

Classic Poetry Series

Torquato Tasso

- poems -

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Jerusalem Delivered - Book 01 - part 01

THE ARGUMENT.

God sends his angel to Tortosa down,
Godfrey unites the Christian Peers and Knights;
And all the Lords and Princes of renown
Choose him their Duke, to rule the wares and fights.
He mustereth all his host, whose number known,
He sends them to the fort that Sion hights;
The aged tyrant Juda's land that guides,
In fear and trouble, to resist provides.

I

The sacred armies, and the godly knight,
That the great sepulchre of Christ did free,
I sing; much wrought his valor and foresight,
And in that glorious war much suffered he;
In vain 'gainst him did Hell oppose her might,
In vain the Turks and Morians armed be:
His soldiers wild, to brawls and mutinies prest,
Reduced he to peace, so Heaven him blest.

II

O heavenly Muse, that not with fading bays
Deckest thy brow by the Heliconian spring,
But sittest crowned with stars' immortal rays
In Heaven, where legions of bright angels sing;
Inspire life in my wit, my thoughts upraise,
My verse ennobles, and forgive the thing,
If fictions light I mix with truth divine,
And fill these lines with other praise than thine.

III

Thither thou know'st the world is best inclined
Where luring Parnass most his sweet imparts,
And truth conveyed in verse of gentle kind
To read perhaps will move the dullest hearts:
So we, if children young diseased we find,
Anoint with sweets the vessel's foremost parts
To make them taste the potions sharp we give;
They drink deceived, and so deceived, they live.

IV

Ye noble Princes, that protect and save
The Pilgrim Muses, and their ship defend
From rock of Ignorance and Error's wave,
Your gracious eyes upon this labor bend:
To you these tales of love and conquest brave
I dedicate, to you this work I send:
My Muse hereafter shall perhaps unfold
Your fights, your battles, and your combats bold.

V

For if the Christian Princes ever strive
To win fair Greece out of the tyrants' hands,
And those usurping Ismaelites deprive
Of woful Thrace, which now captived stands,
You must from realms and seas the Turks forth drive,
As Godfrey chased them from Juda's lands,
And in this legend, all that glorious deed,
Read, whilst you arm you; arm you, whilst you read.

VI

Six years were run since first in martial guise
The Christian Lords warraid the eastern land;
Nice by assault, and Antioch by surprise,
Both fair, both rich, both won, both conquered stand,
And this defended they in noblest wise
'Gainst Persian knights and many a valiant band;
Tortosa won, lest winter might them shend,
They drew to holds, and coming spring attend.

VII

The sullen season now was come and gone,
That forced them late cease from their noble war,
When God Almighty form his lofty throne,
Set in those parts of Heaven that purest are
(As far above the clear stars every one,
As it is hence up to the highest star),
Looked down, and all at once this world beheld,
Each land, each city, country, town and field.

VIII

All things he viewed, at last in Syria stayed
Upon the Christian Lords his gracious eye,
That wondrous look wherewith he oft surveyed
Men's secret thoughts that most concealed lie
He cast on puissant Godfrey, that assayed
To drive the Turks from Sion's bulwarks high,
And, full of zeal and faith, esteemed light
All worldly honor, empire, treasure, might:

IX

In Baldwin next he spied another thought,
Whom spirits proud to vain ambition move:
Tancred he saw his life's joy set at naught,
So woe-begone was he with pains of love:
Boemond the conquered folk of Antioch brought,
The gentle yoke of Christian rule to prove:
He taught them laws, statutes and customs new,
Arts, crafts, obedience, and religion true;

X

And with such care his busy work he plied,
That to naught else his acting thoughts he bent:

In young Rinaldo fierce desires he spied,
And noble heart of rest impatient;
To wealth or sovereign power he naught applied
His wits, but all to virtue excellent;
Patterns and rules of skill, and courage bold,
He took from Guelpho, and his fathers old.

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XI

Thus when the Lord discovered had, and seen
The hidden secrets of each worthy's breast,
Out of the hierarchies of angels sheen
The gentle Gabriel called he from the rest,
'Twixt God and souls of men that righteous been
Ambassador is he, forever blest,
The just commands of Heaven's Eternal King,
'Twixt skies and earth, he up and down doth bring.

XII

To whom the Lord thus spake: "Godfredo find,
And in my name ask him, why doth he rest?
Why be his arms to ease and peace resigned?
Why frees he not Jerusalem distress?
His peers to counsel call, each baser mind
Let him stir up; for, chieftain of the rest
I choose him here, the earth shall him allow,
His fellows late shall be his subjects now."

XIII

This said, the angel swift himself prepared
To execute the charge imposed aright,
In form of airy members fair imbard,
His spirits pure were subject to our sight,
Like to a man in show and shape he fared,
But full of heavenly majesty and might,
A stripling seemed he thrive five winters old,
And radiant beams adorned his locks of gold.

XIV

Of silver wings he took a shining pair,
Fringed with gold, unwearied, nimble, swift;
With these he parts the winds, the clouds, the air,
And over seas and earth himself doth lift,
Thus clad he cut the spheres and circles fair,
And the pure skies with sacred feathers clift;
On Libanon at first his foot he set,
And shook his wings with rory May dews wet.

XV

Then to Tortosa's confines swiftly sped
The sacred messenger, with headlong flight;
Above the eastern wave appeared red
The rising sun, yet scanty half in sight;
Godfrey e'en then his morn-devotions said,
As was his custom, when with Titan bright
Appeared the angel in his shape divine,
Whose glory far obscured Phoebus' shine.

XVI

"Godfrey," quoth he, "behold the season fit

To war, for which thou waited hast so long,
Now serves the time, if thou o'erslip not it,
To free Jerusalem from thrall and wrong:
Thou with thy Lords in council quickly sit;
Comfort the feeble, and confirm the strong,
The Lord of Hosts their general doth make thee,
And for their chieftain they shall gladly take thee.

XVII

"I, messenger from everlasting Jove,
In his great name thus his behests do tell;
Oh, what sure hope of conquest ought thee move,
What zeal, what love should in thy bosom dwell!"
This said, he vanished to those seats above,
In height and clearness which the rest excel,
Down fell the Duke, his joints dissolved asunder,
Blind with the light, and stricken dead with wonder.

XVIII

But when recovered, he considered more,
The man, his manner, and his message said;
If erst he wished, now he longed sore
To end that war, whereof he Lord was made;
Nor swelled his breast with uncouth pride therefore,
That Heaven on him above this charge had laid,
But, for his great Creator would the same,
His will increased: so fire augmenteth flame.

XIX

The captains called forthwith from every tent,
Unto the rendezvous he them invites;
Letter on letter, post on post he sent,
Entreatance fair with counsel he unites,
All, what a noble courage could augment,
The sleeping spark of valor what incites,
He used, that all their thoughts to honor raised,
Some praised, some paid, some counselled, all pleased.

XX

The captains, soldiers, all, save Boemond, came,
And pitched their tents, some in the fields without,
Some of green boughs their slender cabins frame,
Some lodged were Tortosa's streets about,
Of all the host the chief of worth and name
Assembled been, a senate grave and stout;
Then Godfrey, after silence kept a space,
Lift up his voice, and spake with princely grace:

XXI

"Warriors, whom God himself elected hath
His worship true in Sion to restore,
And still preserved from danger, harm and scath,

By many a sea and many an unknown shore,
You have subjected lately to his faith
Some provinces rebellious long before:
And after conquests great, have in the same
Erected trophies to his cross and name.

XXII

"But not for this our homes we first forsook,
And from our native soil have marched so far:
Nor us to dangerous seas have we betook,
Exposed to hazard of so far sought war,
Of glory vain to gain an idle smook,
And lands possess that wild and barbarous are:
That for our conquests were too mean a prey,
To shed our bloods, to work our souls' decay.

XXIII

"But this the scope was of our former thought, --
Of Sion's fort to scale the noble wall,
The Christian folk from bondage to have brought,
Wherein, alas, they long have lived thrall,
In Palestine an empire to have wrought,
Where godliness might reign perpetual,
And none be left, that pilgrims might denay
To see Christ's tomb, and promised vows to pay.

XXIV

"What to this hour successively is done
Was full of peril, to our honor small,
Naught to our first designment, if we shun
The purposed end, or here lie fixed all.
What boots it us there wares to have begun,
Or Europe raised to make proud Asia thrall,
If our beginnings have this ending known,
Not kingdoms raised, but armies overthrown?

XXV

"Not as we list erect we empires new
On frail foundations laid in earthly mould,
Where of our faith and country be but few
Among the thousands stout of Pagans bold,
Where naught behoves us trust to Greece untrue,
And Western aid we far removed behold:
Who buildeth thus, methinks, so buildeth he,
As if his work should his sepulchre be.

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XXVI

"Turks, Persians conquered, Antiochia won,
Be glorious acts, and full of glorious praise,
By Heaven's mere grace, not by our prowess done:
Those conquests were achieved by wondrous ways,
If now from that directed course we run
The God of Battles thus before us lays,
His loving kindness shall we lose, I doubt,
And be a byword to the lands about.

XXVII

"Let not these blessings then sent from above
Abused be, or split in profane wise,
But let the issue correspondent prove
To good beginnings of each enterprise;
The gentle season might our courage move,
Now every passage plain and open lies:
What lets us then the great Jerusalem
With valiant squadrons round about to hem?

XXVIII

"Lords, I protest, and hearken all to it,
Ye times and ages, future, present, past,
Hear all ye blessed in the heavens that sit,
The time for this achievement hasteneth fast:
The longer rest worse will the season fit,
Our sureties shall with doubt be overcast.
If we forslow the siege I well foresee
From Egypt will the Pagans succored be."

XXIX

This said, the hermit Peter rose and spake,
Who sate in counsel those great Lords among:
"At my request this war was undertake,
In private cell, who erst lived closed long,
What Godfrey wills, of that no question make,
There cast no doubts where truth is plain and strong,
Your acts, I trust, will correspond his speech,
Yet one thing more I would you gladly teach.

XXX

"These strifes, unless I far mistake the thing,
And discords raised oft in disordered sort,
Your disobedience and ill managing
Of actions lost, for want of due support,
Refer I justly to a further spring,
Spring of sedition, strife, oppression, tort,
I mean commanding power to sundry given,
In thought, opinion, worth, estate, uneven.

XXXI

"Where divers Lords divided empire hold,

Where causes be by gifts, not justice tried,
Where offices be falsely bought and sold,
Needs must the lordship there from virtue slide.
Of friendly parts one body then uphold,
Create one head, the rest to rule and guide:
To one the regal power and sceptre give,
That henceforth may your King and Sovereign live."

XXXII

And therewith stayed his speech. O gracious Muse,
What kindling motions in their breasts do fry?
With grace divine the hermit's talk infuse,
That in their hearts his words may fructify;
By this a virtuous concord they did choose,
And all contentions then began to die;
The Princes with the multitude agree,
That Godfrey ruler of those wars should be.

XXXIII

This power they gave him, by his princely right,
All to command, to judge all, good and ill,
Laws to impose to lands subdued by might,
To maken war both when and where he will,
To hold in due subjection every wight,
Their valors to be guided by his skill;
This done, Report displays her tell-tale wings,
And to each ear the news and tidings brings.

