

Jerusalem Delivered

Torquato Tasso

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by Torquato Tasso

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Gerusalemme Liberata
("Jerusalem Delivered")

by

Torquato Tasso
(1544-1595)

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FIRST BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

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

I

The sacred armies, and the godly knight,

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

II

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

III

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

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

VIII

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

IX

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

X

And with such care his busy work he plied,
That to naught else his acting thoughts he bent:
In young Rinaldo fierce desires he spied,
And noble heart of rest impatient;
To wealth or sovereign power he naught applied
His wits, but all to virtue excellent;
Patterns and rules of skill, and courage bold,
He took from Guelpho, and his fathers old.

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

But when recovered, he considered more,
The man, his manner, and his message said;
If erst he wished, now he longed sore
To end that war, whereof he Lord was made;
Nor swelled his breast with uncouth pride therefore,
That Heaven on him above this charge had laid,

But, for his great Creator would the same,
His will increased: so fire augmenteth flame.

XIX

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

XX

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

XXI

"Warriors, whom God himself elected hath
His worship true in Sion to restore,
And still preserved from danger, harm and scath,
By many a sea and many an unknown shore,
You have subjected lately to his faith
Some provinces rebellious long before:
And after conquests great, have in the same
Erected trophies to his cross and name.

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

"What to this hour successively is done
Was full of peril, to our honor small,
Naught to our first designment, if we shun
The purposed end, or here lie fixed all.

What boots it us there wares to have begun,
Or Europe raised to make proud Asia thrall,
If our beginnings have this ending known,
Not kingdoms raised, but armies overthrown?

XXV

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

"These strifes, unless I far mistake the thing,
And discords raised oft in disordered sort,

Your disobedience and ill managing
Of actions lost, for want of due support,
Refer I justly to a further spring,
Spring of sedition, strife, oppression, tort,
I mean commanding power to sundry given,
In thought, opinion, worth, estate, uneven.

XXXI

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

XXXII

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

XXXIII

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

My mind, Time's enemy, Oblivion's foe,
Disposer true of each noteworthy thing,
Oh, let thy virtuous might avail me so,
That I each troop and captain great may sing,
That in this glorious war did famous grow,
Forgot till now by Time's evil handling:
This work, derived from my treasures dear,
Let all times hearken, never age outwear.

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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

XL

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

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

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

XLIV

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

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

Now groan, now armed, this champion captive led.

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

L

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

LI

Tatine their guide, and except Tatine, none
Of all the Greeks went with the Christian host;
O sin, O shame, O Greece accurst alone!
Did not this fatal war affront thy coast?
Yet safest thou an idle looker-on,
And glad attendest which side won or lost:
Now if thou be a bonds slave vile become,
No wrong is that, but God's most righteous doom.

LII

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

LIII

Dudon of Consa was their guide and lord,
And for of worth and birth alike they been,
They chose him captain, by their free accord,
For he most acts had done, most battles seen;
Grave was the man in years, in looks, in word,

His locks were gray, yet was his courage green,
Of worth and might the noble badge he bore,
Old scars of grievous wounds received of yore.

LIV

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

LV

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

LVI

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

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

Sophia by Adige's flowery bank him bore,
Sophia the fair, spouse to Bertoldo great,
Fit mother for that pearl, and before
The tender imp was weaned from the teat,

The Princess Maud him took, in Virtue's lore
She brought him up fit for each worthy feat,
Till of these wares the golden trump he hears,
That soundeth glory, fame, praise in his ears.

LX

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

LXI

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

LXII

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

LXIII

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

LXIV

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

LXV

But now was passed every regiment,
Each band, each troop, each person worth regard
When Godfrey with his lords to counsel went,

And thus the Duke his princely will declared:
"I will when day next clears the firmament,
Our ready host in haste be all prepared,
Closely to march to Sion's noble wall,
Unseen, unheard, or undescried at all.

LXVI

"Prepare you then for travel strong and light,
Fierce to the combat, glad to victory."
And with that word and warning soon was dight,
Each soldier, longing for near coming glory,
Impatient be they of the morning bright,
Of honor so them pricked the memory:
But yet their chieftain had conceived a fear
Within his heart, but kept it secret there.

LXVII

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

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

Aurora bright her crystal gates unbarred,
And bridegroom-like forth stept the glorious sun,

When trumpets loud and clarions shrill were heard,
And every one to rouse him fierce begun,
Sweet music to each heart for war prepared,
The soldiers glad by heaps to harness run;
So if with drought endangered be their grain,
Poor ploughmen joy when thunders promise rain.

LXXII

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

LXXIII

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

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

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

LXXVII

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

LXXVIII

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

LXXIX

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

LXXX

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

LXXXI

The brazen trump of iron-winged fame,
That mingleth faithful troth with forged lies,
Foretold the heathen how the Christians came,
How thitherward the conquering army hies,
Of every knight it sounds the worth and name,
Each troop, each band, each squadron it descries,
And threat'neth death to those, fire, sword and slaughter,
Who held captived Israel's fairest daughter.

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

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

LXXXV

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

LXXXVI

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

LXXXVII

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

LXXXVIII

Thus thought the tyrant in his traitorous mind,
But durst not follow what he had decreed,
Yet if the innocents some mercy find,
From cowardice, not truth, did that proceed,
His noble foes durst not his craven kind
Exasperate by such a bloody deed.

For if he need, what grace could then be got,
If thus of peace he broke or loosed the knot?

LXXXIX

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

XC

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

SECOND BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

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

I

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

II

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

III

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

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

VIII

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

IX

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

X

With busy search the tyrant gan to invade
Each house, each hold, each temple and each tent
To them the fault or faulty one bewrayed
Or hid, he promised gifts or punishment,
His idle charms the false enchanter said,
But in this maze still wandered and miswent,
For Heaven decreed to conceal the same,
To make the miscreant more to feel his shame.

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

With virgin beams this spotless Cynthia shone.

XV

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

XVI

Sophronia she, Olindo hight the youth,
Both or one town, both in one faith were taught,
She fair, he full of bashfulness and truth,
Loved much, hoped little, and desired nought,
He durst not speak by suit to purchase ruth,
She saw not, marked not, wist not what he sought,
Thus loved, thus served he long, but not regarded,
Unseen, unmarked, unpitied, unrewarded.

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

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

XX

Her molest boldness, and that lightning ray
Which her sweet beauty streamed on his face,
Had struck the prince with wonder and dismay,
Changed his cheer, and cleared his moody grace,
That had her eyes disposed their looks to play,

The king had snared been in love's strong lace;
But wayward beauty doth not fancy move,
A frown forbids, a smile engendereth love.

XXI

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

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

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

XXV

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

XXVI

Ta'en was the damsel, and without remorse,
The king condemned her guiltless to the fire,
Her veil and mantle plucked they off by force,

And bound her tender arms in twisted wire:
Dumb was the silver dove, while from her corse
These hungry kites plucked off her rich attire,
And for some deal perplexed was her sprite,
Her damask late, now changed to purest white.

XXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

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

XXXII

He thinks, such thoughts self-guiltiness finds out,
They scorned his power, and therefore scorned the pain,

"Nay, nay," quoth he, "let be your strife and doubt,
You both shall win, and fit reward obtain."
With that the sergeants hent the young man stout,
And bound him likewise in a worthless chain;
Then back to back fast to a stake both ties,
Two harmless turtles dight for sacrifice.

XXXIII

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

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

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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

XL

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

XLI

This lusty lady came from Persia late,
She with the Christians had encountered eft,
And in their flesh had opened many a gate,
By which their faithful souls their bodies left,
Her eye at first presented her the state
Of these poor souls, of hope and help bereft,
Greedy to know, as is the mind of man,
Their cause of death, swift to the fire she ran.

XLII

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

XLIII

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

XLIV

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

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

And come to you for mercy and for ruth.

L

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

LI

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

LII

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

LIII

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

LIV

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

LV

A hard division, when the harmless sheep
Must leave their lambs to hungry wolves in charge,
But labor's virtues watching, ease her sleep,
Trouble best wind that drives salvation's barge,
The Christians fled, whither they took no keep,

Some strayed wild among the forests large,
Some to Emmaus to the Christian host,
And conquer would again their houses lost.

LVI

Emmaus is a city small, that lies
From Sion's walls distant a little way,
A man that early on the morn doth rise,
May thither walk ere third hour of the day.
Oh, when the Christian lord this town espies
How merry were their hearts? How fresh? How gay?
But for the sun inclined fast to west,
That night there would their chieftain take his rest.

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

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

LXI

Aletes laid his right hand on his heart,
Bent down his head, and cast his eyes full low,
And reverence made with courtly grace and art,

For all that humble lore to him was know;
His sober lips then did he softly part,
Whence of pure rhetoric, whole streams outflow,
And thus he said, while on the Christian lords
Down fell the mildew of his sugared words:

LXII

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

LXIII

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

LXIV

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

LXV

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

LXVI

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

LXVII

"Thy sign is in his Apogaeon placed,

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

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

"Tell me if, great in counsel, arms and gold,
The Prince of Egypt war 'gainst you prepare,
What if the valiant Turks and Persians bold,
Unite their forces with Cassanoe's heir?
Oh then, what marble pillar shall uphold
The falling trophies of your conquest fair?
Trust you the monarch of the Greekish land?
That reed will break; and breaking, wound your hand.

LXXII

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

LXXIII

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

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

"Perhaps thy fortune doth control the wind,
Doth loose or bind their blasts in secret cave,
The sea, pardie, cruel and deaf by kind,
Will hear thy call, and still her raging wave:
But if our armed galleys be assigned
To aid those ships which Turks and Persians have,
Say then, what hope is left thy slender fleet?
Dare flocks of crows, a flight of eagles meet?

LXXVII

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

LXXVIII

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

LXXIX

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

LXXX

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

LXXXI

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

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

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

Our spear that hurts, our sword that wounds our foes.

LXXXV

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

LXXXVI

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

LXXXVII

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

LXXXVIII

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

LXXXIX

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

XC

His semblance fierce and speechless proud, provoke
The soldiers all, "War, war," at once to cry,
Nor could they tarry till their chieftain spoke,
But for the knight was more inflamed hereby,
His lap he opened and spread forth his cloak:

"To mortal wars," he says, "I you defy;"
And this he uttered with fell rage and hate,
And seemed of Janus' church to undo the gate.

XC I

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

XC II

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

XC III

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

XC IV

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

XC V

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

XC VI

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

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

XCVII

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

THIRD BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

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

I

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

II

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

III

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

With joyful shouts, and acclamations sweet.

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

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

VIII

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

IX

This while the wary watchman looked over,
From tops of Sion's towers, the hills and dales,
And saw the dust the fields and pastures cover,
As when thick mists arise from moory vales.
At last the sun-bright shields he gan discover,

And glistening helms for violence none that fails,
The metal shone like lightning bright in skies,
And man and horse amid the dust descies.

X

Then loud he cries, "O what a dust ariseth!
O how it shines with shields and targets clear!
Up, up, to arms, for valiant heart despiseth
The threatened storm of death and danger near.
Behold your foes;" then further thus deviseth,
"Haste, haste, for vain delay increaseth fear,
These horrid clouds of dust that yonder fly,
Your coming foes does hide, and hide the sky."

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

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

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

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

XX

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

XXI

This while forth pricked Clorinda from the throng
And 'gainst Tancredi set her spear in rest,
Upon their helms they cracked their lances long,

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

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

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

XXV

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

XXVI

"So singled, may we both our courage try:"
Clorinda to that motion yielded glad,
And helmless to the forestward gan hie,
Whither the prince right pensive wend and sad,
And there the virgin gan him soon defy.
One blow she stricken, and he warded had,
When he cried, "Hold, and ere we prove our might,
First hear thou some conditions of the fight."

XXVII

She stayed, and desperate love had made him bold;

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

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

XXXII

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

XXXIII

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

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

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

And all that dwells by Nilus' unknown springs.

XXXIX

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

XL

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

XLI

While thus they tell their foemen's worthiness,
The slaughter rageth in the plain at large.
Tancred and young Rinaldo break the press,
They bruise the helm, and press the sevenfold targe;
The troop by Dudon led performed no less,
But in they come and give a furious charge:
Argantes' self fell at one single blow,
Inglorious, bleeding lay, on earth full low:

XLII

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

XLIII

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

XLIV

Algazar's breastplate, of fine temper made,
Nor Corban's helmet, forged by magic art,
Could save their owners, for Lord Dudon's blade
Cleft Corban's head, and pierced Algazar's heart,
And their proud souls down to the infernal shade,
From Amurath and Mahomet depart;

Not strong Argantes thought his life was sure,
He could not safely fly, nor fight secure.

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

He came and breathed vengeance from his breast
'Gainst him that noble Dudon late had slain;
And being come thus spoke he to the rest,
"Warriors, why stand you gazing here in vain?
Pale death our valiant leader had opprest,

Come wreak his loss, whom bootless you complain.
Those walls are weak, they keep but cowards out
No rampier can withstand a courage stout.

LI

"Of double iron, brass or adamant,
Or if this wall were built of flaming fire,
Yet should the Pagan vile a fortress want
To shroud his coward head safe from mine ire;
Come follow then, and bid base fear avaunt,
The harder work deserves the greater hire;"
And with that word close to the walls he starts,
Nor fears he arrows, quarries, stones or darts.

LII

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

LIII

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

LIV

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

LV

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

LVI

The town is stored of troughs and cisterns, made
To keep fresh water, but the country seems
Devoid of grass, unfit for ploughmen's trade,

Not fertile, moist with rivers, wells and streams;
There grow few trees to make the summer's shade,
To shield the parched land from scorching beams,
Save that a wood stands six miles from the town,
With aged cedars dark, and shadows brown.

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

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

LXI

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

LXII

"Next look on him that seems for counsel fit,

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

LXIII

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

LXIV

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

LXV

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

LXVI

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

LXVII

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

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

Thus he complained; but now the sable shade
Ycleped night, had thick enveloped
The sun in veil of double darkness made;
Sleep, eased care; rest, brought complaint to bed:
All night the wary duke devising laid
How that high wall should best be battered,
How his strong engines he might aptly frame,
And whence get timber fit to build the same.

LXXII

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

LXXIII

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

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

The shooter grew, the broad-leaved sycamore,
The barren plantain, and the walnut sound,
The myrrh, that her foul sin doth still deplore,
The alder owner of all waterish ground,
Sweet juniper, whose shadow hurteth sore,
Proud cedar, oak, the king of forests crowned;
Thus fell the trees, with noise the deserts roar;
The beasts, their caves, the birds, their nests forlore.

FOURTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan his fiends and spirits assembleth all,
And sends them forth to work the Christians woe,
False Hydraort their aid from hell doth call,
And sends Armida to entrap his foe:
She tells her birth, her fortune, and her fall,
Asks aid, allures and wins the worthies so
That they consent her enterprise to prove;
She wins them with deceit, craft, beauty, love.

I

While thus their work went on with lucky speed,
And reared rams their horned fronts advance,
The Ancient Foe to man, and mortal seed,
His wannish eyes upon them bent askance;
And when he saw their labors well succeed,
He wept for rage, and threatened dire mischance.
He choked his curses, to himself he spake,
Such noise wild bulls that softly bellow make.

II

At last resolving in his damned thought

To find some let to stop their warlike feat,
He gave command his princes should be brought
Before the throne of his infernal seat.
O fool! as if it were a thing of naught
God to resist, or change his purpose great,
Who on his foes doth thunder in his ire,
Whose arrows hailstones he and coals of fire.

III

The dreary trumpet blew a dreadful blast,
And rumbled through the lands and kingdoms under,
Through wasteness wide it roared, and hollows vast,
And filled the deep with horror, fear and wonder,
Not half so dreadful noise the tempests cast,
That fall from skies with storms of hail and thunder,
Not half so loud the whistling winds do sing,
Broke from the earthen prisons of their King.

IV

The peers of Pluto's realm assembled been
Amid the palace of their angry King,
In hideous forms and shapes, tofore unseen,
That fear, death, terror and amazement bring,
With ugly paws some trample on the green,
Some gnaw the snakes that on their shoulders hing,
And some their forked tails stretch forth on high,
And tear the twinkling stars from trembling sky.

V

There were Silenus' foul and loathsome rout,
There Sphinxes, Centaurs, there were Gorgons fell,
There howling Scillas, yawling round about,
There serpents hiss, there seven-mouthed Hydras yell,
Chimera there spues fire and brimstone out,
And Polyphemus blind supporteth hell,
Besides ten thousand monsters therein dwells
Misshaped, unlike themselves, and like naught else.

VI

About their princes each took his wonted seat
On thrones red-hot, ybuilt of burning brass,
Pluto in midst heaved his trident great,
Of rusty iron huge that forged was,
The rocks on which the salt sea billows beat,
And Atlas' tops, the clouds in height that pass,
Compared to his huge person mole-hills be,
So his rough front, his horns so lifted he.

VII

The tyrant proud frowned from his lofty cell,
And with his looks made all his monsters tremble,
His eyes, that full of rage and venom swell,
Two beacons seem, that men to arms assemble,
His feltered locks, that on his bosom fell,
On rugged mountains briars and thorns resemble,
His yawning mouth, that foamed clotted blood,
Gaped like a whirlpool wide in Stygian flood.

VIII

And as Mount Etna vomits sulphur out,
With cliffs of burning crags, and fire and smoke,
So from his mouth flew kindled coals about,
Hot sparks and smells that man and beast would choke,
The gnarring porter durst not whine for doubt;
Still were the Furies, while their sovereign spoke,
And swift Cocytus stayed his murmur shrill,
While thus the murderer thundered out his will:

IX

"Ye powers infernal, worthier far to sit
About the sun, whence you your offspring take,
With me that whilom, through the welkin flit,
Down tumbled headlong to this empty lake;
Our former glory still remember it,
Our bold attempts and war we once did make
Gainst him, that rules above the starry sphere,
For which like traitors we lie damned here.

X

"And now instead of clear and gladsome sky,
Of Titan's brightness, that so glorious is,
In this deep darkness lo we helpless lie,
Hopeless again to joy our former bliss,
And more, which makes my griefs to multiply,
That sinful creature man, elected is;
And in our place the heavens possess he must,
Vile man, begot of clay, and born of dust.

XI

"Nor this sufficed, but that he also gave
His only Son, his darling to be slain,
To conquer so, hell, death, sin and the grave,
And man condemned to restore again,
He brake our prisons and would algates save
The souls there here should dwell in woe and pain,
And now in heaven with him they live always
With endless glory crowned, and lasting praise.

XII

"But why recount I thus our passed harms?
Remembrance fresh makes weakened sorrows strong,
Expulsed were we with injurious arms
From those due honors, us of right belong.
But let us leave to speak of these alarms,
And bend our forces gainst our present wrong:
Ah! see you not, how he attempted hath
To bring all lands, all nations to his faith?

XIII

"Then, let us careless spend the day and night,
Without regard what haps, what comes or goes,
Let Asia subject be to Christians' might,
A prey he Sion to her conquering foes,
Let her adore again her Christ aright,
Who her before all nations whilom chose;
In brazen tables he his lore ywrit,

And let all tongues and lands acknowledge it.

XIV

"So shall our sacred altars all be his,
Our holy idols tumbled in the mould,
To him the wretched man that sinful is
Shall pray, and offer incense, myrrh and gold;
Our temples shall their costly deckings miss,
With naked walls and pillars freezing cold,
Tribute of souls shall end, and our estate,
Or Pluto reign in kingdoms desolate.

XV

"Oh, he not then the courage perished clean,
That whilom dwelt within your haughty thought,
When, armed with shining fire and weapons keen,
Against the angels of proud Heaven we fought,
I grant we fell on the Phlegrean green,
Yet good our cause was, though our fortune naught;
For chance assisteth oft the ignobler part,
We lost the field, yet lost we not our heart.

XVI

"Go then, my strength, my hope, my Spirits go,
These western rebels with your power withstand,
Pluck up these weeds, before they overgrow
The gentle garden of the Hebrews' land,
Quench out this spark, before it kindles so
That Asia burn, consumed with the brand.
Use open force, or secret guile unspied;
For craft is virtue gainst a foe defied.

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

About the world they spread forth far and wide,
Filling the thoughts of each ungodly heart
With secret mischief, anger, hate and pride,
Wounding lost souls with sin's empoisoned dart.
But say, my Muse, recount whence first they tried

To hurt the Christian lords, and from what part,
Thou knowest of things performed so long agone,
This latter age hears little truth or none.

XX

The town Damascus and the lands about
Ruled Hidraort, a wizard grave and sage,
Acquainted well with all the damned rout
Of Pluto's reign, even from his tender age;
Yet of this war he could not figure out
The wished ending, or success presage,
For neither stars above, nor powers of hell,
Nor skill, nor art, nor charm, nor devil could tell.

XXI

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

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

"My dear, who underneath these locks of gold,
And native brightness of thy lovely hue,
Hidest grave thoughts, ripe wit, and wisdom old,
More skill than I, in all mine arts untrue,
To thee my purpose great I must unfold,
This enterprise thy cunning must pursue,
Weave thou to end this web which I begin,
I will the distaff hold, come thou and spin.

XXV

"Go to the Christians' host, and there assay
All subtle sleights that women use in love,
Shed brinish tears, sob, sigh, entreat and pray,
Wring thy fair hands, cast up thine eyes above,

For mourning beauty hath much power, men say,
The stubborn hearts with pity frail to move;
Look pale for dread, and blush sometime for shame,
In seeming truth thy lies will soonest frame.

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

Her breasts, two hills o'erspread with purest snow,
Sweet, smooth and supple, soft and gently swelling,

Between them lies a milken dale below,
Where love, youth, gladness, whiteness make their dwelling,
Her breasts half hid, and half were laid to show,
So was the wanton clad, as if this much
Should please the eye, the rest unseen, the touch.

XXXII

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

XXXIII

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

"Sir Knight," quoth she, "your praises reach too high
Above her merit you commend so,
A hapless maid I am, both born to die
And dead to joy, that live in care and woe,
A virgin helpless, fugitive pardie,
My native soil and kingdom thus forego
To seek Duke Godfrey's aid, such store men tell
Of virtuous ruth doth in his bosom dwell.

XXXVII

"Conduct me then that mighty duke before,
If you be courteous, sir, as well you seem."

"Content," quoth he, "since of one womb ybore,
We brothers are, your fortune good esteem
To encounter me whose word prevaieth more
In Godfrey's hearing than you haply deem:
Mine aid I grant, and his I promise too,
All that his sceptre, or my sword, can do."

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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

XL

"And I though bred in Macon's heathenish lore,
Which thou oppressest with thy puissant might,
Yet trust thou wilt an helpless maid restore,
And repossess her in her father's right:
Others in their distress do aid implore
Of kin and friends; but I in this sad plight
Invoke thy help, my kingdom to invade,
So doth thy virtue, so my need persuade.

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

"Prince Arbilan that reigned in his life

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

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

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

L

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

L1

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

LII

"In these extremes, for so my fortune would
Perchance preserve me to my further ill,
One of my noble father's servants old,
That for his goodness bore his child good will,
With store of tears this treason gan unfold,
And said; my guardian would his pupil kill,
And that himself, if promise made be kept,
Should give me poison dire ere next I slept.

LIII

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

LIV

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

LV

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

LVI

"The fort Arontes was, for so the knight
Was called, that my deliverance thus had wrought,
But when the tyrant saw, by mature flight
I had escaped the treasons of his thought,
The rage increased in the cursed wight
Gainst me, and him, that me to safety brought,
And us accused, we would have poisoned
Him, but descried, to save our lives we fled.

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

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

For on my ruin is his safety wrought.

LXI

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

LXII

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

LXIII

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

LXIV

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

LXV

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

LXVI

Besides the kindness of his gentle thought,
Ready to comfort each distressed wight,
The maiden's offer profit with it brought;
For if the Syrian kingdom were her right,
That won, the way were easy, which he sought,

To bring all Asia subject to his might:
There might he raise munition, arms and treasure
To work the Egyptian king and his displeasure.

LXVII

Thus was his noble heart long time betwixt
Fear and remorse, not granting nor denying,
Upon his eyes the dame her lookings fixed,
As if her life and death lay on his saying,
Some tears she shed, with sighs and sobbings mixed,
As if her hopes were dead through his delaying;
At last her earnest suit the duke denayed,
But with sweet words thus would content the maid:

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

"Where none attends, what boots it to complain?
Men's froward hearts are moved with women's tears
As marble stones are pierced with drops of rain,
No plaints find passage through unwilling ears:
The tyrant, haply, would his wraith restrain
Heard he these prayers ruthless Godfrey hears,
Yet not thy fault is this, my chance, I see,
Hath made even pity, pitiless in thee.

LXXII

"So both thy goodness, and good hap, denayed me,
Grief, sorrow, mischief, care, hath overthrown me,
The star that ruled my birthday hath betrayed me,
My genius sees his charge, but dares not own me,

Of queen-like state, my flight hath disarrayed me,
My father died, ere he five years had known me,
My kingdom lost, and lastly resteth now,
Down with the tree sith broke is every bough.

LXXIII

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

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

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

LXXVII

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

LXXVIII

But jolly Eustace, in whose breast the brand
Of love and pity kindled had the flame,
While others softly whispered underhand,

Before the duke with comely boldness came:
"Brother and lord," quoth he, "too long you stand
In your first purpose, yet vouchsafe to frame
Your thoughts to ours, and lend this virgin aid:
Thanks are half lost when good turns are delayed.

LXXIX

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

LXXX

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

LXXXI

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

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

Eustace recalled her, and bespake her thus:
"Beauty's chief darling, let those sorrows be,

For such assistance shall you find in us
As with your need, or will, may best agree:"
With that she cheered her forehead dolorous,
And smiled for joy, that Phoebus blushed to see,
And had she deigned her veil for to remove,
The God himself once more had fallen in love.

LXXXV

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

LXXXVI

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

LXXXVII

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

LXXXVIII

If some, as hopeless that she would be won,
Forebore to love, because they durst not move her,
On them her gentle looks to smile begun,
As who say she is kind if you dare prove her
On every heart thus shone this lustful sun,
All strove to serve, to please, to woo, to love her,
And in their hearts that chaste and bashful were,
Her eye's hot glance dissolved the frost of fear.

LXXXIX

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

XC

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

XCi

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

XCII

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

XCIII

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

XCIV

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

XCV

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

XCVI

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

FIFTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

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

I

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

II

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

III

He called the worthies then, and spake them so:
"Lordlings, you know I yielded to your will,
And gave you license with this dame to go,
To win her kingdom and that tyrant kill:
But now again I let you further know,
In following her it may betide yon ill;
Refrain therefore, and change this forward thought
For death unsent for, danger comes unsought.

IV

"But if to shun these perils, sought so far,
May seem disgraceful to the place yon hold;

If grave advice and prudent counsel are
Esteemed detractors from your courage bold;
Then know, I none against his will debar,
Nor what I granted erst I now withhold;
But he mine empire, as it ought of right,
Sweet, easy, pleasant, gentle, meek and light.

V

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

VI

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

VII

"Since then the feat is easy, danger none,
All set in battle and in hardy fight,
Do thou permit the chosen ten to gone
And aid the damsel:" thus devised the knight,
To make men think the sun of honor shone
There where the lamp of Cupid gave the light:
The rest perceive his guile, and it approve,
And call that knighthood which was childish love.

