

Classic Poetry Series

Torquato Tasso

- poems -

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Torquato Tasso(1544 - 1595)

Torquato Tasso was born in Sorrento, near Naples in Italy, in 1544. As a young man he was educated by Jesuits at the Court of the Dukes of Urbino and later studied law and philosophy at the University of Padua. He completed his studies at the University of Bologna, from where he later received an invitation, in 1565, to join the brilliant court of the Este at Ferrara, where he remained for many years. There he wrote a number of beautiful, lyrical poems. He had already achieved fame prior to this when, aged just 18, he published his chivalric poem *Rinaldo* in 1562.

Other works by Tasso include the pastoral play *Aminta* (1573) and his masterpiece *Gerusalemme Liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*) - an epic of the exploits of Godfrey of Boulogne during the First Crusade. To some extent, Tasso was a victim to his own religious scruples and desire not to violate the rules of good literature which were then commonly accepted. Before publication, he would offer up his work to scrutiny from his friends, as well as the church authorities. However, their sometimes harsh criticisms led him to develop an persecution complex. He was also concerned that actions in life, in which he had sometimes been carried away by storms of passion, were not free from reproach. Psychologically unstable, and following a fit of violence, Tasso was confined, first in a convent, then intermittently (1579–87) in a hospital.

In his last years, he lived with the Gonzagas in Mantua and then wandered restlessly throughout Italy searching for ideal working conditions at other courts. He died at a monastery in Rome in 1595, just one day before he was to have been crowned poet laureate.

Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* has since been lauded both as the embodiment of lyric sentiment and as the greatest poem of the Counter-Reformation. The religious motif is strong, the subplots of love and adventure are well developed, and chivalric exploits are recounted in a majestic classical style. The work had enormous influence on English poets, especially Milton. The legend of Tasso's doomed love for Leonora d'Este was immortalized in works by Byron, Goethe, and others and made Tasso a romantic hero.

Ecco Mormorar L'Onde (Now The Waves Murmur)

Ecco mormorar l'onde,
E tremolar le fronde
A l'aura mattutina, e gli arboscelli,
E sovra i verdi rami i vaghi augelli
Cantar soavemente,
E rider l'Oriente;
Ecco già l'alba appare,
E si specchia nel mare,
E rasserena il cielo,
E le campagne imperla il dolce gelo,
E gli alti monti indora:
O bella e vaga Aurora,
L'aura è tua messaggera, e tu de l'aura
Ch'ogni arso cor ristaura.

Translation:

Now the waves murmur
And the boughs and the shrubs tremble
in the morning breeze,
And on the green branches the pleasant birds
Sing softly
And the east smiles;
Now dawn already appears
And mirrors herself in the sea,
And makes the sky serene,
And the gentle frost impearls the fields
And gilds the high mountains:
O beautiful and gracious Aurora,
The breeze is your messenger, and you the breeze's
Which revives each burnt-out heart.

Torquato Tasso

Hedge, That Divides The Lovely

Hedge, that divides the lovely
Garden, and myself from me,
Never in you so fair a rose I see
As she who is my lady,
Loving, sweet and holy:
Who as I stretch my hand to you
Presses it, so softly, too.

Torquato Tasso

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 enoble, 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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Jerusalem Delivered - Book 01 - Part 02

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 distrest?
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 imbared,
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 deny
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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Jerusalem Delivered - Book 01 - Part 03

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 forswow 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 regret
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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Jerusalem Delivered - Book 01 - Part 04

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 scantly 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 guides,
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 bonds slave 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 Tuscain 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 scantly 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 coulter 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.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 01 - Part 06

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 stragglng troops 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 neighboreth 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.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 02 - Part 01

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-yeared,
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.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 02 - Part 03

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 fault 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,
Lies 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

Sophronia 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 reprov'd,
And sweetly spake him thus, that so her loved:

XXXVI

"Far other complaints, 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 vail,
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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Jerusalem Delivered - Book 03 - Part 01

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 wroth,
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 uneth,
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 endangered 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,
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.

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XVII

'Among the knights and worthies of their train,
Let some like outlaws wander uncouth ways,
Let some be slain in field, let some again
Make oracles of women's yeas and nays,
And pine in foolish love, let some complain
On Godfrey's rule, and mutinies gainst him raise,
Turn each one's sword against his fellow's heart,
Thus kill them all or spoil the greatest part.'

XVIII

Before his words the tyrant ended had,
The lesser devils arose with ghastly roar,
And thronged forth about the world to gad,
Each land they filled, river, stream and shore,
The goblins, fairies, fiends and furies mad,
Ranged in flowery dales, and mountains hoar,
And under every trembling leaf they sit,
Between the solid earth and welkin flit.

XIX

About the world they spread forth far and wide,
Filling the of each ungodly heart
With secret mischief, and pride,
Wounding lost with sin's empoisoned dart.
But say, my Muse, recount whence first they tried
To hurt the Christian lords, and from what part,
Thou knowest of things performed so long ago,
This latter age little or none.

XX

The town Damascus and the lands about
Ruled Hidraort, a wizard grave and,
Acquainted well with all the damned rout
Of Pluto's reign, even from his tender age;
Yet of this war he could not figure out

The wished ending, or success presage,
For neither stars above, nor powers of hell,
Nor skill, nor art, nor charm, nor devil could tell.

XXI

And yet he, - Oh, vain conceit of man,
Which as thou wishest judgest things to come! -
That the French host to sure destruction ran,
Condemned quite by Heaven's eternal doom:
He no force withstand or vanquish can
The Egyptian strength, and therefore would that some
Both of the prey and glory of the fight
Upon this Syrian folk would haply light.

XXII

But for he held the Frenchmen's worth in prize,
And the gain of bloody war,
He, that was closely false and slyly war,
Cast how he might annoy them most from far:
And as he gan upon this point devise, -
As counsellors in ill still nearest are, -
At hand was Satan, ready ere men need,
If once they , to make them do, the deed.

XXIII

He counselled him how best to hunt his game,
What dart to cast, what net, what toil to pitch,
A niece he had, a nice and tender dame,
Peerless in , in nature's blessings rich,
To all she could her beauty frame,
False, fair and young, a virgin and a witch;
To her he told the sum of this emprise,
And praised her thus, for she was fair and:

XXIV

'My dear, who underneath these locks of gold,
And native brightness of thy lovely hue,
Hidest grave , ripe, and old,

More skill than I, in all mine arts untrue,
To thee my purpose great I must unfold,
This enterprise thy cunning must pursue,
Weave thou to end this web which I begin,
I will the distaff hold, come thou and spin.

XXV

'Go to the Christians' host, and there assay
All subtle sleights that women use in love,
Shed brinish tears, sob, sigh, entreat and pray,
Wring thy fair hands, cast up thine eyes above,
For mourning beauty hath much power, men say,
The stubborn hearts with frail to move;
Look pale for dread, and blush sometime for shame,
In seeming thy lies will soonest frame.

XXVI

'Take with the bait Lord Godfrey, if thou may'st;
Frame snares of look, strains of alluring speech;
For if he love, the conquest then thou hast,
Thus purposed war thou may'st with ease impeach,
Else lead the other Lords to deserts waste,
And hold them slaves far from their leader's reach:'
Thus taught he her, and for conclusion, saith,
'All things are lawful for our lands and .'

XXVII

The sweet Armida took this charge on hand,
A tender piece, for beauty, sex and age,
The sun was sunken underneath the land,
When she began her wanton pilgrimage,
In silken weeds she trusteth to withstand,
And conquer knights in warlike equipage,
Of their night ambling dame the Syrians prated,
Some , some bad, as they her loved or.

XXVIII

Within few days the nymph arrived there

Where puissant Godfrey had his tents ypitch;
Upon her strange attire, and visage clear,
Gazed each soldier, gazed every knight:
As when a comet doth in skies appear,
The people stand amazed at the light;
So wondered they and each at other sought,
What mister wight she was, and whence ybrought.

XXIX

Yet never eye to Cupid's service vowed
Beheld a face of such a lovely pride;
A tinsel veil her amber locks did shroud,
That strove to cover what it could not hide,
The golden sun behind a silver cloud,
So streameth out his beams on every side,
The marble goddess, set at Cnidos, naked
She seemed, were she unclothed, or that.

XXX

The gamesome wind among her tresses plays,
And curleth up those riches short;
Her spareful eye to spread his beams denays,
But keeps his shot where Cupid keeps his fort;
The rose and lily on her cheek assays
To paint fairness out in bravest sort,
Her lips, where blooms naught but the single rose,
Still blush, for still they kiss while still they close.

XXXI

Her breasts, two hills o'erspread with purest snow,
Sweet, smooth and supple, soft and gently swelling,
Between them lies a milken dale below,
Where love, youth, gladness, whiteness make their dwelling,
Her breasts half hid, and half were laid to show,
So was the wanton clad, as if this much
Should please the eye, the unseen, the.

XXXII

As when the sunbeams dive through Tagus' wave,
To spy the store-house of his springtime gold,
Love-piercing so through her mantle drave,
And in her gentle bosom wandered bold;
It viewed the wondrous beauty virgins have,
And all to fond with vantage told,
Alas! what hope is left, to quench his fire
That kindled is by, blown by.

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XXXIII

Thus passed she, praised, wished, and wondered at,
Among the troops who there encamped lay,
She smiled for, but well dissembled that,
Her greedy eye chose out her wished prey;
On all her gestures seeming sat,
Toward the imperial tent she asked the way:
With that she met a bold and lovesome knight,
Lord Godfrey's youngest brother, Eustace hight.

XXXIV

This was the fowl that first fell in the snare,
He her fair, and hoped to find her kind;
The throne of Cupid had an easy stair,
His bark is fit to sail with every wind,
The breach he makes no can repair:
With reverence meet the baron low inclined,
And thus his purpose to the virgin told,
For youth, use, nature, all had made him bold.

XXXV

'Lady, if thee beseem a stile so low,
In whose sweet looks such sacred beauty shine, -
For never yet did Heaven such grace bestow
On any daughter born of Adam's line -
Thy name let us, though far unworthy, ,
Unfold thy will, and whence thou art in fine,
Lest my audacious boldness learn too late
What honors due become thy high estate.'

XXXVI

'Sir Knight,' quoth she, 'your praises reach too high
Above her merit you commend so,
A hapless maid, both born to die
And dead to, that live in care and woe,

A virgin helpless, fugitive pardie,
My native soil and kingdom thus forego
To seek Duke Godfrey's aid, such store men tell
Of ruth doth in his bosom dwell.

XXXVII

'Conduct me then that mighty duke before,
If you be courteous, sir, as well you seem.'
'Content,' quoth he, 'since of one womb ybore,
We brothers are, your fortune esteem
To encounter me whose word prevaieth more
In Godfrey's than you haply deem:
Mine aid I grant, and his I promise too,
All that his sceptre, or my sword, can do.'

XXXVIII

He led her easily forth when this was said,
Where Godfrey sat among his lords and peers,
She reverence did, then blushed, as one dismayed
To speak, for secret wants and inward,
It seemed a bashful shame her speeches stayed,
At last the courteous duke her gently cheers;
Silence was made, and she began her tale,
They sit to, thus sung this nightingale:

XXXIX

'Victorious prince, whose honorable name
Is held so great among our Pagan kings,
That to those lands thou dost by conquest tame
That thou hast won them some content it brings;
Well to all is thy immortal fame,
The earth, thy worth, thy foe, thy praises sings,
And Paynims wronged come to seek thine aid,
So doth thy, so thy power persuade.

XL

'And I though bred in Macon's heathenish lore,
Which thou oppressest with thy puissant might,

Yet trust thou wilt an helpless maid restore,
And repossess her in her father's right:
Others in their distress do aid implore
Of kin and friends; but I in this sad plight
Invoke thy, my kingdom to invade,
So doth thy, so my need persuade.

XLI

'In thee I hope, thy succors I invoke,
To win the crown whence dispossesst;
For like renown awaiteth on the stroke
To cast the haughty down or raise the opprest;
Nor greater glory brings a sceptre broke,
Than doth deliverance of a maid distrest;
And since thou canst at will perform the thing,
More is thy praise to make, than kill a king.

XLII

'But if thou would'st thy succors due excuse,
Because in Christ I have no hope nor trust,
Ah yet for virtue's sake, thy use!
Who scorneth gold because it lies in dust?
Be witness Heaven, if thou to grant refuse,
Thou dost forsake a maid in cause most just,
And for thou shalt at large my fortunes,
I will my wrongs and their great treasons show.