XXXIV

She told the soldiers, who allowed him meet
And well deserving of that sovereign place.
Their first salutes and acclamations sweet
Received he, with love and gentle grace;
After their reverence done with kind regreet
Requited was, with mild and cheerful face,
He bids his armies should the following day
On those fair plains their standards proud display.

XXXV

The golden sun rose from the silver wave,
And with his beams enamelled every green,
When up arose each warrior bold and brave,
Glistering in filed steel and armor sheen,
With jolly plumes their crests adorned they have,
And all tofore their chieftain mustered been:
He from a mountain cast his curious sight
On every footman and on every knight.

XXXVI

My mind, Time's enemy, Oblivion's foe,
Disposer true of each noteworthy thing,
Oh, let thy virtuous might avail me so,

That I each troop and captain great may sing,
That in this glorious war did famous grow,
Forgot till now by Time's evil handling:
This work, derived from my treasures dear,
Let all times hearken, never age outwear.

XXXVII

The French came foremost battailous and bold,
Late led by Hugo, brother to their King,
From France the isle that rivers four infold
With rolling streams descending from their spring,
But Hugo dead, the lily fair of gold,
Their wonted ensign they tofore them bring,
Under Clotharius great, a captain good,
And hardy knight ysprong of princes' blood.

XXXVIII

A thousand were they in strong armors clad,
Next whom there marched forth another band,
That number, nature, and instruction had,
Like them to fight far off or charge at hand,
All valiant Normans by Lord Robert lad,
The native Duke of that renowned land,
Two bishops next their standards proud upbare,
Called Reverend William, and Good Ademare.

XXXIX

Their jolly notes they chanted loud and clear
On merry mornings at the mass divine,
And horrid helms high on their heads they bear
When their fierce courage they to war incline:
The first four hundred horsemen gathered near
To Orange town, and lands that it confine:
But Ademare the Poggian youth brought out,
In number like, in hard assays as stout.

XL

Baldwin, his ensign fair, did next dispread
Among his Bulloigners of noble fame,
His brother gave him all his troops to lead,
When he commander of the field became;
The Count Carinto did him straight succeed,
Grave in advice, well skilled in Mars his game,
Four hundred brought he, but so many thrice
Led Baldwin, clad in gilden arms of price.

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XLI

Guelpho next them the land and place possest,
Whose fortunes good with his great acts agree,
By his Italian sire, fro the house of Est,
Well could he bring his noble pedigree,
A German born with rich possessions blest,
A worthy branch sprung from the Guelphian tree.
'Twixt Rhene and Danubie the land contained
He ruled, where Swaves and Rhetians whilom reigned.

XLII

His mother's heritage was this and right,
To which he added more by conquest got,
From thence approved men of passing might
He brought, that death or danger feared not:
It was their wont in feasts to spend the night,
And pass cold days in baths and houses hot.
Five thousand late, of which now scanty are
The third part left, such is the chance of war.

XLIII

The nation then with crisped locks and fair,
That dwell between the seas and Arden Wood,
Where Mosel streams and Rhene the meadows wear,
A battel soil for grain, for pasture good,
Their islanders with them, who oft repair
Their earthen bulwarks 'gainst the ocean flood,
The flood, elsewhere that ships and barks devours,
But there drowns cities, countries, towns and towers;

XLIV

Both in one troop, and but a thousand all,
Under another Robert fierce they run.
Then the English squadron, soldiers stout and tall,
By William led, their sovereign's younger son,
These archers be, and with them come withal,
A people near the Northern Pole that wone,
Whom Ireland sent from loughs and forests hoar,
Divided far by sea from Europe's shore.

XLV

Tancredi next, nor 'mongst them all was one,
Rinald except, a prince of greater might,
With majesty his noble countenance shone,
High were his thoughts, his heart was bold in fight,
No shameful vice his worth had overgone,
His fault was love, by unadvised sight,
Bred in the dangers of adventurous arms,
And nursed with griefs, with sorrows, woes, and harms.

XLVI

Fame tells, that on that ever-blessed day,

When Christian swords with Persian blood were dyed,
The furious Prince Tancredi from that fray
His coward foes chased through forests wide,
Till tired with the fight, the heat, the way,
He sought some place to rest his wearied side,
And drew him near a silver stream that played
Among wild herbs under the greenwood shade.

XLVII

A Pagan damsel there unwares he met,
In shining steel, all save her visage fair,
Her hair unbound she made a wanton net,
To catch sweet breathing from the cooling air.
On her at gaze his longing looks he set,
Sight, wonder; wonder, love; love bred his care;
O love, o wonder; love new born, new bred,
Now groan, now armed, this champion captive led.

XLVIII

Her helm the virgin donned, and but some wight
She feared might come to aid him as they fought,
Her courage earned to have assailed the knight;
Yet thence she fled, unaccompanied, unsought,
And left her image in his heart ypight;
Her sweet idea wandered through his thought,
Her shape, her gesture, and her place in mind
He kept, and blew love's fire with that wind.

XLIX

Well might you read his sickness in his eyes,
Their banks were full, their tide was at the flow,
His help far off, his hurt within him lies,
His hopes unstrung, his cares were fit to mow;
Eight hundred horse (from Champaign came) he guies,
Champaign a land where wealth, ease, pleasure, grow,
Rich Nature's pomp and pride, the Tirrhene main
There woos the hills, hills woo the valleys plain.

L

Two hundred Greeks came next, in fight well tried,
Not surely armed in steel or iron strong,
But each a glaive had pendant by his side,
Their bows and quivers at their shoulders hung,
Their horses well inured to chase and ride,
In diet spare, untired with labor long;
Ready to charge, and to retire at will,
Though broken, scattered, fled, they skirmish still;

LI

Tatine their guide, and except Tatine, none
Of all the Greeks went with the Christian host;
O sin, O shame, O Greece accurst alone!

Did not this fatal war affront thy coast?
Yet safest thou an idle looker-on,
And glad attendest which side won or lost:
Now if thou be a bondslave vile become,
No wrong is that, but God's most righteous doom.

LII

In order last, but first in worth and fame,
Unfeared in fight, untired with hurt or wound,
The noble squadron of adventurers came,
Terrors to all that tread on Asian ground:
Cease Orpheus of thy Minois, Arthur shame
To boast of Lancelot, or thy table round:
For these whom antique times with laurel drest,
These far exceed them, thee, and all the rest.

LIII

Dudon of Consa was their guide and lord,
And for of worth and birth alike they been,
They chose him captain, by their free accord,
For he most acts had done, most battles seen;
Grave was the man in years, in looks, in word,
His locks were gray, yet was his courage green,
Of worth and might the noble badge he bore,
Old scars of grievous wounds received of yore.

LIV

After came Eustace, well esteemed man
For Godfrey's sake his brother, and his own;
The King of Norway's heir Gernando than,
Proud of his father's title, sceptre, crown;
Roger of Balnavill, and Engerlan,
For hardy knights approved were and known;
Besides were numbered in that warlike train
Rambald, Gentonio, and the Gerrards twain.

LV

Ubaldo then, and puissant Rosimond,
Of Lancaster the heir, in rank succeed;
Let none forget Obizo of Tuscan land,
Well worthy praise for many a worthy deed;
Nor those three brethren, Lombards fierce and yond,
Achilles, Sforza, and stern Palamede;
Nor Otton's shield he conquered in those stowres,
In which a snake a naked child devours.

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LVI

Guascher and Raiphe in valor like there was.
The one and other Guido, famous both,
Germer and Eberard to overpass,
In foul oblivion would my Muse be loth,
With his Gildippes dear, Edward alas,
A loving pair, to war among them go'th
In bond of virtuous love together tied,
Together served they, and together died.

LVII

In school of love are all things taught we see,
There learned this maid of arms the ireful guise,
Still by his side a faithful guard went she,
One true-love knot their lives together ties,
No would to one alone could dangerous be,
But each the smart of other's anguish tries,
If one were hurt, the other felt the sore,
She lost her blood, he spent his life therefore.

LVIII

But these and all, Rinaldo far exceeds,
Star of his sphere, the diamond of this ring,
The nest where courage with sweet mercy breeds:
A comet worthy each eye's wondering,
His years are fewer than his noble deeds,
His fruit is ripe soon as his blossoms spring,
Armed, a Mars, might coyest Venus move,
And if disarmed, then God himself of Love.

LIX

Sophia by Adige's flowery bank him bore,
Sophia the fair, spouse to Bertoldo great,
Fit mother for that pearl, and before
The tender imp was weaned from the teat,
The Princess Maud him took, in Virtue's lore
She brought him up fit for each worthy feat,
Till of these wares the golden trump he hears,
That soundeth glory, fame, praise in his ears.

LX

And then, though scanty three times five years old,
He fled alone, by many an unknown coast,
O'er Aegean Seas by many a Greekish hold,
Till he arrived at the Christian host;
A noble flight, adventurous, brave, and bold,
Whereon a valiant prince might justly boast,
Three years he served in field, when scant begin
Few golden hairs to deck his ivory chin.

LXI

The horsemen past, their void-left stations fill

The bands on foot, and Reymond them befor,
Of Tholouse lord, from lands near Piraene Hill
By Garound streams and salt sea billows worn,
Four thousand foot he brought, well armed, and skill
Had they all pains and travels to have borne,
Stout men of arms and with their guide of power
Like Troy's old town defenced with Ilion's tower.

LXII

Next Stephen of Amboise did five thousand lead,
The men he prest from Tours and Blois but late,
To hard assays unfit, unsure at need,
Yet armed to point in well-attempted plate,
The land did like itself the people breed,
The soil is gentle, smooth, soft, delicate;
Boldly they charge, but soon retire for doubt,
Like fire of straw, soon kindled, soon burnt out.

LXIII

The third Alcasto marched, and with him
The boaster brought six thousand Switzers bold,
Audacious were their looks, their faces grim,
Strong castles on the Alpine clifts they hold,
Their shares and coulthers broke, to armors trim
They change that metal, cast in warlike mould,
And with this band late herds and flocks that guide,
Now kings and realms he threatened and defied.

LXIV

The glorious standard last to Heaven they sprad,
With Peter's keys ennobled and his crown,
With it seven thousand stout Camillo had,
Embattailed in walls of iron brown:
In this adventure and occasion, glad
So to revive the Romans' old renown,
Or prove at least to all of wiser thought,
Their hearts were fertile land although unwrought.

LXV

But now was passed every regiment,
Each band, each troop, each person worth regard
When Godfrey with his lords to counsel went,
And thus the Duke his princely will declared:
"I will when day next clears the firmament,
Our ready host in haste be all prepared,
Closely to march to Sion's noble wall,
Unseen, unheard, or undescried at all.

LXVI

"Prepare you then for travel strong and light,
Fierce to the combat, glad to victory."
And with that word and warning soon was dight,

Each soldier, longing for near coming glory,
Impatient be they of the morning bright,
Of honor so them pricked the memory:
But yet their chieftain had conceived a fear
Within his heart, but kept it secret there.

