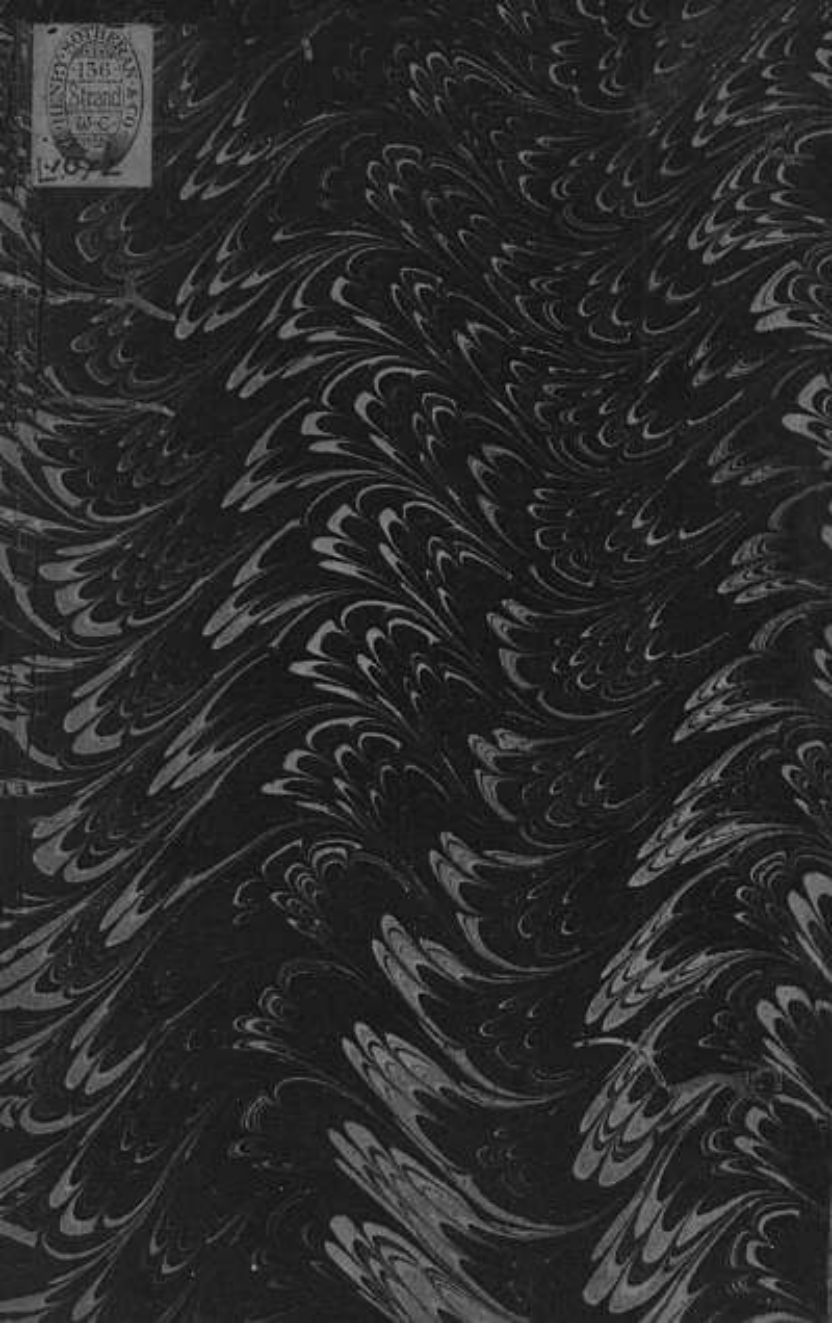
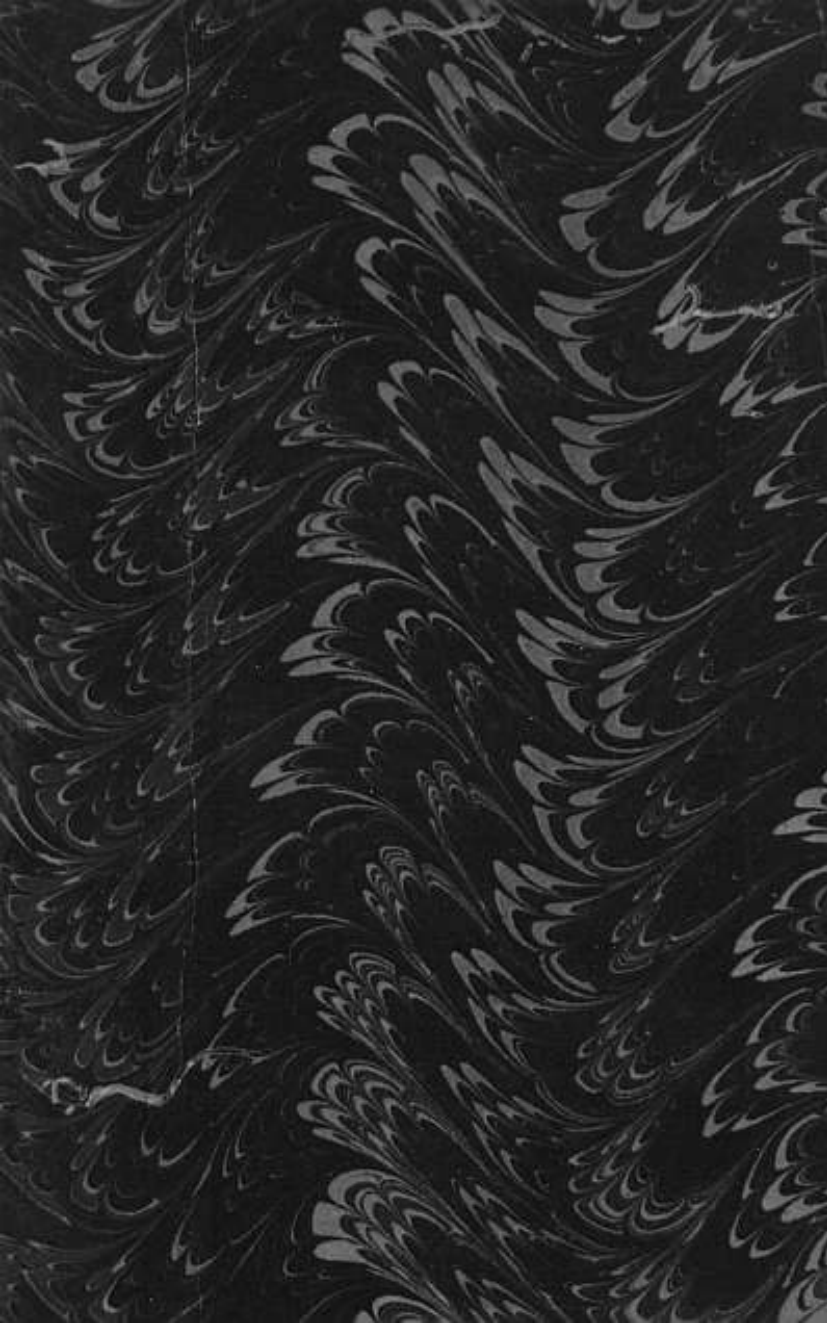




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ARIOSTO'S
ORLANDO FURIOSO

Translated by W. S. Rose.

VOL. II.

THE
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

FROM THE ITALIAN OF

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO,

WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE

New Edition.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL.

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ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

*Rogero Richardetto from the pains
Of fire preserves, doomed by Marsilius dead:
He to Rogero afterwards explains
Fully the cause while he to death was led.
Them mournful Aldigier next entertains,
And with them the ensuing morning sped,
Virian and Malagigi to set free;
To Bertolagi sold for hire and fee.*

I.

OH! mighty springs of war in youthful breast,
Impetuous force of love, and thirst of praise!
Nor yet which most avails is known aright:
For each by turns its opposite outweighs.
Within the bosom here of either knight,
Honour, be sure, and duty strongly sways:
For the amorous strife between them is delayed,
Till to the Moorish camp they furnish aid

II.

Yet Love sways more; for, save that the command
Was laid upon them by their lady gay,
Neither would in that battle sheathe the brand,
Till he was crowned with the victorious bay;
And Agramant might vainly with his band,
For either knight's expected succour, stay.
Then Love is not of evil nature still;
—He can at times do good, if often ill.

III.

Twas now, suspending all their hostile rage,
 One and the other paynim cavalier,
 The Moorish host from siege to disengage,
 For Paris, with the gentle lady, steer ;
 And with them goes as well that dwarfish page,
 Who tracked the footsteps of the Tartar peer,
 Till he had brought the warrior front to front,
 In presence with the jealous Rodomont.

IV.

They at a mead arrived, where, in disport,
 Knights were reposing by a stream, one pair
 Disarmed, another casqued in martial sort ;
 And with them was a dame of visage fair.
 Of these in other place I shall report,
 Not now ; for first Rogero is my care,
 That good Rogero, who, as I have shown,
 Into a well the magic shield had thrown.

V.

He from that well a mile is hardly gone
 Ere he a courier sees arrive at speed,
 Of those dispatched by King Troyano's son
 To knights whom he awaited in his need :
 From him Rogero hears that ' so foredone
 ' By Charles are those who hold the paynim creed,
 ' They will, save quickly succoured in the strife,
 ' As quickly forfeit liberty and life.'

VI.

Rogero stood awhile in pensive case,
 Whom many warring thoughts at once opprest :
 But neither fitted was the time nor place
 To make his choice, or judge what promised best.
 The courier he dismiss, and turned his face
 Whither he with the damsel was address ;
 Whom aye the Child so hurried on her way,
 He left her not a moment for delay.

VII.

Pursuing thence their ancient road again,
 They reached a city, with the westering sun ;
 Which, in the midst of France, from Charlemagne
 Marsilius had in that long warfare won :
 Nor them to interrupt or to detain,
 At drawbridge or at gate, was any one :
 Though in the fosse, and round the palissade,
 Stood many men, and piles of arms were laid.

VIII.

Because the troop about that fortress see
 Accompanying him the well-known dame,
 They to Rogero leave the passage free,
 Nor even question him from whence he came.
 Reaching the square, of evil company
 He finds it full, and bright with ruddy flame;
 And, in the midst, is manifest to view
 The youth condemn'd, with face of pallid hue

IX.

As on the stripling's face he turns his eyes,
 Which hangs declined and wet with frequent tear,
 Rogero thinks he Bradamant descries;
 So much the youth resembles her in cheer:
 More sure the more intently he espies
 Her face and shape: when thus the cavalier;
 "Or this is Bradamant, or I no more
 "Am the Rogero which I was before.

X.

"She hath adventured with too daring will,
 "In rescue of the youth condemn'd to die;
 "And, for the enterprise has eud'd ill,
 "Hath here been taken, as I see. Ah! why
 "Was she so hot her purpose to fulfil,
 "That she must hither unattended hie?
 "—But I thank Heaven, that hither have I made:
 "Since I am yet in time to lend her aid."

XI.

He drew his falchion without more delay,
 (His lance was broken at the other town),¹
 And, through the unarmed people making way,
 Wounding flank, paunch, and bosom, bore them down.
 He whirled his weapon, and, amid the array,
 Smote some across the gullet, cheek, or crown.
 Screaming, the dissipated rabble fled;
 The most with cloven limbs or broken head.

XII.

As while at feed, in full security,
 A troop of fowl along the marish wend,
 If suddenly a falcon from the sky
 Swoop mid the crowd, and one surpris'd and rend,
 The rest dispersing, leave their mate to die,
 And only to their own escape attend;
 So scattering hadst thou seen the frighted throng,
 When young Rogero pricked that crowd among.

XIII.

Rogero smites the head from six or four,
 Who in escaping from the field are slow.
 He to the breast divides as many more,
 And countless to the eyes and teeth below.
 I grant no helmets on their heads they wore,
 But there were shining iron caps enow;
 And, if fine helmets did their temples press,
 His sword would cut as deep, or little less.

XIV.

Such good Rogero's force and valour are,
 As never now-a-days in warrior dwell;
 Nor yet in rampant lion, nor in bear,
 Nor (whether home or foreign) beast more fell.
 Haply with him the earthquake might compare,
 Or haply the great devil—not he of hell—
 But he who is my lord's,² who moves in fire,
 And parts heaven, earth, and ocean in his ire.

XV.

At every stroke he never less o'erthrew
 Than one, and oftener two, upon the plain;
 And four, at once, and even five he slew;
 So that a hundred in a thought were slain.
 The sword Rogero from his girdle drew
 As knife cuts curd, divides their plate and chain,
 Falerina in Orgagna's garden made,
 To deal Orlando death, that cruel blade.³

XVI.

But to have forged that falchion sorely rued,
 Who saw her garden wasted by the brand.
 What wreck, what ruin then must have ensued,
 From this when wielded by such warrior's hand?
 If e'er Rogero force, e'er fury shewed,
 If e'er his mighty valour well was scanned,
 'Twas here; 'twas here employed; 'twas here displayed;
 In the desire to give his lady aid.

XVII.

As hare from hound unslipt, that helpless train
 Defends itself against the cavalier.
 Many lay dead upon the cumbered plain,
 And numberless were they who fled in fear.
 Meanwhile the damsel had unloosed the chain
 From the youth's hands, and him in martial gear
 Was hastening, with what speed she might, to deck,
 With sword in hand and shield about his neck.⁴

XVIII.

He, who was angered sore, as best he could,
 Sought to avenge him of that evil crew ;
 And gave such signal proofs of hardihood,
 As stamped him for a warrior good and true.
 The sun already in the western flood
 Had dipt his gilded wheels, what time the two,
 Valiant Rogero and his young compeer,
 Victorious issued, of the city clear.

XIX.

When now Rogero and the stranger knight,
 Clear of the city-gates, the champaign reach,
 The youth repays, with praises infinite,
 Rogero in kind mode and cunning speech,
 Who him, although unknown, had sought to right,
 At risk of life, and prays his name to teach,
 That he may know to whom his thanks he owed
 For such a mighty benefit bestowed.

XX.

"The visage of my Bradamsnt I see,
 "The beauteous features and the beauteous cheer,"
 Rogero said ; "and yet the suavity
 "I of her well-known accents do not hear :
 "Nor such return of thanks appears to be
 "In place towards her faithful cavalier.
 "And if in very sooth it is the same,
 "How has the maid so soon forgot my name?"

XXI.

In wary wise, intent the truth to find,
 Rogero said, "You have I seen elsewhere ;
 "And have again, and yet again, divined,
 "Yet know I not, nor can remember where.
 "Say it, yourself, if it returns to mind,
 "And, I beseech, your name as well declare :
 "Which I would gladly hear, in the desire
 "To know whom I have rescued from the fire."

XXII.

"—Me it is possible you may have seen,
 "I know not when nor where (the youth replied) ;
 "For I too range the world, in armour sheen,
 "Seeking adventure strange on every side ;
 "Or haply it a sister may have been,
 "Who to her waist the knightly sword has tied ;
 "Born with me at a birth ; so like to view,
 "The family discerns not who is who.

XXIII.

- " You not first, second, or even fourth will be,
 " Who have in this their error had to learn ;
 " Nor father, brother, nor even mother me
 " From her (such our resemblance) can discern.
 " 'Tis true, this hair, which short and loose you see,
 " In manly guise, and hers, with many a turn,
 " And in long tresses wound about her brow,
 " Wide difference made between us two till now.

XXIV.

- " But since the day, that, wounded by a Moor
 " In the head (a story tedious to recite),
 " A holy man, to heal the damsel's sore,
 " Cut short to the mid-ear her tresses bright,
 " Excepting sex and name, there is no more
 " One from the other to distinguish : light
 " I Richardetto am, Bradamant she ;
 " Rinaldo's brother and his sister we.

XXV.

- " And to displease you were I not afraid,
 " You with a wonder would I entertain,
 " Which chanced from my resemblance to the maid ;
 " Begun in pleasure, finishing in pain."
 He to whom nought more pleasing could be said,
 And to whose ears there was no sweeter strain
 Than what in some sort on his lady ran,
 Besought the stripling so, that he began.

XXVI.

- " It so fell out, that as my sister through
 " The neighbouring wood pursued her path, a wound
 " Was dealt the damsel by a paynim crew,
 " Which her by chance without a helmet found.
 " And she was fain to trim the locks which grew
 " Clustering about the gash, to make her sound
 " Of that ill cut which in her head she bore :
 " Hence, shorn, she wandered through the forest hour.

XXVII.

- " Ranging, she wandered to a shady font ;
 " Where, worn and troubled, she, in weary wise,
 " Lit from her courser and disarmed her front,
 " And, couched upon the greensward, closed her eyes.
 " A tale more pleasing than what I recount
 " In story there is none, I well surmise :
 " Thither repaired young Flordeaspine of Spain,
 " Who in that wood was hunting with her train.

XXVIII.

- " And, when she found my sister in the shade,
 " Covered, except her face, with martial gear,
 " —In place of spindle, furnished with the blade—
 " Believed that she beheld a cavalier :
 " The face and manly semblance she surveyed,
 " Till conquered was her heart : with courteous cheer
 " She wooed the maid to hunt with her, and past
 " With her alone into that holt at last.

XXIX.

- " When now she had her, fearless of surprise,
 " Safe in a solitary place, that dame,
 " By slow degrees, in words and amorous wise,
 " Showed her deep-wounded heart ; with sighs of flame,
 " Breathed from her inmost breast, with burning eyes,
 " She spake her soul sick with desire ; became
 " Now pale, now red ; nor longer self-controlled,
 " Ravished a kiss, she waxed so passing bold.

XXX.

- " My sister was assured the huntress maid
 " Falsely conceited her a man to be ;
 " Nor in that need could she afford her aid ;
 " And found herself in sore perplexity.
 " 'Tis better that I now dispel (she said)
 " The foolish thought she feeds, and that in me
 " The damsel should a gentle woman scan,
 " Rather than take me for a craven man.'

XXXI.

- " And she said well : for cravenhood it were
 " Befitting man of straw, nor warrior true,
 " With whom so bright a lady deigned to pair,
 " So wonderous sweet and full of nectarous dew,
 " To clack like a poor cuckoo to the fair,
 " Hanging his coward wing, when he should woo.
 " Shaping her speech to this in wary mode,
 " My sister ' that she was a damsel, showed ;

XXXII.

- " That, like Camilla and like Hyppolite,
 " Sought fame in battle-field, and near the sea,
 " In Afric, in Arzilla, saw the light ;
 " To shield and spear enured from infancy.'
 " A spark this quenched not ; nor yet burned less bright
 " The enamoured damsel's kindled phantasy.
 " Too tardy came the salve to ease the smart ;
 " So deep had Love already driven his dart.

XXXIII.

- " Nor yet less fair to her my sister's face
 " Appeared, less fair her ways, less fair her guise ;
 " Nor yet the heart returned into its place,
 " Which joyed itself within those dear-loved eyes.
 " Flordespine deems the damsel's iron case,
 " To her desire some hope of ease supplies,
 " And when she thinks she is indeed a maid,
 " Laments and sobs, with mighty woe downweighed.

XXXIV.

- " He who had marked her sorrow and lament
 " That day, himself had sorrowed with the fair.
 " What pains (she said) did ever wight torment,
 " So cruel, but that mine more cruel were ?
 " I need not to accomplish my intent,
 " In other love, impure or pure, despair ;
 " The rose I well might gather from the thorn :
 " My longing only is of hope forlorn.

XXXV.

- " If 'twas thy pleasure, Love, to have me shent,
 " Because my glad estate thine anger stirred,
 " Thou with some torture might'st have been content
 " On other lovers used ; but never word
 " Have I found written of a female bent
 " On love of female, mid mankind or herd.
 " Woman to woman's beauty still is blind ;
 " Nor ewe delights in ewe, nor hind in hind.

XXXVI.

- " 'Tis only I, on earth, in air, or sea,
 " Who suffer at thy hands such cruel pain :
 " And this thou hast ordained, that I may be
 " The first and last example in thy reign.
 " Folly did Ninus' wife and impiously
 " For her own son a passion entertain ;
 " Loved was Pasiphæ's bull and Myrrha's sire ;
 " But mine is madder than their worst desire.

XXXVII.

- " Here female upon male had set her will ;
 " Had hope ; and, as I hear, was satisfied.
 " Pasiphæ the wooden cow did fill :
 " Others, in other mode, their want supplied.
 " But, had he flown to me,—with all his skill,
 " Dan Dædalus had not the noose untied :
 " For one too diligent hath wreathed these strings ;
 " Even Nature's self, the puissantess of things.

XXXVIII.

- " So grieves the maid, so goads herself and wears,
 " And shows no haste her sorrowing to forego ;
 " Sometimes her face, sometimes her tresses tears,
 " And levels at herself the vengeful blow.
 " In pity, Bradamant the sorrow shares,
 " And is constrained to hear the tale of woe.
 " She studies to divert, with fruitless pain,
 " The strange and wild desire : but speaks in vain.

XXXIX.

- " She, who requires assistance, not support,
 " Still more laments herself, with grief oppress.
 " By this the waning day was growing short,
 " For the low sun was crimsoning the west ;
 " A fitting hour for those to seek a port,
 " Who would not in the wood set up their rest :
 " When to this city, near her sylvan haunt,
 " Young Flordespine invited Bradamant.

XL.

- " My sister the request could ill deny ;
 " And so they came together to the place,
 " Where, but for you, by that ill squadron I
 " Had been compelled the cruel flame to face :
 " There Flordespina made her family
 " Caress and do my sister no small grace ;
 " And, having in a female robe arraid,
 " Past her on all beholders for a maid.

XLI.

- " Because perceiving vantage there was none
 " In the male cheer by which she was misled,
 " The damsel held it wise, reproach to shun,
 " Which might by any carping tongue be said.
 " And this the rather : that the ill, which one
 " Of the two garments in her mind had bred,
 " Now with the other which revealed the cheat,
 " She would assay to drive from her conceit.

XLII.

- " The ladies share one common bed that night,
 " Their bed the same, but different their repose.
 " One sleeps, one groans and weeps in piteous plight,
 " Because her wild desire more fiercely glows ;
 " And on her wearied eyes should slumber light,
 " All is deceitful *that* brief slumber shows.
 " To her it seems, as if relenting Heaven
 " A better sex to Bradamant has given.

XLIII.

- " As the sick man with burning thirst distrest,
 " If he should sleep,—ere ho that wish fulfil,—
 " Aye in his troubled, interrupted, rest,
 " Remembers him of every once-seen rill :
 " So is the damsel's fancy still possess'd,
 " In sleep, with images which glad her will.
 " Then from the empty dreams which crowd her brain.
 " She wakes, and, waking, find's the vision vain.

XLIV.

- " What vows she vow'd, how oft that night she pray'd,
 " To all her gods and Mahound, in despair !
 " —That they, by open miracle, the maid
 " Would change, and give her other sex to wear.
 " But all the lady's vows were ill appaid,
 " And haply Heaven as well might mock the prayer ;
 " Night fades, and Phœbus raises from the main
 " His yellow head, and lights the world again.

XLV.

- " On issuing from their bed when day is broken,
 " The wretched Flordespina's woes augment :
 " For of departing Bradamant had spoken,
 " Anxious to scape from that embarrassment.
 " The princess a prime jennet, as a token,
 " Forced on my parting sister, when she went ;
 " And gilded housings, and a surcoat brave,
 " Which her own hand had richly broidered, gave.

XLVI.

- " Her Flordespine accompanied some way,
 " Then, weeping, to her castle made return.
 " So fast my sister pricked, she reached that day
 " Mount Alban ; we who for her absence mourn,
 " Mother and brother, greet the martial may,
 " And her arrival with much joy discern :
 " For hearing nought, we feared that she was dead,
 " And had remained in cruel doubt and dread.

XLVII.

- " Unhelmed, we wondered at her hair, which passed
 " In braids about her brow, she whilom wore ;
 " Nor less we wondered at the foreign cast *
 " Of the embroidered surcoat which she wore :
 " And she to us rehearsed, from first to last,
 " The story I was telling you before ;
 " How she was wounded in the wood, and how,
 " For cure, were shorn the tresses from her brow ;

XLVIII.

- ' And next how came on her, with labour spent,
 ' —As by the stream she slept—that huntress bright;
 ' And how, with her false semblance well content,
 ' She from the train withdrew her out of sight.
 ' Nor left she anything of her lament
 ' Untold; which touched with pity every wight;
 ' Told how the maid had harboured her, and all
 ' Which past, till she revisited her Hall.'

XLIX.

- " Of Flordespine I knew: and I had seen
 " In Saragossa and in France the maid;
 " To whose bewitching eyes and lovely mien
 " My youthful appetite had often strayed:
 " Yet her I would not make my fancy's queen;
 " For hopeless love is but a dream and shade:
 " Now I this proffered in such substance view,
 " Straightway the ancient flame breaks forth anew.

L.

- " Love, with this hope, constructs his subtle ties;
 " Who other threads for me would vainly weave.
 " 'Tis thus he took me, and explained the guise
 " In which I might the long-sought boon achieve.
 ' Easy it were the damsel to surprise;
 ' For as the likeness others could deceive,
 ' Which I to Bradamant, my sister, bear,
 ' This haply might as well the maid ensnare.'

LI.

- " Whether I speed or no, I hold it wise,
 " Aye to pursue whatever gives delight.
 " I with no other of my plan devise,
 " Nor any seek to counsel me aright.
 " Well knowing where the suit of armour lies
 " My sister doffed, I thither go at night;
 " Her armour and her steed to boot I take,
 " Nor stand expecting until daylight break.

LII.

- I rode all night—Love served me as a guide—
 " To seek the home of beauteous Flordespine;
 " And there arrived, before in ocean's tide
 " The western sun had hid his orbit sheen.
 " A happy man was he who fastest hied
 " To tell my coming to the youthful queen;
 " Expecting from that lady, for his pain,
 " Favour and goodly guerdon to obtain.

LIII.

- " For Bradamant the guests mistake me all,
 " —As you yourself but now—so much the more,
 " That I have both the courser and the palfrey,
 " With which she left them but the day before.
 " Floridespine comes at little interval,
 " With such festivity and courteous lore,
 " And with a face, so jocund and so gay,
 " She could not, for her life, more joy display.

LIV.

- " Her beauteous arms about my neck she throws,
 " And fondly clasping me, my mouth she kist.
 " If to my inmost heart the arrow goes,
 " Which Love directs, may well by you be wist,
 " She leads me to her chamber of repose
 " In haste, nor suffers other to assist
 " In taking off my panoply of steel;
 " Disarming me herself from head to heel.

LV.

- " Then, ordering from her store a costly vest,
 " She spread it, and—as I a woman were—
 " The lady me in that rich garment drest,
 " And in a golden net confined my hair.
 " I gravely moved my eye-balls, nor confest,
 " By gesture or by look, the sex I bear.
 " My voice, which might discover the deceit,
 " I tuned so well that none perceived the cheat.

LVI.

- " Next to the hall, where dame and cavalier
 " In crowds are gathered, we united go;
 " Who make to us such court and goodly cheer,
 " As men to queen or high-born lady show.
 " Here oft I laughed at some, with secret jeer,
 " Who, knowing not the sex concealed below
 " My flowing robe of feminine array,
 " Wooed me with wishful eyes in wanton way.

LVII.

- " When more advanced is now the festive night,
 " And the rich board—board plenteously purveyed
 " With what in season was most exquisite—
 " Has been some time removed, the royal maid
 " Expects not till I of myself recite
 " The cause, which thither me anew conveyed:
 " By her own courtesy and kindness led,
 " That lady prays me to partake her bed.

LVIII.

- "Damsels and dames withdrawn—with all the rest—
 "Pages and chamberlains, when now we lay,
 "One and the other, in our bed undrest,
 "With kindled torches, counterfeiting day;
 "Marvel not, lady,' (her I thus address,)
 "That I return after such short delay;
 "For, haply, thou imagined, that again
 "Thou shouldst not see me until Heaven knows when.

LIX.

- 'The reason I departed from thy side,
 'And next of my return, explained shall be.
 'Could I unto thy fever have applied,
 'By longer sojourn here, a remedy,
 'I in thy service would have lived and died,
 'Nor would have been an hour away from thee:
 'But seeing how my stay increased thy woe,
 'I, who could do no better, fixed to go.

LX.

- 'Into the middle of a wood profound
 'By chance I from the beaten pathway strayed:
 'Where near me plaintive cries I hear resound,
 'As of a woman who intreated aid.
 'To a lake of crystal I pursue the sound,
 'And, there, amid the waves, a naked maid
 'Caught on the fish-hook of a Faun, survey,
 'Who would devour alive his helpless prey.

LXI.

- 'Upon the losel, sword in hand, I ran,
 'And, for I could not aid in other wise,
 'Bereft of life that evil fisherman.
 'She in an instant to the water flies.
 '*—Me hast thou helped not vainly,*' (she began)
 '*And well shalt be rewarded—with what prize*
 '*Thou canst demand—for know I am a nymph,*
 '*And have my dwelling in this crystal lymph*

LXII.

- 'And power is mine to work portentous ends;
 'Nature and Elements I force: thy prayer
 'Shape to the scope to which my strength extends,
 'And leave its satisfaction to my care.
 'Charmed by my song the moon from Heaven descends
 'Fire can I freeze, and harden liquid air;
 'And I at times have stopt the sun, and stirred
 'This earth beneath me by a simple word.'

LXIII.

- "Treasure I covet not, nor yet aspire
 "O'er land or people to hold sovereign away ;
 "Nor greater strength nor valour would acquire,
 "Nor fame in every warfare bear away ;
 "But only to accomplish thy desire,
 "Entreat the damsel she will show some way.
 "Nor one nor other method I forestall ;
 "But to her choice refer me, all in all.

LXIV.

- "Scarce my demand was made, before mine eye
 "Beneath the lymph engulfed that lady viewed :
 "Nor answered she my prayer, but, for reply,
 "Me with the enchanted element bedewed ;
 "Which has no sooner touched my face than I,
 "I know not how, am utterly transwewed :
 "I see, I feel—yet doubting what I scan—
 "Feel, I am changed from woman into man.

LXX.

- "The thing remained concealed between us two ;
 "So that our bliss endured some months ; at last
 "We were espied ; and, as I sorely rue,
 "The tidings to the Spanish monarch past.
 "Thou that whilerc preserved'st me from the crew,
 "Which me into the flames designed to cast,
 "By this mayst fully comprehend the rest ;
 "But God alone can read my sorrowing breast."

LXXI.

- So Richardetto spake, and by his say
 Made the dark path they trod less irksome be.
 Up a small height this while their journey lay,
 Girdled with cliff and cavern, drear to see.
 Bristling with rocks, a steep and narrow way
 Was to that rugged hill the stubborn key ;
 A town, called Agrismonte, crowned the steep,
 Which Aldigier of Clermont had in keep.

LXXII.

- Bastard of Buovo, brother to the pair,
 Sir Vivian and Sir Malagigi light :
 Who him Gerardo's lawful son declare,
 Are witnesses of little worth and light.
 —This, as it may !—strong, valiant, wise, and ware,
 Liberal, humane, and courteous was the knight ;
 And on the fortress of its absent lord,
 By night and day, kept faithful watch and ward.

LXXIII.

His cousin Richardetto, as beloved,
 Was courteously received by Aldigier ;
 Who him as dearly as a brother loved,
 And made Rogero for his sake good cheer ;
 But not with wonted welcome ;—inly moved—
 He even wore a visage sad and drear :
 For he, that day, ill-tidings had received,
 And hence in heart and face the warrior grieved.

LXXIV.

To Richardetto he exclaims, instead
 Of greeting ; “ Evil news are hither blown.
 “ By a sure messenger, to-day I read
 “ That faithless Bertolagi of Bayonne,
 “ With barbarous Lanfusa has agreed,
 “ And costly spoils makes over to that crone ;
 “ Who will consign to him the brethren twain,
 “ Thy Malugigi and thy Viviane ;

LXXV.

“ These she, since Ferrau took them, aye has stayed
 “ Imprisoned in a dark and evil cell ;
 “ Till the discourteous and foul pact was made
 “ With that false Maganzese of whom I tell ;
 “ And them to-morrow, to a place conveyed
 “ Twixt Bayonne and a town of his, will sell
 “ To him, who will be present, to advance
 “ The price of the most precious blood in France.

LXXVI.

“ One, at a gallop, even now, to report
 “ Tidings to our Rinaldo of the wrong,
 “ I sent ; but fear that he can ill resort
 “ To him in time, the journey is so long.
 “ Men have I not to sally from my fort ;
 “ And my power halts where my desire is strong.
 “ The traitor will the knights, if rendered, slay ;
 “ Nor know I what to do nor what to say.”

LXXVII.

Sir Richardetto the ill news displeasè,
 And (as they him) displeasè in equal wise
 Rogero ; who, when silent both he sees,
 Nor able any counsel to devise,
 Exclaims with nuckle daring ; “ Be at ease ;
 “ I challenge for myself the whole surprize ;
 “ And, to set free your brethren, in my hand
 “ More than a thousand shall avail this brand.

LXXVIII.

" I ask not men, I ask not aid ; my spear
 " Is, I believe, sufficient to the feat.
 " I only ask of you a guide to steer
 " Me to the place where for the exchange they meet :
 " I even in this place will make you hear
 " Their cries, who for that evil bargain treat."
 He said ; nor to *one* listener of the twain,
 That had beheld his actions, spake in vain.

LXXIX.

The other heard him not, or heard at most
 As we great talkers hear, who little do :
 But Richardetto took aside their host
 And told, ' how him he from the fire withdrew ;
 ' And how he was assured, beyond his boast,
 ' He would in time and place his prowess shew.'
 'Twas now that better audience than before
 Aldigier lent, and set by him great store ;

LXXX.

And at the feast, where Plenty for the three
 Emptied her horn, him honoured as his lord.
 Here they conclude they can the brethren free
 Without more succour from their gsoler's ward.
 This while Sleep seized on lord and family,
 Save young Rogero : no repose afford
 To him the thoughts, which evermore molest,
 And, rankling in his bosom, banish rest.

LXXXI.

The siege of Agramant, to him that day
 Told by the messenger, he has at heart.
 He well discerns that every least delay
 Will be dishonour. ' What a ceaseless smart
 ' Will scorn inflict, what shame will him appay,
 ' If he against his sovereign lord take part ?
 ' Oh ! what foul cowardice, how foul a crime
 ' His baptism will appear at such a time !'

LXXXII.

That true religion had the stripling swayed
 Men might at any other time conceive :
 But now, when needed was the warrior's aid
 From siege the Moorish menarch to relieve,
 That Fear and Baseness had more largely weighed,
 In his design, would every one believe,
 Than any preference of a better creed :
 This thought makes good Rogero's bosom bleed.

LXXXIII.

Nor less to quit his Queen, her leave unsought,
 Did with Rogero's other griefs combine :
 Now *this* and now *that* care upon him wrought ;
 Which diversely his doubtful heart incline :
 Thè unhappy lover fruitlessly had thought
 To find her at the abode of Flordespine ;
 Whither together went (as told whilere),
 To succour Richardetto, maid and peer.

LXXXIV.

He next bethinks him of the promise plight
 To meet at Vallombrosa's sanctuary,
 Deems her gone thither, and that 'twill excite
 Her wonderment himself not there to see.
 ' Could he at least a message send or write,
 ' That he with reason might not censured be,
 ' Because not only he had disobeyed,
 ' But was departed hence, and nothing said !'

LXXXV.

He, having thought on many things, in the end
 Resolves on writing what behoves ; and, though
 He knows not how his letter he shall send,
 In the assurance it will safely go,
 This hinders not ; he thinks that, as they wend,
 Chance in his way some faithful Post may throw ;
 Nor more delays : up leaps the restless knight,
 And calls for pen and paper, ink and light.

LXXXVI.

That which is needed, in obedience meet,
 Aldigier's valets bring, a careful band.
 The youth begins to write ; and, first, to greet
 The maid, as wonted courtesies demand ;
 Next tells, ' how Agramant has sent to entreat,
 ' In his dispatches, succour at his hand ;
 ' And, save he quickly to his comfort goes,
 ' Must needs be slain or taken by his foes.'

LXXXVII.

Then adds, ' his sovereign being so bested,
 ' And praying him for succour in his pain,
 ' She must perceive what blame upon his head
 ' Would light, if Agramant applied in vain ;
 ' And, since with her he is about to wed,
 ' 'Tis fitting he should keep him without stain ;
 ' For ill he deems a union could endure
 ' Between aught foul and her so passing pure.

LXXXVIII.

' And if he erst a name, renowned and clear,
 ' Had laboured to procure by actions fair,
 ' And having gained it thus, he held it dear,
 ' —If this had sought to keep—with greater care
 ' He kept it now,—and with a miser's fear
 ' Guarded the treasure she with him would share;
 ' Who, though distinct in body and in limb,
 ' When wedded, ought to be ore soul with him;'

LXXXIX.

And, as he erst by word, he now explained
 Anew by writing, ' that the period o'er,
 ' For which he was to serve his king constrained,
 ' Unless it were his lot to die before,
 ' He would in deed a christian be ordained,
 ' As in resolve he had been evermore;
 ' And of her kin, Rinaldo and her sire,
 ' Her afterwards in wedlock would require.

XC.

" I would," he said, " relieve, with your good will,
 " My king, besieged by Charlemagne's array,
 " That the misjudging rabble, prone to ill,
 " Might never, to my shame and scandal, say;
 " Rogero, in fair wind and weather, still
 " Waited upon his sovereign, night and day,
 " And now that Fortune to King Charles is fled,
 " Has with that conquering lord his ensign spread.

XCI.

" I fifteen days or twenty ask, that I
 " Yet once again may to our army speed;
 " So that, by me from leaguering enemy
 " The African cantonments may be freed:
 " I will some fit and just occasion spy,
 " Meanwhile, to justify my change of creed.
 " I for my honour make this sole request;
 " Then wholly yours for life, in all things, rest."

XCII.

Rogero in such words his thoughts exposed,
 Which never could by me be fully showed;
 And added more, nor from his task reposed,
 Until the crowded paper overflowed:
 He next the letter folded and enclosed,
 And sealed it, and within his bosom stowed;
 In hopes to meet next morning by the way
 One who might covertly that writ convey.

XCIII.

When he had closed the sheet, that amorous knight
 His eyelids closed as well, and rest ensued :
 For Slumber came and steeped his wearied might
 In balmy moisture, from a branch imbued
 With Lethe's waters ; and he slept till—white
 And red—a rain of flowers the horizon strewed,
 Painting the joyous east with colours gay ;
 When from her gold'en dwelling broke the day :

XCIV.

And when the greenwood birds 'gan, far and wide,
 Greet the returning light with gladsome strain,
 Sir Aldigier (who wished to be the guide,
 Upon that journey, of the warlike twain,
 Who would in succour of those brethren ride,
 To rescue them from Bertolagi's chain)
 Was first upon his feet ; and either peer
 Issues as well from bed, when him they hear.

XCV.

When clad and thoroughly in arms arrayed—
 Rogero with the cousins took his way,
 Having that pair already warmly prayed
 The adventure on himself alone to lay :
 But these, by love for those two brethren swayed,
 And deeming it discourtesy to obey,
 Stood out against his prayer, more stiff than stone,
 Nor would consent that he should wend alone.

XCVI.

True to the time and place of change, they lie
 Whither Sir Aldigier's advices teach ;
 And there survey an ample band who lie
 Exposed to fierce Apollo's heat ; in reach,
 Nor myrtle-tree nor laurel they descry,
 Nor tapering cypress, ash, nor spreading beech :
 But naked gravel with low shrubs discerned,
 Undelved by mattock and by share unturned.

XCVII.

Those three adventurous warriors halted where
 A path went through the uncultivated plain,
 And saw a knight arrive upon the lair,
 Who, flourished o'er with gold, wore plate and chain,
 And on green field that beauteous bird and rare,
 Which longer than an age extends its reign.
 No more, my lord ; for at my canto's close
 I find myself arrived, and crave repose.

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

*Of mighty matters, sculptured in a font,
Does Malogigi to his comrades tell :
On them come Mandricardo and Rodomont,
And forthwith battle follows fierce and fell.
Discord goes scattering quarrel and affront
Amid the crew : but whither, forced by spell,
Fair Daralice upon her palfrey speeds,
The Tartar king, and Sarzan, turn their steeds.*

I.

In former ages courteous ladies were,
Who worshipt virtue, and not worldly gear.
Women in this degenerate age are rare,
To whom aught else but sordid gain is dear :
But they who real goodness make their care,
Nor with the avaricious many steer,
In this frail life are worthy to be blest,
—Held glorious and immortal when at rest.

II.

Bradamant well would deathless praise inherit,
Who nor in wealth nor empire took delight ;
But in Rogero's worth, excelling spirit,
In his unbounded gentlesse ; and aright
For this did good Duke Aymon's daughter merit
To be beloved of such a valorous knight ;
Who, what might be for miracles received,
In future ages, for her sake achieved.

III.

He, with those two of Clermont, as whilero
To you I in the former canto said,
I say with Richardet and Aldigier,
Was gone, to give the prisoned brethren aid :
I told, as well how they a cavalier
Of haughty look approaching had surveyed,
Who bore that noble bird, by fiery birth
Renewed, and ever single upon earth.

IV.

When those three of that warrior were espied,
Poised on the wing, as if about to smite,
He fain by proof their prowess would have tried,
And if their semblance tallied with their might.
“ Is there, among you, one,” the stranger cried,
“ Will prove upon me, which is best in fight,
“ With lance or sword, till one to ground be cast,
“ While in the sell his foe is seated fast ?”

V.

"—I, at your choice," said Aldigier, "were fain
 "To flourish faulchion, or to tilt with spear;
 "But this with feat, which, if you here remain,
 "Yourself may witness, so would interfero,
 "That for the present parley time with pain
 "Suffices, and yet less for the career.
 "Six hundred men, or more, we here attend,
 "With whom we must to-day in arms contend.

VI.

"Two of our own to rescue from their foes,
 "And free from chains, us Love and Pity sway.
 He to that stranger next the reason shows
 Why thus in steel their bodies they array.
 "So just is the excuse which you oppose,"
 —He answered—"that I ill should this gainsay,
 "And hold you surely for three cavaliers
 "That seldom upon earth will find their peers.

VII.

"With you a lance or two I would have crost
 "To prove how great your prowess in the field;
 "But, since 'tis shown me at another's cost,
 "Forego the joust, and to your reasons yield.
 "Warmly I pray your leave against that host,
 "To join with your good arms this helm and shield;
 "And hope, if suffered of your band to be,
 "No worthless comrade shall you find in me."

VIII.

Some one, mescems, may crave the stranger's name,
 Who thus the champions on their road delayed,
 And so to partnership in arms laid claim
 With those three warriors, for the strife arrayed:
 Suz—style no more a man that martial dame—
 Marphisa was; that on Zerbino laid
 The task to bear about, against his will,
 Ribald Gabrina, prone to every ill.

IX.

The two of Clermont and their bold compeer*
 Gladly received her succour in her cause,
 Whom certes they believed a cavalier,
 And not a damsel, and not what she was.
 A banner was espied by Aldigier
 And shown the others, after little pause,
 Which by the wavering wind was blown about,
 And round about it ranged a numerous rout.

* Rogero

X.

And when, now nearer, the advancing crew
 Were better marked in Moorish habit stoled,
 For Saracens the stranger band they knew ;
 And they upon two sorry jades behold,
 I' the middle of that troop, the prisoners, who
 Were to the false Maganza to be sold.
 Marphisa cries, " Why is the feast delayed,
 " When lo ! the guests are here, for whom we stayed ?"

XI.

—" Not all:" Rogero said, " of the array
 " Invited, lacks as yet a numerous part :
 " A solemn festival is held to-day,
 " And we, to grace it more, use every art :
 " Yet they can now but little more delay."
 While thus they parley, they from other part
 Desery the treacherous Maganzese advance ;
 So all was ready to begin the dance.

XII.

They of Maganza from one quarter steer,
 And laden mules beneath their convoy go,
 Bearing vest, gold, and other costly gear.
 On the other side, mid faulchion, spear, and bow,
 Approached the captive two with doleful cheer,
 Who found themselves awaited by the foe ;
 And false and impious Bertolagi heard,
 As with the Moorish captain they conferred.

XIII.

Nor Buovo's nor Duke Aymon's valiant son*
 Can hold, when that false Maganzese they view ;
 Against him both with rested lauces run :
 He falls the victim of those furious two,
 Through belly and through pummel pierced by one
 And by the other, in mid visage, through
 His bleeding cheeks : may like disastrous fate
 O'erwhelm all evil doers, soon or late !

XIV.

Marphisa with Rogero moved her horse
 At this, nor waited other trumpet-strain ;
 Nor broke her lance in her impetuous course,
 Till in succession three had prest the plain.
 A mark well worthy fierce Rogero's force,
 The paynim leader in a thought is slain ;
 And with him, pierced by the same weapon, go
 Two others to the gloomy realms below.

* Aldigier and Richardetto.

XV.

'Twas hence a foul mistake the assaulted made ;
 It caused their utter loss, and ruined all :
 They of Maganza deemed themselves betrayed
 By the infidels, upon their leader's fall :
 On the other side, so charged with hostile blade,
 The Moors those Maganzese assassins call ;
 And, with fierce slaughter, either angry herds
 'Gan bend the bow, and brandish lance and sword.

XVI.

Rogero, charging this, or the other band,
 Slays ten or twenty, shifting his career ;
 No fewer by the warlike damsel's hand
 Are slaughtered and extinguished, there and here :
 As many men as feel the murderous brand
 Are from the saddle seen to disappear ;
 Before it vanish cuirass, helms, and shields,
 As the dry wood to fire in forest yields.

XVII.

If ever you remember to have viewed,
 Or heard,—what time the wasps divided are,
 And all the winged college is at feud,
 Mustering their swarms for mischief in mid air,—
 The greedy swallow swoop amid that brood,
 To mangle and devour, and kill, and tear,
 You must imagine so, on either part
 The bold Rogero and Marphisa dart.

XVIII.

Not so Sir Richardot and Aldigier,
 Varied the dance between those squadrons twain ;
 For, heedless of the Moors, each cavalier
 Had but an eye to false Maganza's train.
 The brother of Rinaldo, Charles's peer,
 Much courage added to much might and main ;
 And these were now redoubled by the spite,
 Which against false Maganza warned the knight.

XIX.

This cause made him who in his fury shared,
 Good Buovo's bastard, seem a lion fell ;
 He, without pause, each trusty helmet pared
 With his good blade, or crushed it like the shell
 Of brittle egg ; and who would not have dared—
 Would not have shown a Hector's worth as well,
 Having two such companions in the stower,
 Of warlike wights the very choice and flower ?

XX.

Marphisa, waging all the while the fight,
 On her companions often turned to gaze,
 And as she marked their rivalry in might,
 Admiring, upon all bestowed her praise ;
 But when she on Rogero fixed her sight,
 Deemed him unparalleled ; and in amaze,
 At times believed *that* Paladin was Mars,
 Who left his heaven to mix in mortal wars.

XXI.

She marvels at the champion's horrid blows ;
 She marvels how in vain they never fell.
 The iron, smit by Balisarda, shows
 Like paper, not like stubborn plate and shell.
 To pieces helm and solid coralet goes,
 And men are severed, even to the sell ;
 Whom into equal parts those strokes divide.
 Half dropt on this, and half on the other side.

XXII.

With the same downright stroke, he overbore
 The horse and rider, bleeding in the dust ;
 The heads of others from their shoulders bore,
 And parted from the hips the bleeding bust.
 He often at a blow cleft five and more ;
 And—but I doubt who hears me might distrust
 What of a seeming falsehood bears the impréss—
 I would say more ; but I parforce say less.

XXIII.

Good Turpin, he who knows that he tells true,
 And leaves men to believe what they think right,
 Says of Rogero wondrous things, which you
 Hearing related, would as falsehoods slight.
 Thus, with Marphisa matched, that hostile crew
 Appears like ice, and she like burning light.
 Nor her Rogero with less marvel eyes,
 Than she had marked his valour with surprise.

XXIV.

As she had Mars in bold Rogero seen,
 Perhaps Bellona he had deemed the maid,
 If for a woman he had known that queen,
 Who seemed the contrary, in arms arrayed ;
 And haply emulation had between
 The pair ensued, by whom with cruel blade
 Most deadly signs of prowess should be shown,
 Mid that vile herd, on sinew, flesh, and bone.

XXV.

To rout each hostile squadron, filled with dread,
 Sufficed the soul and valour of the four;
 Nor better arms remained for them who fled
 Than the sharp goads which on their heels they wore.
 Happy was he with *courser* well bested!
 By trot or amble they set little store;
 And he who had no steed, here learned, dismayed,
 How wretched is the poor foot-soldier's trade.

XXVI.

The conquerors' prize remained both field and prey;
 Nor was there footman left nor muleteer;
 The Moor took *this*, Manganza took *that* way;
 One leaves the prisoners, and one leaves the gear.
 With visage glad, and yet with heart more gay,
 The four untied each captive cavalier;
 Nor were less diligent to free from chains
 The prisoned pages, and unload the wains.

XXVII.

Besides good quantity of silver fine,
 Wrought into different vessels, with a store
 Of feminine array, of fair design,
 Embroidered round about with choicest lore,
 And suit of Flemish tapestry, framed to line
 Royal apartments, wrought with silk and ore—
 —They, 'mid more costly things in plenty spread—
 Discovered flasks of wine, and meat and bread.

XXVIII.

When now the conquering troop their temples bare,
 All see they have received a damsel's aid,
 Known by her curling locks of golden hair,
 And delicate and beautiful face displayed:
 Her the knights honoured much, and to declare
 Her name, so well deserving glory, prayed;
 Nor she, that ever was of courteous mood
 Among her friends, their instances withstood.

XXIX.

With viewing her they cannot sate their eyes,
 Who in the battle such had her espied,
 She speaks but with the Child, but him descries;
 None prizes, values none, 'twould seem, beside.
 Meanwhile 'that ready spread a banquet lies,'
 To them is by the servants notified.
 This they had served about a neighbouring fountain,
 Screened from the sun by an o'ershadowing mountain.

XXX.

This spring was one of those four fountains rare,
 Of those in France produced by Merlin's sleight;
 Encompassed round about with marble fair,
 Shining and polished, and than milk more white.
 There in the stone choice figures chiselled were,
 By that magician's godlike labour dight;
 Save voice was wanting, these you might have thought
 Were living and with nerve and spirit fraught.

XXXI.

Here, to appearance, from the forest prest
 A cruel Beast and hideous to the eye,
 With teeth of wolf, an ass's head and crest,
 A carcass with long famine lean and dry,
 And lion's claws; a fox in all the rest:
 Which seemed to ravage France and Italy,
 And Spain and England's desolated strands,
 Europe and Asia, and in fine all lands.¹

XXXII.

That beast the low and those of proudest port
 Had slain or maimed throughout this earthly ball;
 Yea, fiercest seemed on those of noble sort,
 Sovereign and satrap, prince and peer, to fall;
 And made most havoc in the Roman court;
 For it had slaughtered Pope and Cardinal:
 Had filled St. Peter's beauteous seat with scathe,
 And brought foul scandal on the HOLY FAITH.

XXXIII.

Whate'er she touches, wall or rampire steep,
 Goes to the ground; where'er the monster wends,
 Each fortress opens; neither castle-keep,
 Nor city from her rage its wealth defends.
 Honours divine as well that Beast would reap,
 It seems (while the besotted rabble bends)
 And claim withal, as to its keeping given,
 The sacred keys which open Hell and Heaven.

XXXIV.

Approaching next, is seen a cavalier,
 His temples circled with imperial bay;
 Three youths with him in company appear,
 With golden lilies wrought in their array:
 A lion seems against that monster drear
 To issue, with the same device as they:
 The names of these are on the marble read,
 Some on their skirt, some written overhead.

XXXV.

Of those who so against that Beast advance,
 One to the hilt has in his life-blood dyed
 His faulchion, Francis styled the first of France ;
 With Austrian Maximilian at his side :
 In one, who gores his gullet with the lance,
 The emperor Charles the fifth is signified :
 Henry the eighth of England is he hight,
 Who in the monster's breast a dart has pight.

XXXVI.

THE TENTH, in writing, on his back displayed
 The Lion, who that Beast is seen to hold
 By both his ears, and him so well has bayed,
 That thither troop assistants manifold.
 'Twould seem the world all fear aside has laid ;
 And in amendment of their errors old,
 Thitherward nobles troop, but these are few
 And so that hideous Beast those hunters slew.

XXXVII.

In wonder stood long time that warlike train,
 Desirous, as the storied work they traced,
 To know by hands of whom that Beast was slain,
 Which had so many smiling lands defaced,
 The names unknown to them, though figured plain
 Upon the marble which that fountain cased :
 They one another prayed, if any guessed
 That story, he would tell it to the rest.

XXXVIII.

Vivian on Malagigi turned his eyes,
 Who listening stood this while, yet spake he nought.
 " With thee," he cried, " to tell the meaning lies,
 " That shouldst by what I see in this be taught :
 " Who are they, by whose darts and lances dies
 " The hideous monster, that to bay is brought ?
 —And Malagigi—" Hitherto their glory
 " No author has consigned to living story.

XXXIX.

" The chiefs whose names are graved upon the stone,
 " Not yet have moved upon this worldly stage ;
 " But will within seven hundred years be known,
 " To the great honour of a future age.
 " What time king Arthur filled the British throne,
 " This fountain Merlin made, enchanter sage ;
 " Who things to come upon the marble fair
 " Made sculpture by a cunning artist's care.

XL.

- " This Beast, when weights and measures first were found
 " Came out of nether hell ; when on the plain,
 " Common before, men fixed the landmark's bound,
 " And fashioned written pacts with jealous pain ;
 " Yet walked not every where, at first, her round :
 " Unvisited she left yet many a reign :
 " Through diverse places in our time she wends ;
 " But the vile rabble and the crowd offends.

XLI.

- " From the beginning even to our day,
 " Aye has that monster grown, and aye will grow ;
 " And till much time be past will grow away :
 " Was never mightier, nor worse cause of woe.
 " That Python, oft the theme of ancient lay,
 " So passing wonderful and fierce in show,
 " Came not by half this loathsome monster nigh,
 " In all its foulness and deformity.

XLII.

- " Dread desolation shall it make ; nor place
 " Will unpolluted or untainted be :
 " And you in the mysterious sculpture trace
 " But little of its foul iniquity.
 " The world, when weary of imploring grace,
 " Those worthy peers (whose names you sculptured see
 " And which shall blazing carbuncle outshine),
 " To succour in its utmost need combine.

XLIII.

- " No one shall more that cruel beast molest
 " Than Francis, who the realm of France will steer,
 " Who justly shall be forward in this quest,
 " Whom none shall go beyond, whom few shall peer
 " Since he in splendour, as in all the rest,
 " Wanting in worth, will many make appear
 " Who whilom perfect seemed ; so fade and yield
 " All lesser glories to the sun revealed.

XLIV.

- " In the first year of his successful reign,
 " The crown yet ill secure upon his front,
 " He threads the Alps, and makes their labour vain,
 " Who would against his arms maintain the Mount.
 " Impelled by generous and by just disdain,
 " That unavenged as yet is that affront,
 " Which a French army suffered from their rage,
 " Who poured from beast-cote, field, and pasturage :

XLV.

- " And thence shall into the rich Lombard plain
 " Descend, with all the flower of France, and so
 " Shall break the Switzer, that henceforth in vain
 " Would he uplift his horn against the foe.
 " To the sore scandal of the Church and Spain,
 " And to the Florentine's much scathe and woe,
 " By him that famous castle shall be quelled,
 " Which inexpugnable whilero was held.³

XLVI.

- " In quelling it his honoured faulchion, more
 " Than other arms, availing shall be found ;
 " Which first that cruel Beast to death will gore,
 " The foul destroyer of each country round :
 " Parforce will every standard fly before
 " That conquering faulchion, or be cast to ground :
 " Nor, stormed by it, will rampart, fosse, or wall,
 " Secure the city, they surround, from fall.

XLVII.

- " Imbued with every generous quality,
 " Which can in great commander be confined,
 " —Prudence like his who won Thrasymenæ
 " And Trebbia's field, with Cesar's daring mind,
 " And Alexander's fortune, him I see ;
 " Without which all designs are mist and wind ;
 " Withal, so passing liberal, I in none
 " Mark his example or his paragon."

XLVIII.

- So Malagigi to his comrades said,
 And moved in them desire some name to hear
 Of others, who had laid that monster dead,
 Which to slay *others* had been used whilero.
 Among the first Bernardo's name was read,³
 Much vaunted in the writing of the Seer :
 Who said, " Through him as known is Bibbienna
 " As her own neighbour Florence and Siena.

XLIX.

- " More forward in this chase shall no one show
 " Than Sigismund, than Lewis, and than John ;
 " Each to that hideous beast a cruel foe ;
 " One a Gonzaga, one of Arragon,
 " And one a Salviati :⁴ with them go
 " Francis Gonzaga and Frederick his son :⁵
 " Brother and sou-in-law, their aid afford ;
 " One chief Ferrara's, one Urbino's lord.⁶

L.

- " Of one of these the son, Sir Guidobald,⁷
 " Will not by sire, or other, distanced be ;
 " With Ottobon de Flisco, Sinibald⁸
 " Chases the beast, both striving equally ;
 " Lewis de Gazolo⁹ its neck has galled
 " With one of those keen darts, Apollo's fee,
 " Given with his bow, what time as well his glaive,
 " The god of war, to gird that warrior, gave.

LI.

- " Two Hercules and two Hippolyti¹⁰
 " Of Este, a Hercules and Hippolyte
 " Of the Gonzagas' and the Medici,
 " Hunt and fatigue the monster in his flight :
 " Nor Julian¹¹ lets his good son pass him by ;
 " Nor bold Ferrant¹² his brother ; nor less wight
 " Is Andrew Doria¹³ nor by any one
 " Is Francis Sforza¹⁴ in the chase outdone.

LII.

- " Of good Avalo's glorious lineage bred,¹⁵
 " Two chiefs that mountain for their bearing show ;
 " Which, hiding him, from dragon-feet to head,
 " The wicked Typhæus seems to keep below.
 " 'Mid those combined, to lay the monster dead,
 " Shall none more forward than this couple go :
 " Him Francis of Pescara¹⁶ names the text ;
 " Alphonso, hight of Guasto,¹⁷ is the next.

LIII.

- " But where leave I Gonsalvo Ferrant,¹⁸ who
 " Is held in such esteem, the pride of Spain ?
 " So praised by Malagigi, that him few
 " Equal among the worthies of that train.
 " William, surnamed of Monferrato,¹⁹ view
 " 'Mid those that have the hideous monster slain ;
 " But these are few compared with numbers round,
 " Whom that despicable Beast shall kill or wound."

LIV.

- To converse gay the friends themselves address,
 And seemly pastimes, when their meal was done,
 Through the hot noontide, and fine carpets prest,
 'Mid shrubs, by which that limpid river run.
 Vivian and Malagigi, that the rest
 Might be more tranquil, watched with armour on ;
 When unaccompanied they saw a dame,
 Who quickly towards their place of shelter came ;

LV.

Hippalca she ; from whom was torn away
 Frontino, that good horse, by Rodomont ;
 Him had she long pursued the former day,
 And now with prayer, now followed with affront.
 Which booting nought, she had retraced her way,
 To seek Rogero out in Agrismont ;
 And, how I know not, heard upon her round,
 He here with Richardetto would be found.

LVI.

And, for to her well known was that repair,
 Used by her often, she herself address
 Towards the fount, and in that quarter fair
 Found him, and in what manner was express :
 But like embassadress, who—wise and ware—
 Better than was enjoined performs a feat,
 When Richardetto she beheld, made show
 As if she good Rogero did not know.

LVII.

She turned her wholly to Sir Richardet,
 As bound direct to him ; and, on his side,
 He who well knew her, straight uprose and met,
 And asked that damsel whitherward she hied.
 Hippalca, with her eyes yet red and wet
 From her long weeping, sighing deeply, cried,
 But cried aloud, that young Rogero, near
 The warrior she address, her tale might hear :

LVIII.

“ I from Mount Alban with a courser sped ;
 “ (So your good sister had commanded me)
 “ A horse much loved by her, and highly bred ;
 “ Frontino is yeapt that charger free ;
 “ And him I more than thirty miles had led
 “ Towards Marseilles, where she designed to be
 “ Within few days ; by her enjoined to wend
 “ Thither, and her arrival there attend.

LIX.

“ I in the sure belief pursued my course,
 “ Was none so stout of heart, if I should say
 “ How Sir Rinaldo's sister owned the horse,
 “ He would presume to take that steed away.
 “ But vain was my design ; for him parforce
 “ A Saracen took from me yesterday :
 “ Nor, when to him his master's name I read,
 “ Will that bold robber render back the steed.

LX.

"Him I to-day and all the day before
 "Have prayed, and prayer and menace proving vain,
 "Aye cursing him and execrating sore,
 "Have left at little distance; where, with pain,
 "Both to his courser and himself, the Moor,
 "As best he can, a combat does maintain
 "Against a knight, who him so hard has prest,
 "I trust my injury shall be redrest."

LXI.

At this Rogero, leaping on his feet,
 Who scarcely had endured the whole to hear,
 To Richardetto turned; and, as a meet
 Guerdon for his good deed, the cavalier
 Did, with beseechings infinite, entreat
 To let him singly with that damsel steer,
 Until she showed the paynim, who by force
 Had wrested from her hands that goodly horse.

LXII.

Richardet (though it seems discourtesy
 To yield to other champion that emprise,
 Which by himself should terminated be)
 Yet with Rogero's earnest suit complies;
 Who takes farewell of that good company,
 And with the damsel on her journey lies.
 And leaves those others, whom his feats confound,
 Not merely lost in wonder, but astound.

LXIII.

To him Hippalea said, when she apart
 Had drawn him to some distance from the rest,
 'She was dispatched by her that in her heart
 'Bore of his worth the image so imprest;
 '—And added, without using farther art,
 'All that her lady had to him address;
 'And if she told another tale whilere,
 'Of Richardetto she was then in fear.'

LXIV.

She added, 'how the author of that deed
 'Had also said to her with mickle pride;
 "'Because I know Rogero owns the steed,
 "'More willingly I take him from his guide.
 "'If he would repossess the courser, read
 "'To him what I have no desire to hide,
 "'I am *that* Rodomont, whose martial worth
 "'Scatters its splendour through this ample earth."

LXV.

Listening, the visage of the youthful knight
 Showed with what rage his heart was in a flame,
 As well as that the horse was his delight ;
 As well upon account of whence it came ;
 And also that 't was roft in his despite ;
 He sees dishonour will ensue and blame,
 Save he from Rodomont redeem the prey,
 And with a due revenge that wrong repay.

LXVI.

With him, without repose, the damsel rides,
 Who with his foe would bring him front to front ;
 And thither journies where the road divides,
 And one branch cuts the plain, one climbs the mount,
 And either pathway to that valley guides,
 Where she had newly left King Rodomont.
 The mountain track was short, but trod with pain ;
 That other longer far, but smooth and plain.

LXVII.

Hippalca's ardour to retrieve the prey,
 And upon Rodomont avenge the wrong,
 Incites that maid the mountain to assay ;
 By which (as said) the journey was less long ;
 While Mandricardo, Rodomont, and they
 Of whom I erst made mention in my song,
 That easier track across the level hold ;
 And thus encounter not Rogero bold.

LXVIII.

Until King Agramant shall succoured be,
 Suspended is their quarrel (in what wise
 You know), and in the champions' company
 Doralice, cause of all their discord, hies.
 Now hear the upshot of this history !
 Their way directly by that fountain lies,
 Beside whose margin are in pastime met
 Marphisa and Aldigier and Richardet.

LXIX.

Marphisa had, at her companions' prayer,
 Clothed her in female ornaments and vest,
 Of those, which by Maganza's traitor were
 Late to Lanfusa, in full trust, addrest ;
 And, though the appearance of that maid was rare
 Without her corslet, casque and all the rest,
 —At their entreaty, these for once laid down—
 She deigned to seem a maid and donned the gown.

LXX.

As soon as Mandricardo saw her face,
 In trust that, could he win her in affray,
 He would that maid, in recompense and place
 Of Doralice, to Rodomont convey ;
 As if Love trafficked in such contracts base,
 And lover could his lady change away,
 Nor yet with reason at the event be pained,
 If he in losing one another gained.

LXXI.

Hence with a damsel to provide the peer,
 That he himself the other may retain ;
 Deeming her worthy any cavalier,
 He would by force of arms the maid obtain ;
 And, as if he could suddenly hold dear
This maid as *that*, on him bestow the gain
 And all of those, whom he about her spied,
 Forthwith to joust and single fight defied.

LXXII.

Vivian and Malagigi (who were dight
 In arms, as guard and surety for the rest,)
 One and the other champion—prompt for fight,
 Rose lightly from the herbage which they preat,
 Deeming they had to joust with either knight ;
 But Rodomont, who came not on this quest,
 No motion made as he a course would run ;
 So that they had to tourney but with one.

LXXIII.

Sir Vivian is the first who moves his horse,
 With mighty heart, and lays his weapon low ;
 And he, that Tartar king, renowned for force,
 With greater puissance meets the coming foe.
 His lance each warrior loyels in the course
 Where he best trusts to plant the furious blow.
 Vainly Sir Vivian's spear the casque offends ;
 Nor throws that paynim knight, nor even bends.

LXXIV.

That Tartar's harder weapon makes the shield
 Of Vivian, at their onset, fly like glass ;
 And, tumbling from his saddle on the field,
 Extends the champion amid flowers and grass.
 To run his chance Sir Malagigi, steeled,
 Did to his brother's succour quickly pass ;
 But (such that warrior's hurry to be near)
 Rather accompanied, than venged the peer.

LXXV.

The other of those brethren armed before
 His cousin, and had backed his courser wight;
 And, having first defied, encountered sore,
 Spurring with flowing rein, the stranger knight.
 Against the tempered helm that pagan wore
 Sounded the blow, an inch below the sight:
 Heaven-high the truncheon flew, in fragments broke,
 But the stout pagan winced not for the stroke.

LXXVI.

Him on the left side smote that paynim peer,
 And (for the blow was with huge force designed)
 Little his shield, and less his iron gear,
 Aailed, which opened like the yielding blind:
 The weapon pierced his shoulder; Aldigier
 Now right now left upon his horse inclined;
 Then him, 'mid grass and flowers, his comrades view,
 With arms of crimson, face of pallid, hue.

LXXVII.

Next Richardetto comes, and for the blow
 Intended, levels such a mighty lance,
 He showed himself, as he was wont to show,
 Worthy to be a paladin of France;
 And had stamped signs of this upon the foe,
 If he had warred on him with equal chance;
 But prostrate rolled, encumbered by his steed;
 Nor fell the courser through his lord's misdeed.

LXXVIII.

When knight appeared not on the other side,
 Who should in joust the paynim king affront,
 He thought the damsel was his prize, and hied
 Thither, where she was seated by the fount.
 And—"Lady, you are mine," the Tartar cried,
 "Save other champion in your succour mount;
 "Nor can you make denial or excuse,
 "Since such the right of war and common use."

LXXIX.

Marphisa raised her face with haughty cheer,
 And answered him; "Thy judgment wanders far;
 "I will concede thy sentence would be clear,
 "Concluding I am thine by right of war,
 "If either were my lord or cavalier
 "Of those, by thee unhorsed in bloody jar:
 "Nor theirs am I, nor other's, but my own.
 "Who wins me, wins me from myself alone.

LXXX.

"I too with lance and sword do doughty deed,
 "And more than one good knight on earth have laid.
 "—Give me," she cried, "my armour and my steed."
 And readily her squires that best obeyed:
 Then in her waistcoat stood, of flowing weed
 Despoiled, with well-knit form and charms displayed;
 And in all points (such strength she shewed and grace)
 Resembled heavenly Mars, except her face.

LXXXI.

The damsel donned her sword, when arm'd all o'er,
 And on her courser leapt with nimble spring;
 And, right and left, she made him, thrice or more
 Poised on his haunches, turn in narrow ring.
 And, levelling the sturdy lance she bore,
 Defied, and next assailed, the Tartar king.
 So combating with Peleus' son, of yore,
 Penthesilæa warred on Trojan shore.

LXXXII.

Like brittle crystal, in that proud career,
 The weapons at the rest to pieces went;
 Yet neither of those warriors, 't would appear,
 Backwards one inch at their encounter bent.
 Marphisa, who would willingly be clear
 What of a closer fight would be the event,
 For a new combat with the paynim lord,
 Wheeled, to attack that warrior with the sword.

LXXXIII.

That Tartar cursed the elements and sky,
 When her he saw remaining in her sell;
 And she, who thought to make his buckler fly,
 Cursed heaven as loudly as that infidel.
 Already were their faulchions raised on high,
 Which on the enchanted arms like hammers fell:
 Enchanted arms both combatants enclose,
 Never more needed by those deadly foes.

LXXXIV.

So perfect are the champions' plate and chain,
 They thrust or out of spear or faulchion stay;
 So that the two the battle might maintain,
 Throughout this and throughout another day:
 But Rodomont leaps in between the twain,
 And taxes Mandricardo with delay;
 Crying, "If battle here is to be done,
 "Finish we that which we to-day begun.

LXXXV.

“ We made a truce, thou knowest, upon pact
 “ Of furnishing our baffled forces aid ;
 “ Nor foe in joust or fight can be attacked
 “ By us with justice till this debt be paid.”
 Then to Marphisa he in reverent act
 Addressed himself, and of that courier said ;
 And next recounted to the martial dame,
 How seeking aid for Agramant he came.

LXXXVI.

Next prays ‘ not only with that Tartar knight
 ‘ She will abandon or defer the fray ;
 ‘ But that, Troyano’s valiant son to right,
 ‘ She will, together with them, wend her way ;
 ‘ By which her warlike fame a higher flight,
 ‘ More easily may, even to heaven, assay,
 ‘ Than in a quarrel of such paltry guise,
 ‘ Which offers hindrance to such fair emprise.’

LXXXVII.

Marphisa, who had evermore in thought
 To prove the paladins of Charles, and who
 To France was over land and ocean brought,
 From clime so distant, with no other view,
 Than by her own experience to be taught
 If their far-spread renown were false or true,
 Resolved together with the troop to speed,
 As soon as she had heard their monarch’s need.

LXXXVIII.

Meanwhile Rogero, with that guiding may,
 Had vainly by the rugged pathway sped :
 Who that king Rodomont another way
 Had taken, when he reached the mountain, read :
 And thinking that he was not far away,
 And the road straight towards that fountain led,
 Trotting in haste behind the Sarzan hied,
 Where he new prints upon the path espied.

LXXXIX.

‘ Hippalea he to Mont Albano,’ prayed,
 ‘ To wend, which distant one day’s journey lies ;
 ‘ Because to seek anew that fountain-glade,
 ‘ Would be to wander in too wide a guise.
 ‘ And that she need not doubt withal,’ he said,
 ‘ But that he would retrieve the ravished prize.
 ‘ And, were she in Mount Alban—or where’er—
 ‘ Vowed she the tidings speedily should hear.’

XC.

And gave the letter to that maid to bear,
 Which writ by him, he in his bosom wore,
 And added many matters, with the prayer,
 ' She would excuse him by her friendly lore.'
 Hippalca in her memory fixt, with care,
 The whole : took leave, and turned her horse once more :
 Nor ceased that faithful messenger to ride
 Till she Mount Alban reached at evening-tide.

XCI.

Rogero followed fast the paynim knight,
 Tracked o'er the level by those footsteps new
 But overtook him not, till he got sight,
 Beside the fount, of Mandricardo too.
 Already either had his promise plight,
 He nought unknown to his compeer would do,
 Till they had succour to that host conveyed,
 On which King Charles his yoke had nearly laid.

XCII.

Arrived, Rogero knew Frontino gay,
 And, through that courser, knew the knight astride ;
 And on his lance with bending shoulders lay,
 And in fierce tone the African defied.
 Job was outdone by Rodomont that day,
 In that the king subdued his haughty pride,
 And the fell fight which he had ever used
 To seek with every instance, he refused.

XCIII.

The first day this and last, that e'er in fight
 King Rodomont refused his part to bear !
 But his desire appeared to him so right,
 In succour of his sovereign to repair ;
 That if he had believed he clutched the knight
 Faster than nimble leopard gripes the hare,
 He not so far his purpose would forego,
 As on his prey to waste a passing blow.

XCIV.

Add, that he knows Rogero is the peer
 Who him for good Frontino now assails ;
 —So famous, that no other cavalier
 Like him such eminence of glory scales ;
 —The man, of whom he gladly would be clear,
 By proof, how much in battle he avails ;
 Yet shuns the combat, proffered on his part ;
 So much his monarch's siege has he at heart.

XCV.

Three hundred miles, a thousand, would he ride,
 —Were it not so—to purchase such affray ;
 But he, if him Achilles had defied,
 Had done no otherwise than as I say ;
 So deeply did the covering ashes hide
 That fire beneath, whose fury stifled lay :
 He told, ‘ why he refused the strife ;’ and prayed,
 ‘ As well Rogero the design to aid.’

XCVI.

Adding, ‘ that he, in doing so, would do
 ‘ What to his lord a faithful vassal owes ;
 ‘ Still, when the siege was raised, might they renew
 ‘ And terminate their deadly strife by blows.’
 To him Rogero cried, “ The fight with you
 “ I freely will defer, till from his foes
 “ King Agramant be rescued by the sword ;
 “ Provided first Frontino be restored.

XCVII.

“ Would you that I delay to prove by deed,
 “ That you have acted in unworthy sort,
 “ —Nor did, like valiant man, to take my steed
 “ Thus from a woman—till we meet at court,
 “ Render me my Frontino back, or read,
 “ Upon no other ground, will I support
 “ That battle shall not be between us two ;
 “ Nor will accord an hour of truce to you.”

XCVIII.

While of that African he so demands
 Frontino, or him threats with instant fray ;
 And either still the other’s claim withstands,
 Nor *this* the steed will grant, nor *that* delay ;
 King Mandricardo stirs, on the other hand,
 Another strife ; who sees that ensign gay
 Rogero on his shield was wont to wear,
 The bird which reigns o’er other fowls of air.

XCIX.

He bore on azure field that eagle white,
 The beauteous ensign of the Trojan throng :
 Such glorious bearing showed that youthful knight,
 Because he drew his line from Hector strong.
 But Mandricardo knew not of this right,
 Nor would endure—and deemed a crying wrong,
 That any other but himself should wield
 Famed Hector’s argent eagle on his shield.

C.

King Mandricardo in like blazon wore
 The bird of Ide, which bore off Ganymede:
 How in the castle perilous of yore,
 He gained that noble ensign for his meed,
 —That enterprize I ween, with matter more,
 You bear in mind, and how, for his good deed,
 The fairy gave it him with all the gear,
 Erst given by Vulcan to the Trojan peer.

CI.

The Tartar and Rogero had before
 Engaged in battle, only on this quest,
 Divided by what accident, my lore
 Recites not, as already manifest:
 Nor had till now those knights encountered more:
 When Mandricardo sees that bird imprest
 On the Child's shield, he shouts with threatening cry
 To young Rogero; "Take my proud defy!"

CII.

"Audacious man, mine ensign dost thou wear,
 "Nor this to-day for the first time, is said;
 "And think'st thou, madman, I will thee forbear,
 "Because for once to spare thee I was led?
 "But since nor menace nor yet counsel are
 "Of force to drive this folly from thy head,
 "It shall appear how much it had been best
 "For thee forthwith to have obeyed my best."

CIII.

As fire, whereon dry, heated wood is strown,
 Roused by a little puff, at once ascends,
 So burns Rogero's wrath, to fury blown,
 By the first word with which that king offends.
 "Thou thinkest," he exclaims, "to bear me down,
 "Because this knight as well with me contends:
 "But learn that I can win in fighting field
 "From him the horse, from thee good Hector's shield.

CIV.

"Yet once before—nor is it long ago—
 "Twixt us in battle was this question tried:
 "But I that day restrained the murderous blow,
 "Because thou hadst no faulchion at thy side.
 "These shall be deeds, *that* strife was but a show;
 "And ill this argent bird shall thee betide;
 "This is the ancient bearing of my line;
 "'Tis thou usurpest what by right is mine."

CV.

—“ Say rather, thou usurpest mine from me ;”
 Cried Mandricardo ; and that faulchion drew,
 Which lately, underneath the greenwood tree,
 Orlando from his hand in fury threw.
 The Child, who could not aught but courteous be,
 (Such was his gentle nature) at the view
 Of Mandricardo, with his faulchion drawn,
 Let fall his ready lance upon the lawn ;

CVI.

And at the same time, strained his goodly sword ;
 And better braced the covering shield he wore :
 But 'twixt those combatants leapt Argier's lord,
 And quick Marphisa spurred the pair before ;
 And one *this* foe, the other *that* implored,
 And both besought, that they would strive no more.
 King Rodomont complains, ' The Tartar knight
 ' Has violated twice the compact plight.

CVII.

' First, in belief he should Marphisa gain,
 ' He more than once had jousted for that fair ;
 ' Now to bear off Rogero's ensign fain,
 ' He for King Agramant shows little care.'
 —“ If thus” (said Rodomont) “ you faith maintain,
 “ To finish our own combat better were,
 “ A cause of strife more fitting and more due
 “ Than either of the pleas maintained by you.

CVIII.

“ On this condition was the treaty plight,
 “ And the accord between us now in force,
 “ When I with thee shall have performed the fight,
 “ I next shall answer him about the horse :
 “ You then with him, if you survive, your right
 “ Shall to the shield maintain in warlike course.
 “ But I such work shall give you, I conceive,
 “ As will small labour for Rogero leave.”

CIX.

—“ The bargain which thouapest thou shalt not have,”
 (King Mandricardo answered Rodomont)
 “ I will accord thee more than thou dost crave,
 “ And trust to make thee sweat from feet to front.
 “ And to bestow on others, much shall save,
 “ As water never fails in plenteous font ;
 “ And for Rogero and a thousand more,
 “ And all the world beside reserve a store.”

CX.

Their fury waxed, and angrier words ensued,
 Now upon *this* and now upon *that* side.
 With Rodomont and with the Child at feud,
 Fierce Mandricardo both at once defied.
 Rogero, not endowed with suffering mood,
 Would hear no more of peace, but vengeance cried.
 Now *here* Marphisa hurried, and now *there*,
 But could not singly such an ill repair.

CXI.

As peasant, when a river saps its mounds,
 And seeking vent the oozing waters drop,
 Hastening to shut the stream within its bounds,
 And save his pastures and expected crop,
 Dams right and left: yet him the stream confounds:
 For, if he *here* the sinking ruin prop,
There he beholds the rotten dyke give out,
 And from thick seams the restless water spout,

CXII.

So, while the Tartar and Rogero rage,
 And Rodomont, in hurly-burly fray,
 For each of these would fiercest battle wage,
 And would outgo his fears in that assay,
 Marphisa seeks their fury to assuage,
 And strives, and time and trouble throws away;
 For as she makes one knight from strife retire,
 She sees the others re-engage with ire.

CXIII.

Marphisa, to appease the warriors bent,
 Exclaimed, "Sirs, listen to my better lore;
 "A good remembrance 'tis, all argument
 "To leave until we Agramant restore.
 "If each is on his own design intent,
 "With Mandricardo will I strive once more;
 "And fain would see, according to his word,
 "If he can conquer me with spear and sword.

CXIV.

"But if, to aid our sovereign, duty call,
 "Him let us aid, nor civil discord breed."
 —"To ground, through me, such project shall not fall,"
 Rogero said, "so *he* restore my steed.
 "Let him resign that horse, or—once for all,
 "I say again—to his defence take heed.
 "I either here my parting breath will yield,
 "Or on my courser will return afield."

CXV.

—“Twere not so easy to obtain this quest
 “As ’twere that other,” Rodomont replied ;
 And thus pursued ; “I unto thee protest,
 “If any evil shall our king betide,
 “Thine is the fault not mine ; for I am prest
 “To do whate’er is fitting, on my side.”
 Small heed to that protest Rogero paid,
 And stung by fury, griped his trenchant blade.

CXVI.

On Argier’s king he sprang, like savage boar,
 Encountering him with shoulder and with shield ;
 And him disordered and distress so sore,
 That with one stirrup’s loss the monarch reeled.
 —“Rogero,” Mandricardo cried, “give o’er,
 “Or else with me divide the battle-field ;”
 And struck, this said, with worse than felon spite,
 Upon the morion of that youthful knight.

CXVII.

Even to his courser’s neck Rogero bends :
 Nor, when he would, himself anew can rear ;
 Because the sword of Ulien’s son* descends
 As well upon the youthful cavalier ;
 And, but that adamant his face defends,
 Across the cheeks his tempered helm would sheer.
 The Child, in anguish, opens either hand ;
 And this the bridle drops and that the brand.

CXVIII.

Him o’er the field his courser bears away
 On earth the faulchion lies, which he let go :
 Marphisa (with Rogero through that day,
 Comrade in arms) appeared like fire to glow,
 Enraged, that two one knight should overlay ;
 And, as magnanimous and stout, for foe
 Singled King Mandricardo out, and sped,
 With all her might, a stroke upon his head.

CXIX.

Rodomont o’er the plain pursues his man.
 —Another stroke, and he has lost the horse !
 But Richardetto drives, and Vivian,
 Between the Child and paynim in that course.
 This warrior at the king of Argier ran,
 And from Rogero severed him by force ;
 That (it was Vivian) in Roger’s hand,
 Now from the blow recovered, placed his brand.

Rodomont.

CXX.

As soon as to himself the Child returns,
 And is by Vivian armed with sword again,
 To venge the injury that stripling burns,
 And runs at Rodomont with flowing rein,
 Like lion, whom a bull upon his horns
 Has lifted, though he feels this while no pain,
 So him his heat of blood, disdain, and ire,
 To venge that cruel outrage goad and fire.

CXXI.

Rogero storms upon the paynim's crest ;
 And, could that knight recover his own brand,
 Which by foul felony (as erst exprest)
 Was ravished from the youthful warrior's hand,
 I well believe that the descending pest
 Rodomont's iron casque would ill withstand ;
 That casque which Babel's king bade forge, who sought
 To war on Heaven in his presumptuous thought.

CXXII.

Discord, believing nothing could ensue
 But stir, and strife, and combat on that head ;
 And that there was no place, amid the crew,
 For truce or treaty, to her sister said,
 ' That she, her well-beloved monks to view,
 ' Might now again with her securely tread.'
 Let them depart ; and mark we where in front
 Rogero has sore wounded Rodomont.

CXXIII.

Rogero's blow was levelled with such spite,
 That this upon Frontino's crupper made
 The helmet and the shell of iron smite,
 In which that Saracen his limbs arrayed ;
 And he, three times or four, to left and right,
 —As if about to fall—head-foremost, swayed ;
 And would have lost withal his trusty brand,
 But that the hilt was fastened to his hand.

CXXIV.

Marphisa has king Mandricardo prest
 Meanwhile, and makes him swcat breast, front, and face ;
 And he Marphisa has as sore distrest ;
 But such good plates each valiant bosom case,
 Impassable is either iron vest ;
 And both have hitherto maintained their place.
 But, at a turn her martial courser made,
 Marphisa needed young Rogero's aid.

CXXV.

Marphisa's martial steed, in turning short,
 Where a firm footing that soft mead denied,
 On the moist surface slipt, and in such sort,
 That he fell, helpless, on his better side ;
 And, as he rose in haste and lacked support,
 Athwart by furious Brigliador was plied ;
 On which the paynim, little courteous, came ;
 So that he fell anew beneath the dame.

CXXVI.

Rogero, when Marphisa on the ground
 He saw unhorsed, deferred no more his aid ;
 Who for that deed had leisure ; since, astound,
 Rodomont far away had been conveyed :
 He smote the morion which that Tartar crowned
 And, cleft like stalk, his head on earth had laid,
 Had he his trusty Balisarda born,
 Or Mandricardo other helmet worn.

CXXVII.

Rodomont, of his senses repossess,
 Turned round this while, and Richardetto spied ;
 And recollecting how, when late distrest,
 He to Rogero succour had supplied,
 Quickly against that youthful warrior prest ;
 Who an ill guerdon would from him abide,
 Did Malagigi not his malice thwart
 With other magic and with mickle art.

CXXVIII.

Sage Malagigi versed in every sleight
 Which by the wisest wizard can be done ;
 Although his book he has not, by whose might
 He in his course can stop the passing sun ;
 The conjuration recollects and rite,
 By which he tames the rebel fiends ; and one
 Bids enter into Doralice's steed,
 Whom he to fury stings and headlong speed.

CXXIX.

Into that gentle palfrey's form, who bore
 The beauteous daughter of king Stordilano,
 Sir Vivian's brother, simply by his lore,
 Made pass an angel of the dark domain ;
 And the good horse, who never moved before,
 Except in due obedience to the rein,
 Now took a leap, possess'd by that ill sprite,
 Thirty feet long, and sixteen feet in height.

CXXX.

It was a mighty leap, yet not so wide
 As to make any rider void the sell²⁰
 Seeing herself so high in air, loud cried,
 (Yielding herself for dead) that bonnibel.
 Her palfrey, with the Damon for his guide,
 After his leap, runs, goaded by the spell
 (The maid still screaming) such a furious course,
 An arrow had not reached the flying horse,

CXXXI.

At the first hearing of that voice, the son
 Of Ulien, on his part, the strife suspended ;
 And thither, where the furious palfrey run,
 Swiftly in succour of the lady wended.
 No less was by the Tartar monarch done ;
 Who neither Child nor damsel more offended ;
 But without craving time, or truce, or peace,
 Pursued king Rodomont and Doralice.

CXXXII.

Marphisa rose meanwhile, to fury stirred ;
 And, with disdain all over in a glow,
 Thought to accomplish her revenge, and erred :
 For at too great a distance was the foe.
 Rogero, who beheld the war deferred,
 Rather like lion roared than sighed : well know
 Those two their coursers they should vainly gore,
 Following Frontino and good Brigliador.

CXXXIII.

Rogero will not halt till he renew
 And end the unfinished combat for the horse ;
 Marphisa will not quit that Tartar, who
 Will to her satisfaction prove his force.
 To leave their quarrel in such guise the two
 Esteem foul scandal ; as their better course,
 In chase of those offending knights to fare,
 Is the conclusion of that valiant pair.

CXXXIV.

hey in the paynim camp will find each foe,
 If them before they find not on their way ;
 Whom thither bound, to raise the siege they know,
 Ere Charlemagne bring all beneath his sway.
 So thitherward the twain directly go
 Where these, they deem, will be their certain prey.
 Yet not so rudely thence Rogero broke,
 But that he first with his companions spoke.

CXXXV.

Thither returns Rogero, where apart
 Is he, the brother of his lady fair;
 And vows himself his friend, with generous heart,
 In good or evil fortune, everywhere.
 Him he implores—and frames his speech with art—
 ‘He his salutes will to his sister bear;’
 And this so well; he moves by that request
 No doubt in him, nor any of the rest.

CXXXVI.

Of Malagigi he and Viviane
 Next takes farewell and wounded Aldigier;
 Their services no less that kindly twain
 Proffer, as ever debtors to the peer.
 Marphisa to seek Paris is so fain,
 That parting she forgets her friends to cheer;
 But Malagigi and Vivian, in pursuit,
 Follow, and from afar that maid salute;

CXXXVII.

And so Sir Richardet as well: but low
 On earth lies Aldigier, and there must rest.
 The two first champions* towards Paris go,
 And the two others† next pursue that quest.
 In other canto, Sir, I hope to show
 Of wondrous and of superhuman gest,
 Wrought to the damage of the christian king,
 By those two couples of whose worth I sing.

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

*By good Rogero and those paynims three
 Defeated, Charlemagne to Paris flies.
 Already all, throughout their chivalry,
 Are mad with spite and hatred; jars arise,
 And strife; and means to still their enmity
 Their sovereign is unable to devise.
 From him departs the monarch of Argier,
 Who is rejected of his lady dear.*

Mandricardo and Rodemont.

† Rogero and Marphisa.

I.

A WOMAN for the most part reasons best
 Upon a sudden motion, and untaught ;
 For with that special grace the sex is blest,
 'Mid those so many gifts, wherewith 'tis fraught ;
 But man, of a less nimble wit possest,
 Is ill at counsel, save, with sober thought,
 He ruminates thereon, content to spend
 Care, time and trouble to mature his end.

II.

That seemed good counsel, but was ill indeed
 Of Malagigi's, as before was said ;
 Albeit he so rescued in his need
 His cousin Richardet, with odds o'erlaid,
 When from the paynim monarchs him he freed
 By ready demon, who his best obeyed :
 For sure he never deemed they should be borne,
 Where they would work the Christian army scorn.

III.

Had he some little space for counsel stayed,
 (We with the same success may well suppose)
 He to his cousin might have furnished aid,
 Yet brought not on the Christian host their foes :
 That evil sprite he might as well have made,
 Him, who embodied in the palfrey goes,
 Eastward or west, so far that lady bear,
 That France should hear no further of the pair.

IV.

So the two lovers, following her who flies,
 To other place than Paris might be brought :
 But this calamity was a surprise
 On Malagigi, through his little thought ;
 And fiendish malice, banished from the skies,
 Which ever blood and fire and ravage sought,
 Guided them by that way to Charles' disaster ;
 Left to his choice by him, the wizard master.

V.

The wayward fiend who makes that palfrey ramp
 Bears off the frightened Doralice amain ;
 Nor river nor yet yawning ditch, or swamp,
 Wood, rock, or rugged cliff, the steed restrain ;
 Till, traversing the French and English camp,
 And other squadrons of the mingled train,
 Beneath the holy flag of Christ arraid,
 He to Granada's king the fair conveyed.

VI.

The Sarzan and the Tartar the first day
 That royal damsel a long while pursue;
 Because her distant form they yet survey;
 But finally they lose that lady's view;
 When, like a lyme-dog, whom the hunters lay
 On hare or roebuck's trail, the valiant two
 Follow upon her track, nor halt, till told
 That she is harboured in her father's hold.

VII.

Guard thyself, Charles: for, lo! against thee blown
 Is such a storm, that I no refuge see:
 Nor these redoubted monarchs come alone,
 But those of Sericane and Circassy;
 While Fortune, who would probe thee to the bone,
 Has taken those two shining stars from thee,
 Who kept thee by their wisdom and their light;
 And thou remainest blind and wrapt in night.

VIII.

'Tis of the valiant cousins* I would speak:
 Of these, Orlando of his wit bereft,
 Naked, in sun or shower, by plain or peak,
 Wanders about the world, a helpless wretch
 And he, in wisdom little less to seek,
 Rinaldo, in thy peril thee has left:
 And, for in Paris-town she is not found,
 In search of his Angelica is bound.

IX.

A cunning, old enchanter him deceived,
 As in the outset of my tale was said:
 Deluded by a phantom, he believed
 Angelica was with Orlando fled;
 And hence with jealousy, at heart, aggrieved
 (Lover ne'er suffered worse) to Paris sped;
 Whence he, as soon as he appeared at court,
 By chance, was named to Britain to resort.

X.

Now, the field won, wherein with mickle fame
 He drove King Agramant his works behind,
 To Paris yet again the warrior came,
 Searched convent, tower, and house, and, save confound
 'Twixt solid walls or columns bo the dame,
 Her will the restless lover surely find:
 Nor her nor yet Orlando he descries,
 So forth in the desire to seek them hies.

* Orlando and Rinaldo.

XI.

Her to Anglantes or to Brava brought,
 He deemed the Count enjoyed in mirth and play ;
 And vainly, here and there, that damsel sought,
 Nor here nor there, descried the long-sought prey.
 To Paris he repaired again, in thought
 The paladin returning to waylay ;
 Because he deemed he could not rove at large
 Without that Town, but on some special charge.

XII.

Within he takes a day or two's repose ;
 And, when he finds Orlando comes not there,
 Again to Brava and Auglantes goes
 Inquiring tidings of the royal fair ;
 Nor, whether morning dawns or noontide glows.
 —Nor night nor day—his weary steed does spare
 Not once—but twice a hundred times—has run
 The self-same course, by light of moon or sun.

XIII.

But the ancient foe, deluded by whose say,
 To the forbidden fruit Eve raised her hand,
 Turned his wan eyes on Charlemagne one day,
 When he the good Rinaldo absent scanned
 And seeing what foul rout and disarray
 Might at that time be given to Charles's band,
 Of all the Saracens the choice and flower
 Marshalled in arms against the Christian power.

XIV.

King Sacripant and King Gradasso (who
 Whilere companionship in war had made,
 When from Atlantes' palace fled the two)
 Together to unite their arms, in aid
 Of royal Agramant's beleaguered crew,
 And to the ruin of King Charles, he swayed ;
 And where through unknown lands the warriors hied,
 Made smooth the way, and served them as a guide.

XV.

Thither another fiend that ruthless foe
 Bade Rodomont and Mandricardo bear
 Through ways, by which his comrade was not slow
 With the affrighted Doralice to fare :
 A third, lest they their enterprise forego,
 Rogero and Marpisa has in care :
 But *their* conductor journeys not so fast ;
 And hence that martial pair arrives the last.

XVI.

Later by half an hour, against their foes,
 So matched, Rogero and Marphisa sped ;
 Because the sable angel, who his blows
 Aimed at the bands that held the Christian creed,
 Provided, that the contest which arose
 About that horse, his work should not impede ;
 Which had again been kindled, had the twain,
 Rodomont and Rogero, met again.

XVII.

The first four ride until themselves they find
 Where the besiegers and besieged they view :
 And see the banners shaking in the wind,
 And the cantonments of those armies two.
 Here they short counsel took, and next opined,
 In spite of Charlemagne's beleaguering crew,
 To carry speedy succour to their liege,
 And rescue royal Agramant from siege.

XVIII.

Where thickest camped lay Charles's host, they spurred,
 Closing their files against the Christian foe.
 "Afric and Spain !" is the assailants' word,
 Whom at all points the Franks for paynims know.
 —"To arms, to arms !" throughout their camp is heard :
 But first is felt the Moorish sabre's blow :
 Even on the rear-guard falls the vengeful stroke,
 Not charged alone, but routed, beat and broke.

XIX.

The Christian host throughout is overthrown,
 And how, they know not, in tumultuous wise ;
 And that it is a wonted insult done
 By Switzer or by Gascon, some surmise ;
 But—since the reason is to most unknown—
 Each several nation to its standard flies,
 This to the drum, that to the trumpet's sound,
 And shriek and shout from earth to heaven redound.

XX.

All armed is Charlemagne, except his head,
 And, girt with paladins, his faithful stay,
 Arrived demanding what alarm has bred
 Disorder in his host and disarray ;
 And stopt with menace this or that who fled,
 And many fugitives, upon their way,
 Some with maimed face, breast, arm, or hand, espied,
 And some with head or throat with life-blood dyed.

XXI.

Advancing, he on earth saw many more,
 Or rather in a lake of crimson laid,
 Horribly weltering in their own dark gore,
 Beyond the leech's and magician's aid !¹
 And busts discovered from the heads they bore,
 And legs and arms—a cruel show—surveyed ;
 And, from the first cantonments to the last,
 Saw slaughtered men on all sides as he past.

XXII.

Where the small band advances in such wise,
 Deserving well eternal praise to gain,
 Vouching their deeds, a long-drawn furrow lies,
 A signal record of their might and main.
 His army's cruel slaughter, with surprise,
 Anger and rage, is viewed by Charlemagne.
 So he whose shattered walls have felt its force,
 Throughout his mansion tracks the lightning's course.

XXIII.

Not to the ramparts of the paynim crew
 Of Agramant as yet had pierced this aid,²
 When, on the further side, those other two,
 Rogero and Marphisa, thither made.
 When, once or twice, that worthy pair a view
 Have taken of the ground, and have surveyed
 The readiest way assistance to afford,
 They swiftly move in succour of their lord.

XXIV.

As when we spark to loaded mine apply,
 Through the long furrow, filled with sable grain,
 So fast the furious wildfire darts, that eye
 Pursues the progress of the flash with pain ;
 And as dire ruin follows, and from high,
 The loosened rock and solid bastion rain,
 So bold Rogero and Marphisa rush
 To battle, so the christian squadrons crush.

XXV.

Front and askance, the assailants smote, and low
 On earth, heads, arms, and severed shoulders lay,
 Where'er the christian squadrons were too slow
 To free the path and break their close array.
 Who'er has seen the passing tempest blow,
 And of the hill or valley, in its way,
 One portion ravage and another leave,
 May so their course amid that host conceive.

XXVI.

Many who had escaped by quick retreat,
 Rodomont and those other furious three,
 Thank God that he had given them legs and feet,
 Wherewith to fly from that calamity ;
 And from the Child and damsel new defeat
 Encounter, while with endlong course they flee :
 As man, no matter if he stand or run,
 Seeks vainly his predestined doom to shun.

XXVII.

Who 'scape one peril, into other fly,
 And pay the penalty of flesh and blood ;
 So, by the teeth of dog, is wont to die
 The fox, together with her infant brood,
 By one who dwells her ancient cavern nigh
 Unearthed, and with a thousand blows pursued ;
 When from some unexpected place, the foe
 Has filled with fire and smoke the den below.

XXVIII.

Marphisa and the Child, of danger clear,
 Enter the paynim ramparts ; and, with eyes
 Uprturned, the Saraccens, with humble cheer,
 Thank Heaven for the success of that emprise :
 The paladins no longer are their fear ;
 The meanest Moor a hundred Franks defies ;
 And 'tis resolved, without repose, again
 To drench with Christian blood the thirsty plain.

XXIX.

At once a formidable larum rose :
 Horns, drums, and shrilling clarions filled the skies ;
 And the wind ruffles, as it comes and goes,
 Banner and gonfalon of various dyes.
 The Germans and the warlike Bretons close :
 Ranged on the other part, in martial wise,
 Italians, English, French, were seen, and through
 Those armies furious war blazed forth anew.

XXX.

The force of the redoubted Rodomont,
 And *that* of Agrican's infuriate son,*
That of Rogero, valour's copious font,
 Gradasso's, so renowned for trophies won,
 The martial maid, Marphisa's fearless front,
 And might of Sacripant, excelled by none,
 Made Charles upon Saint John and Denys call,
 And fly for shelter to his Paris wall.

* Mandricardo.

XXXI.

Of fierce Marphisa and her bold allies
 The unconquered daring and the wondrous might,
 Sir, was not of a nature—of a guise—
 To be conceived, much less described aright:
 The number slaughtered hence may you surmise!
 What cruel blow King Charles sustained in fight!
 Add to these warriors of illustrious name,
 More than one Moor with Ferrau known to Fame.

XXXII.

Many through reckless haste were drowned in Seine,
 For all too narrow was the bridge's floor,
 And wished, like Icarus, for wings in vain,
 Having grim death behind them and before.
 Save Oliver, and Ogier hight the Dane,
 The paladins are prisoners to the Moor:
 Wounded beneath his better shoulder fled
 The first, that other with a broken head.

XXXIII.

And, like Orlando and Duke Aymon's son,*
 Had faithful Brandimart thrown up the game,
 Charles had from Paris into exile gone,
 If he had scaped alive so fierce a flame.
 Brandimart does his best, and when 'tis done,
 Yields to the storm: Thus Fortune, fickle dame,
 Now smiles upon the paynim monarch, who
 Besieges royal Charlemagne anew.

XXXIV.

From earth beneath the widow's outcry swells,
 Mingled with elder's and with orphan's prayer,
 Into the pure serene, where Michael dwells,
 Rising above this dim and troubled air;
 And to the blest archangel loudly tells,
 How the devouring wolf and raven tear
 His faithful English, French, and German train,
 Whose slaughtered bodies overspread the plain.

XXXV.

Red blushed the blessed angel, who believed
 He ill obedience to his lord had paid;
 And, in his anger, deemed himself deceived
 By the perfidious Discord and betrayed:
 He his Creator's order had received
 To stir the Moors to strife, nor had obeyed;
 Had rather in their eyes who marked the event,
 Appeared throughout to thwart his high intent.

* Rinaldo



Moreau.

J. Johnsons.

The descent of Michael.

XXXVI.

As servant faithful to his lord, and more
 In love than memory strong, who finds that he
 Has that forgotten which at his heart-core
 As precious as his life and soul should be,
 Hastes to repair his error, nor before
 He mend that fault, again his lord will see,
 So not to God St. Michael will ascend
 Until he has achieved his holy end.

XXXVII.

Again he to that monastery flew,
 Where whilom he had Discord seen; and there
 Seated in chapter sees her, while anon
 Their yearly officers elected are,
 She taking huge delight those friars to view,
 That at each other hurled their books of prayer.
 His hand within her locks the archangel twists,
 And deals her endless scathe with feet and fists.

XXXVIII.

On her he next a cross's handle broke;
 Wherewith her back, and arms, and head he plies;
 His mercy with loud voice the wretch bespoke,
 And hugged that angel's knees with suppliant cries.
 Michael suspends not the avenging stroke
 Till hunted to the Moorish camp she flies,
 Then thus; "Believe worse vengeance yet in store,
 "If I beyond these lines behold thee more."

XXXIX.

Albeit in back and arms all over shent
 Was Discord by that angel, in her fear
 Of suffering yet again such chastisement,
 Such horrid fury and such blows severe,
 She speedily to take her bellows went,
 And, adding food to what she lit whilere,
 And setting other ready piles afire,
 Kindled in many hearts a blaze of ire;

XL.

And good Rogero (she inflames them so)
 With Rodomont and Mandricardo fares
 To Agramant; and all (since now the foe
 The paynims pressed no more, the vantagio theirs)
 To him the seed of their dissensions show,
 And what the bitter produce which it bears:
 Then to the judgment of the king refer
 Who first in listed field his claim should stir.

XLI.

As well Marphisa to Troyano's son,*
 Relates her case, and will conclude the fray
 Which with the Tartar king she had begun,
 Because by him provoked to that assay ;
 Nor will she yield her place to any one,
 No, not a single hour, yet less a day ;
 But with loud instances maintains her right
 With Mandricardo first to wage the fight.

XLII.

To have the first possession of the field
 No less renowned King Rodomont contended,
 Which he, the African array to shield,
 Had interrupted and till now suspended.
 Rogero to King Agramant appealed,
 As having borne too long, though sore offended,
 That Rodomont from him detained his horse,
 Nor yet would meet him first in martial course.

XLIII.

The Tartar king, for more perplexity,
 Denied on any ground Rogero's right
 The bearer of the white-winged bird to be ;
 And was so passing wroth with wrath and spite,
 That, if to this those others would agree,
 He would at once those several quarrels fight
 And so those others would as well have done,
 If Agramant's consent they could have won.

XLIV.

King Agramant, with prayer and kindly word,
 Had willingly appeased that jarring crew :
 But since the foes were deaf to all accord,
 Nor would assent to peace or truce anew,
 Considered how at least he might afford
 The field to each of them in order due ;
 And, as the best resolve, at last decreed,
 Each should by lot possess the listed mead.

XLV.

Four lots the monarch bade prepare, which done,
 This ' Rodomont and Mandricardo ' said ;
 ' Rogero and Maudricardo ' were in one ;
 In one, ' Rogero and Rodomont ' were read ;
 That ' Mandricardo and Marphisa ' ran ;
 Next, as the fickle goddess, Fortune, led,
 The lots are drawn, and in the first appear
 The Tartar king and sovereign of Argier.

* Agramant.

XLVI.

Rogero and Mandricardo for that play
 Were next ; Rogero and Rodomont were third ;
 Marphisa's lot and Mandricardo's lay
 At bottom ; whence the dame was deeply stirred ;
 Nor young Rogero seems a whit more gay :
 Who knows the prowess of those two preferred
 Will nothing in the listed combat leave
 For him or for Marphisa to achieve.

XLVII.

There lies a place, of Paris little wide,
 Covering a mile or somewhat less, and round ;
 Like ancient theatre, on every side,
 Encompass'd by a tall and solid mound ;
 With castle whilom was it fortified,
 Which sword and fire had levelled with the ground.
 The Parmesan like circle does survey,
 Whenever he to Borgo wends his way.

XLVIII.

In this place is prepared the listed mead,
 Which palisades of little height inclose ;
 A square, of just proportions for that need,
 With two capacious gates, as usage goes.
 The day on which to combat have agreed
 Those valiant knights, who will not balk their foes,
 Beside the palisades, to left and right,
 Facing each entrance, are pavilions pight.

XLIX.

In that, which looks towards the western sun,
 Is lodged the giant monarch of Argièr ;
 And him assist his serpent-hide to don
 Bold Ferrax and Circassia's cavalier.
 Gradasso and the puissant Falsiron,
 In that which fronts the morning hemisphere,
 Clothe with their hands, in Trojan plate and chain,
 The good successor of King Agricane.

L.

High on a throne of ample state appeared
 Agramant and Marsilius ; next in place
 Were Stordilane and all the chiefs, revered
 Throughout the squadrons of the paynim race.
 Happy was he who found himself upreared
 On mound or tree, above that level space.
 Great was the throng, and round the palisade
 On every side the eddying people sway'd.

LI.

Were seated with the Queen of fair Castille
 Queens, princesses, and dames of noble strain,
 From Arragon, Granada, and Seville,
 And Atlas' columns ; and amid the train
 Assembled to behold that fierce appeal,
 Was placed the daughter of King Stordilane ;
 Two costly vests—one red, one green—she wore ;
 But ill the first was dyed, and faded sore.³

LII.

In dress succinct Marphisa sate ; in plight
 Such as beseemed a warrior and a maid :
 Thermodöon haply witnessed Hippolyte
 And her fair squadron in like garb arrayed.
 Afield already, in his livery dight,
 Agramant's herald made proclaim, and said,
 ' It was forbid to all men, far and wide,
 ' In act or word, with either part to side.'

LIII.

The frequent crowd expects the double foe ;
 And often, in impatience, they complain,
 And call those famous cavaliers too slow :
 When from the Tartar's tent an angry strain
 Is heard, and cries which multiply ; sir, know
 It was the martial king of Sericane,*
 And puissant Tartar, who that question stirred,
 And made the mighty tumult which was heard.

LIV.

Sericane's monarch, having with his hand
 Equipt the king of Tartary all o'er,
 Approached to gird him with that sovereign brand,
 With which Orlando went adorned of yore.
 When ' *Durindana*' on the hilt he scanned,
 Graved with the quartering that Almoutes wore ;
 Which from that wretched man, beside a font,
 Youthful Orlando reft in Aspramont.

LV.

He, seeing this, agnised it for the blade
 So famous, which Anglantes' warrior bore,
 For which he had the fairest fleet arrayed
 Which ever put to sea from eastern shore ;
 And had Castille's rich kingdom overlaid,
 And conquered fruitful France some years before ;
 But cannot now imagine how that sword
 Is in possession of the Tartar lord ;

* Gradasso.

LVI.

And asks, 'had he by force or treaty won,
 ' And when and where and how, that faulchion bright ;
 And Mandricardo said that ' he had done
 ' Fierce battle for that sword with Brava's knight ;
 ' Who feigned himself of sober sense foregone
 ' Hoping that so he should conceal his fright :
 —" For I on him would ceaseless war have made,"
 (He added,) " while he kept the goodly blade."

LVII.

Saying, ' The Count, in yielding to his foe
 ' That sword, the Beavers' known device had tried ;
 ' Who, followed closely by the hunter, know
 ' Their fell pursuer covets nought beside.'
 Ere he had heard him out,—" Nor I forego
 " That sword to thee nor any one," (replied
 Gradasso, fierce,) " well earned by me, at cost
 " Of treasure, and of pain, and people lost.

LVIII.

" Some other faulchion for thyself purvey ;
 " This will I have ; nor deem my reasons new ;
 " Whether Orlando wise or foolish stray,
 " I make it mine where'er it meets my view.
 " With none to witness, thou, beside the way
 " Usurped that sword ; I claim it as my due :
 " For this my scimeter shall reasons yield,
 " And we will try the cause in listed field.

LIX.

" Prepare to win the sword before thou rear
 " That goodly blade against King Rodomont.
 " To win his arms is use of cavalier,
 " Before his foe in duel he affront."
 —" No sweeter music ever soqthes my ear"
 (Replied the Tartar, as he raised his front)
 " Than voice which champions me to martial field ;
 " But see that his consent the Sarzant yield.

LX.

" Be thou the first ; and, next on listed ground
 " Let Sarza's valiant lord the question try ;
 " Nor doubt but I in readiness be found
 " To thee and every other to reply."
 —" Thou shalt not so the ordered lots confound,
 " Or break our compact (was Rogero's cry) :
 " Either, first Rodomont shall take the field,
 " Or shall to me his right of battle yield.

* Orlando.

† Rodomont.

LXI.

"If that be true Gradasso has averred,
 "That knight should win the arms he would assay,
 "Thou hast no title to my white-winged bird,
 "Save this from me thou first shalt bear away.
 "But since, forsooth, whilere I said the word,
 "I will not what I once pronounced unsay,
 "That mine shall be the second battle, so
 "That Argier's monarch first affront his foe.

LXII.

"I will confuse the order of the field,
 "Throughout, if partially confused by thee;
 "Abandon will I not my blazoned shield,
 "Unless thou combat for it now with me."
 —"Were one and the other Mars, for battle steeled.
 (Replies, enraged, the king of Tartary)
 "Nor one nor the other's might should make me wa
 "My title to that shield and goodly glaive;

LXIII.