VIII

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

IX

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

X

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

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

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

XX

Now, if he win, or if he lose the day,
Yet is his praise and glory hence derived,
For that the world will, to his credit, say,
Lo, this is he that with Gernando strived.
The charge some deal thee haply honor may,
That noble Dudon had while here he lived;
But laid on him he would the office shame,
Let it suffice, he durst desire the same.

XXI

If when this breath from man's frail body flies
The soul take keep, or know the things done here,
Oh, how looks Dudon from the glorious skies?
What wrath, what anger in his face appear,
On this proud youngling while he bends his eyes,
Marking how high he doth his feathers rear?

Seeing his rash attempt, how soon he dare,
Though but a boy, with his great worth compare.

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

All that in him was rare or excellent,
All that was good, all that was princely found,
With such sharp words as malice could invent,
He blamed, such power has wicked tongue to wound.
The youth, for everywhere those rumors went,
Of these reproaches heard sometimes the sound;
Nor did for that his tongue the fault amend,
Until it brought him to his woful end.

XXV

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

Thunder his voice, and lightning seemed his brand,
So fell his look, and furious was his cheer,
Gernando trembled, for he saw at hand
Pale death, and neither help nor comfort near,

Yet for the soldiers all to witness stand
He made proud sign, as though he naught did fear,
But bravely drew his little-helping blade,
And valiant show of strong resistance made.

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

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

XXXII

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

XXXIII

Arnoldo, minion of the Prince thus slain,
Augments the fault in telling it, and saith,

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

"Great Prince," quoth Tancred; "set before thine eyes
Rinaldo's worth and courage what it is,
How much our hope of conquest in him lies;
Regard that princely house and race of his;
He that correcteth every fault he spies,
And judgeth all alike, doth all amiss;
For faults, you know, are greater thought or less,
As is the person's self that doth transgress."

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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

XL

These words Tancredi heard and pondered well,
And by them wist how Godfrey's thoughts were bent,
Nor list he longer with these old men dwell,
But turned his horse and to Rinaldo went,
Who, when his noble foe death-wounded fell,
Withdrew him softly to his gorgeous tent;
There Tancred found him, and at large declared
The words and speeches sharp which late you heard.

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

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

XLIV

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

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

L

"For soon, if forces come from Egypt land,
Or other nations that us here confine,
Godfrey will beaten be with his own wand,
And feel he wants that valor great of thine,
Our camp may seem an arm without a hand,
Amid our troops unless thy eagle shine:"

With that came Guelpho and those words approved,
And prayed him go, if him he feared or loved.

LI

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

LII

He rides, revolving in his noble spright
Such haughty thoughts as fill the glorious mind;
On hard adventures was his whole delight,
And now to wondrous acts his will inclined;
Alone against the Pagans would he fight,
And kill their kings from Egypt unto Inde,
From Cynthia's hills and Nilus' unknown spring
He would fetch praise and glorious conquest bring.

LIII

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

LIV

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

LV

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

LVI

"But let him come withouten bond or chain,
For still my thoughts to do him grace are framed;
But if our power he haply shall disdain,
As well I know his courage yet untamed,

To bring him by persuasion take some pain:
Else, if I prove severe, both you be blamed,
That forced my gentle nature gainst my thought
To rigor, lest our laws return to naught."

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

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

LXI

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

LXII

To change his modest thought the dame procureth,
And proffereth heaps of love's enticing treasure:

But as the falcon newly gorged endureth
Her keeper lure her oft, but comes at leisure;
So he, whom fulness of delight assureth
What long repentance comes of love's short pleasure,
Her crafts, her arts, herself and all despiseth,
So base affections fall, when virtue riseth.

LXIII

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

LXIV

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

LXV

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

LXVI

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

LXVII

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

LXVIII

"Before report can bring the tyrant news,
Or his espials certify their king,
Oh let thy goodness these few champions choose,
That to her kingdom should thy handmaid bring;
Who, except Heaven to aid the right refuse,
Recover shall her crown, from whence shall spring
Thy profit; for betide thee peace or war,
Thine all her cities, all her subjects are."

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

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

LXXII

He that would satisfy each good desire,
Withouten partial love, of every knight,
Although he swelled with shame, with grief and ire
To see these fellows and these fashions light;
Yet since by no advice they would retire,
Another way he sought to set them right:
"Write all your names," quoth he, "and see whom chance
Of lot, to this exploit will first advance."

LXXIII

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

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

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

LXXVII

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

LXXVIII

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

LXXIX

The conqueress departs, and with her led
These prisoners, whom love would captive keep,
The hearts of those she left behind her bled,
With point of sorrow's arrow pierced deep.
But when the night her drowsy mantle spread,
And filled the earth with silence, shade and sleep,

In secret sort then each forsook his tent,
And as blind Cupid led them blind they went.

LXXX

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

LXXXI

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

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

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

LXXXV

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

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

LXXXVI

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

LXXXVII

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

LXXXVIII

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

LXXXIX

From mouth to mouth the heavy rumor spread
Of these misfortunes, which dispersed wide
Among the soldiers, great amazement bred;
Famine they doubt, and new come foes beside:
The duke, that saw their wonted courage fled,
And in the place thereof weak fear espied,
With merry looks these cheerful words he spake,
To make them heart again and courage take.

XC

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

XCI

"That Lord who helped you out at every need,
When aught befell this glorious camp amiss,

Shall fortune all your actions well to speed,
On whom his mercy large extended is;
Tofore his tomb, when conquering hands you spread,
With what delight will you remember this?
Be strong therefore, and keep your valors high
To honor, conquest, fame and victory."

XCII

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

SIXTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

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

I

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

II

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

III

"How long shall we, like prisoners in chains,
Captived lie inclosed within this wall?
I see your workmen taking endless pains
To make new weapons for no use at all;
Meanwhile these eastern thieves destroy the plains,

Your towns are burnt, your forts and castles fall,
Yet none of us dares at these gates out-peep,
Or sound one trumpet shrill to break their sleep.

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

"But if in field your wisdom dare not venture
To hazard all your troops to doubtful fight,
Then bind yourself to Godfrey by indenture,
To end your quarrels by one single knight:
And for the Christian this accord shall enter
With better will, say such you know your right
That he the weapons, place and time shall choose,
And let him for his best, that vantage use.

VIII

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

IX

"Bold youth," the tyrant thus began to speak,
"Although I withered seem with age and years,
Yet are not these old arms so faint and weak,
Nor this hoar head so full of doubts and fears

But whenas death this vital thread shall break,
He shall my courage hear, my death who hears:
And Aladine that lived a king and knight,
To his fair morn will have an evening bright.

X

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

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

"Say that a knight, who holds in great disdain
To be thus closed up in secret new,

Will with his sword in open field maintain,
If any dare deny his words for true,
That no devotion, as they falsely feign,
Hath moved the French these countries to subdue;
But vile ambition, and pride's hateful vice,
Desire of rule, and spoil, and covetice.

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

The challenge gan he then at large expose,
With mighty threats, high terms and glorious words;
On every side an angry murmur rose,
To wrath so moved were the knights and lords.
Then Godfrey spake, and said, "The man hath chose
An hard exploit, but when he feels our swords,
I trust we shall so far entreat the knight,
As to excuse the fourth or fifth of fight.

XIX

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

XX

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

XXI

While he was armed, his heart for ire nigh brake,

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

XXII

Thus spake the King, and soon without abode
The troop went forth in shining armor clad,
Before the rest the Pagan champion rode,
His wonted arms and ensigns all he had:
A goodly plan displayed wide and broad,
Between the city and the camp was spread,
A place like that wherein proud Rome beheld
The forward young men manage spear and shield.

XXIII

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

XXIV

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

XXV

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

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

XXXII

The encounter such, upon the tender grass,
Down from his steed the Christian backward fell;
Yet his proud foe so strong and sturdy was,
That he nor shook, nor staggered in his sell,
But to the knight that lay full low, alas,
In high disdain his will thus gan he tell,
"Yield thee my slave, and this thine honor be,
Thou may'st report thou hast encountered me."

XXXIII

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

XXXIV

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

The victor spurred again his light-foot steed,
And made his passage over Otho's heart,
And cried, "These fools thus under foot I tread,
This dare contend with me in equal mart."
Tancred for anger shook his noble head,
So was he grieved with that unknighly part;
The fault was his, he was so slow before,
With double valor would he salve that sore.

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

He roared and thundered when he should have spoken.

XXXIX

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

XL

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

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

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

XLIV

The proud Circassian saw his streaming blood,
Down from his wound, as from a fountain, running,
He sighed for rage, and trembled as he stood,
He blamed his fortune, folly, want of cunning;
He lift his sword aloft, for ire nigh wood,

And forward rushed: Tancred his fury shunning,
With a sharp thrust once more the Pagan hit,
To his broad shoulder where his arm is knit.

XLV

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

XLVI

Uniting force extreme, with endless wrath,
Supporting both with youth and strength untired,
His thundering blows so fast about he layeth,
That skies and earth the flying sparkles fired;
His foe to strike one blow no leisure hath,
Scantly he breathed, though he oft desired,
His warlike skill and cunning all was waste,
Such was Argantes' force, and such his haste.

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

L

Now were they tired both, and well-nigh spent,
Their blows show greater will than power to wound;
But Night her gentle daughter Darkness, sent,
With friendly shade to overspread the ground,

Two heralds to the fighting champions went,
To part the fray, as laws of arms them bound
Aridens born in France, and wise Pindore,
The man that brought the challenge proud before.

L1

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

LII

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

LIII

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

LIV

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

LV

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

LVI

Her the sole daughter of that hapless king,
That of proud Antioch late wore the crown,
The Christian soldiers to Tancredi bring,

When they had sacked and spoiled that glorious town;
But he, in whom all good and virtue spring,
The virgin's honor saved, and her renown;
And when her city and her state was lost,
Then was her person loved and honored most.

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

The silly maid in secret longing pined,
Her hope a mote drawn up by Phoebus' rays,
Her love a mountain seemed, whereon bright shined
Fresh memory of Tancred's worth and praise,
Within her closet if her self she shrined,
A hotter fire her tender heart assays:
Tancred at last, to raise her hope nigh dead,
Before those walls did his broad ensign spread.

LXI

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

LXII

Within the kingly palace builded high,

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

LXIII

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

LXIV

But when she saw the end, and wist withal
Their strong contention should eftsoons begin,
Amazement strange her courage did appal,
Her vital blood was icy cold within;
Sometimes she sighed, sometimes tears let fall,
To witness what distress her heart was in;
Hopeless, dismayed, pale, sad, astonished,
Her love, her fear; her fear, her torment bred.

LXV

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

LXVI

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

LXVII

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

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

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

LXXI

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

LXXII

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

LXXIII

The sly deceiver Cupid thus beguiled
The simple damsel, with his filed tongue:
"Thou wert not born," quoth he, "in desert wild
The cruel bears and savage beasts among,
That you shouldest scorn fair Citherea's child,
Or hate those pleasures that to youth belong,
Nor did the gods thy heart of iron frame;

To be in love is neither sin nor shame.

LXXIV

"Go then, go, whither sweet desire inviteth,
How can thy gentle knight so cruel be?
Love in his heart thy grief and sorrows writeth,
For thy laments how he complaineth, see.
Oh cruel woman, whom no care exciteth
To save his life, that saved and honored thee!
He languished, one foot thou wilt not move
To succor him, yet say'st thou art in love.

LXXV

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

LXXVI

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

LXXVII

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

LXXVIII

With such vain hopes the silly maid abused,
Promised herself mountains and hills of gold;
Yet were her thoughts with doubts and fears confused
How to escape unseen out of that hold,
Because the watchman every minute used
To guard the walls against the Christians bold,
And in such fury and such heat of war,
The gates or seld or never opened are.

LXXIX

With strong Clorinda was Erminia sweet
In surest links of dearest friendship bound,
With her she used the rising sun to greet,
And her, when Phoebus glided under ground,
She made the lovely partner of her sheet;
In both their hearts one will, one thought was found;

Nor aught she hid from that virago bold,
Except her love, that tale to none she told.

LXXX

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

LXXXI

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

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

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

LXXXV

"Or else my tender bosom opened wide,
And heart though pierced with his cruel blade,
The bloody weapon in my wounded side
Might cure the wound which love before had made;

Then should my soul in rest and quiet slide
Down to the valleys of the Elysian shade,
And my mishap the knight perchance would move,
To shed some tears upon his murdered love.

LXXXVI

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

LXXXVII

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

LXXXVIII

"I know the men that have the gate to ward,
If she command are not her will deny,
In what sort else could I beguile the guard?
This way is only left, this will I try:
O gentle love, in this adventure hard
Thine handmaid guide, assist and fortify!
The time, the hour now fitteth best the thing,
While stout Clorinda talketh with the king."

LXXXIX

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

XC

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

XCI

The trusty squire provided needments meet,
As for their journey fitting most should be;
Meanwhile her vesture, pendant to her feet,

Erminia doft, as erst determined she,
Stripped to her petticoat the virgin sweet
So slender was, that wonder was to see;
Her handmaid ready at her mistress' will,
To arm her helped, though simple were her skill.

XCII

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

XCIII

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

XCIV

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

XCV

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

XCVI

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

XCVII

But when these fair adventurers entered were

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

XCVIII

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

XCIX

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

C

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

CI

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

CII

But she, impatient, to whose desire
Grievous and harmful seemed each little stay,
Recounts his steps, and thinks, now draws he nigher,
Now enters in, now speaks, now comes his way;
And that which grieved her most, the careful squire
Less speedy seemed than e'er before that day;
Lastly she forward rode with love to guide,
Until the Christian tents at hand she spied.

CIII

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

CIV

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

CV

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

CVI

Thus parleyed she, poor soul, and never feared
The sudden blow of Fortune's cruel spite,
She stood where Phoebe's splendent beam appeared
Upon her silver armor double bright,
The place about her round she shining cleared
With that pure white wherein the nymph was dight:
The tigress great, that on her helmet laid,
Bore witness where she went, and where she stayed.

CVII

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

CVIII

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

CIX

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

CX

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

CXI

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

CXII

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

CXIII

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

CXIV

Tancred, whose thoughts the squire had filled with doubt
By his sweet words, supposed now hearing this,
Alas! the virgin came to seek me out,
And for my sake her life in danger is;
Himself forthwith he singled from the rout,
And rode in haste, though half his arms he miss;

Among those sandy fields and valleys green,
To seek his love, he galloped fast unseen.

SEVENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

A shepherd fair Erminia entertains,
Whom whilst Tancredi seeks in vain to find,
He is entrapped in Armida's trains:
Raymond with strong Argantes is assigned
To fight, an angel to his aid he gains:
Satan that sees the Pagan's fury blind,
And hasty wrath turn to his loss and harm,
Doth raise new tempest, uproar and alarm.

I

Erminia's steed this while his mistress bore
Through forests thick among the shady treen,
Her feeble hand the bridle reins forlore,
Half in a swoon she was, for fear I ween;
But her fleet courser spared ne'er the more,
To bear her through the desert woods unseen
Of her strong foes, that chased her through the plain,
And still pursued, but still pursued in vain.

II

Like as the weary hounds at last retire,
Windless, displeased, from the fruitless chase,
When the sly beast tapished in bush and brier,
No art nor pains can rouse out of his place:
The Christian knights so full of shame and ire
Returned back, with faint and weary pace:
Yet still the fearful dame fled swift as wind,
Nor ever stayed, nor ever looked behind.

III

Through thick and thin, all night, all day, she drove,
Withouten comfort, company, or guide,
Her plaints and tears with every thought revived,
She heard and saw her griefs, but naught beside:
But when the sun his burning chariot dived
In Thetis' wave, and weary team untied,
On Jordan's sandy banks her course she stayed
At last, there down she light, and down she laid.

IV

Her tears, her drink; her food, her sorrowings,
This was her diet that unhappy night:
But sleep, that sweet repose and quiet brings,
To ease the griefs of discontented wight,
Spread forth his tender, soft, and nimble wings,
In his dull arms folding the virgin bright;
And Love, his mother, and the Graces kept
Strong watch and ward, while this fair lady slept.

V

The birds awoke her with their morning song,
Their warbling music pierced her tender ear,
The murmuring brooks and whistling winds among
The rattling boughs and leaves, their parts did bear;
Her eyes unclosed beheld the groves along
Of swains and shepherd grooms that dwellings were;
And that sweet noise, birds, winds and waters sent,
Provoked again the virgin to lament.

VI

Her complaints were interrupted with a sound,
That seemed from thickest bushes to proceed,
Some jolly shepherd sung a lusty round,
And to his voice he tuned his oaten reed;
Thither she went, an old man there she found,
At whose right hand his little flock did feed,
Sat making baskets, his three sons among,
That learned their father's art, and learned his song.

VIII

"But, father, since this land, these towns and towers
Destroyed are with sword, with fire and spoil,
How many it be unhurt that you and yours
In safety thus apply your harmless toil?"
"My son," quoth he, "this poor estate of ours
Is ever safe from storm of warlike broil;
This wilderness doth us in safety keep,
No thundering drum, no trumpet breaks our sleep.

IX

"Haply just Heaven's defence and shield of right
Doth love the innocence of simple swains,
The thunderbolts on highest mountains light,
And seld or never strike the lower plains;
So kings have cause to fear Bellona's might,
Not they whose sweat and toil their dinner gains,
Nor ever greedy soldier was enticed
By poverty, neglected and despised.

X

"O poverty, chief of the heavenly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crown:
No wish for honor, thirst of others' good,
Can move my heart, contented with mine own:
We quench our thirst with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poison should therein be thrown;
These little flocks of sheep and tender goats
Give milk for food, and wool to make us coats.

XI

"We little wish, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger us to clothe and feed;
These are my sons, their care preserves from stealth
Their father's flocks, nor servants more I need:
Amid these groves I walk off for my health,
And to the fishes, birds, and beasts give heed,
How they are fed, in forest, spring and lake,

And their contentment for example take.

XII

"Time was, for each one hath his doating time,
These silver locks were golden tresses then,
That country life I hated as a crime,
And from the forest's sweet contentment ran,
To Memphis's stately palace would I climb,
And there I but a simple gardener were,
Yet could I mark abuses, see and hear.

XIII

"Enticed on with hope of future gain,
I suffered long what did my soul displease;
But when my youth was spent, my hope was vain.
I felt my native strength at last decrease;
I gan my loss of lusty years complain,
And wished I had enjoyed the country's peace;
I bade the court farewell, and with content
My latter age here have I quiet spent."

XIV

While thus he spake, Erminia hushed and still
His wise discourses heard, with great attention,
His speeches grave those idle fancies kill
Which in her troubled soul bred such dissension;
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within those woods to dwell was her intention,
Till Fortune should occasion new afford,
To turn her home to her desired lord.

XV

She said therefore, "O shepherd fortunate!
That troubles some didst whilom feel and prove,
Yet livest now in this contented state,
Let my mishap thy thoughts to pity move,
To entertain me as a willing mate
In shepherd's life which I admire and love;
Within these pleasant groves perchance my heart,
Of her discomforts, may unload some part.

XVI

"If gold or wealth, of most esteemed dear,
If jewels rich thou diddest hold in prize,
Such store thereof, such plenty have I here,
As to a greedy mind might well suffice."
With that down trickled many a silver tear,
Two crystal streams fell from her watery eyes;
Part of her sad misfortunes then she told,
And wept, and with her wept that shepherd old.

XVII

With speeches kind, he gan the virgin dear
Toward his cottage gently home to guide;
His aged wife there made her homely cheer,
Yet welcomed her, and placed her by her side.
The princess donned a poor pastoral's gear,
A kerchief coarse upon her head she tied;
But yet her gestures and her looks, I guess,
Were such as ill beseemed a shepherdess.

XVIII

Not those rude garments could obscure and hide
The heavenly beauty of her angel's face,
Nor was her princely offspring damnified
Or aught disparaged by those labors base;
Her little flocks to pasture would she guide,
And milk her goats, and in their folds them place,
Both cheese and butter could she make, and frame
Herself to please the shepherd and his dame.

XIX

But oft, when underneath the greenwood shade
Her flocks lay hid from Phoebus' scorching rays,
Unto her knight she songs and sonnets made,
And them engraved in bark of beech and bays;
She told how Cupid did her first invade,
How conquered her, and ends with Tancred's praise:
And when her passion's writ she over read,
Again she mourned, again salt tears she shed.

XX

"You happy trees forever keep," quoth she,
"This woful story in your tender rind,
Another day under your shade maybe
Will come to rest again some lover kind;
Who if these trophies of my griefs he see,
Shall feel dear pity pierce his gentle mind;"
With that she sighed and said, "Too late I prove
There is no troth in fortune, trust in love.

XXI

"Yet may it be, if gracious heavens attend
The earnest suit of a distressed wight,
At my entreat they will vouchsafe to send
To these huge deserts that unthankful knight,
That when to earth the man his eyes shall bend,
And sees my grave, my tomb, and ashes light,
My woful death his stubborn heart may move,
With tears and sorrows to reward my love.

XXII

"So, though my life hath most unhappy been,
At least yet shall my spirit dead be blest,
My ashes cold shall, buried on this green,
Enjoy that good this body ne'er possessed."
Thus she complained to the senseless treen,
Floods in her eyes, and fires were in her breast;
But he for whom these streams of tears she shed,
Wandered far off, alas, as chance him led.

XXIII

He followed on the footsteps he had traced,
Till in high woods and forests old he came,
Where bushes, thorns and trees so thick were placed,
And so obscure the shadows of the same,
That soon he lost the tract wherein he paced;
Yet went he on, which way he could not aim,

But still attentive was his longing ear
If noise of horse or noise of arms he hear.

XXIV

If with the breathing of the gentle wind,
An aspen leaf but shaken on the tree,
If bird or beast stirred in the bushes blind,
Thither he spurred, thither he rode to see:
Out of the wood by Cynthia's favor kind,
At last, with travel great and pains, got he,
And following on a little path, he heard
A rumbling sound, and hasted thitherward.

XXV

It was a fountain from the living stone,
That poured down clear streams in noble store,
Whose conduit pipes, united all in one,
Throughout a rocky channel ghastly roar;
Here Tancred stayed, and called, yet answered none,
Save babbling echo, from the crooked shore;
And there the weary knight at last espies
The springing daylight red and white arise.

XXVI

He sighed sore, and guiltless heaven gan blame,
That wished success to his desire denied,
And sharp revenge protested for the same,
If aught but good his mistress fair betide;
Then wished he to return the way he came,
Although he wist not by what path to ride,
And time drew near when he again must fight
With proud Argantes, that vain-glorious knight.

XXVII

His stalwart steed the champion stout bestrode
And pricked fast to find the way he lost,
But through a valley as he musing rode,
He saw a man that seemed for haste a post,
His horn was hung between his shoulders broad,
As is the guise with us: Tancredi crossed
His way, and gently prayed the man to say,
To Godfrey's camp how he should find the way.

XXVIII

"Sir," in the Italian language answered he,
"I ride where noble Boemond hath me sent:"
The prince thought this his uncle's man should be,
And after him his course with speed he bent,
A fortress stately built at last they see,
Bout which a muddy stinking lake there went,
There they arrived when Titan went to rest
His weary limbs in night's untroubled nest.

XXIX

The courier gave the fort a warning blast;
The drawbridge was let down by them within:
"If thou a Christian be," quoth he, "thou mayest
Till Phoebus shine again, here take thine inn,

The County of Cosenza, three days past,
This castle from the Turks did nobly win."
The prince beheld the piece, which site and art
Impregnable had made on every part.

XXX

He feared within a pile so fortified
Some secret treason or enchantment lay,
But had he known even there he should have died,
Yet should his looks no sign of fear betray;
For wheresoever will or chance him guide,
His strong victorious hand still made him way:
Yet for the combat he must shortly make,
No new adventures list he undertake.

XXXI

Before the castle, in a meadow plain
Beside the bridge's end, he stayed and stood,
Nor was entreated by the speeches vain
Of his false guide, to pass beyond the flood.
Upon the bridge appeared a warlike swain,
From top to toe all clad in armor good,
Who brandishing a broad and cutting sword,
Thus threatened death with many an idle word.

XXXII

"O thou, whom chance or will brings to the soil,
Where fair Armida doth the sceptre guide,
Thou canst not fly, of arms thyself despoil,
And let thy hands with iron chains be tied;
Enter and rest thee from thy weary toil.
Within this dungeon shalt thou safe abide,
And never hope again to see the day,
Or that thy hair for age shall turn to gray;

XXXIII

"Except thou swear her valiant knights to aid
Against those traitors of the Christian crew."
Tancred at this discourse a little stayed,
His arms, his gesture, and his voice he knew:
It was Rambaldo, who for that false maid
Forsook his country and religion true,
And of that fort defender chief became,
And those vile creatures stablished in the same.

XXXIV

The warrior answered, blushing red for shame,
"Cursed apostate, and ungracious wight,
I am that Tancred who defend the name
Of Christ, and have been aye his faithful knight;
His rebel foes can I subdue and tame,
As thou shalt find before we end this fight;
And thy false heart cleft with this vengeful sword,
Shall feel the ire of thy forsaken Lord."

XXXV

When that great name Rambaldo's ears did fill,
He shook for fear and looked pale for dread,

Yet proudly said, "Tancred, thy hap was ill
To wander hither where thou art but dead,
Where naught can help, thy courage, strength and skill;
To Godfrey will I send thy cursed head,
That he may see, how for Armida's sake,
Of him and of his Christ a scorn I make."

XXXVI

This said, the day to sable night was turned,
That scant one could another's arms descry,
But soon an hundred lamps and torches burned,
That cleared all the earth and all the sky;
The castle seemed a stage with lights adorned,
On which men play some pompous tragedy;
Within a terrace sat on high the queen,
And heard, and saw, and kept herself unseen.

XXXVII

The noble baron whet his courage hot,
And busked him boldly to the dreadful fight;
Upon his horse long while he tarried not,
Because on foot he saw the Pagan knight,
Who underneath his trusty shield was got,
His sword was drawn, closed was his helmet bright,
Gainst whom the prince marched on a stately pace,
Wrath in his voice, rage in his eyes and face.

XXXVIII

His foe, his furious charge not well abiding,
Traversed his ground, and stated here and there,
But he, though faint and weary both with riding,
Yet followed fast and still oppressed him near,
And on what side he felt Rambaldo sliding,
On that his forces most employed were;
Now at his helm, not at his hauberk bright,
He thundered blows, now at his face and sight.

XXXIX

Against those numbers battery chief he maketh,
Wherein man's life keeps chiefest residence;
At his proud threats the Gascoign warrior quaketh,
And uncouth fear appalled every sense,
To nimble shifts the knight himself betaketh,
And skippeth here and there for his defence:
Now with his rage, now with his trusty blade,
Against his blows he good resistance made.

XL

Yet no such quickness for defence he used,
As did the prince to work him harm and scathe;
His shield was cleft in twain, his helmet bruised,
And in his blood is other arms did bathe;
On him he heaped blows, with thrusts confused,
And more or less each stroke annoyed him hath;
He feared, and in his troubled bosom strove
Remorse of conscience, shame, disdain and love.