XLIII

'Prince Arbilan that reigned in his life
On fair Damascus, was my sire,
Born of mean race he was, yet got to wife
The Queen Chariclia, such was the fire
Of her hot love, but soon the fatal knife
Had cut the thread that kept their entire,
For so mishap her cruel lot had cast,
My birth, her death; my first day, was her last.

XLIV

'And ere five years were fully come and gone
Since his dear spouse to hasty death did yield,
My father also died, consumed with moan,
And sought his love amid the Elysian fields,
His crown and me, poor orphan, left,
Mine uncle governed in my tender eild;
For well he, if mortal men have,
In brother's breast love his mansion hath.

XLV

'He took the charge of me and of the crown,
And with kind shows of love so brought to pass
That through Damascus great report was blown
How, how just, how kind mine uncle was;
Whether he kept his wicked unknown
And hid the serpent in the flowering grass,
On that did in his bosom won,
Because he meant to match me with his son.

XLVI

'Which son, within short while, did undertake
Degree of knighthood, as beseemed him well,
Yet never durst he for his lady's sake
Break sword or lance, advance in lofty sell;
As fair he was, as Citherea's make,
As proud as he that signorisseth hell,
In fashions wayward, and in love unkind,
For Cupid deigns not wound a currish.

XLVII

'This paragon should Queen Armida wed,
A swain to be a princess' fere,
A lovely partner of a lady's bed,
A head a golden crown to wear:
His glosing sire his errand daily said,
And sugared speeches whispered in mine ear
To make me take this darling in mine arms,
But still the adder stopt her ears from charms.

XLVIII

'At last he left me with a troubled grace,
Through which transparent was his inward spite,
I read the story in his face
Of these mishaps that on me since have light,
Since that foul haunt my resting-place,
And ghastly visions break any sleep by night,
Grief, horror, my fainting did kill,
For so my foreshowed my coming ill.

Torquato Tasso

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XLIX

'Three times the shape of my dear mother came,
Pale, sad, dismayed, to warn me in my,
Alas, how far from the same
Whose eyes shone erst like Titan's glorious beam:
'Daughter,' she says, 'fly, fly, behold thy dame
Foreshows the treasons of thy wretched eame,
Who poison gainst thy harmless life provides:'
This said, to shapeless air unseen she glides.

L

'But what avail high walls or bulwarks strong,
Where fainting cowards have the piece to guard?
My sex too weak, mine age was all to young,
To undertake a work so hard,
To wander wild the desert woods among,
A banished maid, of wonted ease debarred,
So grievous seemed, that liefer were my death,
And there to expire where first I drew my breath.

LI

'I deadly evil if long I stayed,
And yet to fly had neither will nor power,
Nor durst my heart declare it waxed afraid,
Lest so I hasten might my dying hour:
Thus restless waited I, maid,
What hand should first pluck up my springing flower,
Even as the wretch condemned to lose his life
Awaits the falling of the murdering knife.

LII

'In these extremes, for so my fortune would
Perchance preserve me to my further ill,
One of my father's servants old,
That for his bore his child will,

With store of tears this treason gan unfold,
And said; my guardian would his pupil kill,
And that, if promise made be kept,
Should give me poison dire ere next I slept.

LIII

'And further told me, if I wished to live,
I must convey by secret flight,
And offered then all succours he could give
To aid his mistress, banished from her right.
His words of, to exile drive,
The dread of death, made lesser dangers light:
So we concluded, when the shadows dim
Obscured the earth I should depart with him.

LIV

'Of close escapes the aged patroness,
Blacker than erst, her sable mantle spread,
When with two trusty maids, in great distress,
Both from mine uncle and my realm I fled;
Oft looked I back, but hardly could suppress
Those streams of tears, mine eyes uncessant shed,
For when I looked on my kingdom lost,
It was a grief, a death, an hell almost.

LV

'My steeds drew on the burden of my limbs,
But still my locks, my, drew back as fast,
So fare the men, that from the heaven's brims,
Far out to sea, by sudden storm are cast;
Swift o'er the grass the rolling chariot swims,
Through ways unknown, all night, all day we haste,
At last, nigh tired, a castle strong we fand,
The utmost border of my native land.

LVI

'The fort Arontes was, for so the knight
Was called, that my deliverance thus had wrought,

But when the tyrant, by mature flight
I had escaped the treasons of his ,
The rage increased in the cursed wight
Gainst me, and him, that me to safety brought,
And us accused, we would have poisoned
Him, but descried, to save our lives we fled.

LVII

'And that in lieu of his approved,
To poison him I hired had my guide,
That he despatched, mine unbridled youth
Might rage at will, in no subjection tied,
And that each night I slept - O foul untruth! -
Mine honor lost, by this Arontes' side:
But Heaven I pray send down revenging fire,
When so base love shall change my chaste.

LVIII

'Not that he sitteth on my regal throne,
Nor that he thirst to drink my lukewarm blood,
So grieveth me, as this despite,
That my renown, which ever blameless stood,
Hath lost the light wherewith it always shone:
With forged lies he makes his tale so,
And holds my subjects' hearts in such suspense,
That none take armor for their queen's defence.

LIX

'And though he do my regal throne possess,
Clothed in purple, crowned with burnished gold;
Yet is his , his rancor, ne'er the less,
Since naught assuageth malice when 'tis old:
He threats to burn Arontes' forteress,
And murder him unless he yield the hold,
And me and mine threats not with war, but death,
Thus causeless , endless is uneth.

LX

'And so he trusts to wash away the stain,
And hide his shameful fact with mine offence,
And saith he will restore the throne again
To his late honor and due excellence,
And therefore would I should be algates slain,
For while I live, his right is in suspense,
This is the cause my guiltless life is sought,
For on my ruin is his safety wrought.

LXI

'And let the tyrant have his heart's,
Let him perform the cruelty he meant,
My guiltless blood must quench the ceaseless fire
On which my endless tears were bootless spent,
Unless thou ; to thee, renowned Sire,
I fly, a virgin, orphan, innocent,
And let these tears that on thy feet distil,
Redeem the drops of blood, he thirsts to spill.

LXII

'By these thy glorious feet, that tread secure
On necks of tyrants, by thy conquests brave,
By that right hand, and by those temples pure
Thou seek'st to free from Macon's lore, I crave
for this sickness none but thou canst cure,
My life and kingdom let thy save
From death and ruin: but in vain I prove thee,
If right, if , if justice cannot move thee.

LXIII

'Thou who dost all thou wishest, at thy will,
And never willest aught but what is right,
Preserve this guiltless blood they seek to spill;
Thine be my kingdom, save it with thy might:
Among these captains, lords, and knights of skill,
Appoint me ten, approved most in fight,
Who with assistance of my friends and kin,
May serve my kingdom lost again to win.

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LXIV

'For lo a knight, that had a gate to ward,
A man of chiefest trust about his king,
Hath promised so to beguile the guard
That me and mine he undertakes to bring
Safe, where the tyrant haply sleepeth hard
He counselled me to undertake this thing,
Of these some little succor to intreat,
Whose name accomplish can the feat.'

LXV

This said, his answer did the nymph attend,
Her looks, her sighs, her gestures all did pray him:
But Godfrey did his grant suspend,
He the worst, and that awhile did stay him,
He, who no God, he loves no friend,
He the heathen false would thus betray him:
But yet such ruth dwelt in his princely,
That gainst his, made him kind.

LXVI

Besides the kindness of his gentle,
Ready to each distressed wight,
The maiden's offer profit with it brought;
For if the Syrian kingdom were her right,
That won, the way were easy, which he sought,
To bring all Asia subject to his might:
There might he raise munition, arms and treasure
To work the Egyptian king and his displeasure.

LXVII

Thus was his heart long time betwixt
and remorse, not granting nor denying,
Upon his eyes the dame her lookings fixed,
As if her life and death lay on his saying,

Some tears she shed, with sighs and sobbings mixed,
As if her hopes were dead through his delaying;
At last her earnest suit the duke denayed,
But with sweet words thus would content the maid:

LXVIII

'If not in service of our God we fought,
In meaner quarrel if this sword were shaken,
Well might thou gather in thy gentle,
So fair a princess should not be forsaken;
But since these armies, from the world's end brought,
To free this sacred town have undertaken,
It were unfit we turned our strength away,
And victory, even in her coming, stay.

LXIX

'I promise thee, and on my princely word
The burden of thy wish and hope,
That when this chosen temple of the Lord,
Her holy doors shall to his saints unclose
In and peace; then this victorious sword
Shall execute due vengeance on thy foes;
But if for of a worldly dame
I left this work, such were my shame.'

LXX

At this the princess bent her eyes to ground,
And stood unmoved, though not unmarked, a space,
The secret bleeding of her inward wound
Shed heavenly dew upon her angel's face,
'Poor wretch,' quoth she, 'in tears and drowned,
Death be thy peace, the grave thy resting-place,
Since such thy hap, that lest thou find
The gentlest heart on earth is proved unkind.

LXXI

'Where none attends, what boots it to complain?
Men's froward hearts are moved with women's tears

As marble stones are pierced with drops of rain,
No plaints find passage through unwilling ears:
The tyrant, haply, would his wraith restrain
he these prayers ruthless Godfrey,
Yet not thy fault is this, my chance, I,
Hath made even, pitiless in thee.

LXXII

'So both thy, and hap, denayed me,
Grief, mischief, care, hath overthrown me,
The star that ruled my birthday hath betrayed me,
My genius his charge, but dares not own me,
Of queen-like, my flight hath disarrayed me,
My father died, ere he five years had me,
My kingdom lost, and lastly resteth now,
Down with the tree sith broke is every bough.

LXXIII

'And for the modest lore of maidenhood,
Bids me not sojourn with these armed men,
O whither shall I fly, what secret wood
Shall hide me from the tyrant? or what den,
What rock, what vault, what cave can do me ?
No, no, where death is sure, it resteth then
To scorn his power and be it therefore,
Armida lived, and died, both like a queen.'

LXXIV

With that she looked as if a proud disdain
Kindled displeasure in her,
The way she came she turned her steps again,
With gesture sad but in disdainful kind,
A tempest railed down her cheeks amain,
With tears of woe, and sighs of anger's wind;
The drops her footsteps wash, whereon she treads,
And seems to step on pearls, or crystal beads.

LXXV

Her cheeks on which this streaming nectar fell,
Stilled through the limbeck of her diamond eyes,
The roses white and red resembled well,
Whereon the rory May-dew sprinkled lies
When the fair morn first blusheth from her cell,
And breatheth balm from opened paradise;
Thus sighed, thus mourned, thus wept this lovely queen,
And in each drop bathed a grace unseen.

LXXVI

Thrice twenty Cupids unperceived flew
To gather up this liquor, ere it fall,
And of each drop an arrow forged new,
Else, as it came, snatched up the crystal ball,
And at rebellious hearts for wildfire threw.
O wondrous love! thou makest gain of all;
For if she weeping sit, or smiling stand,
She bends thy bow, or kindleth else thy brand.

LXXVII

This forged plaint drew forth unfeigned tears
From many eyes, and pierced each worthy's heart;
Each one condoleth with her that her,
And of her grief would her bear the smart:
If Godfrey aid her not, not one but swears
Some tigress gave him suck on roughest part
Midst the rude crags, on Alpine cliffs aloft:
Hard is that heart which beauty makes not soft.

LXXVIII

But jolly Eustace, in whose breast the brand
Of love and kindled had the flame,
While others softly whispered underhand,
Before the duke with comely boldness came:
'Brother and lord,' quoth he, 'too long you stand
In your first purpose, yet vouchsafe to frame
Your to ours, and lend this virgin aid:
Thanks are half lost when turns are delayed.

LXXIX

'And not that Eustace's talk assays
To turn these forces from this present war,
Or that I wish you should your armies raise
From Sion's walls, my speech tends not so far:
But we that venture all for fame and praise,
That to no charge nor service bounden are,
Forth of our troop may ten well spared be
To succor her, which naught can weaken thee.

LXXX

'And, they shall in God's high service fight,
That virgins innocent save and defend:
Dear will the spoils be in the Heaven's ,
That from a tyrant's head we rend:
Nor seemed I forward in this lady's right,
With hope of gain or profit in the end;
But for I he arms unworthy bears,
To a maiden's cause that shuns or.

