sure, should each desire arise
With just zeal for the Lord, that you'll exist
Among the happy saints for evermore;
But you were lost and damn'd to hell before!"

LX.

And thus great honour to Morgante paid
The abbot: many days they did repose.
One day, as with Orlando they both stray'd,
And saunter'd here and there, where'er they chose,
The abbot show'd a chamber, where array'd
Much armour was, and hung up certain bows;
And one of these Morgante for a whim
Girt on, though useless, he believed, to him.

LXI.

There being a want of water in the place,
Orlando, like a worthy brother, said,
" Morgante, I could wish you in this case
To go for water." " You shall be obey'd
In all commands," was the reply, " straightways."
Upon his shoulder a great tub he laid,
And went out on his way unto a fountain,
Where he was wont to drink below the mountain.

LXII.

Giunto a la fonte, sente un gran fracasso
Di subito venir per la foresta:
Una saetta cavò del turcasso,
Posela a l' arco, ed alzava la testa;
Ecco apparire un gran gregge al passo
Di porci, e vanno con molta tempesta;
E arrivorno alla fontana appunto
Donde il gigante è da lor sopraggiunto.

LXIII.

Morgante a la ventura a un saetta;
Appunto ne l' orecchio lo 'ncarnava:
Da l' altro lato passò la verretta;
Onde il cinghial giù morto gambettava;
Un altro, quasi per farne vendetta,
Addosso al gran gigante irato andava;
E perchè e' giunse troppo tosto al varco,
Non fu Morgante a tempo a trar con l' arco.

LXIV.

Vedendosi venuto il porco adosso,
Gli dette in su la testa un gran punzone¹
Per modo che gl' infranse insino a l' osso,
E morto allato a quell' altro lo pone:
Gli altri porci veggendo quel percosso,
Si misson tutti in fuga pel vallone;
Morgante si levò il tinello in collo,
Ch' era pien d' acqua, e non si muove un crollo.

LXV.

Da l' una spalla il tinello avea posto,
Da l' altra i porci, e spacciava il terreno;
E torna a la badia, ch' è pur discosto,
Ch' una gocciola d' acqua non va in seno.
Orlando che l' vedea tornar sì tosto
Co' porci morti, e con quel vaso pieno;
Maravigliossi che sia tanto forte;
Così l' abate; e spalancan le porte.

LXVI.

I monaci veggendo l' acqua fresca
Si rallegrorno, ma più de' cinghiali;
Ch' ogni animal si rallegra de l' esca;
E posano a dormire i breviali:
Ognun s' affanna, e non par che gl' incresca,
Acciò che questa carne non s' insali,
E che poi secca sapesse di victo:
E la digiune si restorno a drieto.

LXVII.

E ferno a scoppia corpo per un tratto,
E scuffian, che parien de l' acqua usciti;
Tanto che l' cane sen doleva e l' gatto,
Che gli ossi rimanean troppo puliti.
L' abate, poi che molto onore ha fatto
A tutti, un dì dopo questi conviti
Dette a Morgante un destrier molto bello,
Che lungo tempo tenuto avea quello.

LXVIII.

Morgante in su 'n un prato il caval mena,
E vuol che corra, e che facci ogni pruova,
E pensa che di ferro abbi la schiena,
O forse non credeva schiacciar l' uova:
Questo caval s' accoscia per la pena,
E scoppia, e'n su la terra si ritruova.
Dicca Morgante: lieva su, rozzone;
E va pur punzecchiando co lo sprone.

¹ ["Gli dette in su la testa un gran punzone." It is strange that Pulci should have literally anticipated the technical terms of my old friend and master, Jackson, and the art which he has carried to its highest pitch. "A punch on the head," or

LXII.

Arrived there, a prodigious noise he hears,
Which suddenly along the forest spread;
Whereat from out his quiver he prepares
An arrow for his bow, and lifts his head;
And lo! a monstrous herd of swine appears,
And onward rushes with tempestuous tread,
And to the fountain's brink precisely pours;
So that the giant's join'd by all the boars.

LXIII.

Morgante at a venture shot an arrow,
Which pierced a pig precisely in the ear,
And pass'd unto the other side quite thorough;
So that the boar, defunct, lay tripp'd up near.
Another, to revenge his fellow farrow,
Against the giant rush'd in fierce career,
And reach'd the passage with so swift a foot,
Morgante was not now in time to shoot.