XLI

At last so careless foul despair him made,
He meant to prove his fortune ill or good,
His shield cast down, he took his helpless blade
In both his hands, which yet had drawn no blood,
And with such force upon the prince he laid,
That neither plate nor mail the blow withstood,
The wicked steel seized deep in his right side,
And with his streaming blood his bases dyed:

XLII

Another stroke he lent him on the brow,
So great that loudly rung the sounding steel;
Yet pierced he not the helmet with the blow,
Although the owner twice or thrice did reel.
The prince, whose looks disdainful anger show,
Now meant to use his puissance every deal,
He shook his head and crashed his teeth for ire,
His lips breathed wrath, eyes sparkled shining fire.

XLIII

The Pagan wretch no longer could sustain
The dreadful terror of his fierce aspect,
Against the threatened blow he saw right plain
No tempered armor could his life protect,
He leapt aside, the stroke fell down in vain,
Against a pillar near a bridge erect.
Thence flaming fire and thousand sparks outstart,
And kill with fear the coward Pagan's heart.

XLIV

Toward the bridge the fearful Paynim fled,
And in swift flight, his hope of life reposed;
Himself fast after Lord Tancredi sped,
And now in equal pace almost they closed,
When all the burning lamps extinguished
The shining fort his goodly splendor losed,
And all those stars on heaven's blue face that shone
With Cynthia's self, dispeared were and gone.

XLV

Amid those witchcrafts and that ugly shade,
No further could the prince pursue the chase,
Nothing he saw, yet forward still he made,
With doubtful steps, and ill assured pace;
At last his foot upon a threshold trad,
And ere he wist, he entered had the place;
With ghastly noise the door-leaves shut behind,
And closed him fast in prison dark and blind.

XLVI

As in our seas in the Commachian Bay,
A silly fish, with streams enclosed, striveth,
To shun the fury and avoid the sway
Wherewith the current in that whirlpool driveth,
Yet seeketh all in vain, but finds no way
Out of that watery prison, where she diveth:
For with such force there be the tides in brought,
There entereth all that will, thence issueth naught:

XLVII

This prison so entrapped that valiant knight;
 Of which the gate was framed by subtle train,
 To close without the help of human wight,
 So sure none could undo the leaves again;
 Against the doors he bended all his might,
 But all his forces were employed in vain,
 At last a voice gan to him loudly call,
 "Yield thee," quoth it, "thou art Armida's thrall."

XLVIII

"Within this dungeon buried shalt thou spend
 The res'due of thy woful days and years;"
 The champions list not more with words contend,
 But in his heart kept close his griefs and fears,
 He blamed love, chance gan he reprehend,
 And gainst enchantment huge complaints he rears.
 "It were small loss," softly he thus begun,
 "To lose the brightness of the shining sun;

XLIX

"But I, alas, the golden beam forego
 Of my far brighter sun; nor can I say
 If these poor eyes shall e'er be blessed so,
 As once again to view that shining ray:"
 Then thought he on his proud Circassian foe,
 And said, "Ah! how shall I perform that fray?
 He, and the world with him, will Tancred blame,
 This is my grief, my fault, mine endless shame."

L

While those high spirits of this champion good,
 With love and honor's care are thus oppressed,
 While he torments himself, Argantes wood,
 Waxed weary of his bed and of his rest,
 Such hate of peace, and such desire of blood,
 Such thirst of glory, boiled in his breast;
 That though he scant could stir or stand upright,
 Yet longed he for the appointed day to fight.

LI

The night which that expected day forewent,
 Scantly the Pagan closed his eyes to sleep,
 He told how night her sliding hours spent,
 And rose ere springing day began to peep;
 He called for armor, which incontinent
 Was brought by him that used the same to keep,
 That harness rich old Aladine him gave,
 A worthy present for a champion brave.

LII

He donned them on, not long their riches eyed,
 Nor did he aught with so great weight incline,
 His wonted sword upon his thigh he tied,
 The blade was old and tough, of temper fine.
 As when a comet far and wide descried,
 In scorn of Phoebus midst bright heaven doth shine,
 And tidings sad of death and mischief brings
 To mighty lords, to monarchs, and to kings.

LIII

So shone the Pagan in bright armor clad,
And rolled his eyes great swollen with ire and blood,
His dreadful gestures threatened horror sad,
And ugly death upon his forehead stood;
Not one of all his squires the courage had
To approach their master in his angry mood,
Above his head he shook his naked blade,
And gainst the subtle air vain battle made.

LIV

"The Christian thief," quoth he, "that was so bold
To combat me in hard and single fight,
Shall wounded fall inglorious on the mould,
His locks with clods of blood and dust bedight,
And living shall with watery eyes behold
How from his back I tear his harness bright,
Nor shall his dying words me so entreat,
But that I'll give his flesh to dogs for meat."

LV

Like as a bull when, pricked with jealousy,
He spies the rival of his hot desire,
Through all the fields doth bellow, roar and cry,
And with his thundering voice augments his ire,
And threatening battle to the empty sky,
Tears with his horn each tree, plant, bush and brier,
And with his foot casts up the sand on height,
Defying his strong foe to deadly fight:

LVI

Such was the Pagan's fury, such his cry.
A herald called he then, and thus he spoke;
"Go to the camp, and in my name, defy
The man that combats for his Jesus' sake;"
This said, upon his steed he mounted high,
And with him did his noble prisoner take,
The town he thus forsook, and on the green
He ran, as mad or frantic he had been.

LVII

A bugle small he winded loud and shrill,
That made resound the fields and valleys near,
Louder than thunder from Olympus hill
Seemed that dreadful blast to all that hear;
The Christian lords of prowess, strength and skill,
Within the imperial tent assembled were,
The herald there in boasting terms defied
Tancredi first, and all that durst beside.

LVIII

With sober those ten which chosen were by lot,
And viewed at leisure every lord and knight;
But yet for all his looks not one stepped out,
With courage bold, to undertake the fight:
Absent were all the Christian champions stout,
No news of Tancred since his secret flight;

Boemond far off, and banished from the crew
Was that strong prince who proud Gernando slew:

LIX

And eke those ten which chosen were by lot,
And all the worthies of the camp beside,
After Armida false were followed hot,
When night were come their fight to hide;
The rest their hands and hearts that trusted not,
Blushed for shame, yet silent still abide;
For none there was that sought to purchase fame
In so great peril, fear exiled shame.

LX

The angry duke their fear discovered plain,
By their pale looks and silence from each part,
And as he moved was with just disdain,
These words he said, and from his seat upstart:
"Unworthy life I judge that coward swain
To hazard it even now that wants the heart,
When this vile Pagan with his glorious boast
Dishonors and defies Christ's sacred host.

LXI

"But let my camp sit still in peace and rest,
And my life's hazard at their ease behold.
Come bring me here my fairest arms and best;"
And they were brought sooner than could be told.
But gentle Raymond in his aged breast,
Who had mature advice, and counsel old,
Than whom in all the camp were none or few
Of greater might, before Godfredo drew,

LXII

And gravely said, "Ah, let it not betide,
On one man's hand to venture all his host!
No private soldier thou, thou are our guide,
If thou miscarry, all our hope were lost,
By thee must Babel fell, and all her pride;
Of our true faith thou art the prop and post,
Rule with thy sceptre, conquer with thy word,
Let others combat make with spear and sword.

LXIII

"Let me this Pagan's glorious pride assuage,
These aged arms can yet their weapons use,
Let others shun Bellona's dreadful rage,
These silver locks shall not Raymondo scuse:
Oh that I were in prime of lusty age,
Like you that this adventure brave refuse,
And dare not once lift up your coward eyes,
Gainst him that you and Christ himself defies!

LXIV

"Or as I was when all the lords of fame
And Germain princes great stood by to view,
In Conrad's court, the second of that name,
When Leopold in single fight I slew;
A greater praise I reaped by the same,

So strong a foe in combat to subdue,
Than he should do who all alone should chase
Or kill a thousand of these Pagans base.

LXV

"Within these arms, bad I that strength again,
This boasting Paynim had not lived now,
Yet in this breast doth courage still remain;
For age or years these members shall not bow;
And if I be in this encounter slain,
Scotfree Argantes shall not scape, I vow;
Give me mine arms, this battle shall with praise
Augment mine honor, got in younger days."

LXVI

The jolly baron old thus bravely spake,
His words are spurs to virtue; every knight
That seemed before to tremble and to quake,
Now talked bold, example hath such might;
Each one the battle fierce would undertake,
Now strove they all who should begin the fight;
Baldwin and Roger both, would combat fain,
Stephen, Guelpho, Gernier and the Gerrards twain;

LXVII

And Pyrrhus, who with help of Boemond's sword
Proud Antioch by cunning sleight opprest;
The battle eke with many a lowly word,
Ralph, Rosimond, and Eberard request,
A Scottish, an Irish, and an English lord,
Whose lands the seas divide far from the rest,
And for the fight did likewise humbly sue,
Edward and his Gildippes, lovers true.

LXVIII

But Raymond more than all the rest doth sue
Upon that Pagan fierce to wreak his ire,
Now wants he naught of all his armors due
Except his helm that shone like flaming fire.
To whom Godfredo thus; "O mirror true
Of antique worth! thy courage doth inspire
New strength in us, of Mars in thee doth shine
The art, the honor and the discipline.

LXIX

"If ten like thee of valor and of age,
Among these legions I could haply find,
I should the best of Babel's pride assuage,
And spread our faith from Thule to furthest Inde;
But now I pray thee calm thy valiant rage,
Reserve thyself till greater need us bind,
And let the rest each one write down his name,
And see whom Fortune chooseth to this game, --

LXX

"Or rather see whom God's high judgement taketh,
To whom is chance, and fate, and fortune slave."
Raymond his earnest suit not yet forsaketh,
His name writ with the residue would he have,

Godfrey himself in his bright helmet shaketh
The scrolls, with names of all the champions brave:
They drew, and read the first whereon they hit,
Wherein was "Raymond, Earl of Tholouse," writ.

LXXI

His name with joy and mighty shouts they bless;
The rest allow his choice, and fortune praise,
New vigor blushed through those looks of his;
It seemed he now resumed his youthful days,
Like to a snake whose slough new changed is,
That shines like gold against the sunny rays:
But Godfrey most approved his fortune high,
And wished him honor, conquest, victory.

LXXII

Then from his side he took his noble brand,
And giving it to Raymond, thus he spake:
"This is the sword wherewith in Saxon land,
The great Rubello battle used to make,
From him I took it, fighting hand to hand,
And took his life with it, and many a lake
Of blood with it I have shed since that day,
With thee God grant it proves as happy may."

LXXIII

Of these delays meanwhile impatient,
Argantes threateneth loud and sternly cries,
"O glorious people of the Occident!
Behold him here that all your host defies:
Why comes not Tancred, whose great hardiment,
With you is prized so dear? Pardie he lies
Still on his pillow, and presumes the night
Again may shield him from my power and might.

LXXIV

"Why then some other come, by hand and hand,
Come all, come forth on horseback, come on foot,
If not one man dares combat hand to hand,
In all the thousands of so great a rout:
See where the tomb of Mary's Son doth stand,
March thither, warriors hold, what makes you doubt?
Why run you not, there for your sins to weep
Or to what greater need these forces keep?"

LXXV

Thus scorned by that heathen Saracine
Were all the soldiers of Christ's sacred name:
Raymond, while others at his words repine,
Burst forth in rage, he could not bear this shame:
For fire of courage brighter far doth shine
If challenges and threats augment the same;
So that, upon his steed he mounted light,
Which Aquilino for his swiftness hight.

LXXVI

This jennet was by Tagus bred; for oft
The breeder of these beasts to war assigned,

When first on trees burgeon the blossoms soft
Pricked forward with the sting of fertile kind,
Against the air casts up her head aloft
And gathereth seed so from the fruitful wind
And thus conceiving of the gentle blast,
A wonder strange and rare, she foals at last.

LXXVII

And had you seen the beast, you would have said
The light and subtile wind his father was;
For if his course upon the sands he made
No sign was left what way the beast did pass;
Or if he menaged were, or if he played,
He scanty bended down the tender grass:
Thus mounted rode the Earl, and as he went,
Thus prayed, to Heaven his zealous looks upbent.

LXXVIII

"O Lord, that diddest save, keep and defend
Thy servant David from Goliath's rage,
And broughtest that huge giant to his end,
Slain by a faithful child of tender age;
Like grace, O Lord, like mercy now extend!
Let me this vile blasphemous pride assuage,
That all the world may to thy glory know,
Old men and babes thy foes can overthrow!"

LXXIX

Thus prayed the County, and his prayers dear
Strengthened with zeal, with godliness and faith,
Before the throne of that great Lord appear,
In whose sweet grace is life, death in his wrath,
Among his armies bright and legions clear,
The Lord an angel good selected hath,
To whom the charge was given to guard the knight,
And keep him safe from that fierce Pagan's might.

LXXX

The angel good, appointed for the guard
Of noble Raymond from his tender eild,
That kept him then, and kept him afterward,
When spear and sword he able was to wield,
Now when his great Creator's will he heard,
That in this fight he should him chiefly shield,
Up to a tower set on a rock he flies,
Where all the heavenly arms and weapons lies:

LXXXI

There stands the lance wherewith great Michael slew
The aged dragon in a bloody fight,
There are the dreadful thunders forged new,
With storms and plagues that on poor sinners light;
The massy trident mayest thou pendant view
There on a golden pin hung up on height,
Wherewith sometimes he smites this solid land,
And throws down towns and towers thereon which stand.

LXXXII

Among the blessed weapons there which stands
Upon a diamond shield his looks he bended,
So great that it might cover all the lands,
Twixt Caucasus and Atlas hills extended;
With it the lord's dear flocks and faithful bands,
The holy kings and cities are defended,
The sacred angel took his target sheen,
And by the Christian champion stood unseen.

LXXXIII

But now the walls and turrets round about,
Both young and old with many thousands fill;
The king Clorinda sent and her brave rout,
To keep the field, she stayed upon the hill:
Godfrey likewise some Christian bands sent out
Which armed, and ranked in good array stood still,
And to their champions empty let remain
Twixt either troop a large and spacious plain.

LXXXIV

Argantes looked for Tancredi bold,
But saw an uncouth foe at last appear,
Raymond rode on, and what he asked him, told,
Better by chance, "Tancred is now elsewhere,
Yet glory not of that, myself behold
Am come prepared, and bid thee battle here,
And in his place, or for myself to fight,
Lo, here I am, who scorn thy heathenish might."

LXXXV

The Pagan cast a scornful smile and said,
"But where is Tancred, is he still in bed?
His looks late seemed to make high heaven afraid;
But now for dread he is or dead or fled;
But whe'er earth's centre or the deep sea made
His lurking hole, it should not save his head."
"Thou liest," he says, "to say so brave a knight
Is fled from thee, who thee exceeds in might."

LXXXVI

The angry Pagan said, "I have not spilt
My labor then, if thou his place supply,
Go take the field, and let's see how thou wilt
Maintain thy foolish words and that brave lie;"
Thus parleyed they to meet in equal tilt,
Each took his aim at other's helm on high,
Even in the fight his foe good Raymond hit,
But shaked him not, he did so firmly sit.

LXXXVII

The fierce Circassian missed of his blow,
A thing which seld befell the man before,
The angel, by unseen, his force did know,
And far awry the poignant weapon bore,
He burst his lance against the sand below,
And bit his lips for rage, and cursed and swore,
Against his foe returned he swift as wind,
Half mad in arms a second match to find.

LXXXVIII

Like to a ram that butts with horned head,
So spurred he forth his horse with desperate race:
Raymond at his right hand let slide his steed,
And as he passed struck at the Pagan's face;
He turned again, the earl was nothing dread,
Yet stept aside, and to his rage gave place,
And on his helm with all his strength gan smite,
Which was so hard his courtlax could not bite.

LXXXIX

The Saracen employed his art and force
To grip his foe within his mighty arms,
But he avoided nimbly with his horse,
He was no prentice in those fierce alarms,
About him made he many a winding course,
No strength, nor sleight the subtle warrior harms,
His nimble steed obeyed his ready hand,
And where he stept no print left in the sand.

XC

As when a captain doth besiege some hold,
Set in a marsh or high up on a hill,
And trieth ways and wiles a thousandfold,
To bring the piece subjected to his will;
So fared the County with the Pagan bold;
And when he did his head and breast none ill,
His weaker parts he wisely gan assail,
And entrance searched oft 'twixt mail and mail.

XCI

At last he hit him on a place or twain,
That on his arms the red blood trickled down,
And yet himself untouched did remain,
No nail was broke, no plume cut from his crown;
Argantes raging spent his strength in vain,
Waste were his strokes, his thrusts were idle thrown,
Yet pressed he on, and doubled still his blows,
And where he hits he neither cares nor knows.

XCII

Among a thousand blows the Saracine
At last struck one, when Raymond was so near,
That not the swiftness of his Aquiline
Could his dear lord from that huge danger bear:
But lo, at hand unseen was help divine,
Which saves when worldly comforts none appear,
The angel on his targe received that stroke,
And on that shield Argantes' sword was broke.

XCIII

The sword was broke, therein no wonder lies
If earthly tempered metal could not hold
Against that target forged above the skies,
Down fell the blade in pieces on the mould;
The proud Circassian scant believed his eyes,
Though naught were left him but the hilts of gold,

And full of thoughts amazed awhile he stood,
Wondering the Christian's armor was so good.

XCIV

The brittle web of that rich sword he thought,
Was broke through hardness of the County's shield;
And so thought Raymond, who discovered naught
What succor Heaven did for his safety yield:
But when he saw the man gainst whom he fought
Unweaponed, still stood he in the field;
His noble heart esteemed the glory light,
At such advantage if he slew the knight.

XCV

"Go fetch," he would have said, "another blade,"
When in his heart a better thought arose,
How for Christ's glory he was champion made,
How Godfrey had him to this combat chose,
The army's honor on his shoulder laid
To hazards new he list not that expose;
While thus his thoughts debated on the case,
The hilts Argantes hurled at his face.

XCVI

And forward spurred his mounture fierce withal,
Within his arms longing his foe to strain,
Upon whose helm the heavy blow did fall,
And bent well-nigh the metal to his brain:
But he, whose courage was heroical,
Leapt by, and makes the Pagan's onset vain,
And wounds his hand, which he outstretched saw,
Fiercer than eagles' talon, lions' paw.

XCVII

Now here, now there, on every side he rode,
With nimble speed, and spurred now out, now in,
And as he went and came still laid on load
Where Lord Argantes' arms were weak and thin;
All that huge force which in his arms abode,
His wrath, his ire, his great desire to win,
Against his foe together all he bent,
And heaven and fortune furthered his intent.

XCVIII

But he, whose courage for no peril fails,
Well armed, and better hearted, scorns his power.
Like a tall ship when spent are all her sails,
Which still resists the rage of storm and shower,
Whose mighty ribs fast bound with bands and nails,
Withstands fierce Neptune's wrath, for many an hour,
And yields not up her bruised keel to winds,
In whose stern blast no ruth nor grace she finds:

XCIX

Argantes such thy present danger was,
When Satan stirred to aid thee at thy need,
In human shape he forged an airy mass,
And made the shade a body seem indeed;
Well might the spirit of Clorinda pass,

Like her it was, in armor and in weed,
In stature, beauty, countenance and face,
In looks, in speech, in gesture, and in pace.

C

And for the spirit should seem the same indeed,
From where she was whose show and shape it had,
Toward the wall it rode with feigned speed,
Where stood the people all dismayed and sad,
To see their knight of help have so great need,
And yet the law of arms all help forbad.
There in a turret sat a soldier stout
To watch, and at a loop-hole peeped out;

CI

The spirit spake to him, called Oradine,
The noblest archer then that handled bow,
"O Oradine," quoth she, "who straight as line
Can't shoot, and hit each mark set high or low,
If yonder knight, alas! be slain in fine,
As likest is, great ruth it were you know,
And greater shame, if his victorious foe
Should with his spoils triumphant homeward go.

CII

"Now prove thy skill, thine arrow's sharp head dip
In yonder thievish Frenchman's guilty blood,
I promise thee thy sovereign shall not slip
To give thee large rewards for such a good;"
Thus said the spirit; the man did laugh and skip
For hope of future gain, nor longer stood,
But from his quiver huge a shaft he hent,
And set it in his mighty bow new bent,

CIII

Twanged the string, out flew the quarrel long,
And through the subtle air did singing pass,
It hit the knight the buckles rich among,
Wherewith his precious girdle fastened was,
It bruised them and pierced his hauberk strong,
Some little blood down trickled on the grass;
Light was the wound; the angel by unseen,
The sharp head blunted of the weapon keen.

CIV

Raymond drew forth the shaft, as much behoved,
And with the steel, his blood out streaming came,
With bitter words his foe he then reprov'd,
For breaking faith, to his eternal shame.
Godfrey, whose careful eyes from his beloved
Were never turned, saw and marked the same,
And when he viewed the wounded County bleed,
He sighed, and feared, more perchance than need;

CV

And with his words, and with his threatening eyes,
He stirred his captains to revenge that wrong;
Forthwith the spurred courser forward hies,

Within their rests put were their lances long,
From either side a squadron brave out flies,
And boldly made a fierce encounter strong,
The raised dust to overspread begun
Their shining arms, and far more shining sun.

CVI

Of breaking spears, of ringing helm and shield,
A dreadful rumor roared on every side,
There lay a horse, another through the field
Ran masterless, dismounted was his guide;
Here one lay dead, there did another yield,
Some sighed, some sobbed, some prayed, and some cried;
Fierce was the fight, and longer still it lasted,
Fiercer and fewer, still themselves they wasted.

CVII

Argantes nimbly leapt amid the throng,
And from a soldier wrung an iron mace,
And breaking through the ranks and ranges long,
Therewith he passage made himself and place,
Raymond he sought, the thickest press among.
To take revenge for late received disgrace,
A greedy wolf he seemed, and would assuage
With Raymond's blood his hunger and his rage.

CVIII

The way he found not easy as he would,
But fierce encounters put him oft to pain,
He met Ormanno and Rogero bold,
Of Balnavile, Guy, and the Gerrards twain;
Yet nothing might his rage and haste withhold,
These worthies strove to stop him, but in vain,
With these strong lets increased still his ire,
Like rivers stopped, or closely smouldered fire.

CIX

He slew Ormanno, and wounded Guy, and laid
Rogero low, among the people slain,
On every side new troops the man invade,
Yet all their blows were waste, their onsets vain,
But while Argantes thus his prizes played,
And seemed alone this skirmish to sustain,
The duke his brother called and thus he spake,
"Go with thy troop, fight for thy Saviour's sake;

CX

"There enter in where hottest is the fight,
Thy force against the left wing strongly bend."
This said, so brave an onset gave the knight,
That many a Paynim bold there made his end:
The Turks too weak seemed to sustain his might,
And could not from his power their lives defend,
Their ensigns rent, and broke was their array,
And men and horse on heaps together lay.

CXI

O'erthrown likewise away the right wing ran,
Nor was there one again that turned his face,

Save bold Argantes, else fled every man,
Fear drove them thence on heaps, with headlong chase:
He stayed alone, and battle new began,
Five hundred men, weaponed with sword and mace,
So great resistance never could have made,
As did Argantes with his single blade:

CXII

The strokes of swords and thrusts of many a spear,
The shock of many a joust he long sustained,
He seemed of strength enough this charge to bear,
And time to strike, now here, now there, he gained
His armors broke, his members bruised were,
He sweat and bled, yet courage still he feigned;
But now his foes upon him pressed so fast,
That with their weight they bore him back at last.

CXIII

His back against this storm at length he turned,
Whose headlong fury bore him backward still,
Not like to one that fled, but one that mourned
Because he did his foes no greater ill,
His threatening eyes like flaming torches burned,
His courage thirsted yet more blood to spill,
And every way and every mean he sought,
To stay his flying mates, but all for naught.

CXIV

This good he did, while thus he played his part,
His bands and troops at ease, and safe, retired;
Yet coward dread lacks order, fear wants art,
Deaf to attend, commanded or desired.
But Godfrey that perceived in his wise heart,
How his bold knights to victory aspired,
Fresh soldiers sent, to make more quick pursuit,
And help to gather conquest's precious fruit.

CXV

But this, alas, was not the appointed day,
Set down by Heaven to end this mortal war:
The western lords this time had borne away
The prize, for which they travelled had so far,
Had not the devils, that saw the sure decay
Of their false kingdom by this bloody war,
At once made heaven and earth with darkness blind,
And stirred up tempests, storms, and blustering wind.

CXVI

Heaven's glorious lamp, wrapped in an ugly veil
Of shadows dark, was hid from mortal eye,
And hell's grim blackness did bright skies assail;
On every side the fiery lightnings fly,
The thunders roar, the streaming rain and hail
Pour down and make that sea which erst was dry.
The tempests rend the oaks and cedars brake,
And make not trees but rocks and mountains shake.

CXVII

The rain, the lightning, and the raging wind,
Beat in the Frenchmen's eyes with hideous force,
The soldiers stayed amazed in heart and mind,
The terror such that stopped both man and horse.
Surprised with this evil no way they find,
Whither for succor to direct their course,
But wise Clorinda soon the advantage spied,
And spurring forth thus to her soldiers cried:

CXVIII

"You hardy men at arms behold," quoth she,
"How Heaven, how Justice in our aid doth fight,
Our visages are from this tempest free,
Our hands at will may wield our weapons bright,
The fury of this friendly storm you see
Upon the foreheads of our foes doth light,
And blinds their eyes, then let us take the tide,
Come, follow me, good fortune be our guide."

CXIX

This said, against her foes on rode the dame,
And turned their backs against the wind and rain;
Upon the French with furious rage she came,
And scorned those idle blows they struck in vain;
Argantes at the instant did the same,
And them who chased him now chased again,
Naught but his fearful back each Christian shows
Against the tempest, and against their blows.

CXX

The cruel hail, and deadly wounding blade,
Upon their shoulders smote them as they fled,
The blood new spilt while thus they slaughter made,
The water fallen from skies had dyed red,
Among the murdered bodies Pyrrhus laid,
And valiant Raiphe his heart blood there out bled,
The first subdued by strong Argantes' might,
The second conquered by that virgin knight.

CXXI

Thus fled the French, and then pursued in chase
The wicked sprites and all the Syrian train:
But gainst their force and gainst their fell menace
Of hail and wind, of tempest and of rain,
Godfrey alone turned his audacious face,
Blaming his barons for their fear so vain,
Himself the camp gate boldly stood to keep,
And saved his men within his trenches deep.

CXXII

And twice upon Argantes proud he flew,
And beat him backward, maugre all his might,
And twice his thirsty sword he did imbrue,
In Pagan's blood where thickest was the fight;
At last himself with all his folk withdrew,
And that day's conquest gave the virgin bright,
Which got, she home retired and all her men,
And thus she chased this lion to his den.

CXXIII

Yet ceased not the fury and the ire
Of these huge storms, of wind, of rain and hail,
Now was it dark, now shone the lightning fire,
The wind and water every place assail,
No bank was safe, no rampire left entire,
No tent could stand, when beam and cordage fail,
Wind, thunder, rain, all gave a dreadful sound,
And with that music deafed the trembling ground.

EIGHTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

A messenger to Godfrey sage doth tell
The Prince of Denmark's valour, death and end:
The Italians, trusting signs untrue too well,
Think their Rinaldo slain: the wicked fiend
Breeds fury in their breasts, their bosoms swell
With ire and hate, and war and strife forth send:
They threaten Godfrey; he prays to the Lord,
And calms their fury with his look and word.

I

Now were the skies of storms and tempests cleared,
Lord Aeolus shut up his winds in hold,
The silver-mantled morning fresh appeared,
With roses crowned, and buskined high with gold;
The spirits yet which had these tempests reared,
Their malice would still more and more unfold;
And one of them that Astragor was named,
His speeches thus to foul Alecto framed.

II

"Alecto, see, we could not stop nor stay
The knight that to our foes new tidings brings,
Who from the hands escaped, with life away,
Of that great prince, chief of all Pagan kings:
He comes, the fall of his slain lord to say,
Of death and loss he tells, and such sad things,
Great news he brings, and greatest dangers is,
Bertoldo's son shall be called home for this.

III

"Thou knowest what would befall, bestir thee than;
Prevent with craft, what force could not withstand,
Turn to their evil the speeches of the man,
With his own weapon wound Godfredo's hand;
Kindle debate, infect with poison wan
The English, Switzer, and Italian band,
Great tumult move, make brawls and quarrels rife,
Set all the camp on uproar and at strife.

IV

"This act beseems thee well, and of the deed
Much may'st thou boast before our lord and king."
Thus said the sprite. Persuasion small did need,

The monster grants to undertake the thing,
Meanwhile the knight, whose coming thus they dread,
Before the camp his weary limbs doth bring,
And well-nigh breathless, "Warriors bold," he cried,
"Who shall conduct me to your famous guide?"

V

An hundred strove the stranger's guide to be,
To hearken news the knights by heaps assemble,
The man fell lowly down upon his knee,
And kissed the hand that made proud Babel tremble;
"Right puissant lord, whose valiant acts," quoth he,
"The sands and stars in number best resemble,
Would God some gladder news I might unfold,"
And there he paused, and sighed; then thus he told:

VI

"Sweno, the King of Denmark's only heir,
The stay and staff of his declining eild,
Longed to be among these squadrons fair
Who for Christ's faith here serve with spear and shield;
No weariness, no storms of sea or air,
No such contents as crowns and sceptres yield,
No dear entreaties of so kind a sire,
Could in his bosom quench that glorious fire.

VII

"He thirsted sore to learn this warlike art
Of thee, great lord and master of the same;
And was ashamed in his noble heart,
That never act he did deserved fame;
Besides, the news and tidings from each part
Of young Rinaldo's worth and praises came:
But that which most his courage stirred hath,
Is zeal, religion, godliness, and faith.

VIII

"He hasted forward, then without delay,
And with him took of knights a chosen band,
Directly toward Thrace we took the way,
To Byzance old, chief fortress of that land,
There the Greek monarch gently prayed him stay,
And there an herald sent from you we fand,
How Antioch was won, who first declared,
And how defended nobly afterward.

IX

"Defended gainst Corbana, valiant knight,
That all the Persian armies had to guide,
And brought so many soldiers bold to fight,
That void of men he left that kingdom wide;
He told thine acts, thy wisdom and thy might,
And told the deeds of many a lord beside,
His speech at length to young Rinaldo passed,
And told his great achievements, first and last:

X

"And how this noble camp of yours, of late

Besieged had this town, and in what sort,
And how you prayed him to participate
Of the last conquest of this noble fort.
In hardy Sweno opened was the gate
Of worthy anger by this brave report,
So that each hour seemed five years long,
Till he were fighting with these Pagans strong.

XI

"And while the herald told your fights and frays,
Himself of cowardice reproved he thought,
And him to stay that counsels him, or prays,
He hears not, or, else heard, regardeth naught,
He fears no perils but whilst he delays,
Lest this last work without his help be wrought:
In this his doubt, in this his danger lies,
No hazard else he fears, no peril spies.

XII

"Thus hasting on, he hasted on his death,
Death that to him and us was fatal guide.
The rising morn appeared yet aneath,
When he and we were armed, and fit to ride,
The nearest way seemed best, o'er hold and heath
We went, through deserts waste, and forests wide,
The streets and ways he openeth as he goes,
And sets each land free from intruding foes.

XIII

"Now want of food, now dangerous ways we find,
Now open war, now ambush closely laid;
Yet passed we forth, all perils left behind,
Our foes or dead or run away afraid,
Of victory so happy blew the wind,
That careless all the heedless to it made:
Until one day his tents he happed to rear,
To Palestine when we approached near.

XIV

"There did our scouts return and bring us news,
That dreadful noise of horse and arms they hear,
And that they deemed by sundry signs and shows
There was some mighty host of Pagans near.
At these sad tidings many changed their hues,
Some looked pale for dread, some shook for fear,
Only our noble lord was altered naught,
In look, in face, in gesture, or in thought.

XV

"But said, 'A crown prepare you to possess
Of martyrdom, or happy victory;
For this I hope, for that I wish no less,
Of greater merit and of greater glory.
Brethren, this camp will shortly be, I guess,
A temple, sacred to our memory,
To which the holy men of future age,
To view our graves shall come in pilgrimage.'

XVI

"This said, he set the watch in order right
To guard the camp, along the trenches deep,
And as he armed was, so every knight
He willed on his back his arms to keep.
Now had the stillness of the quiet night
Drowned all the world in silence and in sleep,
When suddenly we heard a dreadful sound,
Which deafed the earth, and tremble made the ground.

XVII

" `Arm, arm,' they cried; Prince Sweno at the same,
Glistering in shining steel leaped foremost out,
His visage shone, his noble looks did flame,
With kindled brand of courage bold and stout,
When lo, the Pagans to assault us came,
And with huge numbers hemmed us round about,
A forest thick of spears about us grew,
And over us a cloud of arrows flew:

XVIII

"Uneven the fight, unequal was the fray,
Our enemies were twenty men to one,
On every side the slain and wounded lay
Unseen, where naught but glistering weapons shone:
The number of the dead could no man say,
So was the place with darkness overgone,
The night her mantle black upon its spreads,
Hiding our losses and our valiant deeds.

XIX

"But hardy Sweno midst the other train,
By his great acts was well descried I wot,
No darkness could his valor's daylight stain,
Such wondrous blows on every side he smote;
A stream of blood, a bank of bodies slain,
About him made a bulwark of bodies slain,
And when soe'er he turned his fatal brand,
Dread in his looks and death sate in his hand.

XX

"Thus fought we till the morning bright appeared,
And strewed roses on the azure sky,
But when her lamp had night's thick darkness cleared,
Wherein the bodies dead did buried lie,
Then our sad cries to heaven for grief we reared,
Our loss apparent was, for we descry
How all our camp destroyed was almost,
And all our people well-nigh slain and lost;

XXI

"Of thousands twain an hundred scant survived.
When Sweno murdered saw each valiant knight,
I know not if his heart in sunder rived
For dear compassion of that woful sight;
He showed no change, but said: `Since so deprived
We are of all our friends by chance of fight,
Come follow them, the path to heaven their blood

Marks out, now angels made, of martyrs good.'

XXII

"This said, and glad I think of death at hand,
The signs of heavenly joy shone through his eyes,
Of Saracens against a mighty band,
With fearless heart and constant breast he flies;
No steel could shield them from his cutting brand
But whom he hits without recourse he dies,
He never struck but felled or killed his foe
And wounded was himself from top to toe.

XXIII

"Not strength, but courage now, preserved on live
This hardy champion, fortress of our faith,
Struck he strikes, still stronger more they strive,
The more they hurt him, more he doth them scathe,
When toward him a furious knight gan drive,
Of members huge, fierce looks, and full of wrath,
That with the aid of many a Pagan crew,
After long fight, at last Prince Sweno slew.

XXIV

"Ah, heavy chance! Down fell the valiant youth,
Nor amongst us all did one so strong appear
As to revenge his death: that this is truth,
By his dear blood and noble bones I swear,
That of my life I had not care nor ruth,
No wounds I shunned, no blows I would off bear,
And had not Heaven my wished end denied,
Even there I should, and willing should, have died.

XXV

"Alive I fell among my fellows slain,
Yet wounded so that each one thought me dead,
Nor what our foes did since can I explain,
So sore amazed was my heart and head;
But when I opened first mine eyes again,
Night's curtain black upon the earth was spread,
And through the darkness to my feeble sight,
Appeared the twinkling of a slender light.

XXVI

"Not so much force or judgement in me lies
As to discern things seen and not mistake,
I saw like them who open and shut their eyes
By turns, now half asleep, now half awake;
My body eke another torment tries,
My wounds began to smart, my hurts to ache;
For every sore each member pinched was
With night's sharp air, heaven's frost and earth's cold grass.

XXVII

"But still the light approached near and near,
And with the same a whispering murmur run,
Till at my side arrived both they were,
When I to spread my feeble eyes begun:
Two men behold in vestures long appear,
With each a lamp in hand, who said, 'O son
In that dear Lord who helps his servants, trust,

Who ere they ask, grants all things to the just.'

XXVIII

"This said, each one his sacred blessings flings
Upon my corse, with broad our-stretched hand,
And mumbled hymns and psalms and holy things,
Which I could neither hear nor understand;
'Arise,' quoth they, with that as I had wings,
All whole and sound I leaped up from the land.
Oh miracle, sweet, gentle, strange and true!
My limbs new strength received, and vigor new.

XXIX

"I gazed on them like one whose heart denieth
To think that done, he sees so strangely wrought;
Till one said thus, 'O thou of little faith,
What doubts perplex thy unbelieving thought?
Each one of us a living body hath,
We are Christ's chosen servants, fear us naught,
Who to avoid the world's allurements vain,
In wilful penance, hermits poor remain.

XXX

" 'Us messengers to comfort thee elect
That Lord hath sent that rules both heaven and hell;
Who often doth his blessed will effect,
By such weak means, as wonder is to tell;
He will not that this body lie neglect,
Wherein so noble soul did lately dwell
To which again when it uprisen is
It shall united be in lasting bliss.

XXXI

" 'I say Lord Sweno's corpse, for which prepared
A tomb there is according to his worth,
By which his honor shall be far declared,
And his just praises spread from south to north:"
But lift thine eyes up to the heavens ward,
Mark yonder light that like the sun shines forth
That shall direct thee with those beams so clear,
To find the body of thy master dear.'

XXXII

"With that I saw from Cynthia's silver face,
Like to a falling star a beam down slide,
That bright as golden line marked out the place,
And lightened with clear streams the forest wide;
So Latmos shone when Phoebe left the chase,
And laid her down by her Endymion's side,
Such was the light that well discern I could,
His shape, his wounds, his face, though dead, yet bold.

XXXIII

"He lay not grovelling now, but as a knight
That ever had to heavenly things desire,
So toward heaven the prince lay bolt upright,
Like him that upward still sought to aspire,
His right hand closed held his weapon bright,

Ready to strike and execute his ire,
His left upon his breast was humbly laid,
That men might know, that while he died he prayed.

XXXIV

"Whilst on his wounds with bootless tears I wept,
That neither helped him, nor eased my care,
One of those aged fathers to him stepped,
And forced his hand that needless weapon spare:
'This sword,' quoth he, 'hath yet good token kept,
That of the Pagans' blood he drunk his share,
And blusheth still he could not save his lord,
Rich, strong and sharp, was never better sword.

XXXV

"`Heaven, therefore, will not, though the prince be slain,
Who used erst to wield this precious brand
That so brave blade unused should remain;
But that it pass from strong to stronger hand,
Who with like force can wield the same again,
And longer shall in grace of fortune stand,
And with the same shall bitter vengeance take
On him that Sweno slew, for Sweno's sake.

XXXVI

"`Great Solyman killed Sweno, Solyman
For Sweno's sake, upon this sword must die.
Here, take the blade, and with it haste thee than
Thither where Godfrey doth encamped lie,
And fear not thou that any shall or can
Or stop thy way, or lead thy steps awry;
For He that doth thee on this message send,
Thee with His hand shall guide, keep and defend.

XXXVII

"`Arrived there it is His blessed will,
With true report that thou declare and tell
The zeal, the strength, the courage and the skill
In thy beloved lord that late did dwell,
How for Christ's sake he came his blood to spill,
And sample left to all of doing well,
That future ages may admire his deed,
And courage take when his brave end they read.

XXXVIII

"`It resteth now, thou know that gentle knight
That of this sword shall be thy master's heir,
It is Rinaldo young, with whom in might
And martial skill no champion may compare,
Give it to him and say, "The Heavens bright
Of this revenge to him commit the care."
While thus I listened what this old man said,
A wonder new from further speech us stayed;

XXXIX

"For there whereas the wounded body lay,
A stately tomb with curious work, behold,
And wondrous art was built out of the clay,

Which, rising round, the carcass did enfold;
With words engraven in the marble gray,
The warrior's name, his worth and praise that told,
On which I gazing stood, and often read
That epitaph of my dear master dead.

XL

"`Among his soldiers,' quoth the hermit, `here
Must Sweno's corpse remain in marble chest,
While up to heaven are flown their spirits dear,
To live in endless joy forever blest,
His funeral thou hast with many a tear
Accompanied, it's now high time to rest,
Come be my guest, until the morning ray
Shall light the world again, then take thy way.'

XLI

"This said, he led me over holts and hags,
Through thorns and bushes scant my legs I drew
Till underneath a heap of stones and crags
At last he brought me to a secret mew;
Among the bears, wild boars, the wolves and stags,
There dwelt he safe with his disciple true,
And feared no treason, force, nor hurt at all,
His guiltless conscience was his castle's wall.

XLII

"My supper roots; my bed was moss and leaves;
But weariness in little rest found ease:
But when the purple morning night bereaves
Of late usurped rule on lands and seas,
His loathed couch each wakeful hermit leaves,
To pray rose they, and I, for so they please,
I congee took when ended was the same,
And hitherward, as they advised me, came."

XLIII

The Dane his woful tale had done, when thus
The good Prince Godfrey answered him, "Sir knight,
Thou bringest tidings sad and dolorous,
For which our heavy camp laments of right,
Since so brave troops and so dear friends to us,
One hour hath spent, in one unlucky fight;
And so appeared hath thy master stout,
As lightning doth, now kindled, now quenched out.

XLIV

"But such a death and end exceedeth all
The conquests vain of realms, or spoils of gold,
Nor aged Rome's proud stately capital,
Did ever triumph yet like theirs behold;
They sit in heaven on thrones celestial,
Crowned with glory, for their conquest bold,
Where each his hurts I think to other shows,
And glory in those bloody wounds and blows.

XLV

"But thou who hast part of thy race to run,

With haps and hazards of this world ylost,
rejoice, for those high honors they have won,
Which cannot be by chance or fortune crossed:
But for thou askest for Bertoldo's son,
Know, that he wandereth, banished from this host,
And till of him new tidings some man tell,
Within this camp I deem it best thou dwell."

XLVI

These words of theirs in many a soul renewed
The sweet remembrance of fair Sophia's child,
Some with salt tears for him their cheeks bedewed,
Lest evil betide him mongst the Pagans wild,
And every one his valiant prowess showed,
And of his battles stories long compiled,
Telling the Dane his acts and conquests past,
Which made his ears amazed, his heart aghast.

XLVII

Now when remembrance of the youth had wrought
A tender pity in each softened mind,
Behold returned home with all they caught
The bands that were to forage late assigned,
And with them in abundance great they brought
Both flocks and herds of every sort and kind.
And corn, although not much, and hay to feed
Their noble steeds and coursers when they need.

XLVIII

They also brought of misadventure sad
Tokens and signs, seemed too apparent true,
Rinaldo's armor, frused and hacked they had,
Oft pierced through, with blood besmeared new;
About the camp, for always rumors bad
Are farthest spread, these woful tidings flew.
Longing to see what they were loth to know.

XLIX

His heavy hauberk was both seen and known,
And his brand shield, wherein displayed flies
The bird that proves her chickens for their own
By looking against the sun with open eyes;
That shield was to the Pagans often shown,
In many a hard and hardy enterprise,
But now with many a gash and many a stroke
They see, and sigh to see it, frused and broke.

L

While all his soldiers whispered under hand,
And here and there the fault and cause do lay,
Godfrey before him called Aliprand
Captain of those that brought of late this prey,
A man who did on points of virtue stand,
Blameless in words, and true whate'er he say,
"Say," quoth the duke, "where you this armor had,
Hide not the truth, but tell it good or bad."

LI

He answered him, "As far from hence think I
As on two days a speedy post well rideth,
To Gaza-ward a little plain doth lie,
Itself among the steepy hills which hideth,
Through it slow falling from the mountains high,
A rolling brook twixt bush and bramble glideth,
Clad with thick shade of boughs of broad-leaved treen,
Fit place for men to lie in wait unseen.

LII

"Thither, to seek some flocks or herds, we went
Perchance close hid under the green-wood shaw,
And found the springing grass with blood besprent,
A warrior tumbled in his blood we saw,
His arms though dusty, bloody, hacked and rent,
Yet well we knew, when near the corse we draw;
To which, to view his face, in vain I started,
For from his body his fair head was parted;

LIII

"His right hand wanted eke, with many a wound
The trunk through pierced was from back to breast,
A little by, his empty helm we found
The silver eagle shining on his crest;
To spy at whom to ask we gazed round,
A child then toward us his steps addressed,
But when us armed by the corse he spied,
He ran away his fearful face to hide:

LIV

"But we pursued him, took him, spake him fair,
Till comforted at last he answer made,
How that, the day before, he saw repair
A band of soldiers from that forest shade,
Of whom one carried by the golden hair
A head but late cut off with murdering blade,
The face was fair and young, and on the chin
No sign of heard to bud did yet begin.

LV

"And how in sindal wrapt away he bore
That head with him hung at his saddle-bow.
And how the murtherers by the arms they wore,
For soldiers of our camp he well did know;
The carcass I disarmed and weeping sore,
Because I guessed who should that harness owe,
Away I brought it, but first order gave,
That noble body should be laid in grave.

LVI

"But if it be his trunk whom I believe,
A nobler tomb his worth deserveth well."
This said, good Aliprando took his leave,
Of certain troth he had no more to tell,
Sore sighed the duke, so did these news him grieve,
Fears in his heart, doubts in his bosom dwell,
He yearned to know, to find and learns the truth,
And punish would them that had slain the youth.

LVII

But now the night dispread her lazy wings
O'er the broad fields of heaven's bright wilderness,
Sleep, the soul's rest, and ease of careful things,
Buried in happy peace both more and less,
Thou Argillan alone, whom sorrow stings,
Still wakest, musing on great deeds I guess,
Nor sufferest in thy watchful eyes to creep
The sweet repose of mild and gentle sleep.

LVIII

This man was strong of limb, and all his 'says
Were bold, of ready tongue, and working sprite,
Near Trento born, bred up in brawls and frays,
In jars, in quarrels, and in civil fight,
Which exiled, the hills and public ways
He filled with blood, and robberies day and night
Until to Asia's wars at last he came,
And boldly there he served, and purchased fame.

LIX

He closed his eyes at last when day drew near.
Yet slept he not, but senseless lay opprest
With strange amazedness and sudden fear
Which false Alecto breathed in his breast,
His working powers within deluded were,
Stone still he quiet lay, yet took no rest,
For to his thought the fiend herself presented,
And with strange visions his weak brain tormented.

LX

A murdered body huge beside him stood,
Of head and right hand both but lately spoiled,
His left hand bore the head, whose visage good,
Both pale and wan, with dust and gore defoiled,
Yet spake, though dead, with whose sad words the blood
Forth at his lips in huge abundance boiled,
"Fly, Argillan, from this false camp fly far,
Whose guide, a traitor; captains, murderers are.

LXI

"Godfrey hath murdered me by treason vile,
What favor then hope you my trusty friends?
His villain heart is full of fraud and guile,
To your destruction all his thoughts he bends,
Yet if thou thirst of praise for noble stile,
If in thy strength thou trust, thy strength that ends
All hard assays, fly not, first with his blood
Appease my ghost wandering by Lethe flood;

LXII

"I will thy weapon whet, inflame thine ire,
Arm thy right hand, and strengthen every part."
This said; even while she spake she did inspire
With fury, rage, and wrath his troubled heart:
The man awaked, and from his eyes like fire
The poisoned sparks of headstrong madness start,

And armed as he was, forth is he gone,
And gathered all the Italian bands in one.

LXIII

He gathered them where lay the arms that late
Were good Rinaldo's; then with semblance stout
And furious words his fore-conceived hate
In bitter speeches thus he vomits out;
"Is not this people barbarous and ingrate,
In whom truth finds no place, faith takes no rout?
Whose thirst unquenched is of blood and gold,
Whom no yoke boweth, bridle none can hold.

LXIV

"So much we suffered have these seven years long,
Under this servile and unworthy yoke,
That thorough Rome and Italy our wrong
A thousand years hereafter shall be spoke:
I count not how Cilicia's kingdom strong,
Subdued was by Prince Tancredi's stroke,
Nor how false Baldwin him that land bereaves
Of virtue's harvest, fraud there reaped the sheaves:

LXV

"Nor speak I how each hour, at every need,
Quick, ready, resolute at all assays,
With fire and sword we hasted forth with speed,
And bore the brunt of all their fights and frays;
But when we had performed and done the deed,
At ease and leisure they divide the preys,
We reaped naught but travel for our toil,
Theirs was the praise, the realms, the gold, the spoil.

LXVI

"Yet all this season were we willing blind,
Offended unrevenged, wronged but unwroken,
Light griefs could not provoke our quiet mind,
But now, alas! the mortal blow is stroken,
Rinaldo have they slain, and law of kind,
Of arms, of nations, and of high heaven broken,
Why doth not heaven kill them with fire and thunder?
To swallow them why cleaves not earth asunder?

LXVII

"They have Rinaldo slain, the sword and shield
Of Christ's true faith, and unrevenged he lies;
Still unrevenged lieth in the field
His noble corpse to feed the crows and pies:
Who murdered him? who shall us certain yield?
Who sees not that, although he wanted eyes?
Who knows not how the Italian chivalry
Proud Godfrey and false Baldwin both envy

LXVIII

"What need we further proof? Heaven, heaven, I swear,
Will not consent herein we be beguiled,
This night I saw his murdered sprite appear,
Pale, sad and wan, with wounds and blood defiled,
A spectacle full both of grief and fear;
Godfrey, for murdering him, the ghost reviled.

I saw it was no dream, before mine eyes,
Howe'er I look, still, still methinks it flies.

LXIX

"What shall we do? shall we be governed still
By this false hand, contaminate with blood?
Or else depart and travel forth, until
To Euphrates we come, that sacred flood,
Where dwells a people void of martial skill,
Whose cities rich, whose land is fat and good,
Where kingdoms great we may at ease provide,
Far from these Frenchmen's malice, from their pride;

LXX

"Then let us go, and no revengement take
For this brave knight, though it lie in our power:
No, no, that courage rather newly wake,
Which never sleeps in fear and dread one hour,
And this pestiferous serpent, poisoned snake,
Of all our knights that hath destroyed the flower,
First let us slay, and his deserved end
Example make to him that kills his friend.

LXXI

"I will, I will, if your courageous force,
Dareth so much as it can well perform,
Tear out his cursed heart without remorse,
The nest of treason false and guile enorm."
Thus spake the angry knight with headlong course;
The rest him followed with a furious storm,
"Arm, arm." they cried, to arms the soldiers ran.
And as they run, "Arm, arm," cried every man.

LXXII

Mongst them Alecto strowed wasteful fire,
Envenoming the hearts of most and least,
Folly, disdain, madness, strife, rancor, ire,
Thirst to shed blood, in every breast increased,
This ill spread far, and till it set on fire
With rage the Italian lodgings, never ceased,
From thence unto the Switzers' camp it went,
And last infected every English tent.

LXXIII

Not public loss of their beloved knight,
Alone stirred up their rage and wrath untamed,
But fore-conceived griefs, and quarrels light,
The ire still nourished, and still inflamed,
Awaked was each former cause of spite,
The Frenchmen cruel and unjust they named,
And with bold threats they made their hatred known,
Hate seld kept close, and oft unwisely shown:

LXXIV

Like boiling liquor in a seething pot,
That fumeth, swelleth high, and bubbleth fast,
Till o'er the brims among the embers hot,
Part of the broth and of the scum is cast,

Their rage and wrath those few appeased not
In whom of wisdom yet remained some taste,
Camillo, William, Tancred were away,
And all whose greatness might their madness stay.

LXXV

Now headlong ran to harness in this heat
These furious people, all on heaps confused,
The roaring trumpets battle gan to threat,
As it in time of mortal war is used,
The messengers ran to Godfredo great,
And bade him arm, while on this noise he mused,
And Baldwin first well clad in iron hard,
Stepped to his side, a sure and faithful guard.

LXXVI

Their murmurs heard, to heaven he lift his een,
As was his wont, to God for aid he fled;
"O Lord, thou knowest this right hand of mine
Abhorred ever civil blood to shed,
Illumine their dark souls with light divine,
Repress their rage, by hellish fury bred,
The innocency of my guiltless mind
Thou knowest, and make these know, with fury blind."

LXXVII

Tis said he felt infused in each vein,
A sacred heat from heaven above distilled,
A heat in man that courage could constrain
That his brave look with awful boldness filled.
Well guarded forth he went to meet the train
Of those that would revenge Rinaldo killed;
And though their threats he heard, and saw them bent
To arms on every side, yet on he went.

LXXVIII

Above his hauberk strong a coat he ware,
Embroidered fair with pearl and rich stone,
His hands were naked, and his face was bare,
Wherein a lamp of majesty bright shone;
He shook his golden mace, wherewith he dare
Resist the force of his rebellious foe:
Thus he appeared, and thus he gan them teach,
In shape an angel, and a God in speech:

LXXIX

"What foolish words? what threats be these I hear?
What noise of arms? who dares these tumults move?
Am I so honored? stand you so in fear?
Where is your late obedience? where your love?
Of Godfrey's falsehood who can witness bear?
Who dare or will these accusations prove?
Perchance you look I should entreaties bring,
Sue for your favors, or excuse the thing.

LXXX

"Ah, God forbid these lands should hear or see
Him so disgraced at whose great name they quake;

This sceptre and my noble acts for me
A true defence before the world can make:
Yet for sharp justice governed shall be
With clemency, I will no vengeance take
For this offence, but for Rinaldo's love,
I pardon you, hereafter wiser prove.

LXXXI

"But Argillano's guilty blood shall wash
This stain away, who kindled this debate,
And led by hasty rage and fury rash,
To these disorders first undid the gate;"
While thus he spoke, the lightning beams did flash
Out of his eyes of majesty and state,
That Argillan, -- who would have thought it? -- shook
For fear and terror, conquered with his look.

LXXXII

The rest with indiscreet and foolish wrath
Who threatened late with words of shame and pride,
Whose hands so ready were to harm and scath,
And brandished bright swords on every side;
Now hushed and still attend what Godfrey saith,
With shame and fear their bashful looks they hide,
And Argillan they let in chains be bound,
Although their weapons him environed round.