And overmastered by his choler, flies
 With a clenched fist at him of Sericane,
 And smites him with his right-hand in such wise,
 As makes him quit his hold of Durindane.
 Gradasso bold was taken by surprise,
 Not deeming him so furious and insane;
 And, while he looked not to the Tartar lord,
 Found himself robbed of good Orlando's sword.

LXIV.

Fury and scorn Gradasso's visage heats,
 Which seems to flash with fire, at that disgrace;
 And with more rage and pain his bosom beats,
 In that 'twas offered in such public place.
 To draw his scinctor, the king retreats,
 Intent upon revenge, some little space.
 So Mandricardo on himself relies
 Rogero he to fight, as well defies.

LXV.

"Come on in arms against me, both combined,
 "And be King Rodomont the third!" (he said)
 "Come Spain and Afric and all human kind;
 "Ne'er will I turn." And he, at nought dismayed,
 So saying, in his fury, sawed the wind
 About him, with Almontes' noble blade,
 Embraced his shield, and, full of choler, stood
 Against Gradasso and Rogero good.

LXVI.

"Leave me the care," the fierce Gradasso cried,
 "The phrenzy of this madman to subdue."
 —"Not so, by Heaven!" Rogero wroth replied,
 "For I this field claim justly as my due."
 —"Stand back!" and "stand *thou* back!" on either side
 They shout; yet neither of the twain withdrew.
 And thus among those three began a feud;
 And thence some strange result would have ensued,

LXVII.

If many had not interposed, and sought
 With little wit their fury to restrain;
 Who had well-nigh too dear the experience bought
 Of saving others at their proper pain;
 Nor to accord the world had ever brought
 Those knights, but that the worthy king of Spain*
 Came thither with renowned Troyano's heir; †
 Awed by whose sovereign presence all forbear.

LXVIII.

Agramant those contending warriors made
 The cause of their so burning strife display;
 Next earnestly bestirred himself, and prayed
 Gradasso that he would, in courteous way,
 Concede the Trojan Hector's goodly blade
 To Mandricardo, solely for that day,
 Until the cruel fight was at an end.
 Wherein he should with Rodomont contend.

LXIX.

While royal Agramant would peace restore,
 And now with this and now with that conferred,
 From the other tent, between the Sarzan Moor
 And Sacripant, another strife was heard.
 Valiant King Sacripant (as said before)
 To equip Sir Rodomont himself bestirred,
 And he and Ferrau had that champion drest
 In his forefather Nimrod's iron vest;

LXX.

And there had they arrived, where with his spume
 The horse was making his rich bridle white:
 I of the good Frontino speak, for whom
 Rogero raged with yet unfelt despite.
 King Sacripant, who plays the part of groom,
 And has to bring afield the Sarzan knight,
 Marks narrowly the courser's gear and shoes,
 And sell and furniture throughout reviews;

* Marsilius.

† Agramant

LXXI.

And as his points and nimble parts, more near,
 He, in this view, observes with better heed,
 The youthful king, beyond all doubt, is clear
 He sees his Frontilatte in that steed,
 Him he of old had held so passing dear,
 Whilom of such debates the fruitful seed ;
 And for whose loss, whilere he was so woo,
 He evermore on foot resolved to go.

LXXII.

This from beneath him had Brunello' borne
 Before Albracca, on the very day
 Angelica's rare ring, and Roland's horn,
 And Balisarda he conveyed away,
 With fierce Marphisa's blade,—and on return
 To Afric—to Rogero, from his prey,
 Gave Balisarda and the courser, who
 Was by the Child Frontino named anew.

LXXIII.

Assured 'twas no mistake, Circassia's chief
 Turned him about to Rodomont, and cried ;
 " Rest from me in Albracca, by a thief,
 " This horse is mine : which might be certified
 " By them whose words would warrant well belief :
 " But as my witnesses are distant wide,
 " If it be questioned, I will make it plain,
 " And will, with sword in hand, the truth maintain.

LXXIV.

" Yet am I well contented, for that we
 " Have for these some few days together gone,
 " To lend him for to-day ; since well I see,
 " That not without him could the fight be done ;
 " But on condition, that the courser be
 " Acknowledged mine, and furnished as a loan :
 " Otherwise hope not for that horse, save first
 " Me, on this quarrel, thou in combat worst."

LXXV.

The furious king of Argier, that in pride
 Surpassed all knights that ever girt the sword,
 Whose paragon, for heart and prowess tried,
 Meseems no ancient histories record,
 Cried ; " Sacripant, if any one beside
 " Thyself, to me should utter such a word,
 " He should deem quickly, from its bitter fruit,
 " He from his birth would better have been mute.

LXXVI.

" But, for that fellowship in which we went,
 " (As thou hast said) together, I to show
 " Such patience and forbearance am content,
 " As warning thee, thy purpose to forego,
 " Until thou shalt have witnessed the event
 " Of strife between me and my Tartar foe :
 " When him I such example hope to make,
 " That thou shalt humbly say, ' The courser take.' "

LXXVII.

Fierce and enraged, replied Circassia's peer,
 " To play the churl with thee is courteous deed,
 " But I to thee repeat more plain and clear,
 " Thou ill wouldst aught design against that steed,
 " For, while I an avenging sabre rear,
 " This I prohibit thee, and, should it need,
 " And every better means of battle fail,
 " With thee for this would battle, tooth and nail."

LXXVIII.

They from dispute proceed to ribaldry,
 From words to blows ; and through their mickle ire,
 Fierce battle was inflamed, and blazed more high
 Than ever lightly kindled straw took fire,
 King Rodomont is steeled in panoply ;
 Sacripant neither plate nor mail attire ;
 Yet so in fence is skilled that nimble lord,
 He seems all over sheltered by his sword.

LXXIX.

No greater were the daring and the might
 (Though infinite) which Rodomont displayed
 Than the precaution and the nimble sleight
 Which the Circassian summoned to his aid :
 No mill-wheel ever turns with swifter flight
 The circling stone by which the grain is brayed,
 Than Sacripant at need moves foot or hand,
 And shifts now here, now there his restless stand.

LXXX.

But Serpentine and Ferrau interfere ;
 They with drawn swords the twain asunder bore ;
 With them Grandonio was, and Isolier,
 And many other leaders of the Moor.
 This was the tumult which was heard whilero
 In the other tent, what time they laboured sore,
 Rogero vainly to a peace to bring
 With Tartary's and Sericana's king.

LXXXI.

This while some voice to Agramant the news
 Reports aright, that Ulien's mighty seed,*
 With Sacripant, Circassia's king, pursues
 A fierce and furious quarrel for the steed.
 Agramant, whom so many jars confuse,
 Exclaims to King Marsilius; "Take thou heed
 "That no worse evil mid these knights betide,
 "While for this new disorder I provide."

LXXXII.

Rodomont reined his anger, and retired
 Some deal, at his approaching sovereign's view;
 Nor less respect in Sacripant inspired
 The Moorish monarch; of the furious two,
 He with grave voice and royal mien inquired
 What cause of strife such deadly discord blew:
 And having searched their quarrel to the root,
 Would fain accord them; but with little fruit.

LXXXIII.

Circassia's monarch would not, on his side,
 Longer his horse to Argier's lord allow,
 Save humbly Rodomont to him applied,
 That steed for this occasion to bestow.
 To him Sir Rodomont, with wonted pride,
 Returned for answer: "Neither Heaven nor thou
 "Shall make me recognize as gift or loan
 "What I with this good hand can make mine own."

LXXXIV.

The king bade Sacripant explain his right,
 And how that horse was taken from him sought;
 And this from first to last Circassia's knight
 Rehearsed, and reddened as the tale he taught,
 Relating to the king the robber's sleight;
 'Who had surprised him overwhelmed with thought,
 'Upon four spears his courser's saddle stayed,
 'And from beneath the naked horse conveyed.'

LXXXV.

Marphisa, whom these cries, mid others, bring,
 When of the robbery of the horse advised,
 In visage is disturbed, remembering
 How on that day her faulchion was surprised;
 And when that courser (which equipt with wing
 Appeared when flying her) she recognized;
 And recognized as well—at first unknown—
 The valiant king who filled Circassia's throne.

Rodomont.

LXXXVI.

The others who stood round her, wont to hear
 Brunello often boast of the deceit,
 'Gan turn towards that wretch, and made appear
 By open signs they knew him for the Cheat.
 Marphisa who the subtle knave whilere
 Suspected as the author of that feat,
 Now questions this, now that, who all accord
 In saying 'twas Brunello stole her sword ;

LXXXVII.

' Who, well deserving as a fitting pain
 ' To dangle from the gallows-tree in air,
 ' By Agramant the crown of Tingitane
 ' (An ill example) was preferred to wear.'
 This fires anew Marphisa's old disdain,
 Nor she from instant vengeance will forbear,
 For this, as well as other shame and scorn
 She on her road had from that caitiff born.

LXXXVIII.

A squire laced on her helmet, at her hest :
 She wore the remnant of her armour sheen ;
 Nor without martial cuirass on her breast,
 Find I, that she ten times was ever seen,
 Even from the day when first that iron vest
 Braced on her limbs the passing-valiant queen ;
 With helm on head, where, mid the highest rows,
 Brunello sits among the first, she goes.

LXXXIX.

Him by mid breast Marphisa griped amain,
 And lifted up the losel from the ground ;
 As is rapacious eagle wont to strain
 The pullet, in her talons circled round ;
 And bore him where the son of King Troyane
 Heard the two knights their jarring claims propow
 He who perceives himself in evil hands,
 Aye weeps, and mercy of that maid demands.

XC.

Above the universal noise and shout,
 Which rose nigh equally on either side,
 Brunello, who from all the crowd about
 For pity now, and now for succour, cried,
 So loud was heard, that of that ample rout
 He gatherèd round himself the pressing tide.
 Arrived before the Moorish army's head,
 To him with haughty mien Marphisa said :

XCI.

- " This thief, (said she) thy vassal, will I slay
 " And with this hand of mine will knot the cord
 " About his neck ; because the very day
 " He stole *his* courser, he purloined *my* sword.
 " But is there any one who deems I say
 " Amiss, let him stand forth and speak the word ;
 " For I on him will prove, before thine eyes
 " I have done right, and who gainsays me, lies.

XCII.

- " But because haply some one may pretend
 " I have till such a time of strife delayed
 " My vengeance, when such famous knights contend,
 " For three days shall the wretch's doom be stayed ;
 " In the mean time let him who would defend
 " That caitiff, come himself, or send him aid.
 " For afterwards, if none the deed prevent,
 " His carcass shall a thousand birds content.

XCIII.

- " I hence to yonder tower, which distant nigh
 " Three leagues, o'erlooks a little copse, repair,
 " But with one varlet in my company,
 " And with one waiting-maid ; if any dare
 " Rescue the thief, let him come thither ; I
 " Wait the approach of his defenders there."
 Thus she ; and thither quickly wends her ways
 Whither was said, nor any answer stays.

XCIV.

- Held on the pommel grappled by his hair,
 Brunello on Marphisa's courser lies ;
 The caitiff weeps, and shrieking in despair,
 On all in whom he hopes, for succour cries.
 In such confusion is Troyano's heir,
 He sees no way through these perplexities ;
 And, that Marphisa thence Brunello bore
 In such a guise, yet grieved the monarch more.

XCV.

- Not that he loved the losel or esteemed,
 Rather to him some time had borne despite ;
 And often had to hang the caitiff schemed,
 Since he had forfeited the ring of night.
 But here his honour touched the monarch deemed,
 So that his visage reddened at the slight :
 He would, in person, follow her at speed,
 And to his utmost power avenge the deed.

XCVI.

But the wise king, Sobrino, who was by,
 Him from the quest endeavoured to dissuade,
 And 'that with his exalted majesty
 'Such enterprise were ill assorted,' said:
 'Although firm hope, nay full security,
 'He had to overcome that martial maid,
 'If he with pain subdued a woman, shame,
 'Rather than honour, would pursue his name.

XCVII.

'Small profit and much peril would succeed
 'From any fight he should with her maintain,
 (And he advised him) 'as the better deed,
 'To leave that wretched caitiff to his pain;
 'And albeit but a simple nod should need
 'To free him, from that nod he should refrain.
 'In that the monarch would do ill to force
 'Even-handed Justice from her destined course.

XCVIII.

"Thou to the fierce Marphisa may'st apply
 "To leave his trial (he pursued) to thee,
 "With promise, her in this to satisfy,
 "And to suspend him from the gallows-tree
 "And even should the maid thy prayer deny,
 "Let her in every wish contented be:
 "And rather than that she desert thy side,
 "Let her hang him and every thief beside."

XCIX.

Right willingly King Agramant gave way
 To King Sobrino's counsel sage and staid;
 And let renowned Marphisa wend her way,
 Nor scathed he, nor let scathe, that martial maid,
 Neither endured that any her should pray;
 And heaven knows with what courage he obeyed
 That wise advice, to calm such ruder strife
 And quarrel, as throughout his camp were rife.

C.

At this mad Discord laughed, no more in fear
 That any truce or treaty should ensue;
 And scowered the place of combat there and here,
 Nor could stand still, for pleasure at the view.
 Pride gamboled and rejoiced with her compeer,
 And on the fire fresh food and fuel threw,
 And shouted so that Michael in the sky
 Knew the glad sign of conquest in that cry.

CI.

Paris-town rocked, and turbid ran the flood
 Of Seine at that loud voice, that horrid roar ;
 And, so its echo rang in Arden's wood,
 Beasts left their caverns in that forest hoar.
 Alp and Cevenne's mountain-solitude,
 And Blois, and Arles, and Rouen's distant shore,
 Rhine, Rhone, and Saône, and Garonne, heard the pest ;
 Scared mothers hugged their children to their breast.

CII.

Fire have set up their rest, resolved to be
 The first their different quarrels to conclude :
 And tangled so is one with other plea,
 That ill Apollo's self could judge the foud.*
 To unravel that first cause of enmity
 The king began—the strife which had ensued,
 Because of beauteous Doralice, between
 The king of Scythia* and her Algerine.

CIII.

King Agramant oft moved, between the pair,
 Now here, now there, to bring them to accord ;
 Now there, now here, admonishing that pair,
 Like faithful brother and like righteous lord :
 But when he found that neither would forbear,
 Deaf and rebellious to his royal word,
 Nor would consent that lady to forego,
 The cause of strife, in favour of his foe,

CIV.

As his best lore, at length the monarch said,
 And to obey his sentence both were fain ;
 ' That he who was by her preferred, should wed
 ' The beauteous daughter of King Stordilane :
 ' And that what was established on this head
 ' Should not be changed, to either's loss or gain.'
 The compromise was liked on either side,
 Since either hoped she would for him decide.

CV.

The mighty king of Sarza, who long space
 Before the Tartar, had loved Doralice,
 (Who had preferred that sovereign to such grace
 As modest lady may, nor do amiss)
 Believed, when she past sentence on the case,
 She must pronounce what would ensure his bliss.
 Nor thus alone King Rodomont conceived,
 But all the Moorish host with him believed.

* Mandricardo.

CVI.

All know what exploits wrought by him had been
 For her in joust and war; they all unsound
 And weak King Mandricardo's judgment ween;
 But he, who oft was with her on their round,
 And oftener private with the youthful queen,
 What time the tell-tale sun was under ground,
 He, knowing well how sure he was to speed,
 Laughed at the silly rabble's idle creed.

CVII.

They, after, ratify the king's award,
 Between his hands, and next the suitors twain
 Before that damsel go, that on the award
 Fixing her downcast eyes, in modest vein,
 Avows her preference of the Tartar lord;
 At which sore wondering stand the paynim train;
 And Rodomont remains so sore astound,
 He cannot raise his visage from the ground.

CVIII.

But wonted anger chasing shame which dyed
 The Sarzan's face all over, he arraigned
 The damsel's sentence, of the faulchion, tied
 About his manly waist, the handle strained,
 And in the king's and others' hearing cried;
 "By this the question shall be lost or gained;
 "And not by faithless woman's fickle thought,
 "Which thither still inclines, where least it ought.

CIX.

King Mandricardo on his feet once more,
 Exclaims, "And be it as it pleases thee."
 So that ere yet the vessel made the shore
 Unploughed remained a mighty space of sea;
 But that his king reproved the Sarzan sore,
 Ruling, 'that to appeal upon that plea
 'No more with Mandricardo could avail,'
 And made the moody Sarzan strike his sail.

CX.

Branded with double scorn, before those peers,
 By noble Agramant, whose sovereign sway
 He, as in loyal duty bound, reveres,
 And by his lady on the selfsame day,
 There will no more the monarch of Algiers
 Abide, but of his band—a large array—
 Two serjeants only for his service takes,
 And with that pair the paynim camp forsakes.

CXI.

As the afflicted bull who has foregone
 His heifer, nor can longer warfare wage,
 Seeks out the greenwood-bolt and stream most lone,
 Or sands at distance from his pasturage ;
 There ceases not, in sun or shade to moan ;
 Yet not for that exhales his amorous rage :
 So parts, constrained his lady to forego,
 The king of Argier, overwhelmed with woe.

CXII.

Rogero moved, his courser to regain,
 And had already donned his warlike gear,
 Then recollecting, that on listed plain
 At Mandricardo he must couch the spear,
 Followed not Rodomont, but turned his rein,
 To end his quarrel with the Tartar, ere
 He met in combat Sericana's lord
 Within close barriers, for Orlando's sword.

CXIII.

To have Frontino ravished in his sight,
 And be unable to forbid the deed,
 He sorely grieves ; but, when he shall that fight
 Have done, resolves he will regain the steed ;
 But Sacripant, whom, like the youthful knight,
 No quarrels in the Moor's pursuit impede,
 And who was unengaged in other quest,
 Upon the Sarzan's footsteps quickly prest ;

CXIV.

And would have quickly joined him that was gone,
 But for the chance of an adventure rare ;
 Which him detained until the day was done,
 And made him lose the track of Ulien's heir :
 A woman who had fallen into the Saône,
 And who without his help had perished there,
 The warrior drowning in that water found,
 And stemmed the stream and dragged the dame aground

CXV.

When afterwards he would remount the sell,
 From him his restless charger broke astray,
 Who fled before his lord till evening fell,
 Nor lightly did the king that courser stay.
 At last he caught him ; but no more could spell
 Where he had wandered from the beaten way :
 Two hundred miles he roved, 'twixt hill and plain,
 Ere he came up with Rodomont again.

CXVI.

How he by Sacripant was overtaken,
 And fought by him, to his discomfit sore,
 And how he lost his courser, how was taken,
 I say not now, who have to say before;
 With what disdain and with what anger shaken,
 Against his liege and love, the Sarzan Moor
 Forth from the Saracen cantonments sped,
 And what he of the one and other said.

CXVII.

Wherever that afflicted paynim goes,
 He fills the kindling air with sighs that burn ;
 And Echo oft, for pity of his woes,
 With him from hollow rock is heard to mourn :
 " O female mind ! how lightly ebbs and flows
 " Your fickle mood," (he cries,) " aye prone to turn !
 " Object most opposite to kindly faith !
 " Lost, wretched man, who trusts you to his scathe !

CXVIII.

" Neither my love nor length of servitude,
 " Though by a thousand proofs to you made clear,
 " Had power even so to fix your faithless mood,
 " That you at least so lightly should not veer ;
 " Nor am I quitted, because less endued
 " With worth than Mandricardo I appear ;
 " Nor for your conduct cause can I declare,
 " Save this alone, that you a-woman are.

CXIX.

" I think that nature and an angry God
 " Produced thee to the world, thou wicked sex,
 " To be to man a plague, a chastening rod ;
 " Happy, wert thou not present to perplex.
 " So serpent creeps along the grassy sod ;
 " So bear and ravening wolf the forest vex :
 " Wasp, fly, and gad-fly buzz in liquid air,
 " And the rich grain lies tangled with the tare.

CXX.

" Why has not bounteous Nature willed that man
 " Should be produced without the aid of thee,
 " As we the pippin, pear, and service can
 " Engraft by art on one another's tree ?
 " But she directs not all by certain plan ;
 " Rather, upon a nearer view, I see,
 " In naming her, she ill can act aright,
 " Since Nature is herself a female light.

CXXI.

" Yet be not therefore proud and full of scorn
 " Women, because man issues from your seed ;
 " For roses also blossom on the thorn,
 " And the fair lily springs from loathsome weed.
 " Despiteous, proud, infortunate, and lorn
 " Of love, of faith, of counsel, rash in deed,
 " With that, ungrateful, cruel and perverse,
 " And born to be the world's eternal curse ! "

CXXII.

These plaints and countless others to the wind
 Poured forth the paynim knight, to fury stirred ;
 Now easing in low tone his troubled mind,
 And now in sounds which were at distance heard,
 In shame and in reproach of womankind ;
 Yet certes he from sober reason erred :
 For we may deem a hundred good abound,
 Where one or two perchance are evil found.

CXXIII.

Though none for whom I hitherto have sighed
 —Of those so many—have kept faith with me,
 All with ingratitude, or falsehood dyed
 I deem not, I accuse my destiny.
 Many there are, and have been more beside
 Unmeriting reproach : but if there be,
 'Mid hundreds, one or two of evil way,
 My fortune wills that I should be their prey.

CXXIV.

Yet will I make such search before I die,
 Rather before my hair shall wax more white,
 That haply on some future day, even I
 Shall say, ' That one has kept her promise plight.'
 And should not the event my trust belie,
 (Nor am I hopeless) I with all my might
 Will with unwearied pain her praise rehearse
 With pen and ink and voice, in prose and verse.

CXXV.

The Saracen, whom rage no less profound
 Against his sovereign lord than lady swayed,
 And who of reason thus o'erpast the bound,
 And ill of one and of the other said,
 Would fain behold that monarch's kingdom drowned
 With such a tempest, with such scathe o'erlaid,
 As should in Africk every house aggrieve,
 Nor one stone standing on another leave.

CXXVI.

And would that from his realm, in want and woe,
 King Agramant a mendicant should wend ;
 That through his means the monarch, brought thus low,
 His fathers' ancient seat might reascend :
 And thus he might the fruit of fealty show,
 And make his sovereign see, a real friend
 Was eye to be preferred in wrong or right,
 Although the world against him should unite ;

CXXVII.

And thus the Saracen pours forth his moan,
 With rage against his liege and love possess ;
 And on his way is by long journeys gone,
 Giving himself and courser little rest.
 The following day or next, upon the Sadoe
 He finds himself, who has his course address
 Towards the coast of Provence, with design
 To his African domain to cross the brine.

CXXVIII.

From bank to bank the stream was covered o'er
 With boats of little burden, which conveyed,
 For the supply of the invading Moor,
 Victual, from many places round purveyed :
 Since even from Paris to the pleasant shore
 Of Acquamorta, all his rule obeyed ;
 And—fronting Spain—whate'er of level land
 Was seen, extending on the better hand.

CXXIX.

The victual, disembarked from loaded barge,
 Was laid on sumpter-horse or ready wain ;
 And sent, with escort to protect the charge,
 Where barges could not come : about the plain,
 Fat herds were feeding on the double marge,
 Brought thither from the march of either reign ;
 And, by the river-side, at close of day,
 In different homesteads lodged, the drovers lay.

CXXX.

The king of Argier, (for the dusky air
 Of night began upon the world to close)
 Here listened to a village-landlord's prayer,
 That in his inn besought him to repose.
 —His courser stalled—the board with plenteous fare
 Is heaped, and Corsic wine and Grecian flows,
 For, in all else a Moor, the Sarzan drank
 Of the forbidden vintage like a Frank.

CXXXI.

To warlike Rodomont, with goodly cheer
 And kindlier mien, the landlord honour paid ;
 For he the port of an illustrious peer
 In his guest's lofty presence saw pourtrayed.
 But, sore beside himself, the cavalier
 Had scarce his heart within him, which had strayed
 To her—whilere his own—in his despite ;
 Nor word escaped the melancholy knight.

CXXXII.

Mine host, most diligent in his vocation
 Of all the trade who throughout France were known,
 (In that he had, 'mid strange and hostile nation,
 And every chance of warfare, kept his own)
 —Prompt to assist him in his occupation,
 Some of his kin had called : whereof was none
 Who dared before the warrior speak of aught,
 Seeing that paynim mute and lost in thought.

CXXXIII.

From thought to thought the Sarzan's fancy flies,
 Himself removed from thence a mighty space,
 Who sits so bent, and with such downcast eyes,
 He never once looks any in the face.
 Next, after silence long, and many sighs,
 As if deep slumber had but then given place,
 His spirits he recalls, his eyelids raises,
 And on the family and landlord gazes.

CXXXIV.

Then silence broke, and with a milder air,
 And visage somewhat less disturbed, applied
 To him, the host, and those by-standers there,
 To know, 'if any to a wife were tied ;'
 And landlord and attendants,—' that all were,
 To Sarza's moody cavalier replied :
 He asked, 'what each conceited of his spouse,
 'And if he deemed her faithful to her vows,'

CXXXV.

Except mine host, those others were agreed,
 'That chaste and good their consorts they believed.'
 —"Think each man as he will, but well I read,"
 (The landlord said,) "you fondly are deceived :
 "Your rash replies to one conclusion lead,
 "That you are all of common sense bereaved ;
 "And so too must believe this noble knight,
 "Unless he would persuade us black is white.

CXXXVI.

- " Because, as single is that precious bird
 " The phoenix, and on earth there is but one,
 " So, in this ample world, it is averred,
 " One only can a woman's treason shun.
 " Each hopes alike to be that wight preferred,
 " The victor who that single palm has won.
 " —How is it possible that what can fall
 " To one alone, should be the lot of all?

CXXXVII.

- " Erewhile I made the same mistake as you,
 " And that more dames than one were virtuous thought,
 " Until a gentleman of Venice, who,
 " For my good fortune, to this inn was brought,
 " My ignorance by his examples true
 " So ably schooled, he better wisdom taught.
 " Valerio was the name that stranger bore ;
 " A name I shall remember evermore.

CXXXVIII.

- " Of wives and mistresses the treachery
 " Was known to him, with all their cunning lore.
 " He, both from old and modern history,
 " And from his own, was ready with such store,
 " As plainly showed that none to modesty
 " Could make pretension, whether rich or poor
 " And that, if one appeared of purer strain,
 " 'Twas that she better hid her wanton vein.

CXXXIX.

- " He of his many tales, among the rest,
 " (Whereof a third is from my memory gone)
 " So well one story in my head imprest,
 " It could not be more firmly graved in stone :
 " And what I thought and think, would be professed
 " For that ill sex, I ween by every one
 " Who heard ; and, Sir—if pleased to lend an ear—
 " To their confusion you that tale shall hear."

CXL.

- " What could'st thou offer which could better please
 " At present" (made reply the paynim knight)
 " Than sample, chosen from thine histories,
 " Which hits the opinion that I hold, aright?
 " That I may hear thee speak with better ease
 " Sit so, that I may have thee in my sight."
 But in the following canto I unfold
 What to King Rodomont the landlord told.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

*To whatsoever evil tongue can tell
Of womankind King Rodomont gives ear ;
Then journeys homeward ; but that infidel
Finds by the way a place he holds more dear.
Here him new love inflames for Isabel ;
But so the wishes of the cavalier
A friar impedes, who with that damsel wends,
Him by a cruel death the felon ends.*

I.

LADIES, and all of you that ladies prize,
Afford not, for the love of heaven, an ear
To this, the landlord's tale, replete with lies,
In shame and scorn of womankind ; though ne'er
Was praise or fame conveyed in that which lies
From such a caitiff's tongue ; and still we hear
The sottish rabble all things rashly brand,
And question most what least they understand.

II.

Omit this canto, and—the tale untold—
My story will as clear and perfect be ;
I tell it, since by Turpin it is told,
And not in malice or in rivalry :
Besides, that never did my tongue withhold
Your praises, how you are beloved by me
To you I by a thousand proofs have shown,
Vouching I am, and can but be, your own.

III.

Let him who will, three leaves or four pass-by,
Nor read a line ; or let him, who will read,
As little of that landlord's history,
As of a tale or fiction, make his creed.
But to my story :—When his auditory
He saw were waiting for him to proceed,
And that a place was yielded him, o'erright
The cavalier, he 'gan his tale recite ;

IV.

“ Astolpho that the Lombard sceptre swayed,
“ Who was King Monacho, his brother's heir,
“ By nature with such graces was purveyed,
“ Few e'er with him in beauty could compare ;
“ Such scarce Apelles' pencil had pourtrayed,
“ Zeuxis', or worthier yet, if worthier were :
“ Beauteous he was, and so by all was deemed,
“ But far more beauteous he himself esteemed.

V.

- " He not so much rejoiced that he in height
 " Or grandeur was exalted o'er the rest,
 " And that, for riches, subjects, and for might,
 " Of all the neighbouring kings he was the best,
 " As that, superior to each other wight,
 " His beauty was throughout the world confest.
 " This pleased the monarch, who the praise conferred,
 " As that wherein he most delighted, heard.

VI.

- " Faustus Latinus, one of his array,
 " Who pleased the king, a Roman cavalier,
 " Hearing oftentimes Astolpho now display
 " The beauties of his hand, now of his cheer,
 " And, questioned by that monarch, on a day,
 " If ever in his lifetime, far or near,
 " He any of such beauty had espied,
 " To him thus unexpectedly replied :

VII.

- " Faustus to him replied : ' By what I see,
 ' And what I hear, is said by every one,
 ' Few are there that in beauty rival thee ;
 ' And rather I those few confine to one :
 ' Jocundo is that one, my brother he ;
 ' And well I ween that, saving him alone,
 ' Thou leavest all in beauty far behind ;
 ' But I in him thy peer and better find.'

VIII.

- " Impossible Astolpho deemed the thing,
 " Who hitherto had thought the palm his own ;
 " And such a longing seized the Lombard king
 " To know that youth whose praises so were blown,
 " He prest, till Faustus promised him to bring
 " The brother praised by him, before his throne,
 " Though 'twould be much if thither he repaired,
 (The courtier added) ' and the cause declared :

IX.

- " Because the youth had ne'er been known to measure,
 ' In all his life, a single pace from Rome ;
 ' But, on what Fortune gave him, lived at leisure,
 ' Contented in his own paternal dome ;
 ' Nor had diminished nor increased the treasure,
 ' Wherewith his father had endowed that home ;
 ' And he more distant would Pavia deem
 ' Than Tanüis another would esteem ;

X.

- 'And that a greater difficulty were
 'To tear Jocundo from his consort ; who
 'Was by such love united to that fair,
 'No other will but hers the husband knew :
 'Yet at his sovereign's heat he would repair
 'To seek the stripling, and his utmost do.'
 "The suit with offers and with gifts was crowned,
 "Which for the youth's refusal left no ground.

XI.

- "Faustus set forth, and, after few days' ride,
 "Reached Rome, and his paternal mansion gained ;
 "There with entreaties so the brother plied,
 "He to that journey his consent obtained ;
 "And wrought so well (though difficult to guide)
 "Silent even young Jocundo's wife remained ;
 "He showing her what good would thence ensue,
 "Besides what gratitude would be her due.

XII.

- "Jocundo names a time to wend his way,
 "And servingmen meanwhile purveys and steeds ;
 "And a provision makes of fair array ;
 "For beauty borrows grace from glorious weeds.
 "Beside him or about him, night and day,
 "Aye weeping, to her lord the lady reads ;
 "She knows not how she ever can sustain
 "So long an absence, and not die with pain.

XIII.

- 'For the mere thought produced such misery,
 'It seemed from her was ravished her heart's core.'
 —'Alas ! my love (Jocundo cried) let be
 'Thy sorrows'—weeping with her evermore—
 'So may this journey prosper ! as to thee
 'Will I return ere yet two months are o'er ;
 'Nor by a day o'erpass the term prescribed,
 'Though me the king with half his kingdom bribed.

XIV.

- "This brought his troubled consort small content :
 "She, 'that the period was too distant,' said,
 "And, 'that 'twould be a mighty wonderment,
 "If her, at his return, he found not dead.'
 "The grief which, day and night, her bosom rent,
 "Was such, that lady neither slept nor fed ;
 "So that for pity oft the youth repented
 "He to his brother's wishes had consented.

XV.

- " She from her neck unloosed a costly chain
 " That a gemmed cross and holy relics bore ;
 " Which one, a pilgrim of Bohemia's reign,
 " Had gathered upon many a distant shore ;
 " Him did her sire in sickness entertain,
 " Returning from Jerusalem of yore ;
 " And hence was made that dying pilgrim's heir :
 " This she undoes, and gives her lord to wear ;

XVI.

- " And round his neck entreats him, for her sake,
 " That chain in memory of herself to wind :
 " Her gift the husband is well pleased to take ;
 " Not that a token needs his love to bind :
 " For neither time, nor absence, e'er will shake,
 " Nor whatsoever fortune is behind,
 " Her memory, which, rooted fast and deep,
 " He still has kept, and after death will keep.

XVII.

- " The night before that morning streaked the sky,
 " Fixt for his journey, to his sore dismay,
 " Her husband deemed that in his arms would die
 " The wife from whom he was to wend his way.
 " She slumbered not : to her a last goodbye
 " He bade, while yet it lacked an hour of day,
 " Mounted his nag, and on his journey sped ;
 " While his afflicted spouse returned to bed.

XVIII.

- " Jocunda was not two miles on his road,
 " When he that jewelled cross recalled to mind ;
 " Which he beneath his pillow had bestowed,
 " And through forgetfulness, had left behind.
 " Alas ! (the youth bethought him) in what mode
 " Shall I excuse for my omission find,
 " So that from this my consort shall not deem
 " I little her unbounded love esteem ?

XIX.

- " He pondered an excuse ; then weened 'twould be
 " Of little value, if it were exprest
 " By page or other—save his embassy
 " He did himself ; his brother he address ;
 " —Now to Baccano ride you leisurely,
 " And there at the first inn set-up your rest ;
 " For I must back to Rome without delay ;
 " But trust to overtake you by the way.

XX.

- ' No other but myself my need could do.
 ' Doubt not but I shall speedily be back.'
 "—No servant took he, but, with an adieu,
 " Jocundo, at a trot, wheeled round his hack,
 " And when that cavalier the stream was through,
 " The rising sun 'gan chase the dusky rack.
 " At home he lighted, sought his bed, and found
 " The consort he had quitted sleeping sound.

XXI.

- " He, without saying aught, the curtains drew,
 " And, what he least believed, within espied:
 " For he beneath the quilt, his consort true,
 " And chaste, saw sleeping at a stripling's side.
 " Forthwith Jocundo that adulterer knew,
 " By practice, of his features certified,
 " In that he was a footboy in his train,
 " Nourished by him, and come of humble strain.

XXII.

- " To imagine his distress and wonderment,
 " And warrant it, that other may believe,
 " Is better than to make the experiment,
 " And, like this wretch, the cruel proof receive:
 " By anger stirred, it was his first intent
 " To draw his sword, and both of life bereave;
 " But love, which spite himself, he entertained
 " For that ungrateful woman, him restrained.

XXIII.

- " You see if like a vassal he obeyed
 " This ribald Love, who left him not the force
 " To wake her, lest to know her guilt surveyed,
 " Should in his consort's bosom move remorse.
 " As best he could, he forth in silence made,
 " The stair descended, and regained his horse.
 " Goaded by Love, he goads his steed again,
 " And ere they reach their inn rejoins his train.

XXIV.

- " His change of mien to all was manifest;
 " All saw his heart was heavy; yet not one,
 " Mid these, in any sort, the reason guessed,
 " Nor read the secret woe which caused his moan;
 " All thought he had to Rome his steps address,
 " Who to the town, surnamed of horns, and gone,¹
 " That Love has caused the mischief all surmise,
 " Though none of them conjectures in what wise.

XXV.

- " His brother weened he was in grief immersed
 " For his deserted wife : he, on his side,
 " For other reason, inly chafed and cursed,
 " —That she was but too well accompanied.
 " Meanwhile, with swelling lips and forehead pursed,
 " The ground that melancholy striping eyed.
 " Faustus, who vainly would apply relief,
 " Ill cheered him, witless what had caused his grief.

XXVI.

- " He for his sore an evil salve had found,
 " And, where he should relieve, increased his woes ;
 " Who, with the mention of his wife, that wound
 " Inflamed and opened, which he sought to close.
 " He rests not night nor day, in sorrow drowned ;
 " His appetite is gone, with his repose,
 " Ne'er to return ; and (whilom of such fame)
 " His lovely visage seems no more the same.

XXVII.

- " His eye-balls seem deep-buried in his head,
 " His nose seems grown—his cheeks are pined so sore—
 " Nor even remains (his beauty so is fled)
 " Enough to warrant what he was before.
 " Such fever burns him, of his sorrow bred,
 " He halts on Arbia's and on Arno's shore ;
 " And, if a charm is left, 'tis faded soon,
 " And withered like a rose-bud plucked at noon.

XXVIII.

- " Besides that Faustus sorrowed to descry
 " Him so bested ; worse cause for sorrowing
 " Was to that courtier to appear to lie
 " Before Astolpho ; he was pledged to bring
 " One that was fairest deemed in every eye,
 " Who must appear the foulest to that king ;
 " Yet he continued on his way to wend,
 " And brought him to Pavia in the end.

XXIX.

- " Not that forthwith he lets the youth be seen,
 " Lest him the king of little wit arraign ;
 " He first by his dispatches lets him ween,
 " That thither he Jocundo brings with pain :
 " Saying, that of his beauteous air and mien
 " Some secret cause of grief had been the bane,
 " Accompanied by a distemper sore :
 " So that he seemed not what he was before.

XXX.

- " Glad was the monarch, of his coming taught,
 " As of a friend's arrival he could be ;
 " Since in the universal world was nought,
 " That he so much desired as him to see :
 " Nor was the Lombard king displeas'd in ought
 " To mark his guest's inferiority ;
 " Though, but for his misfortune, it was clear,
 " He his superior would have been or peer.

XXXI.

- " Lodged by him in his palace, every day
 " And every hour, the stranger youth he sees,
 " Studious to honour him, and bids purvey
 " Store of provision for his better ease.
 " While still his thoughts to his ill consort stray,
 " Jocundo languishes ; nor pastimes please
 " That melancholy man ; nor music's strain
 " One jot diminishes his ceaseless pain.

XXXII.

- " Above his chambers, on the upper floor,
 " Nearest the roof, there was an ancient hall :
 " Thither, in solitary mood, (for sore
 " Pastime and company the stripling gill,)
 " He eye betakes himself ; while evermore
 " Sad thoughts some newer cause of grief recall.
 " He here (who would believe the story ?) found
 " A remedy unhoped, which made him sound.

XXXIII.

- " At that hall's farther end, more feebly lighted,
 " (For windows ever closed shut out the day)
 " Where one wall with another ill united,
 " He, through the chink, beheld a brighter ray :
 " There laid his eye, and saw, what he had slighted
 " As hard to credit, were it but hearsay :
 " He hears it not, but this himself descrics ;
 " Yet hardly can believe his very eyes.

XXXIV.

- " He of the Queen's apartment here has sight,
 " Her choicest and her priviest chamber, where
 " Was never introduced whatever wight,
 " Save he most faithful was esteemed : he there,
 " As he was peeping, saw an uncouth fight ;
 " A dwarf was wrestling with the royal fair ;
 " And such that champion's skill, though under-grown,
 " He in the strife his opposite had thrown.

XXXV.

- " As in a dream, Jocundo stood, beside
 " Himself, awhile of sober sense bereaved ;
 " Nor, but when of the matter certified,
 " And sure it was no dream, his sight believed.
 —' A scorned and crooked monster,' (then he cried.)
 ' Is, as her conqueror, by a dame received,
 ' Wife of the comeliest, of the curtiest wight,
 ' And greatest monarch ; Oh ! what appetite !'

XXXVI.

- " And he the consort to whom he was wed,
 " Her he most used to blame, recalled to mind
 " And, for the stripling taken to her bed,
 " To deem the dame less culpable inclined :
 " Less of herself than sex the fault he read,
 " Which to one man could never be confined ;
 " And thought, if in one taint all women shared
 " At least *his* had not with a monster paired.

XXXVII.

- " To the same place Jocundo made return,
 " At the same hour, upon the following day ;
 " And, putting on the king the self-same scorn,
 " Again beheld that dwarf and dame at play :
 " And so upon the next and following morn ;
 " For—to conclude—they made no holiday :
 " While she (what most Jocundo's wonder moved
 " The pigmy for his little love reproved.

XXXVIII.

- " One day, amid the rest, the youth surveyed
 " The dame disordered and opprest with gloom :
 " Having twice summoned, by her waiting-maid,
 " The favoured dwarf, who yet delayed to come ;
 " A third time by the lady sent, she said ;
 —' Engaged at play, Madonna, is the groom,
 ' Nor, lest he lose a doit, his paltry stake,
 ' Will that discourteous churf his game forsake.'

XXXIX.

- " At such strange spectacle, the Roman knight
 " Cleared up his brow, his visage and his eyes ;
 " He jocund, as in name, became in sprite,
 " And changed his tears for smiles : with altered guise,
 " He waxes ruddy, gay, and plump in plight,
 " And seems a cherubim of Paradise.
 " So that such change with wonderment all see,
 " Brother and king, and royal family.

XL.

- " If from the youth Astolpho wished to know
 " From whence this sudden light of comfort came,
 " No less Jocundo thus desired to show,
 " And to the king such injury proclaim :
 " But willed that like himself he should forego
 " Revenge upon the author of that shame :
 " Hence, that he might discern her guilt, yet spare,
 " He made him on the *Agnus Dei* swear.⁴

XLI.

- " He made him swear that he, for nothing said,
 " Or seen, which might to him displeasing be,
 " (Though he, in what he should discover, read
 " An outrage offered to his majesty,)
 " Would, now or ever, venge him on this head :
 " Moreover him he bound to secrecy :
 " That the ill doer ne'er, through deed or word,
 " Might guess his injured king that case had heard.

XLII.

- " The monarch, who to every thing beside
 " Could better have given credit, freely swore :
 " To him the cause Jocundo signified,
 " Why he had many days lamented sore ;
 — ' Because he had his evil wife espied
 — ' In the embraces of a serjeant poor ;⁵
 ' And vowed he should in fine have died of grief,
 ' If he for longer time had lacked relief.

XLIII.

- ' But that within his highness' palace,' said,
 ' He had witnessed what had much appeased his woe ;
 ' For, if foul shame had fallen upon his head,
 ' At least he was not single ;' " saying so,
 " He to that chink the Lombard monarch led,
 " Who spied the mannikin of hideous show.
 " * * * * *
 " * * * * *

XLIV.

- " You may believe he shameless deemed that act,
 " Without my swearing it ; he, at the sight,
 " It seemed, would go distraught,—with fury racked,
 " He against every wall his head would smite—
 " Would cry aloud—would break the solemn pact,
 " Yet kept parforce the promise he had plight ;
 " And gulped his anger down and bitter scorn ;
 " Since on the holy wafer he had sworn.

XLV.

" Then to Jocundo ; ' What remains to me
 ' To do in this misfortune, brother, speak ;
 ' Since vengeance with some noted cruelty
 ' Thou wilt not let me on the sinners wreak.'
 ' (Jocundo answered) ' Let these ingrates be ;
 ' And try we if all women are as weak ;
 ' And if the wives of others can be won
 ' To do what others by our own have done.

XLVI.

' Both fair and youthful, measured by this scale,
 ' Not easily our equals shall we find ;
 ' What woman but to us shall strike her sail,
 ' If even to the ugly these are kind ?
 ' At least, if neither youth nor grace avail,
 ' The money may, with which our bags are lined ;
 ' Nor will I that we homeward more return,
 ' Ere the chief spoils we from a thousand earn.

XLVII.

' Long absence, seeing many a distant part,
 ' Converse with different women, oft allay,
 ' As it would seem, the troubles of a heart,
 ' Whereof Love's angry passions make their prey.'
 " The king is pleased to hear the youth impart
 " This counsel, nor his journey will delay :
 " Thence on their road, with but two squires beside,
 " He and the Roman knight together ride.

XLVIII.

" Disguised they go through France and Italy,
 " They Flanders next and England scower, and where
 " A woman they of lovely visage spy,
 " Aye find the dame compliant with their prayer.
 " They upon some bestow what others buy,
 " And oft replaced their squandered treasures are.
 " Our travellers to the wives of many sued,
 " And by as many other dames were wooed.

XLIX.

" By solid proof those comrades ascertain,
 " *Here* tarrying for a month, and *there* for two,
 " That their own wives are of no other vein
 " Than those of others, and as chaste and true.
 " After some season, wearied are the twain
 " With ever running after something new :
 " For, without risk of death, thus evermore
 " The intruders ill could enter other's door.

L.

- '—'Twere best to find a girl whose natural bent
 ' And face to both of us should pleasing be ;
 ' A girl, that us in common might content,
 ' Nor we in her find cause for jealousy ;
 ' And wherefore wouldst thou that I should lament
 ' More than with other, to go halves with thee ?'
 (Exclaimed Astolpho) ' well I know is none,
 ' Of all the female sex, content with one.

LI.

- ' One damsel that in nought shall us constrain,
 ' —Then only, when disposed to please the fair—
 ' Will we in peace and pleasure entertain,
 ' Nor we, about her, have dispute or care.
 ' Nor deem I she with reason could complain :
 ' For if two fell to every other's share,
 ' Better than one might she keep faith with two ;
 ' Nor haply we such frequent discord view.

LII.

- " Much seems the king's proposal to content
 " The Roman youth ; and thus it is, the twain
 " To execute Astolpho's project bent,
 " Journey by many a hill and many a plain ;
 " And find at last, well fitting their intent,
 " The daughter of a publican of Spain,
 " Of presence and of manners framed to win ;
 " Whose father at Valencia kept his inn.

LIII.

- " As yet, upon the bloom of spring, the maid
 " Was a fresh flower that scarce began to blow :
 " Her sire with many children was o'erlaid
 " And was to poverty a mortal foe.
 " Hence 'tis an easy matter to persuade
 " Mine host his buxom daughter to forego,
 " And let them where they will the damsel bear
 " In that to treat her well the travellers swear.

LIV.

* * * * *

- " They to Zattiva come upon the day
 " That from Valencia they had bent their way.

LV.

- " The travellers from their inn to street and square
 " And places, public and divine, resort ;
 " Who, wheresoever they had made repair,
 " Themselves were so accustomed to disport,
 " The girl is with the valets left in care,
 " Who make the beds, and wearied hackneys sort :
 " While others in the hostel-kitchen dight
 " The meal against their lords' return at night.

LVI.

- " As groom, a stripling in the hostel plied,
 " Who in the other landlord's house had been :
 " He, from her childhood at the damsel's side,
 " Had joyed her love : they, without change of mien,
 " On meeting, closely one another eyed,
 " Since either apprehended to be seen :
 " But when alone—now left together—raised
 " Their eyelids and on one another gazed.

LVII.

- " The stripling asked her, ' whitherward they sped,
 " And of the two which claimed her as his right ;'
 " This, point by point, to him Flammetta read :
 " Flammetta she, the Greek that boy was light.
 ' —When I had hoped the time was coming,' said
 ' The Greek—' that I should live with thee, my light,
 ' Flammetta, thou, alas ! art lost to me,
 ' Nor know I if I more thy face shall see.

LVIII.

- ' I to the bitter dregs the cup must drain
 " Of promised sweets ; since thou art others' prey.
 ' 'Twas my design, having with mickle pain
 ' And labour sore, some money put away,
 ' Which I had hoarded out of frequent gain
 ' From parting guests, and from my yearly pay,
 ' To seek again Valencia, and demand
 ' Thee from thy sire in lawful wedlock's band.'

LIX.

- " The damsel shrugs her shoulders, and complains ;
 " And—' that he is too late'—is her reply.
 " The Greek laments and sobs, and partly feigns :
 ' —Wilt thou (he answered her) thus let me die ?
 ' Let me, at least, exhale my amorous pains !
 ' Let me, but once, in thine embraces lie !
 ' For every moment in thy presence spent,
 ' Ere thou depart, will make me die content.'

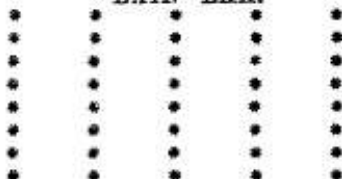
LX.

- " To him the damsel, full of pity, cries ;
 ' Believe, I covet this no less than thee ;
 ' But here, surrounded by so many eyes,
 ' Is neither time nor opportunity.
 ' —I feel assured' (to her that youth replies)
 ' Were I beloved by you, as you by me,
 ' This very night you would find out a place
 ' Wherein to solace us some little space.'

LXI.

- " She bade him come—when she awhile had thought—
 " When he believed that all asleep were laid ;
 " And how by him her chamber should be sought,
 " And how he should return, at full, displayed.
 " The cautious stripling did as he was taught,
 " And, when he found all silent, thither made :
 " He pushed, till it gave way, the chamber-door,
 " And, upon tiptoes, softly paced the floor.

LXII.—LXX.



LXXI.

- " Gazing on one another, with surprise,
 " The monarch and Jocundo are confused ;
 " Nor even to have heard a case surmise
 " Of two, that ever thus had been abused :
 " Then laughed so, that they sate with winking eyes,
 " And open mouth, and lungs which breath refused ;
 " And, wearied with the mirth her tale had bred,
 " Fell backwards, both, exhausted on the bed.

LXXII.

- " When they had laughed so loud a laugh, the dew
 " Stood in their eyes, and each with aching breast
 " Remained, the pair exclaimed : ' What shall we do
 ' In order not to be a woman's jest ?
 ' Since we, with all our heed, between us two,
 ' Could not preserve the one by us possess,
 ' A husband, furnished with more eyes than hair,
 ' Parforce must be betrayed with all his care.

LXXIII.

' A thousand, beauteous all, have we found kind,
 ' Nor one of those so many has stood fast.
 ' If tried, all women we by proof should find
 ' Like these ; but be the experiment our last.
 ' Then we may deem our own not worse inclined
 ' Than are the wives of others, and as chaste :
 ' And if like others we our own discern,
 ' I hold it best that we to them return.'

LXXIV.

" When they have come to this resolve, they, through
 " Flammetta, call the youth into their bower ;
 " And with the girl her leman, in the view
 " Of many, gift, and add a fitting dower.
 " They mount, and to the east their way pursue,
 " Accustomed westward hitherto to scower ;
 " To their deserted wives again repair,
 " Nor of their after-deeds take farther care."

LXXV.

Here paused mine host ; to whom on every side
 His audience had with careful heed attended.
 Rodomont listened, nor a word replied,
 Until the landlord's story was suspended.
 Then—" Fully I believe," that paynim cried,
 " The tale of women's frauds would ne'er be ended ;
 " Nor could that man in any volume note
 " The thousandth part, who would their treasons quote."

LXXVI.

Of sounder judgment, 'mid that company,
 There was an elder, one more wise and bold ;
 That undefended so the sex to see,
 Was inly wroth, and could no longer hold :
 To the relater of that history
 He turned ; and, " Many things we have been told"
 (Exclaimed that ancient) " wherein truth is none,
 " And of such matters is thy fable one.

LXXVII.

" Him I believe not, that told this to you,
 " Though in all else he gospel-truths exprest ;
 " As less by his experience, than untrue
 " Conceit respecting women prepossesst.
 " The malice which he bears to one or two,
 " Makes him unjustly hate and blame the rest.
 " But you shall hear him, if his wrath o'erblow,
 " Yet greater praise than blame on these bestow

LXXVIII.

" And he a larger field for speaking well
 " Will find, than blaming womankind withal ;
 " And of a hundred worthy fame may tell,
 " For one whose evil deeds for censure call.
 " He should exalt the many that excel,
 " Cull'd from the multitude, not rail at all.
 " If otherwise your friend Valerio said,
 " He was by wrath, and not by reason, led.

LXXIX.—LXXXIII.

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LXXXIV.

So reasoning, that just elder and sincere,
 With ready instances, supports his creed ;
 Showing there many women are who ne'er
 Sinned against chastity, in word or deed :
 But him with impious visage and severe
 The paynim scared, ill pleased the truth to read.
 So that, through fear, he further speech forbore,
 But changed not therefore aught his former lore.

LXXXV.

Having stopt further question in this wise,
 The paynim monarch from the table rose :
 Then lays him on his bed, till from the skies
 The dusky shades depart, and morning glows :
 But spends a larger part of night in sighs
 At his liege-lady's sin than in repose.
 Rodomont thence departs at dawn of day,
 Resolved by water to pursue his way.

LXXXVI.

For with such care for his good horse's plight,
 As is becoming a good cavalier,
 The courser fair and good, made his in spite
 Of young Rogero and Circassia's peer ;
 Seeing he, for two days, that horse's might
 Had taxed too hardly in his long career,
 —As well he for his ease embarked the steed,
 As to pursue his way with better speed.

LXXXVII.

He straight makes launch the vessel from the marge,
 And bids put forth the oars from either side :
 Nor big nor deeply laden, she, at large,
 Descends the Sóane, transported by the tide.
 Care never quits him, though the shifting barge
 The king ascend, or nimble horse bestride :
 This he encounters aye on prow or poop,
 And bears behind him on his courser's croup ;

LXXXVIII.

Rather within his head or heart always
 Care sits ; whence every comfort is o'erthrown :
 No remedy the wretched man surveys,
 In that his enemies are in the town.
 From others hope is none ; since they who raise
 This fearful war against him, are his own :
 Vext by that cruel one, aye night and day,
 Whom he might hope to find his natural stay.

LXXXIX.

Rodomont navigates the day and night
 Ensuing, aye by heavy thoughts opprest ;
 Nor can he ever banish the despite,
 Suffered from king and lady, from his breast.
 The self-same grief sat heavy on his sprite
 Aboard the bark, as when his steed he prest.
 Such fire was not by water to be drowned,
 Nor he his nature changed by changing ground.*

XC.

As the sick man who with a fever glows,
 And, weak and weary, shifts his place in vam,
 Whether he right or left himself bestows,
 And hopes in turning some relief to gain,
 Finds neither on *this* side nor *that* repose,
 But everywhere encounters equal pain :
 The pagan monarch so found small relief,
 By land or water, for his secret grief.

XCI.

Rodomont brooked no more aboard to stay,
 But bade them land him, and by Lyons hied ;
 By Vienne and Valence next took his way,
 And the rich bridge in Avignon descried.
 For these and more, which 'twixt the river lay
 And Celtiberian hills upon that side,
 (Theirs, from the day they conquered the champaigne)
 Obeyed the kings of Afric and of Spain.

XCII.

To pass to Afric straight, the cavalier
 Kept to the right, towards Acquamorta's shore,
 And lighted on a stream and hamlet, dear
 To Ceres and to Bacchus, which that Moor
 Found quitted by the peasants, in their fear
 As often by the soldier harried sore.
 The beech upon one side broad ocean laved,
 And on the other yellow harvests waved.

XCIII.

Here, newly built upon a hillock's crest,
 A little church the Saracen espied ;
 Abandoned by its priesthood, like the rest,
 For war was flaming upon every side.
 Rodomont of this place himself possesseth ;
 Which, from its site, as well as lying wide
 Of fields, from whence he tidings loathed to hear,
 So pleased him, he for it renounced Argièr.

XCIV.

He changed his scheme of seeking Afric's land,
 (So this fair spot seemed fit for his behoof !)
 And here housed carriages, and steed, and band,
 Together with himself, beneath one roof.
 At few leagues' distance, did Montpelier stand,
 And other wealthy towns, not far aloof.
 The village was upon a river's side,
 So that its every need might be supplied.

XCV.

Here standing, full of thought, upon a day,
 (Such was his common wont) the paynim spied,
 Advancing by a narrow path, which lay
 Through a green meadow, from the adverse side,
 A lovely damsel, that upon her way
 Was by a bearded monk accompanied ;
 And these behind them led a lusty steed,
 Who bore a burden, trapt with sable weed.

XCVI.

Who that attendant monk and damsel were,
 And what that burden, will to you be clear,
 Remembering Isabella in the fair,
 Charged with the corpse of her Zerbino dear :
 I left her, where from Provence, in the care
 Of that good sire, she bowned herself to steer,
 By whom persuaded, had the lady given
 The remnant of her virtuous life to heaven.

XCVII.

Although in her pale face and troubled guise,
 The sorrow of that dame is manifest,
 Although two fountains are her streaming eyes,
 And sobs aye issue from her burning breast,
 And more beside of suffering testifies,
 With what a load of grief she is oppress'd,
 Yet, in her faded cheek such beauties meet,
 Love and the Graces there might fix their seat.

XCVIII.

As soon as he of Sarza saw appear
 The beauteous dame, he laid the thought aside
 Of hatred to that gentle race and dear,
 By whom alone the world is glorified ;
 And best by Isabel the cavalier
 Believed his former love would be supplied,
 And one love by another be effaced,
 As bolt by bolt in timber is displaced.

XCIX.

Her with the kindest mien and mildest tone
 That he could fashion, met the Sarzan knight ;
 To whom the dame her every thought made known ;
 And said, when she was questioned of her plight,
 ' She would with holy works—this world forgone—
 Seek favour in her Heavenly Father's sight.'
 Loud laughed that godless paynim at the thought,
 Who every faith and worship held at nought ;

C.

And said, ' that she from reason wandered wide,
 ' And termed her project sudden and unsound ;
 ' Nor deemed her less to blame than those who hide,
 ' Through greediness, their treasure under ground,
 ' And keep it from the use of all beside,
 ' Though hence no profit to themselves redound.
 ' Rightly were prisoned lion, snake, and bear,
 ' But ill whate'er is innocent and fair.'

CI.

The monk, that to this talk has lent an ear,
 Prompt with advice that mournful dame to stay,
 And lest she quit her course prepared to steer
 His bark, like practised pilot, on her way,
 A sumptuous table, rich in spiritual cheer,
 Had speedily bestirred him to array ;
 But, born with evil taste, that paynim rude
 No sooner tasted, than he loathed, the food.

CII.

And having interrupted him in vain,
 Nor having power to make him stint his lore,
 That paynim, stirred to fury, broke the rein
 Of patience, and assailed the preacher hoar.
 But haply wearisome might seem the strain,
 If I upon this theme dilated more :
 So here I close, nor words will idly spend,
 Admonished by that ancient's evil end.

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

*Isabel makes the paynim take her head,
 Rather than he his wicked will should gain ;
 Who, having his unhappy error read,
 Seeks to appease his wounded spirit in vain.
 He builds a bridge, and strips those thither led ;
 But falls from it with Roland the insane ;
 Who thence, of him regardless, endlong speeds,
 And by the road achieves prodigious deeds.*

I.

O FEEBLE and unstable minds of men !
 How quickly our intentions fluctuate !
 All thoughts we lightly change, but mostly when
 These from some lover's quarrel take their date.
 But now, so wroth I saw that Saracen
 With woman, so outrageous in his hate,
 I weened not only he would ill assuage,
 But never more would calm, his amorous rage.

II.

That which he rashly uttered to your blame,
 Ye gentle dames, does so my spirit grieve,
 Till I his error teach him, to his shame,
 He shall no quarter at my hands receive :
 So him with pen and page will I proclaim,
 That, whosoever reads me, shall believe
 He had better held—aye, better bit, his tongue,
 Than ever have your sex with slander stung.

III.

But that in this the witless infidel
 Spake as a fool, the event demonstrates clear:
 Even now, with dagger drawn, that paynim fell
 In fury on all women whomsoe'er.
 Next him so touched one look of Isabel,
 She quickly made his fickle purpose veer;
 For her, scarce seen, and to that warrior strange,
 He would his Doralice already change;

IV.

And, as new love the king did heat and goad,
 He moved some arguments of small avail,
 To shake her stedfast spirit, which abode
 Wholly with God; but he, her shield and mail,
 That hermit, lest she from the better road
 Should wander, and her chaste intention fail,
 With stronger arguments with him contended,
 And still, as best he could, the dame defended.

V.

The king, who long had taxed himself to bear
 The monk's bold sermon to his sore displeasure,
 And vainly bade him to his cell repair
 Anew, without that damsel, at his leisure,
 Yet seeing he would still his patience dare,
 Nor peace with him would keep, nor any measure,
 Upon that preacher's chin his right hand laid,
 And whatsoe'er he grasped, as rudely flayed.

VI.

And (so his fury waxed) that, as it were
 With tongs, he griped his neck, and after he
 Had whirled him once or twice about in air,
 Dismist him from his hand towards the sea.
 I say not—know not, what befel him there:
 Many the rumours are, and disagree.
 One says, 'he burst upon a rock's rude bed,
 'And lay one shapeless jelly, heels and head.'

VII.

'He fell into the sea,' by one is said,
 'Distant three miles and more; and, in that sound,
 'He having prayer, and Ave vainly made,
 'Because he knew not how to swim, was drowned.'
 Others report, 'a Saint bestowed his aid,
 'And dragged him with a visible hand aground.'
 Whichever be the reading of this mystery,
 Of him I speak no further in mine history.

VIII.

Cruel King Rodomont, when from his side
 He had removed the prating eromite,
 With visage less disturbed, again applied
 To that sad lady, heartless with affright;
 And, in the language used by lovers, cried,
 'She was his very heart, his life, his light,
 'She was his comfort and his dearest hope ;'
 With all such words as have that common scope.

IX.

And now, so temperate showed that infidel,
 'Twould seem that he no violence designed,
 The gentle semblance of fair Isabel,
 Enamouring him, so tamed his haughty mind ;
 And, though he might that goodly kernel shell,
 The paynim would not pass beyond the rind,
 Who that its flavour would be lost, believed,
 Unless 'twere as a gift from her received ;

X.

And by degrees so thought to mould the dame
 To his desires. She in that lone retreat
 And savage, open to his evil aim,
 And like a mouse, beneath Grimalkin's feet,
 Had liefer found herself i' the midst of flame ;
 And ever on one thought her fancy beat ;
 'If any mode, if any way, remained
 'To scape that wilful man, untouched, unstained.

XI.

Sad Isabella in her mind is bent
 To slay herself with her own hand, before
 The fell barbarian compass his intent ;
 And be the means to make her wrong so sore
 That cavalier, by cruel Fortune spent,
 Within her loving arms, to whom she swore
 With mind to him devoted, his to be,
 Vowing to Heaven perpetual chastity.

XII.

She sees that paynim monarch's passion blind
 Increasing still, nor what to do she knows ;
 Well knows what foul intention is behind,
 Which she is all too feeble to oppose :
 Yet moving many matters in her mind,
 Finds out at last a refuge for her woes,
 And means to save her chastity from shame,
 (How I shall say) with clear and lasting fame.

XIII.

She cried unto that paynim, foul to see,
 Already threatening her with word and act,
 And now devoid of all that courtesy,
 Which he in the beginning did enact,
 " If thou mine honour wilt ensure to me,
 " Beyond suspicion, I, upon this pact,
 " Will upon thee bestow what shall o'erpay,
 " By much, that honour thou wouldst take away.

XIV.

" For pleasure, which endures so brief a space,
 " Wherewith this ample world does so o'errun,
 " Reject not lightly a perpetual grace,
 " A real joy, to be postponed to none.
 " Of women everywhere of pleasing face
 " A hundred and a thousand may be won ;
 " But none beside me, or few others, live
 " Who can bestow the boon which I can give.

XV.

" I know, and on my way a herb did view,
 " And nearly know where I on this could light,
 " Which, being boiled with ivy and with rue,
 " Over a fire with wood of cypress dight,
 " And squeezed, when taken from the cauldron, through
 " Innocent hands, affords a juice of might,
 " Wherewith whoever thrice his body laves,
 " Destructive steel or fire securely braves."

XVI.

" If thrice therewith he bathe himself, I say,
 " His flesh no weapon for a month shall score :
 " He once a month must to his body lay
 " Mine unction, for its virtue lasts not more :
 " This liquor can I make, and will to-day,
 " And thou to-day shalt also prove my lore :
 " And well, I trust, thou shalt more grateful be,
 " Than were all Europe won to-day by thee.

XVII.

" In guerdon for this present, I request
 " That thou to me upon thy faith wilt swear,
 " Thou never wilt my chastity molest
 " In word or deed." So spake that damsel fair ;
 And Rodomont who heard, again repress
 His evil will ; for so he longed to bear
 A charmed life, that readily he more
 Than Isabel of him demanded swore ;

XVIII

And will maintain his promise, till the fact
 Vouch'd of that wondrous water shall appear;
 And force himself, meanwhile, to do no act,
 To show no sign of violence; but the peer
 Resolves he will not after keep the pact,
 As one who holds not God or saint in fear;
 And to that king, regardless of his oath,
 All lying Afric yields in breach of troth.

XIX.

Argier's perfidious king to Isabel
 More than a thousand times assurance swore,
 In case that water rendered him what fell
 Achilles and what Cygnus were of yore,
 She, eye by beetling cliff and darksome dell,
 Away from city and from farm, a store
 Of herbs collected, nor this while was e'er
 Abandoned by the paynim cavalier.

XX.

When herbs enow by them in many a beat,
 With or without their roots, collected were,³
 At a late hour, the twain to their retreat
 Betook them; and, throughout night's remnant, there
 That paragon of continence did heat
 What simples she had culled, with nickle care,
 While to those mysteries and her every deed
 The pagan, present still, gave curious heed;

XXI.

Who, wearing out the weary night in sport,
 —He and those followers that with him remained—
 Had suffered thirst in such a grievous sort,
 From the fierce fire in that small cave contained,
 That drinking round, in measure full or short,
 Of Grecian wine two barrels they had drained;
 A booty which those squires who served the Moor,
 From travellers seized a day or two before.

XXII.

To Argier's warlike king, unused to wine,
 (Cursed, and forbidden by his law, esteemed)
 The liquor, tasted once, appeared divine,
 Sweeter than nectar or than manna seemed;
 He, quaffing largely, now of Ishmael's line
 The sober use deserving censure deemed.
 So fast their cups with that good wine they fill
 Each reveller's head is whirling like a mill.

XXIII.

Meanwhile that lady from the fire does lift
 The pot, wherein she cooked those herbs, and cries
 To Rodomont; "In proof I not adrift
 "Have launched the words I spake, in random guise,
 "—By *that*, which can the truth from falsehood sift,
 "Experience, which can make the foolish wise,
 "Even now the thing shall to thyself be shown,
 "Not on another's body, but my own.

XXIV.

"I first will trial make" (that lady said)
 "Of this choice liquor with rare virtue blest;
 "Lest haply thou shouldst harbour any dread
 "That mortal poison from these herbs be prest.
 "With this will I anoint myself, from head
 "Downwards below the naked neck and breast.
 "Then prove on me thy faulchion and thine arm,
 "And prove if one can smite, the other harm."

XXV.

She washed, as said, and gladly did decline
 Her neck to that unthinking pagan's brand;
 Unthinking, and perhaps overcome by wine,
 Which neither helm, nor mail, nor shield withstand.
 That brutish man believed her, and, in sign
 Of faith, so struck with cruel steel and hand,
 That her fair head, erewhile Love's place of rest,
 He severed from the snowy neck and breast.

XXVI.

This made three bounds, and thence in accents clear
 Was heard a voice which spake Zerbino's name,
 To follow whom, escaping Sarza's peer,
 So rare a way was taken by the dame.
 Spirit! which nobly didst esteem more dear
 Thy plighted faith, and chaste and holy name,
 (Things hardly known, and foreign to our time,)
 Than thine own life and thine own blooming prime!

XXVII.

Depart in peace, O spirit blest and fair!
 —So had my verses power! as evermore
 I would assay, with all that happy care,
 Which so adorns and points poetic lore!
 And, as renowned should be thy story rare,
 Thousands and thousands of long years and more!
 —Depart in peace to radiant realms above,
 And leave to earth the example of thy love!

XXVIII.

His eyes from Heaven did the Creator bend,
 At the stupendous and unequalled feat,
 And said; "I thee above that dame commend
 Whose death drove Tarquin from his royal seat;
 And I to register a law intend,
 'Mid these which ages change not as they fleet,
 Which—I attest the inviolable river—
 Unchanged through future times, shall last for ever."

XXIX.

"I will that all, in every future age,
 Who bear thy name, be blest with genius high;
 Be courteous, gentle, beautiful, and sage,
 And to the real pitch of honour fly.
 That to their glory the historic page
 They may with worthy argument supply;
 So that for aye Parnassus' hill and well
 Shall ring with Isabel and Isabel."

XXX.

So spake the Sire; and cleared the ambient air,
 And hushed beyond its wont the heaving main.
 To the third heaven her chaste soul made repair
 And in Zerbino's arms was locked again.
 On earth, with shame and sorrow for his share,
 That second Breuse sans pity did remain;
 Who, when digested was the maddening bowl,
 Lamented sore his error, sad at soul.

XXXI.

That placated, or in some sort content,
 The sainted soul of Isabel might be;
 That, if to death that damsel he had shent,
 He might at least revive her memory,
 He, as a means to compass his intent,
 Would turn into a tomb that church, where he
 Inhabited, and where she buried lies;
 To you shall be related in what wise.

XXXII.

In all parts round about this chosen site,
 For love or fear, he master-masons found;
 And, making full six thousand men unite;
 Stript of their heavy stones the mountains round,
 And raised a fabric ninety yards in height,
 From its extremest summit to the ground;
 And he within its walls the church enclosed;
 Wherein entombed the lovers twain reposed.

XXXIII.

This nearly imitates that pile beside
 Old Tyber's stream, by Adrian built ;^d and nigh
 The sepulchre, will be a tower provide,
 Wherein he purposes some time to lie.
 A narrow bridge, and only two yards wide,
 He flung across the stream which rolled fast by.
 Long, but so scanty is that bridge, with pain
 The narrow pass two coursers can contain ;

XXXIV.

Two coursers, that abreast have thither made,
 Or else, encountering, on that causeway meet ;
 Nor any where was ledge or barricade,
 To stay the horse's fall, who lost his feet.
 He wills *that* bridge's toll be dearly paid
 By Christian or by Moor, who pass his seat ;
 For with a thousand trophies, arms, and vest,
 That damsel's tomb is destined to be drest.

XXXV.

Within ten days, or shorter time, was placed
 The bridge, whose arch across the stream was dight ;
 But not that pile and tower with equal haste
 Were so conducted to their destined height.
 Yet was the last so high, a sentry paced
 Its top, who, whensoever any knight
 Approached the bridge, was wont his lord to warn,
 Sounding a signal on his bugle-horn.

XXXVI.

Whereat he armed, and issued for the stower,
 Now upon *one* and now the *other* side :
 For when a warrior pricked towards the tower,
 Him from the adverse bank that king defied :
 The bridge affords the field their steeds must scour
 And, should one but a little swerve aside,
 (Peril unparalleled !) the horse will go
 Into the deep and dangerous stream below.

XXXVII.

The pagan had imagined, as a pain,
 That, risking oft to tumble in the course,
 Head-first into that stream, where he must drain
 Huge draughts of water in his fall, parforce,
 He would assoil and cleanse him from that stain,
 Whereof excess in wine had been the source ;
 As if what ill wine prompts to do or say,
 Water, as well as wine, could wash away.

XXXXVIII.

Soon thitherward flocked many a cavalier ;
 Some who pursued the beaten road and plain ;
 Since for way-faring men, who southward steer,
 No straighter lay for Italy or Spain :
 Their courage and their honour, held more dear
 Than life, excited others of the train ;
 And all, where they had hoped the mood of strife,
 Had lost their arms, and many arms and life.

XXXIX.

If those he conquers are of pagan strain,
 He is content to take their arms and vest :
 And of those first arrived the titles plain
 Are written, and their arms suspended rest.
 But he in prison pens the christened train,
 ('Twould seem) to be to Argier's realm address.
 Nor yet was brought that building to a head
 When thitherward the crazed Orlando sped.

XL.

It chanced Orlando, in his furious mood,
 Came thither where that foaming river ran ;
 Where Rodomont beside the mighty flood
 Was hurrying on his work ; nor yet were done
 The tower and tomb, thè bridge, scarce finished, stood :
 Here—save his casque was open—Ulrien's son*
 Steeled cap-a-pee, stood ready armed for fight,
 When to the bridge approached Anglantes' knight. †

XLI.

Orlando running thus his wild career,
 The barrier tops, and o'er the bridge would fly,
 But sullen Rodomont, with troubled cheer,
 Afoot, as he that tower is standing nigh,
 For he disdains to brandish sword or spear,
 Shouts to him from afar with threatening cry,
 " Halt ! thou intrusive churl and indiscreet,
 " Rash, meddling, saucy villain, stay thy feet !

XLII.

" Only for lord and cavalier was made,
 " And not for thee, dull slave, that bridge was meant."
 To this no heed insane Orlando paid,
 But, fixt upon his purpose, forward went.
 " This madman must I school," the paynim said,
 And was approaching with the fell intent
 Him into that deep river to dispatch,
 Not deeming in such foe to find his match.

* Rodomont.

† Orlando.

XLIII.

This while, a gentle damsel sought the place
 That towards that bridge across the river rode,
 Richly arrayed and beautiful of face,
 Who sage reserve in her demeanour showed.
 'Tis she that, of her Brandimart in chase,
 (If you remember, sir,) through every road
 And place her lover seeks in anxious wise,
 Excepting Paris, where the warrior lies.

XLIV.

When Flordelice that bridge and tower was near,
 (So was by name the wandering damsel light)
 Grappling with Roland stood the Sarzan peer,
 And would into that river pitch the knight.
 She, conversant with Brava's cavalier,
 The miserable county knew aright;
 A mighty marvel in that dame it raised
 To see him rove, a naked man and crazed.

XLV.

She stopt, the issue of that strife to know,
 Wherein those two so puissant warriors vied.
 His opposite by might and main to throw,
 Into the stream each doughty champion tried.
 "How can a fool such mighty prowess show?"
 Between his teeth, the furious paynim cried.
 And, shifting here and there, was seen to strain
 Brimfull of pride, and anger, and disdain.

XLVI.

This hand and now that other he puts out,
 To take new hold, where he his vantage spies;
 Now within Roland's legs, and now without,
 Locks his right foot or left, in skilful wise;
 And thus resembles, in that wrestling bout,
 The stupid bear, who in his fury tries
 The tree, from whence he tumbled, to o'erthrow;
 Deeming it sole occasion of his woe.

XLVII.

Roland, whose better wit was lost withal,
 I know not where, and who used force alone;
 That utmost force, to which this earthly ball
 Haply affords few paragons, or none,
 Let himself backwards in that struggle fall,
 Embracing as he stood with Ulien's son.
 Together in the foaming stream they sank;
 High flashed the wave, and groaned the echoing bank.

XLVIII.

Quickly the stream asunder bore the pair.
 Roland was naked, and like fish could swim,
 Here shot his feet, his arms extended there,
 And gained the bank; nor, when upon the brim,
 Halted to mark if his adventure were
 Achieved with praise or shame: in evil trim,
 The pagan, by his arms impeded sore,
 With heavier pain and trouble, toiled ashore.

XLIX.

Along the bridge which spanned that foaming tide
 Did Flordelice meantime securely pace,
 And, having vainly sought on every side
 Brandimant's bearing, since nor iron case
 Nor vest of his she anywhere espied,
 She hoped to find the knight in other place.
 But here return we of the count to tell,
 Who left behind him stream, bridge, tower, and cell.

L.

'Twere frenzy of his every frantic feat
 To promise the relation, one by one!
 So many and many,—should I these repeat,
 I know not when my story would be done.
 Yet some of his notorious deeds, and meet
 For mention in my song, will I make known:
 Nor will I not that wondrous one recount,
 Near Thoulouse, on the Pyrenean Mount.

LI.

Much country had been traversed by the knight,
 Urged by the furious rage which him misguides:
 At last he reached the hill whose boundary height
 Arragonese and neighbouring Frank divides.
 Thither directing eye his course outright,
 Where the descending sun his visage hides,
 He reached a path upon the rugged steep,
 Which overhung a valley dark and deep.

LII.

Here he by chance encountered in mid road
 Two youths, that woodmen were, and drove before
 An ass along that pathway, with a load
 Of logs; they, marking well what scanty store
 Of brain in poor Orlando's head was stowed,
 Called to the approaching knight, and threatened sore
 Bidding him stand aside, or else go back,
 Nor to their hindrance block the common track.

LXII.

To this address Orlando answered nought,
 Save that his foot he to their beast applied,
 Smote in mid-breast, which, with that vigour fraught,
 —That force exceeding every force beside—
 Tost him so high, that the beholders thought
 It was a bird in air which they descried.
 The ass upon a mountain-summit fell,
 Which rose above a mile beyond that dell.

LIV.

Upon those youths next sprang the furious knight.
 With better luck than wit, one woodman shear
 From that tall cliff, twice thirty yards in height,
 Cast himself headlong downward in his fear:
 Him a moist patch of brambles, in his flight,
 Received; and, amid grass and bushes, here,
 From other mischief safe, the stripling lit,
 And for some scratches in his face was quit.

LV.

That other to a jutting fragment clung
 Who so to gain the higher steep would strive;
 Because he hopes, if once those crags among,
 To keep him from that fool he may contrive;
 But by the feet Orlando, ere he sprung,
 Seized him, who will not leave the wretch alive;
 And stretching them as wide as he could strain,
 So stretched his arms, he rent his prey in twain.

LVI.

Even in such mode as often we descrie
 Falconer by heron or by pullet do;
 Whose entrails he plucks out, to satisfy
 Merlin or falcon that the game pursue.
 How happy was that other not to die!
 Who risked his neck in that deep bottom, who
 Rehearsed the tale so often, Turpin heard,
 And handed down to us the wondrous word.

LVII.

These and more marvels does the count, who bends
 His steps across that mountain to the plain;
 And, seeking long a path, at length descends
 Towards the south, upon the land of Spain.
 His way along the beach he after wends,
 Near Arragon, beside the tumbling main,
 And, ever prompted by his frenzy rank,
 Will make himself a dwelling on the ban,

LVIII.

Where he some deal may shun the noontide ray,
 With dry and powdery sea-sand covered o'er;
 And here, while so employed, upon their way
 Arrives Angelica with her Medore,
 Who, as you have been told in former lay,
 Had from the hills descended on that shore.
 Within a yard or less approached the fair,
 Ere yet she of his presence was aware.

LIX.

So different from himself was he to sight,
 Nought of Orlando she in him surveyed:
 For, from the time that rage possess'd his sprite,
 He had gone naked forth in sun and shade.
 Had he been born on hot Syene's site,
 Or sands where worship is to Ammon paid,
 Or nigh those hills, whence Nile's full waters spin,
 Orlando had not borne a dingier skin.

LX.

Nigh buried in their sockets are his eyes,
 Spare in his visage, and as dry as bone:
 Dishevelled is his hair in woful wise,
 With frightful beard his cheek is overgrown:
 No sooner is he seen, than backward flies
 Angelica, who, trembling sore, is flown:
 She shrieking loud, all trembling and disunayed,
 Betakes her to her youthful guide for aid.

LXI.

When crazed Orlando was of her aware,
 To seize the damsel he upsprang in haste;
 So pleased the wretched count her visage fair,
 So quickly was his mood inflamed: effaced
 In him all ancient recollections are,
 How she by him was whilom served and graced.
 Behind her speeds the count and hunts that dame,
 As questing dog pursues the sylvan game.

LXII.

The youth, that sees him chase his love who fled,
 His courser spurs, and in pursuit is gone.
 With naked faulchion after him he sped,
 And cut and thrust at Roland as he run.
 He from his shoulders hoped to cleave his head,
 But found the madman's skin as hard as bone;
 Yea, harder far than steel, nor to be harmed;
 So good Orlando at his birth was charmed.

LXIII.

When on his back Orlando felt him beat,
 He turned, and turning on his youthful foe,
 Smote with clenched fist, and force which nought can meet
 —Smote on his horse's head, a fearful blow ;
 And, with skull smashed like glass, that courser fleet
 Was by the madman's furious stroke laid low.
 In the same breath Orlando turned anew,
 And chased the damsel that before him flew.

LXIV.

At speed Angelica impelled her mare,
 And whipped and spurred her evermore ; whom slow
 She would esteem, albeit that palfrey were
 Yet faster than a shaft d'ismist from bow :
 Her ring she thought upon, and this the fair
 Placed in her mouth ; nor failed its virtue now ;
 For putting it between her lips, like light
 Extinguished by a puff, she past from sight.

LXV.

Was it through fear, or was she, while she stript
 This from her finger, shaken in her seat ;
 Or was it rather, that her palfrey tript,
 (For neither *this* nor *that* I surely weet)
 Angelica, while 'twixt her lips she slipt
 The virtuous ring, and hid her visage sweet,
 Her stirrups lost ; and, tumbling from the sell,
 Reversed upon the sand that lady fell.

LXVI.

If but two inches short had fallen his prey,
 Upon her would have pounced Orlando near ;
 Who would have crushed her in his furious way,
 But that kind Fortune saved her from the peer.
 Let her by other theft herself purvey
 With other palfrey, as she did whilere ;
 For never will she have this courser more,
 Who chased by swift Orlando scours the shore.

LXVII.

Doubt not that she another will provide ;
 And follow we in mad Orlando's rear ;
 Whose rage and fury nevermore subside,
 Wroth that Angelica should disappear :
 After that beast along the sands he hied,
 Aye gaining on the mare in this career.
 Now, now he touches her, and lo ! the mane
 He grasps, and now secures her by the rein.

LXVIII.

Orlando seizes her with that delight
 That other man might seize a damsel fair ;
 The bit and bridle he adjusts aright,
 Springs on her back, and o'er that sea-beach bare
 For many miles impels the palfrey's flight,
 Without repose or pause, now here, now there ;
 Nor ever sell or bridle be displaced,
 Nor let her grass or heartening forage taste,

LXIX.

As in this course to o'erleap a ditch he sought,
 Head over heels, she with her rider went :
 Nor harmed was he, nor felt that tumble aught :
 But she, with shoulder slipt, lay foully shent.
 Long how to bear her thence Orlando thought,
 And in the end upon his shoulders hent.
 He from the bottom climbed, thus loaded sore,
 And carried her three bow-shots' length and more.

LXX.

Next, for he felt that weight too irksome grow,
 He put her down, to lead her by the rein :
 Who followed him with limping gait and slow.
 "Come on," Orlando cried, and cried in vain ;
 And, could the palfrey at a gallop go,
 This ill would satisfy his mood insano.
 The halter from her head he last unloosed,
 Wherewith her hind off-foot the madman noosed.

LXXI.

'Tis thus he comforts and drags on that mare,
 That she may follow with more ease, so led ;
 Who whiles despoiled of flesh, and whiles of hair,
 Is scathed by stones which that ill road o'erspread.
 At length the misused beast, with wear and tear
 Of the rude rocks, and suffering sore, lies dead.
 Orlando nought the slaughtered mare regards,
 Nor anyway his headlong course retards.

LXXII.

To drag that palfrey ceased he not, though dead,
 Continuing still his course towards the west,
 And all this while sacked hamlet, farm, and stead,
 Whenever he by hunger was distrest ;
 And aye to glut himself with meat, and bress,
 And fruit, he every one by force opprest.
 One by his hand was slain, one foully shent ;
 Seldom he stopt, and ever onward went.

LXXIII.

As much, or little less, would do the knight
 By his own love, did not that damsel hide;
 Because the wretch discerns not black from white,
 And harms where he would help. A curse betide
 The wonder-working ring, and eke the wight
 Who gave it to that lady, full of pride!
 Since Roland, but for this, would venge the scorn
 He and a thousand more from her had borne.

LXXIV.

Would that of her Orlando were possest,
 And of all women that are above ground!
 For one and all are ingrates at the best,
 Nor is in all an ounce of goodness found.
 But it is meet I let my hearer rest
 Ere my strained chords return a faltering sound,
 And that he may less tedious deem the rhyme,
 Defer my story till another time.

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

*Great feats achieves Orlando by the way.
 The Tartar king is by Rogero slain;
 For whom fair Bradamant, his spouse, does stay,
 And, him expecting, suffers cruel pain.
 But Fate forbade, that he who wounded lay
 To her his plight promise should maintain.
 He after boldly with the brethren made,
 Their lord Rinaldo in his need to aid.*

I.

WHEN Reason, giving way to heat of blood,
 Herself from hasty choler ill defends,
 And, hurried on by blind and furious mood,
 We with the tongue or hand molest our friends,
 Though the offence is, after, wept and rued,
 The pennance which we pay is poor amends.
 Alas! I sorrow and lament in vain
 For what I said in other angry strain.

II.

But like sick man am I, who, sore bested,
 Suffering with patience many and many a day,
 When against pain he can no more make head,
 Yields to his rage, and curses; pain gives way,
 And with it the impetuous wrath is fled,
 Which moved his ready tongue such ill to say;
 And he is left his wilful rage to rue,
 But cannot that which he has done undo.

III.

Well hope I, from your sovereign courtesy,
 Your pardon, since I crave it, ladies bright;
 You will excuse, if moved by madness, I
 Rave in my passion; let your censure light
 On foe, who treats me so despiteously,
 I could not be reduced to worsèr plight;
 Who prompts what sore repents me: Heaven above
 Knows how she wrongs me, knows how well I love.

IV.

No less beside myself than Brava's peer*
 Am I, nor less my pardon should obtain,
 He, who by mead or mountain, far or near,
 Had scoured large portion of the land of Spain,
 Dragging that jennet in his wild career,
 Dead as she was, behind him by the rein;
 But, where a river joined the sea, perforce
 Abandoned on the bank her mangled corse.

V.

And he, who could like any otter swim,
 Leapt in, and rose upon the further side,
 Behold! a mounted shepherd at the brim
 Arrived, his horse to water in the tide:
 Now when he saw Orlando coming, him
 Eschewed, whom naked and alone he spied.
 —“ My jennet for thy hackney were I fain
 “ To barter,” cried the madman to the swain:

VI.

“ Her will I show thee, if thou wilt; who dead
 “ Upon the river's other margin fell;
 “ At leisure may'st thou have her cured,” (he said)
 “ And of no other fault have I to tell.
 “ Give me thy hackney, with some boot instead:
 “ Prythee, dismount thee, for he likes me well.”
 The peasant, laughing, answered not a word,
 But left the fool and pricked towards the ford.

* Orlando.

VII.

"Hearst thou not? hola! I want thy steed,"
 (Cried Roland) and advanced with wrathful cheer.
 A solid staff and knotted, for his need,
 That shepherd had, wherewith he smote the peer;
 Whose violence and ire all bounds exceed,
 Who seems withal to wax more fierce than e'er:
 A cuff he levels at that rustic's head,
 And splits the solid bone, and lays him dead.

VIII.

Then leaping on his horse, by different way
 The country scowers, to make more spoil and wrack:
 That palfrey never more tastes corn or hay;
 So that few days exhaust the famished hack.
 But not afoot does fierce Orlando stray,
 Who will not, while he lives, conveyance lack.
 As many as he finds, so many steeds
 —Their masters slain—he presses for his needs.

IX.

He came at last to Malaga, and here
 Did mightier scathe than he had done elsewhere;
 For now—besides that the infuriate peer
 Of all its people left the country bare,
 Nor (such the ravage) could another year
 The desperate havoc of the fool repair—
 So many houses burnt he, or cast down,
 Sacked was a third of that unhappy town.

X.

Departing thence, insane Orlando flees
 To Zizra, a seaward town, whose site
 Is in Gibraltar's bay, or (if you please)
 Say Gibletâr's; for either way 'tis hight;
 Here, loosening from the land, a boat he sees
 Filled with a party: and for pleasure dight:
 Which, for their solace, to the morning gale,
 Upon that summer sea, had spread their sail.

XI.

"Hosh! the boat! put back!" the count 'gan cry,
 Who was in mind to go aboard their barge:
 But vainly on their ears his clamours die:
 For of such freight none willingly take charge.
 As swiftly as a swallow cleaves the sky,
 Furrowing the foamy wave the boat goes large.
 Orlando urges on; with straightening knee,
 And whip and spur, his horse towards the sea.

XII.

He plunged into the waves, at last, parforce ;
 For vainly would he shun the waters green.
 Bathed are knees, paunch, and croup, till of that horse
 Scarcely the head above the wave is seen :
 Let him not hope to measure back his course,
 While smitten with the whip his ears between.
 Woe worth him ! he must founder by the way
 Or into Africa his load convey.

XIII.

Nor poops nor prows does Roland more desery,
 For all have launched their shallows, which are wide
 Of that dry shore ; while from his level eye
 Their hills the tall and shifting surges hide.
 He spurs his horse amid the billows high,
 Wholly resolved to reach the farther side.
 The courser ends his swim and life in fine,
 Drained of his strength, and drenched brinfull of brine.

XIV.

He sinks, and would with him draw down his load
 But that himself the madman's arms upbear :
 With sinewy arms and either palm he rowed,
 And puffed and blew the brine before ; the air
 Breathed softly, and the water gently flowed ;
 And well was needed weather more than fair :
 For if the waters yet a little rise,
 Whelmed by the waxing tide Orlando dies.

XV.

But Fortune, that of madmen is the guide,
 Him from the water drew near Ceuta's shore,
 Upon that beach, and of those walls as wide
 As twice an archer's hand could shoot at score.
 For many days along the bank he hied,
 At hazard, ever westward hurrying sore,
 Until he came where on the sea beat strand
 Encamped a host of blacks, a countless band.

XVI.

Leave we the paladin at will to stray !
 To speak of him occasion will come round.
 — Sir, what befel the lady of Catay,
 Who scaped, in time, from him of wit unsound,
 And afterwards, upon her homeward way,
 Was with good bark and better weather bound ;
 And how she made Medoro, India's king ;
 Perchance some voice in happier verse may sing.

XVII.

To say so many things I am intent,
 I mean not to pursue the cavalier.
 To Mandricardo my fair argument
 It now behoves me, in his turn, to veer.
 He happily enjoyed, his rival spent,
 The beauty, left in Europe without peer,
 Since fair Angelica from hence had wended,
 And virtuous Isabel to heaven ascended.

XVIII.

King Mandricardo, proud that in his right
 His lady had adjudged the amorous suit,
 Enjoys not her award with full delight;
 Since others with him other points dispute.
 By young Rogero claimed, that eagle white
 Of one disastrous quarrel is the root;
 Another moves the King of Sericana
 Against the Tartar king, for Durindana.

XIX.

Agramant and Marsilius strive in vain,
 With labour sore, this tangle to undo;²
 Nor only cannot they persuade the twain
 In peace and concord to unite anew,
 But cannot make the valiant Child refrain
 From claiming Hector's buckler as his due;
 Nor yet Gradasso move the sword to lend,
 Till *this*, or till *that*, quarrel have an end.

XX.

Rogero brooks not that in other fight
 His shield be braced, nor will Gradasso bear
 That save against himself the Tartar knight
 Should wield the sword Orlando used to wear
 " See we, in fine, on whom the chance will light
 " (Cries Agramant) and further words forbear.
 " How Fortune rules the matter let us see,
 " And choose him that of her shall chosen be.

XXI.

" And—would ye do what most would me delight,
 " And be an obligation evermore—
 " You shall by casting lots decide your right:
 " Premising, he whose lot is drawn before
 " The other, shall upon two quarrels fight:
 " So he who wins, on his companion's score
 " Shall win as well as on his own; and who
 " Loses the battle lose alike for two.

XXII.

" Between Rogero and Gradasso, we
 " Deem there is little difference, rather none;
 " And wot whichever shall elected be,
 " In arms will make his martial prowess known.
 " As for the rest, let doubtful victory
 " Descend on him whom Heaven is pleased to own!
 " Upon the vanquished knight no blame shall fall,
 " But we to Fortune will impute it all."

XXIII.

Rogero and Gradasso, at this say
 Of Agramant, stood silent, and agreed,
 That he whose lot first issued, the assay
 Should undertake for both in listed mead.
 Thus in two scrolls, inscribed in the same way,
 Their names are writ as destined to succeed.
 These afterwards are cast into an urn,
 Which much they shake and topsy turvy turn.

XXIV.

A seely boy then dipt his hand and drew
 A billet from the vase, and it befel,
 Thereon Rogero's name the assistants knew;
 —Gradasso's left behind—I cannot tell
 How joyed renowned Rogero at the view,
 And can as little say what sorrow fell
 Upon Gradasso, on the other side;
 But he perforce his fortune must abide.

XXV.

Gradasso every thought and every deed
 Employs, Rogero to instruct and aid,
 That in the strife his champion may succeed;
 And teaches every sleight he has assayed:
 —How best to manage sword and shield at need—
 —What strokes are feints, and what with vantage made—
 And when he should tempt Fortune, when eschew—
 Reminds him, one by one, in long review.

XXVI.

After the drawing lots and king's award,
 What of that day remained the champions spent
 As wont, in giving tokens of regard,
 To this or to that other warrior sent.
 The people, greedy for the fight, toward
 The field is gone, and many not content
 With wending thither ere the dawn of light,
 Upon the place of combat watch all night.

XXVII.

The foolish rabble anxiously attends
 Those goodly champions' contest for the prize,
 A crowd which neither sees nor comprehends
 Other than that which is before its eyes.
 But they who know what boots and what offends,
 — Marsilius and Sobrino, and the wise—
 Censure the fight, and monarch that affords
 A field of combat to those martial lords.

XXVIII.

Nor, 'what a heavy loss he would sustain'
 (Cease they to royal Agrament to read)
 'Were Mandricardo or Rogero slain;
 'A thing by cruel Destiny decreed.
 'Since they, to combat against Charlemagne,
 'Of one of these alone have greater need
 'Than of ten thousand more, amid which crew
 'They scarce would find one champion good and true.'

XXIX.

Agrament recognized this truth; but thought
 That ill his royal word could be repealed;
 Yet Mandricardo and the Child besought
 'That they the right, conferred by him, would yield:
 'More; that the question was a thing of nought,
 'Nor worthy to be tried in martial field;
 'And prayed them—would they not obey his best
 'At least somewhat, to let their quarrel rest.

XXX.

'Five or six months would they the strife delay,
 'Or more or less, till Charles defeated were.
 'And stript of mantle, crown, and royal sway.'
 But each, though he would willingly forbear,
 And much desired his sovereign to obey,
 Stood out against the Moorish monarch's prayer:
 Since either deemed he would be foully slent
 Who to this treaty first should yield consent

XXXI.

But more than king, than all, who sought in vain
 To soften Agrican's infuriate son,
 The beauteous daughter of King Stordilano
 Lamented, and besought him, woe-begone,
 Besought him he would do what all would fain
 Behold by the relenting warrior done;
 — Lamented her, as through the cavalier,
 For ever kept in agony and fear.

XXXII.

- "Alas! and what (exclaims she) can I find
 "Which may avail to minister repose,
 "If aye, by this or that desire inclined,
 "You don your harness to affront new foes?
 "What boots it to restore my harassed mind
 "That I behold one fearful quarrel's close,
 "Against one champion moved for love of me,
 "If one as fierce already kindled be?

XXXIII.

- "Woe worth me! I was proud, with little right,
 "So good a king, so stout a cavalier
 "For me should in the fierce and dangerous fight
 "Peril his life, who now, I see too clear,
 "Upon a ground of strife so passing light,
 "With the same risk prepares to couch the spear.
 "You, more than love for me, to strife impels
 "The natural rage, wherewith your bosom swells.

XXXIV.

- "But if the love you force yourself to show,
 "Be in good earnest, that which you profess,
 "By this I pray you, by that chastening woe
 "Which does my spirit, does my heart oppress,
 "Be not concerned, because the bird of snow
 "Roger, pictured on his shield, possess.
 "I know not wherefore you should joy or grieve
 "That he the blazoned buckler bear or leave.

XXXV.

- "Much evil may ensue and little gain
 "Out of the battle you to wage prepare;
 "Small guerdon will be bought with mickle pain
 "If from Roger, you his eagle bear;
 "But if your fortune shifts on listed plain,
 "She whom you hold not captive by her hair,
 "You cause an evil with such mischief fraught,
 "My heart is broken at the simple thought.

XXXVI.

- "If of small value life to you appear,
 "And you esteem a painted bird more high,
 "At least for my life's sake esteem yours dear;
 "For one without the other shall not die.
 "With you to die excites in me no fear;
 "With you, prepared for life or death am I;
 "Yet would I fain not die so ill content,
 "As I should die if you before me went."

XXXVII.

Accompanying words with tears and sighs,
 In such, or such like speech she him did pray,
 Throughout that livelong night, in piteous wise,
 Hoping her lover's anger to allay ;
 And Mandricardo, sucking from her eyes
 Those sweet tears, glittering in their humid ray,
 And that sweet moan, from lips more deeply dyed
 Than crimson rose, himself in tears, replied.

XXXVIII.

" Alack ! my dearest life ! take thou no dread,
 " Alack ! for love of Heaven ! of thing so light :
 " For if (to my sole harm) with banners spread,
 " Their following of the Frank or paynim rite
 " King Agramant and Charles united led,
 " This need not cause you matter for affright.
 " What poor account you make of me is clear
 " If this one, sole, Rogero breeds such fear.

XXXIX.

" And yet should you remember how alone
 " (Nor had I scimeter or sword in hand)
 " Of knights, with a spear's truncheon overthrown,
 " I singly cleared the field, an armed band,
 " Though to his shame and sorrow this he own,
 " Gradasso tells to them who make demand,
 " He was my prisoner in the Syrian tower :
 " Yet other than Rogero's is his power.

XL.

" Not King Gradasso will the truth deny :
 " Sacripant knows it and your Isolier :
 " I say King Sacripant of Circassy,
 " And Aquilant, and Gryphon, famous peer ;
 " With hundreds—yea and more—from far and nigh
 " Made prisoners at that fearful pass whilere,
 " Baptized or Infidel ; and all by me
 " From prison on the selfsame day set free.

XLI.

" And even yet they marvel evermore
 " At the great feat which I performed that day ;
 " Greater than if the squadrons of the Moor
 " And Frank united I had held at bay ;
 " And shall Rogero, new to martial lore,
 " Me, one to one, with scathe or scorn appay ?
 " And me shall now this young Rogero scare,
 " When Hector's sword and Hector's arms I wear ?

XLII.

" Ah! as I might have won you from my foe,
 " Why did I not for you in arms contend?
 " I so had then my valour shown, I know,
 " You would have well foreseen Rogero's end.
 " For heaven's sake dry your tears, nor by such woe
 " —An evil omen for my arms—offend;
 " And learn, 'tis Honour pricks me to the field,
 " And not an argent bird and blazoned shield."

XLIII.

So said he; and with reasons passing good
 To him that dame replied, with saddest face;
 Nor only would have changed his sullen mood,
 But would have moved a pillar from its place.
 She would the champion quickly have subdued,
 Though she was gowned, he locked in iron case;
 And make him satisfy the Moorish lord,
 If Agramant spake further of accord;

XLIV.

And had; but that Aurora—on his way
 Ushering aye the sun—no sooner stirred,
 Than young Rogero, anxious to display
 That rightfully he bore Jove's beauteous bird,
 To cut the quarrel short, and lest delay
 He further interposed, in act or word,
 Where round the palisade the people close,
 Appears in armour and his bugle blows.

XLV.

When that loud sound is by the Tartar heard,
 Which the proud warrior to the strife defies,
 No more of treaty will he hear a word:
 From bed upspringing, 'Arms,' the monarch cries,
 And shows a visage with such fury stirred,
 Doralice dares no longer peace advise,
 Nor speak of treaty or of truce anew;
 And now perforce the battle must ensue.

XLVI.

The Tartar arms himself in haste; with pain
 The wonted service of his squires he carries:
 This done, he springs upon the steed again,
 Erewhile the champion's who defended Paris;*
 And him with speed towards the listed plain,
 Fixt for that fierce assay, the courser carries.
 Even then the king and barons thither made,
 So that the strife was little time delayed.

* Orlando.

XLVII.

Put on and laced the shining helmets were,
 And given to either champion was the spear;
 Quickly the trumpet's blast was heard in air,
 Whose signal blanched a thousand checks with fear.
 Levelled those cavaliers their lances bear,
 Spurring their warlike steeds to the career.
 And, in mid champaign, meet with such a shock,
 That Earth appears to rive and Heaven to rock.

XLVIII.

From this side and from that, the eagle flew,
 Which Jove in air was wonted to sustain;
 So hurtled, but with plumes of different hue,
 Those others often on Thessalian plain.³
 The benny lances, rested by the two,
 Well warranted the warriors' might and main,
 And worse than that encounter had withstood:
 So towers resist the wind, so rocks the flood.

XLIX.

As Tarpin truly writes, into the sky
 Upwent the splinters, broke in the career;
 For two or three fell flaming from on high,
 Which had ascended to the starry sphere.⁴
 The knights unsheathed their faulchions from the thigh,
 And, like those who were little moved by fear,
 For new encounter wheeled, and, man to man,
 Pointing at one another's vizor ran.

L.

They, pointing at the vizors' sight, attacked,
 Nor with their faulchions at the steeds took aim,
 Each other to unhorse, unseemly act!
 Since in that quarrel they are nought to blame.
 Those err, nor know the usage, who by pact
 Deem they were bound their horses not to main:
 Without pact made, 'twas reckoned a misdeed,
 And an eternal blot to smite a steed.

LI.

They level at the vizor, which is double,
 And yet resists such mighty blows with pain.
 The champions evermore their strokes redouble
 Faster than pattering hail, which mars the grain,
 And bruises branch and leaf, and stalk and stubble,
 And cheats the hopes of the expecting swain.
 To you is known the force of either brand,
 And known the force of either warrior's hand.

LII.

But yet no stroke well worthy of their might.

Those peers have dealt, so cautious are the twain.
 The Tartar's faulchion was the first to bite,
 By which was good Rogero well nigh slain.
 By one of those fell blows which either knight
 So well could plant, his shield was cleft in twain;
 Beneath, his cuirass opened to the stroke,
 And to the quick the cruel weapon broke.

LIII.

The assistants' hearts were frozen at the blow,
 So did Rogero's danger them appal,
 On whom the many's favour, well they know,
 And wishes rest, if not of one and all.
 And then (had Fortune ordered matters so,
 As the most part desired they should befall)
 Taken had been the Tartar king or slain;
 So had that blow offended all the train.

LIV.

I think that blow was by some angel stayed,
 To save Rogero from the mischief near:
 Yet at the king (nor answer he delayed)
 He dealt a stroke more terrible than e'er.
 At Mandricardo's head he aims his blade,
 But such the fury of the cavalier,
 And such his haste, he less my blame deserves,
 If slanting from the mark his faulchion swerves.

LV.

Had Balisarda smote him full, though crowned
 With Hector's helm, the enchantment had been vain.
 So reels the Tartar, by that stroke astound,
 He from the bridle-hand lets go the rein:
 Thrice with his head he threats to smite the ground,
 While his unguided courser scowrs the plain;
 That Briigliodoro, whom by name you know,
 Yet, for his change of master, full of woe.

LVI.

Never raged trampled serpent, never so
 Raged wounded lion, as in fell despite
 Raged Mandricardo, rallying from that blow,
 Which had deprived of sense the astonished knight;
 And as his pride and fury waxes, grow
 As much, yea more, his valour and his might.
 He at Rogero makes his courser vault,
 With sword uplifted high for the assault.

LVII.

Poised in his stirrups stood the Tartar lord,
 And aiming at his foeman's casque, believed
 He with the stroke of his descending sword
 Rogero to the bosom should have cleaved ;
 But from that youth, yet quicker in his ward,
 A wound beneath his arm the king received,
 Which made wide daylight in the stubborn mail,
 That clothed the better armpit with its scale.

LVIII.

Rogero drawing Balisarda back,
 Out sprang the tepid blood of crimson stain ;
 Hence Mandricardo's arm did vigour lack,
 And with less dint descended Durindane :
 Yet on the croup the stripling tumbled back,
 Closing his eyelids, through excess of pain
 And memorable eye had been that blow,
 Had a worse helmet clothed the warrior's brow.

LIX.

For this he pauses not, but spurs amain,
 And Mandricardo smites in the right side.
 Here little boots the texture of the chain,
 And the well welded metal's temper tried,
 Against that sword, which never falls in vain,
 Which was enchanted to no end beside,
 But that against it nothing should avail,
 Enchanted corselet or enchanted mail.

LX.

Whate'er that sword takes in it shears outright,
 And in the Tartar's side inflicts a wound :
 He curses Heaven and raves in such despite,
 Less horribly the boisterous billows sound.
 He now prepares to put forth all his might :
 The shield, with argent bird and azure ground,
 He hurls, with rage transported, from his hand,
 And grasps with right and left his trenchant brand.

LXI.

"Marry," (Rogero cried,) "it needs no more
 "To prove your title to that ensign vain,
 "Which now you cast away, and cleft before ;
 "Nor can you more your right in it maintain."
 So saying, he perforce must prove how sore
 The danger and the dint of Durindane ;
 Which smites his front, and with such weight withal,
 A mountain lighter than that sword would fall.

LXII.

It cleft his vizor through the midst; 'twas well
 That from the sight diverged the trenchant blade,
 Which on the saddle's plated pommel fell;
 Nor yet its double steel the faulchion stayed:
 It reached his armour (like soft wax, the shell
 Oped, and the skirts wherewith 'twas overlaid)
 And trenched upon his thigh a grievous wound;
 So that 'twas long ere he again waxed sound.

LXIII.

The spouting blood of either cavalier
 Their arms had crimsoned in a double drain:
 Hence diversly the people guessed, which peer
 Would have the better of the warlike twain:
 But soon Rogero made the matter clear
 With that keen sword, so many a champion's bane:
 With this he at that part in fury past
 Whence Mandricardo had his buckler cast.

LXIV.

He the left side of his good cuirass gored,
 And found a passage to the heart below;
 Which a full palm above the flank he bored;
 So that perforce the Tartar must forego
 His every title to the famous sword,
 The blazoned buckler, and its bird of snow,
 And yield, together with these seeds of strife,
 —Dearer than sword and shield—his precious life.

LXV.

Not unavenged the unhappy monarch dies;
 For in the very moment he is smit,
 The sword—for little period his—he plies,
 And good Rogero's vizor would have split,
 But that he stopt the stroke in wary wise,
 And broke its force and vigour ere it lit;
 Its force and vigour broke: for he, below
 The better arm, first smote his Tartar foe.

LXVI.

Smit was the Child by Mandricardo's hand,
 At the same moment he that monarch slew:
 He, albeit thick, divides an iron baud
 And good steel cap beneath it; inches two,
 Lies buried in the head the trenchant brand,
 The solid bone and sinew severed through.
 Astound Rogero fell, on earth reversed,
 And from his head a stream of life-blood burst.

LXVII.

Rogero was the first who went to ground,
 And so much longer did the king delay,
 Nigh every one of those who waited round
 Weened he the prize and vaunt had borne away.
 So erred his Doralice, that oft was drowned
 In tears, and often clad in smiles that day:
 She thanked her God, with hands to Heaven extended,
 That in such wise the fearful fight had ended.

LXVIII.

But when by tokens manifest appear
 The live man living and the dead man slain,
 The favourers of those knights, with change of cheer,
 Some weep and some rejoice, an altered train.
 King, lord, and every worthiest cavalier
 Crowd round Rogero, who has rison with pain.
 Him to embrace and gratulate they wend,
 And do him grace and honour without end.

LXIX.

Each with Rogero is rejoiced, and feels
 That which he utters in his heart; among
 The crowd the Sericane alone conceals
 Other than what he vouches with his tongue.
 He pleasure in his countenance reveals,
 With envy at the conquest inly stung;
 And—were his destiny or chance to blame—
 Curses whiche'er produced Rogero's name.

LXX.

What of Rogero's favour can be said?
 What of caresses, many, true, and kind,
 From Agramant? that not without his aid
 Would have unrolled his ensigns to the wind;
 Who had to move from Africk been afraid,
 Nor would have trusted in his host combined.
 He, now King Mandricardo is no more,
 Esteems him the united world before.

LXXI.

Nor to Rogero lean the men alone;
 To him incline as well the female train,
 Who for the land of France had left their own,
 Amid the troops of Africk or of Spain;
 And Doralice, herself, although she moan,
 And for her lover, cold and pale, complain,
 Save by the griding curb of shame repress,
 Her voice, perchance, had added to the rest.

LXXII.

I say perchance, nor warrant it I dare,
 Albeit the thing may easily be true ;
 For such his manners, such his merits are,
 So beauteous is Rogero's form to view,
 She (from experience we are well aware)
 So prone to follow whatsoe'er is new,
 That not to play the widow's lovelorn part,
 She on Rogero well might set her heart.

LXXIII.

Though he did well alive, what could be done
 With Mandricardo, after he was dead ?
 'Tis fitting she provide herself with one
 That her, by night or day, may bravely stand.
 Meanwhile to young Rogero's succour run
 The king's physician in his art best read ;
 Who, having seen the fruits of that fell strife,
 Already has ensured Rogero's life.

LXXIV.

Agramant bids them diligently lay
 The wounded warrior in his tent, and there
 Is evermore beside him, night and day ;
 Him with such love he watches, with such care :
 To his bed the Tartar's arms and buckler gay,
 So bado the Moorish king, suspended were ;
 Suspended all, save trenchant Durindana,
 Relinquished to the King of Sericana.

LXXV.

With Mandricardo's arms, his other weed
 Was to Rogero given, and given with these
 Was warlike Brigliador, whom on the mead
 Orlando left, distraught with his disease.
 To Agramant Rogero gave the steed,
 Well knowing how that goodly gift would please.
 No more of this : perforce my strain returns
 To her that vainly for Rogero burns.

LXXVI.