Torquato Tasso

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LXXXI

'Ah! be it not pardie declared in France,
Or elsewhere told where courtesy is in prize,
That we forsook so fair a chevisance,
For or that might from fight arise;
Else, here surrender I both sword and lance,
And swear no more to use this martial guise;
For ill deserves he to be termed a knight,
That bears a blunt sword in a lady's right.'

LXXXII

Thus parleyed he, and with sound,
The approved what the gallant said,
Their general their knights encompassed round,
With humble grace, and earnest suit they prayed:
'I yield,' quoth he, 'and it be found,
What I have granted, let her have your aid:
Yours be the thanks, for yours the danger is,
If aught succeed, as much I, amiss.

LXXXIII

'But if with you my words may credit find,
Oh temper then this heat misguides you so!'
Thus much he said, but they with fancy blind,
his grant, and let his counsel go.
What works not beauty, man's relenting
Is eath to move with plaints and shows of woe:
Her lips cast forth a chain of sugared words,
That captive led most of the Christian lords.

LXXXIV

Eustace recalled her, and bespake her thus:
'Beauty's chief darling, let those be,
For such assistance shall you find in us
As with your need, or will, may best agree:'

With that she cheered her forehead dolorous,
And smiled for, that Phoebus blushed to,
And had she deigned her veil for to remove,
The God once more had fallen in love.

LXXXV

With that she broke the silence once again,
And gave the knight great thanks in little speech,
She said she would his handmaid poor remain,
So far as honor's laws received no breach.
Her humble gestures made the residue plain,
Dumb eloquence, persuading more than speech:
Thus women, and thus they use the guise,
To enchant the valiant, and beguile the.

LXXXVI

And when she her enterprise had got
Some wished mean of quick and proceeding,
She to strike the iron that was hot,
For every action hath his hour of speeding:
Medea or false Circe changed not
So far the shapes of men, as her eyes spreading
Altered their hearts, and with her syren's sound
In lust, their, their hearts, in love she drowned.

LXXXVII

All wily sleights that subtle women,
Hourly she used, to catch some lover new.
None kenned the bent of her unsteadfast bow,
For with the time her her looks renew,
From some she cast her modest eyes below,
At some her gazing glances roving flew,
And while she thus pursued her wanton sport,
She spurred the slow, and reined the forward short.

LXXXVIII

If some, as hopeless that she would be won,
Forebore to love, because they durst not move her,

On them her gentle looks to smile begun,
As who say she is kind if you dare prove her
On every heart thus shone this lustful sun,
All strove to serve, to please, to woo, to love her,
And in their hearts that chaste and bashful were,
Her eye's hot glance dissolved the frost of.

LXXXIX

On them who durst with fingering bold assay
To the softness of her tender skin,
She looked as coy, as if she list not play,
And made as things of worth were hard to win;
Yet tempered so her deignful looks alway,
That outward scorn showed store of grace within:
Thus with false hope their longing hearts she fired,
For hardest gotten things are most.

XC

Sometimes she walked in secret where,
To ruminate upon her discontent,
Within her eyelids the swelling tear,
Not poured forth, though sprung from sad lament,
And with this craft a thousand well near
In snares of foolish ruth and love she hent,
And kept as slaves, by which we fitly prove
That witless breedeth fruitless love.

XCI

Sometimes, as if her hope unloosed had
The chains of grief, wherein her lay fettered,
Upon her minions looked she blithe and glad,
In that lore so was she lettered;
Not glorious Titan, in his brightness clad,
The sunshine of her face in lustre bettered:
For when she list to cheer her beauties so,
She smiled away the clouds of grief and woe.

XCII

Her double charm of smiles and sugared words,
Lulled on sleep the of their senses,
Reason shall aid gainst those assaults affords,
no warrant from those sweet offences;
Cupid's deep rivers have their shallow fords,
His griefs, bring ; his losses, recompenses;
He breeds the sore, and cures us of the:
Achilles' lance that wounds and heals again.

XCIII

While thus she them torments twixt frost and fire,
Twixt and grief, twixt hope and restless,
The sly enchantress her gain the nigher,
These were her flocks that golden fleeces bear:
But if someone durst utter his,
And by complaining make his griefs appear,
He labored hard rocks with plaints to move,
She had not learned the gamut then of love.

XCIV

For down she bet her bashful eyes to ground,
And donned the weed of women's modest grace,
Down from her eyes welled the pearls round,
Upon the bright enamel of her face;
Such honey drops on springing flowers are found
When Phoebus holds the crimson morn in chase;
Full seemed her looks of, and of shame;
Yet shone transparent through the same.

XCV

If she by his outward cheer,
That any would his love by talk bewray,
Sometimes she him, sometimes stopped her ear,
And played fast and loose the livelong day:
Thus all her lovers kind deluded were,
Their earnest suit got neither yea nor nay;
But like the sort of weary huntsmen fare,
That hunt all day, and lose at night the hare.

XCVI

These were the arts by which she captived
A thousand of young and lusty knights;
These were the arms wherewith love conquered
Their feeble hearts subdued in wanton fights:
What wonder if Achilles were misled,
Of great Alcides at their ladies' ,
Since these champions of the Lord above
Were thralls to beauty, yelden slaves to lore.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 05 - Part 01

THE ARGUMENT.

Gernando scorns Rinaldo should aspire
To rule that charge for which he seeks and strives,
And slanders him so far, that in his ire
The wronged knight his foe of life deprives:
Far from the camp the slayer doth retire,
Nor lets be bound in chains or gyves:
Armide departs content, and from the seas
Godfrey news which him and his displease.

I

While thus Armida false the knights misled
In wandering errors of love,
And , besides the champions promised,
The other lordlings in her aid to move,
In Godfrey's a strong contention bred
Who fittest were this hazard great to prove;
For all the worthies of the adventures' band
Were like in birth, in power, in strength of hand.

II

But first the prince, by grave advice, decreed
They should some knight choose at their own election,
That in his charge Lord Dudon might succeed,
And of that glorious troop should take protection;
So none should grieve, displeas'd with the deed,
Nor blame the causer of their new subjection:
Besides, Godfredo showed by this device,
How much he held that regiment in price.

III

He called the worthies then, and spake them so:
'Lordlings, you I yielded to your will,
And gave you license with this dame to go,
To win her kingdom and that tyrant kill:

But now again I let you further ,
In following her it may betide yon ill;
Refrain therefore, and change this forward
For death unsent for, danger comes unsought.

IV

'But if to shun these perils, sought so far,
May seem disgraceful to the place yon hold;
If grave advice and counsel are
Esteemed detractors from your courage bold;
Then , I none against his will debar,
Nor what I granted erst I now withhold;
But he mine empire, as it ought of right,
Sweet, easy, , gentle, meek and light.

V

'Go then or tarry, each as likes him best,
Free power I grant you on this enterprise;
But first in Dudon's place, now laid in chest,
Choose you some other captain stout and ;
Then ten appoint among the worthiest,
But let no more attempt this hard emprise,
In this my will content you that I have,
For power constrained is but a glorious slave.'

VI

Thus Godfrey said, and thus his brother spake,
And answered for and all his peers:
'My lord, as well it fitteth thee to make
These delays and cast these and ,
So 'tis our part at first to undertake;
Courage and haste beseems our might and years;
And this proceeding with so grave advice,
, in you, in us were cowardice.

VII

'Since then the feat is easy, danger none,
All set in battle and in hardy fight,

Do thou permit the chosen ten to gone
And aid the damsel:' thus devised the knight,
To make men the sun of honor shone
There where the lamp of Cupid gave the light:
The his guile, and it approve,
And call that knighthood which was childish love.

VIII

But loving Eustace, that with eye
Beheld the worth of Sophia's child,
And his fair shape did secretly envy,
Besides the in his breast compiled,
And, for in love he would no company,
He stored his mouth with speeches smoothly filed,
Drawing his rival to attend his word;
Thus with fair sleight he laid the knight aboard:

IX

'Of great Bertoldo thou far greater heir,
Thou star of knighthood, flower of chivalry,
Tell me, who now shall lead this squadron fair,
Since our late guide in marble cold doth lie?
I, that with famous Dudon might compare
In all, but years, hoar locks, and gravity,
To whom should I, Duke Godfrey's brother, yield,
Unless to thee, the Christian army's shield?

X

'Thee whom high birth makes equal with the best
Thine acts prefer both me and all beforne;
Nor that in fight thou both surpass the ,
And Godfrey's worthy , I hold in scorn;
Thee to obey then am I only pressed;
Before these worthies be thine eagle borne;
This honor haply thou esteemest light,
Whose day of glory never yet found night.

XI

'Yet mayest thou further by this means display
The spreading wings of thy immortal fame;
I will procure it, if thou sayest not nay,
And all their wills to thine election frame:
But for I scanty am resolved which way
To bend my force, or where employ the same,
Leave me, I pray, at my discretion free
To Armida, or serve here with thee.'

XII

This last request, for love is evil to hide,
Empurpled both his cheeks with scarlet red;
Rinaldo soon his passions had descried,
And gently smiling turned aside his head,
And, for weak Cupid was too feeble eyed
To strike him sure, the fire in him was dead;
So that of rivals was he naught afraid,
Nor cared he for the journey or the maid.

XIII

But in his revolved he oft
Dudon's high prowess, death and burial,
And how Argantes bore his plumes aloft,
Praising his fortunes for that worthy's fall;
Besides, the knight's sweet words and praises soft
To his due honor did him fitly call,
And made his heart rejoice, for well he,
Though much he praised him, all his words were.

XIV

'Degrees,' quoth he, 'of honors high to hold,
I would them first deserve, and the;
And were my valor such as you have told,
Would I for that to higher place aspire:
But if to honors due raise me you would,
I will not of my works refuse the hire;
And much it glads me, that my power and might
Ypraised is by such a valiant knight.'

XV

'I neither seek it nor refuse the place,
Which if I get, the praise and thanks be thine.'
Eustace, this spoken, hied thence apace
To which way his fellows' hearts incline:
But Prince Gernando coveted the place,
Whom though Armida sought to undermine,
Gainst him yet vain did all her engines prove,
His pride was such, there was no place for love.

XVI

Gernando was the King of Norway's son,
That many a realm and region had to guide,
And for his elders lands and crowns had won.
His heart was puffed up with endless pride:
The other boasts more what had done
Than all his ancestors' great acts beside;
Yet his forefathers old before him were
Famous in war and peace five hundred years.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 05 - Part 02

XVII

This barbarous prince, who only vainly
That in wealth and kingly power doth lie,
And in respect esteemed all naught
Unless it were adorned with titles high,
Could not endure, that to the place he sought
A simple knight should dare to press so nigh;
And in his breast so boiled fell despite,
That ire and wrath exiled reason quite.

XVIII

The hidden devil, that lies in close await
To win the fort of unbelieving man,
Found entry there, where ire undid the gate,
And in his bosom unperceived ran;
It filled his heart with malice, strife and ,
It made him rage, blaspheme, swear, curse and ban,
Invisible it still attends him near,
And thus each minute whispereth in his ear.

XIX

What, shall Rinaldo match thee? dares he tell
Those idle names of his vain pedigree?
Then let him say, if thee he would excel,
What lands, what realms his tributaries be:
If his forefathers in the graves that dwell,
Were honored like thine that live, let :
Oh how dares one so mean aspire so high,
Born in that servile country Italy?

XX

Now, if he win, or if he lose the day,
Yet is his praise and glory hence derived,
For that the world will, to his credit, say,
Lo, this is he that with Gernando strived.

The charge some deal thee haply honor may,
That Dudon had while here he lived;
But laid on him he would the office shame,
Let it suffice, he durst the same.

XXI

If when this breath from man's frail body flies
The take keep, or the things done here,
Oh, how looks Dudon from the glorious skies?
What wrath, what in his face appear,
On this proud youngling while he bends his eyes,
Marking how high he doth his feathers rear?
his rash attempt, how soon he dare,
Though but a boy, with his great worth compare.

XXII

He dares not only, but he strives and proves,
Where chastisement were fit there wins he praise:
One counsels him, his speech him forward moves;
Another fool approveth all he says:
If Godfrey favor him more than behoves,
Why then he wrongeth thee an hundred ways;
Nor let thy so far disgraced be,
Now what thou art and canst, let Godfrey.

XXIII

With such false words the kindled fire began
To every vein his poisoned heart to reach,
It swelled his scornful heart, and forth it ran
At his proud looks, and too audacious speech;
All that he blameworthy in the man,
To his disgrace that would be each where preach;
He termed him proud and vain, his worth in fight
He called fool-hardise, rashness, madness right.