LXXXIII

So when a lion shakes his dreadful mane,
And beats his tail with courage proud and wrath,
If his commander come, who first took pain
To tame his youth, his lofty crest down goeth,
His threats he feareth, and obeys the rein
Of thralldom base, and serviceage, though loth,
Nor can his sharp teeth nor his armed paws,
Force him rebel against his ruler's laws.

LXXXIV

Fame as a winged warrior they beheld,
With semblant fierce and furious look that stood,
And in his left hand had a splendent shield
Wherewith he covered safe their chieftain good,
His other hand a naked sword did wield,
From which distilling fell the lukewarm blood,
The blood pardie of many a realm and town,
Whereon the Lord his wrath had poured down.

LXXXV

Thus was the tumult, without bloodshed, ended.
Their arms laid down, strife into exile sent.
Godfrey his thoughts to greater actions bended.
And homeward to his rich pavilion went,
For to assault the fortress he intended
Before the second or third day were spent;
Meanwhile his timber wrought he oft surveyed
Whereof his ram and engines great he made.

NINTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

Alecto false great Solyman doth move
By night the Christians in their tents to kill:
But God who their intents saw from above,
Sends Michael down from his sacred hill:
The spirits foul to hell the angels drove;
The knights delivered from the witch, at will
Destroy the Pagans, scatter all their host:
The Soldan flies when all his bands are lost.

I

The grisly child of Erebus the grim,
Who saw these tumults done and tempest spent,
Gainst stream of grace who ever strove to swim
And all her thoughts against Heaven's wisdom bent,
Departed now, bright Titan's beams were dim
And fruitful lands waxed barren as she went.
She sought the rest of her infernal crew,
New storms to raise, new broils, and tumults new.

II

She, that well wist her sisters had enticed,
By their false arts, far from the Christian host,
Tancred, Rinaldo, and the rest, best prized
For martial skill, for might esteemed most,
Said, of these discords and these strifes advised,
"Great Solyman, when day his light hath lost,
These Christians shall assail with sudden war,
And kill them all while thus they strive and jar."

III

With that where Solyman remained she flew,
And found him out with his Arabian bands,
Great Solyman, of all Christ's foes untrue,
Boldest of courage, mightiest of his hands,
Like him was none of all that earth-bred crew
That heaped mountains on the Aemonian sands,
Of Turks he sovereign was, and Nice his seat,
Where late he dwelt, and ruled that kingdom great.

IV

The lands forenenst the Greekish shore he held,
From Sangar's mouth to crooked Meander's fall,
Where they of Phrygia, Mysia, Lydia dwelled,
Bithynia's towns, and Pontus' cities all:
But when the hearts of Christian princes swelled,
And rose in arms to make proud Asia thrall,
Those lands were won where he did sceptre wield
And he twice beaten was in pitched field.

V

When Fortune oft he had in vain assayed,
And spent his forces, which availed him naught,
To Egypt's king himself he close conveyed,

Who welcomed him as he could best have thought,
Glad in his heart, and inly well apayed,
That to his court so great a lord was brought:
For he decreed his armies huge to bring
To succor Juda land and Juda's king.

VI

But, ere he open war proclaimed, he would
That Solyman should kindle first the fire,
And with huge sums of false enticing gold
The Arabian thieves he sent him forth to hire,
While he the Asian lords and Morians hold
Unites; the Soldan won to his desire
Those outlaws, ready aye for gold to fight,
The hope of gain hath such alluring might.

VII

Thus made their captain to destroy and burn,
In Juda land he entered is so far,
That all the ways whereby he should return
By Godfrey's people kept and stopped are,
And now he gan his former losses mourn,
This wound had hit him on an elder scar,
On great adventures ran his hardy thought,
But naught assured, he yet resolved on naught.

VIII

To him Alecto came, and semblant bore
Of one whose age was great, whose looks were grave,
Whose cheeks were bloodless, and whose locks were hoar
Mustaches strouting long and chin close shave,
A steeped turban on her head she wore,
Her garment wide, and by her side, her glaive,
Her gilden quiver at her shoulders hung,
And in her hand a bow was, stiff and strong.

IX

"We have." Quoth she, "through wildernesses gone,
Through sterile sands, strange paths, and uncouth ways,
Yet spoil or booty have we gotten none,
Nor victory deserving fame or praise,
Godfrey meanwhile to ruin stick and stone
Of this fair town, with battery sore assays;
And if awhile we rest, we shall behold
This glorious city smoking lie in mould.

X

"Are sheep-cotes burnt, or preys of sheep or kine,
The cause why Solyman these bands did arm?
Canst thou that kingdom lately lost of thine
Recover thus, or thus redress thy harm?
No, no, when heaven's small candles next shall shine,
Within their tents give them a bold alarm;
Believe Araspes old, whose grave advice
Thou hast in exile proved, and proved in Nice.

XI

"He feareth naught, he doubts no sudden broil

From these ill-armed and worse-hearted bands,
He thinks this people, used to rob and spoil,
To such exploit dares not lift up their hands;
Up then and with thy courage put to foil
This fearless camp, while thus secure it stands."
This said, her poison in his breast she hides,
And then to shapeless air unseen she glides.

XII

The Soldan cried, "O thou which in my thought
Increased hast my rage and fury so,
Nor seem'st a wight of mortal metal wrought,
I follow thee, whereso thee list to go,
Mountains of men by dint of sword down brought
Thou shalt behold, and seas of red blood flow
Where'er I go; only be thou my guide
When sable night the azure skies shall hide."

XIII

When this was said, he mustered all his crew,
Reproved the cowards, and allowed the bold:
His forward camp, inspired with courage new,
Was ready dight to follow where he would:
Alecto's self the warning trumpet blew
And to the wind his standard great unrolled,
Thus on they marched, and thus on they went,
Of their approach their speed the news prevent.

XIV

Alecto left them, and her person dight
Like one that came some tidings new to tell:
It was the time, when first the rising night
Her sparkling diamonds poureth forth to sell,
When, into Sion come, she marched right
Where Juda's aged tyrant used to dwell,
To whom of Solyman's designment bold,
The place, the manner, and the time she told.

XV

Their mantle dark, the grisly shadows spread,
Stained with spots of deepest sanguine hue,
Warm drops of blood, on earth's black visage shed,
Supplied the place of pure and precious dew,
The moon and stars for fear of sprites were fled,
The shrieking goblins eachwhere howling flew,
The furies roar, the ghosts and fairies yell,
The earth was filled with devils, and empty hell.

XVI

The Soldan fierce, through all this horror, went
Toward the camp of his redoubted foes,
The night was more than half consumed and spent;
Now headlong down the western hill she goes,
When distant scant a mile from Godfrey's tent
He let his people there awhile repose,
And victualled them, and then he boldly spoke
These words which rage and courage might provoke:

XVII

"See there a camp, full stuffed of spoils and preys,
Not half so strong as false report recordeth;
See there the storehouse, where their captain lays
Our treasures stolen, where Asia's wealth he hoardeth;
Now chance the ball unto our racket plays,
Take then the vantage which good luck affordeth;
For all their arms, their horses, gold and treasure
Are ours, ours without loss, harm or displeasure.

XVIII

"Nor is this camp that great victorious host
That slew the Persian lords, and Nice hath won:
For those in this long war are spent and lost,
These are the dregs, the wine is all outrun,
And these few left, are drowned and dead almost
In heavy sleep, the labor half is done
To send them headlong to Avernus deep,
For little differs death and heavy sleep.

XIX

"Come, come, this sword the passage open shall
Into their camp, and on their bodies slain
We will pass o'er their rampire and their wall;
This blade, as scythes cut down the fields of grain,
Shall cut them so, Christ's kingdom now shall fall,
Asia her freedom, you shall praise obtain."
Thus he inflamed his soldiers to the fight,
And led them on through silence of the night.

XX

The sentinel by starlight, lo, descried
This mighty Soldan and his host draw near,
Who found not as he hoped the Christians' guide
Unware, ne yet unready was his gear:
The scouts, when this huge army they descried,
Ran back, and gan with shouts the 'larum rear;
The watch stert up and drew their weapons bright,
And busked them bold to battle and to fight.

XXI

The Arabians wist they could not come unseen,
And therefore loud their jarring trumpets sound,
Their yelling cries to heaven upheaved been,
The horses thundered on the solid ground,
The mountains roared, and the valley green,
The echoes sighed from the caves around,
Alecto with her brand, kindled in hell,
Tokened to them in David's tower that dwell.

XXII

Before the rest forth pricked the Soldan fast,
Against the watch, not yet in order just,
As swift as hideous Boreas' hasty blast
From hollow rocks when first his storms outburst,
The raging floods, that trees and rocks down cast,
Thunders, that towns and towers drive to dust:
Earthquakes, to tear the world in twain that threat,
Are naught, compared to his fury great.

XXIII

He struck no blow, but that his foe he hit;
And never hit, but made a grievous wound:
And never wounded, but death followed it;
And yet no peril, hurt or harm he found,
No weapon on his hardened helmet bit,
No puissant stroke his senses once astound,
Yet like a bell his tinkling helmet rung,
And thence flew flames of fire and sparks among.

XXIV

Himself well nigh had put the watch to flight,
A jolly troop of Frenchmen strong and stout,
When his Arabians came by heaps to fight,
Covering, like raging floods, the fields about;
The beaten Christians run away full light,
The Pagans, mingled with the flying rout,
Entered their camp, and filled, as they stood,
Their tents with ruin, slaughter, death and blood.

XXV

High on the Soldan's helm enamelled laid
An hideous dragon, armed with many a scale,
With iron paws, and leathern wings displayed,
Which twisted on a knot her forked tail,
With triple tongue it seemed she hissed and brayed,
About her jaws the froth and venom trail,
And as he stirred, and as his foes him hit,
So flames to cast and fire she seemed to spit.

XXVI

With this strange light, the Soldan fierce appeared
Dreadful to those that round about him been,
As to poor sailors, when huge storms are reared,
With lightning flash the rafting seas are seen;
Some fled away, because his strength they feared,
Some bolder gainst him bent their weapons keen,
And forward night, in evils and mischiefs pleased,
Their dangers hid, and dangers still increased.

XXVII

Among the rest that strove to merit praise,
Was old Latinus, born by Tiber's bank,
To whose stout heart in fights and bloody frays,
For all his eild, base fear yet never sank;
Five sons he had, the comforts of his days,
That from his side in no adventure shrank,
But long before their time, in iron strong
They clad their members, tender, soft and young.

XXVIII

The bold ensample of their father's might
Their weapons whetted and their wrath increased,
"Come let us go," quoth he, "where yonder knight
Upon our soldiers makes his bloody feast,
Let not their slaughter once your hearts affright,
Where danger most appears, there fear it least,

For honor dwells in hard attempts, my sons,
And greatest praise, in greatest peril, wons."
XXIX

Her tender brood the forest's savage queen,
Ere on their crests their rugged manes appear,
Before their mouths by nature armed been,
Or paws have strength a silly lamb to tear,
So leadeth forth to prey, and makes them keen,
And learns by her ensample naught to fear
The hunter, in those desert woods that takes
The lesser beasts whereon his feast he makes.

XXX

The noble father and his hardy crew
Fierce Solyman on every side invade,
At once all six upon the Soldan flew,
With lances sharp, and strong encounters made,
His broken spear the eldest boy down threw,
And boldly, over-boldly, drew his blade,
Wherewith he strove, but strove therewith in vain,
The Pagan's steed, unmarked, to have slain.

XXXI

But as a mountain or a cape of land
Assailed with storms and seas on every side,
Doth unremoved, steadfast, still withstand
Storm, thunder, lightning, tempest, wind, and tide:
The Soldan so withstood Latinus' band,
And unremoved did all their justs abide,
And of that hapless youth, who hurt his steed,
Down to the chin he cleft in twain the head.

XXXII

Kind Aramante, who saw his brother slain,
To hold him up stretched forth his friendly arm,
Oh foolish kindness, and oh pity vain,
To add our proper loss, to other's harm!
The prince let fall his sword, and cut in twain
About his brother twined, the child's weak arm.
Down from their saddles both together slide,
Together mourned they, and together died.

XXXIII

That done, Sabino's lance with nimble force
He cut in twain, and 'gainst the stripling bold
He spurred his steed, that underneath his horse
The hardy infant tumbled on the mould,
Whose soul, out squeezed from his bruised corpse,
With ugly painfulness forsook her hold,
And deeply mourned that of so sweet a cage
She left the bliss, and joys of youthful age.

XXXIV

But Picus yet and Lawrence were on live,
Whom at one birth their mother fair brought out,
A pair whose likeness made the parents strive
Of which was which, and joyed in their doubt:
But what their birth did undistinguished give,

The Soldan's rage made known, for Picus stout
Headless at one huge blow he laid in dust,
And through the breast his gentle brother thrust.

XXXV

Their father, but no father now, alas!
When all his noble sons at once were slain,
In their five deaths so often murdered was,
I know not how his life could him sustain,
Except his heart were forged of steel or brass,
Yet still he lived, pardie, he saw not plain
Their dying looks, although their deaths he knows,
It is some ease not to behold our woes.

XXXVI

He wept not, for the night her curtain spread
Between his cause of weeping and his eyes,
But still he mourned and on sharp vengeance fed,
And thinks he conquers, if revenged he dies;
He thirsts the Soldan's heathenish blood to shed,
And yet his own at less than naught doth prize,
Nor can he tell whether he liefer would,
Or die himself, or kill the Pagan bold.

XXXVII

At last, "Is this right hand," quoth he, "so weak,
That thou disdain'st gainst me to use thy might?
Can it naught do? can this tongue nothing speak
That may provoke thine ire, thy wrath and spite?"
With that he struck, his anger great to wreak,
A blow, that pierced the mail and metal bright,
And in his flank set ope a floodgate wide,
Whereat the blood out streamed from his side.

XXXVIII

Provoked with his cry, and with that blow,
The Turk upon him gan his blade discharge,
He cleft his breastplate, having first pierced through,
Lined with seven bulls' hides, his mighty targe,
And sheathed his weapons in his guts below;
Wretched Latinus at that issue large,
And at his mouth, poured out his vital blood,
And sprinkled with the same his murdered brood.

XXXIX

On Apennine like as a sturdy tree,
Against the winds that makes resistance stout,
If with a storm it overturned be,
Falls down and breaks the trees and plants about;
So Latine fell, and with him felled he
And slew the nearest of the Pagans' rout,
A worthy end, fit for a man of fame,
That dying, slew; and conquered, overcame.

XL

Meanwhile the Soldan strove his rage
To satisfy with blood of Christian spilled,
The Arabians heartened by their captain stern,

With murder every tent and cabin filled,
Henry the English knight, and Olipherne,
O fierce Draguto, by thy hands were killed!
Gilbert and Philip were by Ariadene
Both slain, both born upon the banks of Rhone.

XLI

Albazar with his mace Ernesto slew,
Under Algazel Engerlan down fell,
But the huge murder of the meaner crew,
Or manner of their deaths, what tongue can tell?
Godfrey, when first the heathen trumpets blew,
Awaked, which heard, no fear could make him dwell,
But he and his were up and armed ere long,
And marched forward with a squadron strong.

XLII

He that well heard the rumor and the cry,
And marked the tumult still grow more and more,
The Arabian thieves he judged by and by
Against his soldiers made this battle sore;
For that they forayed all the countries nigh,
And spoiled the fields, the duke knew well before,
Yet thought he not they had the hardiment
So to assail him in his armed tent.

XLIII

All suddenly he heard, while on he went,
How to the city-ward, "Arm, arm!" they cried,
The noise upreared to the firmament,
With dreadful howling filled the valleys wide:
This was Clorinda, whom the king forth sent
To battle, and Argantes by her side.
The duke, this heard, to Guelpho turned, and prayed
Him his lieutenant be, and to him said:

XLIV

"You hear this new alarm from yonder part,
That from the town breaks out with so much rage,
Us needeth much your valor and your art
To calm their fury, and their heat to 'suage;
Go thither then, and with you take some part
Of these brave soldiers of mine equipage,
While with the residue of my champions bold
I drive these wolves again out of our fold."

XLV

They parted, this agreed on them between,
By divers paths, Lord Guelpho to the hill,
And Godfrey hasted where the Arabians keen
His men like silly sheep destroy and kill;
But as he went his troops increased been,
From every part the people flocked still,
That now grown strong enough, he 'proached nigh
Where the fierce Turk caused many a Christian die.

XLVI

So from the top of Vesulus the cold,
Down to the sandy valleys, tumbleth Po,

Whose streams the further from the fountain rolled
Still stronger wax, and with more puissance go;
And horned like a bull his forehead bold
He lifts, and o'er his broken banks doth flow,
And with his horns to pierce the sea assays,
To which he proffereth war, not tribute pays.

XLVII

The duke his men fast flying did espy,
And thither ran, and thus, displeased, spake,
"What fear is this? Oh, whither do you fly?
See who they be that this pursuit do make,
A heartless band, that dare no battle try,
Who wounds before dare neither give nor take,
Against them turn your stern eye's threatening sight,
An angry look will put them all to flight."

XLVIII

This said, he spurred forth where Solyman
Destroyed Christ's vineyard like a savage boar,
Through streams of blood, through dust and dirt he ran,
O'er heaps of bodies wallowing in their gore,
The squadrons close his sword to ope began,
He broke their ranks, behind, beside, before,
And, where he goes, under his feet he treads
The armed Saracens, and barbed steeds.

XLIX

This slaughter-house of angry Mars he passed,
Where thousands dead, half-dead, and dying were.
The hardy Soldan saw him come in haste,
Yet neither stepped aside nor shrunk for fear,
But busked him bold to fight, aloft he cast
His blade, prepared to strike, and stepped near,
These noble princes twain, so Fortune wrought
From the world's end here met, and here they fought:

L

With virtue, fury; strength with courage strove,
For Asia's mighty empire, who can tell
With how strange force their cruel blows they drove?
How sore their combat was? how fierce, how fell?
Great deeds they wrought, each other's harness clove;
Yet still in darkness, more the ruth, they dwell.
The night their acts her black veil covered under,
Their acts whereat the sun, the world might wonder.

LI

The Christians by their guide's ensample hearted,
Of their best armed made a squadron strong,
And to defend their chieftain forth they started:
The Pagans also saved their knight from wrong,
Fortune her favors twixt them evenly parted,
Fierce was the encounter, bloody, doubtful, long;
These won, those lost; these lost, those won again;
The loss was equal, even the numbers slain.

LII

With equal rage, as when the southern wind,

Meeteth in battle strong the northern blast,
The sea and air to neither is resigned,
But cloud gainst cloud, and wave gainst wave they cast:
So from this skirmish neither part declined,
But fought it out, and kept their footings fast,
And oft with furious shock together rush,
And shield gainst shield, and helm gainst helm they crush.

LIII

The battle eke to Sionward grew hot,
The soldiers slain, the hardy knights were killed,
Legions of sprites from Limbo's prisons got,
The empty air, the hills and valleys filled,
Hearing the Pagans that they shrinked not,
Till where they stood their dearest blood they spilled;
And with new rage Argantes they inspire,
Whose heat no flames, whose burning need no fire.

LIV

Where he came in he put to shameful flight
The fearful watch, and o'er the trenches leaped,
Even with the ground he made the rampire's height,
And murdered bodies in the ditch unheaped,
So that his greedy mates with labor light,
Amid the tents, a bloody harvest reaped:
Clorinda went the proud Circassian by,
So from a piece two chained bullets fly.

LV

Now fled the Frenchmen, when in lucky hour
Arrived Guelpho, and his helping band,
He made them turn against this stormy shower,
And with bold face their wicked foes withstand.
Sternly they fought, that from their wounds downpour
The streams of blood and run on either hand:
The Lord of heaven meanwhile upon this fight,
From his high throne bent down his gracious sight.

LVI

From whence with grace and goodness compassed round,
He ruleth, blesseth, keepeth all he wrought,
Above the air, the fire, the sea and ground,
Our sense, our wit, our reason and our thought,
Where persons three, with power and glory crowned,
Are all one God, who made all things of naught,
Under whose feet, subjected to his grace,
Sit nature, fortune, motion, time and place.

LVII

This is the place, from whence like smoke and dust
Of this frail world the wealth, the pomp and power,
He tosseth, tumbleth, turneth as he lust,
And guides our life, our death, our end and hour:
No eye, however virtuous, pure and just,
Can view the brightness of that glorious bower,
On every side the blessed spirits be,
Equal in joys, though differing in degree.

LVIII

With harmony of their celestial song
The palace echoed from the chambers pure,
At last he Michael called, in harness strong
Of never yielding diamonds armed sure,
"Behold," quoth he, "to do despite and wrong
To that dear flock my mercy hath in cure,
How Satan from hell's loathsome prison sends
His ghosts, his sprites, his furies and his fiends.

LIX

"Go bid them all depart, and leave the care
Of war to soldiers, as doth best pertain:
Bid them forbear to infect the earth and air;
To darken heaven's fair light, bid them refrain;
Bid them to Acheron's black flood repair,
Fit house for them, the house of grief and pain:
There let their king himself and them torment,
So I command, go tell them mine intent."

LX

This said, the winged warrior low inclined
At his Creator's feet with reverence due;
Then spread his golden feathers to the wind,
And swift as thought away the angel flew,
He passed the light, and shining fire assigned
The glorious seat of his selected crew,
The mover first, and circle crystalline,
The firmament, where fixed stars all shine;

LXI

Unlike in working then, in shape and show,
At his left hand, Saturn he left and Jove,
And those untruly errant called I trow,
Since he errs not, who them doth guide and move:
The fields he passed then, whence hail and snow,
Thunder and rain fall down from clouds above,
Where heat and cold, dryness and moisture strive,
Whose wars all creatures kill, and slain, revive.

LXII

The horrid darkness, and the shadows dun
Dispersed he with his eternal wings,
The flames which from his heavenly eyes outrun
Beguiled the earth and all her sable things;
After a storm so spreadeth forth the sun
His rays and binds the clouds in golden strings,
Or in the stillness of a moonshine even
A falling star so glideth down from Heaven.

LXIII

But when the infernal troop he 'proached near,
That still the Pagans' ire and rage provoke,
The angel on his wings himself did bear,
And shook his lance, and thus at last he spoke:
"Have you not learned yet to know and fear
The Lord's just wrath, and thunder's dreadful stroke?
Or in the torments of your endless ill,
Are you still fierce, still proud, rebellious still?"

LXIV

"The Lord hath sworn to break the iron bands
The brazen gates of Sion's fort which close,
Who is it that his sacred will withstands?
Against his wrath who dares himself oppose?
Go hence, you cursed, to your appointed lands,
The realms of death, of torments, and of woes,
And in the deeps of that infernal lake
Your battles fight, and there your triumphs make.

LXV

"There tyrannize upon the souls you find
Condemned to woe, and double still their pains;
Where some complain, where some their teeth do grind,
Some howl, and weep, some clank their iron chains:"
This said they fled, and those that stayed behind,
With his sharp lance he driveth and constrains;
They sighing left the lands, his silver sheep
Where Hesperus doth lead, doth feed, and keep.

LXVI

And toward hell their lazy wings display,
To wreak their malice on the damned ghosts;
The birds that follow Titan's hottest ray,
Pass not in so great flocks to warmer coasts,
Nor leaves in so great numbers fall away
When winter nips them with his new-come frosts;
The earth delivered from so foul annoy,
Recalled her beauty, and resumed her joy.

LXVII

But not for this in fierce Argantes' breast
Lessened the rancor and decreased the ire,
Although Alecto left him to infest
With the hot brands of her infernal fire,
Round his armed head his trenchant blade he blest,
And those thick ranks that seemed moist entire
He breaks; the strong, the high, the weak, the low,
Were equalized by his murdering blow.

LXVIII

Not far from him amid the blood and dust,
Heads, arms, and legs, Clorinda strewed wide
Her sword through Berengarius' breast she thrust,
Quite through the heart, where life doth chiefly bide,
And that fell blow she struck so sure and just,
That at his back his life and blood forth glide;
Even in the mouth she smote Albinus then,
And cut in twain the visage of the man.

LXIX

Gernier's right hand she from his arm divided,
Whereof but late she had received a wound;
The hand his sword still held, although not guided,
The fingers half alive stirred on the ground;
So from a serpent slain the tail divided
Moves in the grass, rolleth and tumbleth round,

The championess so wounded left the knight,
And gainst Achilles turned her weapon bright.

LXX

Upon his neck light that unhappy blow,
And cut the sinews and the throat in twain,
The head fell down upon the earth below,
And soiled with dust the visage on the plain;
The headless trunk, a woful thing to know,
Still in the saddle seated did remain;
Until his steed, that felt the reins at large,
With leaps and flings that burden did discharge.

LXXI

While thus this fair and fierce Bellona slew
The western lords, and put their troops to flight,
Gildippes raged mongst the Pagan crew,
And low in dust laid many a worthy knight:
Like was their sex, their beauty and their hue,
Like was their youth, their courage and their might;
Yet fortune would they should the battle try
Of mightier foes, for both were framed to die.

LXXII

Yet wished they oft, and strove in vain to meet,
So great betwixt them was the press and throng,
But hardy Guelpho gainst Clorinda sweet
Ventured his sword to work her harm and wrong,
And with a cutting blow so did her greet,
That from her side the blood streamed down along;
But with a thrust an answer sharp she made,
And 'twixt his ribs colored somedeal her blade.

LXXIII

Lord Guelpho struck again, but hit her not,
For strong Osmida haply passed by,
And not meant him, another's wound he got,
That cleft his front in twain above his eye:
Near Guelpho now the battle waxed hot,
For all the troops he led gan thither hie,
And thither drew eke many a Paynim knight,
That fierce, stern, bloody, deadly waxed the fight.

LXXIV

Meanwhile the purple morning peeped o'er
The eastern threshold to our half of land,
And Argillano in this great uproar
From prison loosed was, and what he fand,
Those arms he hent, and to the field them bore,
Resolved to take his chance what came to hand,
And with great acts amid the Pagan host
Would win again his reputation lost.

LXXV

As a fierce steed 'scaped from his stall at large,
Where he had long been kept for warlike need,
Runs through the fields unto the flowery marge
Of some green forest where he used to feed,
His curled mane his shoulders broad doth charge

And from his lofty crest doth spring and spread,
Thunder his feet, his nostrils fire breathe out,
And with his neigh the world resounds about.

LXXVI

So Argillan rushed forth, sparkled his eyes,
His front high lifted was, no fear therein,
Lightly he leaps and skips, it seems he flies,
He left no sign in dust imprinted thin,
And coming near his foes, he sternly cries,
As one that forced not all their strength a pin,
"You outcasts of the world, you men of naught
What hath in you this boldness newly wrought?"

LXXVII

"Too weak are you to bear a helm or shield
Unfit to arm your breast in iron bright,
You run half-naked trembling through the field,
Your blows are feeble, and your hope in flight,
Your facts and all the actions that you wield,
The darkness hides, your bulwark is the night,
Now she is gone, how will your fights succeed?
Now better arms and better hearts you need."

