

**MODERN
BIOGRAPHIES. GIOSUE
CARDUCCI, PP.1-122**

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ORLANDO WILLIAMS

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MODERN BIOGRAPHIES

GIOSUE CARDUCCI

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BY
ORLO WILLIAMS

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I wish to acknowledge the kindness of the two firms of Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna, and G. Barbèra, Florence, in giving me permission to make such quotations as I wished. From the former come the complete edition of Carducci's works and his letters; from the latter the valuable memoir by G. Chiarini. The full titles of all books to which I have referred will be found in the Bibliography.

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GIOSUE CARDUCCI

I

THE birthplace of Giosue Carducci was Valdicastello, a little village of the Versilia, that part of the Tuscan coast lying beneath the Apuan Alps and the quarries of Carrara which inspired many of the most beautiful poems in the third book of D'Annunzio's *Laudi*. He was born on July 27, 1885, but the only impression that he preserved of this part of Tuscany was the "sad accent of the Versilia" sounding the fairy stories of his grandmother, who accompanied the family when they moved in 1888 further south to Bolgheri in the more dreary and less healthy Tuscan Maremma. Carducci's father, the doctor Michele Carducci, son of a small landed proprietor in the Versilia, who had died after dissipating all his property, was an

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unstable, hot-headed man whose republican sympathies had already won him exile and imprisonment. He left the Versilia, where he had been doctor to a mining company, to take the post of municipal doctor at Bolgheri at a small salary. His second son, Dante, had been already born to him, and the third, Valfredo, made his appearance in 1841. The Carducci family remained in the Maremma, either at Bolgheri or Castagneto, for eleven years, and this rather mournful country,

dove raro ombreggia il bosco
le maligne crete, e al pian
di rei sugheri irto e fosco
i cavalli errando van,¹

where bloomed, in the poet's words, his "triste primavera," was the native land to which in after years he turned the wistful eye of memory, when he wrote the sonnet *Traversando la Maremma Toscana*, the *Idillio Maremmano* and the beautiful *Davanti San Guido*. Moreover, though most of his life was spent in Bologna,

¹ "Where verdure sparsely shades the unkindly chalk-hills, and the horses go wandering down to the plain, dark and bristling with ugly cork trees."