XXIV

All that in him was rare or excellent,
All that was , all that was princely found,

With such sharp words as malice could invent,
He blamed, such power has wicked tongue to wound.
The youth, for everywhere those rumors went,
Of these reproaches sometimes the sound;
Nor did for that his tongue the fault amend,
Until it brought him to his woeful end.

XXV

The cursed fiend that set his tongue at large,
Still bred more fancies in his idle brain,
His heart with slanders new did overcharge,
And soothed him still in his vein;
Amid the camp a place was broad and large,
Where one fair regiment might easily train;
And there in tilt and harmless tournament
Their days of the youths and gallants spent.

XXVI

There, as his fortune would it should betide,
Amid the press Gernando gan retire,
To vomit out his venom unespied,
Wherewith foul envy did his heart inspire.
Rinaldo him as he stood beside,
And as he could not bridle wrath and ire,
'Thou liest,' cried he loud, and with that word
About his head he tossed his flaming sword.

XXVII

Thunder his voice, and lightning seemed his brand,
So fell his look, and furious was his cheer,
Gernando trembled, for he at hand
Pale death, and neither nor near,
Yet for the soldiers all to witness stand
He made proud sign, as though he naught did ,
But bravely drew his little-helping blade,
And valiant show of strong resistance made.

XXVIII

With that a thousand blades of burnished steel
Glistened on heaps like flames of fire in ,
Hundreds, that not yet the quarrel weel,
Ran thither, some to gaze and some to fight:
The empty air a sound did
Of murmurs low, and outcries loud on height,
Like rolling waves and Boreas' blasts
When roaring seas against the rocks he casts.

XXIX

But not for this the wronged warrior stayed
His just displeasure and incensed ire,
He cared not what the vulgar did or said,
To vengeance did his courage fierce aspire:
Among the thickest weapons way he made,
His thundering sword made all on heaps retire,
So that of near a thousand stayed not one,
But Prince Gernando bore the brunt.

XXX

His hand, too quick to execute his wrath,
Performed all, as his eye and heart,
At head and breast oft times he stricken hath,
Now at the right, now at the other part:
On every side thus did he harm and scath,
And oft beguile his with nimble art,
That no defence the prince of wounds acquits,
Where least he , or , there most he hits.

XXXI

Nor be, till in Gernando's breast
He sheathed once or twice his furious blade;
Down fell the hapless prince with death oppressed,
A double way to his weak was made;
His bloody sword the victor wiped and dressed,
Nor longer by the slaughtered body stayed,
But sped him thence, and soon appeased hath
His , his ire, his rancor and his wrath.

XXXII

Called by the tumult, Godfrey drew him near,
And there beheld a sad and rueful,
The signs of death upon his face appear,
With dust and blood his locks were loathly dight,
Sighs and complaints on each side might he,
Made for the sudden death of that great knight:
Amazed, he asked who durst and did so much;
For yet he not whom the fault would.

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XXXIII

Arnoldo, minion of the Prince thus slain,
Augments the fault in telling it, and saith,
This Prince murdered, for a quarrel vain,
By young Rinaldo in his desperate wrath,
And with that sword that should Christ's law maintain,
One of Christ's champions bold he killed hath,
And this he did in such a place and hour,
As if he scorned your rule, despised your power.

XXXIV

And further adds, that he deserved death
By law, and law should inviolate,
That none offence could greater be unneath,
And yet the place the fault did aggravate:
If he escapes, that mischief would take breath,
And flourish bold in spite of rule and;
And that Gernando's friends would venge the wrong,
Although to justice that did first belong,

XXXV

And by that means, should discord, and strife
Raise mutinies, and what therefore ensueth:
Lastly he praised the dead, and still had rife
All words he could vengeance move or rut
Against him Tancred argued for life,
With honest reasons to excuse the youth:
The Duke all, but with such sober cheer,
As banished hope, and still increased.

XXXVI

'Great Prince,' quoth Tancred; 'set before thine eyes
Rinaldo's worth and courage what it is,
How much our hope of conquest in him lies;
Regard that princely house and race of his;

He that correcteth every fault he spies,
And judgeth all alike, doth all amiss;
For faults, you, are greater or less,
As is the person's that doth transgress.'

XXXVII

Godfredo answered him; 'If high and low
Of sovereign power alike should the stroke,
Then, Tancred, ill you counsel us, I trow;
If lords should no law, as erst you spoke,
How vile and base our empire were you,
If none but slaves and peasants bear the yoke;
Weak is the sceptre and the power is small
That such provisos bring annexed withal.

XXXVIII

'But mine was freely given ere 'twas sought,
Nor that it lessened be I now consent;
Right well I both when and where I ought
To give condign reward and punishment,
Since you are all in like subjection brought,
Both high and low obey, and be content.'
This, Tancredi stayed his words,
Such weight the sayings have of kings and lords.

XXXIX

Old Raymond praised his speech, for old men
They ever seem when most severe,
' 'Tis best,' quoth he, 'to make these great ones shrink,
The people love him whom the :
There must the rule to all disorders sink,
Where pardons more than punishments appear;
For feeble is each kingdom, frail and weak,
Unless his basis be this I speak.'

XL

These words Tancredi and pondered well,
And by them how Godfrey's were bent,

Nor list he longer with these old men dwell,
But turned his horse and to Rinaldo went,
Who, when his foe death-wounded fell,
Withdrew him softly to his gorgeous tent;
There Tancred found him, and at large declared
The words and speeches sharp which late you.

XLI

And said, 'Although I the outward show
Is not witness of the secret,
For that some men so subtle are, I trow,
That what they purpose most appeareth naught;
Yet dare I say Godfredo means, I,
Such hath his looks and speeches wrought,
You shall first prisoner be, and then be tried
As he shall deem it and law provide.'

XLII

With that a smile well might you
Rinaldo cast, with scorn and high disdain,
'Let them in fetters plead their cause,' quoth he,
'That are base peasants, born of servile stain,
I was free born, I live and will die free
Before these feet be fettered in a chain:
These hands were made to shake sharp spears and swords,
Not to be tied in gyves and twisted cords.

XLIII

'If my service reap this recompense,
To be clapt up in close and secret mew,
And as a thief be after dragged from thence,
To suffer punishment as law finds due;
Let Godfrey come or send, I will not hence
Until we who shall this bargain rue,
That of our tragedy the late done fact
May be the first, and this the second, act.

XLIV

'Give me mine arms,' he cried; his squire them brings,
And clad his head, and dressed in iron strong,
About his neck his silver shield he flings,
Down by his side a cutting sword there hung;
Among this earth's brave lords and mighty kings,
Was none so stout, so fierce, so fair, so young,
God Mars he seemed descending from his sphere,
Or one whose looks could make great Mars to.

XLV

Tancredi labored with some speech
His fierce and courage to appease;
'Young Prince, thy valor,' thus he gan to preach,
'Can chastise all that do thee wrong, at ease,
I your can your enemies teach,
That you can venge you when and where you please:
But God forbid this day you lift your arm
To do this camp and us your friends such harm.

XLVI

'Tell me what will you do? why would you stain
Your hands in our unguilty blood?
By wounding Christians, will you again
Pierce Christ, whose parts they are and members?
Will you destroy us for your glory vain,
Unstayed as rolling waves in ocean flood?
Far be it from you so to prove your strength,
And let your zeal appease your rage at length.

XLVII

'For God's love stay your heat, and just displeasure,
Appease your wrath, your courage fierce assuage,
a praise; is a treasure;
Suffrance, an angel's is; a monster, rage;
At least you actions by example measure,
And how I in mine unbridled age
Was wronged, yet I would not revengement take
On all this camp, for one offender's sake.

XLVIII

'Cilicia conquered I, as all men,
And there the glorious cross on high I reared,
But Baldwin came, and what I got
Bereft me falsely when I least him;
He seemed my friend, and I discovered not
His secret covetise which since appeared;
Yet strive I not to get mine own by fight,
Or civil war, although perchance I might.

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XLIX

'If then you scorn to be in prison pent,
If bonds, as high disgrace, your hands refuse;
Or if your still to maintain are bent
Your liberty, as men of honor use:
To Antioch what if forthwith you went?
And leave me here your absence to excuse,
There with Prince Boemond live in ease and peace,
Until this storm of Godfrey's.

L

'For soon, if forces come from Egypt land,
Or other nations that us here confine,
Godfrey will beaten be with his own wand,
And he wants that valor great of thine,
Our camp may seem an arm without a hand,
Amid our troops unless thy eagle shine:'
With that came Guelpho and those words approved,
And prayed him go, if him he or loved.

LI

Their speeches soften much the warrior's heart,
And make his wilful at last relent,
So that he yields, and saith he will depart,
And leave the Christian camp incontinent.
His friends, whose love did never shrink or start,
Preferred their aid, what way soe'er he went:
He thanked them all, but left them all, besides
Two bold and trusty squires, and so he rides.

LII

He rides, revolving in his spright
Such haughty as fill the glorious;
On hard adventures was his whole delight,
And now to wondrous acts his will inclined;

against the Pagans would he fight,
And kill their kings from Egypt unto Inde,
From Cynthia's hills and Nilus' unknown spring
He would fetch praise and glorious conquest bring.

LIII

But Guelpho, when the prince his leave had take
And now had spurred his courser on his way,
No longer tarriance with the would make,
But to find Godfredo, if he may:
Who him approaching, forthwith spake,
'Guelpho,' quoth he, 'for thee I only stay,
For thee I sent my heralds all about,
In every tent to seek and find thee out.'

LIV

This said, he softly drew the knight aside
Where none might , and then bespake him thus:
'How chanceth it thy nephew's rage and pride,
Makes him so far forget and us?
Hardly could I believe what is betide,
A murder done for cause so frivolous,
How I have loved him, thou and all can tell;
But Godfrey loved him but whilst he did well.

LV

'I must provide that every one have right,
That all be , each cause be well discussed,
As far from partial love as free from spite,
I complaints, yet naught but proves I trust:
Now if Rinaldo weigh our rule too light,
And have the sacred lore of war so brust,
Take you the charge that he before us come
To clear and our upright dome.

LVI

'But let him come withouten bond or chain,
For still my to do him grace are framed;

But if our power he haply shall disdain,
As well I his courage yet untamed,
To bring him by persuasion take some:
Else, if I prove severe, both you be blamed,
That forced my gentle nature gainst my
To rigor, lest our laws return to naught.'

LVII

Lord Guelpho answered thus: 'What heart can bear
Such slanders false, devised by and spite?
Or with stayed, reproaches,
And not revenge by battle or by fight?
The Norway Prince hath bought his folly dear,
But who with words could stay the knight?
A fool is he that comes to preach or prate
When men with swords their right and wrong debate.

LVIII

'And where you wish he should submit
To the censure of your upright laws;
Alas, that cannot be, for he is flit
Out if this camp, withouten stay or pause,
There take my gage, behold I offer it
To him that first accused him in this cause,
Or any else that dare, and will maintain
That for his pride the prince was justly slain.

LIX

'I say with reason Lord Gernando's pride
He hath abated, if he have offended
Gainst your commands, who are his lord and guide,
Oh pardon him, that fault shall be amended.'
'If he be gone,' quoth Godfrey, 'let him ride
And brawl elsewhere, here let all strife be ended:
And you, Lord Guelpho, for your nephew's sake,
Breed us no new, nor quarrels old.'

LX

This while, the fair and false Armida strived
To get her promised aid in sure possession,
The day to end, with endless plaint she derived;
, beauty, craft for her made intercession:
But when the earth was once of light deprived,
And western seas Titan's hot impression,
'Twixt two old knights, and matrons twain she went,
Where pitched was her fair and curious tent.

LXI

But this false queen of craft and sly invention, -
Whose looks, love's arrows were; whose eyes his quivers;
Whose beauty matchless, free from reprehension,
A wonder left by Heaven to after-livers, -
Among the Christian lord had bred contention
Who first should quench his flames in Cupid's rivers,
While all her weapons and her darts rehearsed,
Had not Godfredo's constant bosom pierced.

LXII

To change his modest the dame procureth,
And proffereth heaps of love's enticing treasure:
But as the falcon newly gorged endureth
Her keeper lure her oft, but comes at leisure;
So he, whom fulness of delight assureth
What long repentance comes of love's short,
Her crafts, her arts, and all despiseth,
So base affections fall, when riseth.