LXXVIII

While thus he spoke, he gave a cruel stroke
Against Algazel's throat with might and main;
And as he would have answered him, and spoke,
He stopped his words, and cut his jaws in twain;
Upon his eyes death spread his misty cloak,
A chilling frost congealed every vein,
He fell, and with his teeth the earth he tore,
Raging in death, and full of rage before.

LXXIX

Then by his puissance mighty Saladine,
Proud Agricalt and Muleasses died,
And at one wondrous blow his weapon fine,
Did Adiazal in two parts divide,
Then through the breast he wounded Ariadine,
Whom dying with sharp taunts he gan deride,
He lifting up unneath his feeble eyes,
To his proud scorns thus answereth, ere he dies:

LXXX

"Not thou, whoe'er thou art, shall glory long
Thy happy conquest in my death, I trow,
Like chance awaits thee from a hand more strong,
Which by my side will shortly lay thee low:"
He smiled, and said, "Of mine hour short or long
Let heaven take care; but here meanwhile die thou,
Pasture for wolves and crows," on him his foot
He set, and drew his sword and life both out.

LXXXI

Among this squadron rode a gentle page,
The Soldan's minion, darling, and delight,
On whose fair chin the spring-time of his age

Yet blossomed out her flowers, small or light;
The sweat spread on his cheeks with heat and rage
Seemed pearls or morning dews on lilies white,
The dust therein uprolled adorned his hair,
His face seemed fierce and sweet, wrathful and fair.

LXXXII

His steed was white, and white as purest snow
That falls on tops of aged Apennine,
Lightning and storm are not so 'swift I trow
As he, to run, to stop, to turn and twine;
A dart his right hand shaken, prest to throw;
His cutlass by his thigh, short, hooked, fine,
And braving in his Turkish pomp he shone,
In purple robe, o'erfret with gold and stone.

LXXXIII

The hardy boy, while thirst of warlike praise
Bewitched so his unadvised thought,
Gainst every band his childish strength assays,
And little danger found, though much he sought,
Till Argillan, that watched fit time always
In his swift turns to strike him as he fought,
Did unawares his snow-white courser slay,
And under him his master tumbling lay:

LXXXIV

And gainst his face, where love and pity stand,
To pray him that rich throne of beauty spare,
The cruel man stretched forth his murdering hand,
To spoil those gifts, whereof he had no share:
It seemed remorse and sense was in his brand
Which, lighting flat, to hurt the lad forbare;
But all for naught, gainst him the point he bent
That, what the edge had spared, pierced and rent.

LXXXV

Fierce Solyman that with Godfredo strived
Who first should enter conquest's glorious gate,
Left off the fray and thither headlong driven,
When first he saw the lad in such estate;
He brake the press, and soon enough arrived
To take revenge, but to his aid too late,
Because he saw his Lesbine slain and lost,
Like a sweet flower nipped with untimely frost.

LXXXVI

He saw wax dim the starlight of his eyes,
His ivory neck upon his shoulders fell,
In his pale looks kind pity's image lies,
That death even mourned, to hear his passing bell.
His marble heart such soft impression tries,
That midst his wrath his manly tears outwell,
Thou weepest, Solyman, thou that beheld
Thy kingdoms lost, and not one tear could yield.

LXXXVII

But when the murderer's sword he hapt to view

Dropping with blood of his Lesbino dead,
His pity vanished, ire and rage renew,
He had no leisure bootless tears to shed;
But with his blade on Argillano flew,
And cleft his shield, his helmet, and his head,
Down to his throat; and worthy was that blow
Of Solyman, his strength and wrath to show:

LXXXVIII

And not content with this, down from his horse
He lights, and that dead carcass rent and tore,
Like a fierce dog that takes his angry course
To bite the stone which had him hit before.
Oh comfort vain for grief of so great force,
To wound the senseless earth that feels no sore!
But mighty Godfrey 'gainst the Soldan's train
Spent not, this while, his force and blows in vain.

LXXXIX

A thousand hardy Turks affront he had
In sturdy iron armed from head to foot,
Resolved in all adventures good or bad,
In actions wise, in execution stout,
Whom Solyman into Arabia lad,
When from his kingdom he was first cast out,
Where living wild with their exiled guide
To him in all extremes they faithful bide;

XC

All these in thickest order sure unite,
For Godfrey's valor small or nothing shrank,
Corcutes first he on the face did smite,
Then wounded strong Rosteno in the flank,
At one blow Selim's head he stroke off quite,
Then both Rossano's arms, in every rank
The boldest knights, of all that chosen crew,
He felled, maimed, wounded, hurt and slew.

XCI

While thus he killed many a Saracine
And all their fierce assaults unhurt sustained,
Ere fortune wholly from the Turks decline,
While still they hoped much, though small they gained,
Behold a cloud of dust, wherein doth shine
Lightning of war in midst thereof contained,
Whence unawares burst forth a storm of swords,
Which tremble made the Pagan knights and lords.

XCII

These fifty champions were, mongst whom there stands,
In silver field, the ensign of Christ's death,
If I had mouths and tongues as Briareus hands,
If voice as iron tough, if iron breath,
What harm this troop wrought to the heathen bands,
What knights they slew, I could recount uneth
In vain the Turks resist, the Arabians fly;
If they fly, they are slain; if fight, they die.

XCIII

Fear, cruelty, grief, horror, sorrow, pain,
Run through the field, disguised in divers shapes,
Death might you see triumphant on the plain,
Drowning in blood him that from blows escapes.
The king meanwhile with parcel of his train
Comes hastily out, and for sure conquest gapes,
And from a bank whereon he stood, beheld
The doubtful hazard of that bloody field.

XCIV

But when he saw the Pagans shrink away,
He sounded the retreat, and gan desire
His messengers in his behalf to pray
Argantes and Clorinda to retire;
The furious couple both at once said nay,
Even drunk with shedding blood, and mad with ire,
At last they went, and to recomfort thought
And stay their troops from flight, but all for nought.

XCV

For who can govern cowardice or fear?
Their host already was begun to fly,
They cast their shields and cutting swords arrear,
As not defended but made slow thereby,
A hollow dale the city's bulwarks near
From west to south outstretched long doth lie,
Thither they fled, and in a mist of dust,
Toward the walls they run, they throng, they thrust.

XCVI

While down the bank disordered thus they ran,
The Christian knights huge slaughter on them made;
But when to climb the other hill they gan,
Old Aladine came fiercely to their aid:
On that steep brae Lord Guelpho would not than
Hazard his folk, but there his soldiers stayed,
And safe within the city's walls the king .
The relics small of that sharp fight did bring:

XCVII

Meanwhile the Soldan in this latest charge
Had done as much as human force was able,
All sweat and blood appeared his members large,
His breath was short, his courage waxed unstable,
His arm grew weak to bear his mighty targe,
His hand to rule his heavy sword unable,
Which bruised, not cut, so blunted was the blade
It lost the use for which a sword was made.

XCVIII

Feeling his weakness, he gan musing stand,
And in his troubled thought this question tossed,
If he himself should murder with his hand,
Because none else should of his conquest boast,
Or he should save his life, when on the land
Lay slain the pride of his subdued host,
"At last to fortune's power," quoth he, "I yield,
And on my flight let her her trophies build.

XCIX

"Let Godfrey view my flight, and smile to see
This mine unworthy second banishment,
For armed again soon shall he hear of me,
From his proud head the unsettled crown to rent,
For, as my wrongs, my wrath etern shall be,
At every hour the bow of war new bent,
I will rise again, a foe, fierce, bold,
Though dead, though slain, though burnt to ashes cold."

TENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

Ismen from sleep awakes the Soldan great,
And into Sion brings the Prince by night
Where the sad king sits fearful on his seat,
Whom he emboldeneth and excites to fight;
Godfredo hears his lords and knights repeat
How they escaped Armida's wrath and spite:
Rinaldo known to live, Peter foresays
His Offspring's virtue, good deserts, and praise.

I

A gallant steed, while thus the Soldan said,
Came trotting by him, without lord or guide,
Quickly his hand upon the reins he laid,
And weak and weary climbed up to ride;
The snake that on his crest hot fire out-braid
Was quite cut off, his helm had lost the pride,
His coat was rent, his harness hacked and cleft,
And of his kingly pomp no sign was left.

II

As when a savage wolf chased from the fold,
To hide his head runs to some holt or wood,
Who, though he filled have while it might hold
His greedy paunch, yet hungreth after food,
With sanguine tongue forth of his lips out-rolled
About his jaws that licks up foam and blood;
So from this bloody fray the Soldan hied,
His rage unquenched, his wrath unsatisfied.

III

And, as his fortune would, he scaped free
From thousand arrows which about him flew,
From swords and lances, instruments that be
Of certain death, himself he safe withdrew,
Unknown, unseen, disguised, travelled he,
By desert paths and ways but used by few,
And rode revolving in his troubled thought
What course to take, and yet resolved on naught.

IV

Thither at last he meant to take his way,
Where Egypt's king assembled all his host,
To join with him, and once again assay

To win by fight, by which so oft he lost:
Determined thus, he made no longer stay,
But thitherward spurred forth his steed in post,
Nor need he guide, the way right well he could,
That leads to sandy plains of Gaza old.

V

Nor though his smarting wounds torment him oft,
His body weak and wounded back and side,
Yet rested he, nor once his armor doffed,
But all day long o'er hills and dales doth ride:
But when the night cast up her shade aloft
And all earth's colors strange in sables dyed,
He light, and as he could his wounds upbound,
And shook ripe dates down from a palm he found.

VI

On them he supped, and amid the field
To rest his weary limbs awhile he sought,
He made his pillow of his broken shield
To ease the griefs of his distempered thought,
But little ease could so hard lodging yield,
His wounds so smarted that he slept right naught,
And, in his breast, his proud heart rent in twain,
Two inward vultures, Sorrow and Disdain.

VII

At length when midnight with her silence deep
Did heaven and earth hushed, still, and quiet make,
Sore watched and weary, he began to steep
His cares and sorrows in oblivion's lake,
And in a little, short, unquiet sleep
Some small repose his fainting spirits take;
But, while he slept, a voice grave and severe
At unawares thus thundered in his ear:

VIII

"O Solyman! thou far-renowned king,
Till better season serve, forbear thy rest;
A stranger doth thy lands in thraldom bring,
Nice is a slave, by Christian yoke oppressed;
Sleepest thou here, forgetful of this thing,
That here thy friends lie slain, not laid in chest,
Whose bones bear witness of thy shame and scorn!
And wilt thou idly here attend the morn?"

IX

The king awoke, and saw before his eyes
A man whose presence seemed grave and old,
A withen staff his steps unstable guides,
Which served his feeble members to uphold.
"And what art thou?" the prince in scorn replies,
"What sprite to vex poor passengers so bold,
To break their sleep? or what to thee belongs
My shame, my loss, my vengeance or my wrongs."

X

"I am the man of thine intent," quoth he,

"And purpose new that sure conjecture hath,
And better than thou weenest know I thee:
I proffer thee my service and my faith.
My speeches therefore sharp and biting be,
Because quick words the whetstones are of wrath, --
Accept in gree, my lord, the words I spoke,
As spurs thine ire and courage to provoke.

XI

"But now to visit Egypt's mighty king,
Unless my judgment fall, you are prepared,
I prophesy, about a needless thing
You suffer shall a voyage long and hard:
For though you stay, the monarch great will bring
His new assembled host to Juda-ward,
No place of service there, no cause of fight,
Nor gainst our foes to use your force and might.

XII

"But if you follow me, within this wall
With Christian arms hemmed in on every side,
Withouten battle, fight, or stroke at all,
Even at noonday, I will you safely guide,
Where you delight, rejoice, and glory shall
In perils great to see your prowess tried.
That noble town you may preserve and shield,
Till Egypt's host come to renew the field."

XIII

While thus he parleyed, of this aged guest
The Turk the words and looks did both admire,
And from his haughty eyes and furious breast
He laid apart his pride, his rage and ire,
And humbly said, "I willing am and prest
To follow where thou leadest, reverend sire,
And that advice best fits my angry vein
That tells of greatest peril, greatest pain."

XIV

The old man praised his words, and for the air
His late received wounds to worse disposes,
A quintessence therein he poured fair,
That stops the bleeding, and incision closes:
Beholding then before Apollo's chair
How fresh Aurora violets strewed and roses,
"It's time," he says, "to wend, for Titan bright
To wonted labor summons every wight."

XV

And to a chariot, that beside did stand,
Ascended he, and with him Solyman,
He took the reins, and with a mastering hand
Ruled his steeds, and whipped them now and than,
The wheels or horses' feet upon the land
Had left no sign nor token where they ran,
The coursers pant and smoke with lukewarm sweat
And, foaming cream, their iron mouthfuls eat.

XVI

The air about them round, a wondrous thing,
Itself on heaps in solid thickness drew,
The chariot hiding and environing,
The subtle mist no mortal eye could view;
And yet no stone from engine cast or sling
Could pierce the cloud, it was of proof so true;
Yet seen it was to them within which ride,
And heaven and earth without, all clear beside.

XVII

His beetle brows the Turk amazed bent,
He wrinkled up his front, and wildly stared
Upon the cloud and chariot as it went,
For speed to Cynthia's car right well compared:
The other seeing his astonishment
How he bewildered was, and how he fared,
All suddenly by name the prince gan call,
By which awaked thus he spoke withal:

XVIII

"Whoe'er thou art above all worldly wit
That hast these high and wondrous marvels brought,
And know'st the deep intents which hidden sit
In secret closet of man's private thought,
If in thy skilful heart this lot be writ,
To tell the event of things to end unbrought;
Then say, what issue and what ends the stars
Allot to Asia's troubles, broils and wars.

XIX

"But tell me first thy name, and by what art
Thou dost these wonders strange, above our skill;
For full of marvel is my troubled heart,
Tell then and leave me not amazed still."
The wizard smiled and answered, "In some part
Easy it is to satisfy thy will,
Ismen I hight, called an enchanter great,
Such skill have I in magic's secret feat;

XX

"But that I should the sure events unfold
Of things to come, or destinies foretell,
Too rash is your desire, your wish too bold,
To mortal heart such knowledge never fell;
Our wit and strength on us bestowed I hold,
To shun the evils and harms, mongst which we dwell,
They make their fortune who are stout and wise,
Wit rules the heavens, discretion guides the skies.

XXI

"That puissant arm of thine that well can rend
From Godfrey's brow the new usurped crown,
And not alone protect, save and defend
From his fierce people, this besieged town,
Gainst fire and sword with strength and courage bend,
Adventure, suffer, trust, tread perils down,
And to content, and to encourage thee,
Know this, which as I in a cloud foresee:

XXII

"I guess, before the over-gliding sun
Shall many years mete out by weeks and days,
A prince that shall in fertile Egypt won,
Shall fill all Asia with his prosperous frays,
I speak not of his acts in quiet done,
His policy, his rule, his wisdom's praise,
Let this suffice, by him these Christians shall
In fight subdued fly, and conquered fall.

XXIII

"And their great empire and usurped state
Shall overthrown in dust and ashes lie,
Their woful remnant in an angle strait
Compass'd with sea themselves shall fortify,
From thee shall spring this lord of war and fate."
Whereto great Solyman gan thus reply:
"O happy man to so great praise ybore!"
Thus he rejoiced, but yet envied more;

XXIV

And said, "Let chance with good or bad aspect
Upon me look as sacred Heaven's decree,
This heart to her I never will subject,
Nor ever conquered shall she look on me;
The moon her chariot shall awry direct
Ere from this course I will diverted be."
While thus he spake, it seemed he breathed fire,
So fierce his courage was, so hot his ire.

XXV

Thus talked they, till they arrived been
Nigh to the place where Godfrey's tents were reared,
There was a woful spectacle yseen,
Death in a thousand ugly forms appeared,
The Soldan changed hue for grief and teen,
On that sad book his shame and loss he lead,
Ah, with what grief his men, his friends he found;
And standards proud, inglorious lie on ground!

XXVI

And saw one visage of some well-known friend.
In foul despite, a rascal Frenchman tread,
And there another ragged peasant rend
The arms and garments from some champion dead,
And there with stately pomp by heaps they wend,
And Christians slain roll up in webs of lead;
Lastly the Turks and slain Arabians, brought
On heaps, he saw them burn with fire to naught.

XXVII

Deeply he sighed, and with naked sword
Out of the coach he leaped in the mire,
But Ismen called again the angry lord,
And with grave words appeased his foolish ire.
The prince content remounted at his sword,
Toward a hill on drove the aged sire,
And hasting forward up the bank they pass,

Till far behind the Christian leaguer was.

XXVIII

There they alight and took their way on foot,
The empty chariot vanished out of sight,
Yet still the cloud environed them about.
At their left hand down went they from the height
Of Sion's Hill, till they approached the route
On that side where to west he looketh right,
There Ismen stayed, and his eyesight bent
Upon the bushy rocks, and thither went.

XXIX

A hollow cave was in the craggy stone,
Wrought out by hand a number years tofore,
And for of long that way had walked none,
The vault was hid with plants and bushes hoar,
The wizard stooping in thereat to gone,
The thorns aside and scratching brambles bore,
His right hand sought the passage through the cleft,
And for his guide he gave the prince his left:

XXX

"What," quoth the Soldan, "by what privy mine,
What hidden vault behoves it me to creep?
This sword can find a better way than thine,
Although our foes the passage guard and keep."
"Let not," quoth he, "thy princely foot repine
To tread this secret path, though dark and deep;
For great King Herod used to tread the same,
He that in arms had whilom so great fame.

XXXI

"This passage made he, when he would suppress
His subjects' pride, and them in bondage hold;
By this he could from that small forteress
Antonia called, of Antony the bold,
Convey his folk unseen of more and less
Even to the midst of the temple old,
Thence, hither; where these privy ways begin,
And bring unseen whole armies out and in.

XXXII

"But now saye I in all this world lives none
That knows the secret of this darksome place,
Come then where Aladine sits on his throne,
With lords and princes set about his grace;
He feareth more than fitteth such an one,
Such signs of doubt show in his cheer and face;
Fityly you come, hear, see, and keep you still,
Till time and season serve, then speak your fill."

XXXIII

This said, that narrow entrance passed the knight,
So creeps a camel through a needle's eye,
And through the ways as black as darkest night
He followed him that did him rule and guie;
Strait was the way at first, withouten light,

But further in, did further amplify;
So that upright walked at ease the men
Ere they had passed half that secret den,

XXXIV

A privy door Ismen unlocked at last,
And up they clomb a little-used stair,
Thereat the day a feeble beam in cast,
Dim was the light, and nothing clear the air;
Out of the hollow cave at length they passed
Into a goodly hall, high, broad and fair,
Where crowned with gold, and all in purple clad
Sate the sad king, among his nobles sad.

XXXV

The Turk, close in his hollow cloud imbarred,
Unseen, at will did all the prease behold,
These heavy speeches of the king he heard,
Who thus from lofty siege his pleasure told;
"My lords, last day our state was much impaired,
Our friends were slain, killed were our soldiers bold,
Great helps and greater hopes are us bereft,
Nor aught but aid from Egypt land is left:

XXXVI

"And well you see far distant is that aid,
Upon our heels our danger treadeth still,
For your advice was this assembly made,
Each what he thinketh speak, and what he will."
A whisper soft arose when this was said,
As gentle winds the groves with murmur fill,
But with bold face, high looks and merry cheer,
Argantes rose, the rest their talk forbear.

XXXVII

"O worthy sovereign," thus began to say
The hardy young man to the tyrant wise,
"What words be these? what fears do you dismay?
Who knows not this, you need not our advice!
But on your hand your hope of conquest lay,
And, for no loss true virtue damnifies,
Make her our shield, pray her us succors give,
And without her let us not wish to live.

XXXVIII

"Nor say I this for that I aught misdeem
That Egypt's promised succors fail us might,
Doubtful of my great master's words to seem
To me were neither lawful, just, nor right!
I speak these words, for spurs I them esteem
To waken up each dull and fearful sprite,
And make our hearts resolved to all assays,
To win with honor, or to die with praise."

XXXIX

Thus much Argantes said, and said no more,
As if the case were clear of which he spoke.
Orcano rose, of princely stem ybore,

Whose presence 'mongst them bore a mighty stroke,
A man esteemed well in arms of yore,
But now was coupled new in marriage yoke;
Young babes he had, to fight which made him loth,
He was a husband and a father both.

XL

"My lord," quoth he, "I will not reprehend
The earnest zeal of this audacious speech,
From courage sprung, which seld is close ypend
In swelling stomach without violent breach:
And though to you our good Circassian friend
In terms too bold and fervent oft doth preach,
Yet hold I that for good, in warlike feat
For his great deeds respond his speeches great.

XLI

"But if it you beseem, whom graver age
And long experience hath made wise and sly,
To rule the heat of youth and hardy rage,
Which somewhat have misled this knight awry,
In equal balance ponder then and gauge
Your hopes far distant, with your perils nigh;
This town's old walls and rampires new compare
With Godfrey's forces and his engines rare.

XLII

"But, if I may say what I think unblamed,
This town is strong, by nature, site and art,
But engines huge and instruments are framed
Gainst these defences by our adverse part,
Who thinks him most secure is eathest shamed;
I hope the best, yet fear unconstant mart,
And with this siege if we be long up pent,
Famine I doubt, our store will all be spent.

XLIII

"For all that store of cattle and of grain
Which yesterday within these walls you brought,
While your proud foes triumphant through the plain
On naught but shedding blood, and conquest thought,
Too little is this city to sustain,
To raise the siege unless some means be sought;
And it must last till the prefixed hour
That it be raised by Egypt's aid and power.

XLIV

"But what if that appointed day they miss?
Or else, ere we expect, what if they came?
The victory yet is not ours for this,
Oh save this town from ruin, us from shame!
With that same Godfrey still our warfare is,
These armies, soldiers, captains are the same
Who have so oft amid the dusty plain
Turks, Persians, Syrians and Arabians slain.

XLV

"And thou Argantes wotest what they be;

Of hast thou fled from that victorious host,
Thy shoulders often hast thou let them see,
And in thy feet hath been thy safeguard most;
Clorinda bright and I fled eke with thee,
None than his fellows had more cause to boast,
Nor blame I any; for in every fight
We showed courage, valor, strength and might.

XLVI

"And though this hardy knight the certain threat
Of near-approaching death to hear disdain;
Yet to this state of loss and danger great,
From this strong foe I see the tokens plain;
No fort how strong soe'er by art or seat,
Can hinder Godfrey why he should not reign:
This makes me say, -- to witness heaven I bring,
Zeal to this state, love to my lord and king --

XLVII

"The king of Tripoli was well advised
To purchase peace, and so preserve his crown:
But Solyman, who Godfrey's love despised,
Is either dead or deep in prison thrown;
Else fearful is he run away disguised,
And scant his life is left him for his own,
And yet with gifts, with tribute, and with gold,
He might in peace his empire still have hold."

XLVIII

Thus spake Orcanes, and some inkling gave
In doubtful words of that he would have said;
To sue for peace or yield himself a slave
He durst not openly his king persuade:
But at those words the Soldan gan to rave,
And gainst his will wrapt in the cloud he stayed,
Whom Ismen thus bespake, "How can you bear
These words, my lord? or these reproaches hear?"

XLIX

"Oh, let me speak," quoth he, "with ire and scorn
I burn, and gains, my will thus hid I stay!"
This said. the smoky cloud was cleft and torn,
Which like a veil upon them stretched lay,
And up to open heaven forthwith was borne,
And left the prince in view of lightsome day,
With princely look amid the press he shined,
And on a sudden, thus declared his mind.

L

"Of whom you speak behold the Soldan here,
Neither afraid nor run away for dread,
And that these slanders, lies and fables were,
This hand shall prove upon that coward's head,
I, who have shed a sea of blood well near,
And heaped up mountains high of Christians dead,
I in their camp who still maintained the fray,
My men all murdered, I that run away.

LI

"If this, or any coward vile beside,
False to his faith and country, dares reply;
And speak of concord with yon men of pride,
By your good leave, Sir King, here shall he die,
The lambs and wolves shall in one fold abide,
The doves and serpents in one nest shall lie,
Before one town us and these Christians shall
In peace and love unite within one wall."

LII

While thus he spoke, his broad and trenchant sword
His hand held high aloft in threatening guise;
Dumb stood the knights, so dreadful was his word;
A storm was in his front, fire in his eyes,
He turned at last to Sion's aged lord,
And calmed his visage stern in humbler wise:
"Behold," quoth he, "good prince, what aid I bring,
Since Solyman is joined with Juda's king."

LIII

King Aladine from his rich throne upstart
And said, "Oh how I joy thy face to view,
My noble friend! it lesseneth in some part
My grief, for slaughter of my subjects true;
My weak estate to stablish come thou art,
And mayest thine own again in time renew,
If Heavens consent:" with that the Soldan bold
In dear embracements did he long enfold.

LIV

Their greetings done, the king resigned his throne
To Solyman, and set himself beside,
In a rich seat adorned with gold and stone,
And Ismen sage did at his elbow bide,
Of whom he asked what way they two had gone,
And he declared all what had them betide:
Clorinda bright to Solyman addressed
Her salutations first, then all the rest.

LV

Among them rose Ormusses' valiant knight,
Whom late the Soldan with a convoy sent,
And when most hot and bloody was the fight,
By secret paths and blind byways he went,
Till aided by the silence and the night
Safe in the city's walls himself he pent,
And there refreshed with corn and cattle store
The pined soldiers famished nigh before.

LVI

With surly countenance and disdainful grace,
Sullen and sad, sat the Circassian stout,
Like a fierce lion grumbling in his place,
His fiery eyes that turns and rolls about;
Nor durst Orcanes view the Soldan's face,
But still upon the floor did pore and tout:
Thus with his lords and peers in counselling,
The Turkish monarch sat with Juda's king.

LVII

Godfrey this while gave victory the rein,
And following her the straits he opened all;
Then for his soldiers and his captains slain,
He celebrates a stately funeral,
And told his camp within a day or twain
He would assault the city's mighty wall,
And all the heathen there enclosed doth threat,
With fire and sword, with death and danger great.

LVIII

And for he had that noble squadron known,
In the last fight which brought him so great aid,
To be the lords and princes of his own
Who followed late the sly enticing maid,
And with them Tancred, who had late been thrown
In prison deep, by that false witch betrayed,
Before the hermit and some private friends,
For all those worthies, lords and knights, he sends;

LIX

And thus he said, "Some one of you declare
Your fortunes, whether good or to be blamed,
And to assist us with your valors rare
In so great need, how was your coming framed?"
They blush, and on the ground amazed stare,
For virtue is of little guilt ashamed,
At last the English prince with countenance bold,
The silence broke, and thus their errors told:

LX

"We, not elect to that exploit by lot,
With secret flight from hence ourselves withdrew,
Following false Cupid, I deny it not,
Enticed forth by love and beauty's hue;
A jealous fire burnt in our stomachs hot,
And by close ways we passed least in view,
Her words, her looks, alas I know too late,
Nursed our love, our jealousy, our hate.

LXI

"At last we gan approach that woful clime,
Where fire and brimstone down from Heaven was sent
To take revenge for sin and shameful crime
Gainst kind commit, by those who nould repent;
A loathsome lake of brimstone, pitch and lime,
O'ergoes that land, erst sweet and redolent,
And when it moves, thence stench and smoke up flies
Which dim the welkin and infect the skies.