LXVII

For he by faithful spial was assured,
That Egypt's King was forward on his way,
And to arrive at Gaza old procured,
A fort that on the Syrian frontiers lay,
Nor thinks he that a man to wars inured
Will aught forslow, or in his journey stay,
For well he knew him for a dangerous foe:
An herald called he then, and spake him so:

LXVIII

"A pinnacle take thee swift as shaft from bow,
And speed thee, Henry, to the Greekish main,
There should arrive, as I by letters know
From one that never aught reports in vain,
A valiant youth in whom all virtues flow,
To help us this great conquest to obtain,
The Prince of Danes he is, and brings to war
A troop with him from under the Arctic star.

LXIX

"And for I doubt the Greekish monarch sly
Will use with him some of his wonted craft,
To stay his passage, or divert awry
Elsewhere his forces, his first journey laft,
My herald good and messenger well try,
See that these succors be not us beraft,
But send him thence with such convenient speed
As with his honor stands and with our need.

LXX

"Return not thou, but Legier stay behind,
And move the Greekish Prince to send us aid,
Tell him his kingly promise doth him bind
To give us succors, by his covenant made."
This said, and thus instruct, his letters signed
The trusty herald took, nor longer stayed,
But sped him thence to done his Lord's behest,
And thus the Duke reduced his thoughts to rest.

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LXXI

Aurora bright her crystal gates unbarred,
And bridegroom-like forth stept the glorious sun,
When trumpets loud and clarions shrill were heard,
And every one to rouse him fierce begun,
Sweet music to each heart for war prepared,
The soldiers glad by heaps to harness run;
So if with drought endangered be their grain,
Poor ploughmen joy when thunders promise rain.

LXXII

Some shirts of mail, some coats of plate put on,
Some donned a cuirass, some a corslet bright,
And halbert some, and some a habergeon,
So every one in arms was quickly dight,
His wonted guide each soldier tends upon,
Loose in the wind waved their banners light,
Their standard royal toward Heaven they spread,
The cross triumphant on the Pagans dead.

LXXIII

Meanwhile the car that bears the lightning brand
Upon the eastern hill was mounted high,
And smote the glistening armies as they stand,
With quivering beams which dazed the wondering eye,
That Phaeton-like it fired sea and land,
The sparkles seemed up to the skies to fly,
The horses' neigh and clattering armors' sound
Pursue the echo over dale and down.

LXXIV

Their general did with due care provide
To save his men from ambush and from train,
Some troops of horse that lightly armed ride
He sent to scour the woods and forests main,
His pioneers their busy work applied
To even the paths and make the highways plain,
They filled the pits, and smoothed the rougher ground,
And opened every strait they closed found.

LXXV

They meet no forces gathered by their foe,
No towers defenced with rampire, moat, or wall,
No stream, no wood, no mountain could forslow
Their hasty pace, or stop their march at all;
So when his banks the prince of rivers, Po,
Doth overswell, he breaks with hideous fall
The mossy rocks and trees o'ergrown with age,
Nor aught withstands his fury and his rage.

LXXVI

The King of Tripoli in every hold

Shut up his men, munition and his treasure,
The stragglers sometimes assail he would,
Save that he durst not move them to displeasure;
He stayed their rage with presents, gifts and gold,
And led them through his land at ease and leisure,
To keep his realm in peace and rest he chose,
With what conditions Godfrey list impose.

LXXVII

Those of Mount Seir, that neigboreth by east
The Holy City, faithful folk each one,
Down from the hill descended most and least,
And to the Christian Duke by heaps they gone,
And welcome him and his with joy and feast;
On him they smile, on him they gaze alone,
And were his guides, as faithful from that day
As Hesperus, that leads the sun his way.

LXXVIII

Along the sands his armies safe they guide
By ways secure, to them well known before,
Upon the tumbling billows fraughted ride
The armed ships, coasting along the shore,
Which for the camp might every day provide
To bring munition good and victuals store:
The isles of Greece sent in provision meet,
And store of wine from Scios came and Crete.

LXXIX

Great Neptune grieved underneath the load
Of ships, hulks, galleys, barks and brigantines,
In all the mid-earth seas was left no road
Wherein the Pagan his bold sails untwines,
Spread was the huge Armado, wide and broad,
From Venice, Genes, and towns which them confines,
From Holland, England, France and Sicil sent,
And all for Juda ready bound and bent.

LXXX

All these together were combined, and knit
With surest bonds of love and friendship strong,
Together sailed they fraught with all things fit
To service done by land that might belong,
And when occasion served disbarked it,
Then sailed the Asian coasts and isles along;
Thither with speed their hasty course they plied,
Where Christ the Lord for our offences died.

LXXXI

The brazen trump of iron-winged fame,
That mingleth faithful troth with forged lies,
Foretold the heathen how the Christians came,

How thitherward the conquering army hies,
Of every knight it sounds the worth and name,
Each troop, each band, each squadron it descries,
And threat'neth death to those, fire, sword and slaughter,
Who held captived Israel's fairest daughter.

LXXXII

The fear of ill exceeds the evil we fear,
For so our present harms still most annoy us,
Each mind is prest and open every ear
To hear new tidings though they no way joy us,
This secret rumor whispered everywhere
About the town, these Christians will destroy us,
The aged king his coming evil that knew,
Did cursed thoughts in his false heart renew.

LXXXIII

This aged prince ycleped Aladine,
Ruled in care, new sovereign of this state,
A tyrant erst, but now his fell engine
His graver are did somewhat mitigate,
He heard the western lords would undermine
His city's wall, and lay his towers prostrate,
To former fear he adds a new-come doubt,
Treason he fears within, and force without.

LXXXIV

For nations twain inhabit there and dwell
Of sundry faith together in that town,
The lesser part on Christ believed well,
On Termagent the more and on Mahown,
But when this king had made this conquest fell,
And brought that region subject to his crown,
Of burdens all he set the Paynims large,
And on poor Christians laid the double charge.

LXXXV

His native wrath revived with this new thought,
With age and years that weakened was of yore,
Such madness in his cruel bosom wrought,
That now than ever blood he thirsteth more?
So stings a snake that to the fire is brought,
Which harmless lay benumbed with cold before,
A lion so his rage renewed hath,
Though fame before, if he be moved to wrath.

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LXXXVI

"I see," quoth he, "some expectation vain,
In these false Christians, and some new content,
Our common loss they trust will be their gain,
They laugh, we weep; they joy while we lament;
And more, perchance, by treason or by train,
To murder us they secretly consent,
Or otherwise to work us harm and woe,
To ope the gates, and so let in our foe.

LXXXVII

"But lest they should effect their cursed will,
Let us destroy this serpent on his nest;
Both young and old, let us this people kill,
The tender infants at their mothers' breast,
Their houses burn, their holy temples fill
With bodies slain of those that loved them best,
And on that tomb they hold so much in price,
Let's offer up their priests in sacrifice."

LXXXVIII

Thus thought the tyrant in his traitorous mind,
But durst not follow what he had decreed,
Yet if the innocents some mercy find,
From cowardice, not truth, did that proceed,
His noble foes durst not his craven kind
Exasperate by such a bloody deed.
For if he need, what grace could then be got,
If thus of peace he broke or loosed the knot?

LXXXIX

His villain heart his cursed rage restrained,
To other thoughts he bent his fierce desire,
The suburbs first flat with the earth he plained,
And burnt their buildings with devouring fire,
Loth was the wretch the Frenchman should have gained
Or help or ease, by finding aught entire,
Cedron, Bethsaida, and each watering else
Empoisoned he, both fountains, springs, and wells.

XC

So wary wise this child of darkness was;
The city's self he strongly fortifies,
Three sides by site it well defenced has,
That's only weak that to the northward lies;
With mighty bars of long enduring brass,
The steel-bound doors and iron gates he ties,
And, lastly, legions armed well provides
Of subjects born, and hired aid besides.

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THE ARGUMENT.

Ismeno conjures, but his charms are vain;
Aladine will kill the Christians in his ire:
Sophronia and Olindo would be slain
To save the rest, the King grants their desire;
Clorinda hears their fact and fortunes plain,
Their pardon gets and keeps them from the fire:
Argantes, when Aletes' speeches are
Despised, defies the Duke to mortal war.

I

While thus the tyrant bends his thoughts to arms,
Ismeno gan tofore his sight appear,
Ismen dead bones laid in cold graves that warms
And makes them speak, smell, taste, touch, see, and hear;
Ismen with terror of his mighty charms,
That makes great Dis in deepest Hell to fear,
That binds and looses souls condemned to woe,
And sends the devils on errands to and fro.

II

A Christian once, Macon he now adores,
Nor could he quite his wonted faith forsake,
But in his wicked arts both oft implores
Help from the Lord, and aid from Pluto black;
He, from deep caves by Acheron's dark shores,
Where circles vain and spells he used to make,
To advise his king in these extremes is come,
Achitophel so counselled Absalom.

III

"My liege," he says, "the camp fast hither moves,
The axe is laid unto this cedar's root,
But let us work as valiant men behoves,
For boldest hearts good fortune helpeth out;
Your princely care your kingly wisdom proves,
Well have you labored, well foreseen about;
If each perform his charge and duty so,
Nought but his grave here conquer shall your foe.

IV

"From surest castle of my secret cell
I come, partaker of your good and ill,
What counsel sage, or magic's sacred spell
May profit us, all that perform I will:
The sprites impure from bliss that whilom fell
Shall to your service bow, constrained by skill;
But how we must begin this enterprise,
I will your Highness thus in brief advise.

V

"Within the Christian's church from light of skies,
An hidden alter stands, far out of sight,
On which the image consecrated lies
Of Christ's dear mother, called a virgin bright,
An hundred lamps aye burn before her eyes,
She in a slender veil of tinsel dight,
On every side great plenty doth behold
Of offerings brought, myrrh, frankincense and gold.

VI

"This idol would I have removed away
From thence, and by your princely hand transport,
In Macon's sacred temple safe it lay,
Which then I will enchant in wondrous sort,
That while the image in that church doth stay,
No strength of arms shall win this noble fort,
Of shake this puissant wall, such passing might
Have spells and charms, if they be said aright."

VII

Advised thus, the king impatient
Flew in his fury to the house of God,
The image took, with words unreverent
Abused the prelates, who that deed forbode,
Swift with his prey, away the tyrant went,
Of God's sharp justice naught he feared the rod,
But in his chapel vile the image laid,
On which the enchanter charms and witchcraft said.

VIII

When Phoebus next unclosed his wakeful eye,
Up rose the sexton of that place profane,
And missed the image, where it used to lie,
Each where he sough in grief, in fear, in vain;
Then to the king his loss he gan descry,
Who sore enraged killed him for his pain;
And straight conceived in his malicious wit,
Some Christian bade this great offence commit.

IX

But whether this were act of mortal hand,
Or else the Prince of Heaven's eternal pleasure,
That of his mercy would this wretch withstand,
Nor let so vile a chest hold such a treasure,
As yet conjecture hath not fully scanned;
By godliness let us this action measure,
And truth of purest faith will fitly prove
That this rare grace came down from Heaven above.

X

With busy search the tyrant gan to invade
Each house, each hold, each temple and each tent

To them the fault or faulty one bewrayed
Or hid, he promised gifts or punishment,
His idle charms the false enchanter said,
But in this maze still wandered and miswent,
For Heaven decreed to conceal the same,
To make the miscreant more to feel his shame.