LXIII

And not one foot his steadfast foot was moved
Out of that heavenly path, wherein he paced,
Yet thousand wiles and thousand ways she proved,
To have that castle fair of raised:
She used those looks and smiles that most behoved
To melt the frost which his hard heart embraced,
And gainst his breast a thousand shot she ventured,
Yet was the fort so strong it was not entered.

LXIV

The dame who that one blink of her eye
Could make the chastest heart love's sweet,
Oh, how her pride abated was hereby!
When all her sleights were void, her crafts were vain,
Some other where she would her forces try,
Where at more ease she might more vantage gain,
As tired soldiers whom some fort keeps out,
Thence raise their siege, and spoil the towns about.

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LXV

But yet all ways the wily witch could find
Could not Tancredi's heart to loveward move,
His sails were filled with another wind,
He list no blast of new affection prove;
For, as one poison doth exclude by kind
Another's force, so love excludeth love:
These two nor more nor less the dame
Could win, the all burnt in her sweet flame.

LXVI

The princess, though her purpose would not frame,
As late she hoped, and as still she would,
Yet, for the lords and knights of greatest name
Became her prey, as erst you it told,
She , ere truth-revealing time or frame
Bewrayed her act, to lead them to some hold,
Where chains and band she meant to make them prove,
Composed by Vulcan not by gentle love.

LXVII

The time prefixed at length was come and past,
Which Godfrey had set down to lend her aid,
When at his feet to earth she cast,
'The hour is come, my Lord,' she humbly said,
'And if the tyrant haply at last,
His banished niece hath your assistance prayed,
He will in arms to save his kingdom rise,
So shall we harder make this enterprise.

LXVIII

'Before report can bring the tyrant news,
Or his espials certify their king,
Oh let thy these few champions choose,
That to her kingdom should thy handmaid bring;

Who, except Heaven to aid the right refuse,
Recover shall her crown, from whence shall spring
Thy profit; for betide thee peace or war,
Thine all her cities, all her subjects are.'

LXIX

The captain the damsel fair assured,
His word was passed and should not be recanted,
And she with sweet and humble grace endured
To let him point those ten, which late he granted:
But to be one, each one fought and procured,
No suit, no entreaty, intercession wanted;
There envy each at others' love exceeded,
And all importunate made, more than needed.

LXX

She that well the secret of their hearts,
And how best to warm them in their blood,
Against them threw the cursed poisoned darts
Of , and grief at others',
For love she was weak without those arts,
And slow; for is Cupid's food;
For the swift steed runs not so fast ,
As when some strain, some strive him to outgone.

LXXI

Her words in such alluring sort she framed,
Her looks enticing, and her wooing smiles,
That every one his fellows' favors blamed,
That of their mistress he received erewhiles:
This foolish crew of lovers unashamed,
Mad with the poison of her secret wiles,
Ran forward still, in this disordered sort,
Nor could Godfredo's bridle rein them short.

LXXII

He that would each,
Withouten partial love, of every knight,

Although he swelled with shame, with grief and ire
To these fellows and these fashions light;
Yet since by no advice they would retire,
Another way he sought to set them right:
'Write all your names,' quoth he, 'and whom chance
Of lot, to this exploit will first advance.'

LXXIII

Their names were writ, and in an helmet shaken,
While each did fortune's grace and aid implore;
At last they drew them, and the foremost taken
The Earl of Pembroke was, Artemidore,
Doubtless the county his bread well baken;
Next Gerrard followed, then with tresses hoar
Old Wenceslaus, that Cupid's rage
Now in his doating and his dying age.

LXXIV

Oh how contentment in their foreheads shined!
Their looks with; swelled with secret,
These three it seemed success designed
To make the lords of love and beauty's treasure:
Their fellows at their hap repined,
And with small wait Fortune's leisure,
Upon his lips that read the scrolls attending,
As if their lives were on his words depending.

LXXV

Guasco the fourth, Ridolpho him succeeds,
Then Ulderick whom love list so advance,
Lord William of Ronciglion next he reads,
Then Eberard, and Henry born in France,
Rambaldo last, whom wicked lust so leads
That he forsook his Saviour with mischance;
This wretch the tenth was who was thus deluded,
The to their huge grief were all excluded.

LXXVI

O'ercome with envy, wrath and,
The blind Fortune curse, and all her laws,
And mad with love, yet out on love they cry,
That in his kingdom let her judge their cause:
And for man's is such, that oft we try
Things most forbidden, without stay or pause,
In spite of fortune purposed many a knight
To follow fair Armida when 'twas night.

LXXVII

To follow her, by night or else by day,
And in her quarrel venture life and limb.
With sighs and tears she gan them softly pray
To keep that promise, when the skies were dim,
To this and that knight did she plain and say,
What grief she to part withouten him:
Meanwhile the ten had donned their armor best,
And taken leave of Godfrey and the.

LXXVIII

The duke advised them every one apart,
How light, how trustless was the Pagan's,
And told what policy, what, what art,
Avoids, which heedless men betray'th;
His speeches pierce their ear, but not their heart,
Love calls it folly, whatso saith:
Thus warned he leaves them to their wanton guide,
Who parts that night; such haste had she to ride.

LXXIX

The conqueress departs, and with her led
These prisoners, whom love would captive keep,
The hearts of those she left behind her bled,
With point of sorrow's arrow pierced deep.
But when the night her drowsy mantle spread,
And filled the earth with silence, shade and sleep,
In secret sort then each forsook his tent,
And as blind Cupid led them blind they went.

LXXX

Eustatio first, who scantly could,
Till friendly night might hide his haste and shame,
He rode in post, and let his breast him bear
As his blind fancy would his journey frame,
All night he wandered and he not where;
But with the morning he espied the dame,
That with her guard up from a village rode
Where she and they that night had made abode.

LXXXI

Thither he galloped fast, and drawing near
Rambaldo the knight, and loudly cried,
'Whence comes young Eustace, and what seeks he here?'
'I come,' quoth he, 'to serve the Queen Armide,
If she me, would we all were there
Where my good-will and might best be tried.'
'Who,' quoth the other, 'chosest thee to prove
This high exploit of hers?' He answered, 'Love.'

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LXXXII

'Love hath Eustatio chosen, Fortune thee,
In thy conceit which is the best election?'
'Nay, then, these shifts are vain,' replied he,
'These titles false serve thee for no protection,
Thou canst not here for this admitted be
Our fellow-servant, in this sweet subjection.'
'And who,' quoth Eustace, , 'dares deny
My fellowship?' Rambaldo answered, 'I.'

LXXXIII

And with that word his cutting sword he drew,
That glittered bright, and sparkled flaming fire;
Upon his foe the other champion flew,
With equal courage, and with equal ire.
The gentle princess, who the danger ,
Between them stepped, and prayed them both retire.
'Rambald,' quoth she, 'why should you grudge or plain,
If I a champion, you an gain?

LXXXIV

'If me you love, why wish you me deprived
In so great need of such a puissant knight?
But welcome Eustace, in time arrived,
Defender of my , my life, my right.
I wish my hapless no longer lived,
When I esteem such assistance light.'
Thus talked they on, and travelled on their way
Their fellowship increasing every day.

LXXXV

From every side they come, yet there none
Of others coming or of others' ,
She welcomes all, and telleth every one,
What her in his arrival find.

But when Duke Godfrey his knights were gone,
Within his breast his divined
Some hard mishap upon his friends should light,
For which he sighed all day, and wept all night.

LXXXVI

A messenger, while thus he mused, drew near,
All soiled with dust and sweat, quite out of breath,
It seemed the man did heavy tidings bear,
Upon his looks news of loss and death:
'My lord,' quoth he, 'so many ships appear
At sea, that Neptune bears the load unneath,
From Egypt come they all, this lets thee weet
William Lord Admiral of the Genoa fleet,

LXXXVII

'Besides a convoy coming from the shore
With victual for this camp of thine
Surprised was, and lost is all that store,
Mules, horses, camels laden, corn and wine;
Thy servants fought till they could fight no more,
For all were slain or captives made in fine:
The Arabian outlaws them assailed by night,
When least they , and least they looked for fight.

LXXXVIII

'Their frantic boldness doth presume so far,
That many Christians have they falsely slain,
And like a raging flood they spared are,
And overflow each country, field and plain;
Send therefore some strong troops of men of war,
To force them hence, and drive them home again,
And keep the ways between these tents of thine
And those broad seas, the seas of Palestine.'

LXXXIX

From mouth to mouth the heavy rumor spread
Of these misfortunes, which dispersed wide

Among the soldiers, great amazement bred;
Famine they, and new come foes beside:
The duke, that their wonted courage fled,
And in the place thereof weak espied,
With merry looks these cheerful words he spake,
To make them heart again and courage take.

XC

'You champions bold, with me that 'scaped have
So many dangers, and such hard assays,
Whom still your God did keep, defend and save
In all your battles, combats, fights and frays,
You that subdued the Turks and Persians brave,
That thirst and hunger held in scorn always,
And vanquished hills, and seas, with heat and cold,
Shall vain reports appal your courage bold?

XCI

'That Lord who you out at every need,
When aught befell this glorious camp amiss,
Shall fortune all your actions well to speed,
On whom his large extended is;
Tofore his tomb, when conquering hands you spread,
With what delight will you this?
Be strong therefore, and keep your valors high
To honor, conquest, fame and victory.'

XCII

Their hopes half dead and courage well-nigh lost,
Revived with these brave speeches of their guide;
But in his breast a thousand cares he tost,
Although his he could hide;
He studied how to feed that mighty host,
In so great scarceness, and what force provide
He should against the Egyptian warriors sly,
And how subdue those thieves of Araby.

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THE ARGUMENT.

Argantes calls the Christians out to just:
Otho not chosen doth his strength assay,
But from his saddle tumbleth in the dust,
And captive to the town is sent away:
Tancred begins new fight, and when both trust
To win the praise and palm, night ends the fray:
Erminia hopes to cure her wounded knight,
And from the city armed rides by night.

I

But better hopes had them recomforted
That lay besieged in the sacred town;
With new supply late were they victualled,
When night obscured the earth with shadows brown;
Their armies and engines on the walls they spread,
Their slings to cast, and stones to tumble down;
And all that side which to the northward lies,
High rampiers and strong bulwarks fortifies.

II

Their wary king commands now here now there,
To build this tower, to make that bulwark strong,
Whether the sun, the moon, or stars appear,
To give them time to work, no time comes wrong:
In every street new weapons forged were,
By cunning smiths, sweating with labor long;
While thus the careful prince provision made,
To him Argantes came, and boasting said:

III

'How long shall we, like prisoners in chains,
Captived lie inclosed within this wall?
I see your workmen taking endless pains

To make new weapons for no use at all;
Meanwhile these eastern thieves destroy the plains,
Your towns are burnt, your forts and castles fall,
Yet none of us dares at these gates out-peep,
Or sound one trumpet shrill to break their sleep.

IV

'Their time in feasting and good cheer they spend,
Nor dare we once their banquets sweet molest,
The days and night likewise they bring to end,
In peace, assurance, quiet, ease and rest;
But we must yield whom hunger soon will shend,
And make for peace, to save our lives, request,
Else, if th' Egyptian army stay too long,
Like cowards die within this fortress strong.

V

'Yet never shall my courage great consent
So vile a death should end my noble days,
Nor on mine arms within these walls ypent
To-morrow's sun shall spread his timely rays:
Let sacred Heavens dispose as they are bent
Of this frail like, yet not withouten praise
Of valor, prowess, might, Argantes shall
Inglorious die, or unrevenge'd fall.

VI

'But if the roots of wonted chivalry
Be not quite dead your princely breast within,
Devise not how with frame and praise to die,
But how to live, to conquer and to win;
Let us together at these gates outfly,
And skirmish bold and bloody fight begin;
For when last need to desperation driveth,
Who dareth most he wisest counsel giveth.

VII

'But if in field your wisdom dare not venture

To hazard all your troops to doubtful fight,
Then bind yourself to Godfrey by indenture,
To end your quarrels by one single knight:
And for the Christian this accord shall enter
With better will, say such you know your right
That he the weapons, place and time shall choose,
And let him for his best, that vantage use.

VIII

'For though your foe had hands, like Hector strong,
With heart unfeared, and courage stern and stout,
Yet no misfortune can your justice wrong,
And what that wanteth, shall this arm help out,
In spite of fate shall this right hand ere long,
Return victorious: if hereof you doubt,
Take it for pledge, wherein if trust you have,
It shall yourself defend and kingdom save.'