LXIV.

Perceiving that the pig was on him close,
He gave him such a punch upon the head,
As floor'd him so that he no more arose,
Smashing the very bone; and he fell dead
Next to the other. Having seen such blows,
The other pigs along the valley fled;
Morgante on his neck the bucket took,
Full from the spring, which neither swerved nor shook.

LXV.

The tun was on one shoulder, and there were
The hogs on t' other, and he brush'd apace
On to the abbey, though by no means near,
Nor spilt one drop of water in his race.
Orlando, seeing him so soon appear
With the dead boars, and with that brimful vase,
Marvell'd to see his strength so very great;
So did the abbot, and set wide the gate.

LXVI.

The monks, who saw the water fresh and good,
Rejoiced, but much more to perceive the pork;—
All animals are glad at sight of food:
They lay their breviaries to sleep, and work
With greedy pleasure, and in such a mood,
That the flesh needs no salt beneath their fork.
Of rankness and of rot there is no fear,
For all the fasts are now left in arrear.

LXVII.

As though they wish'd to burst at once, they ate;
And gorged so that, as if the bones had been
In water, sorely grieved the dog and cat,
Perceiving that they all were pick'd too clean.
The abbot, who to all did honour great,
A few days after this convivial scene,
Gave to Morgante a fine horse, well train'd,
Which he long time had for himself maintain'd.

LXVIII.

The horse Morgante to a meadow led,
To gallop, and to put him to the proof,
Thinking that he a back of iron had,
Or to skim eggs unbroke was light enough;
But the horse, sinking with the pain, fell dead,
And burst, while cold on earth lay head and hoof.
Morgante said, " Get up, thou sulky cur!"
And still continued pricking with the spur.

"a punch in the head,"—"a punzone in su la testa,"—is the exact and frequent phrase of our best pugilists, who little dream that they are talking the purest Tuscan.

LXIX.

Ma finalmente convien ch' egli smonte,
E disse: io son pur leggier come penna,
Ed è scoppiato; che ne di' tu, conte?
Rispose Orlando: un arbore d'antenna
Mi par piuttosto, e la gaggia la fronte:
Lascialo andar, che la fortuna accenna
Che meco appiede ne venga, Morgante.
Ed io così verra, disse il gigante.

LXX.

Quando sarà mestier, tu mi vedrai
Com'io mi proverò ne la battaglia.
Orlando disse: io credo tu farai
Come buon cavalier, se Dio mi vaglia;
Ed anco me dormir non mirerai:
Di questo tuo caval non te ne caglia:
Vorrebbe portarlo in qualche bosco,
Ma il modo nè la via non ci conosco.

LXXI.

Disse il gigante: io il porterò ben io,
Da poi che portar me non ha voluto,
Per render ben per mal, come fa Dio;
Ma vo' che a porlo addosso mi dia ajuto.
Orlando gli dicea: Morgante mio,
S'al mio consiglio ti sarai attenuto,
Questo caval tu non ve'l porteresti,
Che ti farà come tu a lui facesti.

LXXII.

Guarda che non facesse la vendetta,
Come fece già Nesso così morto:
Non so se la sua istoria hai inteso o letta;
E' ti farà scoppiar; datti conforto.
Disse Morgante: ajuta ch'io me l' metta
Addosso, e poi vedrai s'io ve lo porto:
Io porterei, Orlando mio gentile,
Con le campane la quel campanile.

LXXIII.

Disse l'abate: il campanil v'è bene;
Ma le campane voi l'avete rotte.
Dicea Morgante, e' ne porton le pene
Color che morti son là in quelle grotte;
E levossi il cavallo in su le schiene,
E disse: guarda s'io sento di gotte,
Orlando, nelle gambe, e s'io lo posso;
E fe' duo salti col cavallo addosso.

LXXIV.

Era Morgante come una montagna:
Se faceva questo, non è maraviglia;
Ma pure Orlando con seco si lagna;
Perchè pur era omai di sua famiglia;
Temenza avea non pigliasse magagna.
Un'altra volta costui riconsiglia:
Posalo ancor, nol portare al deserto.
Disse Morgante: il porterò per certo.