Bradamant's torment have I to recount,
 While for the courier damsel she did stay :
 With tidings of her love to Alban's Mount,
 To her Hippalca measured back her way :
 She of Frontino first and Itodomont,
 And next of good Rogero had to say ;
 ' How to the fount anew he had address
 ' His way, with Richardetto and the rest ;

LXXVII.

- ' And how the Child, in rescue of the steed,
 ' Had gone with her to find the paynim rude ;
 ' And weened to have chastised his foul misdeed,
 ' That from a woman took Frontino good.
 ' And how the youth's design did ill succeed,
 ' Because the king had other way pursued.
 ' The reason too why to Mount Alban's hold
 ' Rogero had not come, at full she told ;

LXXVIII.

- ' And fully she to Bradamañt exprest
 ' What to excuse himself Rogero said :
 She after drew the letter from her breast,
 Wherewith entrusted she had thither sped :
 With visage which more care than hope confest,
 The paper Bradamañt received and read ;
 Which, but that she expected to have seen
 Rogero's self, more welcome would have been.

LXXIX.

- To find herself with written scroll appaid
 In good Rogero's place, whom she attends,
 Marred her fair visage ; which such fear pourtrayed,
 Despite and sorrow as her bosom rends.
 Ten times the page she kissea, while the maid
 As oft to him who writes her heart commends :
 The tears alone which trickle from her eyes
 Keep it from kindling at her burning sighs.

LXXX.

- Four times, nay six, she that epistle read,
 And willed moreover that as many more
 The message by that damsel should be said,
 Who word and letter to Mount Alban bore.
 This while unceasing tears the lady shed,
 Nor, I believe, would ever have given o'er,
 Save by the hope consoled, that she anew
 Should briefly her beloved Rogero view.

LXXXI.

- Rogero's word was pledged for his return
 When fifteen days or twenty were gone by
 So had he after to Hippalca sworn,
 Bidding her boldly on his faith rely.
 " From accidents that chance at every turn"
 (Cried Bradamañt) " what warranty have I,
 " Alas !—and such are commonest in war—
 " That none the knight's return for ever bar ?

LXXXII.

- " Alas ! alas ! Rogero, that above
 " Myself hast overmore been prized by me,
 " Who would have thought thou more than me could'st love
 " Any, and most thy mortal enemy ?
 " Thou helpest where to punish would behove,
 " And harm'st where thou should'st help ; nor do I see
 " If thou as worthy praise or blame regard
 " Such tardiness to punish and reward.

LXXXIII.

- " I know not if thou knowest—the stones know—
 " How by Troyano was thy father slain ;
 " And yet Troyano's son, against his foe,
 " Thou would'st defend, and keep from harm or stain
 " Such vengeance upon him do'st thou bestow ?
 " And do his vengers, as their meed obtain,
 " That I, descended of this stock, should be
 " The martyr of thy mortal cruelty ?"

LXXXIV.

- To her Rogero, in his absence, said
 The lady these sad words, and more beside,
 Lamenting aye ; while her attendant maid
 Not once alone, but often, certified
 ' The stripling would observe his faith, and prayed
 ' Her—who could do no better—to abide
 ' The Child's arrival till the time came round
 ' When he by promise to return was bound."

LXXXV.

- The comfort that Hippalca's words convey,
 And Hope, companion of the loving train,
 Bradamant's fear and sorrow so allay,
 That she enjoys some respite from her pain :
 This moves her in Mount Alban's keep to stay ;
 Nor ever thence that lady stirred again
 Until the day, that day the youthful knight
 Had fixt, who ill observed his promise plight.

LXXXVI.

- But in that he his promise ill-maintained,
 No blame upon Rogero should be cast ;
 Him one or other cause so long detained,
 The appointed time perforce he overpast :
 On a sick bed, long time, he, sorely pained,
 Was laid, wherein a month or more he past
 In doubt of death ; so deeply him had gone
 Erewhile in fight the Tartar monarch's sword.

LXXXVII.

Him on the day prefixed the maid attended,
 Nor other tidings of the youth had read,
 But those he through Hippalca had commended,
 And that which after Richardetto said ;
 Who told, ' how him Rogero had defended,
 ' And freed the captive pair* to prison led.'
 The tidings, overjoyed, she hears repeat ;
 Yet blended with some bitter is the sweet.

LXXXVIII.

For she had heard as well in that discourse,
 For might and beauty voiced, Marphisa's praise ;
 Heard, how Rogero thither bends his course,
 Together with that lady, as he says,
 Where in weak post and with unequal force
 King Agramant the Christian army stays.
 Such fair companionship the lady lauds,
 But neither likes that union, nor applauds.

LXXXIX.

Nor light suspicion has she of that queen ;
 For, were Marphisa beautiful, as was said,
 And they together till that time had been,
 'T were marvel but Rogero loved the maid :
 Yet would she not believe ; but hung between
 Her hopes and fears, and in Mount Alban stayed ;
 And close and anxious there, until the day
 Which was to bring her joy or sorrow, lay.

XC.

This while Mount Alban's prince and castellan,
 Rinaldo, first of that fair brotherhood,
 —I say in honour, not in age, for twain
 In right of birth before the warrior stood,
 Who—as the sun illumes the starry train
 Had by his deeds ennobled Aymon's blood,
 One day at noon, with none beside a page
 To serve him, reached that famous fortillage.

XCI.

Hither had good Rinaldo now repaired ;
 Because returning Paris-ward again,
 From Brava, (whither had he often fared,
 As said, to seek Angelica in vain)
 He of that pair those evil news had heard,
 His Malagigi and his Viviane,
 How they were to Maganza to be sent ;
 And hence to Agrismont his way had bent.

* Vivian and Malagigi.

XCII.

There, hearing of the safety of that pair,
 And of their enemies' defeat and fall :
 And how Rogero and Marphisa were
 The authors of their ruin: and how all
 His valiant brethren and his cousins are
 Returned, and harboured in Mount Alban's hall,
 Until he there embrace the friendly throng
 Each hour appears to him a twelvemonth long.

XCIII.

His course to Mont Albano was he ta'en ;
 And, there embracing wife and children dear,
 Mother and brethren and the cousins twain,
 (They who were captives to their foe whilere)
 A parent swallow seems, amid that train,
 Which, with full beak, its fasting young doth cheer.
 With them a day or more the warrior stayed,
 Then issued forth and others thence conveyed.

XCIV.

Guichard, Duke Aymon's eldest born, and they,
 Richard, Alardo, and Richardet' combined,
 Vivian and Malagigi, wend their way
 In arms, the martial paladin behind.
 Bradamant, waiting the appointed day,
 Which she, in her desire, too slow opened,
 Feigned herself ailing to the brethren true,
 Nor would she join in arms the banded crew ;

XCV.

And, saying that she ailed, most truly said ;
 Yet 'twas not corporal pain or fever sore,
 It was Desire that on her spirit preyed,
 Diseased with Love's disastrous fit ; no more
 Rinaldo in Mount Alban's castle stayed :
 With him his kinsman's flower the warrior bore.
 How he for Paris journeyed, and how well
 He succoured Charles, shall other canto tell.

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

*Rinaldo and Dudon fight ; then friendship make,
And to each other fitting honour pay.
Agramant's host the united champions break,
And scatter it, like chaff, in disarray.
Brandimart wages war, for Roland's sake,
With Rodomont, and loses in the fray.
This while, for good Bayardo, with more pain
Contend Rinaldo and the Sericane.*

I.

WHAT sweeter, gladder, state could be possest
Than falls to the enamoured bosom's share ?
What happier mode of life, what lot more blest,
Than evermore the chains of love to wear ?
Were not the lover, 'mid his joys, distressed
By that suspicious fear, that cruel care,
That martyrdom, which racks the suffering sprite,
That frenzied rage, which jealousy is light.

II.

For by all bitters else which interpose
Before enjoyment of this choicest sweet,
Love is augmented, to perfection grows,
And takes a finer edge ; to drink and eat,
Hunger and thirst the palate so dispose,
And flavour more our beverage and our meat.
Feebly that wight can estimate the charms
Of peace, who never knew the pain of arms.

III.

That which the heart eye sees, though undiscerned
Of human eye, we can support in peace.
To him long absent, to his love returned,
A longer absence is but joy's increase.
Service may be endured, though nought is earned,
So that the hope of guerdon does not cease.
For worthy service in the end is paid,
Albeit its wages should be long delayed.

IV.

Scorn, and repulse, and finally each pain
Of suffering love, his every martyrdom,
Through recollection, make us entertain
Delights with greater rapture, when they come.
But if weak mind be poisoned by that bane,
That filthy pest, conceived in Stygian home,
Though joy ensue, with all its festive pleasures,
The wretched lover ill his comfort measures.

V.

This is that cruel and envenomed wound
 Where neither salve nor potion soothes the smart ;
 Nor figure made by witch, nor mourned sound ;
 Nor star benign observed in friendly part ;
 Nor aught beside by Zoroaster found,
 Inventor as he was of magic art.
 Fell wound, which, more than every other woe,
 Makes wretched man despair, and lays him low !

VI.

O ! cruel wound ! incapable of cure,
 Inflicted with such ease on lover's breast,
 No less by false suspicion than by sure !
 O wound ! whose pangs so wofully molest,
 They reason and our better wit obscure,
 And from its natural bent our judgment wrest :
 Wound, which against all reason didst destroy
 The damsel of Dordona's every joy !

VII.

I speak not of what fatal mischief wrought
 Hippalca's and the brother's bitter blow ;
 I speak of fell and cruel tidings brought
 Some few days after ; for the former woe,
 Weighed with this other, was a thing of nought :
 This after some digression will I show :
 But first Rinaldo's feats I must declare,
 Who with his troop to Paris made repair.

VIII.

The following day they met a cavalier,
 Towards evening, with a lady by his side ;¹
 Sable his shield, and sable was his gear,
 Whose ground a bar of silver did divide.
 As foremost, and of seeming force, the peer,
 Young Richardetto to the joust defied :
 He, prompt for battle, wheeled his courser round,
 And for the tourney took sufficient ground.

IX.

Between those knights no further parley past :
 Without more question, charged the martial two,
 Rinaldo with the friendly troop stood fast,
 And looked to see what issue would ensue.
 " Him from his saddle will I quickly cast,
 " If firm the footing, and mine arm prove true ;"
 Within himself young Richardetto cries :
 But that encounter ends in other wise.

X.

Him underneath the vizor's sight offends
 The stranger champion, of the sable weed,
 With force so fell, that he the youth extends
 Above two lances' length beyond his steed.
 Quickly to venge the knight Alardo wends,
 But falls himself astounded on the mead ;
 Sore handled, and unhorsed by such a stroke,
 His buckler in the cruel shock is broke.

XI.

His lance Guichardo levelled, when he spied
 Outstretched upon the field the brethren two ;
 Although " Halt, halt," (renowned Rinaldo cried,)
 " For this third course to me is justly due :"
 But he as yet his helmet had not tied ;
 So that Guichardo to the combat flew.
 He kept his seat no better than the twain ;
 Forthwith, like them, extended on the plain.

XII.

All to be foremost in the joust contend,
 Richardo, Malagigi, Viviane :
 But to their strife Rinaldo puts an end ;
 He shows himself-in arms before the train,
 Saying, "'Tis time that we to Paris wend ;
 " For us too long the tourney will detain,
 " If I expect till each his course has run,
 " And ye are all unseated, one by one."

XIII.

So spake the knight, yet spake not in a tone
 To be o'erheard in what he inly said ;
 Who thus foul scorn would to the rest have done.
 Both now had wheeled, and fierce encounter made.
 In the career Rinaldo was not thrown,
 Who all the banded kinsmen much outweighed ;
 Their spears like brittle glass to pieces went,
 But not an inch the champions backward bent.

XIV.

The chargers such a rough encounter made,
 That on his crupper sank each staggering horse :
 Rinaldo's rose so quick, he might be said
 Scarcely to interrupt his rapid course :
 The stranger's broke his spine and shoulder-blade ;
 That other shocked him with such desperate force.
 When his lord sees him slain, he leaves his seat,
 And in an instant springs upon his feet ;

XV.

And to his foe, that having wheeled anew,
 Approached with hand unarmed, the warrior cried ;
 " Sir, to the goodly courser whom ye slew,
 " Because, whenas he lived, he was my pride ,
 " I deem, I ill should render honour due,
 " If thus unvenged by my good arm he died ;
 " And so fall on, and do as best ye may,
 " For we parforce must meet in new assay."

XVI.

To him Rinaldo, " If we for thy horse
 " Have to contend in fight, and nought beside,
 " Take comfort, for I ween that with no worse
 " Thou, in his place, by me shalt be supplied."
 —" Thou errest if thou deem'st his loss the source
 " Of my regret" (the stranger knight replied) ;
 " But I, since thou divinest not my speech,
 " To thee my meaning will more plainly teach.

XVII.

" I should esteem it were a foul misdeed,
 " Unless I proved thee also with the brand.
 " I, if thou in this other dance succeed
 " Better or worse than me, would understand :
 " Then, as it please, afoot or on thy steed,
 " Attack me, so it be with arms in hand,
 " I am content all vantage to afford ;
 " Such my desire to try thee with the sword !"

XVIII.

Not long Rinaldo paused : he cried, " I plight
 " My promise not to balk thee of the fray ,
 " And, for I deem thou art a valiant knight,
 " And lest thou umbrage take at mine array,
 " These shall go on before, nor other wight,
 " Beside a page, to hold my horse, shall stay."
 So spake Mount Alban's lord ; and to his band,
 To wend their way the warrior gave command.

XIX.

To that kind paladin with praise replied
 The stranger peer ; alighting on the plain,
 Rinaldo to the valet, at his side,
 Consigned the goodly steed Bayardo's rein,
 And when his banner he no longer spied,
 Now widely distant with the warrior's train,
 His buckler braced, his biting faulchion drew,
 And to the field defied the knight anew.

XX.

And now each other they in fight assail :
 Was never seen a feller strife in show.
 Neither believes his foeman can avail,
 Long, in that fierce debate, against his blow :
 But when they knew, well weighed in doubtful scale,
 That they were fitly matched, for weal or woe,
 They laid their fury and their pride apart,
 And for their vantage practised every art.

XXI.

Their cruel and despiteous blows resound,
 Re-echoing wide, what time the valiant twain
 With cantlets of their shields now strew the ground,
 Now with their faulchions sever plate and chain.
 Yet more beloves to parry than to wound,
 If either knight his footing would maintain ;
 For the first fault in fence, by either made,
 Will with eternal mischief be appaid.

XXII.

One hour and more than half another, stood
 The knights in battle ; and the golden sun
 Already was beneath the tumbling flood,
 And the horizon veiled with darkness dun :
 Nor yet had they reposed, nor interlude
 Had been, since that despiteous fight begun,
 'Twixt these, whom neither ire nor rancour warms,
 But simple thirst of fame excites to arms.

XXIII.

Rinaldo in himself revolving weighed
 Who was the stranger knight, so passing stout ;
 That not alone him bravely had gainsaid,
 But oft endangered in that deadly bout ;
 And has so barassed with his furious blade,
 He of its final issue stands in doubt.
 —He that the strife was ended would be fain,
 So that his knightly honour took no stain.

XXIV.

The stranger knight, upon the other side,
 As little of his valiant foeman knew ;
 Nor in that lord Mount Alban's chief descried,
 In warfare so renowned all countries through.
 And upon whom, with such small cause defied,
 His faulchion he in deadly combat drew.
 He was assured he could not have in fight
 Experience of a more redoubted wight.

XXV.

He gladly would be quit of the emprise
 He undertook to venge his courser's fall ;
 And, could he, without blame, a mean devise,
 Would fain withdraw from that disastrous brawl.
 So overcast already were the skies,
 Their cruel strokes well nigh fell harmless all.
 Both blindly strike ; more blindly yet those lords
 Parry the stroke, who scarce discern their swords.

XXVI.

He of Mount Alban is the first to say,
 ' They should not combat darkling, on the plain ;
 ' But should their duel till such time delay
 ' As slow Arcturus should have turned his wain.'
 (And adds,) ' as safely as himself might stay
 ' The foe in his pavilion, of his train
 ' As duly tended, honoured, and well seen,
 ' As he in any place had ever been.'

XXVII.

To pray him has Rinaldo little need :
 He courteously accepts him for his host :
 And thither the united warriors speed,
 Where lies Mount Alban's troop in chosen post.
 From his attendant squire a goodly steed,
 With sumptuous housings gorgeously embossed,
 Rinaldo takes, with tempered sword and spear,
 And these bestows upon the cavalier.

XXVIII.

For Montalbano's lord the stranger guest,
 The baron recognised, with whom he came ;
 Because, before they reached their place of rest,
 The paladin had chanced himself to name ;
 And (for they brethren were) with love opprest,
 His tenderness him wholly overcame ;
 And touched with kind affection, at his heart,
 From his full eyes the tears of pleasure start.

XXIX.

Guido the savage was that cavalier,
 Who, with Marphisa leagued, the martial maid,
 Sansonet, and the sons of Olivier,
 Long sailed the sea, as I erewhile have said ;
 From earlier meeting with his kindred dear
 By Pinnabel, the felon knight, delayed ;
 Seized by that traitor, and by him detained,
 To enforce the wicked law he had ordained.

XXX.

Sir Guido, when he knew his host to be
 Rinaldo, famed above each famous knight,
 Whom he had burned with more desire to see
 Than ever blind man covets the lost light.
 In rapture cries, "What fortune tempted me
 "With you, my lord, to strive in deadly fight,
 "Whom long I have beloved, and love, whose worth
 "I prize above all dwellers upon earth?"

XXXI.

"Me on the distant bank of Euxine's flood
 " (I Guido am yeleft) Constantia bare,
 "Conceived of the illustrious seed and good
 "Of generous Aymon, as ye likewise are.
 "To visit you and my bold brotherhood
 "Is the occasion hither I repair;
 "And, where to honour you I had in thought,
 "I see my coming has but mischief wrought.

XXXII.

"But that I neither ye nor the others knew,
 "Must for so foul a fault be my excuse;
 "And, if I can amend it, bid me do
 "Whate'er thou wilt, nor ought will I refuse."
 When, on this part and that, between the two,
 Of interchanged embraces there was truce,
 "Take you no farther thought upon your side
 "The battle to excuse," Rinaldo cried.

XXXIII.

"For in complete assurance that you are
 "A real offset of our ancient tree,
 "You could no better testimony bear
 "Than the tried valour which in you we see;
 "If your demeanour more pacific were,
 "We ill should have believed your ancestry:
 "Since neither lion from the doe proceeds,
 "Nor fearful pigeon, hawk or eagle breeds."

XXXIV.

While neither they through talk their journey stay,
 Neither through speed abate their talk, those two
 Reached the pavilions where the kinsmen lay:
 There good Rinaldo, crying to his crew,
 "That this was Guido, whom so many a day
 "They had impatiently desired to view,"
 Much pleased the friendly troop; and, at his sight
 All like his father deemed the stranger knight.

XXXV.

I will not tell what welcome to the peer
 Made Richardet, Alardo, and those twain;
 What Malagigi, what Sir Aldigier,
 And gallant Vivian, of that kindred train;
 What every captain, every cavalier;
 What Guido spake, what they replied again:
 I for conclusion of my tale will say,
 He was well greeted of the whole array..

XXXVI.

Ever, I deem, good Guido would have been
 Dear to his brethen bold; but welcomed more
 Was now the valiant knight, and better seen
 Than at another time, as needed sore.
 When the sun, garlanded with radiance sheen,
 Upraised his visage from the watery floor,
 Sir Guido and his kinsmen, in a band,
 Beneath Rinaldo's banner took their stand.

XXXVII.

So one day and another prick the train,
 That they to Paris' leaguered gates are nigh,
 Scarce ten miles distant, on the banks of Seine;
 When, as good Fortune wills it, they descry
 Gryphon and Aquilant, the two that stain
 Their virtuous armour with a different dye;
 Sable was Aquilant's, white Gryphon's, weed;
 Good Olivier's and Sigismonda's seed.

XXXVIII.

In parley were they by a damsel stayed,
 Nor she of mean condition to behold;
 That in a snowy samyte was arrayed,
 The vesture edged about with list of gold:
 Graceful and fair; although she was dismayed,
 And down her visage tears of sorrow rolled;
 Who with such mien and act her speech enforced,
 It seemed of some high matter she discoursed.

XXXIX.

As Guido them, they gallant Guido knew.
 He with the pair had been few days before;
 And to Rinaldo; "Behold those! whom few
 "In valour and in prowess go before,
 "And if they join your banner, against you
 "Feebly will stand the squadrons of the Moor."
 Rinaldo vouched what valiant Guido told.
 'How either champion was a warrior bold.'

XL.

Nor them he less had recognized at sight ;
 Because (such was the usage of the pair)
 One by a vest all black, and one all white,
 He knows, and by the ornaments they wear.
 The brethren know as well Mount Alban's knight,
 And give the warlike kinsmen welcome fair :
 They both embrace Rinaldo as a friend,
 And of their ancient quarrel make an end.

XLI.

They—erst at feud and with sore hate possest,
 Through Truffaldino²—(which were long to say)
 Each other with fraternal love carest,
 Now putting all their enmity away.
 Rinaldo next Sir Sansonet address,
 Who somewhat later joined that fair array ;
 And (knowing well his force and mighty thew)
 Received the cavalier with honour due.

XLII.

When she, that gentle damsel, now more near,
 Beholds renowned Rinaldo, him she knows,
 Acquainted with each paladin and peer.
 She news which sorely grieve the warrior shows ;
 And thus begins ; “ My lord, your cousin dear,
 “ To whom its safety Church and Empire owes,
 “ Roland, erewhile so honoured and so sage,
 “ Now roves the world, possest with frantic rage.

XLIII.

“ Whence woe, so direful and so strange, ensued
 “ Cannot by me to you be signified :
 “ I saw on earth his sword and armour strewed,
 “ Doffed by that peer, and scattered far and wide ;
 “ And I a pious knight and courteous viewed
 “ Those arms collecting upon every side,
 “ Who, in the guise of trophy, to a tree
 “ Fastened that fair and pompous canopy.

XLIV.

“ But from the trophied stem the sword withdrew
 “ The son of Agrican that very day.
 “ Thou mayst conceive what mischief may ensue
 “ To Charles and to the christened host's array,
 “ From loss of Durindana, if anew
 “ The infidels that goodly blade should sway.
 “ Good Brigliador as well, who roved, forsaken,
 “ About those arms, was by the paynim taken.

XLV.

" Few days are past, since I in shameful wise
 " Saw Roland, running naked in his mood,
 " Sending forth piteous shrieks and fearful cries.
 " In fine, that he is frantic, I conclude ;
 " Nor this had I believed, save with these eyes
 " That strange and cruel wonder I had viewed."
 She added next, how from the bridge's top,
 Embraced by Rodomont, she saw him drop.

XLVI.

" To whosoe'er I deem not Roland's foe
 " I tell my tale," (pursued the dame again,)
 " That, of the crowd who hear this cruel woe,
 " Some one, in pity to his cruel pain,
 " May strive the peer in Paris to bestow,
 " Or other friendly place, to purge his brain.
 " Well wot I, if such tidings he receive,
 " Nought unattempted Brandimart will leave."

XLVII.

Fair Flordelice was she, the stranger dame ;
 Than his own self to Brandimart more dear :
 Who in pursuit of him to Paris came.
 That damsel, after, tells the cavalier,
 ' How hate and strife were blown into a flame
 ' Between Gradasso and the Tartar peer,
 ' For Roland's faulchion ; fierce Gradasso's prey
 ' When slain in combat Mandricardo lay.'

XLVIII.

By accident, so strange and sad, distrest,
 Rinaldo is distraught with ceaseless woe :
 He feels his heart dissolve within his breast,
 As in the sun dissolves the flake of snow ;
 And, with unchanged resolve, upon the quest
 Of good Orlando, everywhere will go ;
 In hopes, if he discover him, to find
 Some means of cure for his distempered mind.

XLIX.

But since his band already had he dight,
 (Did him the hand of Heaven or Fortune sway)
 He first to put the Saracens to flight,
 And raised the siege of Paris, will assay.
 But (for it promised vantage) he till night
 The assault of their cantonments will delay,
 Till the third watch or fourth, when heavy sleep
 Their senses shall in Lethe's water steep.

L.

His squadron in the wood he placed, and there,
 Ambushed, he made them lie the daylight through;
 But when the sun, leaving this nether air
 In darkness, to his ancient nurse withdrew;
 And fangless serpent now, and goat, and bear,
 With other beasts, adorned the heavens anew,
 Which by the greater blaze had been concealed,
 Rinaldo moved his silent troop afield.

L I.

A mile an-end with Aquilant he prest,
 Gryphon, Alardo, and Vivian of his race,
 Guido and Sansonetto, and the rest,
 Without word spoken, and with stealthy pace.
 The Moorish guard they find with sleep oppress:
 They slaughter all, nor grant one paynim grace;
 And, ere they were by others seen or heard,
 Into their midmost camp the squadron spurred.

L II.

At the first charge on that unchristened band,
 Their guard and sentries, taken by surprise,
 So broken are by good Rinaldo's brand,
 No wight is left, save he who slaughtered lies.
 Their first post forced, the paynims understand
 No laughing matter is the lord's emprise:
 For, sleeping and dismayed, their naked swarms
 Make small resistance to such warriors' arms.

L III.

To strike more dread into the Moorish foe,
 Mount Alban's champion, leading the assault,
 Bade beat his drums and bade his bugles blow,
 And with loud echoing cries his name exalt.
 He spurs Bayardo, that is nothing slow;
 He clears the lofty barriers at a vault,
 Trampling down foot, o'erturning cavalier,
 And scatters booth and tent in his career.

L IV.

Is none so bold of all that paynimry
 But what his stiffened hair stands up an end,
 Hearing Mount Alban's and Rinaldo's cry
 From earth into the starry vault ascend
 Him the twin hosts of Spain and Afric fly,
 Nor time in loading baggage idly spend;
 Who will not wait that deadly fury more,
 Which to have proved so deeply irks them sore.

LV.

Guido succeeds ; no less their foe pursues,
 The valiant sons of warlike Olivier,
 Alardo, Richardet, and the other two ;
 Sansonet's sword and horse a pathway clear ;
 And well is proved upon that paynim crew
 The force of Vivian and of Aldigier.
 Thus each bestirs himself like valorous knight,
 Who follows Clermont's banner to the fight.

LVI.

Seven hundred men with good Rinaldo speed,
 Drawn from Mount Alban and the townships nigh
 —No fiercer erst obeyed Achilles' lead—
 Enured to summer and to winter sky :
 So stout each warrior is, so good at need,
 A hundred would not from a thousand fly ;
 And, better than some famous cavaliers,
 Many amid that squadron couch their spears.

LVII.

If good Rinaldo gathers small supplies
 From rents or cities, which his rule obey,
 So these he bound by words and courtesies,
 And sharing what he had with his array,
 Is none that ever from his service buys
 Deserter by the bribe of better pay.
 Of Montalbano these are left in care,
 Save pressing need demands their aid elsewhere.

LVIII.

Them now in succour of King Charles he stirred,
 And left with little guard his citadel.
 Among the Africans that squadron spurred,
 That squadron, of whose doughty feats I tell,
 Doing by them what wolf on woolly herd
 Does where Gelesus' limpid waters well,
 Or lion by the bearded goat and rank,
 That feeds on Cinyphus's barbarous bank.*

LIX.

Tidings to Charles, Rinaldo had conveyed,
 ' That he for Paris with his squadron steers,
 ' To assail, by night, the paynims ill purveyed ;'
 And ready and in arms the king appears.
 He, when his help is needed, comes in aid,
 With all his peerage, and, beside his peers,
 Brings Monodantes' son,* amid that crew,
 Of Flordelice the lover chaste and true ;

* Brandinart.

LX.

Whom by such long and by such tedious way
 She sought throughout the realm of France in vain;
 Here by the cognizance, his old display,
 Afar, by her distinguished from the train.
 At the first sight of her he quits the fray
 And wears a semblance loving and humane.
 He clipt her round with many a fond caress,
 And kissed a thousand times, or little less.

LXI.

To dame and damsel in that ancient age
 They trusted much, that, in their wandering vein,
 Roved, unescorted, many a weary stage,
 Through foreign countries and by hill and plain;
 Whom they returning hold for fair and sage,
 Nor of their faith suspicion entertain.
 Here Brandimart by Flordelice was taught,
 'How Roland wandered, of his wits distraught.'

LXII.

Had he such strange and evil tidings heard
 From other lips, he scarce had these believed:
 But credited fair Flordelice's word,
 From whom more wondrous things he had received.
 Nor this, as told by other, she averred;
 This had she seen, and ill could be deceived;
 For well as any she Orlando knows;
 And both the when and where that damsel shows.

LXIII.

She tells him, 'How the perilous bridge's floor
 'From cavaliers King Rodomont defends;
 'Where, on a pompous sepulchre, the Moor
 'His prisoners' ravished arms and vest suspends;
 'Tells how she saw Orlando, raging sore,
 'Do fearful deeds,' and her relation ends,
 Describing how the paynim fell reversed,
 To his great peril, in the stream immersed.

LXIV.

Brandimart, who the County loves as dear
 As man can love a brother, friend, or son,
 Disposed to seek Orlando, far and near.
 Nor pain nor peril in the adventure shun,
 Till something for the comfort of that peer
 By wizard's or by leech's art be done,
 Armed as he is, leaps lightly on his steed,
 And takes his way beneath the lady's lead.

LXV.

Thitherward where Orlando she had spied,
 In company the knight and lady made.
 They daily post till to that bridge they ride,
 Which Argier's king maintained, in arms arrayed.
 To him the guard their coming signified ;
 Courser and arms his squires as well conveyed ;
 And Brandimart no sooner is at hand
 Than Rodomont is armed and at his stand.

LXVI.

With lofty voice the sovereign of Argièr,
 Assorting with his moody rage, 'gan say ;
 " —Whoe'er thou art, sir knight, and whence-so'er—
 " Brought by mistake of purpose or of way,
 " Light from thine horse and doff thy warlike gear,
 " To deck this sepulchre, ere thee I slay,
 " An offering to its lovely tenant's spirit ;
 " And thou in thy forced homage have no merit."

LXVII.

Brandimart, at the paynim's proud discourse,
 His weapon in the rest, for answer, laid ;
 He good Batoldo spurred, his gentle horse,
 And at the champion with such fury made,
 As showed that he, for courage and for force,
 With any warrior in the world had weighed.
 King Rodomont as well, with rested spear,
 Thundered along the bridge, in fierce career.

LXVIII.

The paynim's courser, ever used to go
 Upon that bridge's fearful pass, where one
 Fell prone parforce into the stream below,
 Securely to the fierce encounter run :
 While, trembling, and irresolute in show,
 That other to the unwonted course is gone.
 Quivers the bridge beneath, as it would sink :
 Narrow that passage is, unfenced the brink !

LXIX.

With heavy spears, the growth of forest hoar,
 Saplings rough-hewn, those masters of the just,
 Upon the perilous bridge encountering sore,
 Exchange, on either side, no gentle thrust.
 Nor much their mighty strength or manege-lore
 Avails the steeds ; for, prostrate in the dust,
 Crumbles each knight and charger in mid-course ;
 Whelmed in one fate the rider and his horse.



G. P. M.

J. J. P. M.

Brandimart and Rodomont.

LXX.

When either steed would nimbly spring from ground,
 As the spur galled and gored his bleeding flank,
 He on that little bridge no footing found ;
 For all too narrow was the scanty plank.
 Hence both fall headlong, and the deafening sound
 Re-echo vaulted skies and grassy bank.
 So rang our stream, when from the heavenly sphere
 Was hurled the sun's ill-fated charioteer.*

LXXI.

With all their weight, down hurtled from the steep,
 Coursers and cavaliers, who sate them well ;
 And dived into the river's darksome deep,
 To search for beauteous nymph in secret cell.
 Nor this the first nor yet the second leap
 Which from the bridge had made that infidel !
 Who, often floundering in its oozy bed,
 Well in the soundings of that stream was read.

LXXII.

He where 'tis hard and where 'tis softer knows,
 Where shallow is the water, where profound :
 With breast and flanks above the waves he rose,
 And Brandimart assailed on safer ground.
 Brandimart, whirling with the current, goes,
 While his steed's feet the faithless bottom pound.
 He, with his lord, stands rooted in the mud,
 With risk to both of drowning in the flood.

LXXIII.

Whelming them upside-down, the waters flow,
 And plunge them in the river's deepest bed ;
 The horse is uppermost, the knight below
 From the bridge looks his lady, sore bested,
 And tear employs, and prayer, and suppliant vow :
 —“ Ah, Rodomont ! for love of her, whom dead
 “ Ye worship, do not deed of such despite !
 “ Permit not, sir, the death of such a knight.

LXXIV.

“ Ah ! courteous lord ! if e'er you loved withal,
 “ Have pity upon me who love this peer ;
 “ Let it suffice that he become thy thrall !
 “ For if thou on this stone suspend his gear,
 “ Amid whatever spoils adorn the wall,
 “ The best and worthiest will his spoils appear.”
 She ended, and her prayer so well address'd,
 It touch'd, though hard to move, the paynim's breast.

* L'incôton.

LXXV.

Moved by her words, he lent her lover aid,
 So by his courser in the stream immersed ;
 Who, to his peril sore, was overlaid,
 And largely drank, albeit with little thirst.
 But Rodomont a while his help delayed,
 And seized the warrior's sword and helmet first.
 Him half exhausted from the stream he drew,
 And prisoned with that other captive crew.

LXXVI.

All happiness was in that damsel spent,
 When taken she her Brandimart espied,
 Although to see him captive more content,
 Than to behold him perish in the tide.
 None but herself she blames for the event,
 Who thitherward had been the champion's guide ;
 She having to that faithful warrior shown,
 How at the bridge Orlando she had known.

LXXVII.

She parts, and has anew already planned
 Thither with good Rinaldo to resort ;
 With Guido, Sansonot of doughty hand,
 Or other cavalier of Pepin's court ;
 Some warrior good by water and by land,
 That with the Saracen will well assort.
 Who, if no stronger than her baffled knight,
 With better fortune may maintain the fight.

LXXVIII.

For many days the damsel vainly strayed,
 Ere she encountered any one who bore
 Semblance of knight, that might afford her aid,
 And free her prisoned lover from the Moor ;
 After she long and fruitless search had made,
 At length a warrior crost her way, that wore
 A richly ornamented vest, whose ground
 With trunks of cypresses was broidered round.

LXXIX.

Who was that champion, shall be said elsewhere ;
 For I to Paris must return, and show
 How Malagigi and Rinaldo are
 Victorious o'er the routed Moorish foe.
 To count the flyers were a useless care,
 Or many drowned in Stygian streams below.
 The darkness rendered Turpin's labour vain,
 Who tasked himself to tell the pagans slain.

LXXX.

King Agramant in his pavilion lies,
 From his first sleep awakened by a knight :
 Ho that the king will be a prisoner, cries.
 ' Save he with speed betake himself to flight.'
 The monarch looks about him and espies
 His paynim bands dispersed in panic fright.
 Naked, they far and near desert the field ;
 Nay, never halt to snatch the covering shield.

LXXXI.

Uncounselled and confused, the king arrayed
 His naked limbs in knightly plate and chain,
 When thither Falsiron, the Spaniard, made
 Grandonio, Balugantes, and their train :
 They to the Moorish king the risk displayed
 Of being taken in that press, or slain ;
 And vouched, ' if thence he should in safety fare,
 ' He well might thank propitious Fortune's care.'

LXXXII.

Marsilius so, Sobrino so, their fear
 Express ; so, one and all, the friendly band ;
 They warn him ' that Destruction is as near
 ' As swift Mount Alban's lord is nigh at hand.
 ' And if against so fierce a cavalier,
 ' And such a troop, he seeks to make a stand,
 ' He and his friends in that disastrous strife
 ' Will surely forfeit liberty or life.

LXXXIII.

' But he to Arles and Narbonne may retreat,
 ' With such few squadrons as his rule obey :
 ' Since either is well fortified, and meet
 ' The warfare to maintain above one day ;
 ' And having saved his person, the defeat
 ' May venge upon the foe, by this delay :
 ' His troops may rally quickly in that post,
 ' And rout in fine King Charles's conquering host.'

LXXXIV.

Agramant to those lords' opinion bent,
 Though that hard counsel he could ill endure ;
 As if supplied with wings, towards Arles he went,
 By roads which offered passage most secure.
 Beside safe guides, much favoured his intent
 His setting out, when all things were obscure.
 Scaping the toils by good Rinaldo spread,
 Some twenty thousand of the paynims fled.

LXXXV.

Those whom Rinaldo, whom his brethren slew,
 Whom Oliviero's sons, the valiant twain,
 Those who were slaughtered by Mount Alban's crew,
 —The fierce seven hundred, good Rinaldo's train—
 Those whom the valiant Sansonet o'erthrew,
 And those that in their flight were drowned in Seine,
 He who would count, might count as well what flowers
 Zephyr and Flora shed, mid April showers.

LXXXVI.

Here one conjectures Malagigi bore
 A part in the alarum of that night:
 Not that he stained the mead with paynim gore,
 Nor splintered heads; but that the wizard wight,
 Infernal angels, by his magic lore,
 Called from Tartarean caverns into light;
 Whose many spears and banners waving wide
 Two kingdoms such as France had scarce supplied.

LXXXVII.

And with them such sonorous metal brayed,
 So many drums and martial noises sounded;
 So many steeds in that encounter neighed;
 So many cries—with rush of foot confounded—
 Rose all about that hill, dale, wood, and glade,
 From distant parts, the deafening din rebounded;
 And struck into the Moors such sudden dread,
 They turned and from the field in panic fled.

LXXXVIII.

Their king forgets not, how Rogero lay
 Sore wounded, and as yet in evil case.
 Him, with what care they could, he made convey
 From that dread field, on horse of easy pace.
 Borne to the sea by the securest way,
 They in a bark the suffering warrior place,
 And thence commodiously to Arles transport;
 Whither their wasted squadrons make resort.

LXXXIX.

Chased by Rinaldo and King Charlemagne,
 A hundred thousand, or well nigh, I ween,
 By wood, by mountain, valley, and by plain,
 Flying the fury of the Franks are seen;
 More find the passage blocked, and widely stain
 With crimson what before was white and green.
 Not so Gradasso's puissant troop was spent,
 Who farther from the field had pitched his tent.

XC.

Nay; when he hears it is Mount Alban's knight
 By whom assailed the paynim quarters are,
 He in his heart exults, with such delight,
 That he, for very joy, leaps here and there.
 He thanks and lauds his God, who him that night
 Blest with so high a fortune and so rare
 Hoping to win the horse without a peer,
 Bayardo, from the Christian cavalier.

XCI.

Gradasso had desired long time before
 (I think you will have read the tale elsewhere)
 To back that courser, which Rinaldo bore,
 And Durindana by his side to wear:
 He with a hundred thousand men and more
 To France, with this design, had made repair
 And had crewhile to bloody fight defied,
 Even for that good steed, Mount Alban's pride.

XCII.

Hence had that king repaired to the sea-shore,
 The place assigned to end their discord fell:
 But all was marred by Malagigi's lore;⁴
 Who, cheating good Rinaldo with a spell,
 To sea the champion in a pinnace bore.
 Too tedious were the tale at length to tell.
 Hence evermore Gradasso had opined,
 The gentle baron was of craven kind.

XCIII.

Now that Gradasso learns Mount Alban's peer
 Is he that storms the camp, in huge delight,
 Armed, on Alfana leaps the cavalier,
 And through the pitchy darkness seeks the knight.
 O'erturning all who cross his fierce career,
 He leaves afflicted and in piteous plight
 The broken bands of Afric and of France,
 All, food alike for his wide-wasting lance.

XCIV.

He seeks the paladin, now here now there,
 Echoing his name as loud as he can shout;
 And thitherward inclines his courser, where
 The bodies are most thickly strown about.
 At length encounter, sword to sword, the pair,
 For broken are alike their lances stout;
 Which shivering in their hands, had flown upright,
 And smote the starry chariot of the Night.

XCV.

When King Gradasso recognized the foe,
 Not by the blazoned bearing of his shield,
 But by Bayardo—by that horrid blow,
 Which made him seem sole champion of the field,
 He to reproach the knight was nothing slow,
 And of unworthy action him appealed;
 In that he had not kept his ground and day,
 Erewhile appointed for the fierce assay.

XCVI.

“Belike thou hoped,” (said he of Sericane,)
 “If for that time my vengeance thou couldst fly,
 “We should not meet in this wide world again:
 “But we are met, thou seest, anew; and I,
 “Be sure, though thou shouldst seek the Stygian reign,
 “Or be from earth translated to the sky,
 “Will hunt thee, save that courser thou forego,
 “Be it through heaven above or hell below

XCVII.

“Dost thou, as matched with me, mistrust thy force,
 “(And that thou wert ill-paired was seen whilere,)
 “And more esteemest life than fame, a course
 “Remains, which thee may from thy peril clear.
 “And thou, if thou in peace resign the horse,
 “May’st live, if life be deemed so passing dear;
 “But live afoot, unmeriting a steed,
 “That dost by chivalry such foul misdeed.”

XCVIII.

Guido the savage, as he spake, was nigh
 With Richardetto; and the warlike twain
 Brandished alike their trenchant swords on high,
 To teach more wit to him of Sericane:
 But them Rinaldo stopped with sudden cry,
 Nor brooked that he should injury sustain.
 “Am I too weak,” (he cried,) “without your aid,
 “To answer him that dares my deeds upbraid?”

XCIX.

Then to the pagan thus; “Gradasso bear,
 “And wilt thou listen, thou shalt understand,
 “And I will prove it manifest and clear,
 “I came to seek thee out upon the strand:
 “And afterwards on thee will make appear
 “The truth of all I say with arms in hand;
 “Know then thou liest, if e’er with slanderous speech
 “Thou taxest me with aught in knight-hood’s breach.

C.

"But warmly I beseech thee, that before
 "The battle be, thou fully comprehend
 "My just excuses, that thou may'st no more
 "Me for my failure wrongly reprehend:
 "Next for Bayardo, as agreed of yore.
 "'Tis my desire that we afoot contend;
 "Even as ordained by thee, in desert place,
 "Alone in knightly duel, face to face."

CI.

Courteous was Sericana's cavalier,
 (For generous bosoms aye such practice use)
 And is content to listen to the peer,
 How he his breach of promise will excuse.
 With him he seeks the river side, and here
 In simple words what chanced Rinaldo shews:
 From the true history removes the veil,
 And cites all Heaven to witness to his tale.

CII.

Next calls upon the son of Buovo, who
 Is of that history informed aright;
 And now, from point to point, relates anew
 (Nor more nor less rehearsed) the magic sleight.
 When thus Rinaldo; "What I warrant true
 "By witness, I with arms in single fight,
 "For better proof, will vouch upon thy crest,
 "Both now and ever, as it likes thee best."

CIII.

The king of Sericane, as loth to leave
 The second quarrel for the former breach,
 Though doubtful how that tale he should receive,
 Takes in good part the bold Rinaldo's speech.
 Not, as upon the former battle's eve,
 They choose their ground on Barcellona's beach:
 But on the morn ensuing, and, fast by
 A neighbouring fountain, will the question try.

CIV.

Thither Rinaldo will the steed convey,
 There to be placed in common, 'twixt the two.
 If good Gradasso take his foe or slay,
 He wins Bayardo without more ado.
 But if Gradasso fails in that affray,
 — Should he be slain, or else for mercy sue,
 A prisoner to Mount Alban's valiant lord,
 Rinaldo shall possess the virtuous sword.

CV.

With mighty marvel and with greater pain,
 The paladin from Flordelice (as shown)
 Had heard how troubled was his cousin's brain.
 And from the damsel's lips as well had known
 How he his arms had scattered on the plain;
 And heard the quarrel which from thence had grown;
 In fine, how King Gradasso had the brand,
 Which won such thousand palms in Roland's hand.

CVI.

When they were so agreed, Gradasso made
 Thither where, camped apart, his servants lay,
 Albeit warmly by Rinaldo prayed,
 He would with him in his pavilion stay.
 The paynim king in armour was arrayed,
 And so the paladin, by break of day;
 And to the destined fount came either lord,
 The field of combat for the horse and sword.

CVII.

It seemed Rinaldo's friends were all in fear,
 And dreaded much, before it was begun,
 The issue of the fight their cavalier
 Should wage against Gradasso, one to one.
 Much force, much daring, and much skill appear
 In that fierce king; and since of Milo's son
 The goodly sword was to his girdle tied
 All cheeks looked pale upon Rinaldo's side:

CVIII.

And Malagigi more than all the rest,
 Sore doubted the event which would ensue,
 He willingly himself would have addressed
 To disappoint the destined fight anew;
 But fears if he that deadly strife arrest,
 Rinaldo's utter enmity to rue,
 Yet wroth with him upon that other score,
 When he conveyed the warrior from the shore.

CIX.

Let others nourish idle grief and fears!
 Rinaldo wends afield secure and gay,
 Hoping that shame, which to the knight appears
 Too foul to be endured, to wipe away;
 So that of Altafaglia and Poitiers,
 He may for ever silence the mis-say.*
 Boldly, and in his heart secure to win
 That battle's honour, wends the paladin.

CX.

When now from either side those warriors meet,
 Nigh at the same time at the fountain-side,
 So in all points the pair each other greet,
 With countenance so kind, so satisfied,
 'Twould seem by kindred and by friendship sweet
 Rinaldo and Gradasso were allied.
 But how they after closed in fierce affray,
 I till another season shall delay.

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

*To her that does for her Rogero slay,
 Tidings are brought which irk the damsel sore,
 That fair Marphisa caused the youth's delay
 She bent to slay her, grieving evermore,
 Departs, and overtakes, upon the way,
 Ullania with the three kings who rode before.
 These she o'ercomes, and had o'ercome that maid,
 But that an evil law she disobeyed.*

I.

I RECOLLECT that I was bound to sing
 (I promised so, but it escaped my mind)
 Of a suspicion, fraught with suffering
 To Bradamant of more displeasing kind,
 And made by keener and more venom'd sting
 Than caused that other wound, wherewith she pined,
 Which, hearing Richardet his news impart,
 Had pierc'd her breast, and preyed upon her heart.

II.

So was I bound to sing, but I began
 Another song. Rinaldo crossed my way,
 And then those deeds by savage Guido done,
 Kept me employed, and caused no small delay
 And so from subject I to subject run,
 That I forgot of Bradamant to say.
 I now remember, and will tell you, ere
 You of Rinaldo or Gradasso hear.

III.

But it behoves, ere more of these be said,
 I should awhile of Agramant discourse,
 Who had from that night's raging fire conveyed
 To Arles the remnant of his scattered force ;
 Since to unite his troops, and furnish aid
 And victual, 'twas a place of much resource,
 Seated upon a river, nigh the shore,
 With Spain in front and Africa before.

IV.

With horse and foot, of good or evil sort,
 Marsilius throughout Spain their loss repairs ;
 And each armed bark in Barcellona's port,
 Furnished through love or fear, for sea prepares.
 The Moor to council daily calls his court ;
 Nor care nor cost the watchful monarch spares :
 Meanwhile sore taxes and repeated cess,
 All Africa's o'erburdened towns oppress.

V.

He offers Rodomont, if to his side
 He will return, but offers him in vain,
 Renowned Almontes' daughter, as a bride ;
 His cousin she, her portion Oran's reign.
 He lures not from his bridge that knight of pride,
 Who has so many sells, such plate and chain
 Collected there, from cavaliers o'erthrown,
 As serve to hide the monumental stone,

VI.

Marphisa would not such a course pursue :
 Nay, the redoubted damsel hearing said,
 ' That Agramant, subdued by Charles's crew,
 ' — His choicest warriors taken, chased, or dead —
 ' In Arles was sheltered with his broken few,
 Thither, unbidden by the monarch, sped,
 Prompt to assist him with her friendly blade ;
 And proffered purse and person in his aid.

VII.

As a free gift to him the martial fair
 Brunello bore, nor had she done him wrong.
 He, for ten days and nights, to swing in air,
 Had sorely feared, from lofty gallows hung :
 But seeing him unhelped by force or prayer
 Of any one amid the paynim throng,
 She thought foul scorn to stain her generous hands
 With such base blood, and loosed the losel's bands.

VIII.

She pardoned every ancient injury,
 And him to Agramant in Arles conveyed.
 Well may you fancy with what joy and glee
 The monarch greeted her who brought him aid ;
 He in Brunello's fate wills all shall see
 In what esteem he holds that warlike maid ;
 For he in earnest does upon her foe
 What fierce Marphisa menaced but in show.

IX.

The hangman hung his corpse in desert field,
 The craving vulture and the crow to feed.
 Rogero, that erewhile had been his shield,
 And from the noose that catiff would have freed.
 Heaven's justice willed, now lay with wound unhealed,
 Nor could assist the craven in his need ;
 And when the news were known, the knot was tied ;
 So that Brunello, unassisted, died.

X.

This while does good duke Aymon's daughter mourn,
 Because those twenty days so slowly trail :
 —Which term elapsed—Rogero should return,
 And be received into her church's pale.
 Time halts not more with him to foreign bourne
 Exiled, with prisoner pent in noisome jail ;
 Pines the poor wretch for liberty and light.
 Or his loved land, desired and gladsome sight !

XI.

Aye sick with hope deferred, the expecting maid,
 That Phœbus' steed were foundered onewhile deemed ;
 Then that his wheels were out of frame, so stayed,
 Beyond the wonted term, his chariot seemed.
 Yet longer than *that* day when Faith delayed
 The sun, which on the righteous Hebrew beamed,
 Or than *that* night Alcides was conceived,
 She every day and every night believed.

XII.

How oft of dormouse, badger, or of bear,
 The heavy slumber would she fain partake !
 For she that time in sleep would waste and wear ;
 Nor such prolonged repose desired to break ;
 Nor wished the damsel any sound to hear,
 Until Rogero's voice should her awake ;
 But not alone is this beyond her power ;
 She cannot close her eyes one single hour.

XIII.

She here and there, throughout the livelong night,
Tosses and turns, nor ever finds repose ;
And still, impatient for the dawn of light,
From time to time she to her window goes,
To see if Tithon's spouse the lily white
Yet scatters mingled with the crimson rose.
Nor less desires the damsel, when 'tis morn,
To see the golden stars the heavens adorn.

XIV.

When, saving some four days, the term was ended,
Appointed for the youthful warrior's stay,
She, full of hope, the messenger attended
From hour to hour, that should arrive, and say,
" Behold Rogero comes ;" and oft ascended
A turret, from whose top she might survey
Gay champaign, wood, and, mid the wide expanse,
A portion of the road, that led to France.

XV.

When shining arms at distance she perceives,
Or any thing that speaks a cavalier,
'Tis her desired Rogero, she believes ;
And her fair eyes and brows are seen to clear.
If footman, or unarmed, the maid conceives,
It is a courier from the youthful peer ;
And, though fallacious every hope she feeds,
Another and another eye succeeds.

XVI.

And then she arms, and will the warrior meet ;
And from the hill descends into the plain :
She finds him not, and to Montalban's seat
Hopes he by other road his way has ta'en.
In the design, wherewith she moved her feet
From thence, she to her fort returns in vain ;
Nor finds him here nor there ; meanwhile expired
The period whose approach she so desired.

XVII.

—The period so prefixt o'erpast by one,
By two, three, six, by eight, by twenty days—
She seeing not her spouse, and tidings none
Receiving of the youth, laments 'gan raise,
Which had from snake-haired Furies pity won,
In those dark realms that Rhadamanthus sways.
She smote her eyes divine, and bosom fair ;
She rent the tresses of her golden hair.

XVIII.

- " Can it be true?"—(she cried)—" Shall I be fain
 " To follow one, that strives to hide and fly?
 " Esteem a man that has me in disdain?
 " Pray him that never hears my suppliant cry?
 " Suffer who hates me o'er my heart to reign?
 " One that his lofty virtues holds so high,
 " 'Twere need some heaven-born goddess should descend
 " From realms above, his stubborn heart to bend?

XIX.

- " Proud youth! he knows my worship and my love,
 " Nor me will have for lover or for slave.
 " The cruel stripling knows what pangs I prove,
 " Yet will not aid me till I am in my grave.
 " Nor let me tell my sorrows, lest they move
 " Him his perverse and evil will to wave;
 " Shunning me like malignant asp, that fears
 " To change his mood, if he the charmer hears.

XX.

- " Ah! Love, arrest this wight who runs so free,
 " Outstripping my slow feet, or me instal
 " In the condition whence thou tookest me,
 " Such as I was, ere thine or other's thrall.
 " —Alas! how vain the hope! that thou shouldst be
 " Ever to pity moved by suppliant call,—
 " Who sport, yea feed and live, in streams that rise
 " From the distracted lover's brimming eyes.

XXI.

- " But, woe is me, alas! and, what can I
 " Save my irrational desire lament?
 " Which makes me soar a pitch so passing high,
 " I reach a region, where my plumes are brent;
 " Then, unsustainable, fall headlong from the sky;
 " Nor ends my woe; on other flight intent,
 " Again I imp my wings, again I soar;
 " To flame and fall, tormented evermore.

XXII.

- " Yea; rather of myself should I complain,
 " Than the desire, to which I bared my breast
 " Whereby was Reason hunted from her reign,
 " And all my powers by stronger force oppress.
 " Thus borne from bad to worse, without a rein,
 " I cannot the unbridled beast arrest;
 " Who makes me see I to destruction haste,
 " That I more bitterness in death may taste.

XXIII.

- " Yet, ah ! why blame myself ? Wherein have I
 " Ever offended, save in loving thee ?
 " What wonder was it then that suddenly
 " A woman's feeble sense oppress should be ?
 " Why fence and guard myself, lest bearing high,
 " Wise words, and beauty rare should pleasure me ?
 " Most wretched is the mortal that would shun
 " To look upon the visage of the sun.

XXIV.

- " Besides that me my destiny entrained,¹
 " Words, worthy credence, moved me much, that drew
 " A picture of rare happiness, ordained
 " As need of this fair union to ensue.
 " If these persuasive words were false and feigned,
 " If famous Merlin's counsel was untrue,
 " Wrath at the wizard may I well profess ;
 " But cannot therefore love Rogero less.

XXV.

- " Both Merlin and Melissa have I need
 " To blame, and shall for ever blame the twain,
 " That, to exhibit suckers of my seed,
 " Conjured up spirits from infernal reign,
 " Who with this empty hope my fancy feed,
 " Me in perpetual bondage to detain.
 " Nor other cause for this can I suppose,
 " Save that they grudge me safe and sweet repose."

XXVI.

Sorrow the maid so wholly occupies,
 Room has she none for comfort or for rest.
 Yet, maugre her affliction, Hope will rise,
 And form a lodgement in her harassed breast ;
 And to the damsel's memory still supplies
 Rogero's parting words to her address ;
 So makes her, in all seeming facts, despite,
 Await from hour to hour the youthful knight.

XXVII.

For a month's space beyond those twenty days
 This hope affords fair Bradamant content :
 Hence sorrow not on her so heavy weighs
 As it would else her harassed soul have shent.
 She, one day that along the road she strays,
 By which she oft to meet Rogero went,
 Hears tidings, that of Hope—last comfort left—
 (Like every other good) her breast bereft.

XXVIII.

Bound homeward from the hostile camp, where lay
 King Agramant, she met a Gascon knight,
 A prisoner to those paynims, from the day
 That fought nigh Paris was the famous fight.
 The damsel prest him all he knew to say :
 Then to the point she covets led the knight :
 Asks of Rogero, on that theme abides,
 Listens to that, nor aught inquires besides.

XXIX.

Of him a full account did he afford,
 As well acquainted with the court ; he said,
 ' How, matched with Mandricardo, strove that lord,
 ' And layed the martial king in combat dead.
 ' And how, sore wounded by the Tartar's sword,
 ' Above a month the stripling kept his bed :'
 And had the stranger here but closed his news,
 Well might his tale the missing knight excuse.

XXX.

But then subjoins the Gascon cavalier,
 ' How in the Moorish camp a damsel lies,
 ' By name Marphisa hight, of beauteous cheer,
 ' Bold and as skilled in arms of every guise,
 ' Who loves Rogero and to him is dear ;
 ' And them the host so rarely sundered spies,
 ' That every one, throughout the paynim train,
 ' Decuss that betrothed in wedlock are the twain ;

XXXI.

' And hope, when healed shall be the youthful knight,
 ' The marriage of those lovers will succeed ;
 ' (For sure) with pleasure and sincere delight,
 ' Those tidings paynim prince and monarch read :
 ' Since, knowing either's superhuman might,
 ' They augur, from their loins will spring a breed,
 ' In little season, which shall pass in worth
 ' The mightiest race that ever was on earth.'

XXXII.

What he rehearsed, the Gascon knight believed,
 Nor without cause believed the news he bore,
 A rumour universally received
 And bruited through the squadrons of the Moor ;
 Who had that notion of their love conceived
 From signs of kindness witnessed evermore.
 For—good or bad—though from one mouth it flows,
 Fame to a boundless torrent quickly grows.

XXXIII.

That she with him had brought the Paynim aid,
 And ne'er was seen without the cavalier,
 The first foundation of the rumour layed :
 But what confirmed that fame in every ear,
 Was, that she, having from the camp conveyed
 The thief Brunello (as I sang whilere)
 As if alone to see Rogero brought,
 Had to the camp returned, uncalled, unsought.

XXXIV.

She solely to the camp had ta'en her way,
 To visit him that on a sick-bed smarted ;
 Nor once alone ; but often all the day
 There passed that maid, and but at eve departed :
 Who gave yet greater cause of her to say,
 That—known as one so haughty and hard-hearted,
 Who all the world despised—she now was grown
 Benign and humble to the Child alone.

XXXV.

When Bradamant the Gasson's story heard,
 That lady suffered such tormenting pain,
 Such cruel woe her inmost bosom stirred,
 From falling she preserved herself with pain.
 She turned her courser round, without a word,
 Inflamed with jealousy and fierce disdain :
 From her all hope the wretched damsel spurns,
 And to her chamber breathing wrath returns.

XXXVI.

Turned on her face, her body on the bed,
 Armed as she is, the grieving damsel throws,
 And that the sad lament by sorrow bred,
 May be unheard of any, bites the clothes ;
 And so, repeating what the stranger said,
 To such a pitch her smothered anguish grows,
 Her plaints no longer able to restrain,
 So vents the maid perforce her piteous pain :

XXXVII.

" Who ever can be trusted ? woe is me !
 " All false and cruel well may be esteemed,
 " If thou, Rogero, false and cruel be,
 " That I so pious and so faithful deemed.
 " What foul and felon act, what treachery,
 " Was ever yet by tragic poet dreamed,
 " But will fall short of thine, if thou wilt set
 " The sum of my desert against thy debt ?

XXXVIII.

- " Wherefore, Rogero, since no cavalier
 " Mates thee in beauteous form and daring feat,
 " Since thou in matchless valour hast no peer,
 " And none with thee in gentleness compete,
 " Why cannot we, 'mid godlike gifts and clear,
 " Allow thee truth, thy graces to complete ?
 " The praise of spotless truth to thee allow,
 " To which all other virtues yield and bow ?

XXXIX.

- " Knowest thou not, without it, worthless are
 " All gentle bearing and all martial might ?
 " As there is nothing, howsoever fair,
 " That can be seen without the aid of light.
 " Easily mightest thou a maid ensnare,
 " Lord as thou wast, and idol in her sight.
 " Her with thy honied words thou might'st have won
 " To deem that cold and darksome was the sun.

XL.

- " Cruel what sin can trouble thee, if thou
 " Do'st not her murder who loved *thee* repent ?
 " If held so lightly be a breach of vow—
 " Beneath what burden will thy heart be bent ?
 " What treatment will thine adversary know,
 " If one who loves like me thou so torment ?
 " Justice is none in heaven, I well may say,
 " If Heaven its vengeance for my wrongs delay.

XLI.

- " If of all human sins of deepest dye
 " Be fell ingratitude ; if doomed to smart
 " For this, the fairest angel of the sky
 " Was banished into foul and darksome part ;
 " If mighty sins for mighty vengeance cry,
 " Where due atonement cleanses not the heart ;
 " Beware lest thou beneath such vengeance groan,
 " Ingrate ! that wouldst not thy sin atone.

XLII.

- " Cruel Rogero, I of theft, beside
 " All other sins, may justly thee arraign.
 " That thou my heart hast ravished from my side,
 " —Of this offence I will not, I, complain—
 " But, having made it mine, that thou defied
 " All right, and took away thy gift again.
 " Restore it ; well thou know'st what pains requite
 " His sin, who keeps what is another's right.

XLIII.

- "Thou hast left me, Rogero; *thee* to leave,
 "Alas! I neither will nor power possess.
 "But will and power have I my life to reave,
 "To scape from this o'erwhelming wretchedness.
 "To die at strife with thee alone I grieve:
 "For, had the gods so pleased my lot to bless,
 "As to require my life, when loved of thee,
 "Never so welcome had been death to me."

XLIV.

- Resolved to die, 'twas so the damsel cried;
 And starting from her bed, by passion warmed,
 To her left breast her naked sword applied;
 Then recollected she was wholly armed.
 Meanwhile her better Spirit, at her side,
 With these persuasive words her fury charmed:
 "O lady, born to such illustrious name!
 "Would'st thou conclude thy life with such foul shame?

XLV.

- "Were it not better to the field to go,
 "Where aye thy breath with glory may be spent?
 "There, should Rogero chance to lay thee low,
 "He to have slain thee haply may repent;
 "But, should his faulchion deal the mortal blow,
 "What death could ever yield thee more content?
 "Reason it were thou should'st by him be slain,
 "Who dooms thee living to such passing pain.

XLVI.

- "Haply of that Marphisa, too, before
 "Thou die, thou yet may deadly vengeance take,
 "Who with dishonest love and treacherous lore
 "Did thy beloved Rogero's fealty shake."
 This seemed to please the mournful lady more
 Than her first thought; and she forthwith bade make
 A mantle for her arms, which should imply
 Her desperation and desire to die.

XLVII.

- The vest is of that colour which is spied
 In leaf, when gray and yellow are at strife;
 When it is gathered from the branch, or dried
 Is the green blood, that was its parent's life.
 Embroidered is the surcoat's outer side
 With stems of cypress which disdain the knife;
 Which shoot not, when by biting steel laid low.
 A habit well according with her woe.

XLVIII.

She took the courser that was wont to bear
 Astolpho, and with him the lance of gold,
 By whose sole touch unhorsed all champions were.
 Needless anew I deem it to unfold
 Why by Astolpho given, and when and where,
 Or how that spear obtained the warrior bold.
 The lady took the lance, but nothing guessed
 Of the stupendous virtue it possessed.

XLIX.

Without attendants, without squire, alone,
 The hill descending by the nearest way,
 Towards Paris is the mournful damsel gone.
 Where camped erewhile the Moorish forces lay ;
 For yet to her the tidings were unknown,
 That good Rinaldo and his bold array
 Had raised, with Charles' and Maligigi's aid,
 The siege the paynims had to Paris laid.

L.

—Cadurci, and Cahors' city left behind—
 Bradamant sees the mountain, far and near,
 Whence Dordogne's waters to the valley wind ;
 And Montferrant's and Clermont's towers appear :
 When she, a lady fair, of semblance kind,
 Beholds, by that same road, towards her steer.
 Three knights were nigh, and—at the pommel hung—
 A buckler from the damsel's saddle swung.

LI.

Before the lady and behind her ride
 More squires and maids, a numerous company.
 Fair Bradamant of one that past beside
 Demanded, ' who the stranger dame might be ?'
 " That lady to the king of France " (replied
 The squire) " is sent upon an embassy
 " From THE LOST ISLE, which lies mid seas that roll
 " Their restless waves beyond the northern pole.

LII.

" Some THE LOST ISLE, some Iceland call the reign
 " Whereof a royal lady fills the throne ;
 " Whose charms (before those charms all beauties wane)
 " Are such as Heaven has dealt to her alone.
 " The shield you see she sends to Charlemagne,
 " But with the pact and purpose plainly shown,
 " He should confer it on the knight, whose worth
 " Is, in his judgment, fairest upon earth.

LIII.

- " She, as she deems herself (and it is true,
 " She is the fairest of all womankind),
 " A cavalier, that should in heart and thew
 " Surpass all other warriors, fain would find
 " Resolved, should her a hundred thousand woo,
 " None shall unfix the purpose of her mind;
 " —But he, held worthiest by the world's accord,
 " Alone shall be her lover and her lord.

LIV.

- " In France, in royal Charles's famous court,
 " The damscl hopes to find the cavalier,
 " Who in a thousand feats of high report
 " Has shown that he excels each puissant peer.
 " All three are monarchs who the dame escort,
 " And what their kingdoms ye as well shall hear.
 " One Sweden rules, one Gothland, Norway one;
 " Surpast in martial praise by few or none.

LV.

- " These three, whose kingdoms at some distance lie,
 " Yet the least distant lie from the LOST ISLE,
 " (Because few mariners its shore descry,
 " As little known, that island so they style),
 " Wooed and yet woo her for a wife, and vie
 " In valour, and, to win the lady's smile,
 " Illustrious deeds have done, which Fame shall sound,
 " While Heaven shall circle in its wonted round.

LVI.

- " Yet she nor these will wed, nor cavalier
 " That does not, as she deems, all else excel.
 " —'Lightly I hold your proofs of valour here,'
 " (Those northern monarchs was she wont to tell)
 " And if, like sun amid the stars, one peer
 " Outshines his fellows, him I honour well:
 " But therefore hold him not, in fierce alarms,
 " Of living men the bravest knight at arms.

LVII.

- " To Charlemagne, whom I esteem and hold
 " As wisest among reigning kings, by me
 " Shall be dispatched a costly shield of gold,
 " On pact and on condition, that it be
 " Bestowed on him, deemed boldest of the bold,
 " Amid the martial ranks of chivalry.
 " Serves he king Charlemagne or other lord,
 " I will be governed by that king's award.

LVIII.

' If when King Charles the buckler shall receive
 ' And give to one so stout, that best among
 ' All others he that warrior shall believe,
 ' Do they to his or other court belong,
 ' For me the golden buckler shall retrieve
 ' One of you three, in his own virtue strong ;
 ' My every love and thought shall he possess ;
 ' Him for my spouse and lord will I confess.'

LIX.

" Moved by these stirring speeches, hither hie
 " From that wide-distant sea, those monarchs bold,
 " Resolved to win the buckler, or to die
 " Beneath his hand who has that shield of gold."
 Bradamant ponders much the squire's reply :
 He gives his horse the head—his story told—
 And plies him so with restless heel and hand,
 He overtakes the damsel's distant band.

LX.

After him gallops not, nor hurries ought,
 Bradamant, who pursues her road at ease :
 Much evermore revolving in her thought
 Things that may chance, she finally foresees
 That through the buckler by that damsel brought,
 Will follow strife and boundless enmities,
 Amid king Charles's peerage and the rest,
 If with that shield he shall reward the best.

LXI.

This grieved the damsel's heart, but far above
 That grief, the former fear her heart did goad :
 That young Rogero had withdrawn his love
 From her, and on the warlike queen* bestowed.
 So buried in the thoughts wherewith she strove,
 Was Bradamant, she heeded not her road,
 Nor took she care where, at the close of light,
 To find befitting shelter for the night.

LXII.

As when from squall, or other chance, a barge
 Drives from the river-side, where late it lay,
 Under no mariner or pilot's charge,
 The winds and waves at will transport their prey ;
 So Rabican with Bradamant, at large,
 —She musing on Rogero—wends his way.
 For thence, by many miles, was distant wide
 That mind which should her courser's bridle guide.

* Marphisa.

LXIII.

She raised her eyes at last, and saw the sun
 Had turned his back on Bocchus' towers and wall ;[†]
 Then, like a cormorant, his journey done,
 Into his nurse's lap beheld him fall,
 Beyond Marocco ; and for her to run
 To tree, for shelter from the rising squall,
 Had been a foolish thought : for now 'gan blow
 A blustering wind, which threatened rain or snow.

LXIV.

To better speed fair Bradamant aroused
 Her courser, yet but little way did ride,
 When with his flock, which on the champaign browsed,
 Leaving the fields, a shepherd she espied.
 To him where, well or ill, she might be housed,
 —With many instances the maid applied—
 'For never house could such ill shelter yield,
 'But that in rain 'twere worse to lodge afield.'

LXV.

To her the shepherd said, " I know of none
 "Whereto I could direct you, near at hand.
 "At least six leagues are distant all, but one,
 "Named TRISTRAM'S TOWER, throughout the neighbouring
 land.
 "But not to all men is the door undone ;
 "For it behoves that they, with lance in hand,
 "Achieve their footing first, and then defend,
 "Who to be lodged within its walls pretend.

LXVI.

"If there be room within, to stranger knight
 "The castellan gives kindly welcome there ;
 "But is a lodging claimed by other wight,
 "To joust with all new comers makes him swear :
 "If none, he need not move ; but arm and fight
 "He must what stranger thither shall repair ;
 "And he that worst his warlike arms shall ply,
 "Must wander forth beneath the naked sky.

LXVII.

"If two, three, four, or more, seek shelter, they
 "That first arrive, in peace their quarters take.
 "Who follows, has a harder game to play ;
 "For war upon those many must he make.
 "So, if one only in that mansion stay,
 "He with those two, or more, a lance must break,
 "Then, with as many others as succeed ;
 "Thus he what strength he has shall sorely need.

LXVIII.

"As well, if wife or maid seek that repair,
 " (Is she alone, is she accompanied,)
 "And afterwards another, the most fair
 "Is housed; that other must without abide."
 Bradamant asked the kindly shepherd where
 That castle stood; and he with signs replied
 As well as words, and pointed with his hand
 Where, five or six miles wide, the tower did stand.

LXIX.

Though Rabican's good paces merit praise,
 To hurry him the damsel has no skill,
 By those so passing foul and broken ways,
 (By season somewhat rainy rendered ill)
 So, as to reach the tower, ere Night o'erlays
 The world, whose every nook dark shadows fill.
 Arrived, that lady finds the portal barred,
 And 'that she seeks a lodging,' tells the guard.

LXX.

He answers, 'that the place is occupied
 'By dame and knight already housed, who, met
 'About the fire, in that chill evening tide,
 'Wait till their supper be before them set.'
 To him that maid; "the board is not supplied,
 "I deem, for them, unless the meal be eat.
 "Now, say I wait their coming," (she pursues)
 "Who know and will observe your castle's use."

LXXI.

The guard his message bore, where at their ease
 Reposed the weary cavaliers; his tale
 Not overlikely was those kings to please;
 For cold and peevish blew the wintry gale,
 And now fast fell the rain; yet, forced to seize
 Their arms, they slowly don the martial mail.
 The rest remain within; while they proceed
 Against the damsel, but with little speed.

LXXII.

Three cavaliers they were, of might so tried,
 Few champions but to them in prowess yield
 The same that she that very day, beside
 The courier maid, encountered in the field,
 They that in Iceland boasted, in their pride,
 To bear away from Franco the golden shield;
 Who (for they had the martial maid outrode)
 Arrived before her at that lord's abode.

LXXIII.

In feats of arms few warriors were more stout ;
 But she besure will be among those few,
 She, that on no account will wait without,
 Fasting and wet, night's weary watches through.
 Within from window and from lodge, the rout
 Look forth, and will the joust by moonlight view,
 Which streams from underneath a covering cloud ;
 Albeit the furious rain beats fast and loud.

LXXIV.

Such transport as the longing gallant cheers,
 About to seize the stolen fruits of love,
 When, after long delay, the listener hears
 The bolt within its socket softly move,
 Such transport cheered her, of those cavaliers
 The prowess and the pith a-fire to prove,
 When now the opened portals she descried,
 And drawbridge dropt, and issuing knights espied.

LXXV.

When she beheld, how, of the drawbridge clear
 Those knights, together or scarce sundered, came,
 She took her ground ; and next in fierce career,
 With flowing bridle, drove the furious dame,
 Levelling against those kings that virtuous spear,
 Her cousin's gift which never missed its aim ;
 Whose touch each warrior must unseat parforce ;
 Yea Mars, should Mars contend in mortal course.

LXXVI.

The king of Sweden, foremost of those knights,
 In falling too is foremost of the train ;
 With such surpassing force his helmet smites
 That spear, which never yet was couched in vain.
 Gothland's good king next meets the maid, and lights
 With feet in air, at distance on the plain.
 The third (unhorsed by Aymon's beautous daughter)
 Half buried lies in mire and marshy water.

LXXVII.

When at three strokes she had unhorsed them all,
 Lighting with head on earth and heels in air,
 Retiring from the field, she sought the Hall,
 In search of lodging ; but, ere harboured there,
 To issue forth, at whosoever's call,
 Is, by the warder's hest, obliged to swear.
 That lord who well had weighed her famous feats,
 The damsel with surpassing honour greets.

LXXVIII.

So does by her the lady, that erewhile
 Had thither journeyed, with those monarchs three,
 As I related, sent from the *LOST ISLE*.
 To France's king, upon an embassy.
 Kind as she is and affable of style,
 She renders back the stranger's courtesy ;
 Rises to welcome her with smiling air,
 And to the fire conducts that warlike fair.

LXXIX.

As Bradamant unarms, and first her shield.
 And after puts her polished casque away,
 A caul of shining gold, wherein concealed
 And clustering close, her prisoned tresses lay,
 She with the helmet doffs ; and now revealed,
 (While the long locks about her shoulders play,)
 A lovely damsel by that band is seen,
 No fiercer in affray than fair of mien.

LXXX.

As when the stage's curtain is uprolled,
 Mid thousand lamps, appears the mimic scene,
 Adorned with arch and palace, pictures, gold,
 And statues ; or, as limpid and serene
 The sun his visage, glorious to behold,
 Unveils, emerging from a cloudy screen ;
 So when the lady doffs her iron case,
 All paradise seems opened in her face.

LXXXI.

Already so well-grown and widely spread
 Were the bright tresses which the hermit shore,
 These, gathered in a knot, behind her head,
 Though shorter than their wont, the damsel wore ;
 And he, that castle's master, plainly read,
 (Who often had beheld her face before)
 That this was Bradamant : and now he paid
 Yet higher honours to the martial maid.

LXXXII.

With modest and with mirthful talk this while,
 Seated about the fire, they feed the ear ;
 And in this way the werry time beguile
 'Till they are heartened with more solid cheer.
 ' If new or ancient were his castle's style,'
 (Bradamant asks the courteous cavalier)
 ' By whom begun, and how it took its rise ?'
 And thus that castellan to her replies.

LXXXIII.

- " When Pharamond of France possessed the throne,
 " His son, prince Clodion, had a mistress rare ;
 " And damsel in that ancient age was none
 " More graceful, beauteous, or more debonair ;
 " So loved of Pharamond's enamoured son,
 " That he lost sight no oftener of the fair
 " Than Io's shepherd of his charge whilere :
 " For jealous as enamoured was the peer.

LXXXIV.

- " Her in this mansion, which his sire bestowed,
 " He kept, and rarely issued from his rest :
 " With him where lodged ten cavaliers, allowed
 " Through France to be the boldest and the best.
 " Hither, while in this castle he abode,
 " Sir Tristram and a dame their course address :
 " Whom from a furious giant, in her need,
 " Short time before that gentle knight had freed.

LXXXV.

- " Sir Tristram and his lady reached the Hall,
 " When now the sun had Seville left behind.
 " They for admission on the porter call,
 " Since they for ten miles round no shelter find.
 " But Clodion, that loved much, and was withal
 " Sore jealous, was determined in his mind
 " No stranger in his keep should ever inn,
 " So long as that fair lady lodged therein.

LXXXVI.

- " When, after long entreaties made in vain,
 " The castellan refused to house the knight,
 " He said, ' What supplication cannot gain,
 " I hope to make thee do in thy despite ;'
 " And loudly challenged him, with all his train,
 " Those ten which he maintained, to bloody fight :
 " Offering, with levelled lance and lifted glaive,
 " To prove Sir Clodion a discourteous knave ;

LXXXVII.

- " On pact, if he sate fast, and overthrown
 " Should be the warder and his warlike rout,
 " He in that castle should be lodged alone,
 " And Clodion with his knights remain without.'
 " Against him goes the king of France's son,
 " At risk of death, to venge that galling flout ;
 " But falls astound ; the rest partake his fate.
 " And on the losers Tristram bears the gate.

LXXXVIII.

- " Entering the tower, he finds her harboured there
 " Whereof I spake, so dear in Clodion's eyes ;
 " Whom she had equalled with the loveliest fair,
 " Nature, so niggard of such courtesies.
 " With her Sir Tristram talks, while fell despair
 " Aye racks the houseless prince in horrid wise.
 " Who prays the conquering knight, with suppliant cry,
 " Not to his arms the damsel to deny.

LXXXIX.

- " Though she small worth in Tristram's sight possess,
 " Nor any, saving Yseult, please his sight,³
 " Nor other dame to love or to caress,
 " The philtre, drunk erewhile, allows the knight ;
 " Yet, for he would that foul discourteousness
 " Of Clodion with a fit revenge requite,
 " He cries, ' I deem it were foul wrong and sore,
 " If on such beauty I should shut the door.

XC.

- ' And, should Sir Clodion grieve beneath the tree
 ' To lodge alone, and company demand ;
 ' Although less beautiful, I have with me
 ' A fair and youthful damsel, here at hand,
 ' Who, I am well content, his mate shall be,
 ' And do in all things, as he shall command.
 ' But she that is most fair to the most strong,
 ' Meseemeth, in all justice should belong.'

XCI.

- " Shut out all night, the moody Clodion strayed,
 " Puffing and pacing round his lofty tower,
 " As if that prince the sentinel had played
 " On them, that slept at ease in lordly bower :
 " Him, sorer far than wind and cold dismayed
 " That lovely lady's loss in Tristram's power :
 " But he, with pity touched, upon the morrow,
 " Rendered her back, and so relieved his sorrow.

XCII.

- ' Because,' he said, and made it plain appear,
 ' Such as he found her, he returned the fair :
 ' And though for his discourtesy whilerc,
 ' Clodion had every scorn deserved to bear,
 ' He was content with having made the peer
 ' Outwatch the weary night in open air.
 ' Accepting not that cavalier's excuse,
 ' Who would have thrown on Love his castle's use.

XCIII.

- ' For Love should make a churlish nature kind,
 ' And not transform to rude a gentle breast.'
 " When Tristram hence was gone, not long behind
 " Remained the enamoured prince who changed his rest :
 " But first he to a cavalier consigned
 " The tower ; whereof that baron he possesseth,
 " On pact, that he and his in the domain
 " Henceforth this usage ever should maintain ;"

XCIV.

- ' That cavalier of greatest heart and power
 ' Should in this hall be harboured without fail :
 ' They that less worthy were, should void the tower,
 ' And seek another inn, by hill or dale.
 ' In fine, that law was fixt, which to this hour
 ' Endures, as you have seen ; while so his tale
 To Bradamant recounts that castle's lord,
 The sewer with savoury meats has heaped the board.

XCV.

- In the great hall that plenteous board was laid,
 (None fairer was in all the world beside)
 Then came he where those beauteous ladies stayed,
 And them, with torches lit, did thither guide.
 On entering, Bradamant the room surveyed,
 And she, that other fair, on every side ;
 Who as they gaze about the gorgeous hall,
 Filled full of picture, mark each storied wall.

XCVI.

- So beauteous are the figures, that instead
 Of eating, on the painted walls they stare ;
 Albeit of meat they have no little need,
 Who wearied sore with that day's labour are.
 With grief the sewer, with grief the cook takes heed,
 How on the table cools the untasted fare.
 Nay, there is one amid the crowd who cries,
 " First fill your bellies, and then feast your eyes."

XCVII.

- The guests were placed, and now about to eat,
 When suddenly bethought that castellan,
 To house two damsels were a thing unmeet :
 One lady must dislodge, and one remain ;
 The fairest stay, and she least fair retreat,
 Where howls the wind, where beats the pattering rain.
 Because they separate came, 'tis ordered so ;
 One lady must remain, one lady go.

XCVIII.

The lord some matrons of his household crew .
 Calls, with two elders, in such judgments wise ;
 He marks the dames, and bids them of the two
 Declare which is most beauteous in their eyes ;
 And all, upon examination due,
 Cry, Aymon's daughter best deserves the prize,
 And vouch as she in might those kings outweighed,
 No less in beauty she surpassed the maid.

XCIX.

The warder cries to that Isfandie dame,
 Who of her sentence has a shrewd suspicion,
 " O lady, let it be no cause of blame,
 " That we observe our usage and condition ;
 " To seek some other rest must be thine aim,
 " Since, by our universal band's admission,
 " Though unadorned that martial maid be seen,
 " Thou canst not match her charms and lovely mien."

C.

As in a moment's time a cloud obscure
 Steams from the bottom of some marshy dale,
 Which the sun's visage, late so bright and pure,
 Mantles all over with its dingy veil ;
 So that poor damsel, sentenced to endure,
 Without, the pelting shower and blustering gale,
 Is seen to change her cheer, and is no more
 The fair and mirthful maid she was before.

CI.

The maid turns pale, and all her colour flies,
 Who dreads so stern a sentence to obey :
 But generous Bradamant, in prudent guise,
 Who could not bear to see her turned away,
 Cried to that baron, " Partial and unwise
 " Your judgment seems, as well all judgments may,
 " Wherein the losing party has not room
 " To plead, before the judge pronounces doom.

CII.

" I, who this cause take on me to defend,
 " Say (whether fairer or less fair I be)
 " I came not as a woman, nor intend
 " That now mine actions shall be womanly.
 " But, saving I undress, who shall pretend
 " To say I am or am not such as she ?
 " Neither should aught be said but what we know,
 " And least of all what works another woe.

CIII.

- " Many, as well as I, long tresses wear,
 " Yet are not therefore women ; if, as guest,
 " I have admittance gained to your repair,
 " Like woman or like man, is manifest :
 " Then why should I the name of woman bear,
 " That in my actions stand a man confest ?
 " 'Tis ruled that woman should a woman chase ;
 " Not that a knight a woman should displace.

CIV.

- " Grant we (what I confess not howso'er)
 " That you the woman in my visage read ;
 " But that in beauty I am not her peer :
 " Not therefore, deem I, of my valour's meed
 " Ye would deprive me, though in beauteous cheer
 " The palm I to that damsel should concede.
 " 'Twere hard, because I yield to her in charms,
 " That I should forfeit what I won in arms.

CV.

- " And if it be your usage, that the dame
 " Who yields in beauty, from your tower must wend,
 " Here to remain I my design proclaim,
 " Should my resolve have good or evil end.
 " Hence I infer, unequal were the game,
 " If she and I in beauty should contend :
 " For if such strife 'twixt her and me ensues,
 " Nought can the damsel gain, and much may lose ;

CVI.

- " And save the gain and loss well balanced be
 " In every match, the contest is unfair.
 " So that by right, no less than courtesy,
 " May she a shelter claim in your repair.
 " But are there any here that disagree,
 " And to impugn my equal sentence dare,
 " Behold me prompt, at such gainsayer's will,
 " To prove my judgment right, his judgment ill !"

CVII.

- Bradamant—grieved that maid of gentle kind
 Should from that castle wrongfully be sped,
 To bide the raging of the rain and wind,
 Where sheltering house was none, nor even shed—
 With reasons good, in wary speech combined,
 Persuades that lord ; but mostly what she said
 On ending, silences the knight ; and he
 Allows the justice of that damsel's plea.

CVIII.

As when hot summer sun the soil has rived,
 And moat the thirsty plant of moisture drains,
 The weak and wasting flower, well nigh deprived
 Of that quick sap which circled in its veins,
 Sucks in the welcome rain, and is revived ;
 So, when bold Bradamant so well maintains
 The courier maid's defence, her beauteous cheer
 And mirth revive, and brighten as whilere.

CIX.

At length the supper, which had long been dight,
 Nor yet was touched, enjoys each hungry guest ;
 Nor any further news of errant knight
 Them, seated at the festive board, molest ;
 All, saving Bradamant, enjoy, whose sprite,
 As wont, is still afflicted and opprest.
 For that suspicious fear, that doubt unjust,
 Which racked her bosom, marred the damsel's gust.

CX.

The supper done—brought sooner to a close
 Haply from their desire to feast their eyes—
 First of the set, Duke Aymon's daughter rose,
 And next the courier maid is seen to rise.
 With that the warder signs to one, that goes
 And many torches fires in nimble wise ;
 Whose light on storied wall and ceiling fell.
 What followed shall another canto tell.

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

*Bradamant sees in picture future fight
 There, where she gained admission by the spear.
 From combat cease, upon Bayardo's flight,
 Gradasso and Montalban's cavalier.
 While soaring through the world, the English knight
 Arrives in Nubia's distant realm, and here
 Driving the Harpies from the royal board,
 Hunts to the mouth of hell that impious horde,*

I.

TIMAGORAS, Parrhasius, Polygnote,¹
 Protogenes, renowned Apollodore,
 Timanthes, and Apelles, first of note,
 Zeuxis and others, famous heretofore,
 Whose memory down the stream of Time will float,
 While we their wreck and labours lost deplore,
 Whose fame will flourish still in Fate's despite,
 (Grammercy authors!) while men read and write;

II.

And those, yet living or of earlier day,
 Mantegna, Leonardo, Gian Belline,
 The Dossi, and, skilled to carve or to pourtray,
 Michael, less man than angel and divine,
 Bastiano, Raphael, Titian, who (as they
 Urbino and Venice) makes Cadoro shine;
 With more, whose works resemble what we hear
 And credit of those spirits, famed whilere;

III.

The painters we have seen, and others, who
 Thousands of years ago in honour stood,
 Things which had been with matchless pencil drew,
 Some working upon wall, and some on wood.
 But never, amid masters old or new,
 Have ye of pictures heard or pictures viewed
 Of things to come; yet such have been pourtrayed
 Before the deeds were done which they displayed.

IV.

Yet let not artist, whether new or old,
 Boast of his skill such wondrous works to make;
 But leave this feat to spell, wherewith controlled
 The spirits of the infernal bottom quake.
 The hall, whereof in other strain I told,
 With volume sacred to Avernus' lake,
 Or Norsine grot,² through subject Demons' might,
 Was made by Merlin in a single night.

V.

Thou art, whereby those ancients erst pourtrayed
 Such wonders, is extinguished in our day.
 But to the troop, by whom will be surveyed
 The painted chamber, I return, and say;
 A squire attendant, on a signal made,
 Bore thither lighted torches, by whose ray
 Were scattered from that hall the shades of night,
 Nor this in open day had shown more bright.

VI.

- When thus the castle's lord addressed that crew :
 " Know, of adventures in this chamber wrought,
 " Up to our days, have yet been witnessed few ;
 " A warfare storied, but its fields unfought.
 " Who limned the battles, these as well foreknew.
 " Hero of defeats to come and victories taught,
 " Whate'er in Italy our host befalls
 " You may discern as painted on these walls.

VII.

- " The wars, wherein French armies should appear,
 " Beyond the Alps, of foul event or fair,
 " Even from his days until the thousandth year,
 " By the prophetic Merlin painted were.
 " Hither Great Britain's monarch sent the seer,
 " To him, that of King Marcomir was heir :
 " Why hither sent, and why this hall was made,
 " At the same time to you shall be displayed.

VIII.

- " King Pharamond, the first of those that passed
 " The Rhine, amid his Franks' victorious train,
 " When Gaul was won, bethought him how to cast
 " On restive Italy the curbing rein ;
 " And this ; that evermore he wasting fast
 " Beheld the Roman empire's feeble reign ;
 " And (for both reigned at once) would make accord,
 " To compass his design, with Britain's lord.

IX.

- " The royal Arthur, by whom nought was done
 " Without the ripe advice of Merlin sage,
 " (Merlin, I say, the devil's mighty son,
 " Well versed in what should chance in future age,
 " Knowing through him, to Pharamond made known,
 " He would in many woes his host engage,
 " Entering that region, which, with rugged mound,
 " Apennine parts, and Alp and sea surround.

X.

- " To him sage Merlin shows, that well nigh all
 " Those other monarchs that in France will reign,
 " By murderous steel will see their people fall,
 " Consumed by famine, or by fever slain ;
 " And that short joy, long sorrow, profit small,
 " And boundless ill shall recompense their pain ;
 " Since vainly will the lily seek to shoot
 " In the Italian fields its withered root.

XI.

- " King Pharamond so trusted to the seer,
 " That he resolved to turn his arms elsewhere ;
 " And Merlin, who beheld with sight as clear
 " The things to be, as things that whilom were,
 " 'Tis said, was brought by magic art to rear
 " The painted chamber at the monarch's prayer ;
 " Wherein whatever deeds the Franks shall do,
 " As if already done, are plain to view..

XII.

- " That king who should succeed, might comprehend,
 " As he renown and victory would obtain,
 " Whene'er his friendly squadrons should defend
 " From all barbarians else the Italian reign ;
 " So, if to damage her he should descend,
 " Thinking to bind her with the griding chain,
 " — Might comprehend, I say, and read his doom—
 " How he beyond these hills should find a tomb."

XIII.

- So said, he leads the listening ladies where
 Those pictured histories begin ; to show
 How Sigisbert his arms will southward bear
 For what imperial Maurice shall bestow.³
 " Behold him from the Mount of Jove repair⁴
 " Thither where Ambra and Ticino flow !
 " Eutar behold,⁵ who not alone repels,
 " But puts the foe to flight, and routs and quells.

XIV.

- " Where they with Clovis tread the mountain way,⁶
 " More than a hundred thousand warriors trace ;
 " See Benevento's duke the monarch stay,
 " Whose thinner files his hostile army face.
 " Lo ! these who feign retreat an ambush lay.
 " Lo ! where through danger, havoc, and disgrace,
 " The Franks, who to the Lombard wine-fat hic,
 " Drugged by the bait, like poisoned mullets die.

XV.

- " Where Childibert the boundary hills has crost,⁷
 " Heading what bands of France and captains, see ;
 " Yet shall no more than baffled Clovis boast
 " The conquest or the spoil of Lombardy.
 " Heaven's sword descends so heavy on his host,
 " Choked with their bodies every road shall be ;
 " So pined with watery flux and withering sun,
 " That, out of ten, unharmed returns not one."

XVI.

He shows King Pepin, shows King Charlemagne ;
 How into Italy their march they bend ;
 And one and the other fair success obtain,
 Because her land they came not to offend.
 But Stephen one, the other Adriane,
 And, after, injured Leo, would defend,⁸
 This quells Astolpho, and that takes his heir,
 And re-establishes the papal choir.

XVII.

A youthful Pepin of the royal line
 He after shows ; who seemed to spread his host,
 Even from THE KILNS to the isle of Palestine ;⁹
 And with a bridge, achieved at mighty cost,
 At Malamocco, to bestride the brine,
 And on Rialto's shore his battle post.
 Then fly and leave his drowning bands behind,
 His bridge destroyed by wasting waves and wind.

XVIII.

" Burgundian Lewis ye behold descend¹⁰
 " Thither with his invading squadrons, where,
 " Vanquished and taken, nevermore to offend
 " With hostile arms, he is compelled to swear.
 " Behold ! he slights his solemn oath—to wend,
 " Anew, with reckless steps, into the snare.
 " Lo ! there he leaves his eyes ; and his array,
 " Blind as the moldwarp, hence their lord convey.

XIX.

" You see him named from Arles, victorious Hugh,¹¹
 " From Italy the Berengari chase !
 " Whom, quelled and broken twice and thrice, now
 " Now the Bavarians, now the Huns, replace.
 " O'ermatched, he then for peace is fain to sue ;
 " Nor long survives, nor he who fills his place ;
 " To Berengarius yielding his domains,
 " Who, repossess of all his kingdom, reigns.

XX.

" You see, her goodly pastor to sustain,
 " Another Charles set fire to Italy ;
 " Who has two kings in two fierce battles slain,
 " Manfred and Conradine, and after see
 " His bands, who seem to vex the new-won reign
 " With many wrongs, and who dispersedly
 " —Some here, some there—in different cities dwell,
 " Slain on the tolling of the vesper bell."¹²

XXI.

He shows them next (but after interval,
 "Twould seem, of many and many an age, not years)
 How, "through the Alps, a captain out of Gaul,
 "To war upon the great Viscontis, steers;"
 "And seems to straiten Alexandria's wall,
 "Girt with his forces, foot and cavaliers:
 "A garrison within, an ambuscade
 "Without the works, the warlike duke has laid;

XXII.

"And the French host, deroyed in cunning wise
 "Thither where the surrounding toils are spread,
 "Conducted on that evil enterprise
 "By Armagnac, the Gallic squadron's head,
 "Slaughtered throughout the spacious champaign lies.
 "Or is to Alexandria captive led:
 "While, swoln not more with water than with blood,
 "Tanarus purpies wide Po's ample flood."

XXIII.

Successively that castellan displayed
 One hight of Marca,¹⁴ of the Anjouites three.
 How "Marsi, Daunians, Salentines," (he said)
 "And Bruci, these shall oft molest, you see:
 "Yet not by Frank or Latian's friendly aid
 "Shall one delivered from destruction be.
 "Lo! from the realm, as oft as they attack,
 "Alphonso and Gonsalvo beat them back.

XXIV.

"You see the eighth Charles, amid his martial train,
 "The flower of Franco, through Alpine pass has pressed."¹⁴
 "Who Liris fords, and takes all Naples' reign,
 "Yet draws not sword nor lays a lance in rest:
 "All, save that rock which—Typhens' endless pain—
 "Lies on the giant's belly, arms, and breast:
 "By Inigo del Guasto here withstood,
 "Derived from Avalo's illustrious blood."

XXV.

The warder of the castle, who makes clear
 To beauteous Bradamant that history,
 Says, having shown her Ischia's island, "Ere
 "I lead you further other things to see,
 "I'll tell what my great-grandfather whilere
 "—I then a child—was wont to tell to me.
 "Which in like manner (that great-grand sire said),
 "As well to him his father whilome read;

XXVI.

- " And *his* from sire or grandsire heard recite ;
 " So son from sire ; even to that baron, who
 " Heard it related by the very wight,
 " That these fair pictures without pencil drew,
 " Which you see painted azure, red, and white.
 " He when to Pharamond (as now to you)
 " Was shown the castle on the rocky mount,*
 " Heard him relate the things I now recount.

XXVII.

- " Heard him relate, how in that fortilage
 " From that good knight should spring, who, 'twould appear,
 " Guards it so well, he scorns the fires that rage,
 " Even to the Pharo, flaming far and near,
 " Then, or within short space, and in that age,
 " (And named the week and day, as well as year,)
 " A noble warrior, unexcelled in worth
 " By other, that has yet appeared on earth.

XXVIII.

- " Nereus less fair,¹⁸ Achilles was less strong,
 " Less was Ulysses famed for daring feat ;
 " Nestor, that knew so much and lived so long,
 " Less prudent ; nimble Ladas was less fleet ;
 " Less liberal and less prompt to pardon wrong,
 " Cæsar, whose praises ancient tales repeat.
 " So that, compared with him, in Ischia born,
 " Each might appear of vaunted virtues shorn ;

XXIX.

- " And if illustrious Crete rejoiced of old
 " In giving birth to Cæsus' godlike heir ;
 " If Thebes in Hercules and Bacchus bold,
 " If Delos boasted of her heavenly pair,
 " Nought should as well this happy isle withhold
 " From lifting high her glorious head in air,
 " When that great marquis shall in her be born,
 " Whom with its evey grace shall heaven adorn.

XXX.

- " Sage Merlin said—and oft renewed that say—
 " He was reserved to flourish in an age,
 " When most oppress the Roman empire lay,
 " That he might free that holy heritage :
 " But as some deeds of his I must display
 " Hereafter, these I will not now presage.
 " So spake that wizard, and renewed the story,
 " Which told of Charlemagne's predestined glory.

* Ischia.

XXXI.

- ' Lewis,' (so learned Merlin said.) ' is woe
 ' To have brought to Italy King Charlemagne,
 ' Whom he called in to harass, not o'erthrow
 ' That ancient rival of his goodly reign;
 ' At his return declares himself his foe,
 ' And leagu'd, with Venice, would the king detain.
 ' Behold that valiant monarch couch his spear,
 ' And in his foes' despite a passage clear.

XXXII.

- ' But his new kingdom leaving to his band,
 ' Far other destiny awaits that throng:
 ' For, with the Mantuan's friendly succour manned,
 ' Gonsalvo to the war returns so strong,
 ' He leaves not in few months, by sea or land,
 ' One living head, his slaughtered troops among.
 ' But then, because of one by treason spent,
 ' In him appears the joy of triumph shent.' "

XXXIII.

- So saying, to his guests the cavalier
 Alphonso, of Pescara hight, displayed: " "
 " Who in a thousand feats will shine more clear
 " Than the resplendent carbuncle," he said.
 " Behold, deceived by faithless treaty, here,
 " Mid snarcs by the malignant Æthiop laid,
 " Transfixt with deadly dart the warrior lies,
 " In whom that ago's worthiest champion dies."

XXXIV.

- Under Italian escort next they see
 Where the twelfth Lewis o'er the hills is gone; " "
 Has by its roots upturn the mulberry,
 And in Viscontis' land the lilies sown:
 " Treading in Charles's steps, by him shall be
 " Bridges athwart the Garigliano thrown.
 " Yet after shall he mourn his army's slaughter,
 " Dispersed and drowning in that fatal water."

XXXV.

- (The lord pursues) " with no less overthrow,
 " Broken in Puglia, see the Gallic train.
 " In him who twice entraps the routed foe,
 " Gonsalvo you behold, the pride of Spain.
 " Fortune to Lewis a fair face shall show,
 " As late a troubled mien, upon that plain,
 " Which even to where vext Adria pours her tides,
 " Po, between Alp and Apennine, divides."

XXXVI.

The host reproved himself, while so he said,
 And pieced his tale, as having left untold
 Things first in order; next to them displayed
 A royal castle by its warder sold.
 A prisoner by the faithless Switzer made,
 He shows the lord who hired him with his gold :¹⁶
 Which double treason, without couching lance,
 Has given the victory to the king of France.

XXXVII.

That warder then shows Cæsar Borgia, grown
 Puissant in Italy,¹⁹ through this king's grace ;
 For all Rome's peerage, and all lords that own
 Her sway, he into exile seems to chase :
 Then shows the king, that will the saw take down,
 And papal acorns in Bologna place :²¹
 Then Genoa's burghers, by this monarch broke,²²
 And rebel city stooping to his yoke.

XXXVIII.

" You see," (pursues that warder,) " how with dead
 " Covered is Ghiúradada's green champaign.²³
 " It seems each city opes her gates through dread
 " And Venice scarce her freedom can maintain.
 " You see he suffers not the Church's head,
 " Passing the narrow confines of Romagne,
 " Modena from Ferrara's duke to reave ;
 " Who would not to that prince a remnant leave.

XXXIX.

" Nay he Bologna rescues from his sway ;
 " Whither the Bentivogli them betake.
 " You next see Lewis siege to Brescia lay,
 " And the close-straitened city storm and take ;
 " Felsina almost at the same time stay
 " With succour, and the papal army break ;
 " And next, 'twould seem, that either hostile band
 " Lies tented upon Chassis' level strand.

XL.

" On this side France, upon the other Spain,
 " Extend their files, and battle rages high ;
 " Fast fall the men at arms in either train.
 " And the green earth is tinged with crimson dye.
 " Flooded with human gore seems every drain ;
 " Mars doubts to whom to give the victory ;
 " When through Alphonso's worth²⁴ the Spaniards yield,
 " And the victorious Franks maintain the field ;

XLI.

- " And, for Ravenna sacked and ravaged lies,
 " The Roman pastor bites his lips through woe ;
 " Called by him, from the hills, in tempest's guise,
 " Swoop the fierce Germans on the fields below.
 " It seems each Frenchman unresisting flies,
 " Chased by their bands beyond the mountain snow,
 " And that they set the mulberry's thriving shoot
 " There, whence they plucked the golden lily's root.

XLII.

- " Behold the Frank returns, and here behold
 " Is broken, by the faithless Swiss betrayed,³⁵
 " He, that his royal father seized and sold,
 " Whose succour dearly by the youth is paid.
 " Those over whom false Fortune's wheel had rolled,
 " Erewhile, beneath another king arrayed,
 " You here behold, preparing to efface
 " With vengeful deed Novara's late disgrace ;

XLIII.

- " And see with better auspices return
 " The valiant Francis, foremost of his train,
 " Who so shall break the haughty Switzer's horn,
 " That little short of spent their bands remain ;
 " And them shall never more the style adorn,
 " Usurped by that foul troop of churlish vein,
 " Of scourge of princes, and the faith's defence,
 " To which those rustics rude shall make pretence.

XLIV.

- " Lo ! he takes Milan, in the league's despite :
 " Lo ! with the youthful Sforza makes accord :
 " Lo ! Bourbon⁴⁶ the fair city keeps, in right
 " Of Francis, from the furious German horde :
 " Lo ! while in other high emprise and fight
 " Elsewhere is occupied his royal lord,
 " Nor knows the pride and licence of his host
 " Through these the city shall anew be lost.

XLV.

- " Lo ! other Francis²⁷ who his grandsire's vein
 " Inherits, not his generous name alone !
 " Who by the Church's favour will regain
 " —The Gaul expelled—a land which was his own.
 " France too returns, but keeps a tighter rein,
 " Nor over Italy, as wont, has flown :
 " For Mantua's noble duke the foe shall stay,
 " And, at Ticino's passage, bar his way.

XLVI.

- " Though on his cheek youth's blossoms scarce appear,
 " Worthy immortal glory, Frederick shines ;
 " And well that praise deserves, since by his spear,
 " But more by care and skill, Pavia's lines
 " Against the French defends that cavalier,
 " And frustrates the sea-lion's* bold designs.
 " You see two marquises, Italia's boast,
 " And both, alike the terror of our host.

XLVII.

- " Both of one blood and of one nest they are ;
 " The foremost is the bold Alphonso's seed,
 " Whom, led by that false black into the snare,
 " You late beheld in purple torrent bleed.
 " You see defeated by his counsel ware,
 " How oft the Franks from Italy recede.
 " The next, of visage so benign and bright,
 " Is lord of Guasto and Alphonso light ;

XLVIII.

- " This is that goodly knight, whose praise you heard
 " When rugged Ischia's island I displayed,
 " Of whom sage Merlin, with prophetic word,
 " To Pharamond such mighty matters said ;
 " Whose birth should to that season be deferred,
 " When more than ever such a champion's aid,
 " Against the barbarous enemy's attack,
 " Vext Italy, and Church, and Empire lack.

XLIX.

- " He in his cousin of Pescara's rear,
 " —Prosper Colonna, chief of that emprise—
 " Makes the rude Switzer pay Bicocca dear,¹⁸
 " Paid by the Frenchman in yet dearer wise.
 " Behold where France prepares for fresh career,
 " And to repair her many losses tries.
 " Behold one host on Lombardy descend !
 " Behold that other against Naples wend !

L.

- " But she, that moves us like the dust which flies
 " Before the restless wind, which whirls it round,
 " Lifts it aloft awhile, and from the skies
 " Blows back anew the rising cloud to ground,
 " To a hundred thousand swells, in Francis' eyes,
 " The soldiers who Pavia's walls surround.
 " The monarch sees but that which he commands,
 " Nor marks how wax or waste his leaguering bands.

II.

- "Tis thus that, through the greedy servant's sin,
 "And easy sovereign's goodness, on his side,
 "The files beneath his banners muster thin,
 "When in his midnight camp, 'to arius' is cried,
 "For by the wary Spaniards charged within
 "His ramparts is he; foes that with the guide
 "Of Avalo's fair lineage, would assay
 "To make to heaven or hell their desperate way.

LII.

- "You see the best of the nobility
 "Of all fair France extinguished on the field;
 "How many swords, how many lances, see
 "The Spaniards round the valiant monarch wield.
 "Behold! his horse falls under him; yet he
 "Will neither own himself subdued, or yield;
 "Though to assault him from all sides is run
 "By wrathful bands, and succour there is none.

LIII.

- "The monarch well defends him from the foe,
 "All over bathed with blood of hostile vein.
 "But valour stoops at last to numbers; lo!
 "The king is taken, is conveyed to Spain;
 "And all upon Pescara's lord bestow
 "And him of that inseparable twain—
 "Of Guasto hight—the praise and prime renown
 "For that great king captived and host o'erthrown.

LIV.

- "This host o'erthrown upon Pavia's plains,
 "That, bound for Naples, halts upon its way:
 "As an ill-nourished lamp or taper wanes,
 "For want of wax or oil, with flickering ray.
 "Lo! the king leaves his sons in Spanish chains,
 "And home returns, his own domain to sway.
 "Lo! while in Italy he leads his band,
 "Another wars upon his native land.²⁹

LV.

- "In every part you see how Rome is woo,³⁰
 "Mid ruthless rapine, murder, fire, and rape.
 "See all to wasting rack and ruin go,
 "And nothing human or divine escape.
 "The league's men hear the shrieks, behold the glow
 "Of hostile fires, and lo! they backward shape
 "Their course, where they should hurry on their way,
 "And leave the pontiff to his foes a prey.

LVI.

"Lautrec the monarch sends with other bands ;
 "Yet not anew to war on Lombardy ;
 "But to deliver from rapacious hands
 "The Church's head and limbs, already free,
 "So slowly he performs the king's commands.
 "Next, overrun by him the kingdom see,
 "And his strong arms against the city turned,
 "Wherein the Syren's body lies inurned."³¹

LVII.

"Lo ! the imperial squadrons thither steer,³²
 "Aid to the leaguered city to convey ;
 "And lo ! burnt, sunk, destroyed, they disappear,
 "Encountered by the Doria in mid-way.
 "Behold ; how Fortune light does shift and veer,
 "So friendly to the Frenchman till this day !
 "Who slays their host with fever, not with lance ;
 "Nor of a thousand one returns to France."

LVIII.

These histories and more the pictures shew,
 (For to tell all would ask too long a strain)
 In beauteous colours and of different hue ;
 Since such that hall, it these could well contain.
 The paintings twice and thrice those guests review,
 Nor how to leave them knows the lingering train,
 'Twould seem ; perusing oft what they behold
 Inscribed below the beauteous work in gold.

LIX.

When with these pictures they their sight had fed,
 And talked long while—those ladies and the rest—
 They to their chambers by that lord were led,
 Wont much to worship every worthy guest.
 Already all were sleeping, when her bed
 At last Duke Aymon's beauteous daughter prest.
 She here, she there, her restless body throws,
 Now right, now left, but vainly seeks repose :

LX.

Yet slumbers towards dawn, and in a dream
 The form of her Rogero seems to view.
 The vision cries : "Why vex yourself, and deem
 "Things real which are hollow and untrue ?
 "Backwards shall sooner flow the mountain-stream
 "Than I to other turn my thought from you.
 "When you I love not, then unloved by me
 "This heart, these apples of mine eyes, will be

LXI.

- "Hither have I repaired (it seemed he said)
 "To be baptized and do as I professed.
 "If I have lingered, I have been delayed,
 "By other wounds than that of Love opprest."
 With that he vanished from the martial maid,
 And with the vision broken was her rest.
 New floods of tears the awakened damsel shed,
 And to herself in this sad fashion said :

LXII.

- "What pleased was but a dream ; alas ! a sheer
 "Reality is this my waking bane ;
 "My joy a dream and prompt to disappear,
 "No dream my cruel and tormenting pain.
 "Ah ! wherefore what I seemed to see and hear,
 "Cannot I, waking, see and hear again ?
 "What ails ye, wretched eyes, that closed ye show
 "Unreal good, and open but on woe ?

LXIII.

- "Sweet sleep with promised peace my soul did buoy,
 "But I to bitter warfare wake anew ;
 "Sweet sleep but brought with it fallacious joy,
 "But—sure and bitter—waking ills ensue.
 "If falsehood so delight and truth annoy,
 "Never more may I see or hear what's true !
 "If sleeping brings me weal, and watching woe,
 "The pains of waking may I never know !

LXIV.

- "Blest animals that sleep through half the year,
 "Nor ope your heavy eyelids, night nor day !
 "For if such tedious sleep like death appear,
 "Such watching is like life, I will not say,
 "Since—such my lot, beyond all wont, severe—
 "I death in watching, life in sleep assay.
 "But oh ! if death such sleep resemble, Death,
 "Even now I pray thee stop my fleeting breath !"

LXV.

- The clouds were gone, the horizon overspread
 With glowing crimson by the new-born sun,
 And in these signs, unlike the past was read
 A better promise of the day begun :
 When Bradamant upstarted from her bed,
 And armed her for the journey to be done,
 Her thanks first rendered to the courteous lord,
 For his kind cheer and hospitable board.

LXVI.

And found, the lady messenger, with maid
 And squire, had issued from the castled hold,
 And was a-field, where her arrival stayed
 Those three good warriors, those the damsel bold
 The eve before had on the champaign laid,
 Cast from their horses by her lance of gold;
 And who had suffered, to their mighty pain,
 All night, the freezing wind and pattering rain.

LXVII.

Add to such ill, that, hungering sore for food,
 They and their horses, through the livelong night,
 Trampling the mire, with chattering teeth, had stood:
 But (what well-nigh engendered more despite
 —Say not well-nigh—more moved the warrior's mood)
 Was that they knew the damsel would recite
 How they had been unhorsed by hostile lance
 In the first course which they had run in France;

LXVIII.