IX

'Bold youth,' the tyrant thus began to speak,
'Although I withered seem with age and years,
Yet are not these old arms so faint and weak,
Nor this hoar head so full of doubts and fears
But whenas death this vital thread shall break,
He shall my courage hear, my death who hears:
And Aladine that lived a king and knight,
To his fair morn will have an evening bright.

X

'But that which yet I would have further blazed,
To thee in secret shall be told and spoken,
Great Soliman of Nice, so far ypraised,
To be revenged for his sceptre broken,
The men of arms of Araby hath raised,
From Inde to Africk, and, when we give token,
Attends the favor of the friendly night
To victual us, and with our foes to fight.

XI

'Now though Godfredo hold by warlike feat
Some castles poor and forts in vile oppression,
Care not for that; for still our princely seat,
This stately town, we keep in our possession,
But thou appease and calm that courage great,
Which in thy bosom make so hot impression;
And stay fit time, which will betide are long,
To increase thy glory, and revenge our wrong.'

XII

The Saracen at this was inly spited,
Who Soliman's great worth had long envied,
To hear him praised thus he naught delighted,
Nor that the king upon his aid relied:
'Within your power, sir king,' he says, 'united
Are peace and war, nor shall that be denied;
But for the Turk and his Arabian band,
He lost his own, shall he defend your land?'

XIII

'Perchance he comes some heavenly messenger,
Sent down to set the Pagan people free,
Then let Argantes for himself take care,
This sword, I trust, shall well safe-conduct me:
But while you rest and all your forces spare,
That I go forth to war at least agree;
Though not your champion, yet a private knight,
I will some Christian prove in single fight.'

XIV

The king replied, 'Though thy force and might
Should be reserved to better time and use;
Yet that thou challenge some renowned knight,
Among the Christians bold I not refuse.'
The warrior breathing out desire of fight,
An herald called, and said, 'Go tell those news
To Godfrey's self, and to the western lords,
And in their hearings boldly say these words:

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XV

'Say that a knight, who holds in great disdain
To be thus closed up in secret new,
Will with his sword in open field maintain,
If any dare deny his words for true,
That no devotion, as they falsely feign,
Hath moved the French these countries to subdue;
But vile ambition, and pride's hateful vice,
Desire of rule, and spoil, and covetice.

XVI

'And that to fight I am not only prest
With one or two that dare defend the cause,
But come the fourth or fifth, come all the rest,
Come all that will, and all that weapon draws,
Let him that yields obey the victor's hest,
As wills the lore of mighty Mars his laws:'
This was the challenge that fierce Pagan sent,
The herald donned his coat-of-arms, and went.

XVII

And when the man before the presence came
Of princely Godfrey, and his captains bold:
'My Lord,' quoth he, 'may I withouten blame
Before your Grace, my message brave unfold?'
'Thou mayest,' he answered, 'we approve the same;
Withouten fear, be thine ambassage told.'
'Then,' quoth the herald, 'shall your highness see,
If this ambassage sharp or pleasing be.'

XVIII

The challenge gan he then at large expose,
With mighty threats, high terms and glorious words;
On every side an angry murmur rose,
To wrath so moved were the knights and lords.

Then Godfrey spake, and said, 'The man hath chose
An hard exploit, but when he feels our swords,
I trust we shall so far entreat the knight,
As to excuse the fourth or fifth of fight.

XIX

'But let him come and prove, the field I grant,
Nor wrong nor treason let him doubt or fear,
Some here shall pay him for his glorious vaunt,
Without or guile, or vantage, that I swear.
The herald turned when he had ended scant,
And hasted back the way he came whileare,
Nor stayed he aught, nor once forslow'd his pace,
Till he bespake Argantes face to face.

XX

'Arm you, my lord,' he said, 'your bold defies
By your brave foes accepted boldly been,
This combat neither high nor low denies,
Ten thousand wish to meet you on the green;
A thousand frowned with angry flaming eyes,
And shaked for rage their swords and weapons keen;
The field is safely granted by their guide,'
This said, the champion for his armor cried.

XXI

While he was armed, his heart for ire nigh brake,
So yearned his courage hot his foes to find:
The King to fair Clorinda present spake;
'If he go forth, remain not you behind,
But of our soldiers best a thousand take,
To guard his person and your own assigned;
Yet let him meet alone the Christian knight,
And stand yourself aloof, while they two fight.'

XXII

Thus spake the King, and soon without abode
The troop went forth in shining armor clad,

Before the rest the Pagan champion rode,
His wonted arms and ensigns all he had:
A goodly plan displayed wide and broad,
Between the city and the camp was spread,
A place like that wherein proud Rome beheld
The forward young men manage spear and shield.

XXIII

There all alone Argantes took his stand,
Defying Christ and all his servants true,
In stature, stomach, and in strength of hand,
In pride, presumption, and in dreadful show,
Encelade like, on the Phlegrean strand,
Of that huge giant Jesse's infant slew;
But his fierce semblant they esteemed light,
For most not knew, or else not feared his might.

XXIV

As yet not one had Godfrey singled out
To undertake this hardy enterprise,
But on Prince Tancred saw he all the rout
Had fixed their wishes, and had cast their eyes,
On him he spied them gazing round about,
As though their honor on his prowess lies,
And now they whispered louder what they meant,
Which Godfrey heard and saw, and was content.

XXV

The rest gave place; for every one descried
To whom their chieftain's will did most incline,
'Tancred,' quoth he, 'I pray thee calm the pride,
Abate the rage of yonder Saracine:'
No longer would the chosen champion bide,
His face with joy, his eyes with gladness shine,
His helm he took, and ready steed bestrode,
And guarded with his trusty friends forth rode.

XXVI

But scantly had he spurred his courser swift
Near to the plain, where proud Argantes stayed,
When unawares his eyes he chanced to lift,
And on the hill beheld the warlike maid,
As white as snow upon the Alpine clift
The virgin shone in silver arms arrayed,
Her ventral up so high, that he descried
Her goodly visage, and her beauty's pride.

XXVII

He saw not where the Pagan stood, and stared,
As if with looks he would his foeman kill,
But full of other thoughts he forward fared,
And sent his looks before him up the hill,
His gesture such his troubled soul declared,
At last as marble rock he standeth still,
Stone cold without; within, burnt with love's flame,
And quite forgot himself, and why he came.

XXVIII

The challenger, that yet saw none appear
That made or sign or show came to just,
'How long,' cried he, 'shall I attend you here?
Dares none come forth? dares none his fortune trust?'
The other stood amazed, love stopped his ear,
He thinks on Cupid, think of Mars who lust;
But forth stert Otho bold, and took the field,
A gentle knight whom God from danger shield.

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XXIX

This youth was one of those, who late desired
With that vain-glorious boaster to have fought,
But Tancred chosen, he and all retired;
Now when his slackness he awhile admired,
And saw elsewhere employed was his thought,
Nor that to just, though chosen, once he proffered,
He boldly took that fit occasion offered.

XXX

No tiger, panther, spotted leopard,
Runs half so swift, the forests wild among,
As this young champion hasted thitherward,
Where he attending saw the Pagan strong:
Tancredi started with the noise he heard,
As waked from sleep, where he had dreamed long,
'Oh stay,' he cried, 'to me belongs this war!'
But cried too late, Otho was gone too far.

XXXI

Then full of fury, anger and despite,
He stayed his horse, and waxed red for shame,
The fight was his, but now disgraced quite
Himself he thought, another played his game;
Meanwhile the Saracen did hugely smite
On Otho's helm, who to requite the same,
His foe quite through his sevenfold targe did bear,
And in his breastplate stuck and broke his spear.

XXXII

The encounter such, upon the tender grass,
Down from his steed the Christian backward fell;
Yet his proud foe so strong and sturdy was,
That he nor shook, nor staggered in his sell,
But to the knight that lay full low, alas,

In high disdain his will thus gan he tell,
'Yield thee my slave, and this thine honor be,
Thou may'st report thou hast encountered me.'

XXXIII

'Not so,' quoth he, 'pardy it's not the guise
Of Christian knights, though fall'n, so soon to yield;
I can my fall excuse in better wise,
And will revenge this shame, or die in field.'
The great Circassian bent his frowning eyes,
Like that grim visage in Minerva's shield,
'Then learn,' quoth he, 'what force Argantes useth
Against that fool that proffered grace refuseth.'

XXXIV

With that he spurred his horse with speed and haste,
Forgetting what good knights to virtue owe,
Otho his fury shunned, and, as he passed,
At his right side he reached a noble blow,
Wide was the wound, the blood outstreamed fast,
And from his side fell to his stirrup low:
But what avails to hurt, if wounds augment
Our foe's fierce courage, strength and hardiment?

XXXV

Argantes nimbly turned his ready steed,
And ere his foe was wist or well aware,
Against his side he drove his courser's head,
What force could he gainst so great might prepare?
Weak were his feeble joints, his courage dead,
His heart amazed, his paleness showed his care,
His tender side gainst the hard earth he cast,
Shamed, with the first fall; bruised, with the last.

XXXVI

The victor spurred again his light-foot steed,
And made his passage over Otho's heart,
And cried, 'These fools thus under foot I tread,

This dare contend with me in equal mart.'
Tancred for anger shook his noble head,
So was he grieved with that unknighthly part;
The fault was his, he was so slow before,
With double valor would he salve that sore.

XXXVII

Forward he galloped fast, and loudly cried:
'Villain,' quoth he, 'thy conquest is thy shame,
What praise? what honor shall this fact betide?
What gain? what guerdon shall befall the same?
Among the Arabian thieves thy face go hide,
Far from resort of men of worth and fame,
Or else in woods and mountains wild, by night,
On savage beasts employ thy savage might.'

XXXVIII

The Pagan patience never knew, nor used,
Trembling for ire, his sandy locks he tore,
Our from his lips flew such a sound confused,
As lions make in deserts thick, which roar;
Or as when clouds together crushed and bruised,
Pour down a tempest by the Caspian shore;
So was his speech imperfect, stopped, and broken,
He roared and thundered when he should have spoken.

XXXIX

But when with threats they both had whetted keen
Their eager rage, their fury, spite and ire,
They turned their steeds and left large space between
To make their forces greater, 'proaching nigher,
With terms that warlike and that worthy been:
O sacred Muse, my haughty thoughts inspire,
And make a trumpet of my slender quill
To thunder out this furious combat shrill.

XL

These sons of Mayors bore, instead of spears,

Two knotty masts, which none but they could lift,
Each foaming steed so fast his master bears,
That never beast, bird, shaft flew half so swift;
Such was their fury, as when Boreas tears
The shattered crags from Taurus' northern clift,
Upon their helms their lances long they broke,
And up to heaven flew splinters, spark and smoke.

XLI

The shock made all the towers and turrets quake,
And woods and mountains all nigh hand resound;
Yet could not all that force and fury shake
The valiant champions, nor their persons wound;
Together hurtled both their steeds, and brake
Each other's neck, the riders lay on ground:
But they, great masters of war's dreadful art,
Plucked forth their swords and soon from earth up start.

XLII

Close at his surest ward each warrior lieth,
He wisely guides his hand, his foot, his eye,
This blow he proveth, that defence he trieth,
He traverseth, retireth, presseth nigh,
Now strikes he out, and now he falsifieth,
This blow he wardeth, that he lets slip by,
And for advantage oft he lets some part
Discovered seem; thus art deludeth art.

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XLIII

The Pagan ill defenced with sword or targe,
Tancredi's thigh, as he supposed, espied
And reaching forth gainst it his weapon large,
Quite naked to his foe leaves his left-side;
Tancred avoideth quick his furious charge,
And gave him eke a wound deep, sore and wide;
That done, himself safe to his ward retired,
His courage praised by all, his skill admired.

XLIV

The proud Circassian saw his streaming blood,
Down from his wound, as from a fountain, running,
He sighed for rage, and trembled as he stood,
He blamed his fortune, folly, want of cunning;
He lift his sword aloft, for ire nigh wood,
And forward rushed: Tancred his fury shunning,
With a sharp thrust once more the Pagan hit,
To his broad shoulder where his arm is knit.

XLV

Like as a bear through pierced with a dart
Within the secret woods, no further flieth,
But bites the senseless weapon mad with smart,
Seeking revenge till unrevenged she dieth;
So mad Argantes fared, when his proud heart
Wound upon wound, and shame on shame espieth,
Desire of vengeance so o'ercame his senses,
That he forgot all dangers, all defences.