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XI

But when the angry king discovered not
What guilty hand this sacrilege had wrought,
His ireful courage boiled in vengeance hot
Against the Christians, whom he faulters thought;
All ruth, compassion, mercy he forgot,
A staff to beat that dog he long had sought,
"Let them all die," quoth he, "kill great and small,
So shall the offender perish sure withal.

XII

"To spill the wine with poison mixed with spares?
Slay then the righteous with the faulty one,
Destroy this field that yieldeth naught but tares,
With thorns this vineyard all is over-gone,
Among these wretches is not one, that cares
For us, our laws, or our religion;
Up, up, dear subjects, fire and weapon take,
Burn, murder, kill these traitors for my sake."

XIII

This Herod thus would Bethlem's infants kill,
The Christians soon this direful news receive,
The trump of death sounds in their hearing shrill,
Their weapon, faith; their fortress, was the grave;
They had no courage, time, device, or will,
To fight, to fly, excuse, or pardon crave,
But stood prepared to die, yet help they find,
Whence least they hope, such knots can Heaven unbind.

XIV

Among them dwelt, her parents' joy and pleasure,
A maid, whose fruit was ripe, not over-year'd,
Her beauty was her not esteemed treasure;
The field of love with plough of virtue eared,
Her labor goodness; godliness her leisure;
Her house the heaven by this full moon aye cleared,
For there, from lovers' eyes withdrawn, alone
With virgin beams this spotless Cynthia shone.

XV

But what availed her resolution chaste,
Whose soberest looks were whetstones to desire?
Nor love consents that beauty's field lie waste,
Her visage set Olindo's heart on fire,
O subtle love, a thousand wiles thou hast,
By humble suit, by service, or by hire,
To win a maiden's hold, a thing soon done,
For nature framed all women to be won.

XVI

Sophronia she, Olindo hight the youth,
Both or one town, both in one faith were taught,

She fair, he full of bashfulness and truth,
Loved much, hoped little, and desired nought,
He durst not speak by suit to purchase ruth,
She saw not, marked not, wist not what he sought,
Thus loved, thus served he long, but not regarded,
Unseen, unmarked, unpitied, unrewarded.

XVII

To her came message of the murderment,
Wherein her guiltless friends should hopeless starve,
She that was noble, wise, as fair and gent,
Cast how she might their harmless lives preserve,
Zeal was the spring whence flowed her hardiment,
From maiden shame yet was she loth to swerve:
Yet had her courage ta'en so sure a hold,
That boldness, shamefaced; shame had made her bold.

XVIII

And forth she went, a shop for merchandise
Full of rich stuff, but none for sale exposed,
A veil obscured the sunshine of her eyes,
The rose within herself her sweetness closed,
Each ornament about her seemly lies,
By curious chance, or careless art, composed;
For what the most neglects, most curious prove,
So Beauty's helped by Nature, Heaven, and Love.

XIX

Admired of all, on went this noble maid,
Until the presence of the king she gained,
Nor for he swelled with ire was she afraid,
But his fierce wrath with fearless grace sustained,
"I come," quoth she, "but be thine anger stayed,
And causeless rage 'gainst faultless souls restrained --
I come to show thee, and to bring thee both,
The wight whose fact hath made thy heart so wroth."

XX

Her molest boldness, and that lightning ray
Which her sweet beauty streamed on his face,
Had struck the prince with wonder and dismay,
Changed his cheer, and cleared his moody grace,
That had her eyes disposed their looks to play,
The king had snared been in love's strong lace;
But wayward beauty doth not fancy move,
A frown forbids, a smile engendereth love.

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XXI

It was amazement, wonder and delight,
Although not love, that moved his cruel sense;
"Tell on," quoth he, "unfold the chance aright,
Thy people's lives I grant for recompense."
Then she, "Behold the faultier here in sight,
This hand committed that supposed offence,
I took the image, mine that fault, that fact,
Mine be the glory of that virtuous act."

XXII

This spotless lamb thus offered up her blood,
To save the rest of Christ's selected fold,
O noble lie! was ever truth so good?
Blest be the lips that such a leasing told:
Thoughtful awhile remained the tyrant wood,
His native wrath he gan a space withhold,
And said, "That thou discover soon I will,
What aid? what counsel had'st thou in that ill?"

XXIII

"My lofty thoughts," she answered him, "envied
Another's hand should work my high desire,
The thirst of glory can no partner bide,
With mine own self I did alone conspire."
"On thee alone," the tyrant then replied,
"Shall fall the vengeance of my wrath and ire."
" 'Tis just and right," quoth she, "I yield consent,
Mine be the honor, mine the punishment."

XXIV

The wretch of new enraged at the same,
Asked where she hid the image so conveyed:
"Not hid," quoth she, "but quite consumed with flame,
The idol is of that eternal maid,
For so at least I have preserved the same,
With hands profane from being eft betrayed.
My Lord, the thing thus stolen demand no more,
Here see the thief that scorneth death therefor.

XXV

"And yet no theft was this, yours was the sin,
I brought again what you unjustly took."
This heard, the tyrant did for rage begin
To whet his teeth, and bend his frowning look,
No pity, youth; fairness, no grace could win;
Joy, comfort, hope, the virgin all forsook;
Wrath killed remorse, vengeance stopped mercy's breath
Love's thrall to hate, and beauty's slave to death.

XXVI

Ta'en was the damsel, and without remorse,

The king condemned her guiltless to the fire,
Her veil and mantle plucked they off by force,
And bound her tender arms in twisted wire:
Dumb was the silver dove, while from her corse
These hungry kites plucked off her rich attire,
And for some deal perplexed was her sprite,
Her damask late, now changed to purest white.

XXVII

The news of this mishap spread far and near,
The people ran, both young and old, to gaze;
Olindo also ran, and gan to fear
His lady was some partner in this case;
But when he found her bound, stript from her gear,
And vile tormentors ready saw in place,
He broke the throng, and into presence brast;
And thus bespake the king in rage and haste:

XXXVIII

"Not so, not so this grief shall bear away
From me the honor of so noble feat,
She durst not, did not, could not so convey
The massy substance of that idol great,
What sleight had she the wardens to betray?
What strength to heave the goddess from her seat?
No, no, my Lord, she sails but with my wind."
Ah, thus he loved, yet was his love unkind!

XXIX

He added further: "Where the shining glass,
Lets in the light amid your temple's side,
By broken by-ways did I inward pass,
And in that window made a postern wide,
Nor shall therefore this ill-advised lass
Usurp the glory should this fact betide,
Mine be these bonds, mine be these flames so pure,
O glorious death, more glorious sepulture!"

XXX

Sophonra raised her modest looks from ground,
And on her lover bent her eyesight mild,
"Tell me, what fury? what conceit unsound
Presenteth here to death so sweet a child?
Is not in me sufficient courage found,
To bear the anger of this tyrant wild?
Or hath fond love thy heart so over-gone?
Wouldst thou not live, nor let me die alone?"

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XXXI

Thus spake the nymph, yet spake but to the wind,
She could not alter his well-settled thought;
O miracle! O strife of wondrous kind!
Where love and virtue such contention wrought,
Where death the victor had for meed assigned;
Their own neglect, each other's safety sought;
But thus the king was more provoked to ire,
Their strife for bellows served to anger's fire.

XXXII

He thinks, such thoughts self-guiltiness finds out,
They scorned his power, and therefore scorned the pain,
"Nay, nay," quoth he, "let be your strife and doubt,
You both shall win, and fit reward obtain."
With that the sergeants hent the young man stout,
And bound him likewise in a worthless chain;
Then back to back fast to a stake both ties,
Two harmless turtles dight for sacrifice.

XXXIII

About the pile of fagots, sticks and hay,
The bellows raised the newly-kindled flame,
When thus Olindo, in a doleful lay,
Begun too late his bootless plaints to frame:
"Be these the bonds? Is this the hoped-for day,
Should join me to this long-desired dame?
Is this the fire alike should burn our hearts?
Ah, hard reward for lovers' kind desarts!

XXXIV

"Far other flames and bonds kind lovers prove,
But thus our fortune casts the hapless die,
Death hath exchanged again his shafts with love,
And Cupid thus lets borrowed arrows fly.
O Hymen, say, what fury doth thee move
To lend thy lamps to light a tragedy?
Yet this contents me that I die for thee,
Thy flames, not mine, my death and torment be.

XXXV

"Yet happy were my death, mine ending blest,
My torments easy, full of sweet delight,
It this I could obtain, that breast to breast
Thy bosom might receive my yielded sprite;
And thine with it in heaven's pure clothing drest,
Through clearest skies might take united flight."
Thus he complained, whom gently she reproved,
And sweetly spake him thus, that so her loved:

XXXVI

"Far other plaints, dear friend, tears and laments

The time, the place, and our estates require;
Think on thy sins, which man's old foe presents
Before that judge that quits each soul his hire,
For his name suffer, for no pain torments
Him whose just prayers to his throne aspire:
Behold the heavens, thither thine eyesight bend,
Thy looks, sighs, tears, for intercessors send."

XXXVII

The Pagans loud cried out to God and man,
The Christians mourned in silent lamentation,
The tyrant's self, a thing unused, began
To feel his heart relent, with mere compassion,
But not disposed to ruth or mercy than
He sped him thence home to his habitation:
Sophronia stood not grieved nor discontented,
By all that saw her, but herself, lamented.

XXXVIII

The lovers standing in this doleful wise,
A warrior bold unwares approached near,
In uncouth arms yclad and strange disguise,
From countries far, but new arrived there,
A savage tigress on her helmet lies,
The famous badge Clorinda used to bear;
That wons in every warlike stowre to win,
By which bright sign well known was that fair inn.

XXXIX

She scorned the arts these silly women use,
Another thought her nobler humor fed,
Her lofty hand would of itself refuse
To touch the dainty needle or nice thread,
She hated chambers, closets, secret news,
And in broad fields preserved her maidenhead:
Proud were her looks, yet sweet, though stern and stout,
Her dam a dove, thus brought an eagle out.

XL

While she was young, she used with tender hand
The foaming steed with froary bit to steer,
To tilt and tourney, wrestle in the sand,
To leave with speed Atlanta swift arear,
Through forests wild, and unfrequented land
To chase the lion, boar, or rugged bear,
The satyrs rough, the fauns and fairies wild,
She chased oft, oft took, and oft beguiled.

XLI

This lusty lady came from Persia late,
She with the Christians had encountered eft,
And in their flesh had opened many a gate,
By which their faithful souls their bodies left,

Her eye at first presented her the state
Of these poor souls, of hope and help bereft,
Greedy to know, as is the mind of man,
Their cause of death, swift to the fire she ran.

XLII

The people made her room, and on them twain
Her piercing eyes their fiery weapons dart,
Silent she saw the one, the other 'plain,
The weaker body lodged the nobler heart:
Yet him she saw lament, as if his pain
Were grief and sorrow for another's smart,
And her keep silence so, as if her eyes
Dumb orators were to entreat the skies.