LXII

"This is the lake in which yet never might
Aught that hath weight sink to the bottom down,
But like to cork or leaves or feathers light,
Stones, iron, men, there fleet and never drown;
Therein a castle stands, to which by sight
But o'er a narrow bridge no way is known,
Hither us brought, here welcomed us the witch,

The house within was stately, pleasant, rich.

LXIII

"The heavens were clear, and wholesome was the air,
High trees, sweet meadows, waters pure and good;
For there in thickest shade of myrtles fair
A crystal spring poured out a silver flood;
Amid the herbs, the grass and flowers rare,
The falling leaves down pattered from the wood,
The birds sung hymns of love; yet speak I naught
Of gold and marble rich, and richly wrought.

LXIV

"Under the curtain of the greenwood shade,
Beside the brook upon the velvet grass,
In massy vessel of pure silver made,
A banquet rich and costly furnished was,
All beasts, all birds beguiled by fowler's trade,
All fish were there in floods or seas that pass,
All dainties made by art, and at the table
An hundred virgins served, for husbands able.

LXV

"She with sweet words and false enticing smiles,
Infused love among the dainties set,
And with empoisoned cups our souls beguiles,
And made each knight himself and God forget:
She rose and turned again within short whiles,
With changed looks where wrath and anger met,
A charming rod, a book with her she brings,
On which she mumbled strange and secret things.

LXVI

"She read, and change I felt my will and thought,
I longed to change my life, and place of bidding,
That virtue strange in me no pleasure wrought,
I leapt into the flood myself there hiding,
My legs and feet both into one were brought,
Mine arms and hands into my shoulders sliding,
My skin was full of scales, like shields of brass,
Now made a fish, where late a knight I was.

LXVII

"The rest with me like shape, like garments wore,
And dived with me in that quicksilver stream,
Such mind, to my remembrance, then I bore,
As when on vain and foolish things men dream;
At last our shade it pleased her to restore,
Then full of wonder and of fear we seem,
And with an ireful look the angry maid
Thus threatened us, and made us thus afraid.

LXVIII

"`You see,' quoth she, `my sacred might and skill,
How you are subject to my rule and power,
In endless thralldom damned if I will
I can torment and keep you in this tower,
Or make you birds, or trees on craggy hill,

To bide the bitter blasts of storm and shower;
Or harden you to rocks on mountains old,
Or melt your flesh and bones to rivers cold:

LXIX

"Yet may you well avoid mine ire and wrath,
If to my will your yielding hearts you bend,
You must forsake your Christendom and faith,
And gainst Godfredo false my crown defend.'
We all refused, for speedy death each prayeth,
Save false Rambaldo, he became her friend,
We in a dungeon deep were helpless cast,
In misery and iron chained fast.

LXX

"Then, for alone they say falls no mishap,
Within short while Prince Tancred thither came,
And was unwares surprised in the trap:
But there short while we stayed, the wily dame
In other folds our mischiefs would upwrap.
From Hidraort an hundred horsemen came,
Whose guide, a baron bold to Egypt's king,
Should us disarmed and bound in fetters bring.

LXXI

"Now on our way, the way to death we ride,
But Providence Divine thus for us wrought,
Rinaldo, whose high virtue is his guide
To great exploits, exceeding human thought,
Met us, and all at once our guard defied,
And ere he left the fight to earth them brought.
And in their harness armed us in the place,
Which late were ours, before our late disgrace.

LXXII

"I and all these the hardy champion knew,
We saw his valor, and his voice we heard;
Then is the rumor of his death untrue,
His life is safe, good fortune long it guard,
Three times the golden sun hath risen new,
Since us he left and rode to Antioch-ward;
But first his armors, broken, hacked and cleft,
Unfit for service, there he doft and left."

LXXIII

Thus spake the Briton prince, with humble cheer
The hermit sage to heaven cast up his eyne,
His color and his countenance changed were,
With heavenly grace his looks and visage shine,
Ravished with zeal his soul approached near
The seat of angels pure, and saints divine,
And there he learned of things and haps to come,
To give foreknowledge true, and certain doom.

LXXIV

At last he spoke, in more than human sound,
And told what things his wisdom great foresaw,
And at his thundering voice the folk around
Attentive stood, with trembling and with awe:

"Rinaldo lives," he said, "the tokens found
From women's craft their false beginnings draw,
He lives, and heaven will long preserve his days,
To greater glory, and to greater praise.

LXXV

"These are but trifles yet, though Asia's kings
Shrink at his name, and tremble at his view,
I well foresee he shall do greater things,
And wicked emperors conquer and subdue;
Under the shadow of his eagle's wings
Shall holy Church preserve her sacred crew,
From Caesar's bird he shall the sable train
Pluck off, and break her talons sharp in twain.

LXXVI

"His children's children at his hardiness
And great attempts shall take example fair,
From emperors unjust in all distress
They shall defend the state of Peter's chair,
To raise the humble up, pride to suppress,
To help the innocents shall be their care.
This bird of east shall fly with conquest great,
As far as moon gives light or sun gives heat;

LXXVII

"Her eyes behold the truth and purest light,
And thunders down in Peter's aid she brings,
And where for Christ and Christian faith men fight,
There forth she spreadeth her victorious wings,
This virtue nature gives her and this might;
Then lure her home, for on her presence hings
The happy end of this great enterprise,
So Heaven decrees, and so command the skies."

LXXVIII

These words of his of Prince Rinaldo's death
Out of their troubled hearts, the fear had rased;
In all this joy yet Godfrey smiled unneath.
In his wise thought such care and heed was placed.
But now from deeps of regions underneath
Night's veil arose, and sun's bright lustre chased,
When all full sweetly in their cabins slept,
Save he, whose thoughts his eyes still open kept.

ELEVENTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

With grave procession, songs and psalms devout
Heaven's sacred aid the Christian lords invoke;
That done, they scale the wall which kept them out:
The fort is almost won, the gates nigh broke:
Godfrey is wounded by Clorinda stout,
And lost is that day's conquest by the stroke;
The angel cures him, he returns to fight,
But lost his labor, for day lost his light.

I

The Christian army's great and puissant guide,
To assault the town that all his thoughts had bent,
Did ladders, rams, and engines huge provide,
When reverend Peter to him gravely went,
And drawing him with sober grace aside,
With words severe thus told his high intent;
"Right well, my lord, these earthly strengths you move,
But let us first begin from Heaven above:

II

"With public prayer, zeal and faith devout,
The aid, assistance, and the help obtain
Of all the blessed of the heavenly rout,
With whose support you conquest sure may gain;
First let the priests before thine armies stout
With sacred hymns their holy voices strain.
And thou and all thy lords and peers with thee,
Of godliness and faith examples be."

III

Thus spake the hermit grave in words severe:
Godfrey allowed his counsel, sage, and wise,
"Of Christ the Lord," quoth he, "thou servant dear,
I yield to follow thy divine advice,
And while the princes I assemble here,
The great procession, songs and sacrifice,
With Bishop William, thou and Ademare,
With sacred and with solemn pomp prepare."

IV

Next morn the bishops twain, the heremite,
And all the clerks and priests of less estate,
Did in the midst of the camp unite
Within a place for prayer consecrate,
Each priest adorned was in a surplice white,
The bishops donned their albes and copes of state,
Above their rochets buttoned fair before,
And mitres on their heads like crowns they wore.

V

Peter alone, before, spread to the wind
The glorious sign of our salvation great,
With easy pace the choir come all behind,
And hymns and psalms in order true repeat,
With sweet response in harmonious kind
Their humble song the yielding air doth beat,
"Lastly, together went the reverend pair
Of prelates sage, William and Ademare,

VI

The mighty duke came next, as princes do,
Without companion, marching all alone,
The lords and captains then came two and two,
With easy pace thus ordered, passing through
The trench and rampire, to the fields they gone,
No thundering drum, no trumpet shrill they hear,

Their godly music psalms and prayers were.

VII

To thee, O Father, Son, and sacred Sprite,
One true, eternal, everlasting King;
To Christ's dear mother, Mary, vlrigin bright,
Psalms of thanksgiving and of praise they sing;
To them that angels down from heaven to fight
Gainst the blasphemous beast and dragon bring;
To him also that of our Saviour good,
Washed the sacred font in Jordan's flood.

VIII

Him likewise they invoke, called the Rock
Whereon the Lord, they say, his Church did rear,
Whose true successors close or else unlock
The blessed gates of grace and mercy dear;
And all the elected twelve the chosen flock,
Of his triumphant death who witness bear;
And them by torment, slaughter, fire and sword
Who martyrs died to confirm his word;

IX

And them also whose books and writings tell
What certain path to heavenly bliss us leads;
And hermits good, and ancesses that dwell
Mewed up in walls, and mumble on their beads,
And virgin nuns in close and private cell,
Where, but shrift fathers, never mankind treads:
On these they called, and on all the rout
Of angels, martyrs, and of saints devout.

X

Singing and saying thus, the camp devout
Spread forth her zealous squadrons broad and wide';
Toward mount Olivet went all this route,
So called of olive trees the hills which hide,
A mountain known by fame the world throughout,
Which riseth on the city's eastern side,
From it divided by the valley green
Of Josaphat, that fills the space between.

XI

Hither the armies went, and chanted shrill,
That all the deep and hollow dales resound;
From hollow mounts and caves in every hill,
A thousand echoes also sung around,
It seemed some clever, that sung with art and skill,
Dwelt in those savage dens and shady ground,
For oft resounds from the banks they hear,
The name of Christ and of his mother dear.

XII

Upon the walls the Pagans old and young
Stood hushed and still, amated and amazed,
At their grave order and their humble song,
At their strange pomp and customs new they gazed:
But when the show they had beholden long,

An hideous yell the wicked miscreants raised,
That with vile blasphemies the mountain hoar,
The woods, the waters, and the valleys roar.

XIII

But yet with sacred notes the hosts proceed,
Though blasphemies they hear and cursed things;
So with Apollo's harp Pan tunes his reed,
So adders hiss where Philomela sings;
Nor flying darts nor stones the Christians dread,
Nor arrows shot, nor quarries cast from slings;
But with assured faith, as dreading naught,
The holy work begun to end they brought.

XIV

A table set they on the mountain's height
To minister thereon the sacrament,
In golden candlesticks a hallowed light
At either end of virgin wax there brent;
In costly vestments sacred William dight,
With fear and trembling to the altar went,
And prayer there and service loud begins,
Both for his own and all the army's sins.

XV

Humbly they heard his words that stood him nigh,
The rest far off upon him bent their eyes,
But when he ended had the service high,
"You servants of the Lord depart," he cries:
His hands he lifted then up to the sky,
And blessed all those warlike companies;
And they dismissed returned the way they came,
Their order as before, their pomp the same.

XVI

Within their camp arrived, this voyage ended,
Toward his tent the duke himself withdrew,
Upon their guide by heaps the bands attended,
Till his pavilion's stately door they view,
There to the Lord his welfare they commended,
And with him left the worthies of the crew,
Whom at a costly and rich feast he placed,
And with the highest room old Raymond graced.

XVII

Now when the hungry knights sufficed are
With meat, with drink, with spices of the best,
Quoth he, "When next you see the morning star,
To assault the town be ready all and prest:
To-morrow is a day of pains and war,
This of repose, of quiet, peace, and rest;
Go, take your ease this evening, and this night,
And make you strong against to-morrow's fight."

XVIII

They took their leave, and Godfrey's heralds rode
To intimate his will on every side,
And published it through all the lodgings broad,
That gainst the morn each should himself provide;

Meanwhile they might their hearts of cares unload,
And rest their tired limbs that eveningtide;
Thus fared they till night their eyes did close,
Night friend to gentle rest and sweet repose.

XIX

With little sign as yet of springing day
Out peeped, not well appeared the rising morn,
The plough yet tore not up the fertile lay,
Nor to their feed the sheep from folds return,
The birds sate silent on the greenwood spray
Amid the groves unheard was hound and horn,
When trumpets shrill, true signs of hardy fights,
Called up to arms the soldiers, called the knights:

XX

"Arm, arm at once!" an hundred squadrons cried,
And with their cry to arm them all begin.
Godfrey arose, that day he laid aside
His hauberk strong he wents to combat in,
And donned a breastplate fair, of proof untried,
Such one as footmen use, light, easy, thin.
Scantly the warlord thus clothed had his gromes,
When aged Raymond to his presence comes.

XXI

And furnished to us when he the man beheld,
By his attire his secret thought he guessed,
"Where is," quoth he, "your sure and trusty shield?
Your helm, your hauberk strong? where all the rest?
Why be you half disarmed? why to the field
Approach you in these weak defences dressed?
I see this day you mean a course to run,
Wherein may peril much, small praise be won.

XXII

"Alas, do you that idle prise expect,
To set first foot this conquered wall above?
Of less account some knight thereto object
Whose loss so great and harmful cannot prove;
My lord, your life with greater care protect,
And love yourself because all us you love,
Your happy life is spirit, soul, and breath
Of all this camp, preserve it then from death."

XXIII

To this he answered thus, "You know," he said,
"In Clarimont by mighty Urban's hand
When I was girded with this noble blade,
For Christ's true faith to fight in every land,
To God even then a secret vow I made,
Not as a captain here this day to stand
And give directions, but with shield and sword
To fight, to win, or die for Christ my Lord.

XXIV

"When all this camp in battle strong shall be
Ordained and ordered, well disposed all,
And all things done which to the high degree

And sacred place I hold belongen shall;
Then reason is it, nor dissuade thou me,
That I likewise assault this sacred wall,
Lest from my vow to God late made I swerve:
He shall this life defend, keep and preserve."

XXV

Thus he concludes, and every hardy knight
His sample followed, and his brethren twain,
The other princes put on harness light,
As footmen use: but all the Pagan train
Toward that side bent their defensive might
Which lies exposed to view of Charles's wain
And Zephyrus' sweet blasts, for on that part
The town was weakest, both by side and art.

XXVI

On all parts else the fort was strong by site,
With mighty hills defenced from foreign rage,
And to this part the tyrant gan unite
His subjects born and bands that serve for wage,
From this exploit he spared nor great nor lite,
The aged men, and boys of tender age,
To fire of angry war still brought new fuel,
Stones, darts, lime, brimstone and bitumen cruel.

XXVII

All full of arms and weapons was the wall,
Under whose basis that fair plain doth run,
There stood the Soldan like a giant tall,
So stood at Rhodes the Coloss of the sun,
Waist high, Argantes showed himself withal,
At whose stern looks the French to quake begun,
Clorinda on the corner tower alone,
In silver arms like rising Cynthia shone.

XXVIII

Her rattling quiver at her shoulders hung,
Therein a flash of arrows feathered weel.
In her left hand her bow was bended strong,
Therein a shaft headed with mortal steel,
So fit to shoot she singled forth among
Her foes who first her quarries' strength should feel,
So fit to shoot Latona's daughter stood
When Niobe she killed and all her brood.

XXIX

The aged tyrant tottered on his feet
From gate to gate, from wall to wall he flew,
He comforts all his bands with speeches sweet,
And every fort and bastion doth review,
For every need prepared in every street
New regiments he placed and weapons new.
The matrons grave within their temples high
To idols false for succors call and cry,

XXX

"O Macon, break in twain the steeled lance

On wicked Godfrey with thy righteous hands,
Against thy name he doth his arm advance,
His rebel blood pour out upon these sands;"
These cries within his ears no entrance
Could find, for naught he hears, naught understands.
While thus the town for her defence ordains,
His armies Godfrey ordereth on the plains;

XXXI

His forces first on foot he forward brought,
With goodly order, providence and art,
And gainst these towers which to assail he thought,
In battles twain his strength he doth depart,
Between them crossbows stood, and engines wrought
To cast a stone, a quarry, or a dart,
From whence like thunder's dint or lightnings new
Against the bulwark stones and lances flew.

XXXII

His men at arms did back his bands on foot,
The light horse ride far off and serve for wings,
He gave the sign, so mighty was the rout
Of those that shot with bows and cast with slings,
Such storms of shafts and stones flew all about,
That many a Pagan proud to death it brings,
Some died, some at their loops durst scant outpeep,
Some fled and left the place they took to keep.

XXXIII

The hardy Frenchmen, full of heat and haste,
Ran boldly forward to the ditches large,
And o'er their heads an iron pentice vast
They built, by joining many a shield and targe,
Some with their engines ceaseless shot and cast,
And volleys huge of arrows sharp discharge,
Upon the ditches some employed their pain
To fill the moat and even it with the plain.

XXXIV

With slime or mud the ditches were not soft,
But dry and sandy, void of waters clear,
Though large and deep the Christians fill them oft,
With rubbish, fagots, stones, and trees they bear:
Adrastus first advanced his crest aloft,
And boldly gan a strong scalado rear,
And through the falling storm did upward climb
Of stones, darts, arrows, fire, pitch and lime:

XXXV

The hardy Switzer now so far was gone
That half way up with mickle pain he got,
A thousand weapons he sustained alone,
And his audacious climbing ceased not;
At last upon him fell a mighty stone,
As from some engine great it had been shot,
It broke his helm, he tumbled from the height,
The strong Circassian cast that wondrous weight;

XXXVI

Not mortal was the blow, yet with the fall

On earth sore bruised the man lay in a swoon.
Argantes gan with boasting words to call,
"Who cometh next? this first is tumbled down,
Come, hardy soldiers, come, assault this wall,
I will not shrink, nor fly, nor hide my crown,
If in your trench yourselves for dread you hold,
There shall you die like sheep killed in their fold."

XXXVII

Thus boasted he; but in their trenches deep,
The hidden squadrons kept themselves from scath,
The curtain made of shields did well off keep
Both darts and shot, and scorned all their wrath.
But now the ram upon the rampiers steep,
On mighty beams his head advanced hath,
With dreadful horns of iron tough tree great,
The walls and bulwarks trembled at his threat.

XXXVIII

An hundred able men meanwhile let fall
The weights behind, the engine tumbled down
And battered flat the battlements and wall:
So fell Taigetus hill on Sparta town,
It crushed the steeled shield in pieces small,
And beat the helmet to the wearers' crown,
And on the ruins of the walls and stones,
Dispersed left their blood their brains and bones.

XXXIX

The fierce assailants kept no longer close
Under the shelter of their target fine,
But their bold fronts to chance of war expose,
And gainst those towers let their virtue shine,
The scaling ladders up to skies arose,
The ground-works deep some closely undermine,
The walls before the Frenchmen shrink and shake,
And gaping sign of headlong falling make:

XL

And fallen they had, so far the strength extends
Of that fierce ram and his redoubted stroke,
But that the Pagan's care the place defends
And saved by warlike skill the wall nigh broke:
For to what part soe'er the engine bends,
Their sacks of wool they place the blow to choke,
Whose yielding breaks the strokes thereon which light,
So weakness oft subdues the greatest might.

XLI

While thus the worthies of the western crew
Maintained their brave assault and skirmish hot,
Her mighty bow Clorinda often drew,
And many a sharp and deadly arrow shot;
And from her bow no steeled shaft there flew
But that some blood the cursed engine got,
Blood of some valiant knight or man of fame,
For that proud shootress scorned weaker game.

XLII

The first she hit among the Christian peers
Was the bold son of England's noble king,
Above the trench himself he scanty rears,
But she an arrow loosed from the string,
The wicked steel his gauntlet breaks and tears,
And through his right hand thrust the piercing sting;
Disabled thus from fight, he gan retire,
Groaning for pain, but fretting more for ire.

XLIII

Lord Stephen of Amboise on the ditch's brim,
And on a ladder high, Clotharius died,
From back to breast an arrow pierced him,
The other was shot through from side to side:
Then as he managed brave his courser trim,
On his left arm he hit the Flemings' guide,
He stopped, and from the wound the reed out-twined,
But left the iron in his flesh behind.

XLIV

As Ademare stood to behold the fight
High on the bank, withdrawn to breathe a space,
A fatal shaft upon his forehead light,
His hand he lifted up to feel the place,
Whereon a second arrow chanced right,
And nailed his hand unto his wounded face,
He fell, and with his blood distained the land,
His holy blood shed by a virgin's hand.

XLV

While Palamede stood near the battlement,
Despising perils all, and all mishap,
And upward still his hardy footings bent,
On his right eye he caught a deadly clap,
Through his right eye Clorinda's seventh shaft went,
And in his neck broke forth a bloody gap;
He underneath that bulwark dying fell,
Which late to scale and win he trusted well.

XLVI

Thus shot the maid: the duke with hard assay
And sharp assault, meanwhile the town oppressed,
Against that part which to his campward lay
An engine huge and wondrous he addressed,
A tower of wood built for the town's decay
As high as were the walls and bulwarks best,
A turret full of men and weapons pent,
And yet on wheels it rolled, moved, and went.

XLVII

This rolling fort his nigh approaches made,
And darts and arrows spit against his foes,
As ships are wont in fight, so it assayed
With the strong wall to grapple and to close,
The Pagans on each side the piece invade,
And all their force against this mass oppose,
Sometimes the wheels, sometimes the battlement

With timber, logs and stones, they broke and rent,
XLVIII
So thick flew stones and darts, that no man sees
The azure heavens, the sun his brightness lost,
The clouds of weapons, like to swarms of bees,
Move the air, and there each other crossed:
And look how falling leaves drop down from trees,
When the moist sap is nipped with timely frost,
Or apples in strong winds from branches fall;
The Saracens so tumbled from the wall.

XLIX
For on their part the greatest slaughter light,
They had no shelter gainst so sharp a shower,
Some left on live betook themselves to flight,
So feared they this deadly thundering tower:
But Solyman stayed like a valiant knight,
And some with him, that trusted in his power,
Argantes with a long beech tree in hand,
Ran thither, this huge engine to withstand:

L
With this he pushed the tower, and back it drives
The length of all his tree, a wondrous way,
The hardy virgin by his side arrives,
To help Argantes in this hard assay:
The band that used the ram, this season strives
To cut the cords, wherein the woolpacks lay,
Which done, the sacks down in the trenches fall,
And to the battery naked left the wall.

LI
The tower above, the ram beneath doth thunder,
What lime and stone such puissance could abide?
The wall began, new bruised and crushed asunder,
Her wounded lap to open broad and wide,
Godfrey himself and his brought safely under
The shattered wall, where greatest breach he spied,
Himself he saves behind his mighty targe,
A shield not used but in some desperate charge.

LII
From hence he sees where Solyman descends,
Down to the threshold of the gaping breach,
And there it seems the mighty prince intends
Godfredo's hoped entrance to impeach:
Argantes, and with him the maid, defends
The walls above, to which the tower doth reach,
His noble heart, when Godfrey this beheld,
With courage new with wrath and valor swelled.

LIII
He turned about and to good Sigiere spake,
Who bare his greatest shield and mighty bow,
"That sure and trusty target let me take,
Impenetrable is that shield I know,
Over these ruins will I passage make,
And enter first, the way is eath and low,

And time requires that by some noble feat
I should make known my strength and puissance great."

LIV

He scant had spoken, scant received the charge,
When on his leg a sudden shaft him hit,
And through that part a hole made wide and large,
Where his strong sinews fastened were and knit.
Clorinda, thou this arrow didst discharge,
And let the Pagans bless thy hand for it,
For by that shot thou savedst them that day
From bondage vile, from death and sure decay.

LV

The wounded duke, as though he felt no pain,
Still forward went, and mounted up the breach
His high attempt at first he nould refrain,
And after called his lords with cheerful speech;
But when his leg could not his weight sustain,
He saw his will did far his power outreach,
And more he strove his grief increased the more,
The bold assault he left at length therefore:

LVI

And with his hand he beckoned Guelpho near,
And said, "I must withdraw me to my tent,
My place and person in mine absence bear,
Supply my want, let not the fight relent,
I go, and will ere long again be here;
I go and straight return: "this said, he went,
On a light steed he leaped, and o'er the green
He rode, but rode not, as he thought, unseen.

LVII

When Godfrey parted, parted eke the heart, .
The strength and fortune of the Christian bands,.
Courage increased in their adverse part,
Wrath in their hearts, and vigor in their hands:
Valor, success, strength, hardiness and art,
Failed in the princes of the western lands,
Their swords were blunt, faint was their trumpet's blast,
Their sun was set, or else with clouds o'ercast.

LVIII

Upon the bulwarks now appeared bold
That fearful band that late for dread was fled!
The women that Clorinda's strength behold,
Their country's love to war encouraged,
They weapons got, and fight like men they would,
Their gowns tucked up, their locks were loose and spread,
Sharp darts they cast, and without dread or fear,
Exposed their breasts to save their fortress dear.

LIX

But that which most dismayed the Christian knights,
And added courage to the Pagans most,
Was Guelpho's sudden fall in all men's sights,
Who tumbled headlong down, his footing lost,
A mighty stone upon the worthy lights,

But whence it came none wist, nor from what coast;
And with like blow, which more their hearts dismayed,
Beside him low in dust old Raymond laid:

LX

And Eustace eke within the ditches large,
To narrow shifts and last extremes they drive,
Upon their foes so fierce the Pagans charge,
And with good-fortune so their blows they give,
That whom they hit, in spite of helm or targe,
They deeply wound, or else of life deprive.
At this their good success Argantes proud,
Waxing more fell, thus roared and cried aloud:

LXI

"This is not Antioch, nor the evening dark
Can help your privy sleights with friendly shade,
The sun yet shines, your falsehood can we mark,
In other wise this bold assault is made;
Of praise and glory quenched is the spark
That made you first these eastern lands invade,
Why cease you now? why take you not this fort?
What! are you weary for a charge so short?"

LXII

Thus raged he, and in such hellish sort
Increased the fury in the brain-sick knight,
That he esteemed that large and ample fort
Too strait a field, wherein to prove his might,
There where the breach had framed a new-made port,
Himself he placed, with nimble skips and light,
He cleared the passage out, and thus he cried
To Solyman, that fought close by his side:

LXIII

"Come, Solyman, the time and place behold,
That of our valors well may judge the doubt,
What sayest thou? amongst these Christians bold,
First leap he forth that holds himself most stout:"
While thus his will the mighty champion told,
Both Solyman and he at once leaped out,
Fury the first provoked, disdain the last,
Who scorned the challenge ere his lips it passed.

LXIV

Upon their foes unlooked-for they flew,
Each spited other for his virtue's sake,
So many soldiers this fierce couple slew,
So many shields they cleft and helms they break,
So many ladders to the earth they threw,
That well they seemed a mount thereof to make,
Or else some vulture fit to save the town,
Instead of that the Christians late beat down.

LXV

The folk that strove with rage and haste before
Who first the wall and rampire should ascend,
Retire, and for that honor strive no more,

Scantly they could their limbs and lives defend,
They fled, their engines lost the Pagans tore
In pieces small, their rams to naught they rend,
And all unfit for further service make
With so great force and rage their beams they brake.