LXXV.

E portollo, e gittollo in luogo strano,
E tornò a la badia subitamente.
Diceva Orlando: or che più dimoriano?
Morgante, qui non facciam noi niente;
E prese un giorno l'abate per mano,
E disse a quel molto discretamente,
Che vuol partir de la sua reverenzia,
E domandava e perdono e licenzia.

LXIX.

But finally he thought fit to dismount,
And said, "I am as light as any feather,
And he has burst;—to this what say you, count?"
Orlando answer'd, "Like a ship's mast rather
You seem to me, and with the truck for front:—
Let him go; Fortune wills that we together
Should march, but you on foot Morgante still."
To which the giant answer'd, "So I will.

LXX.

"When there shall be occasion, you will see
How I approve my courage in the fight."
Orlando said, "I really think you'll be,
If it should prove God's will, a goodly knight;
Nor will you napping there discover me.
But never mind your horse, though out of sight
'T were best to carry him into some wood,
If but the means or way I understood."

LXXI.

The giant said, "Then carry him I will,
Since that to carry me he was so slack—
To render, as the gods do, good for ill;
But lend a hand to place him on my back."
Orlando answer'd, "If my counsel still
May weigh, Morgante, do not undertake
To lift or carry this dead courser, who,
As you have done to him, will do to you.

LXXII.

"Take care he don't revenge himself, though dead,
As Nessus did of old beyond all cure.
I don't know if the fact you've heard or read;
But he will make you burst, you may be sure."
"But help him on my back," Morgante said,
"And you shall see what weight I can endure.
In place, my gentle Roland, of this palfrey,
With all the bells, I'd carry your belfry."

LXXIII.

The abbot said, "The steeple may do well,
But, for the bells, you've broken them, I wot."
Morgante answer'd, "Let them pay in hell
The penalty who lie dead in yon grot;
And hoisting up the horse from where he fell,
He said, "Now look if I the gout have got,
Orlando, in the legs—or if I have force;"—
And then he made two gambols with the horse.

LXXIV.

Morgante was like any mountain framed;
So if he did this, 'tis no prodigy;
But secretly himself Orlando blamed,
Because he was one of his family;
And fearing that he might be hurt or maim'd,
Once more he bade him lay his burden by:
"Put down, nor bear him further the desert in."
Morgante said, "I'll carry him for certain."

LXXV.

He did; and stow'd him in some nook away,
And to the abbey then return'd with speed.
Orlando said, "Why longer do we stay?
Morgante, here is nought to do indeed."
The abbot by the hand he took one day,
And said, with great respect, he had agreed
To leave his reverence; but for this decision
He wish'd to have his pardon and permission.

LXXVI.

E de gli onor ricevuti da questi,
Qualche volta potendo, arà buon merito;
E dice: io intendo ristorare e presto
I persi giorni del tempo preterito:
E' son più di che licenzia arei chiesto,
Benigno padre, se non ch'io mi perito;
Non so mostrarvi quel che drento sento;
Tanto vi veggio del mio star contento.

LXXVII.

Io me ne porto per sempre nel core
L'abate, la badia, questo deserto;
Tanto v'ho posto in picciol tempo amore:
Rendavi su nel ciel per me buon merito
Quel vero Dio, quello eterno Signore,
Che vi serba il suo regno al fine aperto:
Noi aspettiam vostra benedizione,
Raccomandiamci a le vostre orazione.

LXXVIII.

Quando l'abate il conte Orlando intese,
Rinteneri nel cor per la dolcezza,
Tanto fervor nel petto se gli accese;
E disse: cavalier, se a tua prodezza
Non sono stato benigno e cortese,
Come conviensi a la gran gentilezza;
Che so che ciò ch'io ho fatto è stato poco,
Incolpa la ignoranzia nostra, e il loco.

LXXIX.

Noi ti potremo di messe onorare,
Di prediche di laude e paternostri,
Piuttosto che da cena o desinare,
O d'altri convenevol che da chiostrati:
Tu m'hai di te sì fatto innamorare
Per mille alte eccellenzie che tu mostri;
Ch'io me ne vengo ove tu andrai con tecco,
E d'altra parte tu resti qui meco.

LXXX.