XLIII

Clorinda changed to ruth her warlike mood,
Few silver drops her vermeil cheeks depaint;
Her sorrow was for her that speechless stood,
Her silence more prevailed than his complaint.
She asked an aged man, seemed grave and good,
"Come say me, sir," quoth she, "what hard constraint
Would murder here love's queen and beauty's king?
What fault or fare doth to this death them bring?"

XLIV

Thus she inquired, and answer short he gave,
But such as all the chance at large disclosed,
She wondered at the case, the virgin brave,
That both were guiltless of the fault supposed,
Her noble thought cast how she might them save,
The means on suit or battle she reposed.
Quick to the fire she ran, and quenched it out,
And thus bespake the sergeants and the rout:

XLV

"Be there not one among you all that dare
In this your hateful office aught proceed,
Till I return from court, nor take you care
To reap displeasure for not making speed."
To do her will the men themselves prepare,
In their faint hearts her looks such terror breed;
To court she went, their pardon would she get,
But on the way the courteous king she met.

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XLVI

"Sir King," quoth she, "my name Clorinda hight,
My fame perchance has pierced your ears ere now,
I come to try my wonted power and might,
And will defend this land, this town, and you,
All hard assays esteem I eath and light,
Great acts I reach to, to small things I bow,
To fight in field, or to defend this wall,
Point what you list, I naught refuse at all."

XLVII

To whom the king, "What land so far remote
From Asia's coasts, or Phoebus' glistening rays,
O glorious virgin, that recordeth not
Thy fame, thine honor, worth, renown, and praise?
Since on my side I have thy succors got,
I need not fear in these my aged days,
For in thine aid more hope, more trust I have,
Than in whole armies of these soldiers brave.

XLVIII

"Now, Godfrey stays too long; he fears, I ween;
Thy courage great keeps all our foes in awe;
For thee all actions far unworthy been,
But such as greatest danger with them draw:
Be you commandress therefore, Princess, Queen
Of all our forces: be thy word a law."
This said, the virgin gan her beaver veil,
And thanked him first, and thus began her tale.

XLIX

"A thing unused, great monarch, may it seem,
To ask reward for service yet to come;
But so your virtuous bounty I esteem,
That I presume for to intreat this groom
And silly maid from danger to redeem,
Condemned to burn by your impartial doom,
I not excuse, but pity much their youth,
And come to you for mercy and for ruth.

L

"Yet give me leave to tell your Highness this,
You blame the Christians, them my thoughts acquite,
Nor be displeased, I say you judge amiss,
At every shot look not to hit the white,
All what the enchanter did persuade you, is
Against the lore of Macon's sacred rite,
For us commandeth mighty Mahomet
No idols in his temple pure to set.

LI

"To him therefore this wonder done refer,

Give him the praise and honor of the thing,
Of us the gods benign so careful are
Lest customs strange into their church we bring:
Let Ismen with his squares and trigons war,
His weapons be the staff, the glass, the ring;
But let us manage war with blows like knights,
Our praise in arms, our honor lies in fights."

LII

The virgin held her peace when this was said;
And though to pity he never framed his thought,
Yet, for the king admired the noble maid,
His purpose was not to deny her aught:
"I grant them life," quoth he, "your promised aid
Against these Frenchmen hath their pardon bought:
Nor further seek what their offences be,
Guiltless, I quit; guilty, I set them free."

LIII

Thus were they loosed, happiest of humankind,
Olindo, blessed be this act of thine,
True witness of thy great and heavenly mind,
Where sun, moon, stars, of love, faith, virtue, shine.
So forth they went and left pale death behind,
To joy the bliss of marriage rites divine,
With her he would have died, with him content
Was she to live that would with her have Brent.

LIV

The king, as wicked thoughts are most suspicious,
Supposed too fast this tree of virtue grew,
O blessed Lord! why should this Pharaoh vicious,
Thus tyrannize upon thy Hebrews true?
Who to perform his will, vile and malicious,
Exiled these, and all the faithful crew,
All that were strong of body, stout of mind,
But kept their wives and children pledge behind.

LV

A hard division, when the harmless sheep
Must leave their lambs to hungry wolves in charge,
But labor's virtues watching, ease her sleep,
Trouble best wind that drives salvation's barge,
The Christians fled, whither they took no keep,
Some strayed wild among the forests large,
Some to Emmaus to the Christian host,
And conquer would again their houses lost.

LVI

Emmaus is a city small, that lies
From Sion's walls distant a little way,
A man that early on the morn doth rise,

May thither walk ere third hour of the day.
Oh, when the Christian lord this town espies
How merry were their hearts? How fresh? How gay?
But for the sun inclined fast to west,
That night there would their chieftain take his rest.

LVII

Their canvas castles up they quickly rear,
And build a city in an hour's space.
When lo, disguised in unusual gear,
Two barons bold approachen gan the place;
Their semblance kind, and mild their gestures were,
Peace in their hands, and friendship in their face,
From Egypt's king ambassadors they come,
Them many a squire attends, and many a groom.

LVIII

The first Aletes, born in lowly shed,
Of parents base, a rose sprung from a brier,
That now his branches over Egypt spread,
No plant in Pharaoh's garden prospered higher;
With pleasing tales his lord's vain ears he fed,
A flatterer, a pick-thank, and a liar:
Cursed be estate got with so many a crime,
Yet this is oft the stair by which men climb.

LIX

Argantes called is that other knight,
A stranger came he late to Egypt land,
And there advanced was to honor's height,
For he was stout of courage, strong of hand,
Bold was his heart, and restless was his sprite,
Fierce, stern, outrageous, keen as sharpened brand,
Scorner of God, scant to himself a friend,
And pricked his reason on his weapon's end.

LX

These two entreatance made they might be heard,
Nor was their just petition long denied;
The gallants quickly made their court of guard,
And brought them in where sate their famous guide,
Whose kingly look his princely mind declared,
Where noblesse, virtue, troth, and valor bide.
A slender courtesy made Argantes bold,
So as one prince salute another wold;

LXI

Aletes laid his right hand on his heart,
Bent down his head, and cast his eyes full low,
And reverence made with courtly grace and art,
For all that humble lore to him was know;
His sober lips then did he softly part,

Whence of pure rhetoric, whole streams outflow,
And thus he said, while on the Christian lords
Down fell the mildew of his sugared words:

LXII

"O only worthy, whom the earth all fears,
High God defend thee with his heavenly shield,
And humble so the hearts of all thy peers,
That their stiff necks to thy sweet yoke may yield:
These be the sheaves that honor's harvest bears,
The seed thy valiant acts, the world the field,
Egypt the headland is, where heaped lies
Thy fame, worth, justice, wisdom, victories.

LXIII

"These altogether doth our sovereign hide
In secret store-house of his princely thought,
And prays he may in long accordance bide,
With that great worthy which such wonders wrought,
Nor that oppose against the coming tide
Of proffered love, for that he is not taught
Your Christian faith, for though of divers kind,
The loving vine about her elm is twined.

LXIV

"Receive therefore in that unconquered hand
The precious handle of this cup of love,
If not religion, virtue be the band
'Twixt you to fasten friendship not to move:
But for our mighty king doth understand,
You mean your power 'gainst Juda land to prove,
He would, before this threatened tempest fell,
I should his mind and princely will first tell.

LXV

"His mind is this, he prays thee be contented
To joy in peace the conquests thou hast got,
Be not thy death, or Sion's fall lamented,
Forbear this land, Judea trouble not,
Things done in haste at leisure be repented:
Withdraw thine arms, trust not uncertain lot,
For oft to see what least we think betide;
He is thy friend 'gainst all the world beside.

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LXVI

"True labour in the vineyard of thy Lord,
Ere prime thou hast the imposed day-work done,
What armies conquered, perished with thy sword?
What cities sacked? what kingdoms hast thou won?
All ears are mazed while tongues thine acts record,
Hands quake for fear, all feet for dread do run,
And though no realms you may to thraldom bring,
No higher can your praise, your glory spring.

LXVII

"Thy sign is in his Apogaeon placed,
And when it moveth next, must needs descend,
Chance in uncertain, fortune double faced,
Smiling at first, she frowneth in the end:
Beware thine honor be not then disgraced,
Take heed thou mar not when thou think'st to mend,
For this the folly is of Fortune's play,
'Gainst doubtful, certain; much, 'gainst small to lay.

LXVIII

"Yet still we sail while prosperous blows the wind,
Till on some secret rock unwares we light,
The sea of glory hath no banks assigned,
They who are wont to win in every fight
Still feed the fire that so inflames thy mind
To bring more nations subject to thy might;
This makes thee blessed peace so light to hold,
Like summer's flies that fear not winter's cold.

LXIX

"They bid thee follow on the path, now made
So plain and easy, enter Fortune's gate,
Nor in thy scabbard sheathe that famous blade,
Till settled by thy kingdom, and estate,
Till Macon's sacred doctrine fall and fade,
Till woeful Asia all lie desolate.
Sweet words I grant, baits and allurements sweet,
But greatest hopes oft greatest crosses meet.

LXX

"For, if thy courage do not blind thine eyes,
If clouds of fury hide not reason's beams,
Then may'st thou see this desperate enterprise.
The field of death, watered with danger's streams;
High state, the bed is where misfortune lies,
Mars most unfriendly, when most kind he seems,
Who climbeth high, on earth he hardest lights,
And lowest falls attend the highest flights.

LXXI

"Tell me if, great in counsel, arms and gold,
The Prince of Egypt war 'gainst you prepare,

What if the valiant Turks and Persians bold,
Unite their forces with Cassanoe's heir?
Oh then, what marble pillar shall uphold
The falling trophies of your conquest fair?
Trust you the monarch of the Greekish land?
That reed will break; and breaking, wound your hand.

LXXII

"The Greekish faith is like that half-cut tree
By which men take wild elephants in Inde,
A thousand times it hath beguiled thee,
As firm as waves in seas, or leaves in wind.
Will they, who erst denied you passage free,
Passage to all men free, by use and kind,
Fight for your sake? Or on them do you trust
To spend their blood, that could scarce spare their dust?

LXXIII

"But all your hope and trust perchance is laid
In these strong troops, which thee environ round;
Yet foes unite are not so soon dismayed
As when their strength you erst divided found:
Besides, each hour thy bands are weaker made
With hunger, slaughter, lodging on cold ground,
Meanwhile the Turks seek succors from our king,
Thus fade thy helps, and thus thy cumpers spring.

LXXIV

"Suppose no weapon can thy valor's pride
Subdue, that by no force thou may'st be won,
Admit no steel can hurt or wound thy side,
And be it Heaven hath thee such favor done:
'Gainst Famine yet what shield canst thou provide?
What strength resist? What sleight her wrath can shun?
Go, shake the spear, and draw thy flaming blade,
And try if hunger so be weaker made.

LXXV

"The inhabitants each pasture and each plain
Destroyed have, each field to waste is laid,
In fenced towers bestowed is their grain
Before thou cam'st this kingdom to invade,
These horse and foot, how canst them sustain?
Whence comes thy store? whence thy provision made?
Thy ships to bring it are, perchance, assigned,
Oh, that you live so long as please the wind!