And—each resolved to die or else his name
 Forthwith in new encounter to retrieve—
 That Ulany, the message-bearing dame,
 (Whose style no longer I unmentioned leave),
 A fairer notion of their knightly fame
 Than heretofore, might haply now conceive,
 Bold Bradamant anew to fight defied,
 When of the drawbridge clear they her descried;

LXIX.

Not thinking, howsoe'er, she was a maid,
 Who in no look or act the maid confest;
 Duke Aymon's daughter, loth to be delayed,
 Refuses, as a traveller that is pressed.
 But they so often and so sorely prayed,
 That she could ill refuse the king's request.
 Her lance she levels, at three strokes extends
 All three on earth, and thus the warfare ends:

LXX.

For Bradamant no more her courser wheeled,
 But turned her back upon the foes o'erthrown.
 They, that intent to gain the golden shield,
 Had sought a land so distant from their own,
 Rising in sullen silence from the field
 (For speech with all their hardihood was gone)
 Appeared as stupefied by their surprise,
 Nor to Ulania dared to lift their eyes.

LXXI.

For they, as thither they their course address,
 Had vaunted to the maid in boasting vein,
 'No paladin or knight with lance in rest,
 'Against the worst his saddle could maintain.'
 To make them vail yet more their haughty crest,
 And look upon the world with less disdain,
 She tells them, by no paladin or peer
 Were they unhorsed, but by a woman's spear.

LXXII.

"Now what of Roland's and Rinaldo's might,
 "Not without reason held in such renown,
 "Ought you to think (she said) when thus in fight
 "Ye by a female hand are overthrown?
 "Say, if the buckler one of these requite,
 "—Better than by a woman ye have done,
 "Will ye by those redoubted warriors do?
 "So think not I, nor haply think so you.

LXXIII.

"This may suffice you all; and need is none
 "A clearer proof of prowess to display;
 "And who desires, if rashly any one
 "Desires, again his valour to assay,
 "Would add but scathe to shame, now made his own;
 "Now; and the same to-day as yesterday.
 "Unless perchance he thinks it praise and gain,
 "By such illustrious warriors to be slain."

LXXIV.

When they by Ulany were certified
 A woman's hand had caused their overthrow,
 Who with a deeper black than pitch had dyed
 Their honour, heretofore so fair of show;
 And more than ten her story testified,
 Where one sufficed—with such o'erwhelming woe
 Were they possest, they with such fury burned,
 They well nigh on themselves their weapons turned.

LXXV.

What arms they had upon them, they unbound,
 And cast them, stung by rage and fury sore,
 Into the moat which girt that castle round,
 Nor even kept the faulchions which they wore;
 And, since a woman them had cast to ground,
 O'erwhelmed with rage and shame, the warriors swore,
 Themselves of such a crying shame to clear,
 'They, without bearing arms, would pass a year;

LXXVI.

' And that they evermore afoot would fare
 ' Up hill or down, by mountain or by plain,
 ' Nor, when the year was ended, would they wear
 ' The knightly mail or climb the steed again ;
 ' Save that from other they by force should bear,
 ' In battle, other steeds and other chain.
 ' So, without arms, to punish their misdeeds,
 ' These wend a-foot, those others on their steeds.'

LXXVII.

Lodged in a township at the fall of night,
 Duke Aymon's daughter, journeying Paris-ward,
 Hears how King Agramant was foiled in fight.
 Good harbourage withal of bed and board,
 She in her hostel found ; but small delight
 This and all comforts else to her afford.
 For the sad damsel meat and sleep foregoes,
 Nor finds a resting-place ; far less repose.

LXXVIII.

But so I will not on her story dwell,
 As not to seek anew the valiant twain ;
 Who, by consent, beside a lovely well,
 Had tied their goodly coursers by the rein.
 I of their war to you some day will tell,
 A war not waged for empire or domain,
 But that the best should buckle to his side
 Good Durindana, and Bayardo ride.

LXXIX.

No signal they, no trumpet they attend,
 To blow them to the lists, no master who
 Should teach them when to foïn and when to fend,
 Or wake their sleeping wrath ; their swords they drew :
 Then, one against the other, boldly wend,
 With lifted blades, the quick, and dextrous two.
 Already 'gan the champions' fury heat,
 And fast and hard their swords were heard to beat,

LXXX.

None e'er by proof two other faulchions chose
 For sound and solid, able to endure
 Three strokes alone of such conflicting foes,
 Passing all mean and measure ; but so pure,
 So perfect was their temper, from all blows
 By such repeated trial so secure,
 They in a thousand strokes might clash on high,
 — Nay more, nor yet the solid metal fly.

LXXXI.

With mickle industry, with mighty pain
 And art, Rinaldo, shifting here and there,
 Avoids the deadly dint of Durindane,
 Well knowing how 'tis wont to cleave and tear.
 Gradasso struck with greater might and main,
 But well nigh all his strokes were spent in air;
 Or, if he sometimes smote, he smote on part,
 Where Durindana wrought less harm than smart.

LXXXII.

Rinaldo with more skill his blade inclined,
 And stunned the arm of Sericana's lord.
 Him oft he reached where casque and coat confined,
 And often raked his haunches with the sword:
 But adamantine was the corslet's rind,
 Nor link the restless faulchion broke or bored.
 If so impassive was the paynim's scale,
 Know, charmed by magic was the stubborn mail.

LXXXIII.

Without reposing they long time had been,
 Upon their deadly battle so intent,
 That, save on one another's troubled mien,
 Their angry eyes the warriors had not bent.
 When such despicable war and deadly spleen,
 Diverted by another strife, were spent.
 Hearing a mighty noise, both champions turn,
 And good Bayardo, sore bested, discern.

LXXXIV.

They good Bayardo by a monster view,
 —A bird, and bigger than that courser—prest.
 Above three yards in length appeared to view
 The monster's beak; a bat in all the rest.
 Equipt with feathers, black as ink in hue,
 And piercing talons was the winged pest;
 An eye of fire it had, a cruel look,
 And, like ship-sails, two spreading pinions shook.

LXXXV.

Perhaps it was a bird; but when or where
 Another bird resembling this was seen
 I know not, I, nor have I any where,
 Except in Turpin, heard that such has been.
 Hence that it was a fiend, to upper air
 Evoked from depths of nether hell I ween;
 Which Malagigi raised by magic sleight,
 That so he might disturb the champions' fight.

LXXXVI.

So deemed Rinaldo too : and contest sore
 Twixt him and Malagigi hence begun ;
 But he would not confess the charge ; nay swore,
 Even by the light which lights the glorious sun,
 That he might clear him of the blame he bore,
 He had not that which was imputed done.
 Whether a fiend or fowl, the pest descends,
 And good Bayardo with his talons rends.

LXXXVII.

Quickly the steed, possessed of mickle might,
 Breaks loose, and, in his fury and despair,
 Against the monster strives with kick and bite ;
 But swiftly he retires and soars in air :
 He thence returning, prompt to wheel and smite,
 Circles and beats the courser, here and there.
 Wholly unskilled in fence, and sore bested,
 Bayardo swiftly from the monster fled.

LXXXVIII.

Bayardo to the neighbouring forest flies,
 Seeking the closest shade and thickest spray ;
 Above the feathered monster flaps, with eyes
 Intent to mark where widest is the way.
 But that good horse the greenwood threads, and lies
 At last within a grot, concealed from day,
 When the winged beast has lost Bayardo's traces,
 He soars aloft, and other quarry chases.

LXXXIX.

Rinaldo and Gradasso, who desried
 Bayardo's flight, the conqueror's destined meed,
 The battle to suspend, on either side,
 Till they regained the goodly horse, agreed,
 Saved from that fowl which chased him, far and wide ;
 Conditioning whichever found the steed,
 With him anew should to that fountain wend,
 Beside whose brim their battle they should end.

XC.

Quitting the fount, they follow, where they view
 New prints upon the forest greensward made :
 By much Bayardo distances the two,
 Whose tardy feet their wishes ill obeyed.
 Himself the king on his Alfana threw,
 That near at hand was tethered in the glade,
 Leaving his foe behind in evil plight ;
 —Never more malcontent and vex in sprite.

XCI.

Rinaldo ceased in little time to spy
 Bayardo's traces, who strange course had run ;
 And made for thorny thicket, wet or dry,
 Tree, rock, or river, with design to shun
 Those cruel claws, which, pouncing from the sky
 To him such outrage and such scathe had done.
 Rinaldo, after labour vain and sore
 To await him at the fount returned once more ;

XCII.

In case, as erst concerted by the twain,
 The king should thither with the steed resort ;
 But having sought him there with little gain,
 Fared to his camp afoot, with piteous port.
 Return we now to him of Sericane,
 He that had sped withal in other sort,
 Who, not by judgment guided to his prey,
 But his rare fortune, heard Bayardo neigh ;

XCIII.

And found him shrouded in his caverned lair,
 So sore moreover by his fright opprest,
 He feared to issue into open air.
 Thus of that horse himself the king possest.
 Well he remembered their conditions were
 To bring him to the fount ; but little pressed
 Now was that knight to keep the promise made,
 And thus within himself in secret said :

XCIV.

“ Win him who will, in war and strife, I more
 “ Desire in peace to make the steed my own :
 “ From the world's further side, did I of yore
 “ Wend hitherward, and for this end alone.
 “ Having the coursers, he mistakes me sore,
 “ That thinks the prize by me will be foregone.
 “ Him would Rinaldo conquer, let him fare
 “ To Ind, as I to France have made repair.

XCV.

“ For him no less secure is Sericane,
 “ Than twice for me has been his France,” he said,
 And pricked for Arles, along the road most plain,
 And in its haven found the fleet arrayed.
 Freight with him, the steed and Durindane,
 A well-rigged galley from that harbour weighed,
 Of these hereafter !—I, at other call,
 Now quit Rinaldo, king, and France, and all.

XCVI.

Astolpho in his flight will I pursue,
 That made his hippogryph like palfrey flee,
 With reins and sell, so quick the welkin through;
 That hawk and eagle soar a course less free.
 O'er the wide land of Gaul the warrior flew
 From Pyrenees to Rhine, from sea to sea.
 He westward to the mountains turned aside,
 Which France's fertile land from Spain divide.

XCVII.

To Arragon he past out of Navarre,
 —They who beheld, sore wondering at the sight—
 Then leaves he Tarragon behind him far,
 Upon his left, Biscay upon his right:
 Traversed Castile, Gallicia, Lisbon, are
 Seville and Cordova, with rapid flight;
 Nor city on sea-shore, nor inland plain,
 Is unexplored throughout the realm of Spain.

XCVIII.

Beneath him Cadiz and the strait he spied,
 Where whilom good Alcides closed the way;
 From the Atlantic to the further side
 Of Egypt, bent o'er Africa, to stray;
 The famous Balearic isles descried,
 And Ivica, that in his passage lay;
 Toward Arzilla then he turned the rein,
 Above the sea that severs it from Spain.

XCIX.

Morocco, Fez, and Oran, looking down,
 Hippona, Argier, he, and Bugia told,
 Which from all cities bear away the crown,
 No palm or parsley wreath, but crown of gold;
 Noble Biserta next and Tunis-town,
 Capys, Alzerba's isle, the warrior bold,
 Tripoli, Berniche, Ptolomitta viewed,
 And into Asia's land the Nile pursued.

C.

'Twixt Atlas' shaggy ridges and the shore,
 He viewed each region in his spacious round;
 He turned his back upon Carena hoar,
 And skimmed above the Cyrenæan ground;
 Passing the sandy desert of the Moor,
 In Albajada, reached the Nubian's bound;
 Left Battus' tomb behind him on the plain,¹²
 And Ammon's, now dilapidated, fauc.

CI.

To other Tremizen he posts, where bred
 As well the people are in Mahound's style ;
 For other Æthiops then his pinions spread,
 Which face the first, and lie beyond the Nile.
 Between Coallee and Dobada sped,
 Bound for the Nubian city's royal pile ;
 Threading the two, where, ranged on either land,
 Moslems and Christians watch, with arms in hand.

CII.

In Ethiopia's realm Senapus reigns,
 Whose sceptre is the cross ; of cities brave,
 Of men, of gold possest, and broad domains,
 Which the Red Sea's extremest waters lave.
 A faith well nigh like ours that king maintains,
 Which man from his primeval doom may save.
 Here, save I err in what their rites require,
 The swarthy people are baptised with fire.²⁴

CIII.

Astolpho lighted in the spacious court,
 Intending on the Nubian king to wait.
 Less strong than sumptuous is the wealthy fort,
 Wherein the royal Æthiop keeps his state,
 The chains that serve the drawbridge to support,
 The bolts, the bars, the hinges of the gate,
 And finally whatever we behold
 Here wrought in iron, there is wrought in gold.

CIV.

High prized withal, albeit it so abound,
 Is that best metal ; lodges built in air
 Which on all sides the wealthy pile surround,
 Clear colonnades with crystal shafts upbear.
 Of green, white, crimson, blue and yellow ground,
 A frieze extends below those galleries fair.
 Here at due intervals rich gems combine,
 And topaz, sapphire, emerald, ruby shine.

CV.

In wall and roof and pavement scattered are
 Full many a pearl, full many a costly stone.
 Here thrives the balm ; the plants were ever rare,
 Compared with these, which were in Jewry grown.
 The musk which we possess from thence we bear,
 From thence on other shores is amber thrown.
 In fine those products from this clime are brought,
 Which in our regions are so prized and sought.

CVI.

The soldan, king of the Egyptian land,
 Pays tribute to this sovereign, as his head,
 They say, since having Nile at his command
 He may divert the stream to other bed.
 Hence, with its district upon either hand,
 Forthwith might Cairo lack its daily bread.
 Senapus him his Nubian tribes proclaim :
 We Priest and Prester John the sovereign name.³⁵

CVII.

Of all those Æthiop monarchs, beyond measure,
 The first was this, for riches and for might :
 But he, with all his puissance, all his treasure,
 Alas! had miserably lost his sight.
 And yet was this the monarch's least displeasure :
 Vexed by a direr and a worse despite ;
 Harassed, though richest of those Nubian kings,
 By a perpetual hunger's cruel stings.

CVIII.

Whene'er to eat or drink, the wretched man
 Prepared by that resistless need pursued,
 Forthwith—infernal and avenging clan—
 Appeared the monstrous Harpies' craving brood ;
 Which, armed with beak and talons, overran
 Vessel and board, and preyed upon the food ;
 And what their wombs suffice not to receive,
 Foul and defiled the loathsome monsters leave.

CIX.

And this : because upborn by such a tide
 Of full-blown honours, in his unripe age,
 For he excelled in heart and nerve, beside
 The riches of his royal heritage,
 Like Lucifer, the monarch waxed in pride,
 And war upon his maker thought to wage.
 He with his host against the mountain went,
 Where Egypt's mighty river finds a vent.

CX.

UPON this hill which well nigh kissed the skies,³⁶
 Piercing the clouds, the king had heard recite,
 Was seated the terrestrial paradise,
 Where our first parents flourished in delight.
 With camels, elephants, and footmen hies
 Thither that king, confiding in his might ;
 With huge desire if peopled be the land
 To bring its nations under his command.

CXI.

God marred the rash emprise, and from on high
 Sent down an angel, whose destroying sword
 A hundred thousand of that chivalry
 Slew, and to endless night condemned their lord.
 Emerging, next, from hellish caverns, fly
 These horrid harpies, and assault his board;
 Which still pollute or waste the royal meat,
 Nor leave the monarch aught to drink or eat.

CXII.

And him had plunged in uttermost despair
 One that to him erewhile had prophesied
 'The loathsome Harpies should his daily fare
 'Leave unpolluted only, when astride
 'Of winged horse, arriving through the air,
 'An armed cavalier should be descried.'
 And, for impossible appears the thing,
 Devoid of hope remains the mournful king.

CXIII.

Now that with wonderment his followers spy
 The English cavalier so make his way,
 O'er every wall, o'er every turret high,
 Some swiftly to the king the news convey.
 Who calls to mind that ancient prophecy,
 And heedless of the staff, his wonted stay,
 Through joy, with outstretched arms and tottering feet,
 Comes forth, the flying cavalier to meet.

CXIV.

Within the castle court Astolpho flew,
 And there, with spacious wheels, on earth descended:
 The king, conducted by his courtly crew,
 Before the warrior knelt, with arms extended,
 And cried; thou angel sent of God, thou new
 "Messiah, if too sore I have offended,
 "For mercy, yet, bethink thee, 'tis our bent
 "To sin, and thine to pardon who repent.

CXV.

"Knowing my sin, I ask not, I, to be
 "—Such grace I dare not ask—restored to light;
 "For well I ween such power resides in thee,
 "As Being accepted in thy Maker's sight.
 "Let it suffice, that I no longer see,
 "Nor let me with perpetual hunger fight.
 "At least, expel the harpies' loathsome horde,
 "Nor let them more pollute my ravaged board;

CXVI.

"And I to build thee, in my royal hold,
 "A holy temple, made of marble, swear,
 "With all its portals and its roof of gold,
 "And decked, within and out, with jewels rare.
 "Here shall thy mighty miracle be told
 "In sculpture, and thy name the dome shall bear."
 So spake the sightless king of Nubia's reign,
 And sought to kiss the stranger's feet in vain.

CXVII.

"Nor angel"—good Astolpho made reply—
 "Nor new Messiah, I from heaven descend;
 "No less a mortal and a sinner I,
 "To such high grace unworthy to pretend.
 "To slay the monsters I all means will try,
 "Or drive them from the realm which they offend.
 "If I shall prosper, be thy praises paid
 "To God alone, who sent me to thine aid.

CXVIII.

"Offer these vows to God, to him well due;
 "To him thy churches build, thine altars rear."
 Discoursing so, together wend the two,
 'Mid barons bold, that king and cavalier.
 The Nubian prince commands the menial crew
 Forthwith to bring the hospitable cheer;
 And hopes that now the foul, rapacious band,
 Will not dare snatch the victual from his hand.

CXIX.

Forthwith a solemn banquet they prepare
 Within the gorgeous palace of the king.
 Seated alone here guest and sovereign are,
 And the attendant troop the viands bring.
 Behold! a whizzing sound is heard in air,
 Which echoes with the beat of savage wing.
 Behold! the band of harpies thither flies,
 Lured by the scent of victual from the skies.

CXX.

All bear a female face of pallid dye,
 And seven in number are the horrid band;
 Emaciated with hunger, lean, and dry;
 Fouler than death; the pinions they expand
 Ragged, and huge, and shapeless to the eye;
 The talon crook'd; rapacious is the hand;
 Fetid and large the paunch; in many a fold,
 Like snake's, their long and knotted tails are rolled.

CXXI.

The fowls are heard in air ; then swoops amain
 The covey well nigh in that instant, rends
 The food, o'erturns the vessels, and a rain
 Of noisome ordure on the board descends.
 To stop their nostrils king and duke are fain ;
 Such an insufferable stench offends.
 Against the greedy birds, as wrath excites,
 Astolpho with his brandished faulchion smites.

CXXII.

At croup or collar now he aims his blow,
 Now strikes at neck or pinion : but on all,
 As if he smote upon a bag of tow,
 The strokes without effect and languid fall.
 This while nor dish nor goblet they forego ;
 Nor void those ravening fowls the regal hall,
 Till they have feasted full, and left the food
 Waste or polluted by their rapine rude.

CXXIII.

That king had firmly hoped the cavalier
 Would from his seat the royal harpies scare.
 He now, that hope foregone, with nought to cheer,
 Laments, and sighs, and groans in his despair,
 Of his good horn remembers him the peer,
 Whose clangours helpful aye in peril are,
 And deems his bugle were the fittest mean
 To free the monarch from those birds unclean ;

CXXIV.

And first to fill their ears, to king and train,
 With melted wax, Astolpho gives command ;
 That every one who hears the deafening strain
 May not in panic terror fly the land.
 He takes the reins, his courser backs again,
 Grasps the enchanted bugle in his hand ;
 And to the sewer next signs to have the board
 Anew with hospitable victual stored.

CXXV.

The meats he to an open gallery bears,
 And other banquet spreads on other ground.
 Behold, as wont, the harpy-squad appears ;
 Astolpho quickly lifts the bugle's round ;
 And (for unguarded are their harassed ears)
 The harpies are not proof against the sound ;
 In terror from the royal dome they speed,
 Nor meat nor aught beside the monsters heed.



Morand.

J. Stephens sculp.

Astolfo and Mrs. Harpues.

CXXVI.

After them spurs in haste the valiant peer :
 And on the winged courser forth is flown,
 Leaving beneath him, in his swift career,
 The royal castle and the crowded town ;
 The bugle ever pealing, far and near.
 The harpies fly toward the torrid zone ;
 Nor light until they reach that loftiest mountain
 Where springs, if anywhere, Nilo's secret fountain.

CXXVII.

Almost at that aerial mountain's feet,
 Deep under earth, extends a gloomy cell.
 The surest pass for him, as they repeat,
 That would at any time descend to hell.
 Hither the predatory troop retreat,
 As a safe refuge from the deafening yell.
 As far, and farther than Cocytus' shore
 Descending, till that horn is heard no more.

CXXVIII.

At that dark, hellish inlet, which a way
 Opens to him who would abandon light,
 The terrifying bugle ceased to bray ;
 —The courser furled his wings and stopt his flight.
 But, ere Astolpho further I convey,
 —Not to depart from my accustomed rite—
 Since on all sides the paper overflows,
 I shall conclude my canto and repose.

CANTO XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

*In the infernal pit Astolpho hears
 Of Lydia's woe, by smoke well nigh oppress.
 He mounts anew, and him his courser bears
 To the terrestrial paradise address.
 By John advised in all, to heaven he steers ;
 Of some of his lost sense here reposest,
 Orlando's wasted wit as well he takes,
 Sees the Fates spin their threads, and earthward makes.*

I.

O PIERCE and hungry harpies, that on blind
 And erring Italy so full have fed !
 Whom, for the scourge of ancient sins designed,
 Haply just Heaven to every board has sped.
 Innocent children, pious mothers, pined
 With hunger, die, and see their daily bread,
 —The orphan's and the widow's scanty food—
 Feed for a single feast that filthy brood.

II.

Too foul a fault was his, who did unclose
 That cave long shut, and made the passage free,
 From whence *that* greediness, *that* filth arose,
 Our Italy's infection doomed to be.
 Then was good life extinguished, and repose
 So banished, that with strife and poverty,
 With fear and trouble, is she still perplexed.
 And shall for many a future year be vexed :

III.

Till she her sons has shaken by the hair,
 And from Lethæan sloth to life restored ;
 Exclaiming, " Will none imitate that pair,
 " Zethes and Calais, with avenging sword
 " Rescue from claws and stench our goodly fare,
 " And cleanse and glad anew the genial board,
 " As they king Phineus from the fowls released,
 " And England's peer restored the Nubian's feast ?"

IV.

Hunting those hideous birds, that cavalier
 Aye scared them with the bugle's horrid sound ;
 Till at the mountain-cave his long career
 He closed, and ran the monstrous troop to ground :
 Attentive to the vent he held his ear,
 And in that troubled cavern heard rebound,
 Weeping and wailing and eternal yell ;
 Proof certain that its entrance led to hell.

V.

Astolpho doubts if he within shall wend,
 And see those wretched ones expelled from day ;
 Into the central pit of earth descend,
 And in the infernal gulfs around survey.
 " Why should I fear, that on my horn depend
 " For certain succour ?" (did the warrior say)
 " Satan and Pluto so will I confound,
 " And drive before me their three-headed hound."

VI.

He speedily his winged horse forsook ;
 (Him to a sapling near at hand he ties)
 The cavern entered next ; but first he took
 His horn, whereon the knight in all relies,
 Not far has he advanced before a smoke,
 Obscure and foul, offends his nose and eyes.
 Ranker than pitch and sulphur is the stench,
 Yet not thereat does good Astolpho blench.

VII.

But as he more descends into that lair,
 So much he finds the smoke and vapour worse ;
 And it appears he can no farther fare ;
 Nay, backward must retrace his way parforce.
 Lo ! something (*what* he knows not) he in air
 Espies, that seems in notion, like a corse,
 Upon whose wasted form long time had beat
 The winter's rain and summer's scorching heat.

VIII.

In that dim cavern was so little light,
 —Yea, well nigh might he said that light was none—
 Nought sees or comprehends the English knight
 What wavers so, above that vapour dun :
 For surer proof, a stroke or two would smite
 With his good faulchion Otho's valiant son :*
 Then deemed that duke it was a spirit, whom
 He seemed to strike amid the misty gloom.

IX.

When him a melancholy voice addressed ;
 " Ah ! without harming other, downward wend.
 " Me but too sore the sable fumes molest,
 " Which hither from the hellish fires ascend."
 Thereat the duke, amazed, his steps reprecst,
 And to the spirit cried ; " So may Heaven send
 " A respite from the vapours that exhale,
 " As thou shalt deign to tell thy mournful tale !

X.

And to be known on earth shouldst thou be fain,
 " Thee will I satisfy." To him the sprite ;
 " So sweet it seems to me, in fame again
 " Thus to return into the glorious light,
 ' My huge desire such favour to obtain,
 ' Forces my words from me in my despite,
 " Constraining me to tell the things ye seek ;
 " Though 'tis annoyance and fatigue to speak.

* Astolpho.

XI.

- " Lydia, the child of Lydia's king, am I,^s
 " To proud estate and princely honours born,
 " Condemned by righteous doom of God on high
 " In murky smoke eternally to mourn :
 " Because a kindly lover's constancy
 " I, while I lived, repaid with spite and scorn.
 " With countless others swarm these grots below,
 " For the same sin, condemned to the same woe.

XII.

- " Yet lower down, harsh Anaxareté⁴
 " Suffers worse pain where thicker fumes arise ;
 " Heaven changed her flesh to stone, and here to be
 " Tormented, her afflicted spirit sties :
 " In that unmoved she, hung in air could see
 " A lover vexed by her barbarities.
 " Here Daphne learns how rashly she had done
 " In having given Apollo such a run.

XIII.

- " Of hosts of ingrate women in this cell
 " Confined, it would be tedious to recite,
 " If, one by one, I upon these should dwell ;
 " So many, their amount is infinite.
 " 'Twould be more tedious of the men to tell,
 " Whose base ingratitude due pains requite ;
 " And whom, in a more dismal prison pent,
 " Smoke blinds, and everlasting fires torment.

XIV.

- " Since to belief soft woman is more prone,
 " He that deceives her, merits heavier pain :
 " To Theseus and to Jason this is known,
 " And him that vexed of old the Latian reign,⁵
 " And him that of his brother Absalon
 " Erewhile provoked the pestilent disdain,
 " Because of Thamar ; countless is the horde
 " Of those who left a wife or wedded lord.

XV.

- " But, rather of my state than theirs to shew,
 " And sin which brought me hither :— I was fair,
 " But so much haughtier was than fair of hue,
 " I know not if I ever equalled were :
 " Nor which was most excessive of the two,
 " My pride or beauty, could to thee declare.
 " Though it is certain, Pride but took its rise
 " In that rare loveliness which pleased all eyes.

XVI.

- " There lived a Thracian knight, for warlike skill
 " And prowess, upon earth without a peer ;
 " Who, voiced by many a worthy witness still,
 " The praises of my matchless charms did hear.
 " So that, of forethought and his own free will,
 " Fixed all his love on me that cavalier ;
 " Weening this while that I, upon my part,
 " Should for his valour duly prize his heart.

XVII.

- " He came to Lydia, and by faster tie
 " Was fettered at my sight ; and there enrolled
 " Amid my royal father's chivalry,
 " In mickle fame increased that baron bold.
 " His feats of many a sort, and valour high
 " Would make a tale too tedious to be told ;
 " With what his boundless merit had deserved,
 " If a more grateful master he had served.

XVIII.

- " Pamphylia, Caria, and Cilicia's reign,
 " Through him, my father brought beneath his sway,
 " Who never moved a-field his martial train,
 " But when that warrior pointed out the way :
 " He, when he deemed he had deserved such gain,
 " Pressed close the Lydian king, upon a day,
 " And craved me from the monarch as his wife,
 " As meed of all that booty made in strife.

XIX.

- " Rejected of the monarch was the peer,
 " Who was resolved his child should highly wed ;
 " Not him who was a simple cavalier ;
 " Who, saving valour, was with nought beated
 " For on my father, bent on gain and gear
 " And avarice, of all vice the fountain-head,
 " Manners and merit for as little pass,
 " As the lute's music on the lumpish ass.

XX.

- " Alcestes, he of whom I speak (so hight
 " That warrior), when he sees his suit denied,
 " Repulsed by one, by whom he had most right
 " To think that he should most be gratified,
 " Craves his discharge, and threatens he this slight
 " Will make the Lydian monarch dear abide.
 " The Armenian, an old rival of my sire,
 " And mortal foe, he sought with this desire ;

XXI.

- " And so the monarch urged, he made him rear
 " His banner, and attack my sire ; and, through
 " His famous feats, that Thracian cavalier
 " Was named the captain of the invading crew.
 ' For the Armenian sovereign, far and near,
 ' All things (so said the knight) he would subdue ;
 ' But claiming as his share, when all was won,
 ' My sovereign beauties for the service done.'

XXII.

- " I ill to you the mischief could express
 " Alcestes did us in that war ; o'erthrown
 " By him four armies were, and he in less
 " Than one short twelvemonth left us neither town,
 " Nor tower, save one, where cliffs forbade access :
 " 'Twas here my sire, amid those of his own
 " Whom most he loved, took refuge, in his need,
 " With all the wealth he could collect with speed.

XXIII.

- " Us in this fortilage the knight attacked,
 " And shortly to such desperation drove,
 " That gladly would the king have made a pact,
 " To yield me for his consort, yea his slave,
 " With half our realm, if certain by that act
 " Himself from every other loss to save ;
 " Right sure he otherwise should forfeit all,
 " And, after, die in bonds, a captive thrall.

XXIV.

- " Before this happened, to try every way
 " Of remedy the Lydian king was bent ;
 " And thither, where Alcestes' army lay,
 " Me, the first cause of all the mischief, sent.
 " To yield my person to him as a prey
 " I with intention to Alcestes went ;
 " To bid him take what portion of our reign
 " He pleased, and pacify his fierce disdain.

XXV.

- " When of my coming that good knight does know,
 " Me he encounters pale and trembling sore :
 " 'Twould seem a vanquished man's, a prisoner's bro
 " He, rather than a victor's semblance, bore.
 " I who perceive he loves, address not now
 " The warrior as I was resolved before.
 " My vantage I descry, and shift my ground,
 " To fit the state wherein that knight was found.

XXVI.

- " To curse the warrior's passion I begun,
 " And of his crying cruelty complained,
 " Since foully by my father had he done,
 " And me would have by violence constrained ;
 " Who with more grace my person would have won,
 " Nor waited many days, had he maintained
 " His course of courtship, as begun whilere,
 " To king and all of us so passing dear ;

XXVII.

- " And if the honest suit he hoped to gain
 " Had been at first rejected by my sire,
 " 'Twas, he was somewhat of a churlish vein,
 " Nor ever yielded to a first desire :
 " He should not therefore, restive to the rein,
 " Have left his goodly task, so prompt to ire
 " Sure, passing aye from good to better deed,
 " In little time to win the wished-for meed ;

XXVIII.

- " And if my father would not have been won,
 " To him I would so earnestly have prayed,
 " That he my lover should have made his son ;
 " Nay, had my royal sire my suit gainsayed,
 " For him in secret that I would have done,
 " Wherewith he should have deemed himself appaid :
 " But since, it seemed, he other means designed,
 " Never to love him had I fixed my mind ;

XXIX.

- " And, though I sought him, at my father's best,
 " And pious love for him had been my guide,
 " He might be sure, not long should be possess'd
 " The bliss that I, in my despite, supplied ;
 " For the red blood should issue from my breast
 " As soon as his ill will was satisfied
 " On this my wretched person, which alone
 " He so by brutal force should make his own.

XXX.

- With these, and words like these, I mov'd the peer,
 " When I such puissance in myself espied ;
 " And him so contrite made, in desert drear,
 " Was never seen a saint more mortified.
 " Before my feet the doleful cavalier
 " Fell down, and snatch'd a poniard from his side ;
 " Which, he protested, I perforce should take,
 " And for so foul a sin my vengeance slake.

XXXI.

- " To push my mighty victory to an end
 " I scheme, when him I see in such distress,
 " And give him hopes he may even yet pretend
 " That I deservedly his love should bless,
 " If he his ancient error will amend,
 " Will of his realm my father repossess,
 " And will in future time deserve my charms
 " By love and service, not by force of arms.

XXXII.

- " So promised he to do ; and set me free,
 " And let me, as I came, untouched, depart ;
 " Nor even to kiss my lips he ventured ; see
 " If he is yoked securely, if his heart
 " Love has well touched with the desire of me,
 " If he for him need feather other dart !
 " He seeks the Armenian, who by pact should take
 " Whatever spoil the conquering armies make ;

XXXIII.

- " And him, as best he might, would fain persuade
 ' To leave to Lydia's monarch his domain,
 ' Upon whose wasted lands his host had preyed,
 ' And rest content with his Armenian reign.'
 — ' He would not hear of this, (the monarch said,
 With cheeks with fury swollen) ' nor would refrain
 ' From pressing Lydia's king with armed band,
 ' So long as he possessed a palm of land ;

XXXIV.

- ' And if the knight, when a vile woman sues,
 ' His purpose shift, let him the evil bear :
 ' He will not, for the warrior's asking, lose
 ' What he has hardly conquered in a year.'
 " Alcestes to the king his suit renews,
 " And next complains, that he rejects his prayer.
 " At length the Thracian fires, and threatens high,
 " By love or force the monarch shall comply.

XXXV.

- " So kindling anger waxed between the two,
 " It urged them from ill words to worse deed :
 " Upon the king his sword Alcestes drew ;
 " Though thousands aid the monarch in his need,
 " And, in despite of all, their sovereign slew ;
 " And made that day as well the Armenians bleed,
 " Backed by the Thracians' and Cilicians' aid
 " And other followers, by the warrior paid.

XXXVI.

- " His conquest he pursued, and, at his cost,
 " Without expense to us, in less than one
 " Short month, the kingdom by my father lost
 " Restored; and, to repair the mischief done,
 " (Beside spoil given) he conquered with his host,
 " —Taxing or taking what his arms had won—
 " Armenia and Cappadocia which confine;
 " And scoured Hyrcania to the distant brine.

XXXVII.

- " Him not to greet with triumphs, but to slay,
 " Returning from that warfare, we intend;
 " But, fearing failure, our design delay
 " In that we find too many him befriend.
 " Feeding him aye with hope from day to day,
 " I for the Thracian warrior love pretend:
 " But first declare my will that he oppose
 " And prove his valour on our other foes;

XXXVIII.

- " And him, now sole, now ill accompanied,
 " On strange and perilous emprise I speed;
 " Wherein a thousand knights might well have died;
 " But all things happily with him succeed:
 " For Victory was ever on his side:
 " And oft with horrid foes of monstrous breed,
 " With Giants and with Lestrigons, who wrought
 " Damage in our domains, the warrior fought.

XXXIX.

- ' Nor Juno, nor Eurystheus, in such chase
 " Ever renowned Alcides vex so sore,
 " In Erymanth, Nemæa, Lerua, Thrace,
 " Ætolia, Africa, by Tyber's shore,
 " By Ebro's sunny bank, or other place,
 " As (hiding murderous hate, while I implore)
 " I exercise my lover still in strife,
 " With the same fell design upon his life.

XL.

- nable to achieve my first intent,
 I on a scheme of no less mischief fall:
 Through me, all deemed his friends by him are shent,
 Who thus bring down on him the hate of all.
 The Thracian leader, never more content
 Than to obey, whatever be the call,
 Is at my bidding ever prompt to smite,
 Without regarding who or what the wight.

XLI.

- " When I perceive that, through the warrior's mean,
 " Extinguished is my father's every foe ;
 " And, conquered by himself, that knight is seen
 " —Friendless, through us—I now the masque forego :
 " What I, from him, beneath a flattering mien,
 " Had hitherto concealed, I plainly show ;
 " —What deep and deadly hate my bosom fired,
 " And that I but to work his death desired.

XLII.

- " Then, thinking if such course I should pursue,
 " That public shame would still the deed attend,
 " (For men too well my obligations knew,
 " And would be prompt my cruelty to shend,)
 " Meseemed enough to drive him from my view,
 " So that he should no more my eyes offend ;
 " Nor would I more address or see the peer,
 " Nor letter would receive or message hear.

XLIII.

- " This my ingratitude in him such pain
 " At length produced, that mastered by his woe,
 " After entreating mercy long in vain,
 " He sickened sore and sank beneath the blow.
 " For pain which fits my sin, dark fumes now stain
 " My cheek, and with salt rheum mine eyes o'erflow
 " Thus in eternal torment shall I dwell ;
 " For saving mercy helpeth not in hell."

XLIV.

- Since wretched Lydia spake no more, the peer
 Would fain discern if more in torment lay ;
 But, those false ingrates' curse, the darkness drear
 So waxed before him, and obscured the way,
 That not one inch advanced the cavalier ;
 Nay, back perforce returns that warrior ; nay,
 Himself from that increasing smoke to save,
 Makes for the mouth of the disastrous cave.

XLV.

- The motion of his quickly shifting feet
 More savours of a run than walk or trot.
 Thus mounting the ascent in swift retreat,
 Astolpho sees the outlet of the grot ;
 Where, through the darkness of that dismal scat
 And those foul fumes, a dawn of daylight shot ;
 He from the cavern, sorely pained and pined,
 Issues at last, and leaves the smoke behind ;

XLVI.

And next to bar the way against that band,
Whose greedy bellies so for victual crave,
Picks stones, and trees lays level with his brand,
Which charged with pepper or amomum wave;
And what might seem a hedge, with busy hand,
As best he can, constructs before the cave;
And so succeeds in blocking that repair,
The harpics shall no more revisit air.

XLVII.

While in that cave Astolpho did remain,
The fumes that from the sable pitch arose,
Not only what appeared to sight did stain;
But even so searched the flesh beneath his clothes,
He sought some cleansing stream, long sought in vain:
But found at length a limpid rill, which rose
Out of a living rock, within that wood,
And bathed himself all over in the flood.

XLVIII.

Then backed the griffin-horse, and soared a flight
Whereby to reach that mountain's top he schemes;
Which little distant, with its haughty height,
From the moon's circle good Astolpho deems;
And, such desire to see it warms the knight,
That he aspires to heaven, nor earth esteems.
Through air so more and more the warrior strains,
That he at last the mountain-summit gains.

XLIX.

Here sapphire, ruby, gold, and topaz glow.
Pearl, jacinth, chrysolite and diamond lie,
Which well might pass for natural flowers which blow,
Catching their colour from that kindly sky.
So green the grass! could we have such below,
We should prefer it to our emerald's dye.
As fair the foliage of those pleasant bowers!
Whose trees are ever filled with fruit and flowers.

L.

Warble the wanton birds in verdant brake,
Azure, and red, and yellow, green and white.
The quavering rivulet and quiet lake
In limpid hue surpass the crystal bright.
A breeze, which with one breath appears to shake,
Aye, without fill or fall, the foliage light,
To the quick air such lively motion lends,
That Day's oppressive noon in nought offends;

Ll.

And this, mid fruit and flower and verdure there,
 Evermore stealing divers odours, went ;
 And made of those mixt sweets a medley rare,
 Which filled the spirit with a calm content.
 In the mid plain arose a palace fair,
 Which seemed as if with living flames it brent.
 Such passing splendour and such glorious light
 Shot from those walls, beyond all usage bright.

LII.

Thither where those transparent walls appear,
 Which cover more than thirty miles in measure,
 At ease and slowly moved the cavalier,
 And viewed the lovely region at his leisure ;
 And deemed—compared with this—that sad and drear,
 And seen by heaven and nature with displeasure,
 Was the foul world, wherein we dwell below :
 So jocund this, so sweet and fair in show !

LIII.

Astound with wonder, paused the adventurous knight,
 When to that shining palace he was nigh,
 For, than the carbuncle more crimson bright,
 It seemed one polished stone of sanguine dye.
 O mighty wonder ! O Dædalian sleight !
 What fabric upon earth with this can vie ?
 Let them henceforth be silent, that in story
 Exalt the world's seven wonders to such glory !

LIV.

An elder, in the shining entrance-hall
 Of that glad house, towards Astolpho prest ;
 Crimson his waistcoat was, and white his pall ;
 Vermillion seemed the mantle, milk the vest :
 White was that ancient's hair, and white withal
 The bushy beard descending to his breast ;
 And from his reverend face such glory beamed,
 Of the elect of Paradise he seemed.

I.V.

He, with glad visage, to the paladine,
 Who humbly from his self had lighted, cries :
 " O gentle baron, that by will divine
 " Have soared to this terrestrial paradise !
 " Albeit nor you the cause of your design,
 " Nor you the scope of your desire surmise,
 " Believe, you not without high mystery steer^d
 " Hitherward, from your arctic hemisphere.

LVI.

" You for instruction, how to furnish aid
 " To Charles and to the Church in utmost need,
 " With me to counsel, hither are convey'd,
 " Who without counsel from such distance speed.
 " But, son, ascribe not you the journey made
 " To wit or worth; nor through your winged steed,
 " Nor through your virtuous bugle had ye thriven,
 " But that such helping grace from God was given.

LVII.

" We will discourse at better leisure more,
 " And you what must be done shall after hear;
 " But you, that, through long fast, must hunger sore,
 " First brace your strength with us, with genial cheer."
 Continuing his discourse, that elder hoar
 Raised mighty wonder in the cavalier,
 When he avouched, as he his name disclosed,
 That he THE HOLY GOSPEL had composed;

LVIII.

He of our Lord so loved, the blessed John;
 Of whom a speech among the brethren went,
 'He never should see death,' and hence the Son
 Of God with this rebuke St. Peter shent;
 In saying, "What is it to thee, if one
 "Turry on earth, till I anew be sent?"
 Albeit he said not that he should not die,
 That so he meant to say we plain descry.

LIX.

Translated thither, he found company,
 The patriarch Enoch, and the mighty seer
 Elias; nor as yet those sainted three
 Have seen corruption, but in garden, clear
 Of earth's foul air, will joy eternity
 Of spring, till they angelic trumpets hear,
 Sounding through heaven and earth, proclaim aloud
 Christ's second advent on the silvery cloud.

LX.

The holy ancients to a chamber lead,
 With welcome kind, the adventarous cavalier;
 And in another then his flying steed
 Sufficiently with goodly forage cheer.
 Astolpho they with fruits of Eden feed,
 So rich, that in his judgment 'twould appear,
 In some sort might our parents be excus'd
 If, for such fruits, obedience they refused.

LXI.

When with that daily payment which man owes,
 Nature had been contented by the peer,
 As well of due refreshment as repose,
 (For all and every comfort found he here)
 And now Aurora left her ancient spouse,
 Not for his many years to her less dear,
 Rising from bed, Astolpho at his side
 The apostle, so beloved of God, espied.

LXII.

Much that not lawfully could here be shown,
 Taking him by the hand, to him he read.
 "To you, though come from France, may be unknown
 "What there hath happened," next the apostle said;
 "Learn, your Orlando, for he hath foregone
 "The way wherein he was enjoined to tread,
 "Is visited of God, that never shends
 "Him whom he loveth best, when he offends:

LXIII.

"He, your Orlando, at his birth endowed
 "With sovereign daring and with sovereign might,
 "On whom, beyond all usage, God bestowed
 "The grace, that weapon him should vainly smite,
 "Because he was selected from the crowd
 "To be defender of his Church's right.
 "As he elected Sampson, called whilers
 "The Jew against the Philistine to cheer;

LXIV.

"He, your Orlando, for such gifts has made
 "Unto his heavenly Lord an ill return:
 "Who left his people, when most needing aid,
 "Then most abandoned to the heathens' scorn.
 "Incestuous love for a fair paynim maid
 "Has blinded so that knight, of grace forlorn,
 "That twice and more in fell and impious strife
 "The count has sought his faithful cousin's life.

LXV.

"Hence God hath made him mad, and, in this vein,
 "Belly, and breast, and naked flank expose;
 "And so diseased and troubled is his brain,
 "That none, and least himself, the champion knows.
 "Nebuchadnezzar whilom to such pain
 "God in his vengeance doomed, as story shows;
 "Sent, for seven years, of savage fury full,
 "To feed on grass and hay, like slavering bull.

LXVI.

" But yet, because the Christian paladine
 " Has sinned against his heavenly Maker less,
 " He only for three months, by will divine,
 " Is doomed to cleanse himself of his excess.
 " Nor yet with other scope did your design
 " Of wending hither the Redeemer bless,
 " But that through us the mode you should explore,
 " Orlando's missing senses to restore.

LXVII.

" 'Tis true to journey further ye will need,
 " And wholly must you leave this nether sphere ;
 " To the moon's circle you I have to lead,
 " Of all the planets to our world most near.
 " Because the medicine, that is fit to speed
 " Insane Orlando's cure, is treasured here.
 " This night will we away, when over head
 " Her downward rays the silver moon shall shed."

LXVIII.

In talk the blest apostle is diffuse
 On this and that, until the day is worn :
 But when the sun is sunk i' the salt sea ooze,
 And overhead the moon uplifts her horn,
 A chariot is prepared, erewhile in use
 To scour the heavens, wherein of old was borne
 From Jewry's misty mountains to the sky,
 Sainted Elias, rapt from mortal eye.

LXIX.

Four goodly coursers next, and redder far
 Than flame, to that fair chariot yokes the sire ;
 Who, when the knight and he well seated are,
 Collects the reins ; and heavenward they aspire
 In airy circles swiftly rose the car,
 And reached the region of eternal fire ;
 Whose heat the saint by miracle suspends,
 While through the parted air the pair ascends.

LXX.

The chariot, towering, threads the fiery sphere,
 And rises thence into the lunar reign.
 This, in its larger part they find as clear
 As polished steel, when undefiled by stain ;
 And such it seems, or little less, when near,
 As what the limits of our earth contain :
 Such as our earth, the last of globes below,
 Including seas, which round about it flow.

LXXI.

Here doubly waxed the paladin's surprise,
 To see that place so large, when viewed at hand ;
 Resembling but a little hoop in size,
 When from the globe surveyed whereon we stand,
 And that he both his eyes behoved to strain,
 If he would view Earth's circling seas and land ;
 In that, by reason of the lack of light,
 Their images attained to little height.

LXXII.

Here other river, lake, and rich champaign
 Are seen, than those which are below descried ;
 Here other valley, other hill and plain,
 With towns and cities of their own supplied ;
 Which mansions of such mighty size contain,
 Such never he before or after spied.
 Here spacious holt and lonely forest lay,
 Where nymphs for ever chased the panting prey.

LXXIII.

He, that with other scope had thither soared,
 Pauses not all these wonders to peruse :
 But led by the disciple of our Lord,
 His way towards a spacious vale pursues ;
 A place wherein is wonderfully stored
 Whatever on our earth below we lose.
 Collected there are all things whatsoe'er,
 Lost through time, chance, or our own folly, here.

LXXIV.

Nor here alone of realm and wealthy dower,
 O'er which aye turns the restless wheel, I say :
 I speak of what it is not in the power
 Of Fortune to bestow, or take away.
 Much fame is here, whereon Time and the Hour,
 Like wasting moth, in this our planet prey.
 Here countless vows, here prayers unnumbered lie,
 Made by us sinful men to God on high.

LXXV.

The lover's tears and sighs ; what time in pleasure
 And play we here unprofitably spend ;
 To this ; of ignorant men the eternal leisure,
 And vain desigus, aye frustrate of their end,
 Empty desires so far exceed all measure,
 They o'er that valley's better part extend.
 There wilt thou find, if thou wilt thither post,
 Whatever thou on earth beneath hast lost.

LXXVI.

He, passing by those heaps, on either hand,
 Of this and now of that the meaning sought;
 Formed of swollen bladders here a hill did stand.
 Whence he heard cries and tumults, as he thought.
 These were old crowns of the Assyrian land
 And Lydian—as that paladin was taught—
 Grecian and Persian, all of ancient fame;
 And now, alas! well-nigh without a name.

LXXVII.

Golden and silver hooks to sight succeed,
 Heaped in a mass, the gifts which courtiers bear,
 —Hoping thereby to purchase future need—
 To greedy prince and patron; many a snare,
 Concealed in garlands, did the warrior heed,
 Who heard, these signs of adulation were;
 And in cicadas, which their lungs had burst,
 Saw fulsome lays by venal poets versed.

LXXVIII.

Loves of unhappy end in imagery
 Of gold or jewelled bands he saw express
 Then eagles' talons, the authority
 With which great lords their delegates invest;
 Bellows filled every nook, the fume and fee
 Wherein the favourites of kings are blest;
 Given to those Ganymedes that have their hour,
 And rest, when faded is their vernal flower.

LXXIX.

O'erturned, here ruined town and castle lies,
 With all their wealth: "The symbols" (said his guide)
 "Of treaties and of those conspiracies,
 "Which their conductors seemed so ill to hide."
 Serpents with female faces, felonies
 Of coiners and of robbers, he descried;
 Next broken bottles saw of many sorts,
 The types of servitude in sorry courts.

LXXX.

He marks a mighty pool of porridge spilled,
 And asks what in that symbol should be read,
 And here 'twas charity, by sick men willed
 For distribution, after they were dead.
 He passed a heap of flowers, that erst distilled
 Sweet savours, and now noisome odours shed;
 The gift (if it may lawfully be said)
 Which Constantine to good Sylvester made. *

LXXXI.

A large provision, next, of twigs and lime
 —Your witcheries, O women!—he explored.
 The things he witnessed, to recount in rhyme
 Too tedious were; were myriads on record,
 To sum the remnant ill should I have time.
 'Tis here that all infirmities are stored,
 Save only Madness, seen not here at all,
 Which dwells below, nor leaves this earthly ball.

LXXXII.

He turns him back, upon some days and deeds
 To look again, which he had lost of yore;
 But, save the interpreter the lesson reads,
 Would know them not, such different form they wore.
 He next saw that which man so little needs,
 As it appears—none pray to Heaven for more;
 I speak of sense; whereof a lofty mount
 Alone surpast all else which I recount.

LXXXIII.

It was us 'twere a liquor soft and thin,
 Which, save well corked, would from the vase have drained;
 Laid up, and treasured various flasks within,
 Larger or lesser, to that use ordained.
 That largest was which of the paladin,
 Anglantes' lord, the mighty sense contained;
 And from those others was discerned, since writ
 Upon the vessel was ORLANDO'S WIT.

LXXXIV.

The names of those whose wits therein were pent
 He thus on all those other flasks espied.
 Much of his own, but with more wonderment,
 The sense of many others he descried,
 Who, he believed, no dram of theirs had spent;
 But here, by tokens clear was satisfied,
 That scantily therewith were they purveyed;
 So large the quantity he here surveyed.

LXXXV.

Some waste on love, some seeking honour, lose
 Their wits, some, scouring seas, for merchandise,
 Some, that on wealthy lords their hope repose,
 And some, befooled by silly sorceries;
 These upon pictures, upon jewels those;
 These on whatever else they highest prize.
 Astrologers' and sophists' wits mid these,
 And many a poet's too, Astolpho sees.

LXXXVI.

Since his consent the apostle signified
 Who wrote the obscure Apocalypse, his own
 He took, and only to his nose applied,
 When (it appeared) it to its place was gone ;
 And henceforth, has Sir Turpin certified,
 That long time sagely lived king Otho's son ;
 Till other error (as he says) again
 Deprived the gentle baron of his brain.

LXXXVII.

The fullest vessel and of amplest round
 Which held the wit Orlando erst possessed,
 Astolpho took ; nor this so light he found,
 As it appeared, when piled among the rest.
 Before, from those bright spheres, now earthward bound,
 His course is to our lower orb addressed,
 Him to a spacious palace, by whose side
 A river ran, conducts his holy guide.

LXXXVIII.

Filled full of fleeces all its chambers were,
 Of wool, silk, linen, cotton, in their hue,
 Of diverse dyes and colours, foul and fair.
 Yarns to her reel from all those fleeces drew,
 In the outer porch, a dame of hoary hair.
 On summer-day thus village wife we view,
 When the new silk is reeled, its filmy twine
 Wind from the worm, and soak the slender line.

LXXXIX.

A second dame replaced the work when done
 With other ; and one bore it off elsewhere ;
 A third selected from the fleeces spun,
 And mingled by that second, foul from fair.
 " What is this labour ? " said the peer to John ;
 And the disciple answered Otho's heir,
 " Know that the Parcs are those ancient wives,
 " That in this fashion spin your feeble lives.

XC.

" As long as one fleece lasts, life in such wise
 " Endureth, nor outlasts it by a thought.
 " For Death and Nature have their watchful eyes
 " On the hour when each should to his end be brought.
 " The choicest threads are culled for Paradise,
 " And, after, for its ornament are wrought ;
 " And fashioned from the strands of foulest show
 " Are galling fetters for the damned below."

XCI.

On all the fleeces that erewhile were laid
 Upon the reel, and culled for other care,
 The names were graved on little plates, which made
 Of silver, or of gold, or iron, were,
 These piled in many heaps he next surveyed ;
 Whence an old man some skins was seen to bear,
 Who, seemingly unwearied, hurried sore,
 His restless way retracing evermore.

XCII.

That elder is so nimble and so prest,
 That he seems born to run : he bears away
 Out of those heaps by lapfulls in his vest
 The tickets that the different names display.
 Wherefore and whither he his steps address,
 To you I shall in other canto say,
 If you, in sign of pleasure, will attend,
 With that kind audience ye are wont to lend.

CANTO XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

*The apostle praises authors to the peer,
 Duke Aymon's martial daughter in affray,
 Conquers the giant monarch of Argyr,
 And of the good Frontino makes a prey.
 She next from Arles defies her cavalier,
 And, while he marvels who would him assay,
 Grandonio and Ferrau she with her hand
 And Serpentine unhorses on the strand.*

I.

MADONNA, who will scale the high ascent
 Of heaven, to me my judgment to restore,
 Which, since from your bright eyes the weapon went,
 That pierced my heart, is wasting overmore ?
 Yet will not I such mighty loss lament,
 So that it drain no faster than before ;
 But—ebbing further—I should fear to be
 Such as Orlando is described by me.

II.

To have anew that judgment, through the skies,
 I deem there is no need for me to fly
 To the moon's circle, or to Paradise;
 For, I believe, mine is not lodged so high.
 On your bright visage, on your beauteous eyes,
 Alabastrine neck, and paps of ivory,
 Wander my wits, and I with busy lip,
 If I may have them back, these fain would sip.

III.

Astolpho wandered through that palace wide,
 Observing all the future lives around:
 When those already woven he had spied
 Upon the fatal wheel for finish wound,
 He a fair fleece discerned that far outvied
 Fine gold, whose wondrous lustre jewels ground,
 Could these into a thread be drawn by art,
 Would never equal by the thousandth part.

IV.

The beauteous fleece he saw with wondrous glee
 Equalled by none amid that countless store;
 And when and whose such glorious life should be,
 Longed sore to know. "This," (said the apostle hoar,
 Concealing nothing of its history,)
 "Shall have existence twenty years before,
 "Dating from THE INCARNATE WORD, the year
 "Shall marked by men with M and D appear;"

V.

"And, as for splendour and for substance fair,
 "This fleece shall have no like or equal, so
 "Shall the blest age wherein it shall appear
 "Be singular in this our world below;
 "Because all graces, excellent and rare,
 "Which Nature or which Study can bestow,
 "Or bounteous Fortune upon men can shower,
 "Shall be its certain and eternal dower.

VI.

"Between the king of rivers' horns," (he cries,
 "Stands what is now a small and humble town."
 "Before it runs the Po, behind it lies
 "A misty pool of marsh; this—looking down
 "The stream of future years—I recognize
 "First of Italian cities of renown;
 "Not only famed for wall and palace rare,
 "But noble ways of life and studies fair.

VII.

- " Such exaltation, reached so suddenly,
 " Is not fortuitous nor wrought in vain ;
 " But that it may *his* worthy cradle be,
 " Whereof I speak, shall so the heavens ordain.
 " For where men look for fruit they graff the tree,
 " And study still the rising plant to train ;
 " And artist uses to refine the gold
 " Designed by him the precious gem to hold.

VIII.

- " Nor ever, in terrestrial realm, so fine
 " And fair a raiment spirit did invest,
 " And rarely soul so great from realms divine
 " Has been, or will be, thitherward address,
 " As that whereof THE ETERNAL has design
 " To fashion good Hippolytus of Este :
 " Hippolytus of Este shall he be hight,
 " On whom so rich a gift of God shall light.

IX.

- " All those fair graces, that, on many spent,
 " Would have served many wholly to array,
 " Are all united for his ornament,
 " Of whom thou hast entreated me to say.
 " To prop the arts, the virtues is he sent ;
 " And should I seek his merits to display,
 " So long a time would last my tedious strain,
 " Orlando might expect his wits in vain."

X.

- 'Twas so Christ's servant with the cavalier
 Discoursed ; they having satisfied their view
 With sight of that fair mansion, far and near,
That whence conveyed were human lives, the two
 Issued upon the stream, whose waves appear
 Turbid with sand and of discoloured hue ;
 And found that ancient man upon the shore,
 Who names, engraved on metal, thithor bore.

XI.

- I know not if you recollect ; of him
 I speak, whose story I erewhile suspended,
 Ancient of visage, and so swift of limb,
 That faster far than forest stag he wended.
 With names he filled his mantle to the brim,
 Aye thinned the pile, but ne'er his labour ended ;
 And in that stream, hight Lethe, next bestowed,
 Yea, rather cast away, his costly load.

XII.

I say, that when upon the river side
 Arrives that ancient, of his store profuse,
 He all those names into the turbid tide
 Discharges, as he shakes his mantle loose.
 A countless shoal, they in the stream subside ;
 Nor henceforth are they fit for any use ;
 And, out of mighty myriads, hardly one
 Is saved of those which waves and sand o'errun.

XIII.

Along that river and around it fly
 Vile crows and ravening vultures, and a crew
 Of choughs, and more, that with discordant cry
 And deafening din their airy flight pursue ;
 And to the prey all hurry, when from high
 Those ample riches they so scattered view :
 And with their beak or talon seize the prey :
 Yet little distance they their prize convey.

XIV.

When they would raise themselves in upward flight,
 They have not strength the burden to sustain ;
 So that perforce in Lethe's water light
 The worthy names, which lasting praise should gain.
 Two swans there are amid those birds, as white,
 My lord, as is your banner's snowy grain :³
 Who catch what names they can, and evermore
 With these return securely to the shore.

XV.

Thus, counter to that ancient's will malign,
 Who them to the devouring river dooms,
 Some names are rescued by the birds benign ;
 Wasteful Oblivion all the rest consumes.
 Now swim about the stream those swans divine,
 Now beat the buxom air with nimble plumes,
 Till, near that impious river's bank, they gain
 A hill, and on that hill a hallowed fane.

XVI.

To Immortality 'tis sacred ; there
 A lovely nymph, that from the hill descends,
 To the Lethean river makes repair ;
 Takes from those swans their burden, and suspends
 The names about an image, raised in air
 Upon a shaft, which in mid fane ascends
 There consecrates and fixes them so fast,
 That all throughout eternity shall last.

XVII.

Of that old sire, and why he would dispense
 Idly, all those fair names, as 'twould appear,
 And of the birds and holy place, from whence
 The nymph was to the river seen to steer,
 The solemn mystery, and the secret sense,
 Astolpho, marvelling, desired to hear;
 And prayed the man of God would these unfold,
 Who to the warrior thus their meaning told.

XVIII.

"There moves no leaf beneath, thou hast to know,
 "But here above some sign thereof we trace;⁴
 "Since all, in Heaven above or Earth below,
 "Must correspond, though with a different face.
 "That ancient, with his sweeping beard of snow,
 "By nought impeded and so swift of pace,
 "Works the same end and purpose in our clime,
 "As are on earth below performed by Time.

XIX.

"The life of man its final close attains,
 "When on the wheel is wound the fatal twine;
 "There fume, and here above the mark remains;
 "For both would be immortal and divine,
 "But for that bearded sire's unwearied pains,
 "And his below, that for their wreck combine.
 "One drowns them, as thou seest, mid sand and surges,
 "And one in long forgetfulness immerses.

XX.

"And even, as here above, the raven, daw,
 "Vulture, and divers other birds of air,
 "All from the turbid water seek to draw
 "The names, which in their sight appear most fair;
 "Even thus below, pimps, flatterers, men of straw,
 "Buffoons, informers, minions, all who there
 "Flourish in courts, and in far better guise
 "And better odour, than the good and wise;

XXI.

"And by the crowd are gentle courtiers hight,
 "Because they imitate the ass and swine:
 "When the just Parca or (to speak aright)
 "Venus and Bacchus cut their master's twine,
 "—These base and sluggish dullards, whom I cite—
 "Born but to blow themselves with bread and wine,
 "In their vile mouths awhile such names convey,
 "Then drop the load, which is Oblivion's prey.

XXII.

- " But as the joyful swans, that, singing sweet,
 " Convey the medals safely to the fane,
 " So they whose praises poets well repeat,
 " Are rescued from oblivion, direr pain
 " Than death. O Princes, wary and discreet,
 " Than wisely tread in Cæsar's steps, and gain
 " Authors for friends! They doubt, it not, shall save
 " Your noble names from *Lethe's* lazy wave.

XXIII.

- " Rare as those gentle swans are poets too,
 " That well the poet's name have merited,
 " As well because it is Heaven's will, that few
 " Great rulers should the paths of glory tread,
 " As through foul fault of sordid lordlings, who
 " Let sacred Genius beg his daily bread;
 " Who putting down the Virtues, raise the tribe
 " Of Vices, and the liberal arts proscribe.

XXIV.

- " Believe it, that these ignorant men should be
 " Blind and deprived of judgment, is God's doom;
 " Who makes them loathe the light of poetry,
 " That envious Death may wholly them consume.
 " Besides that Song can quicken and set free
 " Him that is prisoned in the darksome tomb,
 " Though foul his name, if Cirrha him befriend,^s
 " Its savour myrrh and spikenard shall transcend.

XXV.

- " Æneas not so pious, nor of arm
 " So strong Achilles, Hector not so bold,
 " Was, as 'tis famed; and mid the nameless swarm,
 " Thousands and thousands higher rank might hold:
 " But gift of palace and of plenteous farm,
 " Bestowed by heirs of them, whose deeds they told,
 " Have moved the poet with his honoured hand,
 " To place them upon Glory's highest stand.

XXVI.

- " Augustus not so holy and benign
 " Was as great Virgil's trumpet sounds his name.
 " Because he savoured the harmonious line,
 " His foul proscription passes without blame.
 " That Nero was unjust would none divine,
 " Nor haply would he suffer in his fame,
 " Though Heaven and Earth were hostile, had he known
 " The means to make the tuneful tribe his own.

XXVII.

- " Homer a conqueror Agamemnon shows,⁶
 " And makes the Trojans seem of coward vein,
 " And from the suitors, faithful to her vows,
 " Penelope a thousand wrongs sustain :
 " Yet—would'st thou I the secret should expose ?—
 " By contraries throughout the tale explain :
 " That from the Trojan bands the Grecian run ;
 " And deem Penelope a courtesan.

XXVIII.

- " What fame Eliza, she so chaste of sprite,⁷
 " On the other hand, has left behind her, hear !
 " Who widely is a wanton baggage light,
 " Solely that she to Maro was not dear,
 " Marvel not this should cause me sore despite,
 " And if my speech diffusive should appear.
 " Authors I love, and pay the debt I owe,
 " Speaking their praise ; an author I below !⁸

XXIX.

- " There earned I, above all men, what no more
 " Time nor yet Death from me shall take away ;
 " And it behoved our Lord, of whom I bore
 " Such testimony, so my pains to pay.
 " It grieves me much for them, on whom her door
 " Courtesy closes on a stormy day ;
 " Who meagre, pale, and worn with hopeless suit,
 " Knock night and day, and ever without fruit.

XXX.

- " So that continuing what awhile was said,
 " Poets and scholars in small number are :
 " For, where they are unsheltered and unfed,
 " Even beasts desert the inhospitable lair."
 As thus the blessed ancient ended, red
 As two fierce fires, his eyes appeared to glare :
 Then, sagely smiling on the duke, his mien
 He changed anew from troubled to serene.

XXXI.

- Henceforth with that apostle let the peer
 Remain ; for I have now to make a spring
 As far as 'tis from heaven to earth ; for here
 I cannot hang for ever on the wing.
 I to the dame return, who was whilom
 Wounded by jealousy with cruel sting.
 I left her where, successively o'erthrown,
 Three kings she quickly upon earth had strown :

XXXII.

And afterwards arriving in a town,
 At eve, which on the road to Paris lay,
 Heard tidings of Rinaldo's victory blown;
 And how in Arles the vanquished paynim lay.
 —Sure, her Rogero with the king is gone—
 As soon as reappears the dawning day,
 Towards fair Provence, whither (as she hears)
 King Charlemagne pursues, her way she steers.

XXXIII.

She towards Provence, by the nearest road,
 So journeying, met a maid of mournful air;
 Who, though her cheeks with tears were overflowed,
 Was yet of visage and of manners fair.
 She was it, so transfixed with Love's keen goad,
 Who sighed for Monodante's valiant heir,*
 Who at the bridge had left her lord a thrall,
 When with King Rodomont he tried a fall.

XXXIV.

She sought one of an otter's nimbleness,
 By water and by land, a cavalier
 So fierce, that she that champion—to redress
 Her wrongs—might match against the paynim peer.
 When good Rogero's lady, comfortless,
 To that fair dame, as comfortless, drew near,
 Her she saluted courteously, and next
 Demanded by what sorrow she was vext.

XXXV.

Flordelice marked the maid, that, in her sight,
 Appeared a warrior fitted for her needs;
 And of the bridge and river 'gan recite,
 Where Argier's mighty king the road impedes
 And how he had gone nigh to slay her knight;
 Not that more doughty were the monarch's deeds;
 But that the wily paynim vantage-ground
 In that streight bridge and foaming river found.

XXXVI.

"Are you (she said) so daring and so kind,
 "As kind and daring you appear in show,
 "Venge me of him that has my lord confined,
 "And makes me wander thus, opprest with woe,
 "For love of Heaven; or teach me where to find
 "At least a knight who can resist the foe,
 "And of such skill that little boot shall bring
 "His bridge and river to the pagan king.

* Brandimart.

XXXVII.

" Besides that so you shall achieve an end,
 " Befitting courteous man and cavalier,
 " You will employ your valour to befriend
 " The faithfullest of lovers far and near.
 " His other virtues I should ill commend,
 " So many and so many, that whoe'er
 " Knoweth not these, may well be said to be
 " One without ears to hear or eyes to see."

XXXVIII.

The high-minded maid, to whom aye welcome are
 All noble quests, by which she worthily
 May hope a great and glorious name to bear,
 Straight to the paynim's bridge resolves to hie;
 And now so much the more—as in despair—
 Wends willingly, although it were to die:
 In that she, ever with herself at strife,
 Deeming Rogero lost, detested life.

XXXIX.

" O loving damsel (she made answer), I
 " Offer mine aid, for such as 'tis, to do
 " The hard and dread adventure, passing by
 " Causes beside that move me, most that you
 " A matter of your lover testify,
 " Which I, in sooth, hear warranted of few;
 " That he is constant; for i'faith I swear,
 " I well believed all lovers perjured were."

XL.

With these last words a sigh that damsel drew
 A sigh which issued from her heart; then said:
 " Go we;" and, with the following sun, those two
 At the deep stream arrived and bridge of dread:
 —Seen of the guard, that on his bugle blew
 A warning blast, when strangers thither sped—
 The pagan arms him, girds his goodly brand,
 And takes upon the bridge his wonted stand;

XLI.

And as the maid appears in martial scale,
 The moody monarch threatens her to slay,
 Unless her goodly courser and her mail
 As an oblation to the tomb she pay.
 Fair Bradamant, who knew the pitcous tale,
 How murdered by him Isabella lay,
 The story gentle Flordelice had taught;
 Replied in answer to that paynim haught.

XLII.

- " Wherefore, O brutish man, for your misdeed
 " Should penance by the innocent be done ?
 " 'Tis fitting to appease her you should bleed ;
 " You killed her, and to all the deed is known.
 " So that, of trophied armour or of weed
 " Of those so many, by your lance o'erthrown,
 " Your armour should the best oblation be,
 " And you the choicest victim slain, by me ;

XLIII.

- " And dearer shall the gift be from my hand ;
 " Since I a woman am, as she whilere ;
 " Nor save to venge her have I sought this strand ;
 " In this desire alone I hither steer :
 " But first, 'tis good some pact we understand,
 " Before we prove our prowess with the spear :
 " You shall do by me, if o'erthrown, what you
 " By other prisoners have been wont to do.

XLIV.

- " But if, as I believe and trust, you fall,
 " I will your horse and armour have (she cried),
 " And taking down all others from the wall,
 " Hang on the tomb alone those arms of pride ;
 " And will that you release each warlike thrall."
 —" The pact is just (King Rodomont replied),
 " But those, my prisoners, are not here confined,
 " And therefore cannot be to you consigned.

XLV.

- " These have I sent into mine Africk reign ;
 " But this I promise thee, and pledge my fay ;
 " If, by strange fortune, thou thy seat maintain,
 " And I shall be dismounted in the fray ;
 " Delivered, all, shall be the captive train,
 " Within what time suffices to convey
 " An order thither, that ' they out of hand
 " Should do what thou, if conqueror, may'st command.

XLVI.

- " But art thou undermost, as fitter were,
 " And, as thou surely wilt be, I from thee
 " Not therefore will thy forfeit armour tear,
 " Nor shall thy name inscribed, as vanquished, be.
 " To thy bright face, bright eyes, and beauteous hair,
 " All breathing love and grace, the victory
 " Will I resign ; let it suffice that thou
 " Then stoop to love me, as thou hatest now.

XLVII.

“ To fall by me thou needest not disdain ;
 “ I with such strength, such nerve am fortified.”
 Somedea! she smiled ; but smiled in bitter vein ;
 Savouring of anger more than aught beside.
 She spake not to that haughty man again,
 To the bridge-end returned the damsel, plied
 Her courser with the rowels, couched her spear,
 And rode to meet the furious cavalier.

XLVIII.

King Rodomont prepares his course to run ;
 Comes on at speed ; and with such mighty sound
 Echoes that bridge, the thundering noise might stun
 The ears of many distant from the ground.
 The golden lance its wonted work has done ;
 For that fierce Moor, in tourney so renowned,
 This from the saddle lifts, in air suspends,
 Then headlong on the narrow bridge extends.

XLIX.

Scarce for her horse the martial damsel can
 Find space to pass, when she has thrown her foe ;
 And little lacked, and mighty risk she ran
 Of falling into that deep stream below :
 But, born of wind and flame, good Rabican
 So dextrous was, and could so lightly go,
 He picked a path along the outer ledge,
 And could have paced upon a faulchion's edge.

L.

The damsel wheeled, towards the cavalier
 Returned, and him bespoke in sportive way ;
 “ Who is the loser now to thee is clear,
 “ And who is undermost in this assay.”
 Silent remained the monarch of Argier,
 Amazed, that woman him on earth should lay.
 He cannot, or he will not speak ; and lies
 On earth, like one astound, in idiot guise.

LI.

Silent and sad, he raised himself from ground,
 And when he some few paces thence had gone,
 His shield unbraced and helm and mail unbound,
 He flung against the tomb ; and thence, alone,
 Afoot the moody monarch left that ground :
 Yet not till he had given command to one
 (Of his four squires was he) to do his best
 Relating to those captives, as express.

LII.

He parts ; and save that in a caverned cell
 He dwelt, no further news of him were known :
 Meanwhile the harness of that insidel
 Bradamant hung upon the lofty stone ;
 And having thence removed all plate and shell
 Wherewith (as by the writing it was shown)
 The cavaliers of Charles their limbs had drest,
 She moved not, nor let other move, the rest.

LIII.

Besides the arms of Monodantes' heir
 Were those of Sansonnet and Olivier,
 Who, bound in search of good Orlando, were
 Thither conducted by the road most near.
 The day before here taken was the pair,
 And sent by that proud paynim to Argier :
 These warriors' arms the martial maid bade lower
 From that fair tomb, and stored them in the tower.

LIV.

All others, taken from the paynim train,
 Bradamant left suspended from the stone ;
 'Mid these a king's, that idly and in vain,
 Had thither, seeking Frontalatte, gone :
 I say his arms, that ruled Circassia's reign ;
 Who, after wandering long, by dale and down,
 Here to his grief another courser left,
 And lightly went his way, of arms bereft.

LV.

Stript of his armour and afoot, did part
 That paynim monarch from the bridge of dread ;
 As Rodomont permitted to depart
 Those other knights that in his faith were bred :
 But to his camp to wend he had no heart,
 For there he was ashamed to show his head :
 Since, in such fashion, thither to return
 After his boasts, had been too foul a scorn.

LVI.

Yet still with new desire the warrior burned
 To seek her, fixed alone in his heart's core ;
 And such the monarch's chance, he quickly learned
 (I cannot tell you who the tidings bore)
 She was towards her native land returned.
 Hence, as Love spurs and goads him evermore,
 He bows him straight her footsteps to pursue :
 But I to Bradamant return anew.

LVII.

When she in other writing had displayed
 How she had freed that passage from the foe,
 To mournful Flordelice the martial maid,
 She that still held her weeping visage low,
 Turned her, and courteously that lady prayed
 To tell her whither she designed to go.
 To her afflicted Flordelice replied :
 " To Arles, where camp the paynims, would I ride.

LVIII.

" Which bark (I hope) and fitting company,
 " To carry me to Africk may afford ;
 " Nor will I halt upon my way, till I
 " Once more rejoin my husband and my lord ;
 " All means and measures there resolved to try,
 " That may release him from his jailer's ward ;
 " And should the Saracen deceitful prove,
 " Others, and others yet, I mean to move."

LIX.

" My company (replied the martial fair)
 " For some part of the road, I offer thee,
 " Till we have sight of Arles ; then to repair
 " Thither, will pray you, for the love of me,
 " To find King Agramant's Rogero there,
 " Whose glorious name is spread o'er land and sea,
 " And render to that knight this goodly horse,
 " Whence the proud Moor was flung in martial course.

LX.

" Say thus, from point to point, ' A cavalier
 ' That would in combat prove his chivalry,
 ' And to the world at large would fain make clear
 ' Thy breach of faith with him, that thou may'st be
 ' Ready and well prepared for the career,
 ' Gave me this horse, that I might give it thee.
 ' He bids thee promptly mail and corslet dight,
 ' And wait him, who with thee will wage the fight.'

LXI.

" Say this and nought beside, and would he hear
 " My name, declare that 'tis to thee unknown."
 With wonted kindness cried that dame, " I ne'er
 " In spending life itself, not words alone,
 " Should weary in your service ; since whilere
 " You would in my behalf as much have done."
 Her Aymon's daughter thanked in courteous strain,
 And to her hand consigned Frontino's rein.

LXII.

Through long days' journeys, by that river-shore,
 Together go the lovely pilgrim pair,
 Till they see Arles, and hear the hollow roar
 Of billows breaking on the sea-beach bare.
 Almost without the suburbs, and before
 The furthest barrier, stops the martial fair ;
 To furnish Flordelice what time might need
 For the conveyance of Rogero's steed.

LXIII.

She forward rode, within the enclosure sped,
 And o'er the bridge and through the gateway wended,
 And (furnished with a guide, who thither led)
 To young Rogero's inn ; and there descended.
 She to the Child, as bid, her message said,
 And gave the courser, to her care commended :
 Then (for she waits not for an answer) speeds
 In haste to execute her proper needs.

LXIV.

Rogero stands confused ; he finds no end
 To his perplexing thoughts, and cannot see
 Who should defy him, who that message send,
 To speak him ill, and do him courtesy.
 Who thus as faithless him should reprehend,
 Or any reprehend, who'er it be,
 Nor knows he nor imagines ; least of all
 On Bradamant the knight's suspicions fall.

LXV.

To think 'twas Rodomont the youthful peer
 Was more inclined than any other wight ;
 And wherefore even from him he this should hear,
 Muses, nor can the cause divine aright ;
 Save him, in all the world the cavalier
 Knows not of one, that has him at despite.
 Meanwhile Dordona's lady craved the field ;
 And loud that martial damsel's bugle pealed.

LXVI.

To Agramant and King Marsilius flew
 The news, that one craved battle on the plain.
 Serpentine stood by chance before the two,
 And gained their leave to don his plate and chain,
 And vowed to take that haughty man ; the crew
 Of people over wall and rampart strain ;
 Nor child nor elder was there, but he pressed
 To see which champion should bestir him best.

LXVII.

In beauteous arms and costly surcoat drest,
 Serpentine of the star to combat sped ;
 The ground he at the first encounter prest ;
 As if equipt with wings, his courser fled.
 The damsel flew his charger to arrest,
 And by the bridle to that paynim led,
 Exclaiming ; " Mount, and bid your monarch send
 " A knight that better can with me contend."

LXVIII.

The Moorish king, that on the rampart's height
 Stood, with a mighty following, next the plain.
 Marking the joust, much marvelled at the sight
 Of the foe's courtesy to him of Spain.*
 " He takes him not, although he may of right,"
 He cries i' the hearing of the paynim train.
 Serpentine comes, and, as the maid commands,
 A better warrior of that king demands.

LXIX.

Grandonio de Volterra, fierce of mood,
 And in all Spain the proudest cavalier,
 The second for that fell encounter stood,
 Such favour had his suit obtained whilere
 " To thee thy courtesy shall do no good,"
 He threats, " for if unhorsed in the career,
 " A prisoner to my lord shalt thou be led ;
 " But, if I fight as wonted, thou art dead."

LXX.

She cries, " I would not thy discourtesy
 " Should make me so forget my courteous vein,
 " But that aforehand I should caution thee
 " Back to thy fortress to return again,
 " Ere on hard earth thy bones shall battered be.
 " Go tell thy king no champion of thy grain
 " I seek, but hither come to crave the fight
 " With warrior that is worthy of my might."

LXXI.

Bradamant's sharp and stinging answer stirred
 The paynim's fury to a mighty flame ;
 So that, without the power to speak a word,
 He wheeled his courser, filled with rage and shame ;
 Wheeling as well, at that proud paynim spurred
 Her horse with levelled lance the warlike dame.
 As the charmed weapon smites Grandonio's shield,
 With heels in air, he tumbles on the field.

* Serpentine.

LXXII.

To him the high-minded damsel gave his horse,
 And said, "Yet was this fate to thee foreshown,
 "Instead of craving thus the knightly course,
 "Better mine embassy wouldst thou have done.
 "Some other knight, that equals me in force,
 "I pray thee bid the Moorish king send down,
 "Nor weary me, by forcing me to meet
 "Champions like thee, untried in martial feat."

LXXIII.

They on the walls, that know not who the peer
 That in the joust so well maintains his seat,
 Name many a warrior, famous in career,
 That often make them shake in fiercest heat.
 Brandimart many deem the cavalier;
 More guesses in renowned Rinaldo meet:
 Many would deem Orlando was the knight,
 But that they knew his pitiable plight.

LXXIV.

The third encounter craved Lanfusa's son,*
 And cried, "Not that I better hope to fare,
 "But that to warriors who this course have run,
 "My fall may furnish an excuse more fair."
 Next, with all arms that martial jousts don,
 Clothed him, and of a hundred steeds that were
 Ready for service, kept in lordly stall,
 For speed and action chose the best of all.

LXXV.

He bowed him for the tourney, on his side,
 But first saluted her and she the knight.
 "If 'tis allowed to ask," (the lady cried,)
 "Tell me in courtesy how ye are hight."
 In this Ferrau the damsel satisfied,
 Who rarely hid himself from living wight.
 "Ye will I not refuse," (subjoined the dame,)
 "Albeit I to meet another came."

LXXVI.

—"And who?" the Spaniard said:—the maid replied,
 "Rogeró;" and pronounced the word with pain.
 And, in so saying, her fair face was dyed
 All over with the rose's crimson grain.
 She after added, "Hither have I hied,
 "To prove how justly famed his might and main.
 "No other care have I, no other call,
 "But with that gentle youth to try a fall."

* Ferrau.

LXXVII.

She spoke the word in all simplicity,
 Which some already may in malice wrest.
 Ferrau replied, " Assured I first must be
 " Which of us two is schooled in warfare best.
 " If what has chanced to many, falls on me,
 " Hither, when I return, shall be address,
 " To mend my fault, that gentle cavalier,
 " With whom you so desire to break a spear."

LXXVIII.

Discoursing all this while, the martial maid
 Spake with her beavor up, without disguise:
 Ferrau, as that fair visage he surveyed,
 Perceived he was half vanquished by its eyes.
 And to himself, in under tone, he said,
 " He seems an angel sent from Paradise;
 " And, though he should not harm me with his lance,
 " I am already quelled by that sweet glance."

LXXIX.

They take their ground, and to the encounter ride,
 And, like those others, Ferrau goes to ground;
 His courser Bradamant retained, and cried,
 " Return, and keep thy word with me as bound."
 Shamed, he returned, and by his monarch's side,
 Among his peers, the young Rogero found;
 And let the stripling know the stranger knight,
 Without the walls, defied him to the fight

LXXX.

Rogero (for not yet that warrior knows
 What champion him in duel would assail)
 Nigh sure of victory, with transport glows,
 And bids his followers bring his plate and mail;
 Nor having seen beneath those heavy blows
 The rest dismounted, makes his spirit quail.
 But how he armed, how sallied, what befel
 That knight, in other canto will I tell.

CANTO XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

*While with the fierce Marphisa at despite
Duke Aymon's daughter wages fierce affray,
One and the other host engage in fight,
With Bradamant Rogero wends his way.
With other war disturbs their great delight
Marphisa bold; but when that martial may
Hlas for her brother recognized the peer,
They end their every strife with joyous cheer.*

I.

WHERE'ER they be, all hearts of gentle strain
Still cannot choose but courtesy pursue;
For they from nature and from habit gain
What they henceforth can never more undo.
Alike the heart that is of churlish vein,
Where'er it be, its evil kind will shew.
Nature inclines to ill, through all her range,
And use is second nature, hard to change.

II.

Among the warriors of antiquity
Much gentleness and courtesy appear,
Virtues but seldom seen with us; while we
Of evil ways, on all sides, see and hear.
Hippolytus, when you, with ensigury
Won from the foe, and with his captive gear
Adorned our temples; and his galleys bore,
Laden with prey, to your paternal shore;

III.

All the inhuman deeds which wrought by hand
Of Moor, or Turk, or Tartar ever were,
(Yet not by the Venetians' ill command,
That evermore the praise of justice bear,
Were practised by that foul and evil band
Of soldiers, who their mercenaries are.
Of those so many fires not now I tell
Which on our farms and pleasant places fell.

IV.

Though a foul vengeance in that blow was meant
Mainly at you, who being at Cæsar's side,
When Padua by his leaguering host was pent,
'Twas known, that oft, through you, was turned aside
More than one ravening flame, and oft was spent
The fire, in fane and village blazing wide:
What time the destined mischief ye withstood,
As to your inborn courtesy seemed good.

V.

This will I pass, nor their so many more
 Discourteous and despiteous doings tell,
 Save one alone, whereat from rock-stone hoar
 Whene'er the tale is told warm tears might well.
 That day you sent your family before,
 Thither, my lord, where, under omens fell,
 Your foes into a well-protected seat,
 Abandoning their barks, had made retreat.

VI.

As Hector and Æneas, mid the flood,
 Fire to the banded fleet of Greece applied,
 I Hercules and Alexander view'd,
 Urged by too sovereign ardour, side by side,
 Spurring before all others in their mood,
 Even within the hostile ramparts ride ;
 And prick so far, the second 'scaped with pain,
 And on the foremost closed the opposing train.

VII.

Feruffine 'scaped, the good Cantelmo left.
 What counsel, Sora's duke, was thine, what heart,
 When thy bold son thou saw'st, of helm bereft,
 Amid a thousand swords, when—dragged apart—
 Thou saw'st his young head from his shoulders cleft,
 A-shipboard, on a plank ? I, on my part,
 Marvel, that seeing but the murder done,
 Slew thee not, as the faulchion slew thy son.

VIII.

Cruel Slavonian ! say, whence hast thou brought
 Thy ways of warfare ? By what Scythian rite
 To slay the helpless prisoner is it taught,
 Who yields his arms, nor fends himself in fight ?
 Was it a crime he for his country fought ?
 Ill upon thee the sun bestows his light.
 Remorseless era, which hast filled the page
 With Atreus', Tantalus', Thyestes' rage !

IX.

Barbarian ! thou madest shorter by the head
 The boldest of his age, on whom did beam
 The sun 'twixt pole and pole, 'twixt Indus' bed
 And where he sinks in Ocean's western stream ;
 Whose years and beauty might have pity bred
 In Anthropophagus, in Polypheme ;
 Not thee : that art in wickedness outdone
 By any Cyclops, any Lestrigon.

X.

I ween, mid warriors in the days of yore,
 No such example was; they all, in field,
 Were full of gentleness and courteous lore,
 Nor against conquered foe their bosom steeled.
 Not only gentle Bradamant forbore
 To harm the knights whom, smitten on the shield,
 Her lance unhorsed; but for the vanquished crew
 Detained their steeds, that they might mount anew.

XI.

I of that lady fair, of mickle might,
 Told you above, how she had overthrown
 Serpentine of the Star in single fight,
 Grandonio and Ferrau, and then upon
 Their coursers had replaced each baffled knight.
 I told moreover how the third was gone
 Rogero to defy to the career,
 Upon her call, who seemed a cavalier.

XII.

Rogero heard the call in joyous vein,
 And bade his arms be brought; now while in view
 Of Agramant he donned the plate and chain,
 Those lords the former question moved anew;
 'Who was the knight, that on the martial plain
 'The manage of the lance so quaintly knew?'
 And of Ferrau, who spake with him whilere,
 Craved, if to him was known that cavalier.

XIII.

"Be ye assured," to them Ferrau replied,
 "He is not one of those I hear you cite
 "To me (for I his open face descried).
 "Rinaldo's youthful brother seemed the knight.
 "But since his doughty valour I have tried,
 "And wot not such is Richardetto's might,
 "I ween it is his sister, who, I hear,
 "Resembles much in mien that martial peer.

XIV.

"The damsel equals well, so Rumour tells,
 "Rinaldo, and every paladin in fray:
 "But brother she and cousin* both excels,
 "Measured by that which I have seen to-day."
 Hearing him, while upon her praise he dwells,
 As the sky reddens with the morning ray,
 Rogero's face is flushed with crimson hue,
 And his heart throbs, nor knows he what to do.

* Rinaldo and Orlando.

XV.

Stung, at these tidings, by the amorous dart—
 Within, new fire inflames the cavalier;
 And straight, together with the burning smart,
 Shoots through his bones a chill, produced by fear;
 Fear, that new wrath had stifled in her heart
 That mighty love, wherewith she burned whileere.
 Confused he stands, irresolute and slow,
 And undecided if to stay or go.

XVI.

Now fierce Marphisa, who was there, and prest
 By huge desire to meet the stranger wight,
 And armed withal (for, save in iron vest,
 Her seldom would you find by day or night),
 Hearing Rogero is in armour drest,
 Fearing to lose the honour of the fight,
 If first that champion with the stranger vies;
 Thinks to prevent the youth and win the prize.

XVII.

She leapt upon her horse, and thither hied
 Where Aymon's daughter on the listed plain,
 With palpitating heart, upon her side,
 Waited Rogero; whom the damsel fain
 Would make her prisoner, and but schemed to guide
 Her lance in mode the stripling least to pain.
 Marphisa from the city portal fares,
 And on her gallant helm a phoenix wears.

XVIII.

Whether the maid would publish, in her pride,
 That she was single in the world, for might;
 Or whether by that symbol signified,
 That she would live, exempt from bridal rite.
 Her closely Aymon's martial daughter eyed;
 When seeing not those features, her delight,
 She craves the damsel's name before they move,
 And hears that it is she who joys her love:

XIX.

Or rather she, that gentle lady thought,
 Had joyed her love; and whom she hated so,
 Her to Death's door her anger would have brought,
 Unless she venged her sorrow on the foe.
 She wheeled her courser round, with fury fraught,
 Less with desire to lay her rival low,
 Than with the lance to pierce her in mid breast,
 And put her every jealousy at rest.

XX.

Parforce to ground must go the royal maid,
 To prove if hard or soft the listed plain,
 And be with such unwonted scorn appaid,
 That she is nearly maddened by disdain.
 Scarce was she thrown, before her trenchant blade
 She bared, and hurried to avenge the stain.
 Cried Aymon's daughter, no less proud of heart,
 "What art thou doing? Thou my prisoner art."

XXI.

"Though I have courtesy for others, none"
 (She said) "from me, Marphisa, shalt thou find.
 "Since evermore I hear of thee, as one
 "To pride and every churlishness inclined."
 Marphisa, at these words, was heard to groan,
 As roars in some sea-rock the prisoned wind.
 She screamed an answer; but its sense was drowned
 (Such rage confused that damsel) in the sound.

XXII.

She whirls this while her faulchion, and would fain
 Wound horse or rider in the paunch or breast;
 But Aymon's watchful daughter turns the rein;
 And on one side her courser leaps; possest
 With furious anger and with fierce disdain,
 She at her opposite her lance addrest;
 And hardly touch'd the damsel, ere, astound,
 Marphisa fell, reversed upon the ground.

XXIII.

Scarce down, Marphisa started from the plain,
 Intent fell mischief with her sword to do,
 Bradamant couched her golden spear again,
 And yet again the damsel overthrew.
 Yet Bradamant, though blest with might and main,
 Was not so much the stronger of the two
 As to have flung the maid in every just,
 But that such power was in the lance's thrust.

XXIV.

This while some knights (some knights upon our side,
 I say) forth issuing from the city, go
 Towards the field of strife, which did divide
 The squadrons, here and there, of either foe
 —Not half a league of one another wide—
 Seeing their knight such mighty prowess show:
 Their knight, but whom no otherwise they knew
 Than as a warrior of the christian crew.

XXV.

Troyano's generous son, who had espied
 This band approaching to the city-wall,
 For due defence would every means provide,
 And every peril, every case forestall :
 And orders many to take arms, who ride
 Forth from the ramparts, at the monarch's call.
 With them Rogero goes, in armour eused,
 Balked of the battle by Marphisa's haste.

XXVI.

The enamoured youth, with beating heart, intent,
 Stood by, the issue of the just to view.
 For his dear consort fearing the event,
 In that he well Marphisa's valour know
 —At the beginning I would say—when, bent
 On mischief, fiercely closed the furious two :
 But when that duel's turn the stripling eyes,
 He stands amazed and stupid with surprise ;

XXVII.

And when he saw unfinished was the fight,
 At the first onset, like the justs whilere,
 Misdoubting some strange accident, in sprite,
 Sore vexed, this while remained the cavalier.
 To either maid wished well that youthful knight ;
 For both were loved, but not alike were dear.
 For *this* the stripling's love was fury, fire ;
 For *that* 'twas rather fondness than desire.

XXVIII.

If so Rogero could with honour do,
 He willingly the warriors would divide ;
 But his companions, in the fear to view
 Victory with King Charles's knight abide,
 Esteeming him the better of the two,
 Break in between and turn their arms aside ;
 Upon the other part, the christian foes
 Advance, and both divisions come to blows.

XXIX.

On this side and that other, rings the alarm,
 Which in those camps is sounded every day.
 Bidding the unmounted mount, the unarmed arm,
 And all their standards seek, without delay,
 Where, under separate flags, the squadrons swarm,
 More than one shrilling trump is heard to bray ;
 And as their rattling notes the riders call,
 Rousing the foot, beat drum and ataball.

XXX.

As fierce as thought could think, 'twixt either host
 Kindled the fell and sanguinary fray.
 The daring damsel, fair Dordona's boast,
 Sore vexed and troubled, that in the affray
 She cannot compass what she covets most,
 —Marphisa with avenging steel to slay,—
 Now here, now there, amid the medley flies,
 Hoping to see the youth for whom she sighs.

XXXI.

By the eagle argent on the shield of blue
 She recognized Rogero, mid the rest.
 With eyes and thought intent, she stops to view
 The warrior's manly shoulders and his breast,
 Fair face and movements full of graceful shew ;
 And then the maid, with mickle spite possest,
 Thinking another joys the stripling's love,
 Thus speaks, as sovereign rage and fury move.

XXXII.

" Shall thou another kiss those lips so bright
 " And sweet, if those fair lips are lost to me ?
 " Ah ! never other shall in thee delight ;
 " For if not mine, no other's shalt thou be.
 " Rather than die alone and of despite,
 " I with this hand will slay myself and thee,
 " That if I lose thee here, at least in hell
 " With thee I to eternity may dwell.

XXXIII.

" If thou slay'st me, there is good reason, I
 " The comfort too of vengeance should obtain ;
 " In that all edicts and all equity
 " The death of him that causes death ordain ;
 " Nor, since you justly, I unjustly, die,
 " Deem I that thine is equal to my pain.
 " I him who seeks my life, alas ! shall spill,
 " Thou her that loves and worships thee wouldst kill.

XXXIV.

" My hand, why hast thou not the hardiment
 " To rive with steel the bosom of my foe,
 " That me so many times to death has shent,
 " Under the faith of love, in peaceful show ;
 " Him, who to take my life can now consent,
 " Nor even have pity of my cruel woe ?
 " Dare, valiant heart, this impious man to slay,
 " And let his death my thousand deaths appay !"

XXXV.

So said, she spurred at him amid the throng ;
 But, first—"Defend thee, false Rogero!"—cried.
 "No more, if I have power, in spoil and wrong,
 "Done to a virgin heart, shalt thou take pride."
 Hearing that voice the hostile ranks among,
 He deems—and truly deems—he hears his bride ;
 Whose voice the youth remembers in such wise,
That mid a thousand would he recognize.

XXXVI.

Her further meaning well did he divine,
 Weening that him she in that speech would blame,
 For having broke their pact ; and—with design,
 The occasion of his failure to proclaim,—
 Of his desire for parley made a sign :
 But she, with vizard closed, already came,
 Raging and grieved, intent, with vengeful hand,
 To fling the youth ; nor haply upon sand.

XXXVII.

Rogero, when he saw her so offended,
 Fixed himself firmly in his arms and seat.
 He resta his lance, but holds the stave suspended,
 So that it shall not harm her when they meet.
 She that to smite and pierce the Child intended,
 Pitiless, and inflamed with furious heat,
 Has not the courage, when she sees him near,
 To fling, or do him outrage with the spear.

XXXVIII.

Void of effect, 'tis thus their lances go ;
 And it is well ; since Love with burning dart,
 Tilting this while at one and the other foe,
 Has lanced the enamoured warriors in mid-heart.
 Unable at the Child to aim her blow,
 The lady spent her rage in other part,
 And mighty deeds achieved, which fame will earn
 While overhead the circling heavens shall turn.

XXXIX.

Above three hundred men in that affray
 In little space by her dismounted lie.
 Alone that warlike damsel wins the day ;
 From her alone the Moorish people fly.
 To her Rogero, circling, threads his way,
 And says ; "Unless I speak with you I die.
 "Hear me, for love of heaven!—what have I done,
 "Alas ! that ever mine approach ye shun?"

XL.

As when soft southern breezes are unpent,
 Which with a tepid breath from seaward blow,
 The snows dissolve, and torrents find a vent,
 And ice, so hard erewhile, is seen to flow ;
 At those entreaties, at that brief lament,
 Rinaldo's sister's heart is softened so ;
 Forthwith compassionate and pious grown ;
 Which anger fain had made more hard than stone.

XLI.

Would she not, could she not, she nought replied,
 But spurred aslant the ready Rabicane,
 And, signing to Rogero, rode as wide
 As she could wend from that embattled train ;
 Then to a sheltered valley turned aside,
 Wherein embosomed was a little plain.
 In the mid lawn a wood of eypress grew,
 Whose saplings of one stamp appeared to view.

XLII.

Within that thicket, of white marble wrought,
 Is a proud monument, and newly made ;
 And he that makes enquiry, here is taught
 In few brief verses who therein is laid.
 But of those lines, methinks, took little thought,
 Fair Bradamant, arriving in the glade.
 Rogero spurred his courser, and pursued
 And overtook that damsel in the wood.

XLIII.

But turn we to Marphisa, that anew
 During this space was seated on her steed,
 And sought again the valiant champion, who
 At the first onset cast her on the mead ;
 And saw, how from the mingling host withdrew
 Rogero, after that strange knight to speed ;
 Nor deemed the youth pursued in love ; she thought
 He but to end their strife and quarrel sought.

XLIV.

She pricks her horse behind the two, and gains,
 Well nigh as soon as they, that valley ; how
 Her coming thither either lover pains,
 Who lives and loves, untaught by me, may know :
 But sorest vexed sad Bradamant remains ;
 Beholding her whence all her sorrows flow.
 Who shall persuade the damsel but that love
 For young Rogero brings her to that grove ?

XLV.

And him perfidious she anew did name.

—“Perfidious, was it not enough (she said)
 “That I should know thy perfidy from fame,
 “But must the witness of thy guilt be made?
 “I wot, to drive me from thee is thine aim;
 “And I, that thy desires may be appaid,
 “Will die; but strive, in yielding up my breath,
 “She too shall die, the occasion of my death.”

XLVI.

Angrier than venom'd viper, with a bound,
 So saying, she upon Marphisa flies;
 And plants so well the spear, that she, astound,
 Fell backward on the champaigne in such guise,
 Nigh half her helm was buried in the ground:
 Nor was the damsel taken by surprise:
 Nay, did her best the encounter to withstand;
 Yet with her helmed head she smote the sand.

XLVII.

Bradamant who will die, or in that just
 Will put to death Marphisa, rages so,
 She has no mind again with lance to thrust,
 Again that martial maid to overthrow:
 But thinks her head to sever from the bust,
 Where it half buried lies, with murderous blow:
 Away the enchanted lance that damsel flings,
 Unsheathes the sword, and from her courser springs.

XLVIII.

But is too slow withal; for on her feet
 She finds Marphisa, with such fierce disdain
 Inflamed, at being in that second heat
 So easily reversed upon the plain,
 She hears in vain exclaim, in vain entreat,
 Rogero, who beholds their strife with pain.
 So blinded are the pair with spite and rage,
 That they with desperate fury battle wage.

XLIX.

At half-sword's length engage the struggling foes;
 And—such their stubborn mood—with shortened brand
 They still approach, and now so fiercely close,
 They cannot choose but grapple, hand to hand.
 Her sword, no longer needful, each foregoes;
 And either now new means of mischief planned.
 Rogero both implores with earnest suit;
 But supplicates the twain with little fruit.

L.

When he entreaties unavailing found,
 The youth prepared by force to part the two :
 Their poniards snatched away, and on the ground,
 Beneath a cypress-tree, the daggers threw.
 When they no weapons have wherewith to wound,
 With prayer and threat, he interferes anew ;
 But vainly ; for, since better weapons lack,
 Each other they with fists and feet attack.

LI.

Rogero ceased not from his task ; he caught,
 By hand or arm, the fiercely struggling pair,
 Till to the utmost pitch of fury wrought
 The fell Marphisa's angry passions were.
 She, that this ample world esteemed at nought,
 Of the Child's friendship had no further care.
 Plucked from the foe, she ran to seize her sword,
 And fastened next upon that youthful lord.

LII.

" Like a discourteous man and churl ye do,
 " Rogero to disturb another's fight ;
 " A deed (she cried) this hand shall make ye rue,
 " Which, I intend, shall vanquish both." The knight
 Sought fierce Marphisa's fury to subdue
 With gentle speech ; but full of such despite
 He found her, and inflamed with such disdain,
 All parley was a waste of time and pain.

LIII.

At last his faulchion young Rogero drew ;
 For ire as well had flushed that cavalier :
 Nor it is my belief, that ever shew
 Athens or Rome, or city whatsoe'er
 Witnessed, which ever so rejoiced the view,
 As this rejoices, as this sight is dear
 To Bradamant, when, through their strife displaced,
 Every suspicion from her breast is chased.

LIV.

Bradamant took her sword, and to descry
 The duel of those champions stood apart.
 The god of war, descended from the sky,
 She deemed Rogero, for his strength and art :
 If he seemed Mars, Marphisa to the eye
 Seemed an infernal Fury, on her part.
 'Tis true, that for a while the youthful knight
 Against that damsel put not forth his might.

LV.

He knew the virtues of that weapon well,
 Such proof thereof the knight erewhile had made.
 Where'er it falls parforce is every spell
 Annulled, or by its stronger virtue stayed.
 Hence so Rogero smote, it never fell
 Upon its edge or point, but still the blade
 Descended flat: he long this rule observes;
 Yet once he from his patient purpose swerves.

LVI.

In that, a mighty stroke Marphisa sped,
 Meaning to cleave the brainpan of her foe:
 He raised the buckler to defend his head,
 And the sword smote upon its bird of snow,
 Nor broke nor bruised the shield, by spell bested;
 But his arm rang astounded by the blow;
 Nor aught but Hector's mail the sword had stopt,
 Whose furious blow would his left arm have lopt;

LVII.

And had upon his head descended shear,
 Whereat designed to strike the savage fair.
 Scarce his left arm can good Rogero rear;
 Can scarce the shield and blazoned bird upbear.
 All pity he casts off, and 'twould appear
 As in his eyes a lighted torch did glare.
 As hard as he can smite, he smites; and woo
 To thee, Marphisa, if he plants the blow!

LVIII.

I cannot tell you truly in what wise
 That faulchion swerves against a cypress-stock,
 In such close-serried ranks the saplings rise,
 Buried above a palm within the block.
 At this the mountain and the plain that lies
 Beneath it, with a furious earthquake rock;
 And from that marble monument proceeds
 A voice, that every mortal voice exceeds.

LIX.

The horrid voice exclaims, "Your quarrel leave;
 "For 'twere a deed unjust and inhumane,
 "That brother should of life his sister reave,
 "Or sister by her brother's hand be slain.
 "Rogero and Marphisa mine, believe!
 "The tale which I deliver is not vain.
 "Seed of one father, in one womb ye lay;
 "And first together saw the light of day.

LX.

- " Galaciella's children are ye, whom
 " She to Rogero, hight the second, bare.
 " Whose brothers, having, by unrighteous doom,
 " Of your unhappy sire deprived that fair,
 " Not heeding that she carried in her womb
 " Ye, who yet suckers of their lineage are,
 " Her in a rotten carcase of a boat,
 " To founder in mid ocean, set afloat.

LXI.

- " But Fortune, that had destined you whilere,
 " And yet unborn, to many a fair emprise,
 " Your mother to that lonely shore did steer,
 " Which overright the sandy Syrtes lies.
 " Where, having given you birth, that spirit dear
 " Forthwith ascended into Paradise.
 " A witness of the piteous case was I,
 " So heaven had willed, and such your destiny !

LXII.

- " I to the dame as decent burial gave
 " As could be given upon that desert sand.
 " Ye, well enveloped in my vest, I save,
 " And bear to Mount Carena from the strand ;
 " And make a lioness leave whelps and cave,
 " And issue from the wood, with semblance bland.
 " Ye, twice ten months, with mickle foudness bred
 " And from her paps the milky mother fed.

LXIII.

- " Needing to quit my home upon a day,
 " And journey through the country, (as you can
 " Haply remember ye) we on our way
 " Were overtaken by an Arab clan.
 " Those robbers thee, Marphisa, bore away ;
 " While young Rogero 'scaped, who better ran.
 " Bereaved of thee, thy woful loss I wept,
 " And with more watchful care thy brother kept.

LXIV.

- " Rogero, if Atlantes watched thee well,
 " While yet he was alive, thou best dost know.
 " I the fixed stars had heard of thee foretold,
 " That thou shouldst perish by a treacherous foe
 " In Christian land ; and till their influence fell
 " Was ended, laboured to avert the blow ;
 " Nor having power in fine thy will to guide,
 " I sickened sore, and of my sorrow died.

LXV.

" But here, before my death, for in this glade
 " I knew thou should'st with bold Marphisa fight,
 " I with huge stones, amassed by hellish aid,
 " Had this fair monument of marble dight ;
 " And I to Charon with loud outcries said ;
 " I would not he should hence convey my sprite,
 " Till here, prepared in deadly fray to strive,
 " Rogero and his sister should arrive."

LXVI.

Thus has my spirit for this many a day
 " Waited thy coming in these beauteous groves ;
 " So be no more to jealous fears a prey,
 " O Bradamant, because Rogero loves.
 " But me to quit the cheerful realms of day,
 " And seek the darksome cloisters it behoves."
 Here ceased the voice ; which in the Child amazed
 And those two damsels mighty marvel raised.

LXVII.

Gladly a sister in the martial queen
 Rogero, she in him a brother knows ;
 Who now embrace, nor move her jealous spleen,
 That with the love of young Rogero glows ;
 And citing what, and when, and where had been
 Their childish deeds, as they to memory hold,
 In summing up past time, more sure thy rove
 The things whereof the wizard's spirit told.

LXVIII.

Rogero from Marphisa does not hide,
 How Bradamant to him at heart is dear ;
 And by what obligations he is tied
 In moving words relates the cavalier ;
 Nor ceases till he has, on either side,
 Turned to firm love the hate they bore whilero.
 When, as a sign of peace, and discord chased,
 They, at his bidding, tenderly embraced.

LXIX.

Marphisa to Rogero makes request
 " To say what sire was theirs, and what their strain ;
 " And how he died ; by banded foes opprest,
 " Or at close barriers, was the warrior slain ?
 " And who it was had issued the behest
 " To drown their mother in the stormy main ?
 " For of the tale, if ever heard before,
 " Little or nothing she in memory bore."

LXX.

- " Of Trojan ancestors are we the seed,
 " Through famous Hector's line," (Rogerò said.)
 " For after young Astyanax was freed,¹
 " From fierce Ulysses and the toils he spread,
 " Leaving another stripling in his stead,
 " Of his own age, he out of Phrygia fled.
 " Who, after long and wide sea-wandering, gained
 " Sicily's shore, and in Messina reigned.

LXXI.

- " Part of Calabria within Faro held
 " The warrior's heirs, who after a long run
 " Of successors, departed thence and dwelled
 " In Mars' imperial city : more than one
 " Famed king and emperor, who that list have swelled,
 " In Rome and other part has filled the throne ;
 " And from Constantius and good Constantine,
 " Stretched to the son of Pepin, is their line.

LXXII.

- " Rogerò, Gambaron, Buovo hence succeed ;
 " And that Rogerò, second of the name,
 " Who filled our fruitful mother with his seed ;
 " As thou Atlantes may'st have heard proclaim.
 " Of our fair lineage many a noble deed
 " Shalt thou hear blazed abroad by sounding Fame."
 ' Of Agolant's inroad next the stripling told,
 ' With Agramant and with Almontes bold ;

LXXIII.

- ' And how a lovely daughter, who excelled
 ' In feats of arms, that king accompanied ;
 ' So stout she many paladins had quelled ;
 ' And how, in fine, she for Rogerò sighed ;
 ' And for his love against her sire rebelled ;
 ' And was baptized, and was Rogerò's bride ;
 ' And how a traitor loved (him Bertram name)
 ' His brother's wife with an incestuous flame ;

LXXIV.

- ' And country, sire, and brethren two betrayed,
 ' Hoping he so the lady should have won ;
 ' How Risa open to the foe he laid,
 ' By whom all scathe was on those kinsmen done ;
 ' How Agolant's two furious sons conveyed
 ' Their mother, great with child, and six months gone,
 ' Aboard a helmless boat, and with its charge,
 ' In wildest winter, turned adrift the barge.

LXXV.

Valiant Marphisa, with a tranquil face,
 Heard young Rogero thus his tale pursue,
 And joyed to be descended of a race
 Which from so fair a font its waters drew :
 Whence Clermont, whence renowned Mongrana traco
 Their noble line, the martial damsel knew ;
 Blazoned through years and centuries by Fame,
 Unrivalled, both, in men of mighty name.

LXXVI.

When afterwards she from her brother knew
 Agramant's uncle, sire, and grandsire fell,
 In treacherous wise, the first Rogero slew
 And brought to cruel pass Galacielle,
 Marphisa could not hear the story through :
 To him she cries, " With pardon, what you tell,
 " Brother, convicts you of too foul a wrong,
 " In leaving thus our sire unavenged so long.

LXXVII.

" Could'st thou not in Almontes and Troyane,
 " As dead whilere, your thisty faulelion plant,
 " By you those mouarch's children might be slain.
 " Are you alive, and lives King Agramant ?
 " Never will you efface the shameful stain,
 " That ye, so often wronged, not only grant
 " Life to that king, but as your lord obey ;
 " Lodge in his court, and serve him for his pay ?

LXXVIII.

" Here heartily in face of Heaven I vow,
 " *That* Christ my father worshipped, to adore ;
 " And till I venge my parents on the foe
 " To wear this armour ; and I will deplore
 " Your deed, Rogero, and deplore even now,
 " That you should swell the squadrons of the Moor,
 " Or other follower of the Moslem faith,
 " Save sword in hand, and to the paynim's scathe."

LXXIX.