Tanto ch'a questo par contraddizione;
Ma so che tu se' savio, e 'ntendi e gusti,
E intendi il mio parlar per discrezione;
De' beneficj tuoi pietosi e giusti
Renda il Signore a te munerazione,
Da cui mandato in queste selve fusti;
Per le virtù del qual liberi siamo,
E grazie a lui e a te noi ne rendiamo.

LXXXI.

Tu ci hai salvato l'anima e la vita:
Tanta perturbazion già que' giganti
Ci detton, che la strada era smarrita
Da ritrovar Gesù con gli altri santi:
Però troppo ci duol la tua partita,
E sconsolati restiam tutti quanti;
Nè ritener possiamti i mesi e gli anni:
Che tu non se' da vestir questi panni,

LXXXII.

Ma da portar la lancia e l'armadura:
E puossi meritar con essa, come
Con questa cappa; e leggi la scrittura:
Questo gigante al ciel drizzò le some
Per tua virtù; va in pace a tua ventura
Chi tu ti sia, ch'io non ricerco il nome;
Ma dirò sempre, s'io son domandato,
Ch'un angiol qui da Dio fussi mandato.

LXXVI.

The honours they continued to receive
Perhaps exceeded what his merits claim'd:
He said, "I mean, and quickly, to retrieve
The lost days of time past, which may be blamed;
Some days ago I should have ask'd your leave,
Kind father, but I really was ashamed,
And know not how to show my sentiment,
So much I see you with our stay content.

LXXVII.

"But in my heart I bear through every clime
The abbot, abbey, and this solitude—
So much I love you in so short a time;
For me, from heaven reward you with all good
The God so true, the eternal Lord sublime!
Whose kingdom at the last hath open stood.
Meantime we stand expectant of your blessing,
And recommend us to your prayers with pressing."

LXXVIII.

Now when the abbot Count Orlando heard,
His heart grew soft with inner tenderness,
Such fervour in his bosom bred each word;
And, "Cavalier," he said, "if I have less
Courteous and kind to your great worth appear'd,
Than fits me for such gentle blood to express,
I know I have done too little in this case;
But blame our ignorance, and this poor place.

LXXIX.

"We can indeed but honour you with masses,
And sermons, thanksgivings, and pater-nosters
Hot suppers, dinners (fitting other places)
In verity much rather than the cloisters;
But such a love for you my heart embraces,
For thousand virtues which your bosom fosters,
That wheresoe'er you go I too shall be,
And, on the other part, you rest with me.

LXXX.

"This may involve a seeming contradiction;
But you I know are sage, and feel, and taste,
And understand my speech with full conviction;
For your just pious deeds may you be graced
With the Lord's great reward and benediction,
By whom you were directed to this waste:
To his high mercy is our freedom due,
For which we render thanks to him and you.

LXXXI.

"You saved at once our life and soul: such fear
The giants caused us, that the way was lost,
By which we could pursue a fit career
In search of Jesus and the saintly host;
And your departure breeds such sorrow here,
That comfortless we all are to our cost;
But months and years you would not stay in sloth,
Nor are you form'd to wear our sober cloth;

LXXXII.

"But to bear arms, and wield the lance; indeed,
With these as much is done as with this cowl;
In proof of which the Scripture you may read.
This giant up to heaven may bear his soul
By your compassion: now in peace proceed.
Your state and name I seek not to unroll;
But, if I'm ask'd, this answer shall be given,
That here an angel was sent down from heaven.

LXXXIII.

Se c'è armadura o cosa che tu voglia,
Vattene in zambra e pigliane tu stessi,
E cuopri a questo gigante le scaglia.
Rispose Orlando: se armadura avessi
Prima che noi uscissim de la soglia,
Che questo mio compagno difendessi:
Questo accetto io, e sarammi piacere.
Disse l'abate: venite a vedere.

LXXXIV.

E in certa cameretta entrati sono,
Che d'armature vecchie era copiosa;
Dice l'abate: tutte ve le dono,
Morgante va rovistando ogni cosa;
Ma solo un certo sbergo gli fu buono,
Ch'avea tutta la maglia rugginosa:
Maravigliossi che lo cuopra appunto:
Che mai più gnun forse glien'era aggiunto.

LXXXV.