LXXVI

"Perhaps thy fortune doth control the wind,
Doth loose or bind their blasts in secret cave,
The sea, pardie, cruel and deaf by kind,
Will hear thy call, and still her raging wave:
But if our armed galleys be assigned

To aid those ships which Turks and Persians have,
Say then, what hope is left thy slender fleet?
Dare flocks of crows, a flight of eagles meet?

LXXVII

"My lord, a double conquest must you make,
If you achieve renown by this emprize:
For if our fleet your navy chase or take,
For want of victuals all your camp then dies;
Of if by land the field you once forsake,
Then vain by sea were hope of victories.
Nor could your ships restore your lost estate:
For steed once stolen, we shut the door too late.

LXXVIII

"In this estate, if thou esteemest light
The proffered kindness of the Egyptian king,
Then give me leave to say, this oversight
Beseems thee not, in whom such virtues spring:
But heavens vouchsafe to guide my mind aright,
To gentle thoughts, that peace and quiet bring,
So that poor Asia her complaints may cease,
And you enjoy your conquests got, in peace.

LXXIX

"Nor ye that part in these adventures have,
Part in his glory, partners in his harms,
Let not blind Fortune so your minds deceive,
To stir him more to try these fierce alarms,
But like the sailor 'scaped from the wave
From further peril that his person arms
By staying safe at home, so stay you all,
Better sit still, men say, than rise to fall."

LXXX

This said Aletes: and a murmur rose
That showed dislike among the Christian peers,
Their angry gestures with mislike disclose
How much his speech offends their noble ears.
Lord Godfrey's eye three times environ goes,
To view what countenance every warrior bears,
And lastly on the Egyptian baron stayed,
To whom the duke thus for his answer said:

LXXXI

"Ambassador, full both of threats and praise,
Thy doubtful message hast thou wisely told,
And if thy sovereign love us as he says,
Tell him he sows to reap an hundred fold,
But where thy talk the coming storm displays
Of threatened warfare from the Pagans bold:
To that I answer, as my cousin is,

In plainest phrase, lest my intent thou miss.

LXXXII

"Know, that till now we suffered have much pain,
By lands and seas, where storms and tempests fall,
To make the passage easy, safe, and plain
That leads us to this venerable wall,
That so we might reward from Heaven obtain,
And free this town from being longer thrall;
Nor is it grievous to so good an end
Our honors, kingdoms, lives and goods to spend.

LXXXIII

"Nor hope of praise, nor thirst of worldly good,
Enticed us to follow this emprise,
The Heavenly Father keep his sacred brood
From foul infection of so great a vice:
But by our zeal aye be that plague withstood,
Let not those pleasures us to sin entice.
His grace, his mercy, and his powerful hand
Will keep us safe from hurt by sea and land.

LXXXIV

"This is the spur that makes our coursers run;
This is our harbor, safe from danger's floods;
This is our bield, the blustering winds to shun:
This is our guide, through forests, deserts, woods;
This is our summer's shade, our winter's sun:
This is our wealth, our treasure, and our goods:
This is our engine, towers that overthrows,
Our spear that hurts, our sword that wounds our foes.

LXXXV

"Our courage hence, our hope, our valor springs,
Not from the trust we have in shield or spear,
Not from the succors France or Grecia brings,
On such weak posts we list no buildings rear:
He can defend us from the power of kings,
From chance of war, that makes weak hearts to fear;
He can these hungry troops with manna feed,
And make the seas land, if we passage need.

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LXXXVI

"But if our sins us of his help deprive,
Of his high justice let no mercy fall;
Yet should our deaths us some contentment give,
To die, where Christ received his burial,
So might we die, not envying them that live;
So would we die, not unrevenged all:
Nor Turks, nor Christians, if we perish such,
Have cause to joy, or to complain too much.

LXXXVII

"Think not that wars we love, and strife affect,
Or that we hate sweet peace, or rest deny,
Think not your sovereign's friendship we reject,
Because we list not in our conquests stay:
But for it seems he would the Jews protect,
Pray him from us that thought aside to lay,
Nor us forbid this town and realm to gain,
And he in peace, rest, joy, long more may reign."

LXXXVIII

This answer given, Argantes wild drew nar,
Trembling for ire, and waxing pale for rage,
Nor could he hold, his wrath increased so far,
But thus inflamed bespake the captain sage:
"Who scorneth peace shall have his fill of war,
I thought my wisdom should thy fury 'suage,
But well you show what joy you take in fight,
Which makes you prize our love and friendship light."

LXXXIX

This said, he took his mantle's foremost part,
And gan the same together fold and wrap;
Then spake again with fell and spiteful heart,
So lions roar enclosed in train or trap,
"Thou proud despiser of inconstant mart,
I bring thee war and peace closed in this lap,
Take quickly one, thou hast no time to muse;
If peace, we rest, we fight, if war thou choose."

XC

His semblance fierce and speechless proud, provoke
The soldiers all, "War, war," at once to cry,
Nor could they tarry till their chieftain spoke,
But for the knight was more inflamed hereby,
His lap he opened and spread forth his cloak:
"To mortal wars," he says, "I you defy;"
And this he uttered with fell rage and hate,
And seemed of Janus' church to undo the gate.

XCI

It seemed fury, discord, madness fell

Flew from his lap, when he unfolds the same;
His glaring eyes with anger's venom swell,
And like the brand of foul Alecto flame,
He looked like huge Tiphoid loosed from hell
Again to shake heaven's everlasting frame,
Or him that built the tower of Shinaar,
Which threat'neth battle 'gainst the morning star.

XCII

Godfredo then: "Depart, and bid your king
Haste hitherward, or else within short while, --
For gladly we accept the war you bring, --
Let him expect us on the banks of Nile."
He entertained them then with banqueting,
And gifts presented to those Pagans vile;
Aletes had a helmet, rich and gay,
Late found at Nice among the conquered prey.

XCIII

Argant a sword, whereof the web was steel,
Pommel, rich stone; hilt gold; approved by touch
With rarest workmanship all forged weel,
The curious art excelled the substance much:
Thus fair, rich, sharp, to see, to have, to feel,
Glad was the Paynim to enjoy it such,
And said, "How I this gift can use and wield,
Soon shall you see, when first we meet in field."

XCIV

Thus took they congee, and the angry knight
Thus to his fellow parleyed on the way,
"Go thou by day, but let me walk by night,
Go thou to Egypt, I at Sion stay,
The answer given thou canst unfold aright,
No need of me, what I can do or say,
Among these arms I will go wreak my spite;
Let Paris court it, Hector loved to fight."

XCV

Thus he who late arrived a messenger
Departs a foe, in act, in word, in thought,
The law of nations or the lore of war,
If he transgresses or no, he recketh naught,
Thus parted they, and ere he wandered far
The friendly star-light to the walls him brought:
Yet his fell heart thought long that little way,
Grieved with each stop, tormented with each stay.

XCVI

Now spread the night her spangled canopy,
And summoned every restless eye to sleep;
On beds of tender grass the beasts down lie,

The fishes slumbered in the silent deep,
Unheard were serpent's hiss and dragon's cry,
Birds left to sing, and Philomen to weep,
Only that noise heaven's rolling circles kest,
Sung lullaby to bring the world to rest.

XCVII

Yet neither sleep, nor ease, nor shadows dark,
Could make the faithful camp or captain rest,
They longed to see the day, to hear the lark
Record her hymns and chant her carols blest,
They yearned to view the walls, the wished mark
To which their journeys long they had addressed;
Each heart attends, each longing eye beholds
What beam the eastern window first unfolds.

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THE ARGUMENT.

The camp at great Jerusalem arrives:
Clorinda gives them battle, in the breast
Of fair Erminia Tancred's love revives,
He jousts with her unknown whom he loved best;
Argant th' adventurers of their guide deprives,
With stately pomp they lay their Lord in chest:
Godfrey commands to cut the forest down,
And make strong engines to assault the town.

I

The purple morning left her crimson bed,
And donned her robes of pure vermilion hue,
Her amber locks she crowned with roses red,
In Eden's flowery gardens gathered new.
When through the camp a murmur shrill was spread,
Arm, arm, they cried; arm, arm, the trumpets blew,
Their merry noise prevents the joyful blast,
So hum small bees, before their swarms they cast.

II

Their captain rules their courage, guides their heat,
Their forwardness he stayed with gentle rein;
And yet more easy, haply, were the feat
To stop the current near Charybdis main,
Or calm the blustering winds on mountains great,
Than fierce desires of warlike hearts restrain;
He rules them yet, and ranks them in their haste,
For well he knows disordered speed makes waste.

III

Feathered their thoughts, their feet in wings were dight,
Swiftly they marched, yet were not tired thereby,
For willing minds make heaviest burdens light.
But when the gliding sun was mounted high,
Jerusalem, behold, appeared in sight,
Jerusalem they view, they see, they spy,
Jerusalem with merry noise they greet,
With joyful shouts, and acclamations sweet.

IV

As when a troop of jolly sailors row
Some new-found land and country to descry,
Through dangerous seas and under stars unknowe,
Thrall to the faithless waves, and trothless sky,
If once the wished shore begun to show,
They all salute it with a joyful cry,
And each to other show the land in haste,
Forgetting quite their pains and perils past.

V

To that delight which their first sight did breed,
That pleased so the secret of their thought
A deep repentance did forthwith succeed
That reverend fear and trembling with it brought,
Scantly they durst their feeble eyes dispreed
Upon that town where Christ was sold and bought,
Where for our sins he faultless suffered pain,
There where he died and where he lived again.

VI

Soft words, low speech, deep sobs, sweet sighs, salt tears
Rose from their hearts, with joy and pleasure mixed;
For thus fares he the Lord aright that fears,
Fear on devotion, joy on faith is fixed:
Such noise their passions make, as when one hears
The hoarse sea waves roar, hollow rocks betwixt;
Or as the wind in holts and shady greaves,
A murmur makes among the boughs and leaves.

VII

Their naked feet trod on the dusty way,
Following the ensample of their zealous guide,
Their scarfs, their crests, their plumes and feathers gay,
They quickly doffed, and willing laid aside,
Their molten hearts their wonted pride allay,
Along their watery cheeks warm tears down slide,
And then such secret speech as this, they used,
While to himself each one himself accused.

VIII

"Flower of goodness, root of lasting bliss,
Thou well of life, whose streams were purple blood
That flowed here, to cleanse the soul amiss
Of sinful men, behold this brutish flood,
That from my melting heart distilled is,
Receive in gree these tears, O Lord so good,
For never wretch with sin so overgone
Had fitter time or greater cause to moan."

IX

This while the wary watchman looked over,
From tops of Sion's towers, the hills and dales,
And saw the dust the fields and pastures cover,
As when thick mists arise from moory vales.
At last the sun-bright shields he gan discover,
And glistening helms for violence none that fails,
The metal shone like lightning bright in skies,
And man and horse amid the dust descries.

X

Then loud he cries, "O what a dust ariseth!
O how it shines with shields and targets clear!

Up, up, to arms, for valiant heart despiseth
The threatened storm of death and danger near.
Behold your foes;" then further thus deviseth,
"Haste, haste, for vain delay increaseth fear,
These horrid clouds of dust that yonder fly,
Your coming foes does hide, and hide the sky."