LXVI

The Pagans ran transported with their ire,
Now here, now there, and woful slaughters wrought,
At last they called for devouring fire,
Two burning pines against the tower they brought,
So from the palace of their hellish sire,
When all this world they would consume to naught,
The fury sisters come with fire in hands,
Shaking their snaky locks and sparkling brands:

LXVII

But noble Tancred, who this while applied
Grave exhortations to his bold Latines,
When of these knights the wondrous acts he spied,
And saw the champions with their burning pines,
He left his talk, and thither forthwith hied,
To stop the rage of those fell Saracines.
And with such force the fight he there renewed,
That now they fled and lost who late pursued.

LXVIII

Thus changed the state and fortune of the fray,
Meanwhile the wounded duke, in grief and teen,
Within his great pavilion rich and gay,
Good Sigiere and Baldwin stood between;
His other friends whom his mishap dismay,
With grief and tears about assembled been:
He strove in haste the weapon out to wind,
And broke the reed, but left the head behind.

LXIX

He bade them take the speediest way they might,
Of that unlucky hurt to make him sound,
And to lay ope the depth thereof to sight,
He willed them open, search and lance the wound,
"Send me again," quoth he, "to end this fight,
Before the sun be sunken under ground;"
And leaning on a broken spear, he thrust
His leg straight out, to him that cure it must.

LXX

Erotimus, born on the banks of Po,
Was he that undertook to cure the knight,
All what green herbs or waters pure could do,
He knew their power, their virtue, and their might,
A noble poet was the man also,
But in this science had a more delight,
He could restore to health death-wounded men,
And make their names immortal with his pen.

LXXI

The mighty duke yet never changed cheer,

But grieved to see his friends lamenting stand;
The leech prepared his cloths and cleansing gear,
And with a belt his gown about him band,
Now with his herbs the steely head to tear
Out of the flesh he proved, now with his hand,
Now with his hand, now with his instrument
He shaked and plucked it, yet not forth it went.

LXXII

His labor vain, his art prevailed naught,
His luck was ill, although his skill were good,
To such extremes the wounded prince he brought,
That with fell pain he swooned as he stood:
But the angel pure, that kept him, went and sought
Divine dictamnum, out of Ida wood,
This herb is rough, and bears a purple flower,
And in his budding leaves lies all his power.

LXXIII

Kind nature first upon the craggy cliff
Bewrayed this herb unto the mountain goat,
That when her sides a cruel shaft hath rift,
With it she shakes the reed out of her coat;
This in a moment fetched the angel swift,
And brought from Ida hill, though far remote,
The juice whereof in a prepared bath
Unseen the blessed spirit poured hath.

LXXIV

Pure nectar from that spring of Lydia than,
And panaces divine therein he threw,
The cunning leech to bathe the wound began,
And of itself the steely head outflew;
The bleeding stanch'd, no vermilion drop outran,
The leg again waxed strong with vigor new:
Erotemus cried out, "This hurt and wound
No human art or hand so soon makes sound:

LXXV

"Some angel good I think come down from skies
Thy surgeon is, for here plain tokens are
Of grace divine which to thy help applies,
Thy weapon take and haste again to war."
In precious cloths his leg the chieftain ties,
Naught could the man from blood and fight debar;
A sturdy lance in his right hand he braced,
His shield he took, and on his helmet laced:

LXXVI

And with a thousand knights and barons bold,
Toward the town he hasted from his camp,
In clouds of dust was Titan's face enrolled,
Trembled the earth whereon the worthies stamp,
His foes far off his dreadful looks behold,
Which in their hearts of courage quenched the lamp,
A chilling fear ran cold through every vein,
Lord Godfrey shouted thrice and all his train:

LXXVII

Their sovereign's voice his hardy people knew,
And his loud cries that cheered each fearful heart;
Thereat new strength they took and courage new,
And to the fierce assault again they start.
The Pagans twain this while themselves withdrew
Within the breach to save that battered part,
And with great loss a skirmish hot they hold
Against Tancredi and his squadron bold.

LXXVIII

Thither came Godfrey armed round about
In trusty plate, with fierce and dreadful look;
At first approach against Argantes stout
Headed with poignant steel a lance he shook,
No casting engine with such force throws out
A knotty spear, and as the way it took,
It whistled in the air, the fearless knight
Opposed his shield against that weapon's might.

LXXIX

The dreadful blow quite through his target drove,
And bored through his breastplate strong and thick,
The tender skin it in his bosom rove,
The purple-blood out-streamed from the quick;
To wrest it out the wounded Pagan strove
And little leisure gave it there to stick;
At Godfrey's head the lance again he cast,
And said, "Lo, there again thy dart thou hast."

LXXX

The spear flew back the way it lately came,
And would revenge the harm itself had done,
But missed the mark whereat the man did aim,
He stepped aside the furious blow to shun:
But Sigiere in his throat received the same,
The murdering weapon at his neck out-run,
Nor aught it grieved the man to lose his breath,
Since in his prince's stead he suffered death.

LXXXI

Even then the Soldan struck with monstrous main
The noble leader of the Norman band,
He reeled awhile and staggered with the pain,
And wheeling round fell grovelling on the sand:
Godfrey no longer could the grief sustain
Of these displeasures, but with flaming brand,
Up to the breach in heat and haste he goes,
And hand to hand there combats with his foes;

LXXXII

And there great wonders surely wrought he had,
Mortal the fight, and fierce had been the fray,
But that dark night, from her pavilion sad,
Her cloudy wings did on the earth display,
Her quiet shades she interposed glad
To cause the knights their arms aside to lay;
Godfrey withdrew, and to their tents they wend,
And thus this bloody day was brought to end.

LXXXIII

The weak and wounded ere he left the field,
The godly duke to safety thence conveyed,
Nor to his foes his engines would he yield,
In them his hope to win the fortress laid;
Then to the tower he went, and it beheeld,
The tower that late the Pagan lords dismayed
But now stood bruised, broken, cracked and shivered,
From some sharp storm as it were late delivered.

LXXXIV

From dangers great escaped, but late it was,
And now to safety brought well-nigh it seems,
But as a ship that under sail doth pass
The roaring billows and the raging streams,
And drawing nigh the wished port, alas,
Breaks on some hidden rocks her ribs and beams;
Or as a steed rough ways that well hath passed,
Before his inn stumbleth and falls at last:

LXXXV

Such hap befell that tower, for on that side
Gainst which the Pagans' force and battery bend,
Two wheels were broke whereon the piece should ride,
The maimed engine could no further wend,
The troop that guarded it that part provide
To underprop with posts, and it defend
Till carpenters and cunning workmen came
Whose skill should help and rear again the same.

LXXXVI

Thus Godfrey bids, and that ere springing-day,
The cracks and bruises all amend they should,
Each open passage, and each privy way
About the piece, he kept with soldiers bold:
But the loud rumor, both of that they say,
And that they do, is heard within the hold,
A thousand lights about the tower they view,
And what they wrought all night both saw and knew.

TWELFTH BOOK

THE ARGUMENT.

Clorinda hears her eunuch old report
Her birth, her offspring, and her native land;
Disguised she fireth Godfrey's rolling fort.
The burned piece falls smoking on the sand:
With Tancred long unknown in desperate sort
She fights, and falls through pierced with his brand:
Christened she dies; with sighs, with plaints and tears.
He wails her death; Argant revengement swears.

I

Now in dark night was all the world embarred;
But yet the tired armies took no rest,

The careful French kept heedful watch and ward,
While their high tower the workmen newly dressed,
The Pagan crew to reinforce prepared
The weakened bulwarks, late to earth down kest,
Their rampiers broke and bruised walls to mend,
Lastly their hurts the wounded knights attend.

II

Their wounds were dressed, part of the work was brought
To wished end, part left to other days,
A dull desire to rest deep midnight wrought,
His heavy rod sleep on their eyelids lays:
Yet rested not Clorinda's working thought,
Which thirsted still for fame and warlike praise,
Argantes eke accompanied the maid
From place to place, which to herself thus said:

III

"This day Argantes strong, and Solyman,
Strange things have done, and purchased great renown,
Among our foes out of the walls they ran,
Their rams they broke and rent their engines down:
I used my bow, of naught else boast I can,
My self stood safe meanwhile within this town,
And happy was my shot, and prosperous too,
But that was all a woman's hand could do.

IV

"On birds and beasts in forests wild that feed
It were more fit mine arrows to bestow,
Than for a feeble maid in warlike deed
With strong and hardy knights herself to show.
Why take I not again my virgin's weed,
And spend my days in secret cell unknow?"
Thus thought, thus mused, thus devised the maid,
And turning to the knight, at last thus said:

V

"My thoughts are full, my lord, of strange desire
Some high attempt of war to undertake,
Whether high God my mind therewith inspire
Or of his will his God mankind doth make,
Among our foes behold the light and fire,
I will among them wend, and burn or break
The tower, God grant therein I have my will
And that performed, betide me good or ill.

VI

"But if it fortune such my chance should be,
That to this town I never turn again,
Mine eunuch, whom I dearly love, with thee
I leave my faithful maids, and all my train,
To Egypt then conducted safely see
Those woful damsels and that aged swain,
Help them, my lord, in that distressed case,
Their feeble sex, his age, deserveth grace."

VII

Argantes wondering stood, and felt the effect
Of true renown pierce through his glorious mind,
"And wilt thou go," quoth he, "and me neglect,
Disgraced, despised, leave in this fort behind?
Shall I while these strong walls my life protect
Behold thy flames and fires tossed in the wind,
No, no, thy fellow have I been in arms,
And will be still, in praise, in death, in harms.

VIII

"This heart of mine death's bitter stroke despiseth,
For praise this life, for glory take this breath."
"My soul and more," quoth she, "thy friendship prizeth,
For this thy proffered aid required uneath,
I but a woman am, no loss ariseth
To this besieged city by my death,
But if, as God forbid, this night thou fall,
Ah! who shall then, who can, defend this wall!"

IX

"Too late these 'scuses vain," the knight replied,
"You bring; my will is firm, my mind is set,
! follow you whereso you list me guide,
Or go before if you my purpose let."
This said, they hasted to the palace wide
About their prince where all his lords were met,
Clorinda spoke for both, and said, "Sir king,
Attend my words, hear, and allow the thing:

X

"Argantes here, this bold and hardy knight,
Will undertake to burn the wondrous tower,
And I with him, only we stay till night
Bury in sleep our foes at deadeast hour."
The king with that cast up his hands on height,
The tears for joy upon his cheeks down pour.
"Praised," quoth he, "be Macon whom we serve,
This land I see he keeps and will preserve:

XI

"Nor shall so soon this shaken kingdom fall,
While such unconquered hearts my state defend:
But for this act what praise or guerdon shall
I give your virtues, which so far extend?
Let fame your praises sound through nations all,
And fill the world therewith to either end,
Take half my wealth and kingdom for your meed?
You are rewarded half even with the deed."

XII

Thus spake the prince, and gently 'gan distraign,
Now him, now her, between his friendly arms:
The Soldan by, no longer could refrain
That noble envy which his bosom warms,
"Nor I," quoth he, "bear this broad sword in vain,
Nor yet am unexpert in night alarms,
Take me with you: ah." Quoth Clorinda, "no!
Whom leave we here of prowess if you go?"

XIII

This spoken, ready with a proud refuse
Argantes was his proffered aid to scorn,
Whom Aladine prevents, and with excuse
To Solyman thus gan his speeches torn:
"Right noble prince, as aye hath been your use
Your self so still you bear and long have borne,
Bold in all acts, no danger can affright
Your heart, nor tired is your strength with fight.

XIV

"If you went forth great things perform you would,
In my conceit yet far unfit it seems
That you, who most excel in courage bold,
At once should leave this town in these extremes,
Nor would I that these twain should leave this hold,
My heart their noble lives far worthier deems,
If this attempt of less importance were,
Or weaker posts so great a weight could bear.

XV

"But for well-guarded is the mighty tower
With hardy troops and squadrons round about,
And cannot harmed be with little power,
Nor fit the time to send whole armies out,
This pair who passed have many a dreadful stowre,
And proffer now to prove this venture stout,
Alone to this attempt let them go forth,
Alone than thousands of more price and worth.

XVI

"Thou, as it best beseems a mighty king,
With ready bands besides the gate attend,
That when this couple have performed the thing,
And shall again their footsteps homeward bend,
From their strong foes upon them following
Thou may'st them keep, preserve, save and defend:"
Thus said the king, "The Soldan must consent,"
Silent remained the Turk, and discontent.

XVII

Then Ismen said, "You twain that undertake
This hard attempt, awhile I pray you stay,
Till I a wildfire of fine temper make,
That this great engine burn to ashes may;
Haply the guard that now doth watch and wake,
Will then lie tumbled sleeping on the lay;"
Thus they conclude, and in their chambers sit,
To wait the time for this adventure fit.

XVIII

Clorinda there her silver arms off rent,
Her helm, her shield, her hauberk shining bright,
An armor black as jet or coal she hent,
Wherein withouten plume herself she dight;
For thus disguised amid her foes she meant
To pass unseen, by help of friendly night,
To whom her eunuch, old Arsetes, came,

That from her cradle nursed and kept the dame.

XIX

This aged sire had followed far and near,
Through lands and seas, the strong and hardy maid,
He saw her leave her arms and wonted gear,
Her danger nigh that sudden change foresaid:
By his white locks from black that changed were
In following her, the woful man her prayed,
By all his service and his taken pain,
To leave that fond attempt, but prayed in vain.

XX

"At last," quoth he, "since hardened to thine ill,
Thy cruel heart is to thy loss prepared,
That my weak age, nor tears that down distil,
Not humble suit, nor plaint, thou list regard;
Attend awhile, strange things unfold I will,
Hear both thy birth and high estate declared;
Follow my counsel, or thy will that done,"
She sat to hear, the eunuch thus begun:

XXI

"Senapus ruled, and yet perchance doth reign
In mighty Ethiop, and her deserts waste,
The lore of Christ both he and all his train
Of people black, hath kept and long embraced,
To him a Pagan was I sold for gain,
And with his queen, as her chief eunuch, placed;
Black was this queen as jet, yet on her eyes
Sweet loveliness, in black attired, lies.

XXII

"The fire of love and frost of jealousy,
Her husband's troubled soul alike torment,
The tide of fond suspicion flowed high,
The foe to love and plague to sweet content,
He mewed her up from sight of mortal eye,
Nor day he would his beams on her had bent:
She, wise and lowly, by her husband's pleasure,
Her joy, her peace, her will, her wish did measure.

XXIII

"Her prison was a chamber, painted round
With goodly portraits and with stories old,
As white as snow there stood a virgin bound,
Besides a dragon fierce, a champion bold
The monster did with poignant spear through wound,
The gored beast lay dead upon the mould;
The gentle queen before this image laid.
She plained, she mourned, she wept, she sighed, she prayed:

XXIV

"At last with child she proved, and forth she brought,
And thou art she, a daughter fair and bright,
In her thy color white new terror wrought,
She wondered on thy face with strange affright,
But yet she purposed in her fearful thought

To hide thee from the king, thy father's sight,
Lest thy bright hue should his suspect approve,
For seld a crow begets a silver dove.

XXV

"And to her spouse to show she was disposed
A negro's babe late born, in room of thee,
And for the tower wherein she lay enclosed,
Was with her damsels only wond and me,
To me, on whose true faith she most reposed,
She gave thee, ere thou couldst christened be,
Nor could I since find means thee to baptize,
In Pagan lands thou knowest it's not the guise.

XXVI

"To me she gave thee, and she wept withal,
To foster thee in some far distant place.
Who can her griefs and plaints to reckoning call,
How oft she swooned at the last embrace:
Her streaming tears amid her kisses fall,
Her sighs, her dire complaints did interlace?
And looking up at last, `O God,' quoth she,
`Who dost my heart and inward mourning see,

XXVII

"If mind and body spotless to this day,
If I have kept my bed still undefiled,
Not for myself a sinful wretch I pray,
That in thy presence am an abject vilde,
Preserve this babe, whose mother must deny
To nourish it, preserve this harmless child,
Oh let it live, and chaste like me it make,
But for good fortune elsewhere sample take.

XXVIII

"Thou heavenly soldier which delivered hast
That sacred virgin from the serpent old,
If on thine altars I have offerings placed,
And sacrificed myrrh, frankincense and gold,
On this poor child thy heavenly looks down cast,
With gracious eye this silly babe behold;
This said, her strength and living sprite was fled,
She sighed, she groaned, she swooned in her bed.

XXIX

"Weeping I took thee, in a little chest,
Covered with herbs and leaves, I brought thee out
So secretly, that none of all the rest
Of such an act suspicion had or doubt,
To wilderness my steps I first addressed,
Where horrid shades enclosed me round about,
A tigress there I met, in whose fierce eyes
Fury and wrath, rage, death and terror lies:

XXX

"Up to a tree I leaped, and on the grass,
Such was my sudden fear, I left thee lying,
To thee the beast with furious course did pass,

With curious looks upon thy visage prying,
All suddenly both meek and mild she was,
With friendly cheer thy tender body eying:
At last she licked thee, and with gesture mild
About thee played, and thou upon her smiled.

XXXI

"Her fearful muzzle full of dreadful threat,
In thy weak hand thou took'st withouten dread;
The gentle beast with milk-outstretched teat,
As nurses' custom, proffered thee to feed.
As one that wondereth on some marvel great,
I stood this while amazed at the deed.
When thee she saw well filled and satisfied,
Unto the woods again the tigress hied.

XXXII

"She gone, down from the tree I came in haste,
And took thee up, and on my journey wend,
Within a little thorp I stayed at last,
And to a nurse the charge of thee commend,
And sporting with thee there long time I passed,
Till term of sixteen months were brought to end,
And thou begun, as little children do,
With half clipped words to prattle, and to go.

XXXIII

"But having passed the August of mine age,
When more than half my tap of life was run,
Rich by rewards given by your mother sage,
For merits past, and service yet undone,
I longed to leave this wandering pilgrimage,
And in my native soil again to won,
To get some seely home I had desire,
Loth still to warm me at another's fire.

XXXIV

"To Egypt-ward, where I was born, I went,
And bore thee with me, by a rolling flood,
Till I with savage thieves well-nigh was hent;
Before the brook, the thieves behind me stood:
Thee to forsake I never could consent,
And gladly would I 'scape those outlaws wood,
Into the flood I leaped far from the brim,
My left hand bore thee, with the right I swim.

XXXV

"Swift was the current, in the middle stream
A whirlpool gaped with devouring jaws,
The gulf, on such mishap ere I could dream,
Into his deep abyss my carcass draws,
There I forsook thee, the wild waters seem
To pity thee, a gentle wind there blows
Whose friendly puffs safe to the shore thee drive,
Where wet and weary I at last arrive:

XXXVI

"I took thee up, and in my dream that night,

When buried was the world in sleep and shade,
I saw a champion clad in armor bright
That o'er my head shaked a flaming blade,
He said, 'I charge thee execute aright,
That charge this infant's mother on thee laid,
Baptize the child, high Heaven esteems her dear,
And I her keeper will attend her near:

XXXVII

"I will her keep, defend, save and protect,
I made the waters mild, the tigress tame,
O wretch that heavenly warnings dost reject!
The warrior vanished having said the same.
I rose and journeyed on my way direct
When blushing morn from Tithon's bed forth came,
But for my faith is true and sure I ween,
And dreams are false, you still unchristened been.

XXXVIII

"A Pagan therefore thee I fostered have,
Nor of thy birth the truth did ever tell,
Since you increased are in courage brave,
Your sex and nature's-self you both excel,
Full many a realm have you made bond and slave,
Your fortunes last yourself remember well,
And how in peace and war, in joy and teen,
I have your servant, and your tutor been.

XXXIX

"Last morn, from skies ere stars exiled were,
In deep and deathlike sleep my senses drowned,
The self-same vision did again appear,
With stormy wrathful looks, and thundering sound,
'Villain,' quoth he, 'within short while thy dear
Must change her life, and leave this sinful ground,
Thine be the loss, the torment, and the care.'
This said, he fled through skies, through clouds and air.

XL

"Hear then my joy, my hope, my darling, hear,
High Heaven some dire misfortune threatened hath,
Displeased pardie, because I did thee here
A lore repugnant to thy parents' faith;
Ah, for my sake, this bold attempt forbear;
Put off these sable arms, appease thy wrath."
This said, he wept, she pensive stood and sad,
Because like dream herself but lately had.

XLI

With cheerful smile she answered him at last,
"I will this faith observe, it seems me true,
Which from my cradle age thou taught me hast;
I will not change it for religion new,
Nor with vain shows of fear and dread aghast
This enterprise forbear I to pursue,
No, not if death in his most dreadful face
Wherewith he scareth mankind, kept the place."

XLII

Approachen gan the time, while thus she spake,
Wherein they ought that dreadful hazard try;
She to Argantes went, who should partake
Of her renown and praise, or with her die.
Ismen with words more hasty still did make
Their virtue great, which by itself did fly,
Two balls he gave them made of hollow brass,
Wherein enclosed fire, pitch, and brimstone was.

XLIII

And forth they went, and over dale and hill
They hasted forward with a speedy pace,
Unseen, unmarked, undescried, until
Beside the engine close themselves they place,
New courage there their swelling hearts did fill,
Rage in their breasts, fury shown in their face,
They yearned to blow the fire, and draw the sword.
The watch descried them both, and gave the word.

XLIV

Silent they passed on, the watch begun
To rear a huge alarm with hideous cries,
Therewith the hardy couple forward run
To execute their valiant enterprise:
So from a cannon or a roaring gun
At once the noise, the flame, and bullet flies,
They run, they give the charge, begin the fray,
And all at once their foes break, spoil and slay.

XLV

They passed first through thousand thousand blows,
And then performed their designment bold,
A fiery ball each on the engine throws,
The stuff was dry, the fire took quickly hold,
Furious upon the timber-work it grows,
How it increased cannot well be told,
How it crept up the piece, and how to skies
The burning sparks and towering smoke upflies.

XLVI

A mass of solid fire burning bright
Rolled up in smouldering fumes, there bursteth out,
And there the blustering winds add strength and might
And gather close the sparsed flames about:
The Frenchmen trembled at the dreadful light,
To arms in haste and fear ran all the rout,
Down fell the piece dreaded so much in war,
Thus what long days do make one hour doth mar.

XLVII

Two Christian bands this while came to the place
With speedy haste, where they beheld the fire,
Argantes to them cried with scornful grace,
"Your blood shall quench these flames, and quench mine ire:"
This said, the maid and he with sober pace
Drew back, and to the banks themselves retire,
Faster than brooks which falling showers increase
Their foes augment, and faster on them press.

XLVIII

The gilden port was opened, and forth stepped
With all his soldiers bold, the Turkish king,
Ready to aid the two his force he kept,
When fortune should them home with conquest bring,
Over the bars the hardy couple leapt
And after them a band of Christians fling,
Whom Solyman drove back with courage stout,
And shut the gate, but shut Clorinda out.

XLIX

Alone was she shut forth, for in that hour
Wherein they closed the port, the virgin went,
And full of heat and wrath, her strength and power
Gainst Arimon, that struck her erst, she bent,
She slew the knight, nor Argant in that stowre
Wist of her parting, or her fierce intent,
The fight, the press, the night, and darksome skies
Care from his heart had ta'en, sight from his eyes.

L

But when appeased was her angry mood,
Her fury calmed, and settled was her head,
She saw the gates were shut, and how she stood
Amid her foes, she held herself for dead;
While none her marked at last she thought it good,
To save her life, some other path to tread,
She feigned her one of them, and close her drew
Amid the press that none her saw or knew:

LI

Then as a wolf guilty of some misdeed
Flies to some grove to hide himself from view,
So favored with the night, with secret speed
Dissevered from the press the damsel flew:
Tancred alone of her escape took heed,
He on that quarter was arrived new,
When Arimon she killed he thither came,
He saw it, marked it, and pursued the dame.

LII

He deemed she was some man of mickle might,
And on her person would he worship win,
Over the hills the nymph her journey dight
Toward another port, there to get in:
With hideous noise fast after spurred the knight,
She heard and stayed, and thus her words begin,
"What haste hast thou? ride softly, take thy breath,
What bringest thou?" He answered, "War and death."

LIII

"And war and death," quoth she, "here mayest thou get
If thou for battle come," with that she stayed:
Tancred to ground his foot in haste down set,
And left his steed, on foot he saw the maid,
Their courage hot, their ire and wrath they whet,
And either champion drew a trenchant blade,
Together ran they, and together stroke,

Like two fierce bulls whom rage and love provoke.

LIV

Worthy of royal lists and brightest day,
Worthy a golden trump and laurel crown,
The actions were and wonders of that fray
Which sable knight did in dark bosom drown:
Yet night, consent that I their acts display
And make their deeds to future ages known,
And in records of long enduring story
Enrol their praise, their fame, their worth and glory.

LV

They neither shrunk, nor vantage sought of ground,
They traverse not, nor skipped from part to part,
Their blows were neither false nor feigned found,
The night, their rage would let them use no art,
Their swords together clash with dreadful sound,
Their feet stand fast, and neither stir nor start,
They move their hands, steadfast their feet remain,
Nor blow nor loin they struck, or thrust in vain.

LVI

Shame bred desire a sharp revenge to take,
And vengeance taken gave new cause of shame:
So that with haste and little heed they strake,
Fuel enough they had to feed the flame;
At last so close their battle fierce they make,
They could not wield their swords, so nigh they came,
They used the hilts, and each on other rushed,
And helm to helm, and shield to shield they crushed.

LVII

Thrice his strong arms he folds about her waist,
And thrice was forced to let the virgin go,
For she disdained to be so embraced,
No lover would have strained his mistress so:
They took their swords again, and each enchased
Deep wounds in the soft flesh of his strong foe,
Till weak and weary, faint, alive unneath,
They both retired at once, at once took breath.

LVIII

Each other long beheld, and leaning stood
Upon their swords, whose points in earth were pight,
When day-break, rising from the eastern flood,
Put forth the thousand eyes of blindfold night;
Tancred beheld his foe's out-streaming blood,
And gaping wounds, and waxed proud with the sight,
Oh vanity of man's unstable mind,
Puffed up with every blast of friendly wind!

LIX

Why joy'st thou, wretch? Oh, what shall be thy gain?
What trophy for this conquest is't thou rears?
Thine eyes shall shed, in case thou be not slain,
For every drop of blood a sea of tears:
The bleeding warriors leaning thus remain,

Each one to speak one word long time forbears,
Tancred the silence broke at last, and said,
For he would know with whom this fight he made:

LX

"Evil is our chance and hard our fortune is
Who here in silence, and in shade debate,
Where light of sun and witness all we miss
That should our prowess and our praise dilate:
If words in arms find place, yet grant me this,
Tell me thy name, thy country, and estate;
That I may know, this dangerous combat done,
Whom I have conquered, or who hath me won."

LXI

"What I will tell, you ask," quoth she, "in vain,
Nor moved by prayer, nor constrained by power,
But thus much know, I am one of those twain
Which late with kindled fire destroyed the tower."
Tancred at her proud words swelled with disdain,
"That hast thou said," quoth he, "in evil hour;
Thy vaunting speeches, and thy silence both,
Uncivil wretch, hath made my heart more wroth."

LXII

Ire in their chafed breasts renewed the fray,
Fierce was the fight, though feeble were their might,
Their strength was gone, their cunning was away,
And fury in their stead maintained the fight,
Their swords both points and edges sharp em

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