Questo fu d'un gigante smisurata,
Ch'la badia fu morto per antico
Dal gran Milon d'Angrante, ch'arrivato;
V'era, s'appunto questa istoria dico;
Ed era ne le mura istoriato,
Come e' fu morto questo gran nimico,
Che fece a la badia già lunga guerra:
E Milon v'è com' e' l'abbatte in terra.

LXXXVI.

Veggendo questa istoria il conte Orlando,
Fra suo cor disse: o Dio, che sai sol tutto,
Come venne Milon qui capitando,
Che ha questo gigante qui distrutto?
E lesse certe lettere lacrimando,
Che non potè tenir più il viso asciutto,
Com'io dirò ne la seguente istoria:
Di mal vi guardi il Re de l'alta gloria.

LXXXIII.

"If you want armour or aught else, go in,
Look o'er the wardrobe, and take what you choose,
And cover with it o'er this giant's skin"
Orlando answer'd, "If there should lie loose
Some armour, ere our journey we begin,
Which might be turn'd to my companion's use,
The gift would be acceptable to me."
The abbot said to him, "Come in and see."

LXXXIV.

And in a certain closet, where the wall
Was cover'd with old armour like a crust,
The abbot said to them, "I give you all."
Morgante rummaged piecemeal from the dust
The whole, which, save one cuirass, was too small,
And that too had the mail inlaid with rust.
They wonder'd how it fitted him exactly,
Which ne'er has suited others so compactly.

LXXXV.

'Twas an immeasurable giant's, who
By the great Milo of Agrante fell,
Before the abbey many years ago.
The story on the wall was figured well;
In the last moment of the abbey's foe,
Who long had waged a war implacable:
Precisely as the war occur'd they drew him,
And there was Milo as he overthrew him.

LXXXVI.

Seeing this history, Count Orlando said
In his own heart, "Oh God, who in the sky
Know'st all things! how was Milo hither led?
Who caused the giant in this place to die?"
And certain letters, weeping, then he read,
So that he could not keep his visage dry,—
As I will tell in the ensuing story.
From evil keep you the high King of glory!

The Prophecy of Dante.¹

"'T is the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before."
CAMPBELL.

DEDICATION.

LADY! if for the cold and cloudy clime
Where I was born, but where I would not die,
Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy
I dare to build the imitative rhyme,
Harsh Runic copy of the South's sublime,
Thou art the cause; and howsoever I
Fall short of his immortal harmony,
Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.

¹ [This poem, which Lord Byron, in sending it to Mr. Murray, called "the best thing he had ever done, if not *unintelligible*," was written, in the summer of 1819, at

— "that place
Of old renown, once in the Adrian sea,
Ravenna!—where from Dante's sacred tomb
He had so oft, as many a verse declares,
Drawn inspiration."—ROGERS.

The Prophecy, however, was first published in May, 1821. It is dedicated to the Countess Guiccioli, who thus describes the origin of its composition:—"On my departure from Venice, Lord Byron had promised to come and see me at

Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,
Spakest; and for thee to speak and be obey'd
Are one; but only in the sunny South
Such sounds are utter'd, and such charms display'd,

So sweet a language from so fair a mouth—
Ah! to what effort would it not persuade?

Ravenna, June 21. 1819.

Ravenna. Dante's tomb, the classical pine wood*, the relics of antiquity which are to be found in that place, afforded a sufficient pretext for me to invite him to come, and for him to accept my invitation. He came in the month of June, 1819, arriving at Ravenna on the day of the festival of the Corpus Domini. Being deprived at this time of his books, his horses, and all that occupied him at Venice, I begged him to gratify me by writing something on the subject of Dante; and, with his usual facility and rapidity, he composed his Prophecy.*

* "Twas in a grove of spreading pines he strayed," &c.
DRYDEN'S *Theodore and Honoria*.]

PREFACE.

IN the course of a visit to the city of Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he should do the same on Dante's exile,—the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city, both to the native and to the stranger.

"On this hint I spake," and the result has been the following four cantos, in terza rima, now offered to the reader. If they are understood and approved, it is my purpose to continue the poem in various other cantos, to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the Divina Commedia and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan I have had in my mind the Cassandra of Lycophron, and the Prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the Prophecies of Holy Writ. The measure adopted is the terza rima of Dante, which I am not aware to have seen hitherto tried in our language, except it may be by Mr. Hayley, of whose translation I never saw but one extract, quoted in the notes to Caliph Vathek; so that—if I do not err—this poem may be considered as a metrical experiment. The cantos are short, and about the same length of those of the poet, whose name I have borrowed, and most probably taken in vain.