XI

The tender children, and the fathers old,
The aged matrons, and the virgin chaste,
That durst not shake the spear, nor target hold,
Themselves devoutly in their temples placed;
The rest, of members strong and courage bold,
On hardy breasts their harness donned in haste,
Some to the walls, some to the gates them dight,
Their king meanwhile directs them all aright.

XII

All things well ordered, he withdrew with speed
Up to a turret high, two ports between,
That so he might be near at every need,
And overlook the lands and furrows green.
Thither he did the sweet Erminia lead,
That in his court had entertained been
Since Christians Antioch did to bondage bring,
And slew her father, who thereof was king.

XIII

Against their foes Clorinda sallied out,
And many a baron bold was by her side,
Within the postern stood Argantes stout
To rescue her, if ill mote her betide:
With speeches brave she cheered her warlike rout,
And with bold words them heartened as they ride,
"Let us by some brave act," quoth she, "this day
Of Asia's hopes the groundwork found and lay."

XIV

While to her folk thus spake the virgin brave,
Thereby behold forth passed a Christian band
Toward the camp, that herds of cattle drave,
For they that morn had forayed all the land;
The fierce virago would that booty save,
Whom their commander singled hand for hand,
A mighty man at arms, who Guardo hight,
But far too weak to match with her in fight.

XV

They met, and low in dust was Guardo laid,
'Twixt either army, from his sell down kest,
The Pagans shout for joy, and hopeful said,
Those good beginnings would have endings blest:
Against the rest on went the noble maid,

She broke the helm, and pierced the armed breast,
Her men the paths rode through made by her sword,
They pass the stream where she had found the ford.

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XVI

Soon was the prey out of their hands recovered,
By step and step the Frenchmen gan retire,
Till on a little hill at last they hovered,
Whose strength preserved them from Clorinda's ire:
When, as a tempest that hath long been covered
In watery clouds breaks out with sparkling fire,
With his strong squadron Lord Tancredi came,
His heart with rage, his eyes with courage flame.

XVII

Mast great the spear was which the gallant bore
That in his warlike pride he made to shake,
As winds tall cedars toss on mountains hoar:
The king, that wondered at his bravery, spake
To her, that near him seated was before,
Who felt her heart with love's hot fever quake,
"Well shouldst thou know," quoth he, "each Christian knight,
By long acquaintance, though in armor dight.

XVIII

"Say, who is he shows so great worthiness,
That rides so rank, and bends his lance so fell?"
To this the princess said nor more nor less,
Her heart with sighs, her eyes with tears, did swell;
But sighs and tears she wisely could suppress,
Her love and passion she dissembled well,
And strove her love and hot desire to cover,
Till heart with sighs, and eyes with tears ran over:

XIX

At last she spoke, and with a crafty sleight
Her secret love disguised in clothes of hate:
"Alas, too well," she says, "I know that knight,
I saw his force and courage proved late,
Too late I viewed him, when his power and might
Shook down the pillar of Cassanoe's state;
Alas what wounds he gives! how fierce, how fell!
No physic helps them cure, nor magic's spell.

XX

"Tancred he hight, O Macon, would he wear
My thrall, ere fates him of this life deprive,
For to his hateful head such spite I bear,
I would him reave his cruel heart on live."
Thus said she, they that her complainings hear
In other sense her wishes credit give.
She sighed withal, they construed all amiss,
And thought she wished to kill, who longed to kiss.

XXI

This while forth pricked Clorinda from the throng
And 'gainst Tancredi set her spear in rest,

Upon their helms they cracked their lances long,
And from her head her gilden casque he kest,
For every lace he broke and every thong,
And in the dust threw down her plumed crest,
About her shoulders shone her golden locks,
Like sunny beams, on alabaster rocks.

XXII

Her looks with fire, her eyes with lightning blaze,
Sweet was her wrath, what then would be her smile?
Tancred, whereon think'st thou? what dost thou gaze?
Hast thou forgot her in so short a while?
The same is she, the shape of whose sweet face
The God of Love did in thy heart compile,
The same that left thee by the cooling stream,
Safe from sun's heat, but scorched with beauty's beam.

XXIII

The prince well knew her, though her painted shield
And golden helm he had not marked before,
She saved her head, and with her axe well steeled
Assailed the knight; but her the knight forbore,
'Gainst other foes he proved him through the field,
Yet she for that refrained ne'er the more,
But following, "Turn thee," cried, in ireful wise;
And so at once she threats to kill him twice.

XXIV

Not once the baron lifts his armed hand
To strike the maid, but gazing on her eyes,
Where lordly Cupid seemed in arms to stand,
No way to ward or shun her blows he tries;
But softly says, "No stroke of thy strong hand
Can vanquish Tancred, but thy conquest lies
In those fair eyes, which fiery weapons dart,
That find no lighting place except this heart."

XXV

At last resolved, although he hoped small grace,
Yet ere he did to tell how much he loved,
For pleasing words in women's ears find place,
And gentle hearts with humble suits are moved:
"O thou," quoth he, "withhold thy wrath a space,
For if thou long to see my valor proved,
Were it not better from this warlike rout
Withdrawn, somewhere, alone to fight it out?"

XXVI

"So singled, may we both our courage try:"
Clorinda to that motion yielded glad,
And helmless to the forestward gan hie,
Whither the prince right pensive wend and sad,

And there the virgin gan him soon defy.
One blow she stricken, and he warded had,
When he cried, "Hold, and ere we prove our might,
First hear thou some conditions of the fight."

XXVII

She stayed, and desperate love had made him bold;
"Since from the fight thou wilt no respite give,
The covenants be," he said, "that thou unfold
This wretched bosom, and my heart out rive,
Given thee long since, and if thou, cruel, would
I should be dead, let me no longer live,
But pierce this breast, that all the world may say,
The eagle made the turtle-dove her prey.

XXVIII

"Save with thy grace, or let thine anger kill,
Love hath disarmed my life of all defence;
An easy labor harmless blood to spill,
Strike then, and punish where is none offence."
This said the prince, and more perchance had will
To have declared, to move her cruel sense.
But in ill time of Pagans thither came
A troop, and Christians that pursued the same.

XXIX

The Pagans fled before their valiant foes,
For dread or craft, it skills not that we know,
A soldier wild, careless to win or lose,
Saw where her locks about the damsel flew,
And at her back he proffereth as he goes
To strike where her he did disarmed view:
But Tancred cried, "Oh stay thy cursed hand,"
And for to ward the blow lift up his brand.

XXX

But yet the cutting steel arrived there,
Where her fair neck adjoined her noble head,
Light was the wound, but through her amber hair
The purple drops down railed bloody red,
So rubies set in flaming gold appear:
But Lord Tancredi, pale with rage as lead,
Flew on the villain, who to flight him bound;
The smart was his, though she received the wound.

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XXXI

The villain flies, he, full of rage and ire,
Pursues, she stood and wondered on them both,
But yet to follow them showed no desire,
To stray so far she would perchance be loth,
But quickly turned her, fierce as flaming fire,
And on her foes wreaked her anger wrath,
On every side she kills them down amain,
And now she flies, and now she turns again.

XXXII

As the swift ure by Volga's rolling flood
Chased through the plains the mastiff curs toforn,
Flies to the succor of some neighbor wood,
And often turns again his dreadful horn
Against the dogs imbrued in sweat and blood,
That bite not, till the beast to flight return;
Or as the Moors at their strange tennice run,
Defenced, the flying balls unhurt to shun:

XXXIII

So ran Clorinda, so her foes pursued,
Until they both approached the city's wall,
When lo! the Pagans their fierce wrath renewed,
Cast in a ring about they wheeled all,
And 'gainst the Christians' backs and sides they showed
Their courage fierce, and to new combat fall,
When down the hill Argantes came to fight,
Like angry Mars to aid the Trojan knight.

XXXIV

Furious, tofore the foremost of his rank,
In sturdy steel forth stept the warrior bold,
The first he smote down from his saddle sank,
The next under his steel lay on the mould,
Under the Saracen's spear the worthies shrank,
No breastplate could that cursed tree outhold,
When that was broke his precious sword he drew,
And whom he hit, he felled, hurt, or slew.

XXXV

Clorinda slew Ardelio; aged knight,
Whose graver years would for no labor yield,
His age was full of puissance and might
Two sons he had to guard his noble eild,
The first, far from his father's care and sight,
Called Alicandro wounded lay in field,
And Poliphern the younger, by his side,
Had he not nobly fought had surely died.

XXXVI

Tancred by this, that strove to overtake

The villain that had hurt his only dear,
From vain pursuit at last returned back,
And his brave troop discomfit saw well near,
Thither he spurred, and gan huge slaughter make,
His shock no steed, his blow no knight could bear,
For dead he strikes him whom he lights upon,
So thunders break high trees on Lebanon.

XXXVII

Dudon his squadron of adventurers brings,
To aid the worthy and his tired crew,
Before the residue young Rinaldo flings
As swift as fiery lightning kindled new,
His argent eagle with her silver wings
In field of azure, fair Erminia knew,
"See there, sir King," she says, "a knight as bold
And brave, as was the son of Peleus old.

XXXVIII

"He wins the prize in joust and tournament,
His acts are numberless, though few his years,
If Europe six likes him to war had sent
Among these thousand strong of Christian peers,
Syria were lost, lost were the Orient,
And all the lands the Southern Ocean wears,
Conquered were all hot Afric's tawny kings,
And all that dwells by Nilus' unknown springs.

XXXIX

"Rinaldo is his name, his armed fist
Breaks down stone walls, when rams and engines fail,
But turn your eyes because I would you wist
What lord that is in green and golden mail,
Dudon he hight who guideth as him list
The adventurers' troop whose prowess seld doth fail,
High birth, grave years, and practise long in war,
And fearless heart, make him renowned far.

XL

"See that big man that all in brown is bound,
Gernando called, the King of Norway's son,
A prouder knight treads not on grass or ground,
His pride hath lost the praise his prowess won;
And that kind pair in white all armed round,
Is Edward and Gildippes, who begun
Through love the hazard of fierce war to prove,
Famous for arms, but famous more for love."

XLI

While thus they tell their foemen's worthiness,
The slaughter rageth in the plain at large.
Tancred and young Rinaldo break the press,

They bruise the helm, and press the sevenfold targe;
The troop by Dudon led performed no less,
But in they come and give a furious charge:
Argantes' self fell at one single blow,
Inglorious, bleeding lay, on earth full low:

XLII

Nor had the boaster ever risen more,
But that Rinaldo's horse e'en then down fell,
And with the fall his leg opprest so sore,
That for a space there must be algates dwell.
Meanwhile the Pagan troops were nigh forlore,
Swiftly they fled, glad they escaped so well,
Argantes and with him Clorinda stout,
For bank and bulwark served to save the rout.

XLIII

These fled the last, and with their force sustained
The Christians' rage, that followed them so near;
Their scattered troops to safety well they trained,
And while the residue fled, the brunt these bear;
Dudon pursued the victory he gained,
And on Tigranes nobly broke his spear,
Then with his sword headless to ground him cast,
So gardeners branches lop that spring too fast.