XLVI

Uniting force extreme, with endless wrath,
Supporting both with youth and strength untired,
His thundering blows so fast about he layeth,
That skies and earth the flying sparkles fired;

His foe to strike one blow no leisure hath,
Scantly he breathed, though he oft desired,
His warlike skill and cunning all was waste,
Such was Argantes' force, and such his haste.

XLVII

Long time Tancredi had in vain attended
When this huge storm should overblow and pass,
Some blows his mighty target well defended,
Some fell beside, and wounded deep the grass;
But when he saw the tempest never ended,
Nor that the Paynim's force aught weaker was,
He high advanced his cutting sword at length,
And rage to rage opposed, and strength to strength.

XLVIII

Wrath bore the sway, both art and reason fail,
Fury new force, and courage new supplies,
Their armors forged were of metal frail,
On every side thereof, huge cantels flies,
The land was strewed all with plate and mail.
That, on the earth; on that, their warm blood lies.
And at each rush and every blow they smote
Thunder the noise, the sparks, seemed lightning hot.

XLIX

The Christian people and the Pagans gazed,
On this fierce combat wishing oft the end,
Twixt hope and fear they stood long time amazed,
To see the knights assail, and eke defend,
Yet neither sign they made, nor noise they raised,
But for the issue of the fight attend,
And stood as still, as life and sense they wanted,
Save that their hearts within their bosoms panted.

L

Now were they tired both, and well-nigh spent,
Their blows show greater will than power to wound;

But Night her gentle daughter Darkness, sent,
With friendly shade to overspread the ground,
Two heralds to the fighting champions went,
To part the fray, as laws of arms them bound
Aridens born in France, and wise Pindore,
The man that brought the challenge proud before.

LI

These men their sceptres interpose, between
The doubtful hazards of uncertain fight;
For such their privilege hath ever been,
The law of nations doth defend their right;
Pindore began, 'Stay, stay, you warriors keen,
Equal your honor, equal is your might;
Forbear this combat, so we deem it best,
Give night her due, and grant your persons rest.

LII

'Man goeth forth to labor with the sun,
But with the night, all creatures draw to sleep,
Nor yet of hidden praise in darkness won
The valiant heart of noble knight takes keep:'
Argantes answered him, 'The fight begun
Now to forbear, doth wound my heart right deep:
Yet will I stay, so that this Christian swear,
Before you both, again to meet me here.'

LIII

'I swear,' quoth Tancred, 'but swear thou likewise
To make return thy prisoner eke with thee;
Else for achievement of this enterprise,
None other time but this expect of me;'
Thus swore they both; the heralds both devise,
What time for this exploit should fittest be:
And for their wounds of rest and cure had need,
To meet again the sixth day was decreed.

LIV

This fight was deep imprinted in their hearts
That saw this bloody fray to ending brought,
An horror great possessed their weaker parts,
Which made them shrink who on their combat thought:
Much speech was of the praise and high desarts
Of these brave champions that so nobly fought;
But which for knightly worth was most ypraised,
Of that was doubt and disputation raised.

LV

All long to see them end this doubtful fray,
And as they favor, so they wish success,
These hope true virtue shall obtain the day,
Those trust on fury, strength and hardiness;
But on Erminia most this burden lay,
Whose looks her trouble and her fear express;
For on this dangerous combat's doubtful end
Her joy, her comfort, hope and life depend.

LVI

Her the sole daughter of that hapless king,
That of proud Antioch late wore the crown,
The Christian soldiers to Tancredi bring,
When they had sacked and spoiled that glorious town;
But he, in whom all good and virtue spring,
The virgin's honor saved, and her renown;
And when her city and her state was lost,
Then was her person loved and honored most.

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LVII

He honored her, served her, and leave her gave,
And willed her go whither and when she list,
Her gold and jewels had he care to save,
And them restored all, she nothing missed,
She, that beheld this youth and person brave,
When, by this deed, his noble mind she wist,
Laid ope her heart for Cupid's shaft to hit,
Who never knots of love more surer knit.

LVIII

Her body free, captivated was her heart,
And love the keys did of that prison bear,
Prepared to go, it was a death to part
From that kind Lord, and from that prison dear,
But thou, O honor, which esteemed art
The chiefest virtue noble ladies wear,
Enforcest her against her will, to wend
To Aladine, her mother's dearest friend.

LIX

At Sion was this princess entertained,
By that old tyrant and her mother dear,
Whose loss too soon the woeful damsel plained,
Her grief was such, she lived not half the year,
Yet banishment, nor loss of friends constrained
The hapless maid her passions to forbear,
For though exceeding were her woe and grief,
Of all her sorrows yet her love was chief.

LX

The silly maid in secret longing pined,
Her hope a mote drawn up by Phoebus' rays,
Her love a mountain seemed, whereon bright shined
Fresh memory of Tancred's worth and praise,

Within her closet if her self she shrined,
A hotter fire her tender heart assays:
Tancred at last, to raise her hope nigh dead,
Before those walls did his broad ensign spread.

LXI

The rest to view the Christian army feared,
Such seemed their number, such their power and might,
But she alone her troubled forehead cleared,
And on them spread her beauty shining bright;
In every squadron when it first appeared,
Her curious eye sought out her chosen knight;
And every gallant that the rest excels,
The same seems him, so love and fancy tells.

LXII

Within the kingly palace builded high,
A turret standeth near the city's wall,
From which Erminia might at ease descry
The western host, the plains and mountains all,
And there she stood all the long day to spy,
From Phoebus' rising to his evening fall,
And with her thoughts disputed of his praise,
And every thought a scalding sigh did raise.

LXIII

From hence the furious combat she surveyed,
And felt her heart tremble with fear and pain,
Her secret thoughts thus to her fancy said,
Behold thy dear in danger to be slain;
So with suspect, with fear and grief dismayed,
Attended she her darling's loss or gain,
And ever when the Pagan lift his blade,
The stroke a wound in her weak bosom made.

LXIV

But when she saw the end, and wist withal
Their strong contention should eftsoons begin,

Amazement strange her courage did appal,
Her vital blood was icy cold within;
Sometimes she sighed, sometimes tears let fall,
To witness what distress her heart was in;
Hopeless, dismayed, pale, sad, astonished,
Her love, her fear; her fear, her torment bred.

LXV

Her idle brain unto her soul presented
Death in an hundred ugly fashions painted,
And if she slept, then was her grief augmented,
With such sad visions were her thoughts acquainted;
She saw her lord with wounds and hurts tormented,
How he complained, called for her help, and fainted,
And found, awaked from that unquiet sleeping,
Her heart with panting sore; eyes, red with weeping.

LXVI

Yet these presages of his coming ill,
Not greatest cause of her discomfort were,
She saw his blood from his deep wounds distil,
Nor what he suffered could she bide or bear:
Besides, report her longing ear did fill,
Doubling his danger, doubling so her fear,
That she concludes, so was her courage lost,
Her wounded lord was weak, faint, dead almost.

LXVII

And for her mother had her taught before
The secret virtue of each herb that springs,
Besides fit charms for every wound or sore
Corruption breedeth or misfortune brings, -
An art esteemed in those times of yore,
Beseeming daughters of great lords and kings -
She would herself be surgeon to her knight,
And heal him with her skill, or with her sight.

LXVIII

Thus would she cure her love, and cure her foe

She must, that had her friends and kinsfolk slain:
Some cursed weeds her cunning hand did know,
That could augment his harm, increase his pain;
But she abhorred to be revenged so,
No treason should her spotless person stain,
And virtueless she wished all herbs and charms
Wherewith false men increase their patients' harms.

LXIX

Nor feared she among the bands to stray
Of armed men, for often had she seen
The tragic end of many a bloody fray;
Her life had full of haps and hazards been,
This made her bold in every hard assay,
More than her feeble sex became, I ween;
She feared not the shake of every reed,
So cowards are courageous made through need.

LXX

Love, fearless, hardy, and audacious love,
Emboldened had this tender damsel so,
That where wild beasts and serpents glide and move
Through Afric's deserts durst she ride or go,
Save that her honor, she esteemed above
Her life and body's safety, told her no;
For in the secret of her troubled thought,
A doubtful combat, love and honor fought.

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LXXI

'O spotless virgin,' Honor thus began,
'That my true lore observed firmly hast,
When with thy foes thou didst in bondage won,
Remember then I kept thee pure and chaste,
At liberty now, where wouldest thou run,
To lay that field of princely virtue waste,
Or lost that jewel ladies hold so dear?
Is maidenhood so great a load to bear?

LXXII

'Or deem'st thou it a praise of little prize,
The glorious title of a virgin's name?
That thou will gad by night in giglot wise,
Amid thine armed foes, to seek thy shame.
O fool, a woman conquers when she flies,
Refusal kindleth, proffers quench the flame.
Thy lord will judge thou sinnest beyond measure,
If vainly thus thou waste so rich a treasure.'

LXXIII

The sly deceiver Cupid thus beguiled
The simple damsel, with his filed tongue:
'Thou wert not born,' quoth he, 'in desert wild
The cruel bears and savage beasts among,
That you shouldest scorn fair Citherea's child,
Or hate those pleasures that to youth belong,
Nor did the gods thy heart of iron frame;
To be in love is neither sin nor shame.

LXXIV

'Go then, go, whither sweet desire inviteth,
How can thy gentle knight so cruel be?
Love in his heart thy grief and sorrows writeth,
For thy laments how he complaineth, see.

Oh cruel woman, whom no care exciteth
To save his life, that saved and honored thee!
He languished, one foot thou wilt not move
To succor him, yet say'st thou art in love.

LXXV

'No, no, stay here Argantes' wounds to cure,
And make him strong to shed thy darling's blood,
Of such reward he may himself assure,
That doth a thankless woman so much good:
Ah, may it be thy patience can endure
To see the strength of this Circassian wood,
And not with horror and amazement shrink,
When on their future fight thou hap'st to think?

LXXVI

'Besides the thanks and praises for the deed,
Suppose what joy, what comfort shalt thou win,
When thy soft hand doth wholesome plaisters speed,
Upon the breaches in his ivory skin,
Thence to thy dearest lord may health succeed,
Strength to his limbs, blood to his cheeks so thin,
And his rare beauties, now half dead and more,
Thou may'st to him, him to thyself restore.

LXXVII

'So shall some part of his adventures bold
And valiant acts henceforth be held as thine;
His dear embracements shall thee straight enfold,
Together joined in marriage rites divine:
Lastly high place of honor shalt thou hold
Among the matrons sage and dames Latine,
In Italy, a land, as each one tells,
Where valor true, and true religion dwells.'

LXXVIII

With such vain hopes the silly maid abused,
Promised herself mountains and hills of gold;

Yet were her thoughts with doubts and fears confused
How to escape unseen out of that hold,
Because the watchman every minute used
To guard the walls against the Christians bold,
And in such fury and such heat of war,
The gates or seld or never opened are.

LXXIX

With strong Clorinda was Erminia sweet
In surest links of dearest friendship bound,
With her she used the rising sun to greet,
And her, when Phoebus glided under ground,
She made the lovely partner of her sheet;
In both their hearts one will, one thought was found;
Nor aught she hid from that virago bold,
Except her love, that tale to none she told.

LXXX

That kept she secret, if Clorinda heard
Her make complaints, or secretly lament,
To other cause her sorrow she referred:
Matter enough she had of discontent,
Like as the bird that having close imbarred
Her tender young ones in the springing bent,
To draw the searcher further from her nest,
Cries and complains most where she needeth least.

LXXXI

Alone, within her chamber's secret part,
Sitting one day upon her heavy thought,
Devising by what means, what sleight, what art,
Her close departure should be safest wrought,
Assembled in her unresolved heart
An hundred passions strove and ceaseless fought;
At last she saw high hanging on the wall
Clorinda's silver arms, and sighed withal:

LXXXII

And sighing, softly to herself she said,
'How blessed is this virgin in her might?
How I envy the glory of the maid,
Yet envy not her shape, or beauty's light;
Her steps are not with trailing garments stayed,
Nor chambers hide her valor shining bright;
But armed she rides, and breaketh sword and spear,
Nor is her strength restrained by shame or fear.

LXXXIII

'Alas, why did not Heaven these members frail
With lively force and vigor strengthen so
That I this silken gown and slender veil
Might for a breastplate and an helm forego?
Then should not heat, nor cold, nor rain, nor hail,
Nor storms that fall, nor blustering winds that blow
Withhold me, but I would both day and night,
In pitched field, or private combat fight.