Amongst the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of Childe Harold translated into Italian versi sciolti,—that is, a poem written in the *Spenserian stanza* into *blank verse*, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza or of the sense. If the present poem, being on a national topic, should chance to undergo the same fate, I would request the Italian reader to remember that when I have failed in the imitation of his great "Padre Alighier," I have failed in imitating that which all study and few understand, since to this very day it is not yet settled what was the meaning of the allegory in the first canto of the Inferno, unless Count Marchetti's ingenious and probable conjecture may be considered as having decided the question.

He may also pardon my failure the more, as I am not quite sure that he would be pleased with my success, since the Italians, with a pardonable nationality, are particularly jealous of all that is left them

¹ [Dante Alighieri was born in Florence in May, 1265, of an ancient and honourable family. In the early part of his life he gained some credit in a military character, and distinguished himself by his bravery in an action where the Florentines obtained a signal victory over the citizens of Arezzo. He became still more eminent by the acquisition of court honours; and at the age of thirty-five he rose to be one of the chief magistrates of Florence, when that dignity was conferred by the suffrages of the people. From this exaltation the poet himself dated his principal misfortunes. Italy was at that time distracted by the contending factions of the Ghibelines and Guelphs,—among the latter Dante took an active part. In one of the proscriptions he was banished, his possessions confiscated, and he died in exile in 1321. Boccaccio thus describes his person and manners:—"He was of the middle stature, of a mild disposition, and, from the time he arrived at manhood, grave in his manner and deportment. His clothes were plain, and his dress always conformable to his years: his face was long; his nose aquiline; his eyes rather large than otherwise. His complexion was dark, melancholy, and pensive. In his meals he was extremely moderate; in his

as a nation—their literature; and in the present bitterness of the classic and romantic war, are but ill disposed to permit a foreigner even to approve or imitate them, without finding some fault with his ultramontane presumption. I can easily enter into all this, knowing what would be thought in England of an Italian imitator of Milton, or if a translation of Monti, or Pindemonte, or Arici, should be held up to the rising generation as a model for their future poetical essays. But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, when my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

The Prophecy of Dante.¹

CANTO THE FIRST.

ONCE more in man's frail world! which I had left
So long that 't was forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again,—too soon bereft
Of the immortal vision which could heal
My earthly sorrows, and to God's own skies
Lift me from that deep gulf without repeal,
Where late my ears rung with the damned cries
Of souls in hopeless bale; and from that place
Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the angelic race;
Midst whom my own bright Beatricè² bless'd
My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the eternal Triad! first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great God!
Soul universal! led the mortal guest,
Unblasted by the glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty throne.
Oh Beatricè! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath press'd, and the cold marble stone,
Thou sole pure seraph of my earliest love,
Love so ineffable, and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my bosom move,
And meeting thee in heaven was but to meet
That without which my soul, like the arks dove,
Had wander'd still in search of, nor her feet
Relieved her wing till found; without thy light
My paradise had still been incomplete.³
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my sight
Thou wert my life, the essence of my thought,
Loved ere I knew the name of love⁴, and bright

manners most courteous and civil; and, both in public and private life, he was admirably decorous."²

² The reader is requested to adopt the Italian pronunciation of Beatrice, sounding all the syllables.

³ "Che sol per le belle opre
Che fanno in Cielo il sole e l'altre stelle
Dentro di lui' si crede il Paradiso,
Così se guardi fiso
Pensar ben dèi ch'ogni terren' piacere."

Canzone, in which Dante describes the person of Beatrice, Strophe third.

⁴ [According to Boccaccio, Dante was a lover long before he was a soldier, and his passion for the Beatrice whom he has immortalised commenced while he was in his ninth year, and she in her eighth year. It is said that their first meeting was at a banquet in the house of Folco Portinari, her father; and certain it is, that the impression then made on the susceptible and constant heart of Dante was not obliterated by her death, which happened after an interval of sixteen years.—CARY.]