XLIV

Algazar's breastplate, of fine temper made,
Nor Corban's helmet, forged by magic art,
Could save their owners, for Lord Dudon's blade
Cleft Corban's head, and pierced Algazar's heart,
And their proud souls down to the infernal shade,
From Amurath and Mahomet depart;
Not strong Argantes thought his life was sure,
He could not safely fly, nor fight secure.

XLV

The angry Pagan bit his lips for teen,
He ran, he stayed, he fled, he turned again,
Until at last unmarked, unviewed, unseen,
When Dudon had Almansor newly slain,
Within his side he sheathed his weapon keen,
Down fell the worthy on the dusty plain,
And lifted up his feeble eyes unneath,
Opprest with leaden sleep, of iron death.

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XLVI

Three times he strove to view Heaven's golden ray,
And raised him on his feeble elbow thrice,
And thrice he tumbled on the lowly lay,
And three times closed again his dying eyes,
He speaks no word, yet makes his signs to pray;
He sighs, he faints, he groans, and then he dies;
Argantes proud to spoil the corpse disdained,
But shook his sword with blood of Dudon stained.

XLVII

And turning to the Christian knights, he cried:
"Lordlings, behold, this bloody reeking blade
Last night was given me by your noble guide,
Tell him what proof thereof this day is made,
Needs must this please him well that is betide,
That I so well can use this martial trade,
To whom so rare a gift he did present,
Tell him the workman fits the instrument.

XLVIII

"If further proof thereof he long to see,
Say it still thirsts, and would his heart-blood drink;
And if he haste not to encounter me,
Say I will find him when he least doth think."
The Christians at his words enraged be,
But he to shun their ire doth safely shrink
Under the shelter of the neighbor wall,
Well guarded with his troops and soldiers all.

XLIX

Like storms of hail the stones fell down from high,
Cast from their bulwarks, flankers, ports and towers,
The shafts and quarries from their engines fly,
As thick as falling drops in April showers:
The French withdrew, they list not press too nigh,
The Saracens escaped all the powers,
But now Rinaldo from the earth upleapt,
Where by the leg his steed had long him kept;

L

He came and breathed vengeance from his breast
'Gainst him that noble Dudon late had slain;
And being come thus spoke he to the rest,
"Warriors, why stand you gazing here in vain?
Pale death our valiant leader had opprest,
Come wreak his loss, whom bootless you complain.
Those walls are weak, they keep but cowards out
No rampier can withstand a courage stout.

LI

"Of double iron, brass or adamant,
Or if this wall were built of flaming fire,

Yet should the Pagan vile a fortress want
To shroud his coward head safe from mine ire;
Come follow then, and bid base fear avaunt,
The harder work deserves the greater hire;"
And with that word close to the walls he starts,
Nor fears he arrows, quarries, stones or darts.

LII

Above the waves as Neptune lift his eyes
To chide the winds, that Trojan ships opprest,
And with his countenance calmed seas, winds and skies;
So looked Rinaldo, when he shook his crest
Before those walls, each Pagan fears and flies
His dreadful sight, or trembling stayed at least:
Such dread his awful visage on them cast.
So seem poor doves at goshawks' sight aghast.

LIII

The herald Ligiere now from Godfrey came,
To will them stay and calm their courage hot;
"Retire," quoth he, "Godfrey commands the same;
To wreak your ire this season fitteth not;"
Though loth, Rinaldo stayed, and stopped the flame,
That boiled in his hardy stomach hot;
His bridled fury grew thereby more fell,
So rivers, stopped, above their banks do swell.

LIV

The hands retire, not dangered by their foes
In their retreat, so wise were they and wary,
To murdered Dudon each lamenting goes,
From wonted use of ruth they list not vary.
Upon their friendly arms they soft impose
The noble burden of his corpse to carry:
Meanwhile Godfredo from a mountain great
Beheld the sacred city and her seat.

LV

Hierusalem is seated on two hills
Of height unlike, and turned side to side,
The space between, a gentle valley fills,
From mount to mount expanded fair and wide.
Three sides are sure imbarred with crags and hills,
The rest is easy, scant to rise espied:
But mighty bulwarks fence that plainer part,
So art helps nature, nature strengtheneth art.

LVI

The town is stored of troughs and cisterns, made
To keep fresh water, but the country seems
Devoid of grass, unfit for ploughmen's trade,
Not fertile, moist with rivers, wells and streams;

There grow few trees to make the summer's shade,
To shield the parched land from scorching beams,
Save that a wood stands six miles from the town,¹
With aged cedars dark, and shadows brown.

LVII

By east, among the dusty valleys, glide
The silver streams of Jordan's crystal flood;
By west, the Midland Sea, with bounders tied
Of sandy shores, where Joppa whilom stood;
By north Samaria stands, and on that side
The golden calf was reared in Bethel wood;
Bethlem by south, where Christ incarnate was,
A pearl in steel, a diamond set in brass.

LVIII

While thus the Duke on every side descried
The city's strength, the walls and gates about,
And saw where least the same was fortified,
Where weakest seemed the walls to keep him out;
Ermina as he armed rode, him spied,
And thus bespake the heathen tyrant stout,
"See Godfrey there, in purple clad and gold,
His stately port, and princely look behold.

LIX

"Well seems he born to be with honor crowned,
So well the lore he knows of regiment,
Peerless in fight, in counsel grave and sound,
The double gift of glory excellent,
Among these armies is no warrior found
Graver in speech, bolder in tournament.
Raymond pardie in counsel match him might;
Tancred and young Rinaldo like in fight."

LX

To whom the king: "He likes me well therefore,
I knew him whilom in the court of France
When I from Egypt went ambassador,
I saw him there break many a sturdy lance,
And yet his chin no sign of manhood bore;
His youth was forward, but with governance,
His words, his actions, and his portance brave,
Of future virtue, timely tokens gave.

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LXI

"Presages, ah too true:" with that a space
He sighed for grief, then said, "Fain would I know
The man in red, with such a knightly grace,
A worthy lord he seemeth by his show,
How like to Godfrey looks he in the face,
How like in person! but some-deal more low."
"Baldwin," quoth she, "that noble baron hight,
By birth his brother, and his match in might.

LXII

"Next look on him that seems for counsel fit,
Whose silver locks betray his store of days,
Raymond he hight, a man of wondrous wit,
Of Toulouse lord, his wisdom is his praise;
What he forethinks doth, as he looks for, hit,
His stratagems have good success always:
With gilded helm beyond him rides the mild
And good Prince William, England's king's dear child.

LXIII

"With him is Guelpho, as his noble mate,
In birth, in acts, in arms alike the rest,
I know him well, since I beheld him late,
By his broad shoulders and his squared breast:
But my proud foe that quite hath ruinate
My high estate, and Antioch opprest,
I see not, Boemond, that to death did bring
Mine aged lord, my father, and my king."

LXIV

Thus talked they; meanwhile Godfredo went
Down to the troops that in the valley stayed,
And for in vain he thought the labor spent,
To assail those parts that to the mountains laid,
Against the northern gate his force he bent,
Gainst it he camped, gainst it his engines played;
All felt the fury of his angry power,
That from those gates lies to the corner tower.

LXV

The town's third part was this, or little less,
Fore which the duke his glorious ensigns spread,
For so great compass had that forteress,
That round it could not be environed
With narrow siege -- nor Babel's king I guess
That whilom took it, such an army led --
But all the ways he kept, by which his foe
Might to or from the city come or go.

LXVI

His care was next to cast the trenches deep,

So to preserve his resting camp by night,
Lest from the city while his soldiers sleep
They might assail them with untimely flight.
This done he went where lords and princes weep
With dire complaints about the murdered knight,
Where Dudon dead lay slaughtered on the ground.
And all the soldiers sat lamenting round.

LXVII

His wailing friends adorned the mournful bier
With woful pomp, whereon his corpse they laid,
And when they saw the Bulloigne prince draw near,
All felt new grief, and each new sorrow made;
But he, withouten show or change of cheer,
His springing tears within their fountains stayed,
His rueful looks upon the corpse he cast
Awhile, and thus bespake the same at last;

LXVIII

"We need not mourn for thee, here laid to rest,
Earth is thy bed, and not the grave the skies
Are for thy soul the cradle and the nest,
There live, for here thy glory never dies:
For like a Christian knight and champion blest
Thou didst both live and die: now feed thine eyes
With thy Redeemer's sight, where crowned with bliss
Thy faith, zeal, merit, well-deserving is.

LXIX

"Our loss, not thine, provokes these plaints and tears:
For when we lost thee, then our ship her mast,
Our chariot lost her wheels, their points our spears,
The bird of conquest her chief feather cast:
But though thy death far from our army hears
Her chiefest earthly aid, in heaven yet placed
Thou wilt procure its help Divine, so reaps
He that sows godly sorrow, joy by heaps.

LXX

"For if our God the Lord Armipotent
Those armed angels in our aid down send
That were at Dothan to his prophet sent,
Thou wilt come down with them, and well defend
Our host, and with thy sacred weapons bent
Gainst Sion's fort, these gates and bulwarks rend,
That so by hand may win this hold, and we
May in these temples praise our Christ for thee."

LXXI

Thus he complained; but now the sable shade
Ycleped night, had thick enveloped
The sun in veil of double darkness made;
Sleep, eased care; rest, brought complaint to bed:

All night the wary duke devising laid
How that high wall should best be battered,
How his strong engines he might aptly frame,
And whence get timber fit to build the same.

LXXII

Up with the lark the sorrowful duke arose,
A mourner chief at Dudon's burial,
Of cypress sad a pile his friends compose
Under a hill o'ergrown with cedars tall,
Beside the hearse a fruitful palm-tree grows,
Ennobled since by this great funeral,
Where Dudon's corpse they softly laid in ground,
The priest sung hymns, the soldiers wept around.

LXXIII

Among the boughs, they here and there bestow
Ensigns and arms, as witness of his praise,
Which he from Pagan lords, that did them owe,
Had won in prosperous fights and happy frays:
His shield they fixed on the hole below,
And there this distich under-writ, which says,
"This palm with stretched arms, doth overspread
The champion Dudon's glorious carcass dead."

LXXIV

This work performed with advisement good,
Godfrey his carpenters, and men of skill
In all the camp, sent to an aged wood,
With convoy meet to guard them safe from ill.
Within a valley deep this forest stood,
To Christian eyes unseen, unknown, until
A Syrian told the duke, who thither sent
Those chosen workmen that for timber went.

LXXV

And now the axe raged in the forest wild,
The echo sighed in the groves unseen,
The weeping nymphs fled from their bowers exiled,
Down fell the shady tops of shaking trees,
Down came the sacred palms, the ashes wild,
The funeral cypress, holly ever green,
The weeping fir, thick beech, and sailing pine,
The married elm fell with his fruitful vine.

LXXVI

The shooter grew, the broad-leaved sycamore,
The barren plantain, and the walnut sound,
The myrrh, that her foul sin doth still deplore,
The alder owner of all waterish ground,
Sweet juniper, whose shadow hurteth sore,
Proud cedar, oak, the king of forests crowned;

Thus fell the trees, with noise the deserts roar;
The beasts, their caves, the birds, their nests forlore.

Torquato Tasso