Ah ! how fair Bradamant uplifts again
 Her visage at that speech, rejoiced in sprite !
 Rogero she exhorts in earnest vein
 To do as his Marphisa counsels right ;
 And bids him seek the camp of Charlemagne,
 And have himself acknowledged in his sight,
 Who so reveres and lauds his father's worth,
 He even deems him one unmatched on earth.

LXXX.

' In the beginning so he should have done,'
 (Warily young Rogero answer made.)
 ' But, for the tale was not so fully known,
 ' As since, the deed had been too long delayed.
 ' Now, seeing it was fierce Troyano's son
 ' That had begirt him with the knightly blade,
 ' He, as a traitor, well might be abhorred,
 ' If he slew one, accepted as his lord.'

LXXXI.

But, as to Bradamant whilere, he cries,
 ' He will all measures and all means assay,
 ' Whereby some fair occasion may arise
 ' To leave the king ; and had there been delay,
 ' And he whilere had done in otherwise,
 ' She on the Tartar king the fault must lay :
 ' How sorely handled that redoubted foe
 ' Had left him in their battle, she must know ;

LXXXII.

' And she, that every day had sought his bed,
 ' Must of this truth the fittest witness be.'
 Much upon this was answered, much was said,
 Between those damsels, who at last agree ;
 And as their last resolve, last counsel read,
 He should rejoin the paynim's ensigury,
 Till he found fair occasion to resort
 From Agramant's to Charles's royal court.

LXXXIII.

To Bradamant the bold Marphisa cries :
 " Let him begone, nor doubt but I, before
 " Many days pass, will manage in such wise,
 " That Agramant shall be his lord no more."
 So says the martial damsel, nor implies
 The secret purpose which she has in store.
 Making his congees to the friendly twain,
 To join his king Rogero turns the rein.

LXXXIV.

When a complaint is heard from valley near :
 All now stand listening, to the noise attent ;
 And to that plaintive voice incline their ear,
 A woman's (as 'twould seem) that makes lament
 But I this strain would gladly finish here,
 And, that I finish it, be ye content :
 For better things I promise to report,
 If ye to hear another strain resort.

CANTO XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

*Lament and outcry loud of some that mourn,
Attract Rogero and the damsels two.
They find Ulania, with her mantle shorn
By Marganor, amid her moaning crew.
Upon that felon knight, for his foul scorn,
A fierce revenge Marphisa takes: a new
Statute that maid does in the town ordain,
And Marganor is by Ulania slain.*

I.

If, as in seeking other gift to gain,
(For Nature, without study, yieldeth nought)
With mighty diligence, and mickle pain,
Illustrious women day and night have wrought;
And if with good success the female train
To a fair end no homely task have brought,
So—did they for such other studies wake—
As mortal attributes immortal make;

II.

And, if they of themselves sufficient were
Their praises to posterity to show,
Nor borrowed authors' aid, whose bosoms are
With envy and with hate corroded so,
That oft they hide the good they might declare,
And tell in every place what ill they know,
To such a pitch would mount the female name,
As haply ne'er was reached by manly fame.

III.

To furnish mutual aid is not enow,
For many who would lend each other light.
Men do their best, that womankind should show
Whatever faults they have in open sight;
Would hinder them of rising from below,
And sink them to the bottom, if they might:
I say the ancients; as if glory, won
By woman, dimmed their own, as mist the sun.

IV.

But hand or tongue ne'er had, nor has, the skill,
Does voice or lettered page the thought impart,
Though each, with all its power, increase the ill,
Diminishing the good with all its art,
So female fame to stifle, but that still
The honour of the sex survives in part:
Yet reacheth not its pitch, nor such its flight,
But that 'tis far below its natural height.

V.

Not only Thomyris and Harpalice,
 And who brought Hector, who brought Turnus aid,
 And who, to build in Lybia crost the sea,
 By Tyrian and Sidonian band obeyed ;
 Not only famed Zenobia, only she
 Who Persian, Indian, and Assyrian frayed ;
 Not only these and some few others merit
 Their glory, that eternal fame inherit :

VI.

Faithful, chaste, wise, and bold, the world hath seen
 In Greece and Rome not only, but where'er
 The Sun unfolds his flowing locks, between
 The Hesperides and Indian hemisphere
 Whose gifts and praise have so extinguished been,
 We scarce of one amid a thousand hear ;
 And this ; because they in their days have had
 For chroniclers, men envious, false, and bad.

VII.

But ye that prosper in the exercise
 Of goodly labours, aye your way pursue ;
 Nor halt, O women, in your high emprise,
 For fear of not receiving honour due :
 For, as nought good endures beneath the skies.
 So ill endures no more ; if hitherto
 Unfriended by the poet's pen and page,
 They now befriend you in our better age.

VIII.

Erewhile Marullo¹ and Pontane for you
 Declared, and — sire and son—the Strozzi twain ;
 Capello, Bembo, and that writer, who
 Has fashioned like himself the courtier train ;
 With Lewis Alamanni, and those two,
 Beloved of Mars and Muses, of their strain
 Descended, who the mighty city rule,
 Which Mincius parts, and moats with marshy pool.⁴

IX.

One of this pair (besides that, of his will,
 He honours you, and does you courtesies ;
 And makes Parnassus and high Cynthus' hill
 Resound your praise, and lift it to the skies)
 The love, the faith, and mind, unconquered still,
 Mid threats of ruin, which in stedfast wise
 To him his constant Isabel hath shown,³
 Render yet more your champion than his own.

X.

So that he never more will wearied be
 With quickening in his verse your high renown ;
 And, if another censures you, than he
 Prompter to arm in your defence is none ;
 Nor knight, in this wide world, more willingly
 Life in the cause of virtue would lay down :
 Matter as well for other's pen he gives,
 As in his own another's glory lives ;

XI.

And well he merits, that a dame so blest,
 (Blest with all worth, which in this earthly round
 Is seen in them who don the female vest,)
 To him hath evermore been faithful found ;
 Of a sure pillar of pure truth possessat
 In her, despising Fortune's every wound.^{3*}
 Worthy of one another are the twain ;
 Nor better ere were paired in wedlock's chain.

XII.

New trophies he on Oglio's bank has shown ;⁴
 For he, mid bark and ear, amid the gleam
 Of fire and sword, such goodly rhymes hath strown,
 As may with envy swell the neighbouring stream.
 By Hercules Bontivoglio next is blown
 The noble strain, your honour's noble theme ;
 Reynet Trivulzio and Guidecco mine,
 And Molza, called of Phœbus and the Nine.

XIII.

There 's Hercules of the Carnuti,⁵ son
 Of my own duke, who spreads his every plume
 Soaring and singing, like harmonious swan,
 And even to heaven uplifts your name ; with whom
 There is my lord of Guasto, not alone
 A theme for many an Athens, many a Rome ;
 In his high strain he promises as well,
 Your praise to all posterity to tell.

XIV.

And beside these and others of our day,
 Who gave you once, or give you now renown,
 This for yourselves ye may yourselves purvey :
 For many, laying silk and sampler down,
 With the melodious Muses, to allay
 Their thirst at Aganippe's well, have gone,
 And still are going ; who so fairly speed.
 That we more theirs than they our labour need.

XV.

If I of these would separately tell,
 And render good account and honour due,
 More than one page I with their praise should swell,
 Nor ought beside would this day's canto shew ;
 And if on five or six alone I dwell,
 I may offend and anger all the crew.
 What then shall I resolve? to pass all by?
 Or choose but one from such a company?

XVI.

One will I choose, and such will choose, that she
 All envy shall so well have overthrown,
 No other woman can offended be,
 If, passing others, her I praise alone :
 Nor joys this one but immortality,
 Through her sweet style (and better know I none) ;
 But who is honoured in her speech and page,
 Shall burst the tomb, and live through every age.

XVII.

As Phœbus to his silvery sister shows
 His visage more, and lends her brighter fires,
 Than Venus, Maja, or to star that glows
 Alone, or circles with the heavenly quires ;
 So he with sweeter eloquence than flows
 From other lips, that gentle dame inspires ;
 And gives her words such force, a second sun
 Seems in our days its glorious course to run.

XVIII.

Mid victories born, Victoria is her name,⁶
 Well named ; and whom (does she advance or stay)
 Triumphs and trophies evermore proclaim,
 While Victory heads or follows her array.
 Another Artemisia is the dame,
 Renowned for love of her Mausolus, year
 By so much greater, as it is more brave
 To raise the dead, than lay them in the grave.

XIX.

If chaste Laodamia, Portia true,
 Evadne, Argis, Arris,⁷ and many more
 Merited praise, because that glorious crew
 Coveted burial with their lords of yore,
 How much more fame is to Victoria due ?
 That from dull Letho, and the river's shore,
 Which nine times hems the ghosts, to upper light
 Has dragged her lord, in death and fate's despite.

XX.

If that loud-voiced Mæonian trump whilere
 The Mæcedonian grudged Achilles, how,
 Francis Pescara, O unconquered peer,
 Would he begrudge thee, were he living now,
 That wife, so virtuous and to thee so dear,
 Thy well-earned glory through the world should blow
 And that thy name through her should so rebound,
 Thou needst not crave a clearer trumpet's sound!

XXI.

If all that is to tell, and all I fain
 Would of that lady tell, I wished to unfold,
 Though long, yet not so long, would be the strain,
 But that large portion would be left untold,
 While at a stand the story would remain
 Of fierce Marphisa and her comrades bold;
 To follow whom I promised erst, if you
 Would but return to hear my song anew.

XXII.

Now, being here to listen to my say,
 Because I would not break my promise, I
 Until my better leisure, will delay
 Her every praise at length to certify.
 Not that I think she needs my humble lay,
 Who with such treasure can herself supply:
 But simply to appay my single end,
 That gentle dame to honour and commend.

XXIII.

Ladies, in fine I say, that every age
 Worthy of story, many a dame supplies;
 But that, through jealous authors' envious rage,
 Unchronicled by fame, each matron dies;
 But will no more; since in the historic page
 Your virtues ye, yourselves, immortalize.
 Had those two damsels in this art been read,
 Their every warlike deed had wider spread.

XXIV.

Bradamant and Marphisa would, I say,
 Whose bold, victorious deeds, in battle done,
 I strive to bring into the light of day;
 But nine in ten remain to me unknown.
 I what I know right willingly display;
 As well, that all fair actions should be shown,
 As well that, gentle ladies, I am bent
 Ye whom I love and honour, to content.

XXV.

As said, in act to go Rogero stood ;
 And, having taken leave, the cavalier
 Withdraws his trenchant faulchion from the wood,
 Which holds no more the weapon, as whilere.
 When, sounding loud amid that solitude,
 A cry, not distant far, arrests the peer.
 Then thitherward he with those damsels made,
 Prompt, if 'twere needed, to bestow his aid.

XXVI.

They rode an-end ; and louder waxed the sound,
 And plainer were the plaintive words they heard :
 When in a valley they three women found
 Making that plaint, who in strange garb appeared :
 For to the navel were those three ungowned,
 —Their coats by some uncourteous varlet sheared—
 And knowing not how better to disguise
 Their shame, they sate on earth, and dared not rise.

XXVII.

As Vulcan's son,^s that sprang, (as it is versed)
 Out of the dust, without a mother made,
 Whom—so Minerva bade—Aglauros nursed
 With sovereign care, too bold and curious maid,
 Seated in ear, by him constructed first
 To hide his hideous feet, was erst conveyed ;
 So that which never is to sight revealed,
 Sitting, those mournful damsels kept concealed.

XXVIII.

At that dishonest sight and shameful, glows
 Each martial damsel's visage, overspread
 With the rich dyes of Pæstum's crimson rose,
 When vernal airs their gentle influence shed.
 Bradamant marked them ; and that one of those
 Was Ulany, the damsel quickly read ;
 Ulany, that was sent with solemn train
 From the LOST ISLE to royal Charlemagne ;

XXIX.

And recognised the other two no less ;
 For them she saw when she saw Ulany ;
 But now to her directed her address,
 As the most honoured of those ladies three,
 Demanding, who so full of wickedness,
 So lawless was and so unmannerly,
 That he those secrets to the sight revealed,
 Which Nature, as she could, 'twould seem, concealed

XXX.

Ulany, that in Bradamant descried,
 —Known both by voice and ensignry—the maid,
 Who some few days before those knights of pride
 With her victorious lance on earth had laid,
 ‘How, in a town not far remote’—replied—
 ‘An evil race, by pity never awayed,
 ‘Besides that they their raiment thus had shorn,
 ‘Had beat them, and had done them other scorn.

XXXI.

‘What of the shield became,’ she cannot say,
 ‘Nor knows she those three monarchs’ destiny,
 ‘Who guided her so long upon her way ;
 ‘If killed, or led into captivity :’
 And says, ‘that she herself has ta’en her way,
 ‘Albeit to fare a-foot sore irksome be,
 ‘To appcal to royal Charlemagne, assured
 ‘By him such outrage will not be endured.’

XXXII.

To hear, yet more to see, so foul a wrong,
 Disturbed the Child, and damsels’ placid air
 And beauteous visage, whose bold hearts and strong
 No less compassionate than valiant were.
 They now, all else forgetting, ere the tongue
 Of Ulany prefers demand, or prayer,
 That they would venge them on their cruel foe,
 In haste towards the felon’s castle go.

XXXIII.

With one consent, the maids and cavalier,
 By their great goodness moved, from plate and mail
 Had stript their upper vests, well fitting gear
 Those miserable ladies’ shame to veil.
 Bradamant suffers not, that, as whilere,
 Sad Uiany shall tramp by hill and dale ;
 But seats her on her horse’s croup ; so do
 Her comrades by those other damsels two.

XXXIV.

To gentle Bradamant Uania showed
 The nearest way to reach the castled height ;
 While comfort Bradamant on her bestowed,
 Promising vengeance for that foul despite.
 They leave the vale, and by a crooked road
 And long ascend, now wheeling left, now right :
 Nor till the sun is hidden in the sea,
 Upon their weary way repose the three.

XXXV.

They to a hamlet on the summit wound,
 Sealing the mountain's steep and rugged side ;
 And such good shelter and good supper found,
 As could by such rude quarters be supplied.
 Arriving there, they turned their eyes around,
 And full of women every place espied,
 Some old, some young ; nor, mid so large a clan,
 Appeared the visage of a single man.

XXXVI.

Not more bold Jason wondered,² and the train
 Which sailed with him, that Argonautic crew,
 Seeing those dames that had their husbands slain,
 Fathers and sons and brethren,—so that through
 All Lemnos' pleasaut isle, by hill or plain,
 Of manly visage they beheld not two—
 Than here Rogero, and the rest who go
 With good Rogero, wonder at this show.

XXXVII.

The martial damsels bid for Uiany,
 And those who came with her, provide attire ;
 And gowns that eve are furnished for the three,
 If meaner than their own, at least entire.
 To him a woman of that villagery
 Valiant Rogero summons, to inquire
 Where are the men ; in that he none descries ;
 And thus to him that village wife replies :

XXXVIII.

What haply is to you a wonderment,
 " This crowd of womankind, where man is none,
 " To us is grave and grievous punishment,
 " Who, banished here, live wofully alone ;
 " And, that such exile us may more torment,
 " From those so loved, as brother, father, son,
 " A long divorce and cruel we sustain,
 " As our fell tyrant pleases to ordain.

XXXIX.

" Sent to these confines from his land, which lies
 " But two leagues distant thence, where we were born,
 " Us in this place the fell barbarian sties,
 " Having first done us many a brutal scorn ;
 " And has with death and all extremities
 " Threatened our kinsmen and ourselves forlorn.
 " If they come hither, or he hears report
 " We harbour them, when hither they resort.

XL.

- " He to our name is such a deadly foe,
 " He will not have us nearer than I shewed,
 " Nor have us of our kin approached, as though
 " Infection from the female sex ensued.
 " Already have the greenwood trees laid low
 " Their leafy honours twice, and twice renewed,
 " Since our lord's fury to such pitch arose,
 " Nor is there one his phrensy to oppose.

XLI.

- " For he has spread such passing fear among
 " The people, death can cause no worse affright;
 " In that, beside his natural love of wrong,
 " He is endowed with more than human might.
 " He than a hundred other men more stroug,
 " In body is of a gigantic height:
 " Nor us his vassals he molests alone;
 " But worse by him to stranger dame is done.

XLII.

- " If your own honour, sir, and of those three,
 " Beneath your charge, to you in aught is dear,
 " 'Twill safer, usefuller, and better be
 " To leave this road, and by another steer.
 " This leads you to *his* tower, described by me,
 " To prove the savage use that cruel peer
 " Has there established, to the shame and woe
 " Of dame or cavalier, who thither go.

XLIII.

- " This castellan or tyrant, Marganor
 " (So name the felon knight), than whom more fell
 " Nero was not, nor other heretofore,
 " If other be, whose actions Fame doth swell,
 " Thirsts for man's blood, but thirsts for woman's more
 " Than wolf for blood of lambs; and bids expel
 " With shame all females, that, in evil hour,
 " Their fortune has conducted to his tower."

XLIV.

- ' How in that impious man such fury grew,
 Asked young Rogero and those damsels twain,
 And prayed, ' she would in courtesy pursue,
 ' Yea, rather from the first her tale explain.'
 " That castle's lord (the woman said anew)
 " Was always cruel, fierce, and inhumane,
 " Yet for a while his wicked heart concealed,
 " Nor what he was so suddenly revealed.

XLV.

- " For in the lifetime of his sons, a pair
 " That differed much from the paternal style,
 " (Since they the stranger loved; and loathers were
 " Of cruelty and other actions vile)
 " Flourished the courtesies and good customs there,
 " And there were gentle deeds performed this while:
 " For, albeit avaricious was the sire,
 " He never crossed the youths in their desire.

XLVI.

- " The cavaliers and dames who journeyed by
 " That castle, there so well were entertained,
 " That they departed, by the courtesy
 " Of those two kindly brothers wholly gained.
 " In the holy orders of fair chivalry
 " Alike the youthful pair had been ordained.
 " Cylander one, Tanaero light the other;
 " Bold, and of royal mien each martial brother;

XLVII.

- " And truly were, and would have been alway
 " Worthy of every praise and fame, withal,
 " Had they not yielded up themselves a prey
 " To that uncurbed desire, which Love we call;
 " By which they were seduced from the right way
 " Into foul Error's crooked maze; and all
 " The good that by those brethren had been wrought,
 " Waxed, in a moment, rask, corrupt and naught.

XLVIII.

- " It chanced, that in their father's fortilage,
 " A knight of the Greek emperor's court did lie;
 " With him his lady was; of manners sage;
 " Nor fairer could be craved by wishful eye:
 " For her Cylander felt such amorous rage,
 " He deemed, save he enjoyed her, he should die;
 " He deemed that, when the lady should depart,
 " His soul as well would from his body part:

XLIX.

- " And, for he knew 'twas useless to entreat,
 " Devised to make her his by force of hand;
 " Armed, and in silence, near his father's seat,
 " Where must pass knight and lady, took his stand.
 " Through natural daring and through amorous heat,
 " He with too little thought the matter planned;
 " So that, when he beheld the knight advance,
 " He issued, to assail him, lance to lance.

L.

- " To overthrow him, at first shock he thought,
 " And to win dame and palm in the career ;
 " But that Greek knight, in warlike strife well-taught,
 " Shivered, like glass, his breast-plate with the spear.
 " The bitter tidings to the sire were brought,
 " Who bade bear home the stripling on a bier :
 " He, finding he was dead, loud mourning made,
 " And him in earth, beside his fathers, laid.

LI.

- " Yet harbourage and welcome as before
 " Had he who sought it ; neither more nor less :
 " Because Tanacro in his courteous lore
 " Equalled his brother as in gentleness.
 " Thither that very year, from foreign shore,
 " A baron and his wife their steps address :
 " A marvel he of valour, and as fair
 " As could be said, is she, and debonnaire.

LII.

- " Not fairer was the dame than chaste and right,
 " And well deserving every praise ; the peer
 " Derived of generous stock, and bold in fight,
 " As ever champion, of whose fame we hear ;
 " And 'tis well fitting, that such valiant wight
 " Should joy a thing so excellent and dear.
 " Olindro he, the lord of Lungavilla,
 " And she, his lady wife, yeleft Drusilla.

LIII.

- " No less for her the young Tanacro glows,
 " Than for that other burned Cylander sore ;
 " Who brought erewhile to sad and bitter close
 " The wicked love he to that lady bore.
 " The holy, hospitable laws he chose
 " To violate no less than he, before
 " He would endure, that him, with venom'd sting,
 " His new desire to cruel death should bring.

LIV.

- " But he, because he has before his eyes
 " The example of his elder brother slain,
 " Thinks to bear off the lady in such wise,
 " That bold Olindro cannot venge the stain.
 " Straight spent in him, not simply weakened, lies
 " The virtue wout Tanacro to sustain
 " Above that flood of vice, in whose profound
 " And miry waters Marganor lay drowned.

LV.

- " That night he in deep silence had array
 " A score of armed men ; and next conveyed
 " Into some caverns, bordering on the way,
 " And distant from the tower, his ambuscade.
 " The roads were broken, and the following day
 " Olindro from all sides was overlaid ;
 " And, though he made a brave defence and long,
 " Of wife and life was plundered by that throng.

LVI.

- " Olindro slain," they led his lady fair
 " A captive thence, o'erwhelmed with sorrow so,
 " That she refused to live, and made her prayer,
 " Tanacro, as a grace, would death bestow :
 " Resolved to die, she leapt, in her despair,
 " From a high bank into a vale below ;
 " But death was to the wretched dame refused ;
 " Who lay with shattered head and sorely bruised.

LVII.

- " She could not to the castle be conveyed
 " In other guise than borne upon a bier :
 " Her (so Tanacro bids) prompt leeches aid ;
 " Because he will not lose a prey so dear ;
 " And while to cure Drusilla they essayed,
 " Busied about their spousals was the peer :
 " In that so chaste a lady and so fair,
 " A wife's and not a leman's name should wear.

LVIII.

- " He had no other thought, no other aim,
 " No other care, nor spake beside of ought ;
 " Saw he had wronged her, and took all the blame,
 " And, as he could, to amend his error wrought :
 " But all was vain ; the more he loved the dame,
 " The more he to appease her anger sought,
 " So much more was her hate ; so much more will,
 " So much more thirst had she that youth to kill.

LIX.

- " Yet hatred blinded not her judgment so,
 " But what the dame could clearly comprehend,
 " That she, if she would strike the purposed blow,
 " Must feign, and secret snares for him extend.
 " And her desire beneath another show
 " (Which is but how Tanacro to offend)
 " Must mask ; and make him think, that overblown
 " Is her first love, and turned to him alone.

LX.

- " Her face speaks peace ; while vengeance inwardly
 " Her heart demands, and but to this attends :
 " She many things revolves, accepts, puts by ;
 " Or, as of doubtful issue, some suspends.
 " Deeming she can, if she resolves to die,
 " Compass her scheme, with this resolve she ends ;
 " And better how can she expend her breath
 " Than in avenging dear Oliandro's death ?

LXI.

- " She showed herself all joyful, on her part,
 " And feigned that she desired those nuptials sore ;
 " Nor only showed an unreluctant heart ;
 " But all delay and hindrance overbore.
 " Painted and tired above the rest with art,
 " 'Twould seem, she of her husband thinks no more :
 " But 'tis her will, that in her country's wise
 " Tanacro shall their wedding solemnize.

LXII.

- " The custom howsoever was not true,
 " Which as her country's use she certified ;
 " But, because never thought within her grew
 " Which she could spend on any thing beside,
 " A falsehood she devised, whence hope she drew
 " Of killing him by whom her husband died ;
 " And told Tanacro—and the manner said—
 " How in her country's fashion she would wed.

LXIII.

- " The widow that a husband's bed ascends,
 " Ere she approach the bridegroom (said that fair),
 " The spirit of the dead, whom she offends,
 " Must soothe with solemn office, mass and prayer ;
 " In the holy temple making her amends,
 " Where her first husband's bones entombed are.
 " —That sacrifice performed—to bind their vows
 " The nuptial ring the bridegroom gives the spouse.

LXIV.

- " But the holy priest, while this shall be about,
 " Upon wine, thither for that purpose sped,
 " His orisons, appropriate and devout,
 " Blessing withal the liquor, shall have said ;
 " Then from the flask into a cup pour out,
 " And give the blessed wine to them that wed.
 " But 'tis the spouse's part to take the cup ;
 " And first that vessel's cordial beverage sup.

LXV.

- "The unsuspecting youth, who takes no heed
 "What nuptials, ordered in her wise, import,
 "At her own pleasure bids the dame proceed,
 "So that she cut his term of waiting short ;
 "Nor does the miserable stripling read
 "She would avenge Olindro in that sort ;
 "And on one object is so sore intent,
 "He sees but that, on that alone is bent.

LXVI.

- "An ancient woman, seized with her whilere,
 "And left, withal, obeyed Drusilla, who
 "That beldam called and whispered in her ear,
 "So as that none beside could hear the two—
 "A poison of quick power for me prepare,
 "Such as, I know, thou knowest how to brew ;
 "And bottle it ; for I have found a way
 "The traitorous son of Marganor to slay ;

LXVII.

- "And me and thee no less can save," (she said,)
 "And this at better leisure will explain."
 "The woman went her ways, the potion made,
 "And to the palace bent her steps again :
 "A flask of Candian sweet wine she purveyed,
 "Wherewith Drusilla sheathed that deadly bane ;
 "And kept the beverage for the nuptial day ;
 "For now had ceased all hindrance and delay.

LXVIII.

- "On the fixt day she seeks the temple, dight
 "With precious jewels and with goodly gear ;
 "Where her lord's tomb, befitting such a knight,
 "Built by her order, two fair pillars rear.
 "The holy office there, with solemn rite,
 "Is sung, which men and women troop to hear ;
 "And—gay, beyond his usage—with his heir,
 "Begirt by friends, Sir Marganor is there.

LXIX.

- "When the holy obsequies at last were o'er,
 "And by the priest was blest the poisoned draught,
 "He into a fair golden cup did pour
 "The wine, as by Drusilla had been taught.
 "She drank what sorted with her sex ; nor more
 "Than would effect the purpose which she sought :
 "Then to the bridegroom, with a joeund eye,
 "Handed the draught, who drained the goblet dry.

LXX.

- " The cup returned—Tanacro, blithe and gay,
 " Opened his arms Drusilla to embrace;
 " Then altered was her sweet and winning way,
 " And to a tempest that long calm gave place.
 " She thrust him back, she motioned him away;
 " She seem'd to kindle in her eyes and face;
 " And to the youth, with broken voice and dread,
 —' Traitor, stand off,'—the furious lady said;—

LXXI.

- ' Shalt thou then joy and solace have from me,
 ' I tears from thee, and punishment and woe?
 ' Now these mine hands shall make an end of thee.
 ' This, if thou know'st it not, for poison know.
 ' Much grieve I that thou should'st too honoured be
 ' By the executioner who deals the blow;
 ' Should'st die a death too easy: since I wot,
 ' For thee too shameful hand or pain is not.

LXXII.

- ' In seeing this thy death, it gives me pain,
 ' My sacrifice should be completed ill;
 ' For could I do by thee as I were fain,
 ' Nothing should lack that purpose to fulfil.
 ' May my sweet consort not the work disdain,
 ' And for the imperfect deed accept the will!
 ' That, without power to compass what I would,
 ' I have been fain to slay thee as I could!

LXXIII.

- ' And that deserved punishment, which I
 ' Cannot, as I desire, on thee bestow,
 ' I hope thy soul shall have; hope to be nigh,
 ' To see thee suffer, in the realms of woe.
 " Her turbid eyes then raising to the sky,
 " With joyous face all over in a glow,
 " (She cried) ' Olindro, take this victim's life,
 ' With the good will of thine avenging wife;

LXXIV.

- ' And of our lord for me the grace obtain,
 ' To be this day in paradise with thee.
 ' If he reply none cometh to your reign,
 ' Without desert; say such I bring with me,
 ' Who this fell impious monster, in his fane,
 ' Offer, as my first-fruits; and what can be
 ' A greater merit than to have suppress
 ' Such loathsome and abominable pest?



Howard

J. Raphaelson.

The death of Drusilla.

LXXV.

- " Her life, together with her speech, was spent ;
 " And, even dead, her face appeared to glow
 " With joy, at having dealt such punishment
 " To him, that laid her cherished husband low.
 " If fierce Tanacro's spirit did prevent,
 " Or follow hers, I wiss not ; but, I trow,
 " Prevented, for on him that venom rank
 " Yet faster wrought, because he deeper drank.

LXXVI.

- " Marganor, who beheld his only son
 " Fall and expire, his outstretched arms between,
 " Well nigh had with Tanacro died, o'erthrown
 " By that so sudden grief and unforeseen.
 " Two sons he had, and now was left alone ;
 " Brought to that pass he by two wives had been ;
 " *This* was the cause one spent his vital breath
 " With her own hand, *that* dealt the other death.

LXXVII.

- " Love, pity, sorrow, anger, and desire
 " Of death and vengeance, all together rend
 " And rack the childless and unhappy sire,
 " Who groans like sea, when wind and waves contend ;
 " Towards the dame, with vengeful thoughts afire,
 " He goes, but sees that life is at an end ;
 " And, goaded by his rage and hatred hot,
 " Seeks to offend her corse that feels it not.

LXXVIII.

- " As serpent, by the pointed spear pinned down,
 " Fixes his teeth in it, with fruitless spite ;
 " Or as the mastiff runs towards a stone,
 " Which has been flung by some wayfaring wight,
 " And gnaws it in his rage, nor will be gone
 " Until he venge himself ; 'tis so the knight,
 " Than any mastiff, any serpent, worse
 " Offends Drusilla's cold and lifeless corse.

LXXIX.

- " And, for he venteth not, nor slakes his mood,
 " By foul abuse upon the carcase done,
 " Among the women, a large multitude,
 " He springs, and there shows mercy unto none.
 " Mown are we with his impious sword, as strewed
 " Is grass with scythe, when dried by summer sun.
 " There is no 'scape ; for straightways of our train
 " Are full a hundred maimed, and thirty slain.

LXXX.

- " He of his vassals is so held in dread,
 " There is no man who dares to lift his eyes:
 " The women with the meaner sort are fled,
 " And whosoever can, the temple flies.
 " His friends against the furious fit make head,
 " At last, with kind constraint and suppliant cries
 " And, leaving every thing in tears below,
 " Him in his castle on the rock bestow.

LXXXI.

- " His wrath enduring still, to send away
 " The wretch determines all the female band:
 " In that, his will us utterly to slay
 " His people and his friends, with prayer, withstand;
 " And he bids publish, on that very day,
 " An order for us all to leave his land;
 " Placed such his pleasure on these confines: woe
 " To them that nearer to his castle go!

LXXXII.

- " Thus husbands from their wives divided are,
 " Mothers from sons: if hither to resort,
 " Despite that order, any one should dare,
 " Let none know this, who might the deed report!
 " For sorely mulcted for the transgression were
 " Many, and many slain in cruel sort.
 " A statute for his town next made the peer:
 " Of fouler law we neither read nor hear.

LXXXIII.

- " It wills, all women found within the vale,
 " (For thither even yet will some descend,)
 " His men with rods shall on the shoulders whale,
 " And into exile from those countries send;
 " But first their gowns shall clip, and parts unveil
 " That decency and natural shame offend;
 " And if with escort of an armed knight
 " Any wend thither, they are slain outright.

LXXXIV.

- " Those that an armed warrior's escort have,
 " By this ill man, to piety a foe,
 " Are dragged as victims to his children's grave,
 " Where his own hand inflicts the murderous blow
 " Stript ignominiously of armour, glaive,
 " And steed, their champions to his prisons go;
 " And this can he compel; for, night and day,
 " A thousand men the tyrant's heat obey;

LXXXV.

"And I will add, moreover, 'tis his will,
 "Does he free any one, he first shall swear
 "Upon the holy wafer, that he still
 "To woman, while he lives, will hatred bear.
 "If then these ladies and yourself to spill
 "Seem good to you, to yonder walls repair;
 "And put to proof withal, if prowess more
 "Or cruelty prevails in Marganor."

LXXXVI.

So saying, in those maids of martial might
 First she such pity moved and then disdain,
 That they (had it been day instead of night)
 Would then have gone against that castellan.
 There rest the troop; and when Aurora's light
 Serves as a signal to the starry train,
 That they should all before the sun recede,
 They don the cuirass and remount the steed:

LXXXVII.

And now, in act to go, that company
 Behind them hear the stony road resound
 With a long trample, when those warlike three
 Look down the vale and roll their eyes around;
 And they from thence, a stone's-throw distant, see
 A troop, which through a narrow pathway wound:
 A score they are perhaps in number, who
 On horseback, or on foot, their way pursue.

LXXXVIII.

They with them on a horse a woman haul,
 (Whom stricken sore in years her visage shows,)
 In guise wherein some doleful criminal
 Condemned to gallows, fire, or prison goes;
 Who, notwithstanding that wide interval,
 Is by her features known, as well as clothes:
 They of the village, mid the cavalcade,
 Know her for fair Drusilla's chamber maid.

LXXXIX.

The chamber wench, made prisoner with his prize,
 By the rapacious stripling, as I shewed,
 Who being trusted with that ill emprise,
 The poisoned draught of fowl effect had brewed.
 From the others she and those solemnities
 Had kept away, suspecting what ensued:
 Yea, this while, from that lordship had she fled,
 Where she in safety hoped to hide her head.

XC.

News being after to her foeman brought,
 That she retired in Ostericche lay,
 He, with intent to burn the woman, sought
 To have her in his power by every way ;
 And finally unhappy Avarice, bought
 By costly presents, and by proffered pay,
 Wrought on a lord, assured upon whose lands
 The beldam lived, to put her in his hands.

XCI.

He on a sumpter horse the prisoner sent
 To Constance-town, like merchandise addrest ;
 Fastened and bound in manner to prevent
 The use of speech, and prisoned in a chest.
 From whence that rabble, *his* ill instrument,
 Who has all pity banished from his breast,
 Had thither brought her, that his impious rage
 That cruel man might on the hag assuage.

XCII.

As the flood, swollen with Vesulo's thick snows,
 The farther that it foams upon its way,
 And, with Ticino and Lambra, seaward goes,
 Ada, and other streams that tribute pay,
 So much more haughty and impetuous flows ;
 Rogero so, the more he hears display
 Marganor's guilt, and so that gentle pair
 Of damsels filled with fiercer sholer are.

XCIII.

Them with such hatred, them with such disdain
 Against the wretch so many crimes incense,
 That they will punish him, despite the train
 Of armed men arrayed in his defence :
 But speedy death appears too kind a pain,
 And insufficient for such foul offence.
 Better they deem, mid pangs prolonged and slow,
 He all the bitterness of death should know.

XCIV.

But first 'tis right that woman to unchain,
 She whom the hangman-crew to death escort ;
 And the quick rowel and the loosened rein
 Made the quick coursers make that labour short.
 Never had those assaulted to sustain
 Encounter of so fell and fierce a sort ;
 Who held it for a grace, with loss of shield,
 Harness and captive dame, to quit the field ;

XCV.

Even as the wolf, who, laden with his prey,
 Is homeward to his secret cavern bound,
 And, when he deems that safest is the way,
 Beholds it crost by hunter and by hound.
 Flings down his load, and swiftly darts away,
 Where most o'ergrown with brushwood is the ground.
 Nor quicker are that band to void the vale,
 Than those bold three are quicker to assail.

XCVI.

Not only they the dame and martial gear,
 But many horses they as well forsook ;
 And, as the surest refuge in their fear,
 Cast themselves down from bank and caverned nook :
 Which pleased the damsels and the youthful peer ;
 Who three of those forsaken horses took,
 To mount those three, whom, through the day before,
 Upon their croups the three good coursers bore.

XCVII.

Thence, lightened thus, their way they thither bend,
 Where that despiteous, shameful, lordship lies ;
 Resolved the beldam in their hand shall wend,
 To see Drusilla venged ; in vain denies
 That woman, who misdoubts the adventure's end,
 And grieves, and shrieks, and weeps in piteous wise :
 For flinging her upon Frontino's croup,
 Rogero bears her off amid the troop.

XCVIII.

They reached a summit, and from thence espied
 A town with many houses, large and rich ;
 With nought to stop the way on any side,
 As neither compassed round by wall or ditch.
 A rock was in the middle, fortified
 With a tall tower, upon its topmost pitch.
 Fearlessly thither pricked the warriors, who
 Marganor's mansion in that fortress knew.

XCIX.

As soon as in the town that cavalcade
 Arrived, some footmen, who kept watch and ward,
 Behind those warriors closed a barricade ;
 While *that*, before, they found already barred.
 And lo ! Sir Marganor, with men arrayed,
 Some foot, some horsemen ! armed was all the guard :
 Who to the strangers, in few words, but bold,
 The wicked custom of his lordship told.

C.

Marphisa, who had planned the thing whilere
 With Aymon's daughter and the youthful knight,
 For answer, spurred against the cavalier ;
 And, valiant as she was and full of might,
 Not putting in the rest her puissant spear,
 Or baring that good sword, so fanied in fight,
 So smote him with her fist upon the head,
 That on his horse's neck he fell half dead.

CI.

The maid of France is with Marphisa gone,
 Nor in the rear is seen Rogero's crest ;
 Who with those two his course so bravely run,
 That, though his lance he raised not from the rest,
 Six men he slew ; transfixed the paunch of one,
 Another's head, of four the neck or breast ;
 I' the sixth he broke it, whom in flight he speared :
 It pierced his spine and at his paps appeared.

CII.

As many as are touched, so many lie
 On earth, by Bradamant's gold lance o'erthrown ;
 She seems a bolt, dismiss from burning sky,
 Which, in its fury, shivers and beats down
 Whatever it encounters, far and nigh.
 Some fly to plain, or castle from the town,
 Others to sheltering church and house repair ;
 And none, save dead, are seen in street or square.

CIII.

Meanwhile the hands of Marganor, behind
 His back, the fierce Marphisa had made fast,
 And to Drusilla's maid the wretch consigned,
 Well pleased that such a care on her was cast.
 To burn the town 'twas afterwards designed,
 Save it repented of its errors past,
 Repealed the statute Marganor had made,
 And a new law, imposed by her, obeyed.

CIV.

Such end to compass is no hard assay ;
 For, besides fearing lest Marphisa yearn
 To execute more vengeance,—lest she say,
 —' She one and all will slaughter and will burn,'—
 The townsmen all were adverse to the sway
 And cruel statute of that tyrant stern ;
 But did, as others mostly do, that best
 Obey the master whom they most detest.

CV.

Since none dares trust another, nor his will,
 —Out of suspicion—to his comrade break,
 They let him banish one, another kill,
 From *this* his substance, *that* his honour take.
 But the heart cries to Heaven, that here is still,
 Till God and saints at length to vengeance wake :
 Who, albeit they due punishment suspend,
 By mighty pain the long delay amend.

CVI.

The rabble, full of rage and enmity,
 Now seeks the wretch with word and deed to grieve
 As, it is said, all strip the fallen tree,
 Which from its roots the wintry winds upheave :
 Let rulers in his sad example see,
 Ill doers in the end shall ill receive.
 To view fell Marganor's disastrous fall,
 Fit penance for his sins, pleased great and small.

CVII.

Many, of whom the sister had been slain,
 The mother, or the daughter, or the wife,
 Seeking no more their rebel wrath to rein,
 Hurry, with their own hands to take his life :
 And young Rogero and the damsels twain
 Can scarce defend the felon in that strife ;
 Whom those illustrious three had doomed to die,
 Mid trouble, fear, and lengthened agony.

CVIII.

To the hag, who bore such hatred to that wight
 As woman to an enemy can bear,
 They give their prisoner naked, bound so tight,
 He will not at one shake the cordage tear ;
 And she, her pains and sorrow to requite,
 Crimsons the wretch's body, here and there,
 With a sharp goad, which, mid that village band,
 A peasant churl had put into her hand.

CIX.

Nor she the courier-maid, nor they that ride
 With her, eye mindful how they had been shent,
 Now let their hands hang idle by their side ;
 No less than that old crone on vengeance bent :
 Such was their fierce desire, it nullified
 The power to harm ; but rage must have its vent.
 Him one with stones, another with her nails,
This with her teeth, with needles *that*, assails.

CX.

As torrent one while foams in baughty tide,
 When fed with mighty rain or melted snow :
 And, rending from the mountain's rugged side
 Tree, rock, and crop and field, the waters go :
 Then comes a season when its crested pride
 Is vanished, and its vigour wasted so,
 A child, a woman, everywhere may tread,
 And often dry-shod cross, its rugged bed.

CXI.

So Marganor whilere each bound and bourn
 Made tremble, wheresoe'er his name was heard :
 Now one is come to bruise the tyrant's horn ;
 And now his prowess is so little feared,
 That even the little children work him scorn ;
 Some pluck his hair and others pluck his beard.
 Thence young Rogero and the damsels twain
 Towards his rock-built castle turn the rein.

CXII.

This without contest its possessors yield,
 And the rich goods preserved in that repair.
 These the friends partly spoiled, and partly dealt
 To Ulaury and that attendant pair.
 With them, recovered was the golden shield,
 And those three monarchs that were prisoned there ;
 Who, without arms, afoot, towards that hold
 Had wended, as meseems whilere was told.

CXIII.

For from the day that they were overthrown
 By Bradamant, afoot, they evermore,
 Unarmed, in company with her had gone,
 That hither came from her so distant shore.
 I know not, I, if it was better done
 Or worse, by her, that they their arms forbore :
 Worse, touching her defence ; but better far,
 If they were losers in the doubtful war.

CXIV.

For she would have been dragged,—like others, whom
 Armed men had thither brought beneath their guide,
 (Unhappy women) to the brothers' tomb,—
 And by the sacrificial knife have died.
 Death, sure, is worse, and more disastrous doom
 Than showing that which modesty would hide ;
 And they who can to force ascribe the blame,
 Extinguish this and every other shame.

CXV.

Before they hence depart, the martial twain
 Assemble the inhabitants, to swear,
 'They to their wives the rule of that domain
 ' Will leave, as well as every other care ;
 ' And that they will chastise, with heavy pain,
 ' Whoever to oppose this law shall dare.
 ' — In fine, man's privileges, whatso'er,
 ' They swear, shall be conferred on woman here :

CXVI.

Then make them promise, ' never to bestow
 ' Harbourage on whosoever thither sped,
 ' Footman or cavalier, nor even allow
 ' Any beneath a roof to hide his head,
 ' Unless he swore by God and saints, or vow
 ' Yet stronger made—if stronger could be said—
 ' That he the sex's cause would aye defend,
 ' Foe to their foes, and woman's faithful friend ;

CXVII.

' And, if he then were wived, or ever were
 ' — Sooner or later—linked in nuptial noose,
 ' Still to his wife he would allegiance bear,
 ' Nor e'er compliance with her will refuse.'
 Marphisa says, ' within the year, she there
 ' Will be, and ere the trees their foliage lose ;
 ' And, save she find her statute in effect,
 ' That borough fire and ruin may expect.'

CXVIII.

Nor hence they part till from the filthy place,
 Wherein it lay, Drusilla's corse is borne ;
 Her with her lord they in a tomb encase,
 And, with what means the town supplies, adorn.
 Drusilla's ancient woman, in this space,
 Marganor's body with her goad has torn.
 Who only grieves she has not wind enow,
 Nor respite to his torture to allow.

CXIX.

Beside a church, the martial damsels twain
 Behold a pillar, standing in the square ;
 Whereon the wicked lord of the domain
 Had grav'd that mad and cruel law ; the pair,
 In imitation, his helm, plate, and chain,
 And shield, in guise of trophy fasten there ;
 And afterwards upon the pillar trace
 That law they had enacted for the place.

CXX.

Within the town the troop set up their rest,
 Until the law is graved, of different frame
 From that before upon the stone imprest,
 Which every woman doomed to death and shame.
 With the intention to replace her vest,
 Here from that band divides the Islandick dame ;
 Who deems, at court 'twere shameful to appear,
 Unless adorned and mantled as whilere.

CXXI.

Here Ulany remained, and in her power
 Remained the wicked tyrant Marganor :
 She, lest he any how, in evil hour,
 Should break his bonds and injure damsel more,
 Made him, one day, leap headlong from a tower,
 Who never took so stiff a leap before.
 No more of her and hers ! I of the crew
 That journey toward Arles, the tale pursue.

CXXII.

Throughout all *that* and the succeeding day,
 Till the forenoon, proceed those banded friends ;
 And, where the main-road branches, and one way
 Towards the camp, to Arles the other tends,
 Again embrace the lovers, and oft say
 A last farewell, which evermore offends.
 The damsels seek the camp ; to Arles is gone
 Rogero ; and my canto I have done.

CANTO XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

*To Arles the Child, to Charles Marphisa wends,
 To be baptized, with Bradamant for guide.
 Astolpho from the holy realm descends ;
 Through whom with sight the Nubian is supplied ;
 Agramant's land he with his troop offends ;
 But he is of his Africk realm so wide,
 With Charles he bargains, that, on either side,
 Two knights by strife their quarrel should decide.*

I.

YE courteous ladies, who unto my strain
 Kind audience lend—I read it in your cheer—
 That good Rogero should depart again
 So suddenly, from her that held him dear,
 Displeases ye, and scarce inflicts less pain
 Than that which Bradamant endured whilere :
 I read you also argue, to his shame,
 That feebly burned in him the amorous flame.

II.

If from her side for other cause had gone,
 Against that lady's will, the youthful lord ;
 Though in the hope more treasure to have won
 Than swelled rich Cræsus' or rich Crassus' hoard,
 I too should deem the dart, by Cupid thrown,
 Had not the heart-core of Rogero gored.
 For such a sovereign joy, a prize so high
 No silver and no gold could ever buy.

III.

Yet to preserve our honour not alone
 Deserves excuse, it also merits praise :
 This to preserve, I say, when to have done
 In other wise, might shame and scandal raise ;
 And had fair Bradamant reluctance shown,
 And obstinately interposed delays,
 This, as a certain sign, had served to prove
 That lady's little wit or little love.

IV.

For if *his* life, whom gentle woman loves,
 As her own life she values, or before ;
 (I speak of one at whom young Cupid roves^t
 With arrows which beneath the mantle gore)
 His honour to his pleasure it behoves
 That woman to prefer, by so much more,
 As man beyond his life his honour treasures,
 Esteemed by him above all other pleasures.

V.

His duty good Rogero satisfied,
 Following the royal lord with whom he came ;
 For having no fair cause to quit his side,
 He could not leave the Paynim without shame ;
 And, if his sire had by Almoutes died,
 In this, King Agramant was not to blame ;
 Who for his parents' every past offence
 Had made Rogero mighty recompense.

VI.

He will perform his duty to repair
 To his liege lord ; so did that martial maid ;
 Who had not with reiterated prayer
 (As so she might have done) Rogero stayed.
 The stripling may appay the warlike fair
 In other season, if not now appaid ;
 But twice two hundred years will not atone
 The crying sin of honour once forgone.

VII.

To Arles-town, whither had his king conveyed
 His remnant of a host, he pricked anew ;
 While they that, since their kindred was displayed,
 Had a close friendship formed—the damsels two—
 Thither together go where Charles had made
 His mightiest effort, with the Christian crew ;
 Hoping by siege or fight to break the foe,
 And free his kingdom from so long a woe.

VIII.

Bradamant, when she in the camp appeared,
 Was greeted with a welcome warm and kind.
 On all sides was she hailed, by all was cheered ;
 And she to this or that her head inclined.
 Rinaldo, when he of her coming heard,
 Met her ; nor young Richardo stayed behind ;
 Nor Richardet ; nor others of her race ;
 And all received the maid with joyful face.

IX.

When next 'tis known, the second of the twain
 Is that Marphisa, so in arms renowned,
 Who from Catay unto the bounds of Spain
 Had journeyed, with a thousand laurels crowned,
 Nor rich nor poor within their tents remain :
 The curious crowd, encompassing them round
 Press, harm, and heave each other here and there,
 In the sole wish to see so bright a pair.

X.

By them was Charles saluted reverently,
 And the first day was this (has Turpin shown)
 Marphisa had been seen to bend her knee :
 For Pepin's royal son to her, alone,
 Deserving of such duty seemed to be,
 Mid emperors or kings that filled a throne,
 Baptised or infidel, of all those named
 For mighty riches, or for valour famed.

XI.

Her kindly Charlemagne received, and wide
 Of the pavilions met, in open view :
 And, above king, and prince, and peer, beside
 Himself the monarch placed that damsel true,
 Who go not, are dismist ; so none abide
 In little time, except the good and few.
 The Paladins and lords remain ; without,
 Is left the unrespected rabble-rout.

XII.

Marphisa first began in grateful strain :
 " Unconquered Cæsar, glorious and august,
 " Who, to Alcides' strait from Indian main,
 " Mak'st Scythian's pale and Æthiop's race adust
 " Reverse thy Christian cross of snowy grain,
 " —Of earthly monarchs thou most sage and just—
 " Hither thy glory, which no limits bound,
 " Has brought me from the world's extremest ground ;

XIII.

" And (to avow the truth) in jealous mood
 " Alone I came, alone with thee to fight ;
 " Because I grudged that king so puissant should
 " Exist on earth, save he observed my rite.
 " Hence reek thy ravaged fields with Christian blood :
 " And yet with greater rancour and despite,
 " Like cruel foe, I purposed to offend,
 " But that it chanced, one changed me to a friend.

XIV.

" When to worst harm and scaith thy bands I doom,
 " I find (as at my leisure I will show)
 " Rogero of Risa was my father, whom
 " An evil brother traitorously laid low.
 " Me my sad mother carried in her womb
 " Beyond the sea, and bore in want and woe.
 " Till my seventh year by wizard nourished, I
 " Was stolen from him by thieves of Araby.

XV.

" They to a king in Persia vended me,
 " That after died beneath my faulchion, who
 " Would fain have taken my virginity.
 " When grown, that king and all his court I slew ;
 " Chased his ill race, and seized his royalty ;
 " And—such my fortune—by a month or two,
 " I eighteen years had not o'erpast, before
 " I added to my realm six kingdoms more ;

XVI.

- " And, moved by envy of thy glorious fame,
 " I in my heart resolved (as thou hast heard)
 " To abate the grandeur of thy mighty name :
 " I haply so had done ; I haply erred.
 " But now a chance has served *that* will to tame,
 " And clip my fury's wings ; the having heard,
 " Since I arrived in Christendom, how we
 " Are bound by ties of consanguinity :

XVII.

- " And, for my father thee, as kinsman, served,
 " So thou a kin and servant hast in me ;
 " And I that envy, that fierce hate, which nerved
 " Mine arm whilere, now blot from memory.
 " Nay, these for evil Agramant reserved,
 " And for his sire's and uncle's kin shall be ;
 " They who were whilom guilty of the death
 " Of that unhappy pair who gave me breath."

XVIII.

- She adds, ' the Christian faith she will receive,
 ' And, after having spent king Agramant,
 ' Will home return, with royal Charles's leave,
 ' Her kingdom to baptise in the Levant,
 ' And war upon whatever nations cleave
 ' To cheating Mahound or to Termagant ;
 ' Promising that whate'er her arms obtain
 ' Shall be the Christian faith's and empire's gain.'

XIX.

- Charles, no less eloquent upon his side,
 Than bold in deed and prudent in design,
 Much that illustrious lady magnified,
 And much her father, much her noble line :
 He courteously to every point replied ;
 And of his heart his open front was sign.
 As his last words, ' that he received the maid
 ' As kinswoman and child,' the monarch said.

XX.

- Then rose and locked her in a new embrace,
 And kissed her, like a daughter, on the brow.
 Morgana and Clermont's kin, with joyful face,
 All thither troop ; 'twere tedious to tell how
 Rinaldo did the gentle damsel grace ;
 For he had oftentimes espied ere now
 Her martial prowess, tried by goodly test,
 When they with girding siege Albracca pressed.

XXI.

'Twere long to tell how, with those worthies met,
 Guido rejoiced to see Marplisa there ;
 Gryphon, and Aquilant, and Sansonet,
 That with her in the cruel city were ;²
 Vivian, and Malagigi, and Richardet ;
 Who, when Maganza's traitors made repair,
 With those ill purchasers of Spain to trade,
 Found such a faithful comrade in the maid.

XXII.

They deck the ground for the ensuing day ;
 And Charlemagne takes care himself to see
 That they the place shall sumptuously array,
 Wherein Marplisa's baptism is to be.
 Bishops are gathered, learned clerks, and they
 Who ken the laws of Christianity ;
 That taught in all its doctrine by their care
 And holy skill may be that martial fair.

XXIII.

In sacred stole, pontifical, arrayed,
 Her the archbishop Turpin did baptize ;
 Charlemagne from the healthful font the maid
 Uplifted with besitting ceremonies.
 But it is time the witless head to aid
 With that, which treasured in the phial lies,
 Wherewith Astolpho, from the lowest star,³
 Descended in Elias' fiery car.

XXIV.

The duke descended from the lucid round,
 On this our earthly planet's loftiest height.
 Whither he with that blessed vase was bound,
 Which was the mighty champion's brain to right.
 A herb of sovereign virtue on that ground
 The apostle shows, and with it bids the knight
 The Nubiun's eyeballs touch, when him anew
 He visits, and restore that sovereign's view.

XXV.

That he, for this and for his first desert,
 May give him bands, Biserta to assail ;
 And shows him how that people inexpert
 He may to battle train, in plate and mail ;
 And how to pass the deserts, without hurt,
 Where men are dazzled by the sandy gale.
 The order that throughout should be maintained
 From point to point, the sainted sire explained ;

XXVI.

Then made him that plumed beast again bestride,
 Rogero's and Atlantes' steed whilere.
 By sainted John dismiss, his reverend guide,
 Those holy regions left the cavalier ;
 And coasting Nile, on one or the other side,
 Saw Nubia's realm before him soon appear ;
 And there, in its chief city, to the ground
 Descended, and anew Senapus found.

XXVII.

Great was the joy, and great was the delight,
 Wherewith that king received the English lord ;
 Who well remembered how the gentle knight
 Had from the loathsome harpies freed his board.
 But when the humour, that obscured his sight,
 Valiant Astolpho scaled, and now restored
 Was the blind sovereign's eyesight as before,
 He would that warrior as a god adore.

XXVIII.

So that not only those whom he demands
 For the Bisertine war, he gives in aid ;
 But adds a hundred thousand from his bands,
 And offer of his royal person made.
 Scarce on the open plain embattled stands,
 —All foot—the Nubian host, for war arrayed,
 For few the horses which that region bore ;
 Of elephants and camels a large store.

XXIX.

The night before the day, when on its road
 The Nubian force should march, Astolpho rose,
 And his winged hippogryph again bestrode :
 Then, hurrying ever south, in fury goes
 To a high hill, the southern wind's abode ;
 Whence he towards the Bears in fury blows :
 There finds a cave, through whose strait entrance breaks
 The fell and furious Auster, when he wakes.

XXX.

He, as his master erst instruction gave,
 With him an empty bladder had conveyed ;
 Which, at the vent of that dim Alpine cave,
 Wherein reposed the wearied wind, was laid
 Quaintly and softly by the baron brave ;
 And so unlooked for was the ambuscade,
 That, issuing forth at morn, to sweep the plains,
 Auster imprisoned in the skin remains.

XXXI.

To Nubia he, rejoicing in his prey,
Returns; and with that very light the peer,
With the black host, sets out upon his way,
And lets the victual follow in his rear.
Towards Mount Atlas with his whole array
In safety goes the glorious cavalier.
Through shifting plains of powdery sand he past,
Nor dreaded danger from the sultry blast;

XXXII.

And having gained the mountain's hither side,
Whence are discerned the plain, and distant brine,
He chooses from the swarm he has to guide
The noblest and most fit for discipline;
And makes them, here and there, in troops divide,
At a hill's foot, wherewith the plains confine;
Then leaves his host and climbs the hill's ascent,
Like one that is on lofty thoughts intent.

XXXIII.

After he, lowly kneeling in the dust,
His holy master had implored, in true
Assurance he was heard, he downward thrust
A heap of stones. O what things may he do
That in the Saviour wholly puts his trust!
The stones beyond the use of nature grew;
Which rolling to the sandy plain below,
Next, neck and muzzle, legs and belly show.

XXXIV.

They, neighing shrill, down narrow paths repair,
With lusty leaps; and lighting on the plain,
Uplift the croup, like coursers as they are,
Some bay, some roan, and some of dapple stain.
The crowds that waiting in the valleys were,
Laid hands on them, and seized them by the rein.
Thus in a thought each soldier had his horse,
Born ready reined and saddled for the course.

XXXV.

He fourscore thousand of his Nubian power,
One hundred and two footmen, in a day
To horsemen changes, who wide Africk scour,
And, upon every side, sack, burn, and slay.
Agramant had intrusted town and tower,
Till his return, to king Brauzardo's sway.
To Fersa's king, and him of the Algaziers;
And these against Astolpho lead their spears.

XXXVI.

Brewhile a nimble bark, with sail and oar,
 They had dispatched, which, stirring feet and wings,
 News of the Nubian monarch's outrage bore
 To Agramant from his viceregent kings,
 That rests not, night nor day, till to the shore
 Of Provence she her doleful tidings brings;
 And finds her monarch half subdued in Arles,
 For camped within a mile was conquering Charles.

XXXVII.

Agramant, hearing in what peril lies
 His realm, through his attack on Pepin's reign,
 Him in this pressing peril to advise,
 Calls kings and princes of the paynim train;
 And when he once or twice has turned his eyes
 On sage Sobrino and the king of Spain,
 —Eldest and wisest they those lords among—
 The monarch so bespeaks the assembled throng:

XXXVIII.

"Albeit it fits not captain, as I know,
 "To say, '*on this I thought not,*' this I say;
 "Because when from a quarter comes the blow,
 "From every human forethought far away,
 "'Tis for such fault a fair excuse, I trow;
 "And here all hinges; I did ill to lay
 "Unfurnished Africk open to attack,
 "If there was ground to fear the Nubian sack.

XXXIX.

"But who could think, save only God on high,
 "Prescient of all which is to be below,
 "That, from a land beneath such distant sky,
 "Such mighty host would come, to work us woe?
 "'Twixt whom and us unstable deserts lie,
 "Those shifting sands, which restless whirlwinds blow:
 "Yet they their camp have round Biserta placed,
 "And laid the better part of Africk waste.

XL.

"I now on this, O peers! your counsel crave.
 "If, bootless, homeward I should wend my way,
 "Or should not such a fair adventure wave,
 "Till Charles with me a prisoner I convey;
 "Or how I may as well our Africk save,
 "And ruin this redoubted empire, say.
 "Who can advise, is prayed his lore to shew,
 "That we may learn the best, and that pursue."

XLI.

He said ; and on Marsilius seated nigh
 Next turned his eyes, who in the signal read,
 That it belonged to him to make reply
 To what the king of Africa had said.
 The Spaniard rose, and bending reverently
 To Agramant the knee as well as head,
 Again his honoured seat in council prest,
 And in these words the Moorish king address :

XLII.

" My liege, does Rumour good or ill report,
 " It still increases them ; hence shall I ne'er,
 " Under despondence, lack for due support,
 " Nor bolder course than is befitting steer,
 " For what may chance, of good or evil sort ;
 " Weighing in even balance hope and fear,
 " O'errated still ; and which we should not mete
 " By what I hear so many tongues repeat ;

XLIII.

" Which should so much more doubtfully be viewed,
 " As it seems less with likelihood to stand.
 " Now it is seen, if there be likelihood,
 " That king who reigns in so remote a land,
 " Followed by such a mighty multitude,
 " Should set his foot on warlike Africk's strand :
 " Traversing sands, to which in evil hour
 " Cambyses trusted his ill-omened power.

XLIV.

" I well believe, that from some neighbouring hill
 " The Arabs have poured down, to waste the plain :
 " Who, for the country was defended ill,
 " Have taken, burnt, destroyed and sacked and slain :
 " And that Branzardo, who your place doth fill,
 " As viceroy and lieutenant of the reign,
 " Has set down thousands, where he tens should write ;
 " The better to excuse him in your sight.

XLV.

" The Nubian squadrons, I will even yield,
 " Have been rained down on Africk from the skies ;
 " Or haply they have come, in clouds concealed,
 " In that their march was hidden from all eyes :
 " Think you, because unaided in the field,
 " Your Africk from such host in peril lies ?
 " Your garrisons were sure of coward vein,
 " If they were scared by such a craven train.

XLVI.

- " But will you send some frigates, albeit few,
 " (Provided that unfurled your standards be)
 " No sooner shall they loose from hence, that crew
 " Of spoilers shall within their confines flee;
 " —Nubians are they, or idle Arabs—who,
 " Knowing that you are severed by the sea
 " From your own realm, and warring with our band,
 " Have taken courage to assail your land.

XLVII.

- " Now take your time for vengeance, when the son
 " Of Pepin is without his nephew's aid.
 " Since bold Orlando is away, by none
 " Of the hostile sect resistance can be made.
 " If, through neglect or blindness, be foregone
 " The glorious Fortune, which for you has stayed,
 " She her bald front, as now her hair, will show,
 " To our long infamy and mighty woe."

XLVIII.

- Thus warily the Spanish king replied,
 Proving by this and other argument,
 The Moorish squadrons should in France abide,
 Till Charlemagne was into exile sent.
 But King Sobrino, he that plainly spied
 The scope wherein Marsilius was intent,
 To public good preferring private gain,
 So spake in answer to the king of Spain

XLIX.

- " My liege, when I to peace exhorted you,
 " Would that my prophecy had proved less just!
 " Or, if I was to prove a prophet true,
 " Ye in Sobrino had reposed more trust
 " Than in King Rodomont and in that crew,
 " Alzirdo, Martasine, and Marbalust!
 " Whom I would here see gladly, front to front;
 " But see most gladly boastful Rodomont.

L.

- " To twit that warrior with his threat, 'to do
 ' By France what by the brittle glass is done;
 ' And throughout heaven and hell your course pursue,
 ' Yes, (as the monarch said) your course outrun.'
 " Yet lapt in foul and loathsome ease, while you
 " So need his help, lies Ulien's lazy son;*
 " And I, that as a coward was decried
 " For my true prophecy, am at your side.

* Rodomont.

LI.

- " And ever will be while this life I bear ;
 " Which, albeit 'tis with years sore laden, still
 " Daily for you is risked with them that are
 " The best of Franco ; and—be he who he will—
 " There is not mortal living who will dare
 " To say Sobrino's deeds were ever ill ;
 " Yea, many who vaunt more, amid your host,
 " Have not so much, nay lighter, cause for boast.

LII.

- " I speak these words to show that what whilere
 " I said and say again, has neither sprung
 " From evil heart, nor is the fruit of fear ;
 " But that true love and duty move my tongue.
 " You homeward with what haste you may to steer,
 " I counsel, your assembled hands among ;
 " For little is the wisdom of that wight
 " Who risks his own to gain another's right.

LIII.

- " If there be gain, ye know. Late thirty-two,
 " Your vassal kings, with you our sails we spread ;
 " Now, if we pause to sum the account anew
 " Hardly a third survives ; the rest are dead.
 " May it please Heaven no further loss ensue !
 " But if you will pursue your quest, I dread
 " Lest not a fourth nor fifth will soon remain ;
 " And wholly spent will be your wretched train.

LIV.

- " Orlando's absence so far aids, that where
 " Our troops are few, there haply *none* would be
 " But not through this removed our perils are,
 " Though it prolongs our evil destiny.
 " Behold Rinaldo ! whom his deeds declare,
 " No less than bold Orlando ; of his tree
 " There are the shoots ; with paladin and peer,
 " Our baffled Saracens' eternal fear ;

LV.

- " And the other Mars (albeit against my heart
 " It goes to waste my praise upon a foe) ;
 " I speak of the redoubted Brandimart,
 " Whose feats no less than fierce Orlando's show ;
 " Whose mighty prowess I have proved in part,
 " In part, at others' cost I see and know.
 " Then many days Orlando has been gone ;
 " Yet we have lost more fields than we have won.

LVI.

- " I fear, if heretofore our band has lost,
 " A heavier forfeit will henceforth be paid.
 " Blotted is Mandricardo from our host ;
 " Martial Gradasso hath withdrawn his aid ;
 " Marphisa, at our worst, has left her post :
 " So Argier's lord ; of whom it may be said,
 " Were he as true as strong, we should not need
 " Gradasso and the Tartar king to speed.

LVII.

- " While aids like these are lost to our array,
 " While on our side such slaughtered thousands lie,
 " Those looked-for are arrived, nor on her way
 " Is any vessel fraught with new supply—
 " Charles has been joined by four, that, as they say,
 " Might with Orlando or Rinaldo vie ;
 " With reason, for from hence to Bactrian shore,
 " Ill would you hope to find such other four.

LVIII.

- " I know not if you know who Guido are,
 " Sansonnet, and the sons of Olivier.
 " For these I more respect, more fear I bear,
 " Than any warlike duke or cavalier,
 " Of Almayn's or of other lineage fair,
 " Who for the Roman Empire rests the spear,
 " Though I misrate not those of newer stamp,
 " That, to our scathe, are gathered in their camp.

LIX.

- " As often as ye issue on the plain,
 " Worsted so oft, or broken, shall you be.
 " If oft united Africa and Spain
 " Were losers, when sixteen to eight were we,
 " What will ensue when banded with Almayn
 " Are England, Scotland, France, and Italy ?
 " When with our six twice six their weapons cross,
 " What else can we expect but shame and loss ?

LX.

- " You lose your people *here*, and *there* your reign,
 " If you in this emprise are obstinate :
 " —Returning,—us, the remnant of your train,
 " You save, together with your royal state.
 " It were ill done to leave the king of Spain,
 " Since all for this would hold you sore ingrate ;
 " Yet there's a remedy in peace, which so
 " It pleases but yourself, will please the foe.

LXI.

- " But if, as first defeated, on your part
 " It seems a shame to offer peace, and ye
 " Have war and wasteful battle more at heart,
 " Waged hitherto with what success you see,
 " At least to gain the victory use art,
 " Which may be yours, if you are ruled by me.
 " Lay all your quarrel's trial on one peer,
 " And let Rogero be that cavalier.

LXII.

- " Such our Rogero is, ye know and I,
 " That—pitted one to one in listed fight—
 " Not Roland, not Rinaldo stands more high,
 " Nor whatsoever other Christian knight.
 " But would ye kindle warfare far and nigh,
 " Though superhuman be that champion's might,
 " The warrior is but one mid many spears,
 " Matched singly with a host of martial peers.

LXIII.

- " Meseemeth, if to you it seemeth good,
 " Ye should propose to Charles the war to end ;
 " And that, to spare the constant waste of blood,
 " Which his, and countless of your warriors spend,
 " He—by a knight of yours to be withstood—
 " A champion, chosen from his best should send ;
 " And those two all the warfare wage alone,
 " Till one prevails, and one is overthrown ;

LXIV.

- " On pact the king, whose champion in the just
 " Is loser, tribute to that other pay.
 " Nor will this pact displease King Charles, I trust,
 " Though *his* was the advantage in the fray.
 " Then of his arms Rogero so robust
 " I deem, that he will surely win the day ;
 " Who would prevail (so certain is our right)
 " Though Mars himself should be his opposite."

LXV.

With these and other sayings yet more sound,
 So wrought Sobrino, he his end obtained ;
 And on that day interpreters were found,
 And they that day to Charles their charge explained,
 Charles, whom such matchless cavaliers surround,
 Believes the battle is already gained ;
 And chooses good Rinaldo for the just,
 Next to Orlando in his sovereign's trust.

LXVI.

In this accord like cause for pleasure find,
 As well the Christian as the paynim foe:
 For, harassed sore in body and in mind,
 Those warriors all were weary, all were woe.
 Each in repose and quietude designed
 To pass what time remained to him below:
 Each cursed the senseless anger and the hate
 Which stirred their hearts to discord and debate.

LXVII.

Rinaldo felt himself much magnified,
 That Charles, for what in him so strongly weighed,
 More trusted him than all his court beside,
 And glad the honoured enterprise assayed:
 Rogero he esteemed not in his pride,
 And thought he ill could keep him from his blade.
 Nor deemed the Child could equal him in fight,
 Albeit he slew in strife the Tartar knight,

LXVIII.

Rogero, though much honoured, on his part,
 That him his king has chosen from the rest,
 To whom a trust so weighty to impart,
 As of his many martial lords the best,
 Yet shows a troubled face; not that the heart
 Of that good knight unworthy fears molest;
 Not only none Rinaldo would have bred;
 Him, with Orlando leagued, he would not dread—

LXIX.

But because sister of the Christian knight
 (He knows) is she, his consort true and dear;
 That to the stripling evermore did write,
 As one sore injured by that cavalier.
 Now, if to ancient sins he should unite
 A mortal combat with Montalban's peer,
 Her, although loving, will he anger so,
 Not lightly she her hatred will forego.

LXX.

If silently Rogero made lament
 That he in his despite must battle do;
 In sobs his consort dear to hers gave vent,
 When shortly to her ears the tidings flew.
 She beat her breast, her golden tresses rent:
 Fast, scalding tears her innocent cheeks bedrew:
 She taxes young Rogero as ingrate,
 And aye cries out upon her cruel fate.

LXXI.

Nought can result to Bradamant but pain,
 Whatever is the doubtful combat's end.
 She will not think Rogero can be slain;
 For this, 'twould seem, her very heart would rend;
 And should our Lord the fall of France ordain,
That kingdom for more sins than one to shend,
 The gentle maid, beside a brother's loss,
 Would have to weep a worse and bitterer cross.

LXXII.

For, without shame and scorn, she never may,
 Nor without hatred of her kin combined,
 To her loved lord return in such a way
 As that it may be known of all mankind;
 As, thinking upon this by night and day,
 She oftentimes had purposed in her mind;
 And so by promise both were tied withal,
 Room for repentance and retreat was small.

LXXIII.

But she, that ever, when things adverse were,
 With faithful succour Bradamant had stayed,
 I say the weird Melissa, could not bear
 To hear the wailings of the woful maid;
 She hurried to console her in her care,
 And proffered succour in due time and said,
 'She would disturb that duel 'twixt the twain,
 'The occasion of such grief and cruel pain.'

LXXIV.

Meanwhile their weapons for the future fray
 Rogero and Duke Aymon's son prepared;
 The choice whereof with that good warrior lay,
 The Roman empire's knight by Charles declared;
 And he, like one that ever, from the day
 He lost his goodly steed afoot had fared,
 Made choice, afoot and fenced with plate and mail,
 His foe with axe and dagger to assail.

LXXV.

Whether Chance moved Montalban's martial lord,
 Or Malagigi, provident and sage,
 That knew how young Rogero's charmed sword
 Cleft helm and hauberk in its greedy rage,
 One and the other warrior made accord,
 (As said) without their faulechions to engage.
 The place of combat chosen by that twain
 Was near old Arles, upon a spacious plain.

LXXVI.

Watchful Aurora hardly from the bower
 Of old Tithonus hath put forth her head,
 To give beginning to the day and hour
 Prefixed and ordered for that duel dread,
 When deputies from either hostile power,
 On this side and on that forth issuing, spread
 Tents at each entrance of the lists; and near
 The two pavilions, both, an altar rear

LXXVII.

After short pause, was seen upon the plain
 The paynim host in different squadrons dight.
 Rich in barbaric pomp, amid that train,
 Rode Afric's monarch, ready armed for fight:
 Bay was the steed he backed, with sable mane;
 Two of his legs were pied, his forehead white.
 Fast beside Agramant, Rogero came,
 And him to serve Marsilius thought no shame.

LXXVIII.

The casque that he from Mandricardo wrung
 In single combat with such travel sore,
 The casque that (as in loftier strain is sung)
 Cased Hector's head, a thousand years before,
 Marsilius carried, by his side, among
 Princes and lords, that severally bore
 The other harness of Rogero bold,
 Enriched with precious pearls and rough with gold.

LXXIX.

On the other part, - without his camp appears
 Charles, with his men at arms in squadrons dight;
 Who in such order led his cavaliers,
 As they would keep, if marshalled for the fight.
 Fenced is the monarch with his famous peers,
 And with him wends, all armed, Montalban's knight,
 Armed, save his helmet, erst Mambrino's casque;
 To carry which is Danish Ogier's task;

LXXX.

And, of two axes, bath Duke Namus one,
 King Salamon the other: Charlemagne
 Is to *this* side, with all his following, gone,
 To *that* wend those of Afric and of Spain.
 In the mid space between the hosts is none;
 Empty remains large portion of the plain;
 For he is doomed to death who thither goes,
 By joint proclaim, except the chosen foes.

LXXXI.

After the second choice of arms was made
 By him, the champion of the paynim clan,
 Thither two priests of either sect conveyed
 Two books; *that*, carried by one holy man,
 —Him of our law—Christ's perfect life displayed;
 Those others' volume was their Alcoran.
 The emperor in his hands the Gospel took,
 The king of Africa th' other book.

LXXXII.

Charlemagne, at his altar, to the sky
 Lifted his hands, "O God, that for our sake
 (Exclaimed the monarch) "wast content to die
 "Thyself a ransom for our sins to make;
 "—O thou that found such favour in his eye,
 "That God from thee the flesh of man did take,
 "Borne for nine months within thy holy womb,
 "While aye thy virgin flower preserved its bloom,

LXXXIII.

"Hear, and be witnesses of what I say,
 "For me and those that after me shall reign.
 "To Agramant and those that heir his sway,
 "I twenty loads of gold of perfect grain
 "Will every year deliver, if to-day
 "My champion vanquished in the lists remain;
 "And vow I will straightway from warfare cease,
 "And from henceforth maintain perpetual peace;

LXXXIV.

"And may your joint and fearful wrath descend
 "On me forthwith, if I my word forego!
 "And may it me and mine alone offend,
 "And none beside, amid this numerous show!
 "That all in briefest time may comprehend,
 "My breach of promise has brought down the woe."
 So saying, in his hand the holy book
 Charles held, and fixed on heaven his earnest look.

LXXXV.

This done, they seek that altar, sumptuously
 Decked for the purpose, by the pagan train;
 Where their king swears, 'that he will pass the sea,
 'With all his army, to his Moorish reign,
 'And to King Charles will tributary be;
 'If vanquished, young Rogero shall remain;
 'And will observe the truce for evermore
 'Upon the pact declared by Charles before;'

LXXXVI.

And like him, nor in under tone, he swears,
 Calling on Mahound to attest his oath ;
 And on the volume which his pontiff bears,
 To observe what he has promised plight his troth.
 Then to his side each hastily repairs ;
 And mid their several powers are harboured both.
 Next these, to swear arrive the champions twain ;
 And this the promise which their oaths contain.

LXXXVII.

Rogero pledges first his knightly word,
 'Should *his* king mar, or send to mar, the fray,
 'He him no more as leader or as lord
 'Will serve, but wholly Charlemague obey.'
 —Rinaldo—'if in breach of their accord,
 'Him from the field King Charles would bear away,
 'Till one or the other is subdued in fight,
 'That he will be the Moorish monarch's knight.'

LXXXVIII.

When ended are the ceremonies, here
 And there, to seek their camps the two divide.
 Nor long therein delayed ; when trumpets clear
 The time for their encounter signified ;
 Now to the charge advanced each cavalier,
 Measuring with cautious care his every stride.
 Lo ! the assault begins ; now low, now high,
 That pair the sounding steel in circles ply.

LXXXIX.

Now with the axe's blade, now with its heel⁶
 Their strokes they at the head or foot address ;
 And these so skilfully and nimbly deal,
 As needs must shock all credence to express.
 The Child, that at *her* brother aims the steel,
 Who doth his miserable soul possess,
 Evermore with such caution strikes his blow,
 That he is deemed less vigorous than his foe.

XC.

Rather to parry than to smite intent,
 He knew not what to wish ; that low should lie
 Rinaldo, would Rogero ill content,
 Nor willingly the Child by him would die,
 But here am I at my full line's extent,
 Where I must needs defer my history.
 In other canto shall the rest appear,
 If you that other canto please to hear.

CANTO XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

*Agramant breaks the pact, is overthrown,
And forced fair France for Afric to forego.
Meanwhile Astolpho in Biserta's town
Having with numerous host besieged the foe,
By hazard there arrives bold Milo's son,
To whom the duke, instructed how to do,
Restores his wits. At sea does Dudon meet
King Agramant, and sore annoys his fleet.*

I.

THAN that fell woe which on Rogero weighs,
Harder and bitterer pain forsooth is none,
Which upon flesh and more on spirit preys :
For of two deaths there is no scaping one.
Him, if in strife o'erlaid, Rinaldo slays,
Bradamant, if Rinaldo is outdone :
For if he killed her brother, well he knew
Her hate, than death more hateful, would ensue.

II.

Rinaldo, unimpeded by such thought,
Strove in all ways Rogero to o'erthrow ;
Fierce and despiteous whirled his axe, and sought
Now in the arms, now head, to wound the foe.
Rogero circled here and there, and caught
Upon his weapon's shaft the coming blow ;
And, if he ever smote, aye strove to smite
Where he should injure least Montalban's knight.

III.

To most of them that led the paynim bands,
But too unequal seemed the fierce assay.
Too slowly young Rogero plied his hands ;
Too well Rinaldo kept the Child at bay.
With troubled face the king of Afric stands :
He sighed, and breathless gazed upon the fray ;
And all the blame of that ill counsel flung
On King Sobrino's head, from whom it sprang.

IV.

Meanwhile the weird Melissa, she—the font
Of all that wizards or enchanters know—
Had by her art transformed her female front,
And taken Argier's mighty shape ; in show
And gesture she appeared as Rodomont,
And seemed, like him, in dragon's hide to go :
Such was her belted sword and such her shield ;
Nor aught was wanting which he wore afield.

V.

She towards Troyano's mournful son did guide,
 In form of courser, a familiar sprite,
 And with a troubled visage loudly cried,
 "My liege, this is too foul an oversight,
 "A stripling boy in peril yet untried,
 "Against a Gaul, so stout and famed in fight,
 "Your champion in so fierce a strife to make;
 "Where Afric's realm and honour are at stake.

VI.

"Let not this battle be pursued, my lord,
 "In that 'twould cost our Moorish cause too dear.
 "Let sin of broken faith and forfeit word
 "Fall upon Rodomont! take thou no fear!
 "Let each now show the metal of his sword.
 "Each for a hundred stands when I am here."
 So upon Agramant this counsel wrought,
 That king pressed forward without further thought.

VII.

He, thinking that the monarch of Algiers
 Is with him, of the pact has little care;
 And would not rate a thousand cavaliers
 So high, if banded in his aid they were.
 Hence steeds reined-in and spurred, hence levelled spears
 Are seen in one short instant here and there.
 Melissa, when the hosts are mixed in fight
 By her false phantoms, vanishes from sight.

VIII.

The champions two, that, against all accord,
 Against all faith, disturbed their duel see,
 No longer strive in fight, but pledge their word
 —Yea, put aside all hostile injury—
 That they, on neither part, will draw the sword,
 Until they better certified shall be
 Who broke the pact established by that twain,
 Young Agramant, or aged Charlemagne.

IX.

They swear anew, 'the king who had o'erthrown
 'That truce, and broken faith, as foe to treat.'
 The field of combat is turned upside down;
 Some hurry to the charge, and some retreat.
 Who most deserved disgrace, who most renown,
 Was seen, on both hands, in the selfsame feat;
 All ran alike: but, 'mid that wild affray,
 These ran to meet the foe, those ran away.

X.

As greyhound in the slip, that the fleet hare
 Scowring about and circling him discerns,
 Nor with the other dogs a part can bear
 (For him the hunter holds), with anger burns;
 Torments himself and mourns in his despair,
 And whines, and strives against the leash, by turns;
 Such till that moment had the fury been
 Of Aymon's daughter and the martial queen.

XI.

They till that hour upon the spacious plain,
 Had watched so rich a prize throughout the day;
 And, as obliged by treaty to refrain
 From laying hands upon the costly prey,
 Had sore lamented and had grieved in vain,
 Gazing with longing eyes on that array.
 Now seeing truce and treaty broke, among
 The Moorish squadrons they rejoicing sprung.

XII.

Marphisa piercing her first victim's breast,
 (Two yards beyond his back the lance did pass)
 In briefer time than 'tis by me exprest,
 Broke with her sword four helms which flew like glass;
 No less did Bradamant upon the rest;
 But them her spear reduced to other pass.
 All touched by that gold lance she overthrew;
 Doubling Marphisa's score; yet none she slew.

XIII.

They witness to each others' exploits are,
 (Those maids to one another are so near)
 Then, whither fury drives, the martial pair,
 Dividing, through the Moorish ranks career.
 Who could each several warrior's name declare
 Stretched on the champaign by that golden spear?
 Or reckon every head Marphisa left
 Divided by her horrid sword, or cleft?

XIV.

As when benigner winds more softly blow,
 And Apennine his shaggy back lays bare,¹
 Two turbid torrents with like fury flow,
 Which, in their fall, two separate channels wear,
 Uproot hard rocks, and mighty trees which grow
 On their steep banks, and field and harvest bear
 Into the vale, and seem as if they vied
 Which should do mightiest damage on its side:

XV.

So those high-minded virgin warriors two,
 Scowering the field in separate courses, made
 Huge havoc of the Moors; whom they pursue
 One with couched lance, and one with lifted blade.
 Hardly King Agramant his Afric crew
 From flight, beneath his royal banners stayed:
 In search of Rodomont, he vainly turned;
 Nor tidings of the missing warrior learned

XVI.

He at his exhortation (so he trowed)
 Had broke the treaty made in solemn wise,
 To witness which the gods were called aloud;
 Who then so quickly vanished from his eyes:
 Nor sees he King Sobrino; disavowed
 By King Sobrino is the deed, who flies
 To Arles, and deems that day some vengeance dread
 Will fall on Agramant's devoted head,

XVII.

Marsilius too is fled into the town:
 So has that monarch holy faith at heart.
 'Tis hence, that feebly King Troyano's son
 Resists the crew, that war on Charles's part,
 Italians, English, Germans; of renown
 Are all; and, scattered upon every part,
 Are mixed the paladins, those barons bold,
 Glittering like jewels on a cloth of gold;

XVIII.

And, with those peers, is more than one confest
 As perfect as is earthly cavalier.
 Guido the savage, that intrepid breast,
 And those two famous sons of Olivier.
 I will not now repeat what I exprest
 Of that fierce, daring female twain whilere;
 Who on the field so many Moors extend,
 No number is there to the slain or end.

XIX.

But, putting this affray some while aside,
 Without a pinnace will I pass the sea.
 To them of France so fast I am not tied,
 But that Astolpho should remembered be:
 Of the grace given him by his holy guide
 I told erewhile, and told (it seems to me)
 Branzardo and the king of Algaziers
 Against the duke had mustered all their spears.

XX.

Such as the monarchs could in haste engage,
 Raked from all Africa, that host contained ;
 Whether of fitting or of feeble age ;
 Scarce from impressing women they refrained.
 Resolved his thirst of vengeance to assuage,
 Agramant twice his Africa had drained.²
 Few people in the land were left, and they
 A feeble and dispirited array.

XXI.

So proved they ; for the foe was scarce in view,
 Before that levy broke in panic dread :
 Like sheep, their quailing bands Astolpho slew,
 Charging at his more martial squadrons' head ;
 And with the slain filled all that champaign ; few
 Into Biserta from the carnage fled.
 A prisoner valiant Bucifar remained ;
 The town in safety King Branzardo gained ;

XXII.

More grieved at Bucifaro's loss alone,
 Than had he lost the rest in arms arrayed.
 Wide and in want of ramparts is the town ;
 And these could ill be raised without his aid.
 While fain to ransom him, he thinks upon
 The means, and stands afflicted and dismayed,
 He recollects him how the paladin,
 Dudon, has many a month his prisoner been.

XXIII.

Him under Monaco, upon the shore,
 In his first passage, Sarza's monarch took.
 Thenceforth had been a prisoner evermore
 Dudon, who was derived of Danish stock.
 The paladin against the royal Moor
 Branzardo thought, in this distress, to truck ;
 And knowing through sure spy, Astolpho led
 The Nubians, to that chief the offer sped.

XXIV.

A paladin himself, Astolpho knows
 He gladly ought a paladin to free ;
 And when that case the Moorish envoy shows,
 To King Branzardo's offer does agree.
 Dudon from prison loosed, his thanks bestows ;
 And whatsoever pertains to land or sea,
 Bestirs him to accomplish, in accord
 With his illustrious chief, the English lord.

XXV.

Astolpho leading such a countless band
 As might have well seven Africas opprest
 And recollecting 'twas the saint's command,
 Who upon him whilere imposed the quest,
 That fair Provence and Aquamorta's strand
 He from the reaving Saracen should wrest,
 Made through his numerous host a second draught
 Of such as least inapt for sea he thought;

XXVI.

And filling next as full as they could be
 His hands with many different sorts of leaves,
 Plucked from palm, olive, bay and cedar tree,
 Approached the shore, and cast them on the waves.
 Oh blessed souls! Oh great felicity!
 O grace! which rarely man from God receives;
 O strange and wondrous miracle, which sprung
 Out of those leaves upon the waters flung!

XXVII.

They wax in number beyond all esteem;
 Becoming crooked and heavy, long, and wide.
 Into hard timber turn and solid beam,
 The slender veins that branch on either side;
 Taper the masts; and, moored in the salt stream,
 All in a thought transformed to vessels, ride;
 And of as diverse qualities appear,
 As are the plants whereon they grew whilere.

XXVIII.

It was a miracle to see them grown
 To galliot, galley, frigate, ship, and boat;
 Wondrous, that they with tackling of their own,
 Are found as well as any barks aloat.
 Nor lack there men to govern them, when blown
 By blustering winds—from islands not remote—
 Sardinia or Corsica, of every rate,
 Pilot and patron, mariner and mate.

XXIX.

Twenty-six thousand were the troops that manned
 Those ready barks of every sort and kind.
 To Dudon's government, by sea or land
 A leader sage, the navy was consigned;
 Which yet lay anchored off the Moorish strand,
 Expecting a more favourable wind,
 To put to sea; when, freighted with a load
 Of prisoners, lo! a vessel made the road.

XXX.

She carried those, whom at the bridge of dread,
 —On that so narrow place of battle met—
 Rodomont took, as often has been said.
 The valiant Olivier was of the set,
 Orlando's kin, and, with them, prisoners led,
 Were faithful Brandimart and Sansonet,
 With more; to tell whereof there is no need;
 Of German, Gascon, or Italian seed.

XXXI.

The patron, yet unweeting he should find
 Foes in the port, here entered to unload;
 Having left Argier many miles behind,
 Where he was minded to have made abode;
 Because a boisterous, overblowing, wind
 Had driven his bark beyond her destined road;
 Deeming himself as safe and welcome guest
 As Progne, when she seeks her noisy nest.

XXXII.

But when, arrived, the imperial eagle spread,
 And pards and golden lilies he descries,
 With countenance as sicklied o'er by dread,
 He stands, as one that in unwary guise
 Has chanced on fell and poisonous snake to tread,
 Which, in the grass, opprest with slumber lies;
 And, pale and startled, hastens to retire
 From that ill reptile, swoln with bane and ire.

XXXIII.

But no retreat from peril is there here,
 Nor can the patron keep his prisoners down:
 Him thither Brandimart and Olivier,
 Sansonet and those others drag, where known
 And greeted are the friends with joyful cheer,
 By England's duke, and Danish Ogier's son;*
 Who read that he who brought them to that shore
 Should for his pains be sentenced to the oar.

XXXIV.

King Otho's son† kind welcome did afford
 Unto those Christian cavaliers, as said:
 Who—honoured at his hospitable board—
 With arms and all things needful were purveyed.
 His going, for their sake, the Danish lord
 Deferred, who deemed his voyage well delayed,
 To parley with those peers, though at the cost
 Of one or two good days, in harbour lost.

* Astolpho and Dudon.

† Astolpho.

XXXV.

Of Charles, and in what state, what order are
 The affairs of France they gave advices true ;
 Told where he best could disembark, and where
 To most advantage of the Christian crew,
 While so the cavaliers their news declare,
 A noise is heard ; which ever louder grew,
 Followed by such a fierce alarm withal,
 As to more fears than one gave rise in all.

XXXVI.

The duke Astolpho and the goodly throng,
 That in discourse with him were occupied,
 Armed in a moment, on their coursers sprung,
 And hurried where the Nubians loudest cried ;
 And seeking wherefore that wide larum rung,
 Now here, now there—those warlike lords espied
 A savage man, and one so strong of hand,
 Naked and sole he troubled all that band.

XXXVII.

The naked savage whirled a sapling round,
 So hard, so heavy, and so strong of grain,
 That every time the weapon went to ground,
 Some warrior, more than maimed, opprest the plain.
 Above a hundred dead are strewed around ;
 Nor more defence the routed bands maintain ;
 Save that a war of distant darts they try ;
 For there is none will wait the champion nigh.

XXXVIII.

Astolpho, Brandimart, the Danish knight,
 Hastening towards that noise with Olivier,
 Remain astounded at the wondrous might
 And courage which in that wild man appear.
 When, posting thither on a palfrey light,
 Is seen a damsel, clad in sable gear,
 To Brandimart in haste that lady goes,
 And both her arms about the warrior throws.

XXXIX.

This was fair Flordelice, whose bosom so
 Burned with the love of Monodantes' son,*
 She, when they left him prisoner to his foe
 At that straight bridge, had nigh distracted gone.
 From France had she past hither—given to know—
 By that proud paynim, who the deed had done,
 ' How Brandimart, with many cavaliers,
 ' Was prisoner in the city of Algiers.'

Brandimart.

XL.

When now she for that harbour would have weighed,
 An eastern vessel in Marseilles she found,
 Which thither had an ancient knight conveyed :
 Of Monodantes' household ; a long round
 To seek his Brandimart that lord had made,
 By sea, and upon many a distant ground.
 For he, upon his way, had heard it told,
 ' How he in France should find the warrior bold.'

XLI.

She knowing old Bardino in that wight,
 Bardino who from Monodantes' court
 With little Brandimart had taken flight,
 And reared his nursling in THE SYLVAN FORT ;
 Then hearing what had thither brought the knight,
 With her had made him loosen from the port ;
 Relating to that elder, by what chance
 Brandimart had to Afric passed from France.

XLII.

As soon as landed, ' that Biserta lies
 ' Besieged by good Astolpho's band,' they hear ;
 ' That Brandimart is with him in the emprise,'
 They learn, but learn not as a matter clear.
 Now in such haste to him the damsel flies,
 When she beholds her faithful cavalier,
 As plainly shows her joy ; which woes o'erblown
 Had made the mightiest she had ever known.

XLIII.

The gentle baron no less gladly eyed
 His faithful and beloved consort's face ;
 Her whom he prized above all things beside ;
 And clipt and welcomed her with loving grace ;
 Nor his warm wishes would have satisfied
 A first, a second, or a third embrace,
 But that he spied Bardino, he that came
 From France, together with that faithful dame.

XLIV.

He stretched his arms, and would embrace the knight
 And—wherefore he was come—would bid him say :
 But was prevented by the sudden flight
 Of the scared host, which fled in disarray,
 Before the club of that mad, naked wight,
 Who with the braudished sapling cleared his way.
 Flordelice viewed the furious man in front ;
 And cried to Brandimart, " Behold the count !"

XLV.

At the same time, withal, Astolpho hold
 That this was good Orlando plainly knew,
 By signs, whereof those ancient saints had told,
 In the earthly paradise, as tokens true.
 None of those others, who the knight behold,
 The courteous baron in the madman view;
 That from long self-neglect, while wild he ran,
 Had in his visage more of beast than man.

XLVI.

With breast and heart transfixed with pity, cried
 Valiant Astolpho—bathed with many a tear—
 Turning to Danish Dudon, at this side,
 And afterwards to valiant Olivier;
 "Behold Orlando!" Him awhile they eyed,
 Straining their eyes and lids; then knew the peer;
 And, seeing him in such a piteous plight,
 Were filled with grief and wonder at the sight.

XLVII.

So grieve and so lament the greater part
 Of those good warriors, that their eyes o'erflow.
 "'Tis time (Astolpho cried) " to find some art
 "To heal him, not indulge in useless woe;"
 And from his courser sprang: bold Brandimart,
 Olivier, Sansonnet and Dudon so
 All leap to ground, and all together make
 At Roland, whom the warriors fain would take.

XLVIII.

Seeing the circle round about him grow,
 Levels his club that furious paladin,
 And makes fierce Dudon feel (who—couched below
 His buckler—on the madman would break in)
 How grievous is that staff's descending blow;
 And but that Olivier, Orlando's kin,
 Broke in some sort its force, that stake accurat
 Had shield and helmet, head and body burst.

XLIX.

It only burst the shield, and in such thunder
 Broke on the casque, that Dudon prest the shore:
 With that, Sir Sansonnet cut clean asunder
 The sapling, shorn of two cloth-yards and more,
 So vigorous was that warrior's stroke, while under
 His bosom, Brandimart girt Roland sore
 With sinewy arms about his body flung;
 And to the champion's legs Astolpho clung.

L.

Orlando shook himself, and England's knight,
 Ten paces off, reversed upon the ground ;
 Yet loosed not Brandimart, who with more might
 And better hold had clasped the madman round.
 To Olivier, too forward in that fight,
 He dealt so furious and so fell a wound,
 With his clenched fist, that pale the marquis fell ;
 And purple streams from eyes and nostrils well ;

LI.

And save his morion had been more than good,
 Bold Olivier had breathed his last, who lies,
 So battered with his fall, it seemed he would
 Bequeath his parting soul to paradise.
 Astolpho and Dudon, that again upstood
 (Albeit swoln were Dudon's face and eyes)
 And Sansonet, who plied so well his sword,
 All made together at Anglantes' lord.

LII.

Dudon Orlando from behind embraced,
 And with his foot the furious peer would throw :
 Astolpho and others seize his arms ; but waste
 Their strength in all attempts to hold the foe,
 He who has seen a bull, by mastiffs chased
 That gore his bleeding ears, in fury lowe,
 Dragging the dogs that bait him there and here,
 Yet from their tusks unable to get clear ;

LIII.

Let him imagine, so Orlando drew
 Astolpho and those banded knights along.
 Meanwhile upstarted Oliviero, who
 By that fell flatcuff on earth was flung ;
 And, seeing they could ill by Roland do
 That sought by good Astolpho and his throng,
 He meditates, and compasses, a way
 The frantic paladin on earth to lay.

LIV.

He many a hawser made them thither bring,
 And running knots in them he quickly tied ;
 Which on the count's waist, arms, and legs, they fling
 And then, among themselves, the ends divide,
 Conveyed to this or that amid the ring,
 Compassing Roland upon every side.
 The warriors thus Orlando flung parforce,
 As farrier throws the struggling ox or horse.

LV.

As soon as down, they all upon him are,
 And hands and feet more tightly they constrain ;
 He shakes himself, and plunges here and there ;
 But all his efforts for relief are vain.
 Astolpho bade them hence the prisoner bear ;
 ' For he would heal (he said) the warrior's brain.'
 Shouldered by sturdy Dudon is the load,
 And on the beach's furthest brink bestowed.

LVI.

Seven times Astolpho makes them wash the knight ;
 And seven times plunged beneath the brine he goes.
 So that they cleanse away the scurf and blight,
 Which to his stupid limbs and visage grows.
 This done, with herbs, for that occasion dight,
 They stop his mouth, wherewith he puffs and blows,
 For, save his nostrils, would Astolpho leave
 No passage whence the count might air receive.

LVII.

Valiant Astolpho had prepared the vase,
 Wherein Orlando's senses were contained,
 And to his nostrils in such mode conveys,
 That, drawing-in his breath, the county drained
 The mystic cup withal. Oh wondrous case !
 The unsettled mind its ancient seat regained ;
 And, in its glorious reasonings, yet more clear
 And lucid waxed his wisdom than whilere.

LVIII.

As one, that seems in troubled sleep to see
 Abominable shapes, a horrid crew ;
 Monsters which are not, and which cannot be ;
 Or seems some strange, unlawful thing to do ;
 Yet marvels at himself, from slumber free,
 When his recovered senses play him true ;
 So good Orlando, when he is made sound,
 Remains yet full of wonder, and astound.

LIX.

Aldabelle's brother,³ Monodantes' son,*
 And him that on his brain such cure had wrought,
 He wondering marked, but word he spake to none ;
 And when and how he was brought thither, thought.
 He turned his restless eyes now up now down,
 Nor where he was withal, imagined aught,
 Marvelling why he there was naked cast,
 And wherefore tethered, neck and heels, so fast.

*Oliviero and Brandimart.

LX.

Then said, as erst Silenus said—when seen,
 And taken sleeping in the cave of yore—
 SOLVITE ME, ' with visage so serene,
 With look so much less wayward than before,
 That him they from his bonds delivered clean,
 And raiment to the naked warrior bore ;
 All comforting their friend, with grief oppress'd
 For that delusion which had him possess'd.

LXI.

When to his former self he was restored,
 Of wiser and of manlier mind than e'er,
 From love as well was freed the enamour'd lord ;
 And she, so gentle deem'd, so fair whilere,
 And by renowned Orlando so adored,
 Did but to him a worthless thing appear.
 What he through love had lost, to reacquire
 Was his whole study, was his whole desire.

LXII.

Meanwhile Bardino told to Brandimart,
 ' How Monodantes, his good sire, was dead,
 ' And on his brother, Gigliantes' part,
 ' To call him to his kingdom had he sped,
 ' As well as from those isles, which most apart
 ' From other lands, in eastern seas are spread,
 ' That prince's fair inheritance ; than which
 ' Was none more pleasant, populous, or rich.'

LXIII.

He said, mid many reasons which he prest,
 ' That home was sweet, and—were the warrior fain
 ' To taste that sweet—he ever would detest
 ' A wandering life ;' and Brandimart again
 Replies, ' Through all that war, he will not rest
 ' From serving Roland and King Charlemagne :
 ' And after, if he lives to see its end,
 ' To his own matters better will attend.'

LXIV.

Upon the following day, for Provence steer
 The shipping under Danish Dudon's care ;
 When with the duke retired Anglantes' peer,
 And heard that lord the warfare's state declare :
 Then prest with siege Biserta, far and near,
 But let good England's knight the honour wear
 Of every vantage ; while Astolpho still
 In all was guided by Orlando's will.

LXV.

The order taken to attack the town
 Of Iugo Biserta, when, and on what side ;
 How, at the first assault, the walls are won,
 And with Orlando who the palm divide,
 Lament not that I now shall leave unshown,
 Since for short time I lay my tale aside.
 In the meanwhile, how fierce an overthrow
 The Moors received in France, be pleased to know.

LXVI.

Well nigh abandoned was their royal lord
 In his worst peril ; for to Arles again
 Had gone, with many of the paynim horde,
 The sage Sobrino and the king of Spain ;
 Who, for they deemed the land unsafe, aboard
 Their barks sought refuge, with a numerous train,
 Barous and cavaliers, that served the Moor ;
 Who moved by their example put from shore.

LXVII.

Yet royal Agramant the fight maintains ;
 But when he can no longer make a stand,
 Turns from the combat, and directly strains
 For Arles, not far remote, upon the strand.
 Him Rabican pursues, with flowing reins,
 Whom Aymon's daughter drives with heel and hand.
 Him would she slay, through whom so often crost,
 That martial maid had her Rogero lost.

LXVIII.

Marplisa by the same desire was stirred,
 Who had her thoughts on tardy vengeance placed,
 For her dead sire ; and as she fiercely spurred,
 Made her hot courser feel his rider's haste.
 But neither martial maid, amid that herd
 Of flying Moors, so well the monarch chased,
 As to o'ertake him in his swift retreat,
 First into Arles, and then aboard his fleet.

LXIX.

As two fair generous pards, that from some crag
 Together dart, and stretch across the plain ;
 When they perceive that vigorous goat or stag,
 Their nimble quarry, is pursued in vain,
 As if ashamed they in that chase did lag,
 Return repentant and in high disdain :
 So, with a sigh, return those damsels two,
 When they the paynim king in safety view :

LXX.

Yet therefore halt not, but in fury go
 Amid that crowd, which flies, possess with dread ;
 Felling, now here, now there, at every blow,
 Many that never more uprear their head.
 To evil pass was brought the broken foe :
 For safety was not even for them that fled :
 Since Agramant, a sure retreat to gain,
 Bade shut the city-gate which faced the plain ;

LXXI.

And bade on Rhone break all the bridges down.
 Unhappy people, ever held as cheap
 —Weighed with the tyrant's want who wears a crown—
 As worthless herd of goats or silly sheep !
 These in the sea, those in the river drown ;
 And those with blood the thirsty fallows steep.
 The Franks few prisoners made, and many slew ;
 For ransom in that battle was for few.

LXXII.

Of the great multitude of either train,
 Christened or paynim, killed in that last fight,
 Though in unequal parts (for, of the slain,
 By far more Saracens were killed in flight,
 By hands of those redoubted damsels twain),
 Signs even to this day remain in sight :
 For, hard by Arles, where sleeps the lazy Rhonc,
 The plain with rising sepulchres is strown.

LXXIII.

Meanwhile his heavy ships of deepest draught
 King Agramant had made put forth to sea,
 Leaving some barks in port—his lightest craft—
 For them that would aboard his navy flee :
 He stays two days, while they the stragglers waft,
 And, for the winds are wild and contrary,
 On the third day, to sail he gives command,
 In trust to make return to Afric's land.

LXXIV.

Royal Marsilius, in that fatal hour,
 Fearing the costs will fall upon his Spain,
 And that the clouds, which big with tempest lower,
 In the end will burst upon his fields and grain,
 Makes for Valentia ; where he town and tower
 Begins to fortify with mickle pain ;
 And for that war prepares, which after ends
 In the destruction of himself and friends.

LXXV.

King Agramant his sails for Afric bent :
 His barks ill-armed and almost empty go ;
 Empty of men, but full of discontent,
 In that three-fourths had perished by the foe.
 As cruel some, as weak and proud some shent
 Their king, and (as still happens in like woe)
 All hate him privily ; but, for they fear
 His fury, in his presence mute appear.

LXXVI.

Yet sometimes two 'or three their lips unclose,
 — Some knot of friends, where each on each relies—
 And their pent choler and their rage expose :
 Yet Agramant beneath the illusion lies,
 That each with love and pity overflows ;
 And this befalls, because he still espies
 False faces, hears but voices that applaud,
 And nought but adulation, lies and fraud.

LXXVII.

Not in Biserta's port his host to land
 Was the sage king of Africa's intent,
 Who had sure news 'that shore by Nubia's band
 Was held,' but he so far above it meant
 To steer his Moorish squadron, that the strand
 Should not be steep or rugged for descent :
 There would he disembark, and thence would aid
 Forthwith his people, broken and dismayed.

LXXVIII.

But favoured not by his foul destiny
 Was that intention, provident and wise ;
 Which willed the fleet, from leaves of greenwood tree,
 Produced upon the beach in wondrous guise,
 That, bound for France, now ploughed the foaming sea,
 Should meet the king at night ; that from surprise
 In that dark, dismal hour, amid his crew
 Worse panic and disorder might ensue.

LXXIX.

Not yet to him have tidings been conveyed,
 That squadrons of such force the billows plough
 Nor would he have believed in him who said,
 'A hundred barks had sprung from one small bough ;'
 And hence for Africa the king had weighed,
 Not fearing to encounter hostile prow ;
 Nor has he watchmen in his tops to spy,
 And make report of what they hence descry.

LXXX.

'Twas so those ships, by England's peer supplied
 To Dudon, manned with good and armed crew,
 Which see the Moorish fleet at eventide,
 And that strange armament forthwith pursue,
 Assailed them unawares, and, far and wide,
 Among those barks their grappling-irons threw,
 And linked by chains, to their opponents clung,
 When known for Moors and foemen by their tongue.

LXXXI.

In bearing down, impelled by winds that blow
 Propitious to the Danish chief's intent,
 Those weighty ships so shocked the paynim foe,
 That many vessels to the bottom went;
 Then, taxing wits and hands, to work them woe,
 Them with fire, sword, and stones the Christians shent;
 Which on their ships in such wide ruin pour,
 Like tempest never vext the sea before.

LXXXII.

Bold Dudon's men, to whom unwonted might
 And daring was imparted from on high,
 (Since the hour was come the paynims to requite
 For more than one ill deed,) from far and nigh,
 The Moors so pestilently gall and smite,
 Agramant finds no shelter; from the sky
 Above, thick clouds of whistling arrows strike;
 Around gleam hook and hatchet, sword and pike.

LXXXIII.

The king hears huge and heavy stones descend,
 From charged machine or thundering engine sent,
 Which, falling, poop and prow, and broadside rend,
 Opening to ravening seas a mighty vent;
 And more than all the furious fires offend,
 Fires that are quickly kindled, slowly spent.
 The wretched crews would fain that danger shun,
 And ever into direr peril run.

LXXXIV.

One headlong plunged, pursued by fire and sword,
 And perished mid the waters, one who wrought
 Faster with arms and feet, his passage oared
 To other barque, already overfraught:
 But she repulsed the wretch that fain would board
 Whose hand, which too importunately sought
 To clamber, grasped the side, while his lopt arm
 And body stained the wave with life-blood warm.

LXXXV.

Him, that to save his life i' the waters thought,
 Or, at the worst to perish with less pain,
 (Since swimming profited the caitiff nought,
 And he perceived his strength and courage drain)
 To the hungry fires from which he refuge sought,
 The fear of drowning hurries back again :
 He grasps a burning plank, and in the dread
 Of dying either death, by both is sped.

LXXXVI.

This vainly to the sea resorts, whom spear
 Or hatchet, brandished close at hand, dismay ;
 For stone or arrow following in his rear,
 Permit the craven to make little way.
 But haply, while it yet delights your ear,
 'Twere well and wisely done to end my lay,
 Rather than harp upon the theme so long
 As to annoy you with a tedious song.

CANTO XL.

ARGUMENT.

*To fly the royal Ayramant is fain,
 And sees Biserta burning far away ;
 But landing finds the royal Sericane,
 Who of his faith gives goodly warrant : they
 Defy Orlando, backed by champions twain ;
 Whom bold Gradasso firmly trusts to slay.
 For seven kings' sake, fast prisoners to their foes,
 Rogero and the Dane exchange rude blows.*

I.

THE diverse chances of that sea-fight dread,
 Here to rehearse would take a weary while ;
 And to discourse to you upon this head,
 Great son of Hercules, were to Samos' isle
 To carry earthen vessels, as 'tis said,
 To Athens owls, and crocodiles to Nile.
 In that, my lord, by what is vouched to me,
 Such things you saw, such things made others see.

II.

Your faithful people gazed on a long show,
 That night and day, wherein they crowded stood,
 As in a theatre, and hemmed on Po
 Twixt fire and sword, the hostile navies viewed.
 What outcries may be heard, what sounds of woe,
 How rivers may run red with human blood,
 In suchlike combat, in how many a mode
 Men die, you saw, and you to many showed.

III.

I saw not, I, who was compelled to course,
 Evermore changing nags, six days before,
 To Rome, in heat and haste, some helpful force
 Of him our mighty pastor to implore.
 But, after, need was none of foot or horse,
 For so the lion's snout and claws you tore,¹
 From that day unto this I hear not said
 That he more trouble in your land has bred.

IV.

But Trotto, present at this victory,
 Afranio, Moro, Albert, Hannibal,
 Zerbinat, Bagnio, the Ariostos three,
 Assured me of the mighty feat withal,
 Certified after by that ensignry,
 Suspended from the holy temple's wall,
 And fifteen galleys at our river-side,
 Which with a thousand captive barks I spied.

V.

He that those wrecks and blazing fires discerned,
 And such sore slaughter, under different shows,
 Which—vengeing us for hall and palace burned—
 While bark remained, raged wide among the foes,
 Might also deem how Afric's people mourned,
 With Agramant, mid diverse deaths and woes,
 On that dark night, when the redouted Dane
 Assaulted in mid sea the Moorish train.

VI.

'Twas night, nor gleam was anywhere descried,
 When first the fleets in furious strife were blended;
 But when lit sulphur, pitch and tar from side
 And poop and prow into the sky ascended,
 And the destructive wild-fire scattered wide,
 Fed upon ship and shallop ill defended,
 The things about them all descried so clear -
 That night was changed to day, as 'twould appear.

VII.

Hence Agramant, that by the dark deceived,
 Had rated not so high the foes' array,
 Nor to encounter such a force believed,
 But would, if 'twere opposed, at last give way,
 When that wide darkness cleared, and he perceived
 (What least he weened upon the first affray)
 That twice as many were the ships he fought,
 As his own Moorish barks, took other thought.

VIII

Into a boat he with some few descends,
 Briigliador and some precious things, to flee ;
 And so, twixt ship and ship, in silence wends,
 Until he finds himself in safer sea,
 Far from his own ; whom fiery Dudon shends,
 Reduced to sad and sore extremity ;
 Them steel destroys, fires burn, and waters drown ;
 While he, that mighty slaughter's cause, is flown.

IX.

Agramant flies, and with him old Sobrine,
 Agramant grieving he had not believed,
 What time that sage foresaw with eye divine,
 And told the woe wherewith he is aggrieved.
 But turn we to the valiant paladine,
 Who, before other aid can be received,
 Counsels the duke Biserta to destroy ;
 That it no more may Christian France annoy.

X.