LXXXIV

'Nor haddest thou, Argantes, first begun
With my dear lord that fierce and cruel fight,
But I to that encounter would have run,
And haply ta'en him captive by my might;
Yet should he find, our furious combat done,
His thralldom easy, and his bondage light;
For fetters, mine embracements should he prove;
For diet, kisses sweet; for keeper, love.

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LXXXV

'Or else my tender bosom opened wide,
And heart though pierced with his cruel blade,
The bloody weapon in my wounded side
Might cure the wound which love before had made;
Then should my soul in rest and quiet slide
Down to the valleys of the Elysian shade,
And my mishap the knight perchance would move,
To shed some tears upon his murdered love.

LXXXVI

'Alas! impossible are all these things,
Such wishes vain afflict my woeful sprite,
Why yield I thus to plaints and sorrowings,
As if all hope and help were perished quite?
My heart dares much, it soars with Cupid's wings,
Why use I not for once these armors bright?
I may sustain awhile this shield aloft,
Though I be tender, feeble, weak and soft.

LXXXVII

'Love, strong, bold, mighty never-tired love,
Supplieth force to all his servants true;
The fearful stags he doth to battle move,
Till each his horns in others' blood imbrue;
Yet mean not I the haps of war to prove,
A stratagem I have devised new,
Clorinda-like in this fair harness dight,
I will escape out of the town this night.

LXXXVIII

'I know the men that have the gate to ward,
If she command are not her will deny,
In what sort else could I beguile the guard?
This way is only left, this will I try:

O gentle love, in this adventure hard
Thine handmaid guide, assist and fortify!
The time, the hour now fitteth best the thing,
While stout Clorinda talketh with the king.'

LXXXIX

Resolved thus, without delay she went,
As her strong passion did her rashly guide,
And those bright arms, down from the rafter hent,
Within her closet did she closely hide;
That might she do unseen, for she had sent
The rest, on sleeveless errands from her side,
And night her stealths brought to their wished end,
Night, patroness of thieves, and lovers' friend.

XC

Some sparkling fires on heaven's bright visage shone;
His azure robe the orient blueness lost,
When she, whose wit and reason both were gone,
Called for a squire she loved and trusted most,
To whom and to a maid, a faithful one,
Part of her will she told, how that in post
She would depart from Juda's king, and feigned
That other cause her sudden flight constrained.

XCI

The trusty squire provided needments meet,
As for their journey fitting most should be;
Meanwhile her vesture, pendant to her feet,
Erminia doft, as erst determined she,
Stripped to her petticoat the virgin sweet
So slender was, that wonder was to see;
Her handmaid ready at her mistress' will,
To arm her helped, though simple were her skill.

XCII

The rugged steel oppressed and offended
Her dainty neck, and locks of shining gold;

Her tender arm so feeble was, it bended
When that huge target it presumed to hold,
The burnished steel bright rays far off extended,
She feigned courage, and appeared bold;
Fast by her side unseen smiled Venus' son,
As erst he laughed when Alcides spun.

XCIII

Oh, with what labor did her shoulders bear
That heavy burthen, and how slow she went!
Her maid, to see that all the coasts were clear,
Before her mistress, through the streets was sent;
Love gave her courage, love exiled fear,
Love to her tired limbs new vigor lent,
Till she approached where the squire abode,
There took they horse forthwith and forward rode.

XCIV

Disguised they went, and by unused ways,
And secret paths they strove unseen to gone,
Until the watch they meet, which sore affrays
Their soldiers new, when swords and weapons shone
Yet none to stop their journey once essays,
But place and passage yielded every one;
For that while armor, and that helmet bright,
Were known and feared, in the darkest night.

XCV

Erminia, though some deal she were dismayed,
Yet went she on, and goodly countenance bore,
She doubted lest her purpose were betrayed,
Her too much boldness she repented sore;
But now the gate her fear and passage stayed,
The heedless porter she beguiled therefore,
'I am Clorinda, ope the gate,' she cried,
'Where as the king commands, this late I ride.'

XCVI

Her woman's voice and terms all framed been,
Most like the speeches of the princess stout,
Who would have thought on horseback to have seen
That feeble damsel armed round about?
The porter her obeyed, and she, between
Her trusty squire and maiden, sallied out,
And through the secret dales they silent pass,
Where danger least, least fear, least peril was.

XCVII

But when these fair adventurers entered were
Deep in a vale, Erminia stayed her haste,
To be recalled she had no cause to fear,
This foremost hazard had she trimly past;
But dangers new, tofore unseen, appear,
New perils she descried, new doubts she cast.
The way that her desire to quiet brought,
More difficult now seemed than erst she thought.

XCVIII

Armed to ride among her angry foes,
She now perceived it were great oversight,
Yet would she not, she thought, herself disclose,
Until she came before her chosen knight,
To him she purposed to present the rose
Pure, spotless, clean, untouched of mortal wight,
She stayed therefore, and in her thoughts more wise,
She called her squire, whom thus she gan advise.

Torquato Tasso

Jerusalem Delivered - Book 06 - Part 08

XCIX

'Thou must,' quoth she, 'be mine ambassador,
Be wise, be careful, true, and diligent,
Go to the camp, present thyself before
The Prince Tancredi, wounded in his tent;
Tell him thy mistress comes to care his sore,
If he to grant her peace and rest consent
Gainst whom fierce love such cruel war hath raised,
So shall his wounds be cured, her torments eased.

C

'And say, in him such hope and trust she hath,
That in his powers she fears no shame nor scorn,
Tell him thus much, and whatso'er he saith,
Unfold no more, but make a quick return,
I, for this place is free from harm and scath,
Within this valley will meanwhile sojourn.'
Thus spake the princess: and her servant true
To execute the charge imposed, flew;

CI

And was received, he so discreetly wrought,
First of the watch that guarded in their place,
Before the wounded prince then was he brought,
Who heard his message kind, with gentle grace,
Which told, he left him tossing in his thought
A thousand doubts, and turned his speedy pace
To bring his lady and his mistress word,
She might be welcome to that courteous lord.

CII

But she, impatient, to whose desire
Grievous and harmful seemed each little stay,
Recounts his steps, and thinks, now draws he nigher,
Now enters in, now speaks, now comes his way;

And that which grieved her most, the careful squire
Less speedy seemed than e'er before that day;
Lastly she forward rode with love to guide,
Until the Christian tents at hand she spied.

CIII

Invested in her starry veil, the night
In her kind arms embraced all this round,
The silver moon from sea uprising bright
Spread frosty pearl upon the candid ground:
And Cynthia-like for beauty's glorious light
The love-sick nymph threw glittering beams around,
And counsellors of her old love she made
Those valleys dumb, that silence, and that shade.

CIV

Beholding then the camp, quoth she, 'O fair
And castle-like pavilions, richly wrought!
From you how sweet methinketh blows the air,
How comforts it my heart, my soul, my thought?
Through heaven's fair face from gulf of sad despair
My tossed bark to port well-nigh is brought:
In you I seek redress for all my harms,
Rest, midst your weapons; peace, amongst your arms.

CV

'Receive me, then, and let me mercy find,
As gentle love assureth me I shall,
Among you had I entertainment kind
When first I was the Prince Tancredi's thrall:
I covet not, led by ambition blind
You should me in my father's throne install,
Might I but serve in you my lord so dear,
That my content, my joy, my comfort were.'

CVI

Thus parleyed she, poor soul, and never feared
The sudden blow of Fortune's cruel spite,

She stood where Phoebe's splendid beam appeared
Upon her silver armor double bright,
The place about her round she shining cleared
With that pure white wherein the nymph was dight:
The tigress great, that on her helmet laid,
Bore witness where she went, and where she stayed.

CVII

So as her fortune would, a Christian band
Their secret ambush there had closely framed,
Led by two brothers of Italia land,
Young Poliphern and Alicandro named,
These with their forces watched to withstand
Those that brought victuals to their foes untamed,
And kept that passage; them Erminia spied,
And fled as fast as her swift steed could ride.

CVIII

But Poliphern, before whose watery eyes,
His aged father strong Clorinda slew,
When that bright shield and silver helm he spies,
The championess he thought he saw and knew;
Upon his hidden mates for aid he cries
Gainst his supposed foe, and forth he flew,
As he was rash, and heedless in his wrath,
Bending his lance, 'Thou art but dead,' he saith.

CIX

As when a chased hind her course doth bend
To seek by soil to find some ease or goad;
Whether from craggy rock the spring descend,
Or softly glide within the shady wood;
If there the dogs she meet, where late she wend
To comfort her weak limbs in cooling flood,
Again she flies swift as she fled at first,
Forgetting weakness, weariness and thirst.

CX

So she, that thought to rest her weary sprite,
And quench the endless thirst of ardent love
With dear embracements of her lord and knight,
But such as marriage rites should first approve,
When she beheld her foe, with weapon bright
Threatening her death, his trusty courser move,
Her love, her lord, herself abandoned,
She spurred her speedy steed, and swift she fled.

CXI

Erminia fled, scantly the tender grass
Her Pegasus with his light footsteps bent,
Her maiden's beast for speed did likewise pass;
Yet divers ways, such was their fear, they went:
The squire who all too late returned, alas.
With tardy news from Prince Tancredi's tent,
Fled likewise, when he saw his mistress gone,
It bootied not to sojourn there alone.

CXII

But Alicandro wiser than the rest,
Who this supposed Clorinda saw likewise,
To follow her yet was he nothing pressed,
But in his ambush still and close he lies,
A messenger to Godfrey he addressed,
That should him of this accident advise,
How that his brother chased with naked blade
Clorinda's self, or else Clorinda's shade.

CXIII

Yet that it was, or that it could be she,
He had small cause or reason to suppose,
Occasion great and weighty must it be
Should make her ride by night among her foes:
What Godfrey willed that observed he,
And with his soldiers lay in ambush close:
These news through all the Christian army went,
In every cabin talked, in every tent.

CXIV

Tancred, whose thoughts the squire had filled with doubt
By his sweet words, supposed now hearing this,
Alas! the virgin came to seek me out,
And for my sake her life in danger is;
Himself forthwith he singled from the rout,
And rode in haste, though half his arms he miss;
Among those sandy fields and valleys green,
To seek his love, he galloped fast unseen.

Torquato Tasso

Life Of My Life, You Seem To Me

Life of my life, you seem to me
Like some pallid olive tree
Or the faded rose I see:
Nor do you lack beauty,
But pleasing in every way to me,
In shyness or in flattery,
Whether you follow me or flee,
Consume, destroy me softly.

Torquato Tasso

O You, Far Colder, Whiter

O you, far colder, whiter
Than she who makes less fair
The stars with shining there:
Her purest silver cannot dim
Nor any cloud, or rain or wind,
Your sweet brightness, lovely eyes.
Would you but turn to me, with delight,
I should be happy, and my life a dream.

Torquato Tasso

Once We Were Happy

Once we were happy, I
Loving and beloved,
You loved and loving, sweetly moved.
Then you became the enemy
Of love, and I to disdain
Found youthful passion change.
Disdain demands I speak,
Disdain, that in my breast
Keeps the shame of my neglected offering fresh:
And from your laurel
Tears the leaves, now dry, once beautiful.

Torquato Tasso

To His Mistress In Absence

FAR from thy dearest self, the scope
Of all my aims,
I waste in secret flames;
And only live because I hope.

O when will Fate restore
The joys, in whose bright fire
My expectation shall expire,
That I may live because I hope no more!

Torquato Tasso

To The Duchess Of Ferrara

Royal bride, see the time advance
That calls true lovers to the dance,
To charm the clear and frosty nights,
Beneath the soft and pleasing lights.
Now a young girl dares to hear,
Love's secret pain, in her chaste ear,
And leaves her lover uncertain, gently,
At war, with life and death, sweetly.
Great palaces, painted ceilings high,
Echo with song: only I weeping make
This dark prison ring. And is this then
Your loyalty? This the great gift, that I
So longed for? Ah, then you call a grave,
And prison, your pity, and your recompense?

Torquato Tasso

What Weeping, Or What Dewfall,

What weeping, or what dewfall,
Whose then were those tears,
Flung from night's cloak, I saw,
And the white face of the stars?
Why was the white moon sowing
A pure cloud's crystal mass
In the lap of fresh new grass?
Why were the winds heard, blowing,
Through the dark air, round and round,
Till dawn, with mournful sound?
Were they perhaps the strife
Of your going, life of my life?

Torquato Tasso