And hence in public order was it said,
 'The camp should to its arms the third day stand,
 For this, it was with many barks bested ;
 For all were placed not at the Dane's command.
 That fleet the worthy Sansonetto led,
 (As good a warrior he by sea as land)
 Which a mile off the port, and overright
 Biserta. now was anchored by the knight.

XI.

Orlando and the duke, like Christians true,
 Which dare no danger without God for guide,
 'That fast and prayer be made their army through,'
 Ordain by proclamation to be cried ;
 And that upon the third day, when they view
 The signal, all shall bown them, far and wide,
 Biserta's royal city to attack,
 Which they, when taken, doom to fire and sack.

XII.

And so, when now devoutly have been done
 Vigil and vow, and holy prayer and fast,
 Kin, friends, and those to one another known.
 Together feast ; who, when with glad repast
 Their wasted bodies were refreshed, begun
 To embrace and weep ; and acts and speeches past,
 Upon the banquet's close, amid those crews
 Such as best friends, about to sever, use.

XIII.

The holy priests within Biserta's wall,
 Pray with their grieving people, and in tears,
 Aye beat their bosoms, and for succour call
 Upon their Mahomet, who nothing hears.
 What vigils, offerings, and what gifts withal
 Were promised silently, amid their fears !
 What temples, statues, images were vowed,
 In memory of their bitter woes, aloud !

XIV.

And, when the cadì hath his blessing said,
 The people arms and to the rampart hies.
 As yet reposing in her Tithon's bed,
 Aurora was, and dusky were the skies ;
 When to their posts, their several troops to head,
 Here Sansonetto, there Astolpho flies.
 And when they hear Orlando's signal blown,
 Assault with furious force Biserta's town.

XV.

Washed by the sea, upon two quarters, were
 The city walls, two stood on the dry shore,
 Of a construction excellent and rare,
 Wherein was scen the work of days of yore :
 Of other bulwarks was the town nigh bare ;
 For since Branzardo there the sceptre bore,
 Few masons at command, and little space
 That monarch had to fortify the place.

XVI.

The Nubian king is charged by England's peer,
 With sling and arrow so the Moors to gail,
 That none upon the works shall dare appear ;
 And that, protected by the ceaseless fall
 Of stone and dart, in safety cavalier
 And footman may approach the very wall ;
 Who loaded, some with plank, with rock-stone some,
 And some with beam, or weightier burden, come.

XVII.

This and that other thing the Nubians bore,
 And by degrees filled-up that channel wide,
 Whose waters were cut off the day before,
 So that in many parts the ooze was spied.
 Filled is the ditch in haste from shore to shore,
 And forms a level to the further side.
 Cheering the footmen on the works to mount,
 Stand Olivier, Astolpho, and the Count.

XVIII.

The Nubians upon hope of gain intent,
 Impatient of delay, nor heeding how
 With pressing perils they were compassed, went
 Protected by the sheltering boar and sow.²
 With battering ram, and other instrument,
 To break the gate, and make the turret bow,
 Speedily to the city wall they post,
 Nor unprovided find the paynim host.

XIX.

For steel, and fire, and roof, and turret there,
 In guise of tempest on the Nubians fell,
 Which plank and beam from those dread engines tear
 Made for annoyance of the infidel.
 In the ill beginning, and while dim the air,
 Much injury the christened host befell;
 But when the sun from his rich mansion breaks,
 Fortune the faction of the Moor forsakes.

XX.

The assault is reinforced on every side,
 By Count Orlando, both by sea and land:
 The fleet, with Sansonetto for its guide,
 Entered the harbour, and approached the strand;
 And sorely they with various engines plied,
 With arrows and with slings, the paynim band;
 And sent the assailants scaling-ladder, spear,
 And naval stores, and every needful gear.

XXI.

Orlando, Oliviero, Brandimart,
 And he, in air so daring heretofore,*
 Do fierce and furious battle on that part,
 Which lies the furthest inland from the shore:
 Each leads a portion of those Æthiops swart,
 Ordered in equal bands beneath the four,
 Who at the walls, the gateways, or elsewhere,
 All give of prowess shining proofs, and rare.

* Astolpho.

XXII.

So better could be seen each warrior's claim,
Than if confused in combat there and here.
Who of reward is worthy, who of shame,
To a thousand and to watchful eyes is clear.
Dragged upon wheels are towers of wooden frame,
And others well-trained elephants uprear,
Which so o'er top the turrets of the foe,
Those bulwarks stand a mighty space below.

XXIII.

Brandimart to the walls a ladder brought,
Climbed, and to climb withal to others cried:
Many succeed, with bold assurance fraught,
For none can fear beneath so good a guide:
Nor was there one who marked, nor one who thought
Of marking, if such weight it would abide.
Brandimart only, on the foes intent,
Clambered and fought, and grasped a battlement.

XXIV.

Here clang with hand and foot the daring knight,
Sprang on the embattled wall, and whirled his sword;
And, showing mickle tokens of his might,
The paynims charged, o'erthrew, hewed-down, and gored
But all at once, o'erburthened with that weight,
The ladder breaks beneath the assailing horde;
And, saving Brandimart, the Christians all
Into the ditch with headlong ruin fall.

XXV.

Not therefore blenched the valiant cavalier,
Nor thought he of retreat, albeit was none
Of his own band that followed in his rear;
Although he was a mark for all the town.
Of many prayed, the warrior would not hear
The prayer to turn; but mid the foes leapt down;
I say, into the city took a leap,
Where the town-wall was thirty cubits deep.

XXVI.

He without any harm on the hard ground,
As if on feathers or on straw, did light;
And, like cloth shred and shorn, the paynims round
In fury shreds and shears the valiant knight.
Now springs on these, now those, with vigorous bound:
And these and those betake themselves to flight.
They that without have seen the leap he made,
Too late to save him deem all human aid.

XXVII.

Throughout the squadrons a deep rumour flew,
 A murmur and a whisper, there and here,
 From mouth to mouth; the Fame by motion grew,
 And told and magnified the tale of fear:
 For upon many quarters stormed that crew,
 Where good Orlando was, where Olivier,
 Where Otho's son,* she flew on pinious light,
 Nor ever paused upon her nimble flight.

XXVIII.

Those warriors, and Orlando most of all,
 Who love and prize the gentle Brandimart,
 Hearing, should they delay upon that call,
 They would from so renowned a comrade part,
 Their scaling-ladders plant, and mount the wall
 With rivalry, which shows the kingly heart;
 Who carry all such terror in their look,
 That, at the very sight, their foemen shook

XXIX.

As on loud ocean, lashed by boisterous gale,
 The billows the rash bark assault, and still—
 Now threatening poop, now threatening prow—assail.
 And, in their rage and fury, fain would fill;
 The pilot sighs and groans, dismayed and pale,
 —He that should aid, and has not heart or skill—
 At length a surge the pinnace sweeps and swallows,
 And wave on wave in long succession follows;

XXX.

Thus when those win the wall, they leave a space
 So wide, that who beneath their conduct go,
 Safely may follow them; for at its base,
 A thousand ladders have been reared below.
 Meanwhile the battering rams, in many a place,
 Have breached that wall, and with such mighty blow,
 The bold assailants can, from many a part,
 Bear succour to the gallant Brandimart.

XXXI.

Even with that rage wherewith the stream that reigns,
 The king of rivers—when he breaks his mound,
 And makes himself a way through Mantuan plains—
 The greasy furrows and glad harvests, round,
 And, with the sheepecotes, flock, and dogs and swains
 Bears off, in his o'erwhelming waters drowned;
 Over the elm's high top the fishes glide,
 Where fowls erewhile their nimble pinions plied;

* Astolpho.

XXXII.

Even with that rage rushed in the impetuous band,
 Where many breaches in the wall were wrought,
 To slay with burning torch and trenchant brand,
 That people, which to evil pass were brought.
 Murder and rapine there, and violent hand
 Dipt deep in blood and plunder, in a thought,
 Destroy that sumptuous and triumphant town,
 Which of all Afric wore the royal crown.

XXXIII.

Filled with dead bodies of the paynim horde,
 Blood issued from so many a gaping wound,
 A fouler fosse was formed and worse to ford
 Than girdles the infernal city round.
 From house to house the fire in fury poured ;
 Mosque, portico, and palace, went to ground ;
 And spoiled and empty mansions with the clang,
 Of beaten breast, and groan and outcry rang.

XXXIV.

The victors, laden with their mighty prey,
 From that unhappy city's gates are gone,
 One with fair vase, and one with rich array,
 Or silver plate from ancient altar won.
 The mother this, that bore the child away ;
 Rapes and a thousand evil things were done.
 Of much, and what they cannot hinder, hear
 Renowned Orlando and fair England's peer.

XXXV.

By Olivier, amid that slaughter wide,
 Fell Bucifaro of the paynim band ;
 And—every hope and comfort cast aside—
 Branzardo slew himself with his own brand ;
 Pierced with three wounds whereof he shortly died,
 Folvo was taken by Astolpho's hand ;
 The monarchs three, intrusted to whose care
 Agramant's African dominions were.

XXXVI.

Agramant, who had left without a guide
 His fleet this while, and with Sobrino fled,
 Wept over his Biserta when he spied
 Those fires that on the royal city fed.
 When nearer now the king was certified,
 How in that cruel strife his town had sped,
 He thought of dying, and himself had slain,
 But that Sobrino's words his arm restrain.

XXXVII.

- "What victory, my lord, (Sobrino cries)
 "Could better than thy death the Christian cheer,
 "Whence he might hope to joy in quiet wise
 "Fair Africa, from all annoyance clear?
 "Thy being yet alive this hope denies;
 "Hence shall he evermore have cause for fear.
 "For well the foeman knows, save thou art gone,
 "He for short time will fill thine Afric throne.

XXXVIII.

- "Thy subjects by thy death deprived will be
 "Of hope, the only good they have in store,
 "Thou, if thou liv'st, I trust, shalt set us free,
 "Redeem from trouble, and to joy restore.
 "Captives for ever, if thou diest, are we;
 "Afric is tributary evermore.
 "Although not for thyself, yet not to give
 "My liege, annoyance to thy followers, live.

XXXIX.

- "The soldan, he thy neighbour, will be won,
 "Surely with men and money thee to aid:
 "By him with evil eye King Pepin's son,
 "So strong in Africa, will be surveyed.
 "All efforts to restore thee to thy throne
 "By Norandine, thy kinsman, will be made.
 "Turk, Persian and Armenian, Arab, Medo,
 "If prayed, will all assist thee in thy need."

XL.

In such and such like words, with wary art,
 With hope of quickly winning back his reign,
 Sobrino soothed the king, while in his heart
 He other thought perchance did entertain.
 Well knows he to what pass, what evil mart
 That lord is brought; how often sighs in vain,
 Whoe'er foregoes the sceptre which he swayed,
 And to barbarians hath recourse for aid.

XLI.

Jugurtha, martial Hannibal, and more
 In ancient times, good proof of this afford:
 In our own era, Lewis, hight the Moor,
 Delivered into other Lewis' ward.^a
 Your brother, Duke Alphonso, wiser lore
 Learned from their fate;—I speak to you, my lord—
 Wont them as very madmen to decry,
 That more on others than themselves rely;

XLII.

And therefore aye, throughout that warfare drear
 Waged by the pontiff, in his fierce disdain,
 Albeit upon his feeble powers the peer
 Could ill depend, though from Italian plain
 Was driven the friend that aided him whilere,
 And by the foe possessed was Naples' reign,
 He against menace, against promise steeled,
 Ne'er to another would his dukedom yield.

XLIII.

Eastward King Agramant had turned his prow ;
 And seaward steered his bark, of Afric wide ;
 When from the land a wicked wind 'gan blow,
 And took the reeling vessel on one side :
 The master, seated at the helm, his brow
 Raised towards heaven, and to the monarch cried :
 " I see so fell and fierce a tempest form,
 " Our pinnace cannot face the pelting storm.

XLIV.

" If you, my lords, will listen to my lore,
 " An isle is on our left-hand ; and to me
 " It seems that it were well to make that shore
 " Till overblown the tempest's fury be."
 To his advice assents the royal Moor,
 And makes the larboard land, from peril free :
 Which, for the sailor's weal, when tempests rise,
 'Twixt Vulcan's lofty forge and Afric lies.⁴

XLV.

With juniper and myrtle overgrown,
 Of habitations is that islet bare ;
 A pleasing solitude ; and where alone
 Harbour wild stag and roebuck, deer and hare ;
 And, save to fishermen, is little known,
 That oftentimes on the shorn brambles there
 Hang their moist nets ; meanwhile, untroubled sleep
 The scaly fishes in their quiet deep.

XLVI.

Here other vessel, abeltered from the main,
 They found, by tempest tost upon that land,
 Which had conveyed the king of Sericane
 Erewhile from Arles ; on one and the other hand,
 In reverent wise and worthy of the twain,
 Those valiant kings embraced upon the strand :
 For friends the monarchs were, and late before
 The walls of Paris, arms together bore.

XLVII.

With much displeasure Sericana's knight
 Heard by King Agramant his griefs displayed,
 Then him consoled, and in his cause to fight,
 Like courteous king, the kindly offer made :
 But brooked not, that to Egypt's people, light
 And lacking faith, he should resort for aid.
 " That thither it is perilous to wend,
 " Exiles (he said) are warned by Pompey's end.

XLVIII.

" And for Senapus' Æthiopian crew
 " Have come beneath Astolpho, as ye show
 " To wrest your fruitful Africa from you,
 " And burnt and laid her chiefest city low.
 " And with their squadrons is Orlando, who
 " Was wandering void of wit, short while ago,
 " The fittest cure for all, whereby to scape
 " Out of this trouble I, meseems, can shape.

XLIX.

" I, for your love, will undertake the quest,
 " The Count in single combat to appeal ;
 " He vainly would, I wot, with me contest,
 " If wholly made of copper or of steel.
 " I rate the Christian church, were he at rest,
 " As wolf rates lambs, when hungering for his meal.
 " Next have I thought how of the Nubian band
 " —A brief and easy task—to free your land.

L.

" I will make other Nubians, they that hold
 " Another faith, divided by Nile's course,
 " And Arabs and Macrobians (rich in gold
 " And men are *these*, and *those* in herds of horse),
 " Chaldæan, Perse, and many more, controlled
 " By my good sceptre, in such mighty force,
 " Will make them war upon the Nubians' reign,
 " Those reavers shall not in your land remain."

LI.

Gradasso's second offer seemed to be
 Most opportune to King Troyano's son ;
 And much he blest the chances of the sea,
 Which him upon that desert isle had thrown ;
 Yet would not upon any pact agree,
 —Nay, not to repossess Biserta's town—
 Gradasso should for him in fight contend ;
 Deeming too sore his honour 'twould offend.

LII.

- "If Roland is to be defied, more due
 "The battle is to me (that king replies)
 "I am prepared for it; and let God do
 "His will by me, in good or evil wise."
 "—Follow my mode; another mode and new,
 "Which comes into my mind (Gradasso cries),
 "Let both of us together wage this fight
 "Against Orlando and another knight."

LIII.

- "So not left out, I care not, if I be
 "The first or last (said Agramant): I know
 "In arms no better can I find than thee,
 "Though I should seek a comrade, high or low.
 "And what (Sobrino cried) becomes of me?
 "I should be more expert if old in show;
 "And evermore in peril it is good,
 "Force should have Counsel in his neighbourhood."

LIV.

Stricken in years, yet vigorous was the sage,
 And well had proved himself with sword and spear;
 And said, 'he found himself in gray old age,
 'Such as in green and supple youth whilere.'
 They own his claim, and for an embassy
 Forthwith a courier find, then bid him 'steer
 'For Africa, where camped the Christians lie,
 'And Count Orlando on their part defy;

LV.

- 'With equal number of armed knights to be,
 'Matching his foes, on Lampedosa's shore;
 'Where on all quarters that circumfluent sea,
 'By which they are inisled, is heard to roar.'
 The paynim messenger unceasingly,
 Like one in needful haste, used sail and oar,
 Till he found Roland in Biserta, where
 The host beneath his eye their plunder share.

LVI.

From those three monarchs to the cavalier
 The invitation was in public told;
 So pleasing to Anglante's valiant peer,
 To the herald he was liberal of his gold:
 From his companions had he heard whilere
 That Durindane was in Gradasso's hold:
 Hence, to retrieve that faulchion from the foe,
 To India had the Count resolved to go:

LVII.

Deeming he should not find that king elsewhere,
 Who, so he heard, had sailed from the French shore.
 A nearer place is offered now ; and there
 He hopes Gradasso shall his prize restore ;
 Moved also by Almontes' bugle rare,
 To accept the challenge which the herald bore ;
 Nor less by Brigliadoro ; since he knew
 In Agramant's possession were the two.

LVIII.

He chose for his companions in the fight
 The faithful Brandimart and Olivier ;
 Well has he proved the one and the other's might ;
 Knows he alike to both is passing dear.
 Good horses and good armour seeks the knight,
 And goodly swords and lances, far and near,
 For him and his ; meseems to you is known
 How none of those three warriors had his own.

LIX.

Orlando (as I oft have certified)
 In fury his had scattered wide and far ;
 Rodomont took the others', which beside
 The river, locked in that high turret are.
 Few throughout Africa could they provide ;
 As well because to France, in that long war,
 King Agramant had borne away the best,
 As because Africa but few possest.

LX.

What could be had of armour, rusted o'er
 And brown with age, Orlando bids unite ;
 Meanwhile with his companions on the shore,
 He walks, discoursing on the future fight.
 So wandering from their camp three miles and more,
 It chanced that, turning towards the sea their sight,
 Under full sail approaching, they descried
 A helmless barque, with nought her course to guide.

LXI.

She, without pilot, without crew, alone,
 As wind and fortune ordered it, was bound :
 The vessel neared the shore, with sails full-blown,
 Furrowing the waves, until she took the ground.
 But ere of these three warriors more be shown,
 The love wherewith I to the Child am bound,
 To his story brings me back, and bids record
 What past 'twixt him and Clermont's warlike lord.

LXII.

I spake of that good pair of warriors, who
 Had both retreated from the martial fray,
 Beholding pact and treaty broken through,
 And every troop and band in disarray.
 Which leader to his oath was first untrue,
 And was occasion of such evil, they
 Study to learn of all the passing train;
 King Agramant or the Emperor Charlemagne.

LXIII.

Mesnwhile a servant of the Child's, at hand,
 —Faithful, expert and wary was the wight,
 Nor in the shock of either furious band,
 Had ever of his warlike lord lost sight—
 To bold Rogero bore his horse and brand,
 That he might aid his comrades now in flight.
 Rogero backed the steed and grasped the sword;
 But not in battle mixed that martial lord.

LXIV.

Thence he departed; but he first renewed
 His compact with Montalban's knight—that so
 His Agramant convinced of perjury stood—
 Him and his evil sect he would forego.
 That day no further feats of hardihood
 Rogero will perform against the foe:
 He but demands of all that make for Arles,
 'Who first broke faith, King Agramant or Charles'

LXV.

From all he hears repeated, far and near,
 That Agramant had broke the promise plight:
 He loves that king, and from his side to veer,
 For this, believes would be no error light.
 The Moors were broke and scattered (this whilere
 Has been rehearsed) and from the giddy height
 Of HER revolving wheel were downward hurled,
 Who at her pleasure rolls this nether world.

LXVI.

Rogero ponders if he should remain,
 Or rather should his sovereign lord attend
 Love for his lady fits him with a rein
 And bit, which lets him not to Afric wend;
 Wheels him, and to a counter course again
 Spurs him, and threats his restive mood to shend.
 Save he maintains the treaty, and the troth
 Pledged to the paladin with solemn oath.

LXVII.

A wakeful, stinging care, on the other side
 Scourges and goads no less the cavalier ;
 Lest, if he now from Agramant divide,
 He should be taxed with baseness or with fear.
 If many deem it *well* he should abide,
 To many and many it would *ill* appear :
 Many would say, that oaths unbiuding are,
 Which 'tis unlawful and unjust to swear.

LXVIII.

He all that day and the ensuing night
 Remains alone, and so the following day ;
 For ever sifting in his doubtful sprite,
 If it be better to depart or stay :
 Lastly for Agramant decides the knight ;
 To him in Afric will he wend his way :
 Moved by his love for his liege-lady sore,
 But moved by honour and by duty more.

LXIX.

He made for Arles, where yet he hoped would ride
 'The fleet which him to Africa might bear ;
 Nor in the port nor offing ships espied,
 Nor Saracens save dead beheld he there.
 For Agramant had swept the roadstead wide,
 And burnt what vessels in the haven were.
 Rogero takes the road, when this hope fails,
 Along the sea-beat shore toward Marseilles.

LXX.

Upon some boat he hoped to lay his hand,
 Which him for love or force should thence convey.
 Already Ogier's son had made the land,
 With the barbarians' fleet, his captive prey.
 You could not there have cast a grain of sand
 Between those vessels ; moored closely lay
 The mighty squadrons to that harbour brought,
 With conquerors these, and those with prisoners fraught.

LXXI.

The vessels of the Moor that were not made
 The food of fire and water on that night
 (Saving some few that fled) were all conveyed
 Safe to Marseilles by the victorious knight.
 Seven of those kings, that Moorish sceptres swayed,
 Who, having seen their squadron put to flight,
 With their seven ships had yielded to the foe,
 Stood mute and weeping, overwhelmed with woe.

LXXII.

Dudon had issued forth upon dry land,
 Bent to find Charlemagne that very day ;
 And of the Moorish spoil and captive band
 Made in triumphal pomp a long display.
 The prisoners all were ranged upon the strand,
 And round them stood their Nubian victors gay ;
 Who, shouting in his praise, with loud acclaim,
 Made all that region ring with Dudon's name.

LXXIII.

Rogero, when from far the ships he spied,
 Believed they were the fleet of Agramant,
 And, to know further, pricked his courser's side ;
 Then, nearer, mid those knights of mickle vaunt,
 Nasamon's king a prisoner he descried,
 Agricalt, Bambirago, Farurant,
 Balastro, Manilardo, and Rimedont ;
 Who stood with weeping eyes and drooping front.

LXXIV.

In their unhappy state to leave that crew
 The Child, who loved those monarchs, cannot bear ;
 That useless is the empty hand he knew ;
 That where force is not, little profits prayer.
 He couched his lance, their keeper overthrew.
 Then proved his wonted might with faulchion bare ;
 And in a moment stretched upon the strand
 Above a hundred of the Nubian band.

LXXV.

The noise Sir Dudon hears, the slaughter spies,
 But knows not who the stranger cavalier :
 He marks how, put to rout, his people flies,
 With anguish, with lament and mighty fear ;
 Quickly for courser, shield, and helmet cries,
 (Bosom, and arms, and thighs, were mailed whilere)
 Leaps on his horse, nor—having seized his lance—
 Forgets he is a paladin of France.

LXXVI.

He called on every one to stand aside,
 And with the galling spur his courser prest ;
 Meanwhile a hundred other foes have died,
 And filled with hope was every prisoner's breast ;
 And as Rogero holy Dudon spied *
 Approach on horseback, (footmen were the rest.)
 Esteeming him their head, he charged the knight,
 Impelled by huge desire to prove his might.

LXXVII.

Already, on his part, had moved the Dane ;
 But when he saw the Child without a spear,
 He flung his own far from him, in disdain
 To take such vantage of the cavalier.
 Admiring at Sir Dudon's courteous vein,
 "Belie himself he cannot," said the peer,
 "And of those perfect warriors must be one
 "That as the paladins of France are known.

LXXVIII.

"If I my will can compass, he shall shew
 "His name, to me, ere further deed be done."
 He made demand ; and in the stranger knew
 Dudon, the Danish Ogier's valiant son ;
 He from Rogero claimed an equal due,
 And from the Child as courteous answer won.
 —Their names on either side announced—the foes
 A bold defiance speak, and come to blows.

LXXIX.

Bold Dudon had with him that iron mace,
 Which won him deathless fame in many a fight :
 Wherewith he proved him fully of the race
 Of that good Danish warrior, famed for might.
 That best of faulchions, which through iron case
 Of cuirass or of casque was wont to bite,
 Youthful Rogero from the scabbard snatched,
 And with the martial Dane his valour matched.

LXXX.

But for the gentle youth was ever willed
 To offend his lady-love the least he could,
 And knew he should offend her, if he spilled,
 In that disastrous battle, Dudon's blood
 (Well in the lineage of French houses skilled
 He wist of Béatrice's sisterhood,
 —Bradamant's mother she—with Armelline,
 The mother of the Danish paladine)

LXXXI.

He therefore never thrust in that affray,
 And rarely smote an edge' on plate and chain,
 Now warding off the mace, now giving way
 Before the fall of that descending bane,
 Turpin believes, it in Rogero lay
 Sir Dudon in few sword-strokes to have slain.
 Yet never when the Dane his guard foregoes,
 Save on the faulchion's flat descend the blows.

LXXXII.

The flat as fealty as the edge he plies,
 Of that good faulchion forged of stubborn grain,
 And, at strange blindman's buff, in weary wise,⁶
 Hammers on Dudon with such might and main,
 He often dazzles so the warrior's eyes,
 That hardly he his saddle can maintain.
 But to win better audience for my rhyme,
 My canto I defer to other time.

CANTO XLI.

ARGUMENT.

*His prisoners to the Child the Danish peer
 Consigns, who, homeward bound, are wrecked at sea ;
 By swimming he escapes, and a sincere
 And faithful sercant now of Christ is he.
 Meantime bold Brandimart, and Olivier,
 And Roland fiercely charge the hostile three.
 Sobrino is left wounded in the strife ;
 Gradasso and Agramant deprived of life.*

I.

THE odour which well-fashioned beard or hair,
 Or that which fine and dainty raiment steeps
 Of gentle stripling, or of damsel fair,
 —Who often love awakens, as she weeps—
 If it ooze forth and scent the ambient air,
 And which for many a day its virtue keeps,
 Well shows, by manifest effects and sure,
 How perfect was its first perfume and pure.

II.

THE drink that to his cost good Icarus drew¹
 Of yore his sun-burned sicklemen to cheer,
 And which ('tis said) lured Celts and Boi² through
 Our Alpine hills, untouched by toil whilere,
 Well shows that cordial was the draught, when new ;
 Since it preserves its virtue through the year.
 The tree to which its wintry foliage cleaves,
 Well shows that verdant were its spring tide leaves.

III.

The famous lineage, for so many years
 Of courtesy the great and lasting light,
 Which ever, brightening as it burns, appears
 To shine and flame more clearly to the sight,
 Well proves the sire of Est's noble peers
 Must, amid mortals, have shone forth as bright
 In all fair gifts which raise men to the sky,
 As the glad sun mid glittering orbs on high.

IV.

As in his every other feat exprest,
 Rogero's valiant mind and courteous lore
 Were showed by tokens clear and manifest,
 And his high-mindedness shone more and more ;
 —So toward the Dane those virtues stood confest,
 With whom (as I rehearsed to you before)
 He had belied his mighty strength and breath ;
 For pity loth to put that lord to death.

V.

The Danish warrior was well certified,
 No wish to slay him had the youthful knight,
 Who spared him now, when open was his side ;
 Now, when so wearied he no more could smite.
 When finally he knew, and plain descried
 Rogero scrupled to put forth his might,
 If with less vigour and less prowess steeled,
 At least in courtesy he would not yield.

VI.

" Pardi, sir, make we peace ;" (he said) " success
 " In this contention cannot fall to me—
 " Cannot be mine ; for I myself confess
 " Conquered and captive to thy courtesy."
 To him Rogero answered, " and no less
 " I covet peace, than 'tis desired by thee.
 " But this upon condition, that those seven
 " Are freed from bondage, and to me are given."

VII.

With that he showed those seven whereof I spake,
 Bound and with drooping heads, a sad array ;
 Adding, ' he must to him no hindrance make,
 ' Who would those kings to Africa convey.'
 And Dudon thus allowed the Child to take
 Those seven, and him allowed to bear away
 A bark as well ; what likes him best he chooses
 Amid those vessels, and for Afric looses.

VIII.

He looses bark and sail; and in bold wise
 Trusting the fickle wind, to seaward stood.
 At first on her due course the vessel flies,
 And fills the pilot full of hardihood.
 The beach retreats, and from the sailors' eyes
 So fades, the sea appears a shoreless flood.
 Upon the darkening of the day, the wind
 Displays its fickle and perfidious kind.

IX.

It shifts from poop to beam, from beam to prow,
 And even there short season doth remain:
 The reeling ship confounds the pilot; now
 Struck fore, now aft, now on her beam again.
 Threatening the billows rise, with haughty brow,
 And Neptune's white herd lows above the main.
 As many deaths appear to daunt that rout,
 As waves which beat their troubled bark about.

X.

Now blows the wind in front, and now in rear,
 And drives this wave an-end, that other back;
 Others the reeling vessel's side o'erpeer;
 And every billow threatens equal wrack.
 The pilot sighs, confused and pale with fear;
 Vainly he calls aloud to shift the tack,
 To strike or jibe the yard; and with his hand,
 Signs to the crew the thing he would command.

XI.

But sound or signal little boots; the eye
 Sees not amid the dim and rainy night;
 The voice unheard ascends into the sky,—
 The sky, which with a louder larum smite
 The troubled sailors' universal cry,
 And roar of waters, which together fight,
 Unheard is every hest, above, below,
 Starboard or larboard, upon poop or prow.

XII.

In the strained tackle sounds a hollow roar,
 Wherein the struggling wind its fury breaks;
 The forked lightning flashes evermore,
 With fearful thunder heaven's wide concave shakes.
 One to the rudder runs, one grasps an oar;
 Each to his several office him betakes.
 One will make fast, another will let go;
 Water into the water others throw.

XIII.

Lo! howling horribly, the sounding blast,
 Which Boreas in his sudden fury blows,
 Scourges with tattered sail the reeling mast;
 Almost as high as heaven the water flows;
 The oars are broken; and, so fell and fast
 That tempest pelts, the prow to leeward goes;
 And the ungoverned vessel's battered side
 Is undefended from the foaming tide.

XIV.

Fallen on her starboard side, on her beam ends,
 About to turn keel uppermost, she lies.
 Meanwhile, his soul to Heaven each recommends,
 Surer than sure to sink, with piteous cries.
 Scathe upon scathe malicious Fortune sends,
 And when one woe is weathered, others rise.
 O'erstrained, the vessel splits; and through her seams
 In many a part the hostile water streams.

XV.

A fierce assault and cruel coil doth keep
 Upon all sides that wintry tempest fell.
 Now to their sight so high the billows leap,
 It seems that these to heaven above would swell;
 Now, plunging with the wave, they sink so deep,
 That they appear to spy the gulfs of hell.
 Small hope there is or none: with faltering breath
 They gaze upon inevitable death.

XVI.

On a despiteous sea, that livelong night,
 They drifted, as the wind in fury blew.
 The furious wind that with the dawning light
 Should have abated, gathered force anew.
 Lo! a bare rock, ahead, appears in sight,
 Which vainly would the wretched band eschew;
 Whom toward that cliff, in their despite, impel
 The raging tempest and the roaring swell.

XVII.

Three times and four the pale-faced pilot wrought
 The tiller with a vigorous push to sway;
 And for the bark a surer passage sought;
 But the waves snapt and bore the helm away.
 To lower, or ease the bellying canvas aught
 The sailors had no power; nor time had they
 To mend that ill, or counsel what was best;
 For them too hard the mortal peril prest.

XVIII.

Perceiving now that nothing can defend
 Their bark from wreck on that rude rock and bare,
 All to their private aims alone attend,
 And only to preserve their life have care.
 Who quickest can, into the skiff descend,
 But in a thought so overcrowded are,
 Through those so many who invade the boat,
 That, gunwale-deep, she scarce remains afloat.

XIX.

Rogero, on beholding master, mate,
 And men abandoning the ship with speed,
 In doublet, as he is, sans mail and plate,
 Hopes in the skiff, a refuge in that need :
 But finds her overcharged with such a weight,
 And afterwards so many more succeed,
 That the o'erwhelming waves the pinnace drown,
 And she with all her wretched freight goes down ;

XX.

Goes down, and, foundering, drags with her whoe'er
 Leaving the larger bark, on her relics.
 Then doleful shrieks are heard, 'mid sob and tear,
 Calling for succour on unpitying skies :
 But for short space that shrilling cry they rear ;
 For, swoln with rage and scorn, the waters rise,
 And in a moment wholly stop the vent
 Whence issues that sad clamour and lament.

XXI.

One sinks outright, no more to respear ;
 Some rise, and bounding with the billows go ;
 Their course, with head uplifted, others steer ;
 An arm, an unshod leg, those others show :
 Rogero, who the tempest will not fear,
 Springs upward to the surface from below ;
 And little distant sees that rock, in vain
 Eschewed by him and his attendant train.

XXII.

Himself with hands and feet the warrior rows,
 Hoping by force thereof to win the shore ;
 Breasts boldly the importunate flood, and blows
 With his unwearied breath the foam before.
 Waxing meanwhile, the troubled water rose,
 And from the rock the abandoned vessel bore ;
 Quitted of those unhappy men, who die
 (So curst their lot) the death from which they fly.

XXIII.

Alas! for man's deceitful thoughts and blind!
 The ship escaped from wreck, where hope was none;
 When master and when men their charge resigned
 And let the vessel without guidance run.
 It would appear the wind has changed its mind,
 On seeing all that sailed in her are gone;
 And blows the vessel from those shallows free,
 Through better course, into a safer sea.

XXIV.

She, having drifted wildly with her guide,
 Without him, made directly Afric's strand,
 Two or three miles of waste Biserta wide,
 Upon the quarter facing Egypt's land;
 And, as the sea went down and the wind died,
 Stood bedded in that weary waste of sand.
 Now thither Roland roved, who paced the shore;
 As I in other strain rehearsed before.

XXV.

And willing to discover, if alone,
 Laden, or light, the stranded vessel were,¹
 He, Olivier, and Monodantes' son,*
 Aboard her in a shallow bark repair:
 Beneath the hatchways they descend, but none
 Of human kind they see; and only there
 Find good Frontino, with the trenchant sword
 And gallant armour of his youthful lord;

XXVI.

Who was so hurried in his hasty flight
 He had not even time to take his sword;
 To Orlando known; which, Balisarda hight,
 Was his erewhile; the tale's upon record,
 And ye have read it all, as well I wite;
 How Falerina lost it to that lord,
 When waste as well her beauteous bowers he laid;
 And how from him Brunello stole the blade;

XXVII.

And how beneath Carena, on the plain
 Brunello on Rogero this bestowed.
 How matchless was that faulchion's edge and grain,
 To him experience had already showed;
 I say, Orlando; who was therefore fain,
 And to heaven's king with grateful thanks o'erflowed;
 And deemed, and often afterwards so said,
 Heaven for such pressing need had sent the blade:

* Brandimart.

XXVIII.

Such pressing need, in that he had to fight
 With the redoubted king of Sericane;
 And knew that he, besides his fearful might,
 Was lord of Bayard and of Durindane.
 Not knowing them, Anglantes' valiant knight
 So highly rated not the plate and chain
 As he that these had proved: they valued were,
 But valued less as good than rich and fair;

XXIX.

And, for of harness he had little need,
 Charmed, and against all weapons fortified,
 To Olivier he left the warlike weed;
 Not so the sword; which to his waist he tied:
 To Brandimart Orlando gave the steed:
 Thus equally that spoil would he divide
 With his companions twain, in equal share,
 Who partners in that rich discovery were.

XXX.

Against the day of fight, in goodly gear
 And new, those warriors seek their limbs to deck.
 Blazoned upon Orlando's shield appear
 The burning bolt and lofty Babel's wreck.
 A lyme-dog argent bears Sir Olivier,
 Couchant, and with the leash upon his neck:
 The motto; *TILL HE COMES*: In gilded vest,
 And worthy of himself he will be drest.

XXXI.

Bold Brandimart designed upon the day
 Of battle, for his royal father's sake,
 And his own honour, no device more gay
 Than a dim surcoat to the field to take.
 By gentle Flordelice for that dark array,
 Was wrought the fairest facing she could make.
 With costly jewels was the border sown:
 Sable the vest, and of one piece alone.

XXXII.

With her own hand the lady wrought that vest,
 Becoming well the finest plate and chain,
 Wherein the valiant warrior should be drest,
 And cloak his courser's croup and chest and mane:
 But, from that day when she herself addrest
 Unto this task, till ended was her pain,
 She showed no sign of gladness; nor this while,
 Nor after, was she ever seen to smile.

XXXIII.

The heartfelt fear, the torment evermore
 Of losing Brandimart the dame pursued.
 She him whilere a hundred times and more
 Engaged in fierce and fearful fight had viewed ;
 Nor ever suchlike terror heretofore
 Had blanched her cheek and froze her youthful blood :
 And this new sense of fear increased her trouble,
 And made the trembling lady's heart beat double.

XXXIV.

The warriors to the wind their canvas rear,
 When point device the three accoutred are.
 Bold Sansonet is left, with England's peer,
 Intrusted with the faithful army's care.
 Flordelice, pricked at heart with cruel fear,
 Filling the heavens with vow, lament and prayer,
 As far as they by sight can followed be,
 Follows their sails upon the foaming sea.

XXXV.

Scarce, with much labour, the two captains* led
 Her, gazing on the waters, from the shore,
 And to the palace drew, where on her bed
 They left the lady, grieved and trembling sore.
 Meanwhile upon their quest those others sped,
 Whom merry wind and weather seaward bore.
 Their vessel made that island on the right ;
 The field appointed for so fell a fight.

XXXVI.

Orlando disembarks, with his array,
 His kinsman Olivier and Brandimart ;
 Who on the side which fronts the eastern ray,
 Encamp them, and not haply without art.⁴
 King Agramant arrives that very day,
 And tents him on the contrary part.
 But for the sun is sinking fast, forborne
 Is their encounter till the following morn.

XXXVII.

Until the skies the dawning light receive,
 Armed servants keep their watch both there and here.
 The valiant Brandimart resorts that eve
 Thitherward, where their tents the paynims rear ;
 And parleys, by his noble leader's leave,
 With Agramant, for they were friends whilere ;
 And, underneath the banner of the Moor,
 He into France had passed from Afric's shore ;

* Astolpho and Sansonetto.

XXXVIII.

After salutes, and joining hand with hand,
 Fair reasons, as a friend, the faithful knight
 Pressed on the leader of the paynim band
 Why he should not the appointed battle fight ;
 And every town—restored to his command—
 Lying 'twixt Nile and Calpe's rocky height,
 Vowed he, with Roland's license, should receive,
 If upon Mary's Son he would believe.

XXXIX.

He said ; " For loved you were, and are by me,
 " This counsel give I ; that I deem it sane,
 " Since I pursue it, you assured must be :
 " Mahound I hold but as an idol vain :
 " In Jesus Christ, the living God I see,
 " And to conduct you in my way were fain ;
 " I' the way of safety fain would have you move
 " With me and all those others that I love.

XL.

" In this consists your welfare ; counsel none
 " Save this, in your disaster, can avail ;
 " And, of all counsels least, good Milo's son
 " To meet in combat, clad in plate and mail ;
 " In that the profit, if the field be won,
 " Weighs not against the loss, in equal scale.
 " If you be conqueror, little gain ensues,
 " Yet little loss results not, if you lose.

XLI.

" Were good Oriando and we others slain,
 " Banded with him to conquer or to die ;
 " Wherefore, through this, ye should your lost domain
 " Acquire anew, forsooth, I see not, I ;
 " Nor is there reason hope to entertain
 " That, if we lifeless on the champaigne lie,
 " Men should be wanting in King Charles's host
 " To guard in Africa his paltriest post."

XLII.

Thus Brandimart to Afric's cavalier ;
 And much would have subjoined ; but, on his side,
 That knight, with angry voice and haughty cheer,
 The pagan interrupted, and replied ;
 " 'Tis sure temerity and madness sheer
 " Moves you and whatsoever wight beside,
 " That counsels matter, be it good or ill,
 " Uncalled a counsellor's duty to fulfil ;

XLIII.

- " And how to think, from love those counsels flow
 " Which once you bore and bear me, as you say,
 " (To speak the very truth) I do not know,
 " Who with Orlando see you here, this day.
 " I ween that, knowing you are doomed to woe,
 " And marked for the devouring dragon's prey,
 " Ye all mankind would drag to nether hell,
 " In your eternity of pains to dwell.

XLIV.

- " If I shall win or lose, remount my throne,
 " Or pass my future days in exile drear,
 " God only knows, whose purpose is unknown
 " To me, to thee, or to Anglantes' peer.
 " Befall what may, by me shall nought be done
 " Unworthy of a king, through shameful fear.
 " If death must be my certain portion, I,
 " Rather than wrong my princely blood, will die.

XLV.

- " Ye may depart, who, save ye better play
 " The warrior, in to-morrow's listed fight,
 " Than ye have played the ambassador to-day,
 " In arms will second ill Anglantes' knight."
 Agramant ended so his furious say;
 —His angry bosom boiling with despite,
 So said—the warriors parted, to repose,
 Till from the neighbouring sea the day arose.

XLVI.

- When the first whitening of the dawn was seen,
 Armed, in a moment leapt on horseback all;
 Short parley past the puissant foes between.
 There was no stop; there was no interval;
 For they have laid in rest their lances keen:
 But I into too foul a fault should fall
 Meseems, my lord, if, while their deeds I tell,
 I let Rogero perish in the swell.

XLVII.

- Cleaving the flood with nimble hands and feet,
 He swims, amid the horrid surges' roar,
 On him the threatening wind and tempest beat,
 But him his harassed conscience vexes more.
 Christ's wrath he fears; and, since in waters sweet
 (When time and fair occasion served of yore)
 He, in his folly, baptism little prized,
 Fears in these bitter waves to be baptized.

XLVIII.

Those many promises remembered are
 Whereby he to his lady-love was tied,
 Those oaths which sworn to good Rinaldo were,
 And were in nought fulfilled upon his side.
 To God, in hope that he would hear and spare,
 'That he repented, oftentimes he cried,
 'And, should he land, and scape that mortal scath,
 'To be a Christian,' vowed in heart and faith;

XLIX.

'And ne'er, in succour of the Moorish train,
 'With sword or lance, the faithful to offend;
 'And into France, where he to Charlemagne
 'Would render honour due, forthwith to wend;
 'Nor Bradamant with idle words again
 'To cheat, but bring his love to honest end.'
 A miracle it is that, as he vows,
 He swims more lightly and his vigour grows.

L.

His vigour grows; unwearied is his mind;
 And still his arms from him the billow throw,
 This billow followed fast by that behind;
 Whereof one lifts him high, one sinks him low.
 Rising and falling, vext by wave and wind,
 So gains the Child that shore with labour slow;
 And where the rocky hill slopes seaward most,
 All drenched and dropping, climbs the rugged coast.

LI.

All the others that had plunged into the flood
 In the end, o'erwhelmed by those wild waters died.
 Rogero, as to Providence seemed good,
 Mounted the solitary islet's side.
 When safe upon the barren rock he stood,
 A new alarm the stripling terrified;
 To be within those narrow bounds confined,
 And die, with hardships and with hunger pined.

LII.

Yet he with an unconquered heart, intent
 To suffer what the heavens for him ordained,
 O'er those hard stones, against that steep ascent,
 Towards the top with feet intrepid strained;
 And not a hundred yards had gone, when, bent
 With years, and with long fast and vigil stained,
 He worthy of much worship one espied,
 In hermit's weed, descend the mountain's side;

LIII.

Who cries, on his approaching him, "Saul, Saul,
 "Why persecutest thou my faithful seed?"
 As whilom said the Saviour to Saint Paul,
 When (blessed stroke!) he smote him from his steed.
 "Thou thought'st to pass the sea, nor pay withal;
 "Thought'st to defraud the pilot of his meed.
 "Thou seest that God has arms to reach and smite,
 "When farthest off thou deem'st that God of might."

LIV.

And he, that holiest anchoret, pursued,
 To whom the night foregoing God did send
 A vision, as he slumbered, and foreshewed
 How, thither by his aid the Child should wend;
 Wherein his past and future life, reviewed,
 Were seen, as well as his unhappy end;
 And sons, and grandsons, and his every heir,
 Fully revealed to that good hermit were.

LV.

That anchoret pursues, and does upbraid
 Rogero first, and comforts finally:
 Upbraideth him, because he had delayed
 Beneath that easy yoke to bend the knee;
 And what he should have done, when whilom prayed
 And called of Christ—then uncompelled and free—
 Had done with little grace; nor turned to God
 Until he saw him threatening with the rod.

LVI.

Then comforts him—that Christ aye heaven allows
 To them, that late or early heaven desire;
 And all those labourers of the Gospel shows,
 Paid by the vineyard's lord with equal hire,
 With charity and warm devotion glows,
 And him instructs the venerable sire,
 As toward the rocky cell where he resides
 He with weak steps and slow Rogero guides.

LVII.

Above that hollowed cell, on the hill's brow,
 A little church receives the rising day;
 Commodious is the fane and fair enow:
 Thence to the beach descends a thicket gray,
 Where fertile and fruit-bearing palm-trees blow,
 Myrtle, and lowly juniper, and bay,
 Evermore threaded by a limpid fountain,
 Which falls with ceaseless murmur from the mountain.



C. Collins

H. Brown

Prodigal and the Hermit

LVIII.

'Twas well nigh forty years, since on that stone
 The goodly friar had fixed his quiet seat ;
 Which, there to live a holy life, alone,
 For him the Saviour chose, as harbourage meet.
 Pure water was his drink, and, plucked from one
 Or the other plant, wild berries were his meat ;
 And hearty and robust, of ailments clear,
 The holy man had reached his eightieth year.

LIX.

That hermit lit a fire, and heaped the board
 With different fruits, within his small repair ;
 Wherewith the Child somedea! his strength restored,
 When he had dried his clothes and dripping hair.
 After, at better ease, to him God's word
 And mysteries of our faith expounded were ;
 And the day following, in his fountain clear,
 That anchoret baptized the cavalier.

LX.

There dwells the young Rogero, well content
 With what the rugged sojourn does allow ;
 In that the friar showed shortly his intent
 To send him where he fain would turn his prow.
 Meanwhile with him he many an argument
 Handles and often ; of God's kingdom now ;
 Now of things appertaining to his case ;
 Now to Rogero's blood, a future race.

LXI.

The Lord, that every thing doth see and hear,
 Had to that holiest anchoret bewrayed,
 How he should not exceed the seventh year,
 Dating from when he was a Christian made ;
 Who for the death of Pinabel whilere,
 (His lady's deed, but on Rogero laid)
 As well as Bertolagi's, should be slain
 By false Maganza's ill and impious train ;

LXII.

And, how that treason should be smothered so,
 No sign thereof should outwardly appear ;
 For where that evil people dealt the blow,
 They should entomb the youthful cavalier.
 For this should vengeance follow, albeit slow,
 Dealt by his consort and his sister dear ;
 And how he by his wife should long be sought,
 With weary womb, with heavy burden fraught,

LXIII.

"Twixt Brenta and Athesis, beneath those hills
 (Which erst the good Antenor so contented,
 With their sulphureous veins and liquid rills,^s
 And mead, and field, with furrows glad indented,
 That he for these left pools which Xanthus fills;
 And Ida, and Ascanius long lamented,)
 Till she a child should in the forests bear,
 Which little distant from Ateste are;

LXIV.

And how the Child, in might and beauty grown,
 That, like his sire, Rogero shall be hight,
 Those Trojans, as of Trojan lineage known,
 Shall for their lord elect with solemn rite;
 Who next by Charles (in succour of whose crown
 Against the Lombards shall the stripling fight)
 Of that fair land dominion shall obtain,
 And the honoured title of a marquis gain;

LXV.

And because Charles shall say in Latin '*Este*,'
 (That is—be lords of the dominion round!)
 Entitled in a future season *Este*
 Shall with good omen be that beauteous ground;
 And thus its ancient title of Ateste
 Shall of its two first letters lose the sound.
 God also to his servant had foresaid
 The vengeance taken for Rogero dead;

LXVI.

Who shall, in vision, to his consort true
 Appear somewhat before the dawn of day;
 And shall relate how him the traitor slew,
 And where his body lies to her shall say.
 She and Marphisa hence, those valiant two,
 With fire and sword on earth shall Poitiers lay;
 Nor shall his son, when of befitting age,
 Less harm Maganza in his mighty rage.

LXVII.

On Azos, Alberts, Obysons, did dwell
 That hermit hoar, and on their offspring bright;
 Of Borso, Nicholas, and Leonel,
 Alphonso, Hercules, and Hippolyte,
 And, last of those, the gentle Isabel;
 Then curbs his tongue and will no more recite.
 He to Rogero what is fit reveals,
 And what is fitting to conceal, conceals.

LXVIII.

Meanwhile Orlando and bold Brandimart,
 With that good knight, the Marquis Olivier,
 Against the paynim Mars together start ;
 (Name well besitting Sericana's peer)
 And the other two—that from the adverse part,
 At more than a foot-pace their coursers steer ;
 I say King Agramant and King Sobrino :
 The pebbly beach resounds, and rolling brine.

LXIX.

When they encountered in mid field, pell-mell,
 And to the sky flew every shivered lance,
 At that loud noise, the sea was seen to swell,
 At that loud noise, which echoed even to France.
 Gradasso and Roland met as it befel ;
 And fairly balanced might appear the chance,
 But for the vantage of Rinaldo's horse ;
 Which made Gradasso seem of greater force.

LXX.

Bayardo shocked the steed of lesser might,
 Backed by Orlando, with such might and main,
 He made that courser stagger, left and right,
 And measure next his length upon the plain :
 Vainly to raise him strove Anglantes' knight,
 Thrice, nay four times, with rowels and with rein ;
 Balked of his end, he lights upon the field,
 Draws Babisarda, and uplifts his shield.

LXXI.

With Agramant encounters Olivier,
 Who, fitly matched, their foaming coursers gall.
 Bold Brandimart unhorsed in the career
 Sobrino ; but it was not plain withal
 If 'twas the fault of horse or cavalier ;
 For seldom good Sobrino used to fall.
 Was it his courser's or his own misdeed,
 Sobrino found himself without a steed.

LXXII.

Now Brandimart, that upon earth desied
 The king Sobrino, assailed no more his man ;
 But at Gradasso, who Anglantes' pride
 Had equally unhorsed, in fury ran.
 On Agramant and Oliviero's side,
 Meanwhile the warfare stood as it began :
 When broken on their bucklers were the spears
 With swords encountered the returning peers.

LXXIII.

Roland, who saw Gradasso in such guise
 As showed that to return he little cared,
 —Nor can return; so Brandimart aye plies,
 And presses Sciriana's monarch hard,
 Turns round, and, like himself, afoot describes
 Sobrino, in the doubtful strife unpaired:
 At him he sprang; and, at his haughty look,
 Heaven, as the warrior trod, in terror shook.

LXXIV.

Foreseeing the assault with wary eye,
 Prepared, and at close ward, behold the Moor!
 As pilot against whom, now cresting nigh,
 The threatening billow comes with hollow roar,
 Towards it turns his prow, and, when so high
 He views the sea, would gladly be ashore.
 Sobrino rears his buckler, to withstand
 The furious fall of Falerina's brand.

LXXV.

Of such fine steel was Balisarda's blade,
 That arms against it little shelter were;
 And by a person of such puissance awayed,
 By Roland, single in the world or rare,
 It splits the shield, and is in nowise stayed,
 Though bound about with steel the edges are:
 It splits the shield, and to the bottom rends,
 And on the shoulder underneath descends.

LXXVI.

Upon the shoulder; nor, though twisted chain
 And double plates encase the paynim foe,
 These hinder much that sword of stubborn grain
 From opening wide the parted flesh below.
 Sobrino at Orlando smites; but vain
 Against the valiant count is every blow;
 To whom, for special grace, the King of heaven
 A body charmed against all arms had given.

LXXVII.

The valorous count, redoubling still his blows,
 Thought from the trunk the monarch's head to smite.
 Sobrino, who the strength of Clermont knows,
 And how the shield ill boots, retired from fight,
 Yet not so far, but that upon his brows
 Fell the dread falchion of Anglantes' knight:
 'Twas on its flat, but such his might and main,
 It crushed the helm and stupefied the brain.

LXXVIII.

Stunned by that furious stroke, he pressed the shore,
 And it was long ere he again did rise.
 The paladin believes the warfare o'er,
 And that deprived of life Sobrino lies ;
 And, lest Gradasso to ill pass and sore
 Should bring Sir Brandimart, at him he flies :
 For him the paynim overmatched in horse,
 In arms and faulchion, and perhaps in force.

LXXIX.

Bold Brandimart, who guides Frontino's rein,
 The goodly courser, erst Rogero's steed,
 So well contends with him of Sericanae,
 The king yet little seems his foe to exceed ;
 Who, if he had as tempered plate and chain
 As that bold paynim lord, would better speed ;
 But (for he felt himself ill-armed) the knight
 Often gave ground, and traversed left and right.

LXXX.

Better than good Frontino horse is none
 To obey upon a sign the cavalier ;
 'Twould seem that courser had the sense to shun
 Sharp Durindana's fall, now there now here.
 Meanwhile elsewhere is horrid battle done
 By royal Agramant and Olivier ;
 Who may be deemed well matched in warlike sleight,
 Nor champions differing much in martial might.

LXXXI.

Orlando had left Sobrino (as I said)
 On earth, and against Sericana's pride,
 Desirous valiant Brandimart to aid,
 Even as he was, afoot, in fury hied :
 When, prompt to assail Gradasso with the blade,
 He, loose and walking in mid field, espied
 The goodly horse, which had Sobrino thrown ;
 And bowed him straight to make the steed his own.

LXXXII.

He seized the horse (for none the deed gainsaid)
 And took a leap, and vaulted on his prize.
 This hand the bridle grasped, and that the blade.
 Orlando's motions good Gradasso spies ;
 Nor at his coming is the king dismayed ;
 Who by his name the paladin defies :
 With him, and both his partners in the fight,
 He hopes to make it dark before 'tis night.

LXXXIII.

Leaving his foe, he, facing Brava's lord,
 Thrust at the collar of his shirt of mail,
 All else beside the flesh the faulchion bored ;
 To pierce through which would every labour fail.
 At the same time descends Orlando's sword,
 (Where Balisarda bites no spells avail)
 Shears helmet, cuirass, shield and all below,
 And cleaves whate'er it rakes with headlong blow ;

LXXXIV.

And in face, bosom, and in thigh it scamed,
 Beneath his mail, the king of Sericane,
 From whom his blood till now had never streamed
 Since he that armour wore ; new rage and pain
 Thereat the warrior felt, and strange it seemed
 Sword cut so now, nor yet was Durindane.
 Had Roland struck more home, or nearer been,
 From head to belly he had cleft him clean.

LXXXV.

No more in arms can trust the cavalier
 As heretofore ; for proved those arms have been :
 He with more care, more caution than whilere,
 Prepares to parry with the faulchion keen.
 When entered Brandimart sees Brava's peer
 Who snatched that battle from him, he between
 Those other conflicts placed himself, that where
 It most was needed, he might succour bear.

LXXXVI.

While so the fight is balanced 'mid those foes,
 Sobrino, that on earth long time had lain,
 When to himself he was returned, arose,
 In face and shoulder suffering grievous pain.
 He lifts his face, his eyes about him throws ;
 And thither, where more distant on the plain
 He sees his leader, with long paces steers
 So stealthily, that none his coming hears ;

LXXXVII.

He on the Marquis* came, who had but eyes
 For Agramant, and in the warrior's rear,
 Wounded upon the hocks in such fierce wise
 The courser of unheeding Olivier,
 That he falls headlong ; and beneath him lies
 His valiant master, nor his foot can clear ;
 His left foot, which in that unthought-for woe,
 Was in the stirrup jammed, his steed below.

* Oliviero.

LXXXVIII.

Sobrine pursued, and with back-handed blow
 Thought he his head should from his neck have shorn;
 But this forbids that armour, bright of show,
 By Vulcan hammered, and by Hector worn.
 Brandimart sees his risk, and at the foe
 Is by his steed, with flowing bridle, borne.
 Sobrino on the head he smote and flung;
 But straight from earth that fierce old man upsprung;

LXXXIX.

And turned anew to Olivier, to speed
 The warrior's soul more promptly on its way;
 Or at the least that baron to impede,
 And him beneath his courser keep at bay:
 Bold Olivier, whose better arm was freed,
 And with his sword could fend him as he lay,
 Meanwhile so smites and longes, there and here,
 That at sword's length he holds the ancient peer.

XC.

He hopes, if him but little he withstood,
 He shall be straight delivered from that pain:
 He sees him wholly stained and wet with blood,
 And that he spills so much from open vein,
 'Twould seem he speedily must be subdued,
 So weak he hardly can himself sustain.
 Often and oft to rise the Marquis strove,
 Yet could not from beneath his courser move.

XCI.

Brandimart has found out the royal Moor,
 And storms about that paynim cavalier;
 Upon Frontino, like a lathe, before,
 Beside, or whirling in the warrior's rear
 A goodly horse the Christian champion bore;
 Nor worse the southern king's in the career:
 That Brigliador, Rogero's gift he crost,
 Erewhile, by haughty Mandricardo lost.

XCII.

Great vantage has he, on another part:
 Of proof and perfect is his iron weed.
 His at a venture took Sir Brandimart,
 As he could have in haste in suchlike need;
 But hopes (his anger puts him so in heart)
 To change it for a better coat with speed;
 Albeit the Moorish king, with bitter blow,
 Has made the blood from his right shoulder flow.

XCIII.

Him in the flank Gradasso too had gored ;
 (Nor this was laughing matter) so had scanned
 His vantage that redoubted paynim lord,
 He found a place wherein to plant his brand ;
 He broke the warrior's shield, his left arm bored,
 And touched him slightly in the better hand.
 But this was play, was pastime (might be said),
 With Roland's and Gradasso's battle weighed.

XCIV.

Gradasso has Orlando half disarmed ;
 Atop and on both sides his helm has broke :
 Fallen is his shield, his cuirass split, but harmed
 The warrior is not by the furious stroke,
 Which opened plate and mail ; for he is charmed ;
 And worscr vengeance on the king has wroke,
 In face, throat, breast has gored that cavalier,
 Beside the wounds whereof I spake whilere

XCV.

Gradasso, desperate when he descried
 Himself all wet, and smeared with sanguine dye,
 And Roland, all from head to foot espied,
 After such mighty strokes unstained and dry,
 Thinking head, breast, and belly to divide,
 With both his hands upheaved his sword on high ;
 And, even as he devised, upon the front,
 Smote with mid blade Anglantes haughty count.

XCVI.

And would by any other so have done ;
 —Would to the saddle-tree have cleft him clean :
 But the good sword, as if it fell upon
 Its flat, rebounds again, unstained and sheen.
 The furious stroke astounded Milo's son,*
 By whom some scattered stars on earth were seen.
 He drops the bridle and would drop the brand,
 But that a chain secures it to his hand.

XCVII.

So by the noise was scared the horse that bore
 Upon his back Anglantes' cavalier,
 The coursers scoured about the powdery shore,
 Showing how good his speed in the career :
 The County by that stroke astounded sore,
 Has not the power the frightened horse to steer,
 Gradasso follows and will reach him, so
 That he but little more pursues the foe ;

* Orlando.

XCVIII.

But turning round, beholds the royal Moor
 To the utmost peril in that battle brought ;
 For by the shining helmet which he wore,
 With the left hand, him Brandimart had caught ;
 Already had unlaced the casque before,
 And with his dagger would new ill have wrought :
 Nor much defence could make the Moorish lord ;
 For Brandimart as well had reft his sword.

XCIX.

Gradasso turned, nor more Orlando sought,
 But hastened where he Agramant espied :
 The incautious Brandimart, suspecting nought
 Orlando would have let him turn aside,
 Had not Gradasso in his eyes or thought,
 And to the paynim's throat his knife applied.
 Gradasso came, and at his helmet layed,
 Wielding with either hand his trencant blade.

C.

Father of heaven ! 'mid spirits chosen by thee,
 To him thy martyr true, a place accord ;^o
 Who, having traversed his tempestuous sea,
 Now furls his sails in port. Ah ! ruthless sword,
 So cruel, Durindana, canst thou be,
 To good Orlando, to thine ancient lord,
 That thou canst slaughter, in the warrior's view,
 Of all his friends the dearest and most true ?

CI.

An iron ring that girt his helmet round,
 Two inches thick, was broke by that fell blow,
 And cleft ; and with the solid iron bound,
 Was parted the good cap of steel below,
 Bold Brandimart, reversed upon the ground,
 With haggard face beside his horse lies low ;
 And issuing widely from the warrior's head
 A stream of life-blood dyes the shingle red.

CII.

Come to himself, the County turns his eye,
 And sees his Brandimart upon the plain,
 And in such act Gradasso standing by
 As clearly shows by whom the knight was slain.
 If he most raged or grieved I know not, I,
 But such short time is left him to complain,
 His hasty wrath breaks forth, his grief gives way ;
 But now 'tis time that I suspend my lay.

CANTO XLII.

ARGUMENT.

*The victory with Count Orlando lies ;
 But good Rinaldo and Bradamant at heart,
 (One for Angelica, the other sighs
 For young Rogero) suffer cruel smart.
 Him that in chase of the Indian damsel hies,
 D disdain preserves ; from thence does he depart
 Towards Italy, and is with courteous cheer
 And welcome guested by a cavalier.*

I.

WHAT bit, what iron curb is to be found,
 Or (could it be) what adamantine rein,
 That can make wrath keep order and due bound,
 And within lawful limits him contain ?
 When one, to whom the constant heart is bound
 And linked by Love with solid bolt and chain,
 We see, through violence or through foul deceit,
 With mortal damage or dishonour meet.

II.

And is the mind sometimes, if so possest,
 To ill and savage action led astray,
 It may deserve excuse ; in that the breast
 No more is under Reason's sovereign sway.
 Achilles, when, beneath his borrowed crest,
 He saw Patroclus crimsoning the way,
 Was with his murderer's slaughter ill content,
 Till he his mangled corse had dragged and shent.

III.

Unconquered Duke Alphonso, anger so
 Inflamed thy host¹ the day that weighty stone
 Wounded thy forehead with such grievous blow,
 That all believed it to its rest was gone ; -
 —Inflamed them with such fury, for the foe
 In rampart, fosse, or wall, defence was none,
 Who, one and all, within their works lay dead,
 Nor wight was left the woful news to spread.

IV.

Seeing thy fall caused thine such mighty pain,
 They were to fury moved : hadst thou, my lord,
 Maintained thy footing, haply might thy train
 Have with less licence plied the murderous sword.
 Enough for thee thy Bastia to regain !
 In fewer hours replaced beneath thy ward,
 Than Cordova's and fierce Granada's band
 Took days erewhile to wrest it from thy hand.

V.

Haply Heaven's vengeance ordered what befel,
 And in that case thy wound so hindered thee
 To the end, the cruel outrage, foul and fell,
 Done by that band before, should punished be.
 For after the unhappy Vestidel,²
 Wearied and hurt, had sought their clemency,
 Among them (mostly an unchristened train)
 He, mid a hundred swords, unarmed, was slain.

VI.

To end; I say that other rage is none
 Which can be weighed with *that* in equal wise,
 Which kindles, when an injury is done
 To kinsman, friend, or lord before our eyes.
 Then justly in Orlando's heart, for one
 So dear to him, might sudden fury rise;
 When him he saw, extended on the sand,
 Slain by the stroke of fierce Gradasso's brand.

VII.

As nomade swain, who darting on its way
 In slippery line the horrid snake has seen,
 That his young son, amid the sands at play,
 Has killed with venom'd tooth, inflamed with spleen,
 Grasps his baton, the poisonous worm to slay;
 His sword, than every other sword more keen,
 So, in his fury grasped Anglantes' knight,
 And wreaked on Agramant his first despite,

VIII.

Scaped, bleeding, with helm loosened from his head,
 With half a shield and swordless, through his mail,
 Sore wounded in more places than is said;
 As from the dull or envious falcon's nail,
 Escapes the unhappy sparrowhawk, half dead,
 With ruffled plumage and with loss of tail.³
 On him Orlando came, and smote him just
 Where with the helmed head confined the bust.

IX.

Loosed was the helm, the neck without its band:
 So, like a rush, was severed by the sword.
 Down-fell, and shook its last upon the sand
 The heavy trunk of Libya's mighty lord.
 His spirit, which fitted to the Stygian strand,
 Charon with crooked boat-hook dragged aboard.
 On him Orlando wastes no further pain,
 But, sword in hand, seeks him of Sericane.

X.

As the headless trunk of Afric's cavalier
 Extended on the shore Gradasso viewed,
 (What never had befallen him whilere)
 He shook at heart, a troubled visage shewed,
 And, at the coming of Anglantes' peer,
 Presageful of his fate, appears subdued :⁴
 Nor seeks he means of fence against his foe,
 When fierce Orlando deals the fatal blow.

XI.

Orlando levels at his better side,
 Beneath the lowest rib, his faulchion bright ;
 And crimsoned to the hilt, a hand's breadth wide
 Of the other flank, the sword appears in sight ;
 And well his mighty puissance testified,
 And spoke him as the strongest living knight
 That stroke, by which a warrior was undone,
 Better than whom in Paynimry was none.

XII.

Little his victory good Orlando cheers :
 Himself he quickly from his saddle throws ;
 And, with a face disturbed, and wet with tears,
 To his Brandimart in haste the warrior goes :
 The field about him red with blood appears,⁵
 His helmet cleft as by a hatchet's blows ;
 And, had it been than spongy rind more frail,
 Would have defended him no worse than mail.

XIII.

Orlando lifts the helmet, and descries
 Brandimart's head by that destructive brand
 Cleft even to his nose, between the eyes ;
 Yet so the wounded knight his spirits manned,
 That pardon of the king of Paradise
 He, before death, was able to demand.
 And to exhort to patience Brava's peer,
 Whose manly checks were wet with many a tear ;

XIV.

And—"Roland, in thy helping orisons, I
 "Beseech thee to remember me," he cried,
 "Nor recommend to thee less warmly my—"⁶
 —Flordelice would, but could not, say—and died ;
 And sounds and songs of angels in the sky,
 As the soul parts, are heard on every side ;
 Which from its prison freed, mid hymns of love,
 Ascends into the blissful realms above.

XV.

Orlando, albeit he should joy in heart
 At death so holy, and is certified
 That called to bliss above is Brandimart ;
 For he heaven opened to the knight desiered ;
 Through human wilfulness—which ayo takes part
 With our weak senses—hardly can abide
 The loss of one, above a brother dear,
 Nor can refrain from many a scalding tear.

XVI.

Warlike Sobrino, of much blood bereaved,
 Which from his flank and wounded visage rained,
 Long since had fallen, reversed and sore aggrieved,
 And had by now his vessels well nigh drained.
 Olivier too lies stretched ; nor has retrieved,
 Nor can retrieve, his crippled foot, save sprained,
 And almost crushed ; so long between the plain,
 And his stout courser jammed, the limb has lain ;

XVII.

And but Orlando helped (so woe-begone
 Was weeping Olivier, and brought so low)
 He could not have released his limb alone :
 And, when released, endures such pain, such woe,
 The helpless warrior cannot stand upon,
 Or shift withal his wounded foot, and so
 Benumbed and crippled is the leg above,
 That he without assistance cannot move.

XVIII.

The victory brought Orlando small delight ;
 On whom too heavily and hardly weighed
 Of slaughtered Brandimart the piteous sight ;
 Nor sure of Oliviero's life he made.
 Sobrino yet survived ; but little light
 The wounded monarch had, amid much shade :
 For almost spent his ebbing life remained,
 So fast from him the crimson blood had drained.

XIX.

The County has him taken, bleeding sore,
 Thither, where he is salved with sovereign care ;
 And he as if a kinsman of the Moor,
 Benignly comforts him and speaks him fair :
 For in Orlando, when the strife was o'er,
 Was nothing evil ; ever prompt to spare.
 He from the dead their arms and coursers rest,
 The rest he to their knaves' disposal left.

XX.

Here as my story stood not on good ground,
 Frederick Fulgoso doubtful does appear ;¹
 Who, searching Barbary's every shore and sound
 Erewhile on board a squadron, landed here ;
 And the isle so rugged and so rocky found,
 In all its parts so mountainous and drear,
 There is not (through the land) a level space
 (He says) whereon a single foot to place.

XXI.

Nor deems he likely, that six cavaliers,
 The wide world's flower, on Alpine rock should vie,
 In that equestrian fight, with levelled spears.
 To whose objection thus I make reply :
 Erewhile a place, well fit for such careers,
 Stretched at the bottom of the hills did lie ;
 But afterwards, o'erthrown by earthquake's shock.
 A cliff o'erspread the plain with broken rock.

XXII.

So, of Fulgoso's race thou shining ray,
 Clear, lasting light, if, questioning my word,
 Thou on this point hast ever said me nay,
 And haply too, before the unconquered lord,²
 Through whom thy land, reposing, casts away
 All hate, and wholly leans to kind accord,
 Prythee delay not to declare, that I
 In this my story haply tell no lie.

XXIII.

Meanwhile his eyes the good Orlando reared,
 And saw, on turning them to seaward, where
 Under full sail a nimble bark appeared,
 As if she to that island would repair.
 I will not now rehearse who thither steered ;
 For more than one awaiteth me elsewhere.
 Wend me to France and see if they be glad
 At having chased the Saraccus, or sad ;

XXIV.

See what she does withal, the lady true,
 That sees her knight content to wend so wide ;
 Of the afflicted Bradamant I shew ;
 After she saw the oath was nullified,
 Made in the hearing of those armies two,
 Upon the Christian and the paynim side ;
 Since he again had failed her, there was nought
 Wherein she could confide, the damsel thought.

XXV.

And now her too accustomed plaint and wail
 Repenting, of Rogero's cruelty
 Fair Bradamant renewed the wonted tale ;
 She cursed her hard and evil destiny ;
 Then loosening to tempestuous grief the sail,
 Heaven that consented to such perjury,
 —And did not yet by some plain token speak—
 She, in her passion, call'd unjust and weak.

XXVI.

The sage Melissa she accused, and cursed
 The oracle of the cavern, through whose lie
 She in that sea of love herself immerced,
 Upon whose waters she embarked to die.
 She to Marphisa afterwards rehearsed
 Her woes, and told her brother's perfidy ;
 She chides, pours forth her sorrows, and demands,
 With tears and outcries, succour at her hands.

XXVII.

Marphisa shrugs her shoulders ; what alone
 She can, she offers—comfort to the fair ;
 ' Nor thinks Rogero her has so foregone
 ' But what to her he shortly will repair,
 ' And, should he not, such outrage to be done,
 ' The damsel plights her promise not to bear ;
 ' Twixt her and him shall deadly war be waged,
 ' Or he shall keep the word, which he engaged.'

XXVIII.

She makes her somewhat thus her grief restrain ;
 Which having vent in some sort spends its gall.
 Now we have seen the damsel in her pain
 Rogero impious, proud, and perjured call,
 See we, if in a happier state remain
 The brother of that gentle maid withal ;
 Whose flesh, bones, nerves, and sinews are a prey
 To burning love ; Rinaldo I would say.

XXIX.

I say Rinaldo that (as known to you)
 Angelica the benighted loved so well ;
 Nor him into the amorous fillets drew
 So much her beauty as the magic spell.
 In peace reposed those other barons true ;
 For wholly broken was the infidel ;
 Alone amid the victors, he, of all
 The paladins, remained Love's captive thrall.

XXX.

To seek her he a hundred couriers sent,
 And sought as well, himself, the missing maid :
 He in the end to Malagigi went,
 Who in his need had often given him aid :
 To him he told his love, with eyelids bent
 On earth, and visage crimsoned o'er ; and prayed
 That sage magician to instruct him, where
 He in the world might find the long-sought fair.

XXXI.

A case, so strange and wondrous, marvel sore
 In friendly Malagigi's bosom bred :
 The wizard knew, a hundred times and more,
 He might have had the damsel in his bed ;
 And he himself, to move the knight of yore,
 In her behalf, enough had done and said :
 Had him by prayer and menace sought to bend,
 Yet ne'er was able to obtain his end ;

XXXII.

And so much more, that out of prison-ward
 He then would Malagigi so have brought.²
 Now will he seek her, of his own accord,
 On less occasion, when it profits nought.
 Next that magician Montalbano's lord,
 To mark how sorely he had erred, besought :
 Since little lacked, but through the boon denied,
 Erewhile he had in gloomy dungeon died.

XXXIII.

But how much more Rinaldo's strange demand
 Sounded importunately in his ear,
 So by sure index Malagigi scanned,
 That so much was Angelica more dear.
 Rinaldo's prayer unable to withstand,
 In ocean sunk the wizard cavalier
 All memory of old injuries assayed,
 And bowed himself to give the warrior aid.

XXXIV.

For his reply he craved some small delay,
 And with fair hope consoled Mount Alban's knight,
 ' He should be able of the road to say
 ' By which Angelica had sped her flight,
 ' In France or wheresoe'er ;' then wends his way
 Thither where he is wont his imps to cite ;
 A grot impervious and with mountains walled :
 His book he opened and the spirits called.

XXXV.

Then one he chooses, in love-cases read,
 Whom Malagigi to declare requires,
 How good Rinaldo's heart, before so dead,
 Was now so quickly moved by soft desires;
 And 'of those fountains twain (the demon said)
 'Whereof one lights, one quenches amorous fires;
 'And how nought cures the mischief caused by one
 'But that whose stream's in counter current run;'

XXXVI.

And says; 'Rinaldo, having drunk whilere
 'From the love-chasing fountain's mossy urn,
 'To Angelica, that long had wooed the peer,
 'Had shown himself so obstinate and stern;
 'And he, whom after his ill star did steer
 'To drink of that which makes the bosom burn,
 'Her whom but just before he loathed above
 'All reason, by that draught was forced to love.

XXXVII.

'Him his ill star and cruel fate conveyed
 'To swallow fire and flame i' the frozen lake;
 'For nigh at the same time the Indian maid
 'In the other bitter stream her thirst did slake;
 'Which in her bosom so all love allayed,
 'Henceforth she loathed him more than noisome snake;
 'He loved her, and such love was his, as late
 'Rinaldo bore her enmity and hate.'

XXXVIII.

Of this strange story fully certified
 Was Malagigi by the demon's lore;
 Who news as well of Angelique supplied;
 'How yielding up herself to a young Moor,
 'With him embarking on the unstable tide,
 'She had abandoned Europe's every shore;
 'And hoisting her bold canvas to the wind,
 'In Catalonian galley loosed for Ind.'

XXXIX.

Rinaldo seeking out the sage anew
 For his reply—'he would dissuade the knight
 'From loving more thst Indian lady, who
 'Now waited on a vile barbarian wight;
 'And was so distant he could ill pursue,
 'If he would chase the damsel on her flight,
 'Who must have measured more than half her way
 'Homeward, with young Medoro to Catay.'

XL.

In that bold lover no displeasure deep
 The journey of Angelica would move ;
 Nor yet would mar or break the warrior's sleep
 To think that he again must eastward rove :
 But that a stripling Saracen should reap
 The first fruits of that faithless lady's love
 In him such passion bred, such heart-ache sore,
 He never in his life so griev'd before.

XLI.

No power hath he to make one sole reply ;
 His heart, his lip, is quivering with disdain ;
 His tongue no word is able to untie ;
 His mouth is bitter, and 'twould seem with bane.
 He flung from the magician suddenly,
 And, as by fury stirred and jealous pain,
 He after mighty plaint, and mighty woe
 Resolved anew to eastern realms to go.

XLII.

Licence he asks of Pepin's royal son,
 Upon the ground, 'since with his courser dear
 ' To Sericane is King Gradasso gone,
 ' Against the use of gallant cavalier,
 ' Him honour moves the self-same course to run,
 ' In the end he may prevent the paynim peer
 ' From ever vaunting, that with sword and lance
 ' He took him from a Paladin of France.'

XLIII.

Charles gives him leave to go ; though, far and nigh,
 With him all France laments he thence should wend ;
 But he in fine that prayer can ill deny,
 So honest seems the worthy warrior's end.
 Him Dudon, Guido, would accompany ;
 But he refuses either valiant friend :
 From Paris he departs, and wends alone,
 Plunged in his grief, and heaving many a groan.

XLIV.

Ever in memory dwells the restless thought,
 He might a thousand times have had the fair ;
 And—mad and obstinate—had, when besought,
 A thousand times refused such beauty rare ;
 And such sweet joy was whilom set at nought,
 Such bright, such blessed moments wasted were ;
 And now he life would gladly give away
 To have that damsel but for one short day.

XLV.

The thought will never from his mind depart,
 How for a sorry footpage she could slight,
 —Flinging their merit and their love apart—
 The service of each former loving wight.
 Vext by such thought, which racked and rent his heart,
 Rinaldo wends towards the rising light:
 He the straight road to Rhine and Basle pursued,
 Till he arrived in Arden's mighty wood.

XLVI.

When within that adventurous wood has hid
 For many a mile Montalban's cavalier,
 Of lonely farm or lordly castle wide,
 Where the rude place was roughest and most drear,
 The sky disturbed he suddenly descried,
 He saw the sun's dimmed visage disappear,
 And spied forth issuing from a cavern hoar
 A monster, which a woman's likeness wore.

XLVII.

A thousand lidless eyes are in his head:
 She cannot close them, nor, I think, doth sleep:
 She listens with as many ears, and, spread
 Like hair, about her forehead serpents creep.
 Forth issued into day that figure dread
 From devilish darkness and the caverned deep.
 For tail, a fierce and bigger serpent wound
 About her breast, and girt the monster round.

XLVIII.

What in a thousand, thousand quests had ne'er
 Befal'n Rinaldo, here befel the knight;
 Who, when he sees the horrid form appear,
 Coming to seek him, and prepared for fight,
 Feels in his inmost veins such freezing fear,
 As haply never fell on other wight;
 Yet wonted daring counterfeits and feigns,
 And with a trembling hand the faulchion strains

XLIX.

The monster so the fierce assault did make
 Therein her mastery was well descried,
 It might be said; she shook a poisonous snake,
 And now on this, now on the other side,
 Leapt at the knight; at her Rinaldo strake
 Ever meanwhile with random blows and wide;
 With forestroke, backstroke, he assails the foe;
 He often smites but never plants a blow.

L.

The monster threw a serpent at his breast,
 That froze his heart beneath its iron case ;
 Now through the vizor flung the poisonous pest,
 Which crept about his collar and his face.
 Dismayed, Rinaldo fled the field, and prest
 With all his spurs his courser through the chase :
 But not behind the hellish monster halts,
 Who in a thought upon the grupper vaults.

LI.

Wend where the warrior will, an-end or wide,
 Ever with him is that accursed Pest ;
 Nor knows he how from her to be untied,
 Albeit his courser plunges without rest.
 Like a leaf quakes his heart within his side,
 Not that the snakes in other mode molest,
 But they such horror and such loathing bred,
 He shrieks, he groans, and gladly would be dead.

LII.

By gloomiest track and blindest path he still
 Threaded the tangled forest here and there ;
 By thorniest valley and by roughest hill,
 And wheresoever darkest was the air ;
 Thus hoping to have rid him of that ill,
 Hideous, abominable, poisonous Care ;
 Beneath whose gripe he foully might have fared,
 But that one quickly to his aid repaired.

LIII.

But aid, and in good time, a horseman bore,
 Equipt with arms of beauteous steel and clear :
 For crest, a broken yoke the stranger wore ;
 Red flames upon his yellow shield appear :
 So was the courser's housing broidered o'er,
 As the proud surcoat of the cavalier.
 His lance he grasped, his sword was in its place,
 And at his saddle hung a burning mace.

LIV.

That warrior's mace a fire eternal fills,
 Whose lasting fuel ever blazes bright ;
 And goodly buckler, tempered corslet thrills,
 And solid helm ; then needs the approaching knight
 Must make him way, wherever 'tis his will
 To turn his inextinguishable light.
 Nor of less help in need Rinaldo stands,
 To save him from the cruel monster's hands.

LV.

The stranger horseman, like a warrior bold,
 Where he that hubbub hears, doth thither swoop,
 Until he sees the beast, whose snakes enfold
 Rinaldo, linked in many a loathsome loop,
 Who sweats at once with heat and quakes with cold,
 Nor can he thrust the monster from his croup.
 Arrived the stranger smote her in the flank,
 Who on the near side of the courser sank :

LVI.

But scarcely was on earth extended, ere
 She rose and shook her snakes in volumed spire.
 The knight no more assails her with the spear,
 But is resolved to plague the foe with fire :
 He gripes the mace and thunders in her rear
 With frequent blows, like tempest in its ire ;
 Nor leaves a moment to that monster fell
 To strike one stroke in answer, ill or well ;

LVII.

And, while he chases her or holds at bay,
 Smites her and venges many a foul affront,
 Counsels the paladin, without delay,
 To take the road which scales the neighbouring mount :
 He took that proffered counsel and that way,
 And without stop, or turning back his front,
 Pricked furiously till he was out of sight ;
 Though hard to clamber was the rugged height.

LVIII.

The stranger, when he to her dark retreat
 Had driven from upper light that beast of hell
 (Where she herself doth ever gnaw and eat,
 While from her thousand eyes tears ceaseless well)
 Followed the knight, to guide his wandering feet ;
 And overtook him on the highest swell ;
 Then placed himself beside the cavalier,
 Him from those dark and gloomy parts to steer.

LIX.

When him returned beheld Montalban's knight,
 ' That countless thanks were due to him,' he said,
 ' And that at all times, as a debt of right,
 ' His life should be for his advantage paid.
 ' Of him he next demands, how he is light,
 ' That he may know and tell who brought him aid ;
 ' And among worthy warriors, and before
 ' King Charles, exalt his prowess evermore.

LX.

The stranger answered; "Let it irk not thee
 "That I not now my name to thee display;
 "Ere longer by a yard the shadows be,
 "This will I signify; a short delay"
 Wending together, they a river see
 Whose murmurs woo the traveller from his way,
 And shepherd-swain, by whiles, to their green brink;
 There an oblivion of their love to drink.

LXI.

My lord, that fountain's chilling stream and clear
 Extinguished love; Angelica of yore
 Drinking thereof, for good Montalban's peer
 Conceived that hate she nourished evermore;
 And if she once displeas'd the cavalier,
 And he to her such passing hatred bore,
 For this no other cause occasion gave,
 My lord, save drinking of this chilly wave.

LXII.

Arriving at that limpid river's side,
 The cavalier that with Rinaldo goes,
 Reined-in his courser, hot with toil, and cried,
 "Here 'twere not ill, mesecmeth, to repose."
 —"It cannot but be well" (the peer replied),
 "Because, beside that mid day fiercely glows,
 "I have so suffered from that hideous Pest,
 "As sweet and needful shall I welcome rest."

LXIII.

Upon the green sward lit the martial two,
 While their loose horses through the forest fed;
 And from their brows the burnished helmets threw
 On that flowered herbage, yellow, green, and red,
 Rinaldo to the liquid crystal flew,
 By heat and thirst unto the river sped;
 And with one draught of that cold liquor drove
 Out of his burning bosom thirst and love.

LXIV.

Whenas Rinaldo, sated with the draught,
 Raising his head the stranger knight espied,
 And saw that he, repentant, every thought
 Of that so frantic love had put aside,
 He reared himself, and said with semblance haught
 That which he would not say before, and cried:
 "Rinaldo, know that I am hight Disdain,
 "Bound hither but to break thy worthless chain."

LXV.

So saying, suddenly he passed from sight;
 With him his horse: this in Rinaldo bred
 Much wonderment; and the astonished knight,
 "Where is he?" gazing round about him, said,
 He cannot guess if 'twere a magic sprite,
 A fiend by Malagigi thither sped,
 From those his ministers, to break the chain,
 Fettered whereby he lived so long in pain;

LXVI.

Or if an angel from the heavenly sphere
 In his ineffable goodness by the Lord,
 Dispatched, as to Tobias's aid whilere,
 A medicine for his blindness to afford.
 But good or evil angel—whatsoc'er
 He was that him to liberty restored—
 Him thanked and praised Rinaldo, for a heart
 Healed only by his help of amorous smart

LXVII.

Old hate revived upon Rinaldo's side;
 Nor he alone unworthy to be wooed,
 The damsel deemed by pilgrimage so wide
 Her half a league he would not have pursued.
 Nathless anew Bayardo to bestride
 To Sericane would go that warrior good:
 As well because his honour him compelled,
 As for the talk which he with Charles had hold.

LXVIII.

He pricked to Basle upon the following day,
 Whither the tidings had arrived before:
 'That Count Orlando was, in martial fray,
 'To meet Gradasso and the royal Moor:'
 Nor through Orlando was divulged that say:
 But one, who crost from the Sicilian shore,
 And thither had, in haste, the journey made,
 As certain news, the tidings had conveyed.

LXIX.

Rinaldo had gladly been at Roland's side,
 And from that battle far himself doth see:
 Every ten miles he changes horse and guide,
 And whips and spurs, and makes his courser flee.
 He crost the Rhine at Constance, forward hied,
 He traversed Alp, arrived in Italy,
 He left Verona, Mantua, in his rear,
 And reached and past the Po, with swift career.

LXX.

Much towards eve already sloped the sun,
 And the first star was glimmering in the sky,
 When doubting on the bank if he shall run
 Another course, or in some hostel lie
 Until the shades of night and vapours dun
 Before Aurora's beauteous visage fly,
 A cavalier approaching him he viewed,
 Who courtesy in face and semblance shewed.

LXXI.

He, after greeting him, 'if he were tied
 In wedlock,' made in gentle wise demand.
 Rinaldo, wondering what the quest implied,
 Made answer; "I am bound in nuptial band."
 —"I joy thereat," the cavalier replied;
 Then, that he might this saying understand,
 Added, "I pray that you, sir knight, within
 "My mansion will this eve be pleased to inn.

LXXII.

"For I will make you see what needs must please
 "A wight" (pursued the stranger) "that is wed."
 Rinaldo, as well that he would take his case,
 —By this, with so long posting sore bested—
 As that to see and hear strange novelties
 By natural desire he still was led,
 His offer takes, and enters a new road,
 Following that cavalier to his abode.

LXXIII.

A bowshot from the way diverged the two,
 And a great palace fronting them descried:
 Whence squires with blazing lights (a numerous crew)
 Issued, and chased the darkness far and wide.
 Entering, his eyes around Rinaldo threw,
 And saw a place, whose like is seldom spied,
 Of beauteous fabric, and well ordered plan;
 Nor such huge cost befitted private man.

LXXIV.

Of serpentine, and of hard porphyry are
 The stones which form the gateway's arch above.
 Of bronze the portal leaves, which figures bear,
 Whose lively features seem to breathe and move.
 Beneath the vaulted entry, colours rare
 Cheating the eye, in mixt mosaic strove,
 The quadrangle within was galleried,
 And of a hundred yards, on every side.

LXXV.

A gateway is there to each galleried row,
 And, 'twixt it and that gate, an arch is bent ;
 Of equal breadth, but different in their show,
 For the architect had spared not ornament.
 Each arch an entrance was ; up which might go
 A laden horse ; so easy the ascent.¹⁰
 To arch above leads every stair withal,
 And every arch is entrance to a hall.

LXXVI.

Above, project the arches in such sort,
 They for the spacious portals form a shade ;
 And each two pillars has for its support :
 Of bronze are some, and some of marble made.
 The ornamented chambers of the court
 Too many are to be at length displayed ;
 With casements, which (beside what is in sight)
 The skilful master underground had dight.

LXXVII.

Tall columns, with their capitals of gold,
 Which gemmed entablatures support in air ;
 Exotic marbles which adorn that hold,
 By skilful hand engraved with figures fair ;
 Picture and cast, and works so manifold,
 Albeit by night they mostly hidden were,
 Showed that two kings' united treasure ne'er
 Would have sufficed such gorgeous pile to rear.

LXXVIII.

Above the beauteous ornaments and rich
 That mingled in that gay quadrangle meet,
 There is a fresh and plenteous fountain, which
 Scatters in many threads its watery sheet.
 'Tis here that youths at equal distance pitch,
 I' the middle, tables for the festive treat.
 Whence they four gates of that rich mansion see,
 And seen from those four gates as well may be.

LXXIX.

By cunning master, diligent and wise,
 With much and subtle toil, the fount was made ;
 In open gallery or pavilion's guise ;
 Which from eight separate fronts projects a shade.
 A gilded roof, which with enamelled dyes
 Was stained below, the building overlaid.
 Eight marble statues (snowy was the grain)
 With the left arm that gilded roof sustain.

LXXX.

Fair Amalthea's horn in the right hand
 Had quaintly sculptured the ingenious master,
 Whence water, trickling forth with murmur bland,
 Descends into a vase of alabaster ;
 And he, in likeness of a lady grand,
 With sovereign art had fashioned each pilaster.
 Various they were in visage and in vest,
 But all of equal charms and grace possest.

LXXXI.

Upon two beauteous images below
 Each of these female statues fix their feet.
 The lower seem with open mouth to show
 That song and harmony to them are sweet ;
 And, by their attitude, 'twould seem, as though
 Their every work and every study meet
 In praising them, they on their shoulders bear,
 As they would those whose likenesses they wear.

LXXXII.

The images below them in their hand
 Long scrolls, and of an ample size contain,
 Which of the worthiest figures of that band
 The several names with mickle praise explain
 As well their own at little distance stand,
 Inscribed upon that scroll, in letters plain.
 Rinaldo, by the help of blazing lights,
 Marked, one by one, the ladies and their knights.

LXXXIII.

The first inscription there which meets the eye
 Recites at length Lucretia Borgin's fame,¹¹
 Whom Rome should place, for charms and chastity,
 Above that wife who whilom bore her name,
 Strozza and Tebaldeo¹²—Anthony
 And Hercules—support the honoured dame ;
 (So says the scroll) ; for tuneful strain, the pair
 A very Linus and an Orpheus are.

LXXXIV.

A statue no less jocund, no less bright,
 Succeeds, and on the writing is impressed ;
 ' Lo ! Hercules' daughter, Isabella hight,¹³
 ' In whom Ferrara deems her city blest,
 ' Much more because she first shall see the light
 ' Within its circuit, than for all the rest
 ' Which kind and favouring Fortune in the flow
 ' Of rolling years, shall on that town bestow.'

LXXXV.

The pair that such desirous ardour shew
 That eye her praises should be widely blown ;
 John, James alike are named : of those fair two,
 One is Calandra, one is Bardelon.¹⁴
 In the third place, and fourth, where trickling through
 Small rills, the water quits that octagon,
 Two ladies are there, equal in their birth,
 Equal in country, honour, charms, and worth.

LXXXVI.

One was Elizabeth, one Eleanor,¹⁵
 And if we credit what that marble said,
 Manto's so glorious city which such store
 Sets by melodious Maro, whom she bred,
 More vaunts not him, nor reverences more,
 Than these fair dames her poet's honoured head.
 The first of these her hallowed feet had set
 On Peter Bembo and James Sadolet.¹⁶

LXXXVII.

Areljo and Castiglion,¹⁷ a polished pair,
 That other lady, in mid air, sustain.
 Their names were carved upon the marble fair,
 Then both unknown, and now so famed a twain.
 Next was a lady, that from Heaven shall heir
 As mighty virtue as on earth doth reign,
 Or ever yet hath reigned, in any age,
 Well proved by Fortune in her love or rage.

LXXXVIII.

Inscribed in characters of gold is here
 Lucretia Bentivoglia,¹⁸ and among
 Her praises, 'tis declared Ferrara's peer
 Joys that such daughter doth to him belong.
 Her shall Camillus voice,¹⁹ and far and near
 And Reno and Felsina hear his song,
 Wrapt in as mighty wonder at the strain
 As that wherewith Amphryus heard his swain ;²⁰

LXXXIX.

And one, through whom that city's name (where sweet
 Isaurus salts his wave in larger vase)
 Fame shall from Africa to Ind repeat,
 From southern tracts to Hyperborean ways,
 More than because Rome's gold in that famed seat
 Was weighed, whereof perpetual record says²¹
 Gny Posthumus²²—about whose honoured brow
 Phœbus and Pallas bind a double bough.

XC.

Dian is next²³ in order of that train.

- " Regard not (said the marble) if she wear
 " A haughty port : for in her heart, humane
 " The matron is, as in her visage, fair.
 " Learned Celio Calcagnino²⁴ in lofty strain
 " Her glories and fair name abroad shall bear,
 " And Juba's and Moseses' kingdom hear,²⁵
 " And Spain, and farthest Ind, his trumpet clear ;

XCI.

And a Cavallo²⁶ shall make such a font
 Of poetry in famed Ancona run,
 As that winged courser on Parnassus' mount :
 Or was it on the hill of Helicon ?
 'Tis Beatrice,²⁷ who next uprears her front,
 Whereof so speaks the writing on the stone :
 " Her consort Beatrice, while she has breath,
 " Blesses, and leaves unhappy at her death ;

XCII.

" Yea, Italy : that with her triumphs bright,
 " Without that lady fair shall captive be."
 A lofty song appears of her to indite
 A lord of the Correggio's noble tree ;
 And, Benedetto's pride, Timotheus light.²⁸
 Between his banks, descending to the sea,
 By their joint music shall the stream be stopt,
 Whose trees crowlike the liquid amber dropt.²⁹

XCIII.

Between this and that lofty column's place
 Into fair Borgia fashioned (as was said)
 Of aspect so distinguished, of such grace,
 A lady was, of alabaster made,
 That, hiding in a simple veil her face,
 In sable, without gems or gold arrayed,
 She, mid the brightest, flung her light as far,
 As amid lesser fires the Cyprian star.

XCIV.

None knows, observing her with stedfast view,
 If she of charms or grace have fuller store,
 Whether her visage most majestic shew,
 Or Beam with genius or with beauty more.
 " He that would speak—would speak her praises true—
 (Declares in fine the sculptured marble's lore)
 " The fairest of emprizes would intend,
 " But never bring his noble task to end.

XCV.

Albeit such grace and passing sweetness shewed
 Her fair and well-wrought image, she disdain
 Appeared to nurse, that one of wit so rude
 Should dare to sing her praise in humble strain,
 As he that only without comrade stood,
 I know not why, her statue to sustain,
 The marble all those other names revealed.
 That pair's alone the artist had concealed.²⁰

XCVI.

The statues in the middle form a round,
 The floor whereof dry stalks of coral pave ;
 Most pleasant, cool, and grateful, is that ground ;
 So rendered by the pure and crystal wave,
 Which vent without in other channel found ;
 And issued forth in many a stream, to lave
 A mead of azure, white, and yellow hue ;
 Gladdening the plants that on their margins grow.

XCVII.

Conversing with his courteous host, the peer
 Sate at the board, and oft and often prayed,
 That without more delay the cavalier
 Would keep the promise he whilere had made ;
 And marking, ever and anon, his cheer,
 Observes his heart with some deep woe downweighed.
 For not a moment 'mid their converse slips,
 But what a burning sigh is on his lips.

XCVIII.

Oft with desire was good Rinaldo stung
 To ask that sorrow's cause, and the request
 Was almost on the gentle warrior's tongue,
 And there by courteous modesty repress.
 Now at their banquet's close a youth, among
 The menial crew, on whom that charge did rest,
 Placed a gold cup before the paladin,
 Filled full of gems without, of wine within.

XCIX.

The host then somedcal smiling, from the board
 Looked up at Aymon's son ; but who this while
 Well marked him, as he eyed Montalban's lord,
 Had deemed him more disposed to weep than smile.
 " So oft reminded, to maintain my word,
 " 'Tis time meseems (said he, that owned the pile)
 " To shew the touchstone for a woman's love,
 " Which needs to wedded man must welcome prove.

C.

- " Ne'er, in my judgment, should the married dame
 " Be from espial by her lord released :
 " Thus shall he know if honour or if blame
 " His portion is ; if he is man or beast.
 " The weight of horns, though coupled with such shame,
 " Is of all burdens upon earth the least.
 " While well-nigh all behold his antlers spread,
 " He feels them not who has them on his head.

CI.

- " If certain of thy wife's fidelity,
 " Thou hast more ground to prize and hold her dear
 " Than one, whose wife is evil known to be,
 " Or husband that is still in doubt and fear.
 " Full many husbands live in jealousy,
 " And groundlessly, of women chaste and clear.
 " On many women many men rely
 " Meanwhile, who bear their branching antlers high.

CII.

- " If thou wouldst be assured thy wife is true
 " (As sure methinks thou thinkest and must think)
 " For it is hard that notion to undo,
 " Unless thy trust before sure tokens sink,
 " —No hearsay matter this—thyself shalt view
 " The truth, if thou in this fair vessel drink,²¹
 " Placed solely on the supper-board, that thou
 " Mayst see the marvel promised thee but now.

CIII.

- " Drink, and a mighty marvel shall be seen ;
 " For if thou wearest Cornwall's lofty crest,²²
 " No drop of wine shall pass thy lips between,
 " And all the draught be spilt upon thy breast.
 " If faithful is thy wife, thou shalt drink clean.
 " And now—to try thy fortune—to the test !"
 He said, and with fixt eyes the sign explored ;
 If on his breast the wine Rinaldo poured.

CIV.

- Rinaldo was nigh moved the cup to raise,
 And eek what he would haply wish unsought ;
 Forward he reached his hand and took the vase,
 About to proye his fortune in the draught.
 Than of the passing peril of the case,
 Before it touched his lips, the warrior thought.
 But let me, sir, repose myself, and I
 Will then relate the Paladin's reply.

CANTO XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

*Rinaldo from his courteous landlord hears
What folly had destroyed his every good ;
Next learns another story, as he steers
Towards Ravenna with the falling flood ;
Then last arrives where, conqueror o'er his foes
Orlando was, but in no joyful mood.
He, that the Child a Christian made whilere,
Christens Sobrino, and heals Olivier,*

I.

O EXECRABLE avarice ! O vile thirst
Of sordid gold ! it doth not me astound
So easily thou seizest soul, immersed
In baseness, or with other taint unsound :
But that thy chain should bind, amid the worst,
And that thy talon should strike down and wound
One that for loftiness of mind would be
Worthy all praise, if he avoided thee.

II.

Some earth and sea and heaven above us square,
Know Nature's causes, works, and properties ;
What her beginnings, what her endings are ;
And soar till Heaven is open to their eyes :
Yet have no steadier aim, no better care,
Stung by thy venom, than, in sordid wise,
To gather treasure : such their single scope,
Their every comfort, and their every hope.

III.

Armies by him are broken in his pride,
And gates of warlike towns in triumph past :
The foremost he to breast the furious tide
Of fearful battle ; to retire the last ;
Yet cannot save himself from being stied
Till death, in thy dark dungeon prisoned fast.
Of others that would shine thou dimm'st the praise,
Whom other studies, other arts would raise.

IV.

What shall of high and beauteous dames be said ?
Who (from their lovers' worth and charms secure)
Against long service, I behold, more staid,
More motionless, than marble shafts, endure :
Then Avarice comes, who so her spells hath laid,
I see them stoop directly to her lure.
—Who could believe ?—unloving, in a day
They fall some elder's, fall some monster's prey.

V

Not without reason here I raise this cry :
 —Read me who can, I read myself—nor so
 I from the beaten pathway tread awry,
 Nor thus the matter of my song forego.
 Not more to what is shown do I apply
 My saying, than to what I have to show.
 But now return we to the paladine,
 Who was about to taste the enchanted wine.

VI.

Fain would he think awhile, of whom I speak,
 (As said) ere to his lips the vase he bore ;
 He thought ; then thus : “ When finding what we seek
 “ Displease, this 'tis folly to explore.
 “ My wife's a woman ; every woman's weak.
 “ Then let me hold the faith I held before.
 “ Faith still has brought, and yet contentment brings.
 “ From proof itself what better profit springs ?

VII.

“ From this small good, much evil I foresee :
 “ For tempting God moves sometimes his disdain.
 “ I know not if it wise or foolish be,
 “ But to know more than needs, I am not fain.
 “ Now put away the enchanted cup from me ;
 “ I neither will, nor would, the goblet drain ;
 “ Which is with Heaven's command as much at strife,
 “ As Adam's deed who robbed the tree of life.

VIII.

“ For as our sire who tasted of that tree,
 “ And God's own word, by eating, disobeyed,
 “ Fell into sorrow from felicity,
 “ And was by misery evermore o'erlaid ;
 “ The husband so, that all would know and see ;
 “ Whatever by his wife is done and said ;
 “ Passes from happiness to grief and pain,
 “ Nor ever can uplift his head again.”

IX.

Meanwhile the good Rinaldo saying so,
 And pushing from himself the cup abhorred,
 Beheld of tears a plenteous fountain flow
 From the full eyes of that fair mansion's lord ;
 Who cried, now having somewhat calmed his woe,
 “ Accursed be he, persuaded by whose word,
 “ Alas ! I of the fortune made assay,
 “ Whereby my cherished wife was reft away !

X.

- " Wherefore ten years ago wast thou not known,
 " So that I counselled might have been of thee?
 " Before the sorrows and the grief begun,
 " That have nigh quenched my eyes; but raised shall be
 " The curtain from the scene, that thou upon
 " My pain mayst look, and mayst lament with me;
 " And I to thee of mine unheard-of woe
 " The argument and very head will show.

XI.

- " Above, was left a neighbouring city, pent
 " Within a limpid stream that forms a lake;
 " Which widens, and wherein Po finds a vent.
 " Their way the waters from Benacus take.
 " Built was the city, when to ruin went
 " Walls founded by the Agenorean snake.¹
 " Here me of gentle line my mother bore,
 " But of small means, in humble home and poor.

XII.

- " If Fortune's care I was not, who denied
 " To me upon my birth a wealthy boon,
 " Nature that want with graceful form supplied;
 " So that in beauty rival had I none.
 " Enamoured of me in youth's early tide
 " Erewhile was dame and damsel more than one:
 " For I with beauty coupled winning ways:
 " Though it becomes not man himself to praise.

XIII.

- " A sage within our city dwelled, a wight,
 " Beyond belief, in every science great;
 " Who, when he closed his eyes on Phœbus' light,
 " Numbered one hundred years, one score and eight:
 " A savage life he led and out of sight,
 " Until impelled by love, the senior late
 " By dint of gifts obtained a matron fair,
 " Who secretly to him a daughter bare;

XIV.

- " And to prevent the child from being won,
 " As was erewhile the mother, that for gain
 " Bartered her chastity, whose worth alone
 " Excels what gold earth's ample veins contain,
 " With her he from the ways of man is gone,
 " And where he spies the loneliest place, his train
 " Of demons forces, in enchantment skilled,
 " This dome so spacious, fair, and rich, to build.

XV.

- " By ancient and chaste dames he there made rear
 " This daughter, that in sovereign beauty grow ;
 " Nor suffered her to see or even hear
 " A man beside himself ; and, for her view,
 " —Lest lights should lack, whereby her course to steer—
 " The senior every modest lady, who
 " E'er on unlawful love the barrier shut,
 " Made limn in picture, or in sculpture cut.

XVI.

- " Nor he alone those virtuous dames, who, sage
 " And chaste, head so adorned antiquity,
 " Whose fame, preserved by the historic page,
 " Is never doomed its dying day to see ;
 " But those as well that will in future age
 " Everywhere beautify fair Italy,
 " Made fashion in their well-known form and mien ;
 " As eight that round this fount by thee are seen.

XVII.

- " What time the damsel ripe for husband shows,
 " So that the fruit may now be gathered, I
 " (Did chance or my misfortune so dispose ?)
 " Am worthiest found ; and those broad lands that lie
 " Without the walls which that fair town enclose,
 " —The fishy flat no less than upland dry—
 " Extending twenty miles about that water,
 " He gives me for a dowry, with his daughter.

XVIII.

- " She was so mannered, was so fair of hue,
 " None could desire she other gifts should bring ;
 " So well to broider was she taught, and sew,
 " Minerva knew not better ; did she sing,
 " Or play, or walk, to those that hear and view,
 " She seems a heavenly, and no mortal thing ;
 " And in the liberal arts was skilled as well
 " As her own sire, or scarce behind him fell.

XIX.

- " With genius high and beauty no less bright,
 " Which might have served the very stones to move,
 " Such love, such sweetness did the maid unite,
 " Thinking thereof meseems my heart is clove.
 " She had no greater pleasure or delight
 " Than being with me, did I rest or rove.
 " 'Twas long ere we had any strife ; in fine
 " We quarrelled ; and the fault, alas ! was mine.

XX.

- " Five years my consort's father had been dead,
 " Since to the yoke I stooped, and pledged my vow ;
 " When in short time (the manner shall be said)
 " Began the sorrows that I feel even now.
 " While me with all his pinions overspread
 " Love of the dame, whose praises thus I blow,
 " A noble townswoman with love of me
 " Was smit ; more sorely smitten none could be.

XXI.

- " She, in all magic versed, was of such skill
 " As never was enchantress ; by her say
 " Moved solid earth, and made the sun stand still,
 " Illumined gloomy night and darkened day :
 " Yet never could she work upon my will,
 " The anguish of her amorous wound to allay
 " With salve I could not give, except with scathe
 " Of her to whom erewhile I pledged my faith.

XXII.

- " Not because she right gentle was and bright,
 " Nor because I believed her love so true,
 " Nor for large gift, nor promise often plight,
 " Nor yet because she never ceased to sue,
 " Could she from me obtain one spark of light
 " From that first flame my gentle consort blew :
 " So mates and masters every will in me
 " The knowledge of my wife's fidelity.

XXIII.

- " I in the hope, belief, and certitude
 " My wife to me was faithful evermore,
 " Should with contempt the beauty have eschewed
 " Of that famed daughter which fair Leda bore ;
 " And all the wit and wealth wherewith was wooed
 " The illustrious shepherd upon Ida hoar.
 " But no repulse withal with her avails,
 " Who me, for ever at my side, assails.

XXIV.

- " One day that me beyond my palace sees
 " That weird enchantress, who Melissa hight,
 " And where she can discourse with me at ease,
 " She finds a way whereby my peace to blight ;
 " And, goading me with evil jealousies,
 " The faith I nursed at heart, she puts to flight.
 " She 'gan commending my intent to be
 " Faithful to her who faithful was to me.

XXV.

- ' But that she faithful is, ye cannot say,
 ' Save of her faith ye have assurance true ;
 ' If she fails not withal, where fail she may,
 ' She faithful, modest may be deemed by you ;
 ' But is she never from your side away,
 ' Is not permitted other man to view,
 ' How does this boldness come, that you would be
 ' The warrant of her untried modesty ?

XXVI.

- ' Go forth awhile ; go forth from home alone ;
 ' And be the bruit in town and village spread
 ' That she remains behind, and you are gone ;
 ' Let lovers and let couriers have their head :
 ' If, unpersuaded still by prayer and boon,
 ' She does no outrage to the marriage bed ;
 ' Though doing so she deem herself unseen,
 ' Then faithful you the dame may justly ween.'

XXVII.

- " I with such words and such-like words was plied,
 " Till so on me the shrewd enchantress wrought,
 " I wished to see my consort's virtue tried
 " By certain proof, and to the touchstone brought.
 —' Now grant we (I to that witch-lady cried)
 ' She prove what cannot by myself be thought,
 ' How by some certain token can I read
 ' If she will merit punishment or meed ?'

XXVIII.

- ' A drinking-cup will I for that assay
 ' Give you (she said) of virtue strange and rare ;
 ' Such was for Arthur made by Morgue the fay,
 ' To make him of Genevra's fault aware.
 ' The chaste wife's lord thereof may drink ; but they
 ' Drink not, whose wedded partners wanton are ;
 ' For, when they would the cordial beverage sup,
 ' Into their bosom overflows the cup.

XXIX.

- ' Before departing, you the test shall try,
 ' And, to my thinking, now shall you drink clean ;
 ' For clean as yet I think your consort, I ;
 ' The event however shall by you be seen.
 ' Yet will I warrant not your bosom dry,
 ' Should you repeat the proof ; for if, between
 ' The cup and lip, the liquor be not shed,
 ' You are the happiest wight that ever wed.'

XXX.

- " The offer I accept, the vase to me
 " Is given, and trial made with full success ;
 " For hitherto (as hoped) confirmed I see
 " My genile consort's worth and faithfulness.
 " Leave her awhile (Melissa said), and be
 " A month or twain a truant, more or less ;
 " Then homeward wend ; again the goblet fill ;
 " And prove if you the beverage drink or spill.'

XXXI.

- " I thought it hard to leave my consort's side ;
 " Not as so much about her truth in pain,
 " As that I could not for two days abide,
 " Nay, not an hour without her could remain.
 " — You in another way (Melissa cried)
 " Guided by me, the truth shall ascertain ;
 " Voice, vesture shall you change ; and to her sight
 " Present yourself, disguised like other wight.'

XXXII.

- " Sir, a fair city nigh at hand, defends
 " Twixt fierce and threatening horns the foaming Po ;
 " Whose jurisdiction to the shore extends,
 " Where the sea's briny waters come and go :
 " This yields in ancients, but well contends
 " With neighbouring towns in rich and gorgeous show ;
 " A Trojan remnant its foundations placed,
 " Which scaped from Attila's destructive waste.'

XXXIII.

- " A rich, a youthful, and a handsome knight
 " Bridles this city with his sovereign sway ;
 " Who, following a lost falcon in its flight,
 " Entering by chance my dwelling on a day,
 " Beheld my wife, who pleased him so at sight,
 " He bore her impress in his heart away ;
 " Nor ceased to practise on her, with intent
 " To incline the matron to his evil bent.

XXXIV.

- " So often she repels the cavalier,
 " That finally his courtship is foregone ;
 " But her fair image graved by Love will ne'er
 " Be razed from memory ; me Melissa won
 " (So well she soothed and flattered) of that peer
 " The face and figure to the sight to don ;
 " And changed me—nor well how can I declare—
 " In voice and visage and in eyes and hair.

XXXV.

- " I, having to my lady made a show
 " As eastward bound and gone,—like him that wooed,
 " Her rich and youthful lover, altered so,
 " His semblance, walk, voice, vest in me are view'd,
 " Homeward, attended by Melissa, go,
 " Into a page upon her side transmew'd ;
 " Who the most costly jewels with her bore
 " E'er brought from Ind, ~r Erithrean shore.

XXXVI.

- " I enter safely, that my palace knew,
 " And with me wends Melissa ; and there I
 " So wholly at her ease Madonna view,
 " No woman or attendant squire is by.
 " To her with suppliant prayer forthwith I sue,
 " And next those goads to evil deed apply ;
 " Show emerald, ruby, diamond, that might serve
 " To make the firmest heart from honour swerve ;

XXXVII.

- " And I declare to her the gift is small
 " To that, which she may hope to make her own ;
 " Then of the vantage speak, that from his hall
 " Her husband at the present time is gone ;
 " And I how long it was to her recall,
 " Since, as she knew, to her my love was shown ;
 " And that my loving with such faith, in the end
 " Might worthily to some reward pretend.

XXXVIII.

- " At first she was somedeal disturbed ; became
 " Like scarlet ; nor would listen to my say ;
 " But seeing those bright jewels flash like flame,
 " Her stubborn heart was softened, and gave way ;
 " And in brief speech and feeble said the dame
 " What to remember takes my life away :
 " She with my wishes said she would comply,
 " If sure to be unseen of watchful eye.'

XXXIX.

- " Me my wife's words like poisoned weapon thrill,
 " And pierce my suffering spirit through and through :
 " Through bones and veins there went a deadly chill ;
 " My tongue clave to my throat : The witch withdrew
 " With that the magic mantle, and at will
 " Transformed me to mine ancient shape anew.
 " —Bethink thee of what hue my wife became,
 " Taken by me in such notorious shame !

XL.

- " Of deadly hue we both of us remain ;
 " We both stand silent ; both with downcast eye.
 " So feeble is my tongue, that I with pain,
 " So faint my voice, that I with pain can cry ;
 " Thou wouldst betray me then, O wife, for gain,
 " If there was one that would my honour buy !'
 " She nought replies ; nor save by tears she speaks,
 " Which furrow, as they fall, her woful cheeks.

XLI.

- " Shame stings her sore, but yet in sorer wise
 " Wrath at the outrage I to her had done ;
 " And so without restraint it multiplies,
 " And into rage and cruel hate is run,
 " To fly from me forthwith does she devise ;
 " And, what time from his car dismounts the sun,
 " Runs to the shore, aboard her pinnace wends,
 " And all that night the stream in haste descends ;

XLII.

- " And she at morn presents herself before
 " Him that had loved her once, the cavalier,
 " Whose semblance and whose borrowed face I wore
 " When, to my shame, I tempted her whilere.
 " To him that loved, and loves her evermore,
 " Her coming, it may be believed, is dear.
 " From thence she bade me never entertain
 " The hope she'd love me, or be mine again.

XLIII.

- " Alas ! with him she dwells in mickle glee
 " Even from that day and makes of me a jest ;
 " And of that evil which I brought on me
 " I languish yet, and find no place of rest.
 " Justly this growing ill my death will be,
 " Of little remnant now of life possess.
 " I well believe I in a year had died,
 " But that a single comfort aid supplied.

XLIV.

- " That comfort was ; of all which harboured were
 " Here for ten years (for still to every guest
 " Beneath my roof I bade the vessel bear)
 " Was none but with the wine had bathed his breast.
 " To have so many comrades in my care,
 " Some little soothes the griefs that so molest.
 " Thou only of so many hast been wise,
 " Who wouldst forbear the perilous emprise.

XLV.

- " My wish, o'erpassing every fitting bound,
 " To know what husband of his wife should know,
 " Is cause, by me no quiet will be found,
 " Whether my death be speedy or be slow.
 " Thereat at first Melissa joys ; but drowned
 " Forthwith is her light mirth ; for of my woe
 " Esteeming her the cause, that dame so sore
 " I hated, I would not behold her more.

XLVI.

- " Impatient to be treated with disdain
 " By me,—of her more loved than life, she said—
 " Where she forthwith as mistress to remain
 " Had hoped, when thence the other was conveyed,
 " —Not to behold such present cause of pain,
 " Her own departure little she delayed ;
 " And went so far away, no further word
 " By me was ever of that woman heard."

XLVII.

- His tale the mournful cavalier so taught ;
 And when he now had closed his history,
 With pity touched, somehow immersed in thought
 Rinaldo mused, and after made reply ;
 " Right ill advice to thee Melissa brought,
 " Who moved thee thus to anger wasps ; and I
 " Perceive in thee small wisdom, that wouldst sound
 " A thing which thou wouldst gladly not have found.

XLVIII.

- " If she, thy wife, by avarice was inclined
 " To break her faith and be to thee untrue,
 " Muse not : nor first nor last of womankind,
 " She, worsted, from such cruel war withdrew ;
 " And by a meaner bribe yet firmer mind
 " Is even tempted fouler deed to do.
 " Of men, of how many we hear, that sold
 " Their patrons and their friends for sordid gold ?

XLIX.

- " With such fierce arms thou ill didst her assail,
 " If to behold a brave defence thou sought.
 " Knowst thou not, against gold of no avail
 " Is stone, or steel to hardest temper wrought ?
 " Meseems that thou in tempting her didst fail
 " More than herself, that was so quickly caught.
 " I know not, had she tempted thee as much,
 " If thou, thyself, hadst better stood the touch."

L.

Here ends Rinaldo, and—the parley done—
 Rises and to his rest desires to go:
 'Awhile will he repose; and then be gone,
 'An hour or two before the daylight show.'
 But little time has Aymon's warlike son;
 Nor idly will that little time bestow.
 To him the mansion's master made reply,
 'He in his house might at his pleasure lie.

LI.

'For bed and bower, within, were ready dight;
 'But—would he take his counsel for his guide—
 'In comfort might he sleep throughout the night,
 'And yet advance some miles; "For thou," he cried,
 "Shalt have a pinnace, that with rapid flight
 "And without risk shall with the current glide.
 "Therein shalt thou all night pursue thy way,
 "And on thy journey gain withal a day."

LII.

Good seemed that proffer in Rinaldo's eyes,
 And to the courteous host large thanks he paid;
 Then for the pinnace which that lord supplies,
 That waits him with her crew, the warrior made.
 Here, at full ease reclined, Rinaldo lies,
 While with the stream his frigate is conveyed;
 Which, by six oars impelled, flies fast and fair,
 And cleaves the water, as a bird the air.

LIII.

As soon as he reclines his weary head,
 Asleep is Mount Albano's cavalier;
 Having erewhile 'that they shall wake him,' said,
 'As soon as they Ferrara's city near.'
 Melara lies left of that river's bed,
 Scemide to the right; they in their rear
 Next leave Stellata and Figarolo;
 Where his two horns are lowered by angry Po.

LIV.

Of those two horns *that* which t'ward Venice goes
 Rinaldo's pilot left, and took the right;
 Then the Bodeno past. Already shows
 Faintly the eastern blue, and fades from sight;
 For now Aurora from her basket throws
 All her rich flowers, and paints it red and white;
 When viewing the two castles of Tealdo,
 Again his head uplifts the good Rinaldo.

LV.

"O happy town! whereof" (the warrior cried)
 "Spake Malagigi, having, far and near,
 "The fixt and wandering fires of heaven espied,
 "And forced some subject spirit to appear,
 "To me foretelling that in future tide,
 "—What time with him I took this way whilere—
 "Even to such pitch thy glorious fame should rise,
 "Thou from all Italy wouldst bear the prize."

LVI.

So saying, in his barge he all this while
 Hurries, as if the bark with pinions flew,
 Scouring the king of rivers, to that isle
 Nearest the town; ⁴ and, though it not to view
 (Deserted and neglected then) doth smile,
 This yet rejoices to behold anew;
 Nor makes small mirth thereat; because aware
 Hereafter how adorned 'twill be and fair.

LVII.

Before when he with him that way had gone,
 From Malagigi, his cousin, did he hear
 That when seven hundred times his course had run,
 Circling the heaven in Aries, the fourth sphere, ⁵
 Of islands this should be the fairest one
 In sea, or pool, or river, far and near,
 So that who this beheld, would brook no more
 To hear *that* praised which fair Nausicæ bore. ⁶

LVIII.

He heard, 'it in fair mansions would outdo
 'That island which Tiberius held so dear;
 'And trees that in Hesperian gardens grew
 'Would yield to what this beauteous place should bear;
 '—So rare its race of beasts—no fairer shew
 'Herded or housed erewhile by Circe were;
 'Venus with Loves and Graces there should sport,
 'Nor more in *Gnide* and *Cyprus* keep her court;

LIX.

'And so would flourish through his study and care,
 'Who will with knowledge and with power should blend;
 'And who so safely should that bright repair
 'With circling wall and sheltering dyke defend,
 'The united world's assault it well might dare,
 'Nor call on foreign power its aid to lend;
 'And that Duke *Hercules*' sire and *Hercules*' son ⁷
 'Was he by whom this marvel should be done.'

LX.

So wends the warrior summing in his mind
 What erst to him had told his cousin wise ;
 What time the sage of future things divined,
 Whereof with him he often wont devise ;
 And aye contemplating that city blind,
 " How can it ever be," Rinaldo cries,
 " That in all liberal and all worthy arts
 " Shall flourish so these waste and watery parts ?

LXI.

" And that to city of such amplitude
 " And beauty such a petty burgh should grow,
 " And where but marsh and miry pool is viewed,
 " Henceforth should full and fruitful harvests glow ?
 " Even now I rise, to hail the gentle blood,
 " The love, the courtesy thy lords shall show,
 " O thou fair city, in succeeding years ;
 " Thy burghers' honours and thy cavaliers'.

LXII.

" The grace ineffable of powers above,
 " Thy princes' wisdom, and their love of right,
 " Shall with perpetual peace, perpetual love
 " Preserve thee in abundance and delight ;
 " And a defence from all the fury prove
 " Of such as hate thee ; and unmask their spite.
 " Be thy content thy neighbours' wide annoy,
 " Rather than thou shouldst envy other's joy !"

LXIII.

While thus Rinaldo speaks, so swiftly borne
 By the quick current flies that nimble yawl ;
 Not to the lure more swiftly makes return
 The falcon, hurrying at his lord's recall.
 Thenceforth the right-hand branch of the right horn
 Rinaldo takes ; and hid are roof and wall :
 St. George recedes ; recede from that swift boat
 The turrets OF GAIBANA AND OF THE MOAT.

LXIV.

Montalban's martial lord (as it befell,
 That thought moved thought, which others moved again)
 In memory chances on the knight to dwell,
 That him at supper late did entertain ;
 That, through this city's cause, the truth to tell,
 Hath reason evermore to be in pain ;
 And of the magic vessel him bethinks
 Which shows his consort's guilt to him that drinks ;

LXV.

And him bethinks therewith of what the knight
 Related ; how of all that he had tried,
 Who of his goblet drank, there was no wight
 But spilt the wine he to his lips would guide.
 Now he repents him ; now, " 'Tis my delight,"
 (Mutters) " that I the proof would not abide :
 " Succeeding I should prove but what I thought ;
 " And not succeeding, to what pass am brought !

LXVI.

" This my belief I deem a certainty ;
 " And faith could have but small increase in me :
 " So, if I this should by the touchstone try,
 " My present good would little bettered be :
 " But small the evil would not prove, if I
 " Saw of my Clarice what I would not see.
 " This were a thousand against one to stake ;
 " To hazard much where I could nothing take."

LXVII.

The knight of Clermont buried in this mood,
 Who lifted not his visage from the floor,
 A mariner with much attention viewed,
 That overright was seated at his oar :
 And, for he deemed he fully understood
 The thought that prest the cavalier so sore,
 Made him (well-spoken was the man and bold)
 Wake from his muse, some talk with him to hold.

LXVIII.

The substance of the talk between the two
 Was, ' that the husband little wit possest,
 ' Who, wishing to assay if she was true,
 ' Had tried his wife by too severe a test :
 ' For woman, proof to gold and silver, who,
 ' Armed but with modesty, defends her breast,
 ' This from a thousand faulchions will defend
 ' More surely, and through burning fires will wend.'

LXIX.

The mariner subjoined ; " Thou saidest well ;
 " With gifts so rich he should not her have prest ;
 " For, these assaults, these charges, to repel,
 " Not good alike is every human breast.
 " I know not if of wife thou hast heard tell
 " (For haply not with us the tale may rest)
 " That in the very sin her husband spied,
 " For which she by his sentence should have died.

LXX.

- " My lord should have remembered, gold and meed
 " Have upon every hardest matter wrought :
 " But he forgot this truth in time of need ;
 " And so upon his head this ruin brought.
 " Ah ! would that he in proof, like me, a deed
 " Done in this neighbouring city had been taught,
 " His country and mine own ; which lake and fen,
 " Brimming with Minerva's prisoned waters, pen.

LXXI.

- " I of Adonio speak, that in a hound
 " A treasure on the judge's wife conferred."
 " Thereof," replied the paladin, " the sound
 " Hath not o'erpast the Alps : for never word
 " Of this in neighbouring France, nor in my round
 " Through far and foreign countries have I heard :
 " So tell, if telling irks not," said the peer,
 " What willingly I bown myself to hear."

LXXII.

- The boatman then ; " Erewhile was of this town
 " One Anselm, that of worthy lineage came ;
 " A wight that spent his youth in flowing gown,
 " Studying his Ulpian : he of honest fame,
 " Beauty, and state assorting with his own,
 " A consort sought, and one of noble name :
 " Nor vainly ; in a neighbouring city, crowned
 " With superhuman beauty, one he found.

LXXIII.

- " She such fair manners and so graceful shows,
 " She seems all love and beauty ; and much more
 " Perchance than maketh for her lord's repose ;
 " Than well befits the reverend charge he bore.
 " He, wedded, straight in jealousy outgoes
 " All jealous men that ever were before :
 " Yet she affords not other cause for care
 " But that she is too witty and too fair.

LXXIV.

- " In the same city dwelt a cavalier,
 " Numbered that old and honoured race among,
 " Sprung from the haughty lineage, which whilom
 " Out of the jaw-bone of a serpent sprung :
 " Whence Manto,⁶ doomed my native walls to rear,
 " Descended, and with her a kindred throng.
 " The cavalier (Adonio was he named)
 " Was with the beauties of the dame inflamed ;

LXXV.

- " And for the furtherance of his amorous quest,
 " To grace himself, began his wealth to spend,
 " Without restraint, in banquet and in vest,
 " And what might most a cavalier commend :
 " If he Tiberius' treasure had possest,
 " He of his riches would have made an end.
 " I well believe two winters were not done,
 " Ere his paternal fortune was outrun.

LXXVI.

- " The house erewhile, frequented by a horde
 " —Morning and evening—of so many friends,
 " Is solitary ; since no more his board
 " Beneath the partridge, quail, and pheasant bends.
 " Of that once noble troop upon the lord,
 " Save beggars, hardly any one attends.
 " Ruined, at length he thinks he will begone
 " To other country, where he is unknown.

LXXVII.

- " He leaves his native land with this intent,
 " Nor letteth any his departure know ;
 " And coats, in tears and making sad lament,
 " The marshes that about his city go :
 " He his heart's queen, amid his discontent,
 " Meanwhile forgets not, for this second woe.
 " Lo ! him another accident that falls,
 " From sovereign woe to sovereign bliss recalls !

LXXVIII.

- " He saw a peasant who with heavy stake
 " Smote mid some sapling trunks on every side :
 " Adonio stopt, and wherefore so he strake,
 " Asked of the rustic, that in answer cried,
 " Within that clump a passing ancient snake,
 " Amid the tangled stems he had espied :
 " A longer serpent and more thick to view
 " He never saw, nor thought to see anew ;

LXXIX.

- " And that from thence he would not wend his way
 " Until the reptile he had found and slain.
 " When so Adonio heard the peasant say,
 " He scarce his speech with patience could sustain,
 " Aye reverence to the serpent went to pay,
 " The honoured ensign of his ancient strain ;
 " In memory that their primal race had grown
 " Erewhile from serpent's teeth by Cadmus sown ;

LXXX.

- " And by the churl the offended knight so said,
 " And did withal, he made him quit the emprise ;
 " Leaving the hunted serpent neither dead,
 " Nor injured, nor pursued in further wise.
 " Thither, where he believes would least have spread
 " The story of his woe, Adonio bies ;
 " And in discomfort and in sorrow wears,
 " Far from his native land, seven weary years.

LXXXI.

- " Neither for distance nor for straitened cheer,
 " Which will not let Thought run its restless round,
 " Ceased Love, so wont to rein the cavalier,
 " Aye to inflame his heart, aye vex his wound :
 " At length those beauties, to his eyes so dear,
 " Parforce must he revisit, homeward bound.
 " Unshorn, afflicted, he, in poor array,
 " Thither returns, from whence he went his way.

LXXXII.

- " My city, at the time whereof I tell,
 " To Rome was fain to send an embassy ;
 " That sometime near his holiness should dwell ;
 " And for how long a time could none foresee.
 " Upon our judge the lot of envoy fell :
 " O day, that ever wept by him will be !
 " To be excused, Anselmo promised, prayed,
 " And bribed ; but at the last parforce obeyed.

LXXXIII.

- " As no less cruel and less hard to abide
 " He deemed a woe which caused such piteous smart,
 " Than had he seen a hostile hand his side
 " Lay bare, and from his bosom pluck his heart :
 " Dead-white with jealous fear his cheek is dyed,
 " Through doubt of his fair consort while apart ;
 " And in the mode he deems may best avail,
 " He supplicates her not in faith to fail.

LXXXIV.

- " Nor beauty, to his wife the husband cries,
 " Nor noble blood, nor fortune, are enow
 " To make a woman to true honour rise,
 " Save chaste in name and deed ;' subjoining how
 " The virtue that mankind most highly prize
 " Is that which triumphs after strife ; and now,
 " Through his long absence, a fair field and wide
 " Is opened where that virtue may be tried.'

LXXXV.

- " With such persuasions, and with many more
 " Anselm exhorts the lady to be true.
 " His going doth his woful wife deplore.
 " O heaven, what tears, what loud complaints ensue !
 " Immersed in her despair, that lady swore,
 " Sooner the sun bedimmed the world should view
 " Than she would break her faith ; she would expire
 " Sooner than she would cherish such desire.

LXXXVI.

- " Though to the lady's promise and protest
 " He lent belief, and somewhat calmed his fears,
 " Until he further hear he will not rest ;
 " And till he can find matter for his tears.
 " A soothsayer he among his friends possesseth,
 " Prized for his knowledge, as the first of seers ;
 " Who of all witchery and of magic art
 " Had read the whole, or read the greater part.

LXXXVII.

- " To him before departing does he pray,
 " To take the charge upon himself to see
 " If true would be Argia while away
 " (So name his consort), or the contrary.
 " Won by his prayers, he takes the time o' the day ;
 " Figures the heavens as they appear to be.
 " Anselmo left him at his work, and came
 " His answer on the following day to claim.

LXXXVIII.

- " The astrologer is silent, loth to expose
 " A matter that will work the doctor woe ;
 " And would excuse himself with many a gloze :
 " But when he sees, he would the evil know,
 " Argia will break faith with him, he shows,
 " As soon as he shall from his threshold go.
 " Nor prayer shall soften her, nor beauty fire :
 " Corrupted will she be by gain and hire.

LXXXIX.

- " When to Anselmo's early doubt and fear
 " Are joined the threatnings of the signs above,
 " How stands his heart may well to thee appear,
 " If thou hast known the accidents of love ;
 " And worse than every woe, wherewith whileere
 " The afflicted spirits of that husband strove,
 " Is that it by the prophet is foretold,
 " Argia's honour will be bought and sold.

XC.

- " Now to support his wife, as best he may,
 " From falling into such an evil deed.
 " For man, alas, will sometimes disarray
 " The altar, when he finds himself in need,
 " What gold and gems the judge had put away,
 " (A plenteous store) he leaves; and field and mead.
 " Rents, fruits, and all possessions whatso'er
 " Leaves to his consor'; all his worldly gear:

XCI.

- ' With power,' he said, ' not only without measure,
 ' These, as thou needest, to enjoy and spend,
 ' But do with them according to thy pleasure,
 ' Consume and fling away, and give and vend:
 ' Other account I ask not of my treasure,
 ' If such as now I find thee in the end;
 ' But such as now remain;—at thy command
 ' (Even shouldst thou squander both) are house and land.

XCII.

- ' Unless she heard he thither made repair,
 ' He prayed that she would dwell not in the town;
 ' But would a farm of his inhabit, where
 ' She might with all convenience live alone.'
 " And this besought he of his consort fair,
 " As thinking, that the rustics, which on down
 " Pasture their flocks, or fruitful fallows till,
 " Could ne'er contaminate her honest will.

XCIII.

- " Her fearful husband still embracing close,
 " Her arms about his neck Argia threw:
 " A burst of tears her visage overflows;
 " For from her eyes two streams their way pursue.
 " She grieves, ' he guilty should his wife suppose;
 " As if she hath already been untrue:
 " For his suspicion to its source she traced;
 " That in her faith no faith Anselmo placed.,

XCIV.

- " Citing their long farewell, I should exceed.
 " —To thee at length,' he so the dame address,
 " I recommend my honour;—and indeed
 " Took leave, and on his road in earnest prest;
 " And truly felt, on wheeling round his steed,
 " As if his heart was issuing from his breast.
 " She follows him as long as she can follow
 " With eyes whose tears her furrowed visage hollow.

XCV.

- " Poor, pale, unshorn, and wretched (as whilere
 " To you in former strain by me was said),
 " Homeward meanwhile the wandering cavalier,
 " Hoping he there should be unknown, had made.
 " Beside the lake that pilgrim journeyed, near
 " The city, where he gave the serpent aid,
 " In that thick brake besieged by village swain,
 " Who with his staff the reptile would have slain.

XCVI.

- " Arriving here, upon the dawn of light,
 " For yet some stars were glimmering in the skies,
 " Approaching him, in foreign vesture dight,
 " Along the shore, a damsel he espies.
 " Though neither squire nor waiting-wench in sight
 " Appears, yet noble is the lady's guise.
 " With pleasing visage she Adonio boards,
 " And then breaks silence in the following words.

XCVII.

- * Albeit thou know'st me not, O cavalier,
 * I am thy kin, and greatly bound to thee ;
 * I am thy kin ; for of the lineage clear
 * Derived of haughty Cadmus' seed are we.
 * I am the fairy Manto, that whilere
 * Laid the first stone of this rude villagery ;
 * And (as thou haply mayst have heard it famed)
 * Mantua from me the rising town was named.

XCVIII.

- * O' the fairies am I one ; with that to show
 * Our fatal state, and what it doth import :
 * We to all other kinds of ill below
 * Are subject by our natal influence, short
 * Of death ; but with immortal being such woe
 * Is coupled, death is not of direr sort.
 * For every seventh day we all must take,
 * By certain law, the form of spotted snake.

XCIX.

- * So sad it is that loathsome coil to fill,
 * And prone, at length, upon the ground to crawl ;
 * Equal to this there is no worldly ill ;
 * So that immortal life is cursed by all.
 * And thou the debt I owe thee (for my will
 * Is to inform thee of its cause withal)
 * Shalt know as well ; how on that fatal day
 * Of change we are to countless ills a prey.

C.

- ' So hated as the serpent beast is none ;
 ' And we that wear its evil form, alarm,
 ' Outrage, and war endure from every one :
 ' For all that see us, hunt and do us harm :
 ' Unless we can to ground for shelter run,
 ' We feel how heavy falls man's furious arm,
 ' Happier it were to die, than languish—broke,
 ' Battered, and cripple'd by the cruel stroke.

CI.

- ' My mighty obligation due to thee
 ' Is that, when once thou didst this greenwood thread,
 ' Thou from a rustic's fury rescuedst me,
 ' By whose ill handling was I sore bested.
 ' But for thine aid, I should not have got free,
 ' Without a broken spine or battered head :
 ' With body crooked and crushed I should have lain,
 ' Albeit I could not by his arm be slain.

CII.

- Because thou hast to know upon the day
 ' We sprang from earth with scales of dragon dight.
 ' —Subject to us at other times — to obey
 ' The heavens refuse ; and we are void of might :
 ' At other seasons, at our simple say
 ' The circling sun stands still, and dims its light :
 ' Fixt earth is moved, and in a circle wheels :
 ' Ice at our word takes fire, and fire congeals.

CIII.

- ' Now here, prepared to render thee the meed
 ' Of benefit then done to me, I stand ;
 ' For now, dismantled of my dragon weed,
 ' Vainly no grace of me wilt thou demand.
 ' Even now, thrice richer art thou by my deed,
 ' Than when thou heirdst erewhile thy father's land :
 ' Nor will I that henceforth thou shalt be poor ;
 ' But wealth, the more 'tis spent, augment the more :

CIV.

- ' And because with that ancient knot thou still,
 ' I know, art tangled, which by Love was tied,
 ' The mode and order, how thou mayst fulfil
 ' Thy wishes, shall by me be signified.
 ' Now that her lord is absent, 'tis my will
 ' My scheme without delay by thee be tried ;
 ' Go forth the lady at her farm to find,
 ' Without the town ; nor will I stay behind.'

CV.

- " She her discourse continuing, 'gan advise
 " What form he to that lady's eyes should take :
 " I say, what vesture wear, and in what wise
 " Should speak, how tempt her ; what entreaties make :
 " And said, how she her figure would disguise ;
 " For, save the day wherein she was a snake,
 " Upon all others went the fairy drest
 " In whatsoever figure pleased her best.

CVI.

- " She in a pilgrim's habit clothed the knight,
 " Such as from door to door our alms entreat :
 " Into a dog she changed herself to sight ;
 " The smallest ever seen, of aspect sweet,
 " Long hair, than ermine's fur more snowy white ;
 " And skilled withal in many a wondrous feat,
 " Towards Argia's villa, so transmewed,
 " The fairy and the knight their way pursued ;

CVII.

- " And at the labourers' cabins in his round
 " The stripling halts, before he stops elsewhere ;
 " And certain rustic reeds begins to sound ;
 " His dog is up, and dances to the air.
 " The dame, that hears the voice and cry rebound,
 " Is by the rumour moved to see the pair.
 " Into her court she has the pilgrim brought,
 " As Anselm's evil destiny had wrought :

CVIII.

- " And here Adonio gives the dog command ;
 " And here by that obedient dog is shown
 " Dance of our country and of foreign land,
 " With paces, graces, fashions of his own ;
 " And finally he does, amid that band,
 " With winning ways what else is to be done,
 " With such attention of the admiring crew,
 " None winked their eyes, their breath they scarcely drew

CIX.

- " Great marvel in the dame, then longing, bred
 " That gentle dog : she one that her had nursed
 " With no mean offer to his master sped.
 " — ' If all the riches for which women thirst'
 " (To her embassadress in answer said
 " The wary pilgrim) ' in my bags were pursed,
 " There is not in that treasure what would boot
 " To purchase of my dog one single foot ;'

CX.

- " And he, the truth of his discourse to show,
 " Into a corner took the beldam old,
 " And bade the dog in courtesy bestow
 " Upon that messenger a mark of gold.
 " The dog obeyed, and shook himself; and lo!
 " The treasure! which he bade her have and hold;
 " Thereto he added, ' Thinkest thou by ought
 ' A dog so fair and use'ful can be bought ?

CXI.

- ' For whatsoever I of him demand,
 ' I empty-handed never go away;
 ' Now pearl, now ring will he shake from him, and
 ' Now gift me with some rich and fair array.
 ' Yet tell madonna he is at her command;
 ' But not for gold; for him no gold can pay;
 ' But if I for one night her arms may fill,
 ' Him may she take and do with him her will.'

CXII.

- " So said, a gem, new-dropt, on her he prest,
 " And bade her to the lady bear the boon.
 " That in the costly produce she possess
 " Ten, twenty ducats' value deemed the crone.
 " She bore the message to the dame addressed,
 " And after wrought on her till she was won
 " To buy the beauteous dog, ' who might be bought
 ' By payment of a price which costeth nought.'

CXIII.

- " Argia somewhat coy at first appears;
 " Partly that she her faith will not forego:
 " Partly that she believes not all she hears
 " That beldam of the dog and pilgrim show.
 " The nurse insists, and dins into her ears,
 ' That seldom such a chance occurs below;
 " And makes her fix another day to see
 " That dog, when fewer eyes on her shall be.

CXIV.

- " The next appearance which Adonio made
 " Was ruin to the doctor; for the hound
 " Doubloons, by dozens and by dozens, braid
 " Of pearl, and costly jewels scattered round.
 " So that Argia's pride of heart was laid;
 " And so much less the dame maintained her ground,
 " When she in him, who made the proffer, viewed
 " The Mantuan cavalier that whilom wooed.

CXV.

- " The harlot nurse's evil oratory,
 " The prayer and presence of the suitor lord,
 " The occasion to acquire that mighty fee,
 " Which wretched Anselm's absence would afford,
 " The hope that none would her accuser be,
 " So vanquish her chaste thoughts, she makes the accord—
 " Accepts the wondrous dog ; and, as his pay,
 " To her leman yields herself a willing prey.

CXVI.

- " The fruits of love long culled that cavalier
 " With his fair lady ; unto whom the fay
 " Took such affection, whom she held so dear,
 " That she obliged herself with her to stay.
 " Through all the signs the sun had travelled, ere
 " The judge had leave to wend his homeward way.
 " He finally returned ; but sore afraid
 " Through what the astrologer erewhile had said.

CXVII.

- " Arrived, his first employment is to run
 " To that astrologer's abode, and crave,
 " If shame and evil to his wife be done ;
 " Or if she yet her faith and honor save.
 " The heavens be figured ; and to every one
 " Of the seven planets its due station gave ;
 " Then to the judge replied ' that it had been
 " Even as he feared, and as it was foreseen.

CXVIII.

- " By richest presents tempted to forego
 " Her faith, a prey was she to other wight.
 " This to the doctor's heart was such a blow ;
 " Nor lance, nor spear, I deem, so sorely smite.
 " To be more certified he wends (although
 " He is too well assured the seer is right)
 " To that old nurse ; and, drawing her apart,
 " To learn the truth employs his every art.

CXIX.

- " He in wide circles doth about her wind,
 " Hoping now here, now there, to spy some trace :
 " But nought in the beginning can he find,
 " With whatsoever care he sifts the case.
 " For she, as not unpractised in that kind,
 " Denies, and fronts him with untroubled face ;
 " And, as well taught, above a month stands out,
 " Holding the judge 'twixt certainty and doubt.

CXX.

- " How blest would doubt appear, had he that wound
 " Foreseen, which would be given by certainty !
 " When out of that false nurse at last he found
 " He could not fish the truth by prayer or fee,
 " Touching no chord but yielded a false sound,
 " He shrewdly waits his time till there should be
 " Discord between the beldam and his wife :
 " For whereso women a. e. is stir and strife.

CXXI.

- " And even that Anselmo waited, so
 " Befell ; since, angered by the first despite,
 " Unsought of him, to him that nurse did go,
 " To tell the whole ; and nothing hid from sight.
 " How sank his heart beneath that cruel blow,
 " Twere long to say ; how prostrate lay his sprite.
 " So was the wretched judge with grief oppress'd,
 " He of his wits well-nigh was dispossest ;

CXXII.

- " And finally resolved to die, so burned
 " His rage, but first would kill the faithless dame ;
 " And he with one destructive falchion yearned
 " To free himself from woe and her from shame.
 " Stung by such blind and furious thoughts, returned
 " Anselmo to the city, in a flame ;
 " And to the farm despatched a follower true,
 " Charged with the bidding he was bound to do.

CXXIII.

- " He bids the servant to the villa go,
 " And to Argia in his name pretend ;
 " He by a fever is reduced so low,
 " She hardly can arrive before his end.
 " Hence without waiting escort—would she show
 " Her love—she with his man must backward wend,
 " (Wend with him will she surely, nor delay)
 " And bids him cut her throat upon the way.

CXXIV.

- " The serving-man to call his lady went
 " Prepared his lord's command on her to do.
 " Having her little dog at starting hent,
 " She mounted and began her journey, through
 " The dog advised of Anselm's ill intent,
 " But bid no less her purpose to pursue ;
 " For he had taken thought for her ; and aid
 " Should in the time of peril be purveyed.

CXXV.

- " The servant from his pathway turns aside,
 " And through bye-roads and solitary goes ;
 " Purposely lighting on a stream, whose tide
 " From Apennine into our river flows ;
 " Where, both of farm and busy city wide,
 " A holt, and dark and dismal greenwood grows.
 " Silent appeared the gloomy place, and one
 " Fitting the cruel deed which should be done.

CXXVI.

- " He drew his sword on her, and signified
 " The mandate by her angry husband given ;
 " That so she might entreat, before she died,
 " Forgiveness of her every sin from Heaven.
 " I know not how ; she vanished from his side,
 " When through her flank the blade he would have driven.
 " Vainly long time he seeks her, then remains
 " Foiled and outscorned, for guerdon of his pains.

CXXVII.

- " He all astound and with bewildered face,
 " And full of shame, to seek his lord returns ;
 " Who from the servant that unwonted case,
 " Unwrecting how the thing had happened, learns :
 " Nor knows the fairy Manto fills a place
 " About Argia, prompt to serve her turns.
 " Because the nurse, that all the rest revealed
 " (I know not wherefore, I), had this concealed.

CXXVIII.

- " He knows not what to do : the outrage sore
 " Avenged he has not, nor his pain allayed :
 " What was a mote is now a beam ; so sore
 " It prest him ; on his heart so heavy weighed.
 " So plain is what was little known before,
 " He fears that it will shortly be displayed.
 " At first, he haply might have hid his woe ;
 " Which Rumour now throughout the world will blow

CXXIX.

- " Full well he wots, that since his evil vein
 " He to his wife, unhappy wretch ! hath shown,
 " Not to be subject to his yoke again,
 " She to some strong protector will have flown ;
 " Who to his ignominy will maintain,
 " And utter scorn, the lady as his own :
 " And haply may she to some losel flee,
 " Who will her paramour and pander be.

CXXX.

- " For remedy ; he sends in haste a band
 " Of messengers, with letters far and nigh.
 " Some of Argia here, some there demand ;
 " Nor town unsearched is left in Lombardy.
 " Next he in person goes ; nor any land
 " Leaves unexamined by himself or spy.
 " Yet cannot he discover means or way
 " For learning where cor sealed his consort lay.

CXXXI.

- " The servant last he called on whom was laid
 " The ill hest, but who had served not his despite ;
 " And thither by his guidance was conveyed,
 " Where (as 'twas said) she vanished from his sight ;
 " Who haply lurked by day in greenwood-shade,
 " And to some friendly roof retired at night.
 " He thither guided, where but forest-trees
 " He thinks to find, a sumptuous palace sees.

CXXXII.

- " This while for bright Argia in that part
 " The fay had made with speedy toil prepare
 " An alabaster palace by her art,
 " Gilded within, without, and everywhere.
 " So wonderful, no tongue could tell, no heart
 " Conceive, how rich within, without how fair :
 " That, which thou deemed so fair, my master's home,
 " Is but a cottage to that costly dome.

CXXXIII.

- " Curtain and cloth of arras deck the wall,
 " Sumptuously woven and in different wise,
 " In vaulted cellar and in littered stall ;
 " Not only spread in latticed galleries,
 " Not only spread in lordly bower and hall.
 " Vase, gold and silver, gems of many dyes,
 " Carved into cup and charger, blue, red, green,
 " And countless cloths of silk and gold are seen.

CXXXIV.

- " He chanced upon the costly dome (as I
 " To you was in my story making known)
 " When he expected not a hut to spy,
 " And but a weary waste of woodland lone.
 " As he beheld the dome with wondering eye,
 " Anselmo thought his intellects were gone :
 " That he was drunk, or dreamed that wondrous sight
 " He weened, or that his wits had taken flight.

CXXXV.

- " An Æthiop woman posted at the door,
 " With blubber lip and nostril, he describes.
 " Nor will he see again, nor e'er before
 " Had seen a visage of such loathsome guise :
 " Ill-favoured—such was Æsop feigned of yore :
 " If there, she would have saddened Paradise.
 " Greasy and foul and beggarly her vest ;
 " Nor half her hideousness have I exprest.

CXXXVI.

- " Anselm, who saw no other wight beside
 " To tell who was that mansion's lord, drew nigh
 " To the Æthiopian, and to her applied ;
 " And she ; ' The owner of this house am I.
 " The judge was well assured the negress lied,
 " And made that answer but in mockery :
 " But with repeated oaths the negress swears ;
 " 'Tis hers, and none with her the mansion shares ;

CXXXVII.

- " And would he see the palace, him invites
 " To view it at his ease ; and recommends
 " If there be ought within which him delights,
 " To take it for himself or for his friends.
 " Anselmo hears, and from his horse alights,
 " Gives it his man ; and o'er the threshold wends ;
 " And by the bag conducted, mounts from hall
 " Below to bower above, admiring all.

CXXXVIII.

- " Form, site, and sumptuous work doth he behold,
 " And royal ornament and fair device ;
 " And oft repeats, not all this wide world's gold
 " To buy the egregious mansion would suffice.
 " To him in answer said that negress old ;
 " And yet this dome, like others, hath its price ;
 " If not in gold and silver, price less high
 " Than gold and silver will the palace buy ;

CXXXIX.

- " And she to him prefers the same request,
 " Which erst Adonio to Argia made.
 " A fool he deemed the woman and possesser,
 " Who for a boon so foul and filthy prayed.
 " Yet ceased she not, though more than thrice repress :
 " And strove so well Anselmo to persuade,
 " Proffering, for his reward, the palace still,
 " She wrought on him to do her evil will.

CXL.

- "The wife Argia, that is hid fast by,
 "When in such sin her husband she descries,
 "Springs forth and saith; 'Ah! worthy deed! which I
 'Of doctor, that was deemed so passing wise,
 'Found in such foul and filthy work, espy!
 "Bethink thee, if his kindling blushes rise;
 "If he stands mute! why opens not thy hollow
 "And central womb, O earth, the wretch to swallow?

CXLI.

- "To clear herself and shame him, doth she stun
 "Anselmo, never ceasing to upbraid.
 'What pain should by thyself be undergone
 'For this so filthy deed, (Argia said)
 'If thou would'st take my life for having done
 'What Nature prompted and a lover prayed;
 'One that was fair and gentle, and who brought
 'A gift, compared wherewith, this dome is nought?

CXLII.

- 'If worthy of one death thou deemest me,
 'Worthy art thou a hundred deaths to die:
 'And, though my pleasure might I do on thee,
 'So passing puissant in this place am I,
 'No other or worse vengeance done shall be
 'Upon my side, on thy delinquency.
 'The give against the take, O husband, place;
 'And, as 'twas granted thee, so grant me grace:

CXLIII.

- And be there peace between us, and accord
 'That all be to forgetfulness consigned;
 'Nor thee I of thy fault by deed or word,
 Nor me of mine, henceforward *thou* remind!
 "This seemed a goodly bargain to her lord;
 "Nor to such pardon was he disinclined.
 "Thus peace and concord they at home restore,
 "And love each other dearly evermore."

CXLIV.

- So said the mariner, and some brief fit
 Of laughter in Montalban's master stirred;
 And made his visage burn, as if 'twas lit
 With fire, when of Anselmo's shame he heard.
 Rinaldo greatly praised Argia's wit,
 Who by such quaint device had trapped that bird;
 Who fell into the net wherein the dame
 Herself erewhile had fallen, but with less shame.

CXLV.

When the sun climbed a steeper road, the knight
 Ordered the board with food to be supplied,
 Which the good Mantuan landlord overnight
 Took care with largest plenty to provide ;
 While the fair town, upon the left, from sight
 Retired, and on the right that marsh wide.
 Argenta is come and gone, with circling walls
 And stream into whose bed Santerno falls.¹⁰

CXLVI.

Then was not fair Bastia built, deem I,
 Which little cause of boast affords to Spain
 (That there her banner has been raised on high),
 And causes deeper sorrow to Romagne.
 Thence in straight line their bark, that seems to fly,
 To the right shore the boatmen drive amain :
 Next through a stagnant channel make, that near
 Ravenna brings by noon the cavalier.¹¹

CXLVII.

Though oft of money he had small supply,
 Then was the knight so well bested, he made
 The weary rowers, in his courtesy,
 A parting present, ere farewell was said.
 Here changing horse and guide, to Rimini
 Rinaldo rode that very eve, nor stayed
 In Montefiore till the night was done ;
 And well nigh reached Urbino with the sun.

CXLVIII.

Then Frederick was not there of gentle lore,
 Nor was Elizabeth nor Guido good ;
 Francis Maria nor sage Leonore ;
 Who would in courteous, not in haughty mood,
 Have forced so famed a paladin for more
 Than one short eve, with them to make abode ;
 As they long did, and do unto this day,
 By dames and cavaliers who pass that way.

CXLIX.

Since here none takes his rein, Rinaldo bends
 His course an-end to Cagli ; o'er the height,
 Rifted by Gaurus and Metaurus, wends
 Past Apennine, no longer on his right,
 Umbri and Tuscans ; and at Rome descends.
 From Rome to Ostia goes Montalban's knight :
 Thence to the city sails ; wherein a grave
 His pious son to old Anchises gave.

CL.

There changes bark ; and thence in haste he goes,
 Bound towards Lampedosa's island-shore,
 That place of combat chosen by the foes,
 And where they had encountered Frank and Moor.
 Rinaldo grants his boatmen no repose ;
 That do what can be done by sail and oar.
 But with ill wind and strong the warrior strives ;
 And, though by little, there too late arrives.

CLI.

Thither he came what time Anglante's peer
 The useful and the glorious deed had done ;
 Had slain those paynim kings in the career,
 But had a hard and bloody conquest won :
 Dead was Sir Brandimart ; and Olivier,
 Dangerously hurt and sore, safe woe-begone,
 Somewhat apart, upon the sandy ground,
 Martyred and crippled by his cruel wound.

CLII.

From tears could not the mournful Count refrain,
 When brave Rinaldo he embraced, and said,
 How in the battle Brandimart was slain.
 Such love, such faith endeared the warrior dead.
 Nor less Rinaldo's tears his visage stain
 When he so cleft beholds their comrade's head.
 Thence to embrace bold Oliviero, where
 He sits with wounded foot, he makes repair.

CLIII.

All comfort that he could he gave ; though none
 Could good Rinaldo to himself afford ;
 Because he came but when the feast was done :
 Yea after the removal of the board.
 The servants wend to the demolished town,
 There hide the bones of either paynim lord
 Beneath Biserta's ruined domes, and nigh
 And far, the fearful tidings certify.

CLIV.

At the fair conquest won by Roland's blade,
 Sansonnet and Astolpho make great cheer ;
 Yet other mirth those warriors would have made
 Had Brandimart not perished ; when they hear
 That he is dead, their joy is so allayed
 They can no more the troubled visage clear.
 Which of them now the tidings of such woe
 To the unhappy Flordelice shall show ?

CLV.

The night preceding that ill-omened day
 Flordelice dreamed the vest of sable grain
 That she had made, her husband to array,
 And woven with her hand and worked with pain,
 Before her eyes all sprinkled-over lay
 With ruddy drops, in guise of pattering rain.
 That she had worked it so the lady thought;
 And then was grieved at seeing what was wrought.

CLVI.

And seemed to say, "Yet from my lord have I
 "Command to make it all of sable hue;
 "Now wherefore is it stained with other dye
 "Against his will, in mode so strange to view?"
 She from that dream draws evil augury;
 And thither on that eve the tidings flew:
 But these concealed Astolpho from the dame
 Till he to her with Sansonetto came.

CLVII.

When they are entered, and she sees no show
 Of joyful triumph, she, without a word,
 Without a hint to indicate that woe,
 Knows that no longer living is her lord.
 With that her gentle heart was riven so,
 And so her harassed eyes the light abhorred,
 And so was every other sense astound,
 That, like one dead, she sank upon the ground.

CLVIII.

She in her hair, when life returns again,
 Fastens her hand; and on her lovely cheeks,
 Repeating the beloved name in vain,
 With all her force her scorn and fury wreaks;
 Uproots and tears her locks, and in her pain,
 Like woman smit by evil demon, shrieks,
 Or, as Bacchante at the horn's rude sound,
 Erewhile was seen to run her restless round.

CLIX.

Now to the one, to the other now her prayer
 She made for knife, wherewith her heart to smite;
 Now she aboard the pirouette would repair
 That brought the corpse of either paynim knight,
 And would on either, lifeless as they were,
 Do cruel scathe, and vent her fierce despite.
 Now would she seek her lord, till at his side
 She rested from her weary search, and died.

CLX.

- " Ah! wherefore, Brandimart, did I let thee
 " Without me wend on such a dire emprise?
 " She ne'er before did thy departure see,
 " But Floridelice aye followed thee," she cries:
 " Well aided mightest thou have been by me;
 " For I on thee should still have kept my eyes;
 " And when Gradasso came behind thee, I
 " These might have succoured with a single cry;

CLXI.

- " And haply I so nimbly might have made
 " Between you, that the stroke I might have caught,
 " And with my head, as with a buckler, stayed:
 " For little ill my dying would have wrought.
 " Anyhow I shall die; and—that debt paid—
 " My melancholy death will profit nought:
 " When, had I died, defending thee in strife,
 " I could not better have bestowed my life.

CLXII.

- " Even if averse had been hard Destiny,
 " And all heaven's host, when thee I sought to aid,
 " At least my tears had bathed thy visage, I
 " Should the last kiss thoreon, at least, have laid;
 " And, ere amid the blessed hierarchy
 " Thy spirit mixt,—' Depart, I should have said—
 " In peace, and wait me in thy rest; for there,
 " Where'er thou art, I swiftly shall repair.

CLXIII.

- " Is this, O Brandimart, is this the reign,
 " Whose honoured sceptre thou wast now to take?
 " With thee to Dommogire, thy fair domain,
 " Thus wend I; me thus welcome dost thou make?
 " Alas! what hope to-day thou renderest vain!
 " Ah! what designs, fell Fortune, dost thou break!
 " Ah! wherefore fear I, since a lot so blest
 " Is lost, to lose as well the worthless rest?"

CLXIV.

- Repeating this and other plaint, so spite
 And fury waxed, that she in her despair
 Made new assault upon her tresses bright,
 As if the fault was wholly in her hair;
 Wildly her hands together doth she smite,
 And gnaw; with nails her lip and bosom tear.
 But I return to Roland and his peers:
 While she bemoans herself and melts in tears.

CLXV.

Roland with Olivier, who much requires
 Some leech's care, his anguish to allay ;
 And who, himself, some worthy place desires
 As much, wherein Sir Brandimart to lay,
 Steers for the lofty mountain, that with fires
 Brightens the night, with smoke obscures the day.
 The wind blows fair, and on the starboard hand,
 Not widely distant from them, lies that land.

CLXVI.

With a fresh wind, that in their favour blows,
 They loose their hawser at the close of day ;
 In heaven above the silent goddess shows
 Her shining horn, to guide them on their way ;
 And on the following morn before them rose
 The pleasant shores that round Girgenti lay.
 Here Roland orders for the ensuing night
 All that is needful for the funeral rite.

CLXVII.

He, when he saw his order duly done,
 And now the westering sun's fair light was spent,
 With many nobles, who from neighbouring town,
 At his invital, to Girgenti went,
 —The shore with torches blazing up and down,
 And sounding wide with cries and loud lament,—
 Thither returned where late, of life bereft,
 His friend, beloved in life and death, was left.

CLXVIII.

There stands Bardino, weeping o'er the bier,
 Who under Age's heavy burden bows ;
 Who, in the tears on shipboard shed whilero,
 Might well have wept away his eyes and brows :
 Upbraiding skies and stars, the cavalier,
 Like lion, in whose veins a fever glows,
 Roars as he wreathes his wayward hands within
 His hoary hair, and rends his wrinkled skin.

CLXIX.

Upon the paladin's return the cry
 Redoubled, and the mourning louder grew.
 Orlando to the corse approached more nigh,
 And speechless stood awhile, his friend to view,
 Pale, as at eve is the acanthus' dye
 Or lily's, which were plucked at morn : he drew
 A heavy sigh, and on the warrior dead
 Fixing his steadfast eyes, the County said :

CLXX.

- " O comrade bold and true, that here liest slain,
 " And who dost live in heaven above, I know,
 " Rewarded with a life, thy glorious gain,
 " Which neither heat nor cold can take, my woe
 " Forgive, if thou beholdest me complain :
 " Because I sorrow to remain below,
 " And not to share in such delights with thee ;
 " Not that thou art not left behind with me.

CLXXI.

- " Alone, without thee, there is nought I may
 " Ever possess, without thee, that can please.
 " If still with thee in tempest and affray,
 " Ah ! wherefore not with thee in calm and ease
 " Right sore must be my trespass, since this day
 " Will not to follow thee my soul release.
 " If in thy troubles still I bore a burden,
 " Why am I not a partner of thy guerdon ?

CLXXII.

- " Thine is the guerdon ; mine the loss ; thy gain
 " Is single ; but not single is my woe :
 " Partners with me in sorrow are Almayne,
 " And grieving France and Italy ; and oh !
 " How will my lord and uncle, Charlemagne,
 " How will his paladins lament the blow !
 " How will the Christian church and empire moan,
 " Whose best defence in thee is overthrown !

CLXXIII.

- " Oh ! how thy foes will by the death of thee
 " Be freed henceforward from alarm and fear !
 " Alas ! how strengthened paynimry will be !
 " What hardiment will now be theirs ! what cheer !
 " What of thy consort will become ? I see
 " Even here her mourning, and her outcries hear.
 " Me she accuses, haply hates, I know ;
 " In that, through me, her every hope lies low.

CLXXIV.

- " Yet by one comfort, Flordelice, is followed
 " His loss, for us that rest of him remain :
 " His death, with such surpassing glory hallowed,
 " To die all living warriors should be fain.
 " Those Decii ; Curtius, in Rome's forum swallowed ;
 " Codrus, so vaunted by the Grecian train ;
 " Not with more honour to themselves, with more
 " Profit to others, went to death of yore."

CLXXV.

These sad laments and more Orlando made ;
 And all this while white friars, and black, and grey,
 With other clerks, by two and two arrayed,
 Behind in long procession took their way ;
 And they to God for the departed prayed,
 That he would to his rest his soul convey.
 Before and all about were torches reared,
 And changed to day the sable night appeared.

CLXXVI.

They raise the warrior's bier, and ranged to bear
 By turns that honoured weight were earl and knight.
 The pall was purple silk, with broidery rare
 Of gold, and pearls in costly circles dight.
 Thereon, of lordly work and no less fair,
 Cushions were laid, with jewels shining bright.
 On which was stretched the lifeless knight in view,
 Arrayed in vest of like device and hue.

CLXXVII.

A hundred men had past before the rest,
 All taken from the poorest of the town ;
 And in one fashion equally were drest
 Those beadsmen all, in black and trailing gown.
 A hundred pages followed them, who prest
 A hundred puissant steeds, for warfare bown ;
 And by those pages backed, the portly steeds
 Went, sweeping wide the ground with sable weeds.

CLXXVIII.

Banners in front and banners borne in rear,
 Whose field with diverse ensignry is stained,
 Unfurled accompany the funeral bier ;
 Which from a thousand vanquished bands were gained,
 For Caesar and for Peter's church whilere,
 By that rare force, which now extinct remained.
 Bucklers by other followers carried are,
 Won from good warriors, whose device they bear.

CLXXIX.

By hundreds and by hundreds followed more,
 Ordained for different tasks, the steps of those ;
 Who burning torches like those others bore.
 Mantled, say rather closely muffled, goes
 Roland in sables next, and evermore
 His eyes suffused and red with weeping shows.
 Nor wears a gladder face Montalban's peer.
 At home his wound detains Sir Olivier.

CLXXX.

The ceremonies would be long to say
 In verse, wherewith Sir Brandinart was mourned ;
 The mantles, black or purple, given away ;
 The many torches which that eve were burned.
 Wending to the cathedral, where the array
 Past on its road, were no dry eyes discerned :
 All sexes, ages, ranks, in pitying mood
 Gazed upon him so youthful, fair, and good.

CLXXXI.

He in the church was placed ; and, when with vain
 Lament the women had benighted the dead,
 And *Kyrie eleison*, by the priestly train,
 And other holy orisons were said,
 In a fair ark, upraised on columns twain,
 Was reared, with sumptuous cloth of gold o'erspread.
 So willed Orlando ; till he could be laid
 In sepulchre of costlier matter made :

CLXXXII.

Nor out of Sicily the Count departs,
 Till porphyries he procures and alabasters,
 And fair designs ; and in their several arts
 Has with large hire engaged the primest masters.
 Next Flordelice, arriving in those parts,
 Raises the quarried slabs and rich pilasters ;
 Who, good Orlando being gone before,
 Is hither wafted from the Afric shore.

CLXXXIII.

She, seeing that her tears unceasing flow,
 And that of long lament she never tires
 Nor she, for mass or service said, her woe
 Can ease, or satisfy her sad desires,
 Vows in her heart she thence will never go
 Till from the wearied corse her soul expires ;
 And builds in that fair sepulchre a cell ;
 There shuts herself ; therein for life will dwell.

CLXXXIV.

Thither in person, having courier sent
 And letter, Roland goes, her thence to take ;
 Her, would she wend to France, with goodly rent
 Would gift, and Galerana's inmate make ;
 As far as Lizza convoy her, if bent
 On journeying to her father ; for her sake,
 If wholly she to serve her God was willed,
 A monastery would the warrior build.

CLXXXV.

Still in that sepulchre she dwelt, and worn
 By weary penance, praying night and day,
 It was not long, ere by the Paræ shorn
 Was her life's thread : already on their way
 Were the three Christian warriors, homeward borne,
 From the isle in whose old caves the Cyclops lay,
 Sorrowing and afflicted sore in mind
 For their fourth comrade who remained behind.

CLXXXVI.

They would not go without a leech, whose skill
 Might ease the wound of warlike Olivier ;
 Which, as in the beginning it could ill
 Be salv'd, is hard to heal. Meanwhile they hear
 The champion so complain, his outcries fill
 Orlando and all that company with fear.
 While they discours'd thereon, the skipper, moved
 By a new notion, said what all approved.

CLXXXVII.

* A hermit not far distant hence, he said,
 ' A lonely rock inhabits in this sea ;
 ' Whose isle none, seeking succour, vainly tread,
 ' Whether for counsel or for aid it be ;
 ' Who hath done superhuman deeds ; the dead
 ' Restores to life ; and makes the blind to see ;
 ' Hushes the winds ; and with a sign o' the cross
 ' Lulls the loud billows when they highest toss ;

CLXXXVIII.

* And adds they need not doubt, if they will go
 ' To seek that holy man to God so dear,
 ' But he on Olivier will health bestow ;
 ' Having his virtue proved by signs more clear.'
 This counsel pleases good Orlando so,
 That for the holy place he bids him steer ;
 Who never swerving from his course, espies
 The lonely rock, upon Aurora's rise.

CLXXXIX.

Worked by good mariners, the bark was laid
 Safely beside the rugged rock and fell :
 The marquis there, with crew and servants' aid,
 They lowered into their boat ; and through the swell
 And foaming waters in that shallop made
 For the rude isle ; thence sought the holy cell ;
 The holy cell of that same hermit hoar,
 By whom Rogero was baptized before.

CXC.

The servant of the Lord of Paradise
 Receives Orlando and the rest on land ;
 Blesses the company in cheerful wise ;
 And after of their errand makes demand ;
 Though he already had received advice
 From angels of the coming of that band.
 ' That they were thither bound in search of aid
 ' For Oliviero's hurt,' Orlando said ;

CXCI.

' Who, warring for the christian faith, in fight
 ' To perilous pass was brought by evil wound.'
 All dismal fear relieved that eremite,
 And promised he would make him wholly sound.
 In that no unguents hath the holy wight,
 Nor is in other human medicine found,
 His church he seeks, his knee to Jesus bows,
 And issues from the fans with cheerful brows ;

CXCII.

And in the name of those eternal Three,
 The Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost,
 On Oliviero bade his blessing be.
 Oh ! grace vouchsafed to faith ! his sainted lust
 From every pain the paladin did free ;
 And to his foot restored its vigour lost.
 He moved more nimble than before, and sure ;
 And present was Sobrino at the cure.

CXCIII.

Sobrino, so diseased that he desiered
 How worse with each succeeding day he grew,
 As soon as he that holy monk espied
 The manifest and mighty marvel do,
 Disposed himself to cast Mahound aside,
 And own in Christ a living God and true.
 He, full of faith, with contrite heart demands
 Our holy rite of baptism at his hands.

CXCIV.

So him baptized the hermit ; and as well
 That monarch made as vigorous as whilere,
 At this conversion no less gladness fell
 On Roland and each Christian cavalier,
 Than when, restored from deadly wound, and well
 The friendly troop beheld Sir Olivier.
 Rogero more rejoiced than all that crew ;
 And still in faith and grace the warrior grow.

CXC.V.

Rogero from the day he swam ashore
 Upon that islet, there had ever been.
 That band is counselled by the hermit hoar,
 Who stands, benign, those warlike knights between,
 ' Eschewing in their passage mire and moor,
 ' To wade withal through that dead water, clean,
 ' Which men call life ; wherein so fools delight ;
 ' And evermore on heaven to fix their sight.'

CXC.VI.

Roland on shipboard sends one from his throng,
 Who fetches hence good wine, hams, cheese, and bread ;
 And makes the sage, who had forgotten long
 All taste of partridge since on fruits he fed,
 Even do for love, what others did, among
 Those social guests for whom the board was spread.
 They, when their strength by food was reinforced,
 Of many things amid themselves discoursed ;

CXC.VII.

And as in talk it often doth befall
 That one thing from another takes its rise,
 Roland and Olivier Rogero call
 To mind for that Rogero, in such wise
 Renowned in arms ; whose valour is of all
 Lauded and echoed with accordant cries.
 Not even had Rinaldo known the knight
 For him whose prowess he had proved in fight.

CXC.VIII.

Him well Sobrino recognized whilero,
 As soon as with that ancient man espied ;
 But he at first kept silence ; for, in fear
 Of some mistake the monarch's tongue was tied.
 But when those others know the cavalier
 For that Rogero, famous far and wide,
 Whose courtesy, whose might and daring through
 The universal world loud Rumour blew,

CXC.IX.

All, for they know he is a Christian, stand
 About him with serene and joyful face :
 All press upon the knight ; one grasps his hand ;
 Another locks him fast in his embrace :
 Yet more than all the others of that band
 Him would Montalban's lord caress and grace :
 Why more than all the others will appear
 In other strain, if you that strain will hear.

CANTO XLIV.

ARGUMENT.

*Rinaldo his sister to the Child hath plight,
And to Marseilles is with the warrior gone ;
And having crimsoned wide the field in fight,
Therein arrives King Ottho's valiant son.
To Paris thence ; where to that squadron bright
Is mighty grace and wondrous honour done.
The Child departs, resolved on Leo's slaughter,
To whom Duke Aymon h'd betrothed his daughter.*

I.

In poor abode, 'mid paltry walls and bare,
Amid discomforts and calamities,
Often in friendship hearts united are,
Better than under roof of lordly guise,
Or in some royal court, beset with snare,
Mid envious wealth, and ease, and luxuries ;
Where charity is spent on every side,
Nor friendship, unless counterfeit, is spied.

II.

Hence it ensues that peace and pact between
Princes and peers are of such short-lived wear.
To-day king, pope, and emperor leagued are seen,
And on the morrow deadly foemen are.
Because such is not as their outward mien
The heart, the spirit, that those sovereigns bear.
Since, wholly careless as to right or wrong,
But to their profit look the faithless throng.

III.

Though little prone to friendship is that sort,
Because with those she loveth not to dwell,
Who, be their talk in earnest or in sport,
Speak not, except some cozening tale to tell ;
Yet if together in some poor resort
They prisoned are by Fortune false and fell,
What friendship is they speedily discern ;
Though years had past, and this was yet to learn.

IV.

In his retreat that ancient eremite
Could bind his inmates with a faster noose,
And in true love more firmly them unite,
Than other could in domes where courtiers use ;
And so enduring was the knot and tight,
That nothing short of death the tie could loose.
Benignant all the hermit found that crew ;
Whiter at heart than swans in outward hue.

V.

All kind he found them, and of courteous lore ;
 Untainted with iniquity, in wise
 Of them I painted, and who nevermore
 Go forth, unless concealed in some disguise.
 Of injuries among them done before
 All memory, by those comrades buried lies :
 Nor could they better love, if from one womb
 And from one seed that warlike band had come.

VI.

Rinaldo more than all that lordly train
 Rogero graced and lovingly caressed ;
 As well because he on the listed plain
 Had proved the peer so strong in martial gest,
 As that he was more courteous and humane
 Than any knight that e'er laid lance in rest :
 But much more ; that to him on many a ground
 By mighty obligation was he bound.

VII.

The fearful risk by Richardetto run
 He knew, and how Rogero him bested ;
 What time the Spanish monarch's best was done,
 And with his daughter he was seized in bed ;
 And how he had delivered either son
 Of good Duke Buovo (as erewhile was said)
 From Bertolagi of Maganza's hand,
 His evil followers, and the paynin band.

VIII.

To honour and to hold Rogero dear,
 Him, Sir Rinaldo thought, this debt constrained ;
 And that he could not so have done while ere,
 The warlike lord was sorely grieved and pained ;
 When one for Afric's monarch couched the spear,
 And one the cause of royal Charles maintained :
 Now he Rogero for a Christian knew,
 What could not then be done he now would do.

IX.

Welcome, with endless proffers, on his side,
 And honour he to good Rogero paid.
 The prudent sire that in such kindness spied
 An opening made for more, the pass assayed :
 " And nothing else remains," that hermit cried,
 " (Nor will, I trust, my counsel be gainsaid)
 " But that, conjoined by friendship, you shall be
 " Yet faster coupled by affinity.

X.

"That from the two bright progenies, which none
 "Will equal in illustrious blood below,
 "A race may spring, that brighter than the sun
 "Will shine, wherever that bright sun may glow;
 "And which, when years and ages will have run
 "Their course, will yet endure and fairer show,
 "While in their orbits burn the heavenly fires:
 "So me, for your instruction, God inspires."

XI.

And his discourse pursuing still, the seer
 So spake, he moves Rinaldo by his rede
 To give his sister to the cavalier;
 Albeit with either small entreaties need.
 Together with Orlando, Olivier
 The counsel lauds, and would that union speed:
 King Charles and Aymon will, he hopes, approve,
 And France will welcome wide their wedded love.

XII.

So spake together peer and paladine:
 Nor knew that Aymon, with King Charles' consent,
 Unto the Grecian emperor Constantine
 To give his gentle daughter had intent;
 Who for young Leo, of his lofty line
 The heir and hope, to crave the maid had sent.
 Such warmth the praises of her worth inspired,
 With love of her unseen was Leo fired.

XIII.

To him hath Aymon answered; 'he, alone,
 'Cannot conclude thereon in other sort,
 'Until he first hath spoken with his son,
 'Rinaldo, absent then from Charles's court;
 'Who with winged haste, he deems, will thither run,
 'And joy in kinsman of such high report;
 'But from the high regard he bears his heir,
 'Can nought resolve till thither he repair.'

XIV.

Now good Rinaldo, of his father wide,
 And of the imperial practice knowing nought,
 Promised his beauteous sister as a bride,
 Upon his own, as well as Roland's thought
 And the others, harboured in that cell beside;
 But most of all on him the hermit wrought;
 And by such marriage, 'twas the peer's belief,
 He could not choose but pleasure Clermont's chief.

XV.

That day and night, and of the following day
Great part, with that sage monk the warriors spent ;
Scarcely mindful that the crew their coming stay,
Albeit the wind blew fair for their intent.
But these, impatient at their long delay,
More than one message to the warriors sent ;
And to return those barons urged so sore,
Parforce they parted from the hermit hoar.

XVI.

The Child who, so long banished, had not strayed
From the lone rock, whereon the waters roared,
His farewell to that holy master made,
Who taught him the true faith : anew with sword
Orlando girt his side, and with the blade,
Frontino and martial Hector's arms restored ;
As knowing horse and arms were his whilom,
As well as out of kindness to the peer ;

XVII.

And, though the enchanted sword with better right
Would have been worn by good Anglantes' chief,
Who from the fearful garden by his might
Had won the blade with mickle toil and grief,
Than by Rogero, who that faulchion bright
Received with good Frontino, from the thief,
He willingly thereof, as with the rest,
As soon as asked, the warrior repossess.

XVIII.

The hermit blessings on the band implores
They to their bark in fine return ; their sails
Give to the winds, and to the waves their ours ;
And such clear skies they have and gentle gales,
Nor vow nor prayer the patron makes ; and moors
His pinnace in the haven of Marseilles.
There, safely harboured, let the chiefs remain,
Till I conduct Astolpho to that train.

XIX.

When of that bloody, dear-bought victory
The scarcely joyful tale Astolpho knew,
He, seeing evermore fair France would be
Secure from mischief from the Moorish crew,
Homeward to send the king of Æthiopy
Deris'd, together with his army, through
The sandy desert, by the self-same track,
Through which he led them to Biserta's sack.

XX.

Erewhile restored, in Afric waters ride
 Sir Dudon's ships which did the paynims rout ;
 Whose prows (new miracle !) and poop, and side,
 As soon as all their sable crews are out,
 Are changed snow to leaves ; which far and wide,
 Raised by a sudden breeze, are blown about ;
 And scattered in mid air, like such light gear,
 Go eddying with the wind, and disappear.

XXI.

Home, horse and foot, the Nubian host arrayed
 By squadrons, all, from wasted Afric go ;
 But to their king, first, thanks Astolpho paid,
 And said, he an eternal debt should owe ;
 In that he had in person given him aid
 With all his might and main against the foe.
 The skins Astolpho gave them, which confined
 The turbid and tempestuous southern wind.

XXII.

I say, enclosed in skins that wind he gave,
 Which in such fury blows at noon, on high
 It moves the shifting plain in many a wave,
 And fills with eddying sand the troubled sky,
 To carry with them, and from scathe to save
 Their squadrons, lest the dusty whirlwind fly ;
 And bids them, when arrived at home, unnoose
 The bladder's vent, and let their prisoner loose.

XXIII.

When they have lofty Atlas' passes won,
 The horses that the Nubian riders bear,
 Turpin relates, are changed at once to stone ;
 So that the steeds return to what they were.
 But it is time the Duke to France was gone ;
 Who having thus provided, in his care,
 For the main places in the Moorish land,
 Made the hippogryph anew his wings expand ;

XXIV.

He reached Sardinia at one flight and shear,
 Corsica from Sardinia ; and then o'er
 The foaming sea his venturous course did steer,
 Inclining somewhat left the griffin's scour.
 In the sea-marshes last his light career
 He stopt, on rich Provence's pleasant shore :
 Where to the hippogryph by him is done
 What was erewhile enjoined by sainted John.

XXV.

To him the charge did sainted John commit,
 When to Provence by that winged courser borne,
 Him nevermore with saddle or with bit
 To gall, but let him to his lair return.
 Already had the planet, whither flit
 Things lost on earth, of sound deprived his horn:
 For this not only hoarse but mute remained,
 As soon as the holy place Astolpho gained.

XXVI.

Thence to Marseilles he came; and came the day
 Orlando, and Rinaldo, and Olivier
 Arrived therein, upon their homeward way,
 With good Sobrino, and the better peer,
 Rogero: not so triumphs that array,
 Touched by the death of him, their comrade dear,
 As they for such a glorious victory won
 —But for that sad disaster—would have done.

XXVII.

Of the kings slain upon the paynim part,
 The news from Sicily to Charles were blown,
 Sobrino's fate, and death of Brandinart;
 Nor less of good Rogero had been shown.
 Charles stood with jocund face and gladsome heart,
 Rejoicing he had from his shoulders thrown
 The intolerable load whereof the weight
 Will for long time prevent his standing straight.

XXVIII.

To honour those fair pillars that sustain
 The state—the holy empire's corner-stone—
 The nobles of his kingdom Charlemagne
 Dispatched, to meet the knights, as far as Sione;
 And from his city with his worthiest train,
 King, duke, and her, the partner of his throne,
 Issued amid a fair and gorgeous band
 Of noble damsels, upon either hand.

XXIX.

The emperor Charles with bright and cheerful brow,
 Lords, paladins and people, kinsmen, friends,
 Fair love to Roland and the others show.
 Mongrana and Clermont's cry the welkin rends.
 No sooner, mid that kind and festal show,
 The interchange of fond embracements ends,
 Than Roland and his friends Rogero bring,
 And mid these lords present him to the king;

XXX.

And him Rogero of Risa's son declare,
 And vouch in valour as his father's peer,
 "Witnesses of his worth our squadrons are,
 "They best can tell his prowess with the spear."
 Meanwhile, the noble and the lovely pair,
 Marphisa and gentle Bradamant appear.
 This runs to fold Rogero to her heart;
 More coy, that other stands somedecal apart.

XXXI.

The emperor bids Rogero mount again,
 Who from his horse had lit, in reverence due;
 And, side by side, with him his courser rein;
 Nor aught omits that monarch which may do
 The warrior honour, mid his martial train;
 How the true faith he had embraced he knew;
 Of all instructed by that band before;
 When first those paladins set foot ashore.

XXXII.

With pomp triumphal and with festive cheer
 The troop returns within the city walls:
 With leaves and garlands green the streets appear,
 And tapestried all about with gorgeous palls.
 Of herbs and flowers a mingled rain, where'er
 They wend, upon the conquering squadron falls,
 Which with full hands from stand and window throw
 Damsel and dame upon the knights below.

XXXIII.

At every turn, in various places are,
 Of sudden structure arch and trophy high,
 Whereon Bisorta's sack is painted fair,
 Ruin and fire, and feat of chivalry:
 Scaffolds, upraised for different sports elsewhere
 And merrimake and stage-play meet the eye;
 And, writ with truth, above, below, between,
 To THE EMPIRE'S SAVIOURS, everywhere is seen.

XXXIV.

With sound of shrilling pipe and trumpet proud,
 And other festive music, laughter light,
 Applause and favour of the following crowd,
 Which scarce found room, begirt with dame and knight,
 The mighty emperor, mid those greetings loud,
 Before the royal palace did alight:
 Where many days he feasted high in hall
 His lords, mid tourney, mummary, mask and ball.

XXXV.

His son to Aymon on a day made known
 His sister he would make Rogero's bride ;
 And before Olivier and Milo's son,*
 Her to the Child by promise had affied ;
 Who think with him that kindred is there none
 Wherewith to league themselves, on any side,
 For valour or nobility of blood,
 Better than his ; nay, none so passing good.

XXXVI.

Duke Aymon heard his heir with some disdain ;
 That, without concert with him, and alone
 He dared to plight his daughter, whom he fain
 Would marry to the Grecian emperor's son ;
 And not to him that has no kingly reign,
 Nay, has not ought that he can call his own ;
 And should not know, how little nobleness
 Is valued without wealth ; how virtue less.

XXXVII.

But Beatrice, his wife, with more despite
 Arraigns her son, and calls him arrogant ;
 And moves each open way and hidden sleight
 To break Rogero's match with Bradamant ;
 Resolved to tax her every means and might
 To make her empress of the wide Levant.
 Firm in his purpose is Montalban's lord,
 Nor will in aught forego his plighted word.

XXXVIII.

Beatrice, who believes the highminded fair
 Is at her heast, exhorts her to reply,
 ' Rather than she will be constrained to pair
 ' With a poor knight, she is resolved to die ;'
 Nor, if this wrong she from Rinaldo bear,
 Will she regard her with a mother's eye :
 Let her refuse and keep her stedfast course ;
 For her free will Rinaldo cannot force.

XXXIX.

Silent stands mournful Bradamant, nor dares
 Meanwhile her lady-mother's speech gainsay ;
 To whom such reverence, and respect, she bears,
 She thinks no choice is left but to obey.
 Yet a foul fault it in her eyes appears,
 If what she will not do, she falsely say :
 She will not, for she cannot ; since above
 All guidance, great or small, is mighty Love.

* Orlando.

XL.

Deny she dared not, nor yet seem content ;
 So, sighed and spake not ; but—when uncontrolled
 She could—she gave her secret sorrow vent,
 While from her eyes the tears like billows rolled ;
 A portion of the pains that her torment,
 Inflicting on her breast and locks of gold ;
 For this she beat, and those uptore and brake ;
 And thus she made lament, and thus she spake.

XLI.

“ Ah ! shall I will what she wills *not*, by right
 “ More sovereign mistress of my will than I ?
 “ Hers shall I hold so cheaply, as to slight
 “ A mother’s will, my own to satisfy ?
 “ Alas ! what blemish is so foul to sight
 “ In damsel ? What so ill, as to affy
 “ Myself to husband, reckless of *her* will,
 “ Which ’tis my duty ever to fulfil ?

XLII.

“ Wo worth the while ! and shall I then to thee
 “ By filial love be forced to be untrue,
 “ O my Rogero, and surrender me
 “ To a new hope, a new love, and a new
 “ Desire ; or rather from those ties break free,
 “ From all good children to good parents due ;
 “ Observance, reverence cast aside ; and measure
 “ My duty by my happiness, my pleasure ?

XLIII.

“ I know, alas ! what I should do ; I know
 “ That which a duteous daughter doth behave ;
 “ I know ; but what avails it, if not so
 “ My reason moves me as my senses move ;
 “ If she retires before a stronger foe ;
 “ Nor can I of myself dispose, for Love ;
 “ Nor think how to dispose ; so strict his way :
 “ Nor, saving as he dictates, do and say ?

XLIV.

“ Aymon and Beatrice’s child, the slave
 “ Of Love am I ; ah ! miserable me !
 “ I from my parents am in hope to have
 “ Pardon and pity, if in fault I be :
 “ But, if I anger Love, whose prayer shall save
 “ Me from his fury, till one only plea,
 “ Of mine the Godhead shall vouchsafe to bear ;
 “ Nor doom me dead as soon as I appear ?

XLV.

"Alas! with long and obstinate pursuit,
 "To our faith to draw Rogero have I wrought;
 "And finally have drawn; but with what boot,
 "If my fair deed for other's good be wrought?
 "So yearly by the bee, whose labour's fruit
 "Is lost for her, is hive with honey fraught.
 "But I will die ere I the Child forsake,
 "And other husband than Rogero take.

XLVI.

"If I shall not obey my father's best,
 "Nor mother's, I my brother's shall obey,
 "Of greater wisdom far than them possess;
 "Nor Time hath made that warrior's wit his prey;
 "And what *he* wills by Roland is profest;
 "And, one and the other, on my side are they;
 "A pair more feared and honoured far and wide
 "Than all the members of my house beside.

XLVII.

"If them the flower of Clermont's noble tree,
 "The glory and the splendour all account;
 "If all believe our other chivalry
 "They, more than head o'er tops the foot, surmount;
 "Why would I Aymon should dispose of me
 "Rather than good Rinaldo and the Count?
 "I should not; so-much less, as not allied
 "To Leo, and Rogero's promised bride."

XLVIII.

If cruel thoughts the afflicted maid torment,
 Rogero's mind enjoys not more repose;
 For albeit those sad tidings have not vent
 Yet in the city, he the secret knows.
 He o'er his humble fortunes makes lament
 Which his enjoying such a good oppose;
 As unendowed with riches or with reign,
 Dispensed so widely to a worthless train.

XLIX.

Of other goods which Nature's hand supplies,
 Or which acquired by man's own study are,
 He such a portion in himself espies,
 Such and so large was never other's share:
 In that, no beauty with his beauty vies;
 In that, resistance to his might is rare.
 The palm by none from him can challenged be,
 In regal splendour, magnanimity.

L.

But they at whose disposal honours lie,
 Who give at will, and take away renown ;
 The vulgar herd ; and from the vulgar I,
 Except the prudent man, distinguish none ;
 Nor emperor, pope, nor king, is raised more high
 Than these by sceptre, mitre, or by crown,
 Nor save by prudence ; save by judgment, given
 But to the favoured few by partial Heaven ;

LI.

This vulgar (to say out what-I would say)
 Which only honours wealth, therewith more smit
 Than any worldly thing beside, nor they
 Aught heed or aught esteem, ungraced with it,
 Be beauty or be daring what it may,
 Dexterity or prowess, worth, or wit,
 Or goodness—yet more vulgar stands confest
 In that whereof I speak than in the rest.

LII.

Rogero said ; “ If Aymon is disposed
 “ An empress in his Bradamant to see,
 “ Let not his treaty be so quickly closed
 “ With Leo ; let a year be granted me :
 “ In that, meanwhile, I hope, by me deposed
 “ Shall Leo with his royal father be,
 “ And I, encircled with their forfeit crown,
 “ Shall be for Aymon no unworthy son.

LIII.

“ But if he gives without delay, as said,
 “ His daughter to the son of Constantine,
 “ If to that promise no regard be paid,
 “ Which good Rinaldo and the paladine,
 “ His cousin, erst before the hermit made,
 “ The Marquis Olivier and King Sobrine,
 “ What shall I do ? such grievous wrong shall I
 “ Endure, or, rather than endure it, die ?

LIV.

“ What shall I do ? her father then pursue,
 “ On whom for vengeance this grave outrage cries ?
 “ I heed not that the deed is hard to do,
 “ Or if the attempt in me is weak or wise :—
 “ But presuppose that, with his kindred crew
 “ Slain by my hand that unjust elder dies ;
 “ This will in nothing further my content ;
 “ Nay, it will wholly frustrate my intent.

LV.

- " 'Twas ever my intent, and still 'tis so,
 " To have the love, not hatred, of that fair ;
 " But should I Aymon slay, or bring some woe,
 " By plot or practice, on his house or heir,
 " Will she not justly hold me as her foe,
 " And me, that foeman, as her lord forswear ?
 " What shall I do, endure such injury ?
 " Ah ! no, by Heaven ! far rather I will die.

LVI.

- " Nay die I will not ; but with better right
 " Shall Leo die, who so disturbs my joy ;
 " He and his unjust sire ; less dear his flight
 " With Helen paid her paramour of Troy ;
 " Nor yet in older times that soul despite,
 " Done to Proserpina, cost such annoy
 " To bold Pirithous, as for her I've lost
 " My grief of heart shall son and father cost.

LVII.

- " Can it be true, my life, that to forsake
 " Thy champion for this Greek should grieve not thee ?
 " And could thy father force thee him to take,
 " Though joined thy brethren with thy sire should be ?
 " But 'tis my fear that thou would'st rather make
 " Accord withal with Aymon than with me ;
 " And that it seemeth better in thy sight
 " To wed with Cæsar than with simple wight.

LVIII.

- " Can it be true that royal name should blind,
 " Imperial title, pomp and majesty,
 " And taint my Bradamant's egregious mind,
 " Her mighty valour and her virtue high,
 " So that, as cheaper, she should cast behind
 " Her plighted faith, and from her promise fly ?
 " Nor sooner she a foe to Love be made,
 " Than she no longer say, what once she said ?"

LIX.

- These things Rogero said, and more beside,
 Discoursing with himself, and in such strain
 Oftentimes the afflicted warrior cried,
 That stander by o'erheard the knight complain,
 And more than once his grief was signified
 To her that was the occasion of his pain ;
 Who no less for his cruel woe, when known,
 Lamented than for sorrows of her own.

LX.

But most, of all the sorrows that were said
 To vex Rogero, most it works her woe
 To hear that he afflicts himself, in dread
 Lest for the Grecian prince she him forego.
 Hence this belief, this error, from his head
 To drive, and comfort on the knight bestow,
 The trustiest of her bower-women, one day,
 She to Rogero bade these words convey.

LXI.

“ Rogero, I what I was till death will be ;
 “ And be more faithful, if I can be more :
 “ Deals Love in kindness or in scorn with me ;
 “ Hath doubtful Fortune good or ill in store ;
 “ I am a very rock of faith, by sea
 “ And winds unmoved, which round about it roar.
 “ Nor I have changed for calm or storm, nor I
 “ Will ever change to all eternity.

LXII.

“ Sooner shall file or chisel made of lead
 “ To the rough diamond various forms impart,
 “ Than any stroke, by fickle Fortune sped,
 “ Or Love's keen anger, break my constant heart :
 “ Sooner return, to Alp, their fountain-head,
 “ The troubled streams that from its summit part,
 “ Than e'er, for change or chances, good or nought,
 “ Shall wander from its way my stedfast thought.

LXIII.

“ All power o'er me have I bestowed on you,
 “ Rogero ; and more than others may divine :
 “ I know that to a prince whose throne is new
 “ Was never fealty sworn more true than mine ;
 “ Nor ever surer state, this wide world through,
 “ By king or keysar was possess'd than thine.
 “ Thou need'st not dig a ditch nor build a tower,
 “ In fear lest any rob thee of that power.

LXIV.

“ For if thou hire no aids, assault is none,
 “ But what thereon shall aye be made in vain ;
 “ Nor shall it be by any riches won :
 “ So vile a price no gentle heart can gain :
 “ Nor by nobility, nor kingly crown,
 “ That dazzle so the silly vulgar train ;
 “ Nor beauty, puissant with the weak and light,
 “ Shall ever make me thee for other slight.

LXV.

"Thou hast no cause, amid thy griefs, to fear
 "My heart should ever bear new impress more;
 "So deeply is thine image graven here,
 "It cannot be removed; that my heart's core
 "Is not of wax is proved; for Love whilere
 "Smote it a hundred times, not once, before
 "He by his blows a single scale displaced,
 "What time therein his hapd thine image traced.

LXVI.

"Ivory, gem, and every hard-grained stone
 "That best resists the griding tool, may break:
 "But, save the form it once hath taken, none
 "Will ever from the graver's iron take.
 "My heart like marble is, or thing least prone
 "Beneath the chisel's trenchant edge to flake:
 "Love this may wholly splinter, ere he may
 "Another's beauty in its core enlay."

LXVII.

Other and many words with comfort rife,
 And full of love and faith, she said beside;
 Which might a thousand times have given him life,
 Albeit a thousand times the knight had died:
 But, when most clear of the tempestuous strife,
 In friendly port these hopes appeared to ride,
 These hopes a foul and furious wind anew
 Far from the sheltering land to seaward blew.

LXVIII.

In that the gentle Bradamaut, who fain
 Would do far more than she hath signified,
 With wonted daring armed her heart again;
 And boldly casting all respect aside,
 One day stood up before King Charlemagne;
 And, "Sire, if ever yet," the damsel cried,
 "I have found favour in your eyes for deed
 "Done heretofore, deny me not its meed;

LXIX.

"And I entreat, before I claim my fee,
 "That you to me your royal promise plight,
 "To grant my prayer; and fain would have you see
 "That what I shall demand is just and right."
 "Thy valour, damsel dear, deserves from me
 "The boon wherewith thy worth I should requite
 (Charles answered), "and I to content thee swear,
 "Though of my kingdom thou should'st claim a share."

LXX.

" The boon for which I to your highness sue,
 " Is not to let my parents me accord
 (Pursued the martial damsel) " save he shew
 " More prowess than myself, to any lord.
 " Let him contend with me in tourney, who
 " Would have me, or assay me with the sword.
 " Me as his wife let him that wins me, wear;
 " Let him that loses me, with other pair."

LXXI.

With cheerful face the emperor made reply,
 ' The entreaty was well worthy of the maid;
 ' And that with tranquil mind she might rely,
 ' He would accord the boon for which she prayed.
 This audience was not given so secretly,
 But that the news to others were conveyed;
 Which on that very day withal were told
 In the ears of Beatrice and Aymon old;

LXXII.

Who against Bradamant with fury flame,
 And both alike, with sudden anger fraught,
 (For plainly they perceive, that in her claim
 She for Rogero more than Leo wrought)
 And active to prevent the damsel's aim
 From being to a safe conclusion brought,
 Privily take her from King Charles's court,
 And thence to Rocca Forte's tower transport.

LXXIII.

A castle this, which royal Charlemagne
 Had given to Aymon some few days before,
 Built between Carcasson and Perpignan,
 On a commanding point upon the shore.
 Resolved to send her eastward, there the twain
 As in a prison kept her evermore.
 Willing or nilling, so must she forsake
 Rogero, and for lord must Leo take.

LXXIV.

The martial maid of no less modest vein
 Than bold and full of fire before the foe,
 Albeit no guard on her the castellan
 Hath set, and she is free to come or go,
 Observant of her sire, obeys the rein:
 Yet prison, death, and every pain and woe
 To suffer is resolved that constant maid
 Before by her Rogero be betrayed.

LXXV.

Rinaldo, who thus ravished from his hand,
 By ancient Aymon's craft his sister spied,
 And saw he could no more in wedlock's band
 Dispose of her, by him in vain allied,
 Of his old sire complains, and him doth brand,
 Saying his filial love and fear aside:
 But little him Rinaldo's words molest;
 Who by the maid will do as likes him best.

LXXVI.

Rogero, hearing this and sore afraid
 That he shall lose his bride; and Leo take,
 If left alive, by force or love the maid,
 Resolved within himself (but nothing speke)
 Constantine's heir should perish by his blade;
 And of Augustus him a god would make.*
 He, save his hope deceived him and was vain,
 Would sire and son deprive of life and reign.

LXXVII.

His limbs in arms, which Trojan Hector's were,
 And afterwards the Tartar king's, he steeled;
 Bade rein Frontino, and his wonted wear
 Exchanged, crest, surcoat and emblazoned shield.
 On that emprize it pleased him not to bear
 His argent eagle on its azure field.
 White as a lily, was a unicorn
 By him upon a field of crimson worn.

LXXVIII.

He chose from his attendant squires the best,
 And willed none else should him accompany;
 And gave him charge, that ne'er by him exprest
 Rogero's name in any place should be;
 Cross Meuse and Rhine, and pricked upon his quest
 Through the Austrian countries into Hungary;
 Along the right bank of the Danube made,
 And rode an-end until he reached Belgrade.

LXXIX.

Where Save into dark Danube makes descent,
 And to the sea, increased by him, doth flow,
 He saw the imperial ensigns spread, and tent
 And white pavilion, thronged with troops below.
 For Constantine to have that town was bent
 Anew, late won by the Bulgarian foe.
 In person, with his son, is Constantine,
 With all the empire's force his host to line.

LXXX.

Within Belgrade, and through the neighbouring peak,
 Even to its bottom which the waters lave,
 The Bulgar fronts him; and both armies seek
 A watering-place in the intermediate Save.
 A bridge across that rapid stream the Greek
 Would fling; the Bulgar would defend the wave:
 When thither came Rogero; and engaged
 Beheld the hosts in fight, which hotly raged.

LXXXI.

The Greeks in that affray were four to one,
 And with pontoons to bridge the stream supplied;
 And a bold semblance through their host put on
 Of crossing to the river's further side.
 Leo meanwhile was from the river gone
 With covert guile; he took a circuit wide,
 Then thither made return; his bridges placed
 From bank to bank, and past the stream in haste

LXXXII.

With many horses and foot in battle dight,
 Who nothing under twenty thousand rank
 Along the river rode the Grecian knight;
 And fiercely charged his enemies in flank.
 The emperor, when his son appeared in sight,
 Leading his squadrons on the farther bank,
 Uniting bridge and bark together, crost
 Upon his part the stream with all his host.

LXXXIII.

King Vatan, chief of the Bulgarian band,
 Wise, bold, withal a warrior, here and there
 Laboured in vain such onset to withstand,
 And the disorder of his host repair;
 When Leo prest him sore, and with strong hand
 The king to earth beneath his courser bare;
 Whom at the prince's hest, for all too fierce
 Is he to yield, a thousand faulchions pierce.

LXXXIV.

The Bulgar host hath hitherto made head;
 But when they see their sovereign is laid low,
 And everywhere that tempest wax and spread,
 They turn their backs where erst they faced the foe.
 The Child, who mid the Greeks, from whom they fled,
 Was borne along, beheld that overthrow,
 And bowed himself their battle to restore,
 As hating Constantine and Leo more.

LXXXV.

He spurs Frontino, that in his career
 Is like the wind, and passes every steed ;
 He overtakes the troop, that in their fear
 Fly to the mountain and desert the mead.
 Many he stops and turns ; then rests his spear ;
 And, as he puts his courser to his speed,
 So fearful is his look, even Mars and Jove
 Are frighted in their azure realms above.

LXXXVI.

Advanced before the others, he descried
 A cavalier, in crimson vest, whereon
 With all its stalk in silk and gold was spied
 A pod, like millet, in embroidery done ;
 Constantine's nephew, by the sister's side,
 He was, but was no less beloved than son ;
 He split like glass his shield and scaly rind :
 And the long lance appeared a palm behind.

LXXXVII.

He left the dead, and drew his shining blade
 Upon a squadron, whom he saw most nigh ;
 And now at one, and now at other made ;
 Cleft bodies, and made heads from shoulders fly.
 At throat, at breast and flank the warrior laid ;
 Smote hand, and arm, and shoulder, bust, and thigh ;
 And through that champaign ran the reeking blood,
 As to the valley foams the mountain-flood.

LXXXVIII.

None that behold those strokes maintain their place,
 So are they all bewildered by their fear.
 Thus suddenly the battle changed its face :
 For, catching courage from the cavalier,
 The Bulgar squadrons rally, turn, and chase
 The Grecian troops that fled from them whilere.
 Lost was all order in a thought, and they
 With all their banners fled in disarray.

LXXXIX.

Leo Augustus on a swelling height,
 Seeing his followers fly, hath taken post ;
 Where woful and bewildered (for to sight
 Nothing in all the country round is lost)
 He from his lofty station eyes the knight,
 Who with his single arm destroys that host ;
 And cannot choose, though so his prowess harms,
 But praise that peer and own his worth in arms.

XC.

He knew full well by onsigny displayed,
 By surcoat and by gilded panoply,
 That albeit to the foe he furnished aid,
 That champion was not of his chivalry ;
 Wondering his superhuman deeds surveyed :
 And now an angel seemed in him to see,
 To scourge the Greeks from quires above descended,
 Whose sins so oft and oft had heaven offended ;

XCI.

And, as a man of great and noble heart,
 (Where many others would have hatred sworn)
 Enamoured of such valour, on his part,
 Would not desire to see him suffer scorn ;
 For one that died, six Grecians' death less smart
 Would cause that prince ; and better had he borne
 To lose as well a portion of his reign,
 Than to behold so good a warrior slain.

XCII.

As baby, albeit its fond mother beat
 And drive it forth in anger, in its fear
 Neither to sire nor sister makes retreat ;
 But to her arms returns with fondling cheer :
 So Leo, though Rogero in his heat
 Slaughters his routed van and threatens his rear,
 Cannot that champion hate ; because above
 His anger is the admiring prince's love.

XCIII.

But if young Leo loved him and admired,
 Meseems that he an ill exchange hath made ;
 For him Rogero loathed : nor aught desired
 More than to lay him lifeless with his blade :
 Him with his eyes he sought ; for him inquired ;
 But Leo's fortune his desire gainsayed ;
 Which with the prudence of the practised Greek,
 Made him in vain his hated rival seek.

XCIV.

Leo, for fear his bands be wholly spent,
 Bids sound the assembly his Greek squadrons through :
 He to his father a quick courier sent,
 To pray ' that he would pass the stream anew ;
 ' Who, if the way was open, well content
 ' Might with his bargain be ; ' and with a few
 Whom he collects, the Grecian cavalier
 Recross the bridge by which he past whileere.

XCV.

Into the power o' the Bulgars many fall,
 Slain from the hill-top to the river-side ;
 And they into their hands had fallen all,
 But for the river's intervening tide,
 From the bridge many drop, and drown withal ;
 And many that ne'er turned their heads aside,
 Thence to a distant ford for safety made ;
 And many were dragged prisoners to Belgrade.

XCVI.

When done was that day's fight, whercin (since borne
 To ground the Bulgar king his life did yield)
 His squadrons would have suffered scathe and scorn,
 Had not for them the warrior won the field,
 The warrior, that the snowy unicorn
 Wore for his blazon on a crimson shield,
 To him all flock, in him with joy and glee
 The winner of that glorious battle see.

XCVII.

Some bow and some salute him ; of the rest
 Some kissed the warrior's feet, and some his hand.
 Round him as closely as they could they prest,
 And happy those are deemed, that nearest stand ;
 More those that touch him ; for to touch a blest
 And supernatural thing believes the band.
 On him with shouts that rent the heavens they cried,
 To be their king, their captain, and their guide.

XCVIII.

' As king or captain them will he command
 ' As liked them best,' he said, ' but will not lay
 ' On sceptre or on leading-staff his hand ;
 ' Nor yet Belgrade will enter on that day ;
 ' For first, ere farther flies young Leo's band,
 ' And they across the river make their way,
 ' Him will he follow, nor forego, until
 ' That Grecian leader he o'ertake and kill.

XCIX.

' A thousand miles and more for this alone
 ' He thither measured, and for nought beside.'
 He saith ; and from the multitude is gone,
 And by a road that's shown to him doth ride,
 For towards the bridge is royal Leo flown ;
 Haply lest him from this the foe divide :
 Behind him pricks Rogero with such fire,
 The warrior calls not, nor awaits, his squire.

C.

Such vantage Leo has in flight (to flee
 He rather may be said than to retreat)
 The passage open hath he found and free ;
 And then destroys the bridge and burns his fleet.
 Rogero arrived not, till beneath the sea
 The sun was hid ; nor lodging found ; his beat
 He still pursued ; and now shone forth the moon :
 But town or village found the warrior none.

CI.

Because he wots not where to lodge, he goes
 All night, nor from his load Frontino frees.
 When the new sun his early radiance shows,
 A city to the left Rogero sees ;
 And there all day determines to repose,
 As where he may his wearied courser ease,
 Whom he so far that livelong night had pressed ;
 Nor had he drawn his bit, nor given him rest.

CII.

Ungiardo had that city in his guard,
 Constantine's liegeman, and to him right dear ;
 Who, since upon the Bulgars he had warred,
 Much horse and foot had sent that emperor ; here
 Now entered (for the entrance was not barred)
 Rogero, and found such hospitable cheer,
 He to fare further had no need, in trace
 Of better or of more abundant place.

CIII.

In the same hostelry with him, a guest
 Was lodged that evening a Romanian knight ;
 Present what time the Child with lance in rest
 Succoured the Bulgars in that cruel fight ;
 Who hardly had escaped his hand, sore prest
 And scared as never yet was living wight ;
 So that he trembled still, disturbed in-mind,
 And deemed the knight of the unicorn behind.

CIV.

He by the buckler knew as soon as spied
 The cavalier, whose arms that blazon bear,
 For him that routed the Byzantine side ;
 By hand of whom so many slaughtered were.
 He hurried to the palace, and applied
 For audience, weighty tidings to declare ;
 And, to Ungiardo led forthwith, rehearsed
 What shall by me in other strain be versed.

CANTO XLV.

ARGUMENT.

*Young Leo doth from death Rogero free ;
 For him Rogero Bradamant hath won,
 Making that maid appear less strong to be,
 Disguised in fight like Leo ; and, that done
 Straight in despite would slay himself ; so he
 By sorrow, so by anguish is foredone,
 To hinder Leo of his destined wife
 Morphis works, and kindles mighty strife.*

I.

By how much higher we see poor mortal go
 On Fortune's wheel, which runs a restless round,
 We so much sooner see his head below
 His heels ; and he is prostrate on the ground.
 The Lydian, Syracusan, Samian* show
 This truth, and more whose names I shall not sound ;
 All into deepest delour in one day
 Hurled headlong from the height of sovereign sway.

II.

By how much more deprest on the other side,
 By how much more the wretch is downwards hurled,
 He so much sooner mounts, where he shall ride,
 If the revolving wheel again be twirled.
 Some on the murderous block have well-nigh died,
 That on the following day have ruled the world.
 Ventidius, Servius, Marius this have shown
 In ancient days ; King Lewis in our own ;

III.

King Lewis, stepfather of my duke's son ;
 Who, when his host at Santalbino fled,
 Left in *his* clutch by whom that field was won,
 Was nigh remaining shorter by the head.
 Nor long before the great Corvinus† run
 A yet more fearful peril, worse bested :
 Both throned, when overblown was their mischance,
 One king of Hungary, one king of France.

IV.

'Tis plain to sight, through instances that fill
 The page of ancient and of modern story,
 That ill succeeds to good, and good to ill ;
 That glory ends in shame, and shame in glory ;
 And that man should not trust, deluded still,
 In riches, realm, or field of battle, gory
 With hostile blood, nor yet despair, for spurs
 Of Fortune ; since her wheel for ever turns.

Cæsus, Dionysius, and Polycrates.

† Mathius Corvinus.

V.

Through that fair victory, when overthrown
 Were Leo and his royal sire, the knight
 Who won that battle to such trust is grown,
 In his good fortune and his peerless might,
 He, without following, without aid, alone
 (So is he prompted by his daring sprite)
 Thinks, mid a thousand squadrons in array,
 —Footmen and horsemen—sire and son to slay,

VI.

But she, that wills no trust shall e'er be placed
 In her by man, to him doth shortly show,
 How wight by her is raised, and how abased ;
 How soon she is a friend, how soon a foe ;
 She makes him know Rogero, that in haste
 Is gone to work that warrior shame and woe ;
 The cavalier, which in that battle dread
 With much ado had from his faulchion fled.

VII.

He to Ungiardo hastens to declare
 The Child who put the imperial host to flight,
 Whose carnage many years will not repair,
 Here past the day and was to pass the night ;
 And saith, that Fortune, taken by the hair,
 Without more trouble, and without more fight,
 Will, if he prisons *him*, the Bulgars bring
 Beneath the yoke and lordship of his king.

VIII.

Ungiardo from the crowd, which had pursued
 Thither their flight from that eusanguined plain,
 (For, troop by troop, a countless multitude
 Arrived, because not all the bridge could gain)
 Knew what a cruel slaughter had ensued ;
 For there the moiety of the Greeks was slain ;
 And knew that by a cavalier alone
 One host was saved, and one was overthrown ;

IX.

And that undriven he should have made his way
 Into the net, and of his own accord,
 Wondered, and showed his pleasure at the say
 In visage, gesture, and in joyful word.
 He waited till Rogero sleeping lay ;
 Then softly sent his guard to take that lord ;
 And made the valiant Child, who had no dread
 Of such a danger, prisoner in his bed.

X.

By his own shield accused, that witness true,
 The Child is captive in Novogorood,¹
 To Ungiardo, worst among the cruel, who
 Marvellous mirth to have that prisoner showed.
 And what, since he was naked, could he do,
 Bound, while his eyes were yet by slumber glued ?
 A courier, who the news should quickly bear,
 Ungiardo bids to Constantine repair.

XI.

Constantine on that night with all his host,
 Raising his camp, from Save's green shore had gone :
 With this in Beletieche he takes post,
 Androphilus', his sister's husband's town,
 Father of him, whose arms in their first joust
 (As if of wax had been his habergeon)
 Had pierced and carved the puissant cavalier,
 Now by Ungiardo pent in dungeon drear.

XII.

Here from attack the emperor makes assure
 The city walls and gates on every side ;
 Lest, from the Bulgar squadrons ill secure,
 Having so good a warrior for their guide,
 His broken Grecians worse than fear endure ;
 Deeming the rest would by his hand have died.
 Now he is taken, these breed no alarms ;
 Nor would he fear the banded world in arms.

XIII.

The emperor, swimming in a summer sea,
 Knows not for very pleasure what to do :
 " Truly the Bulgars may be said to be
 " Vanquished," he cries, with bold and cheerful brow.
 As he would feel assured of victory,
 That had of either arm deprived his foe ;
 So the emperor was assured, and so rejoiced,
 When good Rogero's fate the warrior voiced.

XIV.

No less occasion has the emperor's son
 For joying ; for besides that he anew
 Trusts to acquire Belgrade, and tower and town
 Throughout the Bulgars' country to subdue,
 He would by favours make the knight his own,
 And hopes to rank him in his warlike crew :
 Nor need he envy, guarded by his blade,
 King Charles', Orlando's, or Rinaldo's aid.

XV.

Theodora was by other thoughts possess'd,
 Whose son was killed by young Rogero's spear;
 Which through his shoulders, entering at his breast,
 Issued a palm's breadth in the stripling's rear;
 Constantine's sister she, by grief oppress'd,
 Fell down before him; and with many a tear
 That dropt into her bosom, while she sued,
 His heart with pity soft'ned and subdued.

XVI.

"I still before these feet will bow my knee,
 "Save on this felon, good my lord," (she cried)
 "Who killed my son, to revenge me thou agree,
 "Now that we have him in our hold; beside
 "That he thy nephew was, thou seest how thee
 "He loved; thou seest what feats upon thy side
 "That warrior wrought; thou seest if thou wilt blot
 "Thine own good name, if thou avenge him not.

XVII.

"Thou seest how righteous Heaven by pity stirred
 "From the wide champaign, red with Grecian gore,
 "Bears that fell man; and like a reckless bird
 "Into the fowler's net hath made him soar;
 "That for short season, for revenge deferred,
 "My son may mourn upon the Stygian shore.
 "Give me, my lord, I pray, this cruel foe,
 "That by his torment I may soothe my woe."

XVIII.

So well she mourns; and in such moving wise
 And efficacious doth she make lament;
 (Nor from before the emperor will arise,
 Though he three times and four the dame has hent,
 And to uplift by word and action tries)
 That he is forced her wishes to content;
 And thus, according to her prayer, commands
 The Child to be deliver'd to her hands;

XIX.

And, not therein his orders to delay,
 They take the warrior of the unicorn
 To cruel Theodora; but one day
 Of respite has the knight: to have him torn
 In quarters, yet alive; to rend and slay
 Her prisoner publicly with shame and scorn,
 Seems a poor pain; and he must undergo
 Other unwonted and unmeasured woe.

XX.

At the commandment of that woman dread,
 Chains on his neck and hands and feet they don;
 And put him in a dungeon-cell, where thread
 Of light was never by Apollo thrown:
 He has a scanty mess of mouldy bread;
 And sometimes is he left two days with none;
 And one that doth the place of jailer fill,
 Is prompter than herself to work him ill.

XXI.

Oh! if duke Aymon's daughter brave and fair,
 Or if Marphisa of exalted mind
 Had heard Rogero's sad estate declare,
 And how he in this guise in prison pined,
 To his rescue either would have made repair,
 And would have flung the fear of death behind:
 Nor had bold Bradamant, intent to aid,
 Respect to Beatrice or Aymon paid.

XXII.

Meanwhile King Charlemagne upon his side,
 Heeding his promise made in solemn sort,
 That none should have the damsel for his bride,
 That of her prowess in the field fell short;
 Not only had his sovereign pleasure cried
 With sound of trumpet in his royal court,
 But in each city subject to his crown.
 Hence quickly through the world the bruit was blown.

XXIII.

Such the condition which he bids proclaim:
 'He that would with Duke Aymon's daughter wed,
 'Must with the sword contend against that dame
 'From the sun's rise until he seeks his bed;
 'And if he for that time maintains the game,
 'And is not overcome, without more said,
 'The lady is adjudged to have lost the stake;
 'Nor him for husband can refuse to take.

XXIV.

'The choice of arms must be by her foregone,
 'No matter who may claim it in the course:
 And by the damsel this may well be done,
 Good at all arms alike, on foot or horse.
 Aymon, who cannot strive against the crown,
 —Cannot and will not—yields at length perforce.
 He much the matter sifts, and in the end
 Resolves to court with Bradamant to wend.

XXV.

Though for the daughter choler and disdain
 The mother nursed, yet that she honour due
 Might have, she garments, dyed in different grain,
 Had wrought for her, of various form and hue.
 Bradamant for the court of Charlemagne
 Departs, and finding not her love, to her view
 His noble court appears like *that* no more,
 Which had appeared to her so fair before.

XXVI.

As he that hath beheld a garden, bright
 With flowers and leaves in April or in May,
 And next beholds it, when the sun his light
 Hath sloped toward the north, and shortened day,
 Finds it a desert horrid to the sight ;
 So, now that her Rogero is away,
 To Bradamant, who thither made resort,
 No longer what it was appeared that court.

XXVII.

What is become of him she doth not dare
 Demand, lest more suspicion thence be bred ;
 But listens still, and searches here and there ;
 That this by some, unquestioned, may be said ;
 Knows he is gone, but has no notion where
 The warrior, when he went, his steps had sped ;
 Because, departing thence, he spake no word
 Save to the squire who journeyed with his lord.

XXVIII.

Oh ! how she sighs ! how fears the gentle maid,
 Hearing Rogero, as it were, was flown !
 Oh ! how above all other terrors, weighed
 The fear, that to forget her he was gone !
 That, seeing Aymon still his wish gainsayed,
 And that to wed the damsel hope was none,
 He fled, perchance, so hoping to be loosed
 From toils wherein he by her love was noosed ;

XXIX.

And that with further end the youthful lord
 Her from his heart more speedily to chase,
 Will rove from realm to realm, till one afford
 Some dame, that may his former love efface ;
 Even, as the proverb says, that in a board
 One nail drives out another from its place.
 A second thought succeeds, and paints the youth
 Arraigned of fickleness, as full of truth ;

XXX.

And her reproves for having lent an ear
 To a suspicion so unjust and blind ;
 And so, this thought absolves the cavalier ;
 And that accuses ; and both audience find ;
 And now this way, now that, she seemed to veer ;
 Nor this, nor that—irresolute of mind—
 Preferred : yet still to what gave most delight
 Most promptly leaned, and loathed its opposite :

XXXI.

And thinking, ever and anon, anew
 On that so oft repeated by the knight,
 As for grave sin, remorse and sorrow grew
 That she had nursed suspicion and affright ;
 And she, as her Rogero were in view,
 Would blame herself, and would her bosom smite ;
 And say ; “ I see ’twas ill such thoughts to nurse,
 “ But he, the cause, is even cause of worse.

XXXII.

“ Love is the cause ; that in my heart inlaid
 “ Thy form, so graceful and so fair to see ;
 “ And so thy daring and thy wit pourtrayed,
 “ And worth, of all so bruted, that to me
 “ It seems impossible that wife or maid,
 “ Blest with thy sight, should not be fired by thee ;
 “ And that she should not all her art apply
 “ To unbind, and fasten thee with other tie.

XXXIII.

“ Ah ! wellaway ! if in my thought Love so
 “ Thy thought, as thy fair visage, had designed,
 “ This—am I well assured—in open show,
 “ As I unseen believe it, should I find ;
 “ And be so quit of Jealousy, that foe
 “ Would not still harass my suspicious mind ;
 “ And, where she is by me repulsed with pain,
 “ Not quelled and routed would she be, but slain.

XXXIV.

“ I am like miser, so intent on gear,
 “ And who hath this so buried in his heart,
 “ That he, for hoarded treasure still in fear,
 “ Cannot live gladly from his wealth apart.
 “ Since I Rogero neither see nor hear,
 “ More puissant far than Hope, O Fear ! thou art ;
 “ To thee, though false and idle, I give way ;
 “ And cannot choose but yield myself thy prey.

XXXV.

- " But I, Rogero, shall no sooner spy
 " The light of thy glad countenance appear,
 " Against mine every credence, from mine eye
 " Concealed (and woe is me), I know not where,—
 " Oh! how true Hope false Fear shall from on high
 " Depose withal, and to the bottom bear!
 " Ah! turn to me, Rogero! turn again,
 " And comfort Hope, whom Fear hath almost slain.

XXXVI.

- " As when the sun withdraws his glittering head,
 " The shadows lengthen, causing vain affright;
 " And as the shadows, when he leaves his bed,
 " Vanish, and reassure the fluid wight;
 " Without Rogero so I suffer dread;
 " Dread lasts not, if Rogero is in sight.
 " Return to me, return, Rogero, lest
 " My hope by fear should wholly be oppress.

XXXVII.

- " As every spark is in the night alive,
 " And suddenly extinguished when 'tis morn;
 " When me my sun doth of his rays deprive,
 " Against me felon Fear uplifts his horn:
 " But they the shades of night no sooner drive,
 " Than Fears are past and gone, and Hopes return.
 " Return, alas! return, O radiance dear!
 " And drive from me that foul, consuming Fear.

XXXVIII.

- " If the sun turn from us and shorten day,
 " Earth all its beauties from the sight doth hide;
 " The wild winds howl, and snows and ice convey;
 " Bird sings not; nor is leaf or flower espied.
 " So, whensoever thou thy glad some ray,
 " O my fair sun, from me dost turn aside,
 " A thousand, and all evil, dreads, make drear
 " Winter within me many times a year.

XXXIX.

- " Return, my sun, return! and springtide sweet,
 " Which evermore I long to see, bring back;
 " Dislodge the snows and ice with genial heat;
 " And clear my mind, so clouded o'er and black."
 As Philomel, or Progne, with the meat
 Returning, which her famished younglings lack,
 Mourns o'er an empty nest, or as the dove
 Laments himself at having lost his love;

XL.

The unhappy Bradamant laments her so,
 Fearing the Child is reft from her and gone ;
 While often tears her visage overflow :
 But she, as best she can, conceals her moan.
 Oh ! how—oh ! how much worse would be her woe,
 If what she knew not to the maid were known !
 That, prisoned and with pain and pine consumed,
 Her consort to a cruel death was doomed.

XLI.

The cruelty which by that beldam ill
 Was practised on the prisoned cavalier,
 And who prepared the wretched Child to kill,
 By torture new, and pains unused whilero,
 While so Rogero pined, the gracious will
 Of Heaven conveyed to gentle Leo's car ;
 And put into his heart the means to aid,
 And not to let such worth be overlaid.

XLII.

The courteous Leo that Rogero loved,
 Not that the Grecian knew howe'er that he
 Rogero was, but by that valour moved
 Which sole and superhuman seemed to be,
 Thought much, and mused, and planned, how it behoved
 —And found at last a way—to set him free ;
 So that his cruel aunt should have no right
 To grieve or say he did her a despite.

XLIII.

In secret, Leo with the man that bore
 The prison-keys a parley had, and said,
 ' He wished to see that cavalier, before
 ' Upon the wretch was done a doom so dread.'
 When it was night, one, faithful found of yore,
 Bold, strong, and good in brawl, he thither led ;
 And—by the silent warder taught that none
 Must know 'twas Leo—was the door undone.

XLIV.

Leo, escorted by none else beside,
 Was led by the compliant castellan,
 With his companion, to the tower, where stied
 Was he, reserved for nature's latest pain.
 There round the neck of their unwary guide,
 Who turns his back the wicket to unchain,
 A slip-knot Leo and his follower cast ;
 And, throttled by the noose, he breathes his last.



L. F. Costin.

J. G. Thompson.

Rogues in the dungeons.

XLV.

—The trap upraised, by rope from thence suspended,
 For such a need—the Grecian cavalier,
 With lighted flambeau in his hand, descended,
 Where, straitly bound, and without sun to cheer,
 Rogero lay, upon a grate extended,
 Less than a palm's breadth of the water clear
 To kill him in a month, or briefer space,
 Nothing was needed but that deadly place.

XLVI.

Lovingly Leo clipt the Child, and, "Mo,
 "O cavalier! thy matchless valour," cried,
 "Hath in indissoluble bands to thee,
 "In willing and eternal service, tied;
 "And wills thy good to mine preferred should be,
 "And I for thine my safety set aside,
 "And weigh thy friendship more than sire, and all
 "Whom I throughout the world my kindred call.

XLVII.

"I Leo am, that thou what fits may'st know,
 "Come to thy succour, the Greek emperor's son:
 "If ever Constantine, my father, trow
 "That I have aided thee, I danger run
 "To be exiled, or aye with troubled brow
 "Regarded for the deed that I have done;
 "For thee he hates because of those thy blade
 "Put to the rout and slaughtered near Belgrade."

XLVIII.

He his discourse with more beside pursues,
 That might from death to life the Child recall;
 And all this while Rogero's bands doth loose.
 "Infinite thanks I owe you," cries the thrall,
 "And I the life you give me, for your use
 "Will ever render back, upon your call;
 "And still, at all your needs, I for your sake,
 "And at all times, that life will promptly stake."

XLIX.

Rogero is rescued; and the gaoler slain
 Is left in that dark dungeon in his place;
 Nor is Rogero known, nor are the twain:
 Leo the warrior, free from bondage base,
 Brings home, and there in safety to remain
 Persuades, in secret, four or six days' space:
 'Meanwhile for him will he retrieve the gear
 'And courser, by Ungiardo reft whilere.'

L.

Open the gaol is found at dawn of light,
 The gaoler strangled, and Rogero gone.
 Some think that *these* or *those* had helped his flight:
 All talk; and yet the truth is guessed by none.
 Well may they think by any other wight
 Rather than Leo had the deed been done;
 For many deemed he had cause to have repaid
 The Child with scathe, and none to give him aid.

LI.

So wildered by such kindness, so immersed
 In wonder, is the rescued cavalier,
 So from those thoughts is he estranged, that erst
 So many weary miles had made him steer,
 His second thoughts confronting with his first,
 Nor these like those, nor those like these appear.
 He first with hatred, rage, and venom burned;
 With pity and with love then wholly yearned.

LII.

Much muses he by night and much by day;
 —Nor cares for ought, nor ought desires beside—
 By equal or more courtesy to pay
 The mighty debt that him to Leo tied.
 Be his life long or short, or what it may,
 Albeit to Leo's service all applied,
 Dies he a thousand deaths, he can do nought,
 But more will be deserved, Rogero thought.

LIII.

Thither meanwhile had tidings been conveyed
 Of Charles' decree: 'that who in nuptial tie
 'Would yoke with Bradamant, with trenchant blade
 'Or lance must with the maid his prowess try.'
 These news the Grecian prince so ill appaid,
 His check was seen to blanch with sickly dye;
 Because, as one that measured well his might,
 He knew he was no match for her in fight.

LIV.

Communing with himself, he can supply
 (He sees) the valour wanting with his wit;
 And the strange knight with his own ensignry,
 Whose name is yet unknown to him, will fit:
 Him he against Frank champion, far and nigh,
 Believes he may for force and daring pit;
 And if the knight to that emprise agree,
 Vanquished und taken Bradamant will be.

LV.

But two things must he do ; must, first, dispose
 That cavalier to undertake the emprise ;
 Then send afield the champion, whom he chose,
 In mode, that none suspect the youth's disguise :
 To him the matter Leo doth disclose ;
 And after prays in efficacious wise,
 That he the combat with the maid will claim,
 Under false colours and in other's name.

LVI.

Much weighs the Grecian's eloquence ; but more
 Than eloquence with good Rogero weighed
 The mighty obligation which he bore ;
 That debt which cannot ever be repaid.
 So, albeit it appeared a hardship sore
 And thing well-nigh impossible, he said,
 With blither face than heart, ' that Leo's will
 ' In all that he commands he would fulfil.'

LVII.

Albeit no sooner he the intent exprest,
 Than with sore grief Rogero's heart was shent ;
 Which, night and day, and ever, doth molest,
 Ever afflict him, evermore torment :
 And though he sees his death is manifest,
 Never will he confess he doth repent :
 Rather than not with Leo's prayer comply,
 A thousand deaths, not one, the Child will die.

LVIII.

Right sure he is to die ; if he forego
 The lady, he foregoes his life no less.
 His heart will break through his distress and woe,
 Or, breaking not with woe and with distress,
 He will, himself, the bands of life undo,
 And of its clay the spirit dispossess.
 For all things can he better bear than one ;
 Than see that gentle damsel not his own.

LIX.

To die is he disposed ; but how to die
 Cannot as yet the sorrowing lord decide :
 Sometimes he thinks his prowess to belie,
 And offer to her sword his naked side :
 For never death can come more happily
 Than if her hand the fatal faulchion guide :
 Then sees, except he wins the martial maid
 For that Greek prince, the debt remains unpaid.

LX.

For he with Bradamant, as with a foe,
 Promised to do, not feign, a fight in mail,
 And not to make of arms a seeming show ;
 So that his sword should Leo ill avail.
 Then by his word will he abide ; and though
 His breast now these now other thoughts assail,
 All from his bosom chased the generous youth,
 Save that which moved him to maintain his truth.

LXI.

With the emperor's licence, armour to prepare,
 And steeds meanwhile had wrought his youthful son ;
 Who with such goodly following as might square
 With his degree, upon his way was gone :
 With him Rogero rides, through Leo's care,
 Equipt with horse and arms, that were his own.
 Day after day the squadrons pricks ; nor tarries
 Until arrived in France ; arrived at Paris.

LXII.

Leo will enter not the town ; but nigh
 Pitches his broad pavilions on the plain ;
 And his arrival by an embassy
 Makes known that day to royal Charlemagne.
 Well pleased is he ; and visits testify
 And many gifts the monarch's courteous vein.
 His journey's cause the Grecian prince displayed.
 And to dispatch his suit the sovereign prayed :

LXIII.

'To send afield the damsel, who denied
 'Ever to take in wedlock any lord
 'Weaker than her : for she should be his bride,
 'Or he would perish by the lady's sword.'
 Charles undertook for this ; and, on her side,
 The following day upon the listed sward
 Before the walls, in haste, enclosed that night,
 Appeared the martial maid, equipt for fight.

LXIV.

Rogero past the night before the day
 Wherein by him the battle should be done,
 Like that which felon spends, condemned to pay
 Life's forfeit with the next succeeding sun :
 He made his choice to combat in the fray
 All armed ; because he would discovery shun :
 Nor barded steed he backed, nor lance he shook ;
 Nor other weapon than his faulchion took.

LXV.

No lance he took: yet was it not through fear
 Of that which Argalia whilom sway'd;
 Astolpho's next; then hers, that in career
 Her foemen ever upon earth had laid:
 Because none weened such force was in the spear,
 Nor that it was by necromancy made;
 Excepting royal Galaphron alone;
 Who had it forged, and gave it to his son.

LXVI.

Nay, bold Astolpho, and the lady who
 Afterwards bore it, deemed that not to spell,
 But simply to their proper force, was due
 The praise that they in knightly joust excel;
 And with whatever spear they fought, those two
 Believed that they should have performed as well.
 What only makes that knight the joust forego,
 Is that he would not his Frontino show.

LXVII.

For easily that steed of generous kind
 She might have known, if him she had espied;
 Whom in Montalban, long to her consigned,
 The gentle damsel had been wont to ride.
 Rogero, that but schemes, but hath in mind
 How he from Bradamant himself shall hide,
 Neither Frontino nor yet other thing,
 Whereby he may be known, afield will bring.

LXVIII.

With a new sword will he the maid await;
 For well he knew against the enchanted blade
 As soft as paste would prove all mail and plate;
 For never any steel its fury stay'd;
 And heavily with hammer, to rebate
 Its edge, as well he on this Faulchion laid.
 So armed, Rogero in the lists appeared,
 When the first dawn of day the horizon cheer'd.

LXIX.

To look like Leo, o'er his breast is spread
 The surcoat that the prince is wont to wear;
 And the gold eagle with its double head
 He blazoned on the crimson shield doth bear;
 And (what the Child's disguisement well may stead)
 Of equal size and stature are the pair.
 In the other's form presents himself the one;
 That other lets himself be seen of none.

LXX.

Dordona's martial maid is of a vein
 Right different from the gentle youth's, who sore
 Hammers and blunts the faulchion's tempered grain,
 Lest it his opposite should cleave or bore.
 She whets her steel, and into it would fain
 Enter, that stripling to the quick to gore:
 Yea, would such fury to her strokes impart,
 That each should go directly to his heart.

LXXI.

As on the start the generous barb is spied,
 When he the signal full of fire attends;
 And paws now here now there; and opens wide
 His nostrils, and his pointed ears extend;
 So the bold damsel, to the lists delied,
 Who knows not with Rogero she contends,
 Seemed to have fire within her veins, nor found
 Resting-place, waiting for the trumpet's sound.

LXXII.

As sometimes after thunder sudden wind
 Turns the sea upside down; and fur and nigh
 Dim clouds of dust the cheerful daylight blind,
 Raised in a thought from earth, and whirled heaven-high;
 Scud beasts and herd together with the hind;
 And into hail and rain dissolves the sky;
 So she upon the signal bared her brand,
 And fell on her Rogero, sword in hand.

LXXIII.

But well-built wall, strong tower, or aged oak,
 No more are moved by blasts that round them rave,
 No more by furious sea is moved the rock,
 Smote day and night by the tempestuous wave,
 Than in those arms, secure from hostile stroke,
 Which erst to Trojans Hector Vulcan gave,
 Moved was he by that ire and hatred rank
 Which stormed about his head, and breast, and flank.

LXXIV.

Now aims that martial maid a trenchant blow,
 And now gives point; and wholly is intent
 Twixt plate and plate to reach her hated foe;
 So that her stifled fury she may vent:
 Now on this side, now that, now high, now low
 She strikes, and circles him, on mischief bent;
 And evermore she rages and repines;
 As balked of every purpose she designs.

LXXV.

As he that layeth siege to well-walled town,
And flanked about with solid bulwarks, still
Renews the assault ; now fain would batter down
Gateway or tower ; now gaping fosse would fill ;
Yet vainly toils (for entrance is there none)
And wastes his host, aye frustrate of his will ;
So sorely toils and strives without avail
The damsel, nor can o'pen plate or mail.

LXXVI.

Sparks now his shield, now helm, now cuirass scatter,
While straight and back strokes, aimed now low, now high,
Which good Rogero's head and bosom batter,
And arms, by thousands and by thousands fly
Faster than on the sounding farm-roof patter
Hailstones descending from a troubled sky.
Rogero, at his ward, with dexterous care,
Defends himself, and ne'er offends the fair.

LXXVII.

Now stopt, now circled, now retired the knight,
And oft his hand his foot accompanied ;
And lifted shield, and shifted sword in flight,
Where shifting he the hostile hand espied.
Either he smote her not, or—did he smite—
Smote, where he deemed least evil would betide.
The lady, ere the westering sun descend,
Desires to bring that duel to an end.

LXXVIII.

Of the edict she remembered her, and knew
Her peril, save the foe was quickly sped :
For if she took not in one day, nor slew
Her claimant, she was taken ; and his head
Phœbus was now about to hide from view,
Nigh Hercules' pillars, in his watery bed,
When first she 'gan misdoubt her power to cope
With that strong foe, and to abandon hope.

LXXIX.

By how much more hope fails the damsel, so
Much more her anger waxes ; she her blows
Redoubling, yet the harness of her foe
Will break, which through that day unbroken shows ;
As he, that at his daily drudgery slow,
Sees night on his unfinished labour close,
Hurries and toils and moils without avail,
Till wearied strength and light together fail.

LXXX.

Didst thou, O miserable damsel, trow
 Whom thou wouldst kill, if in that cavalier
 Matched against thee thou didst Rogero know,
 On whom depend thy very life-threads, ere
 Thou killed him thou wouldst kill thyself; for thou,
 I know, dost hold him than thyself more dear;
 And when he for Rogero shall be known,
 I know these very strokes thou wilt bemoan.

LXXXI.

King Charles and peers him sheathed in plate and shell
 Deem not Rogero, but the emperor's son;
 And viewing in that combat fierce and fell
 Such force and quickness by the stripling shown;
 And, without e'er offending her, how well
 That knight defends himself, now change their tone;
 Esteem both well assorted; and declare
 The champions worthy of each other are.

LXXXII.

When Phœbus wholly under water goes,
 Charlemagne bids the warring pair divide;
 And Bradamant (nor boots it to oppose)
 Allots to youthful Leo as a bride.
 Not there Rogero tarried to repose;
 Nor loosed his armour, nor his helm untied;
 On a small hackney, hurrying sore, he went
 Where Leo him awaited in his tent.

LXXXIII.

Twice in fraternal guise and oftener throw
 Leo his arms about the cavalier;
 And next his helmet from his head withdrew,
 And kiss'd him on both cheeks with loving cheer.
 "I would," he cried, "that thou wouldst ever do
 "By me what pleaseth thee; for thou wilt ne'er
 "Weary my love: at my call I lend
 "To thee myself and state; these freely spend;

LXXXIV.

"Nor see I recompense, which can repay
 "The mighty obligation that I owe;
 "Though of the garland I should disarray
 "My brows, and upon thee that gift bestow."
 Rogero, on whom his sorrows press and prey,
 Who loathes his life, immersed in that deep woe,
 Little replies; the ensigns he had worn
 Returns, and takes again his unicorn;

LXXXV.

And showing himself spiritless and spent,
 From thence as quickly as he could withdrew,
 And from young Leo's to his lodgings went;
 When it was midnight, armed himself anew,
 Saddled his horse, and sallied from his tent;
 (He takes no leave, and none his going view;)
 And his Frontino to that road address,
 Which seemed to please the goodly courser best.

LXXXVI.

Now by straight way and now by crooked wound
 Frontino, now by wood and wide champaign;
 And all night with his rider paced that round,
 Who never ceased a moment to complain:
 He called on Death, and therein comfort found;
 Since broke by him alone is stubborn pain;
 Nor saw, save Death, what other power could close
 The account of his insufferable woes.

LXXXVII.

"Whereof should I complain," he said, "wo is me!
 "So of my every good at once forlorn?
 "Ah! if I will not bear this injury
 "Without revenge, against whom shall I turn?
 "For I, besides myself, none other see
 "That hath inflicted on me scathe and scorn.
 "Then I to take revenge for all the harm
 "Done to myself, against myself must arm.

LXXXVIII.

"Yet was but to myself this injury done.
 "Myself to spare (because this touched but me)
 "I haply could, yet hardly could, be won;
 "Nay, I will say outright, I could not be.
 "Less can I be, since not to me alone,
 "But Bradamant, is done this injury;
 "Even if I could consent myself to spare,
 "It fits me not unavenged to leave that fair.

LXXXIX.

"Then I the damsel will avenge, and die,
 "(Nor this disturbs me) whatsoe'er betide;
 "For, bating death, I know not aught, whereby
 "Defence against my grief can be supplied.
 "But I lament myself alone, that I,
 "Before offending her, should not have died.
 "O happier Fortune! had I breathed my last
 "In Theodora's dungeon prisoned fast!

XC.

- " Though she had slain, had tortured me before
 " She slew, as prompted by her cruelty,
 " At least the hope would have remained in store
 " That I by Bradamant should pitied be :
 " But when she knows that I loved Leo more
 " Than her, that, of my own accord and free,
 " Myself of her, I for his good, deprive,
 " Dead will she rightly hate me or alive."

XCI.

- These words he said and many more, with sigh
 And heavy sob withal accompanied,
 And, when another sun illumed the sky,
 Mid strange and gloomy woods himself espied ;
 And, for he desperate was and bent to die,
 And he, as best he could, his death would hide ;
 This place to him seemed far removed from view,
 And fitted for the deed that he would do.

XCII.

- He entered into that dark woodland, where
 He thickest trees and most entangled, spied :
 But first Frontino was the warrior's care,
 Whom he unharnessed wholly, and untied.
 " O my Frontino, if thy merits rare
 " I could reward, thou little cause" (he cried)
 " Shouldst have to envy him, so highly graced,
 " Who soared to heaven, and mid the stars was placed.³

XCIII.

- " Nor Cillarus, nor Arion,⁴ was whilere
 " Worthier than thee, nor merited more praise ;
 " Nor any other steed, whose name we hear
 " Sounded in Grecian or in Latio lays.
 " Was any such in other points thy peer,
 " None of them, well I know, the vaunt can raise ;
 " That such high honour and such courtesy
 " Were upon him bestowed, as were on thee.

XCIV.

- " Since to the gentlest maid, of fairest dye,
 " And boldest that hath been, or evermore
 " Will be, thou wast so dear, she used to tie
 " Thy trappings, and to thee thy forage bore ;
 " Dear wast thou to my lady love : Ah ! why
 " Call I her mine, since she is mine no more ?
 " If I have given her to another lord,
 " Why turn I not upon myself this sword ?⁵

XCV.

If him these thoughts so harass and torment,
 That bird and beast are softened by his cries ;
 (For, saving these, none hears the sad lament,
 Nor sees the flood that trickles from his eyes)
 You are not to believe that more content
 The Lady Bradamant in Paris lies ;
 Who can no longer her delay excuse,
 Nor Leo for her wedded lord refuse.

XCVI.

Ere she herself to any consort tie,
 Beside her own Rogero, she will fain
 Do whatso can be done ; her word belie ;
 Anger friends, kindred, court, and Charlemague :
 And if she nothing else can do, will die,
 By poison or her own good faulchion slain,
 For not to live appears far lesser woe,
 Than, living, her Rogero to forego.

XCVII.

" Rogero mine, ah ! whither gone" (she cried)
 " Art thou ; and canst thou so far distant be,
 " Thou heardest not this royal edict cried,
 " A thing concealed from none, excepting thee ?
 " Faster than thee would none have hither hied,
 " I wot, hadst thou known this ; ah ! wretched me !
 " How can I e'er in future think of aught,
 " Saving the worst that can by me be thought ?

XCVIII.

" How can it be, Rogero, thou alone
 " Hast read not what by all the world is read ?
 " If thou hast read it not, nor hither flown,
 " How canst thou but a prisoner be, or dead ?
 " But well I wot, that if the truth were known,
 " This Leo will for thee some snare have spread :
 " The traitor will have barred thy way, intent
 " Thou shouldst not him by better speed prevent.

XCIX.

" From Charles I gained the promise, that to none
 " Less puissant than myself should I be given :
 " In the reliance thou wouldst be that one,
 " With whom I should in arms have vainly striven
 " None I esteemed, excepting thee alone :
 " But well my rashness is rebuked by Heaven :
 " Since I by one am taken in this wise
 " Unfamed through life for any fair emprise.

C.

" If I am held as taken, since the knight
 " I had not force to take nor yet to slay ;
 " A thing that is not, in my judgment, right ;
 " Nor I to Charles's sentence will give way,
 " I know that I shall be esteemed as light,
 " If what I lately said, I now unsay ;
 " But of those many ladies that have past
 " For light, I am not, I, the first or last.

CI.

" Enough I to my lover faith maintain,
 " And, firmer than a rock, am still found true !
 " And far herein surpass the female train,
 " That were in olden days, or are in new !
 " Nor, if they me as fickle shall arraign,
 " Care I, so good from fickleness ensue ;
 " Though I am lighter than a leaf be said,
 " So I be forced not with that Greek to wed."

CII.

These things and more beside the damsel bright
 ('Twixt which oft sobs and tears were interposed),
 Ceased not to utter through the livelong night
 Which upon that unhappy day had closed.
 But, when within Cimmeria's caverned height
 Nocturnus with his troop of shades reposed,
 Heaven, which eternally had willed the maid
 Should be Rogero's consort, brought him aid :

CIII.

This moves the haught Marphisa, when 'tis morn,
 To appear before the king ; to whom that maid
 Said, ' to the Child, her brother, mighty scorn
 ' Was done ; nor should he be so ill appaid,
 ' That from him should his plighted wife be torn ;
 ' And nought thereof unto the warrior said ;
 ' And on whoever lists she will in strife
 ' Prove Bradamant to be Rogero's wife ;

CIV.

' And this, before all others, will prove true
 ' On her, if to deny it she will dare ;
 ' For she had to Rogero, in her view,
 ' Spoken those words, which they that marry swear :
 ' And with all ceremony went and due
 ' So was the contract sealed between the pair,
 ' They were no longer free ; nor could forsake
 ' The one the other, other spouse to take.'

CV.

Whether Marphisa true or falsely spake,
 I well believe that, rather with intent
 Young Leo's purpose, right or wrong, to break,
 Than tell the truth, she speaks; and with consent
 Of Bradamant doth that avowal make;
 For to exclude the hated Leo bent,
 And of Rogero to be repossesst,
 This she believes her shortest way and best.

CVI.

Sorely by this disturbed, King Charlemagne
 Bade Bradamant be called, and to her told
 That which the proud Marphisa would maintain;
 And Aymon present in the press behold!
 —Bradamant drops her head, nor treats as vain,
 Nor vouches what avows that virgin bold,
 In such confusion, they may well believe
 That fierce Marphisa speaks not to deceive.

CVII.

Joy good Orlando and joy Rinaldo show,
 Who view in valorous Marphisa's plea
 A cause the alliance shall no further go,
 Which sealed already Leo deemed to be;
 And yet, in spite of stubborn Aymon's no,
 Bradamant shall Rogero's consort be;
 And they may, without strife, without despite
 Done to Duke Aymon, give her to the knight.

CVIII.

For if such words have pass'd between the twain,
 Fast is the knot and cannot be untied;
 They what they vowed more fairly will obtain,
 And without further strife are these assid.
 "This is a plot, a plot devised in vain;
 "And ye deceive yourselves (Duke Aymon cried);
 "For, were the story true which ye have feigned,
 "Believe not therefore that your cause is gained.

CIX.

"For granting what I will not yet allow,
 "And what I to believe as yet demur;
 "That weakly to Rogero so her vow
 "Was plighted, as Rogero's was to her;
 "Where was the contract made, and when and how?
 "More clearly this to me must ye aver.
 "Either it was not so, I am advised;
 "Or was before Rogero was baptized.

CX.

" But if it were before the youthful knight
 " A Christian was, I will not heed it, I;
 " For 'twixt a faithful and a paynim wight,
 " I deem that nought avails the marriage-tie.
 " For this not vainly in the doubtful fight
 " Should Constantine's fair son have risked to die;
 " Nor Charlemagne for this, our sovereign lord
 " Will forfeit, I believe, his plighted word.

CXI.

" What now you say you should before have said,
 " While yet the matter was unbroke, and ere
 " Charles at my daughter's prayer that edict made
 " Which has drawn Leo to the combat here.
 Orlando and Rinaldo were gainsayed
 So before royal Charles by Clermont's peer;
 And equal Charlemagne heard either side,
 But neither would for this nor that decide.

CXII.

As in the southern or the northern breeze
 The greenwood murmurs; and as on the shore,
 When Æolus with the god that rules the seas
 Is wroth, the hoarse and hollow breakers roar,
 So a loud rumour of this strife, that flees
 Through France, and spreads and circles evermore,
 Affords such matter to rehearse and hear,
 That nought beside is bruited far or near.

CXIII.

These with Rogero, those with Leo side;
 But the most numerous are Rogero's friends,
 Who against Aymon, ten to one, divide.
 Good Charlemagne to neither party bends;
 But wills that cause shall be by justice tried,
 And to his parliament the matter sends.
 Marphisa, now the bridal was deferred,
 Appeared anew, and other question stirred;

CXIV.

And said, " In that another cannot have
 " Bradamant, while my brother is alive,
 " Let Leo, if the gentle maid he crave,
 " His foe in listed fight of life deprive;
 " And he, that sends the other to his grave,
 " Freed from his rival, with the lady wive."
 Forthwith this challenge, as erewhile the rest,
 To Leo was declared at Charles' behest.

CXV.

Leo who if he had the cavalier
 Of the unicorn, believed he from his foe
 Was safe; and thought no peril would appear
 Too hard a feat for him; and knew not how
 Thence into solitary woods and drear
 That warrior had been hurried by his woe;
 Him gone for little time and for disport
 Believed, and took his line in evil sort.

CXVI.

This shortly Leo was condemned to rue:
 For he, on whom too fondly he relied,
 Nor on that day nor on the following two
 Appeared, nor news of him were signified;
 And combat with Rogero was, he knew,
 Unsafe, unless that knight was on his side:
 So sent, to eschew the threatened scathe and scorn,
 To seek the warrior of the unicorn.

CXVII.

Through city, and through hamlet, and through town,
 He sends to seek Rogero, far and near:
 And not content with this, himself is gone
 In person, on his steed, to find the peer.
 But of the missing warrior tidings none
 Nor he nor any of the Court would hear
 But for Melissa: I for other verse
 Reserve myself, her doings to rehearse.

CANTO XLVI.

ARGUMENT.

*After long search for good Rogero made,
 Him Leon finds, and yields to him his prize:
 Informed of all—already with that maid
 He wises; already in her bosom lies:
 When thither he that Sarza's sceptre swayed
 To infect such bliss with impious venom hies,
 But falls in combat; and, blaspheming loud,
 To Acheron descends his spirit proud.*

I.

I, IF my chart deceives me not, shall now
 In little time behold the neighbouring shore ;
 So hope withal to pay my promised vow
 To one, so long my guide through that wide roar
 Of waters, where I feared, with troubled brow,
 To scathe my bark or wander evermore.
 But now, methinks—yea, now I see the land ;
 I see the friendly port its arms expand.

II.

A burst of joy, like thunder to my ear,
 Rumbles along the sea and rends the sky.
 I chiming bells, I shrilling trumpets hear,
 Confounded with the people's cheerful cry ;
 And now their forms, that swarm on either pier
 Of the thick-crowded harbour, I descry.
 All seem rejoiced my task is smoothly done,
 And I so long a course have safely run.

III.

What beauteous dames and sage, here welcome me !
 With them what cavaliers the shore adorn !¹
 What friends ! to whom I owe eternity
 Of thanks for their delight at my return.
 Mamma, Ginevra, with the rest I see,
 Correggio's seed,² on the harbour's furthest horn.
 Veronica de Gambarà³ is here,
 To Phœbus and the Aonian choir so dear.

IV.

With Julia, a new Ginevra is in sight,
 Another offset from the self-same tree ;
 Hippolita, Sforza, and Trivultia bright,⁴
 Bred in the sacred cavern, I with thee
 Emilia Pia, and thee, Margherite,
 Angela Borgia, Graziosa, see,
 And fair Richarda d' Este.⁵ Lo ! the twain,
 Blanche and Diana, with their sister train !⁶

V.

Beauteous, but wiser and more chaste than fair,
 I Barbara Turca, linked with Laura, know :⁷
 Nor beams the sun upon a better pair
 'Twixt Ind and where the Moorish waters flow.
 Behold Ginevra ! that rich gem and rare
 Which gilds the house of Malatesta so,⁸
 That never worthier or more honoured thing
 Adorned the dome of Keysar or of king.

VI.

If she had dwelt in Rimini of yore,
 What time, from conquered Gaul returning home,
 Julius stood fearing on the river-shore,
 To ford the stream and make a foe of Rome,
 He every banner would have bowed before
 That dame, discharged his trophies, and such doom,
 Such pact would have received as liked her best ;
 And haply ne'er had Freedom been oppress.

VII.

The consort of my lord of Bòzzolo
 Behold ! the mother, sisters, cousinhood ;¹²
 Them of Torello, Bentivòglio,
 Pallavigini's and Visconti's brood !¹¹
 Lo ! she to whom all living dames forego
 The palm, and all of Grecian, Latin blood,
 Or barbarous, all that ever were, whose name
 For grace and beauty most is noised by Fame ;

VIII.

Julia Gonzaga,¹³ she that wheresoe'er
 She moves, where'er she turns her lucid eyes,
 Not only is in charms without a peer,
 But seems a goddess lighted from the skies :
 With her is paired her brother's wife,¹³ who ne'er
 Swerved from her plighted faith—aye good and wise—
 Because ill Fortune bore her long despite ;
 Lo ! Arragonian Anna, Vasto's light !¹⁴

IX.

Anne, gentle, courteous, and as sage as fair,
 Temple of Love and Truth and Chastity :
 With her, her sister¹⁵ dims all beauty, where
 Her radiance shines. Lo ! one that hath set free
 Her conquering lord from Orcus' dark repair,
 And him in spite of death and destiny
 (Beyond all modern instance) raised on high,
 To shine with endless glory in the sky.

X.

My ladies of Ferrara, those of gay
 Urbino's court are here ; and I descry
 Mantua's dames, and all that fair array
 Which Lombardy and Tuscan town supply.
 The cavalier amid that band, whom they
 So honour, unless dazzled is mine eye
 By those fair faces, is the shining light
 Of his Arezzo, and Accolti hight.¹⁶

XI.

Adorned with scarlet hat and scarlet pall,
 His nephew Benedict,¹⁷ lo ! there I see ;
 With him Campeggio and Mantua's cardinal ;¹⁸
 Glory and light of the consistory :
 And (if I dote not) mark how one and all
 In face and gesture show such mighty glee
 At my return, no easy task 'twould seem
 So vast an obligation to redeem.

XII.

With them Lactantius is, Claude Ptolemy,
 Trissino, Pansa, and Capilùpi mine.¹⁹
 Latino Gioveùl,²⁰ it seems to me ;
 Sasso,²¹ and Molza,²² and Florian hight Montine ;²³
 With him, by whom through shorter pathway we
 Are led to the Aseræan font divine,
 Julio Camillo ;²⁴ and meseems that I
 Berna, and Sanga, and Flaminio²⁵ spy.

XIII.

Lo ! Alexander of Farnese,²⁶ and O
 Learned company that follows in his train !
 Phædro, Cappella, Maddalen', Portio,
 Surnamed the Bolognese, the Volterrane.²⁷
 Blosio, Pierio, Vida, famed for flow
 Of lofty eloquence of exhaustless vein ;
 Mussùro, Lâscari, and Navagèro,
 And Andrew Maro, and the monk Sevèro.²⁸

XIV.

Lo ! two more Alexanders ! of the tree
 Of the Orològi one ; and one Guarino :
 Mário d' Olvito, and of royalty
 That scourge, divine Piètro Aretino.
 I two Giròlamos amid them see,
 Of Veritàe and the Cittadino ;
 See the Mainàrdo, the Leonicèno,
 Pannizzàto, Cèlio, and Teocrèno.²⁹

XV.

Bernardo Capel, Peter Bembo here
 I see, through whom our pure, sweet idiom rose,
 And who, of vulgar usage winnowed clear,
 Its genuine form in his example shows.
 Behold an Obyson, that in his rear
 Admires the pains which he so well bestows.
 I Fracastòro, Bevezzano note,
 And Tryphon Gabriel, Tasso more remote.³⁰

XVI.

Upon me Nicholas Tièpoli
 And Nicholas Ammunio fix their eyes ;
 With Anthony Fulgoso, who to spy
 My boat near land shows pleasure and surprize.
 There, from those dames apart, my Valery
 Stands with Barignan,²¹ haply to devise
 With him how, evermore by woman harmed,
 By her he shall not evermore be charmed.

XVII.

Of high and superhuman genius, tied
 By love and blood, lo ! Pico and Pio true ;
 He that approaches at the kinsmen's side,
 —So honoured by the best—I never knew ;
 But, if by certain tokens signified,
 He is the man I so desire to view,
 That Sannazaro,²² who persuades the nine
 To leave their fountain for the foaming brine.

XVIII.

Diligent, faithful secretary, lo !
 The learned Pistòphilus,²³ mine Angiar here,
 And the Acciajuoli their joint pleasure show
 That for my bark there is no further fear.
 There I my kinsman Malaguzzo know ;
 And mighty hope from Adoardo hear,
 That these my nest-notes shall by friendly wind
 Be blown from Calpe's rock to furthest Ind.

XIX.

Joy's Victor Fausto ; Tancred joys to view²⁴
 My sail ; and with them joy a hundred more.
 Women and men I see, a mingled crew,
 At my return rejoicing, crowd the shore.
 Then, since the wind blows fair, nor much to do
 Remains, let me my course delay no more ;
 And turning to Melissa, in what way
 She rescued good Rogero let me say.

XX.

Much bent was this Melissa (as I know
 I many times have said to you whilere)
 That Bradamant in wedlock should bestow
 Her hand upon the youthful cavalier ;
 And so at heart had either's weal and woe,
 That she from hour to hour of them would hear :
 Hence ever on that quest she spirits sent,
 One still returning as the other went.

XXI.

A prey to deep and stubborn grief, reclined
 Mid gloomy shades Rogero they descried ;
 Firm not to swallow food of any kind,
 Nor from that purpose to be turned aside ;
 And so to die of hunger he designed :
 But weird Melissa speedy aid supplied ;
 Who took a road, from home forth issuing, where
 She met the Grecian emperor's youthful heir ;

XXII.

Leo that, one by one, dispatched his train
 Of followers, far and wide, through every bourn,
 And afterwards, in person, went in vain,
 To find the warrior of the unicorn.
 The wise enchantress, that with sell and rein,
 Had on that day equipt a demon, borne
 By him, in likeness of a hackney horse,
 Constantine's son encountered in her course.

XXIII.

" If such as your ingenuous mien " (she cried
 To Leo) " is your soul's nobility,
 " And corresponding with your fair outside
 " Your inward goodness and your courtesy,
 " Some help, some comfort, sir, for one provide
 " In whom the best of living knights we see ;
 " Who, save ye help and comfort quickly lend,
 " Is little distant from his latter end.

XXIV.

" The best of knights will die of all, who don,
 " Or e'er donned sword and buckler, the most fair
 " And gentle of all warriors that are gone,
 " Or who throughout the world yet living are,
 " And simply for a courteous deed, if none
 " Shall comfort to the youthful sufferer bear.
 " Then come, sir, for the love of Heaven, and try
 " If any counsel succour may supply."

XXV.

It suddenly came into Leo's mind
 The knight of whom she parleyed was that same,
 Whom throughout all the land he sought to find,
 And seeking whom, he now in person came.
 So that obeying her that would persuade
 Such pious work, he spurred behind the dame ;
 Who thither led (nor tedious was the way)
 Where nigh reduced to death the stripling lay.

XXVI.

They found Rogero fasting from all food
 For three long days, so broken down ; with pain
 The knight could but upon his feet have stood,
 To fall, albeit unpushed, to ground again.
 With helm on head, and with his faulchion good
 Begirt, he lay reclined in plate and chain.
 A pillow of his buckler had he made,
 Where the white unicorn was seen portrayed.

XXVII.

There thinking what an injury he had done
 To his lady love—how ingrate, how untrue
 To her had been—not simple grief alone
 O'erwhelmed him, to such height his fury grew,
 He bit his hands and lips ; while pouring down
 His cheeks, the tears unceasing ran, and through
 The passion that so wrapt his troubled sprite,
 Nor Leo nor Melissa heard the knight.

XXVIII.

Nor therefore interrupts he his lament,
 Nor checks his sighs, nor checks his trickling tears.
 Young Leo halts, to hear his speech intent ;
 Lights from his courser, and towards him steers :
 He knows that of the sorrows which torment
 Love is the cause ; but yet from nought appears
 Who is the person that such grief hath bred ;
 For by Rogero this remains unsaid.

XXIX.

Approaching nearer and yet nearer, now
 He fronts the weeping warrior, face to face,
 Greets with a brother's love, and stooping low,
 His neck encircles with a fast embrace.
 By the lamenting Child I know not how
 Is liked his sudden presence in that place ;
 Who fears annoy or trouble at his hand ;
 And lest he should his wish for death withstand.

XXX.

Him with the sweetest words young Leo plied,
 And with the warmest love that he could show,
 " Let it not irk thee," to the Child he cried,
 " To tell the cause from whence thy sorrows flow :
 " For few such desperate evils man betide,
 " But that there is deliverance from his woe,
 " So that the cause be known ; nor he bereft
 " Of hope should ever be, so life be left.

XXXI.

- " Much grieve I thou wouldst hide thyself from me,
 " That know me for thy faithful friend and true ;
 " Not only now I am so bound to thee,
 " That I the knot can never more undo ;
 " But even from the beginning, when to be
 " Thy deadly foeman I had reason due.
 " Hope then that I will succour thee with self,
 " With friends, with following, and with life itself.

XXXII.

- " Nor shun to me thy sorrow to explain,
 " And I beseech thee leave to me to try
 " If wealth avail to free thee from thy pain,
 " Art, cunning, open force, or flattery.
 " If my assistance is employed in vain,
 " The last relief remains to thee to die :
 " But be content awhile this deed to shun
 " Till all that thou canst do shall first be done."

XXXIII.

He said ; and with such forceful prayer appealed ;
 So gently and benignly soothed his moan ;
 That good Rogero could not choose but yield,
 Whose heart was not of iron or of stone ;
 Who deemed, unless he now his lips unsealed,
 He should a foul discourteous deed have done.
 He fain would have replied, but made assay
 Yet twice or thrice, ere words could find their way.

XXXIV.

- " My lord, when known for what I am (and me
 " Now shalt thou know)," he made at last reply,
 " I wot thou, like myself, content will be,
 " And haply more content, that I should die.
 " Know me for him so hated once by thee ;
 " Rogero who repaid that hate am I ;
 " And now 'tis many days since with intent
 " Of putting thee to death from court I went.

XXXV.

- " Because I would not see my promised bride
 " Borne off by thee ; in that Duke Aymon's love
 " And favour was engaged upon thy side.
 " But, for man purposes, and God above
 " Disposes, thy great courtesy, well tried
 " In a sore need, my fixed resolve did move.
 " Nor only I renounced the hate I bore,
 " But purposed to be thine for evermore.

XXXVI.

"What time I as Rogero was unknown,
 "Thou madest suit I would obtain for thee
 "The Lady Bradamant; which was all one
 "As to demand my heart and soul from me.
 "Whether thy wish I rather than mine own
 "Sought to content, thou hast been made to see.
 "Thine is the lady; her in peace possess;
 "Far more than mine I prize thy happiness.

XXXVII.

"Content thee, that deprived of her, as well
 "I should myself of worthless life deprive;
 "For better I without a soul could dwell
 "Than without Bradamant remain alive.
 "And never while these veins with life-blood swell,
 "Canst thou with her legitimately wive:
 "For vows erewhile have been between us said;
 "Nor she at once can with two husbands wed."

XXXVIII.

So filled is gentle Leo with amaze
 When he the stranger for Rogero knows,
 With lips and brow unmoved, with steadfast gaze
 And rooted feet, he like a statue shows;
 Like statue more than man, which votaries raise
 In churches, for acquittance of their vows.
 He deems that courtesy of so high a strain
 Was never done nor will be done again;

XXXIX.

And that he him doth for Rogero know
 Not only that goodwill he bore whilere
 Abates not, but augments his kindness so,
 That no less grieves the Grecian cavalier
 Than good Rogero for Rogero's woe.
 For this, as well as that he will appear
 Deservedly an emperor's son—although
 In other things outdone—he will not be
 Defeated in the race of courtesy;

XL.

And says, "That day my host was overthrown,
 "Rogero, by thy wond'rous valour, though
 "I had thee at despite, if I had known
 "Thou wast Rogero, as I know it now,
 "So me thy virtue would have made thine own,
 "As then it made me, knowing not my foe;
 "So hatred from my bosom would have chased,
 "And with my present love have straight replaced.

XLI.

- " That I Rogero hated, ere I knew
 " Thou wast Rogero, will I not deny,
 " But think not that I further would pursue
 " The hatred that I bore thee; and had I,
 " When thee I from thy darksome dungeon drew,
 " Descried the truth, as this I now descry,
 " Such treatment shouldst thou then have had, as thou
 Shalt have from me, to thine advantage, now;

XLII.

- " And if I willingly had done so, then,
 " When not, as I am now, obliged to thee;
 " How much more gladly should I now; and when,
 " Not doing so, I should with reason be
 " Deemed most ungrateful amid ingrate men;
 " Since thou foregoest thine every good for me!
 " But I to thee restore thy gift, and, more
 " Gladly than I received it, this restore.

XLIII.

- " The damsel more to thee than me is due;
 " And though for her deserts I hold her dear,
 " If that fair prize some happier mortal drew,
 " I think not I my vital thread should shear:
 " Nor would I by thy death be free to woo:
 " That from the hallowed bands of wedlock clear
 " Wherein the lady hath to thee been tied,
 " I might possess her as my lawful bride.

XLIV.

- " Not only Bradamant would I forego,
 " But whatsoever I in the world possess;
 " And rather forfeit life than ever know
 " That grief, through me, should such a knight oppress.
 " To me is thy distrust great cause of woe,
 " That since thou couldst dispose of me no less
 " Than of thyself, thou—rather than apply
 " To me for succour—wouldst of sorrow die."

XLV.

- These words he spake, and more to that intent,
 Too tedious in these verses to recite;
 Refuting evermore such argument
 As might be used in answer by the knight:
 Who said, at last, " I yield, and am content
 " To live; but how can ever I requite
 " The obligation, which by me is owed
 " To thee that twice hast life on me bestowed?"

XLVI.

Melissa generous wine and goodly cheer
 Thither bade carry, in a thought obeyed ;
 And comforted the mourning cavalier,
 Who would have sunk without her friendly aid.
 Meanwhile the sound of steeds Frontino's ear
 Had reached, and thither had he quickly made ;
 Him Leo's squires at his commandment caught,
 And saddled, and to good Rogero brought ;

XLVII.

Who, though by Leo helped, with much ado
 And labour sore the gentle courser scaled.
 So wasted was the vigour which some few
 Short days before, in fighting field, availed
 To overthrow a banded host, and do
 The deeds he did, in cheating armour mailed.
 Departing thence, ere they had measured more
 Than half a league, they reached an abbey hoar :

XLVIII.

Wherein what of that day was yet unworn
 They past, the morrow, and succeeding day ;
 Until the warrior of the unicorn
 His vigour had recruited by the stay.
 He, Leo, and Melissa then return
 To Charles's royal residence ; where lay
 An embassy, arrived the eve before,
 Which from the Bulgars' land a message bore.

XLIX.

Since they that had for king proclaimed the knight
 Besought Rogero thither to repair
 Through these their envoys, deeming they would light
 On him in Charles's court, where they should swear
 Fidelity, and yield to him his right ;
 And he from them the crown receive and wear.
 Rogero's squire who served this band to steer
 Has published tidings of the cavalier.

L.

He of the fight has told which at Belgrade
 Erewhile Rogero for the Bulgars won ;
 How Leo and his sire were overlaid,
 And all their army slaughtered and undone ;
 Wherefore the Bulgars him their king had made ;
 Their royal line excluding from the throne :
 Then how Ungiardo took the warrior brave,
 And him to cruel Theodora gave.

LI.

He speaks with that of certain news, which say
 'How good Rogero's jailer was found dead,
 'The prison broke and prisoner away :'
 Of what became of him was nothing said.
 —Towards the city by a secret way
 (Nor was his visage seen) Rogero sped.
 He, on the following morning, and his friend,
 Leo, to Charles's court together wend.

LII.

To Charles's court he wends; the bird he bore
 Of gold with its two heads—of crimson hue
 Its field—and that same vest and ensigns wore,
 As was erewhile devised between the two;
 And such as in the listed fight before
 His bruised and battered armour was in show.
 So that they quickly knew the cavalier
 For him that strove with Bradamant whilere.

LIII.

In royal ornaments and costly gown,
 Unarmed, beside him doth young Leo fare.
 A worthy following and of high renown
 Before, behind him, and about him are.
 He bowed to Charlemagne, who from his throne
 Had risen to do honour to the pair:
 Then holding still Rogero by the hand,
 So spake, while all that warrior closely scanned.

LIV.

"Behold the champion good, that did maintain
 "From dawn till fall of day the furious fight;
 "And since by Bradamant nor taken, slain,
 "Nor forced beyond the barriers was the knight,
 "He is assured his victory is plain,
 "Dread sir, if he your edict reads aright;
 "And he hath won the lady for his wife:
 "So comes to claim the guerdon of the strife.

LV.

"Besides that by your edict's tenor none
 "But him can to the damsel lift his eyes,
 "—Is she deserved by deeds of valour done,
 "What other is so worthy of the prize?
 "—Should she by him that loves her best be won,
 "None passes him, nor with the warrior vies:
 "And he is here to fight against all foes
 "That would in arms his right in her oppose."

LVI.

King Charlemagne and all his peerage stand
 Amazed, who well believed the Grecian peer
 With Bradamant had striven with lifted brand
 In fight, and not that unknown cavalier.
 Marphisa, thither borne amid the band,
 That crowded round the royal chair to hear,
 Hardly till Leo made an ending staid ;
 Then prest before the listening troop, and said :

LVII.

" Since here Rogero is not, to contest
 " The bride's possession with the stranger knight,
 " Lest he, as undefended, be opprest,
 " And forfeit so without dispute his right,
 " On his behalf I undertake this quest,
 " —His sister I—against whatever wight
 " Shall here assert a claim to Bradamant,
 " Or more desert than good Rogero vaunt."

LVIII.

She spake this with such anger and disdain,
 Many surmised amid the assistant crew,
 That, without waiting leave from Charlemagne,
 What she had threatened she forthwith would do.
 No longer Leo deemed it time to feign ;
 And from Rogero's head the helm withdrew ;
 And to Marphisa, " For himself to speak,
 " Behold him here and ready !" cried the Greek.

LIX.

As looked old Ægeus at the accursed board,³³
 Seeing it was his son to whom—so willed
 His wicked consort—that Athenian lord
 Had given the juice from deadly drugs distilled
 Whom he, if he had recognised his sword
 Though but a little later, would have killed ;
 So looked Marphisa when, disclosed to view,
 She in the stranger knight Rogero knew ;

LX.

And ran forthwith to clip the cavalier ;
 Nor could unclasp her arms : with loving show
 Charlemagne, Roland, and Rinaldo, here
 And there, fix friendly kisses on his brow.
 Nor him Sir Dudon, nor Sir Olivier,
 Nor King Sobrino can caress enow :
 Nor paladin nor peer, amid the crew,
 Wearies of welcoming that warrior true.

LXI.

Leo, who well can play the spokesman, now
 That warlike band hath ceased to clip the knight,
 Tells before Charles and all that audience, 'how
 ' Rogero's daring, how Rogero's might,
 '—Albeit to his good squadron's scathe and woe—
 ' Which at Belgrade he witnessed in that fight,
 ' So moved him that they overweighed all harms
 ' Inflicted on him by the warrior's arms.

LXII.

So that to her Rogero being brought,
 ' Who would all havoc of the youth have made,
 ' He setting all his family at nought,
 ' Had out of durance vile the knight conveyed ;
 ' And how Rogero, that the rescue wrought
 ' By Leo might be worthily repaid,
 ' Did that high courtesy ; which can by none,
 ' That ever were or e'er will be, outdone ;'

LXIII.

And he from point to point continuing, said
 ' That which Rogero had for him achieved ;
 ' And after, how by sorrow sore bested,
 ' In that to leave his cherished wife he grieved,
 ' He had resolved to die, and, almost dead,
 ' Was only by his timely aid relieved ;'
 And this he told so movingly, no eye
 Remained, amid those martial many, dry.

LXIV.

So efficaciously he after prayed
 To the obstinate Duke Aymon, not alone
 The stubborn sire of Bradamant he swayed,
 And to forego his settled purpose won ;
 But that proud lord in person did persuade
 To beg Rogero's pardon, and his son
 And son-in-law to be beseech the knight ;
 And thus to him his Bradamant was plight.

LXV.

To her, where, of her feeble life in doubt,
 She in a secret chamber made lament,
 Through many a messenger, with joyful shout
 And mickle haste, the happy tidings went.
 Hence the warm blood, that stagnated about
 Her heart, by her first sorrow thither sent,
 Ebbd at this notice in so full a tide,
 Well nigh for sudden joy the damsel died.

LXVI.

Of all her vigour is she so foregone,
 She cannot on her feeble feet rely :
 Yet what her force must needs to you be known,
 And what the damsel's magnanimity,
 None doomed to prison, wheel or halter, none
 Condemned some other evil death to die,
 About whose brows the sable band is tied,
 Rejoices more to hear his pardon cried.

LXVII.

Joys Clermont's, joys Mongrana's noble house,²⁶
 Those kindred branches that fresh knot to view.
 With equal grief Count Anselm overflows,
 Gan, Fulcon, Gini and Ginami's crew :
 Yet they meanwhile beneath contented brows
 Conceal the dark and envious thoughts they brew
 As the fox waits the motions of the hare,
 They wait their time for vengeance, and forbear.

LXVIII.

Besides that oftentimes before the rage
 Of Roland and Rinaldo on them fell,
 Though they were calmed by Charles's counsel sage,
 And common danger from the infidel,
 They had new cause for grief in Bertolage
 Slain by their foemen and Sir Pinnabel :
 But they concealed their hatred, and endured
 Those griefs, as of the matter ill assured.

LXIX.

Those envoys of the Bulgars that had made
 For Charles's court (as hath erewhile been shown),
 Hoping to find the knight, whose shield portrayed
 The unicorn, elected to their throne,
 Bless the good fortune which their hope repayed,
 Seeing that valiant warrior, and fall down
 Before his feet, and him in humble speech
 'Again to seek their Bulgary beseech ;

LXX.

'Where kept for him in Adrianople are
 'The sceptre and the crown, his royal due :
 'But let him succour to his kingdom bear ;
 'For—to their further seatho—advices shew
 'Constantine doth a mighty host prepare,
 'And thitherward in person moves anew ;
 'And they—of their elected king possess—
 'Hope the Greek empire from his hands to wrest.'

LXXI.

He accepts the realm, by their entreaties won ;
 And, to afford them aid against their foes,
 Will wend to Bulgary when three months are done ;
 Save Fortune otherwise of him dispose.
 When this is heard by that Greek emperor's son,
 ' He bids Rogero on his faith repose ;
 ' For since by him the Bulgars' realm is swayed,
 ' Peace between them and Constantine is made ;

LXXII.

' Nor needeth he depart in haste, to guide.
 ' His Bulgar bands against the Grecian foe ;
 ' For all that he had conquered far and wide,
 ' He will persuade his father to forego.'
 None of the virtues, in Rogero spied,
 Moved Bradamant's ambitious mother so,
 Or so to endear her son-in-law availed,
 As hearing now that son a sovereign hailed.

LXXIII.

The rich and royal nuptials they prepare
 As well befits him, by whose care 'tis done,
 'Tis done by Charles ; and with such cost and care
 As if 'twere for a daughter of his own.
 For such the merits of the damsel are,
 And such had all her martial kindred show.
 Charles would not think he should exceed due measure
 If spent for her was half his kingdom's treasure.

LXXIV.

He a free court bids cry ; whither his way
 Securely every one that wills may wend ;
 And offers open lists till the ninth day
 To whosoever would in arms contend ;
 And bids build bowers afield, and interlay
 Green boughs therein, and flowers and foliage blend ;
 And make those bowers so gay with silk and gold,
 No fairer place this ample world doth hold.

LXXV.

Guested within fair Paris cannot be
 The countless foreign bands that thither fare ;
 Who, rich and poor, of high and low degree,
 And Greeks and Latins and Barbarians are.
 There is no end of lord and embassy
 That thither from all ends of earth repair ;
 All lodged conveniently, to their content,
 Beneath pavilion, booth, and bower and tent.

LXXVI.

The weird Melissa against the coming night
 With singular and matchless ornament
 Had for that pair the nuptial chamber dight;
 Whereon long time before she had been bent:
 Long time before desirous of the rite
 Had been that dame, presageful of the event;
 Presageful of futurity, she knew
 What goodly fruit should from their stem ensue.

LXXVII.

She had prepared the genial, fruitful bed,
 Under a broad pavilion; one more rich,
 Adorned, and jocund, never overhead
 (Did this for peace or war its master pitch)
 Was in the world, before or after, spread;
 And this from Thracian strand had borne the witch.
 The costly prize from Constantine she bore,
 Who for disport was tented on that shore.

LXXVIII.

She with young Leo's leave, or rather so
 The Grecian's admiration to obtain,
 And a rare token of that art to show,
 Which on Hell's mighty dragon puts the rein,
 And at her pleasure rules that impious foe
 Of Heaven, together with his evil train,
 Bade demons the pavilion through mid aid
 To Paris from Constantinople bear.

LXXIX.

From Constantine that lay there'n, who swayed
 The Grecian empire's sceptre, at mid-day
 This with its cordage, shaft whereby 'twas stayed,
 And all within and out, she bore away;
 And of the costly tent, through air conveyed,
 For young Rogero made a lodging gay.
 The bridal ended, this her demon crew
 Thither, from whence 'twas brought, conveyed anew

LXXX.

Two thousand tedious years were nigh complete,
 Since this fair work was fashioned by the lore
 Of Trojan maid, warmed with prophetic heat;
 Who, 'mid long labour and 'mid vigil sore,
 With her own fingers all the storied sheet
 Of the pavilion had embroidered o'er;
 Cassandra hight; that maid to Hector brave
 (Her brother he) this costly present gave.

LXXXI.

The curtiest cavalier, the kindest shoot
 That ever from her brother's stock should grow
 (Albeit she knew far distant from its root,
 With many a branch between, should be that bough)
 In silk and gold upon the gorgeous suit
 Of hangings had she wrought in goodly show,
 Much prized that gift, while living, Priam's son,
 For its rare work and her by whom 'twas done.

LXXXII.

But when by treachery perished Priam's heir,²⁷
 And Greeks the Trojans scathed in cruel sort,
 When her gates opened by false Sinon were,
 And direr ill was done than tales report,
 This plunder fell to Menelaüs' share,
 Wherewith to Egypt's land he made resort ;
 There left it to King Proteus, Egypt's lord,
 In ransom for his prisoned wife restored ;²⁸

LXXXIII.

She Helen hight : her Menelaüs to free,
 To Proteus the pavilion gave away
 Which, passing through the line of Ptolemy,
 To Cleopatra fell ; from her in fray
 Agrippa's band on the Leucadian sea
 Bore off the treasure, amid other prey.
 Augustus and Tiberius heired the loom,
 Kept till the time of Constantine in Rome :

LXXXIV.

That Constantine, whom thou shalt ever rue
 Fair Italy, while the heavens above are rolled,
 Constantine to Byzantium, when he grew
 Weary of Tyber, bore the tent of old.
 Melissa from his namesake this withdrew,
 Its pole of ivory and its cords of gold,
 And all its cloth with beauteous figures fraught ;
 Fairer Apelles' pencil never wrought.

LXXXV.

Here the three Graces in gay vesture gowned
 Assisted the delivery of a queen.²⁹
 Not in four ages in this earthly round
 Was ever born a boy so fair of mien.
 Jove, Venus, Mars, and Mercury renowned
 For fluent speech, about the child are seen ;
 Him have they strewed, and strew with heaven's perfume,
 Ambrosial odours and ætherial bloom.

LXXXVI.

'Hippolytus' a little label said,
 Inscribed upon the baby's swaddling clothes.
 By the hand him Fortune leads in age more staid ;
 And Valour as a guide before him goes.
 An unknown band in sweeping vest arrayed,
 With long descending locks, the tapestry shows,
 Deputed by Corvinus to desire
 The tender infant from his princely sire.⁴⁰

LXXXVII.

He reverently parts from Hercules' side,
 From her, his lady mother, Eleanor ;
 And to the Danube wends ; where far and wide
 They meet the boy, and as a god adore.
 The prudent king of Hungary is descried,
 Who does due honour to his ripened lore,
 In yet unripe, yea, raw and tender years,
 And ranks the stripling above all his peers.

LXXXVIII.

One is there that in his green age and new
 Places Strigonia's crozier in his hand.
 Him ever at Corvinus' side we view ;
 Whether he doth in court or camp command,
 Whether against the Turk, or German crew
 The puissant monarch leads his martial band,
 Watchful Hippolytus is at his side,
 And gathers virtue from his generous guide.

LXXXIX.

There is it seen, how he his blooming age
 Divides mid arts and wholesome discipline :
 The secret spirit of the ancient page
 There Fuscus well instructs him to divine ;⁴¹
 " This must thou shun, that follow "—seems the sage
 To say—" if thou immortally wouldst shine."
 Fashioned withal with so much skill and care,
 By her who wrought that work, their gestures were.

XC.

A cardinal he next is seen, though young
 In years, at council in the Vatican ;
 Where for deep wisdom graced by eloquent tongue,
 With wonder him the assembled conclave scan.
 " What will he be"—they seem to say among
 Themselves—" when he is ripened into man ?"
 " Oh ! if on him St. Peter's mantle fall,
 " What a blest era ! what a happy call !"

XCI.

That brave youth's liberal pastimes are designed
 In other place; on Alpine mountain hear
 Here he affronts the bear of rugged kind;
 And there in rushy bottom bays the boar:
 Now on his jennet he outgoes the wind,
 And drives some goat or gallant hind before;
 Which falls o'ertaken on the dusty plain,
 By his descending faulchion cleft in twain.

XCII.

He is descried, amid a fair array
 Of poets and philosophers elsewhere.
 This pricks for him the wandering planets' way;
 These earth, these heaven for his instruction square.
 Some chant sad elegies, some verses gay,
 Lays lyric or heroic; singers there
 He with rich music hears; nor moves a pace
 But what in every step is sovereign grace.

XCIII.

The first part of the storied walls pourtrayed
 That noble prince's gentle infancy.
 Cassandra all beside had overlaid
 With feats of justice, prudence, modesty,
 Valour, and that fifth virtue, which hath made
 With those fair sisters closest amity;
 I speak of her that gives and that bestows,
 With all these virtues gilt, the stripling glows.

XCIV.

In this part is the princely youth espied
 With that unhappy duke, the Insubri's head;⁴²
 In peace they sit in council by his side,
 Together armed, the serpent-banner spread.
 The youth by one unchanging faith is tied
 To him for ever, well or ill bested;
 His follower still in flight before the foe,
 His guide in peril, his support in woe.

XCV.

Him in another quarter you descry,
 For his Ferrara and her duke in fear,
 Who by strange proofs doth sift, and certify
 To his just brother, vouched by tokens clear,
 The close device of that ill treachery,
 Hatched by those kinsmen whom he held most dear:
 Hence justly he becomes that title's heir,
 Which Rome yet free bade righteous Tully bear.

XCVI.

Elsewhere in martial panoply he shone,
 Hastening to help the church with lifted blade;
 With scanty and tumultuous levy gone
 Against well-ordered host in arms arrayed:
 And lo! the coming of that chief alone
 Affords the priestly band such present aid,
 Extinguished are the fires before they spread.
He came, he saw, he conquered, may be said.

XCVII.

Elsewhere he stands upon his native strand,
 Fighting against the mightiest armament,
 That whensoever against Argive hand,
 Or Turkish, from Venetian harbour went;
 Scatters and overthrows the hostile band,
 And—spoil and prisoners to his brother sent—
 Nothing reserves save that unfading bay;
 The only prize he cannot give away.

XCVIII.

Upon those figures gazed the courtly crew,⁴³
 But read no meaning in the storied wall:
 Because there was not any one to shew
 That these were things hereafter to befall.
 Those fair and quaintly fashioned forms they view
 With pleasure, and peruse the scrolls withal:
 But Bradamant, to whom the whole was known,
 By wise Melissa taught, rejoiced alone.

XCIX.

Though not instructed in that history
 Like gentle Bradamant, the affianced knight
 Remembers how amid his progeny
 Atlantes often praised this Hippolyte.
 —Who faithfully could verse such courtesy,
 As Charlemagne vouchsafed to every wight?
 With various games that solemn feast was cheered,
 And charged with viands aye the board appeared.

C.

Who is a valiant knight, is here descried:
 For daily broke a thousand lances lay:
 Singly to combat or in troops they ride;
 On horseback or afoot, they mix in fray.
 Worthiest of all, Rogero is espied,
 Who always conquers, jousting night and day;
 And so, in wrestling, dance, and every deed,
 Still from his rivals bears away the meed.

CI.

On the last day, when at their festive cheer
 Was seated solemnly the assembled band,
 Where at Charles' left was placed the wedded peer,
 And Bradamant upon his better hand,
 Across the fields an armed cavalier,
 Of semblance haughty, and of stature grand,
 Was seen to ride towards the royal table ;
 Himself and courser wholly clothed in sable.

CII.

The King of Argier he ; that for the scorn
 Received from her, when on the bridge he fell,
 Never to clothe himself in arms had sworn,
 Nor draw the faulchion nor bestride the sell,
 Till he had like an anchorite outworn
 A year and month and day in lowly cell.
 So to chastise themselves for such like crimes
 Were cavaliers accustomed in those times.

CIII.

Albeit of Charles and Agramant the Moor
 Had heard the several fortunes while away,
 Not to forswear himself, he armed no more
 Than if in nought concerned in that affray :
 But when the year and month were wholly o'er,
 And wholly past was the succeeding day,
 With other courser, harness, sword, and lance,
 The king betook him to the court of France.

CIV.

He neither lighted from his horse, nor bowed
 His head ; and, without sign of reverence due,
 His scorn for Charlemagne by gestures showed,
 And the high presence of so fair a crew.
 Astound and full of wonder stood the crowd,
 Such licence in that haughty man to view.
 All leave their meat, all leave their talk, to hear
 The purpose of the stranger cavalier.

CV.

To Charles and to Rogero opposite,
 With a loud voice, and in proud accent, " I
 " Am Rodomont of Sarza," said the knight,
 " Who thee, Rogero, to the field defy ;
 " And here, before the sun withdraws his light,
 " Will prove on thee thine infidelity :
 " And that thou, as a traitor to thy lord,
 " Deserv'st not any honour at this board.

CVI.

"Albeit thy felony be plain and clear,
 "Which thou, as christened, canst not disavow;
 "Nathless to make it yet more plain appear,
 "This will I prove upon thee; and, if thou
 "Canst find a knight to combat for thee here,
 "Him will accept;—if one be not enow—
 "Will four, nay six accept; and will maintain
 "My words against thee all in listed plain."

CVII.

Rogero, with the leave of Pepin's son,
 Uprose at that appeal, and thus replied;
 "That he—nor he alone—but every one,
 "Who thus impeached him as a traitor, lied;
 "That so he by his king had ever done,
 "Him none could justly blame; and on his side,
 "He was prepared in listed field to shew
 "He evermore by him had done his due.

CVIII.

"He can defend himself; nor need he crave
 "Another warrior's help that course to run;
 "And 'tis his hope to show him he would have
 "Enough, perhaps would have too much, of one."
 Thither Orlando and Rinaldo, brave
 Olivier, and his white and sable son,*
 Thither good Dudon and Marphisa wend;
 Who fain with that fierce paynim will contend.

CIX.

They tell Rogero that, 'as newly wed,
 'The combat he in person should refuse.'
 "Take ye no further pains," the warrior said,
 "For such would be for me a foul excuse."
 The Tartar's arms were brought, which cut the thread
 Of more delay and of all further truce:
 With spurs Orlando deck'd the youthful lord,
 King Charlemagne begirt him with the sword.

CX.

Marphisa and Bradamant in corslet case
 His breast, and clothe him in his other gear.
 Astolpho led his horse of noble race:
 Sir Dudon held his stirrup: far and near
 Rinaldo and Narus made the mob give place,
 Assisted by the Marquis Olivier.
 All from the crowded lists they drive with speed.
 Evermore kept in order for such need.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

CXI.

The pale-faced dames and damsels troop, in guise
 Of pigeons round the lists, a timid show ;
 When, homeward bound, from fruitful field they rise,
 Scared by wide-sweeping winds, which loudly blow,
 Mid flash and clap ; and when the sable skies
 Threat hail and rain, the harvest's waste and woe :
 A timid troop, they for Rogero fear,
 Ill matched they deem with that fierce cavalier.

CXII.

So him deemed all the rabble ; and so most
 Of those bold cavaliers and barons thought :
 In that they had not yet the memory lost
 Of what that paynim had in Paris wrought,
 When singly fire and sword the warrior tost,
 And much of that fair town to ruin brought
 Whose signs remained, and yet will long remain :
 Nor ever greater havoc plagued that reign.

CXIII.

Bradamant's heart above those others' beat :
 Not that she deemed the Saracen in might,
 Or valour which in the heart-core hath its seat,
 Was of more prowess than the youthful knight ;
 Nor (what oft gives success in martial feat)
 That with the paynim was the better right.
 Yet cannot she her some ill misgivings quell.
 But upon those that love such fear sits well.

CXIV.

Oh ! in her fear for him, how willingly
 She battle for Rogero would have done !
 If lifeless on the listed field to lie
 Surer than sure,—in fight with Ulien's son.*
 More than one death would she consent to die,
 If she withal could suffer more than one,
 Rather than she in that unhappy strife
 Would see her cherished consort risk his life.

CXV.

But prayer availed not on the damsel's part
 To make Rogero leave to her the quest :
 She then with mournful face and beating heart
 Stood by to view that pair to fight address.
 From right and left the peer and paynim start,
 And at each other run with lance in rest.
 The spears seem ice, as they in shivers fly,
 The fragments birds, that mount through middle sky.

* Rodomont.

CXVI.

Rodomont's lance which smote in the career
 Upon mid-shield, yet harmed it little; so
 Perfect was famous Hector's iron gear,
 Hardened by Vulcan's hand, and safe from blow.
 As well against the shield his levelled spear
 Rogero guides, and that good buckler—though
 Well steeled within and out, with bone between,
 And nigh a palm in thickness—pierces clean:

CXVII.

And—but his lance resists not that fierce shock,
 And at the first assault its splinters fly,
 And bits and fragments of the shivered stock
 Seem fledged with feathers they ascend so high;
 Were his arms hewn from adamantine rock,
 The spear would pierce the paynim's panoply;
 And end that battle: but it breaks withal,
 And on their croups both staggering coursers fall.

CXVIII.

With bridle and with spur the martial pair
 Raise their proud horses nimbly from the ground;
 And having broke their spears, with faulchions bare
 Return, to bandy fierce and cruel wound.
 Wheeling with wondrous mastery, here and there,
 The bold and ready couersers in a round.
 The warriors with their biting swords begin
 To try where either's armour is most thin.

CXIX.

Rodomont had not that hard dragon-hide
 Which heretofore had cased the warrior's breast;
 Nor Nimrod's trenchant sword was at his side;
 Nor the accustomed helm his temples prest.
 For on that bridge which spanned the narrow tide
 A loser to Dordona's lady,* vest
 And arms suspended from the rotive stone
 He left: as I, meseems, erewhile have shown.

CXX.

Clad was the king in other goodly mail;
 Yet not like that first panoply secure:
 But neither this, nor that, nor harder scale
 Could Balisarda's deadly dint endure;
 Against which neither workmanship avail,
 Enchantment, temper, nor prime steel and pure.
 So here so there Rogero plied his sword,
 He more than once the paynim's armour bored.

* Bradamant.

CXXI.

When Rodomont beholds in that fierce close
 His widely crimsoned arms, nor can restrain
 The greater portion of those griding blows
 From biting to the quick, through plate and chain,
 He with more fury, with more rage o'erflows,
 Than in mid winter the tempestuous main,
 Flings down his shield, and with both hands outright
 Lays at Rogero's helm with all his might.

CXXII.

With that excessive force, wherewith the gin,
 Erected in two barges upon Po,
 And raised by men and wheels, with deafening din
 Descends upon the sharpened piles below,
 With all his might he smote the paladin
 With either hand; was never direr blow:
 Him the charmed helmet helped, or—such its force—
 The stroke would have divided man and horse.

CXXIII.

As if about to fall, the youthful lord
 Twice nodded, opening legs and arms; anew
 Rodomont smote, in that he would afford
 His foe no time his spirits to renew:
 Then threatened other stroke; but that fine sword
 Bore not such hammering, and in shivers flew;
 And the bold Saracen, bereft of brand,
 Was in the combat left with unarmed hand.

CXXIV.

But not for this doth Rodomont refrain:
 He swoops upon the Child, unheeding aught:
 So sore astounded is Rogero's brain;
 So wholly overclouded is his thought.
 But him the paynim well awakes again,
 Whom by the neck he with strong arm has caught,
 And gripes and grapples with such mighty force,
 He falls on earth, pulled headlong from his horse.

CXXV.

Yet leaps from earth as nimbly, moved by spleen
 Far less than shame; for on his gentle bride
 He turned his eyes, and that fair face serene
 Now troubled the disdainful warrior spied.
 She in sore doubt her champion's fall had seen;
 And well nigh at that sight the lady died.
 Rogero, quickly to revenge the affront,
 Clutches his sword and faces Rodomont.

CXXVI.

He at Rogero rode, who that rude shock
 Shunned warily, retiring from his ground,
 And, as he past, the paynim's bridle took
 With his left hand, and turned his courser round ;
 While with his right he at his rider struck,
 Whom he in belly, flank, and breast would wound ;
 And twice sore anguish felt the monarch, gored
 In flank and thigh by good Rogero's sword.

CXXVII.

Rodomont, grasping still in that close fight
 The hilt and pommel of his broken blade,
 Laid at Rogero's helmet with such might,
 That him another stroke might have dismayed :
 But good Rogero, who should win of right,
 Seizing his arm, the king so rudely swayed,
 Bringing his left his better hand to speed,
 That he pulled down the paynim from his steed.

CXXVIII.

Through force or skill, so fell the Moorish lord,
 He stood his match, I rather ought to say
 Fell on his feet ; because Rogero's sword
 Gave him, 'twas deemed, advantage in the fray.
 Rogero stands aloof, with wary ward,
 As fain to keep the paynim king at bay.
 For the wise champion will not let a wight
 So tall and bulky close with him in fight ;

CXXIX.

Rogero flank and thigh dyed red beheld,
 And other wounds ; and hoped he would have failed
 By little and by little, as it welled ;
 So that he finally should have prevailed.
 His hilt and pommel in his fist yet held
 The paynim, which with all his might he scaled
 At young Rogero ; whom he smote so sore,
 The stripling never was so stunned before.

CXXX.

In the helmet-cheek and shoulder-bone below
 The Child was smit, and left so sore astound,
 He, tripping still and staggering to and fro,
 Scarce kept himself from falling to the ground.
 Rodomont fain would close upon his foe ;
 But his foot fails him, weakened by the wound
 Which pierced his thigh : he overtasked his might
 And on his kneecap fell the paynim knight.

CXXXI.

Rogero lost no time, and with fierce blows
 Smote him in face and bosom with his brand;
 Hammered, and held the Saracen so close,
 To ground he bore that champion with his hand.
 But he so stirred himself, again he rose:
 He gripes Rogero so, fast locked they stand.
 Seconding their huge vigour by address,
 They circle one another, shake, and press.

CXXXII.

His wounded thigh and gaping flank had sore
 Weakened the vigour of the Moorish king:
 Rogero had address; had mickle lore;
 Was greatly practised in the wrestlers' ring:
 He marked his vantage, nor from strife forbore;
 And, where he saw the blood most freely spring,
 And where most wounded was the warrior, prest
 The paynim with his feet, his arms, and breast.

CXXXIII.

Rodomont filled with spite and rage, his foe
 Takes by the neck and shoulders, and now bends
 Towards him, and now pushes from him; now
 Raises from earth, and on his chest suspends;
 Whirls here and there and grapples; and to throw
 The stripling sorely in that strife contends.
 Collected in himself, Rogero wrought,
 To keep his vantage taxing strength and thought.

CXXXIV.

So shifting oft his hold, about the Moor
 His arms the good and bold Rogero wound;
 Against his left flank shoved his breast, and sore
 Strained him with all his strength engirdled round,
 At once he past his better leg before
 Rodomont's knees and pushed, and from the ground
 Uplifted high in air the Moorish lord;
 Then hurled him down head foremost on the sword.

CXXXV.

Such was the shock wherewith King Rodomont
 With battered head and spine the champaign smote,
 That, issuing from his wounds as from a font,
 Streams of red blood the crimsoned herbage float.
 Rogero, holding Fortune by the front,
 Lest he should rise, with one hand griped his throat,
 With one a dagger at his eyes addrest;
 And with his knees the paynim's belly prest.

CXXXVI.

As sometimes where they work the golden vein
 Within Pannonian or Iberian cave,
 If unexpected ruin whelm the train
 By impious avarice there condemned to slave,
 So with the load they lie oppress, with pain
 A passage can their prisoned spirit have :
 No less oppress the doughty paynim lay,
 Pinned to the ground in that disastrous fray.

CXXXVII.

Rogero at his vizor doth present
 His naked poniard's point, with threatening cry,
 ' That he will slay him, save he yields, content
 ' To let him live, if he for grace apply.'
 But Rodomont, who rather than be shent
 For the least deed of shame, preferred to die,
 Writhed, struggled, and with all his vigour tried
 To pull Rogero down, and naught replied.

CXXXVIII.

As mastiff that below the deer-hound lies,
 Fixed by the gullet fast, with holding bite,
 Sorely bestirs himself and vainly tries,
 With lips besmeared with foam and eyes alight,
 And cannot from beneath the conqueror rise,
 Who foils his foe by force, and not despite ;
 So vainly strives the monarch of Argier
 To rise from underneath the cavalier.

CXXXIX.

Yet Rodomont so twists and strives, he gains
 The freedom of his better arm anew ;
 And with the right hand, which his poniard strains,
 For he had drawn his deadly dagger too,
 Would wound Rogero underneath the reins :
 But now the wary youth the error knew
 Through which he might have died, by his delay
 That impious Saracen forthwith to slay ;

CXL.

And smiting twice or thrice his horrid front,
 Raising as high as he could raise in air
 His dagger, buried it in Rodomont ;
 And freed himself withal from further care.
 Loosed from the more than icy corse, to foun
 Of fetid Acheron, and hell's foul repair,
 The indignant spirit fled, blaspheming loud ;⁴⁴
 Erewhile on earth so haughty and so proud.

NOTES.

NOTES TO CANTO XXV.

¹ St. xi. l. 2.—At Altaripa, where we had to contend with Guido the savage and the other champions of Pinnabel.

² St. xiv. ll. 6 and 7.—A piece of artillery belonging to his patron, Alphonso of Este, which, we are told, was so denominatèd.

³ St. xv. ll. 7 and 8.—Falerina made this sword *Balsarda*, which would cut even enchanted substances, for the purpose mentioned in the text, in a garden in Orgagna; which is the seat of many marvels in the *INNAMORATO*. Orlando, however, anticipated her, foiled her enchantments, sacked her garden, and made her prisoner, whom he surprised in the act of looking at herself in the polished surface of the sword which she had manufactured for his destruction.

⁴ St. xvii. ll. 7 and 8.—Such was the usual mode of equipping a knight; whose small shield so disposed was no impediment to the action of either arm when necessary, and could be braced at pleasure.

⁵ St. I. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.—Ariosto was in his place thinking of his own country mode of birding, in which it is common to take one fowl and use him as a decoy to others. Love takes Richardetto in his net, and instructs him (like a cult-bird) how he is to take *Flordespina*.

⁶ St. lxiv. l. 8.—The succeeding stanzas (lxv. to lxx.) which I have omitted, were (we are assured by the brother of the poet) condemned on that revision of his work which was made by him with a view to a more perfect edition; and this tends strongly to prove that Ariosto must have somewhat outrun the gross and licentious spirit of his age. English critics are disposed to believe that this was much more outrageous in Italy than in England, and the writer of an article upon my translation in the *Quarterly Review* attributes this to the supposed licentiousness which succeeded the great plague at Florence. Reasoning, however, as all our commentators do, from the great scandal afforded by Italian literature of this period, he overlooks that given by our own writers. Harrington's translation of the *Furioso*, dedicated to a virgin queen, is to the full as licentious as his original, and sometimes infinitely more coarse. As a proof of this, he has in the most scandalous episode which is contained in Ariosto's work used a word so offensive (not printed, indeed, for a blank space is left for it, but indicated by a corresponding double rhyme), that I question whether it would not almost scandalize even the male population of Wapping and St. Giles's. Nor will the plea of '*non meus hic sermo*' excuse our poets of that time: for original writers as well as translators may be cited in proof of English delinquency; and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* presents as many voluptuous pictures as the prose of Boccaccio or the poetry of Ariosto.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVI.

¹ St. xxxi.—All the commentators have explained this monster to mean Avarice, which had overrun the Christian world. Sir John Harrington, who lived in an age of allegory, says, that Ariosto describes this vice very significantly; he makes "her ugly, because of all vices it is most hateful; ears of an ass, being for the most part ignorant, or at least careless of other men's good opinions; a wolf in head and breast, namely, ravenous and never satisfied; a lion's grisly jaw, terrible and devouring; a fox is all the rest, wily and "raffy."

He might have brought other proofs in support of his opinion, as the scandal which the Beast had brought upon the papal court, and as arrogating to itself the keys of Heaven, &c. in which Ariosto (who, as has been said, though a Catholic, was no Papist) manifestly satirizes the sale of indulgences. To this it may be observed, that many of the hunters seem only to be remarkable for their notable liberality.

² St. xlv. ll. 7 and 8.—The citadel of Milan, as we are told.

³ St. xlvi. l. 5.—This Bernardo was a cardinal, and author of the comedy called *Calandra*. Though not born at Bibbiena, a town of Tuscany, he derived his name from this city which he had long inhabited, and was styled *il Bibbiena*. His paternal name was Divizio. His designation is well known to those conversant with Italian literature.

⁴ St. xlix. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.—Three distinguished cardinals, Sigismondo Gonzaga, Giovanni Salviati, and Lewis of Arragon.

⁵ St. xlix. l. 6.—Francis Gonzaga was second of the name, and fourth of the series of Marquises of Mantua. He was much distinguished by his warlike accomplishments as captain of the Venetians, and had a yet better title to respect for the fidelity with which he adhered to his engagements with that people. His son Frederick was also a distinguished leader, and captain general of the Roman church and of the Florentine republic. It has been said that this man, and all who are cited by the poet as hunters of the beast, had the character of liberality.

⁶ St. xlix. ll. 7 and 8.—The brother-in-law of Francesco Gonzaga was Alphonso of Este, duke of Ferrara. The son-in-law, who was duke of Urbino, was Francesco Maria della Rovere, nephew of Pope Julius the second, who procured him his wife and his dukedom.

⁷ St. l. l. 1.—Guidobaldo the second, afterwards duke of Urbino, son of Francesco Maria.

⁸ St. l. l. 3.—Of these names were two noble youths, brothers of the family of Flischi at Genoa, of whom Ottobon was an ecclesiastic. These retired into voluntary exile, that they might not draw a war upon their country by a private enmity which they had incurred.

⁹ St. l. l. 5.—Luigi Gonzaga, surnamed Rodomont for his valour, was the son of Ludovico Gonzaga, and called Gazulo from a castle which he held.

¹⁰ St. li. l. 1.—One Hippolytus the cardinal to whom the poet dedicates his book; the other, son of Alphonso duke of Ferrara, likewise a cardinal. The Hercules were, Hercules Gonzaga, the father of Alphonso duke of

Ferrari, and Hercules Gonzaga, cardinal of Mantua. The last Hippolytus was of the family of Medicis, and a cardinal; who died by poison, much lamented for his many virtues.

¹¹ St. li. l. 5.—The brother of Lorenzo of Medicis who lost his life by assassination. His son was Pope Clement VII., born a few days after his father's death.

¹² St. li. l. 6.—Brother to the duke of Mantua, at one time viceroi of the island of Sicily, and afterwards lieutenant of the duchy of Milan, and general of the imperial army.

¹³ St. li. l. 7.—The famous Andrew Doria, of Genoa.

¹⁴ St. li. l. 8.—The second Francisco Sforza, son of Ludovico il Moro, who obtained the duchy of Milan.

¹⁵ St. lii. l. 1.—This noble family of the Auali came from Spain, and were of great repute and antiquity.

¹⁶ St. lii. l. 7.—Marquis of Pescara, and son of Alphonso. He was a great commander, and prosperous in every undertaking except at Ravenna, where he was taken prisoner after receiving many wounds. To the study of arms he joined the embellishment of letters; and while prisoner with the French, addressed to his wife Vittoria an elegant dialogue on love. He died in the flower of his age.

¹⁷ St. lii. l. 8.—By the Italians *Vasto*, cousin to the before-named Francesco, and no less an ornament to the house of Auali.

¹⁸ St. liii. l. 1.—Was born at Cordova in Andalusia, of an ancient and noble family. By his assistance Ferdinand conquered the city of Granada and the kingdom of Naples. He gained the title of Great, and at last died of a fever, in the 72d year of his age, in the year 1515.

¹⁹ St. liii. l. 5.—William the third marquis of Monferrato, who was rich in every accomplishment of mind and body, and who also died in the flower of his age.

²⁰ St. cxxx. ll. 1 and 2.—It must be recollected that women rode astride, and that the saddles, formerly in use, with a high elevation before and behind, secured the rider as in a box.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVII.

¹ St. xxi. l. 4.—It may perhaps be well to repeat that in an earlier period of society, skill in physic was often ascribed to magic. Some traces of this may be still found in our medical nomenclature, as in the word *carminative*, derived from *carmen* (a charm): and in fact such a belief still lurks in the case which we may suppose in some points most resembles the general composition of society in an earlier age. Witness the cure of agues by charms, &c. &c.

² St. xxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—The reader is to recollect that the attack was made on the Christian camp, and that the assailants were penetrating through this to the Moorish camp.

³ St. li. ll. 7 and 8.—*Red* was the colour of Rodomont (as we have seen

in a former canto), and the ill dye which this had received, and its faded condition, indicate the feeble and evanescent character of the impression which he had made upon Fiordelico. *Green* (on the significance of which I have before remarked) was indicative of her light and wanton disposition.

⁴ St. lxxii. l. 1.—The reader must recur to the *INNAMORATO* for all these robberies of Brunello.

⁵ St. cii. l. 4.—The Delphic Apollo, whose oracle was famous for the solution of all questions and difficulties.

⁶ St. cxxxviii. l. 7.—A Venetian gentleman mentioned by the poet among his friends in the forty-sixth canto, and of whom he has here antedated the existence. This is among the names (in Venetian, *Falier*) of the first twelve families of Venice (entitled *le dodici famiglie fondatrici di Venezia*), respecting which it is a curious fact, that by far the greater portion, that of *Falier* or *Valerio* among the rest, has survived the extinction of the republic.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVIII.

¹ St. xxiv. ll. 5 and 6.—

Credeano che da lor si fosse tolto.

Per gire a Roma, e gito era a *Corneto*.

As an exact equivalent, we might say, if the scene were laid in England, that they thought he was gone to London, whereas he had gone to *Hornsey*.

² St. xxvii. l. 6.—That is, at Sienna and Florence; Sienna being situated upon the Arbia, and Florence upon the Arno.

³ St. xxxiv. l. 1.—Ariosto seems to have got sight of the story which forms the prologue to the Arabian Nights.

⁴ St. xl. l. 8.—Not upon the figured representation of the lamb of God, as the reader might possibly suppose, but upon the host; as appears from a verse in a succeeding stanza.

Since on the holy wafer he had scorn.—St. xliv. l. 8.

⁵ St. xlii. l. 6.—I have already observed that serjant in its general signification formerly meant servant.

⁶ St. lxxxix. l. 8.—

Caelum non animus mutant qui trans mare currunt. HOR.

Though this episode is distinguished by that felicity of expression and neatness of narration so peculiarly characteristic of Ariosto, I cannot think it deserving of all the encomiums which have been bestowed upon it. It is, as I conceive, deficient in that dramatic truth which is equally characteristic of his style, and is generally so well observed by him. What, for instance, can be more extravagant than the conception of the leading incident? We may almost say, that extreme hypocrisy and extreme debauchery are never found together; for there are always some dregs of truth, however muddy, at the bottom of hypocrisy. If this be true, the character of the wife is not in nature; but supposing her character to be in nature, how can we imagine that a husband, who was tied to her apron-string,

should never have entertained the least suspicion of her perverse predilection? Is it not yet more extravagant to suppose that this abused husband, who had surprised her in *flagranti delicto*, and who was at first about to kill both her and her paramour, should be seized with such a sudden qualm of morbid sensibility as not even to disturb her slumbers?

The last act of extravagance in this little piece, the return of king and cavalier to the adulteresses, with whom they live very happy ever afterwards, is less out of nature, and is besides justified by its epigrammatic spirit.

NOTES TO CANTO XXIX.

¹ St. xv. ll. 7 and 8.—That there are some preparations which for a time secure the skin from fire there is no doubt, and we cannot much wonder it should have been believed in a more ignorant age, that what preserved from one danger would preserve from another. In Constantinople, where things have remained (as has been before said) much in the same state as they were in Christendom down to the fifteenth century, a frequent exhibition takes place of dervishes who handle red hot irons with impunity; and every now and then we have some chance performer on the same strange instruments at home.

In these performances there may be some trick, as in the apparent swallowing of molten lead, which is probably some other composite metal capable of fusion by an inferior degree of heat, a thing which is sometimes witnessed in the partial dissolution of an ale-house tea-spoon in a hot cup of tea: but making every reasonable allowance for deception, no one can doubt the main fact, who has witnessed these performances, which certainly offer a reasonable ground for believing that all the strange tricks of natural magic which we read of in works of the middle ages were not such mere *locus pocus* as our modern natural philosophers would persuade us; and the thing on which I have been commenting may show how oddly secrets may be preserved among the ignorant, which elude all the researches of the educated.

² St. xx. ll. 1 and 2.—An Italian commentator attacks Ariosto for having first stated that one nameless herb, boiled with rue and ivy, was sufficient for Isabella's purpose, and then for making her collect many others for this magic bath. I should not have thought the criticism worth notice, if the circumstance did not illustrate a fact in the history of manners, or rather of art. In the earlier ages of Europe, all composers of medicine dealt largely in compound drugs, and never used that on which they most relied without other auxiliary ingredients. The great improvers of medicine were inclined to treat this complication of remedies as an imposture. But better experience seems to prove that our ancestors were right in the principle, however inefficient or erroneous may have been their practice. For it is now well ascertained that the happy union of drugs is one of the most useful points of medicine; and that even preparations of the same ingredient which offend when taken separately, will sometimes produce a beneficial effect when administered in combination.

³ St. xxviii. ll. 7 and 8.—The English reader can only find some palliation for this passage in the spirit of Ariosto's age and country. As a

specimen, indeed, of the different feeling with which his countrymen have contemplated it, it is enough to translate literally the note of one who has furnished many observations upon the *Furioso*, not worse than those of other critics. "The poet" (say he) "uses the oath which the Gentiles put into the mouths of their Gods, in making them swear by the waters of Styx; an oath which was held by them as inviolable. Ariosto *poetically* puts this into the mouth of the true God, to show the unalterable firmness of his purpose!"

Putting aside these indefensible scandals, it is to be observed that Ariosto too often loses himself when he touches the dangerous chord of compliment; but I can say with truth, that after a long and close consideration of the *Furioso*, I am convinced little could safely be abridged in this extraordinary poem besides these complimentary effusions. Everything else has its use, and is conducive to some dramatic, if not poetical, effect. After being long afraid of proclaiming so bold a conclusion, I have derived great confidence from finding that such was the opinion of the late Mr. Fox, who used to contend that there was no such thing as an episode to the *Furioso*; and in the proper estimation of the term he is undoubtedly right, for nothing can be left out or altered, without injury to some other piece of the machinery. This may be extravagant and fantastical, but it is fitted to its ends and coherent in all its varieties.

⁴ St. xxx. l. 6.—A ferocious knight, one of the *dramatis personæ* in the *Mort Arthur*.

⁵ St. xxxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—Now called the Castle of St. Angelo.

NOTES TO CANTO XXX.

¹ St. x. ll. 1, 2, 3, 4.—It is termed *Gibletorre* in the Diary of Teague, chaplain of two king's ships in the Mediterranean in the years 1675-9. In somewhat the same way we say Trafalgar or Traffagar, giving the word sometimes a foreign, sometimes an English accentuation. I do not know what Ariosto means by *Zizera*, and can find no trace of such a town.

² St. xix. ll. 1 and 2.—'It may not be amiss to take a little retrospect, in order to see how the matter was settled by Agramant, which seems rather to require some explanation. By the first lots that were drawn, the combatants stood thus: first, Rodomont and Rogero: fourth, Mandricardo and Marphisa. The list being prepared for the fight between Rodomont and Mandricardo, while these knights are arming themselves, a new dispute arises between them and Gradasso and Sacripant for Durindana and Frontina, which puts a stop to the expected combat between Rodomont and Mandricardo. Marphisa adds to the confusion by carrying off Brunello prisoner, whom she accuses of stealing her sword; and Rogero seeing the order of the lots disturbed, claims again his horse from Rodomont. Agramant, to settle the first dispute between Rodomont and Mandricardo, orders the cause to be determined by Doralice, who, choosing Mandricardo her former lover, quits the camp with indignation. The list now remained according to the first lots, to be entered by Rogero and Mandricardo, but Gradasso persisting still to claim Durindana from Mandricardo, Agramant proposes that lots should be again drawn to determine whether Rogero or

Gradasso should first engage with Mandricardo, and, to prevent future strife, proposes that whoever draws the lot of combat, shall determine both his own claim and the claim of the knight who loses the lot; that when Rogero wins or loses, he shall not only win or lose the eagle for himself, but Gradasso shall, in right of his conquest, or in consequence of his defeat, continue to bear the shield of Hector, or relinquish the claim. In this last disposition of the lots, no provision seems to be made for the termination of Marphisa's quarrel with Mandricardo.—*Hoole*.

³ St. xlviii. ll. 3 and 4.—The Roman eagles were black, those borne by Mandricardo and Rogero white.

⁴ St. xlix. ll. 3 and 4.—A sphere of fire was supposed in the Ptolemaic system. Hence to reconcile Don Quixote (who is blindfolded) to the probability of his having arrived at a certain height in his imaginary ascent upon the wooden horse Clavileno, a handful of flax is burned under his nose.

⁵ St. lv. ll. 1 and 2.—Hector's arms were impenetrable, but nothing was impenetrable by Balisarda. Such are the contradictions incidental to the employment of such machinery as that of magic.

NOTES TO CANTO XXXI.

¹ St. viii. ll. 1 and 2.—The knight turns out to be Guido the savage, and the lady is apparently his favourite wife Aleria, with whom he escaped from the city of Amazons. We do not learn how he had separated from his companions.

² St. xli. ll. 1 and 2.—During the siege of Albracca, where the Christian knights were engaged on different sides principally through Brunello; who having surprised several of them, compelled his prisoners to take an oath, to defend him against his enemies whomsoever, all of whom he had provoked by his manifold treasons. The occurrences during this famous siege are the most striking passage in the *Orlando Innamorata*, and present the most singular pictures of passion, picturesque description, and wild buffoonery, which are to be found in Italian romance.

³ St. lviii. ll. 5, 6, 7, 8.—Galesus a river of Puglia not far from Tarentum, and Cinyphus a river of Africa.

⁴ St. xcii. l. 3.—The *Innamorata* opens with the invasion of France by Gradasso, at the head of a hundred thousand men, for the purpose of obtaining Bayardo and Durindana. In a duel which is to decide his or Rinaldo's right to the horse, Bayardo, in imitation of Virgil, makes Malagigi decoy his cousin aboard a boat by the appearance of a figure like Gradasso; when the boat leaves the land, of itself, and conveys away Rinaldo.

⁵ St. xciii. l. 3.—His charger, so called.

⁶ St. cix. ll. 5 and 6.—These were lordships possessed by the House of Maganza, inimical to that of Clermont, as has been seen throughout this poem.

NOTES TO CANTO XXXII.

¹ St. l. l. 1.—The Cadurci, in ancient geography, were a people of Aquitania, situated between the rivers Oldus, running from the north, and the Tarnis from the south. Cahors is the modern name of their capital.

² St. lxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—I have looked in vain for *Docclus's city* in dictionaries and in Sallust's history of the Jugurthine war. I must, therefore, be contented with stating from Lempriere that he was "a king of Gætulia who perfidiously delivered Jugurtha to Sylla, the lieutenant of Marius."

³ St. lxxxix. l. 2.—Sir Tristram and Yseult became passionately and exclusively enamoured of each other from having drunk a philtre.

NOTES TO CANTO XXXIII.

¹ St. l. i. 1.—In the wish to abridge, as much as possible, what is already too voluminous, I must refer such readers as are uninformed respecting the Greek and Italian masters mentioned in these stanzas, to the Classical Dictionary, or Lives of the Painters by Lanzi or Vassari.

² St. iv. l. 7.—In a mountain in Norsia is the Sibyl's grot or cavern.

³ St. xiii. ll. 3 and 4.—Maurice, emperor of Constantinople, who by large offers incited Sigisbert to this expedition.

⁴ St. xiii. l. 6.—One of the passes of the Alps, says an Italian commentator, but says not which.

⁵ St. xiii. l. 7.—Eutar, king of the Lombards, cut off Sigisbert's retreat.

⁶ St. xiv. l. 1.—Clovis, king of France, marched with a great army into Italy against the Lombards, and thought, by taking advantage of the civil discords that sprang up amongst them, to obtain an easy conquest. The duke of Benevento, having few forces to oppose him, feigned at first an intention of attacking him, and then retreating, left his camp full of provisions and wine. The Franks entered the camp, the soldiers gave themselves up to excess till they were intoxicated, and the duke coming upon them in the night, when they were asleep, killed every man.

⁷ St. xv. l. i.—Childibert, uncle of Clovis, desirous of revenging the death of his nephew, sent three generals, with three great armies, into Lombardy, against the duke of Benevento. One general dying, his army joined the other two; but a dreadful distemper breaking out amongst them, and they being disappointed of the succours which they expected from the emperor, the remainder returned home.

⁸ St. xvi. ll. 5 and 6.—Stefano the second, being raised to the papal chair, Astolpho, king of Lombardy, disturbed the tranquillity of the church: the pope, endeavouring to conciliate him with gifts, had recourse to Pepin, king of France, for assistance, who passed into Italy, and compelled Alphonso to sue for peace. Pepin having left Italy, Alphonso recommenced hostilities against the pope, and was once more compelled by Pepin to make peace. To Pope Adrian succeeded Leo III., who, being ill

treated by the Romans, and threatened with imprisonment, fled to Charlemagne, who sent him with great honours to Rome, and afterwards coming there himself, was anointed by the pontiff emperor of the Romans.

⁹ St. xvii. ll. 1, 2, 3.—*Paestina* (in Venetian *Polestrina*) is an island about six miles beyond Murrano, another islet situated about a mile from Venice, where *Le Formaci* (the kilns, or glass-houses) are situated.

¹⁰ St. xviii. l. 1.—*Lewis of Burgundy*, making an expedition into Italy, was conquered by the Emperor *Berengarius I.* and made prisoner, but set at liberty on his taking an oath never more to invade Italy. The Burgundian, afterwards forgetting his oath, renewed hostilities, and being again taken prisoner by *Berengarius II.*, was, as a punishment for his breach of faith deprived of his sight; and in this condition he returned home.

¹¹ St. xix. l. 1.—*Hugh*, count of *Arles*, called in by the Italians to their assistance against the *Berengarii*: he succeeded greatly at first, but, being afterwards overpowered, was constrained to ask for peace, and retired to *Arles*, leaving his son, *Lothario* behind him, who soon after died.

¹² St. xx.—*Pope Clement IV.* invited *Charles of Anjou*, brother of *St. Lewis*, king of France, against *Manfred*, an enemy to the church, who had usurped the kingdom of *Naples* and *Sicily*. *Charles* arriving, overthrew *Manfred* at *Benevento*, slew him, and took possession of *Sicily*. *Conradine*, to whom the kingdom belonged in right of succession, brought a force from Germany and engaged *Charles*, but was defeated, made prisoner, and beheaded. *Charles* reigned in *Sicily*, and the French began to exercise great tyranny over the *Sicilians*, and, among other enormities, committed violence on their women. Hence a plot was concerted all over the island, that as soon as the vesper bell rang, the inhabitants, ready armed, should sally forth from their houses, and fall upon their oppressors. This was put into execution, and eight thousand French were slain to revenge the dishonour offered to the *Sicilians* in the persons of their wives.

¹³ St. xxi. ll. 3 and 4.—The count of *Armagnac* came with twenty thousand French soldiers in aid of the *Florentines* and *Bolognese*, against *Galeazzo*, duke of *Milan*, who, having left a numerous garrison in *Alexandria*, with the rest of his forces attacked the enemy, at the same time that they were attacked by those from the city, and cut all the Franks to pieces; the count dying soon after of his wounds in prison.

¹⁴ St. xxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—*Joan*, queen of *Naples*, took for her husband *James*, count of *Marca*, who was descended from the kings of France, on condition that he should be contented with the title of prince of *Tarantò*, duke of *Calabria*, and vicar of the kingdom, and that the administration of public affairs should remain with her. But he, attempting to seize the whole government, calling himself king, she, with the assistance of *Francis Sforza*, deprived him of all. *Ludovico*, *Rinieri*, and *John of Anjou*, asserting their pretensions to the crown, were severally defeated by *Alphonso* and *Ferrando*: these the poet calls the *Angioini* or *Anjouites*.

¹⁵ St. xxiv. ll. 1 and 2.—*Charles VIII.*, king of France, assisted by *Ludovico Sforza*, duke of *Milan*, a mortal enemy to *Alphonso* of *Aragon*, king of *Naples*, came, with all the French nobility and a vast army, into Italy. *Alphonso*, giving way to the better fortune of *Charles*, left the

kingdom to his son Ferrando, and retired with his treasures to Sicily. Ferrando, unable to shake head against the Franks, was soon divested of all his fortresses and places except the Isle of Ischia, gallantly defended by Inigo del Gualato. At length all the princes of Italy, alarmed at the rapid victories of Charles, entered into a league against him: and the Neapolitans, detesting the haughty government of the Franks, recalled Ferrando, who, assisted by the Venetians, recovered the kingdom.

¹⁶ St. xxviii. l. 1.—Nereus was a Grecian commander, celebrated for the beauty of his person by Homer. Ladus was the name of a messenger of Alexander the Great, remarkable for his swiftness, mentioned by Catullus, Martial, and Sotinus.

¹⁷ St. xxxiii. ll. 1 and 2.—After the departure of Charles VIII., King Ferrando was received into Naples, and only one castle held out for the Franks, when a Moorish slave devised a scheme to introduce the Arragonese into the church of the Santa Croce. This treacherous Moor, calling the marquis one night to a parley on the walls, shot him with an arrow in the throat.

¹⁸ St. xxxiv. ll. 1 and 2.—Lewis the XIIth, king of France, successor to Charles VIII., and a constant enemy to Ludovico Sforza, had resolved to take from him the government; for which intent he made a league with Pope Alexander VI., with the Venetians, and with Ferrando, king of Spain. He thus drove Ludovico from his government, who fled to the emperor of Germany.

Under the symbol of a mulberry-tree the poet figures the above-mentioned Ludovico Sforza, who was called *il Moro* (a mulberry-tree) from the darkness of his complexion.

¹⁹ St. xxxvi. ll. 5 and 6.—The Swiss, being corrupted by the bribes of the French, betrayed Ludovico to them; who was carried into France, where he died, after five years' imprisonment.

²⁰ St. xxxvii. ll. 1 and 2.—Cæsar Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI., who, by the favour of Lewis XII., king of France, took to wife Charlotte d'Alabretto of the blood royal, he having renounced the cardinal's hat.

²¹ St. xxxvii. ll. 5 and 6.—The saw was the arms of the Bentivogli, and the acorns those of Pope Julius II.

²² St. xxxvii. l. 7.—The Genoese having created Paulo de Nove doge, a man taken from the dregs of the people, and asserted at the same time that Genoa was not subject to any prince, Lewis marched against them with a powerful army, and the city surrendered to him at discretion.

²³ St. xxxviii. ll. 1 and 2.—The Venetians sent a numerous army, who engaged the army of the French at Ghisradada, though contrary to the opinion of the Venetian general. After an obstinate battle, the Venetians were defeated with great loss; the gates of Bergamo, Brescia, and Cremona were thrown open to Lewis; many other places surrendered to him, and he prepared to attack Venice itself.

²⁴ St. xl. l. 7.—Alphonso, duke of Ferrara.

²⁵ St. xlii. ll. 1 and 2.—King Lewis, exasperated at being driven out of Italy, made a peace and league with the Venetians, and sent a fresh army against Maximilian Sforza. Maximilian, assisted with the pope's money

colled in the Swiss to his aid, not without risk (as the poet observes), considering the fate of his father; however, joined with these, he attacked and entirely defeated the French army; for which victory the pope bestowed on the Swiss the title of Defenders of the Holy Church.

²⁴ St. xlv. l. 3.—Ferrando, king of Spain, being dead, the Emperor Maximilian invaded Lombardy with fourteen thousand Swiss and seven thousand Belgians, with an intention of laying siege to Milan, defended by Trivulzio and Charles of Bourbon.

²⁷ St. xlv. l. 1.—The Emperor Charles V. made a league with Pope Leo, in order to drive the French out of Milan; and restore Francesco Sforza, nephew of the first Francis, and son of Ludovico il Moro. The French were now become odious to the Milanese. Sforza engaging Lantio, put him to flight, and, entering the city by night, was made duke.

²⁸ St. xlix. l. 3.—The battle of Bicocca was most fatal in its immediate consequences to the Swiss, and in its ultimate consequences to the French.

King Francis, resolving to recover the duchy of Milan, passed into Lombardy with a great army, when all submitted to him except Pavia. Being attacked in the night by the Marquises of Pescara and Guasto, he was vanquished and made prisoner, though afterwards set at liberty upon giving up his sons for hostages.

²⁹ St. liv. l. 8.—Henry VIII. of England.

³⁰ St. lv. l. 1.—The assault of Rome by the constable Bourbon. The kingdom in this canto, and others treating of Italian wars, means Naples.

³¹ St. lvi. l. 8.—Naples, where Parthenope the syren was said to have been buried.

³² St. lvii. l. 1.—He alludes here to the great naval engagement at Cape d'Orso, between the imperialists and the French, while Naples was besieged, when the French fleet was commanded by Philip Dorea, who held the place of Andrew Dorea, of whom so much is said in the 16th Book.

We have now gone the round of this most wearisome picture-gallery, and are about to escape into the open air. Ariosto has most grievously abused the privilege of poetical prophecy: in his other least successful flights there is some great redeeming grace: in these the beauties are so thinly scattered, that they hardly serve to lead us on to the conclusion.

³³ St. c. l. 7.—The city of Cyrene was built by Battus.

³⁴ St. cii. l. 8.—Hoole says that the ancient Nubians, interpreting the Gospel literally, were branded with the cross.

³⁵ St. cvi. l. 8.—It is hardly necessary to observe that this is the king of Abyssinia, who was formerly so called, it is supposed, as uniting the royal and priestly character. Our 'Priest' is no doubt a corruption of 'presto,' as *Prestor John* is of 'Prete janni.'

³⁶ St. cx. l. 1.—Not only Dante (I believe on authority to be found in the fathers) has assigned a seat to paradise, but it is laid down in the *mappa mondo* of Fra Mauro, that wonderful monument of genius and industry, in which so many geographical discoveries are anticipated.

NOTES TO CANTO XXXIV.

¹ St. i. ll. 1 and 2.—It is strange that this prophecy should have been interpreted in any other way than as referring to the war and waste wrought by the transalpine nations in Italy; yet (as Mr. Hoole observes) another explanation of the poet's meaning has been given by the majority of Italian commentators.

² St. iii. l. 4.—Who drove the harpies from the table of Phineus, a blind king of Thrace; the story in Ovid which suggested that in the text.

³ St. xi. l. 1.—It was natural enough for Ariosto to take his idea of hell rather from Boccaccio than from Dante; but Lydia's story is certainly but a bad imitation of that of Theodore and Honoria.

⁴ St. xii. l. 1.—Anaxarete was a girl of Salamis, who so arrogantly despised the addresses of Iphis, a youth of ignoble birth, that the lover hung himself at her door. She saw this sad spectacle without emotion, and was changed into a stone.—See Ovid's *Met.*

⁵ St. xiv. l. 4.—Æneas.

⁶ St. iv. l. 7.—It is impossible for the reader who is most incredulous as to allegory not to suspect a mystic meaning in many parts of this canto, in the lines where we are told that the smoke had not alone outwardly stained Astolpho, but had searched even beneath his clothes—in his long search for a fountain in order to cleanse himself preparatory to his journey to Paradise—in his desire to reach heaven—his contempt of earth—and finally his accomplishment of his object through intensity of aspiration.

⁷ St. lviii. l. 1.—This introduction of St. John, which to us must appear so indecent and extravagant, will probably be attributed by many to the character of the nation, or to that of the religion, to which Ariosto belonged. For myself, I ascribe it simply to the character of his age, and my reason for so doing is, that Harrington, an Englishman and a Protestant, in commenting upon this passage, expresses neither scandal nor surprise; and indeed would seem to have considered it as an edifying allegory.

⁸ St. lxxx. ll. 7 and 8.—I have before observed that Ariosto, like Dante, was no papist, though a Roman Catholic.

NOTES TO CANTO XXXV.

¹ St. iv. ll. 7 and 8.—Mr. Hoole supposes these lines to have been taken from the *Paradiso*, canto xix. verse 129, and so they probably were. If so, however, we must admit that Ariosto has given us the husk without the kernel of Dante. The lines of Dante are thus spiritedly given by Mr. Carey:

The lame one of Jerusalem shall see
A unit for his virtue, for his vices
No less a mark than millions.

² St. vi. ll. 1 and 2.—The town is Ferrara.

³ St. xiv. ll. 5 and 6.—Another allusion to the white eagle of the house of Este.

⁴ St. xviii. l. 1, 2, 3, 4.—It is impossible to read these lines without thinking of something like a corresponding passage in the fifth book of *The Paradise Lost*, where Raphael, addressing Adam, as St. John the Baptist says,

Though what if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like more than on Earth is thought?

The followers of the mystic philosophers in the age of Ariosto and that of Milton seem to have believed in the existence of two worlds, one of things and the other of types, perhaps from too literal an interpretation of doctrines which were purely allegorical; and it appears that some of the interpreters of the Pythagorean philosophy imagined the seventh sphere of their master to be the moon (Ariosto's land of types). It is, at any rate, clear, that much of the mystery of the present canto, the pre-existent souls, "the sisters three, and such branches of learning," savour strongly of Platonic and Pythagorean doctrines.

⁵ St. xxiv. l. 7.—A town situated at the roots of Parnassus.

⁶ St. xxvii. ll. 1 and 2.—This took its rise from a story-book narration
Of "the tale of Troy divine,"

an *ignis fatuus* which misled many. Hence the attempt to give a different colouring to the Trojan war in the *Troilus and Cressida* of Shakespeare.

For the charge that

Penelope was but a courtesan,

Ariosto has older authorities. Her intrigues with Pan was said to have been manifested by its fruits, and more scandal is reported of her in the *Classical Dictionary*.

⁷ St. xxviii. l. 1.—In rescuing the character of Dido, Ariosto has yet better foundation; since it is agreed that Virgil has overlapt a space of 300 years in order to bring her and Æneas together. Ariosto probably eulogizes her chastity on the ground of the story of her having killed herself to avoid marrying Iarbas. Hence Petrarch in his triumph of chastity places her among his examples of chaste women.

⁸ St. xxviii. ll. 7 and 8.—The characterising St. John as an author is to be sure as ridiculous as making St. James a Moor-slayer; but we must recollect that every age, every country, and every sect, entertains notions of persons which must be monstrous in the eyes of those who are not swayed by their